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The Negro and His Education: Persuasive Strategies of Selected Speeches at the Conference for Education in the South, 1898-1914.

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The Louisiana State University and Agricultural
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Speech

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THE NEGRO AND HIS EDUCATION: PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES
OF SELECTED SPEECHES AT THE CONFERENCE FOR
EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH, 1898-1914

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech

by
Barbara Hulbert Walsh
B.A., Stetson University, 1962
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1965
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ABSTRACT

The Conference for Education in the South (1898-1914) was begun by southern religious leaders and educators committed to improving education in the economically depressed southern region. Its annual meetings, held in various southern cities, became forums for educators, politicians, publishers, and philanthropists, from the North and the South. It grew from quiet gatherings of thirty-five to more than two thousand participants. Convention speeches were devoted to various educational topics including compulsory school attendance, agricultural and vocational training, finances for instruction, and education for women and blacks. This study reports, analyzes, and evaluates selected speeches on Negro education delivered to the Conference for Education in the South on the basis of what they contributed to harmony and to fostering reconciliation between the North and the South.

Robert Curtis Ogden, elected president at the third meeting, chaired the conventions for nearly fifteen years. He encouraged support for the organization by his natural charm and enthusiasm as well as his yearly train trips to southern black and white institutions for invited Conference guests. As the Conference grew in popularity, it attracted other northern and southern leaders including Edwin A. Alderman, William H. Baldwin, Jr., J. L. M. Curry, Walter B. Hill, Walter Hines Page, and George Foster Peabody. These men became an important part of the Southern Education Board which controlled the loosely-formed Conference. The

organization merged with the Southern Education Association in 1914 soon after Ogden's death. The Conference speeches on black education focused on these racial differences, the deficiencies of the Negro morally, spiritually, socially, politically, economically, and intellectually, and the best kind of education to correct these weaknesses.

This study evaluated the persuasive devices employed by these Conference leaders to further harmony among its members and to gather support for the organization and its work in southern education. Those factors outside or extrinsic to the speaking situation were utilized most carefully. Voluminous published material in addition to rallies and state conferences between meetings served to alert citizens to educational deficiencies. Additional planned local publicity before each annual meeting increased Conference attendance and interest. Robert Ogden's popular train trips focused attention on the organization and increased northern and southern support. The Southern Education Board carefully selected conference sites well aware that some states opposed the organization's interest in blacks and resented northern participation. Several devices were employed at the conferences including impressive advance preparations by the host city, elaborately decorated convention halls, carefully planned entertainment, and lavish social occasions. Intrinsic factors of persuasion, or those within the speaking situation, were also utilized. Generally, the person asked to discuss the controversial topic of Negro education was carefully chosen. In addition, most speakers tried to establish their good will and good character within the speech to further amiable relations. Because

harmony was so important, these orators often avoided controversial issues and stressed popular southern myths.

This study concluded that though the Conference for Education in the South became a popular organization and probably furthered harmony and reconciliation between the North and the South, the Negro saw little improvement in his weak status.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1898 thirty-six educators and religious leaders from the South and North met at a small hotel in Capon Springs, West Virginia, little realizing that within five years this annual conference would attract hundreds of interested supporters of southern education. The Conference for Education in the South soon became the leader in educational reform for the region.

First called the Capon Springs Conference, then the Conference for Education in the South, and occasionally the "Ogden Movement," for its long-term president Robert Ogden, this assembly met annually from 1898 to 1914, when it formally joined the Southern Education Association. The Conference seems to have had four purposes. First, its most important goal was to serve as a meeting place for Northerners and Southerners at a time when friendships were needed to promote intersectional harmony. As late as 1900 few opinion leaders traveled into the South; at these yearly meetings participants discovered the admirable qualities of former enemies and projected and promoted programs for an impoverished South. Northern and Southern newspapers lauded the resulting rapport and the speakers and the Conference resolutions commended the spirit of good feeling. For example, the third resolution at the first meeting alluded to this spirit:

In particular, the Southern members of this Conference, speaking for themselves and for those whom they more directly represent, express their grateful sense of generous aid which education in the South has received from friends in the North, in which they see promise for the unity and harmony of our common country.¹

Ogden, the organization's President for many years, won recognition for his ability as a host who made all participants welcome. In his first speech, presented at the Third Conference, he exuded good will:

Echoing down recent decades has come to us of the later generations the cry begun years before our internecine strife, "No North, no South, no East, no West." For years its echoes were in timid whispers; but now again the enthusiasm of a united, born-again patriotism swells the phrase in a national chorus of a revived and glorious hope. God grant that the rich years held within the grasp of a future as yet unknown may find the full realization of the glorious ideal. If it does not, let no man charge the failure upon divine Providence. Within our own hands we hold both the prophecy and the power for its realization. Popular education--mental, moral, and industrial--is the solvent.²

The good fellowship that developed from these Conferences is the second purpose that the organization fulfilled. In special efforts each host city entertained the guests lavishly. These friendly overtures likely furthered harmony in a South long noted for its social graces.

As its third purpose, the organization encouraged universal education in the South. At the First Conference, for example, the

¹"Message and Appeal," First Conference for Education in the South, Proceedings (Washington, n.d.), p. 36. The citations from Conference Proceedings are hereafter listed as First Conference, Second Conference and the page number.

²Third Conference, p. 28.

members agreed that the goals were to support moral and religious education for both races, primarily at the elementary level; to work for longer school terms, better qualified teachers, and industrial education; and to urge Northern contributions that would "proceed upon lines of intelligent, equitable and discriminate selection. . . ."³

At the Twelfth Conference, Ogden insisted the organization "supported the claim that every child in America, native or foreign born, is entitled to a good English education. . . ."⁴

The fourth purpose of the movement in the words of Charles Dabney was a "propaganda" organization, "designed to educate the people about the conditions in the schools and to arouse them to do their duty to the children of the South." He added that their "crusade was universal education: equality of opportunity for all. . . ."⁵

The Southern Education Board, the executive committee of the more loosely formed Conference, came into being in 1901 to serve as a propaganda agent to publicize the organization and interest the Southerner and the Northern philanthropist in its work.⁶ A year later the General Education Board was formed to study the educational deficiencies in the United States; to disburse grants for education;

³First Conference, p. 35.

⁴Twelfth Conference, p. 20.

⁵Charles William Dabney, Universal Education in the South II (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1936), p. v.

⁶Fourth Conference, p. 12.

and, to support the work of the Southern Education Board. Some people were members of both the General and Southern Education Boards, so requests for funds from Southern Board members were usually well received. Ogden made it clear that neither the Conference nor the Southern Education Board had funds, though he might have added it was "interwoven with all the leading philanthropic boards active in Southern education."⁷

After the initial three meetings at Capon Springs, the Conference journeyed to major Southern cities, including Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Athens, Georgia; and Richmond, Virginia. The format of the yearly conclaves, which met for three days, was similar. In his annual address the President usually reviewed the history of the organization, described future aspirations, and reaffirmed the desire for harmony. Following Ogden's address, state field agents reported on their observations of educational progress. Next speakers dealt with the specific problems in education. Finally, the President called upon those attending (usually from the North) to present their impressions which, included statements of good feelings and descriptions of the progress the South was making. In addition, Robert Ogden invited northern guests to accompany him on extensive and much publicized tours of southern schools by private train before and after the meeting.

⁷Louis R. Harlan, Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States 1901-1915 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), p. 85.

Among Conference leaders in education, religion, journalism, or politics, were prominent southern educators including Charles B. Aycock, Governor of North Carolina; Edwin A. Alderman, President of the University of North Carolina, Tulane University, and finally the University of Virginia; and J. L. M. Curry, agent of the John F. Slater Fund and the Peabody Education Fund. Among northern speakers were the Conference founder, Edward Abbott, an Episcopal clergyman from Cambridge, Massachusetts; Charles Parkhurst, a New York City pastor; Robert Ogden and William H. Baldwin, Jr., noted businessmen; and Albert Shaw, editor of Review of Reviews and St. Clair McKelway, editor of the Brooklyn Eagle. Though they attended few meetings, the philanthropists John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and George F. Peabody, Jr. expressed interest in the programs. These philanthropists provided the funds southern education desperately needed. By the time the Conference merged with the Southern Education Association in 1914, millions of dollars were channeled by the Southern Education Board into education and other such vital projects as eradication of hookworm and boll weevil.

At the first Conference the speakers devoted themselves almost exclusively to the subject of Negro education. The founder, Edward Abbott, asked Hollis Frissell, the head of Hampton Institute, a black school, for possible discussion topics. Frissell replied that ". . . it might be well to discuss the questions of how far the public school system in the South can be improved and made effective, how far it is feasible to introduce industrial education, what the relation of the

higher schools and the church schools should be to the public schools, how criminality among Negroes can be decreased, the relation of the churches to the Negro, and in what ways the getting of land and homes by the blacks can be encouraged."⁸ Adopting some of Frissell's suggestions, Abbott announced the topics for the First Conference, "How far can the public school system in the South be improved and made effective? and How far is it feasible to introduce industrial education?"⁹

Urged by some members, who sensed opposition to the topic Negro education, the organization soon turned to a more general program. After the first conferences, the scope included more representative subjects: education finances; universal education; education for women; agricultural education; and, educational progress in the South.

That the influential members considered Negro education to be a topic that could be discussed by Northerners and Southerners together in 1898 seems significant. During this period the Negro was losing some rights and privileges he had held since Reconstruction. Many Southerners resented the Negro's presence and found it distasteful to devote discussion to his education; consequently, he was never invited to address the meetings. In order to promote harmony, the Conference turned to universal education after stating the principle that if the white child were educated, he could then aid the black child. After

⁸Dabney, p. 4.

⁹Ibid.

speeches by J. L. M. Curry and William H. Baldwin at the second annual meeting, therefore, the subject of Negro education received less emphasis and the Executive Secretary of the organization assumed the responsibility of selecting appropriate speakers.

Statement of the Problem

This study reports, analyzes, and evaluates selected speeches on Negro education delivered to the Conference for Education in the South on the basis of what they contributed to harmony and to fostering reconciliation. These addresses were chosen because they are likely representative of the attitude of this movement as well as the general national sentiment toward Negro education from 1898 to 1914. Furthermore, several of these speakers were chosen by the organization's Executive Secretary to address the Conference. Some of these speeches were the only statements on black education at the annual meeting. The following speeches were selected for analysis:

"A Survey of the Field"--The Reverend H. B. Frissell,
Principal of Hampton Institute

"Education in the Southern States"--J. L. M. Curry,
Agent of the Peabody and Slater Funds

"The Present Problem of Negro Education--Industrial
Education"--William H. Baldwin, President, Southern
Railroad

"Industrial Training in Relation to the Negro Problem"--
George T. Winston, President of North Carolina
College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts

"Popular Education as the Primary Policy of the South"--
Hoke Smith, Governor of Georgia

"Address of Welcome"--Hoke Smith, Governor of Georgia

"The Child and the State"--E. A. Alderman, President
of Tulane University

"The Achievements of a Generation"--E. A. Alderman,
President of Tulane University

"Negro Education in the South"--Walter B. Hill,
Chancellor, University of Georgia

"The Unfulfilled Ambition of the South"--Walter Hines
Page, Editor of World's Work

"The South and the School"--S. C. Mitchell, Professor,
Richmond College

"The Christian South and Negro Education"--Right
Reverend T. D. Bratton, Bishop of Mississippi

"Public Taxation and Negro Schools"--Superintendent
C. L. Coon, Superintendent of Schools, Wilson, N. C.

Scanning the above list suggests that all, except Baldwin, were Southerners. The topic was a controversial one; consequently, the speaker was likely a deliberate choice, though a Southerner was probably considered more acceptable. In addition, all were respected in education or religion. The Negro received less consideration at later Conferences, probably because he was generally ignored in the South.

Although a speech by President Ogden was not included in the list above, his dedication to the organization helped to cement warm relationships among members. Consequently, Ogden's contributions are described because of his importance to the movement.

The Limitations of this Study

The scope of this study is limited to the period from 1898 to 1914, the dates of the first and last meetings. Although concern for

Negro education did not receive the emphasis at later meetings it had at earlier ones, the series of yearly conferences does make a clearly defined unit.

As mentioned previously, the Conference for Education in the South considered all phases of education, however, this study focuses on the subject of Negro education. This study is limited to the official published Proceedings of the conferences, but occasionally newspaper accounts of speeches are included. Generally, however, the Executive Secretary was charged with the yearly compilation and publication of the Proceedings, which was the most complete record of the Conference activities.

Importance of the Conference to Southern Education

Opinions vary as to the value of these conferences, though those who participated in the work of this movement were most enthusiastic. Charles Dabney, the President of the University of Tennessee, an active organization participant, and author of Universal Education in the South, directed the Conference-sponsored Summer School for teachers at the University of Tennessee. In addition he was the Director of the Bureau of Information and Advice, which handled all publications and published the Conference Proceedings. Understandably, Dr. Dabney praised the organization and its work:

No cultural movement was ever founded on a higher purpose or planned with greater wisdom or carried on with more courage, patience, and intelligence than this struggle of the people of the South since 1870 to establish universal education. This movement since 1902, popularly known as the

Southern Education Movement, marshaled by the patriotic Ogden and officered by southern men and women, is one of the most notable in the history of the country.¹⁰

Others, however, have not been so enthusiastic. Booker T. Washington was the only Negro agent hired by the Southern Education Board but, following Conference custom, he was never invited to address any meeting. One historian has stated that he wrote privately in 1906 that the southern educational campaign meant "almost nothing so far as the Negro schools are concerned."¹¹ Louis R. Harlan, author of Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States 1901-1915, has studied the Board's activities more recently. Although he found an educational awakening in the South by 1915, he stated, ". . . the Board's efforts seem to have had almost no effect on the Negro schools. Nor did it brake or deflect the course of racism."¹²

Clearly opinions differ concerning the effectiveness of the Conferences and the Southern Education Board in aiding the Negro and maintaining harmony among the members and the public. Was the organization as effective and inspired as Dabney wrote? Were Booker T. Washington and Louis Harlan closer to the truth? Or could the answer lie between these two poles? Was the Conference able to cement

¹⁰Dabney, p. 503.

¹¹James R. Patton, "Southern Reaction to the Ogden Movement," Education in the South: Institute of Southern Culture Lecture at Longwood College, 1959, ed. R. C. Simonini, Jr. (Farmville, Virginia: Longwood College, 1959), pp. 74-75.

¹²Harlan, pp. 268-69.

relationships between Northerners and Southerners and between the Conference and the South? This study will attempt to answer these questions.

Authenticity of Speech Texts

Although the official Proceedings of the Conference is the major source of speech texts for this study, there seems to be no guarantee that the published texts contain the exact speeches as given to the Conference. Some volumes seem to follow the meetings more exactly, for in these the remarks between the speeches, usually by the President Robert Ogden, are informal and relaxed. Other volumes contain no comments between speeches or even an introduction of the speaker. The Executive Secretary was given the responsibility for publishing the Proceedings. Some speakers may have given copies of their speeches immediately to the secretary, or the secretary may have taken notes and enlarged upon them. Probably most speakers sent copies to the secretary afterwards, giving them time to make changes they felt would "improve" upon the text, for the footnotes mention some speeches that were given to the secretary later.

The Reverend Edgar Gardner Murphy, the Executive Secretary of the Conference, was responsible for the publication of the Conference Proceedings. Although Executive Secretary for nearly ten years, Murphy was in ill-health most of his life and this necessarily affected his work. Murphy's biographer described this handicap, for he stated that after the Birmingham Conference (in 1904), "Murphy was not well

enough to edit single-handedly the Proceedings of the Conference and most of his work was done by Dickerman," a paid Conference agent.¹³ This biographer gave one further clue to the means that Murphy used to copy and publish the speeches. Although some Conference speakers gave copies of their addresses to Murphy, sometimes stenographers took notes, for Bailey stated:

After the Richmond conference (in 1903) Murphy apparently devoted five months, from August to December editing and publishing the Proceedings for he wrote that all addresses had to be verified since the stenographers inserted their own interpretations when they did not hear correctly.¹⁴

Murphy was respected by the Southern Education Board for his conscientious work and genuine interest in its objectives. It seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that a person held in such esteem, a minister, and one who evidently spent months working to present reliable texts, sincerely attempted to present the speeches as spoken at the conferences.

The conference members and guests who addressed the organization on the Negro question were carefully chosen. Most were respected Southern leaders of the time. Murphy would have made an honest attempt to publish the speeches verbatim because the speakers were respected men and the subject was a controversial one. In addition this topic received more local newspaper coverage than others

¹³Hugh C. Bailey, Edgar Gardner Murphy: Gentle Progressive (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1968), pp. 165-66.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 163.

and Murphy was surely aware that discrepancies could cause a loss of confidence in the organization and its work. Finally, these speakers probably would not have allowed an extensive revision of their ideas without giving permission.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that this study does not propose to analyze the style employed but is concerned with the themes only. It seems that a study of themes would not be greatly changed by a certain word choice. Consequently, it appears that the speeches are sufficiently authentic for a study of this kind.

Contributory Studies

Two books and one unpublished dissertation have been valuable in undertaking this study. As mentioned previously, Charles Dabney devoted nearly all of the second volume of Universal Education in the South to the Conferences and the Southern Education Board. His history of this movement is certainly important, for he was a member of this organization from at least 1901 and the Director of the Office for Information and Advice and the annual Summer School at the University of Tennessee. Two qualifications must be made, however. First, Dabney was a biased and enthusiastic supporter of the organization. His book contains little if any negative criticism of the work of this movement. Consequently, as valuable as this book is, one must remember that it is a laudatory work. Next, this volume was published in 1936, some years after the organization was absorbed by the Southern Education Association. One could correctly argue that the passage of

time may have dimmed his memory or even have softened arguments or differences that occurred within the organization, particularly the executive board of the group, the Southern Education Board. Nevertheless, this well documented volume is valuable as a history, the only one devoted to this movement by one of its members.

In Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States 1901-1915, mentioned previously, Louis Harlan devoted one chapter to "The Southern Education Board." The author also described some of the conferences briefly. Generally he concluded that so far as Negro education was concerned, the organization was ineffective.

An unpublished dissertation entitled "The Burden Borne: Northern White Philanthropy and Southern Black Industrial Education, 1900-1913" was completed in 1971 by Henry Enck. The study is concerned with all funds and fund raisers on behalf of the Negro for industrial education in the period between 1900 and 1915, but two or three chapters of his twelve chapter study are concerned with the Conferences and the members who were most interested in Negro education. Enck, like Harlan, whom he mentions in his dissertation, found the Conference and the Southern Education Board's efforts in behalf of the Negro lacking. He summarized, "In brief, the record of the Southern Education Board, an organization openly supported by Ogden, Peabody, and other Northern philanthropists, was dismal at best with

regard to black industrial education."¹⁵

Organization of the Study

Several historians have written of the difficult times the Negro faced in the early twentieth century. C. Vann Woodward has described the Negro's plight in the introduction of The Strange Career of Jim Crow:

In the early years of the twentieth century, it was becoming clear that the Negro would be effectively disfranchised throughout the South, that he would be firmly relegated to the lower rungs of the economic ladder, and that neither equality nor aspirations for equality in any department of life were for him. . . . In bulk and detail as well as in effectiveness of enforcement the segregation codes were comparable with the black codes of the old regime. . . . That code lent the sanction of law to a racial ostracism that extended to churches and schools, to housing and jobs, to eating and drinking. Whether by law or by custom, that ostracism extended to virtually all forms of public transportation, to sports and recreations, to hospitals, orphanages, prisons, and asylums, and ultimately to funeral homes, morgues, and cemeteries.¹⁶

Many Negroes lost their semi-skilled jobs in the cities as a result of race hatred. In addition, the lynch law was the popular white law of the time. These conditions and others that the Conference had to face are described in Chapter II.

A brief history of the Conference for Education in the South is the focus of Chapter III. The purposes of the meetings, the most

¹⁵H. S. Enck, "The Burden Borne: Northern White Philanthropy and Southern Black Industrial Education, 1900-1915" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1970), p. 207.

¹⁶C. Vann Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 6-7.

active members, and the achievements of the organization are considered. The relationship between the Southern Education Board and the General Education Board is described. Finally, the audiences and specific occasions are examined.

Chapter IV is devoted to several representative speakers on Negro education at the conferences. These speakers' attitudes toward the black man and his education are studied and the speeches they gave at the Conference are summarized.

Chapter V considers the themes of the speeches in detail. Generally one speaker at each conference was chosen to address the annual meeting on Negro education although sometimes others dealt with this subject briefly. The deficiencies of the Negro are described and the best way to help them advocated by these speakers are analyzed in this chapter.

Chapter VI is concerned with the means employed by the members to make their ideas acceptable to the audience. Because promoting harmony was so important, the members made special efforts before and during the speeches to promote good will. These extrinsic and intrinsic factors of persuasion, therefore, are the focus of this chapter.

Chapter VII presents a summary and conclusions for this study.

CHAPTER II

THE SOUTH AND THE NEGRO IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Richard H. Weaver concluded The Southern Tradition at Bay stating, "The South which entered the twentieth century had largely ceased to be a fighting South."¹ He might have added, "It was indeed a whipped South."

If one looks at this depleted region, he probably understands and appreciates the South that the Conference members saw. The conditions in which the people lived and their vivid memories of the past, including the Civil War and Federal occupation, certainly affected their responses to the Conference speakers. Those who addressed the organization often recalled this period and could draw upon the myths which many Southerners held in common. Speakers needed to be aware of the situation, for to be uninformed might mean a loss of audience rapport or hostility. This chapter first surveys briefly the late nineteenth and early twentieth century South in order to understand the Conference audiences, which were composed of a large percentage of Southerners. Second, it compares the education of the white and Negro. Finally, the chapter explores the life style of the Negro to try to explain his needs and desires.

¹Richard H. Weaver, The Southern Tradition at Bay: A History of Postbellum Thought (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1968), p. 387.

The South in the Late Nineteenth Century

Clement Eaton described the South that emerged after the surrender at Appomattox as one of "extreme poverty" and "vicious hatreds" between the secessionists and the unionists. Kenneth Rayner, a leading North Carolina unionist, wrote to President Johnson on July 8, 1865, vividly describing the conditions, "Your Excellency can have no conception of the utter and absolute poverty of the people of the Southern states. There is no money here, literally none."² Eaton described the South, "The farmers had virtually no staple crops--cotton, tobacco, naval stores--to sell for cash and there were no banks to lend money."³ Business was at a standstill except in such a few favored towns as Atlanta, Mobile, and New Orleans. J. L. M. Curry was so pessimistic about the outlook in the lower South that he moved from Howard College in Alabama to Richmond, Virginia, in 1868. Eaton felt that this mood of discouragement continued until home rule was restored in 1877.⁴

Like Eaton, C. Vann Woodward also described the extreme poverty after the War:

It would be an oversimplification of the South's problem to attribute its industrial deficiencies to artificial barriers. There were "natural" economic difficulties as

²Clement Eaton, The Waning of the Old South Civilization: 1860-1880 (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1968), pp. 121-22.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 123.

well--the scarcity of liquid capital, technical ability, and skilled labor, for example, not to mention the handicap of a late start. In addition there were the chains of habit and custom and the deep groove of agrarian tradition that confined thought in ancient patterns. For the most part, however, these were transitory barriers. . . . In other words, under the new economic order the South was making some strides toward solving the fundamental economic problems of increasing the production of wealth and, in some degree, equalizing distribution.⁵

The economic conditions did not change from 1865 to 1900.

Citing the Statistical Abstract, Woodward compared the per capita wealth of the United States in 1900 of \$1,165 with that of \$509 in the South.⁶ The eleven states with the lowest per capita income were all Southern, with Alabama at the bottom with \$321 and Louisiana a high of \$412.⁷

In the late 1870's Yankee capital had begun to filter into the South as northern companies stripped the land of its timber or criss-crossed the area with railroads. During the period more than 5,000,000 acres of Federal land were sold. The Florida legislature, an example of the desire for capital, sold, resold, and then oversold its land at phenomenally low prices to railroad speculators. Money changed hands, but the cash was controlled by only a few, who were Northerners.

The southern population at the turn of the century was

⁵C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), pp. 317-18. (Unless noted otherwise, all references to Woodward refer to this book.)

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 319.

essentially a rural one, ranging from 70% in Louisiana to 88.5% in Mississippi.⁸

The farmer had a difficult life. Woodward noted:

It was generally agreed that he was behind the times. . . . Even Pig-Iron Killy admitted that "apart from the New South, by which I mean the country around the region of the rapidly developing iron industries . . . the same wretched poverty prevails among the Southern people now, twenty-two years after the close of the war."⁹

The Panic of 1893 brought home to the cities and towns "the distress that had gripped the surrounding countryside for years."¹⁰ The soaring land values that brought the landowner prosperity did not help the tenant who could not afford to buy land. In addition, the farmer remained on the lowest part of the economic ladder into the new century. Woodward quoted John Coulter who wrote in 1913, "The result of this tenant system is poor agriculture, exhausted soils, small crops, poor roads, decaying bridges, unpainted homes and unkempt yards."¹¹

Another condition which plagued the Southerner was the employment of child labor. Woodward described this as an "entrenched interest, a growing evil. . . . In 1900 three out of ten workers in the mills in the South were children under sixteen years of age, and

⁸Charles William Dabney, Universal Education in the South II (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1936), p. 219.

⁹Woodward, pp. 176-77.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 264.

¹¹Ibid., p. 407.

57.5 percent of those children were between ten and thirteen."¹² Child labor laws were not passed until after 1900, well after the Conferences had begun. Conference members were concerned about the use of child labor and southern manufacturers resented their efforts to end this practice. In addition, low standards of health made life almost intolerable:

The shortage of physicians, low income, a high incidence of typhoid and malaria, a large Negro population with aggravated problems of venereal disease and tuberculosis, and a virtual monopoly within the nation of hookworm and pellagra all combined to make the South's public-health problem unique in the country.¹³

Life in the South was difficult, especially for the poor man.

Three factors are credited with contributing to a new spirit observed in Southerners at this time. First, about 1880, a new sense of urgency and optimism rose as commerce and investment increased. Some scholars have labeled this as the beginning of "the industrial revolution."¹⁴ Woodward quoted the editor of the New Orleans Times-Democrat who described this attitude:

The stagnation of despair has, by some magic transformation, given place to the buoyance of hope, of courage, of resolve. The silence of inertia has turned into joyous and thrilling uproar of action. We are a new people. Our land has had a new birth.¹⁵

The interest and availability of Yankee capital were largely responsible for this optimistic feeling. Many felt that the untouched wealth in the United States was more readily available in the South.

¹²Ibid., p. 416.

¹³Ibid., p. 425.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁵Ibid.

A second cause for hope was the Progressive movement which began more than twenty years after the Southern "industrial revolution." The Conference probably resulted from this new movement, which was led by businessmen, professional leaders, newspaper editors, and columnists who worked to clean up local governments, to "bust the trusts"; and to establish prohibition and the direct primary system. Attempts to establish a better educational system were a part of this progressive interest.

Finally, the South by the time of the Conference was making overtures of friendship to the North--and was receiving affirmative replies. Booker T. Washington and Henry Grady were only two of many who attempted to bring North and South together in harmony. Henry Watterson, John B. Gordon, and Benjamin Hill, for example, made numerous reconciliation speeches throughout the North.¹⁶

In summary, although Southerners faced extreme poverty, the 1880's and 1890's was a period of optimism for some. Many saw Northern capital as a solution to their problems, no matter what the cost in land, natural resources, or dignity. Furthermore, many Southerners looked favorably upon a period of harmonious relations with a North it had hated for years. This hopeful attitude probably greeted the Conference members in 1897 as the first Capon Springs meeting gathered.

¹⁶Huber Winton Ellingsworth, "Southern Reconciliation Orators in the North, 1868-1899," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1955).

Education in the Late Nineteenth Century South

The historian Louis Harlan has written that the "Introduction of the Northeastern public school into the South was an important war aim of the North in the Civil War. . . ." The Northern teacher in the South," he continued, "modeled her program after that of the Massachusetts town public school. . . ."17 Far from successful, apparently, by 1900 the model school existed in few cities and then only for white children.18

The southern states did not tax their citizens to pay for education until the Reconstruction era and compulsory education was not enforced.19 The segregated school, a requirement of southern white citizens, added to the tax burden. "Segregation was legalized in Virginia and Georgia from the start and was practiced in the other states."20

Separate schools for the races seem to have been generally accepted by 1900. Southern congressmen were strong enough by the late 1870's to prevent the inclusion of a provision for integrated

¹⁷Louis R. Harlan, Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States 1901-1915. (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), p. 3.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁹Ray Stannard Baker, Following the Color Line: American Negro Citizenship in the Progressive Era (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1964), p. 42.

²⁰Harlan, p. 5.

schools in the proposed federal civil rights bill.²¹ Universal education, a term common among Conference speakers, did not mean integrated schools to them:

Universal education, even among carpetbaggers and Negroes, did not necessarily mean racially integrated schools. Most Freedmen's Bureau schools were segregated in the sense that most of them were Negro schools. And the existent public schools were segregated, in the sense that most of them were white schools, with a gesture here and there toward Negroes. But there was some reluctance to be explicit about segregated schools in the face of the equal protection provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment.²²

Conference speakers did not question the separate school concept. For example, in a speech at Carnegie Hall in 1903, Charles Dabney, an important Conference leader, stated:

Another fact must be borne in mind, namely that the two races in the South must forever be educated apart. That means that the South must always run two sets of schools.²³

Although some admitted the financial difficulty in maintaining two school systems, no effort was made either to unite the educational system or to cut expenses.²⁴ The Peabody Fund, most important in establishing the education of both races in the late 19th century,

²¹Charles Wynes (ed.), The Negro in the South Since 1865: Selected Essays in American Negro History (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1965), p. 144.

²²Ibid., p. 140.

²³"Schooling in the South," The New York Times, January 10, 1903, p. 5.

²⁴August Meier, Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideology in the Age of Booker T. Washington (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1963), p. 363.

did not encourage mixed schools. In fact, from its founding it had opposed them.²⁵

The separate schools were deemed necessary by most Southerners, but some felt this was a burden placed upon them by the Federal Government. The Reverend Edgar Gardner Murphy, the Conference Executive Secretary, advanced this philosophy in Problems of the Present South:

The Federal Government freed the slaves, but the Federal Government spent little indeed fitting them to use their freedom well. Hundreds of thousands of ignorant negro men were introduced to the suffrage without any introduction into the capacity for its exercise, and the South, defeated, impoverished, desolate--was forced to assume the task of providing for the education of two populations out of the poverty of one.²⁶

In other words, Murphy felt that the Federal Government--which had freed the slaves--had by this act forced the South to provide separate schools for each race.

Harlan wrote that the public school survived though often serving as a political football:

Though the schools themselves were poorly maintained at the end of Reconstruction, the public school idea was successful in the long view. It was more than a mere fad among freedmen. The state system of public education in the "conquered territories" ranks as one of the few constructive and permanently popular achievements of Radical Reconstruction. Native white Redeemers who restored Home Rule in the South, politically if not economically, in the mid-seventies usually promised to retain the public schools. "Free Men! Free

²⁵Wynes, p. 144.

²⁶Edgar Gardner Murphy, Problems of the Present South: A Discussion of Certain of the Educational, Industrial and Political Issues in the Southern States (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905), pp. 232-33.

"Ballots!! Free Schools!!!" was the title of a Wade Hampton pamphlet in 1876 in the campaign by which South Carolina's oligarchy returned to power. Such exclamations indicate, if they do not measure, a phase of reconstruction which had gone beyond sudden counter-revolution.²⁷

Education for the Negro had a slow beginning. Before the Civil War, laws forbade Negro education and after the War, many ex-Confederates argued that education would "spoil" the Negro.²⁸ Furthermore, many objected to compulsory taxation for education and deeply resented spending money on Negro education. Some felt the Negro incapable of being educated. Needless to say, the poverty of the Confederate states prevented launching elaborate programs of public education.

