

Honorable Soldiers, Too: An Historical Case Study of Post-Reconstruction African  
American Female Teachers of the Upper Ohio River Valley

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This dissertation titled  
Honorable Soldiers, Too: An Historical Case Study of Post-Reconstruction African  
American Female Teachers of the Upper Ohio River Valley

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the Department of Educational Studies  
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## ABSTRACT

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This exploratory and descriptive study illuminates the lives of African American female teachers who lived in the upper Ohio River Valley between 1875 and 1915. Existing current research depicts teachers in the South and urban North during this period. This study highlights teachers from northern, small to midsized cities in order to bring them into the historical record and direct attention to their contributions to education. The focus of this historical, intrinsic, embedded, single-case case study was on the social profile, educational opportunities, teaching experiences, and support networks of Pocahontas Simmons Peyton, Susie Simmons (Jones?), Bernadine Peyton Sherman, Mary Peyton Dyson, Anna Stevens Posey, and Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter. Three additional themes emerged from the data. They involved inconsistent community attitudes, male-defined perspectives, and multigenerational connections and successes.

The case for this study was bounded by time, place, race, gender, and occupation. The units of analysis were selected from a pool of 27 names using the maximum-variation purposeful sampling method. The central research question asked how the women operated within the educational systems of the three-state area of western Pennsylvania, northern West Virginia, and southeastern Ohio. The researcher employed

multiple methods of data collection in order to triangulate the data and provide rich description of the women within the context of the bounded system.

The findings suggest that these women were part of a tradition of exemplary service to education. Although they were unique, these women shared characteristics with teachers in other areas of the country. With one exception, they worked in segregated schools with poor to adequate resources. Each woman had a range of educational options open to her, but not all options were available in each location. The women were skilled at using support networks and their own abilities to navigate within the educational system. They became role models and pioneers who made significant contributions to the educational landscape of the area. Knowledge of these women increases our understanding of the roles African American women have played in schools and gives them overdue recognition for fighting for an honorable cause.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Under the banner “The Army of Teachers,” a January 13, 1906, *Cleveland Journal* article informed its readers that 13,300 of the 450,000 practicing teachers in the United States were “colored” women. These women constituted a full division within the forces of professional educators of the early 20th century. One hundred years later, few know of the nature of their lives, the battles they fought, or the deeds they routinely performed. Conversations with today’s average citizens about African American women teachers of the Post-Reconstruction Era often begin with an awkward pause and a quizzical look. A scratch of the head typically completes the physical evidence of confusion about the subject. Inevitably, the question is asked, “Were there any?”

Yes, there were many. Census data and school board records, as well as newspaper articles such as the one cited above substantiate this statement. Why is it then that so few, from both the academic community and the general population, know so little about Black teachers prior to World War I? So little is known that many educated individuals doubt their existence. A variety of answers to this question can be posited. A host of answers to it can be traced to a dearth of scholarly writing about the lives of teachers in general (Goodson, 1992; Hoffman, 2003; Rousmaniere, 1997; Weiler & Middleton, 1999) and African American women teachers in particular (Butchart, 1988; Eisenmann, 1997; Perkins, 1987; Shaw, 1996; Ward Randolph, 2001). This lack of literature in the field has made it difficult for historians and the teachers of teachers to pass along information of substance to their students.

Women's history, a relatively new field of research and study, gained momentum in the decade of the 1960s. Woloch (2002b) wrote of that new interest, and how it fueled a "thriving academic enterprise" (p. xi) of course work and publication that continues to this day and that has begun to fill a huge void. The majority of teachers have been female since the 1870s (Herbst, 1989; Hoffman, 2003; Ogren, 2005; Woloch, 2002b). The telling of women teachers' stories is a small part of the women's history movement (Hoffman, 2003; McClelland, 1992; Rousmaniere, 1997). African American women teachers comprised a still smaller subset of interest within the effort to illuminate women's experiences and roles in American history. A survey of the literature in the fields of the history of African American education, northern African American education, northern African American women, and African American teachers, indicated that, for the most part, Black women teachers, particularly those living and working in the North after the Civil War, have long been ignored (Butchart, 1988; Perkins, 1987; Trotter, 1997; Ward Randolph, 2001). Darlene Clark Hine and Kathleen Thompson (1998) concurred with this assessment about Black women in general and proved cautiously optimistic about the prospects of conducting research for filling gaps in the available scholarship. They stated in their book, *A Shining Thread of Hope: The History of Black Women in America*, "Much of the history of Black women was lost forever because it was considered by almost everyone to be unimportant, but a great deal still remains and is being brought to light" (p. 4).

The research conducted for this dissertation was designed to locate, investigate, and illuminate the educational experiences and contributions of African American

women who were either educated or taught, or both, during the period from 1875 to 1915 in a three-state area bordering the upper Ohio River Valley. The purpose of this historical case study is to explore and describe the educational system of this region as it related to Black females. It examines the social profile, educational opportunities, teaching experiences, and support networks of several of these women. Investigation of the examples from the communities of Parkersburg, West Virginia, Athens, Ohio, and Monongahela City, Pennsylvania, provided answers to questions concerning the characteristics of the educational system of the upper Ohio River Valley states and how Black women operated within it. These questions were answered by examining the laws, standards, and policies governing education in Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania, in addition to the kinds of educational institutions that were open to Black women for education and for paid work, the kinds of resources they had to do their work, the goals and aspirations they had for their students, and the kinds and intensity of support they provided to others within the social, economic, and political context of the upper Ohio River Valley.

Indeed, there were many African American women educators in the Post-Reconstruction Era. They, too, were honorable soldiers in the army of teachers. This research sought to uncover some of their stories, voices, and contributions in order to illuminate and enrich the history of Black women's roles in the education of American citizens.

### **Purpose of Study**

Female teachers of all colors and creeds have rarely been recognized as professionals and leaders (Foster, 1994; Franklin, 1990; Herbst, 1989; Hoffman, 2003; Rousmaniere, 1997). Their accomplishments and voices have been forgotten or overlooked because of their gender and the low status assigned to women's work (Gerber, 1976; Hoffman, 2003; Shaw, 1996). In addition, educational historians have traditionally sought answers to their research questions in governmental documents and those of the administration of schools (Nelson, 1992; Rousmaniere, 2004). The record of the development and expansion of the public school enterprise as written by consensus historians Ellwood Cubberley, Paul Monroe, and Thomas Woody celebrated the steady progress schools made toward democracy and equality (Bailyn, 1960; Rousmaniere, 2004; Tyack & Hansot 1982). The approach generally failed to acknowledge the groups of people the system left out or oppressed (Rousmaniere, 2004; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). From the late 1950s to the 1970s social historians such as Bernard Bailyn and Lawrence Cremin advocated broadening the definition of education to include publishing, preaching, tutoring, and a host of other intellectual endeavors (Rousmaniere, 2004). While this approach to the history of education expanded research to questions and topics outside the realm of the public school, it continued the positive tone of its predecessor. In summarizing the second phase of educational historiography, Kate Rousmaniere (2004) concluded that the scholarship "remained primarily intellectual and for the most part positive" (p. 38). She added that the historical arguments of that period supported the belief that "education in both schools and in the broader arena had progressed steadily

over time to inform an increasing number of people in positive ways” (p. 38). The result was that consensus was still the guiding perspective of the authors, “and the voices and experiences of certain groups were still absent from the narrative” (p. 38). Hence both of these early approaches failed to adequately address the roles of females and minorities in formal and informal education because of their exclusion from that process in general and their absence from positions of authority in particular throughout much of history.

The turbulence of the 1960s fueled criticism of the early treatments of American educational history. Revisionists Michael Katz and colleagues Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis offered views of the system as an outgrowth of capitalism and the attempts of one class to maintain power over the others (Rousmaniere, 2004). Rousmaniere included Carl Kaestle, David Tyack, Herbert Kliebard, and James Anderson in the group of revisionist historians. Their works ranged from a reinterpretation of the early founding of the common school in Massachusetts to that of the education of African Americans in the post-Reconstruction South. She concluded that as a group “the depth of analysis and critique” of the revisionists was more “creative” but that “the subject matter remained where the consensus school [had] established it—in schools as institutions” (p. 39).

In recent decades, educational historians have turned their lenses toward a greater variety of subjects and themes, among them the relationships of schooling to work, family, gender, class, race, labor issues, and the history of childhood (Rousmaniere, 2004). These neo-revisionists argued that views of “schooling as an all-oppressive force” allowed “its subjects little voice or agency” (Rousmaniere, 2004, p. 40) and that education was just one of many social forces that shaped the citizens of the United States,

forceful as it could be at times. In conjunction with researchers in many emerging fields, including those in women's studies and African American studies, these educational historians mined different sources to "uncover individual lives, experiences, and relationships in schools and to investigate evidence of resistance to powerful structures of schooling" (Rousmaniere, 2004, p. 40). Researchers looking for documents that hold pictures of the life events and activities of women long departed have a difficult task. Societal values of the time were such that the documents of middle- and upper-class women were more likely to have been preserved than those for the possible subjects of this investigation. This creates a greater challenge for those researchers wishing to locate such sources for African American women who have died (Hine & Thompson, 1998; Lerner, 1979, 2005; Perkins, 1987; Williams, 2005). Hence, even the newer historical works tend to address the experiences of White teachers and contain only cursory mention, or no mention at all, of the African American teaching experience (Archung, 2002; Perkins, 1987; Ward Randolph, 1996). In sum, the examination of the historiography of American education has indicated that there is a gap in the literature regarding the lived experience of African American female teachers.

A review of the historiography of African American education leads to a similar conclusion. Ronald Butchart (1988) and V. P. Franklin (1978) each determined in overviews of the historiography of Black education that prior to 1950, educational history tended to focus on literacy training in the antebellum period, the Freedman's Bureau, individual southern states, and individual institutions, most generally colleges or high schools. After 1950, educational historians were more critical of the early historians' faith

in the school as a liberating force and turned to the study of the “rise of the black ghetto” (Franklin, 1978, p. 10). Butchart (1988) adds that segregation, the Black community’s response to educational opportunity, the education of northern African Americans, and the teachers and students who made up the schools became important matters for researchers to address. Despite this turn of interest toward northern African American education, scholarship is lacking on the lives of northern Black teachers prior to the 1950s (Butchart, 1988; Eisenmann, 1997; Lerner, 1975; Perkins, 1987; Ward Randolph; 2001).

Writing in the introduction to her book on Fanny Jackson Coppin, Linda Perkins stated late in the decade of the 1980s that “although there exist short monographs, sketches, and narratives giving a few facts concerning 19th-century black women there has yet to be written a definitive or full-length biography of any 19th-century black female”(1987, p. 1). At least three biographies have been published since the Coppin biography by Perkins, including Kent Anderson Leslie’s 1995 work *Woman of Color, Daughter of Privilege: Amanda America Dickson 1849-1893*, broadcast journalist and producer A’lelia Bundles’ 2001 volume about her great-great-grandmother *On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madame C. J. Walker*, and Catherine Clinton’s 2004 volume, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*. However, only Perkins’ work focused on an African American educator. This reality is unfortunate because “although black women have been prominent in most facets of American life, their role in the education of their race has been their most salient contribution” (Perkins, 1987, p. 2). With regard to 19th-century Black teachers, Perkins postulated that the oversight was due to factors



such as the historical emphasis placed on northern White teachers and philanthropists heading south to instruct freedmen and women, and the popularity of Booker T. Washington and his philosophy of industrial education. To balance this situation, researchers need to turn to finding out what they can about the lives and experiences of African American women who taught in the North.

The purpose of this research was to uncover, explore, describe, and give voice to unique women living and teaching during a time when the work of their peers in the South and in urban areas of the northern United States drew the lion's share of historians' attention. The focus of this case study was African American female teachers, an under-recognized group of professionals and leaders (Eisenmann, 1997; Perkins, 1987; Shaw 1996; Ward Randolph, 2001), who toiled for the benefit of students and citizens in small communities scattered along the upper Ohio River Valley basin. Aware that only a handful of trained and untrained historians have located and written about Black women from the time and place that bound this study, this researcher intended to add to the richness of the record concerning this population and extend the scholarship in the field of educational and women's history. The study addressed four a priori themes found to be important to this population of teachers. They were:

1. Context—the similarities and differences in milieu in small and mid-sized communities in the upper Ohio Valley River states as compared to that of northern urban areas and southern residential areas.

2. Characteristics—the background, personal qualities, self-images, and values of the African American women teaching in the upper Ohio River Valley communities.
3. Educational opportunities—the kinds and natures of institutions that were available in which the subjects could gain and provide an education.
4. Support networks—the types and patterns of support that the women received in their efforts to gain an education and the types they in turn provided to others.

Additional themes related to the lives of the women studied and their professional and community service emerged from this research. The inquiry was not intended to provide complete biographical pictures of the subjects, or extensive analyses of the institutions and communities within which they lived and worked. It was intended to describe selected women and their unique contributions to education at specific times and in specific places. The provision of the rudimentary explanation of the context within which the values and life choices of these women were shaped was included as a necessary condition to recognizing the power of their voices and celebrating the magnitude of their accomplishments (Creswell, 1998; Geertz, 1973; Hays, 2004). This research amplified the voices and illuminated the accomplishments of a group of women worthy of remembering.

### **Research Questions**

In recent years, there has been active interest in research that dealt with Black teachers (Foster, 1994; Henry, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ward Randolph, 1996,

2001). In it, concern has been expressed about the dearth of Black teachers in the public schools (Diller & Moule, 2005; Hunter-Boykin, 1992; Perkins, 1989), the manner in which they specifically relate to African American students (Foster, 1994; Irvine, 2002; Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 1995), and the historical tradition of these teachers (Anderson, 1988; Butchart, 1988; Engs, 2004; Hine & Thompson, 1998; Perkins, 1987; Ward Randolph, 1996, 2001; Williams, 2005). In order to address issues related to the lack of scholarship focused on the historical traditions of Black teachers, particularly those of post-Reconstruction, African American, female teachers from places other than the South or northern urban areas, this research addressed one central question: How did African American women who were teachers between 1875 and 1915 operate within the educational system of the upper Ohio River Valley states? In addition, several issue and topical sub-questions (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 1995) were addressed.

The issue sub-questions were:

1. How did the laws and practices affecting educational opportunities for African Americans that were in place within the three-state region of Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania support or hinder female teachers in their effort to do their work?
2. What role did Black female teachers play in the educational institutions open to African Americans in the upper Ohio River Valley?
3. How did Black female teachers of the upper Ohio River Valley in the post-Reconstruction era perceive themselves and the value of the roles they assumed?

4. What support networks were in place to foster Black education in the upper Ohio River Valley during the post-Reconstruction era?
5. What themes relating to Black education emerged from this study of the upper Ohio River Valley states during the post-Reconstruction era?

The topical sub-questions were:

1. Who were the Black female teachers of the upper Ohio River Valley working in the post-Reconstruction era?
2. What were these women like? What qualities did they have in common? What made each woman unique?
3. What educational institutions existed in the upper Ohio River Valley for the education of Blacks between 1875 and 1915?
4. What kinds of resources supported the education of Blacks in the upper Ohio River Valley during the post-Reconstruction era and how were they distributed and/or used?
5. How can the emergent themes be interpreted within the larger social, political, and economic context of the region and within the existing literature?

These questions were selected in an attempt to ascertain rudimentary information about women that few know existed and to provide a platform for further research.

Answers to the basic questions of who, what, where, when, and how formed the framework for the report narrative and provided the context for understanding why particular values might have been held, actions taken, and behaviors exhibited.

Categories of supplementary questions that were derived from the three types of research

questions or that emerged from the literature and the research can be found in appendix A. They were used to add depth and complexity to the research. Answers to them, where found, enrich the final description of the women, the schools, and the communities under study, which in turn enhance current understanding of African American professional women bound by the time and place of this case study.

### **Significance of the Study**

Carter G. Woodson understood the connection between the history of a population, or the lack thereof, and its identity. He stated, “If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thoughts of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated” (attributed to Woodson, in “Carter G. Woodson,” 1993, p. 1). “Furthermore,” Woodson opined of non-Blacks, “no one can be thoroughly educated until he learns as much about the Negro as he knows about other people” (1993, p. 136). In their introduction to *Women’s America: Refocusing the Past*, Linda Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hart drew on thoughts from Frantz Fanon, Christine de Pizana, and Jane Austen to posit that “one of the most effective ways in which dominant groups maintain their power is by depriving the people they dominate of the knowledge of their own history” (2004, p. 1). The lack of research about the lives of teachers has been documented (Goodson, 1992; Hoffman: 2003; Nelson, 1992; Weiler & Middleton, 1999), as well as that of the African American women who taught outside the South and in the major cities of the North (Butchart, 1988; Eisenmann, 1997; Lerner, 1975; Perkins, 1987; Ward Randolph, 2001). In addition to these gaps in the literature concerning northern Black female teachers, an argument can be made that what is

available in some cases perpetuated a false impression of these women. Stephanie Shaw's research (1996) strongly suggested that there was a disparity between the image of professional Black women in historical accounts of them and the one the women held of themselves. Hence, this dissertation research, which is focused on African American women who taught in the upper Ohio River Valley between 1875 and 1915, is significant in its attempt to enlighten historians' understanding of who these women were, what they accomplished, and how they worked within the system of which they were a part. In so doing, this research, positioned at the intersection of several fields of study, informs additional disciplines including education, women's history, African American educational history, and African American women's educational history.

In light of Woodson's concern for the consequences of a lack of history concerning a population, this research makes a unique contribution. It adds to the knowledge base about a group of women whose courage, dignity, and wisdom affected the lives of countless others. Although subject to human error, they were role models and community leaders. The stories of their lives in schools, and others like them, should be told and retold. Their work in segregated and predominantly Black schools illuminated the intangible something—the camaraderie, empathy, sense of duty and hope all rolled into what many frequently referred to as racial uplift—that motivated young people to seek their higher selves in the face of the frequent ugliness around them. These women's lives speak to all women and all educators, but particularly to those who recruit and instruct future teachers. Black women have a history of teaching and teaching well, in the North as well as the South, in small communities as well as big ones, and in rural areas

bordering the Ohio River as well as the urban centers of both coasts. Knowledge of such women and their successes can inform current teacher-education programs, inspire educational practice in schools with diversity, and reinforce the need to recruit, retain, and value Black teachers.

This research is also significant because it poses questions for further research. Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman emphasized the notion that sound qualitative studies must “contribute to theory and research—the ongoing conversation in a particular social science discipline or applied field” (1999, p. 9). This research did not complete the needed work in the field of post-Reconstruction, northern, Black, female teachers. It does add to the “ongoing conversation” by describing some women from a particular time who worked in a designated area. It answers some questions about a limited number of women and raises additional questions to which future researchers may seek answers. Coupled with the further analysis of themes and conclusions from this research, scholars can build on it to enrich the “ongoing conversation” in the many fields listed above.

In sum, the significance of this research is threefold: it adds to the scholarship and understanding of Black women who were educators between 1875 and 1915; it helps inform those seeking to impact the education of African American children and teachers; and it contributes to the ongoing conversation among a variety of scholars interested in these women.

### **Design of the Study**

The general lack of scholarship on female African American educators from post-Reconstruction northern and border States such as West Virginia left open many

possibilities for the design of this study. Existing material includes several volumes of biographical sketches, letters, or diary entries of female teachers that included at least one Black woman (Hoffman, 2003; Holmes & Weiss, 1995; Seller, 1994), and books about Black women that included a handful of teachers (Hine, 1990; Hine, Brown, & Terborg Penn, 1993; Lerner, 1975). In addition, it was possible to locate a few single biographies (Bundles, 2001; Hayre & Moore, 1997; Perkins, 1987) and treatments of African American professional women as a group (Aptheker, 1982; Higginbotham, 1993; Shaw, 1996). The largest existent body of literature concerning the post-emancipation years deals with education and teachers, both White and Black, plying their craft in the South (Anderson, 1988; Brown, 2002; Bullock, 1970; Butchart, 1980; Engs, 2004; Williams, 2005). Gretchen Duling published a study of rural, career teachers from Gallia County, Ohio (a county bordering the Ohio River), that included two African American women. Her research took the form of oral history because her subjects were still living at the time of the study (1997). Their teaching careers post-dated the period covered by this research. Woodson's (1921) early work on the education of Blacks in West Virginia gave only cursory mention to specific Black women teachers, Pocahontas Simmons being one of them. The works of Gerber (1976), Cayton (2002), and Bigham (2006), all more recent histories that included discussion of education in Ohio, were similar to Woodson's in the treatment of African American teachers: few were mentioned and those only briefly. Knowledge of African American education in Pennsylvania focused predominantly on the historically rich Philadelphia community (DuBois, 1899; Franklin, 1979; Hayre & Moore, 1997; Perkins, 1987). With the exception of the full biographies, most of these



works employed historical, biographical, and oral history strategies that recounted general life experiences or noted limited contributions of women, with little attention to the linkages between Black female teachers working in similar times and places.

Reflection on the literature regarding African American women professionals suggested that a historical case study of such women operating within the educational system of the upper Ohio River Valley was needed and was feasible. Therefore, this project became an intrinsic case study owing to three factors: its focus on unique women, a clear need for the research that arose from the literature, and the researcher's engagement in it because of personal interest in the topic (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 1995). Robert Stake (1995) reminded those preparing this type of case study that this designation is not purely academic, but was important to the selection of research methodologies. Stake cautioned, "The more the intrinsic interest in the case, the more [you] will restrain [your] curiosities and special interests and the more [you] will try to discern and pursue issues critical to [the case]" (p. 4). These considerations guided the development of the research questions and the inclusion of multiple methods for triangulating data.

This research also sought to disseminate general knowledge about a group of women who were underrepresented in American scholarship, and it employed research strategies similar to those used in the literature. Those research strategies included analysis of documents, archival records, and artifacts. In addition, interviews with descendants and other pertinent individuals were necessary because it was a study of non-living subjects. However, this research was unique in that it was framed as a case study in

order to explore connections, similarities, and differences among women working within a bounded system. A concept popularized by Louis Smith (1979), a bounded system refers to an entity rather than a process that “has a boundary and working parts” (Stake, 1995, p. 2). The bounded system, or unit of study, in this case was a set of practices regarding the education of African American females in a particular geographic area during a given time. There were many working parts within this system. The elements or specific examples chosen to illustrate the working parts embedded (Yin, 2003b) in this single-case study were the women Pocahontas Simmons Peyton, Susie Simmons (Jones?), Bernadine Peyton Shearman, Mary Peyton Dyson, Anna Stevens Posey, and Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter, as well as the institutions in which they learned and worked. They were the actors or participants within the bounded system chosen for close examination in order to understand more fully their work within that system. This choice of research design permitted production of a “particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive” study (Merriam, 1988, p. 11) involving the juxtaposition of unique actors bound by time, place, occupation, race, and gender. The central, issue, and topical research questions provided the framework for the study and, in keeping with its exploratory intent, allowed questions to emerge from the data collected. The analysis of answers to some of these questions serves to inform present-day scholars about traditions within Black education that could be of benefit to current educators. The use of multiple data sources, a hallmark of qualitative case study inquiry (Creswell, 1998; Hays, 2004; Merriam, 1988, Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003a, 2003b), enriched the quality of the final narrative, increased the accuracy of the assertions, and pointed toward questions for

further research. The result of employing this flexible, yet stable research tradition, was the addition of a few pieces to the puzzle of the education of African American women. This research has provided enough additional pieces of the puzzle to give a better sense of the larger picture, but many more pieces remain in the box.

### **Limitations of the Study**

All research has weaknesses (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 1999) and is affected by subjectivity on the part of the researcher in some manner (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Yin, 2003b). This is true of quantitative as well as qualitative approaches (Berg, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Eisner, 1998). Therefore, this exploratory and descriptive, historical, intrinsic, embedded single-case study had its inevitable limitations as well. Nevertheless, the merits of this research far outweigh its limitations, and it adds to scholarly discourse in several fields in spite of these limitations. The limitations were in four areas: design, scope, resources, and the researcher. What follows is a brief discussion of each of these areas and the researcher's attempts to minimize the effects of the limitations.

### ***Design***

Qualitative inquiry in general, and case study research in particular, have been subject to criticism by many as "soft science" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Gillham, 2000; Van Maanen, 1999; Yin, 2003a, 2003b). Much of this criticism is due to the perception that qualitative researchers become the research instruments and interpret data subjectively (Yin, 2003b) and that participants are rarely selected randomly or in sufficient numbers to make the results generalizable to whole populations (Patton, 2002;

Yin, 2003b). Defenders of the paradigm counter that it is possible for professionals to describe their observations competently and thoroughly (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995) and that particularization (Stake, 1995) and transferability can be as important and useful as generalizability (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). An additional argument supporting qualitative case study research revolves around the belief that there is merit in understanding particular phenomenon or individuals in greater depth than the impersonal representations derived from statistical manipulations (Gillham, 2000; Glesne, 1999). Such depth allows the researcher to explore, describe, and/or explain (Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003b) interactions within contexts and demonstrate their complexity (Gillham, 2000; Stake, 1995).

“There are neither good or bad methods, but only methods that are more or less effective under particular circumstances in reaching objectives on the way to a distant goal” (Homans, 1962, in Smith, 1979, p. 317). With this in mind, the embedded single-case case study method was deemed to be the best fit for this study. It allowed the investigator to meet the goals of the research despite the insistence of some experts that the study of contemporary cases was the only appropriate use of the tradition (Hays, 2004; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 2003b). The purpose of the research was to explore, illuminate, describe, and increase understanding of African American female teachers in the upper Ohio River Valley. The researcher found information-rich cases, namely those “from which one can learn a great deal about matters of importance and [were] therefore worthy of in-depth study” (Patton, 2002, p. 242). These included cases for which multiple methods of data collection and analysis were used, and cases for which the narrative

report provided detailed information about the units of analysis and their context. Generalization was not one of the goals of this research. Giving voice to Black women teachers—women who had been largely invisible in the histories of American education, Black education, American women, and African American teachers—was. This research uncovered the names of 27 women who fit into the bounded system under study. The maximum variation method of purposeful sampling was employed to select candidates for more intense study. This method strengthened the value of the themes because themes were found across heterogeneous cases (Patton, 2002). The researcher proposes as topics for future research the names of several of the women not selected as units of analysis, as well as some of the schools in which they worked. Using systematic qualitative case study research techniques as delineated by Merriam, Patton, Stake, and Yin increased the rigor of the research process. Data were triangulated by using multiple methods of data collection and analysis. Systematic research procedures and triangulation of data reduced the impact of researcher bias and subjectivity. The result is a study that makes a significant contribution to the ongoing conversation among scholars in several fields of study.

### *Scope*

The scope of this research was intentionally narrow. The bounded system was established to represent a time, place, and group of women who were underrepresented in the literature. In order to present an in-depth description of specific African American female teachers of the post-Reconstruction era, maximum variation purposeful sampling was employed. Random sampling was not possible because few African American

teachers of the upper Ohio River Valley left extensive records behind. In addition, some documentation and artifacts that were once available were destroyed because so few thought the work of this group was important and because there were few institutions willing to organize and store them (Hine & Thompson, 1998; Lerner 1979, 2005). The sampling method selected was therefore impacted by the quality of documentation available and uncovered by the researcher. The information available about the population under study was often inconsistent across individuals and state lines. The types, physical quality, depth, and accessibility of the documents varied. However, the small, purposeful sample did not negate the usefulness of the findings. Marshall and Rossman stated that “although no qualitative studies are generalizable in the statistical sense, their findings may be transferable” (p. 43). Breaking new ground in some respects, this study’s transferability to other African American teachers, or groups of them, is possible, but would need to be tested by further research. It serves to begin to fill a gap in the literature.

### *Resources*

Investigator resources also affected the scope and quantity of data collected. The amount of time dedicated to the investigation and analysis of data was sufficient to produce a study with merit, but it necessitated limiting the scope of the inquiry. The researcher needed to maintain full-time employment during the course of the project. Alpha Delta State (Ohio) of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society generously awarded the researcher an Annie Webb Blanton Scholarship in 2006 and its first State Leadership Memorial Scholarship in 2007. These awards were appreciated greatly and supplemented

the researcher's personal financial support of this endeavor. However, monetary resources were not large enough to permit the researcher to take a leave from work. A sabbatical was not an option with her employer. The researcher was able to schedule responsibilities flexibly in order to have blocks of time for research and writing. While these constraints affected many of the decisions about the design and scope of the study, the researcher was committed to conducting a study of high quality and created a schedule with sufficient time to do so.

### *Researcher*

Two factors regarding the researcher had bearing on the quality of this study. The first item had to do with the investigator's awareness of the difficulty of becoming the research instrument, especially with respect to conducting an intrinsic case study. Stake (1995) warned those conducting this type of case study (as opposed to an instrumental case study) that they must guard against focusing on personal interests and should make a concerted effort to pursue issues crucial to the case. Due to the fact that the women who were the embedded units of analysis for this study were no longer living, there was not as much opportunity for the researcher to become personally entangled with the subjects. The researcher did bring personal interests, values, and preferences to the project, but made a concerted effort to "put aside many presumptions" (Stake, 1995, p. 1) while the investigation took place. In addition, as a longtime teacher and resident of the upper Ohio River Valley, it was necessary to monitor the work continually for vestiges of personal biases concerning educators, institutions, and places within the bounded system under study. Engaging outside readers aided this process. In addition, the research questions

and a priori themes helped keep the research and report focused on issues directly related to the bounded system, the embedded units of analysis, their education, their work, and its context. That initial effort served to keep the study centered.

The second factor concerned the researcher's level of expertise. Yin (2003b) stated that the skills for doing good case studies have not yet been defined, that people know when they cannot play music or do mathematics, but this knowledge does not seem to be true of doing case study research. This researcher had prior experience with reading and analyzing case studies, but only limited experience with conducting and writing them. Consequently, for support and assistance in the conduct of this work the researcher relied on more than thirty years of teaching experience within an upper Ohio River Valley community, and the direction of scholars in fields related to the study. Through careful study of multiple texts about, and examples of, case studies, this investigator developed respect for the difficulty of the task. The decision to employ the case study tradition was not made quickly (see chapter 3) or without the guidance of advisers and mentors. Its selection was seen as the best way to fulfill the purposes of the study.

This research did not find universal answers to narrow, predetermined questions. It did not establish cause and effect relationships or produce results that could be generalized to the entire population of African American female teachers of the post-Reconstruction era. Nor did it test a well-crafted hypothesis. However, this research, through a systematic procedure, did illuminate the educational experiences of unique women, it placed their stories in the scholarly record, and it discovered subjects for additional research. These were the purposes of this project. Therefore, despite the



weaknesses in design, scope, resources, and researcher experience, this research had merit and the researcher's interpretations warrant discussion among scholars.

### **Overview of Dissertation**

The focus of this dissertation is on the analysis and description of the selected bounded system. The descriptions of the bounded system and the embedded units of analysis were constructed with data gleaned from primary and secondary sources such as letters, photographs, college catalogues, newspaper accounts, school board records, dissertations, personal artifacts, electronic correspondence, and archival materials. Semi-structured or guided interviews were also conducted with descendants of the women under study and with museum curators, historians, site coordinators, and librarians with knowledge of the women, the time, or a specific place. The gathering of information also included visits to schools, homes, cemeteries, and places of importance to the women. The multiple data collection and analysis methods provided verification and triangulation of information used in the building of the narrative for each embedded unit of analysis and the case study as a whole. Analysis of the a priori and emergent themes and patterns led to assertions and answers to research questions as perceived by the researcher. Questions and topics for further research also resulted from this exploratory and descriptive case study, thereby fulfilling a purpose of this research.

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction to the research report. It provides an overview of the purpose, significance, and design of the study. A review of the literature in three fields that is related to this research comprises chapter 2. The review places this study at the crossroads of the

histories of American education, of African American education, of northern African American women, and African American teachers. Chapter 3 explains in detail the design and methodology of the study. Case study was selected because it was a particularly informative research method when it described unique people or phenomena within a context (Gillham, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Chapter 4 provides the social, economic, political, and educational context of the upper Ohio River Valley states during the period of 1875 through 1915. The next three chapters each feature embedded units of analysis, or the three groupings of female African American teachers selected to be the focus of the case study. Chapter 5 covers Pocahontas Simmons Peyton, Susie Simmons (Jones?), Bernadine Peyton, and Mary Peyton Dyson. Anna Stevens Posey is the subject of chapter 6, and the case studies conclude with the one about Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter in chapter 7. Chapter 8 concludes the study. It presents a discussion of themes, assertions, conclusions, and suggestions for further research that were formulated because of this research.

This historical, intrinsic, single-case, embedded case study was exploratory in nature and allowed the presentation of in-depth descriptions of the lives of several women. The stories of each teacher that emerged illuminate four specific themes and give voice to an underrepresented population of African American women.

The initial question can now be answered. Were there any African American women who taught in the upper Ohio River Valley in the post-Reconstruction era? The answer is emphatically, yes. There were many and they, too, were honorable soldiers in the army of American educators of their day.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview

“I walked around the library muttering, ‘Where are the black people? I have to find the black people’” (Williams, 2005, p. 1). This quotation, taken from the introduction of Heather Andrea Williams’ book, *Self-taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom*, expressed the historian’s frustration during her search for source documents containing the voices of African Americans. The pursuit of such voices was frustrating. Many African Americans of the past could not read or write in order to leave records of their thoughts and experiences. Others who could, and did, were not valued enough by the dominant culture to warrant the organization and storage of their documents for the benefit of subsequent generations (Hine & Thompson, 1998; Lerner, 1979, 2005; Trotter, 1997). Concern for a specific set of voices, those of women from a particular time and occupation, made the search even more difficult. This is the primary reason that the survey of existent scholarship on Black women teachers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries uncovered so few of them. The few voices found in that literature were scattered across several academic disciplines. The rest of those not tossed away were hidden in attics, basements, dusty archives, and failing memories. It is the intention of this researcher to amplify some of these forgotten voices through this study so that they may add to the richness of the record of Black women and of teachers.

The purpose of this chapter was to review the literature regarding the lives and educational experiences of African American female teachers from the late 19th and early 20th centuries and to position this research so that it had the potential to contribute to the

scholarship in several fields. Literature from the fields of the history of American education, 19th century curriculum and instruction, post-Reconstruction teacher training, African American education, northern African American education, American women's history, African American women, northern African American women, and African American teachers was surveyed in order to uncover what was already known about such women and their opportunities for learning and educating others. This review of related literature supported the choice of African American female teachers of the upper Ohio River Valley as appropriate subjects for this study. In addition, findings from this examination indicated how the historiography of Black women who were educators unfolded and it illuminated gaps in the literature that need filling.

### **Research Traditions**

Many fields of academic inquiry informed this research. Literature from the domain of qualitative research and the case study tradition guided decisions that dealt with the design and conduct of the study. The qualitative research approach was deemed a necessity. The embedded units of analysis were no longer living so they could not be participants in control or experimental groups. Interviewing and surveying with questionnaires were not possible, nor was the introduction of policy change or therapies for changing the outcomes of their lives. All of these factors precluded the use of quantitative research methodologies for this study. Some counting and calculating was required during the case selection and data analysis phases of this research. However, it was the case, or bounded system, and the three embedded units of analysis that comprised the focus of the study. This intended focus, people working within a context, suggested

that the case study tradition was an appropriate selection of research tradition (Creswell, 1998; Hays, 2004; Merriam, 1988, 1998; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003b). Its flexibility, which permitted blending methodologies from a variety of research traditions into a single study (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Marshall & Rossman, 1999) allowed the researcher to design a qualitative, historical, intrinsic, exploratory, embedded, single-case, case study. Discussed in detail in chapter 3, the process of selecting the approach, tradition, and subcategories of the case study tradition also served to frame the study conceptually (see Figure 3.2).

The results of this review were ascertained by the examination of scholarly writing from two perspectives: that of the historiography of three fields of study and that of the frequency and depth of discussion of African American female teachers. This research was historical and “historians put more emphasis on historiography than they do on specific historical methods” (Rousmaniere, 2004. p. 33). Therefore, the examination of how historians wrote about educational, African American, and women’s history, the specific “techniques of historical research and historical writing” (Rousmaniere, 2004. p. 33) were important to the construction of this study and the establishment of its significance. Special attention was paid to those techniques and the featured themes, theories, and foci of scholars in the fields related to the embedded units of analysis of this research. Such consideration served to inform this researcher about “what has been done before, the strengths and weaknesses of existing studies, and what they might mean” (Boote & Beile, 2005, p. 3). Boote and Beile (2005) found these three purposes of “a substantive, thorough, sophisticated literature review” necessities in order to advance

collective understanding in a field of research, especially in educational research that rarely has a body of “shared knowledge” and must communicate frequently “with a diverse audience” (p. 3). Each of the three main sections of this review, “American Education,” “African American Education,” and “American Women,” began with a discussion of the historiography of that field. Woven into each discussion was the review of specific texts within each field. In the case of scholarship related to subcategories of those fields, reviews followed the historiographic discourse. This format allowed the researcher to first situate the study within multiple disciplines, gather information about procedures within those disciplines, and then move to the examination of the content. The examination of content provided an appreciation for the context of the study and of the lack of scholarship related to several categories of female teachers.

Greater understanding of the women this researcher sought to illuminate and the environment in which they worked came from the study of literature in several genres: biography, history, case study, oral history, journalism, and anthology. The available stories of Black women who were teachers were scattered across disciplines such as education, women’s studies, African American studies, sociology, history, psychology, business, medicine, and religion. A review of applicable scholarship in all of these areas would be unwieldy and most likely yield similar results to those obtained from this more concise examination. Therefore, in order to glean information about African American teachers in the post-Reconstruction period, specific fields of study were selected for discussion. In the broadest sense, this research was part of American history. The magnitude of that discipline necessitated narrowing the review to three traditions within

it: American education, African American education, and American women. Specific subcategories of research within those three disciplines that helped to narrow the focus of this study were 19<sup>th</sup>-century teaching, curriculum, and instruction, post-Reconstruction teacher education, northern African American education, African American women, northern African American women, and northern African American teachers.

Examination of selected works from these fields uncovered an array of references to teachers and their work. Each was checked for the frequency and depth of treatment of teachers across four categories: race, gender, time, and place. Themes were important to the understanding of the context within which teachers worked, but it was the frequency of the references specific to African American women who taught between 1875 and 1915 in the upper Ohio River Valley that was important to establishing the need for this research. Beginning with the broadest context, the history of American education and moving toward the narrowest, northern African American teachers, the application of a magnifying lens to texts in the selected fields resulted in the finding that Black women who taught in southeast Pennsylvania, north central West Virginia, and southeast Ohio during the post-Reconstruction period were under-represented in the current literature.

### **American Education**

The prevalence and pervasiveness of the presence of African Americans in the story of American education has fluctuated by author, but generally increased, since the birth of the field in the early 1900s (Bailyn, 1960; Rousmaniere, 2004). These fluctuations, Rousmaniere reminded scholars of educational history, were due to the fact that “history has been rewritten in different ways over the years and that history is, to a

great extent, shaped by the historical time period in which it was written and the historian who wrote it” (2004, p. 34). In the course of the century of writing within the field, there have been periods of similar themes and interests. Rousmaniere (2004) suggested that the historiography of the history of American education had five such periods: consensus history, social history, revisionist interpretations, neorevisionist histories, and postmodern histories. Each of these periods overlapped somewhat making the delimitation of clear boundaries as to when one ends and another starts difficult. The exception is the first and longest of the periods, that of the consensus histories which lasted from 1900 to 1950. The purpose of this section was to analyze each of these periods and discuss how selected, key authors writing within each of them chose to treat the education of African Americans.

Bernard Bailyn (1960) wrote in an essay entitled “An Interpretation” that he believed the initial tenor of the discipline of American educational history was shaped through the particular interests of a group of men, predominantly turn-of-the-19th-century school administrators and college professors. Their particular interest was “to dignify a newly self-conscious profession, education” (Bailyn, 1960, p. 7). Preferring Thomas Davidson’s *A History of Education* (1900) to Edward Eggleston’s *Transit of Civilization* (1901), this cadre of powerful professional educators and proponents of Social Darwinism argued that “modern education was a cosmic force leading mankind to a full realization of itself” (Bailyn, 1960, p. 7). Davidson’s book raced through thousands of years of civilization starting with “The Rise of Intelligence” and ending with “The Outlook.” The preface to this volume of fewer than 300 pages indicated Davidson’s



belief that education was “the last and highest form of evolution” and he hoped to help elevate teaching to “the noblest of professions” (in Bailyn, 1960, p. 7). Davidson’s concise treatment of the whole of educative processes throughout time provided a host of generalizations and essentially no specific references to Black Americans within that process.

Building on Davidson’s foundation, Paul Monroe and Ellwood Cubberley authored texts in order to impress upon the future teachers and administrators enrolled in their classes at Teachers College and Stanford University, as well as those at other schools of education, that the public school was evolving into a better and more democratic institution with the passage of time. This position, like that of Davidson’s was intended to imbue promising educators with a lasting faith in their profession (Bailyn, 1960). Not trained historians, Monroe and Cubberley molded the young field of American educational history “in a special atmosphere of professional purpose” and “in almost total isolation from the major influences and shaping minds of the twentieth-century historiography” (Bailyn, 1960, pp. 8, 9). Focused squarely on the rise of the public school in this country (Bailyn, 1960, Rousmaniere, 2004), they found the less structured and informal forms of education common in the colonies and subsequent states, lacking. By extrapolation, because these were the forms of education obtained by most African Americans to that date, the education of Blacks was left out of their stories. A brief look at a specific volume from each author confirmed this point.

Monroe’s 1909 *A Text-Book in the History of Education* proffered a more detailed version of the history of education than did Davidson’s. A statement of purpose in the

book's preface that the volume was intended to be "more than a superficial outline containing a summary of trite generalizations" (p. *vii*), could be directed at Davidson's treatment. Monroe wanted his version to provide the student with "far greater insight into the meaning of educational theories and practices and their relation to the social life of the times" (pp. *vii-viii*). He sought to reduce the role of specific men and enhance the view that progress in education came through a series of "great movements." The chapters in the book are organized around these movements starting with primitive education that involved imitation in the pursuit of the satisfaction of needs and ending with the psychological, scientific, sociological, and present (early 1900s) eclectic tendencies in education. Despite Monroe's criticism of earlier histories and this change in organization, his expanded coverage of events and movements supported the consensus historian's theory that education was evolving for the better through the perfection of institutions, most notably centrally administered and scientifically supervised schools. These new schools were meant to harmonize "the old interpretation of education as discipline" (Monroe, 1909, p. 752) with the more modern thrust to consider the individual interests of the child. Yet, little was found in this volume that spoke directly to which children were to have access to these schools nor the specific interests and needs of children outside the dominant culture. Monroe wrote in a formal and inclusive style and used the phrases "the child" and "the race." The reader can assume that he was writing of any child or all children as equal, and the human race, not one specific one. However, because this history dealt almost entirely with the educational movements within Western culture save a chapter on China and a few brief comments about Egypt, India, and

“Mohammedan society” as it related to “the development of education in the West during the Middle Ages” (p. 331), the text can also be read as exclusionary. Monroe’s failure to address the matter of race and cultural diversity as it applied at least to the later movements left the text open to interpretation by proponents of both sides of the equality issue. Those who believed that the ideas, theories, practices, and procedures that came to light in each movement applied to all children could employ them accordingly. Those who did not believe them applicable, most likely found support for their beliefs in the superiority of Western culture. Cubberley’s contribution that focused entirely on the U.S. public school was not much clearer with regard to racial matters.

Published 10 years after Monroe’s textbook, one of Cubberley’s most highly regarded and popular volumes was fully titled *Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History, An Introductory Textbook Dealing with the Larger Problems of Present-Day Education in the Light of their Historical Development* (1919). Cubberley stated in his preface that the book was written to quell criticism that textbooks in educational history to that date had little relevance to practicing teachers. He noted the several points made by those judging the prevailing books deficient:

[M]ost of them devoted the great bulk of their space to ancient and mediæval education and European development; that most of them were cyclopædic in character, and seemed constructed on the old fact-theory-of-knowledge basis; that only two or three attempted to relate the history they presented to present-day problems in instruction; that only one made any real connection between the study

of the history of education and the institutional efforts of the State in the matter of training; and that practically none treated the history of education in the light of either the recent important advances in educational practice and procedure or the great social, political, and industrial changes which have given the recent marked expansion of the state educational effort its entire meaning (1919, p. *vii*).

Therefore, these were the issues he sought to rectify. The list of complaints did not include addressing the needs of diverse populations although they could have been dealt with as part of the effort to cover the social and political changes of the times. Left out of Cubberley's story was the African American population and its struggle for access to public schooling, and subsequently, equitable public schooling. His discussion of education in the southern states failed to mention slaves, Negroes, colored people, Blacks, or any other label that could be construed as recognizing that the African American population was a part of that system. None of these terms are part of the index either. Cubberley's discussion of vocational education does not include mention of Booker T. Washington. W.E. B. DuBois does not have a presence in this text nor do notable Black women. *Public Education in the United States*, though narrower in scope and geared toward connecting history with the current problems and practices of the day, was similar to other histories that came before it in that it failed to address the growing presence of African Americans in public schools and the contributions of Black educators to the country's educational enterprise.

Davidson, Monroe, and Cubberley, as well as many of their contemporaries, "relied on public policy documents that chronicled the institutional and political

development of the American public school systems” (Rousmaniere, 2004, p. 37) and were blinded to the richness of the endeavor by their specific professional purposes (Bailyn, 1960). They tended to view the past as “simply the present writ small” (Bailyn, 1960, p. 9) and failed to acknowledge those left out of the public institutions (Rousmaniere, 2004). For all the democratic and egalitarian rhetoric these consensus historians espoused, people outside the mainstream were virtually invisible in their work. According to Rousmaniere (2004), only Harold Rugg challenged the ideas of historians during this period and his views were criticized as being “anti-American and procommunist” (p. 34). The social historians that followed these schoolmen began in the 1950s and 60s to broaden the view of what was considered education, yet they continued to paint a positive picture of steady progress toward inclusive American schools.

Bailyn and Lawrence Cremin were the best known of the social historians (Rousmaniere, 2004). The themes and foci of this period revolved around an expanded definition of education to include “the entire process by which a culture transmits itself across generations” (Bailyn, 1960, p. 14) and the analysis of a wider range of source documents to find links between educational activity and social behavior (Rousmaniere, 2004). Bailyn’s criticism of consensus historians delivered at a 1959 conference in Williamsburg, Virginia, and published in book form in 1960, provided historians with numerous challenges and ideas for further research. Many of his criticisms were pointed out above. He disagreed with the premise that American education was a refined or more highly evolved version of European practices. Its growth and development was not

smooth, and it often caused social change; it therefore was not always the result of social change. Although he saw changes in family life and the opportunities for a range of careers in a new land as major social and economic forces that required organizations outside the family unit to assume new educative roles, he clung to the belief that education was not solely a matter of teaching taking place in a formal institution. Despite this expansion of the scope of educational history, and his acknowledgement of the early missionary nature of colonists using education to try to convert American Indians and “imported Africans and...a variety of infidels” (p. 39) to embrace “civilized Christian living” (p. 37), his lists of “needs and opportunities for study” (p. 54) included little related to expanding the field to incorporate these marginalized populations in the story. Bailyn mentioned race relations as a research need, but that discussion dealt with English/native interaction and the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) prior to 1800. In fact, the entire thrust of his essay enumerating topics for future research concerned revisiting the history of education prior to the American Revolution.

Cremin addressed many of Bailyn’s concerns. The three-volume set entitled *American Education* (1970-1988) reframed the consensus view to include a larger, more complex picture of learning in the United States. In its over 1,500 pages, Cremin traced the spread of thought and development of schooling practices from 1607 to 1980. The first volume, *The Colonial Experience 1607-1783*, recounted the process of how early colonists transformed, not simply transplanted, European educational customs to meet the needs of the specific regions in which they settled. He focused on the dissemination of

ideas and the transfer of culture in the form of sermons, publishing, and charitable organizations as well as through formal schooling, apprenticeships, and private tutoring. Despite the broadening of the definition of what constituted education to include many informal forms, the education of Blacks was relegated to the “other” category. In several instances, it was coupled with the education and schooling of Indians in a few short paragraphs at the end of a section or chapter. Chapter 6 served as an example. Cremin wrote:

Finally, there was the insistent problem of clientele. By the seventeenth century, access to English schools had been substantially increased, and this increase continued in the colonies, where school attendance was a function more often of propinquity than of social status, at least for white children. The accessibility of schooling to Indians and Negroes, on the other hand, was much more problematical (p. 194).

He continued with several lines about schooling for Indians and finished this last paragraph of the chapter on schools between 1607 and 1689 with:

As far as the blacks are concerned, it appears that only a handful attended school along with the whites, and there is no evidence at all of the establishment of any all-black schools. Apart from the suggestions of John Eliot and Morgan Godwyn, little was proposed and little was accomplished, beyond such “schooling” as might have come on the fringes of household or church instruction for whites (pp. 194-95).

An argument can be made that the schooling of non-White children at this period was so limited that its mention is reasonably placed. However, this pattern persisted throughout the first volume. The progress of Whites in this field came first and with more detail. The education of others seemed to be an afterthought to some sections and discussion of it was dismissed as not applicable or “for all intents and purposes closed” (p. 411) to Indians and Afro-Americans. In Cremin’s defense, his recognition of “a well-developed ideology of race inferiority to justify that situation” (p. 412) is noteworthy and a step forward from previous treatments of American education that either avoided the discussion of Black education or congratulated the White establishment for providing what they did.

The second volume in Cremin’s trilogy, *The National Experience 1783-1876*, won the 1981 Pulitzer Prize in history. It continued in much the same vein as the first. Black education received its first lengthy discussion in the seventh chapter entitled “Outcasts.” This chapter, in fact, included the bulk of the information on Black education provided in this volume. The chapter coupled Indians and Blacks once again and focused on “the dynamics of [their] discordant education” (p. 244). The gist of this concept was that what was taught to Blacks and Indians clashed with the “correlates of freedom that were central to the life of the young Republic” and was “a tragic contradiction in light of the society’s professed values and its hopes of serving as a virtuous example to the world” (p. 219). Mention was made of the education of free Blacks who largely resided in the urban areas of the North and upper South as far from “free” and subject to increasing White hostility. However, the focus of the description of the education of



Blacks revolved around that acquired on southern plantations. References to African Americans subsequent to this chapter dealt with “natural and fictive” (p. 377) family roles in the education of Black children, the educative nature of organized religion within the Black community (pp. 385-86), a snapshot of life for free and enslaved African Americans in the Sumter, South Carolina area (pp. 429-32), and the “wide dissemination of the northern version of the American *paideia*” (p. 518) during Reconstruction.

Cremin’s third volume, *The Metropolitan Experience 1876-1980*, was published 18 years after the first one and reflected some of the changes in thought and scholarship concerning African Americans and their education that occurred in the interim. The information regarding Black education was less fragmented. It was more a part of the flow of American education in general, and included references to more African Americans by name. Few Black individuals were singled out in the first two volumes and those who were, were male. The gender of the vast majority of those mentioned in the third volume did not change, but Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. DuBois, Kenneth Clark, Thurgood Marshall, Martin Luther King, Jr., and others had a greater presence. Terminology changes were also noted in volume three. Instead of Indians and Afro-Americans, Cremin discussed the education of Native Americans and Blacks. He offered the metaphor of a kaleidoscope instead of the melting pot for the increasingly more cosmopolitan and metropolitan America of the 20th century. He again highlighted the educative role of the church in the African American community, adding its role as social service agency to the discussion. The Phelps-Stokes Fund, missionary societies, and northern philanthropists were credited with the founding of schools for Blacks. The

progressives' challenge to align their rhetoric with their actions concerning the meeting of all children's needs, even those of color, warranted discussion as did the strategies employed in winning the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case. Cremin ends the three-part history with an updated notion of the American *paideia*, or this country's unique manner of educating the whole person. The diversity of our country and the exchange of products, services, and ideas worldwide required one that was "compatible with a world *paideia*," one that would "have to be made transnational" (p. 683).

Cremin wrote other volumes and articles that looked at educational history from a different perspective than that of the consensus historians. Among them were: *The American Common School, An Historical Conception* (1951), *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (1961), *The Genius of American Education* (1965), *Traditions of American Education* (1977b), and *Popular Education and its Discontents* (1990). *The Transformation of the School*, although it predated the *American Education* trilogy, was of particular interest to this study. It focused on the relationship between the progressive movement in general, its architects, and progressive education and its advocates. The style was close to that of consensus historians in that the African American community was once again invisible. Cremin crafted a chapter entitled "Culture and Community" and discussed such topics as poverty, squalor, slums, settlement houses, immigrants, the underprivileged, the flight of farmers to the cities, and the "progressive effort to reconstruct the South through education" (p. 81) yet failed to mention Blacks as specific members of these groups or parties to these conditions. The book was helpful in understanding the atmosphere in public schools

and their White power structure from 1876-1957. However, it demonstrated that as late as 1961, in a prize winning book (Bohan, 2007), little attention was paid to African American education.

Revisionist, neorevisionist, and postmodern historians tended to include oppressed and marginalized groups more consistently in their retellings of the history of American education. These final three stages in the historiography of education overlap and are distinguished more by the ideology, theme, and focus of the writer and the writing than by specific dates. The revisionists began reinterpreting consensus and social historians work in the 1960s. Rousmaniere (2004) summarized the rise of this school of practice in this manner:

In part, modern historians realized that political critiques of contemporary schools made the optimistic view of educational history seem absurd. In light of the continued struggles for racial integration in schools, and government and local efforts to address poverty, the shocking reports from inside schools such as Jonathan Kozol's *Death at an Early Age* (1967) and new explorations of race, class, and gender problems, historians began to question the consensus argument of continued progression (p. 38).

The revisionist historians such as Michael Katz, Samuel Bowles, Herbert Gintis, Carl Kaestle, David Tyack, and Herbert Kliebard applied new lenses to the same foci: schools and institutions (Rousmaniere, 2004). They did however feature a new set of themes dealing with "power relations, economics, social struggle, and politics (Rousmaniere, 2004, p. 39). Brief reviews of selected works by Katz, Tyack, and Kliebard demonstrated

that these historians perceived the development of schools in this country to be a complex phenomenon steeped in ideological conflict and the struggle for power.

Calling the histories of the consensus historians of the first half of the 20th century “insipid mythology” (1973c, p. *vii*), Katz wrote articles and books that sought to position the history of education in the realm of true scholarship. *Education in American History*, edited by Katz (1973c) included 25 articles written by a host of scholars. He hoped the book would serve as a springboard for “provocative and useful discussion” (p. *ix*) in college classes dealing with educational history and introduce those students, especially the ones who seemed bored with the topic as presented by older texts, to new interpretations and research methodologies in the field. The book included an article by Cremin on colonial education indicating that he did not place Cremin’s work in the category “bad history” (p. *vii*). Katz wrote three of the contributions to the book: “From Voluntarism to Bureaucracy in American Education,” “The ‘New Departure’ in Quincy, 1873-81; The Nature of Nineteenth-Century educational Reform” and “On *Crisis in the Classroom*.” All three articles analyzed issues of power in the administration of schools. Two of them offered criticism of others’ interpretations of how schools developed. None of them dealt directly with African American educational history. However, Katz included four articles that addressed this topic in a separate section entitled “Blacks and the Schools.” These articles by Leon Litwack, Theodore Hershberg, Colin Greer, and August Meier and Elliott Rudick provided results of research about racism in education in the North before and after the Civil War, and the similarities and differences between ex-slave and freeborn families in antebellum Philadelphia and those between Blacks and

immigrants in the early 20th century. This volume indicated Katz's acknowledgement of the Black community. Yet the placement of the articles in a separate section was not simply indicative of the increasing specialization of educational historians. It was itself a type of bias—one that Myra and David Sadker (2003) called fragmentation.

A later book by Katz, *Reconstructing American Education* (1987), consisted of a series of essays that he hoped would provide new ways of viewing educational history, reform, and historiography. Again, Katz did not address the history of African American education head-on. He did offer criticism of others' treatments of American educational history, particularly one by Diane Ravitch that suggested high rates of mobility by Blacks due to educational attainment. He endorsed a book entitled *Schooling for All* by Ira Katznelson and Margaret Weir (1985) as one "that elevat[ed] debate on education's past to a new plane by showing how the practice and ideal of democracy combined with class formation and the persistence of social inequality to shape the history of schooling" (p. 159). This appeared to be Katz's main interest, reinterpreting the development of schools through the examination of social forces and power issues. These factors influenced schoolmen to act in ways that left many not in the mainstream, including the vast majority of Blacks, with limited access to or inadequate schooling. Other revisionists added to Katz's interpretations.

Tyack authored a short volume entitled *Nobody Knows: Black Americans in the Twentieth Century* (1969) that was a collection of six themed essays. These essays were descriptive of the conditions of being an African American in designated segments of the 20th century up to 1968. Themes included the inequality Blacks lived with despite the

American ideals of justice, freedom, and the equality of all men; family life in the shadow of the plantation; city life during the great migration; the invisibility of Blacks to mainstream culture and their efforts to be more visible; and leaders and movements that worked for Black rights. The essays were sensitive and informative, but they provided limited coverage of education and Black educators. Only a handful of Black women were mentioned. Their work in classrooms was not a feature of this book. Subsequent books authored or co-authored by Tyack provided detailed treatments of specific aspects of American education such as school administration and co-education. However, they were similar to this one in that Black women did not play significant roles in them.

The nonlinear shift from education as a largely rural enterprise in the 19th century to an urban one in the 20th century, and the concomitant transfer of power to professional school administrators was the topic Tyack chose to analyze in his book *The One Best System* (1974). Under the pretext of wresting schools away from politics, turn-of-the-century schoolmen embraced the corporate model of management and specialization and appeared to have “won” the battle for a single, best system. In the process, however, the interests of many were compromised and complete consensus was never reached. Tyack was sensitive to those individuals, groups, and ideas that “lost” and continued to agitate under the surface making true efficiency and order a difficult task. He provided snapshots of ethnic, racial, and gender issues that resulted from the system and created crises of various sorts from decade to decade. The importance of social forces in shaping the system was not understated, nor did the author shy away from stating that the system itself had a life of its own and may be in need of repair. Those repairs included

“reassessment of some cherished convictions about the possibility of finding a one best system, about the value of insulating the school from community influence, about the irrelevance of ethnic differences” (p. 290-91), and finding ways to share power and decision-making with members of the communities they serve. To be fair, Tyack noted that there were differences between and among school districts. Just as Bailyn (1960) cautioned scholars that educational institutions of the past were not simply those of the present “writ small,” Tyack instructed that urban education was not “New York or Boston writ large” (p. 5). Individual Black women received slight mention in this book because they did not hold administrative positions in significant numbers. The book did bring new views about school administration to the scholarly conversation regarding American education and that conversation was further enhanced by additional research and publication by Tyack.

Tyack teamed with Elizabeth Hansot to write *Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980*. Published in 1982, this book also dealt with educational leadership and provided glimpses of how that leadership affected the education of African Americans. It was organized by eras: An Aristocracy of Character, 1820-1890; Schooling by Design in a Corporate Society, 1890-1954; and Dreams Deferred, 1954-?, and concluded that though the problems “we face today are large” they are “no more so than those confronted by people at the turn of the century” (p. 262). The pair had a similar view to that of Katz concerning the current state of public education. They held that

the conflicts of the 1960s and 1970s resulted from dreams deferred, from contradictions between an ideology of equality and democracy and basic cleavages of race, sex, and class too long papered over by a consensus that ignored the powerless (p. 217).

They contended as well that “the protest movements and reforms of the last generation have produced real gains for people who were previously neglected and underserved” (p. 217). On this point Katz and Tyack and Hansot are likely to have been at odds considering Katz’s criticism of Ravitch mentioned above.

In spite of this probable disagreement, *Managers of Virtue* added significantly to the revisionists’ contribution to the history of education. It addressed problems of race and education in each of the eras. From the discussion of southern education prior to the Civil War that they found constructed to maintain privilege and defend orthodoxies in which patricians saw “public schooling more as a threat to the social order than a buttress of it” (p. 85), to the civil rights movement with its “desire to use public education to resolve the contradiction between racism and the democratic and egalitarian values” (p. 214), Tyack and Hansot included Blacks and their struggle to obtain an education in the flow of their story, not as an added chapter or side discussion. They cited African American historians such as Woodson, DuBois, and Anderson and acknowledged the fact that the social profile of school leaders was “remarkable” in its consistency from 1899 until the 1960s—predominantly White. The authors reported that superintendents in that period tended to be native-born, White, male, Republican, Protestants from rural origins and the “older sons in larger than average families” (p. 169). In addition, they noted, “in



dual school systems in the segregated South and in border cities” some Blacks had ascended to administrative positions such as principalships, “but in the North few blacks had even become principals” (p. 169). They featured Black principal Marcus Foster of Oakland, California in a four-page section. He was, however, the leader of a school and community improvement effort in the 1960s. No similar lengthy references to individual Black female leaders or teachers of any period or location were evident.

A second effort by this pair of scholars, *Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Schools* (1990), added considerably to the literature concerning women’s education. The authors, who believed that coeducation was “arguably the most important event in the gender history of American public education” (p. 46), sought to answer many questions. “Why and how Americans educated not only sons but daughters as well” (p. 1) was the overarching one. Their research, conducted to fill a hole in the literature regarding the history of educating boys and girls together in this country, relied on case studies, school reports, statistics, life histories, and photographs to answer this and eight additional categories of questions. Tyack and Hansot argued that despite its “zigzagged” progression over the last 150 years, coeducation was convenient, cost effective, desirable, and likely permanent despite the many assaults to it over time. The analysis was from an institutional perspective, making the contributions of individual women supportive of the story, but not central to it. The authors included comments from at least one African American woman in this account (Anna Julia Cooper) and did not neglect the Black community, yet the richness of Black women’s contributions in this area was not palpable.

Kliebard's focus was the curriculum, but it was the formal curriculum as shaped by administrative personnel, college and university professionals, and interest groups with either a social or an economic stake in the matter. It was not about the curriculum and materials that teachers employed in the classrooms of the day. Kliebard's contribution, first published in 1986 was entitled *The Struggle for the American Curriculum: 1893-1958*. It has gone through two revisions, one in 1995 and a second in 2004. The book chronicled efforts by interest groups to reform school curriculum in order to seek "sanction for their most cherished beliefs in the face of what they perceived to be a massive social upheaval" (2004, p. 291). These efforts tended to be more successful at securing change to elementary school studies than were those aimed at the high school level. The major interest groups involved in this "morality play" were the humanists, the developmentalists, the social efficiency educators, and the social meliorists. The presence of African Americans was limited to the discussion of the social efficiency interest group. This group championed manual training as a curriculum option suited for "restoring the dignity of hand labor, an avenue for youth to a respectable and rewarding occupation" (p. 112), and social studies as a means of inculcating American values to the immigrant and the Negro. The primary players throughout this text are male and White. While it was an important contribution to understanding the power struggles that came with deciding what should be taught in public schools, its obvious message to African Americans was that they did not figure in the process prominently prior to 1958 as either leaders or consumers.

