The Racialized Origins of Violence in the Foundations of Mass Public Education in the US, 1830-1880

by

Tonya M. Kneff-Chang

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Educational Studies)
in the University of Michigan
2020

Doctoral Committee:

Emeritus Professor, David K. Cohen, Co-Chair
Professor Fatma Müge Göçek, Co-Chair
Assistant Professor Michelle J. Bellino
Professor Matthew D. Lassiter
Professor Camille M. Wilson

Tonya M. Kneff-Chang

tkneff@umich.edu

ORCID iD: 0000-0002-7808-5417

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to those who have left this earthly plane, but never my heart: my baby sister, Crystall Starr Bauman; my Gram and childhood confidante, Gerri Bauman; and my advisor and mentor, David K. Cohen.

Acknowledgements

A journey of this magnitude is not a solo one, and I have been blessed with support, love, encouragement, and guidance from so many people. I want to first acknowledge my committee members, each of whom is my intellectual hero, as well as an exemplary scholar and educator.

To my advisor, David K. Cohen, thank you for engaging with me and my ideas with enthusiasm for nearly a decade, brushing away any tendrils of doubt I harbored along the way. David was a mentor unlike any other, who encouraged my instantiable intellectual appetite, validated my ideas and questions, and guided and challenged my thinking in ways both subtle and revolutionary. David made sure I would succeed, through intellectual and financial support. Thank you for investing in me, David. I so miss our conversations, which were always framed as an exchange between colleagues and equals, and though I can never repay you for what you've done, I will pay it forward, in part by tackling the hard stuff head on, pursuing justice, and appreciating the power of education. Thank you, Dr. Cohen, for being part of my journey.

To Fatma Müge Göçek, thank you for investing in me as well. From our first meeting during your post-colonial theory course, I was hooked by your enthusiasm and willingness to challenge the status quo. Your generosity astounds, and I am humbled and filled with gratitude for the many hours we shared pouring over my work in its various forms and directions. Thank you for creating the space for critical scholars, and encouraging us to rethink, deconstruct, and reconstruct the world around us.

To Camille Wilson, you are an inspiration and a model for academic excellence, and I am filled with gratitude for all I have learned from you. Thank you for challenging me, for supporting me, for believing in me. Your feedback and insights were invaluable, and suffused with care for me as well as for a people whose stories I shared. You helped me think of my work in terms of justice, care, and respect, all of which serve to motivate my scholarship. Thank you for your energy, your candor, and your brilliance, and for sharing them with me.

I want to thank you, Matt Lassiter, for being the historian in my corner. The time spent in your classes and through our discussions provided me the necessary space for thinking as an historian. Having always considered myself an educator, history was something I did; I am grateful to you for helping me recognize that it is also something I am.

Michelle Bellino, sad circumstances meant you joined my committee toward the end of my doctoral tenure, but you had already made an impact on me as a scholar and an educator. Thank you for being so thoughtful, which was translated and made accessible through your courses, feedback, and teaching. And thank you for bringing your intellectual and personal brilliance into my final phase. Together, we can make PACS known!

My community transcends boundaries—in geography, in thought, in experiences—and I want to share my love and gratitude for so many of you who helped me reach this point. To Danee Pye, who has been with me since our time at Mt. San Antonio Community College, thank you for always taking me on. You have been there for my biggest, and sometimes hardest, learning moments. Thank you for helping me "do diss" with your time, advice, and seemingly endless re-reads—I would not have finished without you. To my fellow education historian, Kimberly Ransom, what a pleasure to have a colleague, friend, writing partner, archival treasure hunter, and travel buddy whose brilliance shines in all you do. To Katie Haman, my Model UN

partner who shared my commitment for transformative change and social justice, thank you for cheering for me all the way to the finish line. Jon Reimer, my creative and intellectual partner, thank you. Our paths converged in Japan as we created *Yama Gomi*, and I am so thankful we could cross our doctoral finish lines together. To the Vay-Po, Mary Teague, Patricia Dorsher, Tiffany Moreside, Belinda Wolstencroft, Charity Elford, and Erika Pyle, I love ya'll. I know the power of sisterhood because of you.

A doctoral program spans years, and along the way I have engaged with brilliant scholars as we collectively grappled with the ways scholarship could help make a better and more equitable world. To my cohort at the University of Michigan, it has been a pleasure and an honor. I am especially grateful to the PCES crew, Minh Huynh, Christian Fischer, Kwame Yankson, and HyeJin Hwang for taking on post-colonial education with me. Thank you to Nic Boileau, Amber Willis, Charles Wilkes, and Joy Johnson for always being down to think about and discuss race and inequality in education. Thank you as well to Jenny Sawada, a brilliant friend who demonstrated grace and perseverance through incredible hardships. If the mark of a great friendship is hours-long conversations in parking lots after an event has ended, then Carla Dhillon and Matt Alemu are the best. Thank you both for your friendship and support. To my birthday twin, Channing Mathews, who knows what it is like to grow up in southern GA, thank you for our collective celebrations that fed the soul and filled the heart. Jallicia Jolly, I want to thank you for keeping the revolutionary scholar spirit alive. I am so proud to be part of the public scholar collective with you.

There are some friends who deserve special acknowledgement for being willing to read drafts of work. Mollie Bush and Diane Back, this is for you. Not only do I have the privilege of your friendship, but also of your insights on drafts that were sometimes barely coherent. In

addition, there are friends who intervened to have hard conversations about paths taken; I want to thank Yogen Kanthi and Steven Gay for reframing impact so I would stay on mine.

I want to thank my adventure crew, who put fun, laughter, love, and amazing conversations into every trip, dinner, car or boat ride. Alina Veridyan, Sean Duval, Ida Abdalkhani, and Amy Gay – you show the world that love is truly the most powerful force. Valerie Maloof, you have been there to talk (and dance) through any and everything. Thank you for teaching me to #drivelikeagirl. Christian Maloof, thank you for your friendship and all the great wine. Brian Konz and Carla Mickler-Konz your friendship is fuel for the soul. Thank you as well to Lisa Chiya and Heidi Craun, two women who inspire me to be better, do better, and love harder.

In addition, I want to thank some institutions, and the individuals within, especially the School of Education, Educational Studies Department. For the past eight years, the School of Education has been my home, providing space, support, and guidance. Thank you to the staff who help make the SOE function and to the staff who helped me from matriculation to graduation, such as Tina Sanford, Terrie Priebe, Bryon Coleman, Jessica Mason, Kaisa Ryding, and Joanna Elliott-Kovacevich. I have also received grants and stipends that paid for my tuition and health care, for which I am humbly and sincerely grateful. Thank you especially to Eileen Brussolo and Chauna Meyer for advocating on my behalf.

Understanding my own racial identity and how racialization operates is a lifelong process, but I want to thank the Program on Intergroup Relations and Summer Youth Dialogues Program for the opportunities to facilitate conversations about race and ethnicity. Thank you especially to Roger Fisher and Barry Checkoway, who provided mentorship and guidance throughout. Thank you as well to my colleagues and partners of the Student Rights Project and

Student Advocacy Center, especially Peri Stone-Palmquist, who works harder for youth justice that anyone I know.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the National Center for Institutional Diversity as a place of refuge, learning, and solidarity. At NCID I found friendship and mentorship, as well as institutional validation. I want to especially thank Marie Ting for always making time to talk and listen. Marie, you embody scholar-activist through and through. Noe Ortega, thank you for our conversations and projects, which were sources of enlightenment and inspiration. Thank you as well to Phil Bowman and Tabbye Chavous for taking a chance on me. And a huge shout out to all the scholar-activists, especially Raúl Gamez, Gordon Palmer, Christina Morton, Laura Sanchez-Parkinson, Demar Lewis, Alexandria Swift, Dana Brown, Bill Lopez, Charlotte Ezzo, Grecia Serrano-Navarro, Amber Williams, Thalia Maya, and Richard Nunn—you all inspire me. The office door frame talks were the best. I loved learning with you and from you.

My family deserves special recognition for loving and championing me throughout my life. Because of them, I always felt I could accomplish anything. To my Mom, who listened as I lectured even as a child, thank you. To my Dad, who lectured me even as I lectured, thank you. To my siblings, William, Sybrina, Crystall, and James, whose faith in me is inspiring, thank you. To my Gram Gerri, thank you for being my childhood confidante. To my Gramma Carole, you're my best friend and I love you. Thank you for coming to all the graduations and reading all the theses.

To my partner, the other half of my name, Richard Chang, I love you. You've had the unique view of the whole process, which of course included some grueling times. Thank you for finding ways to accommodate (like the no-entry light) and uplift (like the love notes). No matter

the level of stress, you made me laugh every day. Our partnership is my greatest treasure—and I have unparalleled gratitude for you. Thank you for your love and support.

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Abstract

This dissertation is a critical historical inquiry into the role of racialized slavery and violence in the foundations of mass public education during the common school eras of the North and the South, from 1830-1880. The foundations of mass public education in the US are often positioned as a Northern, white-led endeavor, obscuring the roles African Americans played in its development. Employing a critical violence framework informed by Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Peace and Conflict Studies shifts the lens of analysis to illuminate what has been shadowed in historical narratives of how public education came to be. Further, a broader conception of education, one that examines literacy and learning both inside and outside the schoolhouse, as well as a broader conception of violence that includes direct, structural, and cultural violence, spotlights the dynamic relations of power and the role of violence and racism.

Through critical historical inquiry and a violence framework, I challenge narratives of Southern exceptionalism that positioned Northern states as separate from the institution of slavery and white opposition to and hostility toward Black education as a Southern phenomenon. Rather, I show how education in the North during the common school era (1830-1860) was entrenched within the system of slavery and the ideology of white supremacy.

By asking how education became so laden with violence, how violence was justified and legitimated, and why whites perceived Black education as potential violence, I examine the relations and dynamics of African American endeavors to achieve liberation and racial uplift

through education, among white efforts to block, deny, manage, and shape them. Drawing on historical artifacts and accounts documenting African American experiences, I chart how violence traversed African American education during the antebellum North and South and the postbellum Reconstruction era. Whites deployed violence and exclusion in the antebellum North and South in many ways, including excluding free people of color from common schools, burning down Black schools and harassing Black teachers and students, and punishing enslaved Blacks who tried to gain literacy. After the Civil War, whites enacted direct violence such as threats, beatings, arson, and murder, specifically targeting Black educational institutions, teachers, and students. I demonstrate how structural and cultural violence against Black education was legitimated through laws and customs, and justified through racialized ideology and white supremacy stemming from racialized slavery.

Despite multidimensional violence, Blacks persisted in establishing schools in the North and South, and cultivating knowledge networks that would serve as sites of learning and resistance. The story of African American strivings for education enhance historical consciousness and American historical memory by countering erasure of the stories of people of color whose experiences often remain at the margins of historical scholarship. Further, by centering racialized slavery in the history of education and explicitly attending to violence, it is clear that both were critical to shaping the foundations of public education. Also clear are the educational triumphs of many African Americans amidst white violence and how remembering can be a powerful means of resistance.

Chapter 1 Introduction

In *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass,* Frederick Douglass described his journey of literacy and knowledge while still a young boy and a slave in 1830 Baltimore, Maryland, drawing on his experiences with his first teacher and mistress, Sophia Auld. Douglass' curiosity for learning awoke as he listened to Mrs. Auld reading the Bible aloud. Gathering his courage, young Douglass asked Mrs. Auld to teach him to read. Mrs. Auld acquiesced, teaching him with a sense of duty, showing what Douglass interpreted as pride in his progress.

When Douglass' enslaver, Hugh Auld, learned of these lessons, however, he forbade further instruction, telling his wife that teaching a slave to read was both illegal and dangerous. From Hugh Auld's perspective, learning would "spoil" and "unfit" Douglass to be a slave. Frederick Douglass recalled the impact of this lesson that knowledge unfits a child to be a slave and declared, "I instinctively assented to the proposition, and from that moment I understood the direct pathway from slavery to freedom."[1] This pathway from slavery to freedom was, for Douglass, education.

Both Frederick Douglass and Hugh Auld understood education to be incompatible with enslavement and racialized subjugation. Further, both imbued liberation within education. White enslavers responded to this understanding by seeking to prevent Blacks from being educated at all, or to educate them in ways that justified the institutions of slavery and racialized hierarchy.

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[1] Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass An American Slave Written by Himself* (Rochester, NY: North Star Office, 1847), 49-50.

They did so through violence, using the force of the whip to assert a primary lesson: that a slave should know nothing but the master's will.

Through her husband, Mrs. Auld learned that education had no place in a system of slavery. Douglass described Mrs. Auld's struggle of consciousness, as she internalized her husband's lesson that there were "peculiar rules necessary…in the management of human chattels."[2] She went from Douglass' affectionate and tender teacher to a violent opponent of his reading and learning. "The conviction once thoroughly established in her mind," Douglass wrote, "that education and slavery were incompatible with each other" resulted in Mrs. Auld's anger and wrath toward Douglass, ceasing all benevolence and humane treatment.[3] Douglass, who "resolved to *know,"* rejected the Aulds' attempts to keep him in ignorance, despite violence towards his learning. For Douglass, education was key to his liberation in mind and body.

Frederick Douglass, Hugh Auld, and Sophia Auld each represent three distinct positions in the historical relationship between slavery, education, and racialized violence in the antebellum (1815-1860) and postbellum period (1865-1880). Frederick Douglass represented a Black liberationist view that education was the path to freedom. Hugh Auld represented a white supremacist view to deny literacy, prevent education, and deploy violence. Sophia Auld represented a middle approach, in which reformers, in particular, white middle class Protestant women sought to educate the slaves (and later the freedpeople) within paradigms of Protestantism and industrial capitalism. Such was a strategy, not of liberation, but of moral development and liberal uplift that served to maintain the dominant relations of power.

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[2] Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*, 49. Chattel slavery meant that enslaved humans were legally designated as property that could be bought and sold.

[3] Ibid, 52.

Moreover, it was situated within an ideology of white supremacy and racism, which fostered Black subjugation to white domination. Like the white enslaver who denied Black education, the white reformer sought to control and manage Black minds. Both positions provided whites with the means to justify and legitimate violence against Blacks through efforts to control Black minds and bodies.

Each of these perspectives offer an important understanding of education: literacy and learning had power. How that power was wielded is also telling: for Douglass, education had the power to liberate, first the mind, and then the body. Through education, then, Douglass would become unfit for slavery. For the Aulds, controlling education thorough a system of violence and racial subjugation was key to maintaining Douglass' fit for enslavement. Employing education as tool of power has implications not only for the meanings, purposes, and values of education, but also for whom is deemed worthy of education. The notion that education needs to be controlled indicates that people attributed power to learning. The fact that people risked physical harm to learn, and to teach, similarly suggests that people attributed power to education. Furthermore, the belief that some groups should not be allowed access to education also speaks to the power of education. Thus, education—perceived or otherwise—is powerful.

Frederick Douglass' experiences with education occurred during the common school movement from 1830-1860. The common school movement describes a period when states were developing systems of public education—that is, education that was supported through public taxation, regulated through state mechanisms, and open to all elementary-age children. It was during this period that states passed a series of reforms to shape and manage the education of

youth.[4] As Douglass' experience highlighted, intersections between violence, race, and education prevailed. In northern states, education reformers embedded race-based restrictions on who could attend public schools and have access to public school funds, systematically denying access to free Blacks. In addition, states passed immigration laws to limit Black mobility. As white education reformers pushed a common school agenda, they simultaneously pushed a white supremacist agenda. This agenda established common schools as white by excluding Black students from common schools, regulating public funding to support white schools, and using threats, intimidation, harassment, arson, and riots to attack Black access to education. This was common across states, regardless of whether the state entered the Union as a free or slave state.[5] Prior to universal suffrage for Black men in 1870, free Blacks were mostly disenfranchised, which meant they did not have their vote as political leverage to support public education for Black children. To add further insult to injury, Black people paid taxes that supported schools from which their children were excluded.

In the slave-holding South from 1830-1863, enslaved Blacks were violently denied access to education and literacy, as whites like Hugh Auld considered education and literacy to undermine the institution of racialized slavery and its ideology of white supremacy. Henry Bibb, who, like Frederick Douglass, escaped slavery in 1840 and became an abolitionist and newspaper editor, declared in 1851 that education was "emphatically the most effectual

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[4] As the US Constitution does not provide for public education on a national level, states and localities were left to provide provisions for educating their young. Prior to the 1830s, most states did not have systems of public education, but rather tuition-based private academies.

[5] See Stephen Middleton, *The Black Laws in the Old Northwest: A Documentary History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1993). Middleton explained how Black laws in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin limited Black freedom, restricted access to resources, and denied political participation. Anti-Black racism was embedded in the laws and customs of states even as they became part of the republic.

protection to personal or political liberty with which the human family can be armed."[6] Educating people of color "to read and write intelligibly" was "more dreaded by the slaveholders than bowie-knives or pistols." In this sense, education would not only serve as the pathway to freedom, but also guarantee that freedom would not again be taken away. Education, then, was power. In this, whites agreed; education was indeed powerful. White enslavers violently opposed and prohibited Black literacy and education during slavery, employing white patrollers to "break up" schools, to destroy tangible instruments of learning such as books, and to violently punish those who would teach enslaved Blacks. With emancipation in 1863, clandestine schools, which were secret schools for Blacks often set up and taught by Black churches and ministers despite prohibitions in law and custom, dropped the shrouds of secrecy. As Black people embraced their freedom, they embraced the means of formal education, such as literacy and learning. As Black education and learning moved from the shadows, however, so too did white violence targeting Black education. Whites burned Black schools and churches across the South, and attacked Black students, teachers, and their white allies. The levels of white violence that followed Black emancipation from enslavement were so intense that the post-Civil War period from 1865-1877 has been referred to as a regime of terror. This period following the Civil War is known as the Reconstruction era, whereby federal efforts aimed to integrate the Southern Confederate secessionist states back into the Union. The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, known as the Freedmen's Bureau, was established in 1865 and headed by General Oliver Otis Howard.[7] The Freedmen's Bureau coordinated the activities of Northern Aid Societies, or

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[6] Henry Bibb, John T. Fisher, and James D. Tinsley, "An Address to the Colored Inhabitants of North America," September 1851, in *The Black Abolitionist Papers, Volume II, Canada, 1830-1865,* ed. Peter C. Ripley (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 173.

[7] *First Freedmen's Bureau Act*, March 3, 1865. Congress voted to extend the life of the Bureau and its power, which President Andrew Johnson vetoed because it violated states' rights. Johnson's veto was overridden by Congress and in July 1866, the

Benevolent societies, which were secular and sectarian activists, abolitionists, and philanthropists who traveled south to aid the emancipated Blacks, or freedpeople, in their transition from slavery to freedom.[8] Education—setting up schools, teaching freed Blacks, and training teachers—was their primary concern. Education was also a primary concern for the freedpeople, who advocated for schools. Yet, Freedmen's Bureau officers and Northern Aid Societies began withdrawing their support for Black education in the South as early as 1867, only two years after the Civil War.[9] White southerners who had violently denied education to enslaved Blacks, persisted in their violent efforts to destroy "the Black dream of intellectual emancipation through education."[10] These acts of violence and terror, such as arson, beatings, rape, and murder, were deliberate and prevalent throughout southern states. Further, they were explicitly directed at expressions of Black freedom and power, of which education was primary.

From the Periphery: Centering Race, Violence, and Slavery in Mass Public Education

As an undergraduate, I studied peace and conflict studies (PACS), which meant I spent a lot of time with violence. I had been trained to see violence beyond its direct and physical

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second Freedmen's Bureau Act passed and included language regarding the conduct of schools in the South: "the Commissioner of this bureau shall at all times co-operate with private benevolent associations of citizens in aid of freedmen, and with agents and teachers, duly accredited and appointed by them, and shall hire or provide by lease, buildings for purposes of education whenever such associations shall, without cost to the Government, provide suitable teachers and means of instruction; and he shall furnish such protection as may be required for the safe conduct of such schools," Section 13, *Second Freedmen's Bureau Act*, July 16, 1866.

[8] "Freedmen" is the term often used to designate formerly enslaved Blacks after the Emancipation Proclamation (1863) and the passage of the 13th amendment abolishing slavery (1865). In addition, education of former slaves in the 1860s and 1870s was often referred to as "freedmen's education." Throughout this dissertation, I will use the term "freedpeople" to signify an inclusion of freedmen and freedwomen. The term "freedmen" will still be employed in the context of official titles, such as the Freedmen's Bureau or Freedmen's societies.

[9] Funding for the Freedmen's Bureau was through Congress, with educational efforts often funded through the sale of confiscated lands. See Mary J. Farmer-Kaiser, *Freedwomen and the Freedmen's Bureau: Race, Gender, and Public Policy in the Age of Emancipation*. Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 2010, 174, note 2.

[10] Ronald E. Butchart, "Black Hope, White Power: Emancipation, Reconstruction and the Legacy of Unequal Schooling in the US South, 1861-1880" *Paedagogica Historica*, 46, nos. 1-2, (February-April 2010): 37.

manifestations, as embedded in and constructed by actions and structures. Yet, violence remained at the periphery of most of my graduate school career in educational studies. It wasn't until I came across an article discussing racialized violence in education after the Civil War that I began to really ask about the role of violence in the history of US education.[11] I began researching race and education during the postbellum Reconstruction era (1863-1877), examining how violence manifested and how it was justified and legitimized. I could see in historical records how violence in education, and specifically, education for African Americans, was ever adapting, and continued to permeate the 20th century. I soon came to realize, however, I was missing something critical as I investigated the narrative of education history. I was moving forward temporally, but needed to reverse my timeline to examine the period of racialized slavery as well. The common school movement, generally spatially situated in the 19th century North, was occurring during the time of racialized slavery in the South. However, historical narratives of the development of public education rarely discuss racialized slavery or the South, except as points of focus or exception. Similarly, historical narratives of racialized slavery occurring simultaneously during the common school era of the 1830-1860s glossed over education, or included it as a separate area of focus or exception. This left me wondering, what if I were to center racialized slavery and its violence in the foundations of mass education? How would the narrative of US public education be altered?

What I found by centering racialized slavery in the history of public education is that racism and violence were embedded into its foundations. Although early 20th century Black scholars such as Anna Julia Cooper, W. E. B. Du Bois, Carter G. Woodson, Horace Mann Bond, and John Hope Franklin challenged dominant hegemonic narratives that kept Black education

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[11] Butchart, "Black Hope, White Power," 33-50.

and race relations in the US in the shadows, their work is not often connected to dominant history of education narratives. Nor is the violence they illuminated taken as a focus of analysis within histories of education. Contemporary historians of Black education in the South, such as James Anderson, Heather Andrea Williams, and Christopher Span have continued to point out the significance and relevance of race and of African Americans in the development of US public education during the 19th century, exposing how Blacks persisted and thrived amid racism and violence. Building upon these scholars, I center racialized slavery in the history of education. I also explicitly attend to violence, demonstrating that violence was embedded in and critical to shaping the foundations of education.

In this dissertation, I explore how education became so laden with racialized violence. I argue that race and racism were built into the foundations of mass public education through the connections between slavery, violence, and Black education in the South. Given the connection between education and freedom in the antebellum US—especially the three decades prior to the Civil War from 1830 to 1860—my research explores the struggle over efforts to liberate or enslave minds, and the various means of violence in these efforts. Further, I suggest these connections have major implications for the development of mass public education more broadly. Through critical historical inquiry, I examine the relations and dynamics of African American endeavors to achieve liberation through education, among white efforts to block, deny, manage, and shape them. Education in the US has often been connected to notions of freedom and uplift, especially during the common school movement of the 1830s. The range of literature demonstrates that the purposes of education are often defined within complex social relations of power. Education scholars who have explored purposes and meanings of education revealed that various social groups have positioned education in the US as a means to some end. For example,

education has been used to pursue freedom, citizenship, and social mobility among marginalized groups.[12] Education has been used to instill moral values of hard work and virtue or skills and knowledge for specific social class positions.[13] Education has also been used as a weapon.[14] Beliefs that some groups should be denied access to education, that knowledge should be controlled, and that violence against education is justified all speak to perceived power of education. That enslaved Blacks risked physical harm to learn, and to teach, similarly indicates that education has power and value.

There is no doubt that slavery in the United States was violent. From the physical beatings and dismemberments enslaved Blacks endured, to their forced labor, to the denial of their humanity, to rape and family separations, violence was everywhere—in the mundane social relations and interactions, at the auction block, and in the kitchens and fields of the plantations. To deny the violence of slavery would not only be a gross misrepresentation of history, but also it could be interpreted as an act of violence.[15] In contrast, the foundations of public education,

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[12] Vincent Harding, *There is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in* America (New York: Vintage Books, 1981); Christopher M. Span and James D. Anderson, "The Quest for 'Book Learning:' African American Education in Slavery and Freedom," In *A Companion of African American History,* ed. Alton Hornsby, Jr., (Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005); Barry A. Crouch and Larry Madaras, *The Dance of Freedom: Texas African Americans during* Reconstruction (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007).

[13] William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001); David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot, *Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980* (Lexington, KY: Basic Books, 1982); Michael W. Apple*, Ideology and Curriculum* (Boston, MA: Routledge & K. Paul, 1979); Pierre Bourdieu, "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction," in *Knowledge, Education, and Cultural Change,* ed. Richard Brown (London, UK: Tavistock, 1973); Samuel Bowles & Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1976); Jean Anyon, "Social Class and School Knowledge," *Curriculum Inquiry* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 3-42.

[14] David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875*-1928 (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Brenda J. Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

[15] Fatma Müge Göçek offered a compelling rationale against denying the violence of our social and national past. Drawing on Turkey's continual denial of the Armenian Genocide of 1915, Göçek explained the persistent intergenerational harm among victimized communities through the denial of violence and demonstrated the impact of denial, which "passes through generations as the descendants of survivors are also caught in a constant state of emotional upheaval: the wounds cannot heal, imprisoning all in the past and undermining their faith in humanity and justice," 10-11. In *Denial of Violence*, *Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence against the Armenians, 1789* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009).

laid during the common school movement from 1830-1860 in the North and during Reconstruction (1865-1877) in the South, are rarely considered violent within histories of education.

As renowned historian Carl Kaestle wrote, "throughout American history, many people have looked to public education to resolve cultural conflict. While the schools have often abused different cultures, demanding cultural conversion without yielding equal opportunity, it was nonetheless a peaceful and seemingly democratic solution, accepted by some immigrants as well as by native-born Americans."[16] Kaestle noted there were "differing degrees in different communities" of discrimination in the workplace, segregation, and violence, but on the whole, Kaestle did not position violence as a central tenet of US public education. Kaestle was referring to the development of mass public education, also known as *common schools* or *common schooling*, a system of state-sponsored free schools open to American children, which were developing in the three decades prior to the Civil War. Of course, the term "mass" is misleading; mass public education was mostly open to white children, with free Black and brown children attending their own schools, or not attending at all. In Kaestle's narrative of common schools, widespread acceptance of Protestant ideology, republicanism, and capitalism were the foundations of common schools in the North, and by extension, the foundations of US mass public education.[17] Protestantism included notions of social uplift or improvement through character and moral development, self-restraint, discipline, punctuality, hard work, sobriety, and virtue. In addition, nineteenth century Protestantism embraced literacy, as it would enable

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[16] Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 72.