In 1865 Congress established the Freedman's Bureau to "cooperate with private benevolent associations in aid of the freedmen."²⁹ The Bureau began more than 4,000 black elementary schools serving a quarter of a million students. Essentially non-literary, the training today is called "manual or vocational training."³⁰ When the Bureau ended in 1872, Negro education faced a major crisis. Bullock noted that only 2,677 schools remained when government aid was withdrawn.³¹ "Only

²⁷Barlan, pp. 5-6.

²⁸Wynes, p. 138.

²⁹Merle Curti and Roderick Nash, Philanthropy in the Shaping of American Higher Education (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1965), p. 170.

³⁰Henry Allen Bullock, A History of Negro Education in the South from 1619 to the Present (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 30.

³¹Ibid., p. 66.

through increased efforts were the struggling Negro colleges able to survive."³² Northern churches and benevolent organizations sent funds and missionaries to aid Negro education.³³ Throughout the South schools were funded by religious organizations such as the American Missionary Association, the Board of Missions for the Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church, the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the American Baptist Home Mission Society and others.³⁴ Occasionally Negroes themselves organized their own schools.³⁵

Between 1868 and 1870 when state departments of education were formed in many southern states, plans were formulated for the education of the Negro and the white. The schools developed slowly, however.³⁶ J. L. M. Curry, for example introduced a resolution in 1866 in Alabama calling for education of Negroes.³⁷ The Mississippi State Teacher's Association early went on record as favoring public education for

³²Curti and Nash, p. 170.

³³Harry S. Ashmore, The Negro and the Schools (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), pp. 8-9.

³⁴The General Education Board: An Account of Its Activities 1902-14 (New York: General Education Board, 1915), p. 191.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Harlan, pp. 5-6.

³⁷Bullock, p. 5.

blacks and southern politicians urged that they be given decent treatment and adequate schooling.³⁸

Although the North officially discontinued aid to Negro education in 1877, help was available through philanthropic foundations: the Peabody Education Fund for aiding both races, the Slater Fund for Negroes, and a number of missionary organizations.³⁹ Curry described the problem, "Ministering now and then in obscure localities, to individuals and families, brings no permanent relief to the races."⁴⁰ Generally, the period of the seventies and eighties was one in which education for both races, already weak, lacked finances and direction. The Populist Movement aided education somewhat, but Harlan noted that the party was so poor it could accomplish little. Finally, after the 1896 election the Populists rejoined the Democratic Party.⁴¹

A federal act, the Blair Bill, was influential in shaping the course of education for the period of the Conferences. Voted down in the Senate on three different occasions between 1883 and 1886, the bill sought to distribute Federal aid to education in proportion to the illiteracy in each state. J. L. M. Curry, who favored the bill, mentioned in correspondence that he felt it had failed for reasons of race prejudice.⁴² During the first Conference meetings, federal aid to education, though once officially opposed, was not an issue.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., p. 60

⁴⁰Harlan, pp. 7-8.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 37.

⁴²Woodward, p. 64.

To evaluate the weakness of Negro education, any of several measuring sticks are possible, one of which is average enrollment. Most reports state that approximately one half of the Negro children attended school at the turn of the century. A report published in 1899 by the United States Commissioner of Education compared Negro and white attendance:

The total enrollment in the public school of the South (the sixteen former slave states and the District of Columbia) for the year 1898-99 was 5,662,259, the number of white children being 4,150,641 and the number of negro children 1,511,618. The estimated number of children in the South between five and eighteen years of age was 8,867,310. Of this number 5,954,400, or 67% were white children and 2,912,920 or 33% were children of the Negro race. 69.17% of the white school population was enrolled in the school and 51.89% of the Negro school population. The average daily attendance in the white school was 2,669,903, or 64.32% of the whites enrolled, and the average daily attendance in the Negro school was 969,911, or 64.10% of the colored enrollment.⁴³

Other standards were low. The average daily expenditure per pupil who attended school ranged from 8.2¢ in Virginia to 5¢ in South Carolina as compared to a high of 20¢ in Massachusetts.⁴⁴ Another report stated that more than 11% of the whites and 48% of the Negroes were illiterate.⁴⁵ Furthermore, only one in ten children reached fifth grade.⁴⁶

⁴³Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1898-99, Volume II, p. 2201.

⁴⁴Harlan, p. 9.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

By 1900 all but two states outside the South required school attendance, while south of the Mason-Dixon line, only Kentucky had this requirement and even it was flagrantly ignored in rural areas.⁴⁷ The average school term in the Southern seaboard was less than 100 days, which was about half the term in New England.⁴⁸ While the average length of the term increased for white children from 82 days in 1876 to 108 days in 1905, in black schools the term increased only from 77 days to 92 days.⁴⁹

The value of school property also indicates the educational poverty. It ranged from \$5.33 in Virginia and \$1.64 in North Carolina to a high of \$60.92 in Massachusetts. Harlan reported that the national average for 1900, the year of these statistics, was \$24.20 per student.⁵⁰

A few investigations have differed from Harlan's. These stated that until early 1900 the Negro received approximately the same educational fund allocation and other benefits as the white student. One of these contended:

During the initial stages of the public education movement and before the idea of special education had claimed public attention, little difference existed in the financial support given the Negro and white schools. Of the 146,737 children attending the public schools of North Carolina in 1873, 38% were Negro. The state spent \$139,433.66 for the operation of its public schools that year and one-third of this was assigned to schools for Negro children. Relatively little racial discrimination had developed in the allocation of school funds

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 50.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 9.

⁴⁹Bullock, p. 20.

⁵⁰Harlan, p. 9.

as late as 1889. Negro and white schools in various Southern states were open approximately the same number of days each year, and their teachers received approximately the same monthly salary. The greatest difference in the average length of the school term was three days in favor of white children in North Carolina, and the greatest difference in salary was \$12 per month in favor of the salary of white teachers in that state. In fact, the salaries of Negro teachers were higher than those paid white teachers in Kentucky and Louisiana during this time.

As the years passed, however, the strain of taxes became so great that public officials began to search for devices by which they could take from Negroes the equal share of the state funds they had hitherto enjoyed. . . .⁵¹

The black probably did not receive the education the Southern white received, for he was resented. Most evidence indicates that though the Negro was not forgotten, he was placed far lower than whites when financial aid was allocated.

School expenditures and teacher salaries for whites lagged behind the North and the Negro was below that of the Southern white. The national average in 1900-01 per school child was \$21.14, however, the white child in the South received 1/5th or \$4.92 of that amount and the Negro child 1/10th or \$2.21.⁵²

Of course, most teachers were poorly paid.⁵³ The monthly teacher salary for white teachers raised from \$23 in 1876 to \$40 in 1905, but remained the same for black teachers.⁵⁴ According to Harlan,

⁵¹Bullock, pp. 85-86.

⁵²Woodward, pp. 398-99.

⁵³The General Education Board, p. 183.

⁵⁴Bullock, p. 87.

the average salary was \$168.19 in Virginia and \$82.87 in North Carolina, while teachers in Massachusetts received \$566.09 per year and those in Kansas \$236.26.⁵⁵ Booker T. Washington knew a Negro teacher in Snow Hill, Alabama, who received a contract for \$7.50 a month for five months to provide the only formal education received by two hundred Negro children. The General Education Board reported many instances where salaries of \$25 to \$40 a month were offered prospective teachers.⁵⁶

Another problem that plagued the Southerner was larger families. For every 100 children of school age in New York in 1900 there were 125 male adults, in Massachusetts 135, and in Nevada 196. But in Virginia there were only 76 male adults for every 100 children; in Georgia 68; in North Carolina 66; and in South Carolina 61. This meant that for each dollar provided per school child the average adult in Massachusetts had to provide \$1.31 and in South Carolina \$1.64.⁵⁷

The few existing southern state departments of education lacked financial support and legislative backing. In addition, little relationship existed between district, county, and state officials, consequently, the Conference found organization lacking in all states.⁵⁸

⁵⁵Harlan, p. 10.

⁵⁶Bailey, p. 173.

⁵⁷Woodward, p. 399.

⁵⁸The General Education Board, p. 183.

Dabney stated that the state superintendents, ". . . generally political appointees, were afraid to discuss the question of the Negro school and to tell the truth about the illiteracy of the population and the condition of the rural schools."⁵⁹

The Southern Education Association had been in existence for some years but lacked strength:

Several efforts had been made to get this association organized for a campaign for better public schools, but without success. . . . The association was useful for discussion but not competent for the kind of propaganda that was needed. First of all, it was necessary that the people be informed fully about the wretched condition of the schools. . . . The fact was that the SEA was too much under the influence of politicians and their friends, the school book and supply agents, to be used as the basis of a campaign.⁶⁰

Harlan summarized the problems in southern education succinctly when he stated:

The adult male of the Southern seaboard thus had twice as many children as his Northern counterpart, to be educated in two separate school systems, with less than half as much property and barely half as great an income with which to do it. It is not surprising that the South did not have the American system of education, much less the Massachusetts type of school.⁶¹

Hampton Institute in Virginia and Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, both vocational schools, were the two most famous black schools. Hampton was founded in 1868 by Samuel Chapman Armstrong,

⁵⁹Dabney, pp. 17-18.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Harlan, pp. 35-36.

an officer of Negro troops during the Civil War and a long-time friend of Conference President Robert Ogden.⁶² Armstrong and Ogden had met when each was in his twenties and had remained close friends. When Hampton Institute was founded, Ogden assisted it for "thirty-five years as trustee, financial supporter and finally as president of the board."⁶³ In a speech before the Southern Industrial Association in 1901, Ogden lauded Armstrong's work:

A generation has passed, and the world recognizes his methods and principles as the ones that fit the case; and, more than this, high critical authority claims for him the honor of contributing more to American popular education than any other one person since Horace Mann. I rank myself with hundreds of Negro men and women as his pupil. Booker T. Washington was his spiritual child; the Hampton School is his monument. The breadth of view which General Armstrong inspired has brought a large company of people through the influence of Negro education to the consideration of white education, and thus to see the Southern educational question as a unit.⁶⁴

To help his school survive Armstrong made periodic fund raising trips in the North, sometimes giving as many as three speeches a day. He reportedly raised \$50,000 to \$80,000 per year.

Armstrong felt the Negro unequal to the white, for he:

. . . is capable of acquiring knowledge to any degree, and to a certain age, at least, with about the same facility as white children, but lacks the power to assimilate and digest it. The Negro matures sooner than the white, but does not have his steady development of mental strength up to advanced years. He is a child of the tropics, and the differentiation of races goes deeper than the skin.⁶⁵

⁶²Bullock, p. 76.

⁶³Dabney, pp. 26-27.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 27 and 59.

⁶⁵Bullock, p. 76.

He supported the segregated school and vocational training in a speech to the National Education Association in 1872.⁶⁶ In addition, he felt that the "dignity of labor" needed to be taught the Negro, a theory later adopted by Booker T. Washington.⁶⁷

Washington, a former Armstrong student and Principal of famous Tuskegee Institute, was generally accepted by North and South, white and black, as the leader of the Negro race from 1895 until his death in 1915. In his oft-quoted 1895 Exposition Address, Washington gained approval for industrial education, for he argued that the Negro should find "tilling the field" more honorable than "writing a poem." Tuskegee expounded this philosophy with courses in brickmaking, basketry, and tinsmithing, but also worked to develop the man socially and morally.⁶⁸ Woodward wrote that these crafts really "had more relevance to the South of Booker T. Washington's boyhood" and thoughtfully analyzed the popularity of his philosophy:

The enormous vogue that industrial education enjoyed among Negro educators in the South and the extent to which the older institutions, some of them without enthusiasm, fell in with the movement are to be explained to some degree by the influence that Washington exercised over the distribution of Northern philanthropic funds. There is considerable evidence to support the view of an unfriendly critic that Washington's influence became so powerful that "almost no Negro institution could collect funds without the recommendation or acquiescence of Mr. Washington."⁶⁹

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Woodward, p. 365.

⁶⁹Ibid.

The wealthy philanthropists John Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and J. P. Morgan, contributed to Tuskegee at a time when there was much competition for Negro educational funds.⁷⁰ In addition, Washington was the only paid Negro agent of the Southern Education Board during its existence. This position also helped him secure financial support for his projects.

In summary, the educational system of the South was weakly financed, poorly organized, and lacked strength. Although the white student tended to fare better than the Negro, both were far behind those in most Northern states. A few Negroes were fortunate to receive some industrial education, but most found school doors closed and textbooks unavailable. The fact that 11% of the whites and 48% of the Negro population was illiterate demonstrates these weaknesses all too clearly.

The Negro in the Late Nineteenth--Early Twentieth Century

Of approximately 16,000,000 people who lived south of the Potomac in 1900, 6,000,000 were black.⁷¹ Between 1890 and 1900 the Negro population in southern urban communities increased 32% and in the following decade 35.8%. As the population shifted, so did the problems. Crime, for example, spiraled upward. "As the urban Negro population increased, the proportion of crime committed by the race

⁷⁰Curti and Nash, p. 176.

⁷¹"Schooling in the South," p. 5.

mounted--from 256 imprisoned per 100,000 Negro population in 1904 to 1,079 in 1910. . . .⁷² The Negro had to face other serious political, economic, and social deficiencies in addition to those in education.

The attitude of the whites toward the Negro in the North seemed to differ from that in the South. The northern white sentiment was characterized by acceptance and an effort to raise their low conditions with such movements as the Freedman's Bureau. Some Southerners accepted this philosophy according to northerner Albert Shaw in a 1902 article in Review of Reviews:

One never visits the South without finding that although there is a large population of ignorant and ill-conditioned white people, the best white leaders believe thoroughly and heartily in these poorer brethren of theirs. They expect that these poor people are of good blood and origin. . . .⁷³

Many seemed to agree with this feeling though a common southern complaint was that the northern helping hand was often extended too readily to the "shiftless" Negro. Others described the northern conception of the Negro as merely a sunburned white man, "whose only crime was the color of his skin," though, of course, most Southerners viewed this attitude with horror.⁷⁴

The Southern concept of the Negro was usually more complex. Essentially, most saw him as an African and a primitive.⁷⁵ Weaver

⁷²Woodward, p. 354.

⁷³"Education in the South," Review of Reviews, XXV, June, 1902, pp. 663-64.

⁷⁴Weaver, p. 261.

⁷⁵Ibid.

noted that southern speeches, pamphlets, and articles of the period "virtually without exception . . . maintained that the Negro was a primitive whom slavery had assisted forward by enforcing habits of discipline and industry."⁷⁶ There was general agreement that unless the white man helped him, the African would regress to his former savage state.⁷⁷

Although the Thirteenth Amendment freed the slaves, the Fourteenth Amendment extended to him equal protection under the law, and the Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed the vote, the Negroes' problems were not solved. The South was afraid of the black man and wanted to legally erase many of these rights as soon as possible.

After the Civil War, Congress intended to give the Negro social equality. In 1883, however, the Supreme Court declared the Civil Rights Bill of 1875 unconstitutional, thus paving the way for Jim Crow legislation. Gunnar Myrdal described the situation in The Negro in America:

For a quarter of a century this system of statutes and regulations--separating the two groups in schools, on railroad cars and streetcars, in hotels and restaurants, in parks and playgrounds, in theaters and public meeting places--continued to grow, with the explicit purpose of diminishing, as far as was practicable and possible, the social contacts between whites and Negroes in the South.⁷⁸

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 167-68.

⁷⁷Weaver, p. 261 and Paul M. Gaston, The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking (New York: Alfred L. Knopf, 1970), p. 123.

⁷⁸Arnold Rose, The Negro in America, The Condensed Version of Myrdal's An American Dilemma (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 191.

To get around the constitutional provision that Negroes were to enjoy full citizenship, Myrdal explained that the legal term "separate but equal" was sanctioned by the Supreme Court in the Plessy vs. Ferguson decision, a doctrine that was not overturned by the Supreme Court until 1954.⁷⁹

After the War the Southerner tried to reassume his lost authority but was faced with a changed world with free black men:

It was only logical that old relationships should continue as before; that the dominant white race should seek in every possible way to rule the subordinate Negro race as before. While emancipation may have lost to the planter his particular set of Negroes, it did not deprive him of dependent Negro labor. Negro labor was as much dependent upon the white employer as before. Public subjugation came now to be substituted for the old private subjugation under slavery.⁸⁰

To demonstrate their attitude of superiority, Southerners placed the Negro in an inferior position. Studies and surveys taken at the turn of the century demonstrate that the black man had fallen far behind. One of these, dated 1889, announced that "they have absolutely deteriorated and have given no promise of amendment in any direction."⁸¹ The "indolent Negro" was a common expression of the period.

The Negroes lost voting power in many states and the 1900 election was the last in which they voted in large numbers.⁸² Weaver

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Green, p. 137.

⁸¹Weaver, p. 172.

⁸²John Hope Franklin and Isidore Starr, The Negro in Twentieth Century America: A Reader for Civil Rights (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 60.

noted that a reading of diaries and memoirs of the period assures one that the idea of enfranchising the Negro was exclusively a Northern notion. Almost no Southerner was willing to admit that the Negro was ready to participate in government.⁸³ The first serious attempt to disqualify the Negro vote occurred in 1890 at the Mississippi Constitutional Convention with the "second Mississippi Plan."⁸⁴ Seven states followed Mississippi's example between 1895 and 1910 after the Populist revolt.⁸⁵ The move toward disfranchisement was assured in 1898 when the Supreme Court approved the plan that had been adopted by Mississippi. The most common barriers erected to prevent the Negro's vote were property, used in four states, and literacy qualifications, applied in eight states.

Booker T. Washington's philosophy, espoused in "The Atlanta Compromise," was accepted as the definitive Negro statement. Washington's speech had "constituted a renunciation of active political aspirations for the Negro," and Woodward felt this speech had an important bearing upon disfranchisement.⁸⁶ "North Carolina was one of the first states to attain disfranchisement under progressive auspices. Here the movement was held so sacred that it was initiated on Memorial

⁸³Weaver, p. 261.

⁸⁴Fletcher N. Green (ed.), Essays in Southern History Presented to Joseph Gregoire de Roulhac Hamilton (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1949), p. 156.

⁸⁵Woodward, p. 321.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 322.

day, 1898. . . .⁸⁷ Josephus Daniels, editor of The Raleigh News and Observer (formerly owned by Walter Hines Page), soon to become a Conference leader, directed the fight to bar the Negro from the polls in his home state.⁸⁸

Like many Southerners, several of the progressive Conference leaders were willing to enfranchise the educated Negro. The Reverend Edgar Gardner Murphy's position, for example, was similar to that of Robert Ogden, Walter Hines Page, and Albert Shaw. These men felt that any "civilized person" would oppose wholesale Negro enfranchisement in areas where Negroes predominated until "they were literate and had acquired higher moral and cultural standards."⁸⁹ In the midst of a southern tour in 1899, the dissenter Walter Hines Page wrote that the people would not tolerate disfranchisement of Confederate veterans, and "the nigger cannot and shall not rule. This is the central doctrine everywhere."⁹⁰

In the South Negro disfranchisement affected the school systems in several ways. Harlan listed these briefly:

In the first place, disfranchisement made the Negro vote negligible and stripped Negro school funds of what meager protection they had earlier enjoyed. . . . Secondly, the literacy test for suffrage in several states spurred the poor whites to demand education so their children could vote. Thirdly, while disfranchisement registered the ebb of Populism

⁸⁷Bailey, p. 57.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 40.

⁹⁰Ibid.

and hopes for political action, many agrarians, rather than surrender hope as their leaders were doing, hitched their hopes to other stars such as education.⁹¹

The disfranchisement of the Negro, therefore, not only erased his vote, but essentially slammed the school door in his face as well.

As a result of the loss of political power, the Negro faced other serious threats. Race riots became common in the North and South. And the lynch law came into evidence. Woodward wrote of the racial overtones of the practice of lynching:

Lynch law still took a savage toll of Negro life, though the number of lynchings in the country declined markedly from the peak reached in the Nineties, a tendency happily not in conformity with the deterioration in race relations already noted. From 1889 to 1899 the average number of lynchings per year was 187.5, while in the following decade the number was 92.5 or less than half. Two other significant changes, however, occurred over the same period. The proportion of lynchings taking place in the South increased from about 82% of the total in the earlier decade to about 92% in the period 1900-1909. At the same time, the proportion of lynching victims who were white decreased from 32.2% in the earlier decade to 11.4% in the latter. In other words, while lynching was decreasing in the south, it was decreasing more slowly than elsewhere. It was becoming an increasingly Southern and racial phenomenon.⁹²

In addition to lacking most political rights and occasionally fearing for their lives, blacks came up short in the educational realm as well. One historian succinctly stated the case:

With the opening of the twentieth century, the position of the Negro child changed. Less money was provided for his education than whites and by 1910, the Negro child's

⁹¹Harlan, pp. 40-41.

⁹²Woodward, p. 351.

portion of money spent for public education had fallen far below his proportional representation in the population.⁹³

Needless to say, the Negro was in a poor position to complain because he had no money of his own and he had little hope of achieving economic independence. He had little political power, for he could not vote, nor did he have many representatives in state or federal government after 1877. In other ways the black man had a difficult time, for if he swayed from the accepted path too much, he stood a chance of facing the white man's court or a lynch mob.

The historian Guion G. Johnson has summarized the Negro's position in 1910 most clearly:

The period between 1876 and 1910 had written the name of the Negro off the registration books and removed the Negro as a minority pressure group in southern politics. By means of state laws the caste status of the Negro was established in public as well as private relationships. There were few voices of protest throughout the land. When the caste position of the Negro was challenged, the points at issue were fundamentally the same as those of the slavery period; the status and capacities of the Negro. Three groups of thinkers in the South--the romanticists, the paternalists, and those who accepted the theory of progress through education--held out some hope to the Negro, although they either neglected to define what this future higher status should be or the subject. All tended alike to measure the Negro upon the Malthusian scale of personality traits and to find, when the Negro fell short of the ideal, that the black man had serious character defects in comparison to his Caucasian brother. The Negro was, in other words, still considered to be a "peculiar" type of man, and the negrophobists would declare that he always would remain so. White supremacy was, from this point of view, the determination of the dominant race "to ward off political rein and to save society from destruction."⁹⁴

⁹³Bullock, p. 179.

⁹⁴Green, p. 156.

The Negro was given some hope of "catching up" with the white man. When the question was discussed in the southern pulpit or by the press, he was usually led to believe that by hard work and self-denial he might win (or earn) civil and economic equality, though not social equality.⁹⁵ Weaver was correct when he noted that, "Nothing appalled the white people of the South more than the prospect of four million emancipated blacks endowed with the privileges and powers of freemen in a republic."⁹⁶

Although there may have been friendly overtures between the North and South during the latter part of the nineteenth century, there were very few between the southern white and Negro. One historian described "a sudden outpouring of anti-Negro literature in the South and in the nation . . ." between 1890 and 1920.⁹⁷ C. Vann Woodward also pictured this mood, "Writing in 1903, John Spencer Bassett concluded that 'there is today more hatred of whites for blacks and blacks for whites than ever before.'⁹⁸ In The Strange Career of Jim Crow Woodward captures the building of this intense anti-Negro feeling--until the black man was totally separated from the white society. One could argue that the white man said, "If I can't see him, then neither he nor the problem exists."

⁹⁵Green, p. 146.

⁹⁶Weaver, p. 167.

⁹⁷I. A. Newby, Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930 (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), p. 7.

⁹⁸Woodward, p. 355.

Conclusion

This chapter has surveyed the conditions in the South in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries. Although a few overtures of friendship existed, generally hatred and fear characterized the relationships between whites and blacks. The Jim Crow laws further cemented racial separation.

Compulsory education was not legally required and illiteracy was high. The schools were poorly financed and segregated systems permitted the Negro to receive less financial aid than the white. Vocational education for blacks was supported by whites who believed it could replace the training formerly supplied by the plantation.

When the Conference was formed in 1897, the South had not recovered economically from the Civil War. A depleted land, low wages, child labor, and poor health, were symptomatic of most of the region. The Negro, who suffered even more acutely, likely envisioned a bleak future.

CHAPTER III

THE CONFERENCES

The format of the "First Capou Springs Conference for Christian Education in the South" in 1898 was adopted for later meetings for as the gathering grew from thirty-six people to two thousand or more, the program changed only in minor ways. This chapter considers these occasions for the speeches after describing the founding of the organization. Then specific factors are investigated to understand the Conference development: the meeting place, the size and composition of the audience, and the officers elected to conduct the business. Second, publicity before and after the meetings is described to determine acceptance of the organization. Third, the chapter presents themes and important speeches, especially those dealing with Negro education. Finally, it examines the social events that reflect the mood of the occasion.

The Capou Springs meeting began when Reverend Edward Abbott, a Massachusetts minister, recognized the need for improved education as he traveled through the South.¹ Before returning to his home, Abbott visited ex-Confederate soldier and hotel owner, Captain William H. Sale, in Capou Springs, West Virginia. Abbott persuaded Sale to

¹Charles William Dabney, Universal Education in the South, Vol. II (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1936), p. 3.

host a meeting similar to those held annually on Indian Affairs and on International Arbitration at Lake Mohonk, New York.² Abbott used a similar format at Capon Springs to study the problems of southern education.³ "Thus it was," recalled Dabney, "that a Massachusetts minister of the Gospel and a Virginia follower of Lee united to start a great movement for the advancement of education, which, beginning in Virginia, was to be extended to the whole country and finally to be felt in many other parts of the world."⁴

The First Conference, Capon Springs, West Virginia, 1898

In beginning, Abbott formed a committee of ministers and educators from the South and wrote to each concerning the forthcoming meetings:

The plan of Mr. Sale is to bring together for conference in the neighborhood of sixty leaders in the work of Christian Education among both whites and blacks at the South for the discussion of any matters of common interest. . . . It is Mr. Sale's purpose to entertain the entire body of invited guests for the whole time designated. . . . He will expect the conference to cover not less than three days.⁵

The first group assembled in the chapel on the hotel grounds

² Ibid.

³ Lyman Abbott, Reminiscences (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1915), p. 423.

⁴ Dabney, p. 3.

⁵ Ibid.

at 8:30 p.m. on June 29, 1898.⁶ Dabney described the thirty-six who attended:

. . . there were fourteen ministers, representing seven religious denominations, and nine presidents and representatives of colleges and schools for both races in the South. Twelve states and the District of Columbia were represented.⁷

Several delegates were respected in education and religion. The Reverend A. B. Hunter, to name one example, was President of St. Augustine's College in Raleigh, North Carolina, and was remembered for having trained teachers for the state's understaffed Negro schools.⁸

At the first meeting Bishop T. U. Dudley of Kentucky was chosen temporary chairman and the Reverend A. B. Hunter was named temporary secretary.⁹ Later the same two were chosen as the permanent officers. J. L. M. Curry was elected Vice-President and an executive committee was formed to conduct business between meetings.¹⁰ This committee became the Southern Education Board in 1901 at the Fourth Conference.

⁶Proceedings of the First Capon Springs Conference for Christian Education in the South (Washington, D. C.; n.d.) p. 3. The citations from Conference Proceedings are hereafter listed as First Conference, Second Conference, etc. and the page number.

⁷Dabney, p. 5.

⁸Henry Allen Bullock, A History of Negro Education in the South from 1619 to the Present (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 91.

⁹First Conference, p. 3.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 7.

Though the "Conference made a deep impression on those who attended," it received no publicity in the South.¹¹ Newspaper accounts of the Second Conference began to appear in eastern papers, but Dabney stated, "It was significant that the southern papers scarcely noticed the first three meetings at all."¹²

Dabney recalled that Hollis B. Frissell, Principal of Hampton Institute, wrote Abbott to suggest possible conference topics:

. . . how far the public school system in the South can be improved and made effective, how far it is feasible to introduce industrial education, what the relation of the higher schools and the church schools should be to the public schools, how criminality among Negroes can be decreased, the relation of the churches to the Negro, and in what ways the getting of land and homes by the blacks can be encouraged.¹³

Abbott accepted some of Frissell's suggestions and announced the topics for the first conference: "How far can the public school system in the South be improved and made effective? and How far is it feasible to introduce industrial education?"¹⁴

The emphasis on religion is demonstrated in its name: The First Capon Springs Conference for Christian Education in the South. Though later the word Christian was dropped, there were other indications of its Christian emphasis. A session usually opened with prayer and at the First Conference, "Nearer My God to Thee," was sung before

¹¹Dabney, p. 6.

¹²Ibid., p. 8.

¹³Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁴Ibid.

the speeches. Another indication of the religious emphasis was the attendance of the Secretary of the American Society of Religious Education who spoke of the origin, purposes, and plans of his group. Finally, this Conference included two Sunday church services: one in the morning for the membership and the hotel guests and a second one that evening "held for the colored people and an address was made by the Rt. Rev. Thomas U. Dudley."¹⁵ Because the organization was seriously concerned with Christian education, most felt the church services were normal activities. Although later conferences dropped church services, except for the memorial services for deceased members, the religious influence never waned.

At the First Conference, speeches were devoted to Mormonism, the study of American History, the desirability for approved institutions, and industrial and Christian education. However, Negro education was the most important topic. In an initial address, the Reverend Hollis Burke Frissell, Principal of Hampton Institute, a school for blacks, reviewed American Negro history and urged the founding of more schools like Hampton.¹⁶ Speaking on the same topic, Charles F. Meserve, President of Shaw University, compared the Negro and white man, listed the Negro's weaknesses, but suggested that his education should be similar to that of other races.¹⁷ When the

¹⁵First Conference, pp. 36-37.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 3-7.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 20-23.

meeting concluded the members drafted a "Message and Appeal," which declared "its deep and abiding interest in all efforts for the advancement of moral and religious education in the South along Christian lines, and especially that of the more needy of the races."¹⁸

Since the War, few opportunities existed for Northerners and Southerners to meet. These people were unfamiliar with each other and probably hesitation and suspicion existed between parties. The tea in the hotel ballroom likely helped encourage friendships. As the organization grew, social affairs became more lavish because each host town tried to surpass the events of the previous year. These social occasions provided opportunities for southern ladies to display genuine hospitality. Furthermore, each event brought together persons from the North and South. Following the First Conference, A. D. Mayo wrote, ". . . great good will result simply from a hundred people of this sort living together for three days and talking themselves into an understanding of each other's position."¹⁹ Often the Proceedings contained statements by northern visitors thanking the gracious hostess who had entertained them.²⁰ Certainly these social events enhanced cordiality.

The first meeting, consequently, established some practices that were followed in later years. Attendance included northern and

¹⁸Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁹Dabney, p. 7.

²⁰Ninth Conference, p. 162 and 166; Tenth Conference, p. 207.

southern leaders in education and religion. Negro education became a topic of major importance during the first year. Finally, social events which permitted display of the southerner's hospitality were significant activities.

The Second Conference, Capon Springs, West Virginia, 1899

The Second Conference drew seventy-five, or a growth of more than 100%. The noted Southern educator, J. L. M. Curry, was unanimously elected President on the second day. Though he served as President for only one year, he remained an active participant until his death in 1901. As agent of the Peabody and Slater Funds, he had searched for and allotted funds for Negro education for more than twenty years.²¹

Robert Ogden and his guests arrived by railroad and his long association with the organization began. Soon after his arrival he was elected Vice-President, and the following year President, a position he retained until his death in 1913. Established as an annual custom, the gracious host rented several railroad cars, and later a private train to bring guests to the meeting. Each year Ogden included visits to black and white schools as a part of the trip. Walter Hines Page described these tours as "excursions into enobling experiences."²² Ogden usually included among his guests leading northern educators,

²¹Louis R. Harlan, Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901-1915 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), pp. 268-69.