In sum, the revisionists brought the dispossessed and the ignored into the story of American education with more regularity than did the consensus or social historians. Their interpretations provided plausible reasons for policies and practices that affected such groups and their opportunities to secure meaningful education. They also began to include the voices of people of color and of diverse backgrounds in the stories they told. The next category of writers under consideration uncovered and added additional voices to the accounts of American educational history through their research.

Neorevisionists took on many of the same themes as the revisionists, but explored the “relationship of schooling to work and family; gender, class, and race relations; labor issues; the history of childhood; and other social history topics” (Rousmaniere, 2004, p. 39). Many of these accounts focused on social forces, ideas, and educative processes outside of the school building that helped shape life in the United States. Some of the influences were powerful, others less forceful, but most were tied to the “broader economic and political agendas of dominant social groups” (Rousmaniere, 2004, p. 40). In addition, these forces were not “all-oppressive.” Neorevisionists, differing from revisionists’ views of purposeful and planned inequity, found those in oppressed groups frequently exhibited agency and offered resistance to the stifling systems and practices of schools. Rousmaniere puts herself in this category of historians as well as Julia Wrigley and Susan Yohn. Rousmaniere’s book *City Teachers: Teaching and School Reform in Historical Perspective*, published in 1997 looked at teachers in New York City during the decade of the 1920s and how they adapted in order to survive “under intensifying demands, worsening working conditions, and contradictory expectations” (1997, p. 1).

Inspired by her own New York City teaching experience, Rousmaniere interviewed 21 retired teachers whose stories she analyzed to support her argument that in an era when administrators ballyhooed reform and efficiency, teachers found their work conditions chaotic and administrators unresponsive to their concerns. This text included some discussion of African American teachers and was considered again in the section of this review dealing with African American female teachers. Wrigley's work involved a similar study of Chicago's school system in the early 20th century and Yohn focused on missionary women in the Southwest. The work of all three of these women reflected the neorevisionist theme that organizational administration is exceedingly complex and that it can be influenced, even changed by effort exerted from the bottom of the chain of command. The addition of agency to the history of education added an important dimension to the story. No longer were groups outside the mainstream inert masses of victims, they were often sets of dynamic individuals who acted on their own behalf. However, full, robust stories of specific teachers and citizens within those groups, particularly those of African American women, were still absent. The final segment of historiography under consideration was that of the postmodernism. Postmodern scholars took on new ways of viewing the interpretation of historical data, but the material they covered stayed largely the same and the inclusion of Black female voices was often perfunctory at best.

Rousmaniere (2004) stated that the idea of a postmodern historiography of education is a new one and may be a redundant concept. She contended "that if postmodernism challenges the metanarratives of rationalist scientific progress of

education, then revisionists and neorevisionists have already done that work” (p. 40). In addition, postmodernism challenges the process by which historians do their work. They disdain generalizations and generalized narratives making the usual process employed by historians, which is modernist by definition, near impossible to use in telling history (Rousmaniere, 2004). Rousmaniere conceded that postmodern theories, do however, help educational historians “rethink how to read and write history, to question how they authorize as valid certain sources and not others, and how to connect history to the present” (2004, p. 42). She listed work by Harold Silver, Sue Middleton, and Kathleen Weiler as having postmodern themes; Clinton B. Allison claimed the categorization openly. Joel Spring was added to the group in order to bring this portion of the review full circle by comparing Spring’s postmodern approach to textbooks for pre-service teachers with those of the consensus historians. Therefore, a brief review of scholarship by Silver, Allison, and Spring will conclude this discussion of the periods of the historiography of American education.

Silver, Principal of Bulmershe College of Higher Education in Great Britain, incorporated analyses of institutions, events, and ideas from the United States as well as western European nations in books such as *Education as History: Interpreting Nineteenth-and Twentieth-Century Education* (1983), and *Good Schools, Effective Schools: Judgements and Their Histories* (1994) within a Marxist framework (Tyack in Silver, 1983). The international flavor was engaging, but Silver’s work was not the place to look for stories of African American women. His work had merit to this review in terms of providing considerations for the design and methodology of this research,

particularly his essay on case study in historical research in *Education as History* (1983), and for demonstrating postmodern thought in practice. Positions taken by Silver reflect many of the postmodern tenets described by Green in Rousmaniere (2004). They are that “experience is transitory and ephemeral; reality is fragmented and unknowable; and history is arbitrary and directionless” (p. 41).

Espousing a postmodernist stance, Allison, Professor of Cultural Studies in Education at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, presented his beliefs about history’s role in shaping current educational practice in *Past and Present: Essays for Teachers in the History of Education*. In his preface, which was in some ways reminiscent of Tyack’s to *One Best System*, Allison stated “there is no True history” and that he believed that “no one story is the true story” (p. xiv). Hence, he attempted to present a variety of viewpoints to an audience of schoolteachers in order to help them “liberate” themselves from the past so that they could understand their present. Allison purposely wrote the volume so that it was devoid of the postmodern “specialized language that is difficult, if not incomprehensible, for the uninitiated” (p. xiii). Yet he did choose to explain or define some of those terms such as human capital, resistance, and reproduction theory. He admitted that his writing was not “objective or neutral; it is biased” (p. xiv) and professed his bias was for social justice, a conscious attempt to take the side of the victim. In his essay entitled “African-Americans and Education: Do Schools Reproduce Racial Bias in America?,” Allison took the side of Blacks and sought to expose the ways dominate Whites, particularly males, used power to replicate existing class structures and maintain power. He chose to highlight African Americans and their struggle for access and equal

opportunity in education in a separate chapter, but did not confine the discussion to that chapter. As he professed, oppressed and victimized peoples were part of this series of conversations with teachers from start to finish. The various groups were however, frequently faceless groups: elites, African-Americans, the poor, girls. Fewer than 10 African American individuals were named as participants in the process in the chapter on African American education. Virginia Estelle Randolph was the only Black female teacher acknowledged in the chapter. He relied on the work of Black historians (for example, Anderson, Bullock, and Gates) and many other scholars to frame his analyses, but the result was similar to treatments across all five of Rousmaniere's periods, the voices of Black women were not prominent, if included at all.

Spring, a prolific writer and professor at Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, explained in the introduction to the fifth edition of his textbook *The American School: 1642-2000* (2001) that he, too, believed there to be no "right answer but only differing opinions about which historical interpretation is correct" (p. 2). He offered multiple ways of thinking about the history of education in hopes that readers, primarily pre-service teachers, would engage in "critical thinking about history and schools" (p. 2). In addition, he delineated his own "interpretive framework" for understanding that history. It was a framework focused on four themes: conflicts over cultural domination, schools as only one institution engaged in ideological management, racism as a central issue in U.S. as well as educational history, and economic concerns that shaped the evolution American schools (p. 3). There is no introductory framework explicated in Spring's text, *American Education* (2006). However, it, too, presented

situations that required the reader to think critically and make personal interpretations concerning the historical and contemporary data provided. These volumes were in stark contrast to the early writing on educational history for teachers by Cubberley, Monroe, and other consensus historians. In comparison, Spring's work was not positive in tone, it did not exude support for school administrators or governmental agencies, present a case for the notion that schools were evolving toward perfection, attempt to persuade neophyte teachers that they were joining the one profession that could change the world for the better, or deliver the message with surety that this interpretation was necessarily any better than anyone else's. Spring's books take in close to one hundred more years of history than do the consensus historians and include as a matter of course diverse populations and the damage done to them by the system of public education in America. This work is indicative of the fact that current scholars have acknowledged the diversity of American schoolchildren and the teaching force that worked on their behalf; omission at this time would be willful and unwise. Yet the accounts of educational history are still lacking the stories of individuals outside the mainstream who played roles in the process of educating the youth of this nation. The explanations of education for African Americans from the social historians on revolved mainly around DuBois and Washington, the 1954 Brown case, and past and current governmental policies that affect Black children and families. Few, if any, women were included in the struggle for access and equality in education. A reader would have even more difficulty finding African American women, save the passing mention of Anna Julia Cooper, Fanny Jackson Coppin, Mary Church Terrell, and Mary Peake.



The historiography of American education has been interpreted in a variety of ways. The categorizations used here, as enumerated by Rousmaniere (2004), served as a foundation for the review just provided and for the reviews that follow. References to these categories in later sections brought a degree of consistency to this discussion when reviewing historiography and scholarship across disciplines. The next two subsections of this review of American Education deal with curriculum and instruction and teacher education respectively. They were included to provide clues to the types of methods, management techniques, and materials used by African American teachers during the period 1875 to 1915 as well as to indicate how these women were educated to do their work.

### *Nineteenth Century Teaching, Curriculum, and Instruction*

The scholarship dealing with the history of American education provided insights into a variety of topics but often failed to cover thoroughly the many nuances of school life and life as a teacher. Most of the authors discussed in the preceding section included some mention of curriculum, instructional techniques, materials, teachers' salaries, or school facilities in their work, but these things were not their primary focus. In order to understand more clearly the nature of everyday life in post-Reconstruction schools, examination of literature dealing with teaching, curriculum, and instruction during that period was necessary. Researchers interested in the routine practices and materials used in schools during this specific period included Willard Elsbree, Larry Cuban, Barbara Finkelstein, William H. Watkins, William J. Reese, Richard Mosier, Charles Carpenter, and Violet J. Harris. Some of the work of Kliebard, perhaps the first to be labeled a

curriculum historian (Kliebard, 1992), was re-examined for this review as well. This selection of scholarship was not exhaustive but provided sufficient information to obtain a reasonable idea of what a late 19th- or early 20th-century classroom would have been like. Several of the texts fit into one of the historiographical periods as delineated by Rousmaniere. Such classifications are mentioned when appropriate to the review.

Elsbree was a contemporary of many of the consensus historians. His work, *The American Teacher: Evolution of a Profession* (1939), fit the pattern of scholarship in that vein as it focused on the slow, steady, or rapid evolution of practices such as tenure, salary differentiation, licensing, and teacher supervision. He divided the text into three periods: the colonial, the early years of the republic, and the emergence of the professional teacher. The third period received the most space and encompassed the post-Reconstruction era. Elsbree chose to view educational history through the lens of the teacher. Discussions of the social status and character of teachers, their qualifications, their duties, and the materials available to do their jobs received considerable space. References to African Americans numbered about a half dozen. One Black individual was named: in this case, a male New York teacher named Peterson who was elected librarian of the city teachers' association in 1857. Combined, the references would consume about one of the 554 pages of the text. Most of these references were general in nature and in at least one instance, when discussing the conduct of teachers outside the classroom, rather unenlightened. Elsbree opined that "sex immorality among schoolteachers has never been countenanced by the public except in a few sections of the South where White school boards ignore it in Negro teachers" (pp. 436-37). Despite this

rather ugly insinuation, the author painted detailed pictures of the life of an average teacher in each period. These pictures provided a means to compare the experiences of Black women in this research with those of the average White teacher of the post-Reconstruction era.

From post-consensus historian positions Cuban, Finkelstein, and Watkins offered additional views that added dimension to Elsbree's account of turn-of-the-century teaching. The research questions Cuban (1984) explored in *How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms, 1890-1980* dealt with the curious nature of school reform and the how little teaching had changed in the 20th century. However, the first chapter focused on classroom activity between 1890 and 1920 and depicted teachers in a somewhat more positive light than did Elsbree. Elsbree portrayed the majority of teachers as sad, uneducated, and unimaginative characters, whereas Cuban saw less pitiable creatures capable of solving classroom problems and adapting to working conditions despite frequently having rigid curricular expectations, poor facilities, and few materials with which to work. He looked at teaching in both the high school and the elementary school and found it predominantly teacher-centered, recitation-based, and levied on large groups of students sitting in desks that were bolted to the floor and arranged in rows. Pictures taken in 1900 at schools in Washington, DC, included in the chapter do not refute that conclusion. One picture was of Black children at work in their elementary classroom; three others in close proximity were of White children in their elementary or high school rooms. The pictures were likely staged when taken, yet recorded remarkably similar facilities and materials. Cuban made only brief references to

the pictures, and none to the one of the Black school in the text of the chapter, but indicated that conditions in urban areas as captured in them was different in many respects from that occurring in rural areas. The ideas of Sheldon, Parker, and Dewey were affecting urban classroom practice and causing some shift, albeit fragmentary or miniscule in most cases, toward student-centered teaching approaches. These ideas were less likely to have been implemented in rural areas where the teachers were not as informed about object teaching, New Education, or progressivism. In the end, the vast majority of teaching in the post-Reconstruction era was authoritarian and mechanical wherever it was practiced.

Cuban used Finkelstein's 1970 doctoral research that led to the 1989 publication of *Governing the Young: Teacher Behavior in Popular Primary Schools in Nineteenth-century United States* as a key source for his depiction of teaching at the turn of the 19th century. Referenced frequently in other texts (Tyack, 1974; Rousmaniere, 1994; Spring, 2001; Kliebard, 2004), Finkelstein's reconceptualization of her early work was the most thorough treatment of classroom practice and teaching of those reviewed. Her original research reviewed hundreds of documents and reports for the purpose of describing classroom practices between 1820 and 1880. She chose to reframe it in order to explore teacher behavior in its full complexity—as a form of human association which integrates social structures and human consciousness, oral and written traditions, partakes of material and symbolic realities, persists as a form of intergenerational communication, links large and small structures of authority—and, as Ivor

Goodson suggested to me, both reflects and organizes deep structures evolving in the United States over the course of the nineteenth century” (p. 9).

At its publication, Finkelstein believed *Governing the Young* to be the only work of this kind, a work committed to analyzing the “pedagogical practice” of teachers rather than the “pedagogical ideas” (p. 36) of thinkers, reformers, leaders, and administrators. It included a diagram of an alphabet wheel, descriptions of how specific textbooks were used by teachers and students, and examples of exercises practiced by students to demonstrate learning along with Finkelstein’s analysis of teaching techniques. The book was divided into two parts. The first part “examine[d] the role of the teacher as instructor, as disciplinarian, as parent substitute, as purveyor of values” (p. 38). The results of this examination yielded three classifications of teaching patterns: that of the intellectual overseer, the drillmaster, and the interpreter of culture. The second and lengthier part was a collection of readings based on primary source documents, each with an introductory note by Finkelstein. Although the richness and variety of typical 19th century classrooms became apparent, Finkelstein chose not to include descriptions of many types of schools outside the mainstream. She decided that among other schools not considered typical such as those for the deaf, dumb, blind, insane, and American Indian children, that “schools for the Blacks, will not be considered” (p. 38). While it is likely that teaching methods were fairly stable across racial and socioeconomic borders and over time, as Cuban concluded to be true of the 20th century as well, facilities, materials, and curricular expectations could have been quite different for Black children. Those differences were left to discover elsewhere.

“Blacks and the Curriculum: From Accommodation to Contestation and Beyond” by Watkins (2001a) provided some clues to the differences between typical schooling and schooling for African Americans since emancipation. This analysis which was revisionist in tenor and made by summarizing “salient ideological, political, and intellectual forces impacting the 150-year curriculum ‘struggle’ in black education’ (p. 40) was a chapter from *Race and Education: The Roles of History and Society in Educating African American Students*, a book Watkins helped edit. To Watkins, curricular expectations for Black Americans were initially engineered by “northern hegemonists and their southern supporters” in order to “subdue” that population through “containment and subjugation” (p. 42-43). This was done through a “special education” based on Samuel Armstrong’s Hampton model of industrial or vocational education. Northern philanthropists, industrialists, racial sociologists, and educators worked in concert to hold this plan together for over 75 years. This plan, formulated at the Lake Mohonk Conferences of the early 1890s, predated the Washington–DuBois argument over the appropriate methods of educating the Negro and led to on-going protest of this form of oppression by Blacks. The protest continues today as African Americans seek a more culturally responsive form of education for their children and a historically honest representation of themselves to others. Watkins analysis of post-Reconstruction education was not at the classroom level. It did not include descriptions of female teachers nor did it mention any as having say in the curriculum development process. He indicated that Finkelstein’s decision to leave Black schools out of her study because they were not typical of the period was correct. The schools were different because they were planned to be different. However, Watkins

failed to mention an additional form of protest and resistance in which African American teachers engaged.

Watkins was familiar with Kliebard's work on curriculum history. He cited *The Struggle for the American Curriculum* (1987 edition) several times in his examination of the curriculum thrust upon Black children, particularly when discussing meliorism in the early 20th century. However, he did not acknowledge Kliebard or Finkelstein with regard to examining classroom practice as a means of seeing how teachers executed curriculum designed by administrators and elites. Both Kliebard (1992, 2004) and Finkelstein (1989) indicated that planned curriculum and reform frequently had little effect on classroom practice. Kliebard in particular warned "one sort of mistake a curriculum historian can make is to assume that explicit assertions about the program of studies become the curriculum that school children actually experience" (1992, p. *xiii*). In this case, the effort was forceful, well financed, and pervasive. The movement was difficult to thwart. However, Black teachers working in individual classrooms to uplift their charges sometimes injected classical or more liberal subject matter into their teaching. For some, the practice could have countered the limiting effects of industrial education. This kind of protest and resistance was hard to quantify but was widespread (Anderson, 1988; Williams, 2005; Fraser, 2007).

The high school was a more likely place for resistance in the form of supplementing technical curriculum with classical studies than were the common or grammar schools. The American high school initially defied definition according to Reese (1995). His thorough look at the history and inner workings of these institutions,

*The Origins of the American High School*, indicated that an assortment of levels of subject matter sophistication and of curricular options were available in places called high schools. According to Reese, they were conceived in an era of rapid social and economic change in order to instruct youth in the “higher branches of knowledge” and inculcate bourgeois values. The first one opened in 1821 and served the sons of the rising merchant class of Boston. From this point, Reese tracked the tumultuous first 70 years of the institution in an attempt to remind present reformers that there never was an idyllic period long ago when “politicians were wise, teachers superior, and pupils above average” (p. 261).

Reese brought the reality of the early high school experience into focus through extensive use of primary source material. He found the answers to the four key questions he sought to answer about the characteristics of high school life and the forces that shaped it complex and often contradictory. However, by the 1880s an institution called the high school was an important part of the American landscape, particularly in the North, despite the fact that few adolescents attended them and even fewer graduated from them. Enrollment in high schools varied by location, but few had more than 20% of the eligible youth and most locales serviced less than 5%.

African American youth were included in this history, particularly in their roles as stereotypes in the textbooks used in high schools and as individuals unworthy of admittance. Reese wrote, “some northern districts had racially integrated schools, but the region’s checkered history of race relations demonstrated that tolerance was a national, not southern, illness” (p. 231). For the most part, Whites and Blacks were provided



separate facilities no matter where they lived. Where Black high schools existed, such as Gaines High School in Cincinnati, they “educated dozens of future teachers, ministers, and community leaders” (p. 234). Not discussed in this text was industrial education. It did not become a heated issue for high school students, parents and administrators until after the period covered by Reese’s work. Yet, the varied nature of the high school and the likelihood that the teachers in them would have had higher levels of education made them places where learning beyond the proscribed curriculum was inevitable.

One other aspect of post-Reconstruction classroom life worthy of examination was the textbooks used to guide learning. Textbooks often defined what children learned in these classrooms as teachers usually had students memorize their content, and considered the ability to do so, learning (Cuban, 1984; Finkelstein, 1989). Moiser and Carpenter offered more in-depth treatments of the common textbooks teachers had to work with than the brief descriptions in histories focused on institutions, curriculum, or teaching. Moiser analyzed the content and impact of the most widely used textbooks of the 19th and early 20th centuries in *Making the American Mind: Social and Moral Ideas in the McGuffey Readers* (1947). William Holmes McGuffey, a professor at Miami and Ohio Universities in Ohio, and the University of Virginia, originally set the McGuffey Readers to paper. Later refined and updated by a host of compilers and editors, over 120 million readers were sold between 1836 and 1920. Moiser quoted a 1936 *Newsweek* article about the readers that stated “they were the basic school books of 37 states; in some they were the only ones” (p. 169). It was Moiser’s contention that the books embodied the basic values of American civilization and that schools used them to transfer

accumulated culture to generations of citizens. He concluded that the books were “the studied and articulate reflection of a civilization dominated by the middle class” (p. 165). However, they were laced with virtues such as kindness, temperance, modesty, and truthfulness and it was “this Christian code of ethics redeemed from a mangled tradition and identified as the proper code for the good citizen that rescue[d] the McGuffey readers from being exclusively the instrument of the middle class” (p. 165). Carpenter’s *History of American Schoolbooks* (1963) offered descriptions of many textbooks including McGuffey’s books. It was organized into chapters with a type of textbook as the focus of each. From *The New England Primer* to geography textbooks, Carpenter made an effort to list, to describe, and “to make passing mention of text writers, and to trace through the bulk of the material presented as nearly as possible the changes that most textbook authors brought about” (p. 7). He focused on books used in common schools from the colonial period until the mid-20th century and only referred to college texts when necessary to understand changes in elementary and secondary books. He did not include every textbook published in the United States, nor did he attempt to analyze the impact of the ones he did describe. Not surprisingly, African Americans did not have a significant positive presence in these textbooks. If they were used in schools with a Black population, whether integrated or not, they would have most likely been discarded, worn ones no longer needed by the more affluent schools (Williams, 2005). Black children would not have easily seen themselves in them. Some of these children, especially those with backgrounds in the Christian church, might have been able to relate to the morals of stories in texts like the McGuffey series, but the lifestyles and activities of the characters

would have been largely foreign to many of them. The books by Moiser and Carpenter do not address African American issues related to textbooks, but their work demonstrated through neglect that Blacks were not considered a valuable component of American school culture.

A sizable percentage of African American children read these standard textbooks of the day according to Harris (1994), especially in those districts where White administrators selected the textbooks for all students. However, from Reconstruction on, individuals and groups published textbooks specifically designed for African American students. A chapter in *Too Much Schooling, Too Little Education: A Paradox of Black Life in White Societies* (Shujaa, 1994) and written by Harris reintroduced several such texts to interested readers. The chapter entitled “Historic Readers for African-American Children (1868-1944): Uncovering and reclaiming a Tradition of Opposition” provided excerpts from three selected readers. The author argued that books written specifically for African American children were so to promote values and goals somewhat dissimilar to those of mainstream readers such as the McGuffey series. One of those goals was “the characterization of education as a form of liberation” (p. 145). She also detected implicit and explicit beliefs in race pride, racial solidarity, knowledge of African-American history and culture, and commitment to achieving social equality in literacy materials written between The Civil and Second World Wars. Excerpts from the materials indicated that the language was not radical; it could not be if Blacks had any hope that Whites would purchase the books for their children. Yet, the texts were radical in that they were written, published, and purchased in significant numbers during the Jim Crow

Era. Harris concluded that while it was “difficult if not impossible to assess” (p. 170) what caused the authors to create the materials or how children responded to them, “they were successful in another way; they represented a new, oppositional tradition evident in literacy materials” (p. 171).

In concluding this portion of the review of literature, Cuban’s statement that “studies that have captured what teachers have done in classrooms over time” (1984, p. 4) were few in number was important to keep in mind. The literature captured descriptions of social, religious, economic, and political forces that shaped the founding and development of the American school, the stories of people who assisted in that process, and the types of curriculum and materials created to advance the various missions of those schools. Blacks were frequently left out of the stories; Black female teachers were almost invisible in them. In the introduction to *Outside In: Minorities and the Transformation of American Education* (1989), Paula S. Fass reminded scholars that “before the depression and the war, the effective segregation of blacks had so marginalized their concerns that this most significant component of American diversity hardly existed as a school problem” (p. 7). Hence, snapshots of average or typical classrooms and average or typical teachers before 1940 were not representative of the African American educative experience in front of or behind the teacher’s desk. The literature regarding teacher education between 1875 and 1915 suffered from similar omissions.

### *Post-Reconstruction Teacher Training*

Teacher training in the post-Reconstruction period was far from standardized. Many communities set their own standards for teachers and rural communities were often more concerned about the moral character of the candidates than their level of education or teaching skills (Elsbree, 1939; Cremin, 1977a). Jergen Herbst and Christine Ogren offered particular insight into this situation. Herbst's *And Sadly Teach: Teacher Education and Professionalization in American Culture* (1989), and works by Christine Ogren, her dissertation (1996) and book *The American State Normal School: "An Instrument of Great Good"* (2005), further informed about access to teacher preparation institutions and the types of training that future teachers received. In the revisionist mode, Herbst offered a generally grim accounting of teacher education from Horace Mann's support for the first public normal schools in Massachusetts in the late 1830s until professional educators' betrayal of teachers in the 1930s. This latter betrayal involved the choice by the top schools of education (Chicago, Columbia, Harvard, etc.) to groom "experienced teachers for supervisory and administrative positions" and prepare "instructors for professional schools, colleges, and universities" (p. 184) instead of the teaching corps. School teaching according to Woody White, Jr. was "unworthy of a white man's life work" (1982, quoted in Herbst, 1989, p. 184). Herbst concluded that there were many reasons why the normal school failed to live up to its promise of providing a stable, competent, and respected teaching force. Three of them were that local school boards failed to pay teachers more than minimal salaries, that in America at the time there was opportunity to leverage advanced education and teaching experience into more

lucrative jobs, and that the expansion of normal school missions put them in competition for limited funds with state universities. Little distinction is evident with regard to the race of individuals attending normal schools and there are no stories of specific Black women attending them in this book. Ogren, on the other hand, expanded on her dissertation adviser's work and included in her discussion traditionally Black normal schools and the presence of Blacks at majority White institutions. As the title suggests, Ogren reached a more positive conclusion than did Herbst. Instead of failure, she found vibrant, intellectually stimulating campuses that served the lower socioeconomic strata well. Ogren did not find their passing into state teachers' colleges and universities a reason for celebration as did many of those associated with the schools at the time. Lost in the transition was an institution of singular purpose that advanced many nontraditional students "far beyond their humble origins" (p. 5) and "created a strong professional spirit through teacher-education coursework" (p. 201). Together the scholarship of Herbst and Ogren provided a thorough account of the founding, administration, curricula, activities, and social forces that resulted in "mission creep" of normal schools, institutions that were at their peak during the post-Reconstruction era. As noted above, public and private normal schools were not the only means of preparation for teaching. Thomas Woody, Jeanne L. Noble, Ambrose Caliver, and James W. Fraser provided additional information about this complex and non-standardized process.

Three texts on higher education were included in this section in order to uncover additional information relative to teacher education in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Woody's two-volume set entitled *A History of Women's Education in the*

*United States* (1929), Caliver's *Education of Negro Teachers* (1933), and Noble's *The Negro Woman's College Education* (1956) offered additional insights into the types, locations, and characteristics of higher education for women. Written to fill a "silence" in the literature on women's education, Woody assembled two lengthy volumes in order "to present a connected narrative, letting contemporary records and literature of the day, so far as possible, tell the story of changes that have taken place in ideals, practices, and institutions" (p. *viii*) with regard to women's education. The grand consensus style narrative began in primitive times and continued to women's "emancipation," or the right to vote. It included some of the coming social historian's perspective, as the study was not limited to schools. Other institutions such as churches and clubs were included as vehicles of education. In the conclusion, Woody indicated he felt a woman then had all the tools she need "to control the various agencies that affect her life, as has man" (vol. 2, p. 473). A chapter in the first volume is devoted to women in the teaching profession. It reiterated the arguments for female instructors in the common schools made by Beecher, Mann, Gallaudet and others that women were natural teachers and morally superior to men. Next Woody presented the position taken by many of these same individuals to promote funding for institutions and programs designed to train teachers, described the teaching experiences of selected women, and documented their success on the job. The fact that the majority of teachers were women by 1890 caused a backlash known as the "Woman Peril." Men sought to raise salaries and recruit males in greater numbers to staff upper level classrooms to prevent further damage to the manhood of the nation. Blacks do not have a significant presence in the books, but they were not ignored totally. Woody

mentioned Phillis Wheatley as “a rare example of learning in spite of obstacles” (p. 132), pictured an advertisement from a New York paper dated 1760 seeking a teacher for Negro children, and noted that White indentured domestic servants were frequently “a greater source of trouble than Negro slaves” (p. 267) in the 17th century because they ran away more frequently. The second volume offered a similar level of minimal coverage.

Publishing almost thirty years later, Noble (1956) made the Black educated woman’s views of education the focus of her study. Her purpose in conducting it was to find out what Black women wanted to get out of college, what college did for them, and what college failed to do. The book was an analysis of data taken from questionnaires received from 412 African American graduates who were then living in one of six urban areas of the United States. None of the cities was located in the upper Ohio River Valley. However, 38 of the participants attended a college in West Virginia, Ohio, or Pennsylvania. The respondents ranged in age from 20 to 69, making it possible that some of the participants earned their degrees before 1915. Noble’s results indicated that the needs of African American women were different from those of White women. Black women saw themselves more as future breadwinners and their primary purpose for advanced education was to secure a job upon graduation. In the conclusion, Noble posited that post-secondary institutions should work to enhance that vocational aspect, but that they should also assist Black women in seeking self-fulfillment through education. It was their right, not a luxury. The book did not provide a lengthy history of college education for Black women, although the first chapter examined some of that history in order to provide a context for the study and its results.



Caliver's work was one part of a six-volume treatment of teacher education by the U.S. government. This particular book (volume four of the series) published in 1933 focused on the preparation of teachers in 16 states and the District of Columbia where de jure segregation of schools was in effect. The text, tables, and figures provided data valuable to policy makers of the day and researchers studying topics related to African American teachers in the region covered. West Virginia was included in that region. Data was inconsistent across categories and frequently not available for some categories in some locations. In addition, the sample size was too small in some cases, particularly in West Virginia, for the data to be considered accurate. Despite the irregular reporting, the survey offered some useful data for reference points such as the number of teachers at specific levels and in particular fields and the types and amounts of post-secondary education they had even though the population studied was not of the period to apply directly to post-Reconstruction teachers of the upper Ohio River Valley.

A recent treatment of the history of teacher education, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History* by Fraser (2007) ties his research together with the work of several of the authors already discussed (Cuban, Elsbree, Herbst, Ogren, Reese, Woody) and that of several other scholars. Fraser's purpose in assembling and analyzing the information in one volume was twofold: to inform public policy as current reformers try yet again to "fix" teacher education, and to fill a gap in the literature related to "the big picture" (p. 2) of the history of American teacher education. He concluded that for much of its history teacher education was "a haphazard affair" (p. 3). That being the case, he attempted to sort out the various kinds of institutions and programs that provided training to

significant numbers of teachers beginning with the colonial period. From seminaries, academies, teacher institutes, high schools, and normal schools to teacher colleges and multipurpose college and universities, Fraser found combinations of three elements common to nearly every program: “subject matter knowledge, understanding of pedagogy and the learning process, and dedication to the work of teaching and the success of students’ (p. 4). Teacher preparation of elementary and high school personnel was the sole focus of the book. Each chapter dealt with a particular type of teacher education and featured individuals who attended or participated in that form of training. One chapter was devoted to the preparation of African American teachers in the South and covered informal preparation during slavery, the Hampton–Tuskegee model, missionary colleges and normal schools, and county training schools. Fraser also supported with examples Ogren’s contention that northern and western normal schools were more likely to welcome nontraditional students of various backgrounds and races than were traditionally White college and universities. Although Fraser’s task was enormous, he managed to summarize a great deal of scholarship and provide a thoughtful and balanced overview of teacher education. It did not provide significant new information about African American teachers or their training.

The history of American education has been told in many ways, but it was from the institutional perspective that most, no matter what their philosophy or theoretical stance, have analyzed it. Seen as either an evolving institution moving toward perfection and greater access for all, or as an oppressive institution designed to keep elites in power and the less desirable in their places, the accounts have been predominantly about social

forces and schoolmen, and in a minute number of recent cases schoolwomen. Still fewer African American women appeared in these texts as either consumers of or contributors to the smorgasbord of institutions and practices that constituted education in the 19th century. The needs and accomplishments of diverse citizens were discussed more frequently and critically as part of the general unfolding of history with succeeding generations of scholars. However, there is work to be done in order to more fully integrate Black women into this history commensurate with their involvement.

### **African American Education**

The available literature from the field of American education often failed to include Blacks in significant ways. Scholarship of a more meaningful nature with regard to the issue of race and education was found in the study of texts within the field of the history of Black education. The examination of the manner in which educational historians have recorded and analyzed the education of African Americans was aided by the analysis of the major themes, foci, and contexts of the scholarship available on the subject. V. P. Franklin and Ronald Butchart both offered analyses of the historiography of this discipline. Although virtually none of the works they discuss focused particularly on Black women's education, their post-secondary schooling, or their teaching experiences, the texts did provide a basis for understanding the characteristics, patterns, and trends of African American education.

V. P. Franklin suggested four eras to the historiography of African American education in the introduction to his book *New Perspectives on Black Educational History*. The first began at the dawn of the 20th century and was characterized by progressive

fervor and the need “to tell the Negro story” (Franklin, 1978, p. 3). The second generation of historians started publishing works that countered the optimism of Carter G. Woodson and others and looked at “the ‘economic’ underpinnings of racism and discrimination in American society” (Franklin, 1978, p. 3). Lawrence Reddick and Horace Mann Bond were the two key interpreters of this era. Franklin’s third era begins after World War II and includes historians John Hope Franklin, Rayford Logan, C. Vann Woodward, Gunnar Myrdal, Willard Range, Elizabeth Peck, Louis Harlan, and Henry Bullock. The integrationist or ‘civil rights’ perspective (Franklin, 1978) permeates the work of these historians. As of the writing of his analysis in 1978, Franklin had noted a shift from these integrationist themes. This fourth era was marked by “renewed interest in the development and evolution of Afro-American culture and communities” (Franklin, 1978, p. 12). John W. Blassingame and Herbert Gutman led this movement and the seven authors included in *New Perspectives on Black Educational History* supported it.

Butchart, writing 10 years later, divided the same historiography into three eras, each with themes and foci. His first era matched Franklin’s in terms of starting and ending dates. Encompassing 1890 to 1930, Butchart’s first era had two distinct and opposing themes: the “triumphalist” perspectives of southern White historians whom Franklin failed to mention and the “vindicationist” or corrective thrust of African American historians. The primary focus of these two groups was “the image of black America—the image projected to white America, and the image reflected back into the black community” (Butchart, 1988, p. 337). Woodson and W. E. B. DuBois represent the best of the vindicationists who saw education as a way to create “a black leadership

cadre” (Butchart, 1988, p. 338) and Edgar Knight, Henry Swint, and Stuart Nobel are mentioned as the triumphalists. The second era described by Butchart subsumed both of Franklin’s middle two categories. Butchart’s second era spans the years 1930 to 1960 and is categorized by liberal progressivism and concern about segregation. During this era, historians Bond, Harlan, William P. Vaughn, Charles S. Johnson, August Meier, Buell Gallagher, and Bullock documented discrimination, exposed the myths of the southern triumphalists, and questioned industrial education and the motives of the philanthropists who supported it. They “replaced exculpation and accommodation” with “integrationism” (Butchart, 1988, p. 341). Era three in Butchart’s scheme is called “iconoclastic revisionism” (1988, p. 334). Its focus is on antiracism and integration, but the work in this period had little unity of interpretation. Butchart found three themes within the “unparalleled richness in the field of African American educational history” (1988, p. 352) since 1960. They were interracialism, an appeal to American ideals for the delivery of justice, and the exposition of the roots of segregation. He listed Logan, Clarence Bacote, James D. Anderson, Doxie Wilkerson, Carlton Mabee, and Judy Jolley Mohraz as revisionist historians and placed himself within this group as well. Within each era, whether Franklin’s four or Butchart’s three, some topics were of greater concern than others were. The range of these topics is the subject next under consideration.

Butchart’s analysis (1988) of Black educational historiography in “‘Outthinking and Outflanking the Others of the World’: A Historiography of the African American Struggle for Education” provided an extensive accounting of the foci of the genre. He

delineated at least eight topics of interest in the era between 1890 and 1930, and even more for the current revisionist era. The middle era, Butchart claims, “shared some of the topical interests of the first generation, but shifted the thematic content and constructed new interpretive foundations for its work” (1988, p. 341) and therefore had few original foci. Of particular interest to the first generation was higher education, specialized forms of secondary education, and types of informal education such as newspapers, magazines, and literary societies. With the exception of Woodson and DuBois, historians focused almost exclusively on the South and chose the state as the unit of study. These states tended to be seaboard or border states where historians would examine legislation dealing with schools and the response of the Black community to educational opportunity. The emphasis was on Black initiative and uplift and most of the writers were silent on the issue of industrial education. Butchart finds this odd because “some of the era’s historians had been outspoken critics of industrial education and Booker T. Washington, its chief promoter” (1988, p. 336, 337). The Freedman’s Bureau and the early antebellum period were also popular topics for research and writing. Surprisingly, Butchart contends all but DuBois and Thomas Jesse Jones failed to “document frequently or consistently the erosion of black education that had been underway since at least the late 1880s” (Butchart, 1988, p. 337). The topics of study in the second era, as noted earlier, stayed remarkably similar. The southern state continued to be the favored unit of examination but interest in Reconstruction and the Freedman’s Bureau did wane. While second generation historians became more critical of early work for its faith in the school as a liberating force, they failed to record educational practices in northern schools as they

related to African Americans or to “study systematically the differences between rural and urban schooling” (Butchart, 1988, p. 342). The revisionist era, with its expanded thematic choices, added new foci to the standards of the earlier periods. There was a reduction in the number of statewide reports that was replaced by widespread interest in what Franklin calls the “rise of the black ghetto” (1978, p. 10) studies. Also new to this era was scholarship focused on education during slavery, the education of northern Blacks, and the teachers and students who made up the schools. Segregation remained an important topic and the Black community’s response to educational opportunity, higher education, professional training, and institutional biography returned to the attention of historians. The list of foci for the revisionist era is rounded out with scientific racism in the form of standardized and IQ testing and some positive treatments of Black educational achievement. How each of these topics was treated was dependent upon the philosophy and values of the historians and the milieu of the times in which they wrote. Next is the discussion of these influences.

Over time, the needs and beliefs of its contributors have influenced the historiography of African American education. Franklin and Butchart both discuss the accommodationist philosophy of the early Black historians and the liberal progressive bent of those who followed. The accommodationists were so out of a perceived need to advance more appropriate images of Blacks without stirring animosity from the dominant culture. Hence, “they did not seek to confront white America with its criminality, but to appeal to its higher nature” (Butchart, 1988, p. 339). The second generation realized stronger measures were imperative in order to affect change. They studied conditions,

documented them, and sought laws and policies to rectify segregation and stop oppression. Socialist and Marxist influences that were a result of a backlash against industrialization and wealthy capitalists also colored the historiography of this period. The work of Bond and DuBois was in this vein. Their work did not represent the majority of writers of the middle era, but it did challenge educators and historians to think about the social and economic contexts of racism. This theme was taken up with greater energy by the revisionists of the current era. Butchart describes this current group of historians as working within the framework of “a skepticism toward the liberal notion of race and American institutions” (1988, p. 360). They do this because liberal progressives lost their ability to “document progress” and their theory “lacked the ability any longer to explain” why “despite institutional tinkering and good intentions, despite laws and court decisions, America was not moving toward a desegregated society” (Butchart, 1988, p. 359).

What was missing from the discourse of these two scholars was the mention of feminism as an influence on revisionist writing. Due to the 1978 publication date of Franklin’s analysis, it can be excused somewhat because feminism was not yet a significant factor. However, Butchart should have included mention of it in his 1988 work. He listed the field of the education of the Black female as “neglected” and in need of exploration (1988, p. 361), but did not acknowledge the women historians who had started to publish accounts of Black women, their oppression, and their struggle for equal educational opportunity by that time (Perkins, 1981; Aptheker, 1982). Many have written in this vein since 1988. The multiple works of Darlene Clark Hine would be important



examples of such work, as would those of Perkins, Shaw, Higginbotham, and Ward Randolph.

Several books concerning the education of African Americans were crucial to the development of the field. A brief review of some of these classic texts and four recent works not included in either Franklin's or Butchart's historiographies demonstrated the gaps in this literature that need filling.

Just as the history of American education started with consensus historians Davidson, Monroe, and Cubberley, the history of African American education began with Woodson and DuBois. Woodson, a native of Virginia, and a longtime resident of West Virginia, wrote many books. Several were valuable to this study of post-Reconstruction teachers of the upper Ohio River Valley. *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, published in 1919, offered an African American's view of educative processes prior to the Civil War. As Franklin (1978) indicated, the need in the period in which Woodson wrote was to tell the Negro story because so few knew anything of substance about Blacks. The story this book told was of the struggle antebellum Whites had with how much and what kinds of education to provide, as well as, the struggle Blacks had with obtaining access to anything but very rudimentary forms of it. Woodson placed the available delivery systems in three categories: education provided by masters who wanted to increase the efficiency of their workers, education offered by persons wishing to help the oppressed, and education bestowed by missionaries hoping to spread Christianity as well as the use of the English language. His language was cautious, and his criticism veiled. Stories of the personal and collective effort of African Americans to

learn and teach each other (agency) were included in the text, stories that Woodson said “read like the beautiful romances of a people in an heroic age” (p. 206). The contributions of many women were also present along with details concerning the traditions and practices with which post-Reconstruction teachers would have been cognizant, particularly those teachers at work in the early part of the period. Yet, any lengthy accounting of specific women’s efforts to learn and to teach was not included in Woodson’s volume.

*Early Negro Education in West Virginia*, also by Woodson (1921), was similar in its lack of rich description of women teachers in the state, but it was crucial to understanding education in one section of the bounded system of this case study. Woodson chaired a committee appointed by the president of West Virginia Collegiate Institute charged with the collection of “facts bearing on the early efforts of teachers among the Negroes in West Virginia” (p. 3). The committee gathered the data that formed the basis of the book by sending out questionnaires, conducting interviews, and scouring state and county records. Woodson crafted the report from the results, dividing the history into chapters focused on periods, areas of the state, higher education, the West Virginia Teachers Association, and an interpretation of a collection of charts that were indicative of educational “progress” in the state. Particularly instructive was the explanation of the context for the development of Black education in West Virginia. The state maintained the southern practice racial segregation but “took an active role in building an alternate society of black institutions” (“Race Relations,” 2007, p. 8). Many of those institutions were publicly funded schools and health care facilities. Highlighted

throughout the text were individuals and activities in the city of Parkersburg that were crucial to the development of the state's system of education for African Americans. The founding of Sumner School was fundamental to the entire process. Woodson mentioned Robert and Pocahontas Simmons, but he failed to provide details of their many contributions. This practice continued throughout the text. Lists of teachers, many of them female, were included without further description other than the name of the community or school of employment. Given the range of inquiry of the questionnaire sent out to form the basis of the research, Woodson's report was somewhat disappointing. Woodson did not indicate how thoroughly the respondents filled out the questionnaires, but if they came back with the majority of the items answered, a richer depiction of early education for Blacks in West Virginia was most likely possible.

By the time Woodson penned *The Mis-Education of the Negro* in 1933, he had been an observer and scholar of Black education for 40 years. His tone in this book was more like that of revisionist historians as he had become keenly aware of the power structure that was in place to propagate the second-class status of African Americans. He used phrases and terms such "regime of the oppressor" (1977, p. xi), "White supremacy" (1977, p. 128), and "racial racketeer" (1977, p. 116) and "traducers" (1977, p. 163) as he expressed his concern about "educated Negroes" and their growing "contempt toward their own people" (p. 1). The purpose of the text was to point out the mistakes that had been made, some Woodson admitted to have made himself, and to encourage African Americans to take charge of their own education and lives. Woodson saw the education provided to and by Whites as "antiquated" and not able to meet their own needs. He

therefore believed that it was imperative for Blacks to develop a system of their own that “equipped [them] to face the ordeal before them” (1977, p. *xi*) and that would put an end to “the worst sort of lynching” (1977, p. 3) which was compelling children to attend schools that convinced those children they were inferior.

DuBois, published ideas questioning the type of education offered to African Americans thirty years prior to Woodson’s, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (1933). His classic volume entitled *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) catapulted him into the middle of the national dialogue concerning the “Negro problem” (Aptheker, 1973) and its publishing was tagged as the beginning of his legendary dispute with Booker T. Washington over the best way to educate African Americans (Graham, 1973). *Souls* offered many Americans their first exposure to a Black scholar as well as to its subject matter: meaningful Black life in American society. It also brought hope to several generations of African American readers in addition to inspiring action in the fight for justice and equal rights (Aptheker, 1973). DuBois, like Woodson, was concerned with familiarizing as many as possible with the African American story (Franklin, 1978). However, in the case of DuBois the message was stronger from an earlier date and continued to grow more pointed as he developed a socialist perspective, a stance that caused Blacks as well as Whites to shun him in his later years (Aptheker, 1973). The role education played in perpetuating the second-class status of African Americans was a central component in the body of DuBois’ work. The overall purpose of his work rarely caused him to focus on individual teachers, male or female.

A second socialist position came from the pen of Bond. In *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order* (1934), he argued that improvement in the “Negro problem” would not occur without moving beyond the idea that the school was the “cure-all for our ills” (1934, p. 12). Bond believed that economic issues were the cause of most of the misfortunes of Blacks and solutions were to be found by unraveling the problems of the second wave of industrial development. The school had an important role to play in the process of improving life for all, but true and lasting changes in the American social order required planning that recognized the correlation between “all aspects of the forces which work upon individuals” (p. 13) and sought to encompass them in organized action. His thoughts were in stark opposition to consensus historians who advocated leaving progress to the natural evolution of events. With regard to the matter of schooling, Bond offered a plan that involved the financial support of the federal government in equalizing dollars spent on Black and White children. It was proposed as one piece of a larger master plan that would need to be developed—a piece that would not have an impact without plans to rectify inequality in other social, political, and economic arenas. Bond supported his contention with historical data, most of which related to groups or regions in general. He discussed teachers, their numbers, levels of education, salary differential, certification standards or lack thereof, and efficiency. Educational practice in regions, states, and some school districts also figured in the argument. However, with the exception of Booker T. Washington who earned a chapter-length, positive portrayal, few specific individuals, male or female, warranted inclusion in this book.

J. H. Franklin (1947) contributed a comprehensive history to the body of scholarship concerning African American life. His perspective, presented in *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes*, fit into V. P. Franklin's civil rights and integrationist category of historiography. It began in ancient Egypt and ended in the United States shortly after World War II. According to the author, the book was an attempt to "interpret critically the forces and personalities that have shaped" (Franklin, 1947, p. vii) that history. Education played a significant role in the story. Individuals and groups that supported the education of African Americans such as George Fox, Cotton Mather, Anthony Benezet, Simeon Jocelyn, The SPG, the Quakers, the Abolition Society, the American Missionary Association (AMA), and an amorphous assortment of slave owners who for a variety of reasons believed their slaves needed various skills were all woven into the larger story that Franklin developed. The individual and collective efforts of Blacks to foster, found, or finance various types of education were also noted throughout the text. Franklin included the mention of several Black women (Madame Couvent, Mary Peake, Angelina W. Grimké) who were among that group. Due to the nature of the book, these women received little more attention than a line or two in order to keep the complex narrative moving toward its conclusion. That conclusion, one that was simultaneously celebratory and critical of the status of African Americans, implied that America would fail as a world leader in the movement for "peace and international understanding" (p. 589) during the atomic age if it did not recognize and rectify its own hypocrisy in terms of its democratic ideals.

Similar to J. H. Franklin's history but in contrast to Bond's work, *The Negro in American Life and Thought* by Logan (1954) was replete with references to and descriptions of people. Most of the people were not Black, women teachers, however. Logan's aim was the analysis of the social, economic, and political position of African Americans in the last quarter of the 19th century. Hence, the people who played significant roles in this account were presidents, justices, congressmen, lawyers, labor leaders, journalists, and authors of articles in literary magazines. The collective actions of many within this group, particularly the floundering of "a succession of weak presidents between 1877 and 1901" (p. 12), brought about the "consolidation of white supremacy in the South" (p. 13) and strengthened northerners' reluctance to intervene further. This was a period Logan labeled "the nadir" due to African Americans' loss of status and "the continued decline in the recognition of his political and legal rights" (p. 52). He believed this was the result of three conditions: the inability of the rest of the world to put pressure on the United States to recognize the hypocrisy of their rhetoric of equality, the industrial growth of the North which encouraged making friends with old foes in the South, and the southern bitterness exacerbated by Reconstruction. Logan's interest in education was in the broad sense, in the dissemination of ideas and the opportunities for Blacks to advance and live well because of it. Franklin (1978) and Butchart (1988) placed Logan's work in different categories. Franklin included it in that of authors with civil rights and integrationist interests along with J. H. Franklin, Bullock, and Harlan. This seemed to be a more fitting place for the book rather than in Butchart's (1988) iconoclastic revisionism category. Butchart divided 10 more years of scholarship into one fewer categories than

did Franklin making his options for placement less nuanced. Although Logan's work spanned several decades and he published some of it after 1960, *The Negro in American Life and Thought* (1954), and a significant amount of his writing, was published prior to 1960. Logan's tone, themes, and content align more closely with those of authors in Franklin's third era than Butchart's third and final grouping that included works by Anderson, Mohraz, Bacote, and others. Despite the dreary and degrading conditions Logan described, his book had a somewhat hopeful tone and ending. In addition, it added to the conversation about the complexity of "the Negro problem." It did not however include Black women in the solution in a significant way.

Women, White or Black, did not play significant roles in Harlan's celebrated text, *Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States 1901-1915* (1958). The book, placed by Franklin (1978) in the civil rights and integrationist category and by Butchart (1988) in the liberal progressive group, recounted the story of well-intentioned men whose reform campaigns "drove the wedge of inequality between the two systems" (p. 269) of education in the South. There was an obvious indignant undercurrent to Harlan's examination of the role of the two opposing factors, northern philanthropy and southern racism, in the development of the public school systems in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Much of the analysis revolved around the actions of the Southern Education Board in those four states. Funded in large measure by northern philanthropists, the organization sought to graft the New England educational system onto the weak network of state-supported schools in the South. Although the group made considerable progress toward that end, roadblocks such



as opposition to “taxing one man to educate another man’s children” (p. 57), economic conditions that left southern states with less revenue than the industrial North, and deep-seated racism prevented that effort from taking hold and growing in the manner in which the Board had hoped. Harlan concluded that the Southern Education Board “failed in its program of Negro education and failed to challenge or deflect the anti-Negro movement which it paralleled” (p. 254). Lacking the “moral firmness” (p. 269) necessary to make significant changes in race relations in the South, the organization faded away by 1915.

Bullock’s position was more theoretical and less action oriented than that of Bond and Harlan. It was more highly focused on the institution of the school as the central educative force than Logan’s broad view of education. He wrote *A History of Negro Education in the South* (1967) in order to test a theory of history in which he had interest. Bullock was looking for a purpose for segregation, one based on his study of German Romanticists who held that natural and eternal laws moved society upward in cycles toward a divine goal. In his examination of the intended and unintended purposes of segregation, he believed he found the creative forces behind the movement underfoot at the time of the publishing of the book that he hoped would lead to the “complete emancipation of the Negro American as a person” (p. ix). Bullock employed the model of conflict-unintention-accommodation to this work in an effort to explain the dynamics of race relations of the day and “vindicate” his faith in the theory. The history Bullock recounted to advance his theory included contributions of women teachers, but the predominant characters were male. His purpose prevented the telling of life stories. He described most of the players included in the cycles of conflict and accommodation,

whether male or female, in terms of time, location, and pertinent actions. In the spiraling of the cycles, Bullock found the evidence he was seeking to satisfy his curiosity and advance his theory that humanity was moving in a positive direction. Other authors were doubtful that society was making any real progress in that regard.

*The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1750-1925* by Gutman (1976)

established the stability of the African American family until the Great Depression and refuted Moynihan's 1965 "tangle of pathology" theory. Slavery did not doom the Black family, nor did emancipation, migration or poverty. Toward the end of his report, Gutman included a brief description of Anna Julia Cooper and a quotation from her regarding a poem written by Maurice Thompson. Her inclusion was not due to her race, gender, or career, but to her astute analysis of an erroneous assumption perpetuated through the arts as well as politics. Gutman's book informed scholars about topics related African American families, their values, and culture. Education and schooling were things that these families valued, but they were not the focus of the study.

Often quoted by contemporary educational historians and educators interested in providing high quality instruction for African American children, Anderson's book *The Education of Blacks in the South 1860-1935* (1988) offered strong evidence for the argument that the second-class schooling granted to Black children was purposeful and "part of the larger political subordination of blacks" (p. 2). The book fit into the revisionist categories of both Rousmaniere and Butchart and challenged the idea that education for African Americans was evolving for the better. Anderson's research exposed discriminatory and paternalistic attitudes and actions on the part of Whites, even

as some gave large sums of money to build schools for Blacks or sacrificed personal comfort to teach in them. He also told of the Black community's repeated efforts to provide education for their children even when it meant double taxation, furnishing labor and supplies for school buildings, or going without necessities to contribute money to the cause. In some cases, Whites burned school buildings within months of their completion. Blacks built them back. Undaunted, African Americans found ways to continue when Whites murdered their children in route to school or when teachers of Black children were harassed or killed. These incidents allowed Anderson to conclude:

[b]lacks' enduring beliefs in education and their historic struggle to acquire decent educational opportunities against almost overwhelming odds leaves little room to attribute their relatively low levels of educational attainment to uncongenial cultural values or educational norms (p. 285).

There was not space in the book for detailed stories of Black women teachers, but women were present, many times by name, at countless turns of the narrative. Due to the focus of the book, however, they were plying their craft in the South.

Perusal of additional texts of importance by Woodward, Myrdal, Meier and Rudwick, Blassingame, and Wilkerson included in the historiographies of Franklin or Butchart, or both, rendered a similar conclusion: specific African American women who taught in southeastern Ohio, north central West Virginia, and southwestern Pennsylvania have not warranted a significant presence in the literature. Woodward offered an analysis of the historical period that gave rise to the re-segregation and disenfranchisement of African Americans in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955). His intention was to

inform and correct ideas in history books because there was “considerable in the books to mislead and confuse” (p. vii). Although Woodward enlightened readers about the period and noted the complicity of the North, the text is primarily about the South. It has little to do with education or educators per se. Myrdal (1944), at the behest of the Carnegie Corporation, looked at the many facets of being Black and American at the time of World War II in his two-volume examination of race relations entitled *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. The hope was that his Swedish background would allow him to approach an old and emotionally charged subject with a fresh and detached perspective. The book was detailed and insightful, but it dealt with the collective rather than the individual and left stories of teachers, male or female, for another scholar to study. The body of Meier’s work provided analyses of Black protest movements including a non-violent protest of school segregation in Springfield, Ohio. He also focused on schooling in Detroit, the NAACP, and male African American leaders in addition to his summation of the historical roots of American race problems in *From Plantation to Ghetto: An Interpretive History of American Negroes* (1966) that he co-authored with Elliott Rudwick. A handful of female teachers from the Reconstruction Era were named in this text, but the stories of individual Black women teachers do not figure prominently in his collective work. Blassingame, like Gutman provided studies of the slave community, at least one male Black leader (Frederick Douglass), and a major city (New Orleans). He also combined his expertise with that of Mary Francis Berry to produce the book *Long Memory: The Black Experience in America* (1982). This text reviewed and updated scholarship related to several of the same topics and themes found

in *From Plantation to Ghetto*. It included a few more references to women, but the nature of the study prevented in-depth coverage of any of them. During his career, Wilkerson looked at the roots of segregation, the status of education for African American children, compensatory education and equitable education for disadvantaged groups, agricultural extension services to southern Blacks, and Communist influences within the African American community. These studies made significant contributions. However, specific Black female teachers were not one of his foci.

Litwack was not included in either Franklin's or Butchart's analyses of the historiography of Black education, although the 1988 release of Butchart's historiography that appeared in the *History of Education Journal* could have mentioned his volume *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (1979). This particular scholarship inspired Williams (2005, see below) because "his detailed history allowed the former slaves to speak...and showed me a way of telling history" (p. 4). The book focuses on the efforts of African Americans to gain control over their lives after the Civil War and would fit in Rousmaniere's neo-revisionist category. Education and teachers are a part of the story. Mary Peake and Charlotte Forten, Miss Green and Blanche Harris all were permitted to speak in this treatment of African American history—they were each more than a name in a list. Yet, Litwack revealed very little about their lives within and outside of the Reconstruction period in the South.

*White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954* (2001b) by William H. Watkins, a political sociologist, reflected the post-modernists' interest in the relationship between power and discrimination. It is essentially about

White men for they were the ones with the wealth, power, and position to control what services would be provided and to whom during the period under examination. Despite the absence of females, Watkins' study served as a model for using biography to illuminate themes and to render conclusions that contribute to the on-going discourse regarding the impact of individuals on the course of history.

Reprinted in 2004, Robert Engs first published *Freedom's First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861-1890* in 1979. The book recounted the Black experience in Hampton, Virginia, and the founding of Hampton Institute. Although the focus was a southern city, this neo-revisionist analysis provided several important insights. Not only did Engs challenge the traditional demarcations of the Reconstruction period (1863-1877), he also exposed the manner in which the Black community used Hampton Institute to their advantage despite their opposition to its curriculum and its founders' belief that they were not ready for full citizenship. With regard to delineating Reconstruction, Engs purposed viewing it as the time between emancipation and the loss of any chance "to give reality to that freedom" (p. *xi*). In the case of Hampton, emancipation began as early as 1861 and the loss of hope for full citizenship did not occur until 1890, more than a full decade after most consider Reconstruction over. For others in the Deep South the interval was as brief as two or three years (between 1863 and 1866). According to Engs, Hampton was the one place in the South that was poised to have demonstrated what Reconstruction "might have been" (p. *xiii*), but in the end it was northern racism, abandonment, and indifference that caused the reverse of the many successes of the first generation of freed people in Hampton, not Black incompetence.

Williams, one of only a handful of females writing about the history of African American education, published *Self-Taught: African Americans in Slavery and Freedom* in 2005. Her goal was to bring more African American voices to the story of the history of Black education and demonstrate that Blacks were instrumental in the development of southern public schooling. Perusal of a sizable number of primary and secondary sources helped Williams accomplish her goal. Like Engs, she cut across traditional historical periods in order “to discern a continuity of people and ideas” (p. 1). Although the historical account was about teaching and learning in the South, the neo-revisionist work served as a model. The author was able to piece together a sound argument using records and documents that were limited by the nature of the skills of their authors, and that were often times inconsistent, incomplete, or damaged. She was able to incorporate Black voices, demonstrate agency on the part of freed men and women to conduct their own affairs, and illuminate the importance of literacy to formerly enslaved people despite efforts to limit their opportunities to achieve it.

These books, each an important addition to the understanding of how African American children and adults were educated in the United States, contributed pieces to the picture puzzle of Black women’s contributions to the effort, but they failed to feature in significant ways northern Black women educators. Most scholarship related to the education of African Americans was set in the South, where the vast majority of Blacks lived up until the mid-1900s. Yet by the late 19th century, there was a significant and growing Black population in the North. This segment of the population was often

overlooked as they too struggled to improve their individual and collective station through education.

*Education of Northern African Americans.*

Narrowing the focus to literature dealing with the education of African Americans in the North did not result in significantly different findings. Scholars such as W. E. B. DuBois, V. P. Franklin, Linda Perkins, Judy Jolley Mohraz, Charles Blockson, Ann G. Wilmoth, Joe William Trotter, Jr., Eric Ledall Smith, Randall M. Miller, William Pencak, Frederick A. McGinnis, David Gerber, Darrel Bigham, Andrew R. L. Cayton, Patricia Randolph Leigh, and Nikki M. Taylor offered glimpses of African American teachers and classroom life above the Mason–Dixon Line. However, none of these authors specifically designated either the topic or small and mid-sized communities as the main concern of their work. The role of female African American teachers in this area was therefore difficult to discern. Considerable work dealt with major cities, states, regions, institutions, and in some cases individuals, but Black women who were living throughout the upper Ohio River Valley and teaching children in that area were not visible in this scholarship.

Philadelphia had a significant free Black community as early as 1800 and it has been the subject of many studies because of its long and rich history. Both DuBois and V. P. Franklin authored accounts of Black life in this northern city. DuBois' effort, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1899), was intended to examine “Negro problems” through “observation and research into the history and social condition of the transplanted Africans” (p. *iii*). Schools were a significant part of that life and DuBois addressed several topics related to them and their role in the community. Other social and



political issues such as occupational limitations, crime, alcoholism, poverty, housing, and suffrage consumed the lion's share of the text. Franklin focused his study more sharply on the Black educational experience in Philadelphia. *The Education of Black Philadelphia: The Social and Educational History of a Minority Community, 1900-1950* was published in 1979 and was a solid example of the revisionist approach to history. It continued Philadelphia's story where DuBois left off. The first two chapters dealt with happenings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They provided background for the book's central focus on the community's struggle to advance socially, politically, and economically between 1920 and 1950. Both DuBois and Franklin looked at the larger context leaving out the day-to-day functioning of the schools and the stories of the people working in them. Although not omitted from these texts, women were not major characters in them.

Perkins' work departed from the trend of avoiding or ignoring feminine contributions to education in Philadelphia. Her research on Fanny Jackson Coppin and the Institute for Colored Youth (ICY) provided a refreshing look at the capabilities of a Black woman who earned a chance to lead. "The Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia" was a chapter in the book *Blacks in Pennsylvania History* (1983) and focused on the evolution of the school. It complemented Perkins' biography of Coppin.

Additional authors who provided glimpses of the education of Blacks in Pennsylvania were Mohraz, Blockson, Wilmoth, Trotter and Smith, and Miller and Pencak.

Mohraz (1979) conducted a case study of the Black educational experience in three large, northern cities, Philadelphia being one of them. She applied her lens to the treatment of African American students in that city as well as those in Indianapolis and Chicago during the first three decades of the 20th century. She reported her results in the book *The Separate Problem: Case Studies of Black Education in the North, 1900-1930*. Mohraz concluded that “schools did very little of benefit” (p. 143) in the area of trying to “break down prejudice and promote racial tolerance and equality” (p. 143). Philadelphia and Indianapolis had designated “colored schools” and Chicago achieved less official segregation through gerrymandering school districts, residential segregation, and allowing students transfers to other buildings. She stated:

Generally, substandard facilities for blacks accompanied racial separation and also reflected the Negro student’s inferior social position. Children who attended mixed schools seldom escaped the stigma of separation. Teachers and administrators separated Negro students in the school, the classroom, certain sports, and social events (p. 143).

In addition, the teaching staffs in these schools were overwhelmingly White. Blacks usually were not permitted to teach in mixed schools. For this reason, many Blacks supported segregated schools—it was a means of keeping some middle class jobs for their communities. This theme was present in Gerber’s book on Ohio and the color line, as well as Franklin’s study of Philadelphia (1979), and others.

