

Chapter Two

Conditions Affecting Learning in the South between Reconstruction and the New Deal: A Review of the Literature

Whenever man depends upon agriculture and has found a permanent abode, the growing of different staple crops such as rice, wheat, or Indian corn, and the rearing of different domestic animals, selected from the native stock of a region, govern not merely man's interests and habits but also his social organization.

R. Mukerjee, 1929

Education, race, economics, and the attitudes prevalent in the South in the decades following Reconstruction are inextricably related to the present study of American schools and libraries during the 1930's. This review of literature is organized into four themes: the South, its communities, institutional collaboration within communities, and the faith that supported the actions of its people. The literature of the day has been included in the review to provide contemporary attitudes, actions, and descriptions of the themes that shaped the

conditions that impacted learning in the South between Reconstruction and the New Deal.

The Complex South

The American South was a complex social entity during the first part of the twentieth century. It can be defined through its agrarian economy, through its class system, its people's desire to honor the past and its history of little interest in providing formal education, but most importantly, it can be defined through its racial problems. The decisions forced by the emancipation of slaves and whether they would be given the same rights as white southerners were at the root of the socioeconomic and educational life at all levels of southern society. White southerners did not value the notion of universal education for the laboring classes. This lack of interest in providing education for workers combined with the belief in white supremacy and the whites' control of school funds resulted in unequal educational opportunities for blacks and whites as well as for rural and urban children. Long after elementary schools were commonly available for children throughout the nation, schools for rural

southern blacks were established, largely through the efforts of the black communities (Anderson, 1988).

In Search of a Definition

The definition of “the South” from Reconstruction through the first four decades of the twentieth century is multifaceted. As is true of geography, the history and culture of the region are defining standards of the American South. While Vance (1932) acknowledged the force of geography on the essence of the South, he additionally defined the region through its heritage, agriculture, economy, and the lifestyle of its people.

The South’s economic, social and financial structures were rooted in cash crops, absentee landowners, industries that did nothing to enhance the region, and a large untrained work force (King, 1980). The southern farm workers of the early twentieth century were barely making enough to live on from cotton; the annual per capita income was less than half that made by farmers in other regions of the nation. Both blacks and whites were leaving the South at this time in hopes of working at better paying jobs in northern industries (Vance 1932). The South’s economic difficulty existed despite the fact that the area’s long, hot growing season, abundant rainfall, and rich soil were particularly good for growing cotton. The Cotton Belt extended from eastern North Carolina to

western Texas and there, in three percent of the world's total land area, about fifty-five percent of the world's cotton was grown.

The lives of tenant farmers were based on the cycle of cotton growth; year round hard labor, low salaries and deep indebtedness to the landowner characterized their lives (Tindall, 1967). The cotton culture was so deeply entrenched in life in the South that its growth cycle, which was governed by soil and weather, governed social and institutional activities, and in turn required intensive manpower that encouraged a high birth rate (Ramsdell, 1934).

Vance (1935) noted some reasons for the death of cotton as the major factor in the region's economy gradually diminished between Reconstruction and the New Deal.

The demands of the cotton plant are greatest at precisely the period required for the tending of other crops and thus impede diversification. The cotton farmer is peculiarly subject to the speculative risk of the market, since his is the one staple grown in America that can contribute nothing directly consumable by the farm family. Moreover, he is entirely dependent on a money economy, upon a crop whose gyrations in market prices make it deservedly called dynamite. Chained by inability to finance experiments, diversification, and other types of farm enterprise such as dairying, southern agriculture seems bound today to landlords and supply merchants who hold

the economic keys, but are unable or unwilling to unlock the chains. (Vance, 1935, p. 30)

In 1910, Hart categorized “the true Southland” (p. 10) as the belt of states extending from South Carolina to Texas, seven states where conditions were most in need of solving racial problems. Myrdal’s (1944) study defined the South through its race relations. Intermarriage and sexual relations between white women and black men were at the top of white men’s racial concerns followed by sharing social equality with blacks. Political, legal, economic and educational equalities were ranked further down the list. Black men’s ordering of the same list of discriminations was the inverse of the whites’ according to Myrdal’s data.

The notion of white supremacy was legally structured into law during this period of time (Reed & Singal, 1982). The 1896 United States Supreme Court decision, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, blessed segregation when it ordered the “separate but equal doctrine” that would endure for more than fifty years (Johnson, 1957). This doctrine led to the passage of statutes legally separating black from whites in churches, schools, social and fraternal organizations, medical facilities, and work environments (Edgar, 1998).

A very nearly equal number of black and whites presented a situation in the early twentieth South that added to the burden on the limited financial resources

of the region. The dual services dictated for the two races presented particular financial difficulty in the rural areas where 70.2 percent of the region's population lived in 1930. In relationship to the need for educational services it is significant that 45.7 percent of the states' population was 19 years old or younger (Wilson & Wight, 1935).

The Rural South

Urban areas throughout the nation flourished during the period after Reconstruction, but the South remained primarily an agricultural area. Rainfall, insects, and the world's economic upheavals controlled the income of the Southern farmer. Diseases associated with insects and swamps, such as malaria and typhoid were a reality in rural communities; childbirth deaths were common. The annual per capita income of farmers was \$189 in 1930 compared with \$484 for those employed outside the farm areas (Tindall, 1967). By 1926, Federal income tax returns revealed the average gross income for farmers in ten Southern states to be \$690 and \$1611 for farmers in the remainder of the country (Poe, 1935).

The population of the South was 67.9 percent rural in 1930 and almost half of the workforce, 42.8 percent, was employed on farms in the region (Stephenson & Coulter, 1967). Tenancy farming was increasing early in the twentieth century.

42.5 percent of Southern farmers were tenants in 1920 but by 1930, (Vance, 1932) 56 percent of the farmers were tenants or sharecroppers (Nostrand & Estaville, 2001). Tenant farmers in 1930 accounted for half of the farm population in the United States (Parkins, 1935). In 1935, the number of white tenants was 1,091,000 and black tenants numbered 698,000. During the second decade of the twentieth century, the number of black tenants grew by 2000 compared to an increase of white tenants of 200,000 (Reed & Singal, 1982).

The tenant farmers, black and white, were the backbone of a colonial economy; a few landowners controlled the farming in large area similarly to the plantation system of the antebellum South. They were the debtors in the debtor economy (Reed & Singal, 1982). They were on the lowest rung of the economic and social ladders living on a credit system that charged fifteen to forty percent or more interest on the retail price of manufactured goods in 1930 (Poe, 1935). The system was worse for the lower level of tenants, the sharecroppers. Many at this level of tenant farmers owned neither work animals nor farm tools and relied on the landowner to supply these as well as seed and many times, subsistence through much of the year (Parkins, 1935).

The standard of living in the rural South can be indexed through newspaper subscriptions, telephone installations, and electric or gas lights in homes. In the nation, 1 in 3.6 persons living in rural areas subscribed to a newspaper; in nine

southern cotton and tobacco growing states, one of every 12.7 persons subscribed to a newspaper in 1930. In South Carolina only one person in 37.1 persons subscribed to a newspaper. Seven percent of the rural homes in the United States had electric or gas lights compared with 2.7 percent of rural homes in the same southern states. In the entire nation 387 in 1000 homes had telephones and 149 out of every 1000 rural homes had telephones installed in the nine southern states. There were telephones in 57 out of every 1000 homes in South Carolina (Poe, 1935).