[17] In Kaestle's metaphor, common schools represent pillars that uphold the republic of the United States. Protestantism, capitalism, and republicanism form the base of these pillars.

individual access to the Bible, and thus to salvation.[18] Republicanism concerned governance in a democratic republic. Education was viewed as a means to mitigate the tension between liberty and order, as it would "prepare men to vote intelligently and prepare women to train their sons properly."[19] Capitalism concerned the economic roles of production, industry, and progress. Absent this narrative, however, is the role of racism and racialized slavery in constructing republicanism and capitalism. Also absent is how racism, and the white supremacist ideology that underpinned it, is violence.

Moreover, Kaestle's analysis framed education as schooling, that is, state-sponsored tax-supported public education, which occurred at the site of the schoolhouse. In Kaestle's view, "society educates in many ways; the state educates through schools."[20] Journalist Annette Fuentes, like Kaestle, situated her book, *Lockdown High,* in the schoolhouse, focusing on contemporary school discipline and punishment. For Fuentes, the nineteenth century common school systems were seeking to shape and correct behavior, especially for European immigrants. Both Fuentes and Kaestle acknowledged how white fears of social disorder and juvenile delinquency were prevalent and influenced education reforms. Fuentes, who drew most of her analysis from the 20th century, pushed back against schools' historic representation as "Norman Rockwell havens of quaint custom and benign behavior," arguing, "long before the term *school violence* entered popular parlance, before metal detectors became fixtures at the schoolhouse door, before the Lockdown High approach to school safety gained currency, conflict and

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[18] For more about the Protestant ethic and the development of public school, see David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot, *Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980* (Lexington, KY: Basic Books, 1982); For a discussion of how literacy enabled access to scriptures, see William J. Reese, *America's Public Schools: From the Common School to "No Child Left Behind"* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 17.

[19] Kaestle, *Pillars*, 5.

[20] Kaestle, *Pillars,* xi.

violence of one sort or another were part of this country's education system."[21] Fuentes offered accounts of brutal punishments students endured, including lashings with the cat-o'-nine-tails[22] for behaviors such as telling lies or co-ed recreation.[23] It is within these conceptual and temporal intersections that I insert my work.

Conceptually, I agree with Fuentes that violence is an understudied but critical component of the education system in the US. Temporally, like Kaestle, I locate my study in the 19th century, during what is known as the *common school era* when education reformers sought state-regulated, tax-supported, and professionally managed systems of public schooling. In contrast to both Kaestle and Fuentes, however, I shift the question about children in schools to ask why some children were *not* in the public schoolhouse. Historical records demonstrated that discussions about the education of Blacks were ever-present in the North and in the South. Moreover, violence against Blacks seeking education was also prevalent. Yet, Black education and the white violence that accompanied it, remains absent or on the periphery of the narrative of common schooling and mass public education. To demonstrate the presence of racism and violence in the development of public education, I draw on a broader conception of education, one that examines literacy and learning both inside and outside the schoolhouse. I aim to illuminate what is hidden in plain sight, shifting the lens of analysis to what remains marginalized and obscured, and traversing multiple domains to spotlight dynamic relations of power.

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[21] Annette Fuentes, *Lockdown High: When the Schoolhouse Becomes a* Jailhouse (New York: Verso, 2011), 1.

[22] A cat-o'-nine-tails was a type of whip that had multiple cords (usually nine), some of which may have been knotted or tipped with barbs or metal.

[23] Corporal punishment of youth was not unusual during the early 19th century, but as both Fuentes and Kaestle pointed out, widespread acceptance for excessively harsh punishments had decreased at the turn of the century. Kaestle provided 3 reasons for the decrease in corporal punishments: 1) compassionate teachers, 2) feminine stereotypes and an increase in women teachers, and 3) campaigns for moral persuasion, *Pillars,* 19-20.

While I concur the state had a major role in schooling, I question what we are missing by conceptualizing education within the boundaries of state-regulated and state-funded public schooling. By positioning education within the public schoolhouse, the subject of study becomes those who were able to attend school. This means, for example, the four million enslaved African Blacks in the South who were systematically denied access to formalized learning remain on the periphery of the foundations of the American education story. I intend to bring those excluded from the schoolhouse into the American education story.

Further, who could and should be punished in the pursuit of education are questions of concern in this dissertation. Slaves who were brutally punished for reading, having books, or using twigs to write their ABCs in the dirt may not have been in the schoolhouse, but their experiences demonstrated a clear connection between education and violence. Moreover, that slavery was racialized demonstrated that race and racism played a crucial role. Despite lacking well-defined state-led school reform measures, state and local policies, cultural norms, and power dynamics existed in slave states and impacted Black access to education and Black education.

Histories of education often focus on the Northeast (especially Massachusetts) as the site of the development of mass public education, and while I do not contest the importance of Northern states in developing common schools, I do contest the exclusion of racialized slavery in the foundations story.[24] By positioning the foundations of mass public education as a Northern, white-led endeavor, the roles African Americans played in the development of mass public education are obscured. For example, it is generally accepted that mass public education in the

[24] Northeastern states include Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Other Northern states include New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. See Figure 1.

North began systematically developing during the 1830s until about 1860, while in the South systematic development began after the Civil War (1861-1865), continuing through the period of Reconstruction (1865-1877). Since most southern states had limited systems of state-sponsored common schools, the South was either ignored in the history of mass public education, treated as a separate region of exception, or considered to have followed in the footsteps of Northern school reformers.[25] Similarly obscured is the range of white violence against Black education, in the South as well as the North. I propose looking at the foundations of US public education as more than state-sponsored schooling, and looking at racialized slavery in the South as connected to the development of US public education more generally. The connection between education and freedom, for example, impacted Black education in the South, as Black educational efforts such as literacy were met with violent white responses. Education in the North was also entrenched within the system of slavery, which played out in racial exclusion from common schools and state funding.

Research Questions and Significance of Study

To explore the dynamics of racism and violence in the foundations of mass public education and the relationship between education, race, and violence during slavery and Reconstruction in the United States from 1830-1880, I pose the following research questions:

> *RQ 1*: How did race and racism manifest in US education during the antebellum and postbellum common school eras from 1830-1880?
> *RQ2*: What was the relationship between education, race, power, and violence during slavery and Reconstruction from 1830-1880? How did Northern and Southern Blacks distinguish education and literacy as a path to liberation and citizenship?

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[25] Kaestle suggested that Northern acceptance and implementation of common schools occurred by 1860. Further, he characterized the notion of southern states having distinctly different attitudes toward education as a "half-truth," as reform efforts and support for common schooling abounded, xi. Sarah L Hyde in *Schooling in the Antebellum South* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2016) described how some southern states (Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana) had systems of common schools.

RQ 3: Why did many Southern whites perceive Black education as a violent act or as an act with great potential for violence? Further, what were the features of the US slave system that encouraged such perceptions?
RQ 4: How did whites justify and legitimize violence, terror, and use of state power to regulate Black literacy and Black educational life?

Drawing on historical artifacts and accounts documenting African American experiences during the foundations of mass public education, I conducted a critical historical inquiry. Historical inquiry offers interpretation of events of the past, while critical historical inquiry also attends to the role of power. With attention to multiple domains of violence, I examined a broad array of primary source materials, including slave narratives, testimonies of the formerly enslaved, and Black-authored histories. I analyzed sources of public discourse such as pamphlets, newspapers, speeches, almanacs, and meeting minutes, as well as cultural artifacts such as textbooks, novels, and cartoons. I also examined congressional hearings, laws, and reports and correspondence from officials in the field and teachers in classrooms to chart how violence traversed African American education during the antebellum North and South and the postbellum Reconstruction era.

This work contributes to American historical memory and to the larger narrative of the history of public education in the US. Attending to these questions is important because continuing to focus mass public education on the Northern, in-school experiences obscures and erases how education was enmeshed with the social and cultural constructs of race, difference, and otherness. While the importance of education has been well-established throughout history, there remains a lack of historical understanding of how education has been used, controlled, and pursued, as well as how access to education has been and continues to be a racialized process.[26]

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[26] In contemporary contexts, Americans often view schools as the cure to society's problems, yet the history of education is generally neither known nor appreciated by policy makers and education reformers. See Thomas C. Hunt, "Education Reforms:

This work aims to remember, through the experiences of people of color, how education was used as a tool of power. Moreover, my work is significant for its emphasis on violence, spotlighting its role, impacts, and meanings as mass public education developed.

Defining Terms

Before moving onto the literature and conceptual frames, it is important to clarify how I use and situate several terms, specifically *race*, *violence*, *education*, and *the South*.

Race, Racism, Racialized Slavery, and Enslavement

Race is a cultural and social construction. While it is real, and has real consequences, history and culture have made it so; it is not primordial or biological. Anthropologist Audrey Smedley described the "ideology of race," which "originated as a folk ideology about human differences and was constituted of beliefs and attitudes about these differences."[27] These beliefs held that there existed different, unequal groups, made unequal by God or nature. Such attitudes and beliefs, she pointed out, were established during the same time period as laws to establish slavery in the US, and were further legitimized by scientific rationales of the late 18th century.[28] *Racism* is a structural and systemic hierarchy of power based in constructed notions of race. Critical race scholar, Derrick Bell, offered three components that structure systemic racism in the United States: 1) whites are superior to blacks inherently, 2) the US is a white country (as

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Lessons from History" *Phi Delta Kappan* 87, no. 1 (September 2005); David Tyack and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[27] Quoted in Alan H. Goodman, Yolanda T. Moses, & Joseph L. Jones, *Race: Are We So Different?* (UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 21.

[28] From 1690 to 1725, racial slavery restricted "rights of Africans and their descendants, imposing permanent slavery on them, and forbidding masters to set them free" (Smedley, quoted in Goodman, Moses, & Jones, *Are We So Different*, 23). At the same time, colonial leaders created notions of racial identity by homogenizing Europeans into a new social category, pointing out that the first time "white" appeared in the public record was in a 1691 law forbidding marriage of Europeans with Negroes, Indians, and mulattoes.

contrasted to a county with a white majority), and thus black institutions and success are suspect, and 3) whites' fear of black inundation.[29] These notions of superiority based on perceptions of racialized difference are coupled with social and institutional power. Racism, then, is constructed through difference and connected to systems of power, with benefits bestowed upon the dominant group.[30]

Borrowing from Smedley, I employ the term *racialized slavery* to suggest the process and development of race and slavery in tandem. Similarly, I frequently use the term *enslaved* as a means to suggest a particular spatial, temporal, and social condition that was not fixed, predestined, or inevitable. In this study, I also employ racialized terms that demarcate social identity and position, such as enslaved Black, free Black, white enslaver, and white overseer.[31] The terms *Black* and *African American* are used throughout this study, often interchangeably, and are used to describe a social and cultural group. Members of a racialized social group were not homogenous or monolithic in thought or experience, but were generally defined and constructed through various social, cultural, political, economic, and legal means. Terms such as

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[29] Derrick Bell, *Race, Racism, and American* Law (New York: Aspen Publishers, 2008), 55.

[30] Critical race theorists, Daniel G. Solórzano and Tara J. Yosso, "Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research," *Qualitative Inquiry* 8, no. 1 (November 1, 2002), defined racism as a system and an "institutional power" whereby "(a) One group deems itself superior to all others, (b) the group that is superior has the power to carry out the racist behavior, and (c) racism benefits the superior group while negatively affecting other racial and/or ethnic groups," (24). Lawrence Bobo, James R. Kluegel, and Ryan A. Smith, "Laissez-Faire Racism: The Crystallization of a Kinder, Gentler, Antiblack Ideology. *Racial Attitudes in the 1990s: Continuity and Change*, ed. Steven A. Tuch and Jack K. Martin (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), use William Julius Wilson's (1973) definition of racism as "an ideology of racial domination or exploitation that (1) incorporates beliefs in a particular race's cultural and/or inherent biological inferiority and (2) uses such beliefs to justify and prescribe inferior or unequal treatment for that group" (Wilson, p. 32, quoted on p. 4). I offer these definitions to highlight how race and racism are constructed through and rely upon on notions of "otherness" and difference, and the role of power. These definitions challenge notions of racism as being solely the product of individual attitudes and beliefs. See also Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 1-18.

[31] Daina Rima Berry and Kali Nicole Gross in their book, *A Black Women's History of the United States* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2020) elected to use the term "slaveholder" to "represent African Americans who held other African Americans in bondage" and the term "enslaver" to represent non-Blacks who forced Blacks into slavery (xii). The distinction lay in who had power within the slave system, rather than solely within the practice of having or holding slaves. I use *enslaved* and *enslaver* as a demarcation of a process of enacting bondage upon another. I use slaveowner, plantation owner, and master as well to signify social identity and position.

"Negro" and "colored" were common to the time period I investigated, and when historical actors and documents used them, I did as well.[32] Despite these and other terms being jarring, offensive, and even hurtful in our present-day discourse, I elected to let the voices of history speak, rather than changing the language to reflect current norms.

These terms may have been used by the historical actors, but they were not meant to encapsulate all facets of identity or thought, as the human experience was dynamic, and often riddled with contradictions and contestation. That said, the social relations of power in a system of racialized slavery had a hierarchy that drew on notions of race to position people within the hierarchy. Poet and author Toni Morrison suggested the very concept of freedom and the rights of man was connected to the hierarchy of race. Slavery constructed a *not-free, not-me* dyad: "construction of blackness *and* enslavement could be found not only [in] the not-free but also, with the dramatic polarity created by skin color, the projection of the not-me."[33] The free white is thus constructed in contrast to the enslaved Black, with freedom, rights, and citizenship bestowed upon the former.[34] If freedom had no meaning without enslavement, as Morrison argued, then whiteness had no meaning without Blackness. As such, my dissertation engages with this dyad, especially as it related the power to legitimize and justify violence.

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[32] I capitalize *Black* as I would *African American*, which refers to a distinct group within American society. Critical race scholars, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1988): 1241-1299 and Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (June 1993), 1707-1791, pointed out that specific cultural groups, such as Latinos, Asians, and Blacks should be recognized as proper nouns. Harris wrote "Although 'white' and 'Black' have been defined oppositionally, they are not functional opposites. 'White' has incorporated Black subordination; 'Black' is not based on domination" (1710, note 3). The capitalization of the word "Negro" was discussed by W. E. B. Dubois, who pointed out that a lower case "n" was used by whites to denote an inferior status; see Donald L. Grant & Mildred Bricker Grant, "Some Notes on the Capital 'N,'" *Phylon* 36, no. 4 (4th Quarter, 1975). For a contemporary article discussing this, see Lori Tharps' New York Times article, *The Case for Black with a Capital B,* November 18, 2014. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/19/opinion/the-case-for-black-with-a-capital-b.html.

[33] Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 38.

[34] Ian Haney López explained in *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 2006) that the first act on citizenship passed by Congress in 1790 restricted citizenship to "white persons," and despite changes to include or exclude other racialized groups, whiteness as a "racial prerequisite" persisted until 1952, 1.

Education, Literacy, and Schooling

It is important to clarify what I mean by education. Education historians such as Lawrence Cremin and Bernard Bailyn rightly pointed out that education was not solely the formal, in-school teaching and learning, but rather, it was a process by which knowledge and culture were transmitted across generations.[35] Throughout this study, I borrow from Cremin's interpretation of education as "the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, skills and sensibilities, as well as any learning that results from the effort, direct or indirect, intended or unintended."[36] Despite the stage of development of public education or common schooling in southern slave states, flows of knowledge and culture were conveyed systematically during slavery through various means. A definition of education that focuses on the material and spatial components of schooling (i.e., the schoolhouse) does not render these various means visible. Thus, to limit education to schools would suggest that education was not happening in the South before it was formalized or located in schoolhouses. As African Americans sought and gained knowledge from 1830-1880, their particular social location, whether they were free, enslaved, or freed, impacted the dynamics—

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[35] Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964); Bernard Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1960).

[36] Lawrence Cremin, "Notes Toward a Theory of Education," *Institute of Philosophy and Politics of Education,* Teachers College, Columbia University (1973). Though Cremin also distinguished education as a more limited process than acculturation (assimilating to culture) or socialization (learning social behavior), he recognized multiple individuals (including the self) and institutions make up "configurations of education." He wrote, "particular educational institutions at any given time interact with one another and with the larger society that sustains them and is in turn affected by them. Configurations of education also interact, as configurations, with the larger society," 1. For Cremin, these educational institutions were not limited to schools, but also included people (family, peers), social institutions (churches, libraries, museums), media (radio, television), and spaces of social interactions (summer camps, settlement houses, fairs).

i.e., when, where, how—of teaching and learning.[37] This definition helps capture their experiences.

Another related term that is sometimes used synonymously with education is literacy. Literacy is defined as the ability to read and write.[38] While literacy can be considered a component of education, for many African Americans, literacy, or "book learning," was the bedrock of education.[39] Slave narratives and testimonies did not always differentiate between education and literacy, but they did associate education in its multiple forms with freedom. I use education to encompass the processes and experiences of knowledge production, which included literacy, and may have included schooling. Where historical sources made distinctions, I did as well.

The South

The concept of "the South" as some sort of monolithic, coherent, connected space is far from accurate. Borders were often porous, and there was no centralized Southern governing body or cultural cohesion. That said, historical records distinguished "the South" from "the North," (which also had porous and dynamic borders and culture), with both regions carrying markers of identity that held real and perceived meanings for people. Early 20th century histories written

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[37] Carter Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (New York: Arno Press, Inc., 1968); Horace Mann Bond, *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order* (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966).

[38] Carl F. Kaestle in "Studying the History of Literacy," in *Literacy in the United States: Readers and Reading since 1880* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), defined literacy "as the ability to decode and comprehend written language at a rudimentary level—that is, the ability to say written words corresponding to ordinary oral discourse and to understand them" (3). Pre-1850 literacy rates are difficult to substantiate as many historians determined literacy by their ability to sign their name on legal or governmental documents, such as army and marriage registers. Nineteenth century census records that reported literacy rates did not have a standard by which to measure literacy. In 1840, the census figures were self-reported, and subsequent census literacy questions differed in terms of the wording of the questions and the age group of people asked. As Kaestle pointed out, "at worst, census illiteracy statistics measure nothing more than people's willingness to admit illiteracy; at best, they indicate a minimal estimate of illiteracy," 24.

[39] Christopher M. Span and James D. Anderson, "The Quest for 'Book Learning:' African American Education in Slavery and Freedom," In *A Companion of African American History,* ed. Alton Hornsby, Jr. (Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005).

about Northern teachers and their lack of understanding of Southern culture and norms suggested that being "Southern" or being "Northern" was an important distinction of identity.[40] Even as I employ caution against over generalizing regionalized or spatialized characterizations, I also recognize that discourses of the time drew on such distinctions. In this study, I refer to the South as the geographic region comprising states not just where slavery was legal prior to the Civil War, but also those states that comprised the Confederacy (see Figure 1).[41] Some states, such as Delaware and Maryland, had slaves but were not often considered Southern. Kentucky and Missouri were slave states that adopted Confederate ordinances but were not officially under Confederate control during the Civil War.[42] Where there were distinctions such as the Upper or Lower South, or border state, I noted them. Southern states considered in this study included the border state of Missouri; the lower south state of Louisiana; Tennessee; and Georgia.

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[40] Many white historians in the first half of the 20th century like Walter L. Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1911) and Henry Lee Swint, *The Northern Teacher in the South, 1862-1870* (New York: Octagon Books, 1941/1967), described southern white resistance to Black education as a reaction to provocation by northern teachers. Fleming argued that some Southern whites welcomed Black schools, while all Southern whites tolerated them, but it was not until Blacks were educated by northern whites, who instilled insolence in Blacks, did whites react against Black education. Writing in 1974, historian William Preston Vaughn in *Schools for All: The Blacks and Public Education in the South, 1865*-1877 (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1974) also blamed white southern violence on hatred of northerners: "Frequently whites directed their anger as much against the presence of federal troops, the bureau, or carpetbag politicians holding forth at local courthouses, as at the idea of black education," 44.

[41] Prior to the Civil War, there were 34 states. The North included states in New England (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut) as well as New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. The Midwest included Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, and Minnesota, with California and Oregon comprising the West. For a brief discussion of the notion of the South as the Confederacy, see Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams* (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 16.

[42] These four states, Delaware, Maryland, Missouri and Kentucky were known as border states, states with legalized slavery that bordered both the North and the South.

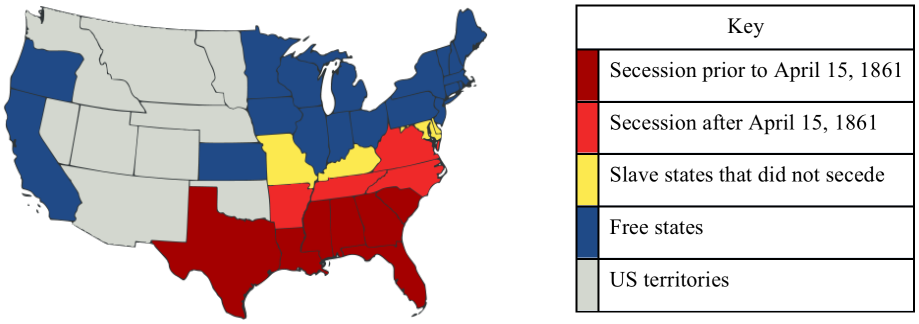

Figure 1: US Secession Map, 1861, Map Image courtesy of Júlio Reis, Creative Commons 3.0[43]

Violence

Defining violence and how it connects to education requires an examination of the roots and nature of violence. I broadly define violence as actions, institutions, structures, and ideologies, seen and unseen, direct and indirect, that cause harm within structures of domination.[44] This project aims to give shape to how violence manifested in the development of public education by focusing on the Black educational experience in the South during slavery and Reconstruction, which occurred contemporaneously with the common school movement in the North. Because violence is the central tenet of my project, each chapter will discuss and develop violence across social, political, and cultural dimensions.

Violence is readily evinced through physical force or threat of physical force intended to harm or threaten. Historians who discuss violence during slavery and Reconstruction include physical acts of white violence against Blacks, such as floggings, beatings, rape, murder, or other

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[43] Júlio Reis, "US Secession Map 1861," from Wikimedia Commons, accessed Aug 26, 2016, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:US_Secession_map_1861.svg, Creative Commons 3.0, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/legalcode.

[44] Some scholars define violence as a physical force that inflicts injury to persons or property. Stuart Carroll, *Cultures of Violence: Interpersonal Violence in Historical Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), argued to define violence otherwise rendered violence "ubiquitous," losing the power of differentiation and "sensible distinction," 8. As I argue in this section, however, dismissal of other forms of violence creates shadow violence, obscuring how violence manifests across multiple dimensions. I do not argue that all social structures are acts of violence, but rather, that social structures are embedded in power relations, which affects how violence is legitimized and justified, how it manifests, and how it perpetuates and reproduces.

injurious acts. Such interpretations of violence are accurate, but they do not sufficiently capture the range of violence and its impacts. For example, a regime of forced ignorance for slaves did not only incorporate direct, physical violence against Black bodies, but was also embedded in social structures and facets of culture.

In addition, it is important to attend to the relations of power, as they impact what was considered violence and who was the victim and perpetrator. Sociologist and Black feminist theorist, Patricia Hill Collins, pointed out that dominant social groups "define violence in ways that legitimate their own power, use those definitions of violence to enforce hierarchical power relations, and then point to ensuing social inequality as proof of the veracity of the definitions of violence themselves."[45] Violence manifested in many forms and occupied multiple dimensions, and thus I argue a broader, more dynamic conception of violence is necessary to encompass the range and multitude of harms against individuals and groups, including those that are somatic, psychological, structural, material, and symbolic. In this dissertation, I explore these definitions and attend to relations of power within the realm of education.

Finally, the notion of intentionality must also be considered when defining violence. The intentional use of force or power to harm has been included in contemporary understandings of violence.[46] Some violence researchers suggest that defining violence is cultural, whereby "some people mean to harm others but, based on their cultural backgrounds and beliefs, do not perceive their acts as violent."[47] In this vein, the intention to harm is present, but those doing the harm do

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[45] Patricia Hill Collins, "The Tie that Binds: Race, Gender, and US Violence," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 5 (September 1998): 920.

[46] "World Report on Violence and Health," eds. Etienne G. Krug, Linda L. Dahlberg, James A. Mercy, Anthony B. Zwi and Rafael Lozano (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2002). See also Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research" *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167-191.

[47] "World Report on Violence and Health," 5.

not define their actions as violent. While demonstrating intentionality can be useful in violence analysis, it is not always necessary. Structures of violence such as poverty do not necessarily have a clearly demarcated agent, but are still considered violent.[48] Further, violence, intentional or otherwise, is situated within social dynamics and the relations of power. In other words, in a system of domination, the dominant group has the power to define and legitimate violence, which also shapes understandings of intent. As a result, this study focuses on the *impact* on the targeted person or group, whether immediate or gradual.

My focus on violence is not a means to make a spectacle or aim for a shock and awe-filled story. Certainly, the horrors of violence knew no bounds for Blacks seeking education, with stories that were harrowing and haunting. Yet, there was also a sense of the mundane, everyday violence that permeated all aspects of social relationships.[49] It is important to also note that the intersection of violence and education was not experienced solely within African American communities. Education and violence impacted other racialized groups, such as Native Americans and Chinese and Mexican immigrants, and while this study does not attend to other racialized minority groups, my dissertation is part of a larger program of research that will explore the relational aspects of violence and education across marginalized groups in the future.

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[48] Johan Galtung, "Violence: Direct, Structural and Cultural" in *Johan Galtung: Pioneer of Peace Research*, ed. Johan Galtung and Dietrich Fischer (New York, NY: Springer, 2013): 35-38.

[49] Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African American Slaves* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003); Ira Berlin, Marc Favreau, and Steven F. Miller, *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk about Their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Emancipation* (New York: The New York Press, 2007).

Chapters Preview

Centering violence, I situate the Black struggle for education within the period of 1830-1880, during the tumultuous transition from slavery to Reconstruction.[50] In the three decades preceding the Civil War, often referred to as the antebellum period, issues of Black education and literacy were widely implicated and evident through public discourses on slavery and freedom. Debates on slavery intersected with debates about education, manifesting in state and national legislatures, in pamphlets and bulletins, in newspapers, in sermons and speeches, and in novels. The 1830s have been framed as the dawn of a new literary epoch, as the publication and genre of slave narratives were taking shape in the US.[51] In addition, white fears of slave insurrections were actualized through Nat Turner's mobilized slave rebellion in Virginia in 1831, which was followed by an increase in southern white anti-literacy sentiment, and further state prohibitions on teaching and learning for enslaved and free Blacks. Moreover, there were increasing numbers of anti-slavery societies, which used literacy and media to further abolitionists' agendas prompting various Southern interventions.[52] I chart how violence intersected with African American education through the decades prior to emancipation (1830-1860) and the Civil War (1861-1865), and continued into the post-war Reconstruction era (1865-1877). I wrap up in 1880, three years after most federal Reconstruction efforts ended. Each

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[50] My focus on slavery and Reconstruction is not meant to ignore the Civil War period or to offer strict temporal delineation; rather, in this work, education during the Civil War is generally embedded in the periodization of slavery and Reconstruction. The educational efforts to enslave or liberate minds and bodies were not neatly bounded by time or geography.