Another, and perhaps the central, theme in Mohraz’s treatment of northern education is the idea that segregation was not “an aberration produced by white

supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan” (p. 144). Discrimination was part of mainstream thought and contradicted the progressive notion that the modern school of the day was based on democratic principles. Mohraz noted:

The goal of twentieth-century school was not equal education for all but class education for a heterogeneous student population. The educators’ justifications for this policy were couched in terms of education which would be appropriate to the individual’s ability as well as the community’s needs (p. 144).

This research provided some insight into the condition of Black education in general in the North prior to 1900 in order to provide context for her study, but the three northern urban centers on which Mohraz focused the book were not in close proximity to the upper Ohio River Valley. Information about African American education in that region was found in varying degrees of detail in volumes about specific states.

Blockson, Wilmoth, and editors Trotter and Smith and Miller and Pencak compiled volumes that addressed education in Pennsylvania in varying degrees. *Pennsylvania’s Black History* (1975) and *African Americans in Pennsylvania: A History and Guide* are collections of biographical sketches and location descriptions of little celebrated Pennsylvanian African Americans and places of significance to their history written by Blockson. Several Black women were featured in the books, as were some educational institutions. The volumes served as references and starting points but did not provide extensive information or description about any single person or place. The political backdrop to Pennsylvania educational history was evident in Wilmoth’s chapter on 19th century schooling in Pittsburgh. She highlighted the Black community’s

continual struggle with local school officials to obtain appropriate facilities and sufficient instruction for their children. The collection of scholarly articles on African American life in Pennsylvania edited by Trotter and Smith also featured some of these same types of struggles in communities across the state. *African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives* (1997) contained 19 chapters, but none of them dealt specifically with education in the Monongahela River Valley during the latter half of the 1800s. *Pennsylvania: A History of the Commonwealth* edited by Miller and Pencak (2002) was a collection of chapters written by experts in particular fields of Pennsylvania history. Several chapters offered information pertinent to the context of this study. Walter Licht's chapter on the second half of the 19th century and the one on the first half of the 20th century that followed it by David R. Contosta were most helpful. The state's developing educational system was a thread in these two chapters as was the Black experience. However, none of the 17 contributors to the book was an educational historian. Education, and specifically Black education, was therefore not a major theme in this lengthy volume. Specific African American female teachers of the post-Reconstruction era were largely invisible as not even Fannie Jackson Coppin earned mention in this book. Texts dealing with Ohio provided similar types of treatments of Black education as did the group about Pennsylvania just reviewed.

*The Education of Negroes in Ohio* by McGinnis (1962) began with a general statement that education for African Americans in Ohio "was never meant to be equal" (p. xi). McGinnis attributes this to three factors: the settlement patterns within the territory and subsequent state, the clashing views on the nature of education among the

different types of settlers, and the propaganda on the nature of Blacks that came from the citizens of neighboring slaveholding states. The various factions of residents caused a constant battle over the general treatment and the specific education of African Americans within the state's borders. More often than not, legislation dealing with African American rights that came out of the state capitol was the result of compromise that was reached only after heated debate. These compromises sometimes took years to hammer out. The bill known as the Arnett Law that sanctioned integrated schools had come to a vote in several legislative sessions before it finally passed in 1887. The passage of this law brought only temporary hope that schooling for Blacks in Ohio would become "truly democratic" (p. 64). McGinnis held that the migration of large numbers of African Americans from the South after 1900 and real estate agents who conspired to keep "poor whites and the colored citizens separated from more well-to-do groups and from one another for mercenary reasons" (p. 65) led to the re-segregation of schools in many cities and towns. Schools remained segregated in many southern counties of Ohio where little effort was ever made to integrate them until the federal Supreme Court ruling in 1954. Despite these problems, after the 1829 passage of a law allowing tax collection for Black education, some communities around the state chose not to separate the races. In many small cities and towns where the African American population was small, this most likely occurred initially because it was financially more reasonable to educate all children together. Where there were few problems, the practice continued. In addition, some communities, particularly in the Western Reserve where citizens had always assumed that education was every child's natural right, had never had separate schools. Books dealing

with issues of race after emancipation in Ohio by Gerber and Bigham confirm much of McGinnis' interpretation.

*Black Ohio and the Color Line, 1860-1915* was published in 1976 after years of research on the part of Gerber. The book dealt with many facets of the Black experience in the state between the Civil and the First World Wars. The first half of the book described a time of progress and hope, while the second half explained the age of Jim Crow and the return of oppressive practices within the state, some legal, some not. Education played a significant role in Gerber's story, but even in this text, women did not have prominent roles. A few warranted mentions by name, a small number of them were teachers. So few women received more than a paragraph or two of description concerning their contributions and accomplishments that a reader, particularly one looking for female presence, might conclude that a better title for the book might be *Black Ohio Men and the Color Line*.

Bigham's volume entitled *On Jordan's Banks: Emancipation and Its Aftermath in the Ohio River Valley* (2006) deals with a small part of Ohio, and essentially no parts of either West Virginia or Pennsylvania. For this book, the Ohio River Valley was designated as the 25 Kentucky counties that border the Ohio River and the six Illinois, 13 Indiana, and six Ohio counties that were across from them. As in Gerber's book, the education of African Americans in the designated area was only one of several aspects of Black life featured. Cayton's treatment of the state of Ohio, *Ohio: The History of a People* (2002) was similar in that respect. The Black experience was a major thread in the story, but education was a small part of that story. The education of African Americans

and the specific Black individuals who helped advance it played even smaller roles.

Neither book had lengthy treatments of specific African American teachers.

In *Fly in the Ointment: School Segregation and Desegregation in the Ohio Valley* (2005), Leigh addressed the history of two school districts in the greater Cincinnati metropolitan area and provided information about Black teachers in those districts based on interview data. She employed Critical Race Theory to analyze the segregation of the Lincoln Heights School District prior to 1954 and its assimilation into the predominately-White Princeton School District following the Brown decision. Of particular interest in this text was the discussion of interest convergence, a term meaning that White support of racial equality is predicated on such policies being advantageous to their own interests, or at least not disrupting the status quo. Insightful and a good model of theory application to historical events, *Fly in the Ointment* focused on a very tiny part of the Ohio Valley. In addition, the focus was on an urban area and the African American teachers featured in the book were not working between 1875 and 1915.

Taylor's book, *Frontiers of Freedom: Cincinnati's Black Community, 1802-1868* was also published in 2005 and focused on the city of Cincinnati. In neo-revisionist style, this text explored the "maturation of the black community" instead of "revisiting how *unfree* African Americans were in Cincinnati" (p. 2). Education was an important element in that maturation process, but it was not a central theme in Taylor's analysis of the Black community's regeneration after the 1841 race riots. The few pages devoted to the discussion of teachers of African Americans mentioned few names and indicated the corps of individuals teaching Blacks in the first half of the 19th century was

predominantly White. *Frontiers of Freedom* was an excellent study, but one of a place and time outside the boundaries of this research.

A host of volumes dealing with county and city history exists in addition to books dealing with regional and state history. These texts, often written by prominent local citizens or experts in local lore, frequently appeared to be exercises in trying to list on a page of text as many names as possible of friends, neighbors, and individuals of stature. The authors rarely described topics in detail and the majority of them tended to ignore the African American communities in the vicinity. However, they were important sources of local resources and industry, of names of schools and teachers, of clues about local events and traditions, and of information about educational personnel, policy, and practice. Some examples that were pertinent to learning about the bounded system of this research were *History of Washington County Pennsylvania* by Earle R. Forrest (1926), *The Old and New Monongahela* (1893) by J. S. Van Voorhis, *Monongahela City Centennial* (1895) by Chill W. Hazzard, *Athens, Ohio: The Village Years* (1997) by Robert L. Daniel, *Getting to Know Athens County* (1984) by Elizabeth Grover Beatty and Marjorie S. Stone, *Multiracial Pioneers of the Ohio Valley from the Beginning to 1900: Statistical Information* (1999) by Benjamin F. Bain, *Historical Hand-Atlas Illustrated Containing...Outline Maps and Histories of Wood and Pleasants Counties, West Virginia* (1882) published by H. H. Hardesty and Company, and *History of West Virginia Old and New in One Volume* (1923) by James Morton Callahan.

The preceding review of the history of African American education indicated that the major foci and themes of the literature within the field did not include in any



significant way northern African American females of the post-Reconstruction period, particularly those from small to mid-sized communities in the upper Ohio River Valley. Research related to such women would be helpful and would fit within the thrust of current scholarship on the subject.

### **American Women**

The historiography of women's studies has several periods despite its relatively short lifespan. Linda Kerber and Jane De Hart (2004) provided an updated historiography to Gerda Lerner's 1979 analysis of how women's history has been written. They indicated that initially women sought to collect their stories together so future generations would not forget their efforts. Similar to the first stage of the historiography of African American educational history discussed by V. P. Franklin (1978), women such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony (1881) "energetically collected evidence of the women's movement of their own time" (p. 2) in order to tell their story. This stage also included the stories of notable women who were exceptional, even deviant according to Lerner (1979, 2005), who rarely represented the average woman. Fifty years after Stanton and Anthony published their book, Mary Beard decided to edit a series called *America through Women's Eyes* (1933) in order to inject women's thought and experience into history texts. Lerner called this stage compensatory history and characterized it as a time when historians, like Diogenes, wandered the land with a lantern in hand seeking to identify women and their works. Lerner delineated three more stages: contribution history, a period of reconstruction of historical generalizations and the reconfiguration of the historical narratives, and a phase of challenging how historians

construct meaning. In the contributions stage, authors traced “the positive achievements of women, their social role, and their contributions to community life” (Lerner, 2005, p. 2). The third stage shifted the focus of women’s history from descriptions “of the conditions of women written from the perspective of male sources” to asking questions “about the actual experience of women in the past” (Lerner, 1979, p. 153). Similar to revisionist writing in the history of education and of Black education, this stage predominated in the 1970s and 1980s and encompassed work based on women’s own writing in the form of diaries, journals, letters, and oral histories. The final stage questioned conventional periodization of history that employs wars and presidential administrations as guideposts, analyzed how “difference in the sexes operates to shape the construction of meaning” (Kerber & De Hart, 2004. p. 3), and called for authors to seek more sophisticated interpretations of social phenomena than those of previous writers. This stage is analogous to neorevisionist and postmodern phases in the historiography of educational history delineated by Rousmaniere (2004). Kerber and De Hart did not suggest additional stages to their account of the study of women’s history.

Lerner (1979, 2005) found that the foci of much of women’s historical scholarship was the women’s rights movement, women’s oppression, women’s place and status in society, biography, women’s work, achievements, and reform efforts, the social relations of the sexes, and how women of different races and classes experience social phenomena. In reading and thinking about the body of work in the field, she asked that those interpreting women’s literature consider the “consciousness” of the women and men authoring the work and that of the women each describes. She delineated three types

of consciousness: male-defined, woman-oriented, and woman-defined. Feminist thought begins with the woman-defined consciousness and “encompasses the active assertion of the rights and grievances of women” (2005, p. 116). These considerations were part of the review and analysis of literature that follows. Three subcategories of literature that related to the research conducted for this dissertation were selected for review: African American women, northern African American women, and African American female teachers. The investigation of scholarship in these areas was difficult at times to categorize. Several of the works discussed crossed the boundaries and could have been placed in all or more than one of the categories. The researcher decided to place general treatments of African American women in the first grouping, scholarship that contained at least some northern Black women in the second category, and work that dealt primarily with teachers in the final section. The primary objective in this review was to determine if African American female teachers of the upper Ohio River Valley were represented in the literature. Their presence was minimal at best.

### *African American Women*

If the study of women for academic purposes is new (Lerner, 1979, 2005; Woloch, 2002b), then the study of African American women, a subcategory of this general field, is even newer (Collier-Thomas & Franklin, 2001; Hull & Smith, 1982; Lerner, 1975, 1979, 2005). Black women have often been regarded as the least important among an insignificant population (Lerner, 1979, 2005) and the records of their lives were discarded or buried in obscure places (Hine & Thompson, 1998; Lerner, 1979, 2005). As the literature in this field developed after 1970, it became “richer and more

complex” (Lerner, 2005, p. 48). Northern African American women have a limited presence in this literature in part because the vast majority of Black women lived in the South until the mid-20th century, and a more modest majority still does (McKinnon, 2003). As noted in chapter 1, few if any book-length biographies of Black women were available before 1975 (Lerner 1979, 2005; Perkins, 1987). Several have been written in recent years, but only Perkins’ treatment of Fanny Jackson Coppin related the story of a northern Black teacher of the post-Reconstruction era. Other biographies have been about businesswomen (Maggie Walker, Madame C. J Walker), more recent teachers (Marva Collins, Ruth Wright Hayre), southern educators (Mary McLeod Bethune, Anna Julia Cooper), athletes (Althea Gibson, Wilma Rudolph), and intriguing characters and leaders (Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott King, Amanda America Dickson, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth). Several anthologies of profiles or short biographical sketches provided glimpses into the lives of African American women living in the North and border states, but such works included few northern Black teachers. *Black Leaders of the Nineteenth Century* edited by Leon Litwack and August Meier (1988), *Epic Lives: One Hundred Black Women Who Made a Difference* edited by Jessie Carney Smith (1993), *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia* edited by Darlene Clark Hine, Elsa Barkley Brown, and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn (1993), and *Portraits of African American Life Since 1865* edited by Nina Mjagkij (2003) are examples of this type of collection. *Black Leaders*, assembled to complement two similar collections of essays dealing with African American leaders, featured three women. The other 13 chapters feature males. Harriet Tubman, Mary Ann Shadd, and Mary Church Terrell were the three women included in

the book. Two of these women were educators. Of the two educators, Shadd had significant northern teaching experience. Although Terrell received the bulk of her education in Ohio (Yellow Springs and Oberlin) and taught two years at both Wilberforce University and the Preparatory School for Colored Youth in Washington, DC, her significant work was as a lecturer, suffragist, and Black women's club leader (Harley, 1988). Two conclusions that can be drawn from the mix of female (3) and male (13) entries in this volume were that as of 1988 there were few scholars researching and writing about Black women and/or few 19th-century Black women were considered leaders.

*Epic Lives* on the other hand is entirely about women, 100 of them. The contributors presented these women as leaders in 4- to 10- page biographies. At least 20 of them were teachers, educators, or college presidents. The mix of featured women was weighted toward those born in the 20th century, but Anna Julia Cooper, Mary McLeod Bethune, Ellen Craft, Susie King Taylor, Mary Church Terrell, and Maggie Walker were all included. This collection fits in Lerner's contributions phase of women's history. It serves to raise awareness about specific women and their accomplishments. As the title suggests, most of the women included in the volume are notable or extraordinary. Editor Smith did not select profiles of any of the common teachers of the upper Ohio River Valley for her book.

The two-volume collection edited by Hine, Brown, and Terborg-Penn also focused entirely on women. It held information related to organizations, institutions, and movements as well as hundreds of biographical sketches about Black women. Some

entries, like Maggie Walker's, dealt with women who taught for a period but who were not primarily known for work in the field of education. The exact number of such women included in this work was not found. However, it was likely that there were many because 19th-century women of ideas and action, White or Black, frequently planned to teach in order to get an education. Once secured, that education could propel them down other career paths (Elsbree, 1939; Herbst, 1989). The editors categorized 113 of the women included in the collection as educators. Of the women in this group, only 36 were working during the post-Reconstruction period and even fewer were from Ohio, Pennsylvania, or West Virginia. Hallie Quinn Brown, Josephine Beall Willson Bruce, Olivia America Davidson, Sarah Jane Woodson Early, and a host of Oberlin alumnae had connections to Ohio during the period. Of this group, only Davidson (who later became Mrs. Booker T. Washington) lived in the region designated for study by this research. Several profiles were of women who taught in eastern Pennsylvania, particularly the Philadelphia area. Susan Paul Vashon, who taught in Pittsburgh before the Civil War, appears to be the only teacher from western Pennsylvania included. Memphis Tennessee Garrison was the sole West Virginia entrant. Her career was lived out in the southern coalfield area of the state. Because references like this one reflect the accumulated scholarship on a subject at the time it was published, the inventory of the teachers included in it stands as evidence of the lack of scholarship dealing with African American female teachers in the upper Ohio River Valley.

Two selections in *Portraits of African American Life since 1865* edited by Nina Mjagkij (2003) focused on teachers. Butchart authored a chapter on the Highgate sisters,

Edmonia and Caroline. These two women from Syracuse, New York went south to teach the freed people and served the Black communities of Norfolk, Virginia, New Orleans, Louisiana, and Jackson and Canton, Mississippi. Betrayed by White men that they loved, the careers of both women ended tragically. Anna Julia Cooper was the subject of the other chapter dealing with an educator of the post-Reconstruction era. She received a college education at Oberlin College in Ohio and then moved to Washington, DC, to teach. The other 12 featured African Americans in this book were male (nine) or women who did not teach.

*Black Women in White America* edited by Lerner (1975) is not a collection of biographical sketches, but it is an anthology of documents written by Black women. These documents reveal a great deal about their authors' history, as well as their joys, sorrows, day-to-day experiences, and concerns. This was Lerner's goal. She wanted the women to speak for themselves and for readers to draw their own conclusions. Lerner divided the book into 10 sections based on themes in the history of Black women and provided background information to each. One is reserved for documents concerning education. With the exception of Maria Stewart, the authors of the documents included in that section were women regularly mentioned in other anthologies and books: Sarah Mapps Douglass, Fannie Jackson Coppin, Charlotte Forten, Susie King Taylor, Nannie Burroughs, and Mary McLeod Bethune. Selections from other women with teaching backgrounds were included in other sections. Ida B. Wells Barnett and Mary Church Terrell were two of them. Lerner was aware of the lack of documents from less notable women and acknowledged the book's middle class bias. In *Black Women in White*

*America*, Lerner has created an excellent reference that straddles both the compensatory and contributions phases of the historiography she categorized. It was an effort to present a woman-defined historical perspective. It speaks to the Black woman's history in general, but the voices of women from the bounded system of this research are missing.

The collections of biographical sketches and documents noted here included women who lived in the North. Their numbers, however, were few. A review of five books that focused on African American women and their world of work yielded similar results. *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* (1982) edited by Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith; *Woman's Legacy: Essays on Race, Sex, and Class in American History* (1982) by Bettina Aptheker; *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church 1880-1920* (1993) by Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham; *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (1995) by Jacqueline Jones; and *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers During the Jim Crow Era* (1996) by Stephanie Shaw were valuable contributions to African American women's history. However, as a group they failed to represent adequately post-Reconstruction, Black teachers of the upper Ohio River Valley.

*But Some of Us Are Brave* was an edited collection of essays, course notes, bibliographies, and reprinted documents that work together to inform individuals who "do research and teach about Black women" (Hull & Smith, 1982, p. xxxi). It served to inform all interested parties, from the uninitiated to the most highly qualified scholar, of issues, attitudes and materials related to understanding Black women. The purpose of the



book was to advance the teaching of Black women's studies. Most of the contributors were teachers, and women's roles as teachers in various capacities were evident in this collection. It provided stimulating ideas that invited self-reflection and advanced personal growth. However, the book did not include historical or biographical treatments of women engaged in particular professions or associated with specific regions of the country.

Another set of essays, in this case all by the same author, *Woman's Legacy*, offered critical analyses of Black women's interactions with the dominant culture in the political, labor, and domestic arenas. Aptheker (1982) discussed connections between racism and male supremacy and Black women's "magnificent heritage of resistance and resilience" (p. 151) in light of them. She was an avowed Marxist and deliberated from a "dialectical, historical-materialist mode of analysis" (p. 7). Women in the role of teachers pervade this collection of papers. Yet, Black women in the labor force as paid instructors of children, youth, or adults, do not. The teachers that were mentioned are there because of their roles in other movements and programs. Aptheker's essay on professional women focused on Black women in medicine and the law. Other essays revolved around the beginnings of the feminist movement through the abolition effort, the suffrage and anti-lynching campaigns, the nature and impact of domestic servitude, and the "Moynihan myth" of Black women as controlling figures in the family structure. These treatises were helpful in thinking about African American women's position within society and the prejudice they encountered in the world of work, but again they lacked the specificity to northern African American teachers sought by this researcher.

Higginbotham's book complemented the contributions of *But Some of Us Are Brave* and *Woman's Legacy*. In it, she argued, "women were crucial to broadening the public arm of the church and making it the most powerful institution of racial self-help in the African American community" (p. 1). The focus of the study was the manner in which Black women members of the National Baptist Convention and its auxiliary Woman's Convention learned leadership roles, provided services to African Americans in need, developed a feminist theology, and protested injustice. Educated women, many of whom were teachers, ministers' wives, and other professionals were key figures in this movement. Higginbotham paid significant attention to the importance of education to the Black community, women's access to higher education, and the establishment in 1909 of the National Training School for Women and Girls (NTSWG) under the leadership of Nannie Helen Burroughs. The NTSWG was the first school for Black women owned by Black women and it stood as visible evidence of women's ability to organize, raise funds for, and execute a plan of major proportion. This volume was helpful to the understanding of the complexity of Black women's roles and their concerted effort to form "a black collective will" (p. 228) through both accommodation and critical discourse. However, its focus was not on teachers per se.

Jones' contribution (1995) dealt primarily with the double discrimination faced by Black women in the world of work from slavery in the early 1800s to the writing of the first edition of *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow* in 1985. She added an epilogue to the 1995 version that continued the same message. While dealing with discrimination on two fronts, Black women faced attitudinal inequality that congratulated White women for

fostering “family values” when they stayed home to care for children and elders but chastised Black women as lazy, dependent, or shiftless for doing the same. Jones acknowledged that the inclusion of Black teachers in her work was because “their labors benefited their less well-to-do sisters” (p. 8). Their presence in this text therefore was limited. Several were mentioned by name, and there were some general references to the work of African American teachers, but those references were usually to southern women.

*What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do* (1996) more clearly focused on teachers, many of whom were working in northern schools. In fact, the majority of professional women studied by Shaw were either teachers or nurses. Her treatment offered snapshots of life across three generations as it would have been for many northern Black women, their daughters and granddaughters. Shaw’s thesis that women of the post-Reconstruction period were groomed by their families, their communities, and their schools to assume leadership roles and help lift up the race, guided her analysis of Black professional women as they navigated life in Jim Crow America. Shaw chose to call the attitudes and values that these women assimilated socially responsible individualism. Socially responsible individualism was an achievement orientation gained from “child-rearing strategies that included much attention to providing the mental (attitudinal) as well as the material preparation necessary to undertake whatever task was at hand (p. 2). It was a process of teaching women to be individuals with an obligation to their communities. Taking a stand that places this book in Lerner’s third stage of historiography, Shaw sought to “refigure [the] history of the leadership of black women professionals so as to

reveal both the roots of their community commitment and the process of their becoming the leaders they became (p. 4). Following Shaw's conclusion, there is an appendix of more than 40 biographical sketches of women she studied as part of her research. Many were teachers and at least five of them were from the North. Therefore, the author devised the concept of socially responsible individualism based on a sample that included women from the North. Additional examples brought to light by this dissertation research may provide support for Shaw's conclusions.

The last group of books to consider in this section is comprehensive histories of American women. Some deal specifically with African American women. *A Shining Thread of Hope: The History of Black Women in America* (1998) is one of many of this type either fully or partially authored by Darlene Clark Hine. Co-authored with Kathleen Thompson, *A Shining Thread of Hope* was chosen for discussion as a representative of both Hine's body of work and this category of books in general. It offers an overview of several hundred years of history beginning in 1619 at Jamestown and ending with the successes and issues of Black women living in the 1990s. The analysis interwoven with the narrative illuminates three themes within that history: the development of community, the priority placed on education, and the individual, internal nature of the sense of self worth. The scholarship cuts across three of Lerner's categories of historiography: it is compensatory, it tells of a group of women's contributions, and the periodization revolves around pivotal points in the lives of Black women, not those of White male leaders while dispelling tired generalizations of its subjects. The scope of the book does not lend itself to the telling of in-depth stories of specific teachers. It does tell a poignant

story of women who have been teachers of one kind or another for generations. They have taught their children, especially their daughters, how to survive. Hine and Thompson conclude that the strength that African American women exhibit is not natural, it is learned, and “at a time when the problems of our society seem insoluble and the obstacles to peace and freedom insurmountable, all Americans have a great deal to learn from the history of black women in America” (p. 308).

Additional books of a general historical nature offer insight into the lives of Black women during specific periods in American history. However, they rarely provide more than a few paragraphs on any one person as they are intended to cover a wide swath. A few examples of this genre are: *Women’s America: Refocusing the Past* by Kerber and De Hart (2000), *Early American Women: A Documented History* compiled by Woloch (2002a), *America’s Women: 400 Years of Dolls, Drudges, Helpmates, and Heroines* by journalist Gail Collins (2003) and *Women in Modern America: A Brief History* by Lois W. Banner (2005). When putting these volumes together, authors often rely on synthesizing the research and writing of other historians and writers. In order for specific women to gain entrance in these volumes, someone must do the research to make the individuals known to their authors. Because research concerning African American teachers from the upper Ohio River Valley is weak, few such women are included in these surveys of women’s history.

The books described above are a cross-section of the many available dealing with African American women and their history. They bridge all four of Lerner’s categories of historiography from simply compensating for the lack of information about them to

challenging the way in which women construct meaning in their lives. Many of them include references to northern women who were teachers, but these Black women were rarely from the upper Ohio River Valley. In order to narrow the focus to this specific group, a review of literature directed at the study of northern Black women follows.

### *Northern African American Women*

Although the amount of work within the fields of women's history and African American history is increasing, research and writing dealing specifically with northern and border state African American women was scarce. Books highlighting individuals from particular states that included some of their Black citizens were available. *Builders of Ohio: A Biographical History* edited by Warren Van Tine and Michael Pierce was one example of that type of literature. However, many of these were compilations of brief biographies written for children or young adults. One exception was *Missing Chapters: West Virginia Women in History* compiled by Barbara Matz and Janet Craig for the West Virginia Women's Commission (1983). This volume contained carefully researched articles about nine women from West Virginia. The Commission wished to dispel the stereotype of West Virginia females as "barefoot, uneducated girls and mamas at once eternally strong, yet powerless to control their own fate" (p. *iii*). All nine of the women were alive during the post-Reconstruction period, the youngest entering the world in 1899. Of the women included, two were professional teachers. Fannie Cobb Carter was one of the teachers and the sole Black woman in the book. Written by Kitty B. Frazier and Diana Simmons, Carter's story involved learning with the children of the homes in which her parents were servants, formal education at variety of schools including Storer

College, a friendship from youth with Booker T. Washington, and a long career begun and ended in Charleston, West Virginia. High points of Carter's career included 10 years of teaching and administering at the State Industrial Home for Colored Girls in Huntington, West Virginia, and 17 years of assisting Burroughs at the NTSWG in Washington, DC. Although her career took her to many locations in the Mountain State, she never taught within the region designated for study in this research. The article mentioned a school for Blacks in Parkersburg founded by "seven prominent colored men" (p. 41) and discussed West Virginia laws as they related to the education of Blacks, but did not name specific teachers from the Parkersburg area.

Some books about Black women focused on the cities in which they lived instead of states. Megan Taylor Shockley's *"We, Too, Are Americans:" African American Women in Detroit and Richmond, 1940-1954* (2004) is an example of such a book. It deals with working Black women during the World War II era and the gendered roots of the modern civil rights movement. Teachers were a part of the protest effort in the two cities under study, but the primary focus was on how urban women negotiated and constructed a new definition of their citizenship. The discussion of how these women created new meanings places this book in Lerner's fourth and most sophisticated phase of women's history. Its contribution to women's history is significant but it does not advance the understanding of specific Black women in smaller communities from an earlier era.

Books with a defined interest in specific causes, issues, organizations, and occupations frequently addressed Black women in the North. *"Doers of the Word;"*

*African-American Women Speakers and Writers in the North* by Carla L. Peterson is an example of such a volume. Peterson, although not a historian, has at the heart of her effort the work of 19th century, northern women, many of whom were teachers. Frances E. Watkins Harper, Charlotte Forten, and Maria Stewart were three of them. Nina Mjagkij, whose area of expertise is the history of the Black YMCA, co-edited a book with Margaret Spratt that also includes chapters dealing with the YWCA and its impact on women in urban areas. *Men and Women Adrift: The YMCA and the YWCA in the City* (1997) is an additional example of scholarship that relates to northern women, some of whom used the services or provided them at one of these organizations. *The Chicago Black Renaissance and Women's Activism* by Anne Meis Knupfer (2006) focuses on urban Black women, some of them teachers, working for the betterment of their community and the support of the arts from 1930 to 1955. Many northern women of the 19th century were involved in the abolition movement or other social reform efforts. Hundreds of books have been written about these causes. Three of note that discussed northern women's roles in abolition were: *Sister Societies: Women's Antislavery Organizations in Antebellum America* by Beth A. Salerno (2005), *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, and Women's Political Identity* by Susan Zaeske, and *American Abolitionists* by Stanley Harrold (2001). Books, book chapters, and articles like these that focus on northern women's organizations and activities add to the knowledge base and are likely to increase reader understanding of women's lives and their contributions to society. However, scholarship in these specialty areas is not meant to recount the lives of specific Black women teachers of the upper Ohio River Valley.



### *African American Female Teachers*

As with northern African American women in general, information specific to Black teachers was scattered across general texts dealing with the history of education, African American education, women's history, and African American history.

*Women Educators in the United States, 1820-1993: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook* edited by Maxine Schwartz Seller contains the stories of a handful of Black teachers. The text included 66 profiles of women who were teachers, school administrators, or educators in situations other than the public school classroom. To Seller these women's stories were important by themselves, but they also represented the stories of many other women. She found several reasons for their entrance into the career. Most of them became teachers because they needed or wanted an income and few other "respectable" jobs were open to them. Other reasons included the love of teaching and learning, and ideological motives such as religious, social, and political activism. In considering the biographies together, Seller detected the following themes running throughout them:

1. Most of the women pursued their own education with passion and determination.
2. They were gifted learners and teachers.
3. They had an ability to inspire the confidence of others
4. They demonstrated ingenuity in overcoming personal and professional difficulties.

5. They appeared to have considerable energy and versatility that enabled them to hold multiple jobs either sequentially or simultaneously.
6. They experienced discrimination, hardship, and family conflict because of their educations and careers.

In addition to these themes, Seller indicated that the concept of the woman's sphere that was still alive in the latter half of the 19th century was not applied universally to all women. She noted:

the biographies show that most middle-class white educators and, to a lesser extent, working-class and minority women faced social pressure to forgo higher education or paid employment and stay at home to fulfill their traditional obligations as daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers (p. *xvi*).

Of the 66 women whose lives were chronicled in this volume, 34 never married and only 14 “combined marriage (and often motherhood) with professional life for significant periods of time” (p. *xvii*). Seller admitted that this was a much higher percentage (more than 50%) than was true of women of similar status and education. With that in mind, it could be that this group of women failed to represent women educators in other ways as well. Of the 10 Black women profiled, two, Fanny Jackson Coppin and Sarah Mapps Douglass, were teachers north of the Mason–Dixon Line. Both of these women taught in Philadelphia. Their experiences may represent those of similar women of the post-Reconstruction era, but because specific women and locations make for unique situations, it is unlikely that they tell the complete story of female teachers in the upper Ohio River Valley.

*The Work of Teachers in America: A Social History through Stories* (1997) edited by Rosetta Marantz Cohen and Samuel Scheer is a collection of reprinted primary source documents and short stories from a cross-section of teachers, male and female, intertwined with the authors' provision of contextual material and commentary. The editors included Black teachers: Daniel Payne, Charlotte Forten, Charles Chesnutt, and W. E. B. DuBois were each allotted spaces in the book. Other selections dealt with individuals who taught African American children (Patri, Kozol). However, with the exception of Forten, the lens through which teaching by and for African Americans was viewed was male.

Hoffman's *Woman's "True" Profession: Voices from the History of Teaching* (2003) is similar in format to *The Work of Teachers in America*. It is different in that the perspective is decidedly feminine. Letters, journal entries, and short stories interspersed with background information and interpretive thoughts by Hoffman make up the book. The author and editor provided an entire chapter, nearly one third of the book, about teachers in the South during and immediately after the Civil War. It included material by Susie King Taylor, Charlotte Forten, and Sara Stanley. Chesnutt's "The March of Progress" was also there and is the only male contribution. Yet, the stories of White women who went south to aide the freed people predominated. Additional entries by Fanny Jackson Coppin and Frances O. Grant rounded out the selection of Black female voices in this book. Hoffman did an admirable job of balancing the voices included in this book and her commentary added to the understanding of the experiences of teachers from diverse backgrounds. Several notable Black graduates of Oberlin were part of the

discussion. However, the voices of African American women from the upper Ohio River Valley were not present.

*Teach the Nation: Public School, Racial Uplift, and Women's Writing in the 1890s* by Anne-Elizabeth Murdy (2003) sought to connect educators with literary critics in order to create a conversation that suggests ways that “literary history might help us enhance current feminist and anti-racist pedagogies” (p. 12). The literature discussed is that of the 1890s. The teachers and educating included here have a strong southern flavor, although the northern voice comes through in the discussion of work by women such as Frances E. Watkins Harper. This book questions how literature and education are connected and how definitions of teaching and schooling might be constructed with knowledge of their historical context. Its primary focus was not women's history, however. It offered insights into teaching, schools and teachers of the late 19th century, but the book's purpose was to change pedagogy not record the lives of women.

Black teachers in the North have not been highly visible in the literature. Perkins sought to change that. Known primarily for her research concerning Fanny Jackson Coppin and The Institute for Colored Youth (ICY), Perkins also authored “Black Feminism and ‘Race Uplift,’ 1890-1900” (1981), *For the Good of the Race: Married African-American Academics-A Historical Perspective* (1997), and “The History of Blacks in Teaching: Growth and Decline Within the Profession” (1989) in addition to *Fanny Jackson Coppin and the Institute for Colored Youth, 1865-1902* (1987). Coppin, an Oberlin graduate and principal of ICY for over thirty years, lived most of her life on the East Coast: Washington, DC, New Bedford, Massachusetts, Newport, Rhode Island,

and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The chapter dealing with Blacks and teaching in Donald Warren's *American Teachers; Stories of a Profession at Work* (1989) is instructive but has only a few paragraphs describing northern education and educators between the Civil War and World War I. The other two pieces of work address issues of importance to teachers' lives, but they are not biographical in focus.

African American teachers working in Ohio schools in the towns of Columbus and Albany have been the subject of the work of Adah Ward Randolph. Her dissertation (1996) was a historical case study of Champion Avenue School, a northern de facto segregated institution. Her focus was on changes occurring within the school between 1910 and 1996. In addition she examined how that change affected the school's relationship with the surrounding African American community. Columbus remained a site of interest for her research as she authored a chapter for *Sisters of the Academy: Emergent Black Women Scholars in Higher Education* edited by Mabokela and Green (2001). The chapter was entitled "Fear of Miscegenation: Black Women Educators in Columbus, Ohio (1898-1909)." It concluded that fears of Black women's influence on White children in mixed race schools poisoned many Whites perceptions of "the best and brightest" (p. 24) Black women of the community. These fears caused the Columbus Board of Education to re-segregate their schools and put the African American teachers where they believed "they could do the most good" (p. 25): in a separate school just for Black children. An additional contribution by Ward Randolph illuminated the work of Thomas Jefferson Ferguson at Albany Enterprise Academy (2003). In addition to its focus on a Black male and an institution, the chapter which appeared in *Cultural Capital*

*and Black Education: African American Communities and the Funding of Black Schooling, 1865 to the Present* informed its readers about Ohio school law and the regional support networks employed to found and maintain the academy. Outside of the females who attended Albany Enterprise Academy, few Black women had major roles in this story.

Rousmaniere (2005) provided a synopsis of the history of educators in “In Search of a Profession: A History of American Teachers” as context for a chapter in a book that dealt with teaching in the 21st century. She included a brief discussion of Black women in this work, and Black women had roles in her book *City Teachers: Teaching and School Reform in Historical Perspective* (1997), but few were mentioned by name. Detailing their many accomplishments was not within the scope or reflective of the purpose of either piece of scholarship.

A recent (2006) dissertation by Linda Gayle Rodgers Williams entitled *Weaving between the Lives: Life Stories of Seven African American Female Teachers in Detroit, 1865-1997*, shed light on organizations and institutions that made up teacher support networks. Family, church, and social organizations were the key entities in those networks. They were strong enough to influence teachers’ decisions to enter the field and to stay in the classroom. The researcher relied on biographical and historical methods to build cases that Williams compared and analyzed to uncover themes running through the women’s stories. Although the study involved northern Black female teachers, they were working in an urban district and some of them taught late into the 20th century. The

findings, however, were significant and worthy of comparison with other samples in similar and dissimilar communities.

Gretchen Duling reformatted her 1993 dissertation into a book entitled *Oral Life Histories of One-Room Schoolhouse Teachers: Voices from the Recitation Bench* (1997). Her research focused on teachers in Gallia County, Ohio. Gallia County is in southeast Ohio and at the southern end of the upper Ohio River Valley. Her review of the literature concluded that “more attention to specific geographical regions” within traditionally delineated areas such as “the Midwest” was needed in order to “more fully understand the history of education and the history of teaching and teacher’s lives in the United States”(p. 2). While this research had qualities of both the compensatory and the contribution categories of women’s history in that it focused on the accomplishments of a group of underrepresented teachers and their activities within their communities, it also questioned traditional geographic boundaries. That added some flavor of Lerner’s most sophisticated phase of women’s history to the study. Duling’s research employed oral history methodology in order to ascertain what one-room schoolhouses were like in mid-20th century, rural, southeastern Ohio. She also wanted to determine if teachers in these schools were unique. Two of the 14 teachers Duling interviewed were African American; two were male. Her findings allowed her to present rich descriptions of the schools and to conclude that the teachers were unique in their universal positive attitude about their education in one-room schools. They also felt prepared and supported in their effort as teachers. This research was conducted with living (at the time) subjects who were

teaching in the early to mid-20th century. It left a hole in the literature for women of that region, especially Black women, who taught at an earlier time.

The field of women's history has experienced tremendous growth in the volume and sophistication of research being conducted by scholars within the discipline. Contributors to the literature have risen from naming women and describing events to seeking new conceptual frameworks for approaching how all scholars write history. As a research discipline, women's history is still developing. Lerner (2005) stated that "it is perfectly understandable that, after centuries of neglect of the role of women in history, compensatory questions and those concerning women's contributions will and must be asked" (p. 121). This review of women's history did not locate substantive literature concerning post-Reconstruction, African American women from the upper Ohio River Valley. Therefore, a compensatory study that describes and analyzes the educational experiences of these underrepresented women would make a contribution to the body of literature concerning women in American history.

### **Conclusion**

The review of literature just completed was intended to locate and examine scholarship concerning the lives and educational experiences of African American female teachers from the late 19th and early 20th centuries and to position this researcher's study so that it had the potential to contribute to that scholarship. Just as Williams (2005) found her search for Black voices frustrating, this review turned up a similar void. Little was found in the available literature that addressed the lives of Black women who taught during the post-Reconstruction era in small to mid-sized cities and towns in the North.



Even less was uncovered that captured their voices and spirit. The literature dealing with American education in general provided only cursory mention of the Black experience in schooling before the First World War. If authors mentioned Black female teachers at all, they tended to discuss them collectively as a small, pitiable group (Lerner, 1979, 2005). If they profiled specific African American teachers of the period under study, it was usually one or two of a handful of women that included Charlotte Forten, Anna Julia Cooper, Mary Church Terrell, Fanny Jackson Coppin, Ida B. Wells, and Mary McLeod Bethune. Exploration of texts in the field of African American educational history revealed substantially more about the education of Blacks in the South and urban North, but added few additional names to the list of women who contributed to the effort. This reviewer found the literature dealing with American women teachers, specifically Black teachers, lacking as well. Women's historians, scholars in a relatively new field, have begun to address Black women, especially teachers, as these women were likely to have left records. However, to date, historians have chronicled few of their lives. The army of teachers included several thousand Black females in the closing quarter of the 19th century and the early 20th century. Their presence in the current literature was negligible and their individual service and quiet heroics left largely untold, particularly those of the upper Ohio River Valley.

### CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Choices concerning the design and methodology of research follow from the selection of a topic that has a place firmly grounded in the literature (Creswell, 1998; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Hays, 2004; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000; Yin, 2003b). One of two major approaches can be taken to the research design: a quantitative approach or a qualitative approach. The decision to employ one approach, and not the other, depends on the purpose of the research and the role the researcher desires to take (Berg, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000; Patton, 2002). “Quantitative researchers seek explanations and predictions that will generalize to other persons and places” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 6) and employ “the positivist or scientific paradigm which leads us to regard the world as made up of observable, measurable facts” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 6). They desire objectivity and work to protect their subjects and data from exposure to the researcher’s personal values and biases. On the other hand, qualitative researchers work with “multiple, socially constructed realities” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 6) that can not be broken down into “discrete variables”(Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 6). They seek to interpret and understand participants or actors (Stake’s choice of terms for subjects) in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) and to become the research instrument. Within each of these approaches, there are many traditions of inquiry that further guide the researcher through the design, execution, and completion of a sound study (Berg, 2001; Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Patton, 2002).

Scholars of qualitative research group traditions of inquiry in a multitude of ways. Creswell (1998) provided a table in his book *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions* that lists nine different categories of traditions within the fields of the social sciences (p. 6). These groupings ranged in number from as many as the seven delineated by both Lancy (1993) and Denzin and Lincoln (1994), to as few as three in the listings of Miles and Huberman (1994) and Slife and Williams (1995). Knowledge of these various and sometimes overlapping traditions allows the researcher to “learn more about how to proceed and how to narrow [the] choice of which tradition to use” (Creswell, 1998, p. 40). The focus of this chapter is on the process and product of this researcher’s decision to conduct a qualitative, historical, intrinsic, embedded single-case case study. In addition, it discusses the methodology for the execution of the study and for the presentation of its results.

### **Overall Approach and Rationale**

Two levels of decisions took place in order to select the overall approach to the design of this research. First, consideration was made of whether a quantitative or a qualitative approach was best suited to its purpose and core research questions. Following the decision to pursue the qualitative approach, several traditions within that field were reviewed and analyzed to bring further definition and procedural direction to this research. The traditions of inquiry that were considered as options for this next step in the design process were biography, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study. The case study tradition was chosen as the most effective way of conducting this research given its goals and limitations. The rationale for these two decisions follows.

### *Qualitative Methodology*

In comparing the quantitative and qualitative research processes, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) pointed out that both types of researchers “use similar elements in their work” (p. 5). They added:

They state a purpose, pose a problem or raise a question, define a research population, develop a time frame, collect and analyze data, and present outcomes. They also rely (explicitly or implicitly) on a theoretical framework and are concerned with rigor. Nonetheless, how researchers go about putting these elements together makes for distinctive differences in both the process and the final product (p. 5).

Arrangement of the elements is dependent on the researcher’s perspective concerning the nature of reality (ontology), the manner in which the inquirer comes to know something (epistemology), and what knowledge she believes is of value (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000). The assumptions delineated by Glesne and Peshkin (1992) that guide the decision to engage in quantitative or qualitative research and the arrangement of the aforementioned elements can be viewed in Table 3.1.

Emanating from human disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, history, philosophy, and literary criticism, the qualitative approach to research has recently become more widely used and accepted as a form of rigorous research (Berg, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000; Marshall & Rossman,

1999; Stake, 1995). Not easily defined, the approach is “a complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts, and assumptions” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 1).

<b>Quantitative Mode</b>	<b>Qualitative Mode</b>
<p><b>Assumptions</b></p> <p>Social facts have objective reality  Primacy of method  Variables can be identified and relationships measured  Etic (outsider's point of view)</p> <p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>Generalizability  Prediction  Causal explanations</p> <p><b>Approach</b></p> <p>Begins with hypotheses and theories</p> <p>Manipulation and control  Uses formal instruments  Experimentation  Deductive  Component analysis  Seeks consensus, the norm  Reduces data to numerical indices  Abstract language in write-up</p> <p><b>Researcher Role</b></p> <p>Detachment and impartiality  Objective portrayal</p>	<p>Reality is socially constructed  Primacy of subject matter  Variables are complex, interwoven, and difficult to measure  Emic (insider's point of view)</p> <p>Contextualization  Interpretation  Understanding actor's perspectives</p> <p>Ends with hypotheses and grounded theory  Emergence and portrayal  Researcher as instrument  Naturalistic  Inductive  Searches for patterns  Seeks pluralism, complexity  Makes minor use of numerical indices  Descriptive write-up</p> <p>Personal involvement and partiality  Empathetic understanding</p>

*Table 3.1.* Predispositions of quantitative and qualitative modes of inquiry.

Adapted from Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p. 7).

Fundamental to the typical qualitative researcher's worldview is the belief that truth is subjective and socially constructed (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The discovery and interpretation of unique cases, the outliers in quantitative approaches, is important, meaningful, and sometimes an objective of the research (Hays, 2004). "Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). They also recognize that the person conducting research shapes it and should make no pretense otherwise (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Direct involvement with participants is routine as the researcher observes, interviews, and/or reviews documents in her attempt to "show the complexity, the contradictions, and the sensibility of social interaction" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 7). This characteristic is considered a strength of the qualitative approach. Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991) have indicated that the "close reading" of data by one researcher can be an advantage in that filtering all information through one brain means "the interpretation of data can more easily take on a unified or holistic character" (p. 274). Methods and research questions can and often do change through the course of the research process as patterns and themes emerge from the data collected. In addition, as Glesne and Peshkin's table reproduced in Table 3.1 has demonstrated, the purpose of this type of research is interpretation and contextualization rather than generalization. This is how David Williamson Shaffer and Ronald C. Serlin (2004) sum up the essence of the qualitative approach:

qualitative inquiry is useful for understanding causal connections in the lived experience of participants, and the inferences from qualitative analyses are typically used to provide a framework for more subtle and sophisticated interpretations (or reinterpretations) of data in other contexts. In this way, qualitative studies build upon one another, providing increasingly nuanced understanding of phenomena (p. 15).

The comparison of these two approaches to research pointed this researcher in the direction of the qualitative paradigm.

The topic, purpose, and research questions chosen to frame this study necessitated the selection of the qualitative approach to research and its array of traditions and methods. The subjects of the study were no longer living. They could not be acted upon, interviewed, surveyed, or tested. The purpose of this research was to explore and describe, to uncover unique cases that may or may not be similar to others of the time and place, and to seek to understand the cases within the context of these same boundaries. While this researcher did not observe or speak to the actors in their natural settings, those settings were studied as they were, visited, and photographed as they now are. The researcher interviewed several descendants of the teachers selected for examination. She also viewed and analyzed documents written by and about the actors. The exploratory intent called for a flexible approach that would accommodate uncovering unexpected data and themes. Furthermore, the researcher was the instrument through which the data and artifacts were collected, interpreted, and reconstructed as stories of lived experience. Finally, a sizable portion of the significance of this study was intended to be in the



detection of questions for further research opportunities, thereby helping to provide the “increasingly nuanced understanding” of African American teachers of the post-Reconstruction era that Shaffer and Serlin (2004) alluded to earlier. All of these matches between the characteristics delineated in scholarly descriptions of qualitative research and the researcher’s intent allowed the researcher confidently to place this study within the confines of the qualitative approach.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) warned that the qualitative approach “sprawls between and crosscuts all the human disciplines” (p. 4) and embraces strategies from many of them, including some from the physical sciences. A second layer of study and reflection was required in order to select a path through the forest of options related to research traditions. The decision to frame this study as a case study therefore warrants additional discussion.

### ***Case Study***

Scholars of qualitative research admit that it is difficult to define (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000; Van Maanen, 1999) and that it “privileges no single methodology over any other” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 3). Nor does it have “a distinctive set of methods that are entirely its own” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 3). Agreement by scholars on the number of, and labels for, research traditions within the qualitative approach has also proved difficult. As noted earlier, Creswell (1998) provided a chart of nine different typologies or classifications of such traditions within the social sciences. While overlap exists among the lists of these classifications, little agreement is evident. These myriad options are part of the

tremendous flexibility of the approach, but they also create confusion and open the approach to criticism from proponents of the quantitative approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Van Maanen, 1999; Walker & Evers, 1999). This researcher received guidance through what Denzin and Lincoln refer to as points of “tension and contradiction” (1994, p. 4) in the field by many practitioners of qualitative traditions who write, make presentations, and offer courses to lend their expertise to interested parties. John W. Creswell is one of those practitioners. In his effort to clarify and compare a variety of traditions, he consolidated many of the options into an array of five well-defined choices. This researcher elected to embrace one of those five traditions.

From his position of understanding, Creswell (1998) analyzed the work of 15 or more qualitative research scholars and reduced to five the “baffling number of choices of traditions” (p. 4). Biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study were the traditions that he believed to be representative of the entire approach. He selected these five traditions based on a set of criteria. This researcher selected the case study tradition from Creswell’s list because its framework was the most compatible with her purpose, questions, and desired reporting format. A brief look at the five choices helps to clarify this decision.

Creswell compared the five traditions across six dimensions: focus, discipline of origin, data collection, data analysis, narrative form, and reporting approaches. He began the differentiating process by explicating the central purpose or focus for each tradition:

the focus of biography is on the life of an individual, and the focus of a phenomenology is on understanding a concept or phenomenon. In grounded

theory, one develops a theory, whereas a portrait is drawn of a cultural group or people in an ethnography. In a case study, a specific case is examined (1998, pp. 37-38).

The intended focus of this study, African American women living and teaching between 1875 and 1915 in the upper Ohio River Valley states could have fit into more than one of these options. The research was to be an attempt to understand or gain knowledge about individuals from a particular cultural group living and working within a defined area at a specific time. The tradition of grounded theory was the only one eliminated from this first level of consideration because there was no intention on the part of the researcher to develop a theory. The next level or step in the process was to look at the disciplines that spawned each tradition. Creswell listed history as one of the disciplines of origin for biography, a definite component of this study. There was no clear connection to a discipline such as education, African American studies, or women's studies in any of the other options, although phenomenology, ethnography, and case study all sprang from fields within the social sciences. With no strong reason to eliminate a tradition based on this information, the researcher next considered data collection methods for each option. At this point, the traditions of phenomenology and ethnography were deemed inappropriate for this research. Phenomenology, a search for the essence of lived experience with an emphasis on the intentionality of consciousness of the participants (Creswell, 1998), and ethnography, "a description and interpretation of a culture or social group or system" (Creswell, 1998, p. 58) both addressed elements of this research: meaning in lived experience and a cultural group. However, both were

predicated on the collection of data in the present. Such data collection would have required the researcher to do extensive interviewing and observation, and in the case of ethnography, live among the participants for an extended period. The fact the subjects were deceased prevented the use of these traditions. Creswell (1998, p. 65) listed documents as sources of data for both biography and case study. Documents were a key source of data for this research. The decision to pursue a case study was made after returning to the consideration of the foci of the biography and case study traditions, and weighing the advantages and disadvantages of the preferred narrative forms and reporting approaches of each tradition. In the end, the researcher deemed biography inappropriate. Its focus on a single individual and a narrative form necessitating a “detailed picture” of that individual’s life (Creswell, 1998, p. 65) did not permit the desired flexibility to explore themes and relationships arising from the educational practices of several women. The limitations of time and resources also figured into this decision. It was unlikely that sufficient source material to tell a thorough story of a single woman could be located in the period set for this research. When the researcher coupled this reality with her desire to narrow the focus to one aspect of women’s lives, their educational experience, the case study tradition became the logical choice. Reflection on this process led to additional reading from a variety of authors and practitioners of the case study tradition in order to support and confirm this decision.

The case study tradition of qualitative research had many features that suggested it was the appropriate methodology for conducting this research in order to obtain the desired outcomes. It also had at least one feature that proved problematic. There appeared

to be consensus among scholars concerning appropriate topics for case study. Stake (1995) stated that for the fields of education and social service “people and programs” make interesting studies because they demonstrate both the “uniqueness and commonality” of the actors and situations we wish to understand (p. 1). Hays (2004) listed “people, topics, issues, or programs” (p. 218) as possible foci for a case study. Merriam (1988) enumerated “a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group” (1988, p. 9) that is selected “because it is an instance of some concern, issue, or hypotheses” (p. 10) as topics befitting a case study. “A case study is an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time” according to Creswell (1998, p. 61). The “bounded system” Creswell wrote of was defined by “time and place and is the case being studied—a program, an event, an activity, or individuals” (p. 61). Yin (2003b) offered that “the case study is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena” (p. 1). These statements supported engaging the case study tradition for this research, which sought to explore the educational experiences of a group of individuals, in this case female African American teachers, and it was “bounded” by time (1875- 1915) and place (parts of Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania).

Yin (2003b) suggested three additional criteria for deciding whether case study was the most advantageous choice for a research plan. They were:

1. The type of research question posed.
2. The extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events.

3. The degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events (p. 5).

Merriam (1988) offered three guideposts as well. The first two mirrored Yin's. The third point was "the desired end product" (Merriam, 1988, p. 9). Included in the discussion of that point was the implication that the end product should be "an intensive description and interpretation of a contemporary phenomenon" (Merriam, 1988, p. 9). It is the third point on these two lists that cast some doubt on the appropriateness of using the case study tradition for this research. Yin, Merriam, and others (Hays, 2004; Gillham, 2000; Scholz & Tietje, 2002) have contended that case study should have a contemporary focus. However, elaboration on the points of agreement and contention with regard to framing research into the case study form resulted in confirmation of case study as the appropriate tradition of inquiry for this research.

The nature of the research question, or its form, provided clues to the appropriateness of the tradition to be used (Yin, 2003b). Questions beginning with "who" or "where" were suggested as better suited to survey strategies used to describe the incidence or prevalence of a phenomenon or predict outcomes (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 2003b). "What" questions tended to lend themselves to exploratory studies that could employ a variety of strategies (Yin, 2003b). The central question for case study research was to begin with "how" or "why" because questions beginning with these two words "deal with operational links needing to be traced over time" (Yin, 2003b, p. 6). The central question to this research, "How did African American women who were teachers between 1875 and 1915 operate within the educational system of the upper Ohio River Valley states?," qualified as an indicator that the research was appropriate for a case

study format. It also sought connections between the units of study, African American women teachers, working within a system, the educational system, over time.

Consideration of points two and three of both Merriam's and Yin's criteria for deciding whether to conduct a case study caused some concern about a possible misalignment between the tradition and researcher intent. The second item referred to the amount of control over, and access to, behavioral events the researcher should have. Both Yin (2003b) and Merriam (1998) indicated that it was desirable for researchers to work in situations in which they had little or no control over participant behavior. This research focused on non-living actors, meaning the researcher had no control over the participants. The point of contention existed with the clarification of the initial statement. Yin (2003b) continued, "the case study is preferred in examining contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated" (p. 7). Point three of both lists, while differing in language, continued the theme that case study research should be contemporary, done about current people, institutions, and phenomena rather than dealing with the "dead" past (Hays, 2004; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 2003b). The objection to employing case study to non-living entities revolved around the inability to interview and observe the participants, something Yin believed necessary in order to fulfill the requirement that case study "deal with a full variety of evidence" (2003b, p. 8). Neither Stake (1995, 2006) nor Creswell (1998) were explicit in delineating present situations as the only purview of case study, but it was implicit in the nature of their discussions and examples that they were promoting a contemporary usage. On the other hand, Bogdan and Biklen (2003) and Van Maanen (1999) fully accepted historical topics as worthy of the tradition. In the final

analysis, the researcher selected the case study tradition as the guiding tradition for this research even though contemporary phenomenon and entities were the preferred focus of many scholars in the field.

No “research project is without limitations; there is no such thing as a perfectly designed study” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 42). This reality necessitated a compromise in order to accommodate the historical nature of this research. Although there was a preference for case study to be based on contemporary foci, Yin (2003b) did admit that case studies and histories could overlap. He also stated in a later section of his book *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (2003b) that “case studies need not always include direct, detailed observations as a source of evidence” (p. 15). Merriam (1988) added after her discussion of the three bulleted points to be used for decision making that “a fourth and probably deciding factor is whether a bounded system (Smith, 1979) can be identified as the focus of the investigation” (p. 9). A bounded system was the focus of this research. It was bounded by gender (female), race (African American), occupation (teacher), time (1875-1915), social structure (educational system), and place (upper Ohio Valley River states). In every other area of description put forth in this discussion, the case study tradition was a match with the researcher’s intent. Finally, some of the confusion over demarcations between traditions, strategies, and methodologies figured into this dilemma. Creswell (1998) did not include history as a research tradition. Yin (2003b) called his list of research options “strategies,” and included four alternatives to case study: history, archival analysis, survey, and experiment (p. 5). These options did not match up with Creswell’s list of five traditions and were



likely to be a result of the error Creswell was trying to correct—that there was great confusion about types of qualitative research and that its elements were often misunderstood. Van Maanen (1999) echoed this concern regarding the definition of case study. Decisions with regard to selection of one of Creswell’s traditions appeared to be at a level at least one step higher than Yin’s strategies, and historical case studies were found to be permissible within the tradition by some scholars (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Van Maanen, 1999). Therefore, it was deemed reasonable that this research could employ a historical strategy within the framework of the case study tradition.

### **Research Design**

Research design involved more than selecting a specific methodology for the study. It was the plan for the entire research process, and “it is the logic that links the data to be collected (and conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of study” (Yin, 2003b, p. 19). The case study tradition does not advance a single research design that must be followed (Van Maanen, 1999; Yin, 2003b), but there are basic steps that needed to be addressed as the investigator planned the course of the inquiry and presentation of results. Yin (2003b) cited Philliber, Schwab and Samsloss, who proposed four problems for the case study researcher to resolve in designing studies: “what questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect, and how to analyze the results” (p. 21). This section of the chapter deals with the design issues that led to the selection of the research questions and the questions that resulted from that process. The issues considered here are the research problem, the context of the study, the sub-type of case study chosen to frame the study, the participants or units of analysis whose stories were the focal point of

in the study, and the development of the primary, issue, and topical research questions. Subsequent sections include discussions of data collection, data analysis, and the presentation of results.

### ***Research Problem***

The literature reviewed in chapter 2 revealed that scholars have recorded little about northern, female African American teachers of the post-Reconstruction era. Such women were products and purveyors of an educational system that varied by location in its quality and commitment to Black citizens. This variation in quality, often marked by differences in the distribution of resources and in both public and private support of the African American community, suggested that a study of women from non-urban communities was in order. Such a study would aid understanding of the totality of the educational experience of African American women following the Civil War. The knowledge base regarding Black women teachers in the South and in northern urban areas of the post-Reconstruction period has been expanding in recent years. The problem that this research sought to address was the absence of feminine voices from small and mid-sized communities of the upper Ohio River Valley in that record. A “close reading” (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991) of women who worked in locations different from those more frequently studied offered data to scholars regarding the patterns of opportunity, experience, and practice of such women and allowed comparisons to be made with the known patterns of others across geographic boundaries.

### *Context of the Study*

Two levels of context were addressed in order to properly situate this research. First, there was the broad context of the qualities of life and the social forces at work during the designated period for the population of United States citizens in general, and African American citizens living in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia in particular. This larger context is treated in detail in chapter 4. It provided the background for a clearer understanding of the times and conditions in which the women who were the units of analysis for this study lived and worked. The immediate context, known in case study research as the bounded system (Creswell, 1998, Hays, 2004; Merriam, 1988, 1998; Stake 1995), or the case itself, set limits for the research and the researcher. “The case is the means to reduce the complexity of the discourse of the universe from general problems...to one individual state of affairs” (Scholz & Tietje, 2002, p. 31). This case study was bounded by six elements: time, place, gender, race, occupation, and a social structure. Taken together these factors restricted this research to a specific group of actors: Black women who taught in distinct sections of Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania between the years 1875 to 1915. The decision to bind this study according to these factors was guided by the discovery of gaps in the literature regarding African American teachers and the interests and constraints of the researcher. African American women who taught in the late 19th and early 20th centuries became an interest because of a suggestion on the part of one of the researcher’s instructors and mentors, Adah Ward Randolph. She proposed considering the leadership qualities of several such women as the topic for a paper and subsequent presentation at a professional organization.

Fascinated by the resourcefulness and dignity in the face of constant obstacles of the first few women studied, this researcher began to inquire about Black women from the period in and around the area in which she lives. Local educators and historians, as well as the individuals to whom they referred the researcher, could not summon more than three names from their collective memories. Inquiries and reading turned up few names or contributions of African American women from the upper Ohio River Valley. The combination of this mentorship, interest, curiosity, and lack of presence in the literature and regional lore led to the demarcation of the bounded system for this study. In addition, the researcher's time constraints and budget also necessitated bounding the study in this way.

Time is the first element that binds this study. The post-Reconstruction period was selected because of the lack of scholarship about this period concerning Black female teachers in the North. For the purpose of this study, the period was delineated as being from 1875 to 1915. The federal government removed U.S. troops from the former Confederate states in 1877, thus marking the official end of Reconstruction. The post-Reconstruction years were initially a time of great hope for Black communities, both north and south of the Ohio River (Bigham, 2006; Gerber, 1976; Williams, 2005). That hope turned to frustration and fear as the Jim Crow Era brought the retrenchment of rights, renewed discrimination, and the rule of the lynch mob. World War I, which the U.S. entered fully in 1917, by no means marked the end of Jim Crow. Its beginning was, however, used as the starting point of a massive migration of southern Blacks to the North that significantly changed the dynamics of race relations in the North. The specific

years 1875 to 1915 were chosen to encompass a round number of years that included the time between the official end of Reconstruction and the start of this northern migration. In addition, the period included the lion's share of the years between emancipation and the right to suffrage for American women of all races and creeds. It was a forty-year period of highs and lows, progress and regression, and rapid change for Americans of African descent. In addition, it was a period of particular uncertainty for Black women.

Several decisions went into the selection of the boundaries for the geographic area considered by this study. The literature pointed to the area of the upper Ohio River Valley as one often neglected with regard to African American women of the post-Reconstruction period. Historical treatments of African Americans in general, and Black female teachers specifically, living in the Ohio River basin tended to feature locations down river from Portsmouth, Ohio (Bigham, 2006, Leigh, 2005; Taylor, 2005). For example, in Bigham's volume entitled *On Jordan's Banks: Emancipation and Its Aftermath in the Ohio River Valley*, the valley discussed is actually the lower Ohio River Valley, which covers the section of the river basin from Ashland, Kentucky, and Lawrence County, Ohio, south to Cairo, Illinois. West Virginia received no mention and Pennsylvania has but one entry in the index. Gerber's 1976 treatment of Blacks in Ohio pays only cursory attention to the southeastern corner of the state. However, there were African American inhabitants in many of the communities of the region. In Ohio, for example, Albany, Athens, Marietta, and Zanesville were a few of them (Daniel, 1997; Gerber, 1976). The 1997 anthology of essays edited by Trotter and Smith, *African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives*, contains a number of works

by a variety of scholars who tend to spotlight life and activity in either Philadelphia or Pittsburgh. Before Pennsylvania's 1881 school integration law, many large and small communities had separate public schools for African American children. The Monongahela City and Bridgeport "colored schools" had African American teachers (Arison, 1882; Hart, 1904; "Colored Schools," 1881). These realities indicated that there were individual soldiers and small squads of Black teachers working in outposts that rarely received acknowledgement.