Educational conditions were equally depressed in the rural areas. Poorly paid teachers often taught eight grades as well as high school subjects in ramshackle buildings that were not likely to have heat or sanitary facilities. There were few materials and textbooks available and local authorities controlled the community school and its curriculum (Maxcy, 1981).

Nine of ten black Americans lived in the South in 1917; about three-fourths of them in rural areas. (Litmack, 1998). Rural life for them was more difficult than that of whites. Walter Page Hines, Southern expatriate, commented that he would "rather be an imp in Hades than a Negro in South Carolina" (Hendrick, 1928, p. 303). It was philosophically accepted by whites of all classes in the South that blacks were an inferior race. To that end, Jim Crow laws and customs emphasized white supremacy. Educational facilities, if they existed at all, were

more primitive for blacks in the rural South than for whites. These barriers to opportunities for self-improvement gave rise to the migration of nearly two million blacks to the North from 1900-1930 in hopes of finding education, jobs, and greater opportunities. During the Great Migration, the black population in the South decreased from 323 blacks per 1000 people in 1900 to 247 blacks per 1000 persons in 1930 (Couch, 1934).

The Autocracy of the Traditions and Laws of Jim Crow

Jim Crow was a system of racial segregation and disfranchisement that invoked racist theories to explain why blacks needed to be separate and unequal. Jim Crow continually changed as whites endeavored to prevent blacks from having social, economic, or political power and to keep them at a lower caste status (Fredrickson, 2002). It was an intricate system of laws and traditions that varied by area, by time, and by the amount of black resistance. "Within a generation virtually all white Carolinians had forgotten that the old antebellum elite had considered squeamishness at coming into contact with blacks as a lower class attitude" (Edgar, 1998, p. 449). Throughout the years between the War Between the States and the Civil Rights Movement, the system evolved and changed until what was not legislated by law was dictated by custom. The "intricate social minuet" (p. 449) provided the scaffold for the contest between

blacks that were determined to claim their civil rights and whites that were determined to deny them (Dailey, Gilmore, & Simon, 2000).

W.E.B. Du Bois (1935) defined the linchpin of the Jim Crow movement as an effort by capitalists to keep blacks as powerless as possible. Segregation meant that African-Americans worked the most menial, lowest-paying, most dangerous jobs. Low income and a constant need for field labor led many families to put their children to work at an early age. As landowners saw no value in literacy for blacks they collaborated with school authorities to keep black children out of books and classrooms (Chafe, Gavins, & Korstad, 2001).

There were Jim Crow laws in every state in the nation, but it was daily practice in the South where it was enforced by the police and the courts as well as by ordinary white citizens who took the law into their own hands. Jim Crow was designed to exclude blacks from the democratic process as well as from social equality with whites (Packard, 2002). One of the findings of the extensive study Andrew Carnegie ordered done by Gunnar Myrdal in the 1940's was that within the framework of the Constitution, America, through law and tradition, denied equality to over fifteen million citizens (Myrdal, 1944).

Racial etiquette was part of the custom of Jim Crow. Classic examples from this intricate set of unwritten rules required blacks to enter white homes only through the back doors and denied them the courtesy of "Mr." or "Mrs."

Corporal punishment could be freely administered to tenant farmers, and their children could be kept out of school to work. Reminiscent of the days when slaveholders passed out supplies to the slaves, and similar to the practice in mining towns in Appalachia and company stores in the Northeast, the landowners sold clothing and other products to the tenants on credit which then had to be paid when the crop was harvested. This crop lien system did easily result in the tenant being in debt to the landowner even after the crop profit was distributed (Chafe, Gavins, & Korstad, 2001).

The inferiority of blacks and the superiority of whites were emphasized during the era of Jim Crow by studies done in “science” (Litmack, 1998, p. 219). Academics developed pseudoscientific doctrines that sounded plausible in their analysis of the economic and educational deficits of sharecroppers, domestic workers, and other laborers. Eugenics, a pseudoscience, widely embraced throughout the South and the nation impacted social and educational practice (Packard, 2002). Eugenics was a “science” that studied the inborn qualities of men with a view to their improvement. The attitudes toward inherited inferiority underlying this study were used to justify racial purity and elitism (Larson, 1995). Eugenics was used to advocate that blacks had biological barriers to being intellectual and that they realized their fullest potential only when doing the simplest tasks (Packard).

Southern history presented a social and cultural debate between the races. White Southerners claimed to have come from thousands of years of European culture and argued that blacks had been delivered from paganism and the jungle when they were brought to America (Packard, 2002). Blacks had maintained a strong oral record of their history that had been passed down from one generation to the next. Their oral history included the suffering under slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, as well as experiences with the daily dance of Jim Crow. White Southerners often had favorable memories of slavery as being benevolent and providing the civilization essential for blacks living in America. The white interpretation and memory of past events was used as the basis of historiography of the period (Chafe et al., 2001).

Southern Progressivism

No individual or specific group can claim credit for the beginning of a national reform of business, government, and social institutions (Keppel, 1962). Beginning early in the twentieth century and lasting for about thirty years, institutional changes were made throughout the nation at the stimulus of those who desired modernization and humanization (Link, 1992). There was no plan or system of reform in the rural South and as the nature of progressivism was amorphous, so the reforms in the rural region were sporadic and unplanned, and

accomplished as a result of the diligence of the reformers (Reynolds & Schramm, 2002).

Agriculture did not provide the financial recovery the South and particularly poor rural farmers needed following the Civil War and Reconstruction. Extreme poverty, perpetuated by the cotton cycle and the tenancy system, was dichotomous to the emerging industrialized urban areas in the South where professional and business people were finding their middle class voice (Woodward, 1974). The overarching racial problem inherent to the South complicated the middle class desire for regional rehabilitation and progress. They sought strict delineation by race and class as a way to resolve the chronic struggle between blacks and whites (Grantham, 1983).

Progressive efforts at social uplift gave reformers an opportunity to attempt control of both the rural social and racial conditions. Grudging whites could be convinced to work with reformers if they were persuaded that blacks would benefit only minimally. The beliefs in black inadequacy and white paternalism were basic to social change. Blacks could change and experience uplift as long as it was in areas that whites could authorize and define. Control manifested itself in the ugliness of disfranchisement, separate but unequal schools, and the Jim Crow system (Link, 1992).

Paradoxically, white reformers built the complex machine of Jim Crow and through progressivism they defended segregation (McGerr, 2003). Whites made all the policy and finance decisions concerning schools for both white and black children. They embraced an antebellum notion that “manual labor schools” (Anderson & Moss, 1999, p. 28) would provide the appropriate education for blacks. Training in the skilled trades and artisanship, as well as in domestic arts, was seen by whites as the way to meet their responsibility for educating blacks but it also assured blacks of menial jobs with no economic mobility. This curriculum for blacks reinforced the whites’ perceived intellectual inadequacies of blacks and it diverted attention from the needs of rural schools. Bifurcation of the curriculum based on racial inferiority justified, for whites, the obtruding disparities in the facilities for schooling the two races.

