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## The Bray Schools and Black Education in the Early American Republic

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THE BRAY SCHOOLS AND BLACK EDUCATION IN THE EARLY AMERICAN

REPUBLIC

by

Mitchell Allen Fellows

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

History

Approved:

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

2022

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## ABSTRACT

The Bray Schools and Black Education in the Early American Republic

by

Mitchell Fellows, Master of Arts

Utah State University, 2022

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Department: History

Following the American Revolution, conceptions about the role of education in American life were in flux. Despite arguments about the importance of education, African Americans often had to rely upon themselves or a few benevolent societies to establish schools. When benevolent societies founded schools for African American and black youth, they frequently had motives that were not predicated on education itself. In the case of the Bray Schools, it appears that the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray desired to convert black people in the British colonies to Christianity. Likewise, the American Colonization Society sought to have all free black people in America be de-patriated and deported to Africa. Both organizations initially established schools and argued for black education in an attempt to progress each organization's ulterior objective. A deep analysis of the Associates' correspondence reveals that, while the Colonization Society remained clung to their views and mission, the Bray Schools altered their ideology around the turn of the nineteenth century.

In the late 1700s, members of the Associates began arguing or tacitly accepting that black agency and leadership within the Bray Schools was good for the schools

themselves. At around the turn of the century, the Associates began providing funding to the black Episcopalian Rev. Absalom Jones, who had started a school out of his home. In Philadelphia, the evolution of the Associates' purpose culminated in the establishment of a school that was run by a Solomon Clarkson, a black man, and attempted to get students into different trade fields. Additionally, the Bray School in the Bahamas was also initially run by a black loyalist refugee, and an associate in Halifax wrote that student success was heavily correlated to parental involvement with the school. Ultimately, this work reveals that benevolent societies and schools that sought to interact with black communities in the Atlantic World had to account for black agency and leadership within their programs or confine themselves to failure. This analysis also reveals that black leaders were at the forefront of educational opportunities for black communities even when they interacted within Euro-American and European funded organizations.

(100 pages)

## PUBLIC ABSTRACT

## The Bray Schools and Black Education in the Early American Republic

Mitchell Fellows

Ideas about the role of education in American society were contentious during the early years of the Nation. Despite this discord, the vast majority of African Americans lacked access to educational opportunities regardless of whether they were free or enslaved. When schools for African Americans did exist, they were often established by local community leaders or by benevolent societies. Benevolent societies in the early United States existed to prevent what they perceived as a moral decline in the nation. This thesis analyzed the records of schools established by two benevolent societies, the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray and the American Colonization Society, to examine how African Americans and black people in the remaining British Colonies navigated working with schools supported by white organizations.

A thorough look at the Bray School and Colonization Society documents revealed that both organizations attempted to utilize education to achieve a different end goal, the conversion to Christianity and the colonization of free African Americans in Africa, respectively. However, by the early 1800s, the Associates altered the mission of the Bray Schools in a way that accepted African American and black agency within the organization's institutions. Rather than change being driven by the Associates, this thesis argues that African Americans and black community leaders were the ones that led to these changes in the Bray Schools' mission. In two of the three geographic areas of this study, funding from the Associates was predated by the existence of informal schools led

by black community members. Moreover, this thesis reveals that the success of the Bray Schools, where the American Colonization Society failed to attract students, was contingent upon their acceptance of the involvement of black people within the institutions. In doing so, this thesis adds to the current, growing historiography on private education in the early United States that highlight the renewed debates about private schools in modern American life. Lastly, it also adds to our understanding of the role of African American leadership in the development of the United States.

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Mitchell A. Fellows



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## INTRODUCTION

Benevolent societies in the Early American Republic abounded to combat the perception that the moral nature of the new nation was on the decline. The upheaval caused by the American Revolution had left many in society feeling that “westward expansion and the growth of democratic ideas and practices,” were leading the Republic down a morally reproachable path.<sup>1</sup> Groups such as the American Education Society, American Bible Society, and American Colonization Society believed that their movements would allow for society to maintain its values. While these institutions grew the most rapidly in the early nineteenth century, some organizations predated this growth but pursued similar goals.<sup>2</sup> In this study, two organizations will be examined to explore how each approached the topic of African American education in the nineteenth century. Of the two, the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray does not fit into the typical history of benevolent societies in the Early Republic. However, the history of the Associates made them extremely similar to the benevolent movements that arose in the century after the creation of the organization. In this work, I show that benevolent societies and educational institutions can be thought of as having existed on a spectrum of more to less rigid in their ideological goals through an examination of the Associates’ and the

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<sup>1</sup> George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image In the White Mind: the Debate On Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper, 1971.), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Philip S. Foner, *History of Black Americans: From Africa to the Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom* (Westport, CT and London; Greenwood Press, 1975), 556,584; Fredrickson, *The Black Image*, 6. Foner tied the American Colonization Society and benevolent societies generally to an earlier time period. He explained that some societies existed before the Revolution but were largely for the purpose of helping communities care for the sick, exchange money, and bury the dead. Foner went on to identify the Free African Society as a black benevolent society movement that was largely secular but had some moral undertones.

American Colonization Society's pursuit of African American education. Moreover, this work examines how African Americans and black people in the Atlantic World navigated organizations and educational institutions that attempted to interact with their communities.<sup>3</sup>

The Associates of the Late Dr. Bray dated their origins back to 1696. At the time Dr. Bray was not only the Bishop of London, but also the "appointed Commissary for Maryland."<sup>4</sup> From his position, Bray observed the work of missionaries in Maryland and believed that many of the struggles they faced while pursuing conversion could be remedied. As result, Bray advocated for the creation of libraries that missionaries could use in the British Colonies in the Atlantic World. After receiving support for his proposal, Bray extended his plan to include libraries in England and Wales.<sup>5</sup> By design, the Associates did not initially set out to pursue the education of black youth. However, Bray

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<sup>3</sup> Due to the complex factors that influenced the way that peoples displaced by the African slave trade viewed their own identity, I use various terms to identify different groups. The term African American identifies enslaved and free black individuals brought to the English colonies that became the United States. The term "black" is an adjective to describe enslaved and free people in the broader Atlantic World unless a specific location is mentioned. Lastly, the term African refers to people that resided in Africa. Ira Berlin, "From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (April 1, 1996): 5n, 8n, 254, 257. Likewise, I shall refer to white individuals as Euro-Americans who occupied the Early American Republic and use the term "white" to describe individuals of primarily European decent in the Atlantic World.

<sup>4</sup> *Account of the Institution Established by the Late Rev. Dr. Bray and His Associates For Founding Clerical Libraries in England and Wales, and Negro Schools in British America, &c. &c. with an Abstract of Their Proceedings for 1829* (London; 1830), 1829:4, accessed via Designs of Dr Bray's Associates Annual Reports. 1821-1839, Rules and reports of the Associates, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900, British Online Archives.

<sup>5</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:4-8, img. 319-323. The Associates identified two types of libraries that were constructed. There were parochial libraries that were supposed to be used by one parish, while the lending libraries would help support all parishes in one region.

was given land by Mr. D'Alone's estate to develop a plan for the education black people in the British Colonies.<sup>6</sup> Upon Bray's death in 1731, the funds for the creation of schools for black people were transferred to the Associates and the organization was left in charge of the libraries and schools. The initial effort to provide an Anglican education to black people took place in Georgia but was largely unsuccessful.<sup>7</sup> The Associates decided to alter their strategy and focus more heavily on providing children education in 1760. As a result, more schools were developed in the colonies. Recent research has explored the role that members of the Associates played in the foundation of the schools and the effect the schools had on black literacy in the late eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup> While there was approximately a fifty-year difference between the Associates' pivot and the significant rise in benevolent societies, the events that precipitated the growth of benevolent societies were about to begin.

Like the Associates, the American Colonization Society did not set out to provide African American education. The roots of colonization ideology extended farther back than the creation of the Society in 1816. While there is debate in the historical field about how far back the idea for colonization existed, most agree that the notion was around

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<sup>6</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:9, img. 324. Mr. D'Alone was referred to as the "Private Secretary to King William."

<sup>7</sup> Nancy Slocum Hornick, "Anthony Benezet and the Africans' School: Toward a Theory of Full Equality." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 99, no. 4 (1975): 399–421.

<sup>8</sup> See Terry L. Meyers "Benjamin Franklin, the College of William and Mary, and the Williamsburg Bray School." *Anglican and Episcopal History* 79, no. 4 (2010): 368–93; and Antonio Bly, "In Pursuit of Letters: A History of the Bray Schools for Enslaved Children in Colonial Virginia," *History of Education Quarterly* 51, no. 4, (November 2011): 429-459.

since the end of the American Revolution.<sup>9</sup> Founded as an organization in 1816 by Rev. Robert Finley, the main goal of the American Colonization Society was to remove African Americans from society and have them settle in colonies in Africa. Additionally, the organization made it clear that it did not intend to challenge slave power. While some individuals within the Society believed that the organization's actions could lead to increased manumissions, the Society did not pursue that goal. The organization also faced broad resistance from African American communities in the United States which inhibited the Society's impact. Ultimately, the growth of immediate abolitionist movements and the rise of Andrew Jackson to power further reduced the Colonization Society's ability to pursue colonization.<sup>10</sup>

Just like the Associates' focus on the conversion of black people in the Atlantic World, the American Colonization Society was driven to provide education as a means to

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<sup>9</sup> Recent scholarship by Matthew Spooner argues that the earliest signs of the colonization movement were in 1646, however, Philip Foner only identified signs of a belief in colonization as early as 1786. Matthew Spooner, "I Know This Scheme Is from God: Toward a Reconsideration of the Origins of the American Colonization Society," *Slavery & Abolition* 35, no. 4 (October 2, 2014): 561; Foner, *History of Black Americans*, 584.

<sup>10</sup> Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 1-11, 21-42; Foner, *History of Black Americans*, 584-594; David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1779-1820* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 302-303; Richard Newman, "Protest in Black and White: The Formation and Transformation of an African American Political Community during the Early Republic," in *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic*, ed. Jeffrey L. Pasley, Andrew W. Robertson, and David Waldstreicher (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 193-197. For another work that discusses the Society generally, see Richard Newman, "Prince Hall, Richard Allen, and Daniel Coker: Revolutionary Black Founders, Revolutionary Black Communities," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Gary B. Nash, Ray Raphael, and Alfred F. Young (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 305-21. For more information on African American Resistance to the Colonization Society, see Leonard I. Sweet, "The Black Response to the Colonizationist Image of America," in *Black Images of America 1784-1870* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1976), 35-68.

advance the organization's main objective of colonization. While the two groups had vastly different motives for advancing African American education, I contend that these groups originally pursued education to progress an ulterior ideological goal. I also assert that the Associates adopted a curriculum that was less rigid and attached to their ideological mission of conversion in the Early American Republic, due to the schools' needs to cater to black communities' desires. As a result, the American Colonization Society and Associates of the Late Dr. Bray can be thought of as having existed on a spectrum of more to less rigid and racialized in ideology. Future studies may be able to utilize this concept to identify were other benevolent societies and schools fit on this spectrum and how that impacted each groups effectiveness.

### Historiography

While the story of the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray and the American Colonization Society are important, this work is primarily a history of education. Until the recent past, historians have largely focused on the history of public education. However, recent studies have highlighted the role of private schools over the course of American history. Historians, such as Kim Tolley and Nancy Beadie, have challenged the notion that public schools were the premier educational institution of the United States for most of its history. Additionally, these historians have noted that the further study is needed to address the educational opportunities that were available to African American children throughout American history.<sup>11</sup> The story of the Bray Schools and the

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<sup>11</sup> Nancy Beadie and Kim Tolley, "A School for Every Purpose: An Introduction to the History of Academies in the United States," in *Chartered Schools: Two Hundred Years of Independent Academies in the United States, 1727-1925*, eds. Nancy Beadie and Kim

Colonization Society's schools closely align with the recent trends in the history of American education by further exploring the role of private educational institutions in African American education. As a result, this work helps further develop our understanding of private schools in the Early American Republic.

Until the 1960s, historians generally only focused on the development of institutions, such as common schools, that were clear antecedents to public schools. Historians also typically struggled to write about private schools because they were not structured in the same way institutions are today. Most academies of the era were “multi-level institutions” that contained a broad swath of students. As a result, they defy historians' expectations that schools should be divided into “elementary, secondary, and higher education.”<sup>12</sup> Despite the Bray Schools being similar to academies in the Early American Republic, some histories of public schools are relevant to this study. Two works that relate to the Bray Schools are Eve Kornfeld's ““Republican Machines”” or *Pestalozzian Bildung? Two Visions of Moral Education in the Early Republic,*” and *American Education: A History,* by Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr.

In ““Republican Machines,”” Kornfeld highlighted two major ideological visions of education in the Early Republic. She explained how the push for public education in the young nation derived from two core beliefs. First, “low moral character was causally

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Tolley (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 2002), 3-6, 14-15; Kim Tolley, “Mapping the Landscape of Higher Schooling, 1727-1850,” in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 38.

<sup>12</sup> Nancy Beadie, “Internal Improvement: The Structure and Culture of Academy Expansion in New York State in the Antebellum Era, 1820-1860,” in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 90.

linked to poverty, crime and other social ills.”<sup>13</sup> Second, morals and beliefs were, at least in part, the product of a person’s environment. Despite sharing these core beliefs, Kornfeld argued that the two groups, the republican reformers and the Pestalozzians, came to differing conclusions regarding the purpose of education and what pedagogy was superior. When discussing the republicans, she focused on Benjamin Rush to explain how education was viewed as form of social control that would help cement American ideals in children. Kornfeld wrote that Rush desired a system of moral education outside of the home “that would restrain natural selfishness and local attachments, and systematically inculcate patriotism, self-control and, above all, civic virtue.”<sup>14</sup> Moreover, this approach’s main pedagogical tool was memorization and recitation, which also served to induce students to respect authority and the nation.<sup>15</sup>

Contrary to the republicans, Kornfeld highlighted how the Pestalozzians held more positive views of human nature and viewed education as a tool for “internal self-development and self-fulfillment.”<sup>16</sup> Additionally, the Pestalozzians believed that women and people from every social background deserved access to education. In order to progress this vision of education, Pestalozzians generally used a different methodology to teach students. Rather than memorization, they used exercises that gradually helped students learn different skills over time.<sup>17</sup> In short, while the Pestalozzians believed that moral education would lead to a better society, their “vision of moral education was

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<sup>13</sup> Eve Kornfeld, “‘Republican Machines’ or Pestalozzian *Bildung*? Two Visions of Moral Education in the Early Republic,” *Canadian Review of American Studies* 60, no. 2, (Fall 1989): 157.

<sup>14</sup> Kornfeld, “‘Republican Machines,’” 160.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 162-163.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.



certainly the more pluralistic and inclusive, in its eagerness to welcome and develop the heterogeneous talents of Americans of all races, sexes and creeds.”<sup>18</sup> Kornfeld concludes that, while both reformist groups initially failed realize their goals, the later common-school movement adopted elements of both visions of American education.<sup>19</sup>

Similar to Kornfeld, Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner generally focus on beliefs that developed around public education. While they discussed a broader history, Urban and Wagoner generally touched upon the same themes and ideas that Kornfeld identified in the Early American Republic. For instance, they discussed Jefferson’s vision of education and enlightenment thought in more depth, but still mentioned Rush, Daniel Webster, and the Pestalozzians.<sup>20</sup> However, Urban and Wagoner’s book continued on to discuss the common school movement, specifically by focusing on Horace Mann.<sup>21</sup> However, what is most important to this study is that Urban and Wagoner highlighted resistance to the common school movement in their chapter on education in the South. They noted that despite some success in the North, the South resisted generally resisted the common school movement and instead utilized academies.<sup>22</sup> In addition, they argued that this difference in development in the North and South is an example of how “regionalism is an important focus in American educational history.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Kornfeld, ““Republican Machines,”” 168.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>20</sup> Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., *American Education: A History* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 55-72, 96-98.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 91-101.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 109-111.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 106.