The inclusion of West Virginia in this research warranted discussion. Although the state was usually associated with the South, the very existence of West Virginia pointed to a desire by the citizens of the region at the time of the Civil War to be separate from Virginia (Rice & Brown, 1993). There were therefore several reasons why the mindset of West Virginians was markedly different from that of the residents of its mother state and the other Confederate states. West Virginia was also important to this study because much of its northern border is the Ohio River. West Virginia communities bordering the river shared many of the same economic and social benefits of the waterway with their Ohio and Pennsylvania neighbors. In addition, West Virginia was included in this study because it was the home of the first free school for African Americans south of the Mason-Dixon Line. Founded in 1862, the Sumner School of Parkersburg, West Virginia became a publicly supported school in 1866 (Ambler, 1951; Gilbert, 1985; *Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882; Jefferson, 1904). Teachers, the school, and the system of which they were a part provided a case for comparison and contrast with cases from their neighbors on the northern side of the river. Lastly, the women who

taught at this institution have received little more than passing mention in the histories of education, of women, of Black education, and of the state of West Virginia.

The specific geographic area covered by this study therefore encompassed parts of three states: north central West Virginia, southeastern Ohio, and southwestern Pennsylvania. The city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, situated at the source of the Ohio River, marked the northern boundary of the region. Gallipolis, Ohio, and its cross-river sister community Point Pleasant, West Virginia, marked the southern boundary. The only women considered for this research lived and worked in communities located in the watershed of the Ohio River between these two boundaries. Figure 3.1 is a map indicating this location and the communities important to the units of analysis.



*Figure 3.1.* Map of the upper Ohio River Valley.



Gender and race also bind this study. The researcher decided to pursue research dealing with female teachers because of her interest in, and ability to relate to, women's issues. She selected African American women because of their omission from the literature, the respect she acquired for them through preliminary research, and the challenge of gaining an understanding of women of another race. Encouraged by advisors and the writing of Darlene Clark Hine, this researcher realized that scholarship concerning African American women could be the purview of people of great diversity. In her essay "Black Women's History, White Women's History: The Juncture of Race and Class," Hine (1994) stated, "We need to break down these intellectual and professional boundaries in order to develop and refine our methodologies for comparative and intersectional analysis" (p. 53). If women historians will engage in more "cross-over history" it is likely that "we will register meaningful progress in the war against racism, sexism, and class oppression" (p. 57). That spirit contributed to the motivation for this researcher to pursue this project.

The social structure or institution that serves as the overarching organizational feature for this study was the educational system of the geographical region under consideration. The educational system, situated in parts of three states, varied because of differences in state and local laws, policies, and practices. On the other hand, there are many similarities across these state boundaries despite the diversity of governmental jurisdictions. This study illuminates this educational system by looking through the lens of Black women who embraced a specific occupation, namely teaching. This decision helps to counteract a form of bias that David and Myra Sadker (2003) labeled

fragmentation. When writing with this type of bias, “racial and ethnic group members may be depicted as interacting only with persons like themselves, isolated from other cultural communities. Fragmentation and isolation ignore dynamic group relationships and suggest that non-dominant groups are peripheral members of society” (p. 278). In addition, the researcher chose a focus on an educational system and teachers because of personal interest. As a third generation teacher with 33 years of experience in Southeast Ohio and numerous family members who hold or who have held a variety of teaching and educational administrative positions, the researcher was in a unique position to interpret the data gathered for this study. These two elements also served to frame the case study in a logical way and pointed to research questions that the literature has rarely addressed.

### *Sub-Types of Case Study*

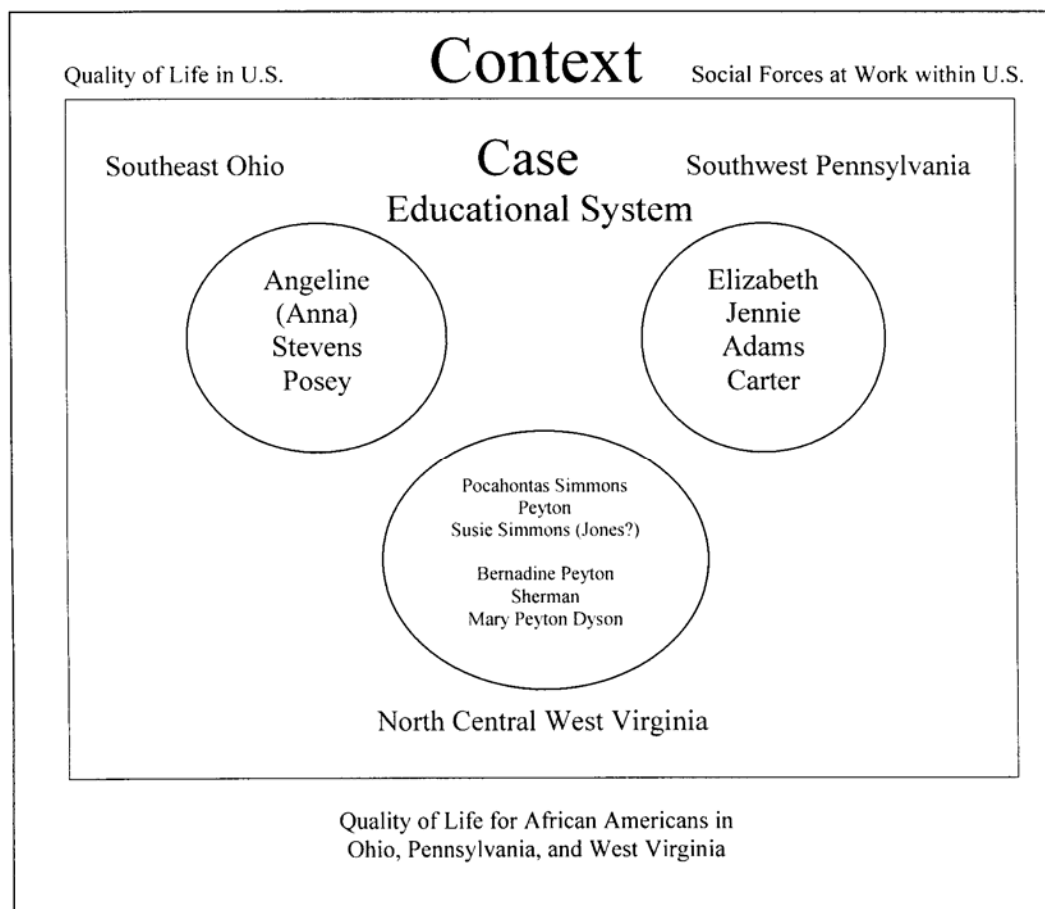
The case study tradition embraces many types of methodology that can be organized into a variety of research formats. As the tradition developed, scholars gave names to some of the categories of work within the genre. This research was an intrinsic, exploratory, historical, embedded, single-case case study. The reasoning for the selection of the elements that bound this study qualified the study as an intrinsic one (Stake, 1995). This means that the researcher selected subject matter or the bounded system in order to learn about the specific case because of personal curiosity and interest, “not because by studying it we learn about other cases or about some general problem” (Stake, 1995, p. 3). The study was exploratory in that the researcher undertook the effort in order to uncover women who were essentially unknown to the vast majority of residents of the chosen geographic area, as well as to scholars of Black women and Black education. The

researcher embarked on the research journey not fully knowing what could or would be found about female African American teachers of the post-Reconstruction period in the selected location. The excursion took many twists and turns and unearthed a host of additional women, questions, and topics for further study. In addition, readers could consider the work exploratory because no specific theory guided its development, nor did it seek to test a theory. Its purpose was one that Scholz and Tietje (2002) offered as an appropriate one for exploratory case study: to “help to gain insight into the structure of a phenomenon” (p. 11). In this case, that would be an understanding of how Black female teachers operated within the educational system of the upper Ohio River Valley states. The exploration of such women within this system was meant to lead this and future researchers to the development of “hypotheses, models, or theories” (Scholz and Tietje, 2002, p. 11). Yin (2003a) claimed that exploratory case studies, the type of studies in which “fieldwork and data collection are undertaken prior to the final definition of study questions and hypotheses” (p. 6) were responsible for the “notorious” reputation case study has earned. He further stated that, “every exploration...should still have some purpose. Instead of propositions, the design for an exploratory study should state this purpose, as well as the criteria by which an exploration will be judged successful” (2003b, p. 22). This study was exploratory, but designed in a way that minimized Yin’s concerns. A purpose for this research was explicated prior to the major data collection and analysis phases, as were the central, issue, and topical research questions. Criteria for judging the success of this work were delineated in the significance portion of chapter 1 (see page 29) and are discussed again in the methodology section of this chapter (see

page 190). This design procedure was followed in order to reduce the limitations of exploratory case study while taking full advantage of the strength of qualitative case study, which sanctions flexibility and refinement of research questions during the investigative process (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Hays, 2004; Stake, 1995). An additional characteristic of this research that put it in a special sub-category of case study was the nature of the subjects under study. Many scholars think case studies should focus on contemporary topics (Merriam, 1998; Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Yin, 2003b). This one did not. All of the embedded units of analysis were deceased, which made documents, not interviews, the primary source of data. Therefore, this research was an historical case study (Merriam, 1998).

Finally, the study was an embedded, single-case case study because it involved “more than one unit, or object of analysis” (Scholz & Tietje, 2002; p. 9) working within a single system. According to Yin (2003b), a researcher had a sound reason for conducting a single case study “when the case represents an *extreme* case or a *unique* case” (p. 40). It is not likely that the women selected as embedded units of analysis working within the bounded system designated for this study would ever be chosen again as a group for a study of this type. They were unique women, and the juxtaposition of their stories in this single case study is unique. What was learned about the case, or the bounded system, came through the attention paid to the lives of the women. Rather than focus solely and holistically on the bounded system, this approach permitted the voices of the women to speak to the qualities of the world in which they lived and worked. For that reason this researcher selected Pocahontas Simmons Peyton, Susie Simmons (Jones?), Bernadine

Peyton Sherman, Mary Peyton Dyson, Anna Stevens Posey, and Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter as the subunits of study that were embedded within the single case, or the bounded system, as delineated earlier (see Figure 3.2 below). This design structure qualified this research as an embedded, single-case case study (Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Yin, 2003b).



*Figure 3.2.* Conceptual framework of the study. Selected type of single-case case study design: Embedded with multiple units of analysis. Reprinted with modifications from Yin (2003b, p. 40).

### *Units of Analysis*

Delineation of the bounded system limited the sub-context of this case study and focused the research and the researcher on a specific time, place, and set of actors within a designated social structure. The selection of specific units of analysis within that structure in turn narrowed the focus of the research further by answering the question, “What should be studied in order to learn about that structure?” The bounded system selected for this study encompassed a large geographic area over a forty-year period. It had many actors and institutions within it, which, if chosen for study, were qualified to play a role in advancing the present day understanding of that system. Any attempt to describe and comprehend this bounded system as a whole would be an immense undertaking. This researcher sought to illuminate and more completely understand a small part of that system through the study of three units of analysis because she did not have the financial resources, the necessary staff, or the desire to conduct such a large-scale study. Those units of analysis were Pocahontas Simmons Peyton, Susie Simmons (Jones?), Bernadine Peyton Sherman, Mary Peyton Dyson, Anna Stevens Posey, and Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter. For the purpose of this study, the Simmons and Peyton women were considered together as one unit of analysis. The three units of analysis were “working parts” (Stake, 1995, p. 2) within the system of education for African American females in the upper Ohio River Valley during the period 1875 to 1915. The researcher selected each woman embedded within this system as a unit of analysis because of her unique position to demonstrate how she was able to navigate, and in at least one case prosper, within that system. Therefore, the researcher gained insight into how the case, or

bounded system, worked through the examination of the lived experience of these several units of analysis.

The researcher used the designated research questions to further narrow the scope of what was to be studied about the units of analysis. The term “lived experience” can refer to everything a person encounters in her life. For the purpose of this investigation, it would be undesirable, not to mention impossible, to record the round-the-clock events and feelings of each of the women chosen for study. The researcher’s intent was to examine selected parts of their lived experience, namely those parts that related to each woman’s education, teaching experience, support networks, and access to the resources needed to get and provide an education. In order to achieve the research objectives, it was necessary to expand the coverage beyond strictly education-related topics. For example, it was necessary to search for personal and family background information about each woman in order to situate each of them in the study, to gain some understanding of their culture and values, and to look for themes and patterns in their experiences. Designating these parts of the lived experience of each unit of analysis as important led to the development of a set of research questions that can be found in chapter 1 (page 27). The central question and the issue and topical sub-questions served to focus the study and keep it on course for a more rapid completion.

In concluding this discussion of the designation of the units of analysis and the direction of the study, the researcher felt it was important to make a point about the results. The thoroughness of the effort to recount the stories of these women and their educational experiences was dependent upon the quality of the primary and secondary



source documents left behind and the documents the researcher was able to locate. In every case, the documentation was not sufficient to provide the same types of information about every category of inquiry for each woman. The variation in the availability of documents was at times frustrating, but in the end, it permitted a greater emphasis on the differences among the women and their unique experiences.

### *Case Selection*

The selection of the appropriate units of analysis that were embedded in this case study was guided by the definition of the bounded system (the parameters of the case) and the explicit research questions (Hays, 2004; Yin, 2003b). As described above, these entities, once delineated, provided limits for the researcher in order to keep the study focused (Hays, 2004; Stake, 1995). Clearly, the units of analysis which formed the foundation for this effort to advance learning with regard to the selected bounded system needed to be African American women who were educated and/or who taught in Southwest Pennsylvania, Southeast Ohio, or North Central West Virginia between 1875 and 1915. As the researcher collected data, additional qualifications needed to be established. In order to highlight the educational system, and how Black women worked within it, it became apparent that it was desirable for the units of analysis to have at least three years of experience learning and working within that system. Women who spent less than three years in the geographic area, either as a student or as a teacher were not included. The rationale for this decision was that it was unlikely that the system would have had a significant impact on them or that they could have left a significant mark on the system. In addition, the researcher deemed it appropriate to include women who

started their teaching careers before 1875 if they taught at least three years during the designated period. Likewise, she considered women who taught past 1915 for inclusion provided they taught at least three years prior to 1915. Pocahontas Simmons Peyton and her sister Susie were included as part of the West Virginia unit because they were part of a generational continuum that illuminated a valuable story.

The decision to select three units for study instead of focusing the research on a single case, two women, or more than three units of analysis was a result of the researcher's desire to balance the quality of the study with the constraints on her time and resources. The nature of the selected bounded system and the purposeful sampling approach employed in this research also influenced this decision. The purpose of this study was to uncover, explore, describe, and give voice to a specific group of women. This made the investigation of multiple women desirable and essentially ruled out focusing on a single individual. Case studies can become unwieldy when there are multiple cases or units of analysis undergoing examination (Yin, 2003b). Coupled with the fact that the researcher, working alone, needed to limit the scope of the study in order to make the best use of her time, the inclusion of more than three units of analysis became unnecessary and impractical. She then considered whether two or three units would be appropriate. After delineating and considering the criteria on which the maximum variation sampling would rest, it was apparent that in many instances a specific criterion had three levels of presence. For example, when considering the duration of teaching careers there were women with career lengths between those having a short one (three to five years) and those having a long one (over 20 years). Such women were

important to represent in the sample. Added to this realization was the fact that the bounded system covered three states. Leaving a representative of one state out would not have given a balanced picture of the region as a whole. Therefore, it was deemed optimum to select three units of analysis from the pool of 27 potential candidates (see appendix B).

Purposeful sampling was used to make the final selections regarding the three embedded units of analysis. The researcher used this type of sampling in order to select “information-rich cases for study in depth” (Patton, 2002, p. 230). It has been a mainstay of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002) and serves the investigator who “wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and [who] therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 1998, p. 68). According to Merriam (1998), this type of sampling should start with the selection of criteria essential to the units of analysis, or in this case, the women who were the focus of the study. As discussed earlier, the researcher chose general criteria for their selection by reflecting upon the definition of the bounded system and by considering examples of women who were covered by that definition. She developed additional criteria in order to employ maximum variation sampling, a type of purposeful sampling first identified by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 (Merriam, 1998). She chose this sampling method because of its ability to give power to the themes that emerged from the diversity of the selected units of analysis (Patton, 2002). The criteria or conditions that were considered for this phase of the selection process were: state of residence or employment, level of formal education, socioeconomic status, marital status, type of school attended or taught in, whether the

candidate was educated in the geographic area under study or not, duration of the teaching career within and outside of the geographic area, the number of educational positions held, and the relative position of the candidate's career within the designated forty-year timeframe.

As much as was possible considering the strength of the available documentation, the units of analysis were selected based on how different they were from each other relative to the nine criteria. A woman from each state was chosen so that the three different governmental jurisdictions would be represented. Each unit of analysis received varying types of formal and informal education. As the women moved into their teaching careers, they each found employment in a different type of institution. The Simmons/Peyton unit taught in an all-Black school in a state with de jure segregation, another unit taught in a racially mixed, but predominantly White school, and the third taught in a Black school in a state that legally permitted, but did not necessarily practice, integration. One of the women in the Simmons/Peyton unit taught in a private school; the others all taught in public institutions. All of the women married at some point, but only one taught after her marriage. The units were not from significantly different socioeconomic backgrounds, although there was some variation in family status. The socioeconomic status of one unit changed significantly in her lifetime. The duration of each woman's teaching career varied between a few years and a time that was longer than the career of the average teacher of the period. The careers of the women spanned different periods within the forty-year range of the bounded system. Two additional criteria, the number of educational positions held and whether the woman received her

education in or out of the geographic area, were considered as points of variation as well. The last two criteria did not receive as much consideration as the other seven. The researcher considered these variations when known. The sampling process that was purposely executed to maximize the diversity of the units of analysis, which could have been a weakness in many forms of research, gave the results of this investigation strength (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). Michael Quinn Patton (2002) emphasized this point in his book *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. He stated,

The maximum variation sampling strategy turns that apparent weakness into a strength by applying the following logic: Any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon (p. 235).

The chosen sampling strategy did not produce a random sample. The researcher intentionally selected the sample in order to provide balance and variety (Stake, 1995) in the representation of African American teachers of the designated time and place. Although assertions from this research can not be generalized to all women teachers of the post-Reconstruction upper Ohio River Valley (Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003b), the common themes and patterns that were detected through it are of merit because they were found among dissimilar cases within the same bounded system (Patton, 2002). Overall, the researcher chose this strategy because it was believed to be the most appropriate for accomplishing the purpose of this study.

### *Research Questions*

Three types of questions were developed for this research and refined as the study unfolded: the central or primary question, issue sub-questions, and topical sub-questions. The formulation of these questions focused the study and helped the “investigator to create a rich dialogue with the evidence” (Yin, 2003b, p. 59). Stake (1995) explained that in intrinsic case study, the case or bounded system was dominant and the issues were secondary. However, the examination of issues was still a valuable function of this type of research. Therefore, the researcher developed several issue-related questions as part of the framework for this investigation.

The primary research question was framed as a “how” question in order to focus the collection of data and its analysis on illuminating the operational links that the case study tradition is known for uncovering (Yin, 2003b). It was these operational links, the ways in which the units of analysis operated within the educational system, that were at the heart of this case study. Yin (2003b) warned researchers conducting embedded case study that it would be easy to become enamored with the individual units of analysis and lose sight of the main goal or the larger system. Hays (2004) and Stake (1995) also cautioned about the temptations that could draw an investigator away from the purpose of the research. They noted that the researcher needed to remember that case study was an evolving process, that research questions could change, and new ones could be developed. All changes, however, needed to relate to the focus of the study. It was the central research question, “How did African American women who were teachers between 1875 and 1915 operate within the educational system of the upper Ohio River

Valley states?” that served to guide the data collection and analysis processes. The researcher developed this question over a period of several months when she was engaged in extensive reading about the period and several post-Reconstruction Black teachers. The question emerged from this interaction with the literature as recommended by Yin (2003b) and Hays (2004). It was refined during discussions with advisers, and it served admirably and without further change throughout the research process. With limited time and resources, it was imperative that this researcher be cognizant of the advice of those with expertise in the case study tradition and keep the central question foremost in her mind.

Stake’s work (1995) provided the guidance for the development of the issue and topical sub-questions for this case study. His preference was to use issues to provide conceptual structure for a case study. Even within an intrinsic case study where the main focus must be the case, or bounded system, issue questions have a twofold purpose: 1) “to force attention to complexity and contextuality,” and 2) to draw “attention to problems and concerns” (p. 16). This focus on personal effort and coping with problems is a result of Stake’s belief that “the nature of people and systems becomes more transparent during their struggles” (p. 16). The women who were the embedded units of analysis in this study lived within a system that caused them to have to wrestle with a host of constraints. This research was an attempt to understand these women and the system in which they worked. It would not have been complete without attention to the issues they faced on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, the researcher wrote many issue-related questions, and even more came up for consideration, as the data were collected

and analyzed. Stake (1995) labeled the issues that emerged from research in this manner “emic” issues. The researcher reduced the original set of nine issue questions to five. As the research progressed and emic issues became apparent, these questions underwent refinement and changes. The final set of issue questions is on page 27.

The topic questions developed for this study went through a similar process. The researcher wrote them with the intention to tease out “information needed for description of the case” (Stake, 1995, p. 25). These questions also supported the conceptual structure of this research. Initially, the researcher created four topical sub-questions and formulated a separate topical outline to give more specific guidance to the early data collection phase. She increased the number of topical sub-questions during the course of the data collection and then reduced the number to five in the final analysis phase. In summary, the central research question and the issue and topical sub-questions provided the conceptual framework for this research. The questions related to the purpose of the study were flexible enough to permit emic issues to emerge and be addressed, and provided the researcher direction and focus throughout the course of the investigative process.

### *Ethical Issues*

All researchers encounter decisions that have ethical implications. Merriam (1998) indicated that ethical dilemmas in qualitative studies are likely to “emerge with regard to the collection of data and in the dissemination of findings” (p. 213). Included in the treatments of ethics in qualitative and case study research by others such as Bogdan and Biklen (2003), Patton (2002), and Stake (1995) was the consideration of ways in which data are interpreted. This section of the chapter addresses these three areas of



ethical concerns. First, the reader will find a discussion of the ethical issues that related to the collection of data. Following that discussion are thoughts concerning appropriate approaches to take when interpreting historical as well as current data. The section concludes with an overview of the necessary considerations surrounding the reporting and dissemination of the findings.

This research involved collecting data about human subjects. Federal legislation and Ohio University guidelines required approval of studies involving living human subjects by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). The embedded units of analysis in this research were no longer living. Therefore, on July 5, 2006, the Ohio University Office of Research Compliance notified this researcher in writing that this study did not require IRB oversight. In spite of this exemption, the researcher deemed issues of “informed consent” and “protection of subjects from harm” to be two issues that Bogdan and Biklen (2003) noted as dominant in guidelines for research with human subjects, and consequently worthy of careful thought with regard to this study. For the subjects of this study neither coercion nor obtaining consent was possible. Retrieval of the vast majority of the data came from public documents. In addition, the women under study suffered no physical harm. Although it was not the purpose of this research, the possibility of damaged reputations was real. In addition, the living descendants of the embedded units of analysis stood to be offended or discredited if the researcher did not pay attention to ethical procedures for collecting, interpreting, and disseminating data about them or their ancestor. For these reasons, this researcher completed the training module related to research with human subjects on July 3, 2006. The training made her more cognizant of

good, general research practices regarding the treatment of human subjects, whether living or dead. Exhibiting openness of purpose to all individuals providing services to the researcher, obtaining permission to use documents, artifacts, and personal belongings, allowing current informants to withdraw from the research without consequence, and using courtesy with everyone involved in the study are components of conducting sound research of every variety.

In order to maximize the likelihood that treatment of participants would be ethical and executed with courtesy, this researcher employed several procedures. She gave a written description of the purpose and design of the study to many individuals assisting the researcher in data collection (see appendix C). Other people whom she contacted by telephone received oral descriptions. A working copy of this research was also available during the data collection phase to anyone involved in the process who had a good reason to wish to see it. The researcher gave small, inexpensive gifts to librarians, curators, archivists, and research technicians when the situation warranted an expression of gratitude for special services. The participating descendants received appropriate gifts as well. A consent form was created (see appendix D) in order to familiarize individuals providing materials and information through interviews with the nature of the research. It also made informants aware that anonymity would not be possible, as historical research required full disclosure of sources. If a consent form had been requested, the participant would have received a signed copy of the form. This form provided three types of contact information in the event that the informant decided to withdraw from the study or to change or add information later. Although the forms were always available, no

participants ever requested a copy. Most participants desired to interact without the formal agreement. All informants were given until February 1, 2008, to make decisions about their desire to have information provide to the researcher included in the final report. After that date, the researcher treated all information given to her as useable in the final report without repercussion. In the few instances when participants were apprehensive about providing valuable family artifacts or about their names appearing in this or future publications, the researcher exercised care and utilized Sturman's (1999) strategy for dealing with like issues, namely negotiation. He was in fact correct, as the researcher solved all but two such situations through the give-and-take of negotiation. The parties terminated participation when negotiation failed.

Interpretation of data began with the collection of the first piece of it. The forming of opinions and stirring of emotions began with each additional piece uncovered. While this type of researcher interpretation is a distinctive, perhaps the most distinctive feature of qualitative research (Stake, 1995), the researcher did not have license to ignore evidence obtained or fabricate missing pieces of data in order to draw conclusions and make assertions. The ethical issues that arose most frequently during this phase of the research dealt with the ability of the investigator to recognize her biases, political opinions, and values and to try to minimize their impact on the interpretation of data. Three areas of particular concern involved the difficulty of understanding life in a time considerably removed from the present, the likelihood that the researcher would favor teacher opinion over that of school administrators and government officials, and the fact that the researcher had never lived the Black experience. The researcher held the

tendency toward presentism, a problem with which many historians must deal, in check by extensive reading about the era and places under study, visiting the sites, interviewing descendants, and triangulating data with multiple sources and experts in specific fields. Thirty-three years of combined teaching experience at the elementary school and college level had caused this researcher to develop a modicum of distrust for school administrators and even more for state and federal legislators and education policy makers. This life experience supported her opinion that these individuals rarely had classroom teaching experience and were often motivated to act based on a set of needs different from those of teachers working day after day in schools. Finally, the researcher acknowledged that no matter how much she studied and empathized with the women who served as the embedded units of analysis for this investigation, she could not know or fully understand their experiences as Black women during this period. Acknowledgement of these biases helped reduce the negative impact of them on the interpretation of data by motivating the researcher to review findings continually, to look for disconfirming evidence, to discuss themes and assertions with participants and advisors, and to seek additional confirming data from other sources. These forms of triangulation and “vigorous interpretation” (Stake, 1995, p. 9) improved the overall quality of this research and gave power to the results (Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995). In the end, the researcher’s personal qualifications, characteristics, and worldview provided the framework for a unique interpretation of this bounded system for other scholars to consider, criticize, and extend through future research. Interpretation of this

kind is the premise for most qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Glesne, 1999; Patton, 2002).

Publishing research reports and presenting research findings at professional forums can cause distress or embarrassment to study participants, informants, and sponsoring agents (Merriam, 1998). This is especially true when naming participants and sources. Such people and institutions become immediately recognizable. Historical research necessitates this practice. As noted earlier, because of this fact this researcher took additional care in the disclosure of intent to informants and in the analysis and triangulation of data. She honored personal wishes to the full extent possible without sacrificing the quality of the results. Delta Kappa Gamma, the only organization that provided funding for this research, did not interfere with the conduct of this study in any way. It was never an objective of this research to discredit participants, informants, or sponsors. If it occurred, it was unintentional and part of the natural consequences of engaging in this kind of investigation. Few people come to complete agreement when the data collected are as voluminous and the interpretations as complex as they were in this research. This researcher tried diligently to produce something that served the “greater good,” not necessarily the specific people and organizations involved (Glesne, 1999). The purpose of this investigation was to bring honest interpretations of life to light. Informants were fully aware of the likelihood that this researcher would avail herself of the opportunities that are likely to be made available to her to disseminate the results of this study. This researcher will take care to do so effectively and ethically.

## **Methodology**

For the purpose of this research, the research design involved planning all phases of the study, whereas methodology involved executing the design and interpreting the data. The research perspective for this study was qualitative, the type and sub-types of research were historical, embedded, single-case, case study. The execution of this research design occurred in three overlapping stages: data collection, data analysis, and presentation of results. Detailed descriptions of these stages follow this introductory section to the research methodology.

The combination of the case study tradition with historical, biographical, and oral and life history research strategies guided this endeavor. Data came from many sources, including government documents, letters, newspaper accounts, school board records, Internet websites, college catalogues, and personal artifacts. The collection of data continued as data analysis began. As is the case with most qualitative research, the on-going data analysis suggested additional questions to explore and data to collect and verify (Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). A general format for the three case reports developed early in the data collection phase, and refined as the process continued, allowed the researcher to begin writing the case reports about each embedded unit of analysis as data were located, verified, and analyzed. The stories of these women became the building blocks for the construction of the researcher's view of the educational system in the upper Ohio River Valley as a whole and the role Black women played within it. Through the examination of these unique and revelatory units of analysis, this study sought to accomplish one of the fundamental goals of the tradition, "to find out

how the case gets things done” (Stake, 2006, p. 2). The researcher accomplished this through additional analysis and reflection on the a priori and emergent themes. The multiple layers of analysis led this researcher to articulate assertions (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003b) or “lessons learned” (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Questions for further research were also ascertained and proposed. The presentation and discussion of these results can be found in the final chapter of this dissertation. In summary, this research design and methodology provided the framework for the completion of a study that captured a unique case and that gave voice to the actors (Gomm, Hammersley, & Foster, 2000).

### *Data Collection Methods*

Key features of the case study method involve provision of in-depth description of the case and building that description from data collected from multiple sources (Creswell, 1998; Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991; Hays, 2004, Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003a, 2003b). The types of data collected for this research and the sources of those data were dependent upon the research questions and the places and individuals chosen for study. Data were sought concerning Black females who were teachers, the schools they attended, the places where they taught, the churches and organizations in which they participated, the natures of their families, and the cities in which they lived. The range of subjects related to the case required that data come from many sources. This section discusses the locations where the researcher found resources, the field methodology used in uncovering information and securing it for use, and the manner in which supplemental interviews were conducted.

Mining primary and secondary source documents predominated over interviewing and field observation due to the historical nature of the research. However, the researcher made many site visits and conducted numerous interviews with living family members of the women under study, in addition to individuals who were interested and knowledgeable about themes and threads of the stories under construction. Primary sources included personal letters, compositions, artifacts, college archival documents, and local school board records. In addition to books, dissertations, and journal articles, secondary sources such as yearbooks, photographs, newspaper articles, Internet websites, and interviews were located and pored over for data. These sources were located through libraries, colleges and universities, museums, historical societies, school board offices, churches, and networks of people working in these places. These sources, in addition to those available through the World Wide Web, permitted the final narrative to be rich in description that in turn served the purpose of case study research.

### ***Document Location***

The documents used to tell the stories of each of the embedded units of analysis and to provide a rich description of the case came from a variety of places. The five primary sites were Parkersburg, West Virginia, Athens, Ohio, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, California, Pennsylvania, and Monongahela, Pennsylvania. The Sumnerite African-American History Museum and Multipurpose Center in Parkersburg, West Virginia, was the first location visited in the quest to uncover documents and collect data for this research. The building, which is what physically remains of the Sumner School founded in 1862, houses more than 1,200 pictures and artifacts of its former students and teachers.



Working with Fran Davis, the Center Coordinator, and her network of assistants and supporters, this researcher was able to locate pertinent information. The Ohio Historical Society Archives in Columbus, Ohio and the website that it maintains was a source of documents, as were the Athens County Historical Society and Museum, the Washington County Public Library Local Historical and Genealogical Department, the California University of Pennsylvania Archives, the office of the Superintendent of the Wood County, West Virginia Schools, the Monongahela (Pennsylvania) Area Public Library, the Uniontown (Pennsylvania) Public Library, the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Ohio University's Alden Library, and the Carson K. Miller Library at Washington State Community College. Dr. Ray Swick, historian at Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park, provided pictures and documents that advanced this research, and Linda Showalter, Marietta College (Ohio) archivist, assisted with finding invaluable resources. William Beverly Carter III, great-grandson of Jennie Carter, shared the story Jennie wrote and a wealth of family history. Mrs. Paul (Gwen) Simmons, shared a limited amount of information over the phone. Visits to additional places, such as the Monongahela cemetery, and discussions with individuals on the periphery of this project added to the richness of this research. Collectively, the documents, interviews, discussions, correspondence, and experiences provided the foundation on which to build this research.

### ***Field Methodology***

There were three main phases to the field methodology for this research: gaining entrée, disclosure and obtaining permission, and research and discovery. These steps were

often cyclical, with the final step frequently leading to information that would start the first phase over again with a new name or place of interest. This researcher gained *entré* in several ways. The typical initial contact involved a participant, mentor, or colleague suggesting a person to talk with and then assisting in making the introduction. The researcher made phone calls or sent letters or electronic messages to the individuals before initial visits in order to detect possible interest in the project. On other occasions, the researcher found references to places or people and initiated communication without help. In one or two instances, when communication was particularly difficult, associates made the calls for the researcher. None of the forays into data collection met with open hostility, although some turned up little or no information, and the researcher discontinued others because of lack of interest, conflicting interest, or lack of participant time. In the vast majority of cases, the researcher gained *entré* quickly and established friendly relationships in which the give and take of information could occur. Disclosure and obtaining permission did not surface as a problem. The researcher provided written or oral descriptions of the study when appropriate or requested by the informant. She also kept copies of all electronic correspondence in electronic files and paper form. Many of the items contain explicit and implicit permission to use information disclosed in them. The research and discovery phase involved site visits, interviews, networking with interested parties, correspondence, phone calls, microfilm viewing, and the collection, reading, and analysis of documents. Each new piece of information seemed to suggest additional research. This phase continued throughout the project.

### *Supplemental Interviews*

Interviews of people associated with, or knowledgeable of, places and people pertinent to this research, but who were not directly related to them, were conducted as researcher time permitted. An example of such an interview was one with Ada Woodson Adams, president of the organization that maintains the Multicultural Genealogical Center in Chesterhill, Ohio. She did not have direct knowledge of the units of analysis of this study, but she was familiar with the Black community in many locations within the bounded system. She also knew people who could assist me. She accompanied me to the Ohio University's Alden Library archives to show me some documents and suggest ways of finding information about diverse populations. In most cases, the questions for these sessions and interviews emerged from the give and take of the conversation, although the researcher formulated questions for each session in advance when time permitted. These interviews provided additional evidence to substantiate and triangulate data as well as to add information to enrich the stories presented in the final report.

### *Data Analysis*

Qualitative strategies familiar to history, biography, life history, narrative analysis, document analysis, and guided interviewing were used to locate, categorize, and analyze the data collected for this research. These strategies allowed the researcher to take apart the data, to rearrange and organize it in different ways, to search for patterns and themes, to consider how her worldview affected the arrangement of the data in the narrative, and to provide a means to enhance understanding of the case. Patton (2002) maintained that case study is a process as well as a product. The process of qualitative

case study analysis involved “gather[ing] comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest” (p. 447). The researcher gathered data for this research from multiple sources, coded and organized it by unit of analysis, and reviewed it for themes and patterns that in turned suggested possibilities for additional data collection and layers of analysis. “The process of data collection and analysis is recursive and dynamic” (Merriam, 1988, p. 123), and in this case study the units of analysis, points of emphasis, themes, and answers to the research questions evolved and changed as data were located and scoured for information and meaning. The system of multiple methods of data collection and analysis employed by this researcher provided the means for triangulation of the data. The methods that supported triangulation were:

1. Variety of units of analysis—selection of dissimilar units of analysis. This procedure was analogous to Creswell’s negative case analysis and aided the refinement of themes and assertions across the macrocosm of the bounded system. It was built into the design of the research. Anna Stevens Posey was the unit of analysis most like a negative case because she was born into the lowest socioeconomic group and ended her life in the highest. The inclusion of the Simmons/Peyton women allowed comparison between communities with de jure as opposed to de facto segregation.
2. Prolonged engagement—aided the development of trust, permitted more time for the researcher to learn about the places and period under study, and allowed the researcher time to follow up on referrals and clues. The researcher

collected data and was available for visits, correspondence, phone calls, and interviews for 10 months.

3. Peer review—allowed others to offer input and suggest differing interpretations. Four individuals served as readers and reviewers of all or parts of this study.
4. Rich, thick, description—allowed the researcher to work with a greater level of detail. It will assist the readers in gaining better understanding of the research context. It also will enable readers to determine for themselves if the data presented are transferable to other settings.
5. Clarification of researcher bias—acknowledgment of researcher values, biases, and positions alerted the researcher to ways in which she filtered data.

Creswell (1998) delineated these verification procedures as part of a group of eight options, and Glesne (1999) reiterated them. Employed collectively, they strengthened the trustworthiness and research validity of the study (Creswell, 1998; Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1988; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003).

An additional need for the triangulation of data sprang from the heavy reliance on records, documents, and newspapers for data. Hodder's contribution to Denzin and Lincoln's 2003 edition of *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials* discussed the fallacy of believing everything left behind in print to be "true." This researcher found that multiple articles concerning the same event often contained conflicting statements or errors. Records, which are items that "attest to some formal transaction," and documents, which are items "prepared for personal rather than official reasons" (Hodder, 2003,

p. 156), were frequently incomplete or damaged. It was also important to consider what Hodder called the “contexts of their conditions of production and reading” because meanings could fluctuate based on those conditions. All records, documents, and other forms of written artifacts were produced to communicate something. It remains the researcher’s duty to try to ascertain that “something,” along with its “practical and social impact” (Hodder, 2003, p. 157). By confirming evidence through “the twin struts” of coherence and correspondence (Hodder, 2003), the result of that process of analysis and interpretation becomes more plausible and worthy of trust. This researcher attempted to confirm interpretations in this manner to the best of her ability based on the number and quality of resources found during the period of investigation.

The researcher used the collected data to write a case study narrative for each embedded unit of analysis. She has constructed the cases following a chronological and thematic pattern and has presented them in separate chapters, one for each embedded unit of analysis. The researcher’s intention was to give the reader a sense of “being there” (Creswell, 1998, p. 21) with each teacher as she worked within a classroom, a school, a state, and a region. Because some resources had been destroyed and others were not located, all three cases have “holes” or missing information. The researcher worked to the best of her ability in the time available to locate data sufficient to tell each story. Unavoidably, her organization and interpretation of the collected data also affected the quality of the final case report and therefore warrant discussion.

### *Organization of Data*

This investigation required multiple layers of analysis and interpretation of data. Therefore, the organization of data was crucial so the researcher could quickly find documents and field notes dealing with specific topics. The researcher employed two main organizational systems: analytic files and memo writing (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). When data were located, the researcher copied, photographed, taped, or described it in a filed notebook. Copies of records, documents, photographs, transcriptions, and descriptions were filed in color-coded hanging files according to embedded unit of analysis. The hanging files each contained folders holding records and documents that related to subtopics such as schools attended, places taught, towns lived in, and family members. When a piece of information was valuable to more than one category of interest, multiple copies were made and filed accordingly. One example of this cross-unit filing was information concerning California University of Pennsylvania. It was often pertinent to more than one unit of analysis. The researcher kept a file of lists of people to call, places to visit, and ideas to pursue as the data collection suggested them. These lists were prioritized and updated weekly. The analytic files grew in number, and file contents were rearranged as the category headings were refined and changed. Suggestions concerning memo writing from Glesne and Peshkin (1992) were helpful. The researcher used multicolored “sticky notes” to keep important points in her line of sight. She also used some for reminders to make calls at a specific time, order pertinent books and articles, and incorporate particular terms or ideas in the written report. These notes could be arranged in different ways on desks, walls, poster boards, and legal pads in order to

work with patterns of ideas or to sequence points in the case reports. They served to keep the researcher focused and to keep her from forgetting appointments, phone numbers, addresses, terms, ideas, and themes from the literature.

The organization of data within the analytic files was accomplished through categorization, ordering of the documents and records within each category, and coding. The two over-arching categories were unit of analysis and theme. Each woman considered for inclusion was assigned a folder for copies of records, documents, interview transcripts, copies of articles, newspaper articles, references from books, and photographs. The amount and quality of material collected in each of these files played a significant role in which women were selected as units of analysis. After the decisions were made concerning the units of analysis, folders holding information about the non-selected women were removed and put in a separate file box. The remaining sets of hanging files were subdivided and expanded. Within each folder documents were coded, or clumped (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), and marked or highlighted to emphasize points of pertinence to the folder topic. Marking documents frequently led to re-filing or making additional copies for other folders. Multiple readings of the same document warranted using several colors of highlighters to mark newer points of interest. The researcher deemed further coding as unnecessary. Stake (1995) indicated that intrinsic case study should remain focused on the case. He continued with this guidance for intrinsic case researchers:

This is case study, not general qualitative research. With intrinsic case studies, our primary task is to come to understand the case. It will help us to tease out



relationships, to probe issues, and aggregate categorical data, but those ends are subordinate to understanding the case. The case is complex, and the time we have for examining its complexity is short. To devote much time to formal aggregation of categorical data is likely to distract attention to its various involvements, its various contexts. Usually we will try to spend most of our time in direct interpretation (p. 77).

To keep this focus the researcher avoided breaking data down into numbered bits of information.

Many documents and artifacts were relevant to specific themes. Files related to the a priori themes and the dissertation's conclusion were created to hold copies of records and documents that supported the themes and possible concluding assertions. These files were subdivided according to topics within the theme. An example would be the file related to the personal characteristics or social profile theme. It was divided into parental backgrounds, vital records, neighborhoods, early influences, and extended family. Files for possible themes emerging from the data were made when the researcher had cause to think an idea might spawn one. As data proliferated for both the units of analysis and themes, maintaining the system of organization of the records and documents saved time and helped keep the researcher focused.

An additional organizational matter involved making decisions about the order of the chapters following the discussion of methodology. These decisions reflected the researcher's ideas about the structure, the rhythm, and the flow of the narrative, as well as the best order in which to present the embedded cases so that connections would be

apparent to the reader. Chronology was not the only factor considered in these decisions. Chapter 4 was included to provide the national and local context or backdrop for the case and the units of analysis. The stories of the embedded units of analysis within that context were ordered so that connections, patterns, and movement within the case could be emphasized. Pocahontas Simmons Peyton was the teacher who began her career at the earliest date (1862). Her career was outside the period delineated for the study, but it provided the foundation on which to build the story of the founding of a school and the many generations of the family who served it. Peyton's daughter Bernadine was the qualifying member of the family. She started her career later in the era than did the other two units of analysis. The richness and power of the multigenerational story that spanned the entire period under study was the reason for choosing it as the initial case report. Anna Stevens Posey follows because she began life in an Ohio town not far from Parkersburg. There was a possibility that through regional events such as Emancipation Day celebrations and mutual acquaintances Anna's path might have crossed those of the Simmons/Peyton clan. Anna's path eventually took her to Pennsylvania, which was the location for Jennie's case. The case of Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter, a native Pennsylvanian, and the qualifying woman who started her career earliest in the period, was presented last because her story was the most complete and could be tied to the other two cases. These organizational decisions reflect the values and reasoning of the researcher. Acknowledgement and discussion of how those factors affected other aspects of this research follow.

### *Self as Researcher*

Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman (1993) pointed out that one of the things that differentiates qualitative research from conventional science (quantitative methods) is the importance of “the assumptions held by the investigator—how he or she thinks about the world” (p. 99) to the interpretation of the data. The researcher becomes the lens through which stories are analyzed and told. Patton (2002) discussed this reality at length in *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* and referred to it as reflexivity. He noted that self-awareness was an asset to fieldwork and analysis because it is a form of “sharpening the instrument” (p. 64). Therefore, it was necessary for the researcher to keep in mind her “cultural, political, social, linguistic, and ideological origins” (Patton, 2002, p. 65) and how resultant values and biases might influence her interpretation of what was real or true. This researcher was aware of several characteristics and values that may have influenced her interpretation of the life experiences of the women and school contexts in this case study. Discussion of some of them appeared earlier in this chapter in the section entitled *Ethical Issues*. They do not need recounting here. However, their bearing on research choices warrants acknowledgment.

Historical researchers debate the role of theory in their work (Kaestle, 1992). A continuum of the degree of reliance on theory exists among researchers. It ranges from dependence on a comprehensive social theory that establishes the truth of a historical work to “the other extreme, those who utterly reject social theory and treat history as mere chronicling” (Kaestle, 1992, p. 362). While this researcher had little desire to develop or support a particular theory through this work, she recognized the error of

claiming the work to be free of theory. Theory and a value system of some type shaped the selection of the research tradition, the case and units of analysis, the collection of relevant data, the analysis of that data, the choices of themes and points of emphasis in the narrative, and the development of assertions and suggestions for further research. In this case, a social construction and constructivist (Patton, 2002) view shaped the researcher's view of reality and her choice of criteria for what it meant to know something. This view is predicated on the belief that "human beings have evolved the capacity to interpret and *construct* reality" (Patton, 2002, p. 96) and that human constructions of reality are perceived and experienced as real even though they are not real in the sense that objects in the physical world are real. Thus, acknowledgement of this and other implicit assumptions was crucial to conducting this study in a way that reduced the negative and enhanced the positive impact each assumption could have on the construction of a consistent and meaningful report. In order for this research to be trustworthy, it needed to be balanced, fair, and complete (Patton, 2002). The trustworthiness of the participants and documents affected the balance and fairness of this study, as well as the researcher's ability to understand the worldviews of all those from whom she obtained information. Reviewing data from the researcher's perspective and that of the participants and informants was another way of triangulating that data (Patton, 2002) and improving the quality of this research.

### ***Interpretation of Data***

The work of Glesne and Peshkin (1992), Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Stake (1995), Merriam (1998), Glesne (1999), Marshall and Rossman (1999), Berg (2001),

Patton (2002), and Yin (2003 a & b) guided the interpretation of data in this research. These individuals represent a cross section of scholars from the fields of qualitative research design and case study methodology in education and the social sciences. Additional ideas came from the writing of educational historians (Kaestle, Rousmaniere) and biographers (Kridel, Smith). It is impossible to assess the relative influence of the work of these and other authors on this research. However, each was read, contemplated, and assimilated into the knowledge base from which this researcher interpreted data and reconstructed it into a case study. As the researcher reduced the volume of data collected in order to arrange it into the case report, she employed the guidance of these experts and her own unique perspective. Stake (1995) and Marshall and Rossman (1999) acknowledged that the analysis and interpretation of data has a mysterious nature. "It is the process of bringing meaning to raw, inexpressive data," and "raw data have no inherent meaning; the interpretive act brings meaning to those data and displays that meaning to the reader through the written report" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 153). Stake (1995) added that the process of struggling with new information that cannot be related to previous experience requires the researcher to perform a kind of mental dissection of the material. During that process, the mind reviews parts separately and questions how the parts relate to each other. It is frequently accomplished "automatically, without conscious protocol" (p. 72). Although researchers have procedures that "help them draw systematically from previous knowledge" and that help them "cut down on misconception," in the end "there is much art and much intuitive processing to the search for meaning" (p. 72). The interpretive path followed by this researcher involved taking

steps that were guided by the expertise of others, as well as some that were inspired by her own inner voice. An example related to this process would be the location of a source that stated Anna Stevens Posey was the first Black woman to graduate from The Ohio State University (Riley, 1994). At the time, not much research had been completed on Anna. Despite this printed source from a reputable author, the statement intuitively did not seem to be correct. In order to check its validity, electronic communication was initiated with Ohio State archivists. Within a matter of days the archivists confirmed that Jesse Stephens, not Anna Stevens, was the holder of that distinction. It was the researcher's training to seek verification and to triangulate data, coupled with her inner guidance system, that resulted in a new interpretation of Anna's educational background. Therefore, research protocols and inner knowing guided the interpretation of the data collected for this study.

This researcher designed a case study, collected data, and examined the data and her influence on its interpretation using the best information available to her. The implementation of rigorous data collection, organization, and analysis procedures reduced the likelihood of blatant misrepresentation of the bounded system and the embedded units of analysis. The research was conducted in an ethical manner as described earlier in this chapter. In conducting this research and reporting the results, the researcher made a concerted effort to perform the tasks necessary to "make sense" (Firestone in Merriam, 1998, p. 199) of the data and earn the confidence of its readers. Her background made her similar in gender and occupation to the units of analysis, yet

time, place, and race made her an outsider looking into the bounded system. The result was a case study constructed by a veteran teacher with a unique perspective.

### *Criteria for Success*

Successful qualitative research answers “questions about people in a particular social context” (Locke, Spirduso, Silverman, 2000, p. 96). This research had a purpose and posed several questions about African American female teachers in a particular social context. The following criteria that reflect the standards used to judge qualitative inquiry (Stake, 1995; Eisner, 1998; Merriam, 1998) will be used to judge the success of this research:

1. Did the research fulfill its purpose? Did it uncover, explore, describe, and give voice to Black women who taught in the upper Ohio River Valley?
2. Were the data collected sufficient to provide rich description of the bounded system and units of analysis?
3. Did the case report add to the scholarship and understanding of African American female teachers within the delineated bounded system? Did the case report demonstrate differences and similarities in community contexts, provide information about the personal characteristics of the embedded units of analysis, offer descriptions of educational opportunities for Black females in the bounded system, and detect support networks developed or employed by the units of analysis? Did the research find evidence of these women’s self-image?

4. Is this study useful? Can the results of this research be transferable to other groups and settings? Specifically, does it inform individuals who seek to affect the education of African American children and their teachers?
5. Did this research make a contribution to more than one academic field that could add to the on-going conversation concerning African American women?

Positive responses to these questions would be needed to establish this research as good qualitative research. A discussion of these questions appears in chapter 8.

### *Presentation of Results*

The results of this research are provided in the following five chapters. Chapter 4 presents background information and the context for the bounded system under study. That chapter has its base in this researcher's reading and understanding of multiple texts, as well as interviews about the history of each state and the Black experience in Ohio, West Virginia, and western Pennsylvania. It offers a snapshot of life in general during the period 1875 to 1915 and sets the stage for a greater understanding of the significance of the featured teachers' accomplishments. Each of the next three chapters focuses on one of the embedded units of analysis. These chapters illuminate the women's stories and recount them in as rich and descriptive a manner as the documentation uncovered by this investigation permitted. This researcher developed a general format for each of the chapters that deals with an embedded unit of analysis. The format has four parts: biographical information, an accounting of the unit's education and experiences related to schooling, a description of professional teaching experiences, and a discussion of how each unit was situated within the bounded system and its relationship to other units. A



discussion of the a priori and emergent themes and assertions rendered by this investigation form the body of chapter 8. That concluding chapter also includes a listing of questions for further research. Together, the subsequent five chapters reveal pictures of six complex women who were foot soldiers in the army of teachers fighting ignorance on many levels.

In conclusion, Silver (1983, 1994) challenged educational researchers to look inside the schools at the people who experienced life in them, meaning students and teachers, and to search for answers to new kinds of questions by looking in many directions. The many directions could include bottom-up interpretations of educational developments, explorations of the meaning of education to various stakeholders, use of nontraditional documents and sources, and detecting new and more nuanced relationships of race, class, and gender. Silver's essay on case study and historical research in *Education as History* (1983) was instructive. In it he warned researchers to refrain from letting a study sink into "weak, descriptive illustration" that served "to reinforce some generalization or assumption already held or partly held by some constituency of scholars or readers" (p. 295), and to use the method to reveal the "complexities and uncertainties" of a condition and "the range of human activities designed to capture and represent its truth" (p. 304). Even though Silver was discussing concerns about contemporary case study, his comments apply to all case study, including historical cases. This research was designed and executed in order to illuminate the "complexities and uncertainties" of African American women's lives in and out of the classroom during a particularly volatile time in American history, and to try to "capture and represent" their truth. An

overview of that era follows. It provides the context for the bounded system and illuminates the social, political, and economic conditions that shaped life for those teachers who fought to improve conditions for future generations.

## CHAPTER 4: CHANGING TIMES AND MUDDY WATERS

If you walk to the crest of the bridge that connects Marietta, Ohio, to Williamstown, West Virginia, and stretch your arms out, it is possible to have the perception that you can reach across the river below and touch both banks. It does not look like a great distance; currently it is about 466 yards, according to Tom Plumley, the surveyor for the Marietta Repair Station of the Army Corps of Engineers (personal communication, 2007). Yet one hundred and fifty years ago, hundreds and thousands of individuals risked their lives to get across what was then a somewhat narrower band of water. It was the physical boundary between slavery and freedom, living as chattel and having the opportunity to determine to some extent the course of one's own life. Today, pedestrians and vehicles move freely across the span. Barges and pleasure craft ply the waters below. Few stop to remember the significance of the river below them, just 1,400 feet wide, to African Americans of the antebellum period.

The River Jordan, the American Nile, La Belle Rivière, the Shining Road, the Ohio River: these were all names for the waterway that begins at the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and flows in a predominantly southwest direction toward the Mississippi River (Cayton, 2002; Havighurst, 2001; McNeese, 2004). It formed the boundaries between states and many political, economic, and social ideologies. The river today bears little resemblance to the one that cut the dividing line between North and South in the mid-19th century. It was narrower and free flowing then, not the series of "navigable lakes" created by locks and dams that it is now (Fitch, personal communication, 2006, June 28; Swick in Payne,

2007). In the spring when snows melted and rains came, the river was wide and full. In the drying heat of the summer and during the freezing cold of the winter, there were times when people could walk across the river (Havighurst, 2001). Under such circumstances, that northern bank must have looked quite tempting to those held captive on the southern side! While what the river symbolized was clear to the enslaved, the Ohio River simply responded to seasonal cycles and executed its naturally-given and life-supporting properties. Yet, the people living to the north of its banks more often than not failed to welcome or support African Americans seeking freedom and a peaceful life among them. Broken dreams and murky prospects for a prosperous and satisfying life were the norm for those Blacks who crossed the muddy waters of the Ohio hoping for a better life.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the context for the case, or bounded system, of this research. Even though they never met each other, the Ohio River, and what it symbolized, tied the women in this study together. To one of the women, it was central to her family's prosperity. In order for these women's stories to be more fully understood, this chapter contains brief descriptions of some of the qualities of life in the United States, the social forces at work, and the northern Black experience between 1875 and 1915. It concludes with a view of the importance of the Ohio River to the case and the sketches of the three communities in which the embedded units of analysis lived and worked.

### **The Times: 1875 to 1915 North of the Mason–Dixon Line**

The sting of losses to northern families and businesses during the Civil War was still alive in the collective conscious as the Reconstruction Era closed. Some people questioned what those losses accomplished. Only 10% of the Black population lived in the North as late as 1900 (Norton, Katzman, Escott, Chuacoff, Paterson, & Tuttle, 1994), yet resentment for the Black population grew in seeming proportion to the number of them moving into the communities around northern Whites (Cayton, 2002). Many of those who had fought against slavery on religious and moral grounds, and others who helped found schools and provide services during Reconstruction, believed that freed men and women should stay in the South (Higginbotham, 1993). Some citizens supported the American Colonization Society (ACS), a group that had been active since its founding in 1816 by “Charles Fenton Mercer, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and other notables” (Burin, 2005, p. 1). It advocated and financed the return of Blacks to Africa (Burin, 2005; McGinnis, 1962) and was an active organization well into the 20th century. Unfamiliarity, concern about competition for jobs, and fear of miscegenation fueled northerners’ fears about the African Americans in their midst (Nash et al., 2006). These fears often resulted in irrational behavior, discriminatory rules, regulations, and laws, interracial tension, and the periodic eruption of violence. The historical backdrop for Black females growing up, going to school, beginning careers, and starting families in the post-Reconstruction upper Ohio River Valley was complex and ever changing. Yet, despite local indignities, rapid industrialization, advances in technology, massive immigration, depressions, recessions, periods of relative prosperity, Jim Crow

oppression, lynching, shifts in educational practice, and various and sundry other movements, individuals often managed to carve out lives that were remarkably stable and personally fulfilling. The snapshots of the historical backdrop that follow demonstrate how remarkable some of the accomplishments of specific Black women were.

### ***Political and World Backdrop***

Ten presidents served the country during the period defined by this study as the post-Reconstruction Era. Of those chief executives, only Cleveland and Wilson were Democrats. Nash and his co-authors indicated that the administrations from Grant through Cleveland “were undistinguished” and that Gilded Age presidents “played a minor role in national life” (2006, p. 627). Known more for patronage and corruption than principled action, political leaders taking a laissez-faire position were not likely to take up moral causes. “It was a time of government passivity,” and these leaders favored “permitting the free pursuit of industrial expansion and wealth” (Nash et al. p. 626). The turn-of-the-century administrations were more active. McKinley oversaw the beginnings of imperialist tendencies that sent Teddy Roosevelt charging up Kettle Hill and brought the Philippines, Guam, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico under U.S. control. Upon McKinley’s assassination, Theodore Roosevelt took the opportunity to invigorate the power of the presidency (Goldfield et. al., 2007). He started the Panama Canal, instigated trust busting, supported the purchase of millions of acres of forests and wildlife refuges, invited Booker T. Washington to the White House, and brandished his big stick at many smaller countries who failed to concede to U.S. demands. Taft intended to soften the bullying of his predecessors and “promote U. S. interests without such combative rhetoric and naked

force” (Goldfield et al., 2007, p. 702) by employing “dollar diplomacy.” This policy was not popular in Latin America and Taft resorted to force in Nicaragua and other countries to protect American interests.

Wilson’s ascension to the highest office in the land changed the direction of many of Roosevelt’s initiatives. Wilson’s New Freedom program saw tariffs lowered for the first time since the Civil War. An income tax was levied to replace funds brought in by the tariffs, and the Federal Reserve Act created a system of regional banks that “provided for a flexible national currency and improved access to credit” (Goldfield et al., 2007, p. 672). Although Wilson nominated and fought for the confirmation of a Jewish man, Louis Brandeis, to the Supreme Court, Progressive reformers with interests in women’s suffrage, child labor, and race relations were disappointed as this president—faced with growing tension abroad and then a world war—seemed to turn his back on reform issues. A southerner, Wilson formalized segregation in the government (Goldfield et al., 2007). Washington, DC, officials fired vocal opponents of the practice, and others in supervisory positions took the opportunity to remove Blacks from federal jobs without repercussion (Goldfield et al., 2007).

While presidents came and went and territories accumulated, the population of the United States nearly doubled. It was 50,155,783 in 1880 and rose to 91,972,266 in 1910 (census data in Norton et al., 1994). Years of industrial expansion and unchecked governmental support caused many citizens to distrust government. In addition, belief in Social Darwinism by much of the upper- and middle-classes exacerbated class conflict (Nash et al., 2006; Norton et al., 1994; Painter, 1987). The theory of survival of the

fittest, adapted to business in the thinking that producers prospered and the rest perished (Painter, 1987), comforted those who had gained some degree of wealth and power. It was God's will that the competent few were blessed with prosperity; it was something that could not be changed. This line of thinking often employed the vocabulary of science, and many used it to "justify race supremacy and imperialism" (Nash et al., 2006, p. 632). Proponents of Herbert Spencer such as William Graham Sumner espoused the idea that aiding the poor and less fortunate did not help them; they had flawed characters and needed to learn the value of hard work to improve their station (Goldfield et al., 2007; Summers, 1997). Andrew Carnegie disagreed. He wrote an essay in 1889 entitled "The Gospel of Wealth" in order to explain his position. Along with a few other wealthy industrialists, Carnegie felt that the wealthy had a responsibility to return some of their holdings to the less fortunate and did so generously. The rest spent lavishly only on themselves in good conscience.

Widespread distrust and the growth of an extremely wealthy class of Americans created conditions that were ripe for public criticism and multiple reform efforts. Muckraking increased the sales of magazines and newspapers around the country as journalists, intent on exposing the excesses of corporate leaders, the corruption of government officials, and the "miseries of slum life" (Goldfield et al., 2007, p. 649), attempted to effect change. Socialism also had its advocates and enjoyed its highest level of popularity during the Progressive Era. Several muckrakers such as Lincoln Steffens and Upton Sinclair, ministers of the Social Gospel, and labor leaders rallying around Eugene V. Debs created both interest in, and fear of, their agendas. The political party



Debs helped organize won some local elections in Wisconsin, New York, and Oklahoma, but socialism was considered “too drastic” by most progressives and “never attracted a large following in the United States” (Goldfield et al., 2007, p. 651). However, socialist elements did cause middle-of-the-road progressives to act in favor of less radical reforms in order to placate them. For those disenchanted with the industrial East or the racially oppressive South, the West was still offering a chance to start anew. Land, railroad expansion, mining opportunities, and advertising promoting the benefits of specific locations all called the restless and adventuresome toward the West (Goldfield et al., 2007). Between 1870 and 1890 “the population living between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean swelled from 7 million to nearly 17 million” (Norton et al., 1994, p. 499). This mass migration had its consequences. It continued the confinement of American Indians to smaller and less desirable territories and it destroyed the beauty and natural resources in many areas. The period between the Civil and First World Wars witnessed the rise of the United States as a world power (Nash et al., 2006). At home and abroad, the energy and inventive spirit of America changed the way the people lived. For some it was not for the better.

### ***Industrialization***

The latter half of the 19th century was a period of tremendous growth in manufacturing and in the number of large corporations. The invention of the electric light bulb, a system of generating electricity, and the internal combustion engine drove much of this expansion. Many jobs, particularly those of skilled artisans, faded away. However, completely new occupations arose in industries such as product research and

development, electrical equipment, steel, food canning, machine tools, cigarettes, meatpacking, chemical production and application, and automobile manufacturing (Goldfield et al., 2007). The creation of thousands of bookkeeping and managerial jobs came along with this industrial growth. Efficiency and profitability became watchwords for the new engineers and managers who sought to increase output (Norton et. al, 1994). The rise of corporate America resulted in a tremendous shift away from agriculture as the mainstay of the U.S. economy. The fraction of the work force made up of farmers dropped from one half to a little over one quarter between 1880 and 1920 (Painter, 1987).

Soon after this shift to urban mass production, employees who toiled in large, impersonal, and often unsafe factories for up to 16 hours a day began to complain of “what one member of the Knights of Labor called the degradation of labor” (Painter, 1987, p. *xxxiv*). A volatile economy that occasioned pay cuts and layoffs, strict supervision, and operating under “the tyranny of the clock” (Cayton, 2002) led to unionization and strikes. Over 22,000 strikes were waged between 1893 and 1903 alone (Goldfield et al., 2007). Many of these strikes were violent and unsuccessful. Outside of large cities, labor activity had a measure of community support. In discussing Southeastern Ohio iron mills, Cayton (2002) pointed out that these mill owners were not as removed from their neighbors and friends as were industrialists who isolated themselves in enclaves of huge Victorian mansions in the cities. “Because most people in relatively homogeneous and compact river towns sympathized with the strikers, the mill owners eventually had to compromise” (p. 189). Yet, even in small towns and villages,

industrialization and the widening disparity between rich and poor was driving a wedge between managers and employees, those with power and position and those without it.