Assuming an inferiority of ability among nonwhites, modernizers concluded that a pedagogy which disregarded racial differences failed to serve the needs of the black community. In the name of progress and educational change, reformers, under the rubric of ‘industrial’ education, advocated inaugurating a segregated pedagogy that sanctioned substantial inequalities (Link, 1986, p.177).

Educated blacks debated the value of industrial education. Booker T. Washington argued that jobs as skilled laborers would relieve the economic slavery of blacks that had existed since Emancipation. He embraced industrial education as it bought white cooperation and provided for educational progress (Link, 1986). W. E. B. DuBois argued that industrial education denied the full potential of an education and as such prevented blacks from attaining civil, economic, and political equality as American citizens (DuBois, 1903). Alexander Crummell, black rector of St. Luke's Church in Washington, D.C. was outspoken in his criticism of industrial education, calling it an example of white endeavors to restrict "our brains and our culture" (as cited in Link, 1986, p.181).

Washington's argument grew in popularity, and in some communities, blacks made makeshift provision for practical education in their schools. These adaptations were so rudimentary, frequently without the materials and equipment needed to fully carry out the instruction, that few of the blacks who participated in this curriculum were prepared to compete with better trained whites (Woodson, 1933).

Another group of reformers in the South were less conservative and focused on change that would ameliorate injustice and poverty. Their interest in community improvement and in racial justice sprang from their Christian faith. Cash (1941) attributed this change in Christian action to the interpretation of

Scripture from earlier days when the Bible had been used to support racial injustice and slavery to a revision in the way Southern institutions of higher education prepared the clergy. From pulpits throughout the South, preachers spoke out against lynching and mistreatment of black as well as against the inadequacy of education, child labor, and general neglect of the working class (Cash). Seminarians and church leaders moved toward social criticism. There was a call for Christians to show concern for the laboring class in the South and for people to live together in harmony as sisters and brothers. Methodist laity was encouraged to read the Bible with an eye toward modeling Christ's life, not to learning the letter of the law (Grantham, 1983).

Paternalism and community resistance barred change in the rural South, according to Link (1992). Paternalistic reformers identified rural problems and did not consider local interests, power, and involvement in resolving problematic issues. Some progressives viewed the government as providing the solution, and while advocating democracy, they argued for increased, more powerful government to intervene in the lives of the rural citizens. This clash of attitudes and actions would have prevented progressive reform in the rural South, argues Link (1992), without participation of northern patrons and national experts and strategies.

It would create a false understanding of the involvement of blacks to look at progressive reform as one sided. Southern blacks were not just recipients of charity (Anderson & Moss, 1999). Blacks contributed millions of dollars in self-help. As an example of self help associated with northern philanthropy, James D. Anderson (1988) argues that the Rosenwald school building program was successful because of the efforts of the black communities:

It was black southerners' enduring beliefs in universal schooling and their collective social actions to achieve it that made possible and sustained the Rosenwald school building program (Anderson, 1988, p. 153).

Anderson (1988) further argues that blacks were accustomed to paying taxes and making private contributions to the schooling of their own children. This double taxation indicated the breadth of the grassroots movement among black southerners to educate their children. Support from sources outside the southern region boosted the efforts that blacks had been forced to make since Reconstruction. Concerning philanthropy for southern black education, Anderson extrapolates:

External support from philanthropic foundations was very helpful. But southern rural blacks absorbed the contributions of the Rosenwald and Jeanes funds into a long-standing tradition of 'self-help' or double taxation that had developed among Afro-Americans decades before 1914. (p. 156)

Early roots of progressivism are evident in South Carolina from 1915 when a group of Columbia women lobbied for a bill that would curb child labor and the bill successfully passed through the General Assembly. White South Carolinians were cautious to avoid being aligned with any of the national progressive efforts so that their detractors could not accuse them of importing change from other regions in the nation. Men and women across the state worked for years following the legislated child labor reform to better their communities with schools, libraries, hospitals, sanitation, and sound local government (Edgar, 1998).

Edgar (1998) expostulates that it is a mistaken assumption that there were no black progressives in South Carolina. Blacks had little political power but black progressives, mostly women, were active in organizing efforts for self-improvement and racial uplift. While some white support was given to black-initiated black uplift, most white progressives turned a blind eye toward racial discrimination, needs, and concerns.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Southern Library Development

In 1933, economic life in the United States was at a virtual standstill. Industrial production was down by fifty percent, more than twelve million people were out

of work, and agricultural prices had dropped below half over the previous four years (Wolters, 1970). The crash in securities and stocks values in late 1929 had been predicated by a national business crisis over the previous ten years. The stock market crash of 1929 threw the United States in to an economic hardship, known as the Great Depression that was unlike any its citizens had experienced before (Werner, 1939). Upon his inauguration, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt began to act on campaign promises to lead the country out of the Great Depression begun three years earlier. Within days, Congress began to enact laws to expand the federal government programs as part of FDR's New Deal. At the center of the ideology of the New Deal was the commitment to make economic security a political right for every American. The right to a good education was part of the Deal. Under the economic security plan were opportunities for immediate employment in building the nation's infrastructure, i.e. roads, bridges, dams, and national forests (Edsforth, 2000).

A renewed New Deal established the Works Progress Administration (WPA) that included the Division of Educational Projects. By late 1937, the division claimed building 53 libraries, the repair of 514 and additions made to 25 libraries throughout the nation. 14,473 people were employed to accomplish the library projects. The WPA's Division of Women's and Professional Project had established more than 3500 new branch libraries, 1200 traveling libraries were

developed and 4500 reading rooms were added to existing libraries (Stanford, 1944). The Division of Women's and Professional Project had helped catalog more than twenty million library books and repair sixteen million library volumes. Additionally, the Division was involved in the repair of more than twelve million school books and six million other volumes (Campbell, Bair, & Harvey, 1939). By the end of 1940, more than 27,000 persons were employed in WPA library work and the emergency work relief program operated on an eighteen million dollar annual budget (Stanford).

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Public Works Authority (PWA) changed the face of South Carolina through building courthouses, airports, libraries, roads and bridges (Edgar, 1988). Of the \$90 million spent nationally by the education division, the WPA spent slightly more than one million dollars in South Carolina (Campbell, Bair, & Harvey, 1939).

The WPA library project was instituted in South Carolina in 1935. Library development had been left to local governments and aside from the three libraries in Charleston, Columbia and Greenville, no regional library facilities existed. Neither the state library board nor the state library association was funded by the legislature so efforts to develop libraries were not well established. A citizens' conference held in 1934 at Clemson Agricultural College studied the status of the state's libraries and developed a plan for library development. The

WPA initially had to provide leadership in planning libraries adapted to the state's regions and needs. By the end of the first quarter of 1941, 392 library service units were active for white citizens and 25 provided service for black citizens. These activities served 573, 403 whites and 46, 920 black. The WPA efforts increased the volumes in the state's libraries in 1932 from 304,756 to 450,000 in 1941 with a resulting increase in circulation of over 2 million books (Stanford, 1944).