²²Dabney, p. 7.

ministers, and philanthropists, such as those he invited to the Second Conference:

. . . Mr. George McAneny of New York, President James MacAlister, Dr. J. L. M. Curry and Mr. A. D. Mayo of Washington, General Guy V. Henry, former governor of Puerto Rico, Dr. George S. Dickerman of New Haven, Mr. William J. Schieffelin of New York, and a number of professors from Teachers College, Columbia University, and Hampton Institute.²³

Ogden, the affable host, clearly enjoyed his prominence and tried to insure every comfort for his guests. In Ogden's memorial volume, Philip Wilson described his hospitality:

It was, of course, a glorious thing to do this, to let loose on an astonished country the very visible embodiment of what Americans call "a good time." And that Ogden enjoyed the affair was obvious to all. The sense that he was host and that he could afford to be host, the indulgence of his passion for detail, the stir that he was making, the press notices, the ceremonies when arriving at or leaving a city--it was all incense that he inhaled with delight.²⁴

In spite of their popularity these tours drew some criticism. Edward Ingle spearheaded the most devastating attack in The Manufacturers Record, a Baltimore publication, stating ". . . the arrival of the special train 'with staterooms, bathrooms, barber shop, etc.' in the words of an unfriendly observer, 'carrying Mr. Ogden's collection of millionaires, educators, philanthropists, and sundry curios.'²⁵

²³Ibid.

²⁴Philip Whitwell Wilson, An Unofficial Statesman (Garden City, New York, 1924), *passim*.

²⁵Edward Ingle, The Ogden Movement: An Educational Monopoly in the Making (Baltimore, Maryland: Manufacturers Record, 1908), p. 69.

A second philanthropist George Foster Peabody soon became influential in the movement, for he provided funds during the first years and offered his summer home at Lake Albenia, New York, as a meeting place for the executive committee. Peabody also brought a railroad car of guests to the Second Conference, some of whom were associated with northern newspapers and journals:

. . . a company including, among others, the Reverend S. D. McConnell of Brooklyn, Dr. Edwin Knox Mitchell of Hartford, Dr. Albert Shaw of Review of Reviews, Mr. St. Clare McKelway of the Brooklyn Eagle, Mr. Clark B. Firestone of the Evening Mail of New York, and Stanhope Sims of the New York Times.²⁶

Although pre-conference publicity was neglected, Shaw, the editor of Review of Reviews reported that this organization was not concerned only with Negroes:

. . . was not intended to be a mass meeting or a great convention, but rather a quiet week's discussion on the part of some of those especially concerned with the great work of instructing the rising generation of both races south of Mason and Dixon's line. It was not--as some newspapers have mistakenly assumed--a conference devoted primarily to the question of negro education. The discussion, in fact, dealt more particularly with the conditions of white education. It is true that men engaged in the work of educating the negro race in the South were very active in promoting this conference and in making it a success; but those very men themselves did not hesitate to say that the welfare of the negro in the South was so dependent upon that of the white race that even those who made it their special mission in life to minister to the negroes must learn that the negro could rise in knowledge and prosperity only as the white race rose still higher.²⁷

Some who attended the first assembly felt that it had devoted

²⁶Ibid., p. 8.

²⁷Albert Shaw, "The Conference at Capon Springs," Review of Reviews, XX, August, 1899, p. 131.

too much time to the Negro and his education. For example, A. D. Mayo of Washington wrote the committee:

I observed in the meeting last year that the majority were interested in one phase of education only and that one the most foreign to the interests of the Southern people;--the Northern schools for Southern Negroes. It seems to me that by proper representations a convention could be gathered next June that will really be a fair representation of Southern education and that great good will result simply from a hundred people of this sort living together for three days and talking themselves into an understanding of each other's position.²⁸

In spite of criticism, the planners again made the Negro the major topic, including speeches on: Hampton's Principal, Samuel Chapman Armstrong; Negro denominational schools; and the education of Negro women.

Curry's speech "A Survey of the Field," was labeled "the charter of the conference," and was later published by the organization.²⁹ Albert Shaw offered to print the address in Review of Reviews.³⁰ The famous educator reviewed southern education's history and described the devastation brought by the War. Georgia, for example, had real and personal property valued in 1861 at \$661,000,000 but worth only \$121,000,000 when the War ended. After the War the white race took up much of the burden of Negro education. In addition most northern white philanthropy was devoted to the Negro. But, Curry argued, ". . . there

²⁸Dabney, pp. 6-7.

²⁹Ibid., p. 8.

³⁰Ibid., p. 8; Second Conference, p. 4.

is greater need for education of the other race."³¹ He continued, ". . . the white people are to be the leaders, to take the initiative, to have the directive control in all matters pertaining to the civilization and the highest interests of our beloved land."³² Dabney noted that Curry's arguments, which changed the focus of the Conference, were accepted by both regions, ". . . as well as by Southern friends of the Negro."³³

William H. Baldwin, a trustee of Tuskegee active in support of Negro education, and the President of the Southern Railway, also presented a major address. Baldwin described the kind of industrial education he felt best for the Negro. After portraying the adequate training of the plantation, he discussed the agitation between the two races and then listed popular Negro abuses. Finally, he echoed Curry's theme: "The South cannot rise unless the negro rises. Nor can the negro rise unless the white man is educated, too."³⁴

This shift from black to white education was accepted, and before it adjourned, the Conference had adopted a Resolution embodying Curry's and Baldwin's proposals:

Resolved, That the education of the white race in the South is the pressing and imperative need, and the noble achievements of the Southern Commonwealth in the creation of common-school

³¹Second Conference, pp. 25-32.

³²Second Conference, p. 28.

³³Dabney, p. 89.

³⁴Second Conference, p. 76.

systems for both races deserve not merely the sympathetic recognition of the country, and of the world at large, but also give the old and high-spirited colleges and universities of the South a strong claim upon a generous share of that stream of private wealth in the United States that is enriching and vitalizing the higher education of the North and West.³⁵

Social events were not described in either the Proceedings or by Dabney.

The Second Conference is notable because of the appearance of Ogden who was elected President the following year and became the forceful leader of the organization. Most important, however, was the shift in emphasis from black to white education. The problems of the Negro never again became a central topic in the organization's program.

The Third Conference, Capon Springs, West Virginia, 1900 Meeting in 1900, the Third Conference, the last small gathering, attracted only forty-four participants. Though he was unable to attend, Robert Ogden sent his speech "The Objects of the Conference as seen by a Northern Business Man," to be read. The speech so impressed the delegates that when Curry declined renomination, they unanimously chose Ogden president.³⁶

A most important topic this meeting was federal aid to education. A resolution requesting aid for industrial education for both races was accepted. The following day President W. L. Wilson of

³⁵Ibid., p. 7.

³⁶Dabney, p. 12.

Washington and Lee University argued against the motion, because he felt southern people needed time to solve their educational problems and that acceptance of federal funds would result in federal control. His speech was the last to discuss aid and the resolution was referred back to committee.³⁷

The Reverend G. S. Dickerman, who had been employed the previous year as the organization's agent, presented the first speech. Since the last meeting, he had traveled through southern states to survey the educational conditions. In his report Dickerman described the difficulties finding qualified teachers in rural areas, and he made a strong plea for industrial training. The Committee on Resolutions asked Dickerman to continue his work and to visit state superintendents of education before the next meeting.

Although not directly concerned with the Negro, Robert Ogden in an important address suggested that the businessman would find it profitable to aid the school-boy for a more educated populace would then help the businessman.³⁸

Again the topic of Negro education was a major concern, though the problems of the black man received less stress at this meeting.³⁹ Most seem to have accepted Curry's recommendation at the Second Conference that the white man should be educated before the Negro.

³⁷Ibid., p. 15.

³⁸Third Conference, pp. 24-28.

³⁹Dabney, p. 10.

Only two speeches were devoted to the Negro. F. G. Woodworth, President of Tougaloo University in Mississippi, had "Some Suggestions as to the Kind of Education Needed for the Negro Race." He hoped that the properly educated black man would become a leader and a citizen with a "high type of social life."⁴⁰ In his speech, Horace Bumstead, President of Atlanta University, suggested the South needed more colleges for Negroes and described several professions open to the educated black man.⁴¹

The Fourth Conference, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, 1901

The Fourth Conference moved to Winston-Salem, because Captain Sale was in poor health and the leaders wanted a more centralized location. The city extended an invitation, and Bishop Edward Rondthaler of the Moravian Church invited it to meet at Salem Academy.

Reports differ concerning the number of Ogden's guests. Dabney stated that a company of over a hundred arrived by train; the Raleigh News and Observer counted only fifty-nine.⁴² In any case the host rented five Pullman cars and a dining car with "every convenience for a ten day's trip through the South."⁴³ The day before the Conference, the

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 37-38.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 39-46.

⁴²Dabney, p. 32; "Friends of Education Gather in Conference," News and Observer, Raleigh, April 19, 1901, p. 1.

⁴³"Educational Conference at Winston-Salem Adjourns," News and Observer, Raleigh, April 21, 1901, p. 1.

group stopped at Hampton Institute to attend its graduation exercises.⁴⁴

This assembly was different from the previous ones in several respects. First, the delegates sensed a new purpose and a larger scope. Although the change in location was partly responsible for this feeling, publicity also reflected this attitude. For example, several days before the first session, the Raleigh News and Observer published a letter to the Editor from Charles D. McIver, an active member. He explained the purpose of this organization: "to study educational conditions in the South and to consider all possible means of promoting our educational interests."⁴⁵ McIver then suggested that the northern money that was poured into education indicated a desire for cordial relations with the South. He also named many of the important people who would be present and urged local business and professional men to attend, because they might be remunerated intellectually and financially.⁴⁶

Though southern newspapers had ignored previous meetings, this Conference received publicity throughout the country. Two southern newspapers, the Atlanta Journal and the Winston-Salem Daily Sentinel reported this Conference. Dabney described Dr. Julius D. Dreher's analysis:

⁴⁴"The Conference on Southern Education," Review of Reviews, XXIII, June, 1901, p. 644.

⁴⁵"Great Educational Conference," News and Observer, Raleigh, April 16, 1901, p. 1.

⁴⁶Ibid.

In the beginning, the Conference for Education in the South was not a conspicuous force in southern life. Not until the Winston-Salem meeting did it command any public attention. Dreher says no secular southern papers took any notice of the first three meetings. At the third Conference only one religious paper had a representative present, but from the time Ogden took charge, the whole country awoke to the fact that a great movement was starting.⁴⁷

A second reason for the new prestige was that important and wealthy people became interested with it. The "Educational Governor" of North Carolina, Charles B. Aycock, who was elected on the platform of promoting the public schools, gave the opening address.⁴⁸ Other distinguished speakers included the Right Reverend Edward Rondthaler, Bishop of the Moravian Church; Albert Shaw, Editor of Review of Reviews; G. R. Glenn, Georgia State Superintendent of Education; Reverend Lyman Abbott, founder of the Conference; and Walter Hines Page, the editor of the Atlantic Monthly. Although he did not speak and he was not listed on the official program beforehand, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. attended.

Third, as professional educators took more active roles, the organization became more secular and ministers held less important positions.

Fourth, the emphasis on whites was now firmly established. Ogden described the change in his opening address:

. . . and while we were originally interested in the South through negro education, our impulses have risen from negro education to the question of the entire burden of educational

⁴⁷Dabney, p. 43.

⁴⁸Fourth Conference, pp. 2-4.

responsibility that you have throughout this whole section of the country.⁴⁹

Several publications noted the new emphasis on whites. For example, the Raleigh News and Observer briefly stated, "Most of them primarily became interested in negro education, but latterly they have broadened their interest and are interested in the betterment of all education of the South."⁵⁰ The article also mentioned that many persons were aware that the South had a terrible burden to bear in educating the Negro.⁵¹

Finally, the Committee on Platform and Resolutions moved that an Executive Board of seven be formed to conduct:

1. A campaign of education for free schools to the newspapers and the people, by supplying literature to the newspaper and periodical press, by participation in educational meetings and by general correspondence; and
2. To conduct a Bureau of Information and Advice on Legislation and School Organization.⁵²

The executive committee soon became known as the Southern Education Board, with Ogden as its President. Page, Shaw, and Peabody were northern members and Frissell, Alderman, Dabney, Curry and McIver represented the South. Reverend Wallace Buttrick served as the representative from the General Education Board, the major source of southern philanthropic funds. The resolutions established the propaganda

⁴⁹Fourth Conference, p. 6.

⁵⁰"Friends of Education Gather in Conference," News and Observer, Raleigh, April 19, 1901, p. 1.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Fourth Conference, p. 12.

interests which attempted to awaken the South to improved educational standards. The Southern Education Board conducted the organization's business and usually met once between the annual meetings. This arrangement freed the Conference for the speeches and social occasions. Because the Board and its business were seldom mentioned at the annual gatherings, probably many who attended the Conference were never aware of its importance.

In 1901 the Southern Education Board decided that funds, ". . . shall [not] be applied to the assistance of any institution or school, but . . . shall be extended exclusively for the purpose of stimulating public sentiment in favor of more liberal provision for universal education in public schools."⁵³

The General Education Board worked with the Southern Education Board to investigate candidates for financial gifts because criticism had long existed of unworthy or nonexistent institutions receiving funds. In his annual addresses Ogden often told the Conference that the Southern Education Board had no money to give away because funds were handled by the General Education Board. Though technically correct, the Southern Education Board often suggested projects for the General Education Board to consider.

In an attempt to clarify its work, the Southern Education Board published its policy. However, its work was criticized by some.

⁵³R. C. Simonini, Jr., Education in the South; Institute of Southern Culture Lectures at Longwood College (Farmville, Virginia; Longwood College, 1959), p. 71.

One historian pictured the opposition:

Its practical work was in the form of propaganda and publicity, directed specifically toward bringing about voluntary local taxation for the increase of school facilities; compulsory education; longer school terms and consolidation of weak schools; better education of teachers; industrial and agricultural instruction; improvement of schoolhouses and equipment; and establishment of high schools and their correlation with elementary schools and colleges. These objectives sound harmless today--but were radical then. Among the factors producing the opposition were: the prospect of increased taxation; the association of the education movement with the crusade against child labor; fear of the Negro; sectional pride; and sectarianism.⁵⁴

The Board early decided that for the first two years at least it ". . . would not emphasize the Negro too much." Consequently, its campaign preached in general terms the value of education for all people and fairness to Negroes.⁵⁵

The topic of the Negro was an extremely emotional one and Conference leaders often reminded the press that the Negro received less emphasis than earlier meetings. Walter Hines Page, for example, in a statement often publicized at the Fourth Conference was queried by one reporter if there was not "a nigger in the woodpile." He replied:

You will find when the woodpile is turned over not a "nigger" but an uneducated white boy. He is the fellow we are after. We want to train both the white boy and the black boy, but we must train the white boy first, because we cannot do anything for the negro boy until his white friend is convinced of his responsibility.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Wynes, The Negro in the South, Since 1865; Selected Essays in American Negro History (Univ., Alabama: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1965, pp. 208-209.

⁵⁶Dabney, pp. 46-47, Columbia State, April 24, 1903.

Both the northern and southern leaders, it seems, stressed the Negro's lesser importance.

Opening this meeting, President Ogden introduced Governor Aycock to present the welcoming address. Aycock, exuding charm, described southern hospitality which "forbids you to hasten away." He bragged that his state now put three-fourths of all taxes collected into public schools and kept schools open for both races at least four months each year. Aycock noted that his state's greatest task now was conquering illiteracy, but believed progress was possible.⁵⁷

In an important address Dabney presented a detailed survey of Southern education. Citing a slight increase in the per capita education expenditure, he noted that when compared with the North, the South was still far behind. "From the standpoint of the school-man the situation is sad beyond expression," he reported.⁵⁸ He then explained that all the weaknesses in education applied to black education as well and that the Southerner must educate the Negro, or he would drag the white man down. He urged the white Southerner to provide funds for black education, especially his industrial education. After the address, Curry moved to ask the Commissioner of Education of the United States and the state superintendents to publish Dabney's paper.⁵⁹

Two other speakers discussed black education. G. R. Glenn,

⁵⁷Fourth Conference, pp. 2-4.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 45.

⁵⁹Dabney, p. 41.

State Superintendent of Education of Georgia, described the problem of educating two races:

Here is a problem of two races, the one dependent on the other, absolutely dependent, yet living under the same government, to be worked out along lines of safety and lines of the least friction. I think as a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, we have only in recent years put ourselves in the right state of sympathy and in the right condition of charity, and in an intelligent frame of mind really to study this great problem as it ought to be studied.⁶⁰

Glenn stated that the Negro needed to be guided by the Southerner. Using reasoning like those who placed the Negro on the plantation, Glenn suggested that "the only place for the right development of the colored man here in the South is on the farm." He continued:

For the next fifty years certainly that will be the only safe place for him. This at least is the opinion entertained by the best men and the most thoughtful men who have given years and years to study this question. There will be no competition for the colored man on the farm. If we can provide for him the right kind of education he will make our fields enormously productive.⁶¹

George T. Winston, President of North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, argued that the "negro problem in the South is at bottom industrial," and that blacks must be taught those industrial skills in which they lagged behind.⁶²

In his last Conference statement, Curry presented a moving address in which he again eloquently reinforced his arguments of two years before:

⁶⁰Fourth Conference, p. 66.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 67-70.

⁶²Ibid., p. 105.

For thirty years I have labored for the education of the people and the negroes in particular, and I sorrow only at our strange stupidity in having so long neglected our plain duty to ourselves and to them. . . . And I hope that my last prayer shall be for universal education of all races and people and tongues. . . . One properly educated white man will help to elevate a dozen negroes where an illiterate white man would hold an equal number of negroes in bondage of ignorance and degradation and still the philanthropy of our wealthy friends North has been [almost] exclusively applied to the negro college. There must be a change in this respect.⁶³

Clearly fond of the speaker, Dabney reported that Curry presented "an impassioned address" in which:

. . . he said he beheld now "the rising of a new sun with healing in his wings to flood the Southland with rays of glory and happiness." Evidently realizing that his labors of fifty years for southern schools were about to close with success he added with deep feeling, "This is my Nunc Dimittis. Like the prophet of old I can say, "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy work for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou has prepared before the face of all people."⁶⁴

The Conference program indicated the organization enjoyed its social occasions more than previously.⁶⁵ On the first day the Men's League and Wachovia Historical Society invited the delegates to visit them.⁶⁶ The Salem orchestra began the evening session and the "Academy pupils" sang later between Curry's and McIver's speeches.⁶⁷ In fact, most sessions included some chorus or instrumental music.

⁶³"A Day Made Memorable by Powerful Addresses," News and Observer, Raleigh, April 20, 1901, p. 1.

⁶⁴Dabney, p. 43.

⁶⁵Fourth Conference, p. 7.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

This new emphasis on cultural activities probably helped to encourage rapport and harmony. Professor Francis G. Peabody of Harvard, a Conference guest, who noticed the new feeling stated, ". . . it must now be admitted that the new relations we now hold with the other end of the world have brought home to millions of Americans a new recognition of the unity of the human race."⁶⁸

The Raleigh News and Observer called the Conference a success and pictured the harmony generated:

The guests--those from the North and from the South--were charmed with the elegant receptions and entertainment afforded them. The people of Winston-Salem more than measured up to the occasion in every respect and won the hearts of all whose good fortune it was to be here for the past three days.⁶⁹

The Fifth Conference, Athens, Georgia, 1902

The Fifth Conference met under less hospitable circumstances, for Georgia, unlike North Carolina, did not support education. Citing the Georgia School Reports, Harlan noted that in Georgia black children of the county were 64.6 per cent of the population in 1893 and yet in 1906 the Negro teachers in the county were paid only 11.5 per cent of the salaries.⁷⁰ Governor Allen D. Candler refused to welcome the Conference. He disliked the organization because the previous year

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 118.

⁶⁹J. D., "The Education Conference at Winston-Salem Adjourns," News and Observer, Raleigh, April 21, 1901, p. 2.

⁷⁰Harlan, p. 218.

after the Winston-Salem meeting some guests traveled south to Atlanta and met in a black church. Though Booker T. Washington attended the meeting, Candler refused, stating, "I don't think much of it. Booker Washington was the best man in that party. Washington is a good negro and is doing pretty good work. It is to his interest to get those Northerners interested in his schools. He gets money out of them and I don't blame him for that at all."⁷¹ Though the Proceedings stated, "The address of welcome was made by the Honorable Clark Howell, editor of the Atlanta Constitution," it quoted only three paragraphs. The newspaper, however, printed the entire speech.⁷² After greeting the Conference, Howell explained the "welcome is made doubly hearty" because the organization aided both races. He warned the audience, however, that he disapproved of programs that allotted aid only to black schools:

In the excited rush of some of those philanthropically inclined to pile up funds to be devoted exclusively to the education of the negro, the struggling masses of the whites have been too often lost sight of. Sometimes in the very shadow of the gilded domes of negro universities which bespangle the firmament of our southern educational system, pitiful white children, threadbare and footsore, have turned their eyes appealingly for help. . . .⁷³

Like Howell, most southern disapproval was ". . . due to the fact that the philanthropy which had directed its energy toward the south has

⁷¹"Northerners are Criticised," New York World, April 24, 1902, (Taken from Ogden Notebook.)

⁷²Fifth Conference, p. 2.

⁷³"Educators are Welcomed to State by Mr. Howell," Atlanta Constitution, April 25, 1902, p. 2.

been expended almost exclusively in the behalf of one race, overlooking the greater necessities of the other."⁷⁴ Howell argued that whites contributed "uncomplainingly" to black education.⁷⁵ Writing in the Atlanta Constitution, Isma Dooley also noticed the coolness toward the forthcoming Conference and confirmed Howell's arguments:

The facts that until recently the negro institutions of the south have been exclusively the beneficiaries of any money dispersed after annual tours and investigations; and that certain utterances of certain members of the conference (probably misinterpreted) have given offense, and have been vigorously debated by representatives of the section where the conference was holding, have led to a sort of mutual misunderstanding.⁷⁶

In spite of his disapproval, the Governor permitted the members to meet at the chapel of the University of Georgia.⁷⁷ Indicating that others were more hospitable, T. W. Reed described the mood of the occasion, noting, ". . . the cordiality with which the members greet each other . . . the unmistakable signs of fraternal feeling, the utter abolition of the line of sections, the unity of all."⁷⁸ Reed reported other examples of cordiality: Ogden received an ovation and Governor Charles Aycock was greeted with "a chautauqua salute from a

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Isma Dooley, "Southern Educational Conference and What It Means to this Section," The Atlanta Constitution, April 20, 1902, p. 17.

⁷⁷Dabney, p. 90.

⁷⁸T. W. Reed, "Stirring Pleas made for More Education," The Atlanta Constitution, April 26, 1902, p. 1.

cheering audience at the conclusion of his 'magnificent address.'"79

Attendance at this Conference greatly increased: one reporter estimated 800 present. Dabney stated that because the Winston-Salem meeting had been successful, state superintendents, principals, and other professional educators and interested citizens now attended in greater numbers.⁸⁰

Speeches at this Conference, which were limited to twenty minutes, included reports from field agents Charles D. McIver, Edwin A. Alderman, and Robert Frazer. Dabney recalled that Felix Adler impressed him greatly because he ". . . argued that the purpose of the Conference should be to introduce true democracy through the education of a competent citizenship."⁸¹ Albert Shaw, editor of Review of Reviews, called for more funds for education in the South because that region had nearly been ruined by the Civil War.⁸²

The Reverend Edgar Gardner Murphy stated in 1907 at a Southern Education Board meeting in Abenia that he was responsible for the organization's program. In this report he explained how he chose speakers on blacks, arguing that if the right person could not be found, the topic was not discussed. Because he was not able to find an acceptable speaker, the Fifth Conference did not include a speech on the Negro:

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid., Dabney, p. 90.

⁸¹Dabney, p. 91.

⁸²Ibid., pp. 93-94.

As I have been somewhat closely identified with the making of the programs since the Conference at Athens, Ga., I should like to explain just how we have attempted to deal with the issue. I have been strongly of the opinion that inasmuch as the negro is an actual, conspicuous factor in our situation at the South, the Conference should deal explicitly with the question of his education. I have been equally clear upon the other hand that unless the question could be handled by the right man in the right way, it were better to ignore it. While it is of course true that the Conference cannot be held responsible for the utterances of its speakers, yet, as a matter of fact, the popular mind does hold such a body to a large degree of accountability for all public expressions from its platform. This is illogical, but it is inevitable.

In preparation, therefore, for the Athens meeting, every effort was made to get the right sort of man to take hold of the subject in an earnest, constructive way. I was especially anxious to secure Bishop Galloway of Mississippi. He was unable to accept, and we did not get one full speech upon the question that I desired. There were, however, strong expressions at Athens from men like Governor Aycock, and even from men like Hoke Smith of Georgia, and H. St. George Tucker of Virginia. The two latter men since that time have manifested a somewhat different tendency, but their expressions at Athens were sympathetic, vigorous, and helpful.⁸³

Though there was not one address devoted entirely to the subject, Negro education was discussed. Hoke Smith, mayor of Atlanta, described Georgia's problems in education. When Smith stated that separate schools were a requirement for Georgia and that "this question with us is settled," though they cost the state more, he, "brought forth great applause."⁸⁴ He also described the "Christian character [which] pervades the men and women of our section" who have spent more than

⁸³Mr. Murphy's Report of his Remarks at Abenia," August 7, 1907. (Taken from Odgen's Notebook.)

⁸⁴T. W. Reed, "Let Knowledge Flood the Country," Atlanta Constitution, April 26, 1902, and Fifth Conference, p. 44.

\$100,000,000 to educate the Negro.⁸⁵ Another speaker was Edwin A. Alderman, the president of Tulane University, who was also concerned with black education:

The second great difficulty gathers around the education of the negro race. . . . The day of emotionalism and passion on this subject has passed. . . . The real, practical question is not shall the negro be educated? but how shall the negro be educated?⁸⁶

Alderman supported industrial education similar to Hampton and Tuskegee.⁸⁷

Even those who were critical likely welcomed the announcement of a gift from the General Education Board, which awarded the Georgia State Normal School at Athens with fifty scholarships of \$50 each for three years. Furthermore, additional \$50 scholarships were provided for every one that the women of Georgia could match before January 1, 1903. The Board also pledged \$4,500 toward the construction of the proposed \$15,000 Winnie Davis Memorial Hall, one half of the remaining balance needed if the other half could be raised before January 1, 1903. Finally, the previous day an anonymous donor provided \$40,000 for a library building at the University of Georgia if the state legislature of Georgia would provide for its support.⁸⁸ This one announcement of gifts during the history of the Conference was likely a deliberate attempt to influence those opposed to the movement.

⁸⁵Fifth Conference, p. 51.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 60-61.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 4.

Ogden closed the session after again commending the city for its gracious response:

This hospitality, at once so genial and so delightful has given us an insight into a certain something, indescribable, perhaps, a gentleness of family life in your homes and--may I say it--a simplicity in your lives, that has been an added and sweet charm to our visit.⁸⁹

After the final session, the president of the Lucy Cobb Institute held a reception, undoubtedly adding to the festive occasion.

The Sixth Conference, Richmond, Virginia, 1903

The Sixth Conference gathered at the Academy of Music in Richmond, with an attendance of more than 2,000, a real growth from the thirty-five at the first meeting and eight hundred the previous year. Impressed by the crowds, the Richmond Times-Dispatch exclaimed, "The Academy of Music was packed to its doors. Every seat in the spacious orchestra and dress circles was occupied and numbers stood during the hour and a half of the exercises."⁹⁰ The following day a reporter again described the large attendance but also noted the elegant dress of those present:

The evening session was attended by an audience as great as the possible capacity of the Academy. In every part of the house many stood throughout the two hours of the exercises. The orchestra and dress circles were given to the white people, while hundreds of colored people listened eagerly from the second gallery. The audience was brilliant and handsome. The best of the Richmond public was present. It was a social

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 9.

⁹⁰ "Object of Educational Conference," Times-Dispatch, Richmond, April 23, 1903, p. 1.

occasion and nearly all were in regulation evening dress. The proscenium boxes were filled with ladies elegantly costumed . . .⁹¹

The Richmond Educational Association handled local arrangements, and the railroads gave cut rates to Conference guests, probably one reason for the increased attendance. Ogden hosted one hundred and twelve on his private train. Dabney noted that, as an indication of increased interest, meetings between Conferences were held in eight Southern states by school superintendents and permanent organizations were formed to promote educational needs.⁹²

The Richmond Times-Dispatch also described Negroes and whites sitting together at this meeting:

A notable fact about the audience last night was that for the first time, so far as known, in the postbellum history of Richmond, whites and black sat side by side in the public hall with no line of demarkation [sic] save that of nature.⁹³

This Conference, therefore, seems unusual in several respects. First, the attendance was much greater than previous meetings. Second, this occasion, an education meeting, was also a social event. Finally, Negroes and whites sat together, something unheard of since the Civil War.

As customary, Ogden began with a prayer after reminding the audience:

⁹¹"Country's Perfect Unity--The Slogan of Education," Times-Dispatch, Richmond, April 24, 1903, p. 1.

⁹²Dabney, p. 96.

⁹³"Manhood the Test of the Right of Suffrage," Times-Dispatch, Richmond, April 25, 1903, p. 1.

The Conference for Education in the South is not a definitely organized body; it has no credit, it professes no particular form of religion. But it is dominated by a Christian spirit, and has always incidentally, but very positively, recognized the influence of the Christian religion as an ally and a necessary support to all true education. Therefore, it has been customary to open the deliberations of the Conference each year by asking the Divine blessing and guidance.⁹⁴

Topics of importance included the consolidation of schools, taxation, and the education of the farmer. In contrast to the previous year, Governor A. J. Montague gave the address of welcome.

Two speakers concentrated on Negro education. Josephus Daniels, editor of the Raleigh, North Carolina, News and Observer, spoke on "The Progress of Southern Education," and listed four obstacles to this progress: the Negro, poverty, lack of teachers, and the sparsity of population. He described two major problems with blacks: their enfranchisement and the forced taxation of whites to pay for black education. Dr. Walter Hill, presented the major address on this subject. The Reverend Edgar Gardner Murphy explained his choice of Hill in his report to the Southern Education Board:

The next Conference came at Richmond, and we were there able to secure the memorable address upon Negro Education by the late Chancellor W. B. Hill of the University of Georgia. Dr. Hill's statement has been widely circulated, and has had much influence both North and South. He touched the subject in the happiest way, and yet he sounded that note of Christian statesmanship which rings through all his public expressions upon educational policy.⁹⁵

In "Negro Education in the South," Hill summarized the education

⁹⁴Sixth Conference, p. 10.

⁹⁵"Mr. Murphy's Report of His Remarks at Abenia."

provided for the Negro since slavery and argued that higher education was necessary only for those desiring to hold professional jobs.⁹⁶ Dabney, who labeled the address "significant" stated, "Walter Bernard Hill was a fine scholar, a magnetic personality, and a wise patriot with broad vision of the southern problem, and his paper on the Negro was a classic discussion."⁹⁷ Ogden was also impressed with this "charter," for the New York Times reported he stated it was ". . . so sane, so scholarly, so statesmanlike and clear from beginning to end that it cannot fail to make a deep and lasting impression on the hearers from every section."⁹⁸

Social events were again important though Ogden asked the members not to forget the purpose of the meetings:

Always, under circumstances like these, when so large a number of those who have gathered here for the serious business of the Conference are surrounded with a hospitality so delightful, there is a very serious temptation to allow social privileges and the charms of such hospitality to lead the delegates away from their serious duties. I therefore desire to ask that you will not yield to social life the attention which this Conference deserves and has a right to require.⁹⁹

To add significance to this meeting, Ogden and his wife were guests of the Governor of Virginia during their Richmond visit.

⁹⁶Sixth Conference, pp. 206-17.

⁹⁷Dabney, p. 100.

⁹⁸"Educators Back from Southern Conference," New York Times, May 1, 1903, p. 6.

⁹⁹Sixth Conference, p. 10.

The Seventh Conference, Birmingham, Alabama, 1904

When the Seventh Conference met in Birmingham, Jefferson Theater was "crowded to its capacity" and decorated for the occasion.¹⁰⁰ Again, many of the town's leading citizens attended this convention. The Birmingham News was awed by the audience at the opening session:

One word will describe the audience. It was magnificent. The lower floor, the balcony, and the galleries were filled to their utmost capacity. Indeed, the topmost bench of the dizzy tribunal of the gods was filled with ladies. The like thereof has never been recorded before scribes of Birmingham.¹⁰¹

Some stood in the aisles, and others used theater props as seats. One reporter described with amusement a white settee occupied by the "president of a well-known Eastern college."¹⁰²

Both races attended, although as customary, only whites addressed the assembly. One report estimated that 1025 officially registered and more than 1100 attended.¹⁰³

Ogden and his guests made the customary tour of selected Southern schools:

Stops were made at Hampton, Winthrop Normal College in Rock Hill, South Carolina, the Alabama Polytechnic Institute at Auburn, the Normal School at Troy, Tuskegee Institute,

¹⁰⁰"Ogdenites in Birmingham," News and Courier, Charlotte, April 27, 1904, p. 1; "Birmingham is Ready to Play the Part of Host," News, Birmingham, April 25, 1904, p. 8.

¹⁰¹"Vast Assembly Deeply Stirred by Earnest Words of Earnest Men," News, Birmingham, April 27, 1904, p. 1.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³"Conference for Education in South has Closed," Age-Herald, Birmingham, April 29, 1904, p. 1.

Montgomery, the Calhoun School, the University of Alabama, and the Girl's Industrial School at Montevallo. Receptions were tendered to the party by the heads of the institutions and the citizens of the communities at each of these places, and brief meetings were held and addresses made by the visitors and their hosts.¹⁰⁴

Several of the principals and presidents who were visited joined the tour and traveled to Birmingham for the meeting.

The Birmingham Age-Herald urged its readers to attend every session. It noted that though some controversial speeches might be presented, the "discussion will be conducted by earnest men, who see the burdens of the South, and who are first of all just and sympathetic."¹⁰⁵

The members were welcomed by the Honorable T. G. Bush because the Governor was ill in New Mexico. Dabney recalled that the chief topic at this meeting was the need for local taxation in Alabama schools.¹⁰⁶

One of the important Conference speeches was presented by Bishop Charles B. Galloway of Mississippi, who was described as a "fearless churchman, eloquent orator," and a fair man by the News:

. . . if the South has been in any way derelict of her duty to the black race, Bishop Galloway had the courage to tell her so in the presence of this assemblage. If the North is retarding the solution of a problem which by decree of Providence has been entrusted to the South, he will voice the

¹⁰⁴Dabney, p. 278.

¹⁰⁵"The Educational Conference," Age-Herald, Birmingham, April 26, 1904, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶Dabney, p. 279.

indictment. And if the occasion calls for a candid statement of the intents and purpose of the South as to the negro, he will make it without reservation.¹⁰⁷

Because he lived in the South and was the black man's friend, Galloway felt he had the knowledge to speak on the Negro.¹⁰⁸

In his address, "The South and the Negro," Galloway dealt with "unrest" and "discontent" of the race in addition to listing ways in which the two races would always remain apart. He supported Negro education, however, stating, "The policy of enforced ignorance is illogical, un-American, and un-Christian."¹⁰⁹

Galloway's speech was commended by northern and southern papers. One observant reporter wrote of the audience's reaction:

When Mr. Ogden presented Bishop Galloway, applause drowned the words of introduction and both of the gentlemen had to await patiently its subsidence.

The address of Bishop Galloway was undoubtedly the event of the session. . . .

His opening remarks were freely applauded, but when he reached that portion of his address in which he said that the negroes of his state were in a condition of unrest and proceeded to give the causes therefor, the silence became profound, almost painful, while there was tense expectancy in every face in the semi-circle on the platform.

Undaunted by the silence the bishop proceeded.

Then as he described emphatically that the South had settled for all time that there should be no social equality between the races, that they must worship in separate churches and be educated in separate schools, the applause from the body of the house was almost terrific.

¹⁰⁷"Soldiers of Progress Gathering to Battle for Betterment of Man," News, Birmingham, April 26, 1904, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸Seventh Conference, p. 27.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 31.

The hands on the platform were perhaps not so energetically clapped. . . .¹¹⁰

Walter Hines Page presented the other important address which dealt with blacks. He argued that the South had an "unfulfilled ambition, training the mass of people."¹¹¹ Contrary to popular belief, he asserted that every community did not require a group of untrained men to handle its manual labor.¹¹²

Murphy, the Executive Secretary, had asked Galloway to address the Birmingham audience. He reported afterwards he was pleased with both Galloway's and Page's speeches:

At the Conference at Birmingham, Alabama, we were at last able to secure an address from Bishop Galloway upon this subject. It rang true, and it at once put the discussions of the whole Conference upon a high plane. It was reprinted in pamphlet form, and was widely circulated both by Mr. Robert C. Ogden and by the Slater Board, in every section of the South. In my own state of Alabama it was productive of definite results in a number of critical instances. This address, together with the address delivered by Dr. Walter H. Page, did a great deal to put some of the strongest men of the state permanently right on the question of the training of our negro population.¹¹³

The Rt. Reverend William Lawrence of Massachusetts stated that he had read many reports of Negro lynchings but now he knew that "the people of the South love the negro even more than do the people of

¹¹⁰"Vast Assembly Deeply Stirred by Earnest Words of Earnest Men," p. 1.

¹¹¹Seventh Conference, p. 100.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 101.

¹¹³"Mr. Murphy's Report of His Remarks at Abenia."

the North."¹¹⁴ Ogden closed the Conference, thanking the Birmingham citizens for their hospitality.

Several social events were held, but one reception seems to have been especially lavish. Roses decorated the room and the President of the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs, dressed in ecru, stood at the head of the receiving line. The attendance of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's daughter, who was a member of Ogden's party, certainly added to the occasion.¹¹⁵ The Outlook, a Northern magazine, described the warm reception afforded its members:

The reception of the Conference by the citizens of Birmingham was characteristically Southern in generosity and cordiality. Everything was done after the good Southern fashion to make the visitors feel at home. . . .¹¹⁶

The Eighth Conference, Columbia, South Carolina, 1905

Columbia, South Carolina, hosted the Eighth Conference though the reception was not very enthusiastic, probably because this state's educational revival was moving slowly.¹¹⁷ When Oscar B. Martin was appointed the State Superintendent of Education in 1903 the fight began for universal education and local taxation.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, a

¹¹⁴Seventh Conference, p. 122.

¹¹⁵"Educational Conference Starts Most Auspiciously," Age-Herald, Birmingham, April 27, 1904, p. 1.

¹¹⁶"Education in the South," The Outlook, Vol. 77, May 7, 1904, p. 7.

¹¹⁷Harlan, p. 180.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 181.

compulsory education law was delayed until 1915, "when an inadequate, local-option law was passed without providing means of enforcement."¹¹⁹ Finally, a leading paper, the Charleston News and Courier opposed the movement:

The Charleston News and Courier, possibly influenced by Courtney [the owner of a cotton mill], was an incessant opponent of the Ogden movement. It would not be mollified, possibly because Murphy, a child labor crusader, was executive secretary of the Board. The News and Courier regarded Ogdenites with deep suspicion as "an organized body of strangers."¹²⁰

The News and Courier labeled Ogden's presidential claims as "swell-bellied."¹²¹ Their opposition may have stemmed from those mill and plantation owners who feared they would lose their children and Negro labor to the public school.¹²²

Even those opposed to the Conference, however, admitted that the meeting "was a most distinguished and important gathering."¹²³ A "Special" to the paper described the colorful open house as, ". . . tastily decorated with red, white, and blue bunting and flags of the Union, interspersed with those of the Palmetto State. . . ." ¹²⁴ One report estimated that, in addition to local residents, 1000 people

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 197.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 184.

¹²¹"Mr. Ogden and His Claims," News and Courier, Charleston, April 28, 1905, p. 4.

¹²²Harlan, pp. 183-84.

¹²³"Conference of Education," News and Courier, Charleston, April 27, 1905, p. 1.

¹²⁴"Special," News and Courier, Charleston, April 27, 1905, p. 1.

attended this meeting.¹²⁵ Though no Negro addressed the organization, one reporter stated that those who attended sat in "nigger heaven."¹²⁶

Because Ogden and the other members were aware of the hostility of South Carolina, most important speeches were devoted to correcting these "misunderstandings."¹²⁷ In his annual address, Ogden argued that the Conference members had no desire for personal gain:

Personal ambitions have not ventured to intrude upon its borders. It has no fads to promote, no patronage to dispense, no friends to reward, no enemies to punish, no bounty of popular applause to bestow, no compensations to award save such as may come to its individual servants and helpers in the effort for the enrichment of other lives through social betterment by the means of higher intelligence.¹²⁸

He also defended the organization against two common attacks, first, that it "makes appropriations for the aid of education," and that it is "controlled from the North."¹²⁹

President George H. Denny of Washington and Lee University also explained the Conference's work. Like Ogden, he first described attacks:

Let me say at the outset, Mr. President, that candor compels us to recognize the fact that various interpretations of these gatherings have found expression in the

¹²⁵"The Educational Conference, News and Courier Charleston, April 26, 1905, p. 2.

¹²⁶"Conference for Southern Education," Nation, Vol. 80, May 11, 1905, p. 369.

¹²⁷Dabney, p. 280.

¹²⁸Eighth Conference, p. 7.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 14.

Southern press, on the Southern platform and by the Southern fireside.¹³⁰

Denny urged support of the organization's work, for it ". . . is worthy of the sympathy and appreciation of thoughtful, patriotic men, and I can see no ground for difference between a northern and a southern interpretation of its mission and its destiny."¹³¹

Conference members assured the Editor of the State that Negro education would not be emphasized and they kept their promise.¹³² Murphy was particularly sensitive to that state's attitude toward blacks and had difficulties finding an acceptable speaker. Failing health also hindered his efforts to plan this program or later ones:

For the Conference at Columbia, S.C., every effort was made to secure an address from Bishop Candler of Georgia. Bishop Candler was unable to come, and I was unable to get any one else who could wisely and rightly speak upon the subject in that state. The situation was peculiarly critical in South Carolina because of the attitude of the Charleston "News and Courier." It was highly important that the subject should be handled in the right way or not handled at all. Just about the time that the Conference met I broke down physically, was unable to attend the meeting and was also prevented by illness from having anything to do with either the Conference at Lexington or with the program of the Conference at Pinehurst.¹³³

Dr. S. C. Mitchell of Richmond College was the only person who devoted a part of his speech to this topic. Mitchell, who called Negroes

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 21.

¹³²Harlan, p. 181.

¹³³"Mr. Murphy's Report of His Remarks at Abenia."

"Africans," contended the world was watching the South handle its "racial adjustment":

Racial adjustment is the distinctive task which has been set for the South. We may fail in other things and escape notice; but not so in our dealings with the millions of Africans living among us.¹³⁴

Mitchell argued, "Only virtue and intelligence can work out a rational basis for racial adjustment."¹³⁵ Like others, his solution for Negro education was a school that would "supply all those elements of discipline which the plantation once furnished. . . ."¹³⁶

Social occasions were again important, including a reception at the State Capitol. The "Minutes" recorded that the "halls had been decorated with magnolia trees, evergreens, and Southern moss. . . ."¹³⁷

The Ninth Conference, Lexington, Kentucky, 1906

The Governor of Kentucky welcomed more than a thousand to the Ninth Conference in Lexington.¹³⁸ Because of the large attendance, only those who held tickets were admitted to the sessions. Even a thunderstorm one night failed to turn away many of the enthusiastic crowd.¹³⁹ Each evening the audience was entertained with music. One

¹³⁴Eighth Conference, p. 150.

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 151.

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 152.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 22.

¹³⁸Ninth Conference, p. 177.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 174.

of these programs was a "negro banjo expert" who "came on stage and played a selection, mimicing a mocking bird during his performance."¹⁴⁰

Lexington citizens proudly decorated their new auditorium for the occasion:

The new auditorium in all its glory will be ready for the Southern Education Conference which opens in this city tonight. A large force of workers were kept busy yesterday putting on the finishing touches and when the doors are thrown wide tonight for the throng which will attend, the big building will be at its best. The whole interior has been decorated with banners and flags and the stage has been tastefully covered with palms and ferns. . . .

The seating capacity of the auditorium is 2,500. . . . The seats are of a fine quality, being very comfortable and cool. The house is well lighted with electricity, there being about two thousand bulbs around the walls and ceiling. When lighted, the scene is a very dazzling one, the new walls showing up well under the brilliant rays of many electrics. . . .¹⁴¹

Negroes attended this meeting and the Proceedings described their interest as "gratifying."¹⁴²

The format of this Conference was different from previous ones because reports from each state, sometimes presented by the superintendent of education, required more than one third of the meeting time. In later years as other separate groups formed, Dabney complained that these small meetings changed the format of the Conference so drastically that they contributed to the organization's division and eventually its merging with the Southern Educational Association.

¹⁴⁰"Intense Interest Shown in Educational Conference at Second Day's Session," The Lexington Herald, May 4, 1906, p. 1.

¹⁴¹"Conference for Education of South Assembles Today," The Lexington Herald, May 2, 1906, p. 3.

¹⁴²Ninth Conference, p. 174.

Ogden again defended the Conference in his annual address as he argued:

. . . much misinformation concerning it exists. An illustration of this condition appears in a statement made to me personally by a Northern writer of frequent contributions to religious periodicals. This gentleman informed me with sincerity, solemnity and regret that Southern friends of the highest intelligence and Christian character condemned severely this educational movement because of its demoralizing influence upon the negro population. It was stated that the large contributions to negro education fostered an undue sense of negro importance and superiority that was extremely injurious.¹⁴³

In his speech in answering these charges, Ogden stated that universal education was the organization's major goal. He continued, "It is a fundamental principle of the Southern Board that it gives no money to any school or educational institution."¹⁴⁴

Edwin Alderman's address, "The Achievements of a Generation," was the only one that dealt with Negro education. The speaker argued that the South had "settled" the question that public education "shall be open to all, regardless of class, sect or race, provided that the children of the white and black races shall be taught in separate schools."¹⁴⁵ Alderman supported the education provided by Hampton and Tuskegee. Much like other years, social events included several receptions and a special event: an old-fashioned Kentucky barbecue attended by 6,000.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 157-58.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 172.

The Tenth Conference, Pinehurst, North Carolina, 1907

Though Ogden was not able to attend because of illness, his wishes were likely fulfilled at Pinehurst for he had requested a small meeting. Dabney reported that only 347 officially registered for the meeting.¹⁴⁷

At this Conference, several groups again met separately, including state delegations, the Southern Education Board, the State Superintendents' Association and the Federation of Women's Clubs. This meeting was probably the turning point of the assembly's growth because the attendance was small, Ogden was ill, and the separate meetings grew in importance yearly.

The small attendance at Pinehurst affected the attitude of those present, for people seemed to relax:

The convention had a stated programme and meetings from day to day in the hall of the hotel, but these played a comparatively secondary part. Informal conversations displaced the more artificial arrangements, and special meetings of a limited number for the discussion of some particular object came about spontaneously.¹⁴⁸

Seaman Knapp, respected for his work in Southern agriculture, presented an address described as the high point of the program.¹⁴⁹

The Negro was hardly mentioned at this Conference, possibly

¹⁴⁷Dabney, p. 287.

¹⁴⁸Raymond W. Logan, The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901 (New York: Collier Books, 1954), p. 317.

¹⁴⁹"Educators at Pinehurst," Charleston News and Courier, April 10, 1907, p. 1; Dabney, p. 285.

reflecting current national uninterest. In the opening address, S. C. Mitchell of Richmond College argued that all children needed to receive education and said the South was now providing a better education for Negroes than previously.¹⁵⁰

Murphy again described the omission of a speech on the Negro in his Abenia report, for his health had prevented his usual efforts to find a qualified speaker. He hoped later meetings could devote more time to this subject:

I hope, therefore, that at the next session of the Conference for Education we may again be able to present a strong, helpful address upon the subject. If, however, we wish real results--results that will be of real and lasting service to our colored people and to our country--we should put the subject into the hands of a man who will handle it wisely and rightly. If we cannot secure that sort of a man it would be better, in my opinion, not to deal with it at all. The subject, just at this stage of our public feeling, presents a magnificent opportunity for a calamity.

I think, however, that the right man can be found. Perhaps it may be possible to adopt the suggestion of Dr. Page, and have some one present a careful, studied, colorless and scholarly report in reference to the whole subject in its economic and educational aspects. . . .¹⁵¹

Possibly Professor Coon's address at the Twelfth Conference was the "scholarly report" suggested by Page.

The Eleventh Conference, Memphis, Tennessee, 1908

The Eleventh Conference, which met in the decorated Lyceum Theater, was less optimistic than previous meetings, because the

¹⁵⁰Tenth Conference, pp. 14-17.

¹⁵¹"Mr. Murphy's Report of His Remarks at Abenia."

organization had existed for more than ten years and Negro education remained far behind. Professor Wickliff Rose, General Agent of the Peabody Fund, described the weaknesses, asserting that the white illiteracy rate was 11% and the Negro's was 23%, a problem ". . . that we have to face."¹⁵² Chief Justice Hill of Arkansas, who outlined the problem in his state, said, "In other words, 35% of white children and 42% of the Negro children do not cross the threshold of a school house."¹⁵³

Ogden ". . . was deeply moved by the cordial welcome given him." Following the established format, separate sessions were devoted to the Superintendent's Association, the Southern Education Board, the college women, and the state delegations. Former Philippine Governor General Luke Wright presented the opening address and James Bryce the Ambassador to Great Britain was a featured speaker.

The Bishop of Mississippi, Rt. Reverend T. D. Bratton, presented the major speech on Negro education. In "The Christian South and Negro Education," Bratton recalled the relationship that once existed between the Negro and the plantation owner and argued that industrial training could replace this education. He considered the Negro child-like and morally weak though "capable of development," but urged whatever education that could "train the mind to right uses of its powers was the kind most needed."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵²Eleventh Conference, p. 177.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁵⁴Eleventh Conference, pp. 87-88.

The Twelfth Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, 1909

The Twelfth Conference convened in the new 7,000 seat auditorium armory which was nearly acoustically perfect.¹⁵⁵ The Atlanta Constitution praised the new hall for it was ". . . flooded with light which rivaled the noonday sun."¹⁵⁶ Many guests reported the auditorium had little echo and the speeches carried to the "utmost recesses of that vast building."¹⁵⁷ The room was well lit, the seats well arranged, and pillars did not obstruct one's view.¹⁵⁸

Southern Methodist Bishop Warren A. Candler opposed the Atlanta meeting and others joined him and voiced their disapproval:

In support of Candler's viewpoint, Len G. Broughton, of Atlanta's Baptist Tabernacle, called the conference "paganistic." Ben J. Davis, vacillating editor of the Atlanta Independent, a Negro weekly, joined Candler in saying "Away with your millions." Touching a really weak spot of the philanthropic boards by mentioning that nearly all grants went to white colleges, Davis declared: "We agree with Bishop Candler, your money is a curse and the South should refuse it. If you are going to use it for the purpose of kindling more racial hate, we do not need it; if you are going to spend it in a way to encourage us to lessen our personal efforts to help ourselves again, we say away with it."¹⁵⁹

Governor Hoke Smith gave a "lukewarm" welcome as he described the differences of opinion, "It would be strange if in such a gathering

¹⁵⁵"In Auditorium Educators Hold First Meeting," The Atlanta Constitution, April 15, 1909, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹Harlan, pp. 226-27.

as this there would not be found diverging views."¹⁶⁰ He contended that the real problem with blacks was the 6,000,000 presently not attending school and argued that many of them can learn from the white man's example.

In his annual address Ogden gave an historical review of the Conference. The theme of this meeting was improvement of country education and addresses by Dr. John Lee Coulter of the University of Minnesota and Dr. Elmer Ellsworth Brown, the United States Commissioner of Education, were anticipated by the members. Several speeches were devoted to the Negro. Professor Charles L. Coon of North Carolina presented a scholarly report in which he described his investigation of Negro education under the sponsorship of the Southern Education Board and the North Carolina Department of Education. After closely studying Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia statistics, he concluded that the Negro was not the "white man's burden" and that if the black children in these states were white, it would cost ". . . just about five times as much as it does now to give the same number of negroes such education as they are getting."¹⁶¹ Coon concluded his speech with an emotional plea:

Such facts give us glimpses of the economic importance of the negro and abundantly justify us in hoping that the senseless race prejudice which has for its object the intellectual enslavement of negro children will soon pass away. I do not believe that any superior race can hope for the

¹⁶⁰Twelfth Conference, p. 12.

¹⁶¹Ibid., p. 166.

blessings of heaven on its own children while it begrudges more light and efficiency for those of an inferior race.¹⁶²

Clarence Ousley, editor of the Fort Worth Record and President of the Conference for Education in Texas, gave one of the most controversial addresses in Conference history. Dabney called it "interesting" though ". . . following along the lines of the General Southern Conference, was going far ahead of it in many directions."¹⁶³ First Ousley claimed Texas contributed more than a million dollars yearly to education and divided its tax money equally between races. He then contended that Texas does not consider black education a burden, stating, "And we repudiate the false doctrine preached by misguided zealots that the descendents of our black mummies shall receive in education only what they contribute in taxes. We do not murmur that we must bear the white man's burden. . . ."¹⁶⁴ The speaker attacked another cherished Southern belief: ". . . it is a groundless fear that the education of the negro will imperil white supremacy."¹⁶⁵ Former slave owners' children, he continued, ". . . owe to the race the obligation of generous and helpful treatment now and hereafter in good faith and earnest purpose."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶²Ibid., p. 167.

¹⁶³Dabney, p. 291.

¹⁶⁴Twelfth Conference, p. 99.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 108.

When Ousley finished Ogden made the first published critical comment in Conference history when he attempted to allay hard feelings: "I beg that the audience will not draw any unfavorable inferences from the kindly allusions from the speaker who has just sat down. I say this for my own protection; particulars on request."¹⁶⁷

The Last Conferences--Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen,
Sixteen, and Seventeen

The Conferences that met between 1910 and 1914 rarely discussed the Negro. These meetings were well attended; one in Little Rock reported 1200 in 1910, and Dabney mentioned that the 1912 meeting, Ogden's last, "was one of the most powerful ever held."¹⁶⁸ The format continued to change, with more time devoted to separate meetings. After Ogden's death in 1913, A. P. Bourland, the Executive Secretary, further divided the organization by encouraging these small groups. Consequently, the 1914 Conference, which could "hardly be called a meeting of the original body," voted formally to merge with the Southern Education Association on July 1, 1914.¹⁶⁹

There were several reasons for the Conference's demise. First, Robert Ogden, the leader of the movement for nearly fifteen years, had died. Although others provided outstanding help, most were not able to devote the time, the energy, or the money that Ogden had. Curry,

¹⁶⁷Ibid., p. 111.

¹⁶⁸Dabney, p. 295.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., p. 309.

McIver, Hill, Baldwin and Murphy, and other active members had died and some had new interests. In addition, few people were endowed with Ogden's personal enthusiasm which the reports often described. Dabney, for example, recalled a statement by the new Conference President, Frank R. Chambers, who described Ogden on his tours:

On these excursions Mr. Ogden was at his best, . . . bringing together people of kindred minds . . . to appreciate the needs of a great cause, acquainting the best type of Northern men and women with the best type of Southern people and, through unity of purpose and sympathy, arousing enthusiasm for his propaganda for education in the South. . . . His powers of coordinating the views of other men and bringing harmony of action was one of his most remarkable traits.¹⁷⁰

Philip Whitwell Wilson in The Unofficial Statesman, a memorial volume to Ogden, also pictured the affable President's hospitality:

And that Ogden enjoyed the affair was obvious to all. The sense that he was host and that he could afford to be host, the indulgence of his passion for detail, the stir that he was making, the press notices, the ceremonies when arriving at or leaving a city--it was all incense that he inhaled with delight.¹⁷¹

Any person assuming the Presidency after Ogden would have a difficult time maintaining the enthusiasm engendered by this man.

There were other reasons for the organization's end in 1914. First, the Southern Education Board, the executive arm of the Conference, was considerably weakened by Ogden's death.¹⁷² Second, World

¹⁷⁰Dabney, p. 29.

¹⁷¹Philip Whitwell Wilson, p. 206.

¹⁷²Dabney, p. 313.

War I turned the attention of the nation to international problems and interest in the Progressive Movement soon waned.¹⁷³ Third, the Conference leaders were aware that by 1914 a Southern educational awakening was indeed a reality and although not sharing benefits equally with whites, the Negro was receiving more educational opportunities. Consequently, the Conference for Education in the South could look upon its work as at least a partial success when it merged with the Southern Education Association.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the growth of the Southern Education Conference from thirty-six in 1898 to 2,000 or more five years later, attests to the interest generated in Southern educational deficiencies. Though the delegates from North and South met together, they were often reminded that Southerners directed this organization. Robert Curtis Ogden, its tireless President for nearly fifteen years, defended the program in his annual addresses and worked to bring leaders from both regions together.

When formed in 1898, the Conference was dedicated to improve Negro education, but when Baldwin and Curry argued in 1899 that the white child needed first consideration, the Negro assumed less importance. Efforts to maintain southern interest and support also dictated this change in focus. Consequently, one speaker was selected by

¹⁷³Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), p. 275.

Edgar Gardner Murphy who hoped to find someone acceptable to the audience to discuss the Negro.

Social occasions gained importance when Northerners began to participate. Teas, receptions, and tours, were common events planned for visitors by the local hospitality committee. To add to the festive mood, the committees often decorated the auditoriums with greenery or chose a patriotic decor. These annual meetings gave many northerners and southerners the opportunity to mingle socially, for some the first since the Civil War. Southerners were able to display genuine hospitality with the social occasions and lavish decorations.

Finally, the leaders' careful attention to details of the occasion contributed to persuasion. The carefully selected Conference sites, Ogden's popular train tours, the participation of state governors, the programs which included local talent, and the favorable publicity, were employed to gain a favorable audience. Though some host cities were more receptive than others, the organization was generally welcomed wherever it met. President Robert Ogden's staunch defense of the Conference helped persuade many that this movement was eager to help the southerners solve many of their problems.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPEAKERS

From the first welcoming address, a few men were responsible for directing an organization that was to grow into national prominence. These speakers were also influential in shaping the black policy of the organization. This chapter, therefore, considers the thinking of Robert C. Ogden, Edwin A. Alderman, William H. Baldwin, Jr., J. L. M. Curry, Walter B. Hill, and Walter Hines Page, on the Negro. These men were selected because, in addition to speaking on Negro education, they were also important organization leaders, popular in the eyes of other members. Robert C. Ogden, the President, genial host, and influential leader for thirteen years, presented one speech at the seventh meeting that clarified the Conference position on the education of both races at a time when the organization was facing much criticism. William Baldwin and J. L. M. Curry were especially important because they changed the emphasis from black to white education with their speeches at the Second Conference. A devoted Southern educator, Edwin Alderman served as a field agent, a member of the Southern Education Board, the executive branch, and presented two speeches that dealt with the black man. Walter Hill, a respected Southerner who was chancellor of the University of Georgia, was chosen by the Executive Secretary to speak on the Negro at the annual meeting. Though he resided in the North, Walter Hines Page always remained devoted to the South. In his

Conference speech he considered the plight of the uneducated man, black or white, and urged education for each. This analysis considers the Conference participation of these leaders and their attitudes on the Negro. Finally, their speeches on black education are summarized to suggest their feeling for the Negro's problems as well as efforts to improve his education and, if possible, his standard of living.

Robert C. Ogden (1836-1913)

Ogden served as President of the Conference for thirteen years.¹ Though his role often appeared to be that of an ambassador of good will, his work with the Southern Education Board and the General Education Board was time consuming and demanding. Many hours were

¹Robert Ogden (1836-1913) Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Ogden was educated in local schools and by the age of fourteen began work as a dry goods apprentice. He remained in the clothing industry all his life, eventually assuming the management of John Wanamaker, a large retail clothing store in Philadelphia. He spent the last ten years before retirement at the age of seventy-one in New York opening and enlarging a new John Wanamaker store there. He served in the Civil War, though his most important military duty consisted of defending Pennsylvania towns threatened by Lee's invasion in 1863.

Ogden first traveled South in 1861 as an agent for a clothing house. He always remained interested in that region as indicated by his work with the Southern Education Conference for thirteen years. As Trustee of Tuskegee Institute and president of the Hampton Institute board of trustees, he served Southern black education as well. Other philanthropic work included the Johnstown Flood Relief Committee in Pennsylvania, for which he headed a fund drive that collected \$6,000,000; a director of Union Theological Seminary; and a relief organizer for the Armenians at Erzerum who suffered from the Russian famine of 1892. He was an elder of the Presbyterian Church and a leader of the liberal element of that denomination.

Ogden died at his summer home in Kennebunkport, Maine in 1913. Dumas Malone, editor, The Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XIII (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934) pp. 641-42; Who Was Who in America, Vol. I (Chicago: The A. N. Marquis Co., 1942), p. 912.

devoted to correspondence between Board members that established policy and clarified members' thinking on issues related to Southern education. In addition, Ogden usually attended the annual meetings of each Board between Conferences. Finally, as host, he carefully planned the details of the Southern tours that he sponsored. He believed that his duty as the president was essentially to establish harmonious relations between the participants. He once wrote to Curry that his "relation to the whole affair is much like that of a conductor to a street car."²

Seldom deviating from his stated custom, each year he welcomed those present, reviewed the founding and development of the organization from its beginning in 1898, and generally displayed good will to visitors from the North and South. In his speech to the Fifth Conference, he made a typical appeal for harmony:

The clarion call of patriotism summons this Assembly and rings out the key-note for its utterances, altruism pure and simple gives it vitality, human brotherhood is the tie that binds it together. If this be true, pessimism can find no foothold here and selfishness no standing ground. This Conference is a Band of Hope. . . .

Five years ago the concentric waves of this Conference began their pulsating circles of teaching influence. With each recurring Assembly the rings of power have grown in strength as they have gained in circumference, and thus the duty comes with the command that we, here gathered, give to the common cause the fresh impulse of larger power, making such success of the past as will lay upon each succeeding future Conference the burden of still greater achievement. With such a spirit, which will certainly receive inspiration from the progressive developments of the Conference, our

² Louis R. Harlan, Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States 1901-1915 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), p. 82.

coming together will have the blessed crown of usefulness and the seal of approving conscience.³

Ogden became interested in Negro education after the Civil War when he met Samuel Chapman Armstrong to discuss the future of the black man. The fruit of their meeting was Hampton Institute, a school in Virginia founded for blacks in 1868 and directed by Armstrong. Ogden was associated with this school for forty-five years and after Armstrong's death assumed responsibility for many of its financial obligations by raising funds, recruiting wealthy northern support, and sponsoring yearly trips to Hampton's graduation ceremonies.⁴ His acquaintance with northern philanthropists and the success of these excursions may have encouraged his interests in the Conference. After Armstrong's death Ogden served as President of Hampton's board of trustees and was also a member of the board of Tuskegee Institute.⁵

In a 1901 speech to the Southern Industrial Association in Philadelphia, Ogden praised Armstrong's work, saying that, ". . . high critical authority claims for him the honor of contributing more to

³Proceedings of the Fifth Conference for Education in the South (Knoxville, Tennessee: Published by the Southern Education Board, 1902), pp. 13-14. Hereafter these Conference Proceedings are called First Conference, Second Conference, etc.

⁴Charles William Dabney, Universal Education in the South Vol. II (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1936), p. 26; H. S. Enck, "The Burden Borne: Northern White Philanthropy and Southern Black Industrial Education, 1900-1915," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1970), p. 48.

⁵"Robert C. Ogden Dies at Maine Home," New York Times, August 7, 1913, p. 7, col. 3.

American popular education than any other one person since Horace Mann. . . .⁶ Ogden greatly admired Hampton's founder, though Armstrong claimed Negroes were "dependent" and "backward" and urged them to stay in the South with their "best friends."⁷ Though Ogden may have privately accepted this philosophy, as Conference leader he never stated so publicly. In fact in the Southern Workman, a publication of Hampton Institute, Ogden offered education as the Negro's "only hope":

Perhaps it may truly be said that slavery has harmed the poor white more than the Negro. They should have sympathy, pity, and patience, not resentment and bitterness, even though they are very provoking and trying. They are a dead weight upon the whole body politic. They must be educated. The joint intelligence of black and white created by painful steps and slow, is the only basis of hope.⁸

Ogden further supported the education provided by Hampton for it trained him "wisely for his day and need."⁹ Though he publicly supported black education, Ogden privately feared only one man in a hundred comprehended the seriousness of the Negro's problems. In 1896 he confided to George Foster Peabody, "I'm growing very intense upon the Negro question," and predicted the next decade would determine his

⁶Dabney, p. 27.

⁷August Meir, Negro Thought in America 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1963), p. 88.

⁸Hugh C. Bailey, Edgar Gardner Murphy: Gentle Progressive (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1968), p. 35.

⁹In Memory of Robert Curtis Ogden: True Friend, Patriotic Citizen, Unofficial Statesman, Christian Gentleman (Published Privately, 1916), Speech by Edwin A. Alderman, p. 18.

rise or fall. To William H. Baldwin he lamented, ". . . sometimes I almost despair."¹⁰

Picturing himself as the Negro's friend, Ogden once wrote Andrew Carnegie, "My sympathy with the Southern people who have never had a chance in our democracy is great."¹¹ He occasionally entertained Booker T. Washington in his home, though he was probably aware he could be criticized for this hospitality. Ogden defended his actions when he wrote to Julius D. Dreher, President of Roanoke College and an active Conference member, "It is my natural disposition to be quite particular in social matters, but I do include among my friends, for whom I have profound respect, at least a half dozen colored men."¹² The Conference President, however, was unsuccessful in getting his friend Booker T. Washington an invitation to address the organization.¹³ Because Ogden was afraid of offending the South, he "consistently refused to invite Negroes to the annual conferences," though he once admitted, "I am greatly ashamed, but nevertheless it is worse than useless at present, to quarrel with conditions we must accept because we cannot control."¹⁴

¹⁰Raymond B. Fosdick, Adventure in Giving: The Story of the General Education Board (New York: Harper and Row, Publisher, 1962), p.4.

¹¹Louis R. Harlan, Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States 1901-15. (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), p. 83.

¹²Bailey, p. 150.

¹³Charles E. Wynes, ed., The Negro in the South Since 1865: Selected Essays in American Negro History (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1965), p. 204.

¹⁴Bailey, p. 150.

Ogden spoke of the Negro at only the Seventh Conference, and then probably because he felt some explanation necessary. This Birmingham meeting was the farthest South the group had traveled. Furthermore, newspapers publicized the forthcoming address on the Negro by Bishop Galloway and Ogden probably chose to record his statement before this speech.

In approaching his subject, Ogden quoted the Resolutions adopted each year since 1898. Though he alluded to the early interest in the Negro, he ignored the resolution which the Conference had adopted supporting education for, ". . . the more needy of both races. . ."15 Then he quoted later Resolutions which affirmed their support of universal education.16 Describing slavery as one of the causes of "educational apathy" before the war, he urged manual training to fill available jobs. He concluded his discussion of the Negro by praising Hampton's work, suggesting others follow its rule: "Go thou and do likewise."17

Opinion of Ogden's work varies. Oswald Garrison Villard, a conference participant, described him as "too complacent and too conciliatory."18 President Howard Taft stated, "We do not know much of

¹⁵First Conference, p. 35.

¹⁶Seventh Conference, pp. 16-17.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁸Wynes, p. 212.

what he has done, but we do know its great value."¹⁹ The New York Times, however, described the South's "bitterness" toward the first meetings, an attitude which finally changed to acceptance at the Twelfth Conference:

For years the meeting of the Conference was about equally encouraged and opposed, but the distrust gradually melted away, and when the twelfth meeting took place in Atlanta, four years ago, the welcome was genuine and general and the citizens surprised him with a loving cup.²⁰

Edwin A. Alderman (1861-1931)

A dedicated Southern educator, Alderman began his work for an educational awakening in North Carolina when he and Charles McIver joined forces in 1882 to organize teacher institutes and to lobby in the state legislature.²¹ Though largely unsuccessful with the

¹⁹In Memory of Robert Curtis Ogden, p. 30.

²⁰"Robert C. Ogden Dies at Maine Home," p. 7.

²¹Edwin Anderson Alderman (1861-1931). Born in Wilmington, North Carolina, Alderman attended private schools in Wilmington and a military academy in Virginia before receiving a Ph.D. degree in 1882 from the University of North Carolina. Charles Aycock and Charles McIver were his classmates, both later influential in the Conference and the Southern educational awakening. While at the University of North Carolina, he won the Mangum medal for oratory and distinguished himself in English and Latin.

Alderman began teaching in the "graded" schools of Goldsboro, North Carolina, when Edward P. Moses influenced him to enter the education profession permanently. When Moses, a disciple of J. L. M. Curry moved to Raleigh, Alderman assumed his position as superintendent of schools. In 1889 he and McIver launched a campaign to attempt to awaken North Carolina to its educational deficiencies. Though this crusade was not successful until Aycock became governor a generation later, it established Alderman as a prominent leader in education.

Alderman taught for a year at the new Normal and Industrial School for Women at Greensboro before accepting a teaching position at the University of North Carolina. Three years later in 1896 he became that University's president, though he moved to Tulane University in

legislature, they set the pattern adopted by the Southern Education Board when it was founded in 1901 to stimulate an educational awakening.

Soon after Alderman attended the 1901 Conference, Ogden invited him and McIver to his summer home in Kennebunkport, Maine, to discuss their work in North Carolina and education in general.²² Alderman's association with the Conference spanned thirteen years, until the organization's dissolution in 1914. He served on the Southern Education Board from its founding in 1901 and addressed the annual meetings several times.²³ In addition, while President of Tulane University, he served until 1907 as an unpaid Louisiana field agent and labored to

1900 as president largely because the financial problems in North Carolina seemed insurmountable. In 1904 he accepted the University of Virginia presidency, where he remained until his death in 1931. The Dictionary of American Biography described some of the changes at Virginia during his tenure:

By the time of his twenty-fifth anniversary in 1929, the student body had increased fourfold since 1904, and the faculty fivefold; the value of grounds and buildings had been multiplied many times, and the endowment had grown from \$350,000 to \$10,000,000.

A noted orator, Alderman traveled through the South speaking for public education. Through the Southern Education Board, he and McIver extended to the South campaign methods like those they employed in North Carolina. He delivered the memorial address on Woodrow Wilson in 1924 at Mrs. Wilson's request and died seven years later, in 1931. Who Was Who in America, p. 12; The Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XXI, Supplement One, pp. 21-22.

²²Dumas Malone, Edwin A. Alderman (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1940), pp. 14-15.

²³Ibid., p. 133.

raise that state's low educational standards which he reported to the Conference.

Alderman formed his attitudes toward blacks in his early North Carolina years when he and McIver worked together. His notebook contained numerous references to the backward people he met there as well as their fear and hatred of the black man. Harlan said that Alderman found, ". . . ignorance in its natural setting--rural poverty, isolation, racial tension, the opposition of landlords and mill barons to schools that might 'spoil a field hand' or a low-wage worker and a 'rugged individualism' which resisted taxation."²⁴ In Watauga county, however, he found fewer provisional citizens for he wrote, "There is pretty good feeling in the county in regard to educational matters--they do not trouble themselves about the negro. . ."²⁵

Alderman sometimes discussed his attitudes toward Negroes in articles and newspaper statements. He believed he was a realist and he was a progressive Southern educator. As a young superintendent of instruction, for example, "he refused to recognize that the Negro presented any obstacle, declaring that refusal to help train the Negro meant a refusal to train the white child."²⁶ His attitude later changed, when he accepted the position of the Southern Education

²⁴Harlan, p. 46.

²⁵Clement Eaton, "Edwin A. Alderman--Liberal of the New South," North Carolina Historical Review, XXIII (April, 1946), p. 213.

²⁶Malone, p. 43.

Conference and declared that the "highest welfare of the Negro lay in the education of the white man even more than in his own education."²⁷ Alderman felt that the economic value of whites and Negroes was inseparable and that both races should receive the benefits of essential education. He joined others to declare it a "stern duty and a noble task . . . to be just and helpful to the black man."²⁸ Though he urged Negro education, unlike Ogden he hesitated to associate publicly with the black man. Walter Hines Page once chided Alderman and McIver for refusing to have lunch with Booker T. Washington and another Negro.²⁹

The Southern educator, like other Conference members, was aware that often Northern money was squandered by those who received it. In 1901, the year the Southern Education Board formed to handle this problem, he wrote in Outlook that the \$25,000,000 spent on the Negro by northern philanthropists had been wasted. "The attempt to put the Negro in possession of the traditional culture of the Anglo-Saxon race was an absurd piece of American haste," he argued.³⁰

In his speeches Alderman often discussed Negro education. In a 1902 speech he pictured the Negro as backward and argued that

²⁷Ibid., p. 142.

²⁸Ibid., p. 144.

²⁹Charles Grier, "Walter Hines Page and the Spirit of the New South," North Carolina Historical Review, XXIX (October, 1952), p. 490.

³⁰Malone, p. 144.

Reconstruction had given him "a penchant for the three P's--politics, the pulpit and the penitentiary."³¹ Supporting education, he added that ". . . it would be a crime to leave that 'seething black mass' in ignorance."³² In a speech that same year at the Fifth Conference he urged the founding of "common schools" for both races and repeated the common axiom that two races "must be forever educated apart."³³ Alderman found the two greatest problems of the South to be taxation and the Negro. First, he suggested more taxation and then he considered the second problem, the Negro and his education. After labeling the Negro a "child race," he argued, "The problem is to apply to this backward child race, slowly reaching up after the essentials of modern civilization, the agencies which will enable it to achieve real freedom and real usefulness."³⁴ Picturing a recent Hampton visit, Alderman found the training provided by Hampton and Tuskegee to be quite adequate for this "child race":

I have just come from Hampton. I saw a splendid spectacle there. I saw education conceived of as power applied to life. I saw men and women being trained to live their lives in this age. I saw common sense and good manners reigning supreme in the workshop, in the kitchen, in the class-room, everywhere. I heard men and women of the negro race tell simply how they had put to use in life what Hampton had

³¹Ibid., p. 147.

³²Ibid.

³³Fifth Conference, p. 60.

³⁴Ibid.

brought them. Hampton and Tuskegee have something to teach to the whole world in the way of training for freedom a backward, child race.³⁵

The following year at the American Economic Association he contended that Southerners did not hate the Negro and urged ". . . the white man to see that the negro gets his chance in everything save social equality and political control. . . ."36

Alderman's address to the Ninth Conference was a summary of the organization's work entitled "The Achievements of a Generation." As he reviewed the accomplishments of the organization, two reasons for the southern emphasis involved the Negro:

The South was bi-racial, involving a duplication of educational effort and a conquest of racial difficulties.

There existed in the South an untaught and backward race newly projected from slavery into citizenship and economic responsibility.³⁷

He repeated his Fifth Conference arguments in which he supported public schools, "open to all, regardless of class, sect or race, provided that the children of the white and black races shall be taught in separate schools."³⁸ He fought the popular belief that "tax money collected should be divided between the races in proportion to the amount received from each race, labeling it 'undemocratic, uneconomic, and un-American.'"39 Though not sure how much the white man should

³⁵Ibid., p. 61.

³⁶Wynes, p. 118.

³⁷Ninth Conference, pp. 146-47.

³⁸Ibid., p. 148.

³⁹Ibid., p. 149.

help Negro education, he recognized the importance of industrial training for blacks, and hoped a technical school could be founded for each race in every state. Alderman summarized asking, "The real question is How shall the negro be trained? and the next question is, What part we of the South, we who know him best, who know his faults-- and he has grievous faults, and who know his virtues--shall have in that training?"⁴⁰ He concluded his discussion of Negro education arguing that universal training should be supplied "so that the most backward man of the most backward race cannot escape its benefits."⁴¹

Writing in the Atlanta Constitution, Isma Dooley praised Alderman, saying:

No man of the moment in public speeches has brought about a more complete understanding between people holding antagonistic views--between the south and her traditions and the north and her theories than has Dr. Alderman.⁴²

A noted educator, Alderman was a Southern progressive in the early Twentieth Century. Though he believed the Negro race to be backward, he supported education for both races but in separate schools. He was more conservative, however, when he supported education for Negroes like that of Hampton and Tuskegee and when he hesitated to associate publicly with the black man.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 158.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Isma Dooley, "'Organization' Theme for Doctor Alderman," Atlanta Constitution, April 4, 1909, p. 7.

William H. Baldwin, Jr. (1863-1905)

Like Ogden, Baldwin was a successful northern businessman and philanthropist.⁴³ He awoke to the south's problems when he assumed the presidency of the Southern Railway in 1891.⁴⁴ He served as a trustee of Tuskegee Institute and devoted much time to improving the school in addition to encouraging financial donations from other northern philanthropists. Because of his efforts, Carnegie gave \$600,000 to build a library and others, most notably John D. Rockefeller and Frederick Gates, contributed to Tuskegee.⁴⁵ One hundred and thirty-one northern philanthropists honored Baldwin when a memorial fund to increase the endowment at Tuskegee was established after his death.⁴⁶

Concentrating on educational problems in the South, he served

⁴³William Henry Baldwin, Jr. (1863-1905). Baldwin was born in Boston and educated in schools there. He received an A.B. degree from Harvard in 1885. A noted businessman, Baldwin worked through various railroad positions in the Midwest until he joined the Southern Railway in 1891 as Third Vice President. He was appointed the president of the Long Island Railroad in 1896 and remained in that position until his death in 1905.

Baldwin's work in the South encouraged his interest in the Negro and he served as a trustee of Tuskegee Institute for nearly ten years. Other interests include combating many social evils of New York City, most notably prostitution and tenement houses. The Committee of Fifteen organized in 1900 worked under his direction to stimulate public interest and pass remedial social legislation to correct these problems. Who Was Who in America, p. 51; The Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. I, pp. 548-49.

⁴⁴Dabney, p. 8.

⁴⁵John Graham Brooks, An American Citizen: The Life of William H. Baldwin, Jr. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910), p. 192; Enck, p. 67.

⁴⁶Enck, p. 68.

on the General Education Board and the Southern Education Board and participated in some of the early conferences. Speaking of the General Education Board, Ogden recalled that, "He became the dominating personality on the Board."⁴⁷

Baldwin often discussed the Negro and his education. Sometimes he assumed the conservative position of Ogden and Alderman, and yet he was more progressive at other times. His conservative thinking is evident, for example, in a paper entitled "The Negro in the United States of America," in which he wrote that slavery "lifted" the Negro and described the faithful plantation slave. Baldwin concluded that industrial and agricultural education was adequate for most blacks and argued in 1899, in opposition "to the so-called higher education of Negroes."⁴⁸ He modified his view in 1903 and stated that higher education is "for the one in a hundred who can use it," though he contended it "makes him aspire and dream of great things but gives him no power to do anything practical."⁴⁹ After touring a technical school in Athens, Georgia, at the 1902 Conference, Baldwin chose his words carefully, reinforcing his statements supporting industrial education:

I believe in helping the negro to help himself, and to my mind the best way to do this is to equip him with an intelligent industrial training. The accumulation of a mess of knowledge which cannot be used is a waste of time. Except in the rarest

⁴⁷Brooks, p. 192.

⁴⁸Fosdick, p. 11.

⁴⁹"The Negro in the South," New York Times, March 19, 1903, p. 2.

of instances, I am bitterly opposed to the so-called higher education for negroes. I believe in training them in practical ways. . . .⁵⁰

As a trustee of Tuskegee, he praised its work:

The Tuskegee student is taught how to work with his hands and he has to work hard. They are taught to have simple tastes and few wants; wants that can be satisfied. He is taught the dignity of manual labor; and with this industrial teaching the students are taught from the books in all studies suitable for their needs.⁵¹

In a statement resembling that of Booker T. Washington, Baldwin supported education for both races, saying, "I do not plead for black more than I plead for white education. The South cannot rise unless the negro rises. Nor can the negro rise unless the white man is educated too. So long as the negro is down, the white man will stay down."⁵²

Baldwin sometimes assumed a more progressive attitude. Once, for example, he chastized the white man for using the Negro:

Can it be that we whites aim solely to use the negro for our comfort or profit; that through calculating legislation or tacit boycott, we would deprive him of that one supreme good that gives value to our lives? The great prizes of life are our chances to get on and up. For these hopes even war has been made sacred.⁵³

Though Baldwin found the Negro among the more criminal element

⁵⁰"Baldwin Praises Convention Work," Atlanta Constitution, April 28, 1902. (Taken from Ogden's Notebook.)

⁵¹Brooks, p. 204.

⁵²Brooks, p. 210; Second Conference, p. 76.

⁵³Brooks, pp. 222-23.

in society, he argued that they are convicted for "petty offenses in much greater proportion than whites."⁵⁴ He also supported the Negro vote and the privilege of holding political office.

Baldwin demonstrated his progressive thinking after the Second Conference when he began to question the policy of "universal education" that excluded most blacks. At the summer meeting of the Southern Education Board in 1903 he voiced this feeling, and argued that one weakness of industrial education was that the Negro was ignored. Enck, who described the impending disagreement, wrote:

He suggested the necessity of a closer connection between the philanthropic boards and black educators. "It stirred up a mighty discussion and it brought out the characters of several men," he admitted, especially when he threatened to resign from the Board and "satisfy my own particular opportunity in siding with the negro race." But it was not just a confrontation of North versus South. Ogden and Peabody sided with the "best South."⁵⁵

Baldwin argued that the Southern Education Board was a victim of "the great undertow" of racism. Walter Hines Page joined Baldwin and they agreed that this Board could remain segregated so long as it began to confer with representative black leaders, but that the General Education Board should desegregate immediately.⁵⁶ To reinforce his argument, Baldwin refused to attend the 1904 Conference because he

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 210.

⁵⁵ Enck, p. 69.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 69-70.

differed with the organization and warned that he would publicly oppose Ogden's policies toward black industrial education. Enck reported, "He was particularly incensed by the philanthropists' lack of candor and evasion tactics they employed to avoid visits to black industrial schools while on their annual tours."⁵⁷ Unfortunately, Baldwin died suddenly before the 1905 Conference. Enck predicted that, had he lived, because he was so powerful, he could have forced some change.⁵⁸ The controversy was never brought to public attention and most Northerners believed Baldwin was solidly behind the Ogden Movement.⁵⁹

At the Second Conference Baldwin made an important speech on industrial education, which was instrumental in changing the focus of the organization. First, he admitted that the Negroes who came to the United States as slaves were in "various stages of barbarism" but argued that under plantation training, "he became the artisan of the South."⁶⁰ Baldwin supported training which would teach the black student morality as well as "how to work with his hands. . . ."⁶¹ Sounding like Curry's famous statement, he said, "The South cannot rise unless the negro rises. Nor can the negro rise unless the white man

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 70.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 95.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 71.

⁶⁰ Second Conference, p. 67.

⁶¹ Ibid.

is educated, too."⁶² When he evaluated the Negro's capability, he found him best suited for heavy labor, and argued, "He will willingly fill the more menial positions, and do the heavy work, at less wages than the American white man or any foreign race which has yet come to our shores."⁶³

In the last section of his speech, labeled "Abuses of Negroes," he found that the black race faced two major problems: lynching and the crop-lien mortgage which forced the Negro into a form of slavery. Like a Southern conservative, he advised the black man to avoid social questions, learn to work hard, accept menial labor, stay in the South, and buy land.⁶⁴ Finally, he echoed Booker T. Washington and stated, "drop your bucket where you are. . . ."⁶⁵

In summary, though Baldwin worked directly with the Negro as a trustee of Tuskegee, he too often adopted a conservative position and placed the Negro in the menial jobs or at heavy labor. Baldwin differed little from other Conference leaders until 1903 when he urged black participation on the General Education Board and the Southern Education Board. His death in 1905 prevented further work for the Negro, however.

⁶²Ibid., p. 76.

⁶³Ibid., p. 72.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 74.

⁶⁵Ibid.

J. L. M. Curry (1825-1903)

An educator for nearly thirty years, Curry lived three-quarters of a century, though he did not see the Conference reach its zenith.⁶⁶

⁶⁶Jabez Lamar Monroe Curry (1825-1903). Curry was born in Lincoln County, Georgia, though his family moved to Alabama in 1838 and he moved to Virginia in 1868 as a professor at Richmond College. He attended a private academy in South Carolina, received a B.A. from the University of Georgia, and a law degree from Harvard University. At Georgia he joined a debating society and while at Harvard he heard many of the famous orators of the period, including Daniel Webster, John Quincy Adams, Seargent S. Prentiss, Wendell Phillips, and William Lloyd Garrison. He was so impressed by the American educator Horace Mann that he became an advocate of universal education.

Curry served in the Mexican War as a private but resigned for health reasons. He was a member of the Alabama legislature three times, a member of Congress from 1857 to 1861, a member of the Confederate Congress from 1861 to 1863, and again in 1864, and served in the Confederate Army from 1864 to 1865. After the War he took the position of president at Howard College, 1865-68, and became professor of English at the University of Richmond, 1868-81. President Hayes, a former Harvard classmate, offered Curry a cabinet position and President Cleveland appointed him minister to Spain. He died in 1903.

In 1881 Curry was appointed general agent for the Peabody Fund, the first fund established to improve the depressed educational conditions in the South. As administrator of the two million dollar fund, Curry traveled throughout the South, attempting to awaken that area to its deficiencies. He is credited with four achievements while agent: state normal schools for each race in twelve southern states; the founding of a system of public graded schools; the awakening of state legislators to the need for rural schools; and a body of educational literature in his forty reports and published speeches. In 1882 Curry became the agent of the Slater Fund, a fund established to aid Negro schools. The educator supported federal aid to education, though there was little enthusiasm for such a program in the South.

Curry's work with the Southern Education Conference and participation in the Southern Education Board was his last major effort in the education field. He served as the president of the second conference and was active in the organization until 1901, the last conference he attended. Though Ogden was the Southern Education Board president, Curry was considered to be its supervising director. Who Was Who in America, p. 285; The Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. IV, pp. 605-06.

His work shaped the direction of the organization during the remainder of its existence. Curry was a well-known educator; consequently, though absent from the first meeting, his election as vice-president was not unusual. He was chosen president at the Second Conference and attended the Third and Fourth, but because of poor health he declined further offices.⁶⁷ Curry was nominated to the Southern Education Board when it began in 1901 and was recognized as the Board's director. In 1902, a year before his death, the General Education Board asked him to become a member.⁶⁸

Curry's position on the Negro was an enlightened one for the period. He became one of the first southerners to advocate Negro education the year after the War ended.⁶⁹ Though he publicly spoke optimistically of the black man's future, privately he was pessimistic.⁷⁰ William Lewis, who studied Curry's speaking, noted that he was so discouraged about the problems in the South that he urged his son Manly to move to St. Paul, Minnesota.⁷¹

Though Curry addressed audiences of either race, he was known

⁶⁷Dabney, p. 12.

⁶⁸ibid., p. 56.

⁶⁹Jesse Pearl Rice, J. L. M. Curry: Southerner, Statesman, and Educator (Columbia University, New York: King's Crown Press, 1949), pp. 7 and 60.

⁷⁰ibid., pp. 156-57.

⁷¹William J. Lewis, "The Educational Speaking of Jabez L. M. Curry" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1955), p. 247.

to present sixty-four speeches to blacks between 1881 and 1902. He rarely varied the content of his speeches. If to a Negro audience, he usually urged them to improve spiritually, materially, and morally,⁷² An admirer of Booker T. Washington, he often supported industrial education, because ". . . academic education was suited only for a small number of blacks."⁷³ Like many others, Curry asserted that the white man was superior to the Negro. At the Second Conference he argued that, "The white people are to be the leaders, to take the initiative, to have the directive control in all matters. . . . History demonstrates that the Caucasian will rule. He ought to rule."⁷⁴

Curry's addresses to the Second and Fourth Conferences were important because they shaped the direction of the organization. Dabney, for example, described his speech to the second meeting as ". . . a forcible presentation of the great difficulties in the way of progress in public education in the southern states and of the ways to overcome them."⁷⁵ Dabney further noted that it "furnished the basis of discussions in the Conference for sixteen years. . . ."⁷⁶ Curry paved the way for the establishment of the Southern Education Board.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Enck, p. 31.

⁷⁴Second Conference, p. 28.

⁷⁵Dabney, p. 8.

⁷⁶Ibid.

His efforts can be summed as "a man about to shift his burden to younger shoulders."⁷⁷

In this address, the speaker directed the attention of the organization from black to white education. When he summarized the southern educational conditions, Curry first portrayed the changes wrought by the Civil War, ". . . what an upheaval, overthrow of cherished convictions, of habits of life, of social and political environments, and destruction of property."⁷⁸ He reminded the audience that before the War, "Our peculiar social system forbade the education of negroes. That obviously would have been impossible and dangerous."⁷⁹ After the War, however, schools for both races were founded in each state ". . . without legal discrimination as to benefits conferred."⁸⁰

Curry argued that Negro schools received most northern financial aid and urged a new emphasis on white education:

I shall not stultify myself by any fresh argument in favor of negro education, but I must be pardoned for emphasizing the fact that there is greater need for the education of the other race. The white people are to be the leaders, to take the initiative, to have the directive control in all matters pertaining to civilization and the highest interests of our beloved land.⁸¹

Curry admitted that some recent "unmentionable atrocities" were

⁷⁷Lewis, p. 281.

⁷⁸Second Conference, p. 25.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 26.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 28.

committed by a "few brutes" and argued that education could correct this problem. Quoting Plato, he stated that ". . . a man not sufficiently or properly trained is the most savage animal on earth."⁸² The remainder of the speech was devoted to the importance of universal education.

Dabney felt that Curry's strong statement at the Second Conference encouraged the Fourth Conference to focus on white education and begin to emphasize universal education.⁸³ Curry delivered the opening and closing addresses at this meeting, but neither was published, though his final speech was reported in the Winston-Salem Daily Sentinel and Dabney quoted parts of it. In this address he called again for universal education, but reminded the audience that white education was the pressing need:

I hope that out of this meeting will grow unity of effort and cooperation of forces, both material and moral, to uplift and educate both black and white. The State schools must do this work. We must proceed first to provide adequate opportunities for the whites. One properly educated white man will help to educate a dozen Negroes, while an illiterate white man will hold many more Negroes in bondage of ignorance and degradation. . . . The education of the white youth of the South is the shortest road to the education of the Negro.⁸⁴

As if he realized this was his last meeting, Curry closed on an emotional note:

This is my Nunc Dimittis. Like the prophet of old I can say, "now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to

⁸²Ibid., p. 29.

⁸³Dabney, p. 89.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 39

Thy work; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou has prepared before the face of all people.⁸⁵

Curry contributed to education and to the South in many ways.

Francis B. Simkins believed that "Curry did more than any other single man to further education 'from the Potomac to the Rio Grande.'"⁸⁶

William Lewis said that, "Curry helped plant the seeds of educational fervor which sprouted and blossomed in the twentieth century."⁸⁷

Walter Barnard Hill (1851-1905)

Hill became interested in educational improvements for the South when he became Chancellor at the University of Georgia in 1899.⁸⁸

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 43.

⁸⁶Francis B. Simkins, "The Everlasting South," The Journal of Southern History, XIII (August, 1947), p. 311.

⁸⁷Lewis, p. 277.

⁸⁸Walter Barnard Hill (1851-1905). Born in Talbot County, Georgia, Hill graduated from the University of Georgia with honors in 1870 and the following year completed a one year law course and the M.A. degree. He joined a debating society while in college. He entered law practice with his father in Macon, Georgia, and when twenty-one was appointed to a commission to revise the code of Georgia. When his father was elevated to the bench, he formed a partnership with Nathaniel C. Harris, a college classmate and later governor of Georgia. Hill served as a legal representative for several railroads. He was a member of the Mercer University law faculty and one of the organizers of the Georgia Bar Association and served both as its secretary and president. He was appointed by the American Bar Association to serve on a commission to study ways to relieve congestion of cases on the Supreme Court. The circuit court of appeals developed as a result of that committee.

Hill was elected chancellor of the University of Georgia in 1899. He worked to update the institution and allay the hostility of the less liberal leaders; sought appropriations from the legislature; and, helped the campus grow from 36 acres to 1,200 acres. While chancellor, he influenced George Foster Peabody to donate \$72,000 for

Although he may have attended the Fifth Conference in Athens, there is no mention of his presence. However, his speech at the Sixth Conference in Richmond was well received. His work for educational improvement in the state of Georgia included support of a constitutional amendment for local taxation. The educational awakening in that state was stimulated by nearly a hundred rallies on Thanksgiving Day in 1903 and during court week at each county seat that winter.⁸⁹

Apparently Hill's work as an attorney for railroad interests and as a teacher of law encouraged little association with blacks. The Conference Executive Secretary, Reverend Edgar Gardner Murphy was likely aware he was a respected southerner, for he asked him to address the 1903 meeting on the Negro. Dabney called this address "classic"; and Ogden added:

The address of Chancellor Hill of the University of Georgia on the "Negro in the South" was a charter or a platform of education on which the good people, the broad people, the thoughtful people of the North and South alike, regardless of political differences, can stand. This address was so sane, so scholarly, so statesmanlike and clear from beginning to end that it cannot fail to make a deep and lasting impression on the hearers from every nation.⁹⁰

the library, the farm, and residence lots. Enrollment increased greatly under his tenure. Hill died suddenly in 1905 from pneumonia.

A Methodist, Hill was influential in securing passage of the prohibition law in Georgia. Who Was Who in America, p. 565; The Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. IX, pp. 47-48.

⁸⁹Harlan, p. 220.

⁹⁰Dabney, p. 100; "Educators Back from Southern Conference," New York Times, May 1, 1903, p. 6.

In the only speech devoted entirely to the Negro at the Sixth Conference, Hill first described the Negro's progress from slavery onward and argued that while in bondage he learned "discipline in labor and practical ethics; in the virtues of order, fidelity, temperance, and obedience."⁹¹ Hill then discussed Reconstruction, a period characterized by a series of blunders, for at that time many assumed a textbook was the real need of the black.⁹² Though the Negro was still 2,000 years behind the whites, and likely to remain far behind, Hill praised Hampton and Tuskegee as examples of a new kind of education.⁹³ Proud of the South, he urged the North not to help the South financially and pointed out that for every dollar received from the North for black education, the South had contributed four dollars. He concluded with support for compulsory school attendance and urged legislation restricting tax money received from one race be used only for that race.

An advocate of agricultural education, he warned, "This does not mean that the three R's are not to be taught in the schools." He agreed with Baldwin who had argued that higher education should be available only for those Negroes who would become its "leaders of thought."⁹⁴

⁹¹Sixth Conference, p. 208.

⁹²Ibid., p. 209.

⁹³Ibid., pp. 210-11.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 215.

Walter Bernard Hill, a leading legal scholar of Georgia, a Southerner, and later chancellor of the University of Georgia, joined the Conference and the Southern Education Board not long before his death in 1905. His speech at the Sixth Conference, though not different from other Southern educators, was the most important one on the subject of blacks at this meeting.

Walter Hines Page (1855-1918)

Page served as a transition figure, for like Alderman, he saw the Conference grow, peak in its development, and merge with the Southern Education Association.⁹⁵

⁹⁵Walter Hines Page (1855-1918). Born in Cary, North Carolina, Page attended both Randolph-Macon College and Johns Hopkins University, where he was awarded a fellowship, but though he was a good student, he graduated from neither institution. These schools instilled a devotion to Greek and English literature that remained throughout his life. While at college he joined a debating society and won a speaking award at Randolph-Macon. He moved into journalism, first as a reporter then the editor of a St. Joseph, Missouri, newspaper, but soon resigned to tour the South and write a series of syndicated articles based on his observations. In 1881 the New York World gave him a roving commission, but he resigned when Joseph Pulitzer took over the newspaper in 1883 and acquired control of the Raleigh State Chronicle in North Carolina. Though he made the newspaper a spokesman for southern reform, the paper was unsuccessful financially, so he relinquished it in 1885 and returned to New York.

In 1887 he joined Forum and helped turn it into an important American publication. Though he associated with the Atlantic Monthly in 1895, four years later he moved to Doubleday, Page and Company as a partner and the following year founded The World's Work on which he served as editor until 1913. This last journal he used partly to encourage improvements in the South in agriculture, education, sanitation, and industry. He accepted the post of Ambassador to Great Britain in 1913 and served until 1918 when he was forced to resign because of ill health. He died two months after returning to the United States, in December, 1918, in Pinehurst, North Carolina.

Page was a member of the Southern Education Board, the General

Page met Aycock, McIver, and Alderman, in 1878 when he taught the summer term at the University of North Carolina. When these men with Charles Dabney and Josephus Daniels formed the Watauga Club in 1887 to promote the material interests of Raleigh and of North Carolina, Page became interested in Southern education. The first project of the club was to establish the industrial school in Raleigh, the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts.⁹⁶

The 1897 speech, "The Forgotten Man," became the rallying cry for an educational crusade. In this address Page called for improved Southern education and better health conditions for the poor white men whom he labeled "the forgotten and neglected men."

Page, a member of the Southern Education Board and the General Education Board, served the Conference from its early years until it merged with the Southern Education Association after Ogden's death. As a Vice-President of the Fourth Conference, he was a member of the Resolutions Committee which suggested the formation of the Southern Education Board. He addressed the seventh, the ninth, and the fifteenth annual meetings. When Ogden was ill and could not attend, he presided at the Sixteenth Conference.

Education Board, the International Health Commission, and Theodore Roosevelt's Country Life Commission. In addition to voluminous journal articles and correspondence, Page was the author of three books: The Rebuilding of Old Commonwealths, A Publisher's Confession, and, The Southerner. Who Was Who in America, pp. 928-29; The Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XIV, pp. 142-44.

⁹⁶Frederick Henry Weaver, "Walter Hines Page and the Progressive Mood," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1968), p. 142.

The attitude of Page towards the Negro is found in his articles and speeches. Though he supported universal education as a means of abating racial prejudice, he also believed Negro education would help the South economically. He once admitted, "I have no sentimental stuff in me about the Negro, but I have a lot of economic stuff in me about the necessity of training him."⁹⁷ Page's travels through the South had awakened him to that region's fear and hatred of the Negro. In a 1898 speech presented to the Harvard Southern Club, he said that a fame equal to that of Washington and Lincoln awaited the man who pointed to a solution to the Negro problem.⁹⁸ Like Ogden, he was not optimistic for the Negro and in 1907, as conditions worsened for the black man, he wrote, "I'm afraid he's a 'goner."⁹⁹ As a pragmatist, he hesitated to stress the rights and privileges of the black man strongly. In a speech before the Unitarian Club in 1903, for example, he accepted Negro disfranchisement:

The negro for the present must be counted out. . . . But there may come a time when their votes will be needed by the successful party. We cannot tell what will happen then.¹⁰⁰

In 1901, the conservative position of Page was evident in a statement to reporters at the Fourth Conference when he advocated white education:

⁹⁷Enck, p. 159.

⁹⁸Weaver, p. 156.

⁹⁹Wynes, p. 63.

¹⁰⁰"The Negro in the South," an address presented at the Unitarian Club by Walter Hines Page, reprinted in the New York Times, March 17, 1903, p. 2.

When a reporter asked Walter Hines Page if there was not a "nigger in the woodpile," he said: "You will find when the woodpile is turned over not a 'nigger,' but an uneducated white boy. He is the fellow we are after. We want to train the white boy first, because we cannot do anything for the Negro boy until his white friend is convinced of his responsibility to him."¹⁰¹

Page was probably more progressive than many who attended the Conferences, for he often advocated the same training for both races.¹⁰² In 1901 he expressed this conviction in a creed presented in Athens, Georgia:

I believe in the free public training of both the hands and the mind of every child born of woman.

I believe that by the right training of men we add to the wealth of the world and he creates it only in proportion to the trained uses of the community; and the more men we train, the more wealth everyone may create.

I believe in the perpetual regeneration of society, in the immortality of democracy and in growth everlasting.¹⁰³

"The Unfulfilled Ambition of the South," his speech to the Seventh Conference in Birmingham, was an important one in which he outlined the intellectual and social problems that training would solve.¹⁰⁴ The Birmingham Age Herald reported the speech "was one of the best delivered at the Conference."¹⁰⁵

Page, who repeated several contentions he emphasized in other

¹⁰¹Dabney, pp. 45-46.

¹⁰²Frederick Henry Weaver, p. 164.

¹⁰³Ibid., pp. 164-65.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 179-80.

¹⁰⁵"Luminous Address on Very Practical Lines," Age Herald, Birmingham, April 28, 1904, p. 8.

speeches, first urged that the untrained man, black or white, receive education, for this was "the unfulfilled ambition of the South." One of the advantages of "training" was financial, for a man earned more. Using case histories from black schools, for example, he described a teacher who previously earned only \$8.00 but now, after education, received \$35.00 a month and stated, "Before training a colored lad can earn in Alabama from 60 to 80 cents a day, after training at any useful kind of work, from \$2.50 to \$4.00 a day."¹⁰⁶ Page also quoted the president of the Alabama Polytechnic Institute who cited even greater differences if a white man were educated.¹⁰⁷

The speaker then considered arguments opposing education, one of which suggested that a man did not need education if he were going to shovel dirt. In addition, an employer could hire the uneducated man more cheaply. Page argued:

No!

That is the fatal doctrine that our fathers fell into and lost industrial leadership thereby. It is this doctrine that has cost the Southern States a hundred years of progress, for this is nothing but a sequel of slavery. If every man in the community were trained you could have the dirt shoveled more cheaply than now. A trained man would drive his scoop to your dirt, attach it to an electric wire and shovel the dirt more accurately, more quickly, more cheaply, than any negro in Alabama can do it. That sort of activity is happening all over the industrial world.¹⁰⁸

He repeated emphatically, "Economic civilization moves forward only as

¹⁰⁶Seventh Conference, p. 101.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 102.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 103.

the whole mass of activity becomes efficient."¹⁰⁹ Page stated his theme, asking for universal education or possibly compulsory education:

Let us go without flinching and see where this leads us. We run now squarely into the doctrine of universal training at the community's expense (compulsory, if need be), which is necessary in a democracy. There is no escape from it.¹¹⁰

He further implied that the educated people of the South supported compulsory education.

Walter Hines Page's interest in education was evident in his journalism; his work with the General Education Board, the Southern Education Board, and the Conferences; and his extensive traveling and speaking for the cause of better education and health throughout the South. Although judged radical because of his support of compulsory education for both races, Page tried not to antagonize influential Southerners. In 1902 Robert Ogden praised Page and his work in a letter to him:

I often question with great seriousness as to whether you are at all conscious of your wide-reaching power and usefulness in the Southern Education cause. . . . In my judgment you are furnishing a large proportion of the brains for the campaign.¹¹¹

Conclusions

In summary, this chapter, which surveyed the work of six leaders, has found that they were educated, enlightened men, devoted to the

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 104.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 105.

¹¹¹Frederick Henry Weaver, p. 174.

Conference and its efforts to improve educational standards. Ogden, Alderman, Baldwin, Curry, Hill, and Page, acknowledged that, though they were interested in helping the black man, Southern support required certain limitations. Some of these leaders associated with Negroes socially, but they refused to invite blacks to address the Conference or to become members of the Southern Education Board or the General Education Board. They believed Southern pressure would not permit them to extend an official invitation to blacks to attend the annual meetings. Though initially devoted to Negro education, with the prodding of Curry and Baldwin, the Conference soon changed its theme to universal education. Vocational training, such as that supplied by Hampton or Tuskegee, was seen as the most acceptable education for blacks because it tended to prepare them for menial tasks. These Conference leaders, therefore, though progressive in many ways, were sensitive to Southern criticism and hesitated to encourage innovations in black education. Consequently, they accepted the prevailing southern attitude toward blacks.

CHAPTER V

SELECTED CONFERENCE THEMES OF PREVAILING ATTITUDES: THE WEAKNESSES AND THE EDUCATION OF BLACKS

C. Vann Woodward has noted that, as the South approached the Twentieth Century, the two races drifted apart:

Upon one opinion, both whites and blacks, Northerners and Southerners appeared to be in agreement--that the transition from the slavery system to the caste system had been accomplished at the cost of grave deterioration of relations.¹

Others also sensed the change for the first decade of the new century was a time of pessimism regarding blacks. Race hatred and fear were common attitudes. Old Southerners, such as General William Oates of Alabama, described the attitude: "Why, sir, the sentiment is altogether different now, when the Negro is doing no harm, why the people want to kill him or wipe him from the face of the earth."²

T. Harry Williams, who also recognized the lack of harmony between the races, felt the cause was the desire of whites to keep the Negro in an inferior position. He noted that ". . . almost any examination of the documents will reveal that on the broad subject of race relations, Southerners had all kinds of diverse opinions. . . ."³

¹C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913, (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), p. 354.

²Ibid., pp. 352-53.

³T. Harry Williams, Romance and Realism in Southern Politics (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), p. 20.

The First Conference faced this tense atmosphere when it convened in 1897. Though at this meeting the members concentrated on the Negro, his problems and his education, at the Second Conference they began to emphasize white education. Under the direction of its members, the organization came to believe that in the interest of Conference harmony they must first express concern for the white child and his deficiencies. To appease possible Southern hostility, therefore, the members listed the Negro's weaknesses, some of which they attempted to correct, but argued that "catching up" to whites was an impossibility. Apparently the white Southerner wished to be assured that he would remain the dominant race. This chapter analyzes how the Conference members faced this topic of race relations. Essentially, the speakers focused on three topics: the differences between the races; the Negro's inferiority; and the best ways to improve his weakened status. How the speakers described those problems and the solutions they recommended is the focus of this chapter.

Differences Between the Races

The Reverend H. B. Frissell recognized the racial disparity in the opening address of the First Conference:

Those of us who have to deal with education in the South feel that we have placed before us one of the most interesting problems in the world, namely as to how two races differing in color, traditions, intelligence, can live together in peace and mutual helpfulness.⁴

⁴Proceedings of the First Capon Springs Conference for Christian Education in the South (Washington, D. C.: n.d.), p. 3. The citations from Conference Proceedings are hereafter listed as First Conference, Second Conference, etc. and the page number.

In order to further harmony between North and South and to encourage philanthropic gifts, Conference leaders briefly described racial differences but often mentioned the rapport between whites and blacks. This section will consider how the members attempted to deal with both racial dissimilarity and harmony to convince the audience of their true concern for the black man.

Generally, speakers traced these differences to the Negro's arrival from Africa. Baldwin, for example, argued that the black man arrived in a state of barbarism.⁵ Both Walter B. Hill, the University of Georgia Chancellor, and Georgia's Governor Hoke Smith remembered that the Negro had developed under slavery.⁶ Hill found the period ". . . up to the present time the most fruitful in the history of negro education."⁷ Smith suggested that some form of slavery be re-established, stating, ". . . I believe the only speedy road to civilization is by subjugation, and it may have been a part in the plan of the Almighty that the negro should have the benefit of slavery to civilize him."⁸

These orators argued that though the Negro arrived in a barbaric state, the plantation provided training to civilize him and to help him become the "artisan of the South."⁹ Frissell quoted one

⁵Second Conference, p. 67.

⁶Fifty Conference, p. 49; Sixth Conference, p. 208.

⁷Sixth Conference, p. 209.

⁸Fifth Conference, p. 49.

⁹Second Conference, p. 67.

slave-owner who stated, "Thus my father had among his slaves carpenters, coopers, sawyers, weavers, tanners, curriers, smiths, and even a distiller."¹⁰ Most Southerners agreed that the plantation trained the Negro satisfactorily, though after slavery was abolished, this kind of education was discontinued. Winston stated that since slavery ". . . the negro is still here, in some respects better, in some respects worse, than when a slave," and added, "It will take several centuries yet to make him a man."¹¹

Another way to describe racial differences was to emphasize white superiority. Curry, for example, argued, "The white people are to be the leaders, to take the initiative, to have the directive control in all matters pertaining to civilization and the highest interests of our beloved land."¹² At the same conference Baldwin noted that whites sometimes mistreated blacks simply to show their superiority: "I know of cases of almost brutal nature, where bodies of negro laborers have been seriously maltreated without cause and simply that the whites might show their mastery."¹³ Alderman labeled Negroes "a child race" and Frissell found they had "weak natures."¹⁴

Some speakers established racial dissimilarity in other ways.

¹⁰First Conference, p. 4.

¹¹Fourth Conference, pp. 103 and 106.

¹²Second Conference, p. 28.

¹³Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁴Fifth Conference, p. 60; First Conference, p. 4. See also, Seventh Conference, p. 36; Eleventh Conference, p. 87.

Mitchell implied a comparison between the Negro and the chimpanzee that any member of the audience could understand:

I talked in Berlin with the keeper of the chimpanzee, who had given nearly four years of his life to the experiment of teaching that rude being certain words and tricks. He had succeeded. Certainly in our stressful circumstances we ought to exhaust the possibilities of education before we come to any final conclusion as to the destiny of the negro in America. There should be brought together in the school all those elements of discipline which will mould the negro to purposes agreeable to the civilization into which he has been thrust.¹⁵

Frissell, however, described the Negro's economic hardship, contending that the credit system forced him into a condition similar to slavery:

The needs of this work [helping the Negro] can only be appreciated by those who have seen the negroes in the country districts of the South where 75 per cent live in one-room cabins, where father, mother, children, dogs, and strangers are huddled together, on rented land under the lien system of crops. The credit system means three things: high interest, high prices for supplies and low prices for crops. This is really a system of irresponsible slavery. As long as it prevails the merchant who sells supplies is quite as much the controlling power as was the slaveowner. To bring the black man and the white man out from this condition is the great need of the South.¹⁶

Baldwin contrasted the races by taking the popular stand that the Negro was best suited for heavy labor:

He will willingly fill the more menial positions, and do the heavy work at less wages than the American white man or any foreign race which has yet come to our shores.¹⁷

These differences were further emphasized in speeches which

¹⁵Eighth Conference, p. 152.

¹⁶First Conference, p. 6.

¹⁷Second Conference, p. 72.

condoned or advocated racial separation. Writing in The Negro in America, Arnold Rose argued many hoped to preserve racial purity:

The kernal of the popular theory "no social equality" is a firm determination on the part of the whites to block amalgamation and preserve the "purity of the white race."¹⁸

Both Northerners and Southerners believed the races must remain apart and, that the Negro should not be granted political rights until he was educated. Baldwin, a Northerner and Tuskegee trustee, said Negroes should not fight for these privileges now:

Whoever lives in the South for a year or more is inclined to reach the same conclusion as the intelligent Southerner on the social question. The educated, intelligent negro recognizes the same fact, and no more treats as a social equal the ordinary uneducated negro than the Northern white man recognized the uneducated shiftless white man. Social recognition of the negro by the white is a simple impossibility, and is entirely dismissed from the minds of the white, and by the intelligent negroes. There is no need of social recognition. It is largely demanded by sentimental theorists, who would be the last to grant such recognition if they were to live with the problem. The ordinary negro would have as much difficulty in obtaining a room and board in a hotel in Boston as he would have in the city of Atlanta. Social recognition, for this generation at least, is denied; properly so, naturally so. Any attempt to force it merely complicates the situation and injures the cause of the black man.¹⁹

Some speakers wanted the audience to know that racial harmony existed. At the Eleventh Conference, for example, Bishop Bratton suggested that relations "however theoretically estranged, are yet

¹⁸Arnold Rose, The Negro in America, The Condensed Version of Gunnar Myrdal's An American Dilemma (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 191.

¹⁹Second Conference, pp. 70-71.

practically and very largely kindly, cordial and often affectionate. . . .²⁰ Dr. Walter Hill quoted a school superintendent who professed, ". . . we are all lovers of the negro," and continued approvingly, ". . . I could not avoid thinking how profoundly true they [his words] were. . . ."²¹ Generally, however most stated unequivocally that the races would always remain separated. Even Alderman, who had described the racial differences and placed the Negro far behind whites, contended that social equality must presently be denied the black man. "Socially, he must grow utterly distinct and separate from the white," Alderman urged.²² In 1905 Bishop Galloway found that the question of social equality was one of four that had been "settled":

First--In the South there will never be any social mingling of the races. Whether it be prejudice or pride of race, there is a middle wall or partition which will not be broken down.²³

Galloway also supported segregated churches and schools, saying, "They will worship in separate churches and be educated in separate schools. This is desired alike by both races, and is for the good of each."²⁴ Governor Hoke Smith of Georgia lamented the cost of separate schools for the races but saw no other solution, for with citizens of his state this was a "sacred question," He argued emotionally:

²⁰Eleventh Conference, p. 87.

²¹Sixth Conference, p. 208.

²²Fifth Conference, p. 60.

²³Seventh Conference, p. 30.

²⁴Ibid.

Yes, separate schools for whites and blacks, and this question with us is settled. We decline even to discuss it. It is with us a sacred question. Back of it we will lay down our lives.²⁵

Dr. Walter Hill of Georgia supported separate schools and then added that the more intelligent Negroes preferred this segregated system:

The policy of separate schools will, of course be maintained; and it is gratifying that this is not only the settled purpose of the whites, but that the intelligent negroes are coming to see that any blending of the races would be between the higher types of their people and the lower types of the white race, and that co-education of the races or any other intermingling is not to be desired from the point of view of the best interests of the negro race.²⁶

When the Conference speakers described the racial differences, therefore, many found only black inferiority and white superiority. Though some warm relationships existed, segregated facilities were unquestioned. Finally, most Southerners believed social equality impossible in the early Twentieth Century.

The Inferiority of the Negro

Conference speakers from both regions accepted and repeated the popular concept that the Negro was inferior. Arnold Rose, who condensed Gunnar Myrdal's The Negro in America described the popular white opinion of the black man:

The white man is, therefore, speaking in good faith when he says that he sincerely believes the Negro to be racially inferior, not merely because he has an interest in this

²⁵Fifth Conference, p. 45.

²⁶Sixth Conference, p. 212.

belief, but simply because he has seen it. He "knows" it.²⁷ Thomas Pearce Bailey, a Southern educator who wrote "Race Orthodoxy in the South," listed the fourth point in his fifteen point "racial creed of the Southern people," as "The Negro is inferior and will remain so."²⁸ Although many intended to improve his status, Conference members found little to praise in the black man. Essentially these speakers placed the Negro far behind whites morally, spiritually, socially, politically, economically, and intellectually.

Morally. The speakers under consideration were concerned and dismayed by the Negro's moral ineptitude. J. L. M. Curry described the intolerable situation:

Recent tragic occurrences at the South are not the gravamen of the problem. They are horrifying, but are incidents. The unmentionable atrocities filling the timid with direful apprehensions are committed by a few brutes who, slaves to appetites, have had their moral perceptions, if discernible at all, blunted by undeveloped intellects, low companionship, descent from depraved mothers, fiery intoxicants, and certainly are far below the average and have not the sympathy and approval of their race.²⁹

Conference leaders repeated several common myths when they described the Negro's moral weakness. First, they firmly argued they were still a child race. For example, George Winston, President of the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, stated, "The negro is yet a child, grown up in body and physical passions, weak

²⁷Rose, p. 35.

²⁸Woodward, p. 355.

²⁹Second Conference, p. 29.

in judgment, foresight, self-control and character. It will take several centuries yet to make him a man."³⁰ Edwin A. Alderman took the same position, stating, "The negro is a child race, backward in training and inferior in type to the race which surrounds it."³¹ At the Eleventh Conference, Bishop Bratton echoed these feelings, saying, ". . . that the vast majority are still children intellectually, and little short of savage morally."³²

A second myth suggested the black race was more criminal than the white race. The Reverend H. B. Frissell found that penitentiaries and asylums were filled with Negroes.³³ George Winston, who stated a new low class of blacks had developed, "living in vice, immorality and crime," added:

Loss of skill is not the only loss that freedom has brought the negro. His criminality and pauperism have rapidly increased since emancipation. He is now the most criminal element in our population.³⁴

Finally, most felt the white man was more civilized than the Negro; and like George Winston argued that for the black race to "catch up" would take "several centuries."³⁵ William H. Baldwin, President of the Southern Railroad, described the barbaric Negro who

³⁰Fourth Conference, p. 106.

³¹Fifth Conference, p. 60.

³²Eleventh Conference, p. 87.

³³First Conference, p. 5.

³⁴Fourth Conference, pp. 104-05.

³⁵Ibid., p. 106.

arrived in the country and felt he had been given civil rights before he was ready to use them wisely:

Before stating the present educational needs of the negro, let us look for a moment at his history. Only a few generations back, we see the negro in Africa in various stages of barbarism. He is transplanted involuntarily to this country. . . . When the Negro was freed, under the Constitution he was given equal rights with white citizens; suffrage was thrust upon him. This was an injustice to him as well as to the white man. He was not ready for it, and he could not use it intelligently.³⁶

Hoke Smith said he had tried to work with this "half-savage" race for three and a half years.³⁷

Apparently the South felt the Negro's immorality was a burden. Dr. Walter Hill argued that this region had a serious problem:

If those of other sections wonder that we in the South hesitate to apply educational principles that seem truisms elsewhere, they may profitably remember that we are in immediate contact with the painful and depressing elements of the problem which do not meet their vision--vast shiftlessness, vice and crime.³⁸

Some believed that crime had increased because the plantation, now abolished, had fostered moral training and eliminated crime.

Slavery had also given the Negro a sense of values and helped him lose his barbaric qualities. When the Reverend H. B. Frissell compared the education of the Indian and the Negro, he found the black man's training superior, for it had included Christian principles:

³⁶Second Conference, pp. 67 and 71.

³⁷Fifth Conference, p. 49.

³⁸Sixth Conference, p. 210.

Slavery with all its tremendous disadvantages gave to the black regular habits of labor, a knowledge of the English language, and some idea of the Christian religion, while the reservation shut the Indian away from his white brothers, left him to his own language and his pagan religion and brought him up in idleness.³⁹

William H. Baldwin, who believed slavery had made the Negro an artisan, argued it had also civilized him.⁴⁰

The solution to moral weakness, many believed, was education.

J. L. M. Curry, for example, urged:

Education--moral, intellectual, industrial, civic--should be persistently, generously furnished; but if universal, it is slow in its results; and, while immensely beneficial, does not settle irreconcilable racial antagonisms, and it leaves two heterogeneous, unassimilable peoples as coequal citizens with growing cleavage in the same territory.⁴¹

At the Seventh Conference Mississippi Bishop Charles Galloway emphasized education and hoped that any unwise educational methods would be changed. He took an unpopular stand when he argued that the school should stay open under any circumstances:

Second.--The right education of the negro is at once a duty and a necessity. All the resources of the school should be exhausted in elevating his character, improving his condition and increasing his capacity as a citizen. The policy of an enforced ignorance is illogical, un-American and un-Christian. It is possible in a despotism, but perilous in a republic. It is indefensible on any grounds of social or political wisdom, and is not supported by any standards of ethics or justice. If one fact is more clearly demonstrated by the logic of history than another, it is that education is an indispensable condition of wealth and prosperity. This is a universal law, without

³⁹First Conference, p. 4.

⁴⁰Second Conference, p. 67.

⁴¹Second Conference, p. 29.

exemption or exception. Ignorance is a cure for nothing.

"It is strange, indeed," says Mr. Murphy, "if education--a policy of God long before it was a policy of man, a policy of the universe long before it was a policy of society--were to find its first defeat at the negro's hands."

Of course, educational methods may be unwise and inadequate, and educational auspices may be unfortunate and unwholesome. In such event the proper course is not to close the school, but to change the methods--not to stop the teaching, but to improve the teachers. "The repression of it will result, not in its extinction, but in its perversion." That results have been disappointing, there is no room to doubt. Even the most sanguine and sentimental must admit that a good deal of prophecy has not been fulfilled. Yet progress has been made, and we have much to inspire hope and encourage effort.⁴²

In summary, several speakers argued that the black race was child-like and morally weak. These conditions, which had deteriorated since the plantation had trained the Negro, could only be improved with education.

Spiritually. Closely aligned with the moral laxity or "weak natures" of the Negro was his religious weakness.⁴³ Some recalled that the plantation had provided not only moral training but religious instruction as well. Walter B. Hill, for example, stated:

The education of slavery was not in books, nor were books needed at the beginning. It was an education and discipline in labor and in practical ethics; in the virtues of order, fidelity, temperance and obedience. Religious instruction was not neglected.⁴⁴

⁴²Seventh Conference, pp. 31-32.

⁴³First Conference, p. 4.

⁴⁴Sixth Conference, p. 208.

At the First Conference, H. B. Frissell also described the religious training given the slave.⁴⁵

Clearly, most argued that the situation had deteriorated since Reconstruction, for from this time the Negro no longer received a Christian education. Winston sadly lamented, "The public school has done less for character training with this generation than the old plantation Cuffee and Sambo."⁴⁶ Frissell, however, believed Hampton and similar institutions filled part of this void:

When the Hampton School was started he (General Armstrong) insisted that there should not only be the school-room but the workshop; not only the church but the farm; not only the training of the head but of the heart and the hand.⁴⁷

One of the solutions the Conference leaders recommended to alleviate his spiritual weakness was to improve the Negro's mind and character for "unless their minds and characters are lifted upwards, the danger is that they may rapidly go backwards."⁴⁸ Frissell recommended more schools like Hampton, though he knew the school needed more funds, longer school terms, and better trade education.⁴⁹ Stating he would "speak tonight with perfect candor," Bishop Charles Galloway also considered the Negro's religious training in his speech

⁴⁵First Conference, p. 4.

⁴⁶Fourth Conference, p. 105.

⁴⁷First Conference, p. 6.

⁴⁸Fifth Conference, p. 49.

⁴⁹First Conference, pp. 6-7.

to the Seventh Conference. Though he could not speak for God concerning the black's future, he urged Christian treatment of the Negro:

I should not presume to speak dogmatically as to the mind of God with reference to the future status of the negro. Into that infinite and holy realm I have neither capacity nor temerity to enter. On what specific lines the race will move through the coming centuries, I dare not attempt to prophesy. But I do know that all our dealings with these people should be in the spirit, and according to the ethics, of the Man of Galilee. What is best for them now should be the measure of present duty, leaving the future to His hands who knows the end from the beginning. And we must insist that the negro have equal opportunity with every American citizen to fulfill in himself the highest purposes of an all-wise and beneficent Providence.⁵⁰

Though Bishop Galloway may have angered some of the audience by suggesting equal opportunity for the Negro, he pleased others when he stated that segregated schools and churches were "settled" with Southerners:

They will worship in separate churches and be educated in separate schools. This is desired alike by both races, and is for the good of each.⁵¹

In summary, though some knew that the Negro lacked moral and religious strength, they found education the solution for both.

Socially. The Southerner saw little hope for the Negro socially, and often argued that a lower class of blacks had developed since the War. At the Fourth Conference, for example, Winston contended:

⁵⁰Seventh Conference, p. 28.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 30.

Besides the highest class of negroes and the great mass, there has sprung up since freedom a lowest class, unknown in slavery, living in vice, immorality and crime. This class does no work at all. It is a menace, a hindrance and a great expense to every southern community, and is increasing in numbers with alarming rapidity, being recruited from the younger generation of negroes, a large proportion of whom are untrained, unrestrained, vicious and semi-savage.⁵²

Bishop Bratton recalled that the races were "closely allied in business and social affairs before Reconstruction."⁵³

Though the Conference might help the Negro improve morally and spiritually, there was no attempt to raise him socially. Northern Conference members did not question this tenet. William H. Baldwin, for example, was just one of several who flatly stated that social recognition was out of the question:

Whoever lives in the South for a year or more is inclined to reach the same conclusion as the intelligent Southerner on the social question. The educated, intelligent negro recognizes the same fact, and no more treats as a social equal the ordinary uneducated negro than the educated Northern white man recognizes the uneducated, shiftless white man. Social recognition of the negro by the white is a simple impossibility, and is entirely dismissed from the minds of the white, and by intelligent negroes. There is no need of social recognition. It is largely demanded by sentimental theorists, who would be the last to grant such recognition if they were to live with the problem. The ordinary negro would have as much difficulty in obtaining a room and board in a hotel in Boston as he would have in the city of Atlanta. Social recognition, for this generation at least, is denied; properly so, naturally so. Any attempt to force it merely complicates the situation and injures the cause of the black man.⁵⁴

⁵²Fourth Conference, p. 104.

⁵³Eleventh Conference, pp. 84-85.

⁵⁴Second Conference, p. 70.

At the Seventh Conference Bishop Charles Galloway of Mississippi echoed these views, saying:

. . . there will never be any social mingling of the races. Whether it be prejudice or pride of race, there is a middle wall or partition which will not be broken down.⁵⁵

Occasionally speakers linked political and social equality and concluded blacks were qualified to receive neither. The progressive Southerner Edwin A. Alderman contended:

To emphasize his political rights is to put the emphasis in the wrong place, for, as a race, he is now unfit for political power. Socially, he must grow utterly distinct and separate from the white. He must make his own society. This is not race prejudice. It is simply race consciousness, and his growth can proceed on no other hypothesis.⁵⁶

Bishop Bratton believed the War was the factor that decided equality in any form was impossible, for ". . .the races emerged with the conviction that they could not dwell together upon the footing of equality, whether social or other equality which had been the fond dream of the negro race; that there must be clear and distinct separation."⁵⁷

The speakers of the organization probably realized they would anger the South if they supported social equality. This was a period of racial barriers and race hatred; consequently, black education was a major step. A rare occurrence, the social mingling of the races at

⁵⁵Seventh Conference, p. 30.

⁵⁶Fifth Conference, pp. 60-61.

⁵⁷Eleventh Conference, p. 85.

the Richmond Conference of 1903, was reported by the Times-Democrat:

A notable fact about the audience last night was that for the first time so far as known, in the postbellum history of Richmond, whites and blacks sat side by side in the public hall with no line of demarkation save that of nature.⁵⁸ [sic]

The races previously sat in separate sections.⁵⁹ Dr. Lyman Abbott, the editor of The Outlook, who also recalled the meeting, said it was the first time since the Civil War that Negroes had been invited to attend such a meeting in the South.⁶⁰

The Conference, therefore, recognized the Negro's social deficiencies but made no attempt to end this social inequality. In fact, no one seemed to feel a problem existed. Though most speakers believed the Negro inferior, they argued he needed help spiritually and morally long before social equality might be attained.

Politically. Although Conference speakers believed the Negro politically inferior, to avoid controversy few mentioned this subject and those who did unanimously agreed that the Negro was unfit for political power.

Some recalled the Reconstruction era as a time of upheaval. J. L. M. Curry noted the changes for both races:

⁵⁸"Manhood--the Test of the Right of Suffrage," Times-Democrat, Richmond, April 25, 1903, p. 1.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Lyman Abbott, Reminiscences (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1915), pp. 423-24.

. . . the addition to the voting population of a large mass of people who, recently in bondage, were suddenly transformed by act of the United States into a body of citizens having the highest privileges and prerogatives. Few people can realize--no one outside the limits of the Confederate States--how utterly transformed everything was; what an upheaval, overthrow of cherished convictions, of habits of life, of social and political environments, and destruction of property.⁶¹

Some were convinced that Northerners wanted the Negro to command in the South. The Principal of Hampton Institute, H. B. Frissell, found that:

The white people of the South became convinced that the north was determined to place them under the political control of their former slaves, and they looked with suspicion on every white teacher from the North, thoroughly believing that he or she had come to help forge the shackles that were to bind the whites under the control of the ignorant black masses. . . . Ignorant negroes were given tyrannical power.⁶²

Many argued that during this period the Negro received rights and privileges far beyond his ability. William H. Baldwin, for example, mentioned that suffrage was "thrust" on the Negro before he was ready for it:

When the negro was freed, under the Constitution he was given equal rights with white citizens; suffrage was thrust upon him. This was an injustice to him as well as to the white man. He was not ready for it, and he could not use it intelligently.⁶³

Most members believed that, like social equality, the Negro should not be permitted political rights. For example, Alderman contended:

⁶¹Second Conference, p. 25.

⁶²First Conference, p. 4.

⁶³Second Conference, p. 71.

To emphasize his political rights is to put the emphasis in the wrong place, for as a race, he is now unfit for political power. Socially he must grow utterly distinct and separate from the white. He must make his own society. This is not race prejudice. It is simply race consciousness and his growth can proceed on no other hypothesis.⁶⁴

Charles B. Galloway supported Alderman when he stated, "The political power of this section will remain in present hands."⁶⁵ He reasoned that ". . . intelligence and wealth will and should control the administration of governmental affairs."⁶⁶ William H. Baldwin concurred, urging the black race not to seek rights he was not ready to use correctly:

Do not attempt to force alleged rights; they will come just as rapidly as you are worthy to receive them. On these lines only can results be attained.⁶⁷

Generally, therefore, though most were aware the Negro did not have the political privileges of whites, most were equally convinced he was not ready to use them wisely. William H. Baldwin felt that the Negro should be content with the present situation, for, though he did not have political rights, he did possess civil rights.⁶⁸ Furthermore, he argued that blacks be permitted to vote when they were able to do so intelligently in their community:

⁶⁴Fifth Conference, pp. 60-61.

⁶⁵Seventh Conference, p. 30.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Second Conference, p. 74.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 71.

After thirty-five years we find the negro practically disfranchised in many of the Southern States, and he should be if he is not properly qualified to cast a vote; but his qualifications should be determined in exactly the same manner as the qualifications of the white man; and to this the negro has no objection. The legal right of the negro to vote has been the only serious cause of hostility on the part of the Southern white man. The negro is the friend of the white man in all matters except politics, but in politics he has seldom joined forces with his white neighbors for the common interest of the community in which he lives. If the time comes when the negro is sufficiently educated, sufficiently intelligent, to deal with political questions purely as questions relating to the community in which he lives, and without regard to sentimental party lines, he will receive more reasonable consideration from the whites in the South. Now is the time when he should recognize this opportunity.⁶⁹

Economically. The South of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries was an area of real poverty. C. Vann Woodward listed the per capita wealth of the United States in 1900 at \$1,165 while that of the South as \$509 or less than half.⁷⁰ Most black income was probably well below this average. Conference members were well aware of the Negro's poor economic condition and often discussed the hardships he faced.

As with the Negro's other weaknesses, speakers traced the beginning of his economic problems to the War. Frissell recalled that "Slavery with all its tremendous disadvantages gave to the black regular habits of labor. . . ."⁷¹ William H. Baldwin believed the

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Woodward, pp. 317-18.

⁷¹First Conference, p. 4.

plantation had made the Negro an artisan:

During this period of bondage the negro was forced to do the manual labor and live the part of civilized man. He was taught all the trades, the conditions of plantation life in the South demanded the education of the negro in various arts and trades, and he became the artisan of the South.⁷²

George Winston, who argued that "There was considerable skill during slavery," estimated that three-fourths of the skilled labor during slavery was performed by Negroes before 1870, but suspected less than 10% afterward.⁷³ The Civil War, which catapulted many whites into impoverishment, also hurt the Negro. Curry described the situation:

The starting-point is the war between the States, which resulted in the most gigantic revolution of modern times--the system of the South; the reversal of tradition, habits, and institutions; the impoverishment of the South. . . . It is impossible for those living north of Mason and Dixon's line to realize how universal and crushing was the bankruptcy of the South after Appomatox.⁷⁴

The black man had changed since the War. George Winston complained, "This class does no work at all."⁷⁵ Hill also found the Negro in "vast shiftlessness, vice and crime," and Hoke Smith of Georgia argued that ". . . they are prone to idleness and to carelessness, even when at work."⁷⁶ Baldwin observed, "Freedom to him meant freedom from work. . . . He no longer worked beyond the needs of a bare

⁷²Second Conference, p. 67.

⁷³Fourth Conference, p. 104.

⁷⁴Second Conference, p. 25.

⁷⁵Fourth Conference, p. 64.

⁷⁶Sixth Conference, p. 211; Twelfth Conference, p. 13.

living."⁷⁷ Curry contended that the lazy Negro often turned to crime:

It needs no argument that the more debased, the less self-reliant, the more unskilled, the more thriftless or unemployed the race or any portion of it is, the more dangerous it will be, the less desirable as inhabitant, as laborer, as citizen, as voter.⁷⁸

Winston observed, "His criminality and pauperism have rapidly increased since emancipation."⁷⁹ He believed that since the blacks had lost white guidance, they had searched for political and social equality rather than economic independence:

The real race struggle is for existence and the negro is ill-prepared to win it. Dragged from barbarism to civilization, educated through slavery into freedom, cut off suddenly by political enfranchisement and manipulation from friendly tutelage and control of southern whites, he has wandered about like a child following the false lights of social and political equality away from the paths of industrial progress and economic independence.⁸⁰

Conference speakers were certain that blacks could never hope to receive rights that whites possessed until they improved financially.

For example, Galloway argued:

The political power of this section will remain in present hands. Here, as elsewhere, intelligence and wealth will and should control the administration of governmental affairs.⁸¹

Most speakers, however, envisioned a brighter future for the

⁷⁷Second Conference, p. 68.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 29.

⁷⁹Fourth Conference, p. 105.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 107.

⁸¹Seventh Conference, p. 30.

Negro. Baldwin was one who argued, "The potential economic value of the negro population properly educated is infinite and incalculable."⁸² Help for the Negro, most agreed, would have to be supplied by the white race. Smith asserted, "The negroes are free, independent men and women and unless their minds and characters are lifted upwards, the danger is that they may rapidly go backwards."⁸³ At the Eleventh Conference, Bishop Bratton echoed Smith's position, stating, "The fact that he lives in the midst of enlightenment dooms him the more surely to deterioration unless his faculties be trained."⁸⁴ Later he optimistically claimed that he was not able to measure the Negro's remarkable capacity for improvement: "That the negro is capable of development to a point whose limit I have not yet discovered."⁸⁵

Walter Hines Page maintained that "right training" would advance civilization and improve race relations:

Economic civilization moves forward only as the whole mass of activity becomes more efficient. . . . And the right training of all the people would come pretty near to ending all our troubles--to removing our difficulties, economic, political and ethnological.⁸⁶

Bishop Galloway echoed Page, for he argued that education and prosperity were synonymous, "If one fact is more clearly demonstrated by the logic

⁸²Second Conference, p. 72.

⁸³Fifth Conference, p. 60.

⁸⁴Eleventh Conference, p. 89.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 87.

⁸⁶Seventh Conference, pp. 104-05.

of history than another, it is that education is an indispensable condition of wealth and prosperity."⁸⁷ Alderman, too argued, "The free man is the man, white or black, who knows how to earn bread and clothes. . . ."⁸⁸

Most sincerely desired to make the Negro an asset. Alderman found that, "When a negro learns to do well things that must be done, he will have no trouble about his economic status."⁸⁹ Baldwin believed, "The potential economic value of the negro population properly educated is infinite and incalculable."⁹⁰ Seemingly the Conference was not adverse to improving the black man's economic status.

Intellectually. When the Conference discussed the Negro, consciously or unconsciously, its members often alluded to his intellectual capabilities. Edwin Alderman, for example, labeled the race "backward" and others called them "ignorant."⁹¹ "The Negro is yet a child, grown up in body and physical passions, weak in judgment, foresight, self-control and character," contended Winston at the Fourth Conference.⁹² Intelligence was one of several differences mentioned by Frissell:

⁸⁷Seventh Conference, p. 31.

⁸⁸Fifth Conference, p. 60.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 61.

⁹⁰Second Conference, p. 72.

⁹¹Ninth Conference, p. 147; Seventh Conference, p. 34.

⁹²Fourth Conference, p. 106.

Those of us who have to deal with education in the South feel that we have placed before us one of the most interesting as well as one of the most important problems in the world, namely as to how two races differing in color, traditions, and intelligence, can live together in peace and mutual helpfulness.⁹³

Some traced the Negro's intellectual weakness to the Reconstruction era. They recalled that under slavery the black man became skilled labor.⁹⁴ The change in his education, however, occurred after Emancipation, for then he received book education from Northerners who ignored vocational training. Baldwin, a Tuskegee trustee, disapproved of a literary education:

The days of reconstruction were dark for all. Their sting has not yet gone. Then appeared from the North a new army--an army of white teachers, armed with the spelling book and the Bible, and from their attack there were many casualties on both sides, the Southern whites as well as the blacks; for although the spelling book and the Bible were necessary for the proper education of the negro race, yet with a false point of view the Northern white teacher educated the negro to hope that through the books he might, like the white man, learn how to live from the fruits of a literary education. How false that theory was, thirty long years of experience have proved [sic]. That was not their opportunity; their opportunity was to be taught the dignity of manual labor and how to perform it. We began at the wrong end. Instead of educating the negro in the lines which were open to him, he was educated out of his natural environment and the opportunities which lay immediately about him.⁹⁵

Hill also criticized the change to a book education, stating "The results appeared to be disappointing to those who looked on the

⁹³First Conference, p. 3.

⁹⁴First Conference, p. 4; Second Conference, p. 67; Fourth Conference, p. 104.

⁹⁵Second Conference, p. 68.

experiment with friendly eyes; and appeared in critical eyes in many instances grotesque."⁹⁶

Several speakers groped to explain the blacks' lack of intellectual capability. Governor Hoke Smith of Georgia found one-half of the population "groveling in darkness."⁹⁷ Seven years later at the Twelfth Conference he elaborated, "The real negro educational problem is found in the six millions of negroes who do not enter these institutions and who are utterly unsuited for the opportunities which they offer."⁹⁸ And Curry, who also found the schools deficient, first listed a few well-known schools for blacks but maintained, "These schools, however valuable the work done by them, reach not more than 30,000 pupils; and, if all these turned out well, what are they among so many?"⁹⁹

The organization, therefore, recognized the Negro's weaknesses morally, spiritually, socially, politically, economically, and intellectually. Though the Conference did not choose to help the Negro socially or politically, its members hoped to correct his other deficiencies. All believed education was the solution, though considerable discussion was devoted to the goals, the methods, and the best way to finance the schools for blacks. Alderman summarized the

⁹⁶Sixth Conference, p. 209.

⁹⁷Fifth Conference, pp. 48-49.

⁹⁸Twelfth Conference, p. 13.

⁹⁹Second Conference, p. 72.

problem at the Fifth Conference, asking, "The real practical question is not shall the negro be educated? but how shall the negro be educated?"¹⁰⁰

The Best Solution--Negro Education

Several speakers outlined the goals of Negro education. The well respected educator J. L. M. Curry, for example, described some who, at the close of the war, argued that education was "the salvation of the South."¹⁰¹ Another important aim was to assume the role once fulfilled by the plantation: to serve as a civilizing influence. Baldwin was only one of those who asked the school to continue this process:

The civilizing influence of education is the only possible solution of these problems of ignorance--an education to teach the dignity of manual labor; to teach only those things which will lead to duties that are attainable.¹⁰²

Governor Smith hoped education would better train the Negro for he optimistically stated:

The first step in the education of this great body of the negro race is to inspire a desire to do better the labor they are called upon to perform and to rid them of a willingness to live poorly. . . .¹⁰³

Baldwin argued that if "properly directed . . . he will willingly fill

¹⁰⁰Fifth Conference, p. 61.

¹⁰¹Second Conference, p. 26.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁰³Twelfth Conference, p. 13.

the more menial positions and do the heavy work. . . ."104 Frissell hoped that education would make the Negro a good citizen:

Make the schools what they should be: teach the boy and girl, the man and woman, that American citizenship means hard work, temperance, morality, the habit of right living, and there will be no room for disappointment; the negro will justify the faith of his friends.¹⁰⁵

He added that the educated person was more likely to become a community leader.¹⁰⁶ Bishop Galloway believed training lessened the black man's criminality:

From the declaration that education has made the negro more immoral and criminal, I am constrained to dissent. There are no data or figures on which to base such an indictment or justify such an assertion. On the contrary, indisputable facts attest the statement that education and its attendant influences have elevated the standard and tone of morals among the negroes of the South. . . .¹⁰⁷

Walter Hines Page supported Galloway, for he argued that ". . . one untrained worthless white man or one untrained worthless negro may cause trouble throughout a whole county."¹⁰⁸

Conference speakers outlined other specific goals they deemed important in Negro education. Baldwin, for example, appealed to racial harmony stating that the schooled Negro could better handle political questions and receive the respect of whites:

¹⁰⁴Second Conference, p. 72.

¹⁰⁵First Conference, p. 7.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., pp. 5-6.

¹⁰⁷Seventh Conference, p. 35.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 105.

If the time comes when the negro is sufficiently educated, sufficiently intelligent, to deal with political questions purely as questions relating to the community in which he lives, and without regard to sentimental party lines, he will receive more reasonable consideration from the whites in the South.¹⁰⁹

Baldwin maintained that colleges could train Negroes in agriculture:

To raise up enthusiastic apostles of agriculture and country life among negro young men and women should be one of the great missions of the higher institutions; and upon the training of girls in all the arts of homemaking, too great stress cannot be laid.¹¹⁰

Some outlined more general aims such as George Winston, who asserted that industrial skill and efficiency might bring the races together.¹¹¹ Bishop Bratton noted that through education the Negro might learn "to help himself," and to "train the mind to right uses of its powers."¹¹²

The Conference speakers, therefore, hoped that with education blacks would become more civilized, more moral, less criminal, and better able to take care of themselves.

Almost all of the speakers under consideration offered some opinion concerning the kind of education the black child should receive. Some were interested in elementary, secondary, and college instruction, but most were concerned with vocational education.

¹⁰⁹Second Conference, p. 71.

¹¹⁰Second Conference, p. 74 (Baldwin Speech); First Conference, p. 6.

¹¹¹Fourth Conference, p. 103.

¹¹²Eleventh Conference, p. 88.

Alderman was one of several who advocated elementary education.

The President of Tulane University argued:

. . . common schools for both races must be everywhere established and maintained in order that the productive power of the community may be heightened, that the standard of conduct, happiness and intelligence may be raised and opportunity given to discover the precious "lad of parts," whose spark of genius may be kindled into leadership for the great affairs of the world.¹¹³

Though Walter Hill was primarily concerned with the Negro's agricultural education, he admitted:

This does not mean that the three R's are not to be taught in the schools. The negro citizen needs primary education for the purposes described by Thomas Jefferson in his statement on this subject which may be regarded as classic and final.¹¹⁴

Secondary education received only cursory examination, however, though Alderman supported public high school for every white child.¹¹⁵ Baldwin contended that any secondary education needed to be supervised by Hampton and Tuskegee:

It is our duty to strengthen Hampton and Tuskegee, and any similar institutions; to concentrate money and effort in their work, to establish other Tuskegees; to build up a secondary school system under the general control and supervision of Hampton and Tuskegee, that their influence may be far-reaching. . . .¹¹⁶

Those who discussed higher education for Negroes reminded the audience that it was rare even for the white child to attend college.

¹¹³Fifth Conference, p. 58.

¹¹⁴Sixth Conference, p. 213.

¹¹⁵Ibid., pp. 151-52.

¹¹⁶Second Conference, p. 74.

Alderman noted, "The going of a Southern boy or girl to college is not an ordinary incident of adolescence."¹¹⁷ Bishop Galloway argued, "The true theory of negro education in the South has been admirably stated in these words: 'The rudiments of an education for all, industrial training for the many, and a college course for the talented few.'¹¹⁸ Generally, higher education was recommended for those Negroes who planned to enter the medical and legal profession.¹¹⁹ Curry, however, noted that the present colleges for Negroes were inadequate because they could handle few students:

Along with what the states have done, Northern religious societies and some benevolent men and women have given liberally for the education of the negroes, and such institutions as Hampton, Tuskegee, Spellman, Tougaloo, Claflin, Shaw, St. Augustine, and others have done most valuable service in preparing the negroes for their changed conditions. These schools, however valuable the work done by them, reach not more than 30,000 pupils; and, if all these turned out well, what are they among so many?¹²⁰

There were several reasons vocational training was believed to be the solution to the Negro's educational deficiencies. First, the speakers were aware blacks adapted well to agricultural training during slavery and were equally convinced that Reconstruction, with a textbook education, was unsuccessful because it encouraged little practical knowledge. They assumed, therefore, that vocational training must be

¹¹⁷Fifth Conference, p. 58.

¹¹⁸Seventh Conference, p. 36.

¹¹⁹Sixth Conference, p. 215; First Conference, p. 5.

¹²⁰Second Conference, p. 26.

resumed to give the Negro the ability to care for himself. Second, some argued that vocational training equipped blacks to do more menial tasks or heavy work. Finally, they were likely aware that the Negro who received only agricultural or industrial training would not threaten the Southern white's superior position.

Several Conference speakers recalled the efficiency of the black man on the plantation and yearned to return to this time. Walter Hill, for example, argued:

The beginning of the education of the negro was the tutelage of slavery. The South does not deny the abuses of slavery and she rejoices in the great conclusion that property in man is forever overthrown; but she contemplates with some complacency the fact that the tuition of slavery developed the negro in a century and a half from the condition of the savage to a status where, in the judgment of those hostile to slavery, the negro was fitted for the privileges of American citizenship. No free civilized race ever made equal progress in emergence from barbarism in so short a time. . . . Slavery was the first chapter, the longest, and up to the present time the most fruitful chapter, in the history of negro education.¹²¹

Hoke Smith spoke bluntly for he argued that though Massachusetts educated minds, the South raised slaves and devoted itself to agriculture.¹²²

William H. Baldwin also praised the training provided by the plantation as well as its ability to civilize the black man:

During this period of bondage the negro was forced to do the manual labor and live the part of civilized man. He was

¹²¹Sixth Conference, pp. 208-09.

¹²²Fifth Conference, p. 44.

taught all the trades; the conditions of plantation life in the South demanded the education of the negro in various arts and trades; and he became the artisan of the South. Each plantation had its own wheelwright and blacksmith, and carpenter and shoemaker. Each plantation was a small industrial school; but first, and most important of all, the negro was taught to work and was made to work.¹²³

Baldwin argued that industrial education brought morality to the Negro:

When the press of the South and of the North, when the better whites of the South, and the intelligent negroes of the North and South, and the whites in the North agree almost unanimously that industrial education is the solution, need we seek further? For industrial education carries with it as a corollary literary and moral teaching and practice. Labor induces morality.¹²⁴

Governor Hoke Smith of Georgia warned in 1909 that the Negro was "prone to idleness and to carelessness, even when at work."¹²⁵ To rid the South of this tremendous problem, he advised training him for the "simplest manual labor":

The first step in the education of this great body of the negro race is to inspire a desire to do better the labor they are called upon to perform, and to rid them of a willingness to live poorly if perchance a meager support can be made with half time labor. The negro engaged in the simplest manual labor will find his first inspiration from being taught the pleasure of doing that labor with artistic skill. The negro who uses the hoe or uses the plow will be lifted to a higher standard when he can be given the inspiration which will come from efficient labor and increased industry.¹²⁶

Walter Hines Page, who portrayed the advantages of education, compared the salaries of trained and untrained black men:

¹²³Second Conference, p. 67.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 69.

¹²⁵Twelfth Conference, p. 13.

¹²⁶Ibid.

Let us see what right training is and how it works. First--does training pay the individual? To reduce the question to its simplest terms, let us first consider the common untrained laborer in the South, the man at the very bottom. I asked the heads of several good schools for negro men and women to tell me the earning power of particular persons before they were trained and after. Here is the answer from Tuskegee:

Before training, a colored lad can earn in Alabama from 60 to 80 cents a day; after training at any useful kind of work, from \$2.50 to \$4.00 a day.¹²⁷

The Conference members who looked for schools which excelled in giving the Negro the kind of education they most recommended, vocational training, saw Hampton and Tuskegee as superior examples. Both institutions were publicized in the North and South and were well supported financially. Furthermore, Hollis Frissell, Hampton's principal who addressed the First Conference, and Booker T. Washington, Tuskegee's leader and a Conference field agent, were popular with the organization. Baldwin, a Tuskegee trustee, credited General Armstrong, Hampton's founder, with beginning Negro education thirty years earlier, but, "it remained for a negro to transplant his work to the black belt of the South. Booker T. Washington was his interpreter--the Moses; Tuskegee his creation; his life, and the hope of the race."¹²⁸ He added that the Negro "is taught the dignity of manual labor," and concluded:

In brief, the aim of Tuskegee is to teach the negro boy or girl to be moral and religious, and how to make a living; to

¹²⁷Seventh Conference, p. 101.

¹²⁸Second Conference, p. 69.

educate them in those lines in which the opportunity to make a living is open. They are educated for their natural environment and not educated out of it.¹²⁹

Later in the same speech, he urged more financial aid to Hampton and Tuskegee and hoped similar institutions could be founded elsewhere.¹³⁰

The education for the Negro most recommended by Conference speakers, therefore, was that provided by Hampton and Tuskegee, which some members had visited and with which most were familiar. Though both institutions offered vocational training in several fields, they concentrated on agricultural education. If these schools could fill the void once held by the plantation, then Southerners and Conference members could ask nothing more.

The available funds for Negro education concerned some for most agreed that financial help was needed. Those who spoke on this subject generally complimented the Southerner for helping the black schools so liberally. Charles Coon, a superintendent of education from North Carolina, noted that the South was presently spending \$32,068,851 on education for both races.¹³¹ The percentage allotted to Negro education was hard to determine, however, for he discovered speakers simply quoted a 1900 government report which stated \$109,000,000 had been spent since 1870.¹³² Coon's report, presented

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 70.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 54; see also Fifth Conference, p. 61; Ninth Conference, p. 158; Sixth Conference, p. 209.

¹³¹Twelfth Conference, p. 157.

¹³²Sixth Conference, pp. 211-12; First Conference, p. 5; Second Conference, p. 26; Fifth Conference, p. 48; Seventh Conference, p. 36.

to the Twelfth Conference, concluded that in the eleven states 74% of the total amount spent on education was paid to teachers. Of this amount, \$3,818,705 was paid Negro teachers, or 12% of total expenditures. White teachers, on the other hand, received 62.4% of the total.¹³³ These figures Coon deemed important, for though blacks comprised 41% of the Southern population, they received only 14.8% of the funds for education.¹³⁴

Some Conference members described the Northern money contributed to Southern education, and stressed that help was appreciated:

Along with what the States have done, Northern religious societies and some benevolent men and women have given liberally for the education of the negroes. . . . Every Southern man and woman is profoundly grateful for what Northern people have done for the education of the negroes.¹³⁵

Baldwin, a Northerner, concluded his address by urging more help for black schools:

The South welcomes such help as the North gives them through Tuskegee and similar institutions and will welcome any sincere, intelligent assistance in working out their educational problem; but the South will always resent sentimental suggestions of theorists--that is human.¹³⁶

The South, which was sensitive to Northern help, emphasized its financial aid to black schools. Hill proudly announced, "For every dollar contributed by the philanthropy of the North for this

¹³³Twelfth Conference, p. 158.

¹³⁴Ibid., pp. 157 and 159.

¹³⁵Second Conference, p. 26.

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 77.

purpose, the South, out of her poverty, has contributed four dollars."¹³⁷ He then admitted, however, "It cannot be truthfully claimed that all people of the Southern states are pleased with this situation."¹³⁸

The members discussed the burden they assumed educating Negroes. Hoke Smith, for example, maintained:

Ninety-five per cent of the taxes in the South are paid by the white men. Over \$100,000,000 has been spent by the South for the education of negroes. The white men have been in control in every State throughout the South, and yet, after paying the school taxes, they have with equal justice distributed it to black and white. Do not misunderstand me. We are not entitled to a particle of praise for it; I simply mention it to show the burden we have carried and how we acted. Could we be so blind, we in the Southern section, as to wish fully half of our population to grow up in ignorance?¹³⁹

Some Southerners struggled to find a means to rid themselves of this financial burden. The solution most often mentioned was to allot to black education only the tax money collected from them. Generally, Conference members opposed this movement, however, and it was never widely accepted. Alderman labeled the practice "undemocratic, un-economic and un-American."¹⁴⁰

Superintendent Coon's study, however, exploded the myth that black education was a burden on whites. Coon first asked, "Is the negro public school in the South a burden on the white taxpayer, and,

¹³⁷Sixth Conference, p. 212.

¹³⁸ibid.

¹³⁹Fifth Conference, p. 48.

¹⁴⁰Ninth Conference, p. 149; see also Sixth Conference, p. 212.

if so, to what extent?"¹⁴¹ After examining the money collected and disbursed in Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia, the states with most complete data, he concluded, ". . . that the negro school is not very much of a white man's burden in at least three States, unless the white man is ready to say that the division I suggest is not a fair one."¹⁴²

Conference speakers, therefore, argued that black education was costly and, though they were adequately educating the Negro, Northern financial support was welcome. Southerners were unhappy that most Northern support was given to black institutions. Charles Coon questioned the popular belief that the Negro was a white man's burden, however, and found it to be a myth.

Conclusions

In summary, this chapter summarized the Conference speech themes that considered the racial differences and harmony in the early Twentieth Century; the deficiencies of the Negro; and, the kind of education recommended to alleviate these weaknesses. Though aware of apparent racial differences, these orators stressed the existing harmony between whites and blacks. The barbaric conditions in which the Negro was brought from Africa were recalled by some who further argued that though cordial race relations existed, whites remained superior. Conference speakers listed the weaknesses of the Negro morally,

¹⁴¹Twelfth Conference, p. 157.

¹⁴²Ibid., pp. 165-66.

spiritually, socially, politically, economically, and intellectually, but opposed social or political changes. Vocational training was believed to be best for blacks because it would replace the education once supplied by the plantation. Consequently, though these speakers considered the Negro to be far behind whites, they avoided controversial issues and essentially encouraged improvements for blacks that were popular with Southerners. These orators discussed the past extensively and encouraged few innovations because they were aware that these changes would not place the Negro and white in competition or anger the southern white who hated and feared blacks.

CHAPTER VI

THE RHETORIC OF THE MOVEMENT

The Conference for Education in the South, sometimes labeled a "propaganda organization," was established to awaken the southern people to their deficiencies in education and to promote universal education. Dabney proudly listed the organization's accomplishments:

The creed of their crusade was universal education; equality of opportunity for all--an idea which, through the influence of the Conference for Education, the Southern Education Board, and the General Education Board, was to conquer the South in the next decade.¹

Conference leaders seemed well aware of the resentment that might be aroused by Northerners invading the South presenting "cures" for the region's many ills.² Consequently, President Ogden and other Board members often reminded the organization that it was essentially directed by Southerners. For example, he stated at the Eleventh Conference:

The Conference for Education in the South is composed of Southern men and women. I am the only man of all the group of officers of this organization that is a Northern man, a resident

¹Charles William Dabney, Universal Education in the South II (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1936), p. v.

²Ibid., p. 45.

of a Northern city. All of the rest come from your own States, and, therefore, this organization is your organization.³

The topic of the Negro was also an extremely sensitive one and the President usually described the organization's goals yearly. He was cognizant of the unfavorable publicity and once wrote Dabney, "The Southern press charges us with being simply friends of the Negroes in disguise. . . ."⁴ Though Ogden admitted that the original gatherings were devoted to Negro education, ". . . our impulses have risen from negro education to the question of the entire burden of educational responsibility that you have throughout this whole section of country."⁵ At the Ninth Conference he reported that a "Northern writer" had informed him that southern friends condemned the "movement because of its demoralizing influence upon the negro population."⁶ He argued that the "record" indicated that the organization supported "training of all the people. . . ."⁷ The leader, therefore, often listed the goals of the organization in an attempt to allay criticism and encourage support from its members.

³Proceedings of the Eleventh Conference for Education in the South (Nashville: Published by the Executive Committee of the Conference), p. 26. The citations from Conference Proceedings are hereafter listed as First Conference, Second Conference, etc. and the page number. (See also Eighth Conference, pp. 9 and 14; Twelfth Conference, p. 18.)

⁴Dabney, p. 47.

⁵Fourth Conference, p. 6.

⁶Ninth Conference, p. 9.

⁷Ibid.

In addition to Ogden's statements, other persuasive techniques were employed to interest the assembly. Long before the annual meeting many of the Conference guests and citizens from both regions were manipulated by devices designed to make them agreeable to the goals of the Conference. This chapter, therefore, is divided into two parts. Because they are more important, those strategies "outside the province of the speaker's art," called the "extrinsic means of persuasion," are described first.⁸ Then this chapter considers the intrinsic persuasive devices, or those "within the inventive power of the speaker."⁹

Extrinsic Factors of Persuasion

Writing more than two thousand years ago, Aristotle argued that if the speaker wished to achieve his goal, he must be familiar with his audience. "That is, he must know human nature, with its ways of reasoning, its habits, desires, and emotions, and must know the kind of argument that will persuade each kind of men. . . ."¹⁰ Consequently, the pre-existing attitudes of the audience were important to the speaker, for if he was not aware of their prejudices as well as their interests, he might never gain their support. Chapter II described the life-style and some attitudes of the southern whites and blacks at the beginning

⁸Giles W. Gray and Waldo W. Braden, Public Speaking: Principles and Practice (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), p. 372.

⁹Ibid. See also Winston L. Brembeck and William S. Howell, Persuasion: A Means of Social Control (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), Chapter 10.

¹⁰Lane Cooper (trans.), The Rhetoric of Aristotle (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1932), xx.

of the Twentieth Century. Both races worked to ease the extreme poverty from which the South never recovered after the Civil War. This depleted region was characterized by child-labor, low standards of health, and poor working conditions. Blacks and whites also suffered from a weak educational system demonstrated by high illiteracy, lack of compulsory school attendance and little money channeled into education. In addition, the Negro faced white prejudice, for many described the Negro as child-like, inferior and close to the barbaric state in which he arrived from Africa. The Southerner refused to franchise the black and white fear and hatred permitted little change in their economic or educational status.

Other extrinsic factors of persuasion are evident in the carefully planned Conference setting. Ogden's annual tours were designed to "render the audience suggestible to the desired end."¹¹ These trips, described in Chapter III, were held in the Spring before and after the yearly convention. The time was a beautiful one in the South for the temperature was warm and spring foliage welcomed them to that region. Ogden's guests were important Northerners, usually associated with the publication of journals or newspapers, the ministry, university education, or philanthropy. The tours were free, clearly an added incentive for the attendance of these guests. The Conference president enjoyed serving as the host and made special efforts to ensure their comfort.

¹¹Brembeck and Howell, p. 172.