The railroad, the coal, steel, and petroleum industries, and the businesses related to river transportation were major sources of non-agricultural employment in the upper Ohio River Valley. However, few of these industries hired significant numbers of African Americans. Goldfield and his co-authors (2007) reported that “Pittsburgh steelmakers preferred Polish workers to the black workers” (p. 567) and Gerber (1976) noted that “union hostility” caused “the decimation of the skilled black railway force” (p. 302). If Blacks secured jobs in these areas, they tended to be in the lowest paying positions with little hope of advancement (Gerber, 1976; Licht, 2002). Desperate for work, Blacks sometimes took jobs as strikebreakers, which alienated them from union personnel (Cayton, 2002; Gerber, 1976; Glasco, 2004; Licht, 2002; Nash et al., 2006).

Complicating matters, most unions excluded Blacks. The United Mine Workers, with roughly 20,000 Black members working in the upper Ohio River Valley in 1890 (Cayton, 2002), and the Knights of Labor were two exceptions. Industrial positions controlled by unions were difficult if not impossible for African Americans to secure (Gerber, 1976; Licht, 2002; Nash et al., 2006). Thus, the vast majority of Black males employed in the upper Ohio River Valley were engaged in heavy labor or service trades such as barbering, personal service, building trades, cleaning and janitorial work, railroad track and roadway maintenance, hauling and carting, mining, loading-dock personnel, and agricultural labor (Gerber 1976; Licht, 2002). A very small number were professionals such as doctors, lawyers, ministers, or teachers. For example, Gerber (1976) noted that as of 1890 there

were only 14 Black attorneys and 32 Black doctors in the entire state of Ohio. The state had a total Black population of 87,113 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002) in that year. In summary, industrialization created thousands of new jobs, but few of them were available to Blacks. For the most part, society reserved for them the lowest paying, roughest, dirtiest work or the work that required serving others. For a group that wanted decent work, the closed doors were demoralizing.

### *Women, Children, and Work*

Growth in the middle class and movement away from the farm during the late 19th century changed family dynamics in a significant manner. Ideologically, women and children belonged at home, a home paid for and sustained by a male breadwinner (Goldfield et al., 2007; Nash et al., 2006; Painter, 1987). Fathers went off to work in the morning and returned home after a hard day's work at the office or factory. Labor-saving devices and expendable income for domestic help created more leisure time for women and children. With improved mass transportation, this rising middle class discovered the suburbs and moved away from the crowded, noisy city in significant numbers (Goldfield et al., 2007). Children attended school through high school, many through college, in growing numbers. Using the training they received, respectable single ladies took jobs in downtown department stores, stenographic pools, hospitals and doctors' offices and classrooms until suitable marriage proposals materialized (Painter, 1987; Woody, 1929). However, for families struggling to get by, especially many immigrant and Black families, this scenario was outside the realm of possibility. Lost was the opportunity for anything more than a rudimentary education, no matter how deep the longing for it.

In stark contrast to the idyllic Victorian family, many wives and children had to work in order to survive (Goldfield et al., 2007; Nash et al., 2006). Working 12 to 14 hours a day or doing shift work (made possible by the invention of the electric light bulb) for subsistence wages put a tremendous strain on families. Fathers and mothers working in this manner were unavailable for regular meals or for tucking children in bed with a story. Mechanization and unsafe work conditions left many heads of households dead, maimed, or chronically ill (Norton et al., 1994) forcing additional women and children into the workforce. During the “nadir,” the name Logan (1954) gave the years between 1877 and 1901; it was common for Black women to find work when their husbands and sons could not (Gerber, 1976; Painter, 1987). Much of that work was in the domestic service of middle- and upper-class women (Jones, 1995; Lerner, 1975; Painter, 1987). In the hierarchy of women’s work, such work was at the bottom, lower than salesclerks and factory workers (Painter, 1987). This was also the era of the sweatshop, when poor and immigrant women toiled in small, hot facilities for pennies a day (Goldfield et al., 2007; Norton, 1994). Often these businesses and a variety of others employed children as well to do menial tasks like pulling basting from garments, sewing on buttons, carrying materials from place to place, fishing out waste from coal chutes, and running messages. Children earned even less than women did. Wages for both were substantially less than that of a man because they were thought to be supplementing family income or simply seeking the “frills” of life (Elsbree, 1939). In this regard, teachers were no different from factory workers. For example, Elsbree (1939) listed average weekly salaries for rural male and female teachers (those likely to be the closest to the women in this study) for

1890 as \$11.30 and \$8.55 respectively. The estimated cost of living for a small family during that same decade was \$8.09 a week (Elsbree, 1939).

Labor laws protecting the working class were slow to come (Nash et al., 2006; Norton et al., 1994). Some states enacted child labor laws, with Pennsylvania being one of the first, but they were not enforced consistently (Nash et al., 2006). Many unions looked unfavorably on women in the labor market. Some prohibited female membership (Norton et al., 1994). Women were a source of competition for male workers who feared they would drive wages lower, thus making their desire to assist with women's issues minimal (Norton et al., 1994; Painter, 1987). Some women formed their own unions, particularly those in the garment industry, winning higher wages and limits on the length of their workweek in the process (Norton et al., 1994; Painter, 1987).

In addition to long hours of tedious work in restrictive clothing for little remuneration, working women had to deal with a stereotype that labeled them "loose" and "easy" (Goldfield et al., 2007). Goldfield and his co-authors (2007) wrote "newspapers and magazines published exposés of working girls descending into prostitution. These images encouraged sexual harassment at work which was rarely punished" (p. 558). For Black working women, gaining any measure of respectability was difficult (Painter, 1987). Relegated to the lowest forms of domestic and industrial work or manual labor "so physically arduous it was usually considered men's work" (Jones, 1995, p. 4), Black women were damned no matter what they did. White society questioned their virtue if they worked. It labeled them lazy if they did not. Throughout

the post-Reconstruction era, Black females remained caught in a web of social and economic constraints from which they could rarely free themselves.

### *Immigration*

A surge in immigration from Europe, especially from southern and eastern Europe, affected the African American's ability to secure employment, particularly in the industrial North, during the post-Reconstruction years (Licht, 2002). Even the most menial of jobs were difficult to secure because employers typically preferred White, foreign-born workers to Blacks (Goldfield et al, 2007). In addition, the supply of those workers with whom Blacks had to compete appeared endless. The incoming masses from Europe, Mexico, and Asia numbered over 20 million between 1870 and 1910 (Goldfield et al, 2007). They came because life was harsh in their native countries. "Overpopulation, famine, and disease drove people to leave" (Nash et al., 2006, p. 594). Changing European economics, governmental policies, particularly those regarding Jews, and the news from family members finding some comfort in a new land brought others to America (Nash et al., 2006). Most of these people entered the country with next to nothing and were willing to work for little pay. Those who did not speak English and preferred to maintain their culture had a more difficult transition than those who were willing to assimilate (Nash et al., 2006). Others, almost half of them, returned to their native land after making some money to improve their lot (Goldfield et al, 2007). Despite this high rate of return, immigrants filled a huge percentage of the needed work force and provided stiff competition for the native Black population. Many immigrants, particularly the dark skinned, felt a need to distance themselves from African Americans because

nativists often lumped all dark skinned people together as Black (Goldfield et al., 2007). At the bottom of almost every citizen's list, especially the employer's hiring list, many Blacks had difficulty supporting themselves and their families as well as difficulty carving out a peaceful existence.

### *Depression and Prosperity*

Burgeoning industrial growth and dubious banking practices, yet unregulated by the federal government, caused volatility in the U.S. economy in the decades following the Civil War (Goldfield et al, 2007). Many families and individuals suffered hardships as the result of severe depressions between 1873-1879 and 1893-1897, a recession from 1884-1886 (Licht, 2002), and a bank scare in 1907 (Nash et al., 2006; Norton et al., 1994). These downturns that were due to expansion and contraction cycles in the corporate world, created additional tension in the labor market that affected the Black population inordinately. When industry cut jobs, African Americans went home in higher proportions than immigrants or Whites. When management reduced salaries, it made life for those making subsistence wages even tougher (Nash et al., 2006). When middle and upper class households tightened the belt for even brief periods, they sought less domestic help and fewer personal services traditionally performed by Blacks. Those who many citizens lectured about pulling themselves up by their bootstraps rarely had the means to afford boots, especially when the economy and prejudice kept them from honest work.

In spite of economic instability, a new era of consumerism and prosperity swirled around the poor and the despised. Americans spent billions of dollars on new items and



various forms of entertainment such as flush toilets, canned foods, Coca-Cola, Hershey bars, ready-made garments, and tickets to amusement parks, nickelodeons, and baseball games (Nash et al., 2006; Norton et al., 1994; Painter, 1987). Newspapers and magazines aided the captains of industry with advertisements and articles about the latest fashions, gadgets, and modern conveniences (Norton et al. 1994). Salaries and wages rose about 30% for most workers between 1890 and 1910 (Nash et al., 2006; Norton et al., 1994) making possible the purchase of homes and products formerly made by hand. The death rate went down, life expectancy went up, and higher levels of education, “the means to upward mobility” (Norton et al., 1994, p. 549), were more accessible. For the average American, life was better than it was before the Civil War.

This improved standard of living did not come “without sacrifices” (Norton et al., 1994, p. 548). Although income rose substantially, so did the cost of living (Nash et al., 2006; Norton et al, 1994). Norton and her co-authors (1994) reported a 47% increase in it between 1889 and 1913. The average 30% gain in salaries over the same period meant many households lost or barely held their ground to inflation. To keep up, couples planned smaller families (thanks to new birth control methods), went without some conveniences, supplemented income with that of wives and children, and took in boarders (Norton et al, 1994). For still others, the sacrifice was total denial of any life-enhancing products or services. Painter (1987) indicated that a U.S. Industrial Commission formed at the turn of the century found “that between 60 and 88 percent of Americans were poor or very poor” (p. 176). The Horatio Alger story was still popular in the early 1900s (Goldfield et al., 2007). The popular press heralded similar stories of a few whose rags to

riches experiences mirrored it. These types of stories and images gave hope to millions, but for most, social and economic polarization kept them in classes in which members could only dream of such success (Nash et al., 2006).

### *Progressivism and Reform*

Progressivism was many things to many people. It was complex and hard to define according to Norton et al. (1994) and perhaps best explained as the “reformist spirit” (p. 626) of turn-of-the-century America. Progressives, as critiqued by these historians, had three goals: to end abuses of power, to reform social institutions, and to apply scientific principles and efficient management to those institutions (Norton et al., 1994). Goldfield et al. stated that these movements “challenged traditional relationships and attitudes” that “often met strong resistance” (p. 645). Although historians differed as to when the Progressive Era began and ended, they usually place most of it within the period from 1877 to 1915 (Goldfield et al. delineated it as 1900-1917; Nash et al., its height from 1900-1914; and Norton et al. as 1895-1920). They also agreed that progressives possessed “a deep faith in the ability of humankind to create a better world” (Norton et al., 1994, p. 626). They were not a uniform organization, as their reform efforts varied “according to their own interests and priorities” (Goldfield et al., 2007, p. 645), and not all progressives accepted every effort as needed or acceptable. Americans were particularly sensitive to changes when they crossed into the realm of religion. Progressive thought invaded some mainline churches in the form of the Social Gospel. Ministers such as Washington Gladden of Columbus, Ohio, and Walter Rauschenbusch of Rochester, New York, felt called “to try to recapture Christianity for

the ideals of social justice” (Painter, 1987, p. 1987). These clergymen attempted to mediate class divisions within their congregations or between their congregations and the less fortunate in their communities, to start branch churches in working-class neighborhoods, and to support collective bargaining and labor reform (Nash et al., 2006; Norton et al., 1994; Painter, 1987). Some of the other highly celebrated progressive reforms involved the establishment of settlement houses to assist the homeless, unemployed, illiterate, and unhealthy among the mushrooming urban population; the formation of leagues and professional organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the American Bar Association to advocate for special interests and regulate entrance to specific occupations; the championing of labor regulations, women’s suffrage, temperance, child-centered education, and anti-prostitution legislation; and the exposure of municipal and state political machinery (Goldfield et al., 2007; Lasch-Quinn, 1993; Nash et al., 2006; Norton et al., 1994; Painter, 1987). Of these many initiatives, women’s club activities and progressive education warrant further discussion in the context of the research presented in this dissertation.

Until the 19th century, American women in general had few opportunities to work for wages outside the home or to build leadership skills. The reform movements of the Jacksonian era, in addition to abolition efforts, provided White women with some of the first socially-acceptable, large-scale platforms on which they could organize events, publicize ideas, and demonstrate competence in the public sector (Berg, 1978; Tyler, 1962; Woody, 1929). The Progressive Era reform movement reinvigorated those

opportunities, and women took advantage of them in greater numbers (Nash et al., 2006; Woody, 1929). Many of these predominantly middle-class women had high school and college educations plus work experience as teachers, nurses, and social workers (Nash et al., 2006; Norton et al., 1994). They were more confident and better prepared for roles outside the home than were their mothers and grandmothers (Goldfield et al., 2007; Painter, 1987; Woody, 1929). They were also highly effective. Women's clubs of all types—from literary to religious, from charitable to political—provided financial support services to their sisters and to their communities in order to improve life (Goldfield et al., 2007; Lerner, 1975; Woody, 1929). Sadly, few White women's clubs accepted Black members (Collins, 2003; Hine & Thompson, 1998; Noble, 1956), even among those whose members had once fought for the abolition of slavery.

The fight for suffrage and women's rights was no different. Growing numbers of predominantly middle-class women, energized by their successes in education and reform efforts, sought to dispel the notion of the "woman's sphere" and to gain the right to vote. Citing their "special, even superior traits as guardians of family and morality" as characteristics that would help them "humanize all of society" (Norton et al., 1994, p. 642), organizations such as the National American Woman Suffrage Association and the Congressional Union for Women's Suffrage organized, printed pamphlets, spoke publically, paraded, and picketed in order to gain voting privileges (Lunardini, 1998). Their work would earn them the franchise in 1920, but to some their rhetoric of oppression and discrimination was hypocritical. Black women were hopeful that White women seeking the vote, other forms of civil and economic equality with men, and

improved conditions for the poor and illiterate would embrace them in their struggle. Shunned on this front, too, Blacks formed groups to fight separate battles for similar causes (Hine & Thompson, 1998; Lerner, 1975; Painter, 1987). The situation gave rise to the Black women's club movement. It not only sought reform of the political system, but also to affect the social, economic, and educational conditions that perpetuated race, class, and gender prejudice (Hine & Thompson, 1998; Lerner, 1975). Many Black women had developed leadership skills through church organizations, particularly those in the National Baptist Convention church (Higginbotham, 1993) and the African Methodist Episcopal church (Hine & Thompson, 1998). These women formed organizations that moved out into the greater community and "became virtually the sole provider of social services to the black community" (Hine & Thompson, 1998, p. 166). Teaching and education were pivotal to many of the programs and services they supported or provided. Clubs throughout the United States, many of them linked through the National Association of Colored Women, offered scholarships to aspiring Black teachers, tutored children and adults, built schools, and maintained nurseries. In the days before public assistance, Black clubwomen provided care to the old, the ill, the widowed, and the unemployed. They did all of this for people whom most progressive White women would not serve.

Progressive education was another complex movement that was difficult to pinpoint in terms of starting date, definition, and ending date (Cohen, 1999). Interest in a variety of social, political, and economic reforms led progressives to focus on the school as an ideal place to change future generations for the better (Cremin, 1962; Goldfield et

al., 2007; Nash et al., 2006; Norton et al., 1994; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Coupled with knowledge from the new field of psychology that gave rise to different ways of viewing learners, the learning process, and testing student ability, progressive educators were in a position to blend science with their desire for greater efficiency as they targeted schools for improvement (Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

Cremin (1962) provided perhaps the most thorough description of the rise and fall of progressive education in *The Transformation of the School*. His treatment began near the end of Reconstruction (1876) and ended in the late 1950s. According to Cremin, the actual progressive era in education did not start until 1917, about the time many historians close the book on progressive enthusiasm in other areas. He differentiated the period between 1876 and 1917 as one prone to the “progressive impulse,” with the fruits of progressive educational thought beginning to ripen at the end of the First World War and “the founding of the Progressive Education Association in 1919” (Cremin, 1962, p. 179). However, the people and events that mark the movement have been tied to the three decades prior to the War. A representative group of these key progressive initiatives is: Francis W. Parker’s development of the “Quincy System” in his Massachusetts school district beginning in 1875; Massachusetts Institute of Technology president John Runkle’s discovery of Russian vocational education at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition; the founding of Teachers College at Columbia University in 1887; *The Forum* publishing in 1892 Joseph Mayer Rice’s controversial series based on his observations of 36 city school districts; the opening of John Dewey’s laboratory school at the University of Chicago in 1896; and the publishing of G. Stanley Hall’s book

*Adolescence* in 1904 (Cremin, 1962; Nash et al., 2006; Norton et al., 1994; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Shaped by energetic leaders, these and similar events moved the school to the forefront of the progressive effort to aid society in dealing with industrialization, immigration, and urbanization (Cremin, 1962; Goldfield et al., 2007; Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

Progressive educators attempted to tackle social ills by relating academic subjects to real life experiences, taking field trips, performing work- and life-related tasks, engaging in problem solving, encouraging extracurricular activities, and permitting interaction between students during the learning process (Contosta, 2002; Cremin, 1962; McClellan, 1999; Norton et al., 1994). Desks were unbolted to permit movement and grouping, administrators had kitchens and workshops built into schools, clubs were established, and educators rewrote curricula to reflect the new child-centered approach (Cremin, 1962; Nash et al., 2006). Progressives also sought to standardize many conditions and practices through state regulation and to develop a professional teaching force (Goldfield et al., 2007; Tyack & Hansot, 1982) capable of tailoring instruction to individual children, each of whom faced the rapidly changing world with their own specific needs.

### ***Education: Characteristics of Schooling***

While progressives “tinkered” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) with the management and curriculum of schools, many, perhaps most, teachers continued on with their daily routines in much the same manner as they had for generations (Cuban, 1984; Finkelstein, 1989). All educators, progressive or otherwise, had to deal with sizable increases in

school enrollment throughout the post-Reconstruction period (Norton et al., 1994). Tax-supported elementary schooling was the norm in the northeastern, midwestern, and western states by the last quarter of the 19th century (Goldfield et al., 2007; Rury, 2005). The number of public high schools was growing during this period as well (Elsbree, 1939; Reese, 1995). Three conditions other than the general increase in population accounted for this interest in schooling:

1. new labor saving devices and migration to the cities meant fewer children were working eight months a year on the farm (Norton et al., 1994)
2. compulsory attendance laws, although ignored by many industries, forced some children into the classroom until they were 14 or older in some locations (Goldfield et al., 2007; Norton et al., 1994; Tyack & Hansot, 1982)
3. new jobs created by the growth of industry required a higher level of skill or academic accomplishment (Cremin, 1962).

In addition to burgeoning enrollments, weeks, and in some rural districts, months were added to the duration of the school year (Rury, 1989). In many cases, the management of all these students for longer periods left little time for teachers to learn new methods or take on complex record keeping and lesson planning. Not inspired by the movement, others simply stayed with the methodology of memorize and recite with which they were more comfortable.

Testing and the application of scientific procedures to improve education was one progressive initiative that took hold in the early 20th century. E. L. Thorndike, on his way to making psychology “the study of observable, measurable human behavior” (Cremin,



1962, p. 112), offered teachers a wealth of research-based material on “the design and choice of teaching materials, the organization of instruction, ways of adjusting to individual differences in the classroom, and methods of judging student progress” (Cremin, 1962, p. 14). Although more conservative than Thorndike, G. Stanley Hall also pioneered in the field of psychology and child development. According to Mohraz (1979), Hall was as a key proponent of the idea that “the child should not be fitted to the school as had traditionally been the case; rather, the school and the curriculum should be determined by principles of child development” (p. 48). This philosophy had many positive points over the traditional one-size-fits-all school. However, for children not in the cultural mainstream, educators and philanthropists employed it to their disadvantage. The prevailing belief, supported by geography textbooks of the day, was that there was a hierarchy of races (Finkelstein, 1989), with the Caucasian race on the top of that hierarchy and the Black race on the bottom. Fitting schools to Black children whose test scores were usually low almost universally meant providing them with less, lowering expectations for them, and limiting the range of educational options and work to which they could aspire. Ratteray (1994) noted that throughout their history on American shores Blacks struggled over both access to, and content in, the schools. The struggle for access was so difficult it “diverted the energies of African-Americans from the task of designing and providing quality schooling” (p. 123). In the regressive Jim Crow era, this left African American children in “substandard ‘public’ facilities and little hope of an opportunity to attend any independent alternative” (p. 127). A group of historians led by Goldfield (2007) charged, “the South frittered away its limited resources on a segregated

educational system that shortchanged both races” (p. 656). However, in most areas of the North and West schooling for Black children was rarely integrated or equal to that of White children (Finkelstein, 1989; Gerber, 1976).

During the post-Reconstruction period, the classroom experience for children both White and Black varied by locale. Levels of resources and community support ranged from stingy (primarily but not universally in small towns and rural areas) to adequate (Did any school district ever have too much of either?) in mid-sized to larger cities. However, evidence was indisputable that schools with all or majority Black enrollments were not funded at that same level as majority-or all-White schools (Foster, 1994; Ratteray, 1994). Ratteray (1994) indicated that as late as the 1930s African Americans were receiving “less than two-fifths of the fair share of funds for public schools” (p. 127). Rural children were still likely to attend one- or two-room schools with students of many ages and abilities in one class, although as the era progressed, more and more rural schools standardized on the graded model (Beatty & Stone, 1984; Finkelstein, 1989). By the 1880s, leveling students by grade in self-contained classrooms was the norm (Finkelstein, 1989). Northern districts where there was sufficient enrollment for separate schools tended to segregate their students by race (Finkelstein, 1989; Mohraz, 1979). All 16 southern states and the District of Columbia had de jure segregation (Caliver, 1933). Where integration existed, it was often a result of financial expedience (Gerber, 1976). The curriculum for children in the elementary grades included reading, penmanship, arithmetic, spelling, and coverage of the “rudimentary knowledge of their country” (Finkelstein, 1989, p. 41). The secondary curriculum was less clear-cut (Reese, 1995).

The length of the class periods and the variety of subject matter studied varied widely until the 1890s, when the Committee of Ten called together by the National Education Association met to standardize high school coursework on the Carnegie Unit and the needs of future college students (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Grade cards replaced public exhibitions of skills at all levels in the majority of districts by the late 19th century (Finkelstein, 1989). While some children and youth enjoyed the application of new child-centered education that made their needs and interests paramount in the classroom, most continued to attend schools where the teacher served as either drillmaster or overseer and labored under the assumption that “the exercise of reason and judgment should be discouraged” (Finkelstein, 1989, p. 137) until basic facts were memorized.

One of the most debated curricular topics of the period related to race was that of vocational education versus classical education. The debate that many associated with Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois played out in many locales and on the national stage (Anderson, 1988). Mohraz (1979) indicated that schoolmen of the progressive era viewed vocational tracks as an appropriate and humane way of differentiating curricula in order to meet the varying needs of children and young adults. A great many educators believed the poorest children, which translated into almost all Black children, were most in need of job skills. For all too many African American youth that meant assignment to programs that instructed them in low-status or dying crafts such as laundering, blacksmithing, machine work in iron or wood, and hat making (Anderson, 1988). Harris (1994) pointed out that the issue was not the either/or situation that many have made it out to be. She stated,

“A range of views existed between the two, and the views of Washington and DuBois varied on the basis of socio-cultural conditions. Rather than keeping the notion of a dichotomy, we should opt instead for the idea of a continuum with fluid boundaries” (p. 148).

There were African Americans who received educations in the classical or liberal arts traditions (Anderson, 1988). There were White children pigeonholed into vocational programs (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Some of both wanted vocational training, as it was a method of obtaining job training. Problems developed when administrators and community values dictated who would receive specific types of education. Choice was the essence of the issue.

Education was a high priority for African Americans during this period. Higginbotham (1993) suggested that in the minds of Blacks it was “second only to religion in enabling their survival and salvation in America” (p. 19). Denied the opportunity to attend school in slavery, and with illiteracy rates still high among the children of the second generation removed from bondage, Black leaders continued to work for greater access and better quality education. The effort was frustrated at many levels, particularly in the South. Pennsylvania was the first of the three states under consideration in this study that sought to teach all students under one roof. However, the equal access law passed there in 1881 did little toward the goal of true integration (Trotter, 1997). Although already in practice and continued in some smaller communities, the law essentially exacerbated the practice of de facto segregation in most of the middle-sized to larger cities of the state (Trotter, 1997). Ohio followed Pennsylvania with similar

legislation in 1887 (Gerber, 1976) with similar results. Of Ohio's three-year legislative battle, Gerber (1976) wrote that, "the course of events had been determined by competing forces: political expediency and prejudice versus idealism and egalitarianism" (p. 243). Responses to the act, known as the Arnett Law, included the gerrymandering of school districts by school boards, the loss of Black teachers, and in some communities "strong, and ultimately successful, resistance to desegregation" (p. 263). West Virginia failed to enact such regulations during the post-Reconstruction era. Desegregation came to that state much later—forced by the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court case *Brown v the Board of Education of Topeka Kansas*. In the end, schooling in the United States for African Americans was second rate and only marginally effective. Literacy rates increased during the period, rising from 18% in 1870 to 60% in 1910 (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). However, many Black children did not attend school. Payne, reporting in the introduction of Bond's book *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order*, listed data indicating that 9.2% of eligible Black children attended school in 1870. By 1910 that figure rose to 45.4%, but that left a little over half of them outside the influence of formal schooling. Church-sponsored Sabbath schools and home instruction provided education for some children unable to attend school, but many young people were left without these types of informal learning opportunities as well. Of the private and public schools available, even among those in the upper Ohio River Valley, most were separate, not as well funded, as well staffed, or as well housed and cared for as schools for Whites. Despite valiant efforts on the part of some community leaders, philanthropists, parents, and Black educators, African American children did not have an equal opportunity to succeed.

### *Teachers and Their Education*

The post-Reconstruction period witnessed a rise in the demand for teachers. Rury (1989) reported that the number of students nearly doubled between 1870 and 1900, and the teacher to student ratio improved from “less than one to a hundred to about one to fifty” (p. 23). Increasing demands for an educated workforce, the hope that education would bring increased opportunity for economic advancement, and prosperity that reduced the need for child labor on farms accounted for much of the rise in the student population (Cremin, 1982; Goldman, 1977; McClellan, 1999; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Tripling the number of teachers employed by school boards accomplished the reduction in student-to-teacher ratio (Rury, 1989). Women took the new positions in increasing numbers because men were moving into school management positions or out of the field due to the lengthening of the school year and better employment options in industry (Rury, 1989). Additionally, their numbers increased because women would accept the low pay. By 1900 almost three quarters of the teaching force was female, and in cities it was over 80% female (Rury, 1989).

Scholars who studied the social profile of the women who answered the call and entered the teaching profession indicated that the majority had native-born parents who were farmers or artisans and were largely from lower-middle and middle-class backgrounds (Elsbree, 1939; Rury, 1989). They tended to start their careers at an early age, at 15 or 16 in some locations, and end them within a few years (Elsbree, 1939; Rury, 1989). Although Black teachers tended to stay in the profession longer because they had “less opportunity to use teaching as a stopgap or steppingstone” (Clifford, 1989, p. 320),

the average tenure was not more than four to six years for women teachers in many areas of the country (Elsbree, 1939; Ogren, 1996; Rury, 1991). The departure of female teachers in countless locations was due to rules that required women to resign when they married. Rury (1989) indicated that “more than 80% of women teachers had less than 10 years of teaching experience in 1910” (p. 28) and the mean age of female teachers was 27, five years less than males in similar positions. African Americans made up 11% of the population in 1900, yet only 5% of the teaching force was Black (Rury, 1989). This under-representation was not characteristic of teachers of immigrant children. Rury reported that “those born in this country of immigrant parents, numbered more than one of four teachers nationally and nearly one in three white teachers” (1989, p. 30). The types of preparation for teaching these individuals engaged in was less consistent than their social profile.

A wide range of educational backgrounds was evident among individuals who made up the teaching profession (Cremin, 1977). Few states had uniform licensing standards until well into the 20th century. Testing, rather than completion of a specific degree program, was the primary vehicle for securing a license, and local school boards in many communities could administer them (Elsbree, 1939). Few teachers had a college education; many had little more than an elementary or common-school education, especially those beginning their careers before or just after Reconstruction (Elsbree, 1939). The majority of those who had instruction past common school had obtained it in a local or regional high school. By the late 1800s, the normal school or college was the preferred place to obtain advanced training for the prospective teacher (Herbst, 1989;

Ogren, 2005). For women, these public and private institutions replaced the academies and seminaries of the first half of the century, but were almost as confusing as to academic level, curriculum, and length of degree program. Many urban school districts attached one or two years of normal training to at least one of their high schools and sought to grow their own teaching force (Reese, 1995). Other normal schools were private or public institutions that provided at least two years of post-secondary education in subject matter and pedagogy (Fraser, 2007; Herbst, 1989; Ogren, 2005; Woody, 1929). Some teachers, the major of this type being male, taught while attending college. However, this practice faded as school years grew longer and colleges no longer built their schedules around public school terms (Rury, 1989). The smallest group within the profession graduated from college before entering the classroom. Without an accrediting body, the quality of education obtained at all but a few highly regarded colleges and universities could be as suspect as that of the normal college. So it was that other than demonstrating mastery of a body of facts on a test, something a few young women could do before they were old enough to be hired (Tyack & Hansot, 1982), the turn-of-the-century teaching force lacked conformity in preparation for the job. Elsbree (1939) reported that well into the 1930s many states were still trying to enforce regulations that required local districts to hire teachers with a minimum of a high school diploma. To advance the professionalism of their teachers once hired, some school districts provided teacher institutes and encouraged summer schooling (Elsbree, 1939; Fraser, 2007). However, professionalism was not the primary concern of every school board. Despite a great demand for teachers due to growing enrollments and high rates of turnover (Rury,



1989), financial concerns and cultural values kept rural and small to mid-sized city district school boards focused on hiring those with minimum qualifications –only White females with good moral character and little advanced education needed to apply.

The nation, the neighborhood, the workplace, the school, and the home were all rapidly changing landscapes during the post-Reconstruction era. In a general atmosphere of fear about what was to come, in a milieu of more pronounced class divides and ethnic and racial tension, most Americans struggled to create a sense of order and stability in their lives. With science on their side, progressives thought they could create a better world for all. Some of them did make a difference for segments of the population. All, however, rarely included those unwilling or unable to assimilate progressive values, and those left untouched by their reform programs. For all but a very few Black Americans, the years 1875 to 1915 were precarious times.

### *The Black Experience*

For most African Americans, life north of the Mason–Dixon Line was not much better than it was south of it (Cayton, 2002). In addition to the waves of foreign immigrants coming to American shores throughout the period that made finding and keeping jobs difficult, the attitudes and actions of the inhabitants rarely seemed consistent with the image of the North as a place where citizens believed all people to be created equal. Racial tension in northern cities such as Philadelphia, New York, Indianapolis, Chicago, and Springfield (both the city in Ohio and the community in Illinois) was real, and it often erupted into riots (Daniel, 1997; Gerber, 1976; Goldfield et al., 2007; Mohraz, 1979). The Ku Klux Klan had a presence in northeastern and midwestern states

such as Pennsylvania and Ohio, and by the 1920s had significant membership rolls (Moore, 1991). Violence was not perpetrated as much by The Klan in these states, but the organizations did exert considerable political pressure in many locations that supported the continued curtailment of Black civil rights (Moore, 1991). In smaller communities, Blacks frequently negotiated tenuous truces with Whites, usually at the expense of their own personal freedoms (Cayton, 2002; Gerber, 1976; Mohraz, 1979).

Northern migration of Blacks was not a new concern to northern communities in the 1870s. The growing Black population was a statewide concern in Ohio from its inception as a state in 1803. Black Laws passed through the legislature periodically in various attempts to curtail immigration and limit their rights (Eslinger, 2005; Gerber 1976). While there was a steady stream of former slaves and their family members heading north throughout the last quarter of the century and the first decade of the 20th century, the great surge of African Americans to northern communities did not come until after World War I (Cayton, 2002). Although the Black population of Ohio (Eslinger, 2005; Gerber, 1976), West Virginia (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002), and Pennsylvania (Licht, 2002) increased substantially during the post-Reconstruction period, their numbers were relatively small when compared to the total population of each state and community (Goldfield et al., 2007). This fact resulted in less racial tension in the North than after World War I, but it gained in intensity as immigrants from the South appeared in steadily greater numbers throughout the period (Cayton, 2002).

By the late 19th century, the citizens of many states and communities curtailed or reversed some or all of the political and social freedoms that African Americans gained in

the aftermath of the Civil War. This period of discriminatory acts and heightened racial tension came to be called “The Jim Crow Era” (Davis, 2006). The name Jim Crow came into the popular culture of the 19th century through minstrel performers. A man performing around 1830 in blackface who danced an exaggerated jig while singing a tune that ended with the line “Eb’ry time I weel about I jump Jim Crow” (Davis, 2006; Goldfield et al., 2007) was thought to have been the original depiction. This caricature became associated with a stereotype of Blacks as inferior and uncultured (Goldfield et al., 2007). Hence, the name came to describe laws and practices intended to regulate the African American community and prevent intermingling of the races.

Jim Crow laws and practices were many and varied. They ranged from the outright removal of voting rights in the South through poll taxes and citizenship tests (Nash et al., 2006), to neighborhood housing restrictions and school district gerrymandering in the North (Gerber, 1976; Mohraz, 1979). Few communities in the North or South permitted Blacks and Whites to share facilities such as theatres, libraries, restaurants, amusement parks, swimming pools, and hotels (Gerber, 1976; Nash et al., 2006). This practice became even more pronounced following the 1896 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the *Plessy v Ferguson* case. The *Plessy* case involved the segregation of railroad cars. In ruling that separate but equal cars were permissible, the highest court in the land sanctioned the continued segregation or re-segregation of countless numbers of public carriers, schools, and gathering places. These segregated facilities were rarely equal in quality to those provided to or for the dominant culture (Goldfield et al., 2007; Logan, 1954). Compounding this loss of rights gained after emancipation was the rise of

fear-based control tactics such as harassment, torture, and lynching (Goldfield et al., 2007; Higginbotham, 1993; Nash et al., 2006).

Lynching was not limited to the South. Accounts of mob violence and lynchings appeared with some regularity in newspapers and other public and private documents in states north of the Ohio River as well as south of it (Daniel, 1997; Logan, 1954; Myrdal, 1944). News of race riots spread fear through communities of all races and ethnicities. Some individuals were quick to jump to conclusions when angry groups implicated Blacks in crimes. Sometimes they took what they thought was justice into their own hands. Cayton (2002) reported the lynching of at least six Black men in Ohio in the 1890s. Pennsylvania (Contosta, 2002) and West Virginia (Diner, 1998) were not immune to the practice either. Nash and his co-authors (2006) reported that in the 1890s over 1,400 Black men were lynched or burned alive. Leading the effort to gain legislation against these atrocities was a former teacher, turned journalist, who decided to expose the “old thread bare lie that Negro men rape white women” (Wells in Aptheker, 1982, p. 66). Ida B. Wells Barnett entered the anti-lynching movement in response to the 1892 lynching of three of her Memphis, Tennessee, friends. Less successful White grocers killed the men because of economic competition, not because of rape. Wells set about researching the details of this and other lynch mobs. She then published her findings in order to demonstrate that such murders were politically and economically motivated. Wells traveled widely and received invitations to lecture on national and international stages. Her effort, along with that of thousands of others who supported the cause, slowly reduced the number of lynching incidents in the U.S. despite being continually thwarted

in the campaign to secure a federal anti-lynching law. However, the reduction in the number of unjust murders did not stop the continual threat that such acts could transpire. This fact coupled with the lack of consistent support from any particular organization, religious or secular, prevented African Americans from enjoying a sense of security.

African Americans could not count on any specific group of people for consistent support and assistance. The Quakers, for instance were allies in the fight against slavery and crusaders for education for all people of all nationalities, races, and ethnic groups. However, individuals within the sect were sometimes far from accepting of full equality for African Americans (Blockson, 1994). Their political maneuvering and sometimes-paternalistic management of schools such as The Philadelphia School for Colored Youth was indicative of some deep-seated prejudice (Perkins, 1978, 1987; Blockson, 1994). Christian missionary groups heading south after the Civil War had noble intentions, but many of the individuals within them held beliefs that Blacks were inferior (Anderson, 1988; Eng, 2004). The Reformed Presbyterians, Wesleyan Methodists, Jews, Dunkers, Roman Catholics, Mennonites, and Amish in some communities were often sympathetic to the African American plight (Blockson, 1994), but congregations in other communities were less than supportive, if not hostile. In addition, Ellen Eslinger noted in her discussion of racial politics in early Ohio that “official church positions occasionally shifted over time and between local congregations” and that “the difficulty of pursuing racial justice without sowing discord and division defied lasting solution” (p. 84). These shifts made it difficult for Blacks to build trust in any predominately-White religious group. While grateful for assistance and support, the majority of African Americans

living in the North understood that most churches that professed equality of the races and that offered monetary aid to immigrants, help with finding homes, land, and employment, did so only as long as Blacks knew their place. In most cases, the churches did not seek Blacks as members, nor did the members desire to have them integrated into their neighborhoods (Cayton, 2002; Higginbotham, 1993). Consequently, most Blacks turned to their own churches and to each other (Higginbotham, 1993) to gain whatever sense of security they could muster.

Religion and the social activities of the church provided many Blacks with one of the only forms of safe assembly and recreation (Bigham, 2006; Higginbotham, 1993). African Americans founded their own branches of the Methodist and Baptist churches, and started other denominations, in order to worship in the manner that they saw fit (Diner, 1998; Little, 2000; Norton et al., 1993). The African Methodist Episcopal (1845) and National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. (1895) were the two largest church organizations founded. In these churches, Blacks were free to blend African folk practices with Christian liturgy. They formed their own “distinctive mode of worship” (Diner, 1998, p. 142) that could be intense, emotional, and offensive to some people, White and Black (Bigham, 2006). However, their worship practices became their own. Higginbotham (1993) stated that the church had always been the “backbone” of the Black community in slavery. It continued to be in freedom. When freedoms initially won in emancipation were systematically removed during the post-Reconstruction period, “the church’s autonomy and financial strength made it the most logical institution for the pursuit of racial self-help” (p. 5). In addition to providing spiritual guidance and a place

for fellowship, churches aided their members and their communities by offering economic development services, mutual aid insurance, educational opportunities, political forums, and care for the needy (Bigham, 2006; Diner, 1998; Higginbotham, 1993; Little, 2000). It was also a place where organizational opportunities created leaders who took their skills out into the larger community (Higginbotham, 1993; Little 2000).

Community was extremely important to African Americans in the nadir. Just as anti-Black sentiment had caused African Americans to form their own churches, discrimination, persecution, and distrust prompted Blacks to band together in their own villages and neighborhoods for safety, companionship, and economic support (Diner, 1998; Gerber, 1976; Higginbotham, 1993; Mohraz, 1979). These enclaves were a source of employment as well as fellowship. Blacks opened stores, started newspapers, formed their own baseball league, and offered services to other Blacks that were otherwise unavailable to them (Diner, 1998). The *Pittsburgh Courier* was an example of a successful Black-owned business that served its community and others around the country. Founded in 1910, it eventually published three editions and employed around 80 skilled and educated African Americans (Buni, 1974; Glasco, 2004). Social and civic organizations such as the Masons, Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows, Order of Saint Luke, the newly-founded National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1909), and a host of women's clubs provided entertainment, fellowship, and uplift. Racial uplift, a term that meant working for the advancement of fellow African Americans, became a duty for many called to teach and serve the Black community (Shaw, 1996). In cities such as Cincinnati, Columbus, Springfield, Dayton, and Pittsburgh, African Americans

opened YMCA and YWCA facilities because they were not welcomed in the existing branches controlled by Whites (Gerber, 1976; Glasco, 2004; Lasch-Quinn, 1993). Black schools, which held out the hope that personal advancement through education might convince the dominant culture of the capability and worth of the race, received sizable support from the already taxed community (Anderson, 1988). African American communities worked to secure schooling in the North as well as the South. They often double taxed themselves, supplied materials, and helped build facilities in order to accomplish this goal (Anderson, 1988; Shaw, 1996; Williams, 2005) because local school boards were not amenable to sharing resources even in states such as Ohio and Pennsylvania where laws demanded that they should (Gerber, 1976; Shaw, 1996; Wilmoth, 1983). In some places, even settlement houses designed to help the urban poor and founded by individuals trained in the new field of social work, refused aid to Blacks (Boynton, 2003; Lasch-Quinn, 1993). Civically minded African Americans such as Edna Jane Hunter of Cleveland, Ohio saved nickels and then dollars to start their own settlement facilities (Boynton, 2003). By means of these and other activities, the African American community built its support structure from within.

Another important institution of personal support was the family. Contrary to commonly held thoughts of the day, African Americans were not the barbaric, uncivilized individuals devoid of virtue that some made them out to be. Black historian John Hope Franklin (2007) stated emphatically that the African American family survived slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and World War I. He indicated that as late as 1925, “six of seven black households had either a husband or father” (p. 5). He cited many stories of



wives, husbands, and children searching for each other following emancipation, and others of couples seeking to make their unions legal following emancipation. The bonds of family were strong, and many went to great lengths to rebuild and strengthen them for generations after the Civil War. Gutman's earlier work (1976) supported this contention as well. Shaw's book (1996) on Black professional women confirmed this, too. She provided extensive evidence in her book *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do* that families worked diligently to "throw up highways" (p. 1) for their children that would help them develop positive identities, avoid exploitation, and aspire to "high individual achievement" while demonstrating "social responsibility" (Shaw, 1996, p. 7). Due to the discriminatory and prohibitive practices of most of society, Black homes often filled the role of hotel, dormitory, hospital, and rest home (Shaw, 1996). Life expectancy for African Americans in the post-Reconstruction era was almost 10 years less than that of Whites (Norton et al., 1994). Hence, it was common for families to take in one or more children of deceased siblings or cousins or to include a widowed parent. Against this backdrop of community and family cohesiveness stood several issues that divided African Americans and disrupted their efforts to stand together to effect change for the better.

Matters of the economic good and social status of the individual as opposed to the group could cause dissention in the African American community. In the heyday of corporate America, Blacks were sometimes slow to employ pooled resources to incorporate major business (Gerber, 1976). Of course, it was difficult for them to raise capital, secure loans, and purchase land and supplies, but Gerber (1976) indicated there

were sufficient numbers of African Americans in Ohio who amassed sufficient wealth to spur Black-owned business. If this was true for Ohio, it was likely in other states. Another troublesome issue revolved around the protection of teaching jobs for Blacks. One of the only positive results of segregated schools during this period was the employment of African American teachers to teach in them (Gerber, 1976; Mohraz, 1979). In most locales, authorities prohibited Blacks from teaching in White or mixed-race schools. Hence, some African Americans actually fought against integration because of their fear of losing positions in one of the only middle-class careers they could enter (Gerber, 1976; Woodson, 1993). In addition, some African Americans who were able to climb the ladder and gain some degree of economic and social success shunned the less fortunate of every race and ethnic group, thereby isolating themselves from Black causes (Gatewood, 1993). It is also interesting to note that there was a hierarchy of status within the Black community, with some successful mulattos marginalizing those with darker skin (Gatewood, 1993; Gerber, 1976). These and other situations caused tension and ill will while demonstrating that Black community life was complex and defied simple explanation (Gatewood, 1993).

Painter (1987) chose to title her book about the post-Reconstruction years *Standing at Armageddon* because she perceived that much of the progressive reform movement was motivated by fear, the fear of revolution and working class violence. Many believed that the end of the world was near. Change occurred rapidly and few felt comfortable with growing class divisions and the diversity of America's citizenry. Diner (1998) believed the people of this era were seeking three things to combat their

perception that they had lost control of their lives: economic security and some level of material comfort, personal autonomy and the ability to make their own life choices free of interference from others, and social status in the form of respect and recognition from peers and the society at large. True as it was that these things were what most people in all cultures throughout time have sought, Diner claimed that they were particularly poignant at this time. Individuals and groups “pursued these goals in distinct ways and attached varying importance to each” (p. 9). They fought for these things in organized and informal ways and in doing so frequently “produced competition, if not conflict, with someone else” (p. 11). Competition usually resulted in winners and losers. African Americans were the overwhelming losers in almost all such competitions of the day (Diner, 1998). The playing field was not level as winners designed policies and practices to keep themselves on top. One form of resistance to oppression in one location was to move to another (Diner, 1998). The freedom to move from place to place was still a possibility for Blacks, and many exercised that option more than once in their lives. The times were uncertain at best, and dangerous at worst, for African Americans living between 1875 and 1915. Sometimes the place in which they chose to live or were fortunate enough to be born in made a significant difference in the quality of their lives.

### **The Place: Upper Ohio River Valley States**

The Ohio River formed in southwestern Pennsylvania thousands of years before either White or African inhabitants were present to observe it. It has wound its way westward in an ever changing course for thousands of years more and now forms the boundaries of five states: Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois. The river

and its many tributaries played a significant role in the development of the nation and the states that surrounded it. Parkersburg, West Virginia, Athens, Ohio, and Monongahela City, Pennsylvania, were three communities that were part of that development. Each grew up on the banks of those waterways and benefitted from the natural gifts the rivers provided. The following discussion sets the stage for understanding these emerging cities as part of the bounded system of this case study and as the formative communities of the embedded units of analysis.

### *The Importance of the River*

The Ohio River was a significant transportation artery into the heart of the United States. The river had been a path into the country's interior for adventurers and pioneers in the 18th and early 19th centuries (Havighurst, 2001). Individuals and families making their way west after the Revolutionary War used it as a faster form of travel than going overland in wagons or on horseback. As towns began to dot the shores of the Mighty Ohio and its tributaries, goods from eastern seaports and manufacturing centers were shipped to them via this inland waterway (Havighurst, 2001). The invention and development of the steamship in the first decades of the 19th century increased the commercial importance of this river as the length of the trip from Pittsburgh to New Orleans decreased from four months to several weeks (McNeese, 2004; Rhodes, 2007). Packet service, or boats that delivered goods, mail, and passengers to destinations on a regular, published schedule, began in 1835 (McNeese, 2004). The growth of the rail industry that began in the 1850s eventually weakened the centrality of the Ohio River's significance for the commerce of the communities along its banks (Havighurst, 2001;

Rhodes, 2007), but it never killed it entirely (nor has anything since, such as the automobile, truck, or airplane). Barge services continued to support the coal industry throughout the post-Reconstruction period, and steamboat traffic actually “witnessed a short-lived resurgence” (McNeese, 2004, p. 63) in the 1870s and 1880s. The federal government did not address the natural hazards of the river such as sandbars, rapids, and fluctuating depths (as low as one foot in some places during dry seasons) with any consistency in the latter decades of the 19th century. It often chose to ignore work on the Ohio because of its waning importance to industry and the more acute interest in the railroad. It was not until 1917 that the river regained national importance because the rail system could not keep up with the need for supply shipments necessitated by World War I (Havighurst, 2001). The renewed interest led to Congressional appropriations that completed work on a series of “dams required to create a minimum nine-foot navigable channel on the Ohio from Pittsburgh to Cairo, Illinois” (McNeese, 2004, p. 64). This project ensured that the Ohio would play a major role in the economic health of the nation, albeit a cyclical one much like the rise and fall of the waters within its banks.

In addition to transporting goods and travelers, the Ohio River moved news and mail up and down its length and served as a source of entertainment. Gathering for the mail packet was often a social event for a small town along the river’s edge. It was a chance to hear from the outside world and meet travelers, adventurers, and entrepreneurs of all sorts. For locals along its banks, it provided a place to play on hot summer days and to slide and skate upon when it was frozen in the winter. Captains of steamboats were competitive, and many challenged crews of other ships to races (Rhodes, 2007). People

living along the river would stop to watch such races and cheer on a favorite. Many a friendly wager was made on a particular boat. Sometimes these races ended in disaster when boilers, pushed to their limits, exploded and burned.

Many found their livelihood on or along the Ohio and its tributaries because of their ability to support commercial and economic interests. Manufacturing enterprises grew up along the banks because the river could provide power to drive machines. It could also carry waste away. Its buoyancy both sped up and lowered the price of transportation. The cost of moving bulk commodities like coal, gravel, sand, grains, and petroleum on the river was much less per ton mile “than via any other inland transportation mode” (Rhodes, 2007, p. 41). Even as the railroad took passenger traffic away from the river, commercial vessels multiplied (Rhodes, 2007). In order to meet the demand for the variety of vessels needed to traverse the changeable Ohio and its tributaries, shipbuilding companies sprang up and employed thousands along the waterways. People were also needed to pilot and provide services on those boats once they were built, and still others were needed to load and unload cargo. Blacks often found work of this nature. It was often backbreaking and rough—requiring long days of physical labor or frequent lengthy periods away from home. Diamond Coke and Coal Company, owned by Cumberland “Cap” Posey, most likely the first licensed African American riverboat engineer, employed 1,000 men in his boat building and coal hauling operation that emanated from Homestead, Pennsylvania (Glasco, 2004). Many of those men were Black. From the steel mills and glass factories of Pittsburgh to the extractive industries of salt, oil, coal, natural gas, clay, limestone, and iron ore that dotted the banks

and basin, the river bolstered commerce and assisted many in making a livelihood. So too, it could cause the destruction of businesses, personal property and life. Flooding was frequent and devastating to inhabitants of the Ohio watershed in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Rhodes, 2004). Yet, when the waters receded, homes were rebuilt and business slowly returned. The Ohio River's benefits to civilization were too real to abandon or to pull back from. In addition to its many practical assets, the river also meant many things to many people in a figurative sense.

The Ohio River was also important to this country and to this study because of the symbolism attached to it. Rivers in general have often had a mysterious, romantic image. They flowed continuously, and life on or near them rarely stood still. Their movement could be slow and calm or rapid and rough. Each had a path to follow in order to complete its mission, union with the sea. They connected places and people. Adventure could be had by traveling on rivers in any number of types of vessels for a few hours or for months and years. In addition, they offered vicarious adventure to all who stood by their banks and imagined what could be found upstream or down. John Fraim (2001), writing about river symbolism stated that

it is the great movement of rivers which have given rise to labeling them with personalities and seeing in them symbols for the progression of life itself from small bubbling mountain streams to raging youth to death at the conjunction with the seas and oceans (p. 4).

The Ohio River embodied all these qualities and yet it was unique. It stood for some time as a dividing line, a physical boundary between freedom and captivity, opportunity and

control, and to some, good and evil. For decades after the emancipation of American slaves, the river retained its aura because life south of it remained hard and cruel for most African Americans. For millions seemingly trapped sharecropping or in other types of demeaning and backbreaking work, the lure of a better life above the Ohio, although often exaggerated toward the positive, was palpable. This river was more than a symbol of adventure, of the passing of time, or of life progressing. It was a symbol of hope, a line to cross, in order to realize more fully one's potential as a human being. Some citizens in the towns and villages along its banks, and those of its tributaries, though rarely the majority, were open and willing to support those seeking to cross that line. In most cases, those who came across continued on (Bigham, 2006; Daniel, 1997), but a few remained. These residents, often overlooked because of their small number and color, were a part of the story of the upper Ohio River Valley. They contributed to the development of the region, served others and each other in times of need, built homes, founded institutions, and worked for a better life, often through the education of their children. This can also be said about those who remained, by choice or need, on the southern shores of "The River."

Of the hundreds of cities, towns, and villages that sprang up on both sides of the Ohio River and its tributaries, few were considered major cities. Pittsburgh, at the river's head, is the only community large enough to be considered a major city in the upper Ohio River Valley, because Cincinnati is located more than half way along the Ohio's path to the Mississippi. Smaller communities such as Wheeling and Parkersburg, West Virginia, and Marietta, Belpre, and Pomeroy, Ohio, which rest between the Gateway to the West



and the Queen City, have also been contributors to commercial activity along the river. Although not as fast paced or glamorous as larger centers of population, these small and mid-sized towns of the upper Ohio River Valley produced goods and provided services that people outside the valley consumed. They played significant roles in moving people, goods, and information from east to west. In several of them colleges and universities were founded that educated and still educate individuals from around the nation and the world. Three such communities, one on the southern bank of the Ohio River and two on northern tributaries, served as microcosms of the region for the purpose of this research. Parkersburg, West Virginia, Athens, Ohio, and Monongahela City, Pennsylvania, each were home to a wide variety of citizens. Each had African American residents who sought to live peaceably and gain an education. Among those residents were young women who sought such a life and chose to teach children in a variety of schools in locations close to and far away from home. A discussion of the hometowns of these women will now be provided in order to better understand the context of their lives.

### *Parkersburg, West Virginia*

Parkersburg, the town in which the Simmons and Peyton families grew up, is located at the confluence of the Little Kanawha and the Ohio rivers. It is, however, on the southern side of the Ohio River, and by its location provided a different milieu, a different set of laws, rules and regulations for its African American inhabitants to live with than those living just several hundred feet across the Ohio. Once a community in the commonwealth of Virginia, this community of 2,493 in 1860 played a significant role in the organization and development of the breakaway state of West Virginia (North, 1985).

The town had a reputation as a hotbed of political activity as early as 1805.

Blennerhassett Island, the site where Aaron Burr and Harman Blennerhassett were suspected of plotting to form a country of their own in the Southwest, is located in the middle of the Ohio about two miles from the center of Parkersburg. West Virginia's first governor, Arthur Boreman, hailed from Parkersburg, as did three of its next 10 governors (North, 1985). Robert Simmons, the patriarch of a free, mulatto family that aided Black education for generations, would play a role in the political activity of the state as well. His loyalty to the Republican Party received notice at the highest level of government. The Grant administration offered Simmons a federal appointment as the ambassador to Haiti, but he declined (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882).

Settlers laid out the town of Newport, Virginia, in the late 1700s. After some legal wrangling concerning the original plan for the town and an overlapping land grant given to Revolutionary War veteran, Captain Alexander Parker, the town of Newport was renamed Parkersburg in 1810 (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882; Rhodes, 2007). The General Assembly of Virginia chartered Parkersburg in 1820 and re-chartered it as a city 1860. Since the beginning of the 19th century, Parkersburg has been located in Wood County, although the county lines have changed several times (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882).

*The Historical Hand-Atlas of Wood and Pleasants Counties, West Virginia* (1882) provided insight into the nature of life in turn-of-the-century Wood County. This volume indicated that the city was a transportation hub and a booming oil and gas center at the time. The land on which the city sat was relatively flat near the rivers and generally hilly elsewhere. The value of an acre of land in the county depended on its elevation.

Bottomland along the Ohio sold for between 60 and 100 dollars an acre, whereas hilly land could be purchased for as little as one to 15 dollars depending on the quality of the timber and oil found on it. The following passage from *The Historical Hand-Atlas* described Wood County's natural resources:

Small coal seams exist, which are mined to considerable extent. Petroleum is the principal product of the county, and is being pumped from many different wells. A number of large refineries are in operation at Parkersburg, and good pipe and potter's clay is found in abundance, which is being extensively manufactured in that city. Good sandstone and limestone for building are quarried in the southern part of the county (p. 209).

In addition to benefitting commercially from natural resources, and despite its predominantly hilly terrain, farming and raising livestock were key industries in the county. Crops included corn, wheat, oats and tobacco. There was some manufacturing in the vicinity, but principal exports were oil, lumber, livestock, and grain. These exports left Parkersburg by boat and train necessitating a sizable workforce in those fields. Rich clay deposits brought A. P. Donaghho and his stoneware business to Parkersburg in 1870. He hired several Black citizens to work at the business that operated at Pottery Junction until 1904 (Dawson, 2004; Lieving et al., 1976). The town also needed workers in the service industries to assist the residents and transient workers of the county.

Citizens obtained local, regional, national, and international news through word of mouth, from visitors to the city, and by reading the local newspapers. The many newspapers of Parkersburg over the years changed names, owners, and editors with some

regularity. Callahan (1923) listed four newspapers in his list of businesses in Parkersburg in 1860. Two of those were papers distributed by churches. The other two, *The Parkersburg Gazette* and *The Parkersburg News*, were published weekly and had circulations of 650 and 800, respectively. Politically, the former paper took a Whig stance, whereas the latter supported the Democratic position (Callahan, 1923). The various newspapers in business between 1860 and 1915 printed stories of interest to the Black community by listing church events, including birth, engagement, wedding, and death announcements, and describing school activities. From time to time, articles projecting negative images and stereotypes appeared in the papers (“An Outsider’s View,” 1875). However, they also published opinions that took a supportive stance as well (“Give Him a Chance,” 1899).

There had been a free Black community in the area for some time prior to the Civil War. *The Historical Hand-Atlas of Wood and Pleasants Counties, West Virginia* (1882) indicated that the Black population of Wood County consisted of one free person and 61 slaves in 1800. That changed to 79 free and 176 slaves in 1860. Ten years later, there were 713 free Blacks in the county. Within the city of Parkersburg, there was an active Black community. As of 1882 there were four African American churches: Wesleyan Church, Zion Baptist Church, Methodist Episcopal Church, and The African Methodist Church. Three of the churches were organized in the 1860s and the third in 1878. Each had at least 40 members and an active Sabbath school. African American men organized two lodges in the 1870s for fellowship and recreation. They were the Sunnyside Lodge No. 38 A. F. and A. M. (1870) and a Grand United Order of Odd

Fellows (1873) (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882). Newspaper articles of the early 20th century indicated that the town also had a Knights of Pythias Lodge in which Blacks participated as well. There were also special events at which the community came together and celebrated. Emancipation Day, held on Blennerhassett Island in late September, was one such day. In a 1976 interview, ninety-year-old Ada Allen described the event with fondness:

The boat that used to take us down the river was the *Valley Belle*. And [on that day] everything to eat and drink was free. They had baseball games and a dance. Then they had this platform and they would speak on the day and explain Emancipation Day. Oh, it was a good day then (in Lieving et al., p. 44).

Other important events were school graduations, banquets commemorating anniversaries, weddings, and milestone birthdays of beloved citizens.

Parkersburg was the site of a milestone in the history of Black education. Carter G. Woodson credited “benevolent white persons” (1921, p. 7) with organizing the first instruction for Blacks in what became West Virginia. Union soldiers and missionary teachers formed the next band of instructors who in turn “enabled” the Black community to provide for themselves. Parkersburg citizens skipped the middle step, organizing their own school 1862. It was a private school at first. Students paid one dollar a month to attend, but founders excluded no one because of inability to pay the tuition (Woodson, 1921). Some of the Virginian attitudes and traditions remained after West Virginia became a state. Woodson offered this explanation for parents’ willingness to pay the fee:

At this time there was a certain stigma attached to the idea of educating one's children at the expense of others or at the expense of the commonwealth. Persons able to pay for the instruction of their children were therefore willing to do so that they might not have the reputation of dependency or delinquency (1921, p. 11).

The payment of tuition at the school in Parkersburg did not last long. Although the initial state constitution of 1863 did not include state support for schools for its African American children, a later act did. After a year under an unsatisfactory provision, the legislature was persuaded in 1867 to allot funds for the creation of such schools as long as there were 15 pupils between the age of six and 21. The West Virginia legislature amended the law in 1872 to ensure that Whites and Blacks attended schools in separate buildings. This statute remained in effect until the U.S. Supreme Court issued its ruling in the *Brown vs the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* case in 1954. The Sumner School of Parkersburg was in operation and had met the requirements of the 1866 legislation. It began receiving state support in that year qualifying it to make the claim that it was the first publicly-supported school for Blacks south of the Mason-Dixon Line. A high school, another first for Blacks in the state, was added in 1885. The initial graduating class of four students completed work in 1887. In terms of education, the efforts for and by Parkersburg African Americans were emulated within and outside of the state of West Virginia (Woodson, 1921).

Parkersburg, West Virginia, of the late 19th century was a town upholding many of the southern traditions it established when it was a part of Virginia. Its location on the banks of the Ohio River and its proximity to northern opinion affected the milieu of the

city and gave it a distinctive quality not characteristic of places further south. The mix of old and new was just that, an inconsistent mixture, a jumble that was often hard to decipher. African Americans were free to move about the town, travel outside the state, purchase homes, and seek gainful employment. However, there were places where signs instructed where “colored” were to sit or stand, businesses where they were not wanted as customers, few neighborhoods in which they could live, and many jobs for which they could not apply (Lieving et al., 1976). While life for Parkersburg African Americans was better than it was before West Virginia acquired statehood in 1863, and often better than it was in other border and southern states, it had retained many qualities that infringed on their rights as full citizens of the United States. Life across the Ohio, the River Jordan, held out the hope for equality—a hope frequently diminished or snuffed out upon migration to the river’s northern shores.

### *Athens, Ohio*

Across the Ohio and upstream about 13 miles from Newport, Virginia, men from the Ohio Company settlement at Marietta, Ohio, went looking for additional fertile land for the community’s expanding population and for a place to found a university. In the mid-1790s they ventured west from the banks of the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers and selected two townships near the Hockhocking River (later shortened to Hocking) about equidistant from Marietta and the state capital of Chillicothe for the development of the school and the village of Athens. Within a year of Ohio becoming a state (1803), the legislature chartered Ohio University at Athens as the state’s first publicly-supported institution of higher learning (Daniel, 1997). The village and the university grew slowly,

but by 1850 “the community shed its frontier character” (Daniel, 1997, p. 92), and Ohio University was fairly secure financially. Early presidents of the university, Robert G. Wilson and William Holmes McGuffey, struggled to stabilize the school’s enrollment and make ends meet. The school’s administrators oversaw the lease of lands surrounding the campus for raising money to run it. As landlord to the local villagers, they had on-going conflicts with townspeople and according to Robert L. Daniel (1997) may have retarded the initial growth of the village. However, its position on a tributary of the Mighty Ohio approximately 25 miles to the southeast provided Athens with attractive natural qualities that drew settlers despite these disputes. “Although the hills of the county were handicaps to agriculture” (Beatty & Stone, 1984, p. 2), they did contain useful mineral deposits. Salt production was a major early industry. In addition, the town was home to many millers, lumbermen, brick makers, ironworkers, and craftsmen (Daniel, 1997). The village gained status and inhabitants as transportation options increased. A canal connecting Athens with Ohio’s larger metropolitan areas and the railroad further enhanced the livability of the area in the 1840s and 1850s (Beatty & Stone, 1984; Daniel, 1997).

Athens was similar to other small communities that struggled with rapid change in the late 1800s. Floods, fires, and disease took their toll on the village. Typhoid, scarlet fever, and diphtheria were common in Athens. Much of the spread of these and other diseases was due to the lack of a city sewer system or waterworks (Daniel, 1997). Few families could boast that every child born into it reached adulthood. Yet, there was positive activity to offset the negative. Post-bellum merchants and homeowners gradually



installed sidewalks to help citizens avoid the standing water and mud for which Athens was renowned. Gas lighting became possible in 1873. In 1874, Athens citizens participated in a huge celebration commemorating the completion of the village hall. The building contained room for government offices, rental space for business, and a hall with opera-house seating for 600. The hall would host Athens High School and Ohio University commencements for decades. Telephone lines first came to town in 1881. New editions of the local newspaper, *The Athens Messenger and Hocking Valley Gazette*, appeared on the village streets weekly. The paper's owner and editor from 1868 until 1896, Charles Jennings, relied on the strength of George Mathews, "a powerful Mulatto" (Daniel, 1997, p. 348), to operate the hand-powered press in order to get the paper to its readers (Beatty & Stone, 1984). The political view espoused through Jennings' paper was solidly Republican. Citizens could obtain the Democratic view by reading the *Athens Journal* (Beatty & Stone, 1984). Daniel (1997) concluded that the period between 1870 and 1900 witnessed the maturing of the village of Athens. He stated:

Economically, the village moved into a cash economy and became caught up in the forces of a national market. Socially, culturally, and intellectually the village mirrored national trends, fashion, and interests. Evidence of an emerging cosmopolitanism surfaced (p. 189).

The African American community of Athens was rarely invited to participate openly in that maturation process.

The first African Americans most likely came to Athens County with settlers from the East (Daniel, 1997). According to Daniel (1997) there were never more than 20

Blacks living in Athens before 1850, and many of them were domestics. The attitude of early residents toward slavery was not “documented with precision” (Daniel, 1997, p. 105). The county did have stations on the Underground Railroad, the local paper, *The Athens Messenger*, published opinions against the spread of slavery into Western territories, and village voting patterns indicated growing support for abolitionist candidates in the mid-1800s (Daniel, 1997). All these factors indicated that there was at least a segment of the population that disapproved of the “peculiar institution.” By 1870, however, few African Americans had put down roots in Athens. The ambivalence of the village residents, a lack of major industry, and a gender imbalance of almost two males to every one female among Blacks 20-59 were the reasons for the population not increasing rapidly after the war (Daniel, 1997). Further analysis of 1870 census data by Daniel (1997), found that the Black community of Athens was young—of the 143 African Americans, 71 were under the age of 25. School was an important option to many Black children, as indicated by the fact that 14 of the 19 children aged seven to 14 for whom data were found, were in school. Athens Township had integrated schools long before the passage of Ohio’s 1887 law supporting them. Angeline Stevens, or to most, simply Anna, would have been one of the children attending a mixed-race school in Athens Township in the 1870s. Her father, like many other Black male heads of households in the area performed menial labor (1870 Census; Daniel, 1997). He could not read or write (1870 Census), but he and his wife sent their children to school. They provided for their family as best they knew how in a place with limited opportunities for Black Americans.

As a child growing up in Athens, Anna would have probably attended the premiere celebration of the Athens African American community, namely Emancipation Day. This annual event held at the fairgrounds each September drew well-known speakers and grew in regional popularity. By the 1880s it attracted as many as 2,500 people from places such as Parkersburg, West Virginia, and from Belpre and Marietta, Ohio, as well as from Athens and Hocking Counties. The Black community also organized clubs, lodges, and social events. The Haitian Ball, held annually on January 1, was a popular event. Two churches, the Mount Zion Baptist and the African Methodist Episcopal, flowered as the preferred places of worship. Daniel (1997) summed up the state of race relations in Athens between 1870 and 1900 in this way: “without any publicized debate over the matter, Athens whites and blacks went their separate ways in social and religious matters” (p. 258). Two individuals and leaders in the Black community in the late 19th century were able to rise above that practice: Edward C. Berry, a caterer who became the owner of the esteemed Berry Hotel, and Andrew Jackson Davidson, who (at least through the publication of Daniel’s book in 1997) was the only African American to practice law in Athens (Daniel 1997). Most of the Black citizens of Athens lived in the West End where the “rowdier” sorts accumulated. This part of Athens contained several saloons and brothels. The West End was by no means reserved for African Americans. Daniel indicated that because the Black population was so small, “white families were seldom more than two or three doors away” (p. 258). Therefore, the neighborhoods and schools remained integrated, even if it was more from expedience than choice.

Athens High School was open to Anna Stevens. An African American female graduated from Athens High School in 1879 and her name was Anna. Whether it was Anna Stevens or not remains to be confirmed, but Anna Stevens did teach in the area until her marriage to Cumberland Posey in 1883. Her departure for Homestead, Pennsylvania, coincided with an exodus in the 1880s and 1890s of many younger Blacks from Athens County. The lack of substantial employment opportunities and the fear and tension that resulted from the 1881 lynching of an Athens County mulatto provided the impetus for many to leave (Daniel, 1997). Anna's move, necessitated by her new husband's business, brought her good fortune—good fortune of a type that most Americans of the day, White or Black, would not realize.

### *Monongahela City, Pennsylvania*

Elizabeth Jennie Adams spent many of her formative years in Monongahela City, Pennsylvania. Located in Pennsylvania's Washington County and situated on the banks of the Monongahela River, the town was perhaps best known as the site for the planning of the 1794 Whiskey Rebellion. The Monongahela River, with its source in the mountains of West Virginia, flowed past the town in a generally northward direction as it twisted its way toward a rendezvous with the Allegheny River at Pittsburgh. Initially comprising two settlements known as Eden and Paradise because of the lush vegetation and plentiful resources, the name of the town changed several times (City of Monongahela, 2007). Parkinson's Ferry encompassed and replaced those names when Joseph Parkinson claimed the land in the area and began a ferry service on the banks of the Monongahela around 1770. Williamsport was the next name for the community, and

that name gave way to Monongahela City in 1837 (Forrest, 1926). It was subsequently shortened to Monongahela.

The Monongahela Valley was the site for much activity in the 1800s as settlers headed further west via the inland water system. It was also an inviting place to put down roots.

The valley for the most part is bordered with moderately high mountains and hills which abound in every variety of minerals, timber, and especially in bituminous coal, petroleum, and natural gas. The soil of the valley is rich in fertility and capable of producing grain and vegetation of almost every variety. (Van Voorhis, 1893, p. 5).

Charles Blockson (1975) noted in his discussion of Pennsylvania's Black history that the southwest corner of the state was a popular haven for those leaving Virginia via the Underground Railroad. Uniontown, about 30 miles south of Monongahela City, had been "visited" by Harriet Tubman on her expeditions north and was a particularly safe refuge for people fleeing slavery. The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Monongahela City was a station on the railway headed north from Uniontown (Switala, 2001). The significant African American population "in the hills and valleys of the southwest" was the result of "fugitive slaves who decided to stop there in the security of wild terrain rather than go on to Canada and risk being caught on the way" (Blockson, 1994, p. 78). By 1930, the Black population of Pennsylvania was concentrated in eight of its 67 counties. Beaver, Westmoreland, Alleghany, and Washington, all counties in the western steel region of Pennsylvania, were four of those eight (Glasco, 2004). Other than

steel-related employment, Blacks in the greater Pittsburgh area held jobs in glass, manufacturing, construction, personal and domestic service, transportation, retail, and repair businesses. Only about 7% were professional workers (Glasco, 2004).

Monongahela City fit into the regional pattern. It had two glass plants and a paper mill along with several “minor industries” (Forrest, 1926, p. 714). Boatbuilding and river transportation services were additional important opportunities for work in the locale, as were service occupations such as barbering, domestic service, teaching, and ministering. The Monongahela Board of School Directors employed one teacher for the Colored School each term from 1854 to 1880. Pennsylvania legislated the desegregation of schools in 1881. Monongahela City put an end to its separate school promptly. Hazzard’s *Centennial Anniversary of the Founding of Monongahela City, Pa.* (1892) indicated that 11 different individuals held that single teaching position in the Colored School during the 26-year period it covered. There was no indication of how many of those individuals were African Americans, but one of them, E. Jennie Adams, teacher from 1876 to 1879, was (Arison, 1892). Only two of Monongahela City’s 11 churches were associated with the Black community: the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (A. M. E.) founded in 1834 with the help of Bishop Paul Quinn, and the Second Baptist Church organized in 1882. Therefore, teaching and ministerial jobs for Blacks were not plentiful in the town.

Two newspapers, one daily and one weekly, provided information and opinion to the 1,078 citizens of Monongahela City in 1870. Col. Chill W. Hazzard owned and edited both papers, *The Daily Republican* and *The Monongahela Valley Republican*. Hazzard was a Civil War veteran and known to print articles both critical and complimentary of

African Americans. He regularly included Bethel A.M.E. and Second Baptist Church activities in the paper along with similar information from other area churches. In the same edition of one paper, he complemented a Black college graduate in one article and doubted that Black children would reach the upper grades at the local high school in another. If the local newspaper of Monongahela City reflected the general mood of the town regarding its roughly 56 African American citizens, then it was conflicted.

Jennie Adams Carter broke new ground in the Monongahela River Valley. The region was progressive enough that she was able to gain a level of education that few White women of the day obtained. Yet attitudes and practices held her in teaching positions at segregated schools. Education at a normal school, dedicated service to her community's segregated school, and excellent skills in public speaking were not sufficient to earn for her a position in Monongahela Valley schools after their desegregation. Besting many of her White counterparts in level of education, maturity, and experience, Jennie had played by the rules set by society for advancement in the teaching profession. However, she moved to Texas in order to continue to share her expertise in the classroom.

### **Conclusion**

The upper Ohio River Valley was an active region of the United States in the post-Civil War Era. The river swept pioneers heading west, goods going from west to east or east to west, and news of the neighborhood and the world up and down its path. The muddy water of the Ohio continued to mark the boundary between the perception of freedom and virtual slavery for southern African Americans. Some Blacks, like the

Simmons and Peyton families of Parkersburg, West Virginia, who lived in border states, were able to carve out relatively peaceful, satisfactory lives within legally segregated communities. For individuals like Anna Stevens Posey of Athens, Ohio, and Jennie Adams Carter, of Monongahela City, Pennsylvania, life above the River Jordan was negotiated by understanding the unwritten laws and customs maintained by many citizens of the North and developing the ability to sense when they applied, when they did not, and when they were elastic. For the vast majority of Black women living in the upper Ohio River Valley, those rules were as muddy as the waters of the Ohio and its many tributaries. Assimilating them, living with them, and pushing their boundaries required a sensitivity, intellect, dignity, and strength of character that historians are just beginning to illuminate. The stories of the women that follow are offered with that illumination as a central goal.



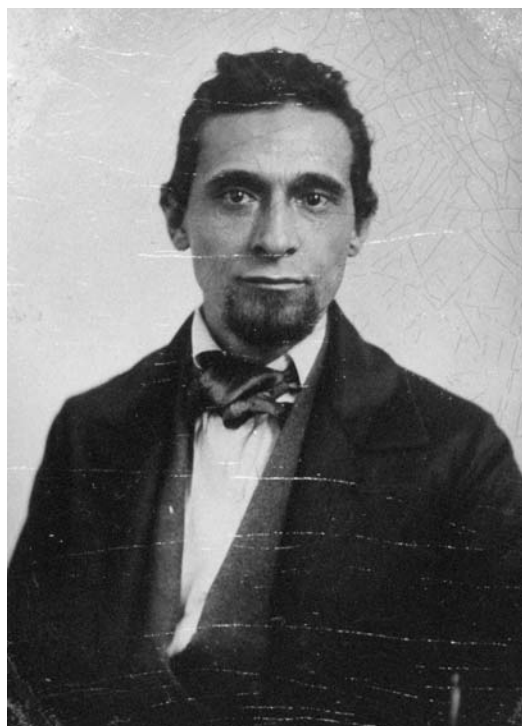
## CHAPTER 5: A FAMILY AFFAIR

The story was handed down through generations. Pocahontas Simmons Peyton recounted it to students of Sumner School and community members at a 1904 banquet hosted by several former students of the school. Miss Meg Brown retold it to the Parkersburg community in 1954 with the assistance of a reporter for *The Parkersburg News*. Ellen Lacy, Robert Simmons' great granddaughter, offered her rendition of the story to *Parkersburg Sentinel* reporter Suzan Zink, and Rae Brown wrote of the story in *The Island Packet* in 1995. Markers erected to commemorate the man at the center of the story and the school he is thought to have traveled through Virginia to secure, punctuate the Avery Street landscape. Yet outside of a handful of families and a few historically-minded citizens of Parkersburg, West Virginia, and the upper Ohio River valley, Robert Simmons' reported journey to Washington, DC, and the school he helped establish seem virtually unknown. Less familiar still were the years of service his daughters, Pocahontas and Susie, and granddaughters, Bernadine and Mary, gave in the service of educating and uplifting the African American communities in which they lived.

### Parental Profile

Robert Simmons (see Figure 5.1) was a respected and successful barber in the town of Parkersburg ("Death of Robert Simmons," 1892). Simmons was born in Fredericksburg, Virginia, about 1816, the son of Streshley and Rosetta Simmons. He moved to Parkersburg in 1841 (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1883; Matheny, 1987). By 1850, he had an established business that supported his household of five. His wife, Susan (see Figure 5.2), whom he married in 1842, managed the home and cared for two children,

eight-year-old Pocahontas and three-year-old Cornelia. A young woman of 16 named Mary King also lived in the home at the time (Matheny, 1987; U.S. Census, 1850). She was probably a sister or relative of Mrs. Simmons, whose maiden name was King. The Simmons family eventually grew to include seven additional children: Andrew K. (1844), John K. (1848), Henry W. (1850), Robert W. (1852), Mary C. (1854), Susie B. (1856), and Mariah W. (1858) (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882). Not all of these children survived to adulthood. The names Andrew and John are absent from the 1850 and 1860 Manuscript Census; Mariah does not appear on the 1860 Census. The Simmons family lived on Sixth Street near the heart of the Parkersburg business district (“Death of Robert Simmons,” 1892; *An Atlas of Wood County*, 1886). The 1870 Census shows that the real and personal property owned by Robert Simmons was valued at \$4,000, a figure that climbed to a little over \$9,000 at his death (Wood County Clerk of Courts, 1893). The heads of households that made up the surrounding neighborhood were engaged in a variety of occupations. Most of them were employed in a business, a profession, or some form of skilled labor. Saloonkeepers, merchants, physicians, teachers, watchmakers, and bridge builders all lived within a few blocks of the Simmons household (U.S. Census, 1860, 1870). Of the 33 residences closest to the Simmons home, other Black families inhabited six. The neighbors were mostly native born and White.



*Figure 5.1 and 5.2. Robert W. and Susan King Simmons, circa 1868. Tintypes courtesy of Dr. Ray Swick of the Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park.*

The young Simmons children most likely received their early education at home or at church. The Simmons family was associated at that time with the Wesleyan Methodist Church, then on a hill above Green Street (Brown, 1995). In 1862, Simmons and a group of six other men from the church gathered on the first Monday in January to make plans to organize a school (Jefferson, 1904). That group included Lafayette Wilson, Robert Thomas, Charles Hicks, William Smith, William Sargent, and Matthew Thomas (Brown, 1995; *Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882; Jefferson, 1904). The men called their group “The Colored School Board of Parkersburg” and elected Robert Thomas president and Simmons secretary (Jackson, 1888). They next drew up a constitution and by-laws (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882). All Black children were to be admitted to the school. Those who could afford the monthly tuition of one dollar were asked to pay for the instruction; those who could not afford the fee were enrolled without charge (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882). This effort predated the founding of Parkersburg’s public school system by at least a year, and the absorption of Sumner into the public system by four years (“Structures of the System”). Initially the new collective of learners gathered in the church or the Simmons’ home for instruction. This situation was less than ideal, especially for the Simmons family, which was sizable by the 1860s.

These events and the support of his fellow board members inspired Simmons to make a long and dangerous journey on horseback through hostile Virginia in the throes of war in order to gain an appearance before President Lincoln. According to Rae Browne, former Project Director of the Sumnerite Museum and Community Center, tradition has it that Lincoln was so impressed by Simmons’ plea for a building to house a church and a

school that he told him, “Mr. Simmons, go home and tell your people they shall have one of the barracks to worship in” (1995, p. 9). The oral tradition is not so precise about the time line and the particulars that came next. Some of them include attending school, and Sabbath school, at an army barracks or some type of old building before moving to other quarters for instruction (Brown, 1995; *Historical Hand Atlas*, 1882). Attempts by this researcher to verify Simmons’ audience before Lincoln did not confirm or reject the story. Searches by Dr. Frederick J. Augustyn, Jr. of the Library of Congress, through Lincoln’s extensive correspondence currently available through the Internet, and at Lincoln’s Library in Springfield did not find evidence that Simmons met with Lincoln. In reporting his inability to confirm Simmons’ meeting with Lincoln, Dr. Byron Andreasen, Research Historian at Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, stated, “All this does not mean that the local tradition is wrong, only that I can find no verification in the sources mentioned” (personal communication, 2008, January 11). He checked several databases, a volume entitled *Lincoln Day-to-Day* that was created by historians from letters, newspapers accounts, diaries, and other Lincoln-related source material, and the indexes to many books that the library holds concerning African Americans and Lincoln. If there is a record of Simmons’ meeting with the president, it has not come to the attention of many Lincoln historians at this time.

Simmons did not stop at advocating and supporting education for the Black community of Parkersburg. He was active in Republican politics at the local, state, and national levels, wrote newspaper columns from time to time under the pen name Rombert (“Death of Robert Simmons,” 1892; Matheny, 1987), and was “well versed in

international law” (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882). Simmons was selected to be a representative to the first Republican convention in West Virginia. *The Historical Hand Atlas...of Wood and Pleasants Counties, West Virginia* (1882) indicated that he was also a delegate to the 1872 and 1876 national Republican conventions, was appointed U.S. consul to Haiti by President Grant, but declined the offer, and helped unveil a statue of Lincoln in Washington, DC. When the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, West Virginia Senator Arthur Boreman sent a dispatch to Simmons from the Senate floor to tell him of the news (“To Mr. Robt. W. Simmons,” 1870; *Historical Hand Atlas*, 1882). Simmons died January 16, 1892, at his home on Sixth Street. His obituary in the *Parkersburg Weekly Sentinel* (1892, January 23) stated, “The deceased was a bright and intelligent colored man and had the respect of not only his own people but of all who knew him.... He was an honest and industrious citizen.” H. E. Matheny (1987) wrote that:

[A]ll Parkersburg marked his passing. He had been undoubtedly the most important black ever to live in the city. He controlled the area’s black vote and thus was a recognized statewide political power. And by his long career as a civic leader, he demonstrated the high-mindedness and culture of Parkersburg’s black population (p. 575).

He left a lasting legacy of service to his family and his community, particularly through the school he helped to found.

## Sumner School

Virginia did not maintain public schools for its citizens in the western part of the state. The southern tradition of private schooling for those who could afford it was in practice. However when the state of West Virginia came into being in 1863 the Constitution called for “a thorough and efficient system of free schools.” Sumner School was taken into that system as a separate entity within the Parkersburg district. An announcement was placed in the local newspaper. It read:

The first public free school for colored children of the city of Parkersburg, West Virginia, was opened in the school ward lately removed. All colored children over 6 years of age and under 21, as the law directs, are at liberty to attend and are requested to do so. Rev. S. E. Colburn, Teacher (*Weekly Times*, 1866, June, 7, in Jefferson, 1904).

This action resulted in the claim that Sumner was the first publicly-supported school for African Americans south of the Mason Dixon Line. It also resulted in the Black community losing control of the school. The Colored School Board of Parkersburg, the original governing body of the school, disbanded, and the Parkersburg Board of Education assumed administrative control. J. Rupert Jefferson, a long-time principal of Sumner School (1895-1938), reported that, “the last session of the colored schools under the original plan ended with a school exhibition, in 1866, by colored pupils in Bank Hall under the charge of the teacher, T. J. Ferguson” (1904, p. 301).

One of the things the original board did before the 1866 takeover was to give the school a name. The board chose Sumner for that distinction in order to honor Charles

Sumner, a United States senator from Massachusetts. Sumner, a respected orator, an intellectual, and a patron of the arts, vehemently opposed slavery. Perhaps best remembered for a single incident, biographer Anne-Marie Taylor (2001) regrets that Sumner is “too often reduced to a stock character in the historical literature” (p. 1) because of that event. Nonetheless, she recounted the unfortunate episode this way:

In 1856, for his outspokenness against slavery, Sumner [was] brutally assaulted on the floor of the Senate by a congressman from South Carolina [Preston Brooks], but he would return to the institution to become the foremost senatorial leader of emancipation, of the concept of equality before the law, and of full civil and political rights for all Americans regardless of color (p. 2).

For his commitment to the cause of racial equality, the founders elected to name the school in Sumner’s honor (Brown, 1995; Gilbert, 1985).

Although the school had a name and an initial student body of about 40 (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882), it did not have a permanent home. The location of the school moved frequently in the early years until the city school board had a structure built in 1874 (“Sumner School & Gymnasium,” undated memo). As mentioned above, the Simmons’ home and a church basement were early sites. *The Historical Hand Atlas...of Wood and Pleasants Counties, West Virginia* (1882) claimed that the school “continued to be held in a large dilapidated frame building on the south corner of Avery and Fifth streets” (p. 230) until 1874. The dilapidated building could well have been the reconditioned army barracks. Once moved to the newly built two-room structure a few blocks down Avery Street, Sumner took root and grew on that spot.



Names of the early teachers of the school were found listed in several sources. The dates and lengths of their service were less clear. Four versions of the succession of teachers and their roles will demonstrate the confusion. One of the earliest written accounts of the founding was extracted from *The Historical Hand Atlas...of Wood and Pleasants Counties, West Virginia* (1882). It held that Sallie Trotter was the first teacher. She was elected by the original Colored School Board of Parkersburg and stayed “in charge” of the school for two years. Pocahontas Simmons followed Trotter. Within a year or two of Simmons’ employment, increased enrollment necessitated the hiring of a male teacher. The book reported that the board chose the Rev. Mr. Coleman, a White man, for that position, and that Simmons stayed on as his assistant. Here the author was most likely referring to S. E. Colburn, the teacher named in the advertisement for the publicly-supported school. By this source’s account, the team of Coleman (Colburn) and Simmons would have been the teachers who resigned when the new administrative system took affect. Ferguson received no mention at all. *The Historical Hand-Atlas* was one of the only sources found that indicated any discord within the community with regard to the school. It stated that following the takeover by the local board “the teachers resigned the positions which they so honorably filled” and that the scholars who changed affiliation “carried on and sustained this worthy enterprise.” In so doing, they were “entitled to great credit” for the success of the school “in battling with the violent opposition that it had to contend with” (p. 230).

Writing in *The Daily State Journal*, W. A. Jackson (1888), then pastor of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, offered a second description of Sumner’s early history. The

founding scenario remained the same and Jackson stated that Trotter was the first teacher. The remaining description became entangled with an account of the 1863 development of a Sabbath school at the same location—an old building on a lot owned in 1888 by Mr. James W. Dils. Jackson indicated that this was the same building and lot on Fifth and Avery streets to which others referred. He also stated that the initial board paid \$10 a month rent for the building, and intimated that the lot on which it sat had not always belonged to Dils. Jackson believed Simmons and Colburn to be the teachers of both the day school and the Sabbath school in 1865 and that the colored school board operated both schools until 1870, when it relinquished control of Sumner's day school. The date of the transfer of power was significantly later than dates suggested by other writers.

A third rendering of the same story came from *The History of Education in West Virginia*. The booklet was prepared for the State Superintendent of Free Schools in 1904. J. Rupert Jefferson wrote the entry concerning the history of the Parkersburg Colored Schools. He told of the meeting of the founders and the fact that the private funds of colored men were used to start a school before the city had its own free school for Whites. Sarah Trotter, Pocahontas Simmons, and Rev. S. E. Colburn were listed as the school's first teachers. This account, however, added T. J. (Thomas Jefferson) Ferguson to the mix, along with some idea of how the school struggled under the new management for a decade or more. According to Jefferson it was under Ferguson's administration, not Colburn's, that the school changed hands. Of Ferguson's abilities, Jefferson wrote:

[He was] a man who was at that time a leading character, not only in educational circles, but in the politics of the country, justly ranked with Bruce Langston,

Lynch, Small, and Douglass, that brilliant coterie of colored men who in their day and generation laid the foundation for the enjoyment of the fuller opportunities which the colored people of the nation possess to-day (p. 302).

By this account it would have been Ferguson and Simmons (and perhaps others) who resigned in 1866, if indeed there was a resignation of all teachers at the school when it came under public control. Such a resignation would have been disruptive to the school and a concern to the Black community, but possible with the change of its administration to the White school board. The departure of these Black leaders and the uncertainty of a new administrative system could have caused some local problems that were exacerbated by statewide conditions. Jefferson commented about those:

The colored schools struggled along overcoming many obstacles for ten or more years, when, with the appointment of a superintendent for all the schools, the course of instruction was improved, the work of the teachers inspected and the schools placed upon better footing (p. 203).

Jefferson was working with the office of the West Virginia Secretary of State when he wrote his history. He had been principal of Sumner for nine years before taking that position (Jefferson, 1904), a job to which he returned after 1904 ("Jubilee," 1941; Gilbert, 1985). His view at the time was from the statewide perspective, and his words suggest some degree of universal struggle for all schools for African Americans in the state. Any new enterprise the size of a state educational system would have to deal with problems in its start-up phase. The White system of public education in West Virginia was in its infancy as well. However, Jefferson seems to be suggesting there was some foot

dragging (10 or more years to get some basic services) because of the color of the students' skin. Coupled with the local "violent opposition" reported in the *Historical Hand-Atlas* (1882), a lack of state and local leadership would have left Sumner vulnerable to extinction. Therefore, it was a significant accomplishment for Parkersburg's Black population that Sumner survived.

At least one more version of this story is deserving of consideration. Carter G. Woodson, writing in a 1921 report to John W. Davis, President of West Virginia Collegiate Institute, began his account of *Early Negro Education in West Virginia* with the Parkersburg saga. He based his version on questionnaire responses and interviews, as well as records from the county and state. The Woodson version appears to be a synthesis of the information presented in the three accounts presented above, as he would have had access to those. Added to that synthesis, Woodson included some information garnered through his research and was able to corroborate most of Jefferson's account. He listed Trotter, Simmons, and Colburn as the teachers employed by the first school board. After considering the advertisement naming Colburn as teacher in June of 1866, Woodson opined, "It does not appear that Rev. Mr. Colburn remained for a long time in this school, for at the close of the session in 1866 we have a record of an exhibition...under the charge of T. J. Ferguson" (p. 12). Woodson did not give the date or name of that record.

If Ferguson's exhibition marks the end of one era, and Colburn's summer term marks the beginning of the new public era, then an additional scenario not considered by either Jefferson or Woodson could be possible. That scenario would suggest that Ferguson and Colburn were both employed at Sumner in the spring of 1866, and that

Ferguson did not post-date Colburn. The Summer enrollment earlier had grown to necessitate more than one teacher; perhaps there were three teachers at this point: Simmons, Colburn, and Ferguson. Alternatively, maybe there were two teachers and a principal, namely Colburn. At the end of the spring term of 1866, Ferguson could have been the teacher in charge of the students at the exhibition. Simmons and Ferguson, the African American instructors, could have been the teachers who resigned at that point, and Colburn, who was White, could have taken over sole teaching duties with the summer term in June when the changeover took place. Ferguson would then have been free to work in the political arena and Simmons either could have left the profession or returned later as an assistant. If she returned, it was not for long, as the 1870 Census showed her living at the home of her parents in Parkersburg at age 27. The space for occupation was blank, an indication she did not consider herself a teacher at that time. If Ferguson were the principal teacher after Colburn, then the transition to public control did not occur in June of 1866. It would have come later, and the exhibition for the close of the 1866 session would have been after the June date of the advertised summer session. That is possible, but a less likely scenario because public exhibitions, such as commencements, were routinely conducted in May or June at the end of what was considered an academic year (Fuller, 1989). The supposition that Ferguson and Colburn were colleagues is supported by an additional account of West Virginia educational history by Ambler (1951). In discussing the June 1866 assumption of public control, Ambler stated that “prior thereto and for some time thereafter the Rev. S. E. Colburn (white) was the principal teacher, but Negro teachers were associated with him from time

to time” (p. 162). Gilbert’s history of Sumner (1985) in *Parkersburg High School History* does not further clarify this early period of Sumner lore.

Other individuals have offered versions of the history of Sumner in its formative stages. Some of these accounts that were told in celebratory newspaper articles about school anniversaries and class reunions incorporated all or some of the parts of the renditions discussed above (“Jubilee,” 1941, May 28; “Negroes, South, Mark 74<sup>th</sup> Anniversary,” 1936). Many simply confound the issue of establishing what actually took place. In one such article (“Jubilee,” 1941, May 28), Colburn was the only male teacher mentioned. The rest, except for a Miss Keziah Hicks, who was not mentioned in any of the above accounts, were members of the Simmons or Peyton families (5 are mentioned). Memories had started to fade by 1941, and some of those memories were apparently influenced by the multigenerational and visible participation of the Simmons family in the development of the school. The Simmons family contributions to the school, while praiseworthy, need to be balanced with the contributions of the many others who worked to open and sustain Sumner School. It was a community effort (Gilbert, 1985).

The growth and development of Sumner School was uneven. Gilbert (1985) and Jefferson (1904) provided glimpses of that maturation. The school started out with primary grades, and “other grades were added progressively” (Gilbert, 1985, p. 131). Sometimes enrollment patterns necessitated adding grades out of sequence. There was also some “overlapping” of grades according to Gilbert, when some students had to stay in a grade more than a year until the next grade could be added. State and local school directories dating back to 1910 indicate that teachers were rarely assigned to teach the

same grades or subjects more than a year or two in a row. By the mid-1880s, interest and enrollment were sufficient to provide a high school curriculum for the Black youth of Parkersburg. The first graduating class earned their diplomas in 1887. Four students participated in the “notable event in the history of the education of the colored race in this city and in this state” (“Sumner High School,” 1887). The first free school for African Americans in Parkersburg, in West Virginia, and in the southern states, had become the first school in West Virginia to successfully graduate an entire class of Black students from high school. An article in *The Daily State Journal* with headlines reading “Sumner High School Sends Out into the World its First Four Graduates” (June 16, 1887) made note that the city was proud of the distinction. Many White citizens, it said, were in the gallery to audit the evening’s events and celebrate with the graduates who were given “a number of handsome bouquets and baskets of flowers.” These young people were “a credit to the school.” On the night of June 16, 1887, Sumner High School was “a source of profound gratification” (“Untitled,” 1887) and much more than a building on Avery Street.

Sumner School outgrew the original two-room building on Avery Street. The school system added two classrooms in 1883 (Gilbert, 1985). A third addition of home economics and manual training facilities came several years later (see Figure 5.3). An undated description of the school held in the vault at the Wood County Board of Education described the physical plant of the classroom building as brick with a slate roof, wood joist floor, wood lath and plaster finish, and steam heat (“Sumner School & Gymnasium,” undated memo). In 1925, land was purchased from Miss Jennie Ingram so

the gymnasium could be built. That addition cost \$26,250 (“The Standard Form of Agreement,” 1925) and is the only part of the school that remains standing to this day (see Figure 5.4). The W. H. Heiby Company razed the classroom facilities on April 18, 1957 (W. H. Heiby letter to Wood County Board of Education), almost two years after the Sumner students were integrated into the Wood County Public Schools. The gymnasium was used for many years as a school for special needs students. It now houses a museum and community center.





*Figure 5.3.* The Sumner School as it looked from the late 1880s until 1926. It was demolished in 1957 after students were integrated into their neighborhood schools. Picture used by permission of the Wood County Board of Education.



*Figure 5.4.* The gymnasium added to Sumner School in 1926. It stands today at 1016 Avery Street in Parkersburg, West Virginia. Picture used by permission of the Wood County Board of Education.

Few particulars about the curriculum and instructional resources of the school were found. Jefferson (1904) provided the only listing of curriculum and courses offered at Sumner in its early years. He stated:

After completing the same primary and grammar course as in the white schools, the pupils take up algebra, general history, geometry, civil government, physical geography, physics, rhetoric and literature. A general review in the advanced work of the common branches is also given, and when the course is completed a teacher's certificate or a diploma is given, as the Board of Education may determine (p. 302).

Examples of those early diplomas given by the board can be viewed at the Sumnerite Museum. They were made of authentic sheepskin. In addition to the course offerings, Jefferson's 1904 history also claimed that "the colored schools have had, so far as text books, supervision and courses of instruction, the same opportunities as the white schools" (p. 302). However, Fran Davis, current Project Director of the Sumnerite Museum and Community Center told of being aware as a student in the late 1930s and early 1940s of the fact that the textbooks they had were old ones no longer used by the White students (personal communication, 2006, June 30). The Museum has in its display cases several old textbooks. Where they came from and when they were used could not be determined. The one thing that can be said of the about the quality of instruction at Sumner is that if the quality of its graduates reflects the quality of the school, then Sumner was successful. Artists, doctors, lawyers, public servants, merchants, a Broadway dancer, a millionaire, and many teachers were first educated within Sumner's walls

(Davis, personal communication, 2006, June 30 and 2008, January 22; Jefferson, 1904; various undated newspaper articles on display at Sumner Museum). Brown (1995) characterized the learning atmosphere at the school in these words:

Through the years, many exceptional teachers taught at Sumner School. Because the number of students in each class was small, teachers could allow more time for individual instruction, and each student was developed to his or her fullest potential. (p. 9)

The number of living graduates of Sumner High School is dwindling. Rae Brown, who served as Project Director for the Sumnerite Museum for many years before passing away in 2006, loved her alma mater. Others still living remember the school with great fondness (personal communication, 2006, June 30; 2008, January, 22). Some will admit that it was possible that several of the students who passed through the doors of Sumner School did not reach their fullest potential. However, if they did not, it was not because teachers, administrators, parents and community failed to make a valiant effort on their behalf.

### **The Second Generation**

Against this backdrop of changing administrations and the coming and going of teachers and principals, the Simmons family remained a constant in the support of Sumner School. All versions of the founding story included Pocahontas Simmons as one of the school's first teachers. Pocahontas was the oldest child and first daughter of Robert and Susan Simmons. She was born in Wood County, Virginia, on February 12, 1843, which would have been Abraham Lincoln's 34<sup>th</sup> birthday (*Historical Hand-Atlas, 1882*).

Wood County became part of the new state of West Virginia 20 years later. Her parents ironically gave her the name of the woman to whom many proud first families of Virginia trace their lineage (Grymes, 2007).

This researcher found little that would describe the life of Pocahontas Simmons. If she left any diaries or letters behind, they are yet to be discovered and brought to light. Because it can be established that she lived with her father and mother, multiple brothers and sisters, and possibly some extended family members and boarders (U.S. Census, 1850, 1860, 1870), it is safe to say that Pocahontas grew up around a great deal of activity. Her father was involved with community, state, and nation affairs. He owned a thriving barbering business. Her neighbors, also business and professional people, were solidly middle class and predominantly White. Pocahontas was likely to have received some form of private and informal education in her first 20 years that prepared her to be able to teach others in the early 1860s. Her education may have not been sufficient to continue teaching when the public system took over. Many of the stories of the early years at Sumner suggested that Simmons was not likely to have been teaching much after 1866 (exception, Jackson, 1888). Jefferson (1904) indicated that all teachers, White and Black, had to meet the same standards within several years of absorption into that system. She most likely continued work at the Sabbath school, but resigned from her day-school duties (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882; Jackson, 1888) sometime in the late 1860s. As noted above, there was no occupation listed after Pocahontas' name in the 1870 Census. References in two places ("Jubilee," 1941, May 28; Gilbert, 1985) listed both Pocahontas Simmons and Mrs. Milton (or Milt) Peyton as early teachers at Sumner. Pocahontas

became Mrs. Milton Peyton sometime in the early 1870s. Perhaps after her marriage she was called upon to assist at Sumner for a school term or two as the need arose, but by the 1880 Census, Pocahontas was considered a housekeeper.

The early teaching responsibilities assigned to Simmons would have been all encompassing. When she took over after the departure of Sarah Trotter, Pocahontas inherited a score or more of students who undoubtedly were of different ages and levels of ability. Although no financial records were found for this early period in the school's history, one can surmise that a school in its infancy supported by private funds and tuition would have had few materials and supplies with which to work. Woodson (1921) maintained that in addition to organizing instruction for the student body, the early supporters and teachers of the school had public relations and recruitment duties to perform. He said that they, "moved among the people from time to time, pointing out the necessity for more extensive preparation to discharge the functions of citizenship then devolving upon Negroes in their new state of freedom after the Civil War" (p. 11). For this effort, the board that hired Simmons paid her \$25 a month (Jackson, 1888).

An enrollment increase at Sumner was cited as the reason the original Black school board sought the assistance of Rev. Colburn. Colburn was brought in to both preach and teach because both were "close to his heart and training" ("Jubilee," 1941, May 28). Most scholars believe Pocahontas stayed on to be his assistant. Enrollment at the school continued to vary. Teachers and principals came and went. Gilbert listed four men as principals before the administration of J. L. Camp (roughly 1875-1886), the man Woodson said was "the next man of consequence after Ferguson" (1921, p. 12) to serve

Sumner School. Those Woodson considered inconsequential were E. Whitman, W. H. Horn, John E. Fletcher, and William Cross (Gilbert, 1985). Pocahontas Simmons Peyton probably knew them all. She was a mainstay in the community. She may have agreed to teach under one or more of these men. However, by the late 1870s Pocahontas was engaged in raising a family and had put formal classroom teaching behind her.

In the early 1870s, sometime between 1870 and 1873, Pocahontas married Milton Peyton, a handsome barber and hairdresser about 12 years her senior. Reverend Reed of the Free Church performed the marriage ceremony (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882). The Peytons had three children: Bernadine, Robert, and Mary (U.S. Census, 1880; “Mrs. Pocahontas (Simmons) Peyton,” 1932). The *Historical Hand-Atlas* confirmed that at the time the book was published the Peytons had two children, Rowena D. (1873) and Robert S. (1875). The author of this reference spelled the family surname “Payton,” and most likely misunderstood someone’s pronunciation of Bernadine, hence the name Rowena. Mary was born about 10 years after her older sister (U.S. Census, 1880, 1900).

Milton Peyton had been a slave and had no early opportunity for an education (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882). Following emancipation he did learn to read and write. When interviewed for the biographical sketch printed in the *Historical Hand-Atlas...of Wood and Pleasants Counties, West Virginia* (1882), Peyton must have impressed the interviewer with the strength of his response concerning his desire for his children to get an education. The book contained the statement that he was “anxious that his children should have every advantage in acquiring and education” (p. 33). They did.

Peyton's anxiety and his wife's experiences more than likely inspired the couple to support their children in achieving the highest levels of education possible. Such encouragement was common among middle-class African American families of that period (Shaw, 1996). Both Bernadine and Mary graduated from high school, and at least Mary earned a normal-school degree. Robert's name was not found on the hand-written list of Sumner graduates ("Class Rolls"). High school and college probably were not necessary for a young man following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. The 1900 Census listed Robert, age 23, as a barber.

Pocahontas and her family experienced many of the joys and sorrows common to life in the late 19th century. They attended weddings, including, for example, a rather large one in 1883 that landed their names in the newspaper. When Miss Mollie Britton married William Watkins, it was billed as "the social event of the year in colored circles" ("A Big Wedding," 1883). Guests were listed in *The Daily State Journal* (September 22, 1883) along with the gifts they presented the newlyweds. M. Peyton and his wife gave the bride and groom a parlor lamp. There were other such affairs to attend, as well as anniversaries, graduations, church events, and community festivals such as Emancipation Day. There were births to be celebrated and deaths to mourn, many of them in their own sizable family. Robert Simmons died intestate. Milton Peyton engaged the services of W. W. Jackson, and assisted the family in the resolution of the legal proceedings that decided the distribution of Simmons' holdings of roughly \$9,000 (Wood County Clerk of Courts, 1893). Within the next few years, Milton passed away. Pocahontas was a widow in 1900 (U.S. Census, 1900) and still caring for her three children who lived at home. Bernadine



was teaching by this time, and Robert was employed as a barber. Mary was in school. In 1904, former Sumner School students from the 1872 student body held a banquet at the Knights of Pythias hall. They invited Pocahontas to present a paper about the founding of the school and its early teachers. “The paper was well received by the class, and they were glad to have their teacher of long ago as their guest on such an occasion” (“Colored People,” 1904). As she grew older, Pocahontas became a fixture at similar banquets, reunions, and graduations. As a respected elder in the community, that community was willing to give her the platform to tell her stories and share her wisdom.

In 1928, Pocahontas left the Parkersburg community in which she had lived for 85 years to live with her daughter Mary in Washington, DC. Mary and her husband, Walter Dyson, a history professor at Howard University, cared for Pocahontas during the last four years of her life. At the age of 89, Pocahontas died at her daughter’s home. Her body was returned to Leavitt’s Funeral Home in Parkersburg. The Reverend A. C. Mayle officiated at her funeral services, which were held at the funeral home. She was laid to rest in Spring Grove Cemetery in Parkersburg (“Funeral Services,” 1932).

Pocahontas was not the only child of Robert and Susan to grace a classroom. Their youngest daughter, Susie, 13 years younger than Pocahontas, also worked in the service of young Black children for at least eight years (U.S. Census, 1880; “Sumner High School,” 1887, June 16). A June 16, 1887, article that appeared in *The Daily State Standard* listed Miss Simmons as one of the teachers “doing excellent work in the Sumner School.” She would have been a part of the team that instructed the first class to graduate from Sumner High School. An article that appeared in *The Daily State Journal*

on the day of the first commencement exercises encouraging citizens to go to the event reflected one opinion circulating in Parkersburg at the time. The unidentified author commended those who had made the event possible, but was guarded in its judgment, saying a better assessment would have to wait until the next day. The article continued:

It is useless to deny the fact that there are many who regard the equal education of the colored and white races as not called for: of these quite a number reside within the corporate limits of this city and school district. Fortunately these thinkers are a minority and year by year are growing less (Untitled, 1887).

The article goes on to congratulate the local school board for their insight, care, and attention to the school that gave the city's African American youth "opportunities for higher usefulness" as the success of the school demanded. The author considered the high school an experiment and believed the graduation exercises would "furnish in part evidence of its success or failure. In the next day's edition, the paper declared the graduation exercises to be a success. (Sumner High School, 1887, June 16)." Susie Simmons played a role in the high school's success.

Teaching was not Susie's only interest. She also served her church. Reverend W. A. Jackson contributed an article to *The Daily State Standard* ("Parkersburg's Colored Schools," 1888) which said that Miss Susie B. Simmons had been elected organist for the congregation for the 11th time. Evidence of Susie's musical interest is on display at the Sumnerite African-American History Museum and Multipurpose Center. The museum has a display case that holds a leather book of sheet music. "S. B. Simmons" is embossed on its cover. The book contains 20 or so pieces of sheet music from the 1860s. The pages

are fragile now and beg not to be turned. However, gently lifting the cover reveals the piece “St. Paul Waltz as Performed by Vaas and Deans Light Guard Band, Arranged for the Piano by A. J. Vaas.” Robert and Susan Simmons had provided their daughter with an opportunity to learn music as well as the academic subjects.

The 1888 reference to Susie was the last one uncovered in this research. She is not listed in the index to marriage licenses issued in Wood County, West Virginia, between 1880 and 1925 (Cochran, 2006). It is highly likely that she left Parkersburg and married. The 1890 Census report was not available, and she was not found in the 1900 U.S. Census for Wood County, West Virginia. Lengthy searches for Susan and Susie Jones proved difficult and uncovered no conclusive evidence. Pocahontas’ obituary (April 7, 1932) listed her living relatives as her two daughters, a sister Mary Wilson, and two nephews, Guy S. Hollinger and Dennis P. Jones. Assuming that only her sisters’ children would have last names other than Simmons, Susie was likely to have married a Jones. Her other sisters who lived to adulthood were accounted for. One was a Hollinger (Cornelia) and the other a Wilson (Mary). Using this persuasive, but possibly not conclusive, argument, Susie Simmons is referred to in this dissertation as Susie Simmons (Jones?).

Despite the difficulty in locating primary source documents about Pocahontas Simmons Peyton and Susie Simmons (Jones?), the available evidence is strong that they were involved in teaching at Sumner School during crucial times in the development of the school. Pocahontas was one of the first instructors (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882; Jackson, 1888; Jefferson, 1904, Woodson, 1921) and participated in the public relations

work within the community to establish its worth and increase enrollment (Woodson, 1921). Susie was on the faculty when the first class graduated from Sumner. She would have been instrumental in advancing the education of Parkersburg's African American youth and assisting in positioning the school to receive the recognition it did as the state's first Black high school. Both women continued the effort begun in part by their father to bring educational opportunities to children of their race; opportunities that were denied to others in their state and country (Woodson, 1921).

### **A Third Generation**

The handwritten class rolls for Sumner School indicate that there were four students in the first high school graduating class in 1887. There were no Simmons or Peyton children in that first class. However, Bernadine Peyton, Pocahontas' oldest daughter, graduated four years later with the class of 1891. Her sister Mary followed in 1899. Jefferson made clear in his history of Sumner School that "the teachers of the colored schools [were] subject to the same regulations and enjoy[ed] the same privileges as the white teachers" (p. 302). Bernadine and Mary were fully prepared to meet the enacted standards, but whether they enjoyed the same privileges or not remains to be established.

Bernadine Peyton (see Figure 5.5) took up teaching, much as her mother had done. She served the school until 1917, when she married William Spencer Sherman and moved to Ypsilanti, Michigan. Records held by the current (2008) Wood County Board of Education date back to the early 1900s. The vault containing those records holds county school directories back to 1919 and a state directory for the 1909-1910 school

year. The minutes of the October 11, 1912, meeting of the Board of Education of Parkersburg District appear on the first page of the first book in a large set of the existing leather books that hold the records of the district's proceedings. Information gleaned from these sources provides some details about Peyton, her colleagues, and Sumner School, in addition to the conditions under which teaching was done in Parkersburg during the early decades of the 20th century.



*Figure 5.5.* Bernadine Peyton. Daughter of Pocahontas Simmons and Milton Peyton.

Picture courtesy of Sumnerite African–American History Museum and Multipurpose Center.

Throughout her tenure at Sumner School, which was probably over 25 years, Bernadine Peyton taught children in the early grades. A picture found at the Sumnerite Museum dated 1900 shows Peyton on the front steps of Sumner with a class of 26 students. The children appear to be between five and eight years old. They were posed in typical school-picture fashion. The girls in the front row were wearing knee-length dresses or skirts, with stockings and shoes or over-the-ankle boots. The boys had on knee-length pants and long sleeve shirts. They were also wearing stockings and over-the-ankle boots with the exception of one boy who was barefoot. Two of the boys wore jackets. Peyton was standing in the top row, erect and confident, with her arms behind her back. She appeared to be proud of her charges. The next evidence regarding Peyton's employment at Sumner was found in a West Virginia Educational Directory for 1909-1910. She is listed under the heading "Sumner School (Colored)" as the teacher for the first and second grade class. Peyton's name can be found in many places in the Board of Education minutes. Most of the entries were in lists of employees approved for payment of salaries (pp. 27, 44, 48, 54, 89, etc.). Her name is also on yearly lists of individuals approved for positions in the district for the upcoming school year through the 1916 list (pp. 43, 92, etc.). The last entry for Bernadine Peyton is on page 346. It is on a list for payment of June salaries for 1917. The board secretary did not appear to record consistently the acceptance of employee resignations. While there were several resignations of teachers and other employees sprinkled throughout the first 350 pages of the minutes of the Board of Education of Parkersburg District meeting, one for Bernadine

Peyton was not found. Neither was an acknowledgement of her lengthy service to the district.

At the present time, the Wood County School Board records offer the best information regarding the salaries paid to Parkersburg's teachers in the second decade of the 20th century. Bernadine Peyton was paid \$625 a year for each of the academic years 1913-14 through 1916-17. This salary was a slight increase over the \$600 she earned for the 1909-10 school year (State Superintendent of Schools, 1910, p. 66). Although her pay did not go up at all for four years, the salary of other teachers remained steady as well (minutes, Parkersburg School District, 1912-1917, pp. 1-346). Peyton's salary was comparable to that of teachers in schools other than Sumner. In some cases, it was more than that of Parkersburg's White employees. Some teachers listed in the July 12, 1913, minutes that enumerated salaries for the upcoming school year were earning as little as \$250 a year. Peyton's salary most likely reflected her longevity at Sumner. Principals made as much as \$1,200, including Sumner principal J. R. Jefferson. Among administrators and teachers, Bernadine Peyton earned as much as, or more than, 70 of the 118 educators on the list (pp. 43, 44).

The quality of the resources with which Peyton had to work was difficult to determine. The board minutes rarely indicated allocation by school building of supplies, textbooks, and monies for upkeep. They did include frequent long lists of vendors to which the board approved payment. However, the payments were in lump sums, such as Carl McHenry, repairs, \$2.00 (p. 1), F. W. Woolworth Co, supplies, \$3.33 (p. 20), and D C Heath & Co, text-books, \$64.77 (p. 337). There were few references to approving



specific curricula or instructional materials. The greatest single undertaking during the period under consideration was the construction of a high school for the White youth of Parkersburg. A serious flood in the city in the spring of 1913 caused the board to postpone the bond levy for the school. It eventually passed 1,001 to 271 (p. 29). The Board was still dealing with issues related to the building of the high school (landscaping work and an Order No. 70) in May 1917, when Peyton's name last appeared on the payroll.

The Board of Education of Parkersburg District minutes indicate that its members did not ignore Sumner School. Lists of the district's high school graduates approved by the Board included those of Sumner, albeit under a separate heading "Sumner School" (p. 26). There were specific references to Sumner's staff (pp. 26, 92) and the colored enrollment (199 in 1914 as compared to 5,270 White children, p. 95). Those references, because there were so few concerning other buildings, point to Sumner's separate status more than its inclusion. Bernadine Peyton and her colleagues at Sumner may have met the same requirements as the teachers in the other Parkersburg schools in order to earn their positions, but in spite of Jefferson's 1904 contention, it did not appear that they enjoyed the same status or all of the same privileges as those enjoyed by the White teachers.

Bernadine Peyton left teaching when she married in July of 1917 (license, recorded July 3, 1917, Wood County Clerk of Courts). She was in her mid-forties and had been in school or taught since she was a young girl. No evidence was found that Bernadine attended normal school or college. It is most likely that she began teaching at

Sumner fairly soon after her 1891 graduation. In that case, she taught more than 25 years before leaving Parkersburg to make a new home. Her new husband, William Spencer Sherman, was employed as a stationary engineer at the Edison Company in Ypsilanti, Michigan (U.S. Census, 1930). The Shermans had one daughter, Catherine.

Mary Peyton also was likely to have taught at Sumner, but not for nearly as many years as her older sister. Although she was listed in a 1941 *Parkersburg News* article as one of the women to have taught at Sumner, it would have been before 1909 when state directory lists became available. It is also known that Mary left Parkersburg to attend Storer College in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, sometime during the first decade of the new century, which limited the range of years she could have taught at Sumner School. In her young adulthood, Mary Peyton may have been married, or at least may have considered marriage, for a brief period during that decade as well. The index to the Wood County Clerk of Courts marriage licenses for 1880 and 1925 (Cochran, 2006) shows an entry for Mary Peyton, colored, age 21, Wood County, and John Burkeen, 22, born in Nashville, Tennessee, but then residing in Wood County. Mary would have been about 21 in 1904. There was no date signaling that the license was returned and recorded, but these two individuals took one out between July 2 and July 3, 1904.

Brief marriage or not, Mary graduated from Storer in 1908 and was using the surname Peyton. A June 20, 1908, article in *The State Journal* read:

Miss Mary Peyton returned home last Thursday from Storer College. Miss Peyton was graduated from that institution last Thursday week with second honors from

the normal department. She also is a graduate from Sumner High School of this city and resides here (“Mary Peyton,” no page available).

Sometime after graduation, Mary found her way to New York City. Dawne Raines Burke (2004) found evidence that Mary may have returned to Storer, perhaps for another degree. She stated in her dissertation that Peyton earned a degree from the normal department in 1914 (p. 371). This is either an error or the confirmation of the possibility that Peyton earned a second degree. Raines also noted that “after earning her degree, Dyson relocated to the District of Columbia, where she was hired by Howard University’s administration as an ‘Assistant Librarian’,” (p. 371) and inferred that that is where she met her husband. Evidence indicating that Mary may have held teaching positions between her time at Storer and her arrival at the Howard library was reported in Peyton’s 1922 marriage announcement”

Mrs. Pocahontas Peyton announces the marriage of her daughter, Mary M. to Mr. Walter M. Dyson, on Friday, June twenty-third, nineteen hundred and twenty-two, New York City.

The above announcement will come as a delightful bit of news to many friends of the bride in Parkersburg, who will hasten to extend good wishes.... She is a graduate of Sumner High School and later attended college, and for some time has been a successful teacher in the East. The groom is a member of the faculty of Howard College, Washington, DC, and is much esteemed. Mr. and Mrs. Dyson will reside in Washington. (“Former Resident Married,” 1922)

It is likely that from June 1922 forward, the new Mrs. Dyson resided in the Washington, DC, area. With degrees from Fisk, Yale, and the University of Chicago, Walter Dyson had secured a prestigious position as Professor of History at Howard University. In addition to duties in the History Department, Dyson was appointed Dean of the Evening School in 1925, a position he kept until 1932 (Dyson, 1941).

After her marriage, Mary Dyson was not content to be a mere faculty wife. She became increasingly involved with her alma mater. She was elected a trustee at Storer College in 1937 (Raines, 2004). Some of the activities that led to the invitation to join this board included National Organizer of the Alumni Associations, treasurer of the Woman's Commission, and leader of the Washington, DC, Alumni Club (Raines, 2004). Dyson would have been doing many of these activities while caring for her mother, Pocahontas, who went to live with the Dysons from 1928 until she died in 1932 (Mrs. Pocahontas (Simmons) Peyton," 1932).

Dyson's work at Storer intensified after her mother's death. She stayed busy with activities at home as well. Her service to Storer involved membership on several important committees, including the Publicity Committee and the Faculty Committee (Raines, 2004). Raines suggested that her role on the Publicity Committee included valuable recruitment work. She joined the Faculty Committee when she became a faculty member in the 1930s. Teaching in Harpers Ferry would have been a lengthy commute from Washington, DC (about 55 miles). During the late 1930s, Dyson also would have been assisting her husband with the research and writing of a book on the history of Howard University. In the forward to the book, entitled *Howard University: The*

*Capstone of Negro Education*, Walter Dyson thanked his wife “for helpful assistance in general” (1941, p. XII). A few years after the book was published, Mary Dyson accepted what was perhaps her greatest responsibility—chair of the Finance Committee at Storer College (Raines, 2004). It was this position that familiarized her with the financial problems of the school and positioned her in the middle of the struggle over the appropriate direction for the College. Siding with one other trustee, Madison Spenser Briscoe, also a Storer alumnus, Dyson fought the liquidation of Storer’s assets (Raines, 2004). The pair filed suit in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia in 1959 to try to prevent the president and other trustees from abandoning the school. The case ended up in a West Virginia court, and Briscoe and Dyson lost their case, their school, and a sizable amount of money in legal fees (Raines, 2004). Mary Peyton Dyson, at the age of 76, had invested her resources in a fight to save the school she loved. She had learned such loyalty to the cause of education, particularly loyalty to an institution founded to provide opportunities for people of her race, at the feet of her mother and grandfather. Educating and institution building were affairs of the Simmons family line.

The schools of Parkersburg, West Virginia, were bound by their location to follow the custom and law of separate schools for Blacks and Whites. The district provided for Sumner School and paid its teachers salaries similar to those of the other schools. However, the school on Avery Street was not equal to other facilities. No other school had to accommodate almost 200 children from grades one to 12 in six rooms (district directories). Nevertheless, the faculty mustered the troops and persisted. The parents and community supported the school with time and money. The result was many successful

Sumner School graduates. Fewer than 50 miles from Parkersburg, on the other side of the Ohio River, was a one-room school in a rural part of Athens County, Ohio. It allowed children of all races and backgrounds to enter and learn. It also had a teacher who locals considered Black. Would that teacher, Anna Stevens, have the resources that Sumner lacked? Would her education be sufficient to allow her to build a successful career? The next chapter will answer those questions.

## **CHAPTER 6: A LADY OF EDUCATION AND REFINEMENT**

Athens, Ohio, has always been a university community. The early settlers of the area selected the land with the idea of building and supporting a college in mind. Residents of the surrounding hilly countryside once paid rent to the trustees of Ohio University so the school's bills could be paid. The early tenants were farmers and laborers. By the mid-1800s the community was growing at a modest pace, but the agrarian life style still predominated (Daniel, 1997). Aquilla Stevens brought his wife and young family to Athens Township in the 1860s. He had been a farmer in neighboring Hocking County in 1860 (U.S. Census, 1860). Perhaps he came to start over, to create a new life with his bride Eliza. Although he could not read or write, he most likely wanted his children to be able to acquire those skills. An atmosphere conducive to learning pervaded the college town of Athens. There were educational opportunities even for a Black family. His daughter, Angeline, would avail herself of one of those opportunities.

### **Family Background**

When Aquilla and Eliza Stevens married in August of 1859 (Lett, personal communication, 2007), they lived in Hocking County. Eliza was only 18 at the time of her marriage. Her new husband was 10 years older than she was and had three children between the ages of 6 and 11 living with him (U.S. Census, 1860). Eliza was probably the second Mrs. Aquilla Stevens. Sometime after 1860, the family left their home in Hocking County, which had an estimated value of \$600, and moved a few miles south to Athens Township. Therefore, when Angeline Stevens came into the world in November of 1862 she was a resident of Athens County. Although she was not the first child raised in the

household of Aquilla Stevens, she is likely to have been the first of 11 children born to Aquilla and Eliza Brackston Stevens (U.S. Census, 1910). To most of her family and friends, Angeline became known simply as Anna. Anna's father held several different jobs after moving to the Athens area. The 1870 U.S. Census for Athens County listed him as a railroad worker. At the time of the next census, he worked as a stonecutter (U.S. Census, 1880). In 1910, at the age of 78, Aquilla was still working, this time as a sexton in a cemetery (U.S. Census, 1910). Mrs. Stevens was likely to have been a full-time mother and homemaker throughout her married life.

Anna's paternal grandparents both hailed from Maryland. Her father's father, Michael Stephenson, was born in the mid-1780s. He was the son of Joseph Stephenson, a man of English descent. Aquilla's mother, Elizabeth Lett, was born in 1789 in Frederick County, Maryland. Michael and Elizabeth married with the benefit of a clergyman in Frederick County, Virginia, on November 14, 1805. At some point, the Stephensons came to Ohio. Together, Michael and Elizabeth Stephenson had 12 children. Aquilla, named after Elizabeth's father, was born August 4, 1830, in Muskingum County, Ohio. Michael Stephenson died in Hocking County, Ohio, in March of 1853. The information concerning Anna's paternal relatives was available because a descendant in the Lett line, Robert Lett, of the state of California, has carefully researched and maintained his family's history. What is known of Anna's mother's family comes from census data. Eliza's parents were both from Virginia.

The family used several surnames in their early years in Ohio, making their movements difficult to trace. Among those names were Stephenson, Stevenson, and



Stephens. Aquilla's unique first name provided some help in searching for his immediate family. Although there were still some variations on the family surname (one of Cumberland Posey's obituaries gave Anna's maiden name as Stevenson), Stevens became the form and spelling they used with regularity after 1880.

The Stevens family did not live in the village of Athens. They lived in Athens Township, out among the farmers and laborers of the less-populated area of the county. Perusal of the census data for both 1870 and 1880 reveals that Anna's nearest neighbors were not of the same professional status as those of the Simmons and Peyton children, who were discussed in the previous chapter. No lawyers or merchants were among them. Only a handful of the neighbors indicated occupations other than farming. There were three stonemasons, a carpenter or two, a few railroad workers, and a painter. Most of the neighboring children between 6 and 12 were in school. The women were housekeepers; one was a servant. The Stevens family was the only non-White family on their page of the census record. (U.S. Census, 1870, 1880). Anna grew up in a rural, White area of Ohio. She would have seen few faces like hers in the schools she attended.

### **Early Schooling**

The Reorganization Act of 1853 had given Black children an opportunity to go to school in Ohio (Beatty & Stone, 1984). When a community had at least 30 such children, the legislation required school boards to open a school for them. "If no objection was raised, however, the colored children could be taught with the white children" (Beatty & Stone, 1984, p. 114). Evidently few raised objections in Athens Township—perhaps more because of financial expedience than a belief in social justice. School board minutes

from Athens Township indicate that for the years 1875 to 1884, there were never more than 17 Black children attending school within its jurisdiction. A separate school would be far more expensive to maintain than assimilating the small numbers of the Black children into the local school populations. Additional sources indicate that Athens Township schools were not segregated (Athens Messenger articles; Daniel, 1997). Although no specific information about Stevens' early education was found, it is likely she attended one or more of the 11 district schools of Athens Township with the children of her surrounding area. The 1870 U.S. Census does not indicate that Anna attended school within the preceding year. At the time of the next census (1880), Anna was living in the home of her parents and had started her career as a schoolteacher. Four of her six brothers and sisters had attended at least four months of school in 1880, but the column for claiming that residents had attended school within the prior year was not checked for Anna. This bit of information was crucial to establishing when, if at all, Anna graduated from high school.

In order to place Stevens' possible graduation from high school, several items were considered. Daniel (1997) reported that his research found evidence in the *Athens Messenger* that Anna graduated from high school. He did not cite a specific date or the issue of the *Athens Messenger* that he used as the source for that claim. However, an *Athens Messenger* article dated June 26, 1879 ("High School Commencement") described the Athens High School graduation ceremonies of 1879. It stated that an Anna Butler was a member of the graduating class that year. The article continued, saying that this Anna was "the first colored graduate of the Athens High School" (p. 5). That being

the case, Anna Stevens would not have graduated before 1879, if she graduated at all. If Anna Stevens had not attended school within the year prior to the conducting of the 1880 Census (June 18 is the date on the on-line manuscript Census of 1880), then the name in the *Messenger* article was likely to have been an error, and Anna Butler was likely to have been Anna Stevens. Further evidence that this might be the case appears in an April 10, 1879, article in *The Messenger* listing Anna Stevens, Athens, as having been granted a teacher's certificate by the Board of School Examiners ("Qualified Teachers"). The certificate was granted for six months, which would suggest that it was likely to have been her first. The Board had granted other individuals from the county certificates for 12 and for 18 months at that same time.

An item confounding this hypothesis was found in the July 3, 1879, *Messenger* ("Qualified to Teach"). It listed Anna Butler, Athens, as the recipient of an 18-month teaching certificate. Could the *Messenger* have made the same mistake twice? Perhaps there was an Anna Butler, in which case she would have been the first Black graduate, not Anna Stevens. Two observations keep the case open. One is the timing of the awarding of the license to Anna Butler. It would have been about the time for Anna Stevens to renew her six-month license. The second, and perhaps more intriguing, is that a search of the 1870 Census for Anna Butler resulted in the discovery that there were no Butlers living in Athens County. The 1880 Census, taken just one year after Anna Butler's supposed graduation, reveals seven people with the last name of Butler in Athens County. None of them had the given name Anna, and all seven were White. A chance

still exists that Anna Stevens was being confused with Anna Butler. Additional research may uncover a definitive answer to this perplexing question.

The Athens City Hall was the site for the annual school graduation exercises. On the occasion of the 1879 graduation, the hall “was filled to overflowing with the best class of our citizens, whose interested attention in the development of the programme was closely held until its close” according to *The Athens Messenger* (“High School Commencement,” 1879, June 26, p. 5). There was “an impressive and appropriate prayer” given by Ohio University’s president, William Henry Scott. The graduating class then sang, “Walk in the Light,” accompanied by Miss Lottie Brown on the piano. The student speeches began following the song. Miss Anna Butler (perhaps Anna Stevens) was the second person to give her address. It was entitled “The Visible and Invisible.” *The Athens Messenger* summarized the message of her oration:

As potent as is the influence upon life’s experience of the visible it is of importance, secondary to the moulding and directing of the invisible influences by which we are constantly surrounded in life (“High School Commencement,” 1879, June 26, p. 5).

Many of the local newspapers of the upper Ohio River Valley were accustomed to providing a critique of each speech. The author of *The Messenger* article had this to say about Anna’s essay:

The originality of thought exhibited in Miss Butler’s composition gives basis for large expectation of the literary efforts of her maturer years. Miss Butler is the first colored graduate of Athens High School and deserves great credit for her

achievement and for having set an example to her race of what may be attained by intelligent and persistent effort—an example which we hope will be followed by every colored girl in Athens (“High School Commencement,” 1879, June 26, p. 5).

The commentary was not free of criticism. The author had remarked that although her essay was “creditably conceived and expressed,” it was “read in too low a tone to be comprehended beyond a few yards of the speaker.” That was an understandable outcome for a young Black woman in a room overflowing with White faces.

Butler’s (Stevens’?) essay topic is also understandable considering her distinction as the first Black graduate. The connection between arguing that what is invisible is more important than what is visible and Anna’s personal situation should be obvious. She took the opportunity to tell the citizens of her community that their words and actions could affect people in ways they could not see, that they could shape peoples’ attitudes and values for a lifetime. It would be nice to think that those in attendance sitting more than a few yards away from the speaker did comprehend her message. However, many could excuse themselves for not comprehending because they just could not hear her. Indeed, the reviewer’s comment in *The Messenger* report was prescient if he is speaking about the future Mrs. Cumberland Posey. Anna Posey’s efforts of a literary nature in her “maturer years,” while not necessarily of the tangible kind, were significant and most likely valuable in developing the invisible qualities of her friends and neighbors.

### Teaching in Athens Township

Anna became a teacher sometime in the late 1870s. At least one person expressed the thought that she was the first Black woman to teach in a White school in Ohio (Tinsley, 2004). Because there were so many schools in Ohio in 1880, and locating employment records for all of them would be extremely difficult, that distinction, for whomever it might be, is nearly impossible to confirm. However, Cleveland employed Black women in their schools in the 1870s. An entry in *Black Women in America* (Hine, Brown & Terborg-Penn, 1993) contributed by Willard B. Gatewood indicated that Josephine Beall Willson Bruce entered the Cleveland teaching force after graduating from high school in 1871 and completing a teacher-training course. She was assigned to an integrated school and would have predated Anna's entrance into the Ohio corps of teachers by at least seven years. It is not likely, therefore, that Anna was the first to teach in a mixed-race school.

At least one of the schools in which Anna taught was part of the Athens Township School District. The district operated 11 schools, and the board minutes referred to each by a number. Maps of the area from the late 1800s mark the locations of schools with names such as Vore Ridge, Jacktown, and Froggy. In his treatment of Athens County (1997), Robert Daniel indicated that Anna was hired to teach in a "public school to the west of Herrold's Mill" (p. 259). Herrold's Mill has been renamed White's Mill and is just west of the city limits of Athens. Once it was located, the *Messenger* article that Daniel was using as his source revealed that by 1882 Anna had actually taught in more than one school. The untitled article read:

Progress in the march of events is, in one direction, chronicled in the fact that Miss Anna Stevens, of African lineage, is teaching the public white school west of Mr. Joseph Herrold's suburban residence. Miss Stevens has previously taught in York township and at other points where she has uniformly been highly personally esteemed. As a teacher she possesses rare tact and efficiency and her services in this line have been in wide demand ("Untitled," 1882b, p. 5).

Not only was Miss Anna Stevens teaching in a school near Herrold's Mill, she was teaching well and her "rare tact and efficiency" were in demand.

Beatty and Stone (1984) claimed that between 1840 and 1930, the average Athenian would have known school as a frame one-room structure that housed grades one through eight. In 1882, Athens County was the home of 167 schoolhouses (195 rooms) that served 9,337 White students and 357 Black children. The desks in the buildings were fastened to the floor and had wooden tops with metal frames. They were arranged in rows with the back of one desk being the front of the next. Desks varied in height for the various sizes of students. Beatty and Stone (1984) continued their description of these schools with the following words:

There was a recitation bench in front, and segregated cloakrooms for boys and girls beside the door. The heat was provided by pot-bellied stove and sanitary facilities by an outhouse. Long before peer-grouping became a fad word for educators, the one-room school provided the opportunity for the brighter students to follow along with the advanced class and for the slower students to hear the subject reviewed and explained anew, but subject matter was limited (p. 116).

The schools of Athens Township match the description of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of other such buildings around the state and country during the latter half of the 19th century (Cremin, 1980, 1988; Duling, 1997; Finkelstein, 1989).

The Athens Township school board discussed and approved the replacement of two school structures in April of 1881. The buildings for districts #4 and #10 were to be 24 by 32 feet in size and furnished with seats and desks. Contracts to build these schools went to Henry O’Bleness and M. L. Saunderson. The O’Bleness’ bid for the district #4 school was for \$750, and Saunderson’s was \$720 for the district #10 school. At the same meeting, the board approved the construction of a new privy at the district #6 school at the cost of \$20, and fencing for three sides of building #3. To pay for these additions and the usual business of the school board, the board resolved to levy “4 mills on the dollar of the Duplicate of the Athens Township for school purposes for the ensuing year” (minutes, 1881, April 18). This body would have administered the physical plant in which Anna worked. They also selected the textbooks that were to be used in those buildings.

In 1880, the Athens Township Board of Education voted unanimously to purchase the following textbooks for “uniform use in the schools of the township for three years” (minutes, September 20, 1880): McGuffey’s Readers, McGuffey’s Spellers, Harvey’s Grammars, Ray’s New Arithmetic, Eclectic Geographies (Ohio Edition), Venable’s U.S. History, and Eclectic Copy Books. One copy of Webster’s Dictionary was also purchased for each of the 11 schools. These books served as the basis for instruction and would have been the materials Anna used in her daily effort to educate the children at her school. The McGuffey series in both spelling and reading were very popular books in all



parts of the country. The selection of these standard textbooks was understandable in the Athens area given that William Holmes McGuffey had been president of Ohio University from 1839 to 1843. He may have written several of the original books while living in the village. At least two other selections had authors with Ohio ties. Ohio residents Thomas W. Harvey and W. H. Venable wrote the grammar and history books, respectively (Nietz, 1961).

Local boards of education in Athens County required all prospective instructors to pass an examination in order to prove their knowledge of subject matter. Advertisements appeared regularly in *The Athens Messenger* appealing to readers to take the test. One such advertisement in the September 11, 1879 (“Teachers’ Examinations”), paper stated that the examinations were given the second Saturday of each month of the year. The Board of Examiners for the county also gave the test on the last Saturday of the month in March, April, May, September, October, and November. The applicants were instructed to be punctual for the 10 o’clock start (but, curiously, were not informed of the location). *The Messenger* assisted those contemplating taking the test by publishing sample test questions (June 19, 1879a; August 28, 1879b). The questions were in four areas: grammar, arithmetic, geography, and theory and practice. The following questions are examples from each category (note the contemporary style of writing fractions):

Write sentences showing the use of the participle in all its forms.

If  $\frac{7}{19}$  of a barrel of flour cost  $1\frac{3}{4}$  dollars, what is the cost of  $5\frac{7}{8}$  barrels?

Name the bodies of land and water crossed by the Tropics and Equator.

What are some advantages of written recitation? (“The Teacher’s Ordeal,” 1879a)

Anna Stevens passed an examination with similar types of questions in the spring of 1879. According to an April 10, 1879, article in *The Athens Messenger* entitled “Qualified Teachers,” Anna Stevens of Athens Township earned a six-month teachers’ license. She was found to be competent and ready to be hired by a local school board.

The Athens Township Board of Education was a group that convened to perform large-scale administrative duties for the several smaller districts. Each district school elected a representative to sit on the township board. Meeting minutes reflect the board’s responsibilities. In addition to building maintenance and purchasing textbooks, the board responsibilities included buying fuel, monitoring enrollment at the various buildings, and levying taxes. At the April 19, 1880, meeting, the members approved the payment of a \$10 reward to A. Morrison for information that led to the conviction of G. Bougher. Mr. Bougher’s crime was “injuring” the district #1 schoolhouse. During the period in which Stevens would have been teaching, the township board did not hire the teachers for the individual buildings. The minutes do not mention teachers’ names or their salaries. Beatty and Stone (1984) provided some indication of what those salaries might have been in the early 1880s. Female teachers earned an average of \$22 a month. They noted the highest salary earned by a woman was \$48 a month by a high school teacher. Local boards usually paid men more than they paid women, but because turnover was so great for both males and females, “permanent” female teachers often earned more than men did. There is no indication that Anna was paid either more or less than her White peers.

Analysis of enrollment data for the period 1876 to 1884 recorded in the Athens Township Board of Education minutes found that the population of Black students never

exceeded 3% of the total student population of the 11 schools. The total enrollment for all 11 schools fluctuated between 415 (1881) and 494 students (1876). During the period, some schools did not have any Black students (#1, #2, #5, #8, #9, #11). District school #3 had the most consistent Black enrollment. It had at least one Black student during six of the nine school years. No school had over seven Black students in any given year. In one year, 1877, only one Black child attended school in the Athens Township system. These figures show that the number of Black children attending Athens Township schools was small and that few attended consistently over a several year period.

In late August and early September of 1879, just about the time Anna would have been starting her teaching career, the Black male community of Athens County met for the first time as a unit to reach a consensus on a political agenda that was in their best interest. Education and the responsibilities of freemen figured prominently in their discussions, as evidenced by the resolutions they had published following their convention (“The Colored Convention,” 1879). The initial meeting was held in Nelsonville, a town about 15 northwest of Athens. T. J. Ferguson, a former teacher at Sumner School in Parkersburg, West Virginia, was elected president. Ferguson and several other men selected by the attendees wrote up a report that contained eight resolutions. The first two resolutions dealt with the right to vote and to sit in the jury box. The third resolution stated, “That all voters are morally bound to inform themselves on the questions of public interest” (“The Colored Convention,” 1879, p. 1). Number four on the list read, “That the public schools are conservators of American intelligence, and should not be given out to inexperienced and incompetent friends and relatives of school

officers” (“The Colored Convention,” 1879, p. 1). The fifth, sixth, and eighth resolutions asserted beliefs about the need to support candidates who recognized Blacks as full humans with Constitutional rights; the responsibility of the United States government to protect all its citizens; and the likelihood that the Republican Party would be the only party capable of helping Blacks remedy their grievances. Resolution number seven stated, “That so long as there are separate schools colored educators should be retained and encouraged and that the employment of white teachers for colored schools is unwise and unjust” (“The Colored Convention,” 1879, p. 1). The role of education and the influence of educators was obviously of great importance to these men. Not far from their meeting place, Anna Stevens was embarking on a career that would address many of their concerns.

Stevens continued her professional education after she secured her teaching position. Her name appeared on a list of almost 200 individuals who were “regular attendants” at the Athens County Teachers’ Institute during August of 1882. *The Athens Messenger* published the list in its August 31, 1882, edition (“The Master Roll”). An advertisement for the institute that appeared in the June 29 *Messenger* indicated that the sessions would begin on August 7 and last for two weeks (“Teachers’ Institute,” 1882a). The Honorable Thomas W. Harvey and Professor T. C. Mendenhall were expected to provide instruction, and D. F. DeWolf, State School Commissioner, was an invited guest for part of the training. All county teachers were invited to attend, as well as those contemplating entering the field. Teachers were able to take the teacher examination following the program of instruction. J. M. Goodspeed, R. T. Hooper, and J. U. McCoy

were members of the committee that organized the institute. Another article appeared in *The Messenger* on August 10 correcting a previous article stating that The Institute would last only one week (“Untitled,” 1882a). This article indicated that the attendance was not as high as the planners had hoped. Additional attendees were encouraged to join the group in progress because none of the county teachers could “afford to wholly neglect the important advantages which these annual occasions afford” (p. 5). Anna Stevens took advantage of this learning opportunity.

Information describing the day-to-day experiences of Anna’s life in her one- or two-room schoolhouse west of Herrold’s Mill was not uncovered during the course of this research. Likewise, Beatty and Stone (1984) had little to report concerning the schools of Athens Township before 1900 other than the descriptions of buildings. Anna’s experiences in many respects were likely to have been similar to those of the other troops in the army of teachers of her region. Yet she was different. She was “of African lineage” and therefore was watched and singled out for progress reports in the press (“Untitled,” 1882). In a town less than 15 miles from Athens, Blacks who sought to educate themselves at Albany Enterprise Academy were falling on hard times in the early 1880s. Enrollment that had once topped 100 in the early 1870s was waning, as lack of good work and racial tension depleted Albany’s Black population (Tribe in Combs, 1994; Ward Randolph, 2004). A suspicious fire that destroyed the Academy’s dormitory in 1886, coupled with the ill health of the school’s “founder and staunchest supporter” (Combs, 1994), T. J. Ferguson, closed the school for good (Ward Randolph, 2004). Some would claim that “free and nonsegregated education” in the county reduced the need for

private academies (Beatty & Stone, 1984), but an 1881 lynching (Daniel, 1997) and other anti-Black activities took their toll on the Black community in Athens County. This researcher has found no evidence suggesting serious public objection or protest to Anna's securing and retaining her teaching post. However, in all probability, her presence in a leadership roll in the schools made many Athens County residents uncomfortable. In Anna's case, no news is at least tolerable news.

### **Family Life in Homestead**

Anna Stevens left public school teaching and married Cumberland "Cap" Posey when she was 21 (see Figure 6.1). Cumberland was a large, dark-complexioned man who rose to prominence working on boats and barges on the Ohio River. His family was from the western part of Virginia that became West Virginia in 1863. He moved across the river to Belpre, Ohio, where he resided when not on the river. Posey's knowledge of ships' engines helped him earn a license as an engineer (Ruck, 1993). This accomplishment was rare and may have been a first for a Black man. How Posey met Anna, and the details of their courtship, remain a mystery to be explored. However, Athens and Belpre were geographically only about 35 miles apart. Someone, perhaps a friend or family member, traveling in the area could have met one or the other and introduced them. Perhaps they attended one or more of the same events, such as Emancipation Day celebrations in either Athens or on Blennerhassett Island. Whatever the circumstance of their introduction and courtship, they were married by Thomas Monroe, a magistrate, on May 9, 1883, in Athens, Ohio (Athens County Clerk of Courts, marriage license). After their marriage, the Poseys moved to Homestead, Pennsylvania.

This community was located on the banks of the Monongahela River just southeast of Pittsburgh. Homestead in the 1980s was the site of Andrew Carnegie's steel plant. The plant required huge amounts of coal to operate, and Posey hauled it up river on his growing fleet of barges in order to satisfy that need. The move to Homestead put Cumberland closer to the seat of action in the coal and river shipping business. An early directory (1890) of the Homestead area shows that C. W. Posey and Anna S. Posey lived in the Harden Station area. This community had a Munhall post office address, but was near Homestead. From this location Posey launched several businesses that brought him, and his family, prosperity and recognition.



*Figure 6.1.* Cumberland Willis Posey, Sr. Thought to be the first Black to earn an engineer's license to run ships on the Ohio River, Posey parlayed his knowledge and business acumen into a sizable fortune. Picture from *Pennsylvania Negro Business Directory—1910* (p. 38).



According to the *Pennsylvania Negro Business Directory—1910*, Posey was one of the more active and diligent “among the many successful and progressive men of Pittsburg” (p. 38). The entry describing Captain C. W. Posey declared that he had added “to the world-wide reputation which the city enjoys as the Queen of Industry” (p. 38). The industries to which he lent his business acumen were many. Posey’s obituary in the *Pittsburgh Courier* (“Cumberland Posey,” June 13, 1925) linked him to several companies. He was general manager of the Delta Coal Company, founded the Posey Steamboat Company, organized the Preston Coal Company, and was a leader at the Diamond Coal Company. In a book of stories about Black Pittsburgh from the Federal Writers’ Project (FWP, terminated in 1939) initially compiled by Clarence Rollo Turner and recently edited by Laurence Glasco (2004), this discussion of Diamond Coal appeared:

The largest enterprise by Pittsburgh Negroes is the Diamond Coke and Coal Company, organized in Homestead in 1890, by a Negro river engineer. In the boat building business he built 21 river steamboats and employs one thousand men (p. 257).

The Posey portfolio of businesses included more than shipbuilding and coal, as the elder Posey invested in the *Pittsburgh Courier* newspaper (Ruck, 1993) and real estate (*Pennsylvania Negro Business Directory*, 1910). The *Pennsylvania Negro Business Directory—1910* also linked Posey to positions as a bank director and building and loan association director. Anna did not have to continue working for remuneration because of Posey’s financial success. However, *The Pennsylvania Negro Business Directory*

indicated that Mrs. Posey “ha[d] been a guiding hand and safe counselor in the business success of her husband” (p. 40). Together, Cumberland and Anna created a sound financial foundation for their family. For a Black family, their standard of living was extraordinary.

The Poseys gave life to three children, Cumberland, Jr. (Cum), Seward, (See) and Beatrice. The most famous of the children was Cum. He was a successful high school and college athlete. He attended Pennsylvania State College, the University of Pittsburgh, and Holy Ghost, which is now Duquesne University (Riley, 1994a; Ruck, 1993). At the latter school, he played basketball and was captain of the golf team (Riley, 1994a). It was his skill at that game, and his ability to promote his team, the Loendi Club, that gave Cum his first taste of success in the business of professional sports. That experience prepared him for further renown in the sport of baseball. He took a rough group of steel workers and turned them into the Homestead Grays, a professional team in the Negro Baseball League, for which he played and which he subsequently owned. Rob Ruck (1993) credited Posey, Jr., along with Gus Greenlee, owner of the Crawfords of the same league, as the two who “shaped black sport in Pittsburgh and nationally during the 1930s and 1940s” (p. 5). In his book *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh* (1993), Ruck called Posey, Jr. “the city’s most astute black sport entrepreneur” who through control of his team, and Greenlee of his, was responsible for bringing “tremendous pride and self-respect...to the wider black community” (p. 114). Neither Anna nor Posey Sr. lived to see the Grays play in their glory years from 1937-1945. During that stretch, the team won nine straight Negro National League pennants (Lester & Miller, 2001). Seward became

the business manager for the Grays. Beatrice, a 1906 graduate of California State Normal College, married a postal clerk, Evan Baker, and eventually moved to a home near her parents on 13th Avenue in Homestead.

*The Pennsylvania Negro Business Directory* of 1910 noted that Anna was “a lady of education and refinement” (p. 40). Her formal education, which would have been through high school at best, would have completed before she married Cumberland. The *Athens Messenger* articles cited above, when considered with additional information, indicate that if she graduated from Athens High School it occurred in 1879. She had held several teaching positions by 1882 (“Untitled,” 1882b). She most likely taught until she married in 1883 and left the Athens area to make her home with Cumberland in Homestead. Riley (1994), Porter (1995), and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum electronic Resources for Teachers website (as of February 4, 2008) have statements claiming that Anna was the first Black woman to graduate and teach at The Ohio State University. This was not likely to have been the case. Tamar Chute and Kevlin C. Haire, currently of the Ohio State Archives, confirmed that a woman by the name of Jesse Stephens earned the distinction of being the first African American female to earn a bachelor’s degree from that institution in the year 1905 (personal communication, September 28, 2007). This woman’s last name may have been the cause for the confusion because, as previously mentioned, the Stevens family was known to have spelled their surname Stephens. However, by the late 1880s the family, at least Anna’s branch, spelled their name Stevens. Married and living in Pennsylvania for 22 years by 1905, it was not likely that Mrs. Posey attended the Ohio State University between 1883 and 1905. Travel

between states would have been difficult in those days, and her plate was full with other responsibilities: raising a family, serving the community, and supporting her husband in his many business ventures. If Anna earned a diploma for schooling past the elementary level, it would have been a high school diploma from Athens High School, and that accomplishment is uncertain.

The matter of her refinement is another story. Again, *The Pennsylvania Negro Business Directory* (1910) informs us that Anna had:

devoted much study to the fine arts. Her home is decorated with hand-painted china, oil paintings, water color sketches, fine silk and lace work, all the work of her own hands. Many pieces of her handiwork adorns [sic] the homes of some of Homestead's wealthiest people (p. 40).

In addition to producing handiwork, Anna (see Figure 6.2) was a devoted clubwoman. She was a charter member of the Aurora Reading Club. This organization "has a reputation for skimming the cream of Pittsburgh's black society, and membership is attained by recommendation" (Tinsley, 2004, p. 2). Blockson (1994) listed the club as one of Pennsylvania's literary societies, groups he claimed to be "closely connected with men and women of letters" (p. 46). However, the Aurora Club's 2004 president, Adaeze Ezekoye, stated, "social action is at its base" (in Tinsley, 2004, p. 2). The club's meetings always focused on books and matters that related to Blacks according to Ezekoye. Yet its members have worked quietly since 1894 to improve their communities and "help others look into the past" (Tinsley, 2004, p. 3). The following description of this club appeared in Glasco's book based on the Federal Writers' Project:

The Aurora Reading Club was organized in 1898 at the home of Mrs. Hallie Lovett by a group of busy women who realized that only some kind of organization of their time would allow leisure for intellectual and cultural activities. The present membership consists largely of the daughters of the charter members. The club devoted its meetings to discussions of topics and books of the day. In 1912 they discussed "The Indians of the great Northwest," Kipling, and "The Recessional." In 1926 they were discussing the "Life of Washington Irving" and selections from Irving, and Cornwallis and the Colonial Congress, "Successful Negro Business Women," and Colored Colleges (p. 295).

Information held by The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania (HSWP)

Archives disputes the date of the club's founding, Lovett's given name, and the implication that the club was founded by Lovett because the meeting was in her home. Their "History of The Aurora Reading Club (1894-)" indicates that the club formed in 1894, that Ms. Lovett's name was Hannah, and that it was Rachel Jones who founded the organization. This history also states that the club's motto was "lifting as we climb," and that during the first half of the 20th century the group supported charities such as the Red Cross and the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Women (later the Lemington Home). One of Anna's obituaries mentioned her involvement with this club ("Death Roll," 1917). She was most likely proud of her association with it in her "maturer" years. The Aurora Reading Club was a vehicle for the Pittsburgh area's most highly educated and socially active to gather, learn, and plan activities for the good of their community.



*Figure 6.2. Angeline (Anna) Stevens Posey. Born and raised in Athens, Ohio. From Pennsylvania Negro Business Directory—1910 (p. 40).*

Anna was involved in other clubs and activities. She belonged to the Ladies Federation of Clubs and assisted Aurora Club organizer Rachel Lovett Jones with the founding of the Working Girls Home, a place for young Black working women arriving in the city to live until other arrangements could be made. *The Pennsylvania Negro Business Directory* (1910) indicated that Mrs. Posey “t[ook] an active interest in all movements tending to the advancement of the race” (p. 40). Her obituary (“Death Roll,” 1917) stated that she was a member of the Warren Methodist Episcopal Church. One cannot imagine that such an active citizen as Anna Posey would simply attend church services on Sundays. She most likely gave of her time to her church as well as her clubs.

Anna would have been further involved in the culture of the community and the world through her husband’s participation in the prestigious Loendi Club—a group he served as president for a time. Organized in 1897 by Black men of means, the club’s mission was to advance the cause of Blacks in Pittsburgh and provide entertainment for men “of wide reputation and ability” (Glasco, 2004, p. 295). The members purchased a \$10,000 property on Fullerton Street for its headquarters (Glasco, 2004). *The Pittsburgh Courier* carried articles about the club’s activities from time to time. One quoted in the book Glasco edited stated:

Loendi, the oldest and finest social and literary club in this city and one of the most outstanding in the country, was founded in 1897 by George Hall. Its social and literary objectives have attracted the most influential men and women to speak at its banquets and symposiums, the fulfillment of its idea to serve the literary and social interests of the its members. For years and years, Loendi has

been a traditional “spot” for all things worthwhile. It has remained exclusive, though democratic. Joining its ranks has been looked upon as an achievement, and its membership boasts the finest men of the city.

Loendi’s list of speakers and honored guests run the gamut of big names. Among those who have either been guests of the organization, or have spoken at some of its outstanding affairs are judge Terrell of Washington, D. C., Mrs. Butler Wilson, Mrs. Lena Trent Gordon, Judge George of Chicago, Judges Josiah Cohen, Marshall Brown and Schafer of the Common Pleas court here; William H. Lewis of Boston, Dr. Emmett J. Scott of Washington, D. C., the late Booker T. Washington, Tuskegee, Ala., Charles Anderson, Geo. C. Hall, Bert Williams, Joe Louis, Dr. John Brashear, Rabbi J. L. Levy and countless others (p. 284).

With exposure to these types of prominent individuals, among them some of the leading activists and thinkers of the day, the Poseys were positioned to be influential residents of their city and region.

Pittsburgh was unique in that its Black population was not isolated into one area of the city. The Federal Writers’ Project book that Glasco edited (2004) stated:

Harlem, South Chicago, South Philadelphia are cities in themselves. In these cities within cities have grown great and small industries, businesses, and social organizations, which give life within them unity. Pittsburgh is different. Here the Negro people are concentrated not in one community only, but in half a dozen island-like groups into which and around which wash other nationalities—Poles,



Italians, Jews (foreign born and native), Germans, Irish, Russians, Mexicans, and Hungarians (p. 24).

The Posey family was an integral part of one of those island-like groups. The Poseys lived at 312 East Thirteenth Avenue in Homestead (see Figure 6.3). In fact, by the 1920s the two generations of living Poseys appeared to own a sizable portion of that street. A Homestead directory for 1921-22 indicated Cumberland, Jr. and daughter Beatrice and her husband lived at 324 and 310 East Thirteenth Avenue, respectively. A similar 1931-32 directory listed the Posey Apartments at 318 through 320 East Thirteenth Avenue. In addition, Seward Posey owned a billiards hall not too far away. Add Cumberland Senior's many holdings and it becomes apparent that the family itself constituted an "island-like" group. Even though the Poseys lived in a suburb of Pittsburgh, it would be safe to assume that they were aware of the other islands, particularly the neighborhoods known as "The Hill" and "The Strip." These were two islands where many of Pittsburgh's poorest citizens lived. Both Anna and her husband were members of groups that sought to improve the quality of life for people of their race. Their sense of civic responsibility and concern for their fellow man would have taken them to these areas to provide assistance. Both Cumberland and Anna had a history of belonging to organizations that gave needed help to others.

Anna died August 20, 1917. She was almost 55. *The Pittsburgh Gazette Times* of August 21, 1917, stated that she died at her home. A second notice of her passing appeared the next day in the same paper. It reported that she died "at West Penn Hospital at 7 o'clock" ("Posey," 1917). Funeral services were held at the Posey's home on

Thursday, August 23 at 1:30. Interment in Homestead Cemetery took place a few hours later. Anna's life ended a bit too soon by today's standards of life expectancy. However, she lived longer than the average Black female of the time (Norton et al., 1994).

Cumberland remarried two years later. He died in 1925 leaving Cumberland, Jr., Seward, and Beatrice to continue the legacy their parents had begun.



*Figure 6.3.* The Posey home on East Thirteenth Street in Homestead, Pennsylvania. From *Pennsylvania Negro Business Directory—1910* (p. 37).

Anna's descendants include Dr. Evan Baker and Maxine B. Baker Stokes. Dr. Baker, a surgical pathologist, who bears the given name of Anna's son-in-law, graduated from, and is an assistant professor at, the University of Pittsburg School of Medicine. He also has served the community of Homestead as president of the borough council. In that capacity, in 2002 he was actively working with the council to redevelop the old Andrew Carnegie steel site and integrate it with the main streets of Homestead ("Forty under Forty," 2002). Maxine Beatrice Baker Stokes retired as President and CEO of the Freddie Mac Foundation in 2006. A graduate of Emerson College in Boston, she led one of the nation's top corporate philanthropy programs. Under her leadership, the Foundation's assets grew from \$22 million to more than \$235 million in 2003 ("Maxine Baker Biography," 2005). The Posey's legacy continues to prosper.

Although Anna Stevens Posey began life in a small community with limited resources, she was able to take advantage of the opportunities available to her to become a lifelong learner and servant to others. She may or may not have graduated from high school, but she did secure teaching positions in an area that had few Black residents. The resources she had at her disposal were similar to those of the women of the Simmons and Peyton families. They all had a basic building in which to work. Each had rudimentary supplies to advance that work. Pocahontas Simmons was able to see at least one of her daughters through normal college. Anna did the same. The college Mary Peyton attended, Storer College, had a tradition of providing education to African Americans. Anna's daughter, Beatrice, selected a school to attend which had that tradition as well, although it was not its expressed purpose. The school Beatrice chose

was California State Normal College. It was the same school, by an earlier name, that opened its doors to Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter. This single brave student paved the way for others such as Beatrice to follow. Jennie, the subject of chapter 7, began a legacy of her own.

## CHAPTER 7: NOT A NORMAL STUDENT

Females were not a common sight in college classrooms of the late 1870s. Rarer still was the presence of an African American female. Therefore, the appearance of Elizabeth Jennie Adams at South Western State Normal School in California, Pennsylvania, for the fall 1879 term was unique. There were other women in classes there, but she was the only Black woman. Jennie's out-of-the-ordinary matriculation on the campus was a defining moment for the college, as well as for Miss Adams. Jennie became a model student at South Western State Normal School. Her success at South Western, a school nestled next to the Monongahela River about an hour's travel south of Pittsburgh, paved the way for other Black students to follow her. Over the years, the college has undergone several changes in its mission and name, and it is now known as California University of Pennsylvania. Jennie attended many classes and participated in school activities that made her a better teacher. The degree she earned and the skills she developed prepared her to secure a position of respect. Her legacy as the first African American to earn a degree at California University of Pennsylvania, male or female, has inspired, and will continue to inspire, other students for generations to come. The university and her descendants were willing to keep her memory alive through a spectacular building project and an endowed scholarship that bear her name.

### **Early Home Life**

Elizabeth Jennie Adams was born on October 9, 1852, in Monongahela City, a small community on the banks of the Monongahela River at the eastern border of Washington County, Pennsylvania (Seehoffer, 2001). Adams rarely used her given name,

Elizabeth, preferring that people call her by her middle name, Jennie. Her parents, Eliza Jane Peters and Beverly Wilkeson (B. W.) Adams, were one generation removed from slavery (Seehoffer, 2001). Both of Jennie's parents came to Pennsylvania from Virginia (U.S. Census; 1860, 1870; 1880). The 1860 Census listed B. W. as the head of the Adams household, which had a value of \$150. He was a barber, and his expertise in that area was sufficient to be remembered in the *Centennial History of the Founding of Monongahela City, Pa.* (1895) as one of the "old successors" to Philip Catlin, the town's first barber (p. 28). According to William Beverly Carter, III, his great-great-grandson, B. W. was also a preacher who rode the Ohio circuit for the African Methodist Episcopal Church (Carter, personal communication, September 25, 2007, February 16, 2008; Seehoffer, 2001). In addition to his wife, E. Jane, four other individuals resided in the home: a son, Charles, age 15; a daughter, Eliza (Jennie), age 7; Anna Teeters, 32, a female domestic from Maryland; and Ann Denniss, 17, a female born in Pennsylvania. Charles was an adopted son (Carter, personal communication, February 16, 2008). Anna Teeters is an incorrect spelling of Anna Peters, Jennie's aunt, and Ann Denniss most likely was Jennie's cousin. The other two were probably boarders (Carter, personal communication, November 30, 2007; U.S. Census, 1860). By the time of the 1870 Census, the complexion of the home had changed. Jennie, aged 17, a schoolteacher who had attended school within the year, resided there with her father, mother, and four other tenants: Annie Collicha, 15, who was attending school; Annie Teeters (actually Peters), 48; Annie Dennis (Ann Denniss in the 1860 Census), 24; and Jos Commings, 57, a teamster who had admitted he could neither read nor write. The estimated value of the home was

\$4,000, and the Adams household claimed an additional \$500 in personal property.

Charles was no longer there. He left the Adams household to serve in the Civil War and retook his birth name Charles H. Davis (Carter, personal communication, February 16, 2008). *Caldwell's Illustrated Historical Atlas of Washington County Pennsylvania* (1876) contains a survey map of Monongahela City that shows a double corner lot on Coal Street as belonging to B. W. Adams. Several homes around that plot bore the names of families living near the Adams household in the 1870 Census. Ten years later, the 1880 Census listed only three people in the home: Beverly, Eliza, and Eliza (Jennie). Jennie was listed as a schoolteacher. Her father was still in the barbering business, and Eliza maintained the home.

A closer look at the data provided in the 1870 Census indicates that the Adams household was part of a predominantly White, middleclass, working neighborhood. Provided the census taker went door to door in an organized fashion, which was the custom, the information listed for the families before and after the Adams household on the document showed that the immediate neighbors were White, two-parent families with the mothers' occupations noted as "keeps house" and the fathers' as carpenter, minister, blacksmith, engineer, teamster, and retired. The Adams household appeared to be the only one that sheltered individuals with last names other than that of the head of household. The size of households ranged from two residents to seven. Some of the neighbors had older children who worked. Joseph and Madison Davidson worked as a carpenter and painter, respectively, and Heseke Rose, age 20, worked on a steamboat. Jennie appeared to be the only working female dependent.



For her early schooling, Jennie most likely attended the facility reserved for Black children. It was publicly supported, but held in a facility that was separate from the one used by White students. A book edited by Chill W. Hazzard (1895) that commemorated the 100th anniversary of Monongahela City provides evidence that the city operated the separate facility for Blacks continuously from 1854 to 1882. W. H. Arison wrote the section of the centennial book on the history of the schools in the city. He had this to say about the education of Monongahela City's Black children:

With the enactment of the law of 1854, the rights of the "colored" children were recognized; indeed, it may be, that even previous to this time, a school for them had been established, but as our record only extends back to 1854, we will assume that from that time, with varying interest, a school was maintained for their instruction. November 3, 1859, O. C. House, with his characteristic bluntness, offered a resolution in the Board, to "demand the basement of the colored people's church, and if given up, to prepare it *immediately* for a school for colored children." Whether this was accomplished or not, the record is silent, but the following year, a petition for the "colored" children; presumably, a school-*house* was meant, as the records show that a school was in operation, maintained by district, having however, no connection with the Union schools. The basement of the old church certainly was used as a school-room for several years, and in July, 1866, the church property was purchased by the district for school purposes, and until 1882, a separate school was maintained for the children of our colored people, when it was merged into the other school (p. 94).

As a resident of Monongahela City, Jennie would have attended school in the basement of the old church. By the time she began teaching, the school district had purchased the church for school use. However, the author was clear in his assertion that the school had no connection to the Union School. The Union School was Monongahela City's graded facility that opened in 1854 because of the consolidation of several smaller schools (Van Voorhis, 1893). A respected educator named Joseph Jennings was the principal of that school for 22 years (1876-1888) and was credited with improving the quality of the education provided there and starting the high school (Arison, 1895; Van Voorhis, 1893). Although there was still no physical connection with the Union School in 1876, Jennings was given supervisory capacity over the colored school (Arison, 1895). He would have been Jennie's supervisor for four school terms (1876-1879).

### **Early Teaching**

It is not clear where or exactly when Jennie began her teaching career. The earliest documentation of her employment was as the teacher of the colored school in Monongahela City in 1876. This information was found in the book, *Centennial Anniversary of the Founding of Monongahela City, Pa.* (1895), which also indicates that she retained that position until 1879. Other teachers were listed for the single position in that school, both before and after Jennie held it. The census indicated that she was teaching in 1870. Legislative policy in Pennsylvania allowed the segregation of schools before 1881. There were several "colored schools" up and down the Monongahela Valley during the 1870s. It was possible that she was teaching in one of them before she obtained the job in Monongahela City.

In her capacity as teacher of the school in Monongahela City, Jennie would have had to prepare her students for an annual exhibition of their skills. An article appearing in the May 16, 1878, *Monongahela Valley Republican* invited local residents to come watch such a program by Jennie's charges:

Colored School—Remember the entertainment to be given this (Thursday) evening by the pupils of the colored school, under charge of Miss Adams. A program of variety and interest has been prepared, and no doubt the audience will be gratified and entertained (p. 2).

The following week the same paper carried its description and opinion of the event:

The School of Miss Jennie Adams closed by an exhibition in the A.M.E. Church last week. The audience was large, and the people seemed well pleased. Both teacher and pupil had given considerable attention to the selection and preparation of the program. Most of the children spoke too low—but the elder pupils showed to good advantage. The scene from the Seminary Exhibition was quite well put on. Brother Ditcher, as the Lover, was good, and Sam blushed to the eyes at the proper times. Joe Jones played his part to perfection, because he has been there and “knew how it was” himself; while Dick Kemper made love in the time old Virginia style—natural as life itself. Annie Grinage was the life of the performance, having a good deal of native talent, and perfect confidence. Indeed the whole affair was above average, and commendable. The effect of the tableaux was spoiled by the red light being thrown on from the back instead of the front part of the stage; and the seating of the audience was entirely neglected. The

representatives of the School Board were allowed to stand all evening, while children and noisy boys occupied comfortable seats. The criticism which we have to make is that the program had very little of the literary and to [sic] much of the humorous about it ("The Colored School," 1878, p. 3).

Anticipating perhaps some of the criticism of the evening's events, Adams sent a letter to the editor that he printed the same day in the column next to the one that contained the above article:

*Mr. Editor:* --We wish to extend through your paper, our thanks to the public who so generously patronized our entertainment on the 16<sup>th</sup> last, and for the patience exhibited by those who were compelled to remain standing during this performance, and for the excellent order and interest manifested in the performance. JENNIE ADAMS, Teacher ("Mr. Editor," 1878, p. 3).

This sequence of articles gave the impression that Adams had the problem of more interest in her event than the church could accommodate, a problem many teachers would be glad to have. The standing-room-only crowd would have been an indication of curiosity on the part of some for what went on under Adams' tutelage, and of outright public support for her work by still others. *Monongahela Valley Republican* owner, publisher, and editor, Chill W. Hazzard, most likely wrote the criticism sprinkled throughout the article. The remarks, although pointed, were similar to remarks he routinely published when describing other persons and events of the town, county, and nation. Veteran librarian Nancy Stoicovy (personal communication, December 18, 2007) of the Monongahela Area Library noted that Hazzard was known to be highly critical of

most citizens in general and less than supportive of the African American population of the town in particular. Stoicovy's experience with helping hundreds of individuals search through old editions of *The Daily Republican* and the *Monongahela Valley Republican*, led her to believe that Hazzard left out much of the news related to the Black population of the area. Whether he went to the exhibition at the A.M.E. Church himself or published the article about it based on someone else's account, the fact that he included it prominently in his paper spoke to the level of his regard for Adams. This factor would come into play again when he chose to position her obituary at the top of the center column of the front page of his paper of January 5, 1891. Yet, Hazzard demonstrated some degree of prejudice through his statements about the program. He had concerns about the humorous rather than literary tone to the program, and about the adults who had to stand. There is some implied belief in the intellectual inferiority of Black children and a lack of deference to White people in his remarks. Perhaps he, or some other person in the audience, was offended when Black children did not give up their seats. Despite these comments, the paper pronounced the event "above average and commendable," a synopsis disseminated throughout the area of which Jennie could be quite proud.

At some point, Adams may have decided to return to high school. An 1878 graduation program from Monongahela City Union School is among belongings that Jennie's family has kept for over a hundred years. Her name was not printed in that program, nor was she listed in the newspaper articles regarding the 1878 graduation (Jennings, 1878; "Close of the Public School," 1878; "Untitled," 1878). An additional list of the graduates of Monongahela City High School found in *Centennial Anniversary of*

*the Founding of Monongahela City, Pa.* (1895, pp. 112-13) does not include either an Elizabeth Adams or a Jennie Adams in the 1878 graduating class. Jennie's great-grandson, William Beverly Carter, III, indicated that he believed Jennie was elected historian of her high school class (Carter, personal communication to CUP, 2001; Seehoffer, 2001). This researcher did not receive documentation of this class office from Mr. Carter in time for inclusion in this dissertation. An argument can be made that Jennie was not permitted to participate in the graduation exercises because of her color. However, without further evidence, such as a diploma, yearbook, or other artifact of school enrollment, two factors cast doubt on that theory. Jennie was teaching in Monongahela City from 1876 to 1879 (Hazzard, 1895; "The Colored School," 1878). Although it was possible that school terms were staggered and Jennie could have conducted her classes around a high school schedule, that would have been difficult and unlikely. In addition, community sentiment concerning Blacks, as evidenced by coverage in the newspaper, was not excellent by any means, but neither was it hostile. In the same year as the graduation, 1878, articles about the class Jennie taught at the school for Blacks appeared in the newspaper. Three years later, the press coverage of her graduation from South Western State Normal School was plentiful, congratulatory, and positive (see SWSNS graduation discussion below). The community appeared quite proud of her. If Jennie had been in the high school class of 1878, which was the first from Monongahela City High School, it seems likely she would have been mentioned in some manner. She was mature (26 years old) and an excellent public speaker. A public presentation by Jennie would have been an asset to the class, enhancing its public perception, not

detracting from it. Considering her employment, talent, and public sentiment, it seems unlikely that Jennie was in this graduating class. Several hypotheses concerning her possession of the program can be proffered. One is that she attended because it was the first graduation and she wanted to be part of the community celebration. A second possibility is that she knew one or more of the students in the class well and wanted to be there to see them graduate. Yet another would be that she was a former student of the Monongahela school system, a current teacher in it, and was invited to attend in an official capacity. It could also have been a combination of these possibilities.

Whether or not Jennie graduated from high school in 1878 does not change the fact that at the age of 26 she was a competent and experienced teacher. She taught one more term at the segregated school in Monongahela City in 1879. Neither *The Daily Republican* nor *The Monongahela Valley Republican* covered the exhibition that year. It appeared to be her last year of service in the borough of her birth. Arison (in Hazzard, 1895) listed J. C. Douglass as the teacher at the colored school for the 1880 term. This departure coincided with Adams' matriculation at South Western State Normal School. She most likely enrolled there in order to challenge herself and to learn more in order to be both a better teacher and a better person (Carter, personal communication with CUP, 1987; Seehoffer, 2001).

### **The Normal Years**

Adams sought to enroll at South Western State Normal School (SWSNS) in California, Pennsylvania in 1879. The level of schooling she had completed was not an issue. High school was not a routine part of every person's education in this period. The

faculty of SWSNS taught their introductory courses “at the level of the high school to prepare students for the work of the normal school” (Serinko, 1992, p. 105). In addition, the principal of SWSNS (today’s equivalent of a president) had the authority to admit students he felt competent (Pokol, personal communication, January 23, 2008).

According to California University of Pennsylvania’s current archivist, Albert Pokol, minutes from meetings of the trustees of the college do not mention Jennie (personal communication, January 23, 2008) and, apparently, SWSNS had no written rules prohibiting the admission of Blacks. Because Pennsylvania was required to provide separate schools for Black children, “the Normal School at California made opportunity available for blacks to prepare for teaching” (Serinko, 1992, p. 96). Dr. George Beard was the principal (1877-83) who would have admitted Jennie (Serinko, 1992).

After admission to the institution, Jennie began classes that included orthography, arithmetic, history, and school economy. It is not clear that Jennie was the first Black to take such classes at SWSNS, there might have been other Black students on campus. An article in the *Cal U Review* (Summer 2001) by Michelle Seehoffer suggested otherwise. Seehoffer posited, “What must life have been like for the only African American on her college campus in the late 1800s?” (p. 20). Knowledge of whether Jennie lived on or near campus has not surfaced either. A three-story dormitory for women, complete with a dining hall, was available on campus (Serinko, 1992). However, Jennie’s home was only about 10 miles to the north, and a major rail line was completed to the campus in 1878. That line would have permitted Jennie to commute. She also could have boarded with someone closer to the campus. What is clearer is that her arrival on campus was not



marked by commotion significant enough to be recorded (Serinko, 1992). There were likely to have been comments, looks, and concerns. However, just how many of them she dealt with both publicly or privately will never be known. What is clearer still is that Jennie progressed through the program, participated in campus activities, and graduated with some degree of fanfare in 1881 as the first Black to complete the two-year program.

Jennie received a sound education at SWSNS. In 1879, the school was relatively new in the development of state normal schools, having received the designation as the State Normal School of the Tenth District of Pennsylvania in 1874. However, the school had roots to private institutions dating back to 1852. The country was just coming out of a serious depression in 1878 and 1879 that had lasted over five years and hit Pennsylvania particularly hard. The economic downturn had complicated the completion of building projects at SWSNS. The school's financial woes also caused problems among administrators, trustees, and faculty over salaries and duties. Despite these concerns, the school's influence was growing, and state officials were pleased with it (Serinko, 1992). Well-known and highly visible leaders in the field of education came to campus periodically to give lectures and teach classes. Col. Francis Parker, Frederick Douglass, G. Stanley Hall, Booker T. Washington, and William Jennings Bryant were just a few of the names of visitors to SWSNS in the late 1800s. In addition to exposure to the top names in education, Jennie would have been required to do practicum work in the model school. SWSNS had a sound teacher-training program and many successful graduates. Its graduates were "students who could take their place alongside the students of those

institutions of national prominence” (Serinko, 1992, p. 95) and were helping to make a name for the school.

One SWSNS graduate of particular note was Wilber Samuel Jackman. Jackman graduated in 1877 and earned a teaching position in the SWSNS model school in 1878. He was likely to have been in that capacity when Jennie was on campus. Jackman took a position in a Pittsburgh school in 1882 and in 1890 left it to work with Col. Parker at the Cook County Normal School in Chicago. In the early 1900s, Jackman was promoted to dean of the education department at the University of Chicago, where he worked and sometimes clashed with John Dewey (Serinko, 1992). Serinko noted that although Jackman was probably the most famous of the SWSNS graduates, “his contribution may stand for the work of all the unsung early graduates” (p. 103). Jennie Adams was one of those unsung graduates.

The 300 to 350 students at SWSNS from the late 1870s to the early 1880s came from places outside the region as well as within it. Students in Jennie’s classes were from towns of the Monongahela River Valley as well as from many from states such as Kansas, Vermont, Montana, and Alabama. They had come to California, Pennsylvania, for an inexpensive education that trained them to teach or go on to colleges and universities in order to study law, medicine, and other professions. Tuition in 1877 was \$1 per week and 75¢ for part time students. As evidenced by employment records from surrounding school districts, SWSNS was the primary source for teachers, principals, and superintendents in the surrounding public schools. However, many graduates did go on to become doctors, lawyers, bankers, merchants, and engineers. Another sizable number of

graduates parlayed their economical and academically-sound education into careers in mission work and the ministry (Serinko, 1992).

The fact that SWSNS was a state institution did not mean religion was excluded from school activities. Religious meetings and Biblical study played a significant role in the educational process at SWSNS in 1879 and beyond. Principals of the institution during this period, including Beard, were ordained ministers. Students were required to attend regular religious meetings (Serinko, 1992). Attention to the spiritual and moral development of the individual pervaded the academic curriculum that was provided through two courses of study: the Elementary Course, and the scientific course. Jennie followed the Elementary Course (diploma, 1881).

Jennie Adams (see Figure 7.1) proved to be an excellent student. Candidates for graduation went through a rigorous screening procedure to earn their degrees. Regis Serinko (1992), author of *California University of Pennsylvania: The People's College in the Monongahela Valley*, explained:

To qualify for graduation the candidate was first examined by the faculty for scholarship, deportment, and teaching power. If the candidate passed the faculty, he was then recommended to the examining committee. The Board of Examiners again tested the scholarship and mental power of the candidate. If the candidate received the vote of four or five members, he was given a diploma (pp. 82-83).

The results of the examinations were reported in the newspapers of the surrounding area. One such article about Jennie's class came from The Washington, Pennsylvania, *Daily Evening Reporter*. It indicated that the examination of the 1881 graduating class

conducted by Pennsylvania State Superintendent Higbee, in cooperation with Professors Shafer and Hull of the normal school was

very rigid but the class stood it well and came off with laurels. The entire class of twenty-eight passed, and the state officials expressed themselves as very highly pleased with the result. The class was composed of twelve gentlemen and sixteen ladies. Among them was a colored young lady—there being no color line here (“California Normal School,” 1881, July 2).

Principal Beard added a more personal comment to the general evaluation of the class as a whole. He said of Jennie that she was:

universally respected as a student and teacher. She has special and rare gifts as an elocutionist and has given public readings before this school and at other places with marked success. She has an intelligent appreciation of sentiment, an unusual skill in expression, great power and command of voice and sympathy with her audience which render her efforts eminently successful. She has a special skill in rendering humorous selections, and never fails to please and instruct (“Black Culture Center,” 1986).

Principal Beard’s assessment focused primarily on Jennie’s skill as a public speaker. Her ability in this area impressed other students, faculty, and locals who heard her speak. A July 21, 1881, article in the *Monongahela Valley Republican* indicated that her commencement speech pleasantly surprised many who attended the ceremony. The author (perhaps Hazzard) of the article wrote:

Miss Adams, a colored girl, surprised the audience by her originality, quaint humor, and more than all in the cultivation of her voice as a reader. She stands well in her class and was a universal favorite. She won success, because she deserved it (“Untitled,” 1881, p. 3).

The use of the term “girl” did not appear to be reserved for Jennie alone. The two other graduates who spoke, both female, a Miss Graham, who “stood at the head of her class,” and Miss Sheplar, who spoke despite having been ill for several weeks, were also referred to as “girls” in the article.



*Figure 7.1.* Elizabeth Jennie Adams. Jennie's graduation picture courtesy of California University of Pennsylvania.

The SWSNS commencement ceremony began at eight o'clock on the morning of July 14, 1881. Twenty-eight students spoke at the event to close to 1,000 individuals in the audience. After a prayer and an initial musical selection, the students spoke in four groups of seven, interspersed with musical interludes. Jennie's commencement speech was the last one in the first group of seven and was titled, "Unwritten History" (Commencement Programme, 1881). It included the following statement: "All is not written; if we knew the unwritten histories of even our enemies, perhaps the knowledge of their weaknesses might cause us to pity and forgive them" ("California Normal," 1881). After all 28 students had addressed the audience, the principal conferred degrees. Jennie's diploma stated that she was considered a Bachelor in the Elements and had been found proficient and duly qualified in Orthography, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, geography, English Grammar and the Theory of Teaching. Additional subjects were entered on the line following. Those subjects were listed in this order: Mental Science, Philosophy, Physiology, Rhetoric, Geometry, Algebra, Civil Government, Drawing, History, Botany, Bookkeeping, Vocal Music, and Latin. The diploma further indicated that Adams could teach in the schools of Pennsylvania without further examination. Elsbree (1939) noted that some states initiated policies such as this one in order to encourage teachers to seek advanced education. No less than 14 names were signed in two columns at the bottom of the diploma. Among them were George P. Beard, Principal, E. E. Higbee, Superintendent of Public Instruction, three county superintendents, and seven faculty members of SWSNS. Jennie also was awarded a certificate from the Clionian Literary Society in July of 1881. It stated that "Moral Worth and Excellence in

Knowledge should be recognized” and that Jennie’s “correct deportment” and “attainments in Literature” entitled her to “all the Priveleges [sic] of Honorary Membership in this Society.” Upon the conferring of this honor and the degree, Bachelor in the Elements, Jennie Adams became the first Black to earn a degree at South Western State Normal School. Some evidence indicates that she was the first Black female graduate of any Pennsylvania state normal college (Carter, personal communication with California University of Pennsylvania, no date).

### **Beyond Graduation**

Jennie’s graduation from SWSNS received attention in many of the local newspapers of the Monongahela River Valley. The articles about Jennie were overwhelmingly positive. However, her graduation coincided with the ruling of the Pennsylvania legislature that Black children were to be integrated into the White public schools and that segregated schools were to be closed. One local weekly paper, *The Monongahela Valley Republican*, Jennie’s hometown newspaper, carried an article that day noting her graduation on an inside page. On the front page, it carried a message indicating that Adams’ accomplishment was only a beginning for most of the African American population of the region. About a month prior to her graduation, *The Daily Republican* (“Colored Schools,” 1881) ran an article declaring that “There will be no more colored schools in this State” (p. 1). It announced the action of the Pennsylvania legislature in passing a bill that would take effect July 4, 1881, and put an end to segregated schools. The article also contained the text of Section 1 of the bill:



That hereafter it shall be unlawful for any school director, superintendent or teacher to make any distinction whatever on account of or by reason of the race or color of any pupil or scholar who may be in attendance upon or seeking admission to any public or common school maintained wholly [sic] or in part under the school laws of this commonwealth (p. 1).

In the conclusion of the article, editor and publisher Chill W. Hazzard opined that “now Independence Day will have an additional meaning to the colored people” (p. 1).

Hazzard was most likely the author of the article that then appeared in *The Monongahela Valley Republican* the day of Jennie’s graduation. It was a vehicle for him to address the local school board and disseminate his ideas for implementing the new law. He believed that the colored primary school needed to remain housed in a room under the “direct supervision of the principal.” He proposed that the best teacher be assigned to that class, but that no student be allowed to enter it unless clean. The cleanliness insinuation coupled with the next statement, “The essential reasons why people are objectionable to each other does [sic] not always include color only” (p. 1), began to reveal his prejudices. The next major point to the article supported the integration of the “upper rooms” of the school and the equal treatment of all students in them. This section was concluded with the thought that

as time wears on people’s prejudices will wear away—and as the colored race becomes more polished, and their living habits more careful, there will be no prejudice at all.

Hazzard then offered more thoughts on why he believed that equality and the waning of prejudice would not come in the immediate future. The thoughts were offered “in kindness, so that [they] may be corrected,” but he considered the following statements to be “facts which now stand in the way of colored pupils” (p. 1). The article continued:

In the first place, teachers of the colored schools have not been required to know as much as for white schools; colored children have easier exams, regular attendance has not been insisted on, discipline has been lax—the fact is the colored pupils have come and gone when they pleased. That must be stopped now, and we think it very doubtful if the colored children will at first submit to the discipline and course of the regular schools.—For one thing, they have not the same mental oversight at home, and by nature they are not partial to restraint (p. 1).

The opinion piece then turned to the need for most poor Black children to perform domestic service, making their attendance in school irregular at best. Not stopping at the need for many to work, Hazzard finished the paragraph with “And, as a rule colored children do not like to go to school” (p. 1). Before concluding that parents were to blame for the problems and were the sole source of the potential remedies, Hazzard offered the following assessment of what was likely to happen:

So we think the primary school will show a heavy falling off as each month progresses, and in the advanced rooms but few of them will be found, long at a time. It is difficult to get them to attend their own school, with their own teachers, with easy lessons and lax discipline. It will be next to impossible to make them

come up to the new standard. Indeed it has been very difficult for the Board to keep the colored school up to any fair standard at all” (p. 1).

This prominently-displayed editorial raised questions about the prevailing attitudes in Jennie’s hometown and surrounding region. The state had decided it was time to teach all children together under one roof, but obviously, there were pockets of resistance to that belief.

The editorial printed in Hazzard’s newspaper raised several questions, the first one being: What evidence did the writer have for his position? Jennie Adams had been the teacher at the Monongahela City colored school from 1876 to 1879. Was it her work and her students that caused the author to believe these things? Had not the same paper printed an article three years earlier that said the exhibition of the African American children at the A.M.E. Church was “above average and commendable?” Was that 1878 exhibition an anomaly to the author? Did he not know that Miss Adams had as much, if not more, education than most of the White teachers of the day? Was it other teachers to whom he objected? Curiosity about the answers to these questions becomes acute if the author was Hazzard, and it is highly likely that it was. He could have fallen back on old stereotypes in order to support his position, basing his rationale on beliefs about the distant whole group, not the individual local parts. Yet, the editorial referred frequently to the author’s assessment of local practice. More intriguing still is that careful perusal of the censuses of both 1870 and 1880 led to the discovery that Hazzard lived fairly close to Jennie. Entries for B. W. Adams and Chill W. Hazzard are not far apart in either census. Census takers of the era canvassed neighborhoods going from one house to the next in an

organized manner so they would not miss dwellings (Showalter, personal communication, 2007). Names close to each other on the record sheets can indicate proximity to each other in terms of residence. In 1870, Hazzard, age 30 was living in a home with his parents. The house was assigned the number 117. House 131, presumably just 14 houses from the Hazzards on the census taker's route was B. W. Adams. Even if they were not as close as the proximity of the entries indicated, in a community of about 200 households (U.S. Census, 1870), no one lived too far away. Hazzard most likely knew Jennie Adams personally, and he believed that she was deserving of her accolades and diploma (see above quotations), but he did not see her as a representative of the potential of others like her.

Faced with this type of prejudice and attitudes all around her, Jennie Adams went back to work in a classroom for the winter term of 1881 at the Bridgeport Colored School. Bridgeport is located across Dunlap's Creek from Brownsville, which is in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. Brownsville, a small community south of California was "a boat building center" that was "situated on the slope above the Monongahela River" (Blockson, 1975, p. 79). The Society of Friends opened the first schools in Bridgeport in the second decade of the 19th century. J. Percy Hart (1904) boasted of Bridgeport "that here were organized the first graded schools west of the Alleghenies, except for Pittsburg and that immediate vicinity" (p. 348). From 1854 until 1875, the Bridgeport Colored School was housed in an old stone schoolhouse. That building was demolished in 1875 and a new brick facility "was erected on the same lot" (Hart, 1904, p. 348). Seehoffer (2001) stated that Jennie was vice-principal of that school. The *Republican Standard* of

Uniontown, Pennsylvania, printed a short item under its “Brownsville” heading (August 4, 1881), which the Monongahela newspaper picked up within a few days, regarding Jennie’s new teaching assignment. It stated that “Charlie Crawford and Miss Jennie E. Adams, of Monongahela City, are to teach the young colored idea [sic] how to shoot this winter in Bridgeport” (“Local News,” 1881, p. 3). Just what they were shooting, and with what implements, are not known, but the article did establish Jennie’s presence in the Monongahela Valley after graduation. Serinko had stated in his history of California University that Jennie “did not remain to teach in the area but taught in a model school in Waco College, Waco, Texas” (p. 96) after graduation from SWSNS. While Jennie did eventually leave Pennsylvania for Waco, Texas, evidence indicates she taught in a school for African American children not far from California for at least one term.

The schools of Pennsylvania were desegregating during the 1881 and 1882 school years. In some communities, citizens vigorously opposed the change. In Uniontown, the seat of Fayette County, the public schools were locked in a lawsuit with the father of a Black student who wanted his son to be admitted to the schools. The *Republican Standard* of May 11, 1882, reported on the latest news of the case. The school board was not faring well considering that the state had mandated integration the year before (“Manaway vs. School Board,” 1882). Once this and other cases were resolved, separate schools for Black children began to disappear. Jennie is likely to have taught in the Bridgeport school until its students were assimilated into the White schools. As was the custom in many places, when that happened Black teachers lost their jobs (Gerber, 1976).

A similar situation in Bridgeport may have been the impetus for Jennie to leave the area for Texas.

### **Talents and Interests**

Jennie Adams, lauded for her public speaking ability during her normal college career, also tried her hand at writing at least one short story at some point in her life. One example of her work in this medium, a handwritten tale of a love triangle involving three characters who had known each other since childhood, was passed down from generation to generation within her family. William Beverly Carter, III, Jennie's great-grandson, employed 21st century technology to enhance the fading text in order to transcribe the untitled composition (see appendix E). The style and sophistication of the piece suggested that a young woman of at least 18 to 20 years of age penned it. Perhaps she was even older when she wrote the story. It was not clear to Carter if the protagonist, suitors, and plot were reflective of her life in any way. He was not sure if Jennie had many love interests, or whether the tale was fictional. Carter tended to believe it to be more fiction than truth (Carter, personal communication, December 10, 2007). Certain elements in the story indicated that there might be some truth buried in her art. The protagonist, named Anna, could be any number of women in, or close to, the Adams family. There were at least four different women named Annie, Ann, or Anna who lived in the Adams household at some time. The story could be something Jennie heard as a child, something that was part of someone's oral tradition and that she decided to record for the sake of posterity. It also could be something Jennie wrote in order to work through a situation in her own life. She married late by the standards of the day (at age 33) and the

story may be a clue as to why. Perhaps she was working through a possible scenario should she have to contend with more than one love interest. There were certainly many males in the neighborhood in which she grew up who were involved in the shipping or shipbuilding trades (1860, 1870 Census). The character Enoch in her tale was a bold and determined sailor. He might have been someone she knew as a child and with whom she played at housekeeping. Philip, the second love interest, was a quiet, wealthy man, and more difficult to place as someone Jennie might have known. Adams did eventually marry a man who had been a neighbor when she was a child in Monongahela City (1860 Census). While it was intriguing to think of the possible connections, the story is most likely fiction. Regardless of its base in reality, the story was important enough for three generations of male descendants to keep. Its mysterious content was haunting, if indeed they were a reflection of Jennie's thoughts as a young woman. If only a good story, it told a great deal about Jennie. Her voice is in the story.