The Potency of Localism and Community

The rural South encompassed a large area with families located on farms spread far apart. They were isolated and provincial (Link, 1986). The rural South was a stronghold of individualism. Southerners perceived government involvement in social causes as interference and as such they did not welcome outside interests. The greatest champions of states' right were Southerners and from colonial history Southerners had harbored a dogged fear and distrust of governmental regulation (Pipkin, 1934). A heritage of individualism, familial identity, and personal honor among white males underscored the acceptance of under education in the region following the turn of the century. The potency of localism transcended race. Rural blacks were as resistant and resentful of outside

intrusion as the whites were and they held the same traditional values concerning family, work and community (Link, 1986).

Rural southerners in small towns and on farms held traditional values, were suspicious of outsiders, and were largely indifferent to their social problems. The notion of localism dictated that community issues come under community control and that outside interference was not welcome. Power in the southern rural community was limited to a very few persons. According to Link (1992), while they were not insulated from the Progressive social innovations spreading through the nation, rural Southerners were often not willing to abandon their long-held attitudes towards government. Following emancipation, the legal status of blacks changed but their social and economic status remained essentially the same. Amending the nation's Constitution did not give the formerly enslaved people equal status in their southern communities. Impacted by both individualism and traditionalism of white rural Southerners, black community residents learned to be distrustful of their white neighbors (Pipkin, 1934). Blacks and whites, who had lived in close proximity and in mutual dependence prior to the Civil War now found themselves in direct social and economic competition.

Non-rural Southerners saw the rural whites as uneducated, crude, and victims of their own lack of ambition (Den Hollander, 1934). Rural whites formed the

backbone of the work force for the textile mills (Carlton, 1982). Southerners looked down on mill workers as they believed it to be a disgrace to have to earn a living in such a way. This class prejudice was based on the belief that rural Southerners who moved to mill villages had lost their farms because they were lazy or inept or that they had been tenants or sharecroppers (Edgar, 1998). Mill life was an economic substitute for slavery a step from any other situation. Mill life was an economic substitute for slavery that was morally and intellectually degrading. It also denied the planter ideal long held as the standard for social and economic mobility. Owning land was the key to wealth, social position, political power, and the material goods individuals associated with luxury. Owning a small farm or even being a tenant farmer provided an element of independence not obtainable in the millworker's life and land ownership offered hope for upward mobility.

Locating the "Public" in Southern Libraries and Schools

The concept of "public" in the South which was dominated by the 1896 United States Supreme Court decision, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, essentially sanctioned segregation when it ordered the "separate but equal" doctrine that would be an albatross around the neck of economic growth in the South for more than fifty

years (Johnson, 1957). *Plessy v. Ferguson* led to the passage of statutes legally separating black from whites in churches, schools, social and fraternal organizations, medical facilities, and work environments (Edgar, 1998).

Every conceivable social situation was segregated black from white through the Jim Crow system of laws and customs. Public parks, hospitals, orphanages, asylums, prisons, nursing homes, schools, and jails were segregated; some refused service to blacks. Waiting rooms, restaurants, ticket lines, theaters, toilets, and water fountains were designated as “White only” or “Colored” (Witmack, 1998).

“Public” as applied to libraries was defined by Joeckel (1935, p. x), “The only really essential requirement in the definition of a public library is that its use should be free to all residents of the community on equal terms.” Wilson and Wight (1935, p. 25) defined the public library more specifically, “as one which receives a part of its support from a governmental unit, such as a city, township, school district, or county.”

“Public” as applied to schools is based on Kaestle’s (1983) definition of the common school as a state-supported elementary school designed to serve all the children in a specific area. The common school was different from other schools in the South such as denominational schools and academies which were found in towns and cities and which required full or partial tuition for students. It was

also different from the subscription schools found in the rural South. Kaestle maintains that these schools would be held in vacant farm buildings with the community subscribing or contracting the service of a teacher for a specified school term and salary.

Schools and Libraries in Collaboration

Public library services extended through public school facilities were a logical and pragmatic approach to offering service to rural communities. Accessibility to schools as well as to libraries presented challenges to the rural black communities. The notion of separate but unequal meant that while the public facilities honored the law, they ignored its intention. Even with donations from the Rosenwald Fund, a philanthropic organization founded by Julius Rosenwald in 1917 to aid in black uplift (Werner, 1939), the public libraries in South Carolina were not accessible to many blacks.

During the first thirty years of the twentieth century the development of public libraries for African-Americans in the South is interwoven with the laws, attitudes, and social customs of the Jim Crow tradition. Farm tenancy, absentee ownership, and exploitation of the land had depleted the South's wealth rendering it unable to sustain one set of social and educational institutions. The separate but equal doctrine ordered in *Plessy v. Ferguson* was financially not

feasible as the South continued its struggle to overcome the impact of the Civil War and its economic aftermath. White southerners were psychologically wounded from the Civil War and Reconstruction and uninterested in uplift for blacks in the region. Lastly, the notion of white supremacy led whites to believe that literate blacks would be dangerous because they would demand too much (Shockley, 1955). While not the norm, there was limited library service to blacks in a number of libraries in the South beginning as early as 1900 but there do not appear to have been any available prior to that (Gleason, 1941).

In 1926, only 10.5% of the blacks in the southern states had access to public libraries. Six years later, the percentage had increased only to 17%. A library for blacks was established in a remodeled church building in Beaufort, South Carolina during that time. The town designated one quarter of the tax mill levied for libraries to go to the black branch (Barker, 1935).

Libraries were typed according to their source of financial support. Free libraries were those from which citizens of a political jurisdiction, town, school district, or county, could borrow a book free of charge. A free library's support was from a tax, an endowment fund, or private donations. Partially free libraries charged a nominal fee for borrowing books. This fee could take the form of a one dollar membership fee, a fee for persons living outside the area, or a per book

fee. However, many libraries did not insist on any fees from patrons who could not pay (Hendrix, 1925).

In ferreting information on libraries and volumes, the researcher should be aware of ways data on libraries and numbers of volumes can be misleading when generalized. Jarrell (1955) found that of the three libraries located in South Carolina in 1909, one of the facilities was the legislative reference library and the other belonged to a small black college. While there were indeed three libraries in the state, two of them were specialized and were not accessible to the general population of the state. Not all 458,782 citizens of New Orleans had access to the 273,683 volumes in the city's public library (1930 Census). Further examination reveals the city's 129,632 black citizens could access only 14,697 of those volumes that were housed in one branch library, the only collection of books available to blacks in New Orleans. That libraries in the South underserved blacks in the early decades of the twentieth century is underscored by Gleason (1941) who analyzed the number of libraries throughout the region. There were 774 communities in the South that provided library service for their residents. 675 of these made absolutely no provision for service to blacks; 99 or 13 percent of the libraries provided some service to blacks. The number of libraries in the South that had service for black residents grew by 24 libraries in the period 1935-39, but

the increase in the number of libraries serving whites in the same period was 283 (Gleason).

Joeckel (1935) found that libraries in cities of more than 30,000 that were supported by special taxes did better financially than those supported in other ways. Gleason (1941) argued that a special tax levied for supporting library facilities for blacks would not guarantee adequate financial support in the South. Three Southern communities maintained black libraries through a portion of the taxes paid by blacks. For 1184 black citizens in Georgetown, Kentucky, the tax allocated was \$.08 per person, totaling \$100 per year. Under the same funding plan, Henderson, North Carolina allocated \$.02 tax per black citizen and the allocated tax was so low as not to be recorded in Weldon, North Carolina. All three libraries were housed in school buildings and two were closed during the summer (Gleason). As blacks owned relatively little property, real estate tax levied on blacks would not yield enough money to support equal and adequate libraries for blacks. Gleason proposed that if the separate library facilities were to continue to be required in the South that a fair formula be determined for calculating the costs of providing a high quality service (1941).

In her study of public libraries in 1924, Hendrix (1925) found that school libraries were generally inadequate; they had limited book collections and were usually closed in the summer. Her assessment revealed that the average number

of library books per 1000 persons in the United States was 508 compared to the 112 per 1000 persons in eleven Southern states and 76 volumes per 1000 persons in South Carolina. Hendrix (1925) compared volume numbers for white population numbers to determine that in the state, there was one book for every 4.05 whites. Her further drilling through the data revealed that there were one and one half books for every licensed automobile in South Carolina.

According to Hendrix (1925) twenty-four libraries were established in South Carolina from 1910-1924, seven of which were funded by the Carnegie Foundation. Sixteen of the libraries were started by groups of citizens who donated time, money, books, and created public interest in the community for the facilities. Volunteers manned the libraries in most instances.

Gleason (1941) notes that in 1935, there were fifty-three libraries in South Carolina; four provided service to blacks. 45.6 percent of the white population in the state received library service while 15.4 percent of the black population had library access. This can be compared to the fact that 21.3 percent of the black population in the Southern United States had access to library service. Libraries underserved blacks in rural South Carolina with only 9.4 percent of the group receiving service; approximately 62,000 had access to libraries in the state leaving almost 600,000 rural blacks with no library service (Gleason, 1941).

From 1930-1935 the Rosenwald County Demonstration Library Project gave impetus to the South's library service for blacks. Seven southern states were given aid to establish demonstration libraries that would provide equal service to all people of the county, black and white, rural and urban and that would offer service to the residents according to their needs (Shockley, 1955). The conditions associated with the Rosenwald Fund library contributions included "adequate" (Towne, 1930, p.38) service to rural, urban, black and white citizens. This level of service was defined as being equal to fifty cents per capita of the total population of the county and that the level of service be equal to all persons in the county (Towne).

The Rosenwald Demonstration Library in Richland County, South Carolina was charged with serving 87,667 people living in an area of 765 square miles. There were 34,399 white people living in urban areas of the county and 15,141 whites in the rural areas. 20,097 black people lived in the county's urban areas and 18,030 blacks lived in the rural areas. In 1934 the library had forty-one outlets, or agencies, for distribution of books to white citizens. The outlets included the main library and school outlets in urban areas and schools, homes, community buildings, and a truck, a forerunner of the bookmobile, in the rural area. The library had nineteen agencies for the county's black citizens. These

outlets were in a branch building in the urban area and in schools in the country (Wilson & Wight, 1935).

In order to secure a second grant from the Rosenwald Fund, the Columbia community had to raise \$2500 as a dollar-for-dollar grant match in 1931.

Economic events in the state following the crash of the stock market in 1929 made such a donation from the legislature or from individuals highly unlikely.

The American Association of University Women collaborated with the State Federation of Women's Clubs to organize a Moving Picture Week to raise money for the library. Despite the endorsement of Governor Blackwood, the State Library Board, and the American Library Association, the money was not raised at this time but the matching money was collected later (Jarrell, 1955).

Charleston had no public library in the early years of the twentieth century despite there having been one in the city as early as 1698 (Stanford, 1944). The Charleston Free Library was the other Rosenwald Demonstration Library in South Carolina. According to Wilson and Wight (1935) the Charleston Free Library was charged with providing services to 101,050 people who lived over 923 square miles. 34,203 white people lived in the urban Charleston area and 12,035 whites lived in the rural Charleston area. 28,062 blacks lived in urban Charleston and 26,750 lived in the rural area of the county. The Charleston Free Library operated eighty-three agencies for whites. In addition to the main library

there were four branches and a library truck available to the urban white population. It operated ninety-one agencies for blacks with a branch in the city and the remainder in the schools. Specifically, the library prepared packages of books and shipped them in the library truck to the black rural schools. The packages of books were from a special collection, designated for black use only. Appendix B supplies circulation data that describes the use of the two Rosenwald Libraries in South Carolina. The library had no relationship with the city schools despite its adequate funding and a high level of interest on the part of the schools. It should be noted that the agency data could have referred to single visits to schools (Wilson & Wight, 1935).

Barker (1936) found that overall the Rosenwald libraries expanded library use opportunities to include about 140,000 blacks who had not previously been served and increased services for another 111,000. Another result of the Rosenwald demonstration was that it set a precedent that led to the Southeastern Library Association writing a resolution that library service to blacks should be built into every library program.

Jarrell (1955) suggested that the Julius Rosenwald Fund decision to establish demonstration libraries in Richland and Charleston counties was atypical. The two counties were the richest counties in the state at the time, each was primarily urban, and the two largest cities in South Carolina were located in these counties.

There had been libraries in each of the counties prior to the Rosenwald Fund grants.

Schools, Libraries and Learning

Specifically considering education, Link (1986) supports the study of rural education in his assertion that an understanding of the local schools, presents a picture of how the majority of Americans lived and learned before the Second World War. Schools in the country were controlled by local authorities and were isolated from urban schools and changes implemented in them. Rural enrollments were typically higher than urban but rural students attended school on an irregular basis that fluctuated with the demands of home and crops. The community typically viewed its schools as peripheral and supportable only as long as they did not interfere with more pressing domestic and agricultural demands.

Harlan (1958) argued that because overall conditions in the rural South were so different from those in other regions, its schools should be analyzed within their context rather than compared to national averages. Economic conditions were depressed throughout the largely rural South, which in turn, caused depressed conditions in schools. Crude, one-room schoolhouses were to be found throughout the country; these were poorly heated and furnished with

roughly hewn desks and benches. One teacher, often armed with only a high school education, taught all the elementary grades and high school subjects if students reached that level. Local authorities controlled operation of schools and did not offer tenure so most teachers worked in a specific community for a year. The rural teacher was usually an unmarried woman who moved from home to home in the community where she was provided room and board as part of her salary (Maxcy, 1981). "Education consumed only as much time of the rural young as the community wanted or could afford. In all aspects of the educational experience, control over education emanated from below" (Link, 1986, p. 6).