Within the chapter on the South, Urban and Wagoner also discussed African American education. They identified how African American children were often excluded from Euro-American schools and often faced apathy or open hostility toward schools created for them. As a result, black Americans were often the leaders of education within their communities. For instance, when schools were not available, knowledge was disseminated by individuals to each other. In other cases, African Americans founded actual schools to teach. One example of this was John Chavis, an African American man, in North Carolina who ran a school from 1808 until the 1830s. While schools such as Chavis's were rare, by 1850 43 percent of free African Americans were literate in North Carolina, adding credit to the idea that the dissemination of knowledge took place in both formal and informal settings.<sup>24</sup>

While these two works fit well with an older model of historiography that focuses on public schools, they highlight a couple of elements for my argument. They showcase the way in which Euro-American education was perceived in the Early American Republic and Antebellum America. They also explain how views about education related to morality, and how education could be used as a form of social control. Moreover, Urban and Jennings's work, being more recent than Kornfeld's, accounts for changes in the historiography that highlight the role that private schools have played in education at large. While a more minor portion of their work, Urban and Jennings's acknowledgement

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<sup>24</sup> Urban and Wagoner, *American Education*, 115-117.

of academies' importance points to how the scholarship on the role of private education in the Early Republic is changing.<sup>25</sup>

The historians who have pushed the boundary of the history of education have approached private institutions from a variety of perspectives. For instance, both Kim Tolley and Nancie Beadie have addressed academies broadly to analyze the institutions' importance over larger time frames. Concurrently, other historians, such as Margaret A. Nash and Mary N. Mitchell, have approached the study of academies through the lenses of gender and race. While more specific, these studies have begun rounding out the historians broader understanding of the academy movement.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, my research seeks to further our understanding of black schools in the Atlantic World and the role that black agency and initiative played in education.

In her chapter on the development of education from 1727 to 1850, Kim Tolley described the general state of education and clearly explained the multiple types of schools that existed in the era. She briefly touched on venture schools, church schools, and town schools. According to Tolley, venture schools were completely supported by tuition and town schools were supported by local communities or state grants.

Additionally, town schools were run by an elected group of officials.<sup>27</sup> Tolley also

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<sup>25</sup> Urban and Wagoner, *American Education*, 75, 101-102, 109-111; Kornfeld, "Republican Machines," 157, 169.

<sup>26</sup> Tolley, "Mapping the Landscape," in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 19-43; Beadie, "Internal Improvement," in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 89-115; Margaret A. Nash, "A Triumph of Reason': Female Education in Academies in the New Republic," in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 64-86; Mary Niall Mitchell, "A Good and Delicious Country': Free Children of Color and How they Learned to Imagine the Atlantic World in Nineteenth-Century Louisiana," in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 137-157.

<sup>27</sup> Tolley, "Mapping the Landscape," in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 19-22.

explained that church schools were directly tied to religious groups and sought to “provide a basic education in literacy, numeracy, and religion.”<sup>28</sup> Moreover, she noted that most African American children were unable to attend most schools but were sometimes able to attend Sunday schools. The first Sunday schools began appearing after the Revolution in Philadelphia, and by 1819, around “two-thirds of the adults in Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School Union schools were black.”<sup>29</sup>

After describing other schools, Tolley argued that academies were distinct from these other types of schools because they had a different administrative structure, were relatively private institutions, and pursued a different curriculum. Tolley then expanded on these ideas by describing how academies were distinct from venture schools because they were not wholly dependent upon tuition. The incorporation of the school by a variety of groups, including communities, education societies, religious groups, allowed for more financial stability than the venture schools.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, the Board of Trustees that ran the schools generally provided “a larger degree of accountability to the community.”<sup>31</sup> However, academies were similar to venture schools in the education they provided. Tolley noted that venture schools attempted to meet the demand for practical training in the eighteenth century even before Thomas Jefferson or Benjamin Rush developed those ideas, as highlighted by Kornfeld, Urban, and Wagoner. At the same time, Tolley noted that some nineteenth century academies still offered traditional classics courses and that the curriculum offered varied from school to school. Ultimately,

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<sup>28</sup> Tolley, “Mapping the Landscape,” in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 20.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-21.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-22, 26-30.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-27.

Tolley concludes that the transition from venture schools to academies after the Revolution and around the turn of the century was really predicated on the desire for more stable institutions that provided some level of accountability.<sup>32</sup>

Building on Tolley's work, Nancy Beadie further discussed the development of academies in the nineteenth century. Like Tolley, Beadie highlighted how academies were institutions that did not typically fit the mold of elementary, secondary, or higher education.<sup>33</sup> Beadie also noted the broad range of groups that might support academies, but did identify "local town boosters," as the most common source of academy development.<sup>34</sup> However, she clarified later that academies sometimes received state funding and that they often still relied on tuition to help run the schools. Beadie also extended Tolley's analysis by explaining how academies were largely rural institutions in which students would gather from a large geographic area. Additionally, Beadie explained that academy attendance was sporadic for most students. Despite attendance being fairly inconsistent, Beadie argued that the lack of attendance did not indicate a lack of academic rigor.<sup>35</sup> Ultimately, Beadie concluded that education came to represent a new type of "inheritance for a new white-collar middle class."<sup>36</sup> In addition to providing material benefits, Beadie argued that the growth of academies in the nineteenth century

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<sup>32</sup> Tolley, "Mapping the Landscape," in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 24-38.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 19; Beadie, "Internal Improvement," in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 89-92.

<sup>34</sup> Beadie, "Internal Improvement," in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 92-96.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 96-99, 102-107.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

helped develop a culture that valued merits and competition. In short, academies helped to support the ideas of independence and self-reliance.<sup>37</sup>

When paired together, Beadie's and Tolley's works form a clear view of the development of academy schools in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Additionally, they both relate to my thesis on the Bray Schools. First and foremost, it appears that the Bray School in Philadelphia, run by Solomon Clarkson, lines up the best with the academy movement. While Tolley noted that there were church schools, the Bray Schools had to answer to the Associates, which is similar to a Board of Trustees. Additionally, in the third chapter, I explain how the Bray School in Philadelphia shifted its focus in an attempt to help students learn different trades after the conclusion of their time at the school. This analysis also lines up with Beadie's conclusion that parents sent their children to school in order to improve their lives. Notably, for African American students the improvement would have had additional characteristics that it did not have for the typical white student. One such characteristic is referred to by historians as moral uplift or uplift ideology. In brief, uplift ideology was the idea that if black people could prove they were living morally acceptable lives and received an education then white society would grow to accept black communities.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Beadie, "Internal Improvement," in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 108.

<sup>38</sup> Bishop White to Rev. Littleton, February 3, 1800, img. 36-39, From 1st Bishop of Pennsylvania concerning the Negro School at Philadelphia. 1788-1821, Correspondence and records for schools in America, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900, British Online Archives; Solomon Clarkson, Quarterly Reports from the Schoolmaster Concerning the Negro School at Philadelphia. 1821-1844., img. 1-131, Correspondence and Records for Schools in America, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900, British Online Archives; Tolley, "Mapping the Landscape," in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 19-22, 26-38; Beadie, "Internal Improvement," in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 107-108; ; Elise Kammerer,

While I argue that the Bray Schools fit into the academy movement, there are a couple other differences that could be argued make the Bray Schools different. One argument is that the Bray Schools did not always charge students tuition. The organization and its properties seemed to provide the funding for the school in Philadelphia, but the school in the Bahamas did charge tuition. The second point of contention is that the schools do not appear to have been as answerable to the local community in the same way that Tolley and Beadie stated. Rather than the Associates being answerable to the community, the schools had to adapt to allow for African American agency or risk losing the students. As noted in Urban and Wagoner's book, and by other historians discussed later, African American communities were willing to abandon Euro-American and European supported institutions and establish their own.<sup>39</sup> Despite these differences, it appears that the motivations for the Bray Schools in the 1820s closely resembles academies of the era. Moreover, I contend that the Associates being forced to adapt to retain students is incredibly similar to a Board of Trustees answering to a community.

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“Uplift in Schools and the Church: Abolitionist Approaches to Free Black Education in Early National Philadelphia,” *Historical Social Research* 42, no. 1, (2017): 301.

<sup>39</sup> The Associates of the late Dr. Bray in Account with Thomas Hale Treasure of the Associates, balance sheets, 1828-1832, img. 26-27, Accounts. T. Hale, Treasure to the Trustees in Philadelphia. 1802-1833, Correspondence and Records for Schools in American, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900, British Online Archives. Christopher Curry, *Freedom and Resistance: A Social History of Black Loyalists in the Bahamas* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2017), 102, ProQuest Ebook Central Tolley, “Mapping the Landscape,” in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 19-22, 26-38; Beadie, “Internal Improvement,” in Beadie and Tolley, *Chartered Schools*, 107-108; Bishop White to Rev. Littleton, February 3, 1800, img. 36-39, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900; Urban and Wagoner, *American Education*, 115-117.

Additionally, Grant Scribner also built upon Tolley's work in his article, "Growing Pains: Quaker Benevolence and School Expansion in Philadelphia's Educational Marketplace, 1689-1798." In the article, he described how Quaker education became more secular over the course of the eighteenth century due to increased competition from other private schools and academies. Scribner explained that the growth in the number of schools caused teachers to evaluate their positions based upon income. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Quakers had to accept teachers who might not have met their moral standards in the past. These teachers were often incentivized to increase class sizes to earn more income, sometimes to the detriment of students' education.<sup>40</sup> Scribner's analysis ended with the argument that the shift toward secular education was predicated on increased market competition in Philadelphia. Moreover, he argued that teachers themselves viewed their jobs through an economic lens. As a result, while the Quaker schools continued to promote the idea that they protected Quaker children from moral corruption, the teachers and overseers of the schools were incentivized to abandon most moral teaching and focus on the secular elements of education.<sup>41</sup> While the Bray Schools in Philadelphia likely faced this pressure as well, I argue that the main impetus for the Bray Schools to adopt secular education was the need to court favor with black communities in the Atlantic World.

In addition to works that highlight the broader history of American educational institutions, some historians have approached the field by focusing on special topics. For

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<sup>40</sup> Grant Scribner, "Growing Pains: Quaker Benevolence and School Expansion in Philadelphia's Educational Marketplace, 1689-1798," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 146, no. 1, (January 2022): 26-54.

<sup>41</sup> Scribner, "Growing Pains," 53.



instance, historians of gender have typically focused on how educational opportunities for women and men differed. Unsurprisingly, they have shown that gender roles and education were closely tied together. In *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*, Linda Kerber explained that women were allowed more access to education to help educate their children. However, the general public still believed that women should be confined to the domestic sphere.<sup>42</sup> She noted:

Discussions of female education were apt to be highly ambivalent. On the one hand, republican political theory called for a sensibly educated female citizenry to educate future generations of sensible republicans; on the other, domestic tradition condemned highly educated women as perverse threats to family stability.<sup>43</sup>

Additionally, the curriculum for female students was sometimes different from the education male students received. For example, female students were often “taught how to knit, sew, and embroider,” in addition to learning how to read.<sup>44</sup>

More recent scholarship by Margaret A. Nash has suggested that the educational opportunities for men and women were far more similar than historians have typically acknowledged. She stated, “[h]istorians have pointed to two main subject areas as indicative of a broad gender difference in schools: classics and ornamentals. But in neither case is the difference as significant as historians have supposed.”<sup>45</sup> Additionally, Tolley and Beadie supported Nash’s conclusion when they highlighted the fact that girls and women were the fastest growing demographic group in the student population.

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<sup>42</sup> Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 10-12; 185-231.

<sup>43</sup> Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 10.

<sup>44</sup> Bly, “In Pursuit of Letters,” 454.

<sup>45</sup> Nash, “A Triumph of Reason,” 79.

Moreover, all three historians mention that coeducational academies existed during the time period. Beadie highlights that up to ninety percent of academies in New York were coeducational throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>46</sup> Despite their compelling evidence, Nash did not entirely undercut the view that female education was tied to gender norms of the era. While Nash argued that even Benjamin Rush acknowledged that female education might be important just for the sake of women's own goals, she later admitted that a common argument for female education was that "educated women made the best daughters, wives, mothers, and citizens."<sup>47</sup> Three of these four reasons that Nash highlighted clearly show that the argument for education was predicated on girls' and women's relationships to men throughout their lives. Moreover, Nash agreed with Kerber that the vocational skills, such as needlework, were gender specific. Ultimately, Nash's work did a good job arguing that the gender divide in education was less extreme than many historians have argued, while still acknowledging that gender impacted some elements of education.<sup>48</sup>

In some cases, historians have highlighted how race and gender intersected in the Early Republic. Nancy Hornick explained, "[n]ot only were black children taught separately from whites, but they were also treated differently in that the sexes were mixed in the classroom, a practice not approved for white children."<sup>49</sup> While Nash, Tolley, and Beadie's arguments show that there were more coeducational opportunities available to women in academy schools, Hornick's study was of schools in the eighteenth century

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<sup>46</sup> Nash, "A Triumph of Reason," 67, 74; Tolley, "Mapping the Landscape," 32; Beadie, "Internal Improvement," 91-104.

<sup>47</sup> Nash, "A Triumph of Reason," 69, 71.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>49</sup> Hornick, "Anthony Benezet," 405.

while the shift toward academies was just beginning.<sup>50</sup> My research does not deeply delve into gender, however, I do examine how the reinforcement of gender norms shows that the Associates' conceptions of race were less extreme than the Colonization Society's views.

Lastly, many historians also compare actions taken by black people or communities to actions taken by white communities. In particular, Elise Kammerer's recent article on schools for free black people in Philadelphia argued that there were distinct differences between Richard Allen's approach and the Pennsylvania Abolition Society's approach to African American education in the late eighteenth century. Kammerer explained that while moral uplift ideology was important to both groups, significant differences existed in the approaches that Allen and the Abolition Society adopted. Kammerer explains that the Abolition Society insisted on consistent attendance and steady progress of the students. Due to the poverty that African Americans faced, it was often not possible for student to regularly attend school and meet the dress requirements set by the Society. Conversely, Allen was much more practical and understanding with his approach. As a result, he was able to steadily build up his school over time. Allen also emphasized the importance of learning a trade to his congregation and students. Kammerer concluded the main body of her argument by discussing black autonomy in the Early Republic as the Abolition Society refused to support African American run schools.<sup>51</sup> She noted, "[t]he unwillingness of the PAS to continue supporting black-run schools was an important step toward black autonomy over black

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<sup>50</sup> Hornick, "Anthony Benezet," 399-421; Nash, "'A Triumph of Reason,'" 67; Tolley, "Mapping the Landscape," 32; Beadie, "Internal Improvement," 91-104.

<sup>51</sup> Kammerer, "Uplift in Schools," 299-319.

schools. Although, [Amos] White's school, for example, ceased operations after a few years, the shift from receiving primary funding from the abolitionist society to self-funding set a precedent for future schools by free blacks."<sup>52</sup> She further explained that later in the nineteenth century African Americans who established schools, such as Sarah Douglass, were conflicted about relinquishing control over African American run institutions.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to Kammerer's analysis of African American education, Mary N. Mitchell recently contributed to our understanding of black ideology in education. Through the study of the Catholic Institution in New Orleans, Mitchell argued that the education provided to free black children in the south led students to understand their identity through a conception of the Atlantic World. Mitchell stated that some of the writing assignments "required the students to think about racial identity, nationality, and citizenship within the broad bounds of the African Diaspora, rather than the narrow confines of the Deep South."<sup>54</sup> Importantly, the schoolteachers who pushed students to conceptualize of their identity in the broader Atlantic World were black intellectuals in Louisiana. Mitchell's analysis lines up well with Kammerer's because they both highlighted how African American and black teachers helped to lead the education in the United States before the Civil War. While Mitchell is more concerned with ideology, particularly in the South, both authors address how black people utilized agency in the Atlantic World.

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<sup>52</sup> Kammerer, "Uplift in Schools," 314.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Mitchell, "'A Good and Delicious Country,'" 138.

Both of these authors works are the most important to my research area.