For example, the Raleigh News and Observer reported that Ogden had rented five pullman cars for his Fourth Conference trip, with "every convenience for a ten days trip through the South."¹² Writing in The Outlook, Hamilton W. Mabie, probably one of Ogden's guests, was especially impressed with the hospitality of the host and the representative guests:

The fifth annual Conference for Education in the South began . . . with . . . the hospitality of Mr. Robert C. Ogden, who entertained a large company of friends . . . in a beautifully appointed special train, where they had all the comforts of an ample house, and opportunities for delightful companionship; for Mr. Ogden's guests included a representative group of men and women whose interests are manifold, and who furnished all the elements of congenial companionship.¹³

Following the format he previously established, Ogden carefully selected the schools for the Conference tour including several black schools in the itinerary. Hampton Institute was Ogden's favorite because he was a trustee and long-time friend of Samuel Chapman Armstrong, the late founder of that school. In addition to serving to make the audience suggestible to the Conference purpose, these tours were a "together device," to bring Northerners in association with each other to work for a common goal.¹⁴ These trips also helped to provide surroundings conducive to persuasion, for as the guests became more familiar with each other and returned each year, they could help form a strong nucleus

¹²"Educational Conference at Winston-Salem Adjourns," Raleigh News and Observer, April 21, 1901, p. 1.

¹³H. W. M., "The Southern Educational Conference," The Outlook, Vol. LXXI, May 3, 1902, pp. 9-13.

¹⁴Brembeck and Howell, p. 173.

favorable to Ogden's proposals and leadership. Consequently, the trips were an important persuasive device; serving as bribes to those who might provide support to the organization.

Brembeck and Howell contend that if the audience is to be "rendered suggestible to a desired end, all surrounding stimuli of the occasion and place must be favorable. . . ."¹⁵ One of the factors which can help achieve this goal is favorable advance publicity. As the Conference grew in popularity, local newspapers usually described the forthcoming meetings, listed noteworthy guests and speeches, and urged the attendance of all interested. A letter to the editor of the Raleigh News and Observer from participant Charles McIver, for example, named some who were expected at the Fourth Conference and requested the presence of local business and professional men.¹⁶ Before the 1904 meeting in Birmingham, the Age-Herald requested its readers to attend every session and the News lauded the work of Bishop Galloway who was to address the organization on the Negro.¹⁷ Pre-conference publicity, therefore, likely garnered support for the movement by awakening local citizens to forthcoming meetings as well as the organization's purpose and development.

The Southern Education Board carefully selected the annual

¹⁵Ibid., p. 172.

¹⁶"Great Educational Conference," News and Observer, Raleigh, April 16, 1901, p. 1.

¹⁷"Soldiers of Progress Gathering to Battle for Betterment of Man," News, Birmingham, April 26, 1904, p. 1.

meeting place because its members were aware of the impact of the Conference locally and throughout the host state. Newspaper publicity probably encouraged interest and participation because many citizens were aware of northern support and philanthropy. As the organization broadened its membership, it met further south and west, once choosing to convene in Birmingham and another time in Little Rock. Furthermore, the organization met in areas slow to encourage educational growth. For example, Georgia was the site of the fifth meeting, partly because the state was accepting educational improvements with reluctance. Open hostility met the eighth annual convention in Columbia, South Carolina, prompting Ogden to defend the organization in his annual address. Consequently, the choice of the meeting place was made with the hope of stimulating a favorable response from the host city and state.

Cities often made special preparations for the conferences. In addition to oiling its streets, Lexington opened its new auditorium for the occasion though workmen were busy the day before the opening session putting on the "finishing touches."¹⁸ Atlanta proudly hosted the Twelfth Conference in its new 7,000 seat auditorium which reporters pictured in elaborate detail.¹⁹

As the organization became more important, the local committees lavishly decorated the meeting places where the groups met. Jefferson

¹⁸"Conference for Education of South Assembles Today," The Lexington Herald, May 2, 1906, p. 3; "Oiling City Streets Before Conference," The Lexington Herald, May 2, 1906, p. 5.

¹⁹"In Auditorium Educators Hold First Meeting," The Atlanta Constitution, April 15, 1909, p. 1.

Theater in Birmingham was "appropriately decorated for the occasion."²⁰ Following a patriotic theme, the Opera House at Columbia, South Carolina, was "tastily [sic] decorated with red, white, and blue bunting and flags of the Union interspersed with those of the Palmetto State. . . ."²¹ Lexington, too, made special preparations, for the ". . . interior has been decorated with banners and flags and the stage has been tastefully covered with palms and ferns. . . ."²² The readying of the host city and the decorations likely served two purposes. First, the elaborate preparations were an indication to the Conference visitors of a warm reception and second, they were a device to bring local citizens together to work for a common project. If townspeople got ready for the Conference together, they likely attended some of its meetings and may have joined the movement. In any case their efforts helped to provide surroundings more conducive to persuasion with favorable surrounding stimuli and appropriate visual symbols.²³

The mood of the occasion was enhanced by other devices employed at the annual conventions. Usually choral groups or orchestras entertained the guests and one time a Negro banjo expert mimicked a mocking

²⁰"Birmingham is Ready to Play the Part of Host," News, Birmingham, April 25, 1904, p. 8.

²¹"Conference of Education," News and Courier, Charleston, April 27, 1905, p. 1.

²²"Conference for Education of South Assembles Today," p. 3.

²³Brembeck and Howell, p. 172; Gray and Braden, p. 372.

bird for his selection.²⁴ Music encouraged local participation and impressed the assembly with the interest of townspeople and nearby schools and colleges. The Governor of the host state often opened the annual meeting with a welcoming address, thereby providing a valuable endorsement to the organization as well as associating the Conference with prestige personalities.²⁵ Pre-arranged seating was employed at conventions that were attended by both races, for blacks usually sat in a separate balcony.²⁶ Apparently the crowds forced a change in seating, for the Richmond Times-Dispatch noted that for the first time since the War whites and blacks sat together.²⁷ Probably those who met as Ogden's guests sat together at the meetings just as many townspeople were likely to do. Consequently, the support of those most interested in the Conference who sat together probably impressed others who attended and were not members.

As the Conference grew in attendance and popularity, social functions became important to both the townspeople and the organization. The first Capon Springs meeting held a tea in the hotel ballroom though in later years lavish receptions were common events. The

²⁴Fourth Conference, p. 7; "Intense Interest Shown in Educational Conference at Second Day's Session," The Lexington Herald, May 4, 1901, p. 1.

²⁵Gray and Braden, p. 374.

²⁶"Country's Perfect Unity--The Slogan of Education," Times-Dispatch, Richmond, April 24, 1903, p. 1.

²⁷"Manhood the Test of the Right of Suffrage," Times-Dispatch Richmond, April 25, 1903, p. 1.

Winston-Salem Conference in 1901 may have established the social pattern, for the Raleigh News and Observer described a reception held that year:

The guests--those from the North and from the South--were charmed with the elegant receptions and entertainment afforded them. The people of Winston-Salem more than measured up to the occasion in every respect and won the hearts of all whose good fortune it was to be here for the past three days.²⁸

Thereafter receptions were yearly events. They became so important to the members that Ogden felt obligated to remind the members of the Sixth Conference not to forget the purpose of the meetings.²⁹ The reception held the next year in Birmingham, however, was one of the most lavish as roses were used for decorating and the receiving line was headed by the president of the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs.³⁰ Lexington honored the annual meeting with an old-fashioned barbecue attended by 6,000.³¹ Sometimes the events were held at the state capitol, which gave them added significance. One important purpose of these social occasions was to serve as a meeting place for people from the North and South. For many these gatherings were the first time since the War to make acquaintances with others from another region. Furthermore, Southerners could display the hospitality for which they remained famous as northern visitors described their warm

²⁸"The Educational Conference at Winston-Salem Adjourns," p. 1.

²⁹Sixth Conference, p. 10.

³⁰"Educational Conference Starts Most Auspiciously," Age-Herald, Birmingham, April 27, 1904, p. 1.

³¹Ninth Conference, p. 172.

reception.³² Finally, these occasions encouraged local interest and participation as the host town welcomed its guests. As the women planned these elaborate receptions together, they were becoming a more polarized audience, thereby adopting a greater unity of response.³³ This persuasive strategy, known as the "together device," helped unify the town as it worked to welcome visitors. Clearly these lavish affairs also served to provide surroundings "conducive to persuasion."³⁴

As the Conference attendance grew, those who read of its work and development likely became more interested in participating. Ogden, already well-known for his devotion to philanthropic concerns, concentrated on obtaining the support of other northern leaders. Important Conference members, Alderman, Baldwin, Curry, Hill, and Page, undoubtedly influenced others to work for educational improvements in the South. The popularity of the organization was well publicized by southern newspapers and northern journalists and publishers who were Ogden's guests. Furthermore, as the philanthropists lent their support to the movement, their examples encouraged additional contributions of time and money. This "bandwagon" technique, joining a group because others who are respected do so, was employed successfully by the Conference for as it acquired the support of influential leaders, the organization grew from 35 to 2,000 or more.³⁵

³²Ninth Conference, pp. 162 and 166; Tenth Conference, p. 207.

³³Brembeck and Howell, p. 173.

³⁴Gray and Braden, p. 372.

³⁵Brembeck and Howell, p. 184.

The "Bureau of Information and Advice on Legislation and School Organization," formed in 1902 by the Southern Education Board, served to supply literature to the press and support educational meetings. This Bureau, directed by Charles Dabney, published voluminous circulars, bulletins, and press releases, numbering 113,200 separate pieces during a two year period.³⁶ Usually this literature described the weak southern educational system or reported on Conference activities and "plans for improving it."³⁷ Undoubtedly this propaganda campaign helped awaken both regions to the southern education system and attain popularity for the Conference.

Another persuasive device which attempted to gain support for the Conference was the publication of speeches that expressed the consensus of the organization. For example, Dabney's Fourth Conference address, a review of the educational conditions in the South since the War, was published by the United States' Commissioner of Education in his Report of 1900-01.³⁸ Bishop Galloway's address on the Negro at the Seventh Conference was "reprinted in pamphlet form and was widely circulated both by Mr. Robert C. Ogden and by the Slater Board, in every section of the South."³⁹

³⁶Dabney, p. 76.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., p. 41.

³⁹"Mr. Murphy's Report of His Remarks at Abenia," August 7, 1907. (Taken from Ogden Notebook.)

Rallies and state education conferences held in each state helped further the organization's work. North Carolina, where one of the most successful campaigns was held, first formed an Association for the Promotion of Public Education in North Carolina, which arranged local meetings throughout the state. Governor Aycock, Dr. McIver, and the superintendent of education, in addition to local personalities, addressed each meeting to support local taxation for schools and to encourage citizens to ask their legislature for more financial support for education. Though some states were not so successful as well-organized North Carolina, these rallies and meetings helped awaken citizens to educational deficiencies in their area and the efforts of the Conference to alleviate these problems.

The work of the Southern Education Board and other committees between the annual meetings also served to promote interest in the Conference. As rallies and state educational conventions were planned, local arrangements committees also made numerous commitments for housing their guests and providing the social activities that would help to make the meeting enjoyable and stimulating. In addition to providing surroundings "conducive to persuasion," this work likely brought the people closer together as they worked for a common goal.⁴⁰ The effect of universality was probably achieved.⁴¹

Though the persuasive strategy employed by the Conference

⁴⁰Brembeck and Howell, p. 173; Gray and Braden, p. 372.

⁴¹Brembeck and Howell, p. 173.

speaker inside or "intrinsic" to his speech should not be minimized, the extrinsic factors of persuasion were more important. The leaders of the movement made great efforts to publicize the organization and to make it acceptable to the South through its tours, social activities, and educational rallies. Consequently, most people who were familiar with the organization were probably favorably impressed by its goals and accomplishments before its annual gathering. Furthermore, the immediate audience was a partisan one, though those who addressed the assembly on the Negro employed several persuasive techniques in their speeches to ensure continued support.

Intrinsic Factors of Persuasion

The most important intrinsic persuasive devices utilized by the Conference orators were those fostering reconciliation and emphasizing harmony between the members and the South. First, the organization's Executive Secretary selected speakers who would further these amiable relationships. Reverend Edgar Gardner Murphy once reported, "I have been equally clear upon the other hand that unless the question could be handled by the right man in the right way, it were better to ignore it."⁴² Though Murphy was not successful in securing a speech from his first choice, Bishop Galloway at the fifth annual meeting, for example, he believed remarks by Governor Aycock, Hoke Smith, and H. St. George Tucker were "sympathetic, vigorous, and helpful."⁴³ Georgia's

⁴²Mr. Murphy's Report of His Remarks at Abenia."

⁴³Ibid.

Bishop Candler, who was asked to address the Columbia meeting, was unable to attend and Murphy noted that he could not get anyone else "who could wisely and rightly speak upon the subject."⁴⁴ The choice of a speaker on the Negro, therefore, was made carefully with the aim of fostering harmony.

The speakers also attempted to establish their good character and good will in the speeches. Gray and Braden have advised the orator to "establish your right to speak on your subject," for ". . . persuading listeners is easier when they believe in you, your ability, your good character, and your sincere interest in them."⁴⁵ Some demonstrated their good will in their speeches by describing their love of the South. For example, Bishop Galloway believed that as a Southerner, a "friend of the negro," and a resident of Mississippi, he was qualified to speak on the topic, "The South and the Negro."⁴⁶ Though he did not elaborate how he was the Negro's friend, he emphasized his good will by discussing his love of the South and his good character by picturing his interest in truth, stating:

Some acquaintance with this section and its citizenship I ought to have gained from life-long residence and eager observation and unwavering devotion. . . . I shall speak to-night with perfect candor, if not with approved wisdom, and I appear not as the partizan [sic] of an idea, but as an ambassador of the truth and a lover of my country.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Gray and Braden, p. 367.

⁴⁶Seventh Conference, p. 27.

⁴⁷Ibid.

Walter Hines Page, a critic and former resident in the South, needed to establish his good will in a different manner, for he moved North in 1883 when his Raleigh, North Carolina, newspaper proved an unsuccessful venture. He pictured the patriotic devotion of the Southerner to his region, an attitude he had experienced first hand:

There is a class of men in the Southern States who have a stronger love of their country--I had almost said--than other men anywhere feel. They are bound closely together by an ardent patriotism which is the inheritance of every Southerner, especially if his traditions run back to the large-minded period when Southern men built the spacious house of our liberties. And every such man would give his work if he knew how--he would give his life, if need be--to restore the thought, the character, and the influence of the South to the commanding position that they held a hundred years ago.⁴⁸

At the Eleventh Conference Bishop Bratton demonstrated his good will by noting his respect for the speaker to follow him, James Bryce, the British Ambassador to the United States, and then by describing the difficult nature of his topic. He stated, "And then I have felt embarrassed by the magnitude of the subject, so inexhaustible in its details, and so vital in its relations to well nigh all the social questions, not simply of the South, but of the entire nation, and indeed, of the world."⁴⁹

William Baldwin, a Northerner, faced a different problem, for he needed to establish his interest in and respect for the South as well as his ability to speak on this difficult topic. He outlined

⁴⁸Seventh Conference, p. 98.

⁴⁹Eleventh Conference, p. 83.

these abilities in the introduction:

It may be proper for me to say that my observations are those of a New Englander, with all the inherited tendencies and sympathies of that people, supplemented by three years of active and intimate relations with the whites and blacks of the South, and, all told, about six years' service as a Trustee of the Tuskegee Institute.⁵⁰

These Conference leaders, therefore, made special efforts to establish their right to speak on this subject by describing their respect or love for the South, by listing their qualifications to speak on this subject, or by picturing their humility because they were asked to address the Conference on this vital topic of the Negro.

Gray and Braden have suggested that orators should "move from areas of agreement to areas of disagreement," in persuasive speeches.⁵¹ Because the topic was so sensitive, and in the interest of harmony, however, these speakers often stressed the issues on which they could agree and ignored the controversial ones. For example, almost everyone probably accepted Curry's description of the South which was irreparably devastated by the War and his popular stand that ". . . the Caucasian will rule," was often repeated at later meetings.⁵² In addition he skirted the issue of universal education by noting that it "is slow in its results."⁵³ Probably the most controversial statement

⁵⁰Second Conference, p. 67.

⁵¹Gray and Braden, p. 369.

⁵²Second Conference, pp. 25 and 28.

⁵³ibid., p. 29.

in his speech urged the audience "to do right in helpfulness for those less favored. . . ."54 Bishop Galloway, who was asked to present an address on blacks, noted he was their friend and spoke more openly of race relations, however. After describing the discontent that existed among Negroes and the necessary separation of the two races, he asked for equal legal protection and "right education" for this race, two issues that caused concern among Southerners.⁵⁵ Though Galloway may have angered some present, the local newspaper publicity before his address was entirely favorable, consequently, these remarks were likely acceptable to most of the audience. Edwin Alderman, a Southerner sensitive to the prevailing mood of the region, praised the accomplishments and unification already achieved. The most controversial statement he made was to ask the audience to consider blacks an "asset."⁵⁶

In addition to stressing issues on which the audience could agree, the orators ignored the controversial ones. For example, federal aid to education was opposed soon after the organization's founding and was never mentioned again. Social and political recognition for blacks, opposed by the members, was never considered possible in the future. Finally, the relationships between whites and blacks were described in general terms as "warm" and that the races were living in "peace" and "mutual helpfulness." Speakers never referred to

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 31.

⁵⁵Seventh Conference, pp. 29-31.

⁵⁶Ninth Conference, pp. 156-57.

the absence of Negroes on the Conference program or addressed those present at the meetings. This "rhetoric of silence," therefore, was tacitly accepted by most of the leaders of the organization who spoke on the Negro.

The popular myths of the period became another "area of agreement" the Conference orators could emphasize to further harmony. The repetition of these beliefs, which were described in the previous chapter, indicated their acceptance of the present system as well as a desire for southern endorsement. Several of these speakers, for example, described the barbaric condition in which the slaves arrived in the United States and the civilizing influence of the plantation.⁵⁷ Slavery had provided an excellent training for blacks, but vocational schools such as Hampton and Tuskegee gave him a fine education.⁵⁸ Finally, though the Negro's condition and education could be improved considerably, he would always remain inferior.⁵⁹ These myths were acceptable to most Southerners, and often repeated by Conference speakers. They were rarely questioned by people from either region and formed a basis for consensus of the members.

⁵⁷See Baldwin's speech, Second Conference, p. 67; Hill's speech, Fifth Conference, p. 49; and Smith's speech, Sixth Conference, p. 208.

⁵⁸See Baldwin's speech, Second Conference, p. 74; Galloway's speech, Seventh Conference, p. 36; Curry's speech, Second Conference, p. 26; Page's speech, Seventh Conference, p. 101.

⁵⁹See Curry's speech, Second Conference, p. 28; Alderman's speech, Fifth Conference, p. 60; Frissell's speech, First Conference, p. 4.

Gray and Braden have suggested that the persuasive speaker should "make acceptance easy" for the audience.⁶⁰ They add that the speaker should select an "attainable, immediate goal."⁶¹ In the interest of harmony the Conference leaders achieved both goals by asking for very little from their audience. Though universal education was important, another major concern was to attain some recognition and acceptance for the black man. Baldwin, for example, argued that the Negro could not be deported.⁶² He also supported a more humane treatment for blacks. For example, though he believed there was "no possible justification for lynching," he hoped that faster trials and some compensation to the family of a person who was lynched would lessen this problem.⁶³ Edwin Alderman argued that ". . . we cannot deny to him humanity, personality or economic value," and later asked the audience, "to consider him an asset."⁶⁴ He contended, "But there is only one thing on God's earth to do with a human being and that thing is to give him a chance."⁶⁵ Curry asked the audience, "It behooves good men and women everywhere, in self-examination, charity towards others, in catholic patriotism, in courageous purpose to do right, in helpfulness

⁶⁰Gray and Braden, p. 371.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 365.

⁶²Second Conference, pp. 71-72.

⁶³Ibid., p. 73.

⁶⁴Ninth Conference, p. 157.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 57-58.

for those less favored. . . .⁶⁶ These speakers did not consider social equality possible, and therefore chose a more attainable objective.

The Conference orators also made acceptance easy for the audience by limiting their logical arguments to two general points. First, they developed their speeches around an "if-then" relationship the auditors found appropriate.⁶⁷ Their argument, "We must help the black man," forms the conclusion of the deductive syllogism:

If the Southern white helps the black man, then his
condition will improve.
We want the black man's condition to improve.
Therefore, we must help the black man.

Though difficult to test for validity, the syllogism is satisfactory in two respects.⁶⁸ First, the assumption in the major premise is of a comprehensive nature and, second, the argument seems reasonable. In Chapter V the minor premise was analyzed to consider how the Negro was deficient and ways the Southern white wanted to help him. Therefore, the conclusion follows from these premises.

The second major form of logical appeal these speakers employed was examples of the respected black schools, Hampton and Tuskegee. Most believed these popular institutions provided the best training available and discouraged advanced schooling. Though a critic could

⁶⁶Second Conference, p. 31.

⁶⁷Brembeck and Howell, p. 223.

⁶⁸Lester Thonssen, A. Craig Baird, and Waldo W. Braden, Speech Criticism, Second Edition (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1970), p. 409; see also Brembeck and Howell, p. 223.

correctly argue these examples were limited and unrepresentative, several Conference leaders were trustees at these schools and undoubtedly were familiar with their work. Their illustrations implied no major change, simply more vocational schools of the same nature. Finally, their descriptions of these institutions were usually extensive and vivid, designed to make them more impressive.⁶⁹ The audience, therefore, emotionally accepted these examples, probably unaware they were weak forms of support.

To review, the intrinsic factors of persuasion utilized by these speakers were those which encouraged reconciliation and harmony. Those who addressed the Conference on the Negro, usually carefully chosen, attempted to convey their good will and good character in speeches that repeated popular myths and asked little from their audiences.

Conclusions

This chapter has dealt with the extrinsic and intrinsic factors of persuasion in an effort to understand the techniques employed by Conference leaders and speakers to make their audience a partisan one. The extrinsic factors, or those "outside the province of the speaker's art," were found to be more important. The Conference leaders utilized several devices to "render the audience suggestible to the desired end," including annual tours for Northern guests, favorable advance publicity, carefully chosen and decorated Conference sites, and occasions

⁶⁹Gray and Braden, p. 369.

for Northerners and Southerners to mingle socially. In addition, the community rallies between these conventions and the numerous publications by the Board of Information and Advice served to awaken the rural South to its educational deficiencies and to secure Conference support. The intrinsic factors of persuasion, or those within the speaker's art, chosen by these orators were devoted to encouraging harmony and reconciliation between the North and South. To achieve this goal, these speakers employed ethical appeals to impress the audience with their good character and good will, repeated the popular Southern myths, and avoided controversial issues.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the change in focus from black to white education at the Conference for Education in the South during a period of national reconciliation. The conditions in the South summarized in Chapter Two reveal a land of extreme poverty in which school expenditures were truly a hardship on its populace. The Negro of this period was plagued with more serious difficulties, particularly in areas of social and legal relationships with whites, though some education was provided by the South in addition to that provided by Northern philanthropists. The organization and growth of the Conference described in Chapter Three indicates that a platform was found for the reunion of leaders from the North and South. Their rhetoric attests to their understanding of many of the South's educational deficiencies. A closer examination of selected Conference speakers on black education in Chapter Four gives evidence that these men, though vigorous in arguing for educational reform, simply reaffirmed Southern attitudes toward Negroes and their education. The rhetorical analysis of Chapters Five and Six reveals that the speakers changed their attitude of helping the Negro to one of maintaining harmony. Chapter Five concentrates on the Conference oratory, which described the Negro's weaknesses and the potential ability of education to diminish or erase many of them. The strained race relations were portrayed by some

Conference speakers who argued this necessitated separate facilities and activities. Their oratory supported the training like that provided by Hampton and Tuskegee while they deliberately placed the Negro in a lesser position than whites by ignoring any literary education for blacks other than a rudimentary one. This chapter also indicates a change of emphasis from black to white education and the ultimate stabilization of the Negro's already weak position. Chapter Six described the persuasive factors intrinsic and extrinsic to these speeches to determine how the audience was made agreeable to the Conference goals. The most important devices were those outside or extrinsic to the speaking situation. The organization's leaders carefully utilized far-reaching advance publicity, extensive tours of the South, impressively decorated auditoriums, and elaborate social occasions, in efforts to mold the pre-existing attitudes of the audience. Intrinsic factors, or those within the speaking situation, included attempts of orators to stress their good will and good character, the avoidance of subjects that might cause disagreements, the repetition of popular southern myths, and the selection of attainable goals.

One reason for the change in the organization's focus stands far above others: to maintain Conference harmony the oratory declared the white race more important than the Negro. Pressures from Southerners and Conference leaders made this change necessary. Though the Negro remained a subject of importance throughout Conference history, he took a place behind whites after the Second Conference. Some who had attended the First Conference urged this change, probably sensing the

mood of the South. A. D. Mayo, for example, wrote the committee that he knew the topic of most importance to the Conference members was the one Southerners most disliked, "the Northern schools for Southern Negroes."¹ He assumed that better Conference representation would change this interest.² Furthermore, Curry's mandate at the Second Conference that the "Caucasian will rule," immediately dictated the organization's emphasis. After the Conference, Albert Shaw, editor of Review of Reviews took the same position:

It was not--as some newspapers have mistakenly assumed--a conference devoted primarily to the question of negro education. The discussion, in fact, dealt more particularly with the conditions of white education.³

Some speakers argued that the training the Negro received on the plantation had educated him for employment. When plantation training was replaced by vocational education after the War, the white man still could be certain he would remain ahead of the Negro. Speakers who supported vocational training usually began by describing the Negro's deficiencies: morally, spiritually, socially, politically, economically, and intellectually. They recalled that the plantation had trained blacks well before the Civil War though present black education was deficient. George Winston, for example, described the

¹Charles William Dabney, Universal Education in the South II (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1936), pp. 6-7.

²Ibid.

³Albert Shaw, "The Conference at Capon Springs," Review of Reviews, XX, August, 1899, p. 131.

inefficiency of the "new generation" and argued that it was "promoting the estrangement of the two races."⁴ William H. Baldwin found that the Negro became an artisan under plantation training.⁵ Consequently, these men spoke of returning to the education provided by the plantation because it had trained the Negro so efficiently. Nearly all who addressed the Conference were leaders in Southern education or religion who were well aware that most Southerners believed the plantation had educated the Negro well. The Conference oratory then simply echoed the convictions of the Southerners.

To strengthen their arguments for plantation training, most claimed that the black man could not handle and did not need the textbook education provided by whites. Consequently, agricultural or industrial education was a workable solution. Additionally, if the Negro received only vocational education, he offered whites no competition in education or employment. Gunnar Myrdal's study of the Negro in America provides a good summary of the reasons for Southern emphasis on vocational training:

Industrial education for Negroes is the formula upon which Southern whites have been able to strike a compromise between their belief in education, which stems from the American Creed, and their interests as white Southerners in preserving the caste order of the region. In the South the problem of industrial versus classical education for Negroes is not, and never has been, discussed merely in terms of pedagogical advantages

⁴Proceedings of the Fourth Conference for Education in the South (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Mount Pleasant Press, 1901), pp. 104-05.

⁵Second Conference, p. 67.

and disadvantages.

Two factors complicate the issue even more: the relatively high costs of modern vocational education and the white laborers' fear of the Negroes as competitors. As a result, no effective industrial education has ever been given the Negroes in the Southern public schools, except training for cooking and menial service. The discussion of whether Negroes should have a vocational or a liberal schooling is thus only in part a real issue. Partly it is a cover for the more general problem as to what extent Negroes should have much education at all. The main conflict is between the ever-present equalitarian American Creed on the one hand and the caste interest on the other.⁶

Conference members found another way to place whites ahead of blacks. They hoped to return to the period before the War when the white man was boss. Under the plantation system, the black man received some moral and religious training though no effort was made to permit social, political, or economic privileges. After the War, the freed slave was guaranteed political rights though social and economic rights could not be legally sanctioned and were not advocated by Conference speakers. Orators recalled this period before the War and urged turning again to this time when the white man controlled the Negro.

Most Northern philanthropists and newspaper editors unquestionably accepted Southern wishes concerning Negro education. Though some of these Northerners possessed money and power, to keep good relations with the South, they bowed to Southern demands. Only Baldwin opposed southern custom, formed an alliance with Walter Hines Page, and

⁶Arnold Rose, The Negro in America: The Condensed Version of Gunnar Myrdal's An American Dilemma (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1944), pp. 286-87.

threatened to withdraw his support from the Southern Educational Conference, though his early death prevented this action.

There were probably several reasons that Northerners refused to question southern Negro policy, all directly related to maintaining good relations with the South. First, Southern Conference speakers often stated that they wanted to solve their own problems with no Northern interference. Consequently, even if the Northerner opposed Southern demands, to maintain harmony he kept a "hands off" policy. Second, the Northerner did not limit financial aid, another indication of at least tacit agreement with Southern attitudes. Third, when Ogden toured Negro schools, these Northern visitors were probably convinced that the Negro received an adequate education. Finally, in a period when complete statistics were almost impossible to gather, the Northerner had little reason to doubt the Southerner's assertions.

A second reason that the Conference changed its major emphasis from black to white education was to avoid Southern criticism. The black issue was an extremely emotional one and members were surely aware that the organization could be weakened or even dissolved because of this subject. The Reverend Edgar Gardner Murphy reported that he carefully selected speeches on Negro education, aware that some who might address the Conference on this topic could anger the audience and the South in general. Though Negroes attended some conferences, they were never officially invited to address the organization. President Robert Ogden regretted this position he felt obliged to take, for he once said, "I am greatly ashamed, but, nevertheless, it is worse

than useless, at present, to quarrel with conditions we must accept because we cannot control."⁷ Even the Conference tours were planned to maintain harmony because any activity or interest in blacks could stimulate Southern criticism. Georgia's Governor Allan D. Candler, for example, refused to welcome the Conference to his state in 1902 because the previous year it had met in a black Atlanta church on its Southern tour. He was quoted as saying, "Dr. Curry the Peabody agent is a good man, but I don't know about the others."⁸

A third explanation is possible for the shift in emphasis from black to white education. For the first time since the War, people from North and South met with a common purpose: to solve problems in Southern education. Conference members from both regions did not want to jeopardize this new friendly relationship between former enemies. The Northerner would almost certainly lose rapport if he insisted that the Negro remain the main Conference consideration. The South contended it was handling this race problem, so the North could hardly disagree and still hope to maintain harmony.

Most critics maintain that the Conference should be credited with contributing to an educational awakening between 1900 and 1915. In 1910 Ogden, the organization's President proudly declared:

⁷Hugh C. Bailey, Edgar Gardner Murphy: Gentle Progressive (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1968), p. 150.

⁸"Northerners are Criticised," New York World, April 24, 1902. (Taken from Ogden's Notebook.)

But the most encouraging thing in the situation is the intelligent and resolute public spirit that is growing up in the South with regard to education.⁹

The organization's work in behalf of the Negro was not so successful, however. Harlan was only one of several who felt the Conference had little effect on black education:

On the other hand, the Board's efforts seem to have had almost no effect on the Negro schools. Nor did it brake or deflect the course of racism. The time was out of joint, and the statesman-schoolmaster could not set it right.¹⁰

The Conference for Education in the South, therefore, an organization which began with hopes for Negro educational advancement, soon echoed southern beliefs. As this organization fell into line with popular southern leaders, its rhetoric adopted the familiar phrases and myths of those it respected. The conclusion is inescapable: though the Conference for Education in the South contributed to white education, the Negro was soon delegated to a lesser position and essentially ignored.

⁹"Ten Years of Southern Schools," The New York Times, April 20, 1910 (Ogden Notebook).

¹⁰Louis Harlan, Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901-1915 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press), p. 268.

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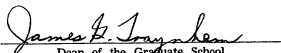
Major Field: Speech

Title of Thesis: The Negro and His Education: Persuasive Strategies of Selected Speeches
at the Conference for Education in the South, 1898-1914

Approved:

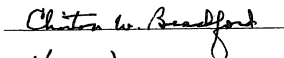


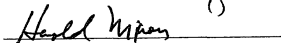
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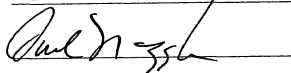
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EXAMINING COMMITTEE:









Date of Examination:

