Negro Historiography With Special Emphasis on Negro Historians of the New School

Ella D. Lewis Douglas

Utah State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/gradreports

Part of the Sociology Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/gradreports/689

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Plan B and other Reports by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact rebecca.nelson@usu.edu.
NEGRO HISTORIOGRAPHY WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS
ON NEGRO HISTORIANS OF THE NEW SCHOOL

by

Ella D. Lewis Douglas

Report No. 1 submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
in
Social Science
Plan B

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah
1968
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special attention is given here to the racial leaders of twenty years ago who spoke of developing race-pride and stimulating race-consciousness, and of the desirability of race solidarity. This report is a special tribute to them.

The writer is also indebted to Drs. G. S. Huxford and Douglas D. Alder for the courtesy and encouragement which they extended in the constructing of this report.

Ella D. Lewis Douglas
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Justification for Negro Historiography</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Its Importance</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. A GENERAL OVERVIEW: THE PROBLEM OF PURPOSES OR OBJECTIVES OF NEGRO HISTORIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problem of Interpretation</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The revolt against classical liberalism</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. NEGRO HISTORIANS OF THE NEW SCHOOL</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rayford W. Logan</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Sherman Savage</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorenzo Johnston Greene</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luther Porter Jackson</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alrutheus Ambush Taylor</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Quarles</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence D. Reddick</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Porter</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William M. Brewer</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton Everett Knox and Eric Williams</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hope Franklin</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT NEGRO HISTORIANS--A CRITIQUE</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Except for an occasional Nat Turner, Booker T. Washington, or George W. Carver, the Negro as a person is missing from the textbooks from which the millions learn their history. The race has bulked large as a theme in American historiography, but such treatment has been largely preoccupied with Negroes en masse and as a "problem," and has rarely extended to individual, creative Negroes and their contributions to American society. It may be supposed that white, college-bred Americans can identify very few of the most celebrated Negroes who attained prominence of some sort before World War I.

However, any attempt at writing an intellectual report on the Negro historian in the United States of America has as a model such works as Charles Beard's That Noble Dream, S. E. Morison's Faith of a Historian, Vernon Lewis Parrington's Main Currents in American Thought, Elmer Barnes' A History of Historical Writing, as well as Henry Steele Commanger's The American Mind.

The writer became interested in Negro historiography the summer of 1965 when she was enrolled in an NDEA History Institute in Oregon College of Education, Monmouth, Oregon. She took a course entitled "American Historiography." In this course the writer noticed that the literature on American historiography had almost nothing to say about Negro historians. Of all the books and texts used in this
course, only one, *American Historians* by Harvey Wish, mentioned the names of Negro historians. These were W. E. B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson, and John Hope Franklin. In about two brief paragraphs, this work disposed of the Negro historian.

Negro historiography has almost come of age in the Twentieth Century. W. E. B. DuBois and Carter G. Woodson, until very recently, were the fore-runners of Negro historiography. After pursuing the field to the turn of the present century, Vernon Loggins concluded: "The long line of Negro autobiographies gives undoubtedly a better understanding of the progress of the American Negro than the writings of the avowed historians." ¹

Probably because of the youthfulness of this historiography, any study or report entitled "Negro Historians" or "Great Negro Historians" would be brief indeed. For that reason, the present report is not confined to either the "great" or "near-great" Negro historians, although some that appear here may be in one of the above categories. Rather, it is a study of the Negro historian of "The New School." "The New School" covers the general period from about 1930 to the present.² The following criteria were used to study writers:

1. Quantity of their writings.
2. Literary merits of their writings.


3. Their training in historical methodology, especially thoroughness in use of sources and documentation.

4. Their philosophy of history.

5. Breadth and soundness of their interpretations of historical events and movements.

6. Objectivity.

7. The impact which their writings have had on people of their own and subsequent periods.

Historians, regardless of race, are subject to fashion and professional writers often have been under the influence of dominant contemporary viewpoints. Thus, as an example of Ranke's "scientific history," we read Henry Adam's brilliantly detailed attack on John Smith's trustworthiness in telling the Pocahantas story. In a study published in 1944 by W. F. Fontaine, Negro historians were said to be environmentalists and used the approach because it rendered conclusion favorable to their race. In this report we will seek evidence for or against this statement. Dr. Woodson emphasized his dislike for Phillips' American Negro Slavery by reviewing it adversely not only for the Mississippi Valley Historical Review but also--in an unsigned review--for his own Journal of Negro History. While he conceded that the book was better than most histories of slavery, he thought that it was primarily an economic treatise concerned only with the Negro as property and definitely biased. He commented upon Phillips' "inability to fathom the Negro mind" and his tendency to emphasize the kindly planter and the contented slave. 3

While a new image of the Negro and his African past began to replace the Phillips' interpretation, young scholars took issue with the entire plantation hypothesis as well.

Kenneth M. Stampp utilized the recent findings on Negroes and African studies by the anthropologists to demonstrate how relatively advanced the original African cultures were. He dismissed the plantation myths of the Negroes' inherent inferiority and submissive temperament. Phillips had made the Negro at once submissive and prone on occasion to slave plots, insurrections, and crimes. Stampp disagreed with Phillips and with those historians who followed this view that slavery did not pay economically. 4

The Negro historians' writings may be more moralistic than other writers but human values are not an indigenous part of the historical narrative; they are put there by a moralist disguised as an historian, and the conclusions of Negro historians, as well as others, are partly shaped by this fact.

The Justification for Negro Historiography

Its importance

What is the proper justification for Negro historiography? A search of 14,285 sketches in the Dictionary of American Biography reveals that only 89 of the number—about six tenths of one per cent—treat Negroes, and the selections reflect an honest application of

4 Ibid., p. 263.
impartial standards. If a conservative twelve per cent be taken, according to Richard Bardolph, as the average proportion of Negroes to the total population in the entire span of American history to 1936, it would follow, if the Negro's opportunity had equaled that of the whites, that some 1,700 colored notables might have found their way into the DAB. This significant omission alone justifies Negro historiography.

The proper justification for Negro historiography, as with any other work of scholarly endeavor, is that it constitutes a contribution to the knowledge and understanding of mankind. The only inspiration really necessary for the scholar is that he, through his researches and writings, is giving to his generation and to posterity knowledge and understanding. Any other outlook may be detrimental to scholarship. What more extreme forms "philopietism" can produce is evident in German historiography of the late Nineteenth Century Nationalist School and in National Socialist and Fascist and Bolshevik propaganda.

No effort has yet been made to evaluate the basic ideas which have produced and inspired American Negro historiography. This report, in a limited sense, is such an effort. It proposes to indicate by analyzing the views of several of the leading historians, some of the ideas which helped to produce, inspire, and shape their historiography, and critically to examine the validity of some of these ideas.

Most Negro writers believe that the job of the Negro historian is to prove that the Negro race has a creditable past.

Negro historiography can inspire the Negro and inform the white man by contemplating the deeds of the worthy members of the Negro
race. Many whites do not know the contributions of the Negro to this country's growth. It will also raise the aspirations of Negro youth to attack the highest objective of life. It supplies models for them--models with which they can identify.

There are many motivating factors responsible for Negro historiography. Concomitant with the New Colonialism of the late Nineteenth Century was a swelling tide of nationalism and humanitarianism, which affected people in all quarters of the globe. Everywhere racial and cultural groups became intensely interested in their pasts. Many sought a folk genius of some kind which would explain their achievements or promises of achievement and serve as a stimulus to group pride. This is even more true today, as the Negro searches for his identity--his African roots.
CHAPTER II
A GENERAL OVERVIEW: THE PROBLEM OF PURPOSES OR OBJECTIVES OF NEGRO HISTORIOGRAPHY

An examination of the writings of such early Negro historians as William Cooper Nell, James W. C. Pennington, Robert Benjamin Lewis, James Theodore Holly, Joseph T. Wilson, William Wells Brown, and George Washington Williams reveals that written Negro history had its beginnings in America primarily as an attempt to justify emancipation. Here it is of interest to compare the purposes which motivated the earliest Negro historians with those of their white contemporaries. Posing recently the question, "What is written history good for?", Henry Steele Commager informs us that:

The generation that had rejoiced in the stately histories by Bancroft, Motley, Prescott, and Parkman had not been troubled by this question. It had been content with the richness of the narrative, the symmetry of the pattern, the felicity of the style that was to be found in these magisterial volumes.

As indicated, such was not the case with the Beginning School of Negro historians, who were as much interested in the uses of their history as they were in its discovery. Here it can be seen that Negro history originated from an urge to social reform as well as the urge to scholarship. The conception of its nature, purposes or goals, and of values to be derived from the study and teaching

---


of this discipline have been shaped, to a large extent, by this duality of urges. If we follow the practice of the many modern educators who "divide subjects or areas into two kinds called 'tool studies' and 'content studies',"⁷ we find that always Negro history has been viewed as both a "content study" and a "tool study."

Of the scholarship goal, George Washington Williams declared in his celebrated study, "Not as a blind panegyrist of my race, nor as a partisan apologist, but from a love for 'the truth of history,' I have striven to record the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."⁸ Similarly, Article II of the Constitution of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, published when this organization had been in existence only two years, gave as the Association's object, "The collection of sociological and historical documents and the promotion of studies bearing on the Negro."⁹ Of the social reform goal, in 1841 James W. C. Pennington voiced a sentiment which practically every Negro historian has echoed. Giving the purpose of his Textbook of the Origin and History of the Colored People, Pennington declared in his Preface, "Prejudices are to be uprooted, false views are to be corrected."⁹a In 1936 L. D. Reddick stated before the Association's annual meeting in Richmond, Virginia

⁸ Ibid., p. 67.
⁹a Ibid., 125.
that one of the purposes of Negro history is "to inculcate a systematic
price in . . . Negros."10 "It is clear," Reddick continued, "that
Negro History has the generalized objective which it shares with all
scholarship of seeking the advancement of knowledge plus the specific
design as a lever of what might be termed 'racial progress.'"11

In 1940 Professor W. B. Hesseltine stated that this Association
"has assumed the task of inspiring pride in the achievements of the
Negro7 race,"12 and in 1957 John Hope Franklin wrote that "Negro
history . . . can and, in time, will provide all America with a
lesson in the wastefulness, nay, the wickedness of human exploitation
and injustice that have characterized too much of this nation's past."13

There may be no better evidence of the social reform goal of Negro
history than the language of the section entitled, "Why the Negro in
History," which Carter Woodson penned for the 1926 brochure on Negro
History Week. Here Dr. Woodson wrote:

Let truth destroy the dividing prejudices of nationality and
teach universal love without distinction of race, merit or rank.
With the sublime enthusiasm and heavenly vision of the Great
Teacher let us help men to rise above the race hate of this
age unto the altruism of a rejuvenated universe.14

The writings of the past by Negro historians suggest that

(1) the Beginning School of Negro historians had an inordinate faith

10 Carter G. Woodson, "Importance of Records in the National Archives
on the History of the Negro," Journal of Negro History, XXI (February,
1937), 40-45.
11 Ibid., 45-46.
12 John Chamberlain, "The Negro as a Writer," Bookman, LXX
(February, 1930), 70-73.
13 John Hope Franklin, "The New Negro History," Journal of Negro
History, XXII (December, 1957), 330-38.
14 Ibid., 339-40.
in the role of education, both as a cause of race prejudice when
misused, and as a corrective of this prejudice when correctly applied.
This prejudice was rooted in an actual de facto and de jure situation.
Furthermore, the 1876-1912 bias against the Negro which American
historiography displayed was not due solely to the romanticist leanings
of the new Southern historiography, nor to the writings of such
Europeans as Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Count Joseph Arthur
de Gobineau.\textsuperscript{15} This bias drew considerable sustenance from the
urban-Eastern-inspired aristocratic tone which dominated American
historiography from 1865-1893. The Twentieth Century shift to a
more favorable view of the Negro in history is in part the result
of a general shift in American historiography from an aristocratic
to a democratic bias. (2) It is believed that an improper mixing
of the scholarship and social protest urges may be detrimental to
Negro historiography. There can be no quarrel with using Negro
history to teach colored youths to respect themselves and their race,
or to instill in American whites a greater respect for this nation's
largest ethnic minority. This might well be called "applied Negro
history" and is a valid endeavor. However, while the scholar may be
inspired to do research on a topic in this area by many motives,
social uplift among them, once he begins his research and writing he
is the pure scientist who should be guided by only the desire to
discover, understand, and relate the truth as objectively and fully
as he can. Ideal historical writing is not tendential and polemical,

\textsuperscript{15} Earl E. Thorpe, \textit{The Negro Mind} (Baton Rouge, Louisiana:
and only when his task of finding and relating the truth about the Negro in history is completed is the scholar free to enter upon the role of the applied social scientist, who brings the truth to bear on whatever problems may need resolution. Chattel slavery and racial segregation and discrimination have caused the Negro historian periodically to lay down his scholar's mantle for that of the applied social scientist much more than has been the case with the American historian of the majority group.

This research will differ with some noted scholars regarding some of the reasons they assign as primary justifications for Negro history. Spinoza insisted that the philosopher must try to see things "under the aspect of eternity" and, in this view, the only end to which Negro history is absolutely necessary is to the fullest knowledge and understanding of human history. In the final analysis the cause of Negro history is circumscribed by neither time nor circumstances, for it is the cause of knowledge and truth. Although it is understandable that the early makers of Negro historiography saw its meaning, significance, and value largely in terms of social usefulness, it should never be forgotten that when all past and present social problems are solved, Negro history will still have all of the uses peculiar to any other body of knowledge. By 1960 it did not appear that the purpose or objectives of Negro history had changed much since the Association was organized in 1915. While the scholarship goal is permanent, the social uplift goal remained because race prejudice, segregation, and discrimination remained. Yet, where other aspects of this discipline are concerned, it would seem that at least two important changes had
occurred since 1915 which should be reflected in the philosophy of Negro history. These changes affect its nature and scope as well as interpretation. By reference to two other areas of historical specialization this may be illustrated.

Evaluating the present state of Occidental research into Chinese history, one critic stated recently that "the field is characterized more by basic 'factual' research than by sweeping interpretive writing."\(^{16}\) The critic continued:

This is largely due to the recency of the assault on Chinese history by the American and European academic communities. Confronted with a vast and virgin field of investigation, many scholars have naturally been inclined to concentrate on particularities rather than generalities.\(^{17}\)

Scientific Negro historiography is also of rather recent origin, and has been characterized more by "basic 'factual' research than by sweeping interpretive writing." Carter Woodson often said that in his day the great need of the area was for basic factual research. By 1960, however, the time had probably come when Negro history should be subjected to more comparative studies and to broader interpretive emphases.

Germane to the second point is the comment which another scholar made recently about research and writing in state and local history. "Local history," he said, "has altered with the times, but the change has been so gradual and imperceptible that it seems not to


\(^{17}\) Ibid., p. 5.
have been noticed even by its practitioners."\textsuperscript{18} Continuing, this scholar stated:

\begin{quote}
Crisply put, the change is this: local history is becoming less localized. It is widening out, extending its horizons, reaching for far-flung comparisons and points of reference. It is looking toward regional and interregional areas of interest.

The truth is, the world has shrunk, and in shrinking, the local at times . . . becomes even more significant.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

Have not these same developments implications for the present philosophy of Negro history? Does not the rise to world power of the U. S. A., the shrinking of the globe, and the increased internationalism have implications where today's philosophy of Negro history is concerned? Do not these developments mean, in part, that Negro history is perhaps more important than ever, and where interpretation is concerned, do not these developments call for a "widening out" of Negro history, an extending of its horizons, and reaching for far-flung comparisons and points of reference?

Today's student of Negro history has been well prepared for these emphases. Carter Woodson, W. E. B. DuBois, Charles H. Wesley and other makers of modern Negro historiography have long contended that the approach to history should be broad. Dr. Woodson often declared that "Negro History Week" was more properly a "History Week," for, he stated, "there is no such thing as Negro History or Jewish History or Chinese History in the sense of isolated contributions."\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[19] Ibid., p. 16.
\end{footnotes}
"The relations and interrelations of races," he declared, "the close communication of peoples, and the wide-spread diffusion of ideas have made it necessary for one group so to depend upon the other and so to profit by the achievements of the other that it is difficult to have any particular culture ear-marked."21 "History, then," he concluded, "is the progress of mankind rather than of racial or national achievement."22

The Problem of Interpretation

In the matter of interpretation, probably the biggest pitfalls for the student of Negro history have been the moral, great man, and economic emphases. The Beginning School viewed history almost exclusively as an affair in which, using individuals as tools, the forces of God and the devil were in conflict, with the latter inexorably doomed. In this view the Civil War came as God's way of ending slavery and as punishment to the nation because of its wrong-doing. This interpretation, even if related to the tone of Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, is naive in its over-simplification.

Frederick Jackson Turner's epic 1893 paper read before the American Historical Association has been taken as the event which signalled a "massive shift of American historiography" from an urban-Eastern-inspired aristocratic bias "to a prodemocratic orientation."23

22 Ibid., p. 403.
Yet, because the Nineteenth Century Negro historian had generally been out of step with the "patrician liberalism" of the 1865-1893 period, the shift for Negro historiography was not nearly so massive as it was for American historiography in general. Still, the appearance in 1896 of W. E. B. DuBois' book on the suppression of the African slave trace, and the beginning of Dr. Woodson's work a few years later, ushered in a new Negro historiography which was not only superior in literary presentation, but in interpretation as well. There was to begin in the 1930's a searching re-appraisal of the matter of interpretation in the whole of Occidental historiography. For Negro historiography the re-appraisal appears to have been triggered by the appearance in 1935 of W. E. B. DuBois' book, *Black Reconstruction*, the Marxian thesis of which several able scholars would erroneously hail as a highly welcome and long-overdue fresh frame of reference for Negro history. When this book appeared, Rayford W. Logan wrote that its "fresh interpretation" is "as significant as was Charles A. Beard's *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States.*"24 As we shall see, a few other persons were similarly impressed, but the fact was soon to be grasped by most scholars that the Marxian thesis therein was not one of the multitudinous merits of the book, *Black Reconstruction*.

---

The revolt against classical liberalism

One year after the appearance of this book, Dr. L. D. Reddick, at the twenty-first annual meeting of the Association, issued a call for "A New Interpretation for Negro History." This history, he stated, "is quite different from the study of the Negro in that Negro history has a purpose which is built upon a faith." Feeling called upon to elaborate on this position, Dr. Reddick continued:

At the sound of such words--purpose, faith--our theoretical objector may again rush forward to protest that the validity of history as history is destroyed if it is urged forward by any purpose other than the search for truth or sustained by any faith save that invested in the methods and procedures. This objection, quite fortunately, is over-ruled by the evidence that despite what the authors themselves may say, all history has been written with an "other" purpose. . . . In the better works, the thesis is implied more often than stated; still it is never absent. It seems humanly impossible to escape point of view.25

Holding that there was in 1936 little difference between the philosophy of Negro historians before or since Dr. Woodson's work, Reddick declared that these historians should end their preoccupation with the "slavery theme" and with the Negro in the U. S. A. and turn more to Africa and South America as they were beginning to do. Also, he said, they should end their bondage to the "philosophy of liberalism" which emphasized individualism, rationalism, tolerance, laissez-faire, and progress. This philosophy, he declared, "has included many of the true factors" in the nation's historical development, but "has been superficial in relating these factors and in determining the forces which have been influential."26

In giving his own preferred

26 Ibid., p. 25.
frame of reference and interpretation, this scholar, obviously influenced by Charles A. Beard and W. E. B. DuBois, gave great stress to the role of economic factors. Reddick had considerable to say about the Civil War as essentially a "conflict of economic systems," the role of "economic interests" on Reconstruction, and the effects of a "rather blatantly aggressive industrialism" on events since 1865. (DuBois contended that a grave criticism of Negro historiography up to 1936 was that their "social philosophy" had been sadly lacking in a grasp of the dynamic forces which turned out to be "the rather naive Emersonian gospel of self-reliance, simple optimism and patient regard for destiny." When his own economic perspective is taken, American history begins "to assume a pattern astonishingly intelligible." ) In continuation, he urged young scholars not to "fall into the errors of their literary fathers."

In conclusion, he stated:

Since point of view is inescapable, it is . . . essential that frame of reference should be large, generous, and socially intelligent; that the developments in Negro life be seen in connection with those of the general pattern, of other racial, minority and laboring groups.\(^{27}\)

And:

If Negro History is to escape the provincial nature of its first phase, it will surely re-define the area of subject matter in terms of a larger focus; recast its catalog of determinative influences affecting Negro life and re-examine the social philosophy implicit throughout the work.\(^{28}\)

\(^{27}\)Ibid., p. 27.

\(^{28}\)Ibid., p. 28.
Two years after this call was issued for a new interpretation for Negro history.

Although the rejection-without-qualification of the liberal philosophy mentioned above was extreme in some respects, it was far from being completely in error. Not only was this rejection in line with a larger movement among Afro-American scholars, but the reading of such a discourse as R. R. Palmer's "the Waning of Classical Liberalism," shows that this thinking was in line with a movement which was affecting the whole of Occidental culture. As Professor Palmer shows, Classical Liberalism had been visibly on the wane since about 1880 and in many ways this philosophy was given the coup de grace by World War I and the Great Depression. By the time Dr. Reddick read his paper before the Association, the mighty weight of social circumstances had demonstrated clearly that some elements of the old liberalism had become antiquated and harmful. Of these no-longer-useful elements the most pronounced were probably the faith in automatic progress and the faith that science and knowledge were inherently benign. When these faults of the liberal philosophy are considered, it can be seen that Professor Reddick's judgment that not only was a revised or enlarged interpretation for Negro history in order, but that the same need existed for the whole of American and Occidental historiography, was essentially correct. Yet, reacting against malevolent factors and trends in modern technology, corporateness, war, depressions, and poverty, and against certain ideas

implicit or explicit in Social Darwinism, Freudianism, and Behavioristic Psychology, the opponents of Classical Liberalism sometimes went too far.

In their insistence that in Nineteenth Century Negro historiography the list of determinative influences was too narrow, and that point of view is inescapable, Dr. Reddick was correct. But too much can be made of this latter point. That Edward Gibbon was a rationalist, Leopold Von Ranke a conservative, and Heinrich von Treitschke a nationalist, as Reddick points out, does not legislate these faults into any general acceptance. Productions as objective and free from bias as is humanly possible ever must be the scholar's goal, and Negro history possesses no exception to this.
CHAPTER III

NEGRO HISTORIANS OF THE NEW SCHOOL

Historians of the New School have been able to write history as rebuttal—rebuttal of some position of their professional elders, such as W. E. B. DuBois and Carter G. Woodson. The problem of this school is in identifying the historiographic as well as identifying heroes and villains. With the history of the American Negro and the struggle over his lot and future, many difficulties arise. The trouble is that the academic establishment already occupies the high ground.

As with the Beginning and Middle Schools, members of this later one show many divergencies in style, interests, and the quantity and quality of their writings, as well as in their philosophies of history. Yet, the similarities greatly outweigh the dissimilarities. The justifications for grouping these writers under the heading of the New School are:

1. They began their professional careers since 1930.
2. They tend to be more objective than either of the preceding Schools.
3. These writers show less bitterness, and are less concerned, though not completely so, with refuting the racialist arguments which gained prominence in the Nineteenth Century.
4. They document their writings more thoroughly, and generally
show evidence of a better grasp of the social sciences in general than did either of the two preceding Schools.

5. These historians are less concerned with the "Negro Theme." With the members of this School, Negro historians, for the first time, write in such an area as international relations, and they express for the first time resentment at the exclusive preoccupations with the racial theme which had been characteristic to their day.

6. The New School shows less tendency to crusade or to use history as propaganda.

7. Writers of the New School do not tend to be very prolific. This is perhaps because: (a) They do not feel the urge to crusade for any cause; (b) They feel, perhaps wrongly, that the "Slavery theme" has been exhausted; and (c) They realize the need for more thoroughgoing research and good writing, hence they do not generally rush works to the press. 30

With the New School, American Negro historiography reached its majority. Helen Boardman states that "the combating of anti-Negro propaganda has ceased to be a primary purpose of the Negro historians," but she admits that the many books on Negro history recently written especially for colored children were conceived as one way to combat this propaganda. In the 1920's and thirties, the Negro history movement, launched by Carter Woodson in 1915, became a mass movement at least among colored intellectuals. It found expression in such

forms as novels, poems, high school and college courses, plays, the very popular Negro History Week, and the beginning of private and public manuscript and book collections of Afro-Americans. It is perhaps impossible to determine the degree to which the Negro history movement had either influenced or been influenced by other notable events of the twenties. Yet there can be little doubt that it was closely intertwined with the urban trek which saw great meccas of Negro life arise in New York, Chicago, Memphis, and other cities; the rise of literacy and resurgence of the Negro voter; growth of colored businesses and wealth; the pugilistic successes of Jack Johnson; and the Harlem literary and artistic renaissance. The latter featured everything from literary criticism, novels, poetry, and drama to the tantalizing rhythms of blues and jazz.

Finally, the connection between the Negro history movement and another upheaval caused by the master-propagandist Marcus Garvey is impossible of assessment. There can be little doubt that the two movements were in some fashion related, nor that Garveyism had better success in arousing lower class persons. While back-to-Africa schemes have never had great appeal to colored Americans, Garvey's glorification of things black won surprising response and revealed that the defensive psychology so long characteristic of much Negro thought and action was being displaced by a new aggressiveness and self-confidence. While Garveyism was related to the nationalistic movements which were then racking India, Ireland, Germany, Russia and
other lands, like these it drew inspiration from a base of recent chauvinistic historical writings. 31

In some respects the 1900-1930 period was the most significant epoch of organizing which the Negro has had. Not only did Woodson launch his successful movement in this period, but scores of new businesses, newspapers, churches, schools, and the Urban League and NAACP attest to this fact. In these formative years individual leaders stood out as giants. Their efforts and utterances indicate that they shared not only the uncertainty but the heady optimism of the Progressive Movement and the "Roaring Twenties." The Great Depression and World War II eras revealed that not only had this optimism been dimmed, but by-and-large the giant-like leaders were fast disappearing. The formative years were largely over, and henceforth most leaders were to be lost in the anonymity of organization. Just as there were to be no more Booker Washingtons in education, Frederick Douglasses in politics (save perhaps for the still-backward South), or A. F. Herndons or M. L. or S. B. Walkers in business, so perhaps would Negro historiography never again be dominated by figures which loomed as large as Woodson and DuBois. There were plenty of topics and sources which needed exploration, but the organization had been formed, an audience and scholars aroused, and a point of view articulated. Though much remained and still remains to be done in Afro-American historiography, by 1930 when the whole of American literature entered a new phase, in terms of quality and themes this historiography had

more in common with the larger body of national literature than ever before. Henceforth, it would show less of both race and propaganda and more of that desirable objectivity and quality about which too much can never be said.

Among the top persons in the New School of Negro Historiography are the following:

Rayford W. Logan

Rayford Whittingham Logan, eminent Chairman of the Department of History at Howard University and one time Editor of the *Journal of Negro History*, is one of the few historians of his racial group who have specialized in the area of international relations. He received his A.B. from Williams College, and both the master's and doctorate degree from Harvard University, the latter degree being awarded in 1936. His dissertation was "Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Haiti, 1776-1891." A Phi Beta Kappa, Dr. Logan is the author of several books and numerous articles and book reviews. Among his books are *The Attitude of the Southern White Press toward Negro Suffrage, 1932-1940*; a work which he edited, entitled *What the Negro Wants, Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Haiti, 1776-1891*; *The Senate and the Versailles Mandate System*; *The Negro and the Post-War World*; and *African Mandates in World Politics*. He is also co-author of the introductory volume of *The Encyclopedia of the Negro*, and author of *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901.*
Dr. Logan's dissertation was published in 1941, bearing its original title. With this work, he established his reputation as a scholar in the field of diplomatic history. For this study, which covers the long period from the year of the Declaration of Independence to the Mole St. Nicholas Affair, Dr. Logan used material from British and French archives as well as official papers of the United States government. He also used private papers of various statesmen. This volume has been called the "most authoritative and complete study of the diplomacy of the place and period," by a critic who praised the "detachment and balanced judgment." The thirty-six page bibliography which is appended to the study has been called the "most extensive and up-to-date list of materials concerning an insular American republic that has yet been made available to scholars." This study is one of the few historical productions by an American Negro which has required an extensive use of the Spanish language.

Few of the other productions of Dr. Logan measure up to his dissertation in thoroughness, objectivity, or documentation. His _Attitude of the Southern White Press Toward Negro Suffrage_ was a study of limited scope which covered only eight years. The work is a collection of excerpts from southern newspapers which relate to Negro suffrage. Dr. Logan's excellent study _The Senate and the Versailles Mandate System_ fits into the pattern of the general outlook of Negro historians on the treatments of colonial peoples in the modern world. In this volume, Dr. Logan scores the great gap which existed between the Wilsonian idealism which permeated the founding of the mandate system and the actual treatment which colonial peoples received under this system. He also criticizes
the attitude which southern Congressmen had toward this particular aspect of President Wilson's idealism, and blames the unfriendly attitude to people of color on the prevailing pattern of race relations in the American Southland.

Dr. Logan's The Negro and the Post-War World; a Primer, is a brief study of only ninety-five pages which is highly reminiscent of W. E. B. DuBois's Color and Democracy. Both works were pleas for a more liberal treatment of the world's colored peoples than had been warded out after World War I. Both indicate the conviction that the old Colonialism did not work and that while being the principal cause of World War I, it also helped to bring about World War II.32

William Sherman Savage

Longtime Professor of History at Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Missouri, William Sherman Savage received the doctorate in history from Ohio State University in 1934. His dissertation topic was "The Controversy over the Distribution of Abolition Literature."

Dr. Savage's dissertation has been published bearing its original title. He also has completed a History of Lincoln University. Dr. Savage, the only Negro historian to specialize in the history of the West, is currently planning to publish a volume which will cover the entire story of the Negro in western history. A prolific writer of scholarly articles, the productions of Dr. Savage, like those of almost all historians of the New School, are temperate

and restrained in tone. He reveals no evidence of bitterness or hate. His works are objective and ably documented.\textsuperscript{33}

\textbf{Lorenzo Johnston Greene}

Another of the few Negroes who have specialized on the history of a section, other than the South, is Lorenzo Johnston Greene. Dr. Greene received the A.B. degree from Howard University, Washington, D. C. and the M.A. and Ph.D. in history from Columbia University. The latter degree was conferred in 1942. His dissertation topic was "The Negro in Colonial New England." Dr. Greene has continued his researches into this topic and area and is the author of several books and scholarly articles. His books are \textit{The Negro Wage Earner} (co-authored with Carter G. Woodson), \textit{The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620-1776}; and, \textit{The Employment of Negroes in the District of Columbia}, which was co-authored with Myra Colson Callis.\textsuperscript{34}

Greene's \textit{Negro in Colonial New England} embraces all of the New England slave trade and markets, after which the effects of slavery and the slave-trade on the political, social, economic and religious life of New England are discussed.

The author throws a vivid light on this dark chapter. The slave regime in New England is usually slighted by most historians of this section. Greene shows that the slave trade was at the core of the

\textsuperscript{33}William Sherman Savage, "The Role of Negro Soldiers in Protecting the Indian Frontier from Intruders," \textit{Journal of Negro History} XXXVI (May, 1951), 230-238.

\textsuperscript{34}The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (Washington, D. C., 1930), Pamphlet No. 10, p. 12.
economic life of New England until the eve of the American Revolution. He concluded that it was primarily the slave trade which caused New England's opposition to the Sugar Act of 1764. This, he thinks, was because rum was the medium of exchange in Africa for slaves.  

The Negro in Colonial New England was generally well received by critics. "The only important weakness," wrote Oscar Handlin of the book, "is a lack of familiarity with some phases of Puritan ideas that sometimes leads to serious misinterpretation."  

The Negro Wage Earner resulted from a general project of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History to study the position of this minority in American society. Although Dr. Woodson aided in outlining the study, Dr. Greene did almost all of the research alone. The work begins with the division of labor among Negroes as slaves and traces the manner in which these initial occupations were continued after emancipation. The volume is replete with tables and statistical facts, and holds that only with the mass migrations of this people to northern industrial centers did the early pattern of Negro occupation begin to change significantly. While not a comprehensive study of the Negro labor movement, as a monograph on the occupational status of Afro-Americans the work is a distinct contribution.


Another historian of the New School was Luther Porter Jackson. Much of his career as a teacher and scholar was spent at Virginia State College for Negroes, Ettrick, Virginia. Like Wesley, DuBois, John Hope Franklin, and several other top-ranking Negro historians, Jackson received his undergraduate training at Fisk University. His M.A. degree was conferred by Columbia University and the doctorate in history by the University of Chicago in 1937. His dissertation topic was "Free Negro Labor and Property Holding in Virginia, 1830-1860." Like most other Negro historians who rose to prominence in the twenties and thirties, Jackson was a close acquaintance of, and worked with Carter G. Woodson in fostering the field of Afro-American research and study. Again, like the other disciples of Woodson and DuBois, he was more restrained in tone, objective, and less bitter than either DuBois or Woodson. The generally high literary qualities of the writings produced by members of the New School are perhaps due in part to the fact that these men write less and are engaged in fewer activities of a broad time-consuming nature than were either DuBois or Woodson.

In 1937, Jackson published a small study entitled A History of the Virginia State Teachers Association. Jackson's Free Negro Labor and Property Holding in Virginia was published under the auspices of the American Historical Association. This work, ably documented and written in a thoroughly scholarly and restrained style, was well received by critics.
Professor Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, formerly Dean and Teacher of History at Fisk University, received the A.B. degree from the University of Michigan, and the M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard. Using as a dissertation topic, "The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia," he received the latter degree in 1936. He has subsequently published: The Negro in Tennessee 1865-1880; The Negro in South Carolina during the Reconstruction; A Study of the Community Life of the Negro Youth, a work which he co-authored; and A History of Fisk University. He is also author of a number of articles which appeared in historical and educational journals.

A. A. Taylor's scholarly productions are all of the commendable quality which is characteristic of the writers of the New School. While his, and most of these writings, come to the defense of the Negro as a participant in history, they are restrained, indulge in no lengthy sermonizing, are not bitter, and are ably documented. While earlier colored historians were frequently short on facts and long on argument and interpretation, writers of the New School generally tend to reverse this situation. This School seems to have a reluctance to interpret boldly, and their works are sometimes made less readable on this account. A competent critic, reviewing Taylor's The Negro in Tennessee, criticized the paucity of interpretation. "The facts so systematically and methodically assembled," observed this reviewer, "have a much broader historical message which finer
interpretation would bring." This same reviewer praised Taylor's objectivity and detachment while studying a "complicated problem," and his "judicial temper." Both Drs. Luther P. Jackson and A. A. Taylor have died since the close of World War II.

Benjamin Quarles

Benjamin Quarles, Professor of History at Morgan College, Baltimore, Maryland, has written what is perhaps a definitive study of Frederick Douglass. Upon the appearance of Quarles' biography of Frederick Douglass, W. M. Brewer wrote: "The work is indispensable for study and research on the period of crisis from 1830-60 as well as the reconstruction. Frederick Douglass lives again as a result of the painstaking researches and interpretations of this author who merits the deepest gratitude and highest praise." A reviewer for the Springfield Republican stated that the volume was "worthy of nomination for a Pulitzer award." Representing years of study of the life of Douglass, the work was praised for its very readable style, as well as the organization, thoroughness of research, and accurate interpretation. Dr. Quarles is also the author of several scholarly articles. In 1954 Prentice Hall publishers brought out his *The Negro in the Civil War*.

---

38 Ibid., pp. 252-253.
This was an effort to bring together data gathered since the appearance of George W. Williams' *Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion*. Although it contained some new information, and is a stylistic improvement over Williams' work, few critics seemed to think that *The Negro in the Civil War* represents a definitive work. Quarles has been criticized for being too enthusiastic in his defense and praise in the black troops.

**Lawrence D. Reddick**

Another prominent member of the New School is Lawrence Dunbar Reddick. Graduating from Fisk in 1932 with highest honors, Reddick went on to earn the M.A. and Ph.D. from Chicago University. He was awarded the latter degree in 1939. From that date until 1948, Reddick was curator of the Schomburg Collection of Negro literature. During much of this period, he also served as a lecturer in history for the New York City College. More recently, he has been associated with Atlanta University and the Alabama State College.

Dr. Reddick was co-editor of the already mentioned introductory volume of the *Encyclopedia of the Negro*. He has also authored several scholarly articles. 40

---

Dorothy Porter

Dorothy Porter has for years been librarian in charge of the Spingarn and Moorland Collections of Negro works at Howard University, Washington, D. C. She also has done considerable work in the field of bibliography.

William M. Brewer

A very active contributor of high-quality reviews to the Journal of Negro History is William M. Brewer. For several years a teacher of history at Miner Teachers College in Washington, D. C., Mr. Brewer, a Harvard graduate, worked closely with Carter Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. He is currently serving as Editor of the Journal of Negro History. His reviews reveal thoroughness in reading, a keen grasp of the essential facts in American history and historical literature, and impartial judgment.

Clinton Everett Knox and Eric Williams

Clinton Everett Knox, Professor of History at Morgan State College, is one of the few Afro-Americans to take a doctorate in the field of European history. Professor Knox received the A.B. from Williams College, the M.A. from Brown University, and the Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1940. He used as his dissertation topic, "French Interests and Policy in the Empire, 1887-1905." 41

There are probably two major reasons why Negro historians have not specialized more in European history. The first is that their intense concern with the history of their own race has turned them to Afro-American studies. The second is that the predominantly Negro colleges have taught almost exclusively survey courses in American history, and recently, the history of Western Civilization. A third factor is the absence of university level training in history at these colleges. Indeed, correction of the third factor would automatically eliminate the first two, since university level training would compel these schools to broaden their course offerings. These conditions have created a situation wherein the few colored Americans who have received the bulk of their training in European history generally have not followed this interest to the point of producing scholarly articles or monographs beyond their dissertations. Recently Dr. Paul McStallworth of Wilberforce, Ohio has done excellent work in the field of European colonialism in Africa, while Dr. Matthew Crawford of Virginia State College has cultivated English history as his major field.

Eric Eustace Williams holds a doctorate in European history and has followed up his study in this area, especially of European policies in the Caribbean. Williams received the Ph.D. in History from Oxford University, England, in 1938 using as a dissertation topic, "The Economic Aspect of the Abolition of the British West Indian Slave Trade and Slavery." Among his other works are: Capitalism and Slavery; The Negro in the Caribbean; and, Education in the British West Indies.
The thesis of *Capitalism and Slavery* is that the two were inextricably intertwined—that the latter made possible the former, although the evolutionary growth of capitalism doomed slavery. "This book," states one reviewer, "marks the beginning of the scientific study of slavery from the international point of view." For this study, Williams used documents relating to slavery from virtually all parts of the British empire. Writing on the dominant ideas during the eras of commercial and industrial capitalism, Williams stated: "Political and moral ideas of the age," he writes, "are to be examined in relation to economic development. ... Politics and morals in the abstract make no sense." 42

Four Negro women who have received doctorates in history are Lula M. Johnson, Helen G. Edmonds, Merze Tate and Elsie Lewis.

Dr. Johnson received all three of her degrees from Iowa State University. Her Ph.D. was awarded in 1941. Dr. Edmonds received the bachelor's degree from Morgan State College, Baltimore, and the master's and doctor's degrees from Ohio State University. She received the latter degree in 1946, using as a dissertation topic, "The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina, 1894-1901." Her re-worked dissertation was published under this title in 1951. Written in the restrained, scholarly, well-documented manner which is generally characteristic of the New School, this work was well received. Dr. Merze Tate received the A. B. from Western Michigan College, the M. A. from Columbia University, and the Ph.D. from

Radcliffe College, the latter degree in 1941. Her dissertation topic was "The Disarmament Illusion." This production was published in 1942 under the auspices of the Bureau of International Research of Harvard University and Radcliffe College. Carter Woodson stated that this book was "eloquent evidence that Dr. Tate deserves rank among the historians of our time." In 1948 Dr. Tate published another volume in this field. Dr. Elsie M. Lewis received the A. B. from Fisk University, the M. A. from the University of Southern California, and the Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

Professor Herman Dreer, sometime teacher of English and History at Stowe Teachers College, St. Louis, Missouri, has been a warm supporter of the work of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. He is the author of two books and several scholarly articles.43

Dr. Joseph H. Taylor, long-time Chairman of the Department of Social Sciences at North Carolina College at Durham, and Professor of History at that institution received the doctorate in history from the University of California in 1936. His master's degree was awarded by the University of Michigan. His unpublished dissertation was entitled, "The Restriction of European Immigration, 1890-1924." He is also the author of several scholarly articles.44

---

43 Herman Dreer, "What Does the Innocent Teacher Impart as History," Journal of Negro History, XXV (April, 1940), 132-35.

Dr. Horace Mann Bond, long-time President of Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, holds the Ph.D. in History from the University of Chicago (1936), and is the author of *Education of the Negro in the American Social Order* (1934); *Education in Alabama: A Study in Cotton and Steel* (1934); *Education for Production* (1944); author of the sections on Negro Education in *The Modern Encyclopedia of Education* and *The Encyclopedia of Educational Research*; as well as numerous articles.

Williston H. Lofton has made several scholarly contributions to the growing body of literature on the Negro. 45 Joseph C. Carroll, long-time high school teacher in Indianapolis, Indiana, received the doctorate in history from Ohio State University in 1937. Rufus E. Clement, long-time President of Atlanta University, received the doctorate in history from Northwestern University in 1930. Edward M. Coleman, Professor of History at Morgan College, Baltimore, received the doctorate from the University of Southern California in 1940. Robert L. Gill received the doctorate from the University of Michigan in 1942. James H. Johnston and Prince Wilson were awarded this degree by the University of Chicago. Lewis C. McMillan, sometime Professor of History, Philosophy and German at Wilberforce University, received the doctorate from the University of Bonn, Germany in 1933 while Susie Owen Lee received the degree in 1943 in 1943 from New York University. George William Brown, businessman of Cleveland, Ohio received the doctorate in 1938 from the London University.

School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, using as a dissertation topic, "The Economic History of Liberia." This work was published by the Associated Publishers in 1942. Leo Hansberry, Professor of History at Howard University, is perhaps one of the leading students of African history in the United States. Holder of an M. A. degree from Harvard University, Professor Hansberry also has studied African culture and history in England. After years of careful research, he is preparing a history of Africa. Another scholar who has specialized in African history is Professor Caulbert Jones of the North Carolina College at Durham. Finally, it may be noted that several scholars have found state history an interesting and fruitful field of endeavor. In addition to studies already mentioned, significant work has been done on the Negro in Georgia by Dr. Alonzo T. Stephens and Dr. Clarence Bacote, the latter of Atlanta University; Alabama by Drs. Robert D. Reid and Henry E. Cobb and Mr. Norman Walton; West Virginia by Dr. J. Reuben Sheeler; Pennsylvania by Dr. James Brewer; Louisiana by Mr. Charles Rousseve; Maryland by Dr. Augustus Low; and Tennessee by Dr. Raleigh Wilson.

The fact that one can list, together with brief biographical sketches, all Afro-Americans who have received the doctorate in history on eight or nine pages of a book as Professor Greene does in his Negro Holders of the Doctorate, is proof of the youthfulness of trained scholarship in this field. With the growth of colleges

and universities that have predominately Negro student bodies, it is perhaps not too much to expect that the necessary improvements in faculty, library facilities, and broadened course offerings in history will have a stimulating effect on scholarship among American Negro historians. Also working in the same direction is the recent tendency of white northern universities to employ colored historians, either as full time teachers, or visiting professors. There can be little doubt that today the thoughts and interests of Americans of color, both scholarly and lay, are less racially centered than in the first 50 years of their post-bondage existence. This is a welcome sign. It will be a welcome day also when there will be colored scholars of national and international repute, in all of the major areas for historical research and study--ancient, medieval and modern. Until such a day arrives, the American Negro historian by chronicling and interpreting the story of his race's development, will probably continue to make a contribution of no small proportions to the historical literature and understanding of the United States and the world.

John Hope Franklin

One of the more able young members of the New School of Negro historians is John Hope Franklin. Dr. Franklin is the author of what is probably the best college textbook on Negro history. John Hope Franklin is today, 1968, the Professor and Chairman of the History Department at the University of Chicago, and he is a native of Oklahoma and attended the public schools of Tulsa, Oklahoma.
In 1935 he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts (Magna Cum Laude) from Fisk University. Pursuing graduate studies in history, he attended Harvard University where he received the A.M. and Ph.D. degrees in 1936 and 1941 respectively. While at Harvard he held the Edward Austin Fellowship from the University and a Fellowship from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. For post-doctoral research he has received grants from the Social Science Research Council and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. In 1952 he was named the President's Fellow of Brown University. He was a Foundation Member of the Fisk University Chapter of the Society of Phi Beta Kappa and a charter member of the Howard University Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, honor society in history.

Receiving the latter degree in 1941, he used as his dissertation topic, "The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790-1860." Active with the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, as well as the American Historical Association and the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, Dr. Franklin is one of the few Negro graduates of Harvard who have been invited back to that institution as visiting lecturer. A tireless researcher and writer, he also has been the recipient of several scholarships and research grants, and has served as visiting lecturer at the University of Wisconsin and in England and Germany.

Dr. Franklin has taught at Fisk University, St. Augustine's College, North Carolina College at Durham, and Howard University. In 1956 he became Professor and Chairman of the Department of History at Brooklyn College. He has also served as visiting professor in
several American universities, including Harvard University, the University of Wisconsin, Cornell University, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Hawaii. Abroad he has served twice as Professor at the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies in Austria, as visiting lecturer at the Seminar in American studies at Cambridge University in England, and has lectured in many German cities. In 1962-63 he was Pitt Professor of American History and Institutions at Cambridge University and a Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge. He has participated in forums and discussion groups in several European countries, as well as the Tenth International Congress of Historical Sciences in Rome. In 1957 he represented the American Council of Learned Societies at the centennial observances at the Universities of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay. In 1960 he was Fulbright Professor at several Australian Universities, and in the same year he went to Nigeria for the Department of State to study higher education in that country.

Dr. Franklin's Free Negro in North Carolina is probably a definitive treatment of this subject, although Woodson regretted that the author did not say more about Negro-Indian relations and the anti-slavery movement in that state. In this connection recent work of Dr. Edward Sweatt on the free Negro in Georgia may be mentioned as a desirable and commendable continuation of interest in a significant topic. In 1947 Franklin's From Slavery to Freedom appeared. Written to serve largely as a textbook, the volume follows the conventional pattern of histories of the race and relies heavily on the researches of such earlier writers as George W. Williams, DuBois and Woodson. There is little that is new in the volume,
either by way of facts or interpretation. Still, the objectivity of the author, his temperateness in tone, thorough grasp of his materials, and scholarly presentation make the work a significant contribution. The scholarly vocabulary and style serve to keep the volume from superseding Woodson's textbook for the high school level.

His first book, *The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1870-1860* was published in 1943. In 1947 he brought out *The Civil War Diary of James T. Avers* and his well-known *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes*, a revised edition of which appeared in 1956. Also in 1956 the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press published his *The Militant South*, which has been widely reviewed. In the fall of 1961 his edition of Tourgee's *A Fool's Errand* was published in the John Harvard Library, and in the spring of 1962 the Beacon Press published his edition of T. W. Higginson's *Army Life in a Black Regiment*. His *Reconstruction After the Civil War*, was published in 1961 in *The University of Chicago Series in American Civilization*. In 1963 Doubleday published the American edition of his *Emancipation Proclamation*, while the Edinburgh University Press published a British edition. Professor Franklin has contributed articles to leading journals in the United States and in Europe. For fifteen years he has served on the editorial board of the *Journal of Negro History*. From 1958 to 1961 he served on the Executive Committee of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association; and in December, 1958 he was elected to the Council of the American Historical Association, and was Chairman of the Executive Committee until the expiration of his term on the Council in 1962.
From Slavery to Freedom was variously received. Most reviewers were favorable in their comments. Most severe was Roi Ottley, who reviewed the production for the New York Times. Ottley concluded that the "discussion of the Negro in Canada is fresh and informative, if, somewhat sketchy. . . . Beyond these few pages, From Slavery to Freedom is a bulky, unwieldy, conventional history, with the studied scholarship of a doctoral thesis. . . . When the author turns reporter to survey the contemporary period, his lack of equipment is obvious." 47

One other reviewer joined Ottley in this severe criticism, but Alain Locke felt that "it will be a long while until another book in this field supersedes it." To date Franklin has also published one work which he edited, and several articles, and in 1956 Harvard University published his latest study. Entitled The Militant South, this is only the second manuscript by a colored author to be accepted for publication in the Harvard Historical Series. The first such work was W. E. B. DuBois's dissertation on the slave trade.

Among Professor Franklin's civic and public services in the past has been his membership on the United States National Commission for UNESCO and the Board of Directors of the American Council on Human Rights. At present he is a member of the Fisk University Board of Trustees on which he serves as chairman of the Committee on Educational Policy, the Board of Directors of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Board of Directors of the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies. In 1962 President Kennedy appointed him to a

---

three-year term on the Board of Foreign Scholarships. He has been the recipient of honorary degrees from Morgan State College, Virginia State College, and Lincoln University.
CHAPTER IV
WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT NEGRO HISTORIANS--
A CRITIQUE

In a study published in 1944, W. F. Fontaine sought to ascertain whether social determination was evident in the writings of Negro scholars. Specifically, he wanted to know if there is any correlation between the knowledge and conclusions put forth by these scholars and the position which their race generally occupies in the social order. His answer was in the affirmative. Fontaine based his conclusion on an analysis of the scientific methods and conclusions about race of E. Franklin Frazier, Charles S. Johnson, Allison Davis, W. M. Cobb, Horace Mann Bond, Martin Jenkins, Carter G. Woodson, Charles Wesley, W. E. B. DuBois, L. D. Reddick, and Ernest E. Just. Fontaine declared that all of these writers were environmentalists to a large extent, and that they utilized this approach because it rendered conclusions favorable to their race. Fontaine found that

The thought style of the parties of the left was most frequently analytical. These parties sought by a counter-thought to break down the morphological classifications of "parties of the right" into units so as to recombine the units in a manner affording intellectual support for its social goals.48

The Negro scholar," he wrote, "does not look upon the exceptional Negro as a sporadic incident; he is rather a sort of terminus toward which all Negroes are moving, some more retarded than others by environmental handicaps." "The relation of environment to defense of race," he continues,

... is made obvious by the fact that it enables ascription of the shortcomings of Negroes to external handicaps, and it counter attacks the arguments of those who point to innate capacity as with the Negro biologist, so with the sociologist, anthropologist, educational psychologist, and historian, environmentalism holds sway." He holds that recent scholars have outgrown the "narrow racist" perspective such as was characteristic of the imaginative writers of the "Negro Renaissance." He also criticizes the efforts of Twentieth Century colored historians to bring about a reconstruction of history so as to give the race a more consequential place in it. Preoccupation with a racially pointed reconstruction blinds the historian to the fact that his extravagant praise of trivial makes his knowledge as well as his groups the easy target of the debunker. "The historian would be better to paint his 'gray in gray' rather than in a false gold easily tarnished by the heart of satire."  

"That the majority of Negro psychologists and social scientists are environmentalists," declared E. F. Frazier, "simply means that they have taken over the viewpoint prevailing today." E. B. Reuter

---

49 Ibid., p. 204.  
50 Ibid., pp. 306-08.  
51 Ibid., p. 310.
also attacked Fontaine's conclusions. "It is exceptional rather than usual for students of social reality to rise to a truly objective level of analysis." He wrote

It may very well be that the Negro scholar occupies the position that he does because the weight of evidence makes any other untenable. The great majority of white scholars reach a position on the basis of evidence that the Negro scholars reach the same position because of their social bias. This is not to deny that there are many Negro students who are unable to recognize and discount their biases, but the Negro group has no monopoly on undisciplined and incompetent scholars.52

A serious weakness of the critiques was the failure to give adequate attention to the scholarly writings by Negroes, as it was largely in the area of scholarly writing that distinctive literary works were being produced by Afro-Americans in the fifties. In the field of history, Rayford Logan's The Negro in American Life and Thought, Benjamin Quarles The Negro in the Civil War, and John Hope Franklin's The Militant South were particularly noteworthy efforts, while perhaps The Desertion of Man: A Critique of Philosophy of History introduced a new dimension to historical writings by Negroes. Oliver C. Fox's analysis of the history and nature of capitalism is also worthy of praise.53

A strong criticism has been that some outstanding historians have been influenced by the conception of Negro history as a weapon

53 Ibid., p. 409.
in the fight for racial equality. This orientation may have been, in some respects, detrimental to their historiography.

Many Negro historians have generally indicated little appreciation or as Dr. Reddick states, "too little awareness of economic forces in history."\(^54\) Their philosophy of history has been a moral one. Thus, too frequently such institutions as slavery and colonialism disappeared simply because they were sinful and immoral, and wars are explained as God's punishment for wrong doing. It is this type of thinking which explains the general failure of many historians of color to see that the concept of racial inferiority stems primarily from and feeds on the actual economic, political, social and cultural inferiority of the masses in their race.

DuBois admitted that writings by colored Americans on the Reconstruction Period are too one-sided and suffer from an article of "striking back."\(^55\) His own historical writings have been severely criticized for this same reason, and for the bitterness which they so poignantly reveal. A leading liberal called this "his strength and also his chief weakness."\(^56\) Though Woodson launched the *Journal of Negro History* with the belief "that facts properly set forth will speak for themselves,"\(^57\) his more lengthy writings have been criticized to some extent, because of using a review to proselytize.

\(^{54}\) L. D. Reddick, "A New Interpretation of Negro History," *Journal of Negro History*, XXXVI (January, 1951), 200-10.


In spite of the criticisms, all America owes these historians great homage and respect for the splendid manner in which they have uncovered and ordered the facts of their group's past and published them to the eternal edification and enlightenment of all mankind. This has been a "solid service" rendered not merely to the Negro race, but to historical scholarship generally, in a difficult and still largely unworked field. This is the proper and well earned justification for Negro history and Negro historiography.


CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Because Negro historians have been so occupied with depicting the sufferings of their race, it is easy to conclude that their view of history conforms with the observation of Gibbon that history is "little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind." But in many instances, such observation would not be correct.

As is to be expected when a people have played such a small direct role in the political life of a nation, their historians have not followed the political theme which was for so long the almost exclusive interest of the nation's historians. Negro history is largely social history. Running throughout the dark gloomy picture which it usually depicts is a small note of optimism, of faith in a coming new day.

Yet, this historiography lacks the note of courageous optimism and hope which is so characteristic of Bancroft and others of the Patriotic School of American historians. Colored historians, though writing in a later era, have generally shown a belief that, somehow, God is moulding the destiny of man, and right and justice must in the end prevail.

Although he too has shared this faith, the failure to feel that the day of righteousness and justice is close at hand long deprived some colored historians of the vibrant type of optimism which is
characteristic of most Americans. George Washington Williams performed the researches for his magnum opus frequently with tears pouring from his eyes because of the sufferings of his race. DuBois composed two of his works in "blood and tears." Carter Woodson, while composing a history, not infrequently stopped the chronicling and explaining of events and facts to devote several paragraphs or pages to point out some particular "lesson of history." DuBois usually preserved the last paragraphs or pages of a chapter, or the last chapter of a volume, to do a similar type of moralizing. John Hope Franklin is unique, he belongs with the great or near greats among American historians--Bancroft, Turner and others--because his writings reflect scientific research and use of original sources. Moralization is almost lost.

Most of American history has had the theme of progress of the nation to a position of world prominence and power. It also has emphasized the achievements of a people living under the conditions of freedom and democracy. For the nation and its historians, the story of "that triumphant advance had to be recorded, for the edification of Europe, for the gratification of posterity." A graphic description of the spirit in which the bulk of American historical literature has been conceived is given by Professor Commanger in his The American Mind. He writes:

60 COMMANGER, P. 280.

61 Ibid., p. 284.
A people so aware that they were making history were conscious of their duty to record it. A people sure that they were beating out paths for other nations to follow were sensible of the obligation to mark those paths well. A people whose institutions were continually under scrutiny were zealous to explain and defend them. A people so proud of their achievements and so uncontaminated by modesty were eager to celebrate their triumphs. A people made up of such conglomerate elements and with so little racial or religious or even geographical unity were at pains to emphasize their common historical experience and validate their historical unity. A people whose collective memory was so short were inclined to cherish what they remembered and romanticize it.

Only a casual acquaintance with Negro historical literature reveals that many of the above generalizations do not apply to it. Not that Negro historians have not been aware of the above forces and impressions, for they have. But often they have not felt they were accepted and respected members of the American community. In the words of DuBois, the colored historian felt that he was "in the world but not of it." Thus, when he has pointed to the magnificent achievements of Americans under democracy and freedom, it has been in order to show that the treatment to which his race has been subjected is a violation of this record.

Still, American Negro historical literature fits, in many ways, into the general pattern of historiography in the United States. New England, and especially Harvard College and University, produced Bancroft, Prescott, Irving, Motley, Parkman, Hildreth and other top ranking historians of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Though beginning their works later, many of the best Negro historians are

62 Ibid.

Harvard trained. W. E. B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson, Charles Wesley, William H. Brewer, Rayford Logan, Leo Hansberry, John Hope Franklin, Merze Tate, Clinton E. Know, are all Harvard trained. From the beginning with DuBois, until the present time, Harvard trained Negro historians have continued in the front ranks.

Also, colored American historians have been affected by the many new theories and movements which have swept the western world, although not to the extent as historians of the majority group. Like so many other intellectuals prior to the 1930's, and perhaps indeed more than most, they have shown strong romanticist leanings. This tendency is perhaps best evidenced in the profound faith in education which has been so characteristic of these scholars. Yet, this faith undoubtedly also has roots in the race's actual benighted condition, which was characteristic for so many years after emancipation. Though most of these historians have denied that there was anything unique or peculiar about the race and have insisted that the black man is "just like any other average human being," much about their statements and program for the uplift of the race indicates that they sometimes have been touched with J. G. Herder's conception of the Volksgeist.

Marxism had its strongest impact on W. E. B. DuBois. Apart from the contention that the race is inherently the equal of any group, historians of color generally have not adhered to rigid schools of thought. Where their interpretations have been broad they were generally eclectic. None, with the exception of DuBois, have followed any varieties of Marxism or Socialism. This historiography has been, to a large extent, defensive.
Like most Americans, these scholars have been conservative rather than liberal. Apart from seeking a higher level of culture and education for the group, and a greater measure of sympathy, understanding, and respect from the majority group, they have not been prolific with ideas for solving the "race problem." Until the recent appearance of the New School, they generally have not sought to present well-rounded pictures, but have been content to chronicle the praiseworthy achievements of their group. Here they have been engaged in the needed task of re-dressing a balance which had seen others portray only the negative aspects of the Black Man's history, or else omit any discussion of the race. Though from 1932-1952 the race generally voted the Democratic ticket, it is impossible to detect from their writings the political biases of these historians.

Again, the Negro historian was of his age when, in the Twentieth Century, he gave less emphasis to personalities than had been the case in the Nineteenth Century. For as Professor Commandeur observes, "the historians of the new century . . . concerned themselves more largely with forces than with persons."64 While DuBois went to extremes in this regards, most Negro historians have been more balanced in their judgments.

Unlike scholars in the majority group, among Negroes there have been no revisionist historians save on the issues centering around slavery, the Civil War and Reconstruction. This is perhaps because historians of color have not taken strong and elaborately stated

positions on such matters as the cause of the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, significance of the frontier, or the War of 1898. As to the two recent World Wars, Negro writers have generally adhered to the belief that both were caused by European competition for colonies, just as they contend that the Civil War was caused primarily by slavery. Perhaps again the sociological term "ethnocentrism" explains these limited interpretations.

The Negro historian has not joined in the Twentieth Century search for historical laws which has been characteristic of historians of the majority group. The one law of history which may be evidenced as a part of the historical apparatus of these Negro scholars until very recently, has been a faith in the moral law that righteousness exalteth a nation or a people, while sin abaseth a nation. Carter Woodson, is one of the few who, before 1930 does not persistently hold up the workings of the moral law in the explanation for most historical phenomena.

No historian of color has counselled violence as a means of raising the status of his group. Nor has any advocated any other economic or polotical system as a salvation for his group, with the possible exception of DuBois. These scholars have accepted and upheld liberalism, democracy, tolerance, majority rule, republicanism and other traditional ideals of American society, despite the fact that it is frequently the majority rule principle which deprives them of first class citizenship. While L. D. Reddick has deplored

some aspects of this traditionalism and conservatism in the thought of Negro historians, he offers no real substitute. The explanation for this conservatism and deep-running faith in the future is not only to be found in the so-called religious nature of the race but in the fluidity of the American society. The faith of the black man in his future is due in large part to his faith in the nation and its ideals.

Negro historians have been ardent lovers of liberty "for all peoples." Yet it was not until World War I aroused an internationalist outlook in many Americans that they reveal any considerable interest in the problems of colonial peoples over the world. DuBois has achieved what is probably the highest degree of catholicity and humanitarianism. Like Tom Paine, his "world-citizenship" not infrequently causes him to subordinate what some would call the immediate interests and safety of his own country to larger, perhaps more remote ends.

Because these scholars have been such persistent seekers of democracy, there have been no aristocratic Negro historians. There have been many white scholars who have advocated that some small elite should rule in society. Too, Negro historians have been opponents of militarism.

---

67 Ibid., p. 605.
Despite their basic conservatism, these scholars have not been willing to compromise on the objectives which were being sought by most members of their race. When in 1944 a group of colored historians and other leaders asserted that "nothing less than complete equality is what the Negro wants and intends to achieve," they were introducing no novel pattern of thought or action.  

When one considers that there was, until recently, no Negro college giving even the master's degree, it can be seen that the Negro Ph.D. has taught at the undergraduate level almost exclusively. Consequently his schools have lacked library facilities or time allotted for research, both of which are necessary for the production of scholarly treatises. And, whether real or imagined, fear of difficulties in getting the results of their researches published has, until recently, deterred Negro scholarship. However, John Hope Franklin has turned out many excellent works.

Of the 67 colored Americans receiving doctorates in the social sciences to 1943, 49 wrote their dissertations on topics dealing with the Negroes. Many of the others treated related or similar problems. It is estimated that by 1945 Afro-American holders of doctorates in the social sciences had produced only 82 books. That this level of production does not compare with that of white Americans goes without the saying. However, in view of the obstacles which these persons have had to surmount, they deserve high praise for their achievement.

\[68\] Ibid., p. 605.
Another interesting fact to be observed is that, while these scholars have been mainly preoccupied with the slavery theme, they have produced few of what might be termed definitive studies in this area. Exceptions are to be found in such works as the DuBois monograph, *Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States* and Lorenzo Greene's study of *The Negro in Colonial New England*. While many works produced by Negroes on such race topics as labor, the church, business, or Negro history in general, and similar ones represent the best available writings on these topics, it is still interesting to observe that the definitive study of slavery in the Caribbean is by a white author, that Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* is the most ambitious undertaking in the sociology of the race problem, that to date, for the period he covers, Vernon Loggin's *The Negro Author* is the definitive study on literature, and that the writings of U. B. Phillips and Kenneth Stampp on slavery in the United States rank above all others in this area.

Considering their great importance to the emancipation of the race, it is somewhat surprising that Negro scholars have not written more on the abolitionist movement and the activities of Radical Republicans. While most colored historians have little but praise

---


for such men as Lundy, Garrison, Lovejoy, Stevens or Sumner, they have failed almost completely to produce biographical studies of abolitionists or radical Republicans. DuBois did produce a creditable biography of John Brown, and there are a few other exceptions to this generalization. A classic indictment of some of the traditional pattern is to be seen in the already mentioned article by L. D. Reddick. He wrote in 1937:

The first indictment to be brought against this body of writing is that insofar as subject matter is concerned, the scope has been narrow, the treatment traditional. The notorious example of this is furnished in the preoccupation with the slavery theme. Let it be declared here and now that for the purposes of Negro history, barring the discovery of new materials, the topic of slavery in the United States has been virtually exhausted.

The two aspects of this area which Reddick lists as exceptions are efforts of slaves to break the system by flight, suicide, and revolt, and the effort to get a picture of the institution as seen through the eyes of the slaves themselves.

On the interpretation of history by Negro historians, Reddick states that:

The history of Negro historiography falls into two divisions, before Woodson and after Woodson. In this later span, remarkable improvement has been made in method and scholarship. But when it comes to the fundamental frame of reference, that is, the final interpretation of the philosophy, even this division may not be necessary. The whole group has written under the influence of the prevailing spirit permeating the American mind. This ideology may be labelled "liberalism." 73

---

73 Ibid., p. 219.
Eeddick believes the essential ingredients of this liberalism to be faith in the ideas of tolerance, faith in rationalism, laissez-faire and progress.\textsuperscript{74} He finds no quarrel with this philosophy as far as it goes, but states it "doesn't answer the questions why and under what circumstances things happened."

Disregarding his own too-narrow "dynamic forces," Reddick concludes:

If Negro history is to escape the provincial nature of its first phases, it will surely re-define the area of subject matter in terms of a larger focus; recast its catalog of the determinative influences affecting Negro life and re-examine the social philosophy implicit throughout the work.\textsuperscript{76}

There is still a great need for an encyclopedia of the Negro. Nor is there yet an intellectual history of the race. Few subjects in Negro history have been treated definitively, despite the fact that some persons may be tired of the "slavery theme." The historian of color has produced (as indeed have few white historians) no new novel thesis of particular note, with the possible exception of the marxist thesis of Dr. DuBois concerning the nature of the Reconstruction period controversy. Among these writers there have been almost no outstanding specialists in any area other than American history. Professor Leo Hansberry of Howard University has done extensive researches into African history, but his publications to date have been very limited. Too, despite the limited number of large Negro

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., pp. 221-22.

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p. 223.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., pp. 227-28.
businesses, it would seem that the history of business is an area which has been almost completely overlooked.

Since the freedom of their race may be said to have been born in civil war, it is somewhat surprising also that no Afro-American has won recognition as a specialist in such revolutionary periods as Seventeenth Century England, the French Revolution and Napoleonic Era, Eighteenth Century Europe, Nineteenth Century Europe or the Russian Revolution. And with the interest which the race naturally has in the color problem, it is perhaps even less understandable that so few have sought to become specialists in European colonialism.

The New School is slowly filling in many of the gaps in the historiography of the race. It is questionable whether historians produce better works in the calm atmosphere of dispassionate observation, or when fired by a zealous cause or crusade. German historical writing reached its greatest heights when caught up in the heated Nineteenth Century issue of national unification. Though ultra-nationalistic and biased, this literature could boast of such luminous lights as Ranke and Treitschke. The historiography of our own Southland reached its greatest heights as a crusade against the biased nationalistic preachments of late Nineteenth Century New England historians. Similarly, the historiography of our West reached its greatest heights following Frederick Jackson Turner in a crusade against the eastern Germ theory orientation of early American writing and thinking. It may be that before American Negro historiography can produce again men of the stature of DuBois and Woodson, it will
have to get caught up in another crusade, this time less racial, it is to be hoped. 77

But what is to be the future of that species of knowledge which these scholars have cultivated with such assiduousness that a discussion of the men is a discussion of the area? -- Negro history we mean. This question calls forth a reference to the race relations question which always has had a heavy hand on the nature and status of the historiography produced by Afro-Americans. Perhaps the dominant post-World War II word on this nation's race relations front has been "integration." The old and traditional pattern of segregation and exclusiveness is dramatically giving way in sports, industry, education, and practically all areas of American life. The changes which are being made have occasioned a multitude of complex problems for both the majority and minority groups involved. Not the least of these problems is one which has to do with the matter of what is to be done with many heretofore all or predominantly-Negro organizations, institutions, and activities; which ones are being made obsolescent, redundant, and unnecessary in a fast-growing racially integrated America.

In early post-World War II years it was practically impossible to attend any broad policy-forming meeting of Negro organizations where this problem did not come up. Such was the case with several annual meetings of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. A sizeable number of well-intentioned persons had come to

77 Walter N. Daykin, "Nationalism as Expressed in Negro History," Social Forces, XIII (December, 1934), 258.
believe that continued effort to teach and popularize Negro history would be to further the idea of racial differentness and uniqueness, and to defeat the main objective of the race, which objective is that colored Americans be accorded the same treatment and respect that is given all other Americans. These critics felt that Negro history should be taught only in general American history courses and coincident thereto, and that the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History should close shop and cease activity. These critics were wont to point out that, when Woodson launched Negro History Week and related activities, one of his main motives was to prove to a doubting world that Afro-Americans had thought worthwhile thoughts and committed commendable acts. This was justified because then the race had no Jack Johnson, Joe Louis, Jackie Robinson, "Duke" Ellington, Marian Anderson or Ralph Bunche whose national and international recognition alone refuted charges of racial inferiority. Furthermore, these critics say, many imperialistic politicians and erudite social scientists were then in league with those who preached viciously doctrines of racial inferiority, but today all of this has changed. Now press, radio, and television daily trumpet outstanding achievements of Negroes, social scientists are practically unanimous in their frequent assertions that no race is inherently inferior to another, and the old Kipling-style imperialistic thinking is in its death-throes.

Still, proponents of the Negro History Movement are wont to counter that the notion of racial inferiority is far from dead, that de-segregation is not integration, and that it is unwise to let current achievements stand as the only justification for according
a group its due respect. Too, the aged debate as to whether Negro history should be taught so as to instill race pride in Negro students was far from settled. At the 1957 annual convention of the Association Dr. Charles H. Wesley urged that the facts of this minority's past should be taught because they constitute a significant part of American history which has too long been too largely omitted. The teacher of Negro history, he declared, should do exactly what the teacher of any other fragment of American or civilizational history does, teach facts. The necessary race pride, he felt, would come as a by-product of the objective teaching of long-neglected facts.

As for the question of whether Negro history has a place in an integrated or integrating society, at the outset of this volume we indicated our belief that it does. Then we stated that the proper justification for Negro history, as with any other work of scholarly endeavor, is that it constitutes a contribution to the knowledge and understanding of mankind. Race, national, sectional, or religious pride are not necessary inspirations for the scholar. The only inspiration which he really requires is that through researches, writings, and teaching he is giving to his generation and to posterity knowledge and understanding. Any other outlook is often detrimental to scholarship and truth.

What would seem to have happened by the middle of the 1950's is that at long last, the teachers and writers of Negro history can do completely what most of the abler scholars did at least two decades ago, that is, cast aside the propagandist's mantle which many here-
tofore have seen fit to wear. They can now devote themselves largely
to that aspect of their endeavors which always has been present,
but often has been obscured by the shrill cry for humane treatment
and social justice. Thus, rather than becoming less attractive,
today Negro history should be emancipated from propaganda and should
shine forth more attractively than ever. For now it can be "pure"
history, and as such is justifiable as a separate entity as is state,
regional, institutional, or national history. As Arnold Toynbee
has maintained, the history of this or any other nation is a hyphenated
or fragmentized tale. Individual states are incomprehensible save
in a civilizational framework, and civilizations are comprehensible
only when viewed against the still vaster history of mankind, life,
and the cosmos.

Only by isolating the frontier and studying it as a separate
entity did Frederick Jackson Turner come to evaluate fully its
contribution to the national culture. The same is true of Walter
P. Webb's epic study of the nation's plains region. While Negro
history probably should not be a required course at any grade level,
as an elective it should continue to have a place in curricula
wherever and as long as there are interested and competent persons to
teach it. For the prospective novelist, poet, dramatist, musician,
thelogian, social philosopher, or lay American, the unique history
of this tenth of the American body politic always will be a mine of
inexhaustible and variegated wealth. Many states, however, do not
include anything about the Negro. California just recently had a
textbook written incorporating the Negro in American history. Other states would do well to follow California's effort.

No theory of history is without exceptions, and the human rights interpretation of American history finds its two major flaws in United States Indian policy and in private racial policy and practice. While mistreatment of Indians and Negroes has never gone without some condemnation by whites, it has been with respect to these two social groups that Americans have been the slowest group in putting their idealistic professions of human rights into practice. Deplorable as the tardiness of advance has been, however, it is significant that Indians and Negroes have gradually and in recent years, rapidly advanced toward the goal of human rights enjoyed by other Americans.

Putting prudential motives aside, does the New School of history deserve the attention of senior men in the field? I think it does. True, their style is very impressive. Great historians, unlike great mathematicians, are made, not born. This group has done work that deserves respect.

The history of the Negro race must be allowed to speak for itself. Let these historians ask their own questions of the past, but let the past then say its piece. The complexities and perplexities of the next few decades may well justify the cooperative commonwealth without the need to play tricks on the dead.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


**Periodicals**


Daykin, Walter N. "Nationalism as Expresed in Negro History," *Social Forces*, XIII (December, 1934), 258.


Dreer, Herman. "What Does the Innocent Teacher Impart as History," *Journal of Negro History*, XXV (April, 1940), 132-35.


The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (Washington, D. C., 1930), Pamphlet No. 10.