Kammerer's analysis is important because I examine how the Associates' adoption of a more adaptable school structure allowed them to proliferate where the American Colonization Society's rigid ideological imperative limited the organizations impact. This mirrors Kammerer's argument about African American agency in the Philadelphia schools. Likewise, Mitchell's work addresses the importance of black agency in teaching students.<sup>55</sup> While more tangentially related to my own work, future studies of the Bray Schools can adopt Mitchell's framework to analyze if there were differences in the conceptions of race, nationality, and citizenship between African American students in the North and South.

### Methodology

To examine how ideology affected the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray's and the American Colonization Society's educational programs, I examine several different types of records. In chapter one, the annual reports of the Associates are analyzed to explain how their mission to convert black people to Christianity, specifically the Anglican Church, was the driving factor behind the Bray Schools. In addition, the student records from the school run by Solomon Clarkson are examined to further support that the schools were primarily interested in providing a Christian education. Likewise, in chapter two, I examine the records from the *African Repository and Colonial Journal*, produced by the Colonization Society, to explain how the organization's mission to de-patriate

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<sup>55</sup> Mitchell, "'A Good and Delicious Country,'" 137-150; Kammerer, "Uplift in Schools," 299-319.

African Americans drove the way they spoke about education. I then compare the Colonization Society's journal to African American students' writings and speeches to explain how the Society and students differed on the role of education in society. The work concludes with an examination of the writings of individual members of the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray and an examination of how the organization addressed gender. This analysis explains that the Associates were less rigid in their ideology and generally held a less extreme racialized view of the Atlantic World that allowed black people to assert their right to self-determination in their education.

## CHAPTER 1: THE BRAY SCHOOLS IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD

Beginning in the middle of the eighteenth century, the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray turned their attention to providing a Christian education to black people in the Atlantic World. By 1760, the Associates modified their approach to education to focus on children. Leading into the nineteenth century, the organization continued to establish more schools to pursue conversion.<sup>56</sup> While the Associates had a broader mission than the American Colonization Society, the organization still provided education for black people due to one primary ideological objective. In the early 1800s, the Associates did not conceal that the main goal of the organization was to convert African Americans and black people in the Atlantic World to Christianity, specifically the Anglican Church. Moreover, the Associates were just as willing as the American Colonization Society to resort to manipulative tactics in attempts to lure black people to the schools that the Associates established. While significant differences in the ideologies of the Associates and the Colonization Society existed, both were similarly driven to provide education to black students by a core set of beliefs that clearly influenced the way in which they offered education and discussed the intelligence of black people in the Atlantic World.

In this chapter, I examine a variety of records to show how the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray's educational program was influenced by the organization's underlying goal of conversion to Christianity and the manipulative tactics the society was willing to use to achieve this aim. The most important records are the annual reports from the organization which detail the larger mission of the Associates. Due to the impersonal

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<sup>56</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:10-11, img. 325-326.

nature of the reports, the statements contained within reflect the common goals that individual members of the society typically supported. Additionally, records from the student lists from the Philadelphia school are analyzed because they reveal how the Associates made learning Christian doctrine a prerequisite to other subjects. While these records will be reexamined to later add nuance to the mission of the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray, they clearly expose that the organization's main motive behind providing education to black people was to promote the spread of Christianity.

### Ideology in Theory

Far from hiding their ultimate goal, the annual reports for the organization highlight the central tenets of the society's work on the first pages each volume. Moreover, the Associates outlined how they were not above the use of coercive or manipulative tactics to convert African Americans and black people in the Atlantic World. While the exact language used to express these ideas changed slightly over time, the core ideology expressed in the reports remained consistent throughout the early 1800s. As a result, the example that is most relevant in this case is the report on the year 1829, published in 1830. This report lines up chronologically with the student records examined later in this chapter and in the third chapter and the records from the American Colonization Society that are analyzed in chapter two.<sup>57</sup>

The Associates opened the first paragraph of each yearly report with a general statement of purpose and explained that the current state of affairs of the organization

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<sup>57</sup> *Account of the Institution Established by the Late Rev. Dr. Bray and His Associates For Founding Clerical Libraries in England and Wales, and Negro Schools in British America*, 30 vols., (London, 1801-1830).



would be outlined in the report. This paragraph was always immediately followed by a paragraph that paid homage to the late Dr. Bray and described him as an individual that should be revered and emulated. These opening statements focused heavily on religion. First, the Associates expressed a desire for the organization to be viewed fondly by “all generous and well-disposed Christians.”<sup>58</sup> Moreover, the organization’s description of Bray as laudable centered around his piety. The report stated, “we could speak largely in the praise of Dr. Bray as a person highly eminent and exemplary in his age for a truly apostolical zeal.”<sup>59</sup> The report further explained that Dr. Bray was also noteworthy for his efforts to promote the spread of Christianity in England and abroad. In the last sentence of the second paragraph, the Associates tied education and Christianity together explicitly. The report explained that, of all the “schemes” developed by Bray, the organization was focused on developing libraries, converting black individuals in the colonies, and educating black children. The Associates stated,

But it is sufficient for our present purpose to consider only those two points, in the management of which we are immediately interested; *viz.* “The making provision for Parochial and Lending Libraries; and for the Conversion of adult Negroes, and the Education of their Children in the British Plantations.”<sup>60</sup>

While it is not evident where this quote comes from, the organization’s main goals are clearly explained. This first definitive statement of purpose does not necessarily imply that the main goal of education was conversion. The quote used only explicitly states that the Associates seek to convert black adults in the colonies. However, it is implied that the

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<sup>58</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:2, img. 318.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

organization expected all black individuals in the colonies would convert. These opening remarks revealed that the promotion of Christianity was the central focus of the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray. In short order, the report clarified that education was primarily a tool to achieve that end.

After the first paragraphs, the report described the reason for and purpose of the libraries that the Associates were managing before returning to the topic of education. As with the discussion of libraries, the report thoroughly explained how Bray became involved with supporting the education of black people in the British colonies. Briefly, Bray was given a grant of land by Mr. D'Alone, who was the "Private Secretary to King William," in order to raise "A CAPITAL FUND OR STOCK, FOR CONVERTING THE NEGROES IN THE *British* PLANTATIONS."<sup>61</sup> Mr. D'Alone provided this land to Dr. Bray due to his aforementioned dedication to promoting the growth of Christianity. Upon Bray's death, the land was given in trust to the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray in 1731.<sup>62</sup>

Following the explanation of how the Associates became involved in providing education for African Americans and black people in the Atlantic World, the report addressed how conversion efforts fared. Initially, the organization attempted to convert African Americans in Georgia but largely failed. After several years, the Associates concluded that there were four main reasons for this failure. In addition to the incredibly harsh working conditions and the language barrier presenting logistical impediments to conversion, African Americans and newly arrived enslaved individuals held onto African religious beliefs and expressed resentment that they had been enslaved. In the Associates'

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<sup>61</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:9, img. 324.

<sup>62</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:10, img. 325.

words, “but the strong prejudices which the adult Negroes retained in favour of their own superstition; the lively resentment they felt for the loss of their liberty and native country...proved almost insuperable obstacles to their instruction.”<sup>63</sup> This statement acknowledged how enslaved black people resisted colonial efforts to dehumanize them and eliminate African and African American cultural practices. Additionally, it provides context for later analysis of black resistance and cooperation within the Bray Schools.<sup>64</sup>

At the same time, the Associates conceived of the schools as a solution to the problems the organization faced in converting black people in Georgia. The report stated:

The ASSOCIATES, therefore, finding their endeavors in this way less effectual, turned their attention chiefly to the instruction of *Negro* children, who, being born in *America*, and understanding our language, may easily be taught the great truths of our holy religion.<sup>65</sup>

This statement from the Associates revealed that they were tying the education of African American children directly to missionary efforts. It was readily apparent that the Associates believed that education could be used as a manipulative tactic to achieve the organization’s primary goal. Rather than having a steadfast belief that education would benefit black individuals in colonial societies, the Associates viewed their schools as a means to an end. Many children who attended these schools may have benefitted from the additional instruction that was offered but that does not counter the idea that the

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<sup>63</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:9, img. 325.

<sup>64</sup> The Associates’ conclusion that African Americans in the southern colonies were resistant to efforts to eliminate and replace their cultural practices further supports the argument made by Ira Berlin. Berlin argued that in the South, African Americans were able to maintain their cultural attachments to Africa longer due to higher amounts of autonomy associated with “the task system.” See, Ira Berlin, “Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North America,” *The American Historical Review* 85, no. 1 (1980): 58-78.

<sup>65</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:10, img. 325.

motivation for the creation of the schools was for conversion. Moreover, additional statements in the report align with and build upon the idea that the schools had a central guiding principle.

Below the paragraph that introduced that the schools were a scheme to subvert black resistance in the colonies, a footnote reemphasized that the Associates were primarily concerned with the spread of Christianity. The footnote stated:

Though the establishment of schools for the instruction of youth seems the surest and most efficacious method of diffusing a proper knowledge of our holy religion among the Negroes; yet the ASSOCIATES have not been inattentive to the instruction of adults, but have, from time to time, sent to divers provinces, Bibles, Testaments, Common Prayers, and other religious books and tracts, to be distributed to such adult Negroes as could read, and would promise to make a good use of them, and instruct their brethren.<sup>66</sup>

Once again, the Associates stated that the schools' function was to promote the spread of Christianity. The footnote also explained that the Associates were so unwavering in their mission that they continued to attempt converting adults, despite the acknowledgement that it was often less effective. In a similar vein to the idea that black children would be more susceptible to conversion, the report noted that the Associates chose to provide religious materials to those who might be able to influence other black individuals. This further shows that the organization was not driven to provide education from a benevolent belief that it was beneficial in general. As is apparent, the report repeatedly and explicitly stated that the motivation behind all of their actions was the spread of Christianity.

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<sup>66</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:10, img. 325.

In addition to consistently affirming their guiding ideology, the reports exhibited a general lack of care for the material wellbeing of black people. Moreover, the Associates explained that the schools were not meant to challenge slavery in the Atlantic World. The Associates appealed to slaveholders in the colonies by explaining that children would be instructed to respect those who enslaved them. In one passage, the reports stated that children would also learn “the great and necessary duties of obedience and fidelity to their masters,” in addition to the “principles of Christianity.”<sup>67</sup> Rather than challenging slave power, the reports argued that the schools would further cement the role of chattel slavery in colonial society. The support of continued enslavement further suggests that schools were not founded out of any belief of genuine social uplift. Rather, the schools were a mechanism to disseminate Christian doctrine.

It is unclear if, after the American Revolution, the schools were intended to reinforce the idea that slavery was acceptable. The reports identified that “the changing circumstances of that country” led to the creation of more schools “in other situations.”<sup>68</sup> It is difficult to ascertain what circumstances the report was referring to, but it mentioned the development of schools in Nova Scotia, Philadelphia, and the Bahama Islands. However, since the initiative to create schools began in 1760, it would be reasonable to conclude that the report is either referring to the Revolution itself, the unrest that preceded it, or both.<sup>69</sup> It is also unclear what other situations the report was referencing

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<sup>67</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:10-11, img. 325-326.

<sup>68</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:11, img. 326.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* As a result, it would be reasonable to conclude that the report is referring to the Revolution. However, the funding for the school in Philadelphia was provided by “Rev. Mr. Upcher, of Sudbury,” in 1767, and the Associates purchased land in Philadelphia in 1774 that the organization leased to produce consistent income for the schools. Therefore,

but it is possible the report was referring to loyalist exiles in the British colonies and the growth of Philadelphia's free black community.

Following the Revolutionary War, loyalists resettled throughout the British Empire. Most ended up settling in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, but others settled in Jamaica, England, and the Bahamas. While the majority of loyalists were white, enslaved people and black loyalists who had earned their freedom through military service faced exile as well. While previous estimates of black people who escaped slavery to join the British were as high as one hundred thousand, most modern historians believe the figure to be much lower, between eight and ten thousand. Additionally, it is believed another fifteen thousand black people who remained enslaved were forced out of the United States. In total, it is estimated that around three thousand free black people initially settled in Nova Scotia, with approximately twelve hundred later relocating to Sierra Leone in 1792. Additionally, the black population in the Bahamas approximately doubled. Moreover, the American Revolution exacerbated tensions regarding slavery that already existed within the British Empire.<sup>70</sup> As historian Linda Colley argued, “[y]et it was, in fact, the lost war with America that precipitated not so much a sea-change in British

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the circumstances the report referenced could also be the unrest in the colonies preceding the War.

<sup>70</sup> Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York and Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 430-439, Kindle Edition; Curry, *Freedom and Resistance*, 2-6; Maya Jasanoff, “The Other Side of Revolution: Loyalists in the British Empire,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (2008): 208; Cassandra Pybus, “Jefferson's Faulty Math: The Question of Slave Defections in the American Revolution,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (2005): 243-244, 264; Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016), 146-151, 241, 314; Linda Colley, “Victories?,” in *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837: with a New Preface by the Author* (London: Pimlico, 2003), 350-351.

attitudes to the slave trade, as a converting of already existing qualms into positive action.”<sup>71</sup> Additionally, the growth of the anti-slavery movement in the British Empire was also fueled by a desire to reassert that British liberty was superior to freedom, or lack thereof, in the United States. Ultimately, this culminated in the end of the British slave trade in 1807 and the end of British slavery in 1834.<sup>72</sup>

Additionally, Philadelphia became the central hub for free black people in the United States after the American Revolution. In historian Gary Nash’s words, “[f]or two generations after the Revolution, Philadelphia was the largest and most important center of free black life in the United States.”<sup>73</sup> In addition, the city was known for its stance on abolition with the Pennsylvania Abolition Society and a vocal black elite including Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and Lemuel Haynes.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, Pennsylvania was one of the first states to pass laws abolishing slavery, although it was gradual abolition.<sup>75</sup> Unfortunately, due to the generalized language the report used, it is impossible to tell if the American Revolution is what the organization was referring to.<sup>76</sup> Regardless, the report did not change its language on chattel slavery in earlier paragraphs over the course

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<sup>71</sup> Colley, “Victories?,” in *Britons: Forging the Nation*, 352.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 350-351, 354; Jasanoff, “The Other Side of Revolution,” 212; Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 234.

<sup>73</sup> Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia’s Black Community, 1720-1840* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 2, <https://hdl-handle-net.dist.lib.usu.edu/2027/heb01388>.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 4-6; Richard Newman, “Protest in Black and White: The Formation and Transformation of an African American Political Community during the Early Republic,” in *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic*, ed. Jeffrey L. Pasley, Andrew W. Robertson, and David Waldstreicher (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 180-204.

<sup>75</sup> Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 4; Urban and Wagoner, *American Education*, 141n11.

<sup>76</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:11, img. 326.

of the early nineteenth century, leading to the implication that they continued to view the schools simply as tools to promote Christianity.<sup>77</sup>

Following the history of the schools, the reports ended the introduction with a quote from Archbishop Secker. While the quote that the Associates used did not rehash the purpose of the schools, it did reassert that the purpose of the organization was to promote Christianity. Adopting a paternalistic tone, the Archbishop stated, “[w]hy...are so many nations without the knowledge or belief of the Christian revelation? Partly, because Christians have neglected to acquaint them with it; or mixed it with corruptions; or disgraced it with the wickedness of life.”<sup>78</sup> This quote demonstrates that the Archbishop believed that Christians were responsible for spreading their religion. Moreover, he believed that one day Christianity would be “universally practice[d],” and that the world would be better for it.<sup>79</sup>

While the Archbishop’s perspective is not surprising, why did the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray include Archbishop Secker’s perspective in each report? It is clear from the way the Associates discussed the schools, and the organization’s other objective to establish religious libraries, that the Associates believed that their mission was to spread Christianity. At first glance it might appear that there was a distinct difference between establishing religious libraries and founding schools. However, when the Associates’ reports are analyzed, it becomes clear that religion was just as important to the creation of schools as it was to the libraries.

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<sup>77</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 30 vols., (London, 1801-1830).