The story was set in the late 1700s. The characters were written to be strong, self-sufficient, and perhaps most telling, free. The story has few, if any, qualities that would indicate the writer was an African American female of the 19th century. The protagonist, Anna, is attractive, "beautiful" and "loved" in Jennie's own words. She described Anna's children the same way more than once: they are "beautiful." The suitors are both men of means; one has the skills to build and provide, and the other appears to have accumulated wealth through his family's success. Anna, makes her own decisions based on what she thinks is best for her. She requests that Philip wait a year before proposing marriage and he honors that request. The story also indicates that Anna wants a better life for any

children she might have. She and her spouse would provide that “better bringing up” by working hard and saving money. Through this story, Jennie’s voice indicates that she has embraced the “American Dream.” She was not unlike other women of her day, or today for that matter. She wanted to be considered attractive and she wanted to be loved, but not at any cost. Moral and ethical issues were weighed in the balance before emotional satisfaction was allowed. Jennie was aware that the dream did not insure an idyllic world. There were hardships and loss that she could overcome. Love and joy were interspersed with the adversity. Hard work and a clear mind would serve her well as a woman and a mother.

Feminism probably was not a word commonly used by normal students of the day. However, Christine Ogren (1996) found that normal colleges often fostered female students’ self-confidence and belief in women’s rights. Jennie possessed a strong sense of self and a desire to demonstrate her competence both as a woman and as an African American woman that was not diminished by her matriculation at SWSNS. She was active in at least one club, a literary society (Clonian Literary Society), and reviews of her speeches indicated she carried herself with an air of self-confidence and comfort. In addition, she kept scrapbooks that contained clippings and comments. She juxtaposed some of the articles to indicate her interest in women’s issues and concerns regarding “women’s efforts to succeed in a ‘man’s world’” with other articles dealing with “‘woman’s place in the kitchen’ and their ‘the inherent lack of intelligence’” (Carter in Seehoffer, 2001, p. 21). Jennie’s great-grandson saw the arrangement of the articles as “a reflection of her survival skills that she was able to keep a sense of humor as she faced



the double burden of being a black woman in the United States in the late 19th century” (Carter in Seehoffer, 2001, p. 21). Jennie would need a sense of humor and a great deal of strength to face the trials of the last years of her life.

### **A Life Too Soon Ended**

Adams most likely left Pennsylvania’s Laurel Highlands in the early months of 1884. She is thought to have joined the faculty at Paul Quinn College about March of 1884 (W. B. Carter, personal communication, December 23, 2007). This institution was affiliated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church and was named for the man who organized the A.M.E. Church in Monongahela City in 1834 (McFarland, 1910). Jennie worked in the model school (Serinko, 1992) and “tutored children who needed extra help or who worked during regular school hours” (Seehoffer, 2001, p. 21). In the summer of 1884, Jennie contracted malaria and bilious fever. A brief entry in the “Local News” column of the *Monongahela City Daily Republican* let the people of her hometown know of her recovery from the disease (July 14, 1884, p. 3). This bout of illness was not Jennie’s last.

While in Texas, Jennie married John Nelson Carter on November 15, 1885 (Carter, personal communication, December 23, 2007). Carter had been a student at SWSNS, but not a graduate. The first Black male did not graduate from the school until 1889 (Seehoffer, 2001). Jennie’s great-grandson was not sure whether the two had travelled to Texas together, or if one followed the other to the Lone Star State (Carter, personal communication, December 23, 2007). It is more than a coincidence that Jennie and Carter found each other in Texas. They had been next-door neighbors at one time in

Monongahela City (U.S. Census, 1860) and classmates at SWSNS. John Carter was an A.M.E. minister. His work in Texas involved filling a pulpit and raising funds to build a church (W. B. Carter, personal communication, December 23, 2007). After their marriage, Jennie continued her teaching and tutoring (Seehoffer, 2001). In 1886, a group of local White pastors and two judges from Tom Green County, Texas, collectively wrote Jennie a letter of recommendation that said Jennie was “amiable, intellectual, and ‘in every way eminently qualified to teach and govern children’” (Seehoffer, p. 21).

The couple did not stay long in Texas. By the late 1880s, they had returned to the Keystone State and were living in West Bridgewater near Beaver. Jennie’s obituary gave her failing health as the reason for their return to Pennsylvania (“Mrs. Carter Dead,” 1891). A serious fall some years before had resulted in a head injury that caused her to have severe headaches. Those who knew Jennie marveled at her ability to be positive and gracious while in such pain. It could not have been easy raising two small children, helping a husband with his church responsibilities, and dealing with increasing pain and discomfort. Jennie’s son, who was a physician in Philadelphia for many decades, made notes that suggested the cause of his mother’s pain and death was a brain tumor (Seehoffer, 2001). Jennie passed away in West Bridgewater at the age of 38. She seemed to have known her death was imminent. An article in the Monongahela paper that appeared after her funeral stated that:

On New Years eve she requested that the family hold a watch meeting as she felt that it would be the last one she would ever attend in this world. She gave them assurance that if she did not see much of the New Year she would rest joyfully in

the arms of the Saviour. To all that called on her during her sickness she would speak of the glorious home she would inherit when she would pass away from this world (“Mrs. Jennie Adams Carter,” 1891).

The Monongahela *Daily Republican* published the first of the two obituaries it printed about Jennie in the center of its front page. It told of her SWSNS accomplishments, her work in Texas, and the time and date of the funeral. The author of the obituary was not identified, but the editor of the paper was still Chill W. Hazzard. He would have made the decision where to place the notice of Jennie’s death. One can only wonder if he wrote the second to last line of it, “She was a mild and gentle lady, and had many friends wherever she went” (“Mrs. Carter Dead,” 1891). Perhaps Hazzard had learned something from this bright and masterful teacher.

Jennie is buried on a hill in the Monongahela Cemetery, not far from, and overlooking, the Monongahela River. The plot is located just a few yards north of the current administrative office for the cemetery. Her resting place lies within an open space containing the remains of approximately eight others. Only one small marker exists for the entire section, and weathering has completely obliterated the writing on it. Cemetery records show that Jennie’s father and mother are buried with her in the same plot.

John Nelson and Jennie Adams Carter had two children. Their daughter Lida Jane died of an unknown cause at the age of six, shortly after Jennie died. Their son, William Beverly Burgin Carter, was born less than a year before Jennie’s death in January of 1891. (The son was named for I. M. Burgin, who was the president of Paul Quinn College when the Carters were in Texas.) John Nelson Carter never remarried. Several

women in the family, grandmothers and a favorite aunt, helped the pastor raise his son (Carter, personal communication, November 12, 2007). Their effort brought a significant return, as W. B. graduated from Geneva College and Temple Medical School. He became a physician in the Philadelphia area. Dr. Carter married and that union produced William Beverly Carter, Jr. He graduated from Lincoln University and became a career Foreign Service officer, serving as ambassador to Tanzania and Liberia. William Jr.'s only child, William Beverly Carter, III graduated from Howard University and Johns Hopkins, and was a long-time employee of The Institute of International Education in Washington, DC (Carter, speech to Black Student Union, 2008, February 22). William Carter, III married Katherine Sebekos. They, too, had one son, Terrance, who graduated from Harvard University in 2001 (Seehoffer, 2001). William Beverly Carter, III and his wife established the scholarship at California University of Pennsylvania in honor of Jennie, Mr. Carter's great-grandmother.

In 1986, the California University of Pennsylvania decided to honor Jennie, her courage, and accomplishments by naming its Black Culture House for her. It was an old home on the corner of Fourth and Park Streets. The dedication was October 25 and the family of William Beverly Carter, III was present for the occasion (*California Times*, 1986). The facility served the African American student body adequately for many years. In 2006, the house was razed to make room for a new multi-purpose building—the Jennie A. Carter Black Culture House was no more. However, the university engaged a team of professionals and student leaders to design and build a new structure on the land vacated by the Black Student Union. It was built to house more than a handful of students.

The sky was a clear blue and the air was warm at midday in California, Pennsylvania, on September 29, 2007. University maintenance workers had arranged several rows of seats under a canopy that faced a temporary stage bedecked in red and black, the school colors of California University of Pennsylvania. Slowly a group gathered, filling roughly half the waiting chairs. An assortment of students, administrators, and representatives of the design and construction team joined William Beverly Carter, III on the stage shortly after 11 a. m. Several people gave speeches, Jennie's life was remembered, the choir sang the alma mater, and a group of dignitaries cut the traditional ribbon (see Figure 7.2). Jennie Adams Carter Hall was officially dedicated and opened. The five-story building of more than 100,000 square feet of space houses a residence hall, wellness center, women's center, multi-cultural center, and a Black Culture Center. The building's architects had planned for the movement of several bookcases and doors from the Jennie Adams Carter House to the new building. The contractors had carefully executed the architects' plan. Guests touring the facility after its dedication were quick to locate the recycled items and nod with approval as they consumed cookies and punch. A university photographer snapped a variety of pictures at the event, many with individuals gathered around a framed collage of Jennie's diploma, Clionian Literary Society certificate, and graduation photograph. In the audience during the unfolding of the day's festivities was California University of Pennsylvania trustee, Gwen Simmons. Through her marriage to retired judge Paul Simmons, Mrs. Simmons is related to Robert and Susan Simmons of Parkersburg, West Virginia, the first members of the Simmons-Peyton families discussed in chapter 5. She is also a current member of the

A.M.E. Church in Monongahela, Pennsylvania, where Jennie's father, father-in-law, and husband once ministered. It was another reminder of the connections among the many generations of three families once located in three separate towns, in three separate states, and linked by the Ohio River and its tributaries.

Jennie Carter was not a normal student at South Western State Normal School. She was better than average in terms of her academic performance. She was an experienced teacher when she enrolled seeking to improve her skills and increase her knowledge base in order to have more to share with future students. She stood out from the rest of the student body because of the color of her skin, yet she gracefully battled the overt and covert concerns of her teachers and fellow students. Moreover, of all the women who entered or re-entered the army of teachers in 1881, it was Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter who was selected by her alma mater a century and a quarter later to have a grand, five-story building named in her honor. It was an honor bestowed upon few normal students of any race or ethnic background!



*Figure 7.2.* Dedication of Carter Hall on September 29, 2007. William Beverly Carter, III, and Dr. Angelo Armenti, Jr., president of California University of Pennsylvania (sixth and seventh from the left, respectively), are joined by Mrs. Carter (on Mr. Carter's right) and other administrators, students, clergy, and project developers to cut the traditional ribbon. Photograph by G. Whitmore Hancock.

## **CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this dissertation was to locate, investigate, and illuminate the educational experiences and contributions of African American women who were either educated, or taught, or both, during the period from 1875 to 1915 in a three-state area bordering the upper Ohio River Valley. In addition, the intent was to explore and describe the educational system of this region as it related to Black female teachers. An historical, intrinsic, embedded, single-case, case-study approach was employed in order to give voice to a group of women who have heretofore been under-represented in the literature. In the execution of the research, and the collection of data, six women were selected for in-depth study. The study focused on the social profile, educational opportunities, teaching experiences, and support networks of Pocahontas Simmons Peyton, Susie Simmons (Jones?), Bernadine Peyton Sherman, Mary Peyton Dyson, Anna Stevens Posey, and Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter. Analysis of data collected from primary and secondary sources revealed inconsistency in the attitudes of their communities toward African American citizens, a pattern of being remembered through male-defined activity, and connections between the women and personal successes that were multigenerational. The women featured in this study lived in a time and region that had both fluid and rigid boundaries. Their lives and experiences suggested that Black women have a storied tradition of exemplary service to education within a region often ignored by scholars.

### **Research Questions**

The central research question addressed by this research asked how African American women who were teachers between 1875 and 1915 operated within the



educational system of the upper Ohio River Valley. The researcher also sought answers to several issue and topical sub-questions. The issue sub-questions dealt with seeking information about how state laws and local practices affected schooling for Blacks; the various educative roles Black women played within the bounded system, the way in which women perceived themselves and the value of their roles; the types of support networks women had in place to help them; and emergent themes that might be detected through the research. Sub-topical questions further delineated the parameters suggested by the primary research question. They asked:

1. Who were the female Black teachers of the bounded system?
2. What were these women like?
3. What educational institutions existed in the bounded system?
4. What types of resources did Blacks have at their disposal in order to educate their children?
5. How can the emergent themes be interpreted within the larger context of the bounded system and within the literature?

These questions narrowed the focus of the case study and guided the collection of data. They also aided the researcher in developing a conceptual framework for the study and in obtaining information about a group of women overlooked and little recognized by local residents as well as scholars with a national perspective. Once developed, the conceptual framework suggested an effective method for the design of the study.

## Methodology

Stake (1995) stated that for the fields of education and social service “people and programs” make interesting case studies because they demonstrate both the “uniqueness and commonality” of the actors and situations we wish to understand (p. 1). The historical, intrinsic, embedded, single case, case-study methodology employed by this researcher allowed for the demonstration of the “uniqueness and commonality” of six women living and working within a specific region of the United States. The maximum variation purposeful sampling method (Patton, 2002) used to select the embedded units of analysis yielded a variety of examples of teachers who met the criteria for study. From the list of 27 qualifying teachers, the researcher selected Pocahontas Simmons Peyton, Susie Simmons (Jones?), Bernadine Peyton Sherman, Mary Peyton Dyson, Anna Stevens Posey, and Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter as units of analysis. The researcher chose these women because they represented a range of qualities within the bounded system. The number and descriptive quality of the available primary and secondary sources also affected the choice of the six women.

The methodology associated with case study guided the researcher in the exploration of the bounded system and the construction of the case reports. After the exploratory phase of this research that led to the discovery and selection of the units of analysis, the researcher engaged in a four-step process that led to the completion of the written reports. The steps were collection of data concerning the units of analysis and the bounded system, organization of the data, analysis of the data, and writing of the case reports. These four steps were on going and recursive. The deadline for submitting the

final report dictated the ending point of this process. The research process took place over a period of two years. Limitations on the researcher's time and personal resources restricted travel to places within the bounded system to pursue documents and interview descendants. She did not make trips to locations such as Waco, Texas, Ypsilanti, Michigan, and Washington, DC. However, the researcher was able to travel to Athens, Ohio, and Parkersburg, West Virginia, on many occasions. She made two trips to the Monongahela Valley for data. In addition, she used the telephone, U.S. Postal Service, and electronic mail to seek and obtain information. These techniques of data collection were sufficient to uncover enough material to create three studies of rich description about the units of analysis.

In order to reduce another limitation of the study, researcher bias, the researcher sought to provide a balance of raw data and the interpretation of it in the reports concerning each unit of analysis. Although filtered through the lens of the researcher, information provided in the final report can be interpreted by readers naturalistically. They are free to make their own judgments and generalizations about the women and the bounded system (Stake, 1995).

Particularization and transferability, not generalization, were objectives of this case-study research (Merriam, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Stake, 1995). Through the analysis of data concerning six particular examples living in three locations within the bounded system, the research report presents a view of the macrocosm by illuminating connections with three microcosms within it. Readers gain a view of the whole by examining individual parts. The description of the women living within each microcosm

adds each of their voices, in greater detail than previously, to the scholarly literature of several fields.

The case-study method, despite its limitations, provided an appropriate framework for this research. The methodology was flexible in that it accommodated the inconsistencies of conducting historical research. Yet it provided a structure in which to perform sound research (Creswell, 1998; Gillham, 2000; Merriam, 1988, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yinn, 2003). Merriam (1988) defined qualitative case study as an “intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 21). This study, an analysis of a social unit, employed the collection of data from “multiple sources of information rich in context” (Creswell, 1998) in order to construct the stories of six teachers. The case study methodological framework was an appropriate guide for this researcher because it was a match to the purposes of the study, and it led her to the discovery of multiple themes and interconnections among the units of analysis.

### **Research Findings and Assertions**

Through the implementation of an historical, intrinsic, embedded single-case case-study approach to qualitative research, this researcher was able to illuminate the lives of six women who met the qualifying criteria for this study. Analysis of the data collected about these women and the educational system within which they worked focused on four a priori themes and revealed three emergent themes. Each of the seven themes warrants discussion. First, the discussion of the four a priori themes of context, characteristics, educational opportunities, and support networks are offered. Those are followed by discussions of three themes that became evident to the researcher as she

worked with the data. They are inconsistency of community attitudes, definition by men, and multigenerational connections and success.

The contexts within which each woman lived had many similarities and some marked differences. Parkersburg, West Virginia, was the largest of the three towns in 1870 with a population of 5,546. That same year, Monongahela City was home to 1,078 people, and the town of Athens had roughly 2,000 residents (*Historical Hand-Atlas*, 1882; U.S. Census, 1870). Parkersburg had the largest Black population in number of individuals, with Athens having a larger Black population (143, or 7%) than did Monongahela City (56, or 5%). All three communities had Black populations that were between 5% and 7% of their total populations. The national figure was 12% in 1870. While the citizens of Parkersburg were constrained by more legal segregation, the women living north of the Ohio River lived with the unwritten variety. The only woman to teach in a mixed-race, and perhaps even an all-White, school was Anna Stevens (“Untitled,” 1882). Athens Township schools remained integrated throughout the period. The actual population of African American children attending school in that township was small, and it varied from year to year. Financial expedience most likely played a role in the decision to allow Black children to attend the White schools (Gerber, 1976). It would have been much more expensive to educate the few who came to school in a separate facility. Until 1881, Pennsylvania required local school boards to educate Black children at public expense, but allowed them to remain segregated. In the Monongahela River Valley they stayed segregated until forced to change by the state. Jennie probably

attended the publicly supported school for Black children that met in the old A.M.E. Church building (Arison, 1895).

All of the towns featured in this study relied on the river that flowed by them (Ohio, Hocking, and Monongahela) for transportation and commerce. Many of the businesses in Parkersburg, Athens, and Monongahela City involved extraction of natural resources. Salt, lumber, gas, stone, and coal were all products exported from one or more of the towns featured in the bounded system. Shipbuilding and construction trades were also important to Parkersburg and Monongahela City. The towns of Parkersburg, Athens, and Monongahela City lacked the financial resources of major northern cities, but they were also somewhat safer for Black families. Racial tension was more likely to erupt into violence in major cities. Black populations in cities were larger, more visible, and were perceived as a greater threat to both locals and immigrants seeking employment (Bigham, 2006; Cayton, 2002; Gerber, 1976) than they were in smaller communities. The Black experience in the South was primarily agrarian during the post-Reconstruction era. The oppressive sharecropping system held Blacks in virtual slavery, and schools were often nonexistent or of poor quality (Anderson, 1988). Pocahontas, Susie, Bernadine, Mary, Anna, and Jennie lived in relative safety and stability compared with their sisters in the South and northern urban centers.

The characteristics of each unit of analysis are also remarkably similar. A male who worked as a barber headed the Simmons, Peyton, and Adams households. Gerber (1976) stated that barbering was a major Black business opportunity. Shop owners with several chairs could make a modest income. Small-town shops had to struggle more, but

if they had little competition, owners could live comfortably. Using Gatewood's (1993) hierarchy, Pocahontas, Susie, Bernadine, Mary, and Jennie were all women from middle- to upper-middle-class backgrounds. Only Anna came from a lower socioeconomic group. Her father, who could not read or write in 1860 and 1870 (U.S. Census, 1860, 1870), performed unskilled labor as a farmer, railroad worker, stonecutter, and cemetery sexton. Every unit of analysis had a mother in the home engaged in housekeeping. Family size ranged from 13 in the Stevens household to three in Jennie's home after she reached adulthood. Each woman was at least two generations removed from slavery, but none of their families had held its position long enough to achieve elite status. That designation was reserved for "old families" with a history "bound up with blacks' experience with slavery—their place in the slave system, their role in opposing it, and the extent to which their families had been free from it" (Gatewood, 1993, p. 9).

The Simmons and Peyton families were involved in their church as well as their school and community. Robert Simmons wielded a considerable amount of power because of his involvement in Republican Party politics. Pocahontas taught in the Sabbath school, as well as, at Sumner, and Susie was the church organist for more than 10 years (Jackson, 1888). Jennie, whose family had ties to the A.M.E. Church in Monongahela City, was described in her obituary as a woman of strong faith ("Mrs. Jennie Adams Carter," 1891). The researcher found no evidence that Anna belonged to a church until her years in Homestead, Pennsylvania ("Mrs. Annie Posey," 1917). It did not appear that she married in the church, as a magistrate signed her marriage license indicating that he performed the ceremony. Because she was an active member of several

prestigious Black societies of the Pittsburgh area, Anna was probably active in the Warren Methodist Episcopal Church, of which she was a member at her death.

Additional social and civic organizations may have been a part of the other women's lives. If so, the researcher did not uncover evidence of their membership in them.

Unable to locate personal papers belonging to the women, the researcher found it difficult to ascertain the status of each of the units of analysis in terms of self-image. The records that do exist, including pictures, indicate that each appeared strong, confident, and capable of making sound personal decisions. Because little evidence was discovered about each that describes anything but model behavior, we can infer that they lived within the rules of acceptable behavior for women of the day. All of the women except Mary Peyton Dyson had at least one child. All of them married: Bernadine, Mary, and Jennie after lengthy careers in education. Five of the six women married after they were 25 years of age (unless Mary had a brief marriage in 1904). Marriage improved the social and economic status of Mary and Anna. Anna made the greatest jump in socioeconomic status. She went from the lowest status of the group to the highest because of her husband's financial successes in the coal, shipbuilding, banking, and real estate businesses. Jennie is the only woman of the group for whom the researcher was able to obtain a document written by a unit of analysis. The story Jennie wrote indicated that she saw women as capable of putting emotions aside in order to make sound decisions and strong enough to weather adversity. She, of all the women, was the one who seemed to have dealt with the most adversity. She died at the youngest age (38) of all the women and was uprooted frequently in her quest to learn, teach, and have a happy home life. The



social and economic backgrounds of these women were similar to most of the women who taught during the period under study, White or Black (Elsbree, 1939, Herbst, 1989; Ogren, 1996; Perkins, 1989; Rury, 1981, 1989; Shaw, 1996). The six themes (see page 137) that Seller detected in the 66 lives of women educators she featured in her book *Women Educators in the United States, 1820-1993: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook* (1996) were also true of the six women in this study.

Educational opportunities within the bounded system were adequate. They ranged from poorly-equipped elementary schools to normal schools. At least one full four-year college, Oberlin, was close to the border of the bounded system and open to Black students. Parkersburg had one school that served all Black students from grades 1 through 12. It was a de jure segregated and publicly-supported institution. While there was some evidence that the Sumner students did not receive the same amount and quality of resources as the White students did, the board provided them with more than most of the children attending segregated schools in the South (Anderson, 1988; Butchart, 1980; Fuller, 1989; Williams, 2005). The state and county directories for 1909-1919 indicate that there were routinely 6 to 10 teachers on the Sumner staff during that period. In addition, the board paid the principal and teachers of Sumner as well as the White teachers in the district. Bernadine Peyton earned as much as, or more than, 70 of her 118 colleagues in the Parkersburg Independent School District. Some advanced education was possible in West Virginia at Storer College and The West Virginia Collegiate Institute (now West Virginia State University). Athens Township had integrated schools, but they were rudimentary one-room buildings with a single teacher for grades one

through eight. Athens High School was open to African American students, and the first Black female graduated in 1879 (Anna Butler/Stevens?). The researcher was not able to make salary comparisons for this location. Anna was probably the only Black teacher in the district for a number of years, and she was in great demand (“Untitled,” 1882). If local school committees were competing for her services, as they seem to have been, she was probably paid as well as, if not better than, other teachers in the area were. Although Ohio University was not open to Anna, Athens County held a yearly Teacher Institute in August for its teachers who sought further professional development. Anna Stevens was in attendance for that institute in 1882 (“The Master Roll,” 1882), and she may have attended others as well.

Monongahela City had perhaps the worst situation of the three locations in terms of primary education. Held in various unattractive locations such as an old church basement, the resources given to the colored school of Monongahela City were not close to those provided the White children. Newspaper articles and county histories celebrated the fine facilities of the White system, but rarely gave more than cursory mention to the African American school (Arison 1895; Ellis, 1882; Hart, 1904). In some cases, authors ignored them entirely. Fortunately, for those Black students able to obtain an education, South West State Normal School opened its doors to African Americans. Jennie Adams availed herself of that opportunity and graduated with high praise from the school.

Educational opportunities of a similar nature to those available to women across the nation existed within the bounded system (Elsbree, 1939; Fraser, 2007; Perkins, 1989). They were not, however, available to all women in all locations. By the late 1800s,

all the locations had opportunities for women to earn high school diplomas, but normal school, college, and teacher institutes were regional, required travel of some distance, and in the case of normal school and college, had tuition costs that precluded many Black women from attending.

Of all the stated themes, that of support networks was one that the researcher had the most difficulty trying to find data to support. Although not explicitly verified, support networks were implied for all the units of analysis. The church and each woman's family were the most probable components of such networks. However, without journals, diaries, letters, and other personal papers that described the situations when the women would have needed or accepted help from others, it was not possible to confirm the level of assistance any relative, neighbor, friend, organization, or institution might have provided. The Wesleyan Methodist Church served as an organizing agent and played a key role in the founding of Sumner School. The school met in a Parkersburg church for some time. Jennie's family was connected to the A.M.E. Church in Monongahela City, and it, too, served as a location for schooling to take place. Because of Jennie's family ties to the church, she was more than likely to have been involved in activities there. Jennie's departure for Waco, Texas, is less surprising when certain facts are considered. Paul Quinn founded the A.M.E. Church in Monongahela City, as well as the college in Waco where Jennie went to work. Her former neighbor, the son of a Monongahela City A.M.E. minister, and future husband came to work in Waco as well. Jennie's move to Waco was more than a coincidence. It was most likely the result of a network of supportive friends. Families provided support, too. Census records showed that both the

Simmons and Adams families took in boards and cared for members of their extended families. Shaw (1996) wrote extensively about these kinds of support networks and found them to be crucial in the preparation of women of this period for service to their race. Evidence points to the probability that the women of this study employed the same kinds of networks.

Anna's club work was also part of a support network on two levels. It provided support of a personal nature as the upper-class Black women of the Pittsburgh area met to learn, share experiences, and navigate the minefield of being Black and trying to meet the requirements of "true womanhood." Giddings (2001) indicated that Black women "traversed a tricky and sometimes contradictory path in responding to the challenge" of accepting "the fundamental premises of the Victorian ethic" in order to "be acculturated into American society," and opposing "its racist and classist implications" (p. 49). The Aurora Reading Club was likely to have been the result of such an effort. This organization allowed for personal support as the women negotiated that territory. In addition, it became a vehicle for upper-class women to lend a helping hand to their less fortunate sisters. Giddings (2001) indicated that Black ladies' literary societies proliferated during this period and most "did more than pursue cultural activities" (p. 49) as a reaction to social pressure to be both ladies of refinement and leisure and responsible members of the Black community. The Aurora Club's motto, "Lifting As We Climb," indicates the dual support it intended to provide.

The emergent themes that were suggested by the analysis of data further enhance understanding of the units of analysis and the nature of the bounded system. The first

theme that arose from the data surfaced early in the data collection process. Because the researcher engaged in reading many newspapers from the communities in which the women lived, the inconsistency in the way in which journalists portrayed African Americans in those papers became apparent rather quickly. The Parkersburg community papers, *The Athens Messenger*, and the Monongahela City *Daily Republican* were remarkably similar in their treatment of African Americans. Each had a paternalistic air even when they were being complementary. Local citizens were often treated with more respect than outsiders, as was the case with Jennie Adams and Robert Simmons in particular, but even some of the local Blacks were not treated well by their hometown press. There were multiple inclusions of short articles about Blacks caught stealing, freeloading on trains, involved in pranks, and apprehended for hurting someone. These articles were frequently about people living in other states, and the subjects were usually labeled with the word “colored,” as in John Q. Citizen, colored. With limited space (two of the papers printed only four pages), it seemed unnecessary to include such information unless editors were attempting to negatively affect citizen’s perceptions of African Americans. (However, they were also guilty of publishing plenty of gossip and inane comments about their own White populations!). *The Parkersburg Sentinel* carried a fairly regular column titled “News of the Colored People.” At least the black readers of that paper could rely on having print space. The Blacks of Monongahela City could not. Librarian, Nancy Stoicovy, of the Monongahela Area Library, recounted stories of the announcements of births, marriages, and deaths of many local Black citizens that were never printed in the *Daily Republican*. That is why the placement of Jennie’s obituary on

the front page of the paper, in the center column, was indicative of the editor's high opinion of Jennie. It is also indicative of the inconsistency that became a theme for all of the women.

Local newspapers often reflect community norms. If that was the case in Parkersburg, Athens, and Monongahela City, these communities held conflicting opinions of their Black neighbors. Analysis of articles each newspaper printed, and awareness of what was not printed, led the researcher to believe that the prevailing attitude toward local Blacks was more positive than for those not in their immediate area. Those who exceeded expectations based on prevailing standards were to be congratulated and praised. Editors seemed to publish out-of-the-ordinary events and ignore the routine ones that frequently made news for the White populations. Notice of Black births, deaths, and marriages were typically missing from *The Athens Messenger* and the *Monongahela Daily Republican*. Yet these two papers and their Parkersburg counterparts, frequently published the short out-of-state snippets mentioned above that were of little value to anyone in the surrounding areas. Sometimes articles were openly hostile, such as Hazzard's opinion of forced school integration and a piece in the Parkersburg *Democrat and Examiner* ("An Outsider's View," 1875) that refers to an aspect of the city's Black population as "idle, thievish, wicked, and even murderous" (p. 1). The mixed published messages sent by these papers had to have kept the African American population on guard or at least suspicious of whom they could trust from day to day. Graciously navigating through the maze of faint praise and blatant racism was a task the women of

this study probably learned to do from an early age. That they all seemed capable of exercising such aplomb inspired admiration for them on the part of the researcher.

A second theme that emerged from the data came into focus when the researcher realized that a man wrote almost every piece of information collected for this study. With the exception of Jennie's story, and one article written about her in the *Cal U Review*, every other item collected, read, or discussed came through a male perspective. Men wrote the newspaper articles, made the brief mentions of Blacks in books of regional and local history, included references to Anna in their business and sports books because of the prominence of her husband and notoriety of her son, and recorded the brief histories of Sumner School that focused on the male founders and principals. Lerner discussed this type of situation in her series of essays in *The Majority Finds its Past* (1979). She called it male-centered history. She states:

To rectify this and to light up areas of historical darkness we must, for a time, focus on *woman-centered* inquiry, considering the possibility of existence of female culture *within* the general culture shared by men and women. History must include an account of the female experience over time and should include the development of feminist consciousness as an essential aspect of women's past (p. 178).

This research has attempted to recast these women's stories from a female teacher's perspective.

The third and final emergent theme deals with the multigenerational connections and successes among the women and their descendants. Some of the connections

undoubtedly came about because of the support networks that African Americans developed in order to survive—and sometimes thrive—in the aftermath of the Civil War and the end of legal slavery. However, some of the connections did not develop until after the women in this study were dead. The most apparent one is the three-generational connection to California University of Pennsylvania. Jennie was the first Black graduate of the school. Anna's daughter, Beatrice, a member of the second generation, graduated from the school in 1906 ("C. W. Posey," 1925). Years later, Gwen Simmons, a member of a later generation of the Parkersburg Simmons family line by virtue of her marriage to Paul Simmons, was elected to the California University of Pennsylvania Board of trustees. Mrs. Simmons is currently serving on that board. Other connections include church membership in the same A.M.E. Church that Jennie attended (i.e., Gwen and Paul Simmons); movement of individuals to the vicinity of another unit of analysis (T. J. Ferguson to Athens County from Parkersburg, and Anna's brother, Herman, to Monongahela City); the likelihood that the Simmons and Stevens families could have met at either the Athens or Parkersburg Emancipation Day celebrations; a connection to Howard University (Mary Peyton Dyson's husband and Jennie's great grandson); and the above-mentioned connection of Jennie to Paul Quinn College. Support networks, special events, and policies that opened doors for Blacks to get an education, coupled with the availability of jobs of a similar nature in river towns, helped tie together several generations of families.

A second part of the connections theme involves the success of the units of analysis and their descendants. The women were role models to their children and



neighbors, as well as living examples of the power of obtaining an education. Each one believed education was important, and all but Pocahontas spent more than the average of 2.5 years teaching school (Fuller, 1989). They began legacies of gaining as much education as possible and of loyalty to institutions that provided it to them. It is little wonder that so many of their descendants have been successful. Paul Simmons was a judge in Washington County Pennsylvania before retiring; his wife is a trustee at California University of Pennsylvania. The Posey family descendants, through Anna's daughter Beatrice Posey Baker, have an impressive list of credits to their names. A funeral director, a physician, and a CEO of a nationally recognized philanthropic foundation all bear the Baker name. Anna's sons became famous as the managers of the Homestead Gray's baseball team. A yearly reunion of the Stevens family at Camp Hervida in Washington County, Ohio, draws together close to 200 people from all walks of life, to reminisce and remember their forebears. Jennie's only sons of only sons have for four generations attended prestigious universities, including Temple, Howard, and Harvard, and served others and their nation in the fields of medicine, foreign service, and international education. The criticism can be leveled that only the prominent descendants were found and reported, and that undoubtedly is true to some extent. These were the examples that came to the researcher's attention during the course of her work. She did not seek them except when their knowledge could advance the purposes of this study, and genealogy was not one of them. Nevertheless, many of the descendants of these six women have continued to build upon the commitment to education made by their ancestors and have flourished as a result.

The collection of data, its continual analysis, the search for themes, and the construction of the case reports all have required the researcher to immerse herself in the process of making sense of the data and deciding what learning has taken place. The results of this process have led to the formulation of 19 assertions. They are:

1. Many African American women taught in the upper Ohio River Valley between 1875 and 1915. In the limited time that this researcher had to conduct this research the names of 27 women were uncovered and the likelihood that more can be found is significant.
2. The six teachers described in this study entered life and their careers as members of the middle or lower middle class. In this regard, they were similar to their White counterparts (Elsbree, 1939; Herbst, 1989; Ogren, 1996, 2005; Rury, 1989, 1991).
3. All of the women were raised in homes with fathers who were working heads of households. Their mothers did not work outside the home after marriage. This finding supports the contentions of both Gutman (1976) and Franklin (2007) that the Black family survived, even thrived, in the wake of slavery.
4. In all three of the families represented in this research, female children carried the names of their mothers or grandmothers as well as the male children those of their fathers and grandfathers. There were at least three generations of Susans and Marys in the Simmons and Peyton families. In the line of Anna Posey's daughter, the name Beatrice was carried forth. Jennie's first name was Elizabeth, as was her mother's given name. Jennie named her daughter Lida Jane, thus carrying

Jennie's mother's middle name, Jane, forward. Gutman (1976) stated, "slaves rarely named daughters for their mothers and regularly named sons for their fathers" (p. 190). He suggested that could have been due to a slave taboo of unknown origin, a desire to connect male children to fathers who were likely to be separated from their children, or the fact that a child's legal status followed his or her mother's status. For the three families discussed in this research, these pre-emancipation concerns no longer appeared to be important.

5. The communities in which the women lived were similar in natural resources, industry, population, size of the African American community, and public opinion toward Blacks as reflected in the local newspapers.
6. The women in this study obtained as much, if not more, education than that of their White counterparts. They taught longer and married later than did the average teacher of the day (Elsbree, 1939; Fuller, 1989; Herbst, 1989; Ogren, 1996, 2005; Rury, 1989, 1991).
7. Despite living in different states with different laws regulating the education of children, the majority of the women in this study taught in publicly-supported, segregated schools. Anna Stevens Posey was the only woman to teach in a mixed-race school within the bounded system during the period under study. Laws and practices in these states frequently limited the number of teaching positions open to Black women. Monongahela City, its surrounding area, and Parkersburg were examples of places where such limits occurred. Despite these limitations, the success of the graduates of Sumner School to which the Simmons and Peyton

women contributed, and the esteem in which Anna and Jennie were held, indicate that a renewed effort should be made to recruit African American women to be teachers and leaders in our schools.

8. The six women who were the embedded units of analysis for this study were skilled at navigating within the educational systems of the bounded system. They were able to obtain high levels of education and find employment within the system, thereby demonstrating that each was able to make personal choices and turn regional opportunities available to them to their advantage. Only Mary left the system in order to earn an advanced degree. That departure was to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, the location of Storer College. Storer was not far outside the boundaries of the system. Two of the six, Jennie and Mary, left the system to find work. Jennie returned after a few years. Bernadine left it after teaching within it for more than 25 years.
9. A wide variety of forms of teacher preparation was found within the bounded system, except for a four-year bachelors degree program. Several schools of this type were not far from the boundaries of the system, and by late in the period some within the system were beginning to admit Black women. Not all forms of preparation were available in every location, but the women of this study could move freely within the system if they chose to and could afford to do so.
10. School resources available to the embedded units of analysis appear to have been more limited than the resources available to teachers in northern urban schools, northern White schools, and northern integrated schools (Cuban, 1984;

Finkelstein, 1989; Mohraz, 1979). They were superior to those available to southern segregated schools (Anderson, 1988; Butchart, 1980; Rury, 2005; Williams, 2005).

11. Each of the women was part of a pioneering effort. The Simmons-Peyton women were pioneers in the formation and maintenance of Sumner School, Anna Stevens Posey was likely to have been the first Black woman to teach in some of the White schools of Athens Township, and Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter was the first African American to graduate from South Western State Normal School (now California University of Pennsylvania). The choices to involve themselves in these efforts allowed them to make unique contributions to life within the bounded system.
12. The support networks appear to be similar to those of other Black women of the period (Giddings, 2001; Higginbotham; 1992; Little, 2000; Shaw, 1996). The family and the church were the primary institutions of support. Unlike their neighbors, the Simmons and Adams families took in extended family members and boarders (census data). The organizational support networks were more limited in these smaller communities and frequently necessitated development in communities outside the bounded system.
13. The A.M.E. and other churches related to the Methodist denomination had a strong following in the Black community of the upper Ohio River Valley. Each of the families had ties to a church based in Methodism. The Wesleyan Church in Parkersburg to which the Simmons family belonged was an offshoot of the

Methodist Episcopal denomination, although it was not affiliated with the A.M.E. organization. Members of this church were instrumental in founding the Sumner School and developing a healthy Sabbath-school program. Members of later generations of the Simmons family would affiliate with the A.M.E. Church. Anna's church affiliation could not be established for the years she lived in Athens. She was a member of the Warren Methodist Episcopal Church at her death. Jennie and her extended family had clear ties to the A.M.E. Church. Her father, husband and father-in-law were all A.M.E. ministers. She taught in the A.M.E. church building in Monongahela City. All of these church organizations supported the education of their members. They allowed the Black community to develop leaders, both male and female, and make choices about the issues, ideas, and organizations they would support (Little, 2000).

14. All of the women in this study appeared to be confident and secure in who they were. Anna demonstrated her comfort and alignment with the Black community by marrying a man with a much darker complexion than her own. All of the other women married Black men as well. They each interacted with and supported the Black communities in which they lived. One reason for this may have been that they stood out as different from the general population and bonded as a community within their neighborhoods more tightly than did Blacks in larger communities.
15. Two of the women and many of the descendants of these women moved into higher socioeconomic classes. Although none of the units of analysis would be

considered part of the Black elite as defined by Gatewood (1993), they were all part of a privileged segment of the entire U.S. Black population. They were educated, lived in comfortable homes, held respectable jobs, and were able to make choices concerning their lives that many Black women of the day were not free to make. Anna Posey came closest to reaching Gatewood's elite status, but because of her recent elevation to that level, would have been a tier below the top stratum of "old families." All of the women left their descendants a legacy that emphasized the importance of education to successful living.

16. The small to mid-sized cities of the upper Ohio River Valley were perhaps safer for Black women than large cities, but each individual needed to remain cautious. Friends could turn out to be enemies. Citizens who burned schools, lynched neighbors, and supported segregation were not far away at any time. The fact that Jennie was teaching children to shoot indicated that being able to hunt for food and protect oneself was still an issue within the bounded system (Carter, personal communication, February 16, 2008).
17. Documents and artifacts written by, or containing the voice of, Black women teachers within this bounded system were difficult to find within the time limits of this research. Additional data undoubtedly are available and need to be located and mined for information about women from this bounded system.
18. The vast majority of the data collected for this study came through the male perspective. This research allowed readers to view these women from a female-centered perspective.

19. The literature review and case reports provide a foundation from which other researchers can work to expand the knowledge base concerning African American women teachers and the schools in which they taught. Pocahontas Simmons Peyton, Susie Simmons (Jones?), Bernadine Peyton Sherman, Mary Peyton Dyson, Anna Stevens Posey, and Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter, six strong women of great dignity, can now be part of the on-going conversation among scholars.

### **Contributions to the Literature**

This research makes at least three contributions to the literature in the history of American education, the history of Black education, and the history of American women. It adds names to the record, supports the research of other scholars, and begins to fill a gap in the literature concerning a specific group of women. First, the exploratory nature of the initial phase of the research uncovered many names of women who are deserving of being remembered for their ability to educate children under less than ideal circumstances. They were often able to instill in these children self-confidence and a love for learning when few wanted to recognize their potential for serious academic achievement. Because these women have been ignored, Woodson's warning that without a history a race becomes a negligible factor in the thoughts of the world (1993) has become a reality in many areas of the country. Highly educated men and women often do not believe there were any Black female teachers in the post-Reconstruction era in the upper Ohio River Valley. To be able to give such people a list of names of women who worked not far from their homes is a service to the women who taught, as well as to those



who are unaware of their existence. The list of names (see appendix D) also can provide research topics for new and existing scholars.

Second, this research supported the findings of other researchers in the field. It rendered assertions that are similar to those of Seller (1994), who found that female educators employed between 1820 and 1993 exhibited passion for the pursuit of education, and several other characteristics common to the women in this study. This research also supports the work of Ward Randolph (1996), Foster (1994), Irvine (2002), and Lee & Slaughter-Defoe (1995), all of whom advocate for the recruitment and retention of Black women teachers who can relate specifically to the needs of African American children. In addition, this research gives power to the findings of Shaw (1996), who found that Black families and communities exerted great effort to educate their children and to groom their daughters to be role models and community leaders during the period under study.

Finally, the inclusion of information about Pocahontas Simmons Peyton, Susie Simmons (Jones?), Bernadine Peyton Sherman, Mary Peyton Dyson, Anna Stevens Posey, and Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter can enrich the understanding of Black women teachers. An extensive review of the literature indicated that African American women of the upper Ohio River Valley do not have a significant presence in the current body of scholarship about Black women educators. This research sought to begin to reverse that situation by illuminating the contributions made by a specific set of women living and working in that area. The researcher collected and synthesized regional information and secured a few primary source documents in order to form a foundation on which others

can build. Although Lerner (1979) hoped that by this date there would no longer be a need for compensatory research in women's history, that effort must continue. This research may help frame studies that will grow into a more complete picture of the company of woman who fought on a daily basis to improve the lives of others.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

An additional significant contribution of this study was to suggest topics for further research. An additional investment of time could yield information that would fill gaps in the stories of the women who were the embedded units of analysis in this study. Further research concerning both Anna Stevens Posey and Elizabeth Jennie Adams may confirm or reject speculation about their high school educations. A particularly promising topic would be an institutional study of Sumner School in Parkersburg, West Virginia. Many living alumni of the school could provide a rich oral history of their experiences at the school and their transition to integrated schools in 1955. The Wood County Board of Education holds a modest quantity of information about the school dating back to 1912—in the form of board minutes, district directories, treasurers' records, and files dealing with the repair, upkeep, and transfer of title of the building. The Sumnerite Museum possesses old textbooks, yearbooks, pictures, newspaper clippings, programs from plays and pageants, and other documents that would aid in the telling of the Sumner story. The Museum and Community Center could benefit from a grant enabling research assistance in cataloging and organizing documents it currently possesses and in seeking out additional holdings from alumni and community members. At least one local historian believes that Sumner School records that were initially thrown away by the Wood County

Board of Education officials in 1955 were saved from trash receptacles and have been inherited by a family member of the rescuer. If so, they can be mined for additional historical data. Other institutions in the upper Ohio River Valley that would be worthy of research are the schools for African Americans founded in Clarksburg and Weston, West Virginia. These schools were opened shortly after Parkersburg's Sumner School. Additional schools that merit study include Barnett Ridge School near Marietta, Ohio, and the separate Black schools of the Monongahela River Valley. Barnett Ridge School closed in the mid-1900s when the Warren Local School District assumed responsibility for its students. Ruth Barnett Mayle, one of the teachers to make the transition to the Warren District, is alive and would be helpful in the study of that school. Individuals who were educated or who taught in the upper Ohio River Valley, and who would be valuable additions to the historical record are: Ethel Carr Watson, Almeda Brown, John Rupert Jefferson, C. V. Harris, Maggie Price, and Clifford Martin—all of Sumner School. Others include Sarah Jane Woodson Early, Valerie Woodson, Minerva Woodson, Amanda Stevens Barnett, and Mary Payton Ball of southeast Ohio, and Susan Paul Vashon of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Because so little has been brought to the attention of the scholarly community about the African American educators of the upper Ohio River Valley, any concerted effort to conduct research in this area would turn up additional names and places worthy of adding to the knowledge base in a variety of academic fields.

### **Conclusion**

This research, conducted over a period from February 2006 to February 2008, sought to uncover, explore, describe and give voice to unique women who were either

educated, or taught, or both, during the period from 1875 to 1915 in a three-state area bordering the upper Ohio River Valley. Its purpose was to do this within the context of the educational systems of this region as they related to Black female teachers. This research has fulfilled that purpose and has met the established criteria, either fully or in part, for conducting a successful research project. From a group of 27 names, the researcher selected six women for in-depth study. Data collection uncovered many and varied sources, which the researcher employed to describe and to give voice—to the fullest extent possible—to those six women. The data collected, although limited in depth and scope, were sufficient to provide a rich description of the bounded system and units of analysis. The case reports add to the scholarship and understanding of African American female teachers by demonstrating the differences and similarities in community contexts, by providing information about the personal characteristics of the embedded units of analysis, by offering descriptions of educational opportunities for Black females in the bounded system, and by pointing out support networks developed or employed by the units of analysis. It also illuminates the inconsistent and changeable nature of community attitudes toward Blacks, the variety in the educational systems, and the many connections and successes across generations within the bounded system. Pictures, descriptions, and in the case of Jennie Adams Carter, a hand-written story, all provided evidence that the women had confidence and a self-image contrary to the image of Black women frequently promoted by the press of their day. This study has the potential to be useful. The results are transferable to other groups of teachers featured in past or future research because of the similarities found between the units of analysis in

this study and many teachers of the period. It suggests possibilities for extensions of this research and topics for new studies. Educators now working to improve schooling for African American children can take information from this research that would support renewed efforts to recruit and retain strong, intelligent Black teachers as leaders and role models. Finally, this research has contributed to more than one academic field. It offers a synthesis of information about a group of women and a set of places that when added to the literature can contribute to the on-going conversation concerning Black women's roles in the history of American education, the history of Black education, and the history of America women. The designation of the upper Ohio River Valley as a focus of study insured that the results would help fill a demonstrated void in the literature about women from that region during the post-Reconstruction period.

Hine and Thompson (1998) warned of the difficulty of locating documentation dealing with deceased Black women. The effort to illuminate the lives of female post-Reconstruction African American teachers was frustrating, yet enlightening and rewarding. Gillham (2000) reminded case study researchers that not all cases would yield information that "challenges the existing order of things" (p. 102). The African American women who were teaching in the upper Ohio River Valley in the late 19th and early 20th centuries described in this study were not significantly different from Black professional women in other regions of the country. Their socioeconomic backgrounds, places of residence, educational opportunities, and support networks were comparable to those of most teachers of the period, White or Black (Clifford, 1989; Elsbree, 1939; Herbst, 1989; Ogren, 1996; Perkins, 1989; Rousmaniere, 1997; Rury, 1989, 1991; Shaw, 1996). Yet

they were unique. They grew up in different settings, attended a variety of schools located in several states, taught in a variety of communities within and outside of the states of their births, married, and established families. Their family responsibilities necessitated additional life changes. Each woman's unique experience adds richness to the history of education, Black education, and American women.

This research added names to the scholarly record. In addition, it provided some insights into the lives of women who lived and taught between 1875 and 1915 in a specific region of the United States. "Sometimes an insight into people's lives is what is required for better understanding and an improved response or attitude" (Gillham, 2000, p. 102). This research has increased the understanding and improved the attitude of the researcher. It has the potential to do that for others. More information can still be discovered about Pocahontas Simmons Peyton, Susie Simmons (Jones?), Bernadine Peyton Sherman, Mary Peyton Dyson, Anna Stevens Posey, and Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter. Still others are waiting for a researcher to discover them. This research illuminated a heretofore little recognized presence of Black women in the upper Ohio River Valley who taught in a variety of schools. They were part of an army of teachers dedicated to improving the lives of their charges. They, too, are worthy of our remembrance and honor.

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## APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### Family Background Questions

- When was the woman born?
- What was her place of birth?
- Was she educated in the bounded system? Where? When?
- Did she teach in the bounded system? Where? For how long?
- What were her parents names, if known? Are the parents of the parents known?
- What was the parent(s)' status?
  - Had either been a slave? When were they freed?
  - What is the parent(s)' work history?
  - Were the parents literate?
  - Did either or both have a formal education? What kind of education did they receive? Where?
  - Can an income level be established?
- What were the living arrangements for the family? Were they stable?
- Did the family move? More than once? Where? Can a reason be established for each move?
- Did the family own a home or rent?
- Were their other family members living in the home? How many?
  - What was the relationship of each to the subject?
- How many siblings did the subject have?
  - What position in the order of the births did she hold?
- How many generations of the family were living in the home?
  - If not in the home, were members of the extended family living near by?
- Did the subject and/or her family have a church affiliation?
  - Were the family members active in the church?
  - What activities did they participate in?
- What is known about the general health of the subject as she grew up?
- Were there any deaths of significant family members that affected the subject emotionally and or physically?
- Did the subject marry? When? To whom?
- Did the woman have children? How many?
  - What were their birth dates?
  - Did any die before maturity?
  - How were the children educated?

### **Early Education Questions**

- What was the subject's play history?
  - Did she have friends or non-family playmates?
  - What kinds of play did they engage in?
  - Did the subject have a responsibility for the care of younger relatives or children?
- Did other family members have known leisure activities?
- Was the subject required to work as a child? At what age? By whom was it required?
  - What type of work? Was the work home or farm related?
- Was there printed material in the home?
- Was there access to a library in the community? Was it a public or private library?
- Did the subject hear stories from individuals close to her? Was she exposed to oral tradition?
- Did the subject have access to formal education? What kinds?
  - How convenient was it (distance from home)?
  - Did the subject enroll?
  - Where did the subject's first formal education take place?
  - Who provided it?
  - How long did it continue?
  - What subjects were studied?
  - Was the schooling in a segregated institution?
- Did the church have a role in the education of the subject? In what way?
- Did the subject have mentors or a support network for obtaining an education?
- Did a particular teacher have an impact on the subject's life and/or career choice?
- Was the subject noted for any particular talents or skills?
- Did she receive any awards?

### **Higher Education Questions**

- Did the subject have access to higher education? High school? Normal school? Other colleges/universities?
- What were the higher education experiences of the subject?
  - Where did they occur?
  - When was the subject enrolled?
  - Did she graduate?
  - What was the curriculum of the school attended?
  - Was the school segregated?
  - Is it known if the subject received any scholarships or monetary support?
  - Did the subject have teachers, mentors, or a support network at this level that impacted her life and/or career choices?
  - Was she involved in extracurricular activities? What kind?
  - Were any honors won at this level?



### **Teaching Experience/Career Questions**

- Did the subject have to pass a test to become licensed to teach?
  - Was it passed?
  - Who gave the test? School? Local school board? State?
- How long did the subject have to look for work?
  - Did she move immediately into a teaching career?
  - Did she work in some other capacity before teaching?
- Where did the subject secure her first teaching position?
  - What were the dates of employment at this site?
  - How large was the school?
  - Was it segregated?
  - What grade did the subject teach? What subjects?
- Who was the woman's immediate superior?
  - What was the quality of their relationship?
  - Was there evidence of harassment by school officials? The community?
- What were the teaching experiences of the subject?
  - How many students did she teach?
  - How long did she teach in each position?
  - Were the parents and community supportive of the subject's work?
  - Is there evidence of how this woman viewed her role as a teacher?
  - Is there evidence of any honors received for teaching excellence?
  - Did the subject change teaching positions in subject, grade level, building within the same district, or to another district? If so why?
  - Did marriage curtail the subject's career? For how long?
  - Did the woman try to handle raising children and teaching? Did she do this with or without success?
  - Are there employment records that indicate quality of performance as judged by a superior?
  - Who did the subject teach with?
  - Did the subject's peers provide support and professional guidance?
  - What policy changes did the woman witness, endure?
  - Can income levels be established?
  - Did the subject obtain any additional schooling after securing a teaching position?
    - Where? What level? What additional degrees were earned?
  - Did it bring about a change in position?
  - Did the subject ever become an administrator? When? Where? For how long? When did the subject leave teaching/administration?
    - What was the total number of years of service in the field of education?
    - Are there records of the subject's thoughts on her life and career?
    - Did the woman indicate she thought teaching was a mission?
    - Is there evidence that the woman experienced a sense of loss when not teaching?
- Did the woman have jobs outside the field of education?
- Did the woman belong to service clubs, do community work?

**APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

February 7, 2007

Dear Tri-State Black Museum President,

I am presently a Professor of Education Transfer at Washington State Community College in Marietta, Ohio and a Ph D candidate at Ohio University in the Educational Studies Department of the College of Education. I am interested in learning about African American women who were teachers between 1875 and 1915 in Ohio, West Virginia, and western Pennsylvania. This information is valuable in preparing future teachers so that they can become aware of the contributions made to their profession by diverse populations. It can also contribute to our knowledge of the accomplishments of African American women to society.

The working title of my research is *Honorable Soldiers, Too: An Historical Case Study of Post-Reconstruction African American Female Teachers of the Upper Ohio River Valley States*. My dissertation committee approved a proposal for this study on April 3, 2006. Dr. David Bower chairs the committee that includes Dr. Adah Ward Randolph, Dr. Rosalie Romano, and Dr. James H. O'Donnell, III. These scholars are sharing their expertise with me as I conduct this project.

I would appreciate any assistance you and/or your institution can provide in locating information about the women selected for study.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 740-374-8716, ext. 2113, or at [chancock@wscc.edu](mailto:chancock@wscc.edu). Information can also be sent to me at:

c/o WSCC  
710 Colegate Dr.  
Marietta, OH 45750

or

105 Keyser St.  
Marietta, OH 45750

Sincerely,

Carole Wylie Hancock

## APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

(For inclusion in this appendix, some blank lines in the original have been removed, and some fonts have been reduced in size.)

### Release of Information Form

#### Title of Research

*Honorable Soldiers, Too: An Historical Case Study of Post-Reconstruction African American Female Teachers of the Upper Ohio River Valley States*

Principal Investigator: Carole Wylie Hancock  
 Ohio University Department: Educational Studies  
 Advisor and Chair of Investigator's Ph D Committee: Dr. David Bower  
 Reason for Research: Completion of requirements for a Ph. D.

#### Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to make an historical analysis of Black education in the upper Ohio River Valley. The emphasis is on African American women who were teachers. The women must have taught for at least three years between 1875 and 1915, and have been educated to be a teacher and/or taught in the three-state area of Ohio, West Virginia, and western Pennsylvania. The research is designed to uncover the stories, voices, and contributions of these women in order to illuminate and enrich the history of Black women's roles in the education of American citizens.

#### Risks and Discomforts

*There is little risk to you involved in this research. Any artifacts you loan me will be treated with care and returned to you by the agreed upon date. Any risk of damage or loss is minimal.*

#### Benefit to Subjects and Information Providers

The benefit to the subjects of this study and to those providing information, artifacts, photographs, letters, journals, and other items of significance to this research is in the advancement of scholarship in the area of Black women teachers. All assistance in this project adds to the richness of the description that will be possible to provide about individual women and their contributions to society.

#### Use of Information and Artifacts Provided

The principal investigator will hold all records of information provided (taped or written) and artifacts loaned until the completion of the research project. Return of personal items can be arranged before that date as specified below. Tapes will be held in the home of the principal investigator indefinitely unless otherwise specified.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact:

Carole W. Hancock	Dr. David Bower
740-373-1270 home or 740 -374-8716 ext. 2113 work	740-597-3024
chancock@wsc.edu	bowerd@ohio.edu

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a provider of research information, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of research Compliance, Ohio University, 740-593-0664.

I am agreeing to (check all that apply):

- allow the researcher to make audio tapes of conversations related to this research and to use information from them in the written report of the research
- allow the researcher to use my name and relationship to the subject of the research in the written report of the study and in any articles and presentations made subsequent to the completion of this research
- allow the researcher to reproduce photographs I have provided in the written report
- allow the researcher to use copies of photographs I have provided in articles and presentations that may be produced
- allow the researcher to photocopy or otherwise reproduce personal papers and to use information from them in the written report  
List (attach a separate sheet if necessary):
- borrow the following items for research (attach a separate sheet if necessary):
- I would like for the following items to be returned.  
Date I would like them returned \_\_\_\_\_  
List (attach a separate sheet if necessary):

Other specification regarding the use of the artifacts and information I have provided to the principal researcher (attach a separate sheet if necessary):

---

I certify that I have read and understand this consent form and agree to allow artifacts and information I have provided to the principal researcher to be used in the research described and for publication. I agree that known risks to me have been explained to my satisfaction and I understand that no compensation is available from Ohio University and its employees for any injury resulting from my participation in this research. I certify that I am 18 years of age or older. I am providing information for this research voluntarily. I understand that at any time prior to August 1, 2007 I may request that information I have provided not be used, and that such a request will be honored without prejudice or penalty. I certify that I have been given a copy of this consent form to take with me.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Subject \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D: LIST OF POSSIBLE UNITS OF ANALYSIS

(The subjects finally selected for study are emphasized in bold italics.)

### Pennsylvania

Emily Burr  
 Alice B. Butcher  
***Elizabeth Jennie Adams Carter***  
 Clara M. Johnson  
 Susan Paul Vashon  
 Matilda (Mary) M. Ware

### Ohio

Amanda Stevens Barnett  
 Madeline Barnett  
 Eva DelVakia Bowles  
 Lydia Mae Chapman  
 Emma Grace Dickinson  
 Sarah Jane Woodson Early  
 Mary Ellen King Guy  
 Frances Watkins Harper  
***Angeline (Anna) Stevens Posey***  
 Leota Spencer  
 Olivia Davidson Washington  
 Minerva Woodson  
 Valerie Woodson

### West Virginia

E. M. Dandridge  
***Mary Peyton Dyson***  
 Josephine Gee\*  
***Susie Simmons (Jones?)***  
***Pocahontas Simmons Peyton***  
***Bernadine Peyton Sherman***  
 Sarah (Sallie) Trotter  
 Ethel Carr Watson

\* taught in school for Blacks, not certain she is African American

## APPENDIX E: A STORY BY JENNIE ADAMS

(As transcribed from the original by her great-grandson, William B. Carter, III.)

More than a hundred years ago three children lived in a village by the sea, Enoch Arden, Anna Lau and Philip Ray. They often played together at housekeeping. Anna was a beautiful little girl and they loved her. Sometimes she would be Enoch's wife then Philip's, they would quarrel and both want her, Anna would cry and tell them she would be wife to both. Prophetic words. When their childhood was past they still loved her. Philip loved in silence but Anna loved Enoch unconsciously. Enoch was a bold sailor and he was determined to make a home for Anna. Before his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday he had saved enough to buy a boat, and fix a snug little home also. One day the young people went a -- -- Enoch. Anna went, but Philip's father was sick, and he could not go until late. Enoch and Anna strayed away until they came to a tree and while sitting under its branches Enoch told Anna of his love. When Philip saw them sitting hand in hand the hope went out of his heart for he saw Anna loved Enoch.

They were married and were very happy for seven years. ~~Two~~ Three beautiful children were born to them. With these children was born the hope in Enoch heart that they should have better bringing up than either of them had had. Therefore he determined to save all his earning. He was successful for a time then came a change. Enoch fell and broke his leg; he had opposition in trade. Enoch became disheartened. In the meanwhile Anna bore him another son. One of the sea captains offered him a position on one of his ships. O how Anna tried to persuade him not to go he was firm because he thought it was for the best. He sold his boat and fitted up a little store for Anna with those things that a seaman or his wife would need. Anna gave him a curl from the baby's head. They parted and the parting was very bitter although Enoch tried to make Anna feel cheerful.

Anna's baby was a pale sickly little thing and needed much care. She was not successful in business often selling goods for less than they cost. The baby died. Then Philip came to her and said you know why Enoch went away let me educate the children and Enoch shall pay me when he comes back. She was weeping over the loss of her babe, his kindness moved her more. Weeping she thanked him, pressed his hand and bade God bless him.

Ten years after Enoch had gone, one day the children coaxed Anna to go to the woods and as they passed the mill the children asked father Philip, as they called him, to go with them. He went and as the children scampered away he asked Anna to marry him. Anna promised him, but he was to wait one year.

When the year was up she plead for one month more so in until six months had sped away Philip was sad. The children were anxious to have them marry and their friends

would laugh and say they did not know their own minds. One night Anna dreamed she saw Enoch among the blest. She then believed him dead and told Philip she marry (would) him. At length they were married. Anna was not altogether happy and for about one year she seemed nervous and fearful and did not like to be left alone. Philip bore with her thinking it would not be for long (time). He was right when her babe was born she was her old self and Philip was all ~~and~~ in all to her.

Enoch's voyage from home was a very prosperous one. He traded and bought things for the children. On his return he was shipwrecked. All were lost save Enoch and two others. They drifted to a lone island and here the others died leaving poor Enoch alone. He waited year after year for a sail. His clothing was gone and his hair was long. He was a pitiful object, when a ship was blown out of its course and came to this island. Enoch succeeded in making them know what he wanted. When they heard his story they took him on board the ship, clothed him and brought him to his own port.

What a contrast. He went away a bright hopeful young man and came back a disheartened sad old man.

Enoch spoke to no one, but hastened home when he came to the house, it was silent and a bill of sale on it. His heart was sad and he kept repeating the words dead or dead to me. He went to an old tavern where (which) he had known. The hostess, Miriam Lane, began telling him of Enoch Arden little dreaming this was he. When he listened to the sad story he gave no sign of how he felt. But desired to see Anna and know if she were happy.

He went to the house and looked in the window and saw Anna, his children and one not his. All seemed happy, his children were beautiful and they were living in luxury for Philip was rich. He sunk on the ground with a cry and wondered why he was not left on the island.

Enoch took sick and then he called Marian Lane to him and told her all but made her swear she would reveal nothing until he was gone. She promised. He told her she might bring his children to see him after he was dead, but did not wish Anna to see him for fear she would be (unhappy). But tell her I loved her to the last. He wanted Anna to have the baby's curl so she might know it was Enoch. He died and the port seldom saw a costlier funeral.

*Note: This story was handwritten. It is undated. Notation in the handwriting of Dr. Wm B. Carter identifies the author as Jennie Adams. There are a few editorial notes in different ink and a couple of different hands. - W. B. Carter 3<sup>d</sup>.*