[51] See Foster, *Witnessing Slavery,* 1994; The slave narrative emerged as a genre that fueled abolitionist sentiment, and spoke to Northern white audiences about the struggles of enslaved blacks and their brave and harrowing attempts at freedom. For a helpful and accessible historical overview of slave narratives as a literary tradition, see William L. Andrews, "How to Read a Slave Narrative," Freedom's Story, TeacherServe©, National Humanities Center. 2017. Accessed May 2018, http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/freedom/1609-1865/essays/slavenarrative.htm.

[52] Michael Kent Curtis, "The Curious History of Attempts to Suppress Antislavery Speech, Press, and Petition in 1835-1837, *Northwestern University Law Review* 89, no. 3 (1995): 785-870.

analytical and interpretive chapter moves across space and time, which taken together, helps shed light on the foundations of mass public education. While I acknowledge that local and regional distinctions existed, violence in education was not restricted to cities or towns, or to the North or South, but rather it was widespread. My analysis of violence in education, then, considers multiple sites across, within, and among states.

In Chapter 2*, Shadows of Racism and Violence: The Narrative of Mass Public Education During the Common School Era,* I describe the education narrative or the story about the development of mass public education as primarily a northern white endeavor in the US. In addition, I offer a critical and multidimensional violence framework as a means to illuminate shadowed narratives of Black education and racialized violence, which have remained peripheral to the common school story. In Chapter 3*, Illuminating Shadows of the Past: A Critical Historical Methodology,* I explain my methodology of critical historical inquiry and the processes of examining violence in the foundations of public education. Following this, I offer three analytical and interpretive chapters, each examining various dimensions and aspects of racialized slavery and violence in the development of mass public education. In Chapter 4*, Intruders Within the Sacred Portals of Knowledge*, I examine the Northern free states during the common school era (1830-1860) and push back against the "myth of Southern exceptionalism," which posits that racism and violence against Black education were a Southern phenomenon.[53] This chapter speaks directly to the narrative of mass public education as represented by historian Carl Kaestle's *Pillars of the Republic.* In Chapter 5, *Knowledge Unfits a Slave*, I examine the

[53] Historian Matthew D. Lassiter described how racism in the South is often framed as a regional exception within the US. Lassiter debunks this myth of Southern exceptionalism, demonstrating how seemingly race-neutral distinctions such as "de jure" segregation in education and housing policies in Northern states in the 20th century were a means to preserve white racial innocence and white spatial privilege" (44), in "De Jure/De Facto Segregation: The Long Shadow of a National Myth" in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism* eds. Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino (Oxford University Press, 2010), 25-48.

role of education in the slave-holding southern states during the common school era and up through the Civil War from 1830-1865. I also examine the tangible power of education and literacy to unfit a slave and how controlling Black bodies and minds was salient to whites in the South. Slave narratives and testimonies of the formerly enslaved highlighted the connection between education and freedom, which were a direct threat to racialized slavery. Further, the chapter explores how whites perceived Black education as violence to them, and how the white racial imaginary justified and legitimated white fears and sense of threat as well as the violence they directed at Blacks. Chapter 6, *A Perfect Reign of Terror,* takes us into the postbellum Reconstruction era (1863-1880) after the Civil War, when African Americans moved their advocacy for education into the public sphere, helping shape common school development in the South. I argue direct and brutal violence against Black education was a continuation of racialized violence against Black education from the antebellum North and South. I wrap up with Chapter 7*: Nuancing the Narrative of Mass Public Education,* a concluding chapter that draws on my theoretical analyses to nuance the narrative of the foundations of mass public education. In the epilogue, *Remembering as Resistance*, I discuss the implications of my study as it is situated in the contemporary moment.

Chapter 2 Shadows of Racism and Violence: The Narrative of Mass Public Education During the Common School Era

Within the history of education, education narratives contribute to the story about how public education in the US came to be. Narratives are generally defined as stories, but I want to draw a distinction between narrative history and master narratives. Both concepts involve storytelling, but the former refers to the stories people use to explain themselves and the world around them.[54] Such narratives can be contradictory and confusing as storytelling and meaning-making do not necessarily follow neat, linear lines of logic or progression. A master narrative is a meta-narrative or an overarching interpretation of events and circumstances that structures people's beliefs and understanding. Poet and author Toni Morrison defined the master narrative as the point of view embedded in the "ideological script that's being imposed by the people in authority on everybody else."[55] Master narratives are taught through various social mechanisms and dynamics, such as through families, or other social institutions like churches and schools, and they are also communicated through culture, language, and other means of generating and molding beliefs. Narratives of difference, for example, may position some aspects of a social

[54] Natalie Zemon Davis, "Writing 'The Rites of Violence' and Afterward," *Past & Present* 214, no. 1 (2012): 8-29; Eileen H. Tamura, "Narrative History and Theory," *History of Education* Quarterly 51, no. 2 (May 2011): 150-157.

[55] Toni Morrison made this statement in the documentary film, *The Pieces I Am*, directed by Timothy Greenfield-Sanders (2019), which examined Morrison's life and work.

group as more desirable or valuable than another. Moreover, a master narrative is one that lays claim to universality, often supporting dominant social groups and thought.[56]

Both narrative history and master narratives engage in framing, which "structures the thinking process and shapes what people see, or do not see, in important societal settings."[57] Central to this point is that interpretation is embedded in narratives. While framing stories is necessary as not everything can be in focus at once, attention to what is being framed, and thus what is rendered peripheral or marginal is also necessary. Such attention is relevant both in narrative history and in master narratives. Historical accounts of the past play a role in constructing master narratives, especially when historical writings are considered collectively, over time.[58] Moreover, histories frame how we come to understand or find meaning about the past, individually and collectively. As Villaverde, Kincheloe, and Helyar suggested, "understanding the ways that the construction of a historical narrative is in part a creative fact, a feat of the imagination does not take away from the usefulness of historical scholarship. Indeed, it provides us with a more accurate picture of the historiographical process and how history may be either distorted or used in a socially beneficent manner."[59] Thus the constructedness of

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[56] The term grand narrative or master narrative is often associated with Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1984). In education, Henry A. Giroux offered a postmodern critique of enlightenment rationality and Western philosophical thought to define master narratives in "Border Pedagogy and the Politics of Modernism/Postmodernism," Journal of Architectural Education 44, no. 2 (Feb. 1991): 452-496. Also, see Patricia Ewick & Susan S. Sibley "Subversive Stories and Hegemonic Tales: Toward a Sociology of Narrative," Law & Society Review 29, no. 2 (1995): 197-226, for a useful overview of how narratives are used in scholarly research, especially pp. 200-204. Ewick and Sibley explained three modes of narrativity: as an object of study, as a method, and as storytelling by researchers.

[57] Joe R. Feagin, *The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-Framing* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 10. See also David A. Snow, "Framing Processes, Ideology, and Discursive Fields," in The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, Hanspecter Kriesi (Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2004), 380-412.

[58] Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob*, Telling the Truth about History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994) point out that history "involves power and exclusion" as "past realities" have the "power to impose" in present interpretations. The authors argue for "a democratic practice of history" that is skeptical of dominant narratives, 10.

[59] Leila Villaverde, Joe L. Kincheloe, and Frances Helyar, "Historical Research in Education" in *Doing Educational Research: A Handbook*, ed. Kenneth Tobin and Joe Kincheloe (Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2006), 322. The authors define

historical narratives has implications for interpretations and inclusion of perspectives. Further, if we are not cognizant of framing processes, then we risk accepting some perspectives as central, as truth, as unchallenged. In this way, the "ideological script" follows the dominant perspective. Alternatively, attention to framings also suggest that our understanding of the past can change with new information, framings, and interpretations.

A persistent narrative within histories of mass public education in the United States emphasizes the rise of common schooling, or mass public education, during a period of great social change, which was set in New England and in the free North from 1830-1860. This period is generally referred to as the *common school era*. Drawing on mainstream educational historiography, I offer a composite example of the narrative of how mass education developed in the United States.[60]

> *Before common schooling*: Education history began with the colonies, which made localized provisions for instructing the young. When the US won its freedom from Great Britain, the new US Constitution (1787) did not include provisions for a national education system. Schooling remained localized, and though states were the custodians of education within their borders, most decisions about education and schools were made and managed at the level of towns and cities.[61]

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historiography as the study of writing about the past, including authors' interpretations, conceptual frameworks, and methodologies, 311.

[60] This composite example was drawn from prominent education historians, such as Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983); Michael B. Katz, *Reconstructing American Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); William J. Reese, *America's Public Schools: From the Common School to "No Child Left Behind"* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot, *Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980* (Lexington, KY: Basic Books, 1982); David B. Tyack, *Turning Points in American Educational History,* (Waltham, MA: Blaisdell Publishing Co., 1967); David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).

[61] General John Eaton, a key military and political figure in the development of African American education, shared a similar narrative in his *Letter of the Commissioner of Education* in 1874, which persisted in education historiography, and remains accepted knowledge, in *A Statement of the Theory of Education in the United States of America, as Approved by Many Leading*

Common school era: Enter education reformers in the 1830s, most notably, Horace Mann of Massachusetts, who believed universal education that was publicly funded and state regulated, or common schooling, was in the best interest of the American political, economic, and social order. [62] As the first Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education in 1837, Mann and his colleagues ushered in a series of reforms to centralize and professionalize education. Public education for Mann was to be "the great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance wheel of the social machinery."[63] Education reformers across Northern states advocated for common schools, and by 1860, most Northern states had state systems of common schooling.[64]

In this narrative, African Americans in the North remained peripheral, as they were excluded from common schools.[65] In the South, the Black educational experience, as well as

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Educators (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1874). For a brief biography of Eaton, see Ethel Osgood Mason, "John Eaton, a Biographical Sketch," in *Grant, Lincoln, and the Freedmen, Reminiscences of the Civil War, with Special Reference to the Work for the Contrabands and Freedmen of the Mississippi Valley* (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1907).

[62] Massachusetts led the charge as the first state to pass compulsory education legislation for primary schooling in 1852, and from there, more and more states followed suit. A state-by-state examination of compulsory education laws during the common school era (1830-1860) revealed that only one state, Massachusetts, passed a state law requiring that children attend primary school. Massachusetts instituted compulsory education in 1852, with Washington D.C. following suit in 1864 and Vermont in 1867. Thirteen more states would pass compulsory education laws in the 1870s, with each of the former confederate states passing laws in the early 20th century, from 1907-1918. Requiring school attendance necessitated at least minimal state educational infrastructure to accommodate primary schooling, but most states had education laws much earlier than their compulsory education laws.

[63] Reforms included state and professional regulatory mechanisms such as state superintendents, state-run normal schools (teacher-training schools), standardized curricula, and age-grading (separating school children by age). Horace Mann was quoted in Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 9.

[64] Kaestle, *Pillars,* 1983; Leon F. Litwak, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1967). David B. Tyack, in *The One Best System*, 1974, would extend this timeframe to 1890, as he suggested education remained locally managed even as centralized common school systems were being developed and implemented.

[65] Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009) described how questions of Black citizenship framed Black exclusion in common schools.

schooling for poor whites, also remained peripheral to this narrative, as most southern states had limited common schooling prior to the Civil War.[66] A central tenet of this master narrative is what Toni Morrison referred to as an "ideological script," in which some group or phenomena is positioned as the standard, the default, the normal; in this case, white Northern educational reformers and white children who were able to attend common schools, be they native-born (i.e., born in the United States) or immigrant, comprised the common school story.[67] Whites and whiteness, which is often unnamed, are thus normalized without questioning how whiteness was established through racial subjugation of Blacks and dispossession of Native Americans.[68]

In addition to a dominant group claiming universality through a master narrative, another tenet of the master narrative is its persistence. Historians of education have offered critical insights about the history of schooling, especially since the "golden age" of the 1960s and 1970s of American educational historiography.[69] The golden age coincided with the civil rights movement, whereby women and people of color interrupted dominant, hegemonic narratives. This era was also marked by the emergence of gender and ethnic studies programs across institutions of higher education. Primarily critiquing Horace Mann's notion that US public education was the balance wheel of society, revisionists in the latter half of the twentieth century explored persistent inequality in education. Even as the radical revisionists of the 1960s and

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[66] James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Sarah L Hyde, *Schooling in the Antebellum South* (Louisiana State University Press, 2016). Limited common school systems meant there was no cadre of teachers, and with the destruction of the South post-Civil War, southern states were not in a position to establish and pay for universal schooling.

[67] Toni Morrison, *Pieces I Am,* 2019. For more about dominant and counter narratives see Derrick Bell, "Who's Afraid of Critical Race Theory," *University of Illinois Law Review*, no. 4 (1995): 906-907; Richard Delgado, "Storytelling for Oppositionists and Others: A Plea for Narrative," *Michigan Law Review* 87, no. 8, (August 1989), 2411-2441.

[68] Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (June 1993): 1737.

[69] Rubén Donato and Marvin Lazerson, "New Directions in American Educational History: Problems and Prospects," *Educational Researcher* 29, no. 8 (November 2000): 1-15.

1970s critiqued how previous histories of education overlooked inequality and promoted a narrative of mass public education as an American triumph, there were still absences of perspectives and research by scholars of color.[70] Since then, critical historians and scholars of color have extended their critiques and centered the experiences of populations and phenomena formerly in the shadows.[71]

A third tenet of master narratives in education history is they create *shadowed narratives*, or narratives that remain obscured or erased from the master narrative. For example, issues of race are often discussed in histories of mass public education, but discussions of racialized slavery are not as often folded into the discussions. Specifically, histories of mass public education have touted public education as a triumph of democratic progress, as an exemplar of civilization and achievement, without problematizing how American democracy was constructed through violence and racialized subjugation. Further, notions of progress and civilization are not usually linked back to the dispossession of Native lands and oppression of Native peoples.[72] This

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[70] Donato & Lazerson, "New Directions," 7; James Banks, "The Lives and Values of Researchers: Implications for Educating Citizens in a Multicultural Society" *Educational Researcher* 27, no. 7 (October 1998), 4-17. Educational historian Diane Ravich, "The Revisionists Revisited: Studies in the Historiography of American Education" *Proceedings of the National Academy of Education* 4 (1977): 1-84, described radical revisionist historians of education (the new left) who, in contrast to liberal democratic thought, viewed schools as intentionally failing the larger society. Such scholars included Joel Spring, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, and Michael Katz. These authors, not all of whom are historians, drew on history to account for inequality in the present. Ravich pointed out that revisiting history to examine persistent problems of inequality in education can be useful, but also cautioned against reductionism (in suggesting that all people of a particular social group have the same experience, for example), determinism and over-simplification (whereby issues of class, for example, lead to foregone conclusions), and intentionality and causation (such as assuming that the intention of a policy maker led to particular consequences of a policy). See Michael Katz for a response to Ravich's critique in *Reconstructing American Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 136-159.

[71] See Donato and Lazerson, "New Directions in American Educational History," 5-8, for a review of revisionist histories in education as well as education histories focusing on people of color up until the 21st century. Scholars writing of African American educational experiences in the 19th century include for example, Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Kabria Baumgartner, *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Black Women and Educational Activism in Antebellum America* (New York: New York University Press, 2019); Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2009*);* Derrick Darby & John L. Rury, *The Color of Mind: Why the Origins of the Achievement Gap Matter for Justice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

[72] While my dissertation focuses on racism and racialized slavery in the development of mass public education, there is also a need to recognize the violence of American nationhood, especially as experienced through Native Americans. See Ned

has created two shadow narratives within histories of public education in the US. First, much educational historiography positioned African American education as outside the common school story, as a separate branch of American educational history.[73] Second, the South was left out of the common school story, as the conditions of slavery did not engender common school systems until after the Civil War. Illuminating these two shadow narratives reveals how the common school story is one of racial and spatial exclusion (see Figure 2). Northern Blacks were excluded from common schools, and thus from the common school story, while Black and white Southerners, by virtue of the social and political dynamics of racialized slavery, did not develop common school systems in their states, and thus were excluded from the common school story. These shadow narratives reinforce that issues of race and racism in education were peripheral and exceptional to the mass public education story. In other words, Black education is framed as outside, as something other, which simultaneously positions white education as normal and hegemonic.[74] In effect, removing *blackness* from the public education story is coupled with framing *whiteness* as neutral, normal, standard, and universal. As such, the master narrative of

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Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008) for a compelling history of violence in building the American nation and empire.

[73] Even in contemporary scholarship, public education history continues, as historian Bernard Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1960) pointed out in the mid-twentieth century, to be treated as something separate from other topics of historical research and writing. Important works of scholarship examining a similar time period often have implications for education. For example, Edward E. Baptist's important work, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), demonstrated how slavery and capitalism were intimately and irrevocably connected. Education did not come into focus, but was often implicated. Similarly, Walter Johnson's *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013) provided a critical account of slavery and capitalism along the Mississippi River. Again, Johnson's work provided implications for education, but as he did not generally focus specifically on schooling, or the formalized and institutionalized components of education, his analysis is not factored into education historiography. Many education scholars do include examinations of race or Black education in their histories of education, but often as a section or chapter within the larger study. See for example, Ira Katznelson and Margaret Weir, *Schooling for All: Class, Race, and the Decline of the Democratic Ideal* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 178-206.

[74] Hegemony is often associated with Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971). Hegemony refers to the process of how attitudes and behaviors of a dominant group in society are reproduced and legitimated.

common schooling erases African American achievements, and instead positions African American educational pursuits as passive, with whites leading the way.[75] Moreover, notions of race-neutrality persist by privileging the stories of those included in common schools, who were predominately white. Thus, the common school story is often depicted as race-neutral, despite the fact that race was clearly implicated by the exclusion of African Americans and other racialized minority groups.

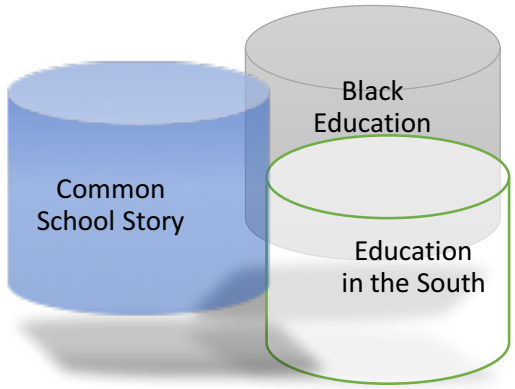

Figure 2: Visual Representation of Racial and Spatial Exclusion. In the common school narrative, Black education and education in the South remain on the periphery of narratives of the common school era.

Scholars have challenged this master narrative demonstrating that African Americans were active and assertive in their educational pursuits, both in the North and in the South.[76] Further, Black education historiography has a robust lineage, even if it was not acknowledged or

[75] Derrick P. Alridge, "The Dilemmas, Challenges, and Duality of an African American Educational Historian," *Educational Researcher* 32 (December 2003): 31.

[76] Discussing the North, see Linda Marie Perkins, *Fanny Jackson Coppin and the Institute for Colored Youth, 1865–1902* (Garland, 1987); Moss, *Schooling Citizens,* 2009*;* Kabria Baumgartner, *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Black Women and Educational Activism in Antebellum America* (New York: New York University Press, 2019); Discussing the South, see Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Christopher M. Span, *From Cottonfield to Schoolhouse: African American Education in Mississippi, 1862-1875* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

accepted within the mainstream histories until the latter half of the twentieth century.[77] African Americans carried their culture and forms of knowledge through generations of bondage from 1619 to 1863, passing on their value of and desires for education.[78]

Moreover, the rise of public education in the South is a story of the development of schools for African Americans and of universal public education, both of which African Americans played a critical, yet often de-emphasized role.[79] During the three decades prior to the Civil War, Southern Blacks laid the groundwork for mass education for Blacks and whites in the South. For example, Freedom schools were established in cities like Memphis, Tennessee and Charleston, South Carolina. Freedom schools for Blacks were often clandestine schools open in defiance of laws and customs. In addition to Black teachers opening schools, many Blacks sought training as teachers by attending night schools, such as the one opened by Mrs. L. Humphrey in Nashville, Tennessee in the fall of 1862. Mary D. Price established a school for colored children in New Orleans in 1858, persisting despite "death to nigger teachers" signs posted on her door. In 1862, when federal rule took over New Orleans, Mrs. Price's school was a local base for the freedmen's educational movement.[80] These schools cultivated a Black teaching force who would teach the freed slaves after emancipation.[81] Black churches also cultivated a

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[77] Donato and Lazerson, "New Directions," 2000. For a review of African American historiography, see Harvard Sitkoff, "Segregation, Desegregation, Resegregation: African American Education, A Guide to the Literature," *Magazine of History* (Winter 2001): 6-13.

[78] Christopher M. Span, "Why the Nineteenth Century Still Matters," in *Using Past as Prologue: Contemporary Perspectives on African American Educational History* eds. Dionne Danns, Michelle A. Purdy, Christopher M. Span (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc., 2015), 27.

[79] James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 1998*;* Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*, 2010; Hilary Green, *Educational Reconstruction: African American Schools in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2016); Christopher M. Span, *From Cottonfield to Schoolhouse,* 2009.

[80] Ibid, 26.

[81] Henry Allen Bullock, *History of Negro Education in the South* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967); Herbert G. Gutman, "Schools for Freedom: The Post-Emancipation Origins of Afro-American Education," in Herbert G. Gutman, *Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class,* ed. Ira Berlin (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 260-297; Christopher M.

Black teaching force, as well as a source for organized resistance and racial pride.[82] Richard Allen, who was formerly enslaved in Delaware, founded the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, in 1816 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Allen successfully sued for his right to an independent congregation, and the AME became a space for Blacks to have religious autonomy free from white racism.[83] Such activism was also infused into establishing Sabbath Schools and Seminaries for Black education and for training Black preachers and educators.[84]

In addition, Blacks who were enslaved persisted in teaching and learning despite severe punishments and prohibitions, and upon emancipation, advocated for education.[85] James Anderson's groundbreaking work, *The Education of Blacks in the South,* demonstrated the crucial role African Americans played through their activism and collective power in the development of mass public education in the South from 1860-1935. The education movement of former slaves during the 1860s and 1870s influenced the rise of universal public education: "It was the day to day choices made by the region's social classes that shaped the paces and character of universal education in the postbellum South. Ex-slaves formed one of those classes, and one that is central to any history of the rise of universal education in the New South."[86]

Christopher M. Span and James D. Anderson, "The Quest for 'Book Learning:' African American Education in Slavery and Freedom," In *A Companion of African American History,* ed. Alton Hornsby, Jr., (Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005).

[82] In *Setting Down the Sacred Past* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), Lauire F. Maffly-Kippp described how Afro-Christian traditions cultivated "communal narratives" from the time of the American Revolution. "through Christian faith, through a legacy of African glory, and through a commitment to America democratic principles, African Americans creatively moored themselves in time and space even as whites sought to disrupt those foundations," 4.

[83] "Our History," *African Methodist Episcopal Church*, accessed November 3, 2020, https://www.ame-church.com/our-church/our-history/.

[84] See Kabria Baumgartner, *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Black Women and Educational Activism in Antebellum America* (New York: New York University Press, 2019), for a history of Northern Black women's activism in education.

[85] Williams, *Self-Taught.*

[86] James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 1860-1935 (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 21.

Black contributions to their own education by way of activism, organizing, and self-funding demonstrate what Anderson called a "tradition of educational self-help," but, formerly enslaved Blacks were also the "first among native Southerners to wage a campaign for universal public education."[87]

Yet, how do we illuminate shadowed histories? One way is by shifting our frame to center what has been marginalized in education history, such as race, slavery, and violence. Using critical historical analysis and a violence framework, a more nuanced historical narrative of the development of mass public education emerges, one whereby racism and violence are embedded in the foundations of mass public education. Highlighting Black agency, scholars have shown the power of Black resistance in the face of oppression, and the role of education in their resistance. In addition to featuring Black educational experiences, such stories counter the dominant narratives and demonstrate how Black educational pursuits were situated within shadows of violence and racism.

Further, we can see how violence functioned within Black education in the North and the South during the antebellum and postbellum common school era. We also see that as African Americans pursued educational endeavors, white perceptions and interpretations of Black education fueled multifarious violent white responses.

Illuminating Shadowed Historical Narratives in the Common School Story: A Critical Violence Framework

To understand how education became laden with violence, I argue we have to understand how violence manifested, how it was experienced, how it was justified, and how it was resisted.

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[87] Ibid, 12.

Thus, as I will detail in the subsequent methodology chapter, I conduct a critical historical inquiry, within a violence framework. Following Patricia Hill Collins, I use violence as a "navigational tool" to question how education shaped and was shaped by racialized slavery and racism.[88] A widely-used term, violence is rarely defined explicitly, which can obscure its manifestations, impacts, and rationalizations.

Borrowing conceptually and methodologically from critical theory, critical race theory, and violence (peace) studies, I employ a critical violence framework. A critical violence framework considers multiple, intersecting domains within structures of domination and oppression. I use this framework to help illuminate and conceptualize violence across multiple social and cultural dimensions as well as how it is adapted and reproduced. In addition, the frame also illuminates the dynamics of resistance to violence.[89] This is not to create a hierarchy of violence or of suffering, nor is it to place people within a fixed victim-perpetrator binary. Rather, the framework helps nuance how violence is understood or defined, how it manifests, how it is justified or legitimized, how it reproduces, and how it is resisted and negotiated. The framework also helps put violence in conversation with other social, political, economic, and cultural processes to examine how they work in tandem. Violence, then, becomes a navigational tool for social processes and dynamics across levels of human and institutional engagement.[90]

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[88] Patricia Hill Collins, "The Tie that Binds: Race, Gender, and US Violence*," Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 5 (September 1998): 917-938; Patricia Hill Collins, "On Violence, Intersectionality and Transversal Politics," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 9 (2017): 1460-1473. Collins, a Black feminist scholar and critical social theorist, wrote, "violence is not only the conceptual glue that joins multiple systems of power, but, as a constellation of dynamic ideas and practices, violence is essential to organizing and managing political domination," 1466. She further pointed out that collective resistance, especially in families and communities, "offer possibilities for resistance that transcends any one system," 1467.

[89] Collins, "On Violence, Intersectionality, and Transversal Politics."

[90] Collins, "The Tie that Binds."

Because the framework and methodology are inextricable, the following sections are meant to provide an overview of Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory as theoretical underpinnings that inform my conceptual framework and methodology. I then discuss the contributions of violence (peace) studies. I end the chapter with an overview of how antebellum and postbellum violence has been examined in historical scholarship, which will set the stage for my methodology chapter.

Why Critical Theory?

Critical analysis provides a framework to examine the social relationships of things and phenomena within their particular historically situated contexts, and within relationships of domination and subordination. Moreover, the framework of Critical Theory puts social institutions and activities of daily life in conversation with the underpinning logic that animates them. Critical Theory emerged from what is known as the Frankfurt School of social thought that emerged from the Institute of Social Research at the University of Frankfurt in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s.[91] Western philosophers and intellectuals in the Frankfurt School "stressed the importance of critical thinking by arguing that it is a constitutive feature of the struggle for both self-emancipation and social change."[92] In addition, in critical theoretical approaches, "dialectical thought replaces positivist forms of social inquiry. That is, the logic of predictability, verifiability, transferability, and operationalism is replaced by a dialectical mode of thinking that

[91] For an overview of Critical Theory, see Patricia Hill Collins, *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 57-65.

[92] For example, Western and European thinkers within the Frankfurt School included Theodor W. Adorno, Jürgen Habermas, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse. See Henry Giroux, *Critical Theory and Educational Practice* (Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1983) for an overview of critical theory within the Frankfurt school (especially pp. 9-23) and how it informas a critical theory of education (especially pages 28-33).

stresses the historical, relational, and normative dimensions of social inquiry and knowledge."[93] Critical Theory is not a single unified theory, but it provides a critique of capitalism and domination and has a focus on emancipation.[94] Critical Theory engages in self-conscious critique and reflection, making it both a concept and process of critique. In education, Critical Theory stresses "the breaks, discontinuities, and tensions in history, all of which become valuable in that they highlight the centrality of human agency and struggle while simultaneously revealing the gap between the society as it presently exists and society as it might be," which is in contrast to traditional and liberal accounts of schooling.[95]

Why Critical Race Theory?

Critical Race Theory (CRT), an outgrowth of Critical Legal Studies, is also not a unified theory. CRT foregrounds the role of racism in its critiques[96] as a strategy to uncover its various forms and to address issues of multiple, often intersecting forms of structural oppression.[97] Racism is acknowledged as completely embedded in the American way of life to the point that it has become "both normal and natural."[98] Critical race scholars point out that interrogation of

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[93] Giroux, *Critical Theory and Educational Practice,* 29.

[94] Ibid, 9.

[95] Ibid, 30.

[96] Daniel G. Solórzano and Tara J. Yosso, "Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research," *Qualitative Inquiry* 8, no. 1 (November 1, 2002): 22-44.

[97] Patricia Hill Collins, *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019) wrote that intersectionality "bundles together ideas from disparate places, times, and perspectives, enabling people to share points of view that formerly were forbidden, outlawed, or simply obscured." Intersectionality is more than a discourse, however, as it is a "form of critical inquiry and praxis," which informs and enables social action and social change, 2. Critical race theorist and legal scholar, Kimberlé Crenshaw in "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color, *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241-1299, drew on critical Black feminism and postmodern theory to map the intersections of social identities, such as race and gender, and the positionality such intersections highlight, especially for women of color. Black women, for example, experience oppression that is gendered and raced, and paradigms that focus on only one aspect of identity misses how race intersects and interacts with gender to shape Black women's experiences.

[98] Ladson-Billings, "Just What is Critical Race Theory, and What's It Doing in a *Nice* Field Like Education?" *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 11, no. 1 (1998): 11.

racism and white supremacy is often absent from educational research, yet systems of oppression continue to impact the experiences of people of color.[99] Indeed, the intentional exclusion of race is part of a larger problem of *colorblind racism*, or an ideology that uses non-racial explanations to explain racial inequality.[100] Key to a critical historical analysis is the notion of *whiteness as property*. Whiteness as property developed through racialized subjugation and exclusion, whereby the "exclusive right to determine the rules" was embedded in a racialized hierarchy of power.[101] The origins of this concept "lie in the parallel systems of domination of Black and Native American peoples," legal scholars and critical race theorist, Cheryl Harris wrote, "out of which were created racially contingent forms of property and property rights."[102] White European cultural constructions of Blacks and Native Americans defined people of color as "savage," "uncivilized," which justified the white colonial project of exploiting Black labor and seizing Native land. Whiteness became a legal categorization of privilege, entitlement, and ownership, in contrast to racialized others, namely those categorized as Black slaves and Brown or Red Native Americans. This ownership principle, a corollary of the chattel principle, relied on constructions of race and colorism, and intersected with social institutions, social spaces, and aspects of culture to marry whiteness with entitlement. Further, this "racialized conception of

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[99] Ladson-Billings, "Just What is Critical Race Theory," 1998; Ian Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

[100] Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America,* 4th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

[101] Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (June 1993): 1737, 1766.

[102] Harris, "Whiteness as Property," 1714.

property," was "implemented by force and ratified by law," which demonstrated how power and violence operated structurally.[103]

Both theories emphasize the role of power as well as how marginalized or other non-dominant positionalities can allow us to see things differently. They also attend to processes, which help demystify the dynamics of oppression and resistance. Critique, then, is not just about ideas but about transformative action that paves the way for liberation and justice.

Why Violence/Peace and Conflict Studies?

I draw on violence or peace and conflict studies (PACS) as part of my conceptual frame primarily due to its more nuanced conceptualizations of violence. Within violence studies, violence certainly encompasses the direct, physical acts of intentional harm, especially between individuals and between groups of people. This includes violence such as genocide, ethnic cleansing, and war. Such manifestations are a tangible violence, one that is embodied by the very marks rendered on its victims.

However, violence is more than its embodied expressions. Violence is also indirect, or structural, which includes systemic social injustices. These distinctions are not mutually exclusive, but rather, are co-constitutive. Violence is the dispossession of Native peoples from their lands; it is the enslavement of a people; it is also theft and destruction of the things that comprise people's social and economic well-being—be they material, such as resources and wealth; cultural, such as language; or structural such as educational institutions. Violence can also be epistemic in that it silences voices or knowledges of marginalized groups, often by

[103] Ibid, 1715. Harris drew on Ronald Takaki's *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Knopf, 1979 (1990).

privileging dominant, hegemonic, and Western knowledges.[104] Violence can occur through its denial as well.[105]

To see the multiple dimensions of violence, I adapt violence (peace) scholar, Johan Galtung's violence triangle, which positioned violence within the intersecting domains of direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence (see Figure 3).[106] For Galtung, any system of social inequality that led to unnecessary death was violence, even without physical force. This is an important distinction in conceptualizing violence, because issues such as poverty, which are often embedded in structures of inequality, are also issues of violence.

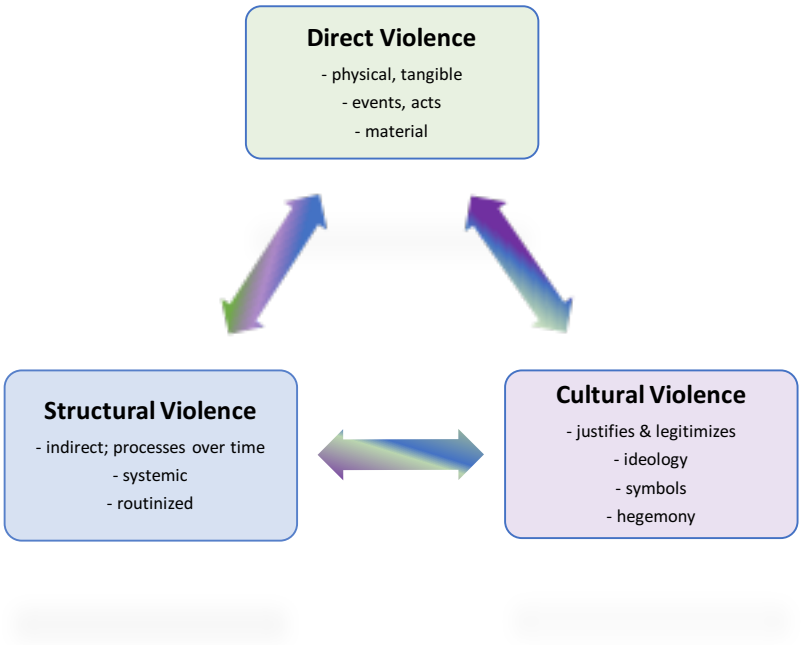

Figure 3: Dimensions Within a Critical Violence Framework

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[104] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 66-111; Kristie Dotson, Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing," *Hypatia* 26, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 236-257. See also, Collins, *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory* for an analysis of how Ida Wells-Barnett challenged epistemic violence and developed an alternative narrative through her anti-lynching campaign, 160-167.

[105] Fatma Müge Göçek, *Denial of Violence Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence against the Armenians, 1789-2009*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015.

[106] Johan Galtung, "Cultural Violence," in *The Journal of Peace Research* 20, no. 3 (1990): 291-305.

Of course, Galtung was not the first to conceptualize violence beyond its direct, physical manifestations and impacts. Social theorist John Stuart Mill wrote in the 1830s that violence included "the presence not only of actual pain but of whatever suggests offensive or disagreeable ideas."[107] In this sense, violence was defined by how people perceived harm, which included harm to the body and to the mind. Such perceptions of harm were also steeped in notions of progress and modernity within structures of the state. Nineteenth century historians wrote of human progress and civilization, which was marked by triumphs of rationality over baser instincts and their corresponding violent behaviors.[108] The rise of the modern nation-state with its monopoly on legitimate violence instilled the rule of law.[109] This meant that rather than resorting to physical violence, modern civilizations and their rational citizens would resolve conflicts through state-sanctioned adjudication. One major flaw in this thinking concerned the role of power, and how the parameters of legitimacy were determined. Situated within hierarchies of power, what was legal, rational, and legitimate was defined through dynamic processes of contestation, negotiation, dominance, and resistance, all of which occurred at individual,

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[107] Quoted in Stuart Carroll, *Cultures of Violence: Interpersonal Violence in Historical Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 3.

[108] Norbert Elias described the "civilizing process" whereby modern societies produce codes of social behavior that translate into self-regulation. *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations* was originally written in German in 1939 and translated into English in 1978 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000). Some contemporary scholars continue to tout an inverse relationship between human progress and violence. Psychologist Steven Pinker, suggested "far from causing us to become more violent, something in modernity and its cultural institutions has made us nobler" in "A History of Violence," *The New Republic* (March 19, 2007) https://newrepublic.com/article/77728/history-violence. Such an argument, however, does not account for structures of violence that are less tangible or visible than homicide or death, nor does it account for intersections of social identities such as race and gender, which can obscure violence against some of the most vulnerable populations. For a critique of enlightenment rationality see Henry A. Giroux, "Border Pedagogy and the Politics of Modernism/Postmodernism," *Journal of Architectural Education*, 44, no. 2 (1991), 69-72. For a discussion of how suffering of vulnerable populations, especially people of color, is rendered invisible by dominant society, see Henry A. Giroux, Reading Hurricane Katrina: Race, Class and the Biopolitics of Disposability, *College Literature,* 3.3 (Summer 2006), 171-196.

[109] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013); Walter Benjamin's 1921 essay, "Critique of Violence," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume 1, 1913-1926,* Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings eds. (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 236-252.

institutional, and state levels. In other words, what counted as violence and who was culpable were socially determined.[110] In addition, measures of violence were (and often continue to be) calculated in terms of wars and violent deaths. In general, the history of violence has been studied in the context of wars, and it was not until the 1970s that historians shifted their studies of violence off the battlefield, and the 1980s when violence as an analytic category was taken up systematically.[111] Scholarship across disciplines often refers to homicide (violent death of one person at the hands of another) rates to theorize about violence. Additionally, war is another primary measure of violence. How many wars, how many people died, and sometimes, how much was destroyed (which might include measures for material, cultural, or geographical/spatial domains) provide some measure of violence. While such measures are certainly important and useful, using them uncritically can also obscure the impacts of systems of oppression and domination, as well as systematic harms that impact social groups gradually, indirectly, and over time.[112] For example, the culture of poverty theory suggests the reason people of color have a devalued status is due to cultural deficiencies, rather than a history of systematic racial discrimination. Conversely, it also positions white successes as result of white

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[110] Collins, "On Violence," 1461.

[111] Stuart Carroll, *Cultures of Violence: Interpersonal Violence in Historical Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Stuart Carroll, "Thinking with Violence," *History and Theory* 55 (December 2017): 23-43.

[112] Khalil Gibran Muhammad's *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010) demonstrated how historians have pathologized Black crime by using statistical data uncritically. Muhammad argued that violent crime rates at the end of 19th century used modern statistics "to link blackness and criminality" (1), which obscured historical and structural conditions of African Americans such as discrimination and oppression. Historian Roger Lane's *Roots of Violence in Black Philadelphia, 1860-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986) is an example of this, as Lane drew on statistical data to conclude that Black crime was a subculture that flourished at the end of the 19th century. Lane criticized Du Bois' notion that the social conditions of racism had a role to play in determining Black crime. For a more in depth discussion, see pages 68-74 and 314n151 in Muhammad's monograph. For a discussion of how statistical analysis was co-constructed with the racialized logic of the eugenics movement see Tukufu Zuberi, *Thicker than Blood: How Racial Statistics Lie* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001). Also see Tukufu Zuberi and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (Eds.), *White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008).

cultural values.[113] Though different in its manifestations, structural issues like racial discrimination are also issues of violence.

Everyday violence, or violence expressed outside of armed conflict and wars, is a more recent area of study, specifically within the twenty-first century. In addition, indirect, structural violence can be a less tangible measurement as structural violence may correlate to traditional measures of harm (such as homicide and death), but not necessarily be the direct cause of them. Poverty is commonly cited as an example of structural violence.[114]

Violence can also manifest through individual and collective historical memories that contour social identities and interactions.[115] Memories, or the acts and products of remembering the past, can serve as a tool to legitimize violence in some cases, as well as a tool of resistance in others, as groups position themselves within a victim-perpetrator framework.[116] Thus, in addition violence manifesting through structures, it could also be expressed through forms of culture. Pierre Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence drew on patriarchy to demonstrate how violence

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[113] Carla O'Connor, Amanda Lewis, and Jennifer Mueller. "Researching 'Black' Educational Experiences and Outcomes: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations," *Educational Researcher,* 36, no 9 (December 2007): 541-552. Daniel G. Solórzano & Ronald W. Solórzano, "The Chicano Educational Experience: A Framework for Effective Schools in Chicano Communities," *Educational Policy* 9, no. 3 (1995): 293-314.

[114] Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research" *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167-191; Paul Farmer, "An Anthropology of Structural Violence," *Current Anthropology* 45, no. 3 (June 2004): 305-325. Farmer explained that acknowledging structural and systematic violence evokes discomfort in a society that renders individuals to blame for social conditions (307).

[115] In explaining the violence between police and protestors in Chauri Chaura, when India was still under British colonial rule, Natalie Davis (2012) wrote, "Here violence has another life after the historical happening: it lives in contested and changing accounts and memories, which leave their mark on identity and on the possibilities for hostility or reconciliation in the future," p. 26. Memory studies has become an area of focus for scholars, and for a helpful review of the field, see Geneviève Zubrzycki and Anna Woźny, "The Comparative Politics of Collective Memory, *Annual Review of Sociology* 46 (2020): 175-194; For a historian who engages with the historical memory of race and the Civil War, see David W. Blight, *Beyond The Battlefield: Race Memory, and The American Civil War* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002).

[116] Michael Rothberg pointed out the sense of competition in memories of collective violence in the sense that there is some group more persecuted or harmed than another. This is in part due to memory's intimate connection to identity. See *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 1-7.

can be interpreted through its symbols and culture rather than its physicality.[117] In addition, violence can be defined in terms of its cultural aspects, "the symbolic sphere of our existence—exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics)—that can be used to justify and legitimize direct or structural violence."[118] This is important because cultural violence highlights the facets of culture that flow through time, and are slow to change, such as ideology and language. Within this frame, ideologies of white supremacy, whereby individuals and groups render their value and ways of being as superior to another, can be examined as an animator of both direct and indirect violence within structures of inequality. Such a framework is not to suggest that all hierarchy is violence, or that structures provide causal explanations for behaviors and social positions.[119] Rather, systems of domination, subjection, and oppression are in focus. A critical violence framework, then, is helpful in illuminating violence as "a saturated site of intersecting power relations."[120] In other words, violence, like power, is situated within particular social and historical contexts. There are also implications for resistance, as understanding violence through domination helps illuminate "the contours of political resistance."[121] Thus, a multidimensional violence framework helps guide critical investigation into the foundations of mass public education.

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[117] Pierre Bourdieu, "Gender and Symbolic Violence," in *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology, ed.* Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 339-342; Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, "Symbolic Violence," in *Violence in War and Peace: An* Anthology, 272-274.

[118] Johan Galtung, "Violence: Direct, Structural and Cultural" in *Johan Galtung: Pioneer of Peace Research*, ed. Johan Galtung and Dietrich Fischer (Springer, 2013): 35-38, DOI: 10.1007/978-3-642-32481-9_3.

[119] Kenneth E. Boulding, "Twelve Friendly Quarrels with Johan Galtung," Journal of Peace Research 1, no. XIV (1997): 75-86, critiqued Galtung for being overly reliant on structures, which can lead to determinism, and "heavily normative" (77). Boulding suggested "evolutionary thinking," which views the world in a state dynamic and constant interaction and disequilibrium.
[120] Collins, "On Violence, Intersectionality and Transversal Politics," 1460.

[121] Ibid, 1460.

Race and Violence During Slavery

Before moving into the mechanics of critical historical inquiry, it is helpful to examine the history of racialized violence during the period of focus, 1830-1880. Scholarly discussions of violence during slavery have a long and abundant history, one that is not absent racialized contestation. Nineteenth century scholars such as Carter G. Woodson and W. E. B. Dubois examined Black experiences amidst white violence, but their work was often subsumed under white-dominated institutions of higher education and these institutions' intimate connection with racialized slavery.[122] During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, white historians of southern slavery carved a narrative of southern history in what is commonly called the *Dunning school*, whereby white historians took the position that Northern aggression and Republicanism (as in members of the Republican political party, which was the party of Abraham Lincoln) were to blame for the state of the South as opposed to the historical oppression and subjugation of enslaved Blacks.[123] In addition, slavery was framed as beneficial to the slaves, as white enslavers were benevolent and paternalistic and enslaved Blacks were generally happy with their positions.[124] In this framing, the violence of slavery was diminished or erased under constructed images of white benevolent masters and cheeky and rambunctious slaves who needed discipline

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[122] See Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony & Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013) for a discussion of how slavery impacted higher education materially and intellectually, especially prior to the Civil War.

[123] William Dunning, a Columbia graduate and professor, is known for the "Dunning" school of historical thought. In Eric Foner's foreword to John Hope Franklin's, *Reconstruction after the Civil War* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013), Foner explained that the Dunning school blamed Radical Republicans and incapable African Americans for corruption and failures during Reconstruction governments. In this view, the south needed a return to "home rule," which in actuality was a return to white supremacy with a vengeance (p. xii). Some of Dunning's students included historians such as Ulrich B. Phillips, author of *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of The Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918). W. E. B. Du Bois was especially critical of Phillips' work. For a contemporary article discussing Phillips' racist historiography, see Blain Roberts and Ethan J. Kytle's New York Times (May 3, 2018) opinion piece, The Historian Behind Slavery Apologists Like Kanye West, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/03/opinion/the-historian-behind-slavery-apologists-like-kanye-west.html.

[124] Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*.

and punishment. Also within this framing was the unapologetic notion that the US was a white man's country, a desire that united white Southerners for centuries.[125] Even as scholars began to challenge the Dunning school in the 1950s and 1960s, some also continued to question slaves' experiences of violence as unverifiable, as they claimed the historical record could not document the lives of those who were illiterate.[126] Revisionist writing in the 1960s and 1970s rewrote histories of slavery and Reconstruction and challenged master narratives, such as how slaves were falsely positioned as happy to serve their white masters; how Blacks, free and enslaved, were incapable of self-government; and how Reconstruction was a story of Southern redemption, or saving the South from Northern aggression and Black supremacy.[127] The fact that noted historian John Blassingame included the statement, "The first impulse of the historian is to reject the slave's portraits as too harsh," revealed the tendency in dominant white historical scholarship to reduce or ignore the role of violence during chattel bondage.[128] Yet, experiences of southern Blacks were documented, through slave narratives, slave testimonies, and federal records.[129] They were also embedded within Black newspapers and abolitionist and missionary

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[125] Historian Ulrich B. Phillips presented this view of the South, pointing out that the South's greatest opponent was the "free labor" north in *The Economic Essays of the Ante-Bellum* South (Richmond, VA: The Southern Publication Society, 1909). Despite these regional distinctions presented in opposition, however, white supremacy was the dominant ideology in the US. Whites in the North and South agreed that the US was indeed a white man's country.

[126] Paul Lewinson, *Race, Class, & Party: A History of Negro Suffrage and White Politics in the South* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1932/1965); Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956/1989).

[127] Nicholas Lemann, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2006).
[128] John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 262.

[129] A large body of literature abounds for using slave narratives and slave testimonies as sources. For a thorough discussion of how to "know the hearts and secret thoughts of slaves" (lxv) through Black testimony, see the introduction to John Blassingame's *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), xvii-lxv. See also Francis Smith Foster, *Written by Herself: Literary Production by African American Women, 1746-1892* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993); Deborah E. McDowell & Arnold Rampersad, *Slavery and the Literary Imagination* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Norman R. Yetman, "The Background of the Slave Narrative Collection," *American Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (Autumn, 1967), 534-553.

publications.[130] Some white scholars have critiqued slave narratives that described brutal physical violence as exaggerations that aided abolitionist propaganda.[131] While slave narratives did have an important role to play in how abolitionists framed their rationales, especially given that white abolitionists were often part of the editorial and publication process, the narratives nevertheless depicted slaves' experiences with violence.[132] Historians of slavery demonstrated that violence was at the heart of slavery, and it permeated all aspects of social life.

Race and Violence Post-Emancipation

The study of post-slavery violence against African Americans has a sizable historiography, especially with respect to lynching.[133] To analyze racialized violence against

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[130] Jacqueline Bacon, *Freedom's Journal: The First African-American Newspaper* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007); Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein, eds., *Early African American Print Culture* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); John Ernest, *Liberation Historiography*: *African American Writers and the Challenge of History, 1794-1861*; Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1977/2007).

[131] Willie Lee Rose, *A Documentary History of Slavery in North America* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press), 7. Rose questioned the credibility of 19th century sources, noting that historical documents are not free from bias or morality. While "documents do not have to truthful…to be useful," Rose wrote, she also avoided documents that were "specifically identifiable as contributions to anti-slavery or pro-slavery arguments," 5-7. In this sense, Rose's attempt at representing a balanced history discounts the role of power and violence in racialized dynamics of the anti- and pro-slavery debates. That is not to say that her documentary history is not useful, but rather that her selections must be reviewed through a critical lens.

[132] Francis Smith Foster, *Witnessing Slavery: The Development of Ante-bellum Slave Narratives* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1994). See also Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 1977; and McDowell & Rampersad, *Slavery and the Literary Imagination*, 1989.

[133] Ida B. Wells-Barnett documented violence against African Americans in *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (New York Age Print, 1892). W. E. B. Du Bois also documented white violence against Blacks in his study of Southern Reconstruction in 1935. Rayford Logan's critical work, *The Betrayal of the Negro: From Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson*, originally published in 1954, referred to the Post-Reconstruction years as "The Nadir" (New York: Da Capo Press, 1997). Contemporary scholars have followed in their footsteps, including Allen W. Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* (1971); Herbert Shapiro, *White Violence and Black Response: From Reconstruction to* Montgomery (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988); Sadiya Hartman *Scenes of Subjection*: *Terror, Slavery and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1997); Nicholas Lemann, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War* (2006); Carole Anderson, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016); Kidada E. Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me: African American Testimonies of Racial Violence from Emancipation to World War I* (New York: New York University Press, 2012). Intersecting gendered and racialized violence, see Mary Frances Berry, *The Pig Farmer's Daughter and Other Tales of American Justice: Episodes of Racism and Sexism in the Courts from 1865 to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999); Hanna Rosen, *Terror in the Heart of Freedom: Citizenship, Sexual Violence, and the Meaning of Race in the Postemancipation South* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Daina Rima Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*: *The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2017); Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019. On lynching, see Gilles Vandal,

African Americans, historians such as Allen Trelease, V. P. Franklin, and Gladys-Marie Fry, examined post-emancipation records of the Freedmen's Bureau,[134] congressional committee hearings on the Ku Klux Klan violence, and interviews with former slaves and their descendants to illuminate the prevalence of white violence against African Americans, especially during Reconstruction from 1865-1877.[135] Other notable historical works that center the violence of chattel slavery and Reconstruction include Hanna Rosen's *Terror in the heart of freedom* and Saidiya Hartman's *Scenes of Subjection*. Centering gender, Rosen's account explored the "rhetorical power of violence and the violent power of rhetoric" as racist, sexual terror accompanied African American women's quest for citizenship.[136] Hartman drew on cultural and literary works to explore white violence against African Americans, which was legitimated through notions of insubordination.[137] Also centering gender, Ella Barley Brown described the gendered violence African American women faced post-emancipation, arguing that many historians continue to assume that violence against African American women was less frequent than against African American men.[138]

Rethinking Southern Violence: Homicides in Post-Civil War Louisiana, 1866-1884 (Ohio State University Press, 2000); Christopher R. Waldrep, *The Many Faces of Judge Lynch: Extralegal Violence and Punishment in America* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia*, *1880-1930* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

[134] In 1865, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, known as the Freedmen's Bureau, was established in the U.S. War Department and headed by General Oliver Otis Howard. As Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, General Howard could appoint assistant commissioners to assist in the Bureau's work in former rebel states (First Freedmen's Bureau Act, March 3, 1865), much of which centered around education of newly freed Blacks.

[135] Allen W, Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971); V. P. Franklin, *Black Self-Determination: A Cultural History of African American Determination* (Brooklyn, NY: Lawrence Hill Books, 1984); and Gladys-Marie Fry, *Night Riders in Black Folk History* (University of Tennessee Press, 1975).

[136] Hanna Rosen, *Terror in the Heart of Freedom: Citizenship, Sexual Violence, and the Meaning of Race in the Postemancipation South* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 19.

[137] Saidiya V. Hartman *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[138] Ella Barley Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom, *Public Culture* 7 (1994): 107-146. In addition to Brown's work, historians such as Mary Frances Berry, *The*

Chronicling the Reconstruction era, Nicholas Lemann documented the violence and terror southern African Americans faced at the hands of white "redeemers" who felt empowered to wage their campaign of violence and reclaim white authority.[139] Further, there was no retribution for whites who terrorized and murdered African Americans.[140] Carole Anderson connected white rage and violence to African American's quest for freedom, autonomy, and citizenship, demonstrating that white violence was in direct response to African American political, social, and economic advancement.[141]

Intersecting Education, Racialized Slavery, and Violence to Illuminate Shadow Narratives

Accounts of violence can be found throughout monographs of the history of education, but with various degrees of visibility. Some education scholars have taken violence from the shadows. W. E. B. Du Bois wrote about white violence toward Blacks and Black education throughout his career.[142] Following his lead, a number of scholars, often scholars of color, continued to document Black educational experiences. Demonstrating Black resistance, Carter G. Woodson wrote of the collective efforts of African American education despite opposition: "the enlightenment of Negroes, however, was not limited to what could be accomplished by individual efforts. In many southern communities colored schools were maintained in defiance of public opine or in violation of the law."[143] Heather Andrea Williams revealed how the African

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Pig Farmer's Daughter and Other Tales of American Justice: Episodes of Racism and Sexism in the Courts from 1865 to the Present (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999); and Hanna Rosen, *Terror in the Heart of Freedom* (2009) have challenged these assumptions.

[139] Nicholas Lemann, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2006), 185.

[140] Ibid, 11.

[141] Carole Anderson, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of our Racial Divide* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016).

[142] W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Bantam Books, 1903/1989); W E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: The Free Press, 1935/1992).

[143] Carter G. Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (New York: Arno Press, Inc., 1968), 215.

American desire for literacy and education was so great, enslaved Blacks undertook incredible risks to learn to read, such as digging pits where they would hold lessons at night, and then hiding the pit with brush and twigs during the day. The violence of racialized slavery was directly connected to Black education: had enslaved Blacks been found engaged in learning, they could have been whipped or even killed. Williams' monograph, *Self-Taught*, shed light on the shadow narrative of education for enslaved blacks in the South, illuminating Black agency and resistance and the embedded social, economic, and cultural contexts of racialized slavery and violence.[144] The violence and terrorism African Americans faced intersected with education. However, most historians who focus on white violence and terror during Reconstruction, did so in the context of constraining black enfranchisement, and excluded attacks on schools.[145]

Summary

By asking how education became so laden with violence, why Black education was perceived as potential violence, and how violence was justified and legitimated, I conduct a critical historical inquiry. If historical inquiry acknowledges the role of *interpretation* in understanding the past, then critical historical inquiry acknowledges the role of *power*, and recognizes how the past is both constructed and embedded in power relationships.[146]

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[144] Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

[145] Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People,* 238n4.

[146] Villaverde, Kincheloe, & Helyar, "Historical Research in Education," 320-321.

Chapter 3 Illuminating Shadows of the Past: A Critical Historical Methodology

Juxtaposing a critical violence framework with historical inquiry allowed me to study the events of the past, while also attending to power. Critical theories constantly question power dynamics and how such dynamics can lead to new or alternative interpretations. Historical inquiry is interpretative, but historians are not always explicit about their theoretical framings, epistemologies, or the constructed nature of historical work.[147] Although interpretation is embedded in historical research, explicit discussions of theoretical frames and methodology still tend to remain in the shadows, which can obscure assumptions, power dynamics, and framings.

To this end, it is important to first understand what I mean by historical inquiry. Historical inquiry is a process of studying events in the past in order to understand them. As the term *process* denotes, history "is something that is done, that is constructed, rather than an inert body of data that lies scattered through the archives."[148] The process of constructing history is done by gathering facts, experiences, and stories of events in the past; determining what from these data is relevant or important; and offering interpretations of meaning.[149] However,

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[147] V. P. Franklin, "Reflections on History, Education, and Social Theories," *History of Education Quarterly,* 51, no. 2 (May 2011): 264-271; Camille M. Wilson, "Starting the Bandwagon: A Historiography of African American Mothers' Leadership during Voluntary School Desegregation, 1954-1971, *Advancing Women in Leadership* 34 (2014): 38-47. Like Wilson, I assume scholars construct history, which has embedded conflict and tensions, 41.

[148] James West Davidson and Mark Hamilton Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection* (New York: Knopf, 1982), xix; see also Ronald Butchart, *Local Schools, Exploring Their History* (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1986), 3

[149] Martha C. Howell and Walter Prevenier (2001) pointed out in *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001) "methodological choices are inevitably political choices in the sense that they dictate the particular sources examined, the evidence deployed, the events studied, the importance assigned to any event, source or piece of evidence," 4. Noted historian and critic of traditional historical methods, Edward Carr, described the historian's role in his lecture at the University of Cambridge in 1961, titled *What is history:* "The main role of the historian is to give meaning to the events of the past…there is no neutral or objective history, as all historical research involves selection hence

acknowledging the role of epistemology, or our systems of knowledge, which include our individual knowledge as well as our systems of valuing, discounting, and representing knowledge, is not often explicated.[150] Further, knowledge production is shaped by racially relevant understandings of the world. Recognizing "class elitist, white-centered, patriarchal histories that have dominated Western historiography for too long," Villaverde, Kincheloe, and Helyar suggested drawing on marginalized perspectives. "The way to see from a perspective differing from that of the positivist guardians," they wrote, "involves exploring institutions such as education from the vantage point of those who have been marginalized by it."[151] With new information, framings, and positionalities, our understanding of the past can change.[152] In other words, by actively centering shadowed perspectives, such as Black educational experiences during the common school era, history of education scholars can interrupt master narratives and interpretations to gain a more nuanced understanding of the common school story, while also countering erasure and the denial of violence.

Methodologically, this means critical historians must find the balance between abstract (generalization) and literal (particularization) representations.[153] A common method of historical

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interpretation," in Edward H. Carr *What is History*: *The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures Delivered in the University of Cambridge January-March 1961,* ed. R. W. Davies (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books, 1964), 5.

[150] Gloria Ladson-Billings, "Racialized Discourses and Ethnic Epistemologies," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed, ed. Norma K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2000); Wilson, "Starting the Bandwagon."

[151] Leila Villaverde, Joe L. Kincheloe, and Frances Helyar, "Historical Research in Education" in *Doing Educational Research: A Handbook*, ed. Kenneth Tobin and Joe Kincheloe (Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2006), 325 & 323, respectively. Walter Benjamin in *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, 1968, urged critical scholars to "brush history across the grain," which, in part, was a call for historians to focus on the experiences of the oppressed to better understand history.

[152] Education historian Derrick P. Alridge offered what he termed, *deep contextualization,* which interrogates how a scholar's personal identity influences the research as well as how it is received and critiqued. For example, he wrote, "I should acknowledge my subjectivity, I should use consistent and rigorous methodological approaches, which include such strategies as triangulation of sources and careful explication of my arguments substantiated by data," 26. In "The Dilemmas, Challenges, and Duality of an African-American Educational Historian," *Educational Researcher* 32, no. 25 (2003): 25-34.

[153] John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

inquiry involves using narratives, or storytelling, to offer an explanation and analysis of historical actors and events.[154] These stories incorporate specific, individual, and particular perspectives as a means to provide a "path to wider understanding of social values and cultural sensibilities."[155]

Narrative history described by Tamura as "telling a story to explain and analyze events and human agency in order to increase understanding," has been positioned in contrast to theory.[156] In the introduction to the special issue of the *History of Education Quarterly,* which engaged perspectives from prominent historians of education in a discussion of the role of theory in education history, Tamura defined theory as:

> An interpretive framework that sources and serves as a lens to analyze evidence and explain identities, actions, events, realities, rationalities and other human phenomena. More specifically, when we refer to the use of theory in educational history, we mean the engagement and mobilization of Marxist, feminist, critical race, queer, and social-constructivist theories as well as "post" approaches to historical interpretation, including postmodern, post-structuralist, and postcolonial theories.[157]

In other words, critical social theories can provide a means of interpretation, which is concerned with doing or the *how* of research, and critical social theories inform cognitive processes such as assumptions and thinking as well as concrete tasks such as running searches, coding, and writing analytic memos. I argue both theoretical frameworks and narrative history provide useful means

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[154] Natalie Zemon Davis, "Writing 'The Rites of Violence' and Afterward," *Past & Present* 214, no. 1 (2012): 8-29; Eileen H. Tamura, "Narrative History and Theory," *History of Education* Quarterly 51, no. 2 (May 2011): 150-157.

[155] Davis, "The Rites of Violence," 25.

[156] Eileen H. Tamura, "Introduction," *History of Education Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (May 2011): 150.

[157] Quote appears on 157. Further, *The History of Education Quarterly* special edition (2011) provided a window into contemporary education historians' debates on theory, social science methods, and historical methods. V.P. Franklin, for example, reminded readers that "historians need social theories to conduct their research whether they are acknowledged or not," 264. A major challenge for historians of education as described by Wayne J. Urban is balancing evidence and interpretation, especially if the discussion is "of theory abstracted from evidence," 236. As Franklin remarked, historians must challenge social theories that do not "address the documentation unearthed during the research process," 267. As a critical scholar, I think these challenges flow in multiple directions.

of understanding the past. While the latter can certainly help illuminate the "everydayness" or the "unexceptional, day-to-day arrangements and ordeals of individual existence," it can be difficult to perceive continuity between what occurs at the level of the individual, and that of the social.[158] Holt argued for historians to bridge these levels, "the global and the local, and the societal and the individual" by exploring "the nexus between the remote or global levels of that experience and its immediate or micro-local expressions."[159] Attending to various levels of analysis helps illuminate intersections of experiences, as well as processes of meaning-making. Examination of what occurred and how people came to understand the event can be better served by also examining micro and macro levels. Holt wrote,

> How these different levels of analysis are linked—that is, understanding how the large and "important" are articulated with and expressed through the small and "unimportant," and vice versa—requires that we explicate more precisely the relation between individual agency and structural frameworks, on the one hand, and that we conceptualize more clearly just how one's consciousness of self and other are formed, on the other.

In other words, attending to how perceptions of *self* and *other* are constructed and situated within social and cultural contexts helps develop nuanced understandings about the past. Moreover, a critical framework provides a means of bridging these levels. In the following section I describe how my critical framework informs my methodology and analysis. I refer to *methodology* as the overarching framework for how my work should proceed and to *method* as the tools and techniques used to gather evidence and conduct analyses.[160] By acknowledging the

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[158] Thomas C. Holt, "Marking: Race, Race-Making, and the Writing of History," *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 1 (February 1995): 8.

[159] Holt, "Marking: Race, Race-Making, and the Writing of History," 7-8.

[160] See Sandra Harding, *Feminism and Methodology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987). Patricia Hill Collins in her book, *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019) and Daniel G. Solórzano and Tara J. Yosso, "Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research," *Qualitative Inquiry* 8, no. 1 (November 1, 2002), 22-44, draw on Harding's definitions of method and methodology. See Collins, 310, note 4 and Solórzano & Yosso, 38, note 2.

role of power and positionality of and among historical actors and scholars, attending to intersections of individual experiences and social structures, and drawing on methods such as triangulation and confirming/disconfirming evidence to enhance validity, shadowed narratives of violence in the foundations of education are illuminated.

Critical Intersections Informing Methodology: Conducting a Critical Historical Inquiry

I conducted a critical historical analysis which is grounded in critical social theories or frameworks. Social theory help guide the domains of criticism, providing means of interpretation and illumination.[161] Further, critical methodologies push the researcher to question how knowledge is produced by challenging and critiquing all components of the research process as well as the relations of power. In this sense, the framework and methodology are inextricable. Through the questions asked, sources evaluated, and analyses conducted, my methodology of critical historical inquiry used a critical and multidimensional violence framework to juxtapose a constellation of ideas, institutions, and experiences within social and cultural realms to gain perspectives and insights that were formally obscured.[162] Patricia Hill Collins' methodology in *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory* drew on abductive analysis, which is "an interactive methodology of working with multiple and often disparate sources of data."[163] Such an analysis guides what the researcher focuses on (e.g., violence in African American education during the common school era) as well as the research process. For example, asking questions such as who

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[161] D. Soyini Madison, *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2012).

[162] Collins, *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory.*

[163] Ibid, 147.

is *not* represented and *why* connects to modes of thinking that enabled me to ask such a question, while at the same time facilitating how I went about finding answers.[164]

To accomplish a critical historical inquiry, my research process was iterative, reflective, and dialogic. It was iterative in that I was in a constant state of consideration, which included refining, redefining, and recalibrating thoughts, concepts, patterns, and meanings. Tools such as creating timelines, maps, and matrices proved useful. Reflection informed all aspects of the research process and included reflecting on how I gathered, classified, and described data as well as on my own positionality and assumptions. Erickson cautioned that interpretative or qualitative research "is a matter of substantive focus or intent" not just procedures and data collections.[165] Just as I critiqued interpretative frames within the common school story, I also had to critique my own "culturally learned frames of interpretation." As a white researcher who has had her whiteness unmarked, taken as neutral, objective, or as the category against which other racial categories are compared, I had to constantly question my assumptions and values.[166] I acknowledged that my race, gender, and class were ever present, I questioned how they manifested as I engaged with an historical text. For instance, who did I consider *other*, was it white men, Southern women, Northern free Blacks? Also, was I universalizing a particular group's experience? Given that interrupting master narratives was part of my critical approach, I

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[164] For discussion and examples of critical historical methods examining Black girlhood, see Corinne T. Field, Tammy-Charelle Ownes, Marcia Chatelain, Lakisha Simmons, Abosede George, and Rhian Keyse, "The History of Black Girlhood: Recent Innovations and Future Directions," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 9, no. 3 (Fall 2016), 383-401. In education research, see Solórzano and Yosso, "Critical Race Methodology: Counter-storytelling," who presented five components of critical race methodology in education research: 1) center race and racism, 2) question and challenge processes of research that explain education of students of color, 3) challenge multiple levels of oppression, especially as they intersect with race and racism, 4) approach educational experiences of students of color as strengths, and 5) draw on interdisciplinary knowledge, 24.

[165] Frederick Erickson, "Qualitative Methods in Research on Teaching," *Handbook on Research on Teaching*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan Press, 1998), 120.

[166] See Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

had to check in with myself about whether and to whom I was making racialized distinctions. For example, did I identify someone as Black as regularly as I identified someone as white? This is important because master narratives assume universality of experience, which can obscure or erase experiences which are not dominant or hegemonic. Thus, it was important that I investigated and noted the racial identities of historical actors. Further, I examined notions such as who was represented in my mind as "they" or "them," which included recognizing that I was making such categorizations in first place.

In addition, remaining detached and value-free while researching racialized violence was not always realistic for me, as the pain and injustice bled through people's stories. In such cases, I asked myself, did I take a side? If so, how did choosing a side dismiss or obscure the dynamics of human interaction? I am informed by critical theories that challenge domination and injustice, yet, as a white woman, I have to consider how my claims to knowledge may serve to subjugate people of color.[167] In addition to persistent violence and white supremacy, what also came through the historical sources, however, was the strength of Black resistance and resilience, and how enacted power was dynamic.[168] Subsequent chapters will explain this more fully, but I point them out here to suggest that human experiences and learning are dynamic, messy, and situated

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[167] D. Soyini Madison wrote in her *Introduction to Critical Ethnography: Theory and Method* (2012) that a critical scholar resists domination, using "resources, skills, and privileges available to her to make accessible—to penetrate the borders and breath through the confines in defense of—the voices and experiences of subjects whose stories are otherwise restrained or out of reach," 6. Yet, revealing and representing patterns of domination may also constitute actions of domination without attention to researcher positionality and notions of objectivity and subjectivity. Moreover, the role of research cannot be divorced from critiques of western scholarship, which has privileged white, European epistemologies linked to European imperialism and colonialism. See Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies, Research and Indigenous Peoples,* especially chapter 1, *Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory* (New York: Zed Books, 2012).

[168] Historian Vincent Brown pointed out that historians often feel there is less to write about Black people, and "most of what you can say is about the crushing weight of slavery, racism, or white supremacy, rather than about Black people's struggles and achievements. Of course these must be placed in their social context, but I try to do so without letting the power of anti-Blackness stand in for Black history." In "Scholars Talk Writing: Vincent Brown," by Rachel Toor, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 19, 2020, https://community.chronicle.com/news/2392-scholars-talk-writing-vincent-brown?cid=VTEVPMSED1&fbclid=IwAR2CmvHvyceu8_1lwd1HRVLpnV8oZKUs2IhEP6tWZ0P8sS5jT5AlpOPbIg8.

in multiple contexts. Similarly, my self-reflection was also dynamic, which meant engaging with others, in person and through scholarship, as well as through forms of personal reflection. This put me in a position of learning, not only about my chosen subject, but about myself as a raced subject.

Critical methodology is also dialogic, which puts "disparate knowledge projects" in conversation.[169] Casting a broad disciplinary net to include works by historians, sociologists, cultural scholars, authors, and legal scholars, the subsequent chapters weave together areas of study that often remain detached. I drew from and built on a range of literatures and historiographies of education, race, and violence, and of slavery and Reconstruction, to examine the development of mass public education.[170] Acknowledging that choices of frames impact what social groups or phenomenon are silenced, rendered invisible, or pushed to the periphery, I framed the history of mass public education within the African American experience. In addition, I concentrated on violence, intersecting multiple historiographies and literatures to create a transdisciplinary menagerie.

Sources and Data

Relying on primary and secondary sources, I began my searches by topic, searching for materials from and about the period of 1830-1880, which included but were not limited to plantation life, education during slavery, the transition from slavery to freedom, post-Civil War Reconstruction, violence and white terrorism, the Freedmen's Bureau, the history of public

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[169] Collins, *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory*, 114.

[170] Villaverde, Kincheloe, and Helyar defined historiography as "the careful study of historical writing and the ways in which historians interpret the past through various theoretical lenses and methodologies," 311. Marybeth Gasman expanded on this definition of historiography to include "the historians' ideologies and argument, the scope and foci of their work, the treatment of sources (or lack thereof), and the historical context of the work being reviewed," "Using Historical Methods to Explore Educational Questions," *Sage Handbook for Research in Education: Pursuing Ideas as the Keystone of Exemplary Inquiry* ed. Clifton F. Conrad and Ronald C. Serlin (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2011), 762.

education, racial inequality, Northern aid societies, liberalism and capitalism, and racial formation and ideology.[171] Within these sources, I searched for stories about education, violence, and race. I also documented events of violence and compared their targets, geographic location, timing, and modes of violence.

I examined physical collections from universities (Fisk University, University of Michigan) and the National Archives in person. I also researched online several full-text digital databases: ProQuest Historical Newspapers for nineteenth century African American newspapers; ProQuest Congressional for hearings, laws, bills, and resolutions; and ProQuest History Vault for Confederate and Union military manuscripts, petitions on race, slavery, and free blacks (until 1867), and plantation records. For census data, I used the Social Explorer database, which has made 220 years of census data accessible. The Hathi Trust digital library, which is a non-profit research collaboration between academic institutions and libraries, provided full access to digitized and often searchable documents, which were previously accessible through physical archives. Primary documents from 1830-1880 are often within the public domain, further increasing their accessibility. I also used the Historical Violence database and the Freedmen's Teacher Project, the latter of which has over 11,700 biographies of teachers of freedpeople from 1862 to 1876.[172] Saidiya Hartman called historical documents a "vehicle of

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[171] Many sources are physically housed in archives such as the National Archives, while others have been digitized. Databases such as ProQuest Historical Newspapers offer searchable, full-text newspapers, including nineteenth century African American newspapers. ProQuest Congressional and ProQuest History Vault are two additional databases with full-text, searchable materials. ProQuest Congressional includes documents such as Congressional hearings and reports, public laws, and bills and resolutions. ProQuest History Vault includes Confederate and Union military manuscripts; petitions on race, slavery, and free Blacks (until 1867); and plantation records.

[172] Randolph Roth, Douglas L. Eckberg, Cornelia Hughes Dayton, Kenneth Wheeler, James Watkinson, Robb Haberman, & James M. Denham, "The Historical Violence Database: A Collaborative Research Project on the History of Violent Crime, Violent Death, and Collective Violence," *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* 41, no. 2 (2008): 81-98; Ronald Butchart, "Collective biographies: How Many Cases are Enough? A Dispatch from the Far Side of 11,700 Biographies of Nineteenth Century Teachers," *Vitae Scholasticae* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2015).

power and domination," and as such, "writing the history of the dominated requires not only the interrogation of dominant narratives and the exposure of their contingent and partisan character but also the reclamation of archival material for contrary purposes."[173] In this vein, I examined top-down artifacts (court cases, legislation, speeches, documents from education leaders and reformers) as well as bottom-up sources (slave narratives, slave testimonies, letters and newspapers documenting African American experiences).[174] These sources included an array of voices such as those of the hegemonic and the elite, as well as those who were positioned as subordinate. Indeed, primary sources included those that have become accepted over time, such as reports from officials in the field and teachers in classrooms, letters and other correspondence, congressional hearings, laws, newspapers, maps, speeches, pamphlets, census data, etc. I extended my search to include materials written about the time, over time, examining scholarship and literature written during the time period, which included history books, textbooks, songs, novels, cartoons, and almanacs. Since I was researching 1830-1880, there were numerous publications written about that time period. A number of these sources were data for my work because they explored how people thought about the events within the 1830-1880 time period, and how those thoughts changed over time. In addition, this data helped show contestation and debate in thinking and actions.[175]

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[173] Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 10.

[174] The prevalence of digital and searchable archives and databases made a number of sources available to me. For example, John Mercer Langston papers from Fisk University Archives contained a response to Henry Grady's speech. Grady's speech was not included in the Langston papers, but a search within HathiTrust revealed the speech had been digitized. Within moments, I had searchable, full text versions of the Langston-Grady debates.

[175] For example, Henry Sullivan Williams (1920), writing in *The Journal of Negro History* about Black public schools in Missouri, argued by 1875, "the progress of Negro schools had been somewhat retarded by a prejudice against public schools in general and to a greater extent by a prejudice against the education of Negros," 154, "The Development of the Negro Public School System in Missouri, *The Journal of Negro History* 5, no. 2 (April 1920), 137-165. Williams' account is a secondary source, but important nevertheless in efforts to shed light on the role of racism and violence in the development of public education for African Americans. In addition, journals such as the *Journal of Negro History* (renamed *The Journal of African*

Sources of Black Voices and Experiences

One critical source of Black voices are slave narratives, which are accounts of African Americans' lives in bondage, and efforts to digitize these narratives have created accessible versions.[176] However, there has been much debate about the use of slave narratives as a historical source. Early 20th century historians dismissed these narratives, primarily critiquing African Americans' agenda to convince whites to abolish slavery, and the role of white abolitionists in shaping them. Historian Kenneth Stampp argued Black illiteracy and slaves' lack of candor when interacting with whites rendered the official historical record inadequate and lacking first-hand accounts of the enslaved.[177] Further, Stampp concluded the "ubiquitous white man, as master, editor, traveler, politician, and amanuensis" presented a barrier between the historian and the slave, one that could not be overcome no matter how inventive the historian.[178] Stampp's critique led me to question further whether or not I, as a white historian, could overcome archival inadequacies. In other words, how were the archival inadequacies in part a function of the researcher's epistemological or theoretical framings? In addition, I also questioned whether accounts by Black historians found similar inadequacies. Journals such as the *Journal of Negro History* (renamed *The Journal of African American History* in 2002), published works about Black life and history, often by scholars of color who were excluded from predominantly white-

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American History in 2002), published works about Black life and history, often by scholars of color who were excluded from predominantly white-authored journals.

[176] The North American Slave Narratives collection at the University of North Carolina boasts the largest collection of slave narratives, and has digitized the 344 items in its physical collection, allowing researchers access to African American experiences, often written in their own words. The digitized narratives, all of which within the Creative Commons Attribution License can be downloaded from http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh.

[177] Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956/1989).

[178] Randall M. Miller, *"Dear Master:" Letters of a Slave Family* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), provided first-hand accounts from the Skipwith family, who were enslaved at the Hopewell and New Hope plantations, which were owned by the Cocke family. Miller's account directly contested Stampp's assertion; see pp. 11-14.

authored journals. For example, Black historian John Hope Franklin explained in 1963 that "at the very time when American scholarship in general was making its claim to recognition, it was denying that Negroes were capable of being scholars."[179] Franklin echoed challenges of early 20th century Black scholars such as Carter G Woodson, who founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915, and Mary McLeod Bethune. Writing that Blacks had the additional task to "make plain to ourselves the great story of our rise in America from 'less than the dust' to the heights of sound achievement," Bethune explained in 1937 that Black people need to be armed with both facts of the Black situation and pride in their history.[180] Part of having pride was in knowing history, and Blacks took it upon themselves to document Black experiences. As such, Black-authored histories provided an invaluable resource for Black voices. George Washington Williams multivolume *History of the Negro Race* (1883) and Monroe Alpheus Majors *Noted Negro Women* (1893) documented Black people and Black experiences across social, political, and cultural contexts.[181]

Stampp's critique was made before revisionist historians drew on what were then unconventional methods and sources, such as blending primarily archive-based historical inquiry with social science methods, such as questioning empirical data, challenging ideological and theoretical underpinnings, and reframing research questions to question how power dynamics and access to resources shaped individual and group agency. Revisionist historians of the 1960s

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[179] John Hope Franklin, "The Lonely Dilemma of the American Negro Scholar, 1963," *Major Problems in African American History, Volume II: From Freedom to "Freedom Now," 1865-1990s,* ed. Thomas C. Holt and Elsa Barkley Brown (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 6-7.

[180] Mary McLeod Bethune, "Clarifying Our Vision with the Facts," *Journal of Negro History* 23 (January 1938): 12-15.

[181] George W. Williams, *History of the Negro Race in America from 1619 to 1880: Negroes as Slaves, as Soldiers and as Citizens, Together with a Preliminary Consideration of the Unity of the Human Family, an Historical Sketch of Africa, and an Account of the Negro Governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1883); M. A. Majors, *Noted Negro Women: Their Triumphs and Activities* (Chicago, IL: Donohue & Henneberry, 1893).

and 1970s, especially women and scholars of color, framed their research around the roots of contemporary issues such as poverty and discrimination, which led to rewriting the social and political histories of slavery and Reconstruction.[182] Perhaps more importantly was to consider the role of voice. Writing in the late 1970s, Black historian John Blassingame argued that the hearts and minds of enslaved Blacks persisted across historical artifacts, but to understand them, historians had to find ways to separate rhetoric from sentiment.[183] Corroboration, comparison, and triangulation are some ways historians can examine sources. Describing "the dual agenda of uplift and academic research," education historian Derrick P. Alridge engages in "deep contextualization," which considers the "historical and intellectual contexts" of historical actors, events, or ideas prior to interpretation.[184] In doing so, historians like Alridge have demonstrated alternative and nuanced understandings of education history that shine the spotlight on marginalized experiences and interrupt master narratives.[185]

In the context of literature, Francis Smith Foster similarly demonstrated the historical and literary value of slave narratives. Foster acknowledged that "slave narrators emphasized certain elements of their experience and employed certain kinds of plots and characters in order to convince white readers to support anti-slavery activity," but they also provided "first-person

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[182] Rubén Donato and Marvin Lazerson, "New Directions in American Educational History: Problems and Prospects," *Educational Researcher* 29, no. 8 (November 2000), 1-15; See also Daniel Wallace Culp, *Twentieth Century Negro Literature; Or a Cyclopedia of Thought on the Vital Topics Relating to the American Negro, by One Hundred of America's Greatest Negroes* (Naperville, IL: J. L. Nichols & Co., 1902); Hallie Q. Brown, ed., *Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction* (Xenia, OH: The Aldine Publishing Company, 1926).

[183] John Blassingame, *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), xvii-lxv.

[184] Derrick P. Alridge, "The Dilemmas, Challenges, and Duality of an African American Educational Historian," *Educational Researcher* 32 (December 2003): 28.

[185] Rubén Donato and Marvin Lazerson, "New Directions in American Educational History: Problems and Prospects;" Derrick P. Alridge, "The Dilemmas, Challenges, and Duality of an African American Educational Historian," *Educational Researcher* 32 (December 2003): 25-34.

accounts of life in slavery and the pursuit of freedom similar to but distinct from other autobiographical writings."[186] Slave narratives are similar in the sense that they describe an individual's interactions with people they met, their religion, the places they lived or traveled, and experiences that resonated with them.[187] A distinction from other autobiographies was a general pattern describing the harrowing journey from enslavement to freedom, while also describing the cruelty and immorality of racialized slavery. 19th century narrators were writing for a white audience, which carried its own challenges, especially given that many formerly enslaved Blacks were bridging racial, cultural, economic, and political divides between themselves and their white audience. In some cases, this meant Black narrators compromised on their descriptions, criticisms, or focus. Yet, Black narrators were not only writing for whites; they used the written word to bear witness to the pain and suffering of their human existence.[188] Further, narrators offered representations of enslaved Black life, giving voice to "the reality of Afro-American experience," which was brutal and violent.[189] Consequently, the narratives' value as a source of Black voices is not solely dependent on their perceived social and political agenda; while an anti-slavery agenda is certainly important context, the narratives provide so much more. Further, historians like Heather Andrea Williams, have also taken up the challenge to center

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[186] In the preface to the second edition, Francis Smith Foster acknowledged that many slave narratives were authored by men, who wrote about the sexual violence enslaved Black women faced. Foster responded to her own critique in her book, *Witnessing Slavery: The Development of Ante-bellum Slave Narratives,* 2nd ed (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), *xxviii*.

[187] Foster, *Witnessing Slavery,* 1-6. Foster pointed out this was especially the case in early slave narratives published during the 16th to 18th centuries.

[188] The slave narratives were certainly important as a means to bear witness, but so too were other Black writings, such as poetry and sermons. See Francis Smith Foster, *Written by Herself: Literary Production by African American Women, 1746-1892.* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993). In addition, Blacks used their voice to bear witness to violence through oral testimonies. See Kidada E. Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 1-12.

[189] Ibid, 15.

Black voices by finding ways to read between the lines, as Scott suggested.[190] To listen to Black voices and to hear Black stories one must resist the urge to draw all testimony from the "ubiquitous white man" and see the world, as Genovese described, that "the slaves made."[191] Hartman employed a similar method, noting that performativity, or the performance of a social or cultural role, of historical actors is evident in what is said and what is censored.[192] Critical historical inquiry, which attends to power dynamics, enables the historian to imagine the stories within the stories. It urges historians to draw on sources ignored or overlooked by others, to question claims of objectivity, and to reframe narratives. As a critical historian, my duty is to situate historical sources in their particular time and place, while also drawing on critical analytical tools that bring to light interpretations that extend our understandings of the past. For example, I constantly looked for Black-authored materials, especially Black women authors. Given that many slave narratives were penned by Black men, I had to take extra care to examine narratives penned by Black women as well. Similarly, when reading reports about freedpeople's schools, I intentionally looked for reports from Black women teachers.

Another important source of Black voices are the interviews and testimonies of formerly enslaved African Americans gathered by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) from 1936-1938. The WPA Federal Writers' Project (FWP) was initially established during the Great

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[190] In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, James Scott argued that people who are oppressed have powerful means, beyond survival, of resistance (New Haven: CT, Yale University Press, 1990). Heather Andrea Williams' monograph, *Self-taught*: *African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005) reads between the lines to offer Black experiences as told from Black voices and perspectives.

[191] Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976).

[192] Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Depression to combat unemployment for writers, historians, artists, and musicians.[193] Collecting American folklore became part of the project, but it was not until Black leaders such as poet Sterling A. Brown and anthropologist Zora Neal Hurston became involved that the focus shifted to include Black Americans, and specifically the life histories of formerly enslaved Black Americans. Like all historical sources, these have their strengths and weaknesses. The WPA interviewers were mostly white southerners, which likely impacted how African Americans responded to their questions. Despite the outlawing of racialized slavery in 1863, the relations between Blacks and whites remained steeped in Jim Crow segregation laws and norms. Further, white violence against Blacks, especially through lynching, had increased from 1880 and through the 1930s.[194] Black FWP workers were rare as white WPA state officials feared offending "local white public opinion." Critics have suggested formerly enslaved Blacks responded to the white interviewer's questions using "caste etiquette," meaning Blacks told whites what they thought whites wanted to hear.[195] interviewers. Interview questions usually included topics such as *home and family life*, *food*, *clothing*, *punishment*, *working conditions*, *amusement*, *religion*, *superstitions*, and *how they liked slavery* (see Appendices A, B, and C). The final question, *How*

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[193] Library of Congress, "The WPA and the Slave Narrative Collection," from the Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938, https://www.loc.gov/collections/slave-narratives-from-the-federal-writers-project-1936-to-1938/articles-and-essays/introduction-to-the-wpa-slave-narratives/wpa-and-the-slave-narrative-collection/, accessed October 2, 2020. The original task was to "prepare a comprehensive and panoramic 'American Guide,' a geographical-social-historical portrait of the states, cities, and localities of the entire United States."

[194] See Ida B. Wells-Barnett, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (New York Age Print, 1892) and W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia*, *1880-1930* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

[195] Scholarship on the Federal Writers' Project abounds. Edited volumes have emerged from the seventeen volumes, such as *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., ed. George P. Rawick (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Co., 1972) and *Voices from Slavery* ed. Norman R. Yetman (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970). For discussions of the slave narratives and testimonies, see Norman Yetman, "The Background of the Slave Narrative Collection", American Quarterly 19 (1967): 534-52, John Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), xvi-lxv; Paul Escott, *Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth Century Slave Narratives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 89; C. Vann Woodward, "History from Slave Sources: A Review Article, *"American Historical Review*, 79, (1985), 470-481, and Charles. T. Davis and Henry Louis Gates, ed. *The Slave's Narrative* (New York, NY: 1985), 48-58; Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 10-12.

did you like slavery? was an indication of how whites in the 1930s had a romanticized perception of racialized slavery. The Dunning school of thought was mostly accepted among mainstream white historians, which falsely positioned enslaved Blacks as happy in their enslavement. Reading across the testimonies, however, formerly enslaved Blacks challenged the master narrative, often saying bluntly, "I hated slavery."[196] In addition, the interviews were also transcribed to reproduce the speakers' dialect, which can feel stereotypical. Yet, speaking with interviewers was also an opportunity for African Americans to describe in their own words their life during enslavement. As I read through slave testimonies from Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, Tennessee, Ohio, and South Carolina, I noted similarities, differences, and contradictions. In addition, I also examined testimonies which were undertaken from 1929-1930 by John B. Cade, an African American Principal at Southern University Laboratory School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Cade's interviews were not part of the WPA FWP. Further, the interviewers, who were also Black, were Cade's history students, many of whom were also teachers.[197] Cade's students also asked formerly enslaved Blacks how they liked slavery, which was in response to Ulrich B. Phillips (William Dunning's student) who wrote that enslaved Blacks did not mind slavery.[198] Some narratives were quite brief, about a page with a sentence to answer the question (see Appendices A, B, and C), while others were several pages long. Berlin, Favreau, & Miller

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[196] John Anderson who was enslaved in Shelby County and Jackson, Tennessee told his interviewer that he hated slavery because he was treated badly. Similarly, Louis Williams from Louisiana remarked, "I didn't like it at all" Narratives compiled from the John B. Cade Slave Narratives Collection, 1822-1865, Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, http://7008.sydneyplus.com/final/Portal/SouthernUniversity.aspx?component=AABC&record=296fb82a-d012-4396-bd3c-8f18c5e4f8f3. Southern University is an Historically Black College/University (HBCU). Thirty-six interviewers interviewed 125 formerly enslaved African Americans. I examined 45 of these testimonies from four states, Georgia, Tennessee, Missouri, and Louisiana.

[197] John B. Cade, "Out of the Mouths of Ex-Slaves," *The Journal of Negro History* 20, no. 3 (July 1935): 294-337.

[198] Ulrich B. Phillips, author of *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of The Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918).

suggested that like any historical source, a good historian will use them "critically and cautiously, carefully evaluating the quality of each narrative, verifying the ex-slave's memory against other sources, and sometimes even sifting through multiple versions of the same interview."[199] Throughout this dissertation, I use the term *slave narratives* to refer to the accounts African Americans wrote. To refer to the interviews conducted by the Works Progress Administration, I use the term *slave testimonies,* which is to distinguish between *slave narratives*.

Federal education records also provided an important source of data. After the Civil War, a number of federal educational agencies were established. In addition to the Freedmen's Bureau, the U.S. Department of Education was created on March 2, 1867.[200] These agencies gathered information about the numbers of African American schools, teachers, and students throughout the South. Reverend John W. Alvord's Semi-Annual Reports on Schools for Freedmen comprised ten reports from 1865-1870 on activities related to the freedpeople's education.[201] The reports documented conditions of schools for the freedpeople, and included white violence and hostility that targeted Black education.

In addition, it is important to note, even though it may seem obvious, that the available sources cannot reproduce the experiences of Blacks in slavery and freedom in their entirety.

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[199] Berlin, Favreau, & Miller, *Remembering Slavery*, xxii.

[200] Primarily concerned with educational statistics, the Bureau of Education (as it was renamed in 1867) was housed within the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Bureau of Education was headed by the commissioner of education, who was responsible for preparing annual reports with information about educational facilities, governance, and tax structures; women and other special populations ("Indian," "Colored," "deaf," "truant"), curriculum and purposes of education; and other descriptions of teaching and learning related activities, conferences, and publications.

[201] In 1865, Reverend John Alvord was Inspector for Schools and Finances in the Freedmen's Bureau, and was appointed General Superintendent of Schools in 1867. Prior to his work with the Freedmen's Bureau, Alvord was Secretary of the American Tract Society in Boston, from Richard R. Wright, *A Brief Historical Sketch of Negro Education in Georgia,* The African-American Pamphlet Collection, 1822-1909 (Library of Congress, 1894).

Second, even as I try to be contrary, as Hartman suggested, or to read between the lines as Scott suggested, there is still a risk of reproducing dominant narratives as I write about those who were oppressed. Where possible, I continued to share critiques and limitations of sources, not to discredit them, but rather to promote awareness of their usefulness. As a historian, I bear in mind the context of the testimonies, while also recognizing that no single testimony will provide a total historical account. Yet, what historical source can provide such an account? Any reading of a historical document has to also include consideration of time period, tone, agenda, audience, and context. Was the document a response to someone or some event? Was it stating a position or trying to persuade? Even with consideration, however, not all questions can be answered. Fortunately, scholarly literature, including theory and historiographies, supplemented and guided my understanding and analysis.

To further address the role of power and attend to marginalized perspectives, I used the following questions to guide my historical research processes: 1) Whose voices are represented in the archives or scholarly literature and whose are silenced? 2) How do social, political, and economic contexts and individual experiences interact to produce meaning? 3) While situating sources in their historical context, do I attend to the values and beliefs of the time while also questioning the inherent power relations embedded in the sources? 4) How does my own subjectivity impact my questions, interpretations, and analyses? and 5) How are my chronological, geographic, and thematic boundaries shaping and potentially distorting the stories I am looking for and the analytical model I am operating?

In answering these questions, a number of strategies and techniques intersected in my critical historical inquiry, including series of queries, content analysis, triangulation and

disconfirming evidence, and memoing. I will briefly explain each and offer an example to illustrate the method.

Contextual Analysis: Mining for Violence and Education

Racialized violence, and especially violence in connection with education, was not always written about explicitly, in primary or secondary sources. As demonstrated through the review of the literature and historiography, violence and education were not written about as connected components of the larger social system in primary sources or historiographic representations of common schools. Occasionally, instances of violence were included in a history of education, but with the exception of Butchart's and William's work, rarely was it the central thread.[202] Instances of physical, direct violence are prevalent within historical records, but not always clearly defined as violence. Digitally searching the University of North Carolina's North American Slave Narratives collection (which is published online and downloadable), I conducted several content analyses using MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software. In a lexical search for the three terms, *violen,* or *cruel,* or *punish,* there were 6177 hits in 261 documents. For the terms *educate* or *school,* there were 12430 hits in 265 documents. When I selected *educat* and *violen*, there were 16 hits in 9 documents. When I add the term, *school*, only 5 documents rendered 5 hits. Mining the research for violence and education required more than counting, however. If I had only considered frequencies, this kind of counting analysis would seem to suggest that violence and education were not generally discussed together, which was not the case.

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[202] Williams, *Self-Taught;* Ronald E. Butchart, "Black Hope, White Power: Emancipation, Reconstruction and the Legacy of Unequal Schooling in the US South, 1861-1880" *Paedagogica Historica*, 46, nos. 1-2 (February-April 2010): 33-50.

Searches such as these were useful, however, as they helped me home in on passages within nearly 300 slave narratives. I gathered passages from these narratives and went through a two-step coding process, initial coding and focused coding.[203] In my initial coding, I skimmed the documents and read fragments of data to determine if they were relevant to my study. In addition, I included information to add context to the passages, such as where the author lived when describing their experiences, the time period (slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction) and how they described their relationships (e.g., with slaveowners, teachers, enslaved Blacks, or free or freed Blacks). In my focused coding stage, I gathered the initial codes that seemed most useful and compared them to other data.

Violence was described in a number of ways within Freedmen's Bureau records. For example, Alvord's *Sixth Semi-Annual Report* described "outrages" in Kentucky to capture the "bitter" white "opposition to schools for the negro."[204] While physical violence may not be immediately apparent in the term "outrage," reading across sources during the time period revealed it was common parlance of the time, and often associated with violence. In addition, terms such as "bitter" and "opposition" have implications for violence. The report also described violence against Black education in Louisiana: "The hostility to colored schools was so great that many acts of personal violence and insult were committed on the teachers; school-houses were burned, and pupils beaten and frightened. As the military force began to be withdrawn from the smaller places in the country, schools had to be discontinued. Planters refused to board the teachers, and they had to abandon their schools or occupy rooms and board with the colored

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[203] Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2006).

[204] John W. Alvord, *Sixth Semi-Annual Report on Schools for Freedmen July 1, 1867* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868), 51.

people."[205] While this example included the word, "violence," it also included words such as "hostility," "insult," "burned," and "beaten," all of which indicated harm against the freedpeople.

The more I read, the more exposed I became to terms that would help me refine my searches moving forward. Similarly, for the concept of race, I inputted various terms when running searches for newspapers. The term "African American," for example, was not common to the vernacular of the time. As I examined more and more sources, I began to see what words were in vogue, such as "colored," and "Negro," which then allowed me to modify my searches.

Searching for instances of violence using explicit terms of violence, such as *violence* or *brutality* or *force* would rarely yield results. Broadening the search to *management*, *discipline*, or *behaviors* offered insights usually connected to violence, but not directly referring to the term, *violence,* or its derivatives. Regardless of what search terms I employed, however, violence was everywhere throughout most monographs and sources. Not always was violence depicted as acts of direct, physical violence but evidence of structural and cultural violence abounded. It permeated every facet of life, even as moments of hope, joy, love, and other seemingly non-violent acts occurred, separately or simultaneously.

Analytic Induction

With an aim to "persuade the audience that an adequate evidentiary warrant exists for the assertions made, that patterns of generalizations within the data set are indeed as the researcher claims they are," I employed Erickson's approach to analytic induction, as described in Moss & Haertel's work on methodological pluralism.[206] This approach necessitated "reviewing the data

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[205] Alvord, *Sixth Annual Report*, 22.

[206] Erickson, "Qualitative Methods in Research on Teaching," wrote this article drawing on different types of participant observation. Using analytic induction is one example of how my methodology juxtaposes a constellation of ideas and processes. In this case, I am intersecting disciplinary methods (anthropology, history, sociology) while also using eclectic tools and

corpus repeatedly to test the validity of assertions that were generated, seeking disconfirming evidence as well as confirming evidence," with an emphasis on seeking disconfirming evidence.[207] Two methods of analytic induction included triangulation or cross-verification of evidence, and memoing, which I describe in more detail.

Triangulation, or using two or more sources to cross verify data, is critical in historical inquiry, and is one of the strategies in an analytic induction approach. Erickson defined triangulation as "comparison across data sources and methods, researchers' and local actors' perspectives, and even theoretical frameworks, both to establish coherence and consensus *and* to illuminate differences."[208] Throughout my analysis, I engaged in triangulation and searches of dissenting and differing perspectives and interpretations, two strategies Erickson suggests. For instance, when mining Kane's portrait of nineteenth century Louisiana sugar plantations, there were discursive framings that stood out as part of the writer's time (in the 1940s).[209] How the author described the masters and slaves, for example, had a romantic quality that not only reflected the author's particular writing style, but also discussed issues of race in ways common to the era. In a more contemporary monograph about the same topic, the framing changed dramatically.[210] Though these two monographs drew on the same evidence, how they interpreted

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techniques. Though historical inquiry cannot observe individual participants and their interactions in person, or in real time, I instead explore interactions at the individual level as represented through multiple sources of historical data to try to understand what was going on at the time. See Pamela A. Moss & Edward H. Haertel, "Engaging Methodological Pluralism," in *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, eds. D.H. Gitomer and C.A. Bell (Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association, 2016), 146-149. Quoted material was on p. 149.

[207] Erickson, "Qualitative Methods in Research on Teaching," quoted in Moss & Haertel, "Engaging Methodological Pluralism" 148.

[208] Ibid, 146.

[209] Harnett T. Kane, *Plantation Parade: The Grand Manner in Louisiana* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1945).

[210] Richard Follet, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2007).

meaning and understanding of master-slave relations on Louisiana's sugar plantations were vastly different. Before drawing the conclusion that these two accounts of Louisiana sugar plantations were different as a function of the historical temporality (i.e., the 1940s vs the 2000s), I had to triangulate and review the historical evidence myself. Since both authors drew on the diary of William Howard Russell, I too, reviewed Russell's diary.[211] As I read, I asked myself, what did the white journalist and British national say when he visited John Burnside's Louisiana plantation? What interpretations do I draw from reading the same documentary evidence as these two authors? I also sought out confirming and disconfirming interpretations by researching John Burnside. As a major plantation and slave owner in pre-Civil War Louisiana, it was not difficult to find information about him digitally. Online searches led to archival holdings and finding aids, where I could confirm certain aspects of evidence. For example, the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library at Tulane University holds the plantation diary of a previous owner of the St. James sugar refinery, which John Burnside had purchased. I then searched Hathi Trust for the diary, and when I found it, I searched within the diary for context related to my inquiry. Sometimes the searches yielded confirmation or clarity for things like dates, locations, and people's names. Other times the search yielded valuable information about enslaved Blacks lives and treatment. And at times the search provided something interesting but extraneous to my current study. Regardless of the content, however, engaging with primary documents offered small windows into the past. This process of triangulation and of seeking dissenting and confirming framings and interpretations of historical evidence was necessary for all my sources. Visuals such as maps and timelines aided this process.

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[211] William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South* (Boston, MA: T.O.H.P. Burnham, 1863).

In addition to triangulation and seeking confirming and disconfirming evidence, memoing was crucial in my research process.[212] I wrote analytic memos throughout my research and thinking processes, which was distinctive from note-taking in that it provided a means to engage my thoughts, to reflect, and to interrogate ideas and concepts. I wrote memos about relationships between concepts, my impressions after engaging with a historical text, and about myself as a researcher. At times, the memos dove into "concrete details of particular happenings or dialogue," and at other times engaged with more general descriptions of the patterns that the concrete examples illustrate."[213] These memos provided dual actions to both draw out my thoughts while also capturing them for documentation and subsequent analysis. I also audio-recorded my thoughts and reflections and then transcribed them.

In summary, critical historical inquiry interrogates the past by attending to interpretation and power in understanding the past. In order to examine how mass public education developed in mid-nineteenth century America, I focused on illuminating shadowed histories within its development. To do so, I engaged in a critical historical inquiry, which intersected systematic review of primary and secondary sources with epistemological queries about the production of knowledge. In the following chapters, I used critical historical inquiry to illuminate the stories within the stories and reframe narratives of the foundations of public education through the lens of race and violence.

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[212] Erickson, cited in Moss & Haertel, 149; Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw positioned "in-process memos" or "analytically focused writings—asides and commentaries" as part of the analytic process, which can help researchers gain insights, 123-126, in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 123-126. See also Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook and The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014), 95-99 for examples and advice on analytic memoing.

[213] Moss & Haertel, 146.

Chapter 4 "Intruders Within the Sacred Portals of Knowledge:" Northern Racism in Education During the Common School Movement, 1830-1860

In 1855, William Cooper Nell, a Black Bostonian who spent his life advocating for equal rights, observed: "American colorphobia is never more rampant towards its victims, than when one would avail himself of the facilities for mental improvement, in common with the more favored dominant party,—as if his complexion was, indeed, prima facie evidence that he was an intruder within the sacred portals of knowledge."[214] In this regard, African American education could not be held in common with the favored, dominant whites, and to do so would be considered an intrusion. Nell's reflections were rooted in his experiences as a Black man in Boston, with his educational background shaping his life's work.[215] Nell came of age in antebellum America, during the common school era, when issues of slavery, race, and education intersected on local, state, and national stages. It was during this time that mass public education was developing, and Americans were actively animating their power and expressing their sentiment through their votes, petitions, letters, speeches, sermons, conventions, and their acts of violence. An examination of debates about education during the common school era reiterated Nell's sentiment of intrusion, and demonstrated that public schooling was as much about who

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[214] William Cooper Nell, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution* (Boston, MA: Robert F. Wallcut, 1855).

[215] Robert P. Smith, "William Cooper Nell: Crusading Black Abolitionist," *The Journal of Negro History* 5, no. 7 (July 1970): 182-189; Dorothy Porter Wesley and Constance Porter Uzelac, eds. *William Cooper Nell: Nineteenth-Century African American Abolitionist, Historian, Integrationist: Selected Writings from 1832-1874* (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 2002).

should attend common schools and have access to public education, as it was about those who should not. Racialized beliefs shaped these debates throughout the common school era.

In this chapter, I examine the role of race in the development of mass public education during the common school era, arguing that racism was a foundational component. To do so, I draw on Historian Carl F. Kaestle's monograph, *Pillars of the Republic: Common schools and American society, 1780-1860* as the foremost foundations story of mass public education in the U.S.[216] As such, Kaestle's work provided insight into the hegemonic narrative of the development of mass public education through the common school movement as a Northern white endeavor. In *Pillars,* Kaestle argued the confluence of Protestantism, republicanism, and capitalism and the underpinning ideology of cosmopolitanism, paved the way for Americans to accept state governed, publicly-funded education within their states. I argue that Kaestle's monograph overlooked an essential factor in the formation of American education and that the foundations of public education in the U.S. cannot be fully understood without considering the influence of racism. Racism, I argue, was a fourth component that erected the pillars of education. In other words, if Kaestle's pillars represented common schools, then racism, along with Protestantism, republicanism, and capitalism formed its foundations. This chapter interrogates the centrality of racism in developing common schools, arguing the pervasiveness of race and racism were embedded in the foundations of mass public education. Moreover, the pervasiveness of racism demonstrated how Black struggles for educational access in the North

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[216] Kaestle's *Pillars* (1983) was published nearly four decades ago, yet it is still the "go-to" history for the foundations of mass public education in the U.S. In his *State of the Field* article, "What Is the Legacy of the Common Schools Movement? Revisiting Carl Kaestle's 1983 *Pillars Of The Republic,*" *Reviews in American History* 44, no. 2 (June 2016), Johann N. Neem referred to Kaestle's *Pillars* as the "go-to source for the formative era of U.S. public education," 344. In addition to his contemporary relevance, Kaestle provided a metaphor of common schooling as the pillars that uphold the American democratic republic. Forming the base of these pillars was Protestantism, capitalism, and republicanism, which were connected through a shared ideology.

defined a major feature about common, public education: namely, that it was raced white.[217] This chapter illuminates white hostility and opposition to Black education that permeated debates on mass public education in the North, demonstrating that anti-Black sentiment was not proprietary to the South.[218] As such, I challenge narratives of Southern exceptionalism that positioned Northern states as separate from the institution of slavery and white opposition to and hostility toward Black education as a southern phenomenon.

A Note on Methodology

This chapter engages critical historical inquiry to examine the master narrative as embedded in an important source for the foundations of education during the common school era. I seek to extend Kaestle's work, building on the issues of race and racism within his monograph. Black education was positioned as peripheral, with African Americans as one of many groups opposing common schooling. Juxtaposing critical analysis of *Pillars* with documentary evidence including Black commentary and experience, perspectives from anti- and pro-slavery organizations, speeches, and education laws and statutes, I illuminate the role of race and violence in the foundations of public education. Through critical examination, it is evident race and racism were pervasive in all facets of public school development, and thus essential to the national educational foundations story. In addition, as subsequent chapters will illustrate, racism and violence were inextricable.

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[217] Thomas C. Holt, "Marking: Race, Race-making, and the Writing of History," *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 1 (February 1995). I use the term "raced" to signify the dynamics and actions that created race. Colorism certainly had some basis in skin color, but race was socially constructed through various means, such as discourse and patterns of behavior.

[218] Leon Litwack, *North of slavery, the Negro in the free states, 1790-1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961). Litwack established white Northerners' anti-Black sentiment and widespread racial discrimination. He wrote, "Politicians, whether Democrats, Whigs, or Republicans, openly and blatantly professed their allegiance to the principles of white supremacy," which assumed the United States was "a white man's country," viii.

Mass Public Education and the Common School Movement

In this section, I first discuss four major components within *Pillars* that shaped Kaestle's rationale for the development of mass public education through the common school movement. These include the purposes and functions of common schools; the role of the state and centralization; opposition to and exclusion from common schooling; and the legacy of American faith in public education. Following each component, I offer a critique that positions race and racism as central and pervasive, especially through public discourses of the time.

Carl Kaestle's pivotal work, *Pillars of the Republic* (1983), located the development of mass public education in the North, where the social beliefs of Protestantism, capitalism, and republicanism intersected among education reformers.[219] The common school movement for free, public schools for all children began in the 1830s, 30 years prior to the Civil War, and was rooted in state education systems across the North by 1860. Kaestle focused on education reformers who sought to create systems of mass education in a rapidly industrializing and culturally pluralistic United States: "As the pace of social change quickened in the American North during the 1830s, so did educators' advocacy of free common schooling dedicated to moral education and good citizenship. It was an era of social reform, and common-school reformers were in the forefront. They were confident that improved public education could alleviate a host of worrisome problems and secure the nation's destiny."[220] At a time of social

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[219] Kaestle defined ideology as "the aspect of culture that attempts to justify and defend a set of social relations and institutions," 76. According to Kaestle, education reformers shared common social beliefs, rooted in Protestantism, capitalism, and republicanism. Native Protestant ideology had ten major tenets of social belief: 1) liberty, virtue, and individualism were sacred in a republic, 2) morality was determined by individual character, 3) people should be industrious, 4) the domestic role was respectable for women, 5) families and society were responsible for or building character, 6) property was sacrosanct, 7) economic opportunity abounded in the U.S., 8) American Protestant culture was superior, 9) America was destined for greatness, and 10) education could help unify a diverse American public, 76-77.

[220] Public schooling, the idea that all children in a society should have access to an elementary education that is state funded and regulated, has gained the attention of scholars since the founding of the nation. No less earnest are contemporary scholars in researching the history of public schooling, as well as the persistence of issues and challenges within it. Kaestle's *Pillars* was

flux reflected in demographic changes and industrial growth, people were looking to public education to shape American morality and citizenship. Indeed, the 1830s ushered in waves of social action with Americans forming abolition and benevolent societies, literary societies, and conventions, each with agendas aimed at affecting social change. However, the perception of education as a means for social change was not just on the minds of white common school reformers. References to improvements of the mind were proclaimed across Black published materials, which of course included essays about education and schools, but also were part of general rationales for Black journals and newspapers and Black societies and conventions. Indeed, Blacks cultivated a literary tradition that was central to struggles for Black freedom.[221] During the late eighteenth century, free Blacks drew on the printed word as a means to speak to and for their race, which included arguing for education for Black children, protesting slavery, and challenging white derogatory perceptions of Blacks. African Americans had long touted education and improvements of the mind as a key to uplifting the race. The first Black newspaper, *The Freedom's Journal,* was founded by African Americans Samuel Cornish and John B. Russwurm in 1827. *The Freedom's Journal* deemed education was "of the highest importance to the welfare of society," which necessitated means and facilities for "the improvement of the faculties and powers of their [youth's] minds."[222] The emphasis was often on

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situated in a historiography stemming from revisionist historians of the 1960s who viewed public schools as bureaucratic institutions that served the needs of the industrial economy, exacerbated inequality, and imposed a Protestant ethic. In addition, scholars have demonstrated that Americans looked to public education to solve America's problems. See Henry J. Perkinson, *The Imperfect Panacea: American Faith in Education, 1865-1976*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1977).

[221] Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein, eds., *Early African American Print Culture* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. Richard Newman, Patrick Rael, and Philip Lapsansky, eds., *Pamphlets of Protest: An Anthology of early African-American Protest Literature, 1790-1860* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001).

[222] *To our Patrons,* cited in the first editorial in the first Black newspaper, *The Freedom's Journal*, March 16, 1827, edited by Samuel Cornish and John B. Russwurm; *A Negro Library is Founded*, originally published in Hazard's Register, March 16, 1833, XI, 186, In Herbert Apethker, ed., *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States,* (New York: The Citadel Press, 1951), 138.

education in various forms—public, private, vocational, classic, in schools, at libraries—African Americans sought and fought for their right to improve their minds.

The distinction between Blacks seeking education in various forms and white education reformers seeking education through state supported common schools was important. Kaestle's analysis hinged on the latter–state systems of education–which were state supported and regulated institutions that served a common purpose of moral and civic instruction. For Kaestle, the three main components of common schooling included central regulation (at the state level), public funding (through taxation), and professional management (training of teachers). Kaestle termed those reformers who also saw a major role for government intervention as "cosmopolitan." Cosmopolitan reformers advocated for government involvement in the economy, morality, and culture, which was politically expressed through the Whig Party. Their perspective "envisioned an integrated economy, more centralized public direction, improved communication, and a common moral and political culture based on Anglo-American Protestantism, capitalism, and republicanism."[223] According to Kaestle, Northern states were generally in favor of these common school systems due to the education reformers' shared social, moral, and economic beliefs. Southern states, however, were not, which was attributed to an enslaver class in the South. Kaestle wrote, "geography, class structure, economic development, and cultural heritage combined to tip the scales in favor of state systems in the North and against them in the South."[224] This was significant because public education was defined primarily in terms of having state education systems. Yet, regional differences between the North and the South did not prevent Black exclusion from mass public education in the

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[223] Kaestle, *Pillars,* 77.

[224] Ibid, 217.

North. In other words, regardless of whether the state had developed public education systems, inclusion of Black children in public schools with white children was fiercely contested. In addition, whether to include public funding for Black education in state systems was also fiercely contested. Moreover, white hostility against Black education was not limited to the slave-holding South. Put differently, state systems were not race-neutral; on the contrary, race became an indicator of public school inclusion and exclusion, social and cultural assimilation, and educational access and denial.

Questions of who should be educated, what should be taught, and education at whose expense intersected with questions of the purposes, organization, and management of education, and were highly contested and debated during the common school era from 1830-1860. As white educational reformers sought to implement common school systems within their states, they contended with resistance and opposition. Kaestle's work examined the dynamics between education reformers and their foes, which consisted of enslavers in the South, advocates for local control, cultural relativists, Catholics and other non-Protestants, and African Americans. For Kaestle, "these groups did not make common cause with each other, did not have the same goals, and did not succeed in preventing the creation of state common-school systems," but rather, affected the "shape" and "content" of schooling, achieving "various concessions and adjustments" by 1860.[225] In this sense, the dynamics that led to racial segregation of public schools became a concession, which effectively obscured dynamics of racialization and the larger implication that common schools were raced white. Furthermore, Kaestle argued "Blacks remained outside the cosmopolitan rationale of antebellum school reform. In the face of this

[225] Kaestle wrote this in the preface, *Pillars,* x.

racist reality, Black leaders remained ambivalent toward public schooling."[226] Though Kaestle acknowledged racism as what kept some Blacks from supporting public schools, it must also be acknowledged that racism also defined common schools as white. Put another way, racism functioned not only to exclude Blacks, but also to include whites. The parameters of inclusion and exclusion were raced; that is to say, beliefs and attitudes about race and racism structured behaviors and actions of public school inclusion and exclusion.[227]

Kaestle did not shy away from recognizing that mass public education was flawed and imperfect. *Pillars of the Republic* revealed that despite its flaws, there was evidence of the American public's faith in the idea of common public schools. Kaestle wrote, "two enduring legacies of the common-school reform movement are the American faith in education and the cosmopolitan ideal of inclusive public schools."[228] In other words, people believed in education even when they saw inequality in the system. In addition, people believed in a notion of public education as common to all, respectful to all, equal in treatment, and offering a sense of fairness and cohesion. There is little dispute that American people across race, class, and gender believed in the power of education, but what must be noted was the importance of race and racism in how these sentiments manifested. As the following sections will demonstrate, systematic discrimination and violence against people of color were actualized through struggles for educational access, in part due to education's perceived power for social, economic, and political equality. Inclusion referred to an ideal of equality that was hardly realized when it came to Blacks and other people of color. Segregation did not fit into the model of inclusion (in fact, it

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[226] Ibid, 179.

[227] Holt, "Marking: Race, Race-making, and the Writing of History," 1995.

[228] Kaestle, *Pillars,* 221-222.

was an opposing concept), yet state educational statutes, public discussions of education reform, and white opposition and hostility toward Black access to common schools left no doubt of the fact of race-based educational segregation from the inception of common schooling. Inclusion, then, had racialized parameters for white European Americans, and while people of color could be included in regard to having access to public schools, the access was through a dual system.[229] In this sense, inclusion was a term that could only be understood with reference to who was excluded.

Marking Race Through Discourse, State Mechanisms, and Social Action in Public Education Debates

Creating common, universal schooling was a primary objective in the development of mass public education. This meant tax-based and state-supported schools would be accessible to all children, at least at the elementary levels. Yet, notions of *common, universal,* and *all* could not be understood without some social parameters against which to measure, and these parameters were steeped in notions of race. In other words, terms such as *common* and *universal* were racially marked. For example, the term *colored* was common parlance to describe people of African descent, and schools accessible to Black children were distinguished as such.[230] Legislation of education at local and state levels often included race-based parameters, implicitly or explicitly. The processes of marking race manifested directly through people's actions,

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[229] John Hope Franklin, "Jim Crow Goes to School: The Genesis of Legal Segregation in Southern Schools," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 58, no. 22 (1959).

[230] Mid-nineteenth century census data designated *color* by whiteness or Blackness. For example, the 1850 census collected the color of free inhabitants and slave inhabitants. For the former, marshals were instructed to leave a blank space for whites, insert B for Blacks, and insert M for mulattos under the category "color." "It is very desirable that these particulars be carefully regarded," the instruction manual noted. *Mulatto* meant mixed race, usually a mix of white and Black parentage. Occasionally, African Americans used the term "people of color," but were also referring to Black people of African descent. United States Census, 1850, Washington D.C.

structurally through state and local legislation and institutions, and culturally through customs, norms, and discourses. The following sections draw on state education statues and public discourse and debate about education reform to show how education during the common school era was raced through multiple means and processes, which circumscribed the borders of public education. These processes were determined through race-based distinctions. Though I will reference Kaestle's work as well, I do so to draw out distinctions and highlight critiques.

Take, for example, common schools as means of assimilation in an increasingly pluralistic society. Education for assimilation hinged on the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. In other words, there was a line against which conformity and assimilation was built, and that line was racialized. African Americans were not just on the other side of that line, but their Blackness was defined in opposition to other Americans' whiteness. Though difference was certainly marked within racialized groups, e.g., African Americans were marked as free or enslaved, and whites were positioned as native or immigrant, *Blackness* and *whiteness* were defined in opposition. Kaestle wrote,

> While schools have often abused different cultures, demanding cultural conversion without yielding equal opportunity, it was nonetheless a peaceful and seemingly democratic solution, accepted by some immigrants as well as by native-born Americans. Thus, education for assimilation became one of the central preoccupations of nineteenth century school officials. Too often educators equated Anglo-American Protestant traditions and values with something mislabeled American culture and then insisted that newcomers take it or leave it.[231]

Thus, as white American Protestant reformers were constructing education for the common man, they were simultaneously constructing the common man. European immigrants who were raced white could conform and assimilate. "Universal" may have included poor people, urban and rural people, American born or European immigrants, women and men, but these categorizations

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[231] Kaestle, *Pillars*, 72.

intersected with a racialized standard as well: they were all white, not black, red, yellow, or colored.

In deciding who could or should receive public education through common schools, residents, voters, and education reformers were also deciding who was to be excluded. Kaestle pointed out that as suffrage for white men spread, so too did the need for universal education for whites: "If the republic was to have universal white male suffrage, it needed universal white education. Public schools could teach patriotism, encourage participation in civic affairs, and teach girls how to teach future sons the same lessons."[232] Kaestle nodded to suffrage as both racialized and gendered, which had implications for public education. Though women could not vote, they had a role in learning their civic duties, which included teaching the children how to uphold the republic. Moreover, though the specifics of common schooling, such as funding, management, and curricula were contested, reformers and white male voters continually reinforced the agreement that common, universal education was for whites.

While some Black Americans wanted separate schools, the rationale usually stemmed from a recognition that white teachers would not treat black students fairly or the same as white students. [233] Further, Black teachers would not readily be accepted as teachers of white children. Such a determination showed that perceptions of teaching and learning were also marked by race. The compromise of common schooling, then, laid in who was considered "common" or could reach the potential to become common. The struggle to define "common" centered race,

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[232] Kaestle pointed to the spirit of nationalism in the 1830s and 1840s that fostered a "spirit of international competition," *Pillars,* 72. White male suffrage was almost universal by the 1830s, but women who could not vote, could work as teachers.

[233] For example, Rhode Island's Black population made up about a quarter of the total population since the early 18th century, with voting rights bestowed upon Black men from 1843. Though laws did not mandate separate schools, Black residents petitioned for a separate school. Special Report, 383.

with the determination that "common" meant *white*. European immigrants certainly struggled for access to education, and many had to compromise their values and culture to assimilate to a white "Native" Protestant ideology.[234] For African Americans, assimilation could not be actualized without dissociation or segregation. Their racial status demarcated a no-access boundary to white schools. White immigrants could pass the boundary through their whiteness, even if it meant conforming to a Protestant ethic.[235] Thus, as whites were given access to assimilate through state systems of education, Blacks seeking education faced barriers to that access.

Another means of racially marking inclusion and exclusion resided in education legislation. Generally established through state constitutions, the legislation of education during the common school era often included race-based parameters on education.[236] For example, the General Statutes of Connecticut, enacted in May 1833, explicitly mentioned the instruction of people of color who were not from Connecticut:

> Whereas, attempts have been made to establish literary institutions in this state for the instruction of colored persons belonging to other states and countries, which would end to the great increase of the colored population of the state, and thereby to the injury of the people...no person shall set up or establish in this state any school, academy, or literary institution for the instruction or education of colored persons who are not inhabitants of this state.[237]

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[234] I use quotations around the term Native here to denote that "Native" meant white Americans born in the United States, which was contrasted with immigrant European whites. The term "Native" was common in historical documents of the time, including the US Census. Native or Indigenous Americans were often referred to as *Indians*.

[235] Kaestle, *Pillars,* 72. Other education scholars have also pointed out that differences in white ethnicity or labor status led to conflicts over public education but did not preclude their access to public schools. See, Ira Katznelson and Margaret Weir, *Class, race, and the decline of the democratic ideal* (University of California Press, 1985).

[236] See Department of Education *Report of the Commissioner of Education with circulars and documents accompanying the same, submitted to the Senate and House of Representatives, June 2, 1868, Washington Government Printing Office, 1868* for state-by-state constitutional provisions, 83-135.

[237] General statutes of Connecticut, 1835, Title 53-Inhabitants. To get a sense of what states were legislating in terms of education, I examined state education laws during the common school era. Though state laws do not provide a full picture of negotiation for or compliance with the laws, they indicated state-level engagement.

Connecticut's state statue denied education to people of color, specifically those who were not from the state.[238] The statutes employed racialized language that presumed free Blacks as the threat and whites as the threatened. In this regard, the danger resided within in Black bodies, which education would spread. Additionally, an increase of "the colored population" would be injurious to the "people." No racial qualifier was offered for the "people," but it was communicated they were not "colored." The worry for "the people" simultaneously normalized "people" as *white* and threats to the people as *Black*. Injuriousness and its potential for harm to whites was a common sentiment conveyed in Northern state statutes and was especially expressed in relation to Black rebellion and slave insurrections. Other states, like Pennsylvania, passed resolutions similar to Connecticut's to "protect the citizens of this commonwealth against the evils arising from the emigration of free blacks," prompting free Blacks to pen petitions of protest, countering white sentiment as "injurious to our general character and standing."[239] Even Horace Mann, who was against slavery, strongly cautioned against inciting slave rebellion and invoking the ire of southern enslavers in a speech made in Boston in 1833, two years after Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831.[240]

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[238] The law became known as the "Canterbury Law" and was repealed by the legislature in 1838. By 1868 Connecticut explicitly outlawed segregated schools. See US Commissioner on Education, Special Report on the Condition and Improvement of Public Schools in the District of Columbia, submitted to the Senate June, 1868, and to the House, with additions, June 13, 1870 (Washington DC, 1871). Despite outlawing public school segregation by race or color, white racial attitudes (that were anti-Black) persisted. See Jane H. Peace and William H. Peace, *They Who Would Be Free: Blacks' Search for Freedom, 1830-1861* (Massachusetts: Halliday Lithograph Corporation, 1974), especially Part III, 95-170, which detailed Black efforts for advancement in the North and the white opposition they faced. See also Davidson M. Douglass, *Jim Crow Moves North, the Battle over Northern School Segregation, 1865-1954* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), with pp. 41, 63, and 84 discussing Connecticut specifically.

[239] "The Negroes of Philadelphia Speak," originally published in *The Liberator*, April 14, 1832. The address was in response to two resolutions passed in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to limit free Blacks from other states settling in the state. James Forten, William Whipper and Robert Purvis drafted the petition. In Apetheker, *A Documentary History,* 126-133, with the quoted material on 132.

[240] See the *Colonizationist and Journal of Freedom* (Boston, MA: G. W. Light, 1834), 12-18 for Horace Mann's address to the Boston Young Men's Colonization Society, given on March 13, 1833.

Racialized discourses persisted in published materials as well. An editorial in Frederick Douglass' antislavery newspaper, *The North Star,* reinforced how northern and mid-western states comprising the free north used racialized language in state legislation to exclude Blacks: "This antipathy to the education of the colored race extends even to the free States. It is not unknown in New England. The State of Ohio established schools in 1829 for 'the white youth of every class and grade without distinction.'"[241] This editorial is significant because it highlighted the role race played in determining funding for public education. Pointing to funding, the author also highlighted how anti-Black racism was infused into the structure of public education. Even when language did not explicitly forbid Black education or schools, other state mechanisms, such as access to public funds from taxation, marked race in education. In Delaware, a slave state that remained in the Union during the Civil War, taxation on state property was only used for schools for white children. In addition, white schools were also funded through a tax on the sale of slaves.[242] Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, though free states, similarly restricted state funds to white schools, and as Black children could not attend these schools, this effectively denied Black access to public education.

Racial marking was also evident in state efforts to constrain Black movement into Northern states. Some whites perceived the way to limit the migration of people of color was to place prohibitions on education, which further highlighted racialized boundaries of educational

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[241] "Selections from Parker's Letter on Slavery, Effects of Slavery on Law and Politics," in *The North Star*, April 21, 1848, Rochester, New York.

[242] Free Blacks comprised about 92% of the Black population in Delaware. In 1860, there were 19,829 free Blacks and 1,798 enslaved Blacks in the state, none of whom received public funds for education. See "Special Report on the Condition and Improvement of Public Schools in DC," *Report of the Commissioner of Education* (Washington DC, 1871), especially 335-336. Also, see George W. Williams, *History of the Negro Race in America from 1619 to 1880* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1883),157-158.

access.[243] Figure 4 captured anti-Black sentiment in the North as whites denied Black children access to public schools with white children.

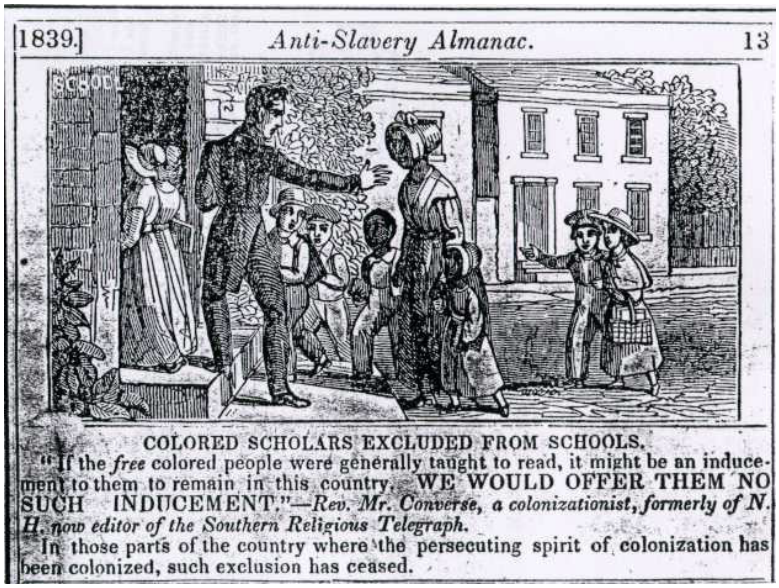

Figure 4: Colored Scholars Excluded from Schools, Anti-Slavery Almanac, 1839. The caption reads: "'If the free colored people were generally taught to read, it might be an inducement to them to remain in this country. WE WOULD OFFER THEM NO SUCH INDUCEMENT.' –Rev. Mr. Converse, a colonizationist formerly of N.H. now editor of the Southern Religious Telegraph. In those parts of the country where the persecuting spirit of colonization has been colonized, such exclusion has ceased."

Published in the *Anti-Slavery Almanac* in 1839, abolitionists pointed to white efforts to block free Black children in the North from attending common, public schools with white children, demonstrating white hostility toward African Americans.[244] Though the image text referenced statements from the American Colonization Society in 1831, which believed free Blacks should leave the United States and settle in Liberia, the denial of Black children from attending public schools with white children occurred across Northern states and localities.[245]

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[243] Douglass, *Jim Crow Moves North*, 41-45.

[244] The *Anti-Slavery Almanac* was published by the American-Anti-Slavery Society, which also published the weekly newspaper, the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. White abolitionists such as Lydia Maria Child and Isaac Knapp contributed to publishing the almanacs from 1836-1843. While abolitionists were certainly anti-slavery, there were divisions and infighting within the abolitionist movement about whether or not Blacks and whites should socially mix, and these conflicts played out in schools, and specifically about whether Black children should have separate schools than whites.

[245] The American Colonization Society or The American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States was founded in 1817. Notable members included former presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. "Annual Reports of

The caption below the image suggested white hostility ceased when colonizationists were thwarted, but that was hardly the case.[246] Even if whites were not members of the American Colonization Society, anti-Black sentiment persisted, as demonstrated in the state statutes. These two issues of limiting Black migration and limiting interracial social mixing intersected and helped define racialized boundaries of public schools that included whites and excluded Blacks.

Other state mechanisms such as tax-based funding for public education and school desegregation cases also raced public education. In addition to discursively shaping racialized boundaries, Black struggles for inclusion and access played out through school funding. Whites often denied Blacks access to state funds Black taxes supported.[247] Thus, tax-supported public schooling became central to common schools developing as common *white* schools. In Boston, the first school for African American children was organized and funded by free Blacks in 1798.[248] Though Black Bostonians paid city taxes, their children could not attend white schools. For nearly two decades, the Black community petitioned the city to fund the school. Black

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the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States," *American Colonization Society* 1-10 (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969).

[246] This image was a visual representation of Reverend Amasa Converse's framing of education as an "inducement" for free Blacks to remain residents of the United States. His original statement was published in the *Southern Religious Telegraph* on February 19, 1831, for which he was also the editor. Reverend Converse and his brothers were proponents of free Black colonization in Africa, which free Black Americans vehemently opposed. The Negro Conventions of the 1830s spoke and published against whites' false philanthropy. See "Denouncing Colonization" 1831 (New York), "First Annual Negro Convention Address," 1831, in Aptheker, *Documentary History*, 109 and 114-118, respectively. Some of these white colonizationists were against slavery, while they also recognized whites as the favored race. Colonizationists argued that racialized prejudice in the US could not be overcome. In Liberia, free Black colonists would be inferior to none, something that could only be hoped for in the US, but not met in reality. Despite the rhetorical strategy to couch their mission in a paternalistic and supportive pro-Black stance, white colonizationists nevertheless affirmed whiteness as supreme and as favored. Interestingly, colonization society members were quick to support, at least rhetorically, publicly funded common schools in Liberia, which Blacks were excluded from in the United States. See "Annual Reports of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States," *American Colonization Society*, 19 (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1835/1969), 21.

[247] Peace & Peace, *They Who Would Be Free*; Litwack, *North of Slavery*.

[248] The first school was opened in the home of Prince Hall, a free Black abolitionist and freemason. See Herbert Aptheker, *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States* (New York, NY: The Citadel Press, 1951), 19-20. See also Noel S. Anderson and Haroon Kharem's Introduction to *Education as Freedom: African American Educational Thought and Activism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), xvi.

activism secured an endowment from a wealthy white merchant in 1815, and the school was subsequently appropriated by the Boston Public School Committee, becoming the first African American public school in the US.[249] Black activism continued, however, in the fight to end segregation and inequality, with African Americans forging alliances with white abolitionists.[250] For example, Black-founded and Black-led societies such as the Colored Citizens of Boston, of which William Cooper Nell was a member, requested support from the New England Anti-Slavery Society to campaign against racial segregation in Boston. Even as free Blacks were barred from public schools, they nevertheless paid taxes to fund the education their own children could not access. This was not a region-exclusive feature of the North or the South; free Blacks in Boston fared similarly to free Blacks in New Orleans. In both cities, publicly funded schools were initially inaccessible. Denial of free Blacks in common public schools sent a clear meaning: Public schools were meant for white children. Denial from the budding public school systems did not preclude Black schools, however; on the contrary, African Americans established schools for children of color. Funding, instruction, and management were undertaken by Blacks themselves, which included some support from white philanthropists.[251] Moreover, Blacks persisted in efforts for education, which took many forms. Some, like Nell, fought for

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[249] For a discussion of how African Americans developed and sustained schools in antebellum Boston, see Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009) 132-163.

[250] For example, William Cooper Nell, who attended the Smith School (so named in 1835 after its benefactor, Abiel Smith), became an apprentice in William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator* office and a champion for school integration. Nell and other free Blacks formed a "Freedom Association" to assist fugitive slaves (which was technically illegal). Such efforts established Black activist networks, which would also advocate for Black education. See Robert P. Smith, "William Cooper Nell: Crusading Black Abolitionist," *Journal of Negro History* 55, no. 3 (July 1970): 182-199); James Oliver Horton, "Generations of Protest: Black Families and Social Reform in Ante-Bellum Boston," *The New England Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (June 1976): 251.

[251] Kaestle pointed out that some Northern whites' concern for immorality and vice manifested in Black education and charity education prior to 1830: "Whites did intend to 'elevate' those blacks who were willing to be educated, but only in the sense that they would be morally fortified to escape vice, criminal activity, and poverty, all of which their benefactors attributed to ignorance," 39.

integration. Some fought for classics, some for vocational education.[252] Regardless, African Americans were invested in their children's education.

If white opposition showed itself through persistent attempts to mark public education as white, Black persistence and resistance challenged this. The Black community, and whites who supported them philanthropically, had long borne the responsibility for Black education. Denial of access to school funds for Black children was evident throughout the North. This is not to say that Blacks in the North did not have schools, but rather, that Black schools were not the common, state-funded schools. When Black schools did operate within public school governance, they remained segregated and distinct from white schools. These issues played out in local and state politics, as well as within national movements such as the anti-slavery movement. The case of *Roberts v the City of Boston* in1849, which maintained the legality of racial segregation of public schools, demonstrated that racism and public education were intertwined. Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw argued that legal equality of the races did not translate to equality in treatment by the law. Just as women and men, and children and adults, had different legal statuses, so too, could whites and Blacks.[253] Yet, organizations such as the Colored Citizens of Boston created networks of activism and community support which provided Blacks with a collective means to combat racial discrimination and to pressure white lawmakers for equality in education. Engaging in boycotts, petitioning public school officials and state lawmakers, raising

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[252] "Appeal from Philadelphia Committee for a Manual Labor School," originally published in *Hazaard's Register*, Sept 24, 1831, VIII, 195-196, In Herbert Aptheker, *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States* (New York: Citadel Press, 1951), 118-119.

[253] See the case of Sarah C. Roberts vs the City of Boston (1849), "Charles Sumner, Brief for Public School Integration, 1849" *Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents* ed. Waldo E. Martin Jr. (Boston, MA: Bedford,/St. Martin's, 1998), 47-60.

funds, and reaching out to other abolitionist organizations, Black Bostonians saw success as Massachusetts passed a law in 1855 for equal rights for Black children.[254]

It is important to note free Black antebellum experiences were not homogenous, nor did African Americans share a unitary vision for public education. The case of desegregation in Boston highlighted multiple perspectives on Black education, as well as the means to achieve educational excellence. Some African Americans, such as William Cooper Nell, thought integration was the key to American and racial uplift, which could not be accomplished in racialized silos. Other African Americans argued against integration, citing that white racial prejudice against Blacks would render unfair and hostile treatment toward Black children. What was common, however, was a racialized system of white supremacy that rendered superiority, a favored status, of whites over Blacks. Moreover, Black perspectives were not divorced from the anti-Black racism they experienced through their educational pursuits and their daily lives.

Whites with different racial, social, and political beliefs and agendas referred to anti-Black sentiment among whites as common, if not varying in degree. African Americans could and did attest this, especially as it pertained to education. William Cooper Nell, like many free Blacks in the North, practiced moral suasion, which was persuasion based on morality and reason rather than direct violence or brute force.[255] Nell worked closely with white abolitionists, believing in white and Black collaboration and integration, but he was well aware of how some whites perceived Black education as an intrusion. Such a perception positioned embodiments of

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[254] Patrick T. J. Browne, "To Defend Mr. Garrison:" William Cooper Nell and the Personal Politics of Antislavery," *The New England Quarterly,* 70, no. 3 (September 1997): 428-430.

[255] See Tunde Adeleke, "Afro-Americans and Moral Suasion: The Debate in the 1830's," *The Journal of Negro History* 83, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 127-142. Moral suasion, which had been used by African Americans and white abolitionists since the 18th century, was persuasion through ideas rather than through violence.

education as a threat to whites. Free Blacks who sought education and access to public schools were such embodiments.

Recall that William Cooper Nell referred to white perceptions of Black education as an intrusion "within the sacred portals of knowledge."[256] In such a perspective, education and the common school belonged to whites, and Black education intruded on white entitlements. Nell continued his observation by describing the potential for white violence against blacks: "In Boston, the so-called 'Athens of America,' large audiences have been thrown almost into spasms by the presence of one colored man in their midst; and, on one occasion, (in the writer's experience, a mob grossly insulted a gentleman and two ladies, who did not happen to exhibit the Anglo-Saxon (constitutional) complexion."[257] Here, Nell described how some whites reacted to the presence of an African American, which resulted in "gross insult" by a white mob. Such actions marked racialized parameters of social and civic life. Nell's own experience cemented how expressions of Black education and Black presence risked white hostility and violence. Nell was speaking of his experience in the North, an experience of which people of color across the United States were all too familiar.

As Nell and others could attest, a person of color who sought equality in education would come up against white hostility. Such framing presupposed processes of meaning-making that centered race in its definitions of who could or should have access to education.[258] In addition to state mechanisms such as education statutes and court cases, Nell's sentiment was also evident in

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[256] William Cooper Nell, *The Colored Patriots*, 113.

[257] Ibid., 113.

[258] Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (June 1993): 1707-1791, described how whites have embedded racial privilege into notions of property. See also George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Benefit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998) for a useful framework on how whites have come to claim whiteness as property.

white social actions, as white hostility manifested into white violence that targeted Black education. Figure 5, published in the *Anti-Slavery Almanac,* illustrated white mob violence against Black education in the antebellum North. In 1830, Three years prior to Connecticut state statutes prohibiting the instruction of non-resident free Blacks in the state, white opposition and hostility forced Prudence Crandall's school for girls of color to close. Crandall faced hostility for admitting Black girls to study with white girls, prompting white parents to withdraw their children.[259] Crandall then opened the school for girls of color and faced even more opposition. White residents of Hartford, Connecticut used a variety of methods to force the school's closure, including intimidation and attacks on the teachers and students, destruction and defacement of the building, outcry in public and literary forums, and petitions and letters to policy makers, all of which illuminated the reach and varied manifestations of white opposition to Black education.

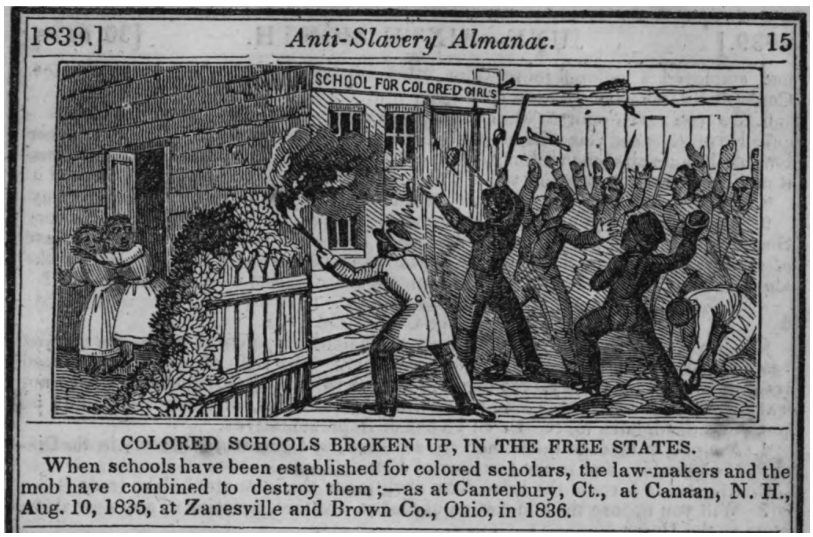

Figure 5: Colored Schools Broken Up, in the Free States, Anti-Slavery Almanac, 1839. The caption reads, "When schools have been established for colored scholars, the law-makers and the mob have combined to destroy them; --as at Canterbury, Ct., at Canaan, N.H., Aug. 10, 1835, at Zanesville and Brown Co., Ohio in 1836."

[259] Kabria Baumgartner, *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Black Women and Educational Activism in Antebellum America* (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 14-45. Dorothy Sterling, ed. *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 180-182.

As in Connecticut, many white Americans either did not accept Black education or fought to keep it separate from white education.[260] Within states that did not explicitly forbid Black education in statutes, white actions spoke volumes. Across cities in the free North, whites physically attacked Black schools.[261] New Hampshire, with its small Black population, illuminated the lengths some northern whites would go to maintain racial separation. The Noyes Academy in Canaan permitted white and Black youth to attend together, and was met with community fury. So great was white hostility against Black attendance that in the summer of 1835 a mob removed the building from its foundations.[262]

These examples demonstrated that race was prominent in the development of public education, and Blacks who sought access to education were blocked and treated as intruders, especially when that access meant racial amalgamation. Education constantly traversed racial boundaries during the common school era, building its pillars upon a foundation of race-consciousness that depended on racialized categories to affirm or deny legitimate entitlements to knowledge. If education was a tool of power, then common schools were a point of access. Even as most northern states provided some level of state-supported public education for free Blacks by 1860, racism prescribed the parameters.[263]

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[260] George Washington Williams's *History of the Negro Race*, 1883, chronicled Black experiences with white hostility in education across states in the North and South. Williams wrote "the doors of nearly all the schools of the entire North were shut in his face; and the few separate schools according him were given grudgingly," 131. See 147-213 for a state by state account of laws pertaining to Black education.

[261] Kabria Baumgartner, *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Black Women and Educational Activism in Antebellum America* (New York: New York University Press, 2019). Baumgartner estimated there were at least nine violent attacks on Black schools in the Northeast from 1830-1845 (see Baumgartner's chart, Appendix D, 222).

[262] "Special Report of the Condition and Improvement of Public Schools," Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1871, 400; Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 117-120. Also, this is one of the examples referenced within Figure 5.

[263] Litwack, *North of Slavery*; Kaestle, *Pillars;* Douglass, *Jim Crow Moves North.*

Northern Connections to Slavery and Dispelling Myths of Southern Exceptionalism

Contemporary studies of the development of mass public education reinforce discourses of exceptionalism, which serve to obscure the effects of racism and slavery. Go and Lindert claimed affordability, local autonomy, and voting power were key in the rise of public schooling in the North in the mid-19th century. They argued the South, in contrast, did not give rise to local autonomy given Southern elitism in its legislatures (especially in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, and Louisiana). In addition, the franchise, which was denied to all Southern Blacks, enslaved or free, was more limited in the South than in the North.[264]

Their distinction of income patterns and suffrage in the northern states bolstered Kaestle's analysis, but they did not situate these patterns within the larger national context of racialized slavery. If Americans in the North had more expendable income to invest in their public schools, where did this income came from? Northern economies were less agrarian with labor much more dependent on industry, such as factories. However, the proliferation of industrial economies in the North were tied to the products of slave labor in the South, especially cotton. Ronald Bailey's analysis revealed cotton production in the South fueled the textile industry in the North. "In 1860, for example, New England had 52 percent of the manufacturing establishments and 75 percent of the 5.14 million spindles in operation," and Massachusetts "alone had 30 percent of all spindles, and Rhode Island another 18 percent." Overall, "New England mills consumed 283.7 million pounds of cotton, or 67 percent of the 422.6 million pounds of cotton used by U.S. mills in 1860."[265] If racialized slavery fueled the cotton industry

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[264] Sun Go and Peter Lindert, "The Uneven Rise of American Public Schools to 1850," *The Journal of Economic History* 70, no. 1 (March 2010), 1-26; Sun Go and Peter Lindert, "The Curious Dawn of American Public Schools," Working Paper 13335, *National Bureau of Economic Research* (Cambridge, MA, August 2007), 1-62.

[265] Ronald Bailey, "The Other Side of Slavery: Black Labor, Cotton, and Textile Industrialization in Great Britain and the United States, *Agricultural History* 68, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 45.

in the South, so too did it fuel the textile industry in the North. In addition, Northern textiles made their way back to the South. For example, white slave owners purchased textiles and shoes from northern merchants for their slaves.[266] Thus, the flow of materials and goods that built and sustained the Northern manufacturing industry were embedded in the system of racialized slavery. Northern whites benefited through an increase in expendable income, some of which funded the public schools. The rise of manufacturing certainly exemplifies Kaestle's point about capitalism as foundational to public education, but also critical is a racial analysis, which demonstrates how capitalism was developed through racialized slavery. Further, the slavery economy helped fund public education, a fact often overlooked in narratives of how mass public education developed.[267]

Suffrage, or the right to vote, is another issue that must be situated in its national context. With few exceptions, only white men had the right to vote during the common school era. Most state statutes implicating education also included language about who could vote based on race. Thus, suffrage was raced white, and explicitly so. This is significant to point out because suffrage provided a means to impact public education funding. Though education reformers were working to standardize and centralize mass public education in their states, schools remained situated within the local political landscape. This is important because suffrage was and continues to be a major factor in explaining why common schools developed, yet, absent this analysis is how suffrage was both racialized and connected to racialized slavery. When Henry

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[266] Theodore Dwight Weld, *American Slavery as It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839).

[267] For comparison, a Southern pro-slavery argument pointed out that as slaves were property, they could be taxed and thus contribute to the "public burden." See Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, "An Essay on the Management of Slaves, and Especially on their Religious Instruction; Read before the Agricultural Society of St. John's Colleton" (Charleston, SC: A. F. Miller,1834), 4. Slave states like Delaware and Florida used taxes from the sale of enslaved Blacks to fund public education for whites, see Williams, *History of the Negro Race,* 1883. For Northern states, taxes on the products of slave labor such as cotton were applied to public education.

Barnard described the legal status of Blacks in education, he repeatedly cited how white voters elected to fund white schools, thus denying resources to Black schools.[268] In his impressive volume on African American history, Williams also outlined state voting patterns that denied public funds to schools for Black children.[269] When Kaestle wrote, by 1860, "when a majority of voters came to associate common-school systems with modernity and equality, the reformers' success in the North was assured," all of the voters were men, and the vast majority were white men.[270] Nineteenth century education reformers were aware that suffrage was a primary tool for shaping publicly funded schools to exclude or separate Black children. Through predominately white male suffrage, white men could use their voting power to shape their public schools. In some cases, this meant voting whether to consolidate smaller districts into larger, centralized districts, which was in line with education reformers' cosmopolitan agendas. Issues of race pervaded these decisions, however, especially when confronted with racial mixing or integration. Recall Figures and 4 and 5, each of which represent Black exclusion from white schools (Figure 4) or from districts that white citizens want to remain white (Figure 5 in Canterbury, Connecticut).

Prior to the 1830s, the US Constitution had implied provisions that the non-slave states should help the South maintain slavery. For one thing, Northerners were required to return fugitive slaves to the South. For another, the US government was to help the South protect

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[268] Some scholars who investigated voting patterns in support of public schools demonstrated that issues of local control were central to voters. See Michael B. Katz, *The Irony of Urban School Reform, Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968) and Maris Vinovskis, *The Politics of Educational Reform in Nineteenth Century Massachusetts: The Controversy over the Beverly High School in 1860* (ERIC Clearinghouse, 1980), for studies of rural Massachusetts. Kaestle pointed out that in these studies power was important, as those who had more power within the public school system supported it (146-148).

[269] Williams, *History of the Negro Race.*

[270] Kaestle, *Pillars*, 219

against slave insurrection should state governors' legislatures not be able to convene.[271] Such laws frustrated some Northern education reformers such as Horace Mann, who remarked that dealing with Southern states was akin to dealing with foreign countries. Black emancipation had to occur by convincing the enslavers and other southern whites to turn against slavery on moral, economic, and political grounds. What it did not entail, however, was to relinquish white supremacy. Racial distinctions persisted, and positioned the "ignorant slave" at the bottom of the racial hierarchy.[272] Horace Mann, considered the father of mass public education, admonished Southern slavery and the lack of common school systems in the South, arguing that both stunted its economic growth and progress. Yet, to make his argument that "uneducated labor is comparatively unprofitable labor," Mann described slaves as ignorant, superstitious, and unthinking:

> Ignorant slaves stand upon a coal mine, and to them it is only a worthless part of the inanimate earth. An educated man uses the same mine to print a million of books. Slaves will see to obtain the same crop from the same field, year after year, though the *pabulum* of that crop is exhausted; the educated man, with his chemist's eye, sees not only the minutest atoms of earth, but the imponderable gasses that permeate it, and he is rewarded with an unbroken succession of luxuriant harvests.[273]

In this speech to Congress, Mann touted a liberal vision of progress and industry, which would flourish with public education. Mann also privileged scientific knowledge by diminishing the knowledge and capability of enslaved Blacks. Though Horace Mann spoke out against slavery, Mann's interests lay in promoting his vision for common school systems, and as such, he reified

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[271] Michael Kent Curtis, "The Curious History of Attempts to Suppress Antislavery Speech, Press, and Petition in 1835-1837," *Northwestern University Law Review* 89, no. 3 (1995): 785-870.

[272] See the *Colonizationist and Journal of Freedom*, 1834, 12-18 for Horace Mann's address to the Boston Young Men's Colonization Society, given on March 13, 183; Horace Mann, *Slavery: Letters and Speeches* (Boston, MA: B. B. Mussey & Co., 1851), 8-9, 38, 41, 43-44, 53-54; Horace Mann, *Lectures on Education* (Boston, MA: Ide & Dutton, 1855).

[273] Horace Mann, "Slavery, Letters, and Speeches. Delivered to the House of Representatives on June 30, 1848 on the Right of Congress to Legislate for the Territories of the United States, and its Duty to Exclude Slavery Therefrom," 1851, 41.

notions of Black inferiority, while also appealing to his Congressional audience of white men and their sense of racial superiority. Further, Mann ensconced a vision of education that would transform the ignorant slave into the hardworking, self-sufficient laborer (see Figure 6).

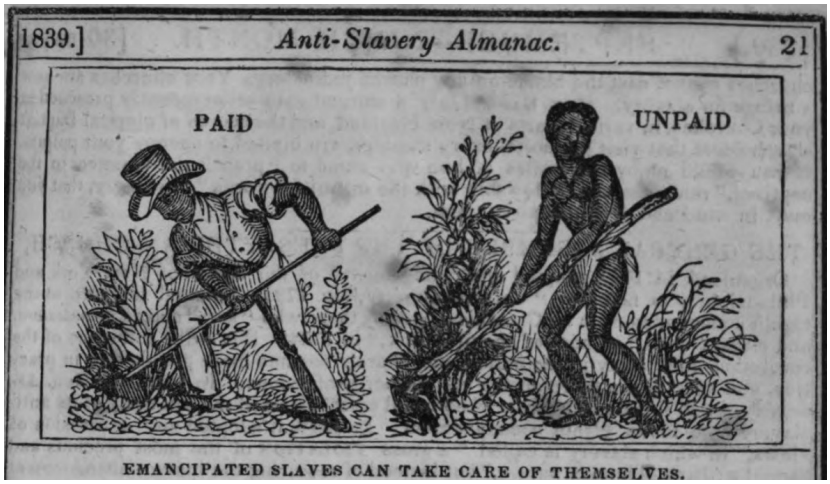

Figure 6: Emancipated Slaves Can Take Care of Themselves, Anti-Slavery Almanac, 1839. The figure juxtaposes a free Black who was paid to labor and thus worked hard, with and enslaved Black, depicted as ignorant and lazy.

This sentiment was especially clear when Mann argued that ignorant slaves hurt white society:

> As a lover of children and as a parent...to whom are entrusted, at the south, the early care and nurture of children?... Who, at the south, administers this early knowledge, —these ideas, these views, that have such sovereign efficacy in the formation of adult character? Who has the custody of children during this ductile, forming, receptive period of life, —a period when the mind absorbs whatever is brought into contact with it? Sir, the children of the south, more or less, and generally *more*, are tended and nurtured by slaves. Ignorance, superstition, vulgarity, passion, and perhaps impurity, are the breasts at which they nurse.[274]

Horace Mann, who decried slavery, simultaneously fortified a racial hierarchy. Mann's vision for public education was to eradicate ignorance, and he abhorred slavery and its system of enforced ignorance. For Mann, knowledge, and a system of public education that cultivated knowledge, would improve the economy and the nation. Not only was Southern slavery incommensurate with education (a view shared among southern Blacks and whites alike), Mann placed the blame on white, slave-holding "tyrants" and "brutes." This is significant because the violence of slavery

[274] Mann, "Slavery, Letters, and Speeches," 53-54.

was attributed to only to enslavers. In this sense, Mann operated within a framework of racial innocence whereby Mann's dismissal of Black capability was not framed as hostile or violent toward enslaved Blacks.

Yet, many Northern whites did not embrace Mann's vision of accessible state-funded education, nor did they embrace abolitionist sentiment. White hostility toward black education was to be found across the nation. And this hostility was not solely directed at institutions of education, such as schools, but at any expression or embodiment of Black learning. Just as Black education through its manifestation in Black schools was a target of white hostility and regulation in the North, so too were free Blacks targeted, with some states like Connecticut prohibiting free Blacks in their state.[275] This hostility intersected with anti-slavery campaigns.

In 1833, abolitionists in the North organized campaigns against slavery. With only a few US anti-slavery societies in 1833, by 1837 there were over a thousand.[276] Critiques of southern enslavers and northern enablers relied on moral suasion, or the attempt to convince whites of Black emancipation through appeals, spoken and published, to morality and justice. These anti-slavery campaigns were certainly not welcome in the South, but they also elicited a violent reaction in the North. Mob violence against abolitionist activities in Utica, New York and Boston, Massachusetts erupted and was blamed on the abolitionists. In Portland, Maine, resolutions were passed stating abolitionists were paving the way for insurrection of slaves against masters, discontent among free Blacks, and the "horrors of servile insurrection."[277]

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[275] In the South, residency legislation regulating free Blacks' residency and mobility was not uncommon. In Louisiana, an act passed in 1830 prohibited free Blacks from entering the state. As the U.S. moved closer to the civil war, southern states such as Tennessee attempted to expel their free Black population.

[276] Curtis, Curious History of Attempts to Suppress Antislavery Speech."

[277] Ibid, 803.

Sentiments expressed in Portland's resolutions were insightful; first, they paralleled sentiment in southern slave states. Second, they emphasized that slavery was not to blame for insurrections, but rather, those who would try to liberate slaves. Third, the locus of violence was embedded within slaves and abolitionists, not within racialized slavery, domination, and oppression. Finally, the resolution positioned the tools of slave liberation as residing in education and knowledge production. In this racialized, fear-based perspective, whites feared that Blacks who had access to these tools would translate them into something horrific for whites.

Pillars located racialized hostility toward Black education firmly in the South. Kaestle wrote:

> Ultimately slavery was rationalized on racial grounds. Unlike George Fitzhugh and some other aristocratic theorists, many writers defended the restrictions on slave education not on the grounds that all people should know and keep their place but that slaves and free blacks should. They appealed to the alleged common interests of slaveholders and nonslaveholders. This line became more effective as Northern criticism grew.[278]

This same logic, that Blacks should "know and keep their place," was in play in the North, as common schooling was similarly rationalized on racial grounds. Even if whites supported Blacks, free or enslaved, having access to education, whites were not hearty supporters of integrated education. Quite the opposite, as white hostility against Black education was demonstrated time and time again. Whites expected Blacks to know their place among the so-called favored race.

Federal statutes also confirmed whites as the favored race by denying citizenship and equality to African Americans. The *Fugitive Slave Law* (1850), which demanded state and local authorities assist in the pursuit of escaped slaves and denied escaped slaves legal recourse

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[278] Kaestle, *Pillars*, 207.

through a trial by jury, coincided with *Roberts v the City of Boston* (1850), which maintained whites and Blacks could have different legal distinctions, thus legitimizing racialized school segregation.[279] The *Dred Scott v Sandford* (1857) decision denied that Blacks were citizens of the United States and thus, according to Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, did not have rights "which the white man was bound to respect."[280]

In addition, not all northerners were abolitionists. At the outbreak of the Civil War some whites fought for the union but did not necessarily believe in abolition.[281] Moreover, even the staunchest abolitionists did not escape white supremacy and purported views of Black inferiority.[282] Abolitionist groups like the American Anti-Slavery Society acknowledged Northern connections to slavery. Members also acknowledged white hostility toward free and enslaved Blacks, which was used to support their moral campaign against slavery and for equality. The *Anti-Slavery Almanac* criticized Northern efforts that promoted slavery and violence against Blacks in the North and South. As part of their agenda to rally Northern free-state whites against slavery, the *Anti-Slavery Almanac* drew on notions of morality and responsibility: "The free states have always had the majority in Congress—consequently the *power* and *responsibility*. How have we used this power? We have maintained slavery and the slavery trade at the seat of government 48 years—legalized slave auctions there—built prisons and hired jailors to keep safely runaway slaves and kidnapped free blacks, and sold both for jail

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[279] *Fugitive Slave Law* (1850); *Roberts v the City of Boston* (1849).

[280] *Dred Scott v Sandford*, 60 US 393, (1857).

[281] Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony & Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013) showed how whites moved between the North and South, shifting their views from abolition to pro-slavery once they became enslavers.

[282] Peace & Peace, *They Who Would Be Free*; Litwack, *North of Slavery.*

fees…"[283] Supporting Black equality and access to education did not mean white Anti-Slavery Society members supported integration or race-mixing. The antislavery movement prioritized the abolition of slavery, but it did not necessitate integration or acceptance of Blacks in perceived white spaces.[284] Moreover, white abolitionists were often targets of white hostility and mob violence, with some members fearful that the presence of Blacks would exacerbate white animus.[285]

Despite different goals, the American Colonization Society, like the Anti-Slavery Society, acknowledged white prejudice and hostility toward African Americans. Touting racism and inequality, the Society asserted the way forward for Blacks was not to change the system in the United States, but for Blacks to cross the Atlantic and settle in Liberia, where Blacks would be inferior to none.[286] In this sense, some whites in favor of Black colonization acknowledged that whites created a racialized caste-based system of superiority and inferiority, and that such a system was would persist for some time.

The American Colonization Society fused notions of Black inferiority with threats to whites in their 1837 annual report: "In the North they are not received into association with the whites; they are riotous, disorderly, and debased. In the South, in addition to these characteristics, they disquiet and corrupt the slaves, and incite them to disobedience and

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[283] *Anti-Slavery Almanac*, 1839, 5. Certainly the anti-slavery publications were incendiary, but they also portrayed circumstances that were accurate. Moreover, they relied on numeracy as Teresa A. Goddu pointed out in her book, *The Antislavery Almanac and the Discourse of Numeracy*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 2009).

[284] See Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 216-226.

[285] Ibid, 217. Abolitionists were advised against inciting white "feelings," which were based in racial prejudice.

[286] Annual Reports of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States, vols 11-20, 1828-36 (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969).

rebellion. It is then, the interest of all to get rid of this population."[287] Some colonizationists were also against slavery, but took a firm position that Blacks were better off not mixing with whites. The Young Men's Colonization Society in Boston resolved in April 1833 that "we are opposed to the system of personal servitude," but "are nevertheless disposed to pay due regard…to the harmony of the Union, and the constitution and laws of the land."[288] Further, they argued that free Blacks should leave the United States because white prejudice was so pervasive.

Despite the free status of African Americans in states above the Mason-Dixon line, racism was consistent and persistent. Some northern whites may have supported abolition of slavery, but support for Black equality was not universal. Some whites may have accepted free Blacks as equal to whites, but that did not mean equal treatment in law or social relations. Whites demonstrated their willingness to enact violence against Black education, which included schools, as well as perceived tools of learning and knowledge production. White hostility and opposition to Black access to public education was not the exception, but the rule in the North. Controversy over Black education was not situated solely in schools, however, as other expressions of education and knowledge were also considered threatening to whites, especially as they could be shared with enslaved Blacks, inciting "discontent." Disparate, often opposing social change agendas had distinct solutions to problems of racism and slavery, but common among them was an acknowledgement of general anti-Black sentiment, stemming from white perceptions of Black inferiority, fears of slave rebellion, and white entitlements to social and

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[287] 21st Annual Meeting of the Society, Dec 12, 1837; Henry Clay was president of society then; words spoken to address society by Mr. Garland of Virginia. This was a meeting on Dec 13, 1837, whereby the "only object of the Society is that which it professes—the colonization of the free people of color in Africa—an object in which the philanthropists of the North and South may cordially unite in promoting," 36).

[288] "Young Men's Colonization Society," *Colonizationist and Journal of Freedom* (Boston, MA: Geo. W. Light, 1834): 12. The *Colonizationist was* first published in 1834, for the society which put "liberty and the union" above opinions that slavery is evil.

civic life. Also acknowledged was that education—knowledge, literacy, learning—was a tool of power, and as such had to be managed and controlled. It is clear from historical analysis that