<sup>78</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:12, img. 327.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*



### Ideology in Practice

In addition to the reports of the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray, student lists that were recorded by individual schools also highlight that the primary mission of the Bray schools was to provide a Christian education. The evidence contained within these records reveals a trend that was consistent across the regions the Associates supervised. The school that contains the best records to analyze this trend are from the boy's school in Philadelphia. Records for the girls attending the school in Philadelphia are not beneficial in this instance. The rudimentary nature of those records inhibits the ability to determine what individual students were learning.<sup>80</sup> While speculation is beneficial in some instances, it would be almost impossible to make accurate suppositions due to the lack of direct or even circumstantial evidence. In cases where the teachers of female students in Philadelphia did record the curriculum given to students, the Bible was the text students were reading. Despite how that might support the central argument of this

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<sup>80</sup> While there are also some records for the schools in Halifax and Skelbourne, they are less detailed than those of the other two geographical areas of focus. The lists from both Halifax and Nova Scotia appeared intermittently, at least in the archive. Additionally, they were inconsistent in how organized they were. The records from the Philadelphia boys school were detailed and organized every quarter, and the one record from the Bahama Islands was also detailed. Correspondence Concerning the School at Halifax, Nova Scotia. 1784-1836., img. 1-168, Correspondence on the Establishment of Schools in Canada, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900, British Online Archives; Correspondence Concerning the Charity School at Skelbourne, Nova Scotia. 1787-1832., img. 1-72, Correspondence on the Establishment of Schools in Canada, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900, British Online Archives; Solomon Clarkson Quarterly Reports 1821-1844., img. 1-131, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900; Student List, "A list of the Names of Scholars In the School of the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray," May 18, 1819, img. 3-8, Return of the Nassau Public School, list of scholars in the school. 1819., Correspondence and records concerning the school in the Bahamas, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900, British Online Archives.

work, it would be disingenuous to apply any weight to these incredibly rare instances of detailed curriculum notes. However, this evidence will be discussed fully later to show how the female students in Philadelphia were treated differently than their male counterparts.

The records on male students taught in Philadelphia demonstrated that the reinforcement of Christian doctrine was clearly the primary mission of the school. From 1822 to 1829, the schoolmaster, Solomon Clarkson, recorded the curriculum each student followed by listing what reading they were given, their writing skill, and what subject of mathematics they were learning each academic quarter.<sup>81</sup> The first noticeable trend appears in the reading column of these records. In particular, 47 percent of the time students were assigned the New Testament.<sup>82</sup> The fact that the teacher assigned the New Testament to nearly half of the students lends itself to the idea that the school's main focus was to convert African American children. While the Bible was the primary reading assigned the school, history constituted 37 percent of the reading curriculum.<sup>83</sup> The students who were not reading in these two subject areas were primarily learning basic spelling.<sup>84</sup> Additionally, in March of 1824, the subject of geography was assigned by the teacher for all the students who were not reading the New Testament. Because this was the only quarter of the 1820s in which geography was taught, it seems reasonable

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<sup>81</sup> Solomon Clarkson Quarterly Reports 1821-1844., img. 1-131, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900. There are a couple of quarters that are unaccounted for, but by and large the record is complete.

<sup>82</sup> Solomon Clarkson Quarterly Reports, 1821-1829, img. 1-40, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900. Eighty out of one-hundred and sixty-nine students or 47.33%.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. Sixty-four out of one-hundred and sixty-nine students or 37.84%.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. Fifteen out of one-hundred and sixty-nine students or 8.88% and one student out of one-hundred and sixty-nine students or 0.59% taught monosyllables.

that the percentage of students learning geography can be added to the history total. When that is done, history constituted 40 percent of the reading curriculum.<sup>85</sup>

Even though the majority of students were reading the New Testament, the percentage of students reading history was very close. At first glance, these figures might cast doubt on the idea that the central mission of the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray was to Christianize African American children. Some caveats reduce the significance of the percentage of students that were reading history. The first is that most students who were reading history appear to be the highest achieving students. While it is not completely clear, there appears to have been a form of ranking applied to students in the male classes that Clarkson observed. He would list students from one to ten every quarter and students that attended consistently gravitated toward the top of the list. Without knowing what books were assigned to students, it is clear that only the highest achieving students, who already exhibited proficiency with the New Testament, were allowed to advance past direct religious readings.<sup>86</sup> The correlation between rank and reading history, the fact that students with the highest ranks tended to have been students for longer, reinforces that history was a secondary subject to the New Testament. Due to their time at the school, some of the top-ranking students had already read the New Testament for one or more quarters before they began reading history. The fact that the highest achieving students

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<sup>85</sup> Solomon Clarkson Quarterly Reports, 1821-1829, img. 1-40, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900. Sixty-eight out of one-hundred and sixty-nine students or 40.24%.

<sup>86</sup> While history and geography being typically taught to the top students on each list, there were cases where this was not true. For instance, in September of 1828, the sixth ranked student, Robert Purnal, was reading history, while the fifth ranked student was reading the New Testament. However, these cases stand out as outliers, and no other form of organization was apparent. Solomon Clarkson Quarterly Reports, September 14, 1828, img. 30, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

had often already received instruction on the New Testament implies that it was a prerequisite to reading historical works. Therefore, despite the high percentage of students reading history, it is likely that those students already showed proficiency with Christian doctrine.

Despite the school's focus on religious instruction, Clarkson recorded the two other subjects, writing and arithmetic, that students were taught. Both of these other subjects were not given the same weight as reading. First, almost all students were given writing instruction, but the signs that the teacher treated it with reduced significance were obvious. While approximately four-fifths of students were writing in "joining hand," or an equivalent, about one-fifth of students were not receiving any writing education.<sup>87</sup> While Clarkson taught most students how to write, every student was assigned some form of reading. Even fewer students were instructed in arithmetic. Clarkson taught about two-thirds of students math but provided no additional instruction to the remaining third. Moreover, mathematics instruction appeared to be more individualized. While there were only four reading and writing subjects listed, there were a minimum of twenty-six different math principles taught from 1822 to 1829, ranging from "simple addition" to the "multiplication of duodecimals."<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Two other writing subjects were taught at the school. The first was poetry, and the second was single letters. However, poetry was only taught for one quarter to two students, and single letters was taught to one student. Solomon Clarkson Quarterly Reports, 1821-1829, img. 1-40, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

<sup>88</sup> Solomon Clarkson Quarterly Reports, 1821-1829, img. 1-40, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

When all three subjects are analyzed together, a particularly interesting trend appears. Usually, the highest-ranking students were reading history, writing in “joining hand,” and were being taught some form of math.<sup>89</sup> As was explained earlier, most of the students had to show a proficiency in Christian doctrine before they were allowed to move on to more advanced subjects. Moreover, the lowest-ranked students were more likely to not receive writing or mathematical instruction and to be reading only the New Testament. From this trend, it appears that Clarkson and the Associates viewed an understanding of Anglican doctrine as a soft prerequisite for students to be taught any other curriculum. The fact that reading, and specifically the New Testament, appears to have been considered the education a student had to receive reinforces the fact that conversion was at the core of the curriculum. Additionally, it shows how the Associates attempted to manipulate African Americans in Philadelphia. If a parent believed that education would provide a better life for their child or children, they had to make the compromise that their children would have to master the fundamentals of Christian beliefs in order to learn other skills.

The importance of Christian doctrine to the Bray Schools was not isolated to Philadelphia. Some of the trends reflected in the Philadelphia records in the 1820s were similar to a report from Nassau Public School in the Bahama Islands. In 1819, a member of the Associates drafted a report that detailed what subjects students were learning. While this record does not show change over time in the same way as Clarkson’s reports

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<sup>89</sup> Solomon Clarkson Quarterly Reports, 1821-1829, img. 1-40, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

did, the evidence contained within the document further supports the conclusion that the schools emphasized Christianity over the other subjects.

Unlike Clarkson's reports, the report identified three classes for male students and three classes for female students. Each class was organized by rank like Clarkson's lists were, but the rank does not appear to have been as important.<sup>90</sup> Whereas in Philadelphia some students advanced past the New Testament to history, the teacher at the Nassau school never assigned anything other than the Bible, New Testament, or a spelling to a student. Moreover, the teacher divided the classes based on what students were reading. For instance, all twenty-one students in the first class of boys and all twenty-one students in the first class of girls were reading the Bible. The teacher then assigned the second classes and third classes the New Testament and a spelling book respectively. The teacher also had every student writing in the first classes but did not dedicate as much time teaching the second and third classes to write. In the second class of boys only four of the ten students were taught to write. Interestingly, the teacher still spent time teaching the second class of boys mathematics, albeit only in "figures" and "addition."<sup>91</sup> While the teacher still taught every student in the second class of girls some writing and arithmetic, the teacher did not teach any writing or math subjects to the third class of girls. As for the third class of boys, the teacher taught all but one student mathematics but neglected or chose not to provide any writing materials.

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<sup>90</sup> Student List, May 18, 1819, img. 3-8, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., img. 3.

Despite a reversal in the importance of mathematics and writing, the 1819 record confirmed that the schools used the understanding of Christianity as the measure of student success. Just like Clarkson, the teacher taught additional subjects to the students in the higher ranked classes. Additionally, a student who had not advanced in mathematics or writing could move up a class in order to read more advanced texts, but the teacher did not move students based on their writing ability or age. At first glance it could appear that the teacher assigned students to a particular class based on age, however a few outliers show that this was not the case. For instance, the instructor assigned Caesar Forbes to the second class of boys even though he was twelve and every other student in the class was seven, eight, or nine. Moreover, Forbes was the only student in the class the instructor taught “addition” to, while the rest were learning “figures,” or not being instructed in math at all.<sup>92</sup> Forbes was also one of the four students that the teacher taught to write their letters. However, the teacher assigned Peter Smith to the first class of boys despite teaching him the same math and writing subjects as Forbes. Smith was one year younger than Caesar. The only clear difference that the teacher identified between the students was that Smith was ready to progress to reading the entire Bible, while Forbes continued to work on the New Testament. Just like with Clarkson’s class, the students at the Nassau School had to display a thorough knowledge of Christian doctrine before they were allowed to advance to the higher ranked classes and more difficult subjects.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Student List, “A List of the Names,” img. 3, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

### The Bray Schools and Conversion

When the trends found within the student lists are compared to the ideology expressed by the annual reports of the Associates, it is clear that the Bray School system was designed to propagate Anglican doctrine. First, the Associates stated directly that impetus for the creation of the schools was driven by a desire to convert more African Americans to Christianity. Moreover, the reports detailed that the only reason that the Associates were targeting children is because they viewed them as more amenable to conversion. Then Clarkson's reports showcase how the schools implemented a curriculum that forced students to master Anglican doctrine before they could advance to other subjects.<sup>94</sup> While the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray had a different ideological goal in mind from the American Colonization Society, the two organizations were similar in that education served as a means to an end. In the next chapter, the Colonization Society is examined to show how the Society advocated for education but only under the precondition that African Americans move to Africa, a tactic similar to the way the Bray Schools provided education on the condition that students learned Anglican doctrine.

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<sup>94</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 30 vols., (London, 1801-1830); Solomon Clarkson Quarterly Reports, 1821-1829, img. 1-40, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.



## CHAPTER 2: THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY AND AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION

On the surface, the American Colonization Society's primary goal was drastically different from the mission of the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray. The Society organized following a vote by the Virginia legislature that allowed "the Governor to correspond with the President...for the purpose of obtaining territory beyond the United State where free Negroes could be colonized," in December 1816.<sup>95</sup> The desire to remove African Americans from the colonies and the United States was not new, but the Colonization Society was notable for the famous people who joined the organization, including Henry Clay, Francis Scot Key, Andrew Jackson, and Daniel Webster, among others. Additionally, the Society established a colony in Liberia in 1822.<sup>96</sup> Despite the Society's prominent figures, the organization largely failed to achieve the impact it sought. The Society struggled to gain the support of slaveholders who believed that colonization might lead to gradual emancipation and the end of slavery. By the middle of the 1820s, slaveholders successfully blocked national legislation that would have endorsed colonization. In addition to the failure to cultivate national support, Andrew Jackson's push to limit government spending as the President of the United States severely limited the funding the Society received.

Not only did the Colonization Society incur the ire of slaveowners, but abolitionists also resented the Society because they believed it supported slave power. Moreover, abolitionists critiqued the Colonization Society's educational programs as

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<sup>95</sup> Foner, *History of Black Americans*, 585.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 584-589.

being devoid of sincerity. In their view, if the Society had truly believed in education, the organization would have pursued it for African Americans regardless of whether they relocated or not.<sup>97</sup> Lastly, and most importantly, the colonization movement sparked deep resistance in African American communities. Prominent black Philadelphians including James Forten, Absalom Jones, and Richard Allen all disparaged the Colonization Society, and a sense of racial solidarity caused most African Americans to resist colonization. Support from African American communities was in such short supply that those who chose to colonize in Liberia were sometimes labeled as traitors.<sup>98</sup> For instance, John B. Russwurm was described by Leonard Sweet as being akin to a “black Benedict Arnold,” for his support of colonization.<sup>99</sup>

Regardless of the effectiveness of the Society’s plan, the organization’s central focus on colonization showed how the Society never believed that the education of free African Americans could result in a society where African Americans and Euro-Americans could co-exist. Where the Associates pursued conversion, the Colonization Society attempted to completely remove African Americans from the United States. However, the two societies were more alike than a brief examination would show. Despite the differences in the organizations’ guiding ideologies, each group provided education to further a specific goal. From a broader perspective, it is less important what each society desired, than the fact that education was merely a means to an end. This analysis is supported by the articles contained within *The African Repository and*

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<sup>97</sup> Vincent P. Franklin, “Education for Colonization: Attempts to Educate Free Blacks in the United States for Emigration to Africa, 1823-1833, *The Journal of Negro Education* 43, no. 1 (Winter 1974): 97, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2966946>.

<sup>98</sup> Sweet, *Black Images of America*, 53-68; Foner, *History of Black Americans*, 589-594.

<sup>99</sup> Sweet, 55.

*Colonial Journal*, which revealed how the Colonization Society viewed education. Because the Society regularly reprinted works, a thorough examination of why they selected each work and how they presented it can provide a deeper understanding of how the Society used education as a tool to entice readers to their perspective. Compared to the Bray Schools' central focus on conversion, I argue that the American Colonization Society was only willing to endorse the education of African Americans if it advanced their primary goal of colonization. As "the official organ of the American Colonization Society," the *African Repository* provides a solid baseline of the organization's general beliefs.<sup>100</sup>

### The Desire for Colonization

The American Colonization Society desired for African Americans to return to Africa, which they considered all black people's home. The Society did not believe that black people could live alongside Euro-Americans, regardless of their place of birth or cultural attachments. The Society also maintained that separation was good for both black and white people around the globe. From the perspective of some members of the Society, such as Henry Clay, the discrimination that African Americans faced in American society prevented them from ever attaining equality. In his book on nationalism, David Waldstreicher described this explanation as a ploy. Essentially, the argument made by some Society members was that prejudice had existed for so long that it could never be eliminated.<sup>101</sup> Below this thin veneer of benevolence, the idea of

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<sup>100</sup> Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 12n.

<sup>101</sup> Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 306-308; Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 16-17.

educating free and enslaved African Americans often became a cheap talking point and was never truly considered a path to social uplift and equality. When the issues of colonization and education came into conflict, the primary goal to de-patriate African Americans took precedence.

An early example of the American Colonization Society's views during the 1820s appears in July of 1826 in a reprinted report of the Prison Discipline Society.<sup>102</sup> Before engaging with the text, the report set the precedent that African Americans were inferior to their Euro-American counterparts by titling the piece, the "Degraded Character of the Coloured Population."<sup>103</sup> Throughout the piece, the report asserted that African Americans constituted a larger proportion of the prison population than expected due to their lack of education. The author stated, "[t]he facts, which are gathered from the penitentiaries, to show how great a proportion of the convicts are coloured, even in those states, where the coloured population is small, show most strikingly, the connection between ignorance and vice."<sup>104</sup> The author began the argument on the supposition that all of the convicted inmates were guilty, which allowed the author to easily set up an argument that education would resolve a growing crime rate.<sup>105</sup> Over the next two pages,

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<sup>102</sup> Fredrickson uses a the same or a similar prison report to argue that African Americans were viewed as inferior based on the environment. I have not been able to confirm that they are the same document based on the information in the collection that I used. However, the quotes appear to be identical. See Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 5-6.