Another obstacle to meaningful education in the Southern public schools was a shortage of materials. In 1931-32, South Carolina black public schools spent a total of \$788 on books in the entire state. This miniscule amount takes on even greater significance in light of the fact that public libraries for blacks were virtually non-existent (Johnson & Lewis, 1971). There were not enough materials to give students practice in various reading techniques and there was not a wide diversity of topics in the book collections so as to deepen the students' education (Wilson & Wight, 1935). The narrowness of curriculum enforced by the limited availability of materials was accentuated by the political and economic dominance of whites in South Carolina that resulted in the whites being the formulators of black and white history and the custodians of state historical

sources. Through their control of the public schools, southern whites wrote and selected textbooks that resulted in their oversight of the transmission of white middle class norms. Textbook dominance was one obstacle to racial reform and it reinforced society's message that blacks were worthless and inferior (Johnson & Lewis, 1971; Harlan, 1935). Texts used by whites emphasized the same message as those of black: the white culture and institutions were superior to black culture (Link, 1992).

Despite increasing interest and dollars invested in southern black education by northern philanthropic agencies such as the Jeanes Funds, the Rosenwald Fund, and the Rockefeller Fund, inequalities were not eliminated. Anderson (1978) suggests that the philanthropic foundations aimed toward reform of the educational program to render blacks economically efficient in industrial jobs but to leave the white Southern attitude toward race the unchanged. According to Anderson (1978) in 1929, the average teacher student teacher ratio in 14 Southern states was 31:1 in white schools and 44:1 in black schools. The school term averaged 159 days for whites and 129 for blacks. Due to the overwhelming burden of building separate schools systems and to the overarching control of the southern racial hierarchy, there was little change in black rural systems during the first 50 years of the twentieth century. There were many small black

schools tucked in the country that were not affected at all by the progressive movement. (Maxcy, 1981).

Anderson (1988) suggests that an interclass agreement existed between the large and small white farmers that thwarted the black demand for education through both groups of whites supporting the whites' desire for education. Data from the Julius Rosenwald Fund supports this; the national average spending per pupil in the nation in 1930 was \$99 and in the South, the spending on white children was \$44.31 and \$12.57 for black children (Wilson & Wight, 1935). Further, planters needed cheap labor for cotton and tobacco, blacks were considered perfect laborers, so economics were diametrically opposed to schools for black children (Anderson, 1988).

In his study of Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia during the first few years of the twentieth century Harlan argues that "the race question pervaded all others" in South Carolina (Harlan, 1958, p.192). The Reconstruction government in 1868 had developed the state's school system but interest in schools and support for the system had waned until the middle 1890's. The efforts of the Tillman administration were aimed at disfranchisement of the state's black population culminating in the Constitution of 1895.

According to Bhatia (1989), the South Carolina Constitution of 1895 provided for segregated schools for the state's children to be funded with a county tax. The

local school trustees as directed by the General Assembly would disburse the tax. The legislature required trustees to be appointed by county supervisors who had been appointed by the legislature and the bill gave the trustees total discretion in spending school taxes for both blacks and whites. In 1900 black schools received 21 percent of the school tax although black children accounted for 61 percent of the school population. The funding was approximately one-sixth as much per child as white schools. Between 1918 and 1929 there were significant changes in black education in the State. Some Progressive educators and politicians pointed out that the State's economy would not improve without educational reform part of the rehabilitative formula (Bhatia).

State support of education was a highly debated topic in the state legislature. Harlan (1958) argues that the opinions and official actions during the fifteen-year life of this argument give insight into the attitude towards education and towards the black citizenry held by those serving in positions of government power in the South Carolina. At issue was the question of whether to include and how to include black education in the system. According to Edgar (1998) the members of the Columbia King's Daughters forced the attention of the state's politicians on compulsory school attendance at the turn of the century when they started teaching mill village children. Even though a bill was passed mandating that all children go to school, the law was weak and not enforced; the debate

over compulsory education raged for fifteen years. The official rhetoric focused on the cost of supporting schools for all children. Raising taxes for 116,000 black children would double taxes and citizens could not afford that, it was argued.

Another claim was that schools for all children would make the education system a burden to the taxpayers. It was also claimed that the state was paying almost as much as any other state for education. Outside the fiscal realm, according to Harlan (1958), government leaders made statements about families being divided because of children having to work to keep the family together rather than going to school. It was also suggested that worthless children would cause problems at school and that an illiterate person who was good was of more benefit to society than an educated person who made trouble. There were diverse arguments made on behalf of keeping blacks out of state supported schools.

Educated blacks would be likely to turn on and harm whites. It was claimed that white landowners would feed black children all winter but in the spring, no children would be available to work the land. One argument pointed out that local school trustees were white and if they could not operate the schools in their own interest, then they were not suited to the task (Harlan, 1958).

Reasonable arguments cropped up in counter to these, Harlan (1958) further argues, such as state prosperity which would result from an educated citizenry, black and white alike. South Carolina would become competitive with other

producers through education was another argument that invited reasonable people to support the compulsory education movement (Harlan, 1958). The fact that black parents would send their children to school when they could was further practical argument for compulsory education. "Where public schools were available black parents in general accepted the loss of child labor and additional household income so that their children would attend school" (Anderson, 1988, p. 150).

Spending on education was widely diverse throughout the state; it was in the rural districts that the financial cost of the dual system of schools was the greatest. In 1915, according to Harlan (1958) there were 209,192 white children and 327,473 black children between the ages of five and eighteen. School expenditures averaged \$12.37 for white children compared to \$1.00 for black children. \$13.98 was spent on white school buildings per child as compared to \$1.13 spent on black school buildings per child. Despite an increase in state spending on the average of forty percent per year for five years, "white schooling in 1915 was still inadequate for the industrial crises and world wars that lay ahead, but the Negro child had the additional handicap of unpreparedness to compete with local whites" (Harlan, 1958, p. 204).

The dual systems of schools in the rural areas were not operated in an equitable fashion in Harlan's (1958) argument. Funds were directed from the

state level to the local school districts based on the total number of children of all races enrolled in schools in the district. Counties with a large proportion of blacks allocated a pittance to the black schools and used the extra for white schools. Counties populated largely by whites were forced to barely fund white schools after giving the black schools even less than a pittance. Even though the motive and method was similar in all counties, the results were different.

Evidence of differing results can be located in several indices. In 1900, the average school term in South Carolina was 105 days in white schools and 75 in black schools. These numbers reflected a widening equity gap in 1915 with 133 days per white school and 67 per black school. Average per pupil expenditure for student attendance in 1900 was \$77.34 per white and \$6.51 per black with approximately a \$17 increase in average black per pupil attendance and a \$35 increase in the white average. It appears that in 1913, the six white children in one district in the Charleston County system received \$76.66 and the 631 black children were funded at \$3.01 each. Inequities widened over the years until during school year 1928-29 when South Carolina allocated \$60.06 per white child enrolled in school and \$7.89 per black but Barnwell County spent \$124.29 per white student and \$5.85 per black (Harlan, 1958).

Interrelationships between Schools and Libraries in the South

Three examples of relationships between libraries and schools are noteworthy from the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1903, the Cossitt Library in Memphis, Tennessee established an agreement with the black school, Lemoyne Institute, whereby the school would supply the space and Cossitt would assign a librarian and books to serve the school's students as well as any interested black in the city and surrounding area (Gleason, 1941). In 1904, the private Rosenberg Library of Galveston, Texas established a library for blacks designed to serve as a public library for the entire city. The Board of Directors built an addition on the Galveston Central High School building that was the first structure erected for the purpose of housing a public library for the exclusive use of blacks (Gleason, 1941).

The King William County Library in Virginia organized service to the local black elementary school and declared it a branch library although the library gifted the school with a few books annually. There were no hours for the community to access the books and the school was closed entirely all summer (Gleason, 1941).

Lucille F. Fargo (1930) was an early advocate of the notion that the library and public school should work in tandem to teach children a wise use of leisure time and to demonstrate to them the ways the library could satisfy their "practical needs" (p. 21). Wilson and Wight (1935) cited a practical reason for cooperation

between schools and libraries in the South. Large portions of the users of libraries in other parts of the nation were children between twelve and eighteen years old. Almost half of the population in the South was in this age bracket. The school age children in the South should be encouraged to grow into adult readers so that the overall reading population of the region increased.

Additionally, Wilson and Wight (1935) argued that the stated objectives of the public library listed by the American Library Association in 1935 and the objectives of the public school, stated by the Committee on the Reorganization of Secondary Education and cited by the United States Bureau of Education in 1918, were aligned in common purpose. Collaboration between the two agencies would avoid overlapping activities.

In South Carolina, Robert MacMillan Kennedy called for collaboration between libraries and schools. In a paper delivered on January 17, 1914 to the Kershaw County Teachers' Institute, Kennedy, suggested development of a county public library system that would be the "capstone of the county's public school system" (p. 10) in the way it worked with the rural schools to meet both the needs of the students and the general county population as well.

According to Gleason (1941) by 1935, thirty percent of the seventy-five public libraries available to Southern blacks were housed in public schools. The biggest advantage to use of the schools was economic; quite simply, there was no rent,

personnel could be hired on a part time basis and the board of education could often be counted on to contribute to maintenance of the facility. A disadvantage was that adults in the community did not perceive that the facility was for their use as well as for the school children's use. Program planning was not necessarily inclusive of the adult reader. Collaboration between the public library and the school presented the disadvantage of offering limited library hours because the school could be closed at night, on weekends, and during the summer as deemed by the local education boards (Gleason).

The Faith That Supports the People's Actions

The faith of the people in the rural South was predominantly Protestant and heavily influenced by Methodism. The tenets of the faith and the structure of the church facilitated social action. Despite the predominantly Christian slant, Jewish ethics impacted Southerners through the work of the northern philanthropic agency, the Julius Rosenwald Fund.

Jewish Ethics

In addition to study, prayer, and ritual, Judaism requires the practice of good deeds. This is the practical wisdom that has been the framework of Jewish piety throughout the centuries (Schwartz, 1999). Jewish ethics are universal and constant. They are inclusive of every race, ethnic group, and every religious belief. Ethical behavior is the foundation of Jewish life. "Judaism is not so much a religion of faith and of soul salvation as it is a religion of conduct and a way of life" (Meyerowitz, 1935, p. 12). The Jewish belief that man is made in the image of his Creator is the basis for living in accordance with the factors of the character of God.

Malachi 2:10 (Metzger & Murphy, 1991) supports the equality of all mankind: "Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our ancestors?" (NSRV)

Surface differences between people do not hide the fact that all are created in the image of God. Genesis 1:27 (1991) "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (NSRV).

Talmudic literature supports the concept of man being created in the image of God. Pirke Aboth 3:18 (Herford, 1925) "Blessed is man, for he was created in the image of God."

The Hebrew scripture Leviticus 19:18, 34 (Metzger & Murphy, 1991) is seen as the basis of Judaism (Meyerowitz, 1935).

You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

(NSRV)

The emphasis of the Hebrew scripture on the value of individuals and their responsibility to honor the commandments is echoed in the Talmudic literature.

“He who hath compassion on his fellow-men, will receive compassion from God.” “What is hateful to you, do not do unto others,--that is the entire law, everything else is commentary” (Elizure-Epstein 1972).

Judaism teaches that a man’s life is destroyed if he is deprived of his means of earning a living or of his possessions. Jews are required to protect their neighbors’ and their interests from any unjust attacks. Jewish teachings also forbid taking advantage of others’ helplessness or ignorance. (Meyerowitz, 1935)

Zechariah 7:9-10 (Metzger & Murphy, 1991) commands:

Thus says the Lord of hosts: Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another; do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another. (NSRV)

According to Schwartz (1999) the spirit of generosity for Jews is linked with identifying so closely with others' needs that it becomes a solidarity creating a desire to give whatever possible. "We should try to have the kind of heart that needs no prompting to feel and then do for others" (p. 122). Care for the powerless applies to the structure and functioning of society. At their best compassion, empathy, and sympathy become catalytic to eliminate causes, not to simply erase symptoms.

Meyerowitz (1935) argues that in the modern world, the community has subsumed social tasks that were once the responsibility of individuals and families. Education, both religious and secular, care for the poor, and relief for the oppressed have become community endeavors and as such, Jews should feel obligated to support them with both financial resources and their active service.

Christian Ethics

Theologian, James H. Cone, argues that the Bible is the source of Christian theology. God's righteousness complements his love and as a personal God He seeks right relationships between people that lead to social justice. God's righteousness invokes in His people a desire and the courage to stand up to injustice and inhumanity. Christian scripture clearly calls Christians to sympathize with the weak and the poor through concrete action (Siker, 1997).

Cone develops his canon calling for Christian action through the Scripture from both the Old Testament and the New Testament (Siker, 1997). One of the texts he relies on from the Old Testament is Isaiah 61:1-2 (Metzger & Murphy, 1991).

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God: to comfort all who mourn; (NRSV)

Cone's canon is further built upon Jesus' teaching for Christian action against social injustice in the New Testament (Metzger & Murphy, 1991), Matthew 25:31-41, when He said,

But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate them as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left. The King will say to those on the right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me

clothing. I was sick, and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me. (NRSV)

Cone interprets this teaching in his call to Christians to act on their faith. "God is not necessarily at work in those places where the Word is truly preached and the sacraments are duly administered, but where the naked are clothed, the sick are visited, and the hungry are fed" (1969, p. 59). Cone argues that "the least in America are literally and symbolically present in black people" (Cone, 1975, p. 136).

Stassen and Gushee (2003) base their argument of Christian ethics on Matthew 22:37-40 (Metzger & Murphy, 1991).

Jesus said, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets

(NSRV).

This twin commandment to love is the “praxis of the kingdom” (p. 21) calling Christians to a lifestyle of service and humility.

A key to understanding this call to service according to Stassen and Gushee (2003) is found in Luke 6:20 (Metzger & Murphy, 1991) “Then he looked up at his disciples and said: ‘Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God’ (NSRV). They expostulate that God knows that the powerful push aside and dominate the poor and that He has deep compassion for the poor. The poor are not blessed because of their virtue but because God wants them rescued from those who use their power to guard privilege and to gain more power.