<sup>103</sup> "Degraded Character of the Coloured Population," in *The African Repository and Colonial Journal* (Washington: Way & Gideon, 1827), 2:152.

<sup>104</sup> "Degraded Character," 2: 152.

<sup>105</sup> The author does not challenge that race could have played a role in conviction. Unsurprisingly, this shows that the author does not conceive of race playing role in the legal system. For a recent work on the way in which slavery and race was intimately tied to the legal system, see Alejandro de la Fuente and Ariela J. Gross, *Becoming Free*,

the author used prison population and cost per inmate statistics to show how African Americans constituted a disproportionate portion of the prison budget of states such as Massachusetts, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. Ultimately, the author argued that if the states had predicted the problem, the government could have used the prison budget to educate free and enslaved African Americans to prevent prison population growth.<sup>106</sup> The author wrote:

Could these states have anticipated these surprising results, and appropriated the money to raise the character of the coloured population, how much better would have been their prospects, and how much less the expense of the states through which they are dispersed, for the support of their coloured convicts.

The expenditure of \$164,000, in so short a time, for the purposes of education, among a people consisting of only 54,000 souls, would very soon raise their character to the level with that of the whites, and diminish the number of convicts from among them, about ten fold.<sup>107</sup>

In themselves, these two paragraphs do not display the belief in a distinct and unalterable racial hierarchy and would give credence to a belief uplift ideology, advocated by some abolitionists, that many African Americans had striven to achieve.<sup>108</sup> The author went one step farther by arguing that African Americans might eventually reach parity with Euro-Americans. Then the author undercut this argument in the last two paragraphs by explaining that it is unlikely that African Americans could learn to

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*Becoming Black: Race, Freedom, and Law in Cuba, Virginia, and Louisiana*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

<sup>106</sup> “Degraded Character,” 2: 152-154.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 154.

<sup>108</sup> Elise Kammerer described the importance of uplift ideology to the Pennsylvania Abolition Society and Richard Allen in her work on African American education in the United States. Similarly, Nancy Hornick described how Anthony Benezet believed in the inherent equality black and white people in her article on the school that he ran. Kammerer, “Uplift in Schools,” 299-319; Hornick, “Anthony Benezet,” 399-421.

improve their moral character. The report stated, “[i]f, however, their character cannot be raised, where they are, a powerful argument may be derived from these facts, in favour of colonization.”<sup>109</sup> In the process, the author revealed that the argument about education was, at least partially, disingenuous. While the author attempted to piece the point back together in the last paragraph, the implication that colonization in Africa was the only place that would be acceptable for African Americans to improve their character remained. Importantly, this argument still insinuated that Euro-American and European education would be necessary for the success of African American colonies established back in Africa.<sup>110</sup>

With the report’s admission that African Americans had the same potential intellectual capacity as Euro-Americans, why did the American Colonization Society republish this document? Based on the organization’s statements in the introduction, the Colonization Society believed that their readers would interpret this report as heavily in favor of the colonization movement. The Society prefaced:

[n]o argument, we believe, can be offered, in favour of the American Colonization Society, more impressive or affecting, than that which is presented by the following statement...[i]t must, we think, awaken, in behalf of our Institution, every humane and patriotic sentiment.<sup>111</sup>

Interestingly, the author of this introduction did not believe it was necessary to interact with the primary argument of the report. The author of the Colonization Society’s introduction automatically assumed that that the reader must come to the conclusion that educational reform was not feasible. Even if the author of the report was sincere in the

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<sup>109</sup> “Degraded Character,” 2: 154.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 2: 152.

conviction that education was a possible route to moral reform, it was readily apparent that the Colonization Society was unwilling to consider that a possibility. Whereas some historians have argued that the Society's belief in colonization was sincere, this introduction shows their belief in education as a tool for societal change was not.<sup>112</sup>

While the previous document shows that the American Colonization Society refused to acknowledge education as a path toward change as an alternative to colonization, other documents display its willingness to promote education as a tool to colonize Africa. One example of this is the article titled "African School," which contains not only original writing of the American Colonization Society, but also a reprinted report from the Board of Directors of the African School in Parsippany, New Jersey. The report condemned the way in which African Americans interacted with society after they became free, when it argued that they lack the skills necessary to enter society because they were ignorant and uneducated. If that were not enough, the author also argued that "if his ignorance does not perpetuate his degeneracy, the deep rooted prejudice of the whites, that separates him from all communion in social and civil intercourse, will fix him in hopeless despondency."<sup>113</sup> Unlike the author of the "Degraded Character of the Coloured Population," the Board of Directors initially expressed a much more empathetic view of the plight that African Americans faced. They showed that even when African Americans attempted to meet the standards of moral uplift that Euro-Americans claimed would work, they still faced discrimination from the biases that plagued society.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 1-42.

<sup>113</sup> "African School," in *The African Repository and Colonial Journal* (Washington: Way & Gideon, 1826), 1:276.

<sup>114</sup> "African School," 1:276.

Despite their more sympathetic interpretation of African American life, the Board also expressed support for the colonization movement and revealed their own inherent biases in the process. The Board of Directors explained that they believed that African Americans could never integrate into society because “[t]hey are emphatically a separate people!”<sup>115</sup> Moreover, they also concluded that African Americans would have to provide education to other black people.<sup>116</sup> They wrote:

They must be trained and educated by themselves; and it is the dictate of the soundest wisdom to deal with them as they are. Let them so understand us—that we are instructing them not for our society—not to form our magistrates or legislators; but preparing them to go home.<sup>117</sup>

Interestingly, the quote above shows how they diverged from the author of the “Degraded Character,” when they acknowledged not only African Americans’ ability to learn but their ability to teach. To be clear, the Board’s statements revealed that they do not believe that African Americans could attain social parity with Euro-Americans. First, their comments displayed a disregard for any form of government other than those that were perceived to be of European or Euro-American descent. Their remarks showcased how, even when founding the colonies in Africa, they believed that African Americans should utilize the same governmental structures that had oppressed them. This belief highlighted the sense of social hierarchy that the Board of Directors implicitly believed was natural.

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<sup>115</sup> “African School,” 1:277.

<sup>116</sup> I utilize the term “black” here to describe the population of free and enslaved individuals of color in the larger Atlantic World. In many of the documents produced or reproduced by the American Colonization Society, they refused to acknowledge a sense of Americanness, or other regional cultural variants, that black people created and cultivated. They would often refer to them as simply “African” regardless of where they were born and felt cultural attachments. Later in the paragraph, an analysis will be given that further expands upon this topic.

<sup>117</sup> African School,” 1:277.



It also demonstrated the Directors belief that African Americans would need to first be taught the proper form of government by benevolent Euro-Americans.

As compared to their introduction of the “Degraded Character,” the American Colonization Society interacted with the idea that education should be promoted for African Americans. The Society stated,

They [the Board of Directors, and the “Synods of New-Nork and New Jersey”] state, that efforts to obtain funds for the school in its present state, have been vain; that the insensibility to the worth of virtuous and enlightened character, among the people of colour, renders it necessary that education, to be of high benefit, should be commenced early in life, and that the exigency of the times demands an Institution more enlarged and better endowed, to prepare coloured men for civil offices in Liberia and Hayti, and fit them to instruct others in science and religion.<sup>118</sup>

This introduction, while distinctly longer, also engaged with all parts of the Board’s argument. Because the discussion of education in these reprinted documents was in line with the effort for colonization, the Colonization Society’s editor or editors felt it acceptable to discuss education. The way that the Colonization Society approached these two documents displayed their selective use of sources. When the argument in the document that they reprinted aligned with their motives, they endorsed that document’s opinion. Alternatively, when the documents argument presented education as an alternative to colonization, the editors of the *African Repository* ignored the argument. The editors’ silence in those instances speaks volumes.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> “African School,” in *African Repository*, 1:276.

<sup>119</sup> For a full explanation of the theory behind interpreting silences in the historical record, see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

The ACS's Vision and African American Perspectives

While the majority of the documents that discussed education in the *African Repository* endorsed colonization directly, others employed by the editors appeared to express similar views to some African Americans who had been educated. However, when the context of these views are examined, it is clear that the Colonization Society was still using the arguments to underscore that colonization was good for society. When analyzed side by side, it becomes clear that, despite similar critiques of the education system in the United States, the authors the Society quoted did not come to same conclusions as African American authors and speakers. In particular, an article from the *New York Observer* was almost identical to a speech delivered by a valedictorian of a school for African American girls and boys in New York.

In 1819, this unnamed student delivered a public speech condemning the merits of his education. Despite remaining grateful to his teachers, he thoroughly explained how his education would provide him little benefit in the future. The speaker noted that his knowledge could not overcome the prejudice of those from whom he sought employment and respect. In many ways, his narrative challenged the idea that moral uplift would be sufficient. He even argued that had he been the first to develop the ideas of John Locke he still would not be respected by Euro-American society. Moreover, he explained that he would not be able to secure physical labor either due to the way in which Euro-American workers viewed working alongside African Americans.<sup>120</sup> He stated:

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<sup>120</sup> "Introductory Address," in *The History of the New-York African Free-Schools, from Their Establishment in 1787, to the Present Time; Embracing a Period of More than Forty Years; Also A Brief Account of the Successful Labors of the New-York*

What are my prospects? To what shall I turn my hand? Shall I be a mechanic? No one will employ me; white boys won't work with me. Shall I be a merchant? No one will have me in his office; white clerks won't associate with me. Drudgery and servitude, then, are my prospective portion.<sup>121</sup>

In a few brief lines, he clearly condemned the state of American society. Regardless of what he had learned, he showed how it would not benefit him through no fault of his own. He then concluded his speech by appealing to a shared humanity under God. In doing so, he also highlighted a connection to enlightenment ideals about race and morality.<sup>122</sup> Additionally, he noted that his speech should be used as an example of black intellect that could serve to sway the minds of white people. He stated: "You will now have an opportunity of seeing that many of us have acquired a commendable knowledge of the various branches taught in this School. This, the exercises now to be introduced, will, I hope, more fully demonstrate."<sup>123</sup> By arguing this, he directly endorsed the idea that moral uplift might be possible, even though his earlier statements may have implied that moral uplift was already failing.

Before discussing how the Colonization Society published similar statements with different conclusions, it is necessary to highlight how the valedictorian's statements from 1819, were not drastically different from other students who attended the school. While many of the other students did not make remarks that were as critical of Euro-American society, most showcased a knowledge and acceptance of enlightenment principles and

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*Manumission Society* by Charles C. Andrews (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 132.

<sup>121</sup> "Introductory Address," in *The History of the New-York African Free Schools*, 132.

<sup>122</sup> Urban and Wagoner, *American Education*, 55-62.

<sup>123</sup> "Introductory Address," in *The History of the New-York African Free Schools*, 132.

thoughts on race. In line with what Patrick Rael argued in *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North*, these students valued their Euro-centric education and in some ways endorsed that world view publicly. However, many of these students may have tempered their language in order to protect themselves. Intense scrutiny in such a public forum could spark vitriolic reprisal. At the same time, in many of their statements we can find a genuine appreciation of their teachers but also remarks that highlight how discrimination would affect them.<sup>124</sup> One valedictorian leaving the school in 1815 remarked, “I, with you will strive to give evidence, that these minds of ours, though passed by sable skins...can feel the glow of gratitude and affection, towards our friends and instructors.”<sup>125</sup> Even if this student’s remarks were an unembellished version of what he believed, he still offered a mild critique of the society. When we consider that he may have had to temper the language of his valedictory speech in order to not upset those who supported the school, he may have withheld many other criticisms of American Society.

Similarly, another valedictorian in 1822 showcased her belief that black people were equal to the people of any race. However, her comments also differ from both other students in that she highlighted a religious element to her beliefs regarding race. She

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<sup>124</sup> “Valedictory Address,” in *The History of the New-York African Free-Schools, from Their Establishment in 1787, to the Present Time; Embracing a Period of More than Forty Years; Also A Brief Account of the Successful Labors of the New-York Manumission Society* by Charles C. Andrews (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 130-131; “Valedictory Address, spoken by a female pupil, April 18, 1822 at a Public Examination,” in *The History of the New-York African Free-Schools, from Their Establishment in 1787, to the Present Time; Embracing a Period of More than Forty Years; Also A Brief Account of the Successful Labors of the New-York Manumission Society* by Charles C. Andrews (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 133-134; Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Franklin, “Education for Colonization,” 101.

<sup>125</sup> “Valedictory Address,” in *The History of the New-York African Free Schools*, 130-131.

stated that despite the chattel slavery that many black people suffered under, she believed that they were still “endowed by the same Almighty Power...with intellectual capacities, not inferior to any people on earth.”<sup>126</sup> Without other sources from this student, it is difficult to differentiate whether her ideas were the result of enlightenment thought or purely religious belief. However, based on the other two students’ statements, I believe that they are connected and inseparable.<sup>127</sup>

While some Colonization Society’s re-publications contained similar sentiments to those held by African American students, particularly in New York, their conclusions were notably different. In an article from the *New-York Observer*, republished in the *African Repository and Colonial Journal* in 1826, the author made an argument that was nearly identical to the valedictorian from 1819. This unidentified author began the article by claiming the topic of education and race arose naturally in a conversation with a friend. The views the author held in the conversation aligned with general enlightenment thought that the three African American authors also appeared to believe. Moreover, in almost identical language, the author utilized a question to suggest that African

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<sup>126</sup> “Valedictory Address, spoken by a female pupil,” in *The History of the New-York African Free Schools*, 134. This valedictorian used the words “African race,” where I have paraphrased using the word “black.” I made this choice to maintain consistency with my initial statements on terminology, see the first footnote. This valedictorian appears to be referring to all people with an ethnic African background. In the modern historical discourse, people of ethnic African descent who were displaced around the globe are often grouped as the African Diaspora. In my opinion, this valedictorian is identifying people of ethnic African backgrounds rather than just people born in Africa. As a result, the word from the terminology I outlined in the beginning that best suites this scenario is “black.” However, her statement may also show that she felt more closely attached to her African ancestry. At this time, I do not have access to any other statement by this individual, nor do I know exactly whom she is. As result, I do not believe it would appropriate to come to a definitive conclusion on what she believed.

<sup>127</sup> Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest*, 52.

Americans were not receiving fair treatment in the United States.<sup>128</sup> He asked, “what are the prospects and the hopes which the coloured parent can place before his rising offspring, as motives, to aim at an elevated standing in society?”<sup>129</sup> Subsequent questions were all incredibly similar to the 1819 valedictorian’s speech. In essence, this author also attempted to prove that racial discrimination held too much sway on American society at the time. The net result was that moral uplift was failing. Once again like the valedictorian’s remarks, the author stated, “[a]las! he is obliged to consign them over to the fate of his unhappy race.”<sup>130</sup> The main divergence between this author and the valedictorian of 1819 was that the author did not end on a hopeful note. Rather than re-emphasize that education was a path toward improvement, the writer had no solution to the problem. Where the valedictorian appealed to his statements as proof that African Americans could be equal, the author from the *New York Observer* failed to make anything other than a simplified argument at the end.<sup>131</sup> The author concluded:

Should the reader ask, “What then can be done?” I am not prepared to give a definite answer in the present communication. Something ought indeed to be done, to meliorate the condition of these depressed children of Africa:—and I trust it will be done.<sup>132</sup>

Aside from a generalized sentiment, the author did not see a direct path to change, where all three valedictorians implied or stated that the solution is to convince white and Euro-American societies to change.

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<sup>128</sup> “Our Coloured Population,” in in *The African Repository and Colonial Journal* (Washington: Way & Gideon, 1826), 1:316-317.

<sup>129</sup> “Our Coloured Population,” 1:317.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:317.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

It is clear, that the way in which the *Observer* article framed the problem allows readers to conclude that colonization was the solution to the racial discrimination, where the students emphasized that racial disparities within white and Euro-American societies should improve. Even if the Society had access to these speeches, the organization would not have been incentivized to use them, particularly the one from 1819, because they undercut the organization's goal. While the *African Repository's* editors could have explained, as with the Prison Discipline Society's report, that they believed the document advocated for colonization, the absence of their words does not necessarily mean they do not believe it suited that purpose. In particular, historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot has noted how silences in the historical record can be just as powerful as explicit statements.<sup>133</sup> In this case, the editors may have refrained from stating that they believed the article advocated for colonization because the article does not mention the concept itself. When taken in context with the rest of the Society's remarks, the reason for the absence begins to diminish in importance. The editors made it clear, through their own words and the works they republished, that they believed in colonization, and the expectation was that someone reading the journal should be convinced that colonization was the most viable solution to prevent racial mixing. The question remains, what does this show about education?

The comparison between these speeches and the *Observer* article show the Society resisted acknowledging the intelligence of African Americans and black individuals. The organization may have argued that education could benefit black communities, but it would always take a secondary role to the Society's primary

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<sup>133</sup> Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 1-30.

objective. Even if the editors of the *African Repository* never came across the students' speeches in their daily lives, it is clear they were also not dedicated to seeking them, or other examples like them, out. If they had, like their contemporary Charles Andrews did, they would likely have been able to include the students' writings to prove that education was beneficial and would produce, in their view, a better society in Africa. However, the republication of the students' speeches would have provided direct counterarguments to colonization. Moreover, other articles from the *African Repository* show a generalized distrust of African American and black intelligence that further supports the idea that the Society did not grapple with education with the same rigor as other benevolent societies.<sup>134</sup>

One example of the Colonization Society's attitude towards black intelligence appeared in an article titled "Benevolence of an African," which was originally printed in the *New York Observer*. The author of this article recalled the story of a black woman and her husband in New Orleans, as recounted by her in her later years. During their lives, the woman and her husband were not only able to purchase their freedom but also free another enslaved person by saving their money to purchase them at a slave auction and manumitting the individual. She also detailed how she, her husband, and the individual they freed traveled to New York where she expressed a desire for their newly freed companion to seek out God and the Gospel. While it is clear that the interviewed woman highlighted her devout belief in Christianity, she also explained her actions as being directed and planned. The woman stated, "the industry of herself and husband, had

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<sup>134</sup> "Benevolence of an African," in *The African Repository and Colonial Journal* (Washington: Way & Gideon, 1826), 1:352.



enabled them to purchase their freedom and lay up about 400 dollars.”<sup>135</sup> Despite the woman’s belief in Christianity, she deliberately highlighted how self-manumitting herself and aiding in the manumission of another were not acts of a divine nature. While she was driven by religious motives, her and her husband’s skills, intelligence, and planning were what ultimately allowed them to help free another enslaved person.

Importantly, the article in the *New York Observer* intentionally highlighted the shortcomings of the unnamed woman’s education and implied that religion, and not intelligence, were the reason she was successful. The author concluded the article, “[t]he conduct of this aged, illiterate African, is a striking example of the power of religion, and her example deserving the highest commendation.”<sup>136</sup> Instead of emphasizing the woman’s competence as well as her religious motivations, the author noted her lack of education by referring to her as illiterate. Whereas the woman explained her life as a combination of industriousness and devotion to Christianity, the author of the *N.Y. Observer* article implied that one clearly superseded the other. It is apparent that the Society and the *New York Observer* downplayed African American and black intelligence when it suited them.

### Conclusion

As explained at the beginning of the chapter, the American Colonization Society was an organization that promoted the removal of African Americans from the United States to Africa. They did not believe that African Americans and Euro-Americans could

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<sup>135</sup> “Benevolence of an African,” 1:352.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:352.

co-exist and refused to accept that African Americans had developed a culture independent of their ancestry. To the members of the Society, any black individual in the United States was African and thus did not belong in the Early American Republic. Intermixed with their arguments about colonization, the Society held distinctive views about education. In line with many enlightenment ideals, they argued that African Americans were inferior to Euro-Americans based on the way they had been treated. They stated that the way society had behaved toward African Americans and black people in the Atlantic World is what had led them to be inferior. As a result, the Society generally supported education but always in a convoluted manner. Similarly to the Bray Schools, the organization's efforts to provide education were secondary to their goal of colonization, and it is clear that the Society struggled with ideas about African American and black intelligence.<sup>137</sup>

In the first section of this work, it was clear that the Society rarely separated its ideas about education from their larger goal. The documents members republished in their national journal, *The African Repository and Colonial Journal*, supported this view, or the editors added their own analysis to promote colonization. When a document set education as an alternative path, the Society tended to ignore that argument and endorse the view that colonization was the answer. Additionally, when a document supported that education was just one facet of colonization, the editors of the *African Repository* were more willing to engage with that argument. It is apparent that the Society believed education could lead to improvement in black communities, but there were limits to that

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<sup>137</sup> Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 306-308; "African School," 1:276; Urban and Wagoner, *American Education*, 55-62.

change. Notably, a Euro-centric education was believed necessary to see improvement and the changes in black communities should primarily occur in Africa.

At the same time, it is also clear that the Colonization Society struggled with African American and black intelligence. Even when documents published by the Society tended to line up with ideas of some African American students, the organization often came to different conclusions. In some ways, this shows how the Society wrestled with the implications of moral uplift and a society in which African Americans utilized enlightenment thought to critique civilization. In other ways, this falls in line with a consistent trend of society of the period, and even beyond, to alter their views to conform to their innermost racist beliefs. Underneath their language that education would produce better black communities in Africa, the Society intimated the idea that racial inferiority was not just due to environmental factors as children developed, but an inherited state of being. While their efforts to promote education were sometimes genuine, it is also clear that they did not believe that education was a path to pure equality. While a more extreme view of racial identity than that of the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray, the similarity between the two organizations is apparent. Both attempted to utilize education or the idea of education to support the primary goal they sought to achieve. In the Colonization Society's case, they sought to endorse education when it argued in favor of colonization and ignore or combat articles that argued education could be a benefit to African Americans regardless of colonization.

### CHAPTER 3: COMPLICATING THE MISSION OF THE ASSOCIATES

In the two previous chapters, I explained that the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray and the American Colonization Society pursued the education of African Americans and black individuals to promote ideologically driven goals. Education for its own sake, or to achieve societal uplift, was secondary to some other objective. However, this chapter outlines how the schools established by the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray were less restrictive than those established by the American Colonization Society. If benevolent organizations and educational institutions are viewed as existing on a spectrum of how restrictive and racialized their programs were, then the American Colonization Society existed on the extreme end of the scale. In contrast, the Bray schools were a more moderate organization than their reports' introductions implied. They allowed for a broader range of ideas and more latitude for black involvement, influence, and leadership.

In order to explain the differences between the American Colonization Society and the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray, this chapter primarily utilizes the letters of individuals who directly monitored the Brays schools. While less formalized than the introductions of the Associates reports, these letters highlighted a more nuanced view of the organization's goals. Despite continuing to emphasize the Associates goal to Christianize black people, these writers also revealed some of their own personal insights about education. Moreover, within the subtext of these documents, a pattern of black involvement and self-determination often emerged. Most of these letters originated from Halifax, Skelbourne, Philadelphia, and the Bahaman Islands. While these records provide added insight on their own, they will be compared to other documents that were analyzed

in the previous chapters. In particular, the records that Solomon Clarkson, the boys' schoolmaster in Philadelphia, kept along with teachers at other Bray Schools will be reexamined to explain how they can be interpreted differently. While a clear focus on Christianity existed, other trends reveal that the schools may have been preparing students for entry into Euro-centric societies. This analysis is not meant to imply that the Associates would have viewed black people as equal members of any society but does show there was a perception that the education provided resulted in better societal members. In addition to the analysis of the Bray Schools, some examples that were presented earlier to showcase the American Colonization Society's approach are reexamined to show how Society's schools were far more rigid and restrictive. While there are still examples of black self-determination, the general distrust of the Colonization Society within African American communities and their more extreme racial beliefs place them further on the fringe of benevolent organizations and educational institutions.

### Competing Forces Within the Bray Schools

The first chapter of this work clearly explained that the focus of the schools founded by the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray was to convert black people in the Atlantic World to Christianity. However, when the letters of people who were in charge of monitoring the schools are analyzed, the mission of the schools becomes murky. These letters always reinforced that Christian conversion and a Christian education were at the center of the schools, but also often shed light on other more minor goals that the schools pursued concurrent with the main curriculum. In several instances, across the whole

geographical area of this study, signs of black resistance or cooperation appeared. Moreover, the letter writers often expressed a desire for more black involvement whenever the topic was broached. The specific examples of this phenomenon, discussed below, show that the mission of the Bray Schools was more nuanced. While the organizations' mission statements were clear and concise, when schools were opened, their curriculum often surpassed the original goals of the Associates.

When analyzing how the Philadelphia schools functioned in practice, the best source comes from Bishop William White. While the letters that he sent on behalf of the schools in Philadelphia stopped in 1821, his writing still held significance to the period from 1820 to 1830 for a few reasons. First, the schools in Philadelphia were not supported by the Associates unlike similar schools in other regions. Rather than the organization providing for the schools directly, they were funded by the rent collected from leased land in the city. Therefore, the schools in Philadelphia were more independent than most of the schools established by the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray. The schools being slightly separated from the larger organization was not a minor difference. While the schools were still technically supported by the Associates, the Philadelphia schools had a separate treasurer. Moreover, it is possible to see the weight the Associates gave this division in their yearly reports. Each year, after outlining the purpose of the schools, a paragraph was always dedicated to explaining the history of the schools in Philadelphia.<sup>138</sup> In addition to this difference in organizational structure, the

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<sup>138</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:11, img. 326.

African American community in Philadelphia was greatly involved in the education process itself.<sup>139</sup>

Both of these factors make Bishop White's writings relevant, despite the fact that the letters slightly precede the time period of this study. Due to the uniqueness of the Philadelphia schools' situation, an examination of a broader history of the schools sheds light on the characteristics the schools shared the 1820s. In addition to the outside factors that make Bishop White's writings significant, his connection to the African American community in the region provided more insight into the schools than in some of the other regions analyzed. Whereas other reporters often referred to black communities generally, Bishop White knew and referred to Absalom Jones. White's relationship with Jones allows for a deeper analysis of African American involvement in education in Philadelphia.<sup>140</sup>

Most of Bishop White's letters concerned the operations of the schools and the trust established to manage the properties the organization owned.<sup>141</sup> However, as early as 1795, a blending of White's managerial concerns and a pragmatic approach to education appeared in his writing. While he began his letter on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1795, with a recommendation to alter the trust slightly, White eventually turned his focus to the

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<sup>139</sup> While Elise Kammerer ties her analysis of Richard Allen and the Pennsylvania Abolition Society to African American communities broadly, she also shows that multiple prominent black leaders were establishing schools in the after the American Revolution. Moreover, she highlights how the reduction in funding from Euro-American societies did not deter African Americans from creating benevolent societies or schools. Kammerer, *Uplift in Schools*, 299-319.

<sup>140</sup> Bishop White to Rev. Littleton, February 3, 1800, img. 37, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

<sup>141</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:12n\*, img. 327.

schools themselves. He mentioned that the lots that were leased were likely to produce a large surplus of funding for the Associates. As a result, he advocated expanding the education program. Bishop White's advocacy did not directly contradict the mission of the Associates. White wrote, "[i]t is evident that...the Society will have an handsome annual Sum at their Disposal: And altho' they may have other new Calls than any here may come to them from this City in behalf of black People; yet, with the Hope, that these Funds will then admit of a School on a more enlarged Plan."<sup>142</sup> The Associates of the Late Dr. Bray likely viewed White's advocacy as forwarding the dissemination of Christian doctrine. On the other hand, White's proposal does not imply that the schools were created as a manipulation tactic to target children due to their impressionability outlined in the introduction of the Associates yearly reports.<sup>143</sup> White's tone and writing did not indicate that he thought of the schools as coercive, and the paragraph that followed displayed a more nuanced view of race than the Associates' formal texts.

After discussing the schools, White described to the Associates the founding of the African Episcopal Church of Saint Thomas. White's descriptions of African American agency and intelligence were a stark contrast to the way in which the yearly reports outlined the schools' mission. White opened the paragraph, stating, "[t]hey [black people] have lately erected, partly at their own Expense [and] partly by the Subscriptions among the white People, a very convenient Church."<sup>144</sup> While Bishop White was recording the event historically, the language he employed offers some insight into his

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<sup>142</sup> Bishop William White to Unknown, June 4, 1795, img. 18, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

<sup>143</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:10, img. 325.

<sup>144</sup> Bishop White to Unknown, June 4, 1795, img. 19, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.



state of mind. First and foremost, White does not present any objection to the cooperation between African Americans and Euro-Americans, nor does he imply that Euro-Americans were superior to the congregants of the new church. Additionally, the emphasis he placed on “People” in the paragraph mirrored his emphasis in the previous section. White utilized “black” and “white” as adjectives and emphasized the word “People,” by capitalizing it. It is highly unlikely that Bishop White harbored no racial bias. However, the way he described the black and white population of Philadelphia showed a more accepting view of collaboration than the ideas progressed by the Associates at large.

Bishop White’s general positive view of African American agency continued in his description of Rev. Absalom Jones. Jones, a formerly enslaved man, rose to prominence in Philadelphia’s African American community and was selected by the elders and deacons of the African Church to lead them as the church combined with the Church of England.<sup>145</sup> After White relayed to the Associates that the congregation desired join the Anglican Church, he also noted the parishioners’ endorsement of Jones. White stated:

[T]hey...have declared a Conformity to our Church in Doctrine, Discipline [and] Worship, [and] have solicited the Ordination of one of their Number, a Man of great Weight among them. Having known him many Years [and] being perfectly satisfied with his Character [and] his [unknown]; considering also that he has a Measure of Literature, alth’o I wish it were more, I have Thoughts of complying with their Request: all my Brethren in this City approving of it.”<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 67-70, 125-128.

<sup>146</sup> Bishop White to Unknown, June 4, 1795, img. 19, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

White also noted that he would attempt to minister to the congregation while he awaited a response about Jones's ordination. White's tone throughout this section of his letter highlighted an even deeper commitment to interracial cooperation. White heaped praise on Jones and advocated for his advancement. Additionally, the only critique of Jones that White offered was based upon his knowledge instead of race. These statements reveal that members of the associates did not conceive of race in as rigid terms as the Colonization Society. White did not argue for the mixing of African American and Euro-American society but did conceive of a world in which black and white communities could coexist.

While Bishop White was not discussing education when he recounted the history of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, his letter illuminated the core beliefs he took with him when he reviewed the schools in Philadelphia. White clearly believed that there was room for African American agency within Euro-American and European power structures. As with the church, an African American man was left in charge of educating the classes of ten boys at the Bray school in Philadelphia. It could be possible that White was subscribing to an older view in which African Americans needed to be monitored by Euro-Americans to prevent them from promoting their own opinions.<sup>147</sup> However, the extent of White's praise of Jones and the very limited, constructive critique of his abilities lends credit to the idea that White did not believe that the church needed to be

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<sup>147</sup> In *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*, Albert Raboteau describes how African American churches were not typically allowed to exist independent of Euro-American oversight. Additionally, formally joining the Church of England had already provide White the opportunity to oversee the operations at the African Episcopal Church. Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2004), 137, 128-150.

heavily supervised. In part, this may have been because the congregation had already declared their intention to join the Church of England. However, leaving the control of preaching to African Americans within Euro-American society shows a drastically different level of control than that advocated by the Colonization Society. In the same vein, the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray left the advancement of their core mission of conversion to an African American man, thereby displaying a fundamental belief that African Americans had a larger role to play in American society.