Spohn (1999) says “When Christian individuals and communities try to figure out what to do about racism, economic justice, sexism, and environmental degradation, they should do so in reference to who they are called to be as disciples of Jesus Christ” (p. 3). The life of Jesus from the Gospels is the fundamental basis for developing individual Christian identity. Certain attitudes are mandated; certain ways of relating to others are proscribed and measured against the paradigm of Jesus’ life. Interpretation of Jesus’ life should be demonstrated through a life that is loving and faithful to God, dedicated to justice, and compassionate to those who are oppressed and suffering. “They are to use their imaginations to recognize certain patterns and to extend them to

their own families, businesses, and societies” (p. 64). McGinn, Meyendorff, and LeClerq (1985) argue that different times, personalities, and perspectives define the injustices and the methods used to embody the life of Christ.

Methodism

Englishman, John Wesley, who founded the Methodist Church, preached a new message to people in the eighteenth century. Wesley preached that all men and women were equal before God and that redemption through Christ was available to anyone, the humblest and poorest or the richest and most royal. His preaching, with its focus on conversion, faith, and service to fellow man, won many followers. Wesley’s followers saw the need to work for social injustice and a spirit of philanthropy soon enveloped England. As social reform bred social reform, class structure lines loosened and life for the poor improved. Wesley himself fought against slavery, intemperance, poor prison conditions, and for the sick and the poor. He set up schools for the poor and made inexpensive literature available to people who could not afford to buy books so they too could have some education (Prince 1941).

Methodism spread into other European nations as well as into America. Itinerant Methodist preachers provided some of the only religious ministry

available to pioneers for more than a century during the settlement of the United States (Inge, 1930). Women's groups within the Methodist denomination emphasized the importance of ethical action based on the concept of God's love for each and every individual. Over time Methodism was gradually reinterpreted to point out the worth and potential of individuals. Efforts to affect social justice easily developed from this notion. Methodist women saw persons in need of spiritual, educational, and physical help and argued that a change of environmental influences would change lives significantly (McDowell, 1982).

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South developed as a result of the schism in the American Methodist church over slavery (Auping, 1994). At the beginning of the twentieth century, two thirds of the southern Methodists lived in rural areas and worshipped in a tradition rooted in theology focused on God's love and concern for people. Many Methodist women reinterpreted their Methodist beliefs to develop a strong conviction of the worthiness and dignity of individuals (McDowell, 1982).

The Methodist women concurred with Woodward's assessment that southern schools were "for the most part miserably supported, poorly attended, wretchedly taught, and wholly inadequate for the education of the people" (Woodward, 1974, p. 398). Believing that moral values and religious beliefs were developed in the early years, Methodist women actively supported

kindergartens and schools for black, immigrant, and poor children and advocated curriculum aimed at intellectual, religious, and character formation (McDowell, 1982).

The large number of blacks in the South presented a challenge to the Methodist women. Most of the southern blacks were poor and lived in rural areas. There was no issue in the region that was as potentially explosive, but uplift for blacks resulted in large part due to the women's efforts. A major thrust in this uplift occurred in the first years of the twentieth century when the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, the Home Missions Board, and Paine College in Augusta Georgia formed a collaborative venture to develop a girls' vocational department at the college. This effort was followed by increasingly more focused work among black despite protests and disinterest or jealousy from both black and white church leaders (McDowell, 1982).

The activities of the Ku Klux Klan, lynchings, and race riots throughout the South after World War I served to increase membership in the women's Methodist organizations as more and more women became interested in the living conditions of African Americans. A gathering in 1920 of about 100 black and white women where the white women learned of the problems of black citizens, the white role in the problems, and the interest of black women in the

uplift of their race bound the women of the two races in further interracial work. Believing that only through application of the teachings of Christ could the racial problem in the South be solved, they condemned the Ku Klux Klan and lynchings and encouraged all Christians to work to abolish these evils. It was logical to them that education, social improvements, and the gospel could cure the poverty, ignorance and immorality they perceived as widespread among blacks. The women worked under the notion that health issues, economics, and morals of both races were influential on the other and that elimination of causes of social ills rather than just the eradication of symptoms would benefit black and whites (McDowell, 1982).

During Jim Crow, while the Methodist women in this primarily white church denomination operated under the notion of separate but equal; they did act on their belief that the cornerstone of democracy was equal opportunity for everyone. They were not necessarily revolutionaries; they did not advocate the intermingling of the races but concentrated on uplift for black citizens. During this period, the Methodist press did not call for an end of the Jim Crow system even though it did advocate an end to violence and lynching in the South (Cameron, 1961). The women did receive support from men in the church as well as from people from outside the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in carrying out the bold actions they deemed part of their Christian service.

Conclusion

Education, race, economics, and the attitudes prevalent in the South in the decades following Reconstruction are foundations of this study of southern American schools and libraries during the 1930's. Life was harsh for the large majority of the population in the rural areas of this region. Cotton as a cash crop was a tenuous commodity; tenant farmers needed large families to work long hours through the crop cycle making school attendance a very low priority. In reality in this situation, social and economic mobility was highly unlikely to the low socioeconomic class and even more elusive to blacks. Rural southerners were disinterested and even resentful of interference in their lives.

The autocracy of Jim Crow forced operation of a dual system of services that was not affordable. White leaders in the community controlled the schools and their funding so white schools were of a higher quality but even at that, "Education was so poor that it was hardly worth the name" (Embree & Waxman, 1949, p. 38). Whites seemingly rationalized the educational inequalities between the races through their widely accepted belief that blacks were not as capable of learning as whites. While schools and libraries were accessible to whites, efforts

were made to avoid extending their services to the blacks in rural areas of South Carolina.

During the Progressive Era, there was a move of the clergy to ameliorate poverty and injustice. Christians were called to act on their faith in effecting social change and eradicating lynching and mistreatment of blacks. The Jewish tenet mandating performance of good deeds and for relating to others with compassion was significant in the work of the philanthropists who invested money in social uplift in the South during the period.

The complexity of the South during the 1930's, the isolation and insulation from the greater world of its rural citizens, their distrust of outside interference, and the practice of Jim Crow complicated the task of social uplift.

It was in this complicated social, economic, and political climate that business magnate, Julius Rosenwald offered matching grants for school construction to black communities through 1932. Rosenwald, from the middle class, grew up in an urban Illinois home where he was not isolated from the world. Even though he did not complete high school, he lived and worked in New York as a young man where he learned his business. He had access to books and current events throughout his life. His adherence to Jewish traditions and beliefs rendered him a man interested in the welfare of blacks, particularly the educational needs of the southern blacks. Rosenwald believed that America's progress would falter if

an entire segment of the population was left behind and that as a wealthy man, it was incumbent on him to use his money to stimulate government to carry out its responsibility in educating blacks.

It was into this complicated social, economic, and political climate that Willie Lee Buffington was born and lived most of his life. Buffington was a white, working class South Carolinian who recognized the inequities that his black neighbors suffered. It would be expected that growing up during this time, Buffington would have been a proponent of Jim Crow. He lived the life of a tenant farmer, and later the life of a mill worker in South Carolina; both life experiences that gave him an empathetic understanding of the hopelessness and complexities of poverty. His compassion for his black friends and his Christian ethics were instrumental in using his white privilege to effect reform for them. His work in providing books and libraries in South Carolina is a multifaceted lesson in educational uplift and a remarkable story of the life of one man lived to serve the oppressed.