This analysis is further supported by the fact that Bishop White did not regularly correspond with the Bray Associates concerning the minute details of the schools' progress. White did not appear to believe that he should be monitoring the school, rather he behaved as if he was an advocate for the congregation of St. Thomas and the black community at large. In the next two letters that White sent, he appealed for the expansion of the school system to advance the ability of African American children to learn trades. Rather than confining his concerns to students' spiritual wellbeing, White attempted to expand the mission of the Associates. On December 5, 1796, White wrote, "you encourage me, Sir, to hope, that the Society will do something, in behalf of the African Church, towards the Endowment of a School, on a more enlarged Plan than the present; the Benefits of which will never extend beyond very young Children or, at best, will not prepare Boys for Trades."<sup>148</sup> Where the Associates made it exceptionally clear that there was a discrete guiding purpose for the schools, White challenged that the Associates

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<sup>148</sup> Bishop White to Rev. Thomas Littleton, December 5, 1796, img. 23, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

should also support secular education in order to improve the lives of Anglican African Americans.

However, White did not end his advocacy at the mere suggestion that the Associates expand their goals. White conceived of two plans that would allow for the enhanced education of older, male African American children. White's first idea was to build the school on the land behind St. Thomas church. As an alternative, White stated that the Associates could build a school that the Church managed, in which the Associates would be guaranteed visitation.<sup>149</sup> White concluded his suggestion, "[c]onsidering the present Prices of Building, which will be much affected by a Peace, whenever that desirable Event shall take place, I think the former Benefit might be suspended; [and] the Scheel be kept, for a Time, in their Church."<sup>150</sup> White's concrete conceptions for the way a school might be created showed that he was not merely pontificating on the role he and the Associates played in providing education to African Americans. White sought substantive change in the schools funded by the Associates that he believed would lead to better lives for the congregants at St. Thomas. White expounded on his recommendation in his next letter dated, December 10, 1798. He argued that to increase students' chances of entering a trade, they would need "Instruction in Writing [and] Arithmetic, as well as reading."<sup>151</sup> White also reiterated that either of his plans could still reasonably accomplish his goal. In the event that the Church ran the school, he believed that a stipend of twenty pounds would be an acceptable contribution

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<sup>149</sup> Bishop White to Rev. Thomas Littleton, December 5, 1796, img. 23-24, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., img. 24.

<sup>151</sup> Bishop White to Unknown, December 10, 1798, img. 27, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

from the Associates to aid in the support of the students. While White's suggestion did not counter the primary goal of the Associates, he clearly disagreed with the balance between two purposes of education, to convert students to Christianity and provide better life outcomes for students, that the Associates had attempted to strike up until the nineteenth century.

In addition to White's direct advocacy for the further development of the Associates education system, he did not challenge African Americans who developed schools for their communities. By 1800, Absalom Jones ran an educational program for African American children out of his home. Despite White's suggestions to the Associates that a school be built or based out of St. Thomas, he supported Jones's decision and continued to speak positively of Jones's work. White wrote, "[t]he African Minister, Mr. Absalom Jones, has, ever since the 9 of March last, kept a School in his own House; towards the Support of which we have allowed him £10 Sterling, to the End of the last year."<sup>152</sup> White further detailed that Jones was receiving money from an abolition society for each child that he taught. Rather than react negatively to Jones's initiative, White detailed that the Associates in Philadelphia were committed to maintaining the support that had already been provided, going forward. Moreover, White explained that Jones's school also met the additional objective of providing a more detailed education to students that he had outlined in his previous letters. White explained, "[y]ou will bear in Mind, that they [the students] will be generally of a larger Growth than those sent to the Mistress [Ruth Hand]; [and] that they will be taught not

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<sup>152</sup> Bishop White to Rev. Littleton, February 3, 1800, img. 37, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

only Reading, but Writing [and] Arithmetic.”<sup>153</sup> White could have expressed concern that Jones was teaching African American students without much Euro-American oversight, but instead he chose to help aid Jones’s initiative and continued to generally speak highly of him. White’s approach shows how the educational system provided by the Associates was less rigid and racialized than the system that the Colonization Society progressed. Whereas the Colonization Society refused to challenge slave power and believed in a complete separation between white and black people, the Bray Schools offered much more moderate approach.

In addition to Bishop White’s point of view, people who reported on the Bray schools in other regions of the Atlantic World offered similar perspectives. White’s support of Jones and advocacy for the expansion of African American education was more extreme than many of his fellow reporters but most of them advocated for the same ideas on a smaller scale. In Halifax, John Inglis informed the Associates that he had recommended that the schoolmaster involve black parents and prominent citizens in order to keep students coming to the school. Inglis’s tone was far more pragmatic than Bishop White’s, but he was acknowledging that black community members had a direct role to play in the Associates’ education system. On January 10, 1823, he wrote to the Associates that the teachers in the region, Mrs. Fitzgerald and Mr. Fletcher, were doing everything in their power to provide a religious education to their students. Moreover, Inglis claimed that, as superintendent, he had done everything in his power to support the teachers. Inglis continued that despite their best efforts, all three had failed to make the

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<sup>153</sup> Bishop White to Rev. Littleton, February 3, 1800, img. 37, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

impact they had wished to see in the region. Just as the Associates argued in their yearly reports, Inglis chalked up their failure in Halifax to the religious beliefs and culture of black community members. He stated, “[t]he religious prejudices and...irregular habits of the Negroes, are the chief difficulties in the way.”<sup>154</sup> Inglis, much more than Bishop White, viewed black and white communities as separate. He remained steadfast in his dedication to converting black children to Christianity, but his views also reflected many of those espoused by the Colonization Society. However, rather than assert that complete separation between different racial groups was necessary, Inglis outlined how the school may increase its effectiveness by involving black community members in the schools.

Inglis wrote:

I have seen Fletcher within the last week, and his report is comfortable – I visit Mrs. Fitzgerald’s School without appointment, and do what I can by remonstrance with both children and parents, to enforce regularity of attendance at School [and] Church...I have advised him [Mr. Fletcher] to attempt to create an interest in the School among a few of the more respectable Black men, that they might occasionally visit the School, and see the progress of the children; and he tells me that he has already derived benefit from the plan, for there visits encourage other to be more regular in sending their children.<sup>155</sup>

Inglis’s statements showed that despite the racial prejudices that he harbored, he was forced to contend with the fact that the schools would only be successful if black community members were allowed direct involvement in their children’s education. Despite being a more pragmatic approach than White’s seemingly genuine concern,

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<sup>154</sup> John Inglis to Rev. Samuel Wix, January 10, 1823, img. 126-127, Correspondence concerning the School at Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1784-1836, Correspondence on the establishment of schools in Canada, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900, British Online Archives.

<sup>155</sup> Inglis to Rev. Wix, January 10, 1823, img. 127, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

Inglis's statements indicated that the Associates were more receptive to crossing racial lines.

Inglis's remarks revealed that black resistance to the coercive measures advocated by the Associates and the Colonization Society was effective. By the 1820s, the Bray Schools in Philadelphia had adopted Bishop White's suggestion that a school for older, male African American children be established to enhance students' prospects of entering a trade. However, at the forefront of this development were black community members, some of whom were known for their outspoken advocacy on behalf of the Philadelphia black community. Between Jones's establishment of a school in the 1790s and Solomon Clarkson's running of the school for male African American children in the 1820s, it is apparent that black community members believed that they should play a central role in the education of black children. Moreover, when community members in the various regions around the Atlantic World were not included in the process, resistance and apathy to the Associates designs severely limited the impact of the Bray Schools. As a result, even when individual Associate members, such as Inglis, were not as enthusiastic about the possibility of black involvement as Bishop White, they were forced to accept that their success or failure hinged on the involvement of black communities.<sup>156</sup> This meant that the Associates could not maintain the rigid racial lines that the Colonization Society believed existed without suffering the same ire and resistance the Society faced.<sup>157</sup> Be it

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<sup>156</sup> Inglis to Rev. Wix, January 10, 1823, img. 127, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

<sup>157</sup> In addition to the analysis from chapter two that shows the attachment that the Colonization Society had to distinct racial boundaries, other authors have highlighted instances in which the Society argued for discrete racial lines. While George Fredrickson notes that often the racial policy that originated from the Society was predicated on the idea that racial bias was too integrated in American society to every be removed, he also



for pragmatic reasons or genuine belief, the Associates allowed for more regional variation in the Bray Schools in order to achieve their ultimate goal of conversion. Black people in the Atlantic World seized upon the latitude in the approach of the Associates and were able to assert some control over the educational system.

In addition to allowing more black involvement in the Bray Schools, some administrators believed that the Associates valued the development of an integrated society. The annual reports of the Association did not state or imply that they wished to fundamentally change society. The reports actually more closely resemble statements made by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in the eighteenth century, in which the SPG asserted that conversion to Christianity would not necessitate manumission.<sup>158</sup> Even into the 1820s the reports stated that children had been taught “the great and necessary duties of obedience and fidelity to their masters.”<sup>159</sup> While the reports were speaking in the past tense about the original purpose of the schools, the Associates did not add a challenge to the notion that black children should be taught to be dutiful slaves. The reports did mention that the schools outside of Georgia were established “in other situations,” but it was never mentioned exactly what the Associates meant by that line of text.<sup>160</sup> However, by April 1831, William Hepworth believed that the organization would be excited to hear about the expansion of rights for black individuals in the Bahama Islands. He wrote, “[i]t will I am sure be highly pleasing to the Associate to hear that the

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highlights a passage from the *African Repository* that argued that any amount of African ancestry caused a person to be inferior to Euro-Americans. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 17.

<sup>158</sup> Katharine Gerbner, *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 112-138.

<sup>159</sup> *Account of the Institution*, 1829:1, img. 326.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

amelioration of the free black and colored population is rapidly advancing, as well as that of the Slaves.”<sup>161</sup> Hepworth continued that news had reached him that a law in Jamaica had granted free black people all of the rights of white people. Moreover, Hepworth was excited to report that the legislature in the Bahama Islands was considering taking up the same initiative. Hepworth also shared that enslaved people were already allowed to testify in court. He stated, “the latter [slaves] are here allowed to give evidence in Court, provided they understand the nature of an Oath, and obtain a certificate to that affect from a Clergyman.”<sup>162</sup> If the Associates were attached to maintaining rigid racial lines and slave power, it would not make sense why Rev. Hepworth believed they would be excited by the news that free and enslaved black people in the Bahama Islands and Jamaica were gaining rights that had traditionally been restricted to white people. In particular, the history of denying the right to testify was incredibly significant in the development of the slave codes in the United States.<sup>163</sup>

It is apparent from Hepworth’s writing and the implementation of Bishop White’s educational plan that the goals of the Associates had become more complex in the early nineteenth century. While the organization initially set out to pursue conversion and continued to dedicate the most time to that end, the Associates’ mission expanded to include secular objectives. In part, this shift may have been due to the changing views around slavery and the continued push for abolition in the British Empire, which was

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<sup>161</sup> Rev. William Hempworth to Rev. Samuel Wix, April 18, 1831, img. 14, From the Rev. W. Hepworth concerning the school at Nassau. 1818-1836, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900, British Online Archives.

<sup>162</sup> W. Hepworth to S. Wix, April 18, 1831, img. 14, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

<sup>163</sup> Taylor, *American Revolutions*, 470-471; Glasson, *Mastering Christianity*, 81-82.

successful in 1833.<sup>164</sup> However, I argue that the most important factor in this change was then need to appeal to black communities in the educational process and allow for self-determination. In a variety of regions across the Atlantic World, it is obvious that the schools' success was heavily tied to interaction with prominent black community members. In Philadelphia, Jones created a school independent of the Associates and received support from them after the fact due to his personal connection with Bishop White. Then, in the early nineteenth century, the education of black male children was left to Solomon Clarkson, a congregant of St. Thomas. Likewise, the Bray School in the Bahamas was initially run by Joseph Paul, a black loyalist refugee, and was subsequently replaced by his son. To Joseph Paul Jr.'s credit, he taught a far larger class than his father, over half of which attended despite not being supported by the Associates.<sup>165</sup> Even in Halifax educators had to rely on the involvement of black community members in order for parents to trust the Bray Schools. Ultimately, where the Colonization Society remained rigid in their attachment to their main goal, the Associates eventually expanded their objectives to reach more children. In doing so, they were able to enforce the teaching of Anglican doctrine but were also forced to accept that black people were able to assert a certain level of control, autonomy, and leadership within the Bray Schools.

In addition to the textual evidence that supports the conclusion that the Bray Schools expanded their role to secular education, the student lists kept by Clarkson also reinforce that the schools developed their focus to other concerns. While it was true that all students received an education in Anglican doctrine, the expansion of the writing and

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<sup>164</sup> Colley, "Victories?," in *Britons: Forging the Nation*, 350-360.

<sup>165</sup> Curry, *Freedom and Resistance*, 102-103.

mathematics elements of education showed an increased concern with the secular lives of students. With almost every student receiving an education in writing, they would be able to advocate for themselves more thoroughly. Additionally, with the majority of students receiving an education on a mathematical subject tailored to them individually, students would have been much better prepared to enter a trade. It cannot be understated that despite these advantages, students would have still faced incredible difficulty in attaining employment comparable to Euro-American students. However, the ideas contained within the letters from Associate members and the additional evidence provided by the student lists show that the Associates were modifying the curriculum they provided in the Early American Republic.

#### Gender in the Bray Schools

Another way in which the Associates showed that they believed that African Americans and black people in the Atlantic World had a place in society is the organization's reinforcement of gender norms. While the Bray Schools may not have explicitly argued that black people could co-exist with Euro-American society, the curriculum established by the Associates showed that they intended for students to interact with the broader society around them when they left the school. In particular, Bishop White's writings paired with the male and female student lists from Philadelphia show how the Associates were modifying their schools to increase, rather than decrease, the gender norms they taught.

As explained in the introduction, the American society in the nineteenth century was beginning to view the education of women more positively. At the same time,

women were still expected to remain in the domestic sphere and that they would use their education to teach their own children how to be responsible republican citizens.<sup>166</sup>

However, as late as 1770, some schools still taught black children in co-educational classes completely separated from white students. When discussing the Penn Charter School on Pear Street and the African School founded by Anthony Benezet, who believed in moral uplift, Nancy Hornick noted, “[n]ot only were black children taught separately from whites, but they were also treated differently in that the sexes were mixed in the classroom, a practice not approved for white children.”<sup>167</sup> As Hornick showed, the creation of mixed gender classrooms in the eighteenth century was viewed a detriment to students. While more recent studies have shown that co-educational academies were more prevalent than historians previously thought, the deliberate creation of mixed gender classrooms for African American students may have been a form of racial discrimination. However, over the course of the early nineteenth century the Bray Schools divided classes based upon gender in some of the schools.<sup>168</sup>

Earlier in the chapter, I analyzed how Bishop White advocated for the creation of an additional school in Philadelphia in 1796. Additionally, he wanted the curriculum to advance the chance of boys to enter a trade.<sup>169</sup> On December 10, 1798, White reiterated his advice when he stated, “[w]hat the Society offer in favor of another School in this City will by no Means encourage the opening of such a School as I had in Contemplation;

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<sup>166</sup> Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 185-231.

<sup>167</sup> Nancy Slocum Hornick, “Anthony Benezet,” 405.

<sup>168</sup> Nash, “A Triumph of Reason,” 67, 74; Tolley, “Mapping the Landscape,” 32; Beadie, “Internal Improvement,” 91-104; Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 193.

<sup>169</sup> Bishop White to Rev. Thomas Littleton, December 5, 1796, img. 23, From 1st Bishop of Pennsylvania.

which would be for bigger Boys, to fit them for Trades.”<sup>170</sup> While White’s suggestion was clearly meant to better the lives of African Americans in Philadelphia, he was also advocating for the reinforcement of gender norms in the Early Republic. The culmination of White’s suggestion was the creation of the all-boys school run by Solomon Clarkson in the 1820s.

When Clarkson’s reports are analyzed, it is clear that the schools were intended to provide better opportunities for the students but also reinforce gendered behavior. In the first chapter, I explained that reading the New Testament and understanding Christian doctrine was a soft prerequisite to receiving other instruction. While it is true that Clarkson emphasized reading in the curriculum, he also taught just over two-thirds of the students that attend the school from 1822 to 1829 some form of math.<sup>171</sup> Additionally, Clarkson taught around four-fifths of the students how to write.<sup>172</sup> The central focus on Christian education may have been a prerequisite, but Clarkson also seemed to live up to White’s expectations by providing the vast majority of his students supplementary education. It appears that Clarkson and the Associates made a concerted effort to secure better secular lives for the students. However, teaching the male students separately reinforced the gender norms of the era and recreated a system of education more like the description of Euro-American schools provided by Hornick.<sup>173</sup> Despite expanding

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<sup>170</sup> Bishop White to Unknown, December 10, 1798, img. 27, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

<sup>171</sup> Solomon Clarkson Quarterly Reports, 1821-1829, img. 1-40, British Online Archives. One hundred and fifteen students out of one hundred and sixty-nine or 68.09% of students received some form of instruction in arithmetic.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. One hundred and thirty-seven out of one hundred and sixty-nine students or 81.07% of students learned how to write.

<sup>173</sup> Hornick, “Anthony Benezet,” 405.

opportunities for women to receive an education in the Early Republic, the Associates attempted to reiterate that male and female students would occupy separate spheres of influence in the world.

In addition to Clarkson's records, the lists created by Ruth Hand and Julia Campbell also showed how male and female students were taught gendered behavior. Between 1821 and 1824, Hand taught a variety of students within a broad age range.<sup>174</sup> Additionally, based on the names of some of the students, it appeared that Mrs. Hand instructed both male and female students. However, the education that she provided was more rudimentary than the boys taught by Clarkson. In every report for the year 1821, Hand recorded students ages and whether they were reading or spelling. Notably, Hand only reported three different topics of instruction. Students were listed as being instructed in "spelling," "reading," or "alphabet."<sup>175</sup> Sometime after July 1821, Hand divided the students into three classes, the "Testament Class," the "Spelling Class," and the "Alphabet" class. Presumably the testament class was reading the New Testament while the other two learned to spell and identify letters; however, Mrs. Hand did not provide any other details about the classes.<sup>176</sup> Finally, Hand abandoned her method of tracking classes and recorded the students in her first class in 1824. Hand indicated that the students in the first class were reading and spelling.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Mrs. Ruth Hand Student Lists, 1821-1824, img. 1-11, Children Taught by Mrs. Ruth Hand at the Negro School in Philadelphia. 1821-1824., Correspondence and records for schools in America, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900, British Online Archives. The average age of a child in her care approximately nine years old.

<sup>175</sup> Hand Student Lists, July 1821 and July 4, 1821, img. 3-7, British Online Archives.

<sup>176</sup> Hand Student Lists, Undated, img. 8-9, British Online Archives.

<sup>177</sup> Hand Student Lists, March 4, 1824, img. 10, British Online Archives.

While Hand's records were very brief, some of her notes on the margins of her lists indicated that she taught some of the female students specific gendered activities. On the undated list, Hand wrote "knitting and spelling," next to three female students in the testament class.<sup>178</sup> The fact that a few male students attended Mrs. Hand's school at the time showed that she may have been teaching gendered topics to students when the school still had a higher number of male students, before Clarkson opened the boys' school. However, Hand's initiative to teach female students gendered labor adds additional weight to the separation of the school.<sup>179</sup> When the removal of most male students from Mrs. Hand's classes is accounted for, it is clear that the Associates were drawing an even clearer distinction between male and female gender norms. Moreover, this distinction was further drawn in 1826 when Julia E. Campbell began teaching and recording the names of students. Of Campbell's lists, only the one in 1826 discussed curriculum at all, and she described the curriculum for the whole class rather than for each individual student.<sup>180</sup> Campbell wrote, "[t]he children are occupied with spelling, reading, plain sewing, knitting, and needlework."<sup>181</sup> While at least some of Hand's lists had some organization, Campbell's were usually just a list of names in one or two columns. Furthermore, both stand in stark contrast to the student lists recorded by

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<sup>178</sup> Hand Student Lists, Undated, img. 8, British Online Archives.

<sup>179</sup> Margarget A. Nash, *Women's Education in the United States, 1780-1840* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 36, 43-48.

<sup>180</sup> Julia E. Campbell Student Lists, 1826-1829, img. 1-11, Children taught by Julia Campbell at the Negro School at Philadelphia. 1826-1829., Correspondence and Records for Schools in America, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900, British Online Archives.

<sup>181</sup> Campbell Student Lists, May 1, 1826, img. 3, British Online Archives.



Clarkson, which had clearly defined columns for each subject taught at the school.<sup>182</sup>

Notably, the average age of students in Campbell's and Hand's classes was lower than the average age of children under Clarkson's care. While this likely contributed to the students' ability to read, the fact that both Hand and Campbell taught gendered subjects showed a dedication to reinforcing the beliefs of Euro-American Society.<sup>183</sup>

### A More Secular Mission

The Associates of the Late Dr. Bray's primary goal was to convert black people in the Atlantic World to Christianity. However, over the course of the early nineteenth century, the Associates adopted additional objectives and the organization modified its approach to African American education. Individual members of the Associates, such as White, Inglis, and Hepworth, began challenging the preconceived notions of the organization and pushing it to pursue other objectives. White appealed on behalf of African Americans and displayed a belief that African American agency should have been welcomed within the Bray Schools. He consistently argued that Absalom Jones was worthy of trust and respect, and he advocated for and helped fund Jones's school. Likewise, Hepworth displayed a belief that expanding rights to include black people was

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<sup>182</sup> Campbell Students Lists, 1826-1829, img. 1-11, British Online Archives; Hand Student Lists, 1821-1824, img. 1-11, British Online Archives; Solomon Clarkson Quarterly Reports, 1821-1829, img. 1-40, British Online Archives.

<sup>183</sup> My analysis is similar to Patrick Rael's in his book, *Black Identity and Black Protest*. Where he argued that the use of Euro-American ideology by African Americans to resist oppression, also further justified the society that legalized chattel slavery. I argue that black conformity to gender norms may have been helpful for pursuing uplift ideology, but that it also helped entrench the gender roles of the era. Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest*, 1-11.

a worthy cause.<sup>184</sup> Between White and Hepworth, there was a challenge to the belief in racial inferiority that was advanced by the Colonization Society. Rather than disparaging black people for advancing their communities and interacting with white society, members of the Associates began to see merit in accepting black autonomy and leadership into the school system. Even Inglis began to acknowledge that the schools' success was dependent on black involvement in the educational process.<sup>185</sup> The willingness to accept black involvement displayed that the Bray Schools were less rigid and racialized, which allowed them to succeed.

Additionally, the Associates further showed that the organization was dedicated to creating a society that was more accepting of black autonomy through the curriculum that was taught at the schools. From the records in Philadelphia, it is apparent that the Bray Schools began challenging racial norms by enforcing gender norms. While in the late eighteenth century, it was viewed as acceptable to educate male and female black children together, the Associates and its members divided the schools into classes based upon sex in the early nineteenth century, bringing them in line with tradition of gender separation in white schools in the eighteenth century. Additionally, the teachers in Philadelphia taught specific gendered behavior to female students.<sup>186</sup> When paired with

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<sup>184</sup> Bishop White to Rev. Thomas Littleton, December 5, 1796, img. 23-24, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900; Bishop White to Unknown, December 10, 1798, img. 27, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900; Bishop White to Rev. Littleton, February 3, 1800, img. 37, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900. W. Hepworth to S. Wix, April 18, 1831, img. 14, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

<sup>185</sup> Inglis to Rev. Wix, January 10, 1823, img. 127, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

<sup>186</sup> Campbell Students Lists, 1826-1829, img. 1-11, British Online Archives; Hand Student Lists, 1821-1824, img. 1-11, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900. Solomon Clarkson Quarterly Reports, 1821-1829, img. 1-40, 'Bray

Bishop White's idea that the schools should prepare boys to enter a trade, the teaching of gender norms showed that the Bray Schools were preparing black students to engage with white society on some level. It is likely that the Associates did not believe in racial equality, however the actions of the organization and its members opened the door for black involvement that was the key to the Bray Schools' relative success.

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Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900. Nash, *Women's Education in the United States*, 36, 43-48. I excluded the student list from the Bahama Islands because it was superfluous. The Nassau School also divided classes based upon sex. However, one interesting element from that record was that the teacher taught students in the second girls' class how to write and some form of arithmetic, when the second class of boys only had four students writing. As interesting as that was, the instructor did not teach the third class of girls any writing or math subjects, while most of the third class of boys were taught some math subject. In my opinion, the disparity between the classes is less important than the fact that they were divided based on sex. The teacher at the Nassau school may or may not have taught the girls how to sew or knit, but it was not uncommon for those gendered behaviors to be excluded from the curriculum if the teacher was male. Nassau Student List, May 18, 1819, img. 3-8, British Online Archives.

## CONCLUSION

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, educational theories and institutions were in flux. While many reformers advocated for broader public education that would instill the morals of the young American nation in children, historians have highlighted how those ideological views can also be seen as a form of social control. Concurrent with educational reformers, benevolent societies in the United States proliferated due to the perception that the nation was experiencing a moral decline. Societies such as the American Education Society, American Bible Society, and American Colonization Society were established and developed. While the Associates of the Late Thomas Bray had a much longer history than many of these benevolent societies, the organization was similar in the way it pursued its primary goal of conversion.<sup>187</sup> In order to enact their primary goals, the Associates and the Colonization Society pursued educational agendas during an era where educational opportunities and instruction varied across the nation and Atlantic World, particularly for black people. When these two organizations are compared, they can be thought of as existing on a spectrum of more and less rigid in their ideological goals and racial beliefs. From a deep analysis of the Associates records and the *African Repository and Colonial Journal*, I explained that the Bray Schools were more moderate in their attachment to promoting Anglican doctrine and more willing to accept black autonomy within the educational system. Moreover, this flexibility was the key to the Associates' success. On the extremely rigid end of the spectrum, the American Colonization Society did not adapt to

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<sup>187</sup> Fredrickson, *The Black Image*, 6; Foner, *History of Black Americans*, 556, 584; *Account of the Institution*, 1829:2-12, img. 318-327.

allow for African American self-determination and struggled to achieve their goal as a result. Ultimately, the Colonization Society was largely despised by African Americans, who then gravitated to organizations and schools that allowed them more control over their lives or created their own organizations.<sup>188</sup> The study of these two organizations reveals that African Americans and black people in the Atlantic World flocked to educational opportunities that accepted black agency as a benefit to the curriculum. On a broader scale, this study also shows that benevolent societies and organizations in the Atlantic World that sought to interact with black communities had to accept black agency or consign themselves to failure.

In 1974, historian Vincent P. Franklin argued that the American Colonization Society's schools and educational initiative failed due to a lack of support from Euro-Americans and African Americans. Franklin highlighted that when Colonization Society schools were established in the United States, they often struggled to retain monetary support and find students they deemed acceptable. Moreover, he explained that educational opportunities for African Americans generally faced opposition from white communities, even in the North. In addition to broad resistance to African American education by Euro-Americans, Franklin noted that abolitionists, in particular those who followed William Lloyd Garrison, criticized the Colonization Society's schools because they failed to improve the lives of black people while they lived in the United States and resulted in a reinforcement of Slave Power.<sup>189</sup> Franklin then went on to explain that most

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<sup>188</sup> Foner, *History of Black Americans*, 589-594; Sweet, *Black Images of America*, 63-68; Newman, "Protest in Black and White," 194-195.

<sup>189</sup> Franklin, "Education for Colonization," 91-99.

African Americans did not endorse colonization due to a sense of racial solidarity.<sup>190</sup> In the end Franklin concluded, “[t]he failure of the attempts to establish viable schools in America for Blacks willing to emigrate to Africa was due primarily to the opposition of members of both the black and white communities in many sections of the country.”<sup>191</sup>

While Franklin’s argument was generally sound, I contend that more weight should be given to the impact of African American communities’ general resistance to colonization. This approach lines up with other recent interpretations of African American history, such as Kellie Carter Jackson’s *Force and Freedom*. By recentering the history of abolition on African Americans, Jackson revealed that “[b]lack leaders served as the primary catalysts for recruiting white followers to abolitionism and for investing the movement with its dual commitment to ending slavery and ending racism.”<sup>192</sup> Similarly, my work has shown that acceptance of black agency was necessary to the success of benevolent societies and schools that sought to interact with African American communities. Moreover, black people in the Atlantic World were the progenitors of change in schools for black children. This fact is readily apparent when the Bray Schools and the Colonization Society are compared.

While the American Colonization Society remained rigid in their ideological vision and racial views, the Associates adapted around the turn of the nineteenth century to account for black leadership in the Bray Schools. As we see from Bishop White’s letters, Absalom Jones took the initiative to expand schooling for black children before

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<sup>190</sup> Franklin, “Education for Colonization,” 99-100.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>192</sup> Kellie Carter Jackson, *Force and Freedom: Black Abolitionists and the Politics of Violence* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 10, Kindle Edition.

the Bray Associates opened the school that Solomon Clarkson ran. Likewise, the Bray School in Bahamas was initially run by Joseph Paul, a black loyalist refugee, who had likely already been teaching classes informally before the Associates became involved. While it is unclear whether the schools in Canada were run by black community leaders, John Inglis informed Reverend Wix that students' success increased with parental involvement. All three of these examples highlight that schools were dependent upon black community involvement. Additionally, in two of these schools, black leaders spearheaded the development of black education in the Atlantic World. Where the Colonization Society failed to attract African American involvement, the Bray Schools persisted due to black leadership. I assert that absent such community involvement and leadership, the Bray Schools would have suffered the same fate as the Colonization Society. The Associates abandonment of a rigid vision of black education that also endorsed slave power allowed the organization to accept black agency as a positive force, which was the key to the Bray Schools prolonged existence.<sup>193</sup>

In addition to the evidence contained within this thesis, Elise Kammerer's work on the Pennsylvania Abolition Society's schools substantiates my conclusions. In her article, Kammerer explained that the Abolition Society had strict rules concerning attendance and the dress code that often conflicted with the realities of daily life for most students. Eventually, the Abolition Society even abandoned funding schools run by African Americans. The end result of these strict requirements and ultimately racial

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<sup>193</sup> Bishop White to Rev. Littleton, February 3, 1800, img. 37, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900; Solomon Clarkson Quarterly Reports 1821-1844., img. 1-131, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900; Curry, *Freedom and Resistance*, 101-102; Inglis to Rev. Wix, January 10, 1823, img. 127, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900.

exclusion, was the development of independent African American schools in Philadelphia.<sup>194</sup> Kammerer noted, “[t]he unwillingness of the PAS to continue supporting black-run schools was an important step toward black autonomy over black schools.”<sup>195</sup> Like the Bray Schools and the Colonization Society, it is clear that African Americans made complex decisions regarding education and association based upon the amount of autonomy they could exert within an organization or school’s structure. Whereas African American leaders established completely independent schools in response to the Abolition Society’s policies, students continued to attend the Bray School in Philadelphia until the 1840s. Furthermore, despite racial tensions in the Bahamas that resulted in open revolt in the late 1820s and early 1830s, the Bray Schools continued to attract students.<sup>196</sup>

In conclusion, benevolent societies and educational institutions in the Early American republic can be thought about as existing on a spectrum of more-to-less rigid ideology. In part, that ideology is determined by how rigidly each organization and school was attached to an end goal other than education. Far more important, however, was the racial bias and discrimination that an organization or school displayed. When schools in the Atlantic World allowed for black autonomy and leadership, parents and students would cooperate with white institutions to achieve their own goals. However, in the absence of opportunities for self-determination, black people abandoned white institutions in favor of community supported, black run schools. In addition to this paradigm, it is apparent that when educational institutions and organizations accepted

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<sup>194</sup> Kammerer, “Uplift in Schools,” 313-316.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 314.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 313-316; Solomon Clarkson Quarterly Reports 1821-1844., img. 1-131, 'Bray Schools' in Canada, America and the Bahamas, 1645-1900; Curry, *Freedom and Resistance*, 17-18, 98-105.



black agency, black leaders were at the forefront of innovation and change. While this thesis examined how the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray and American Colonization Society pursued black education, future research may utilize a conception of education as existing on a spectrum to help examine why educational opportunities were supported by black communities in the Atlantic World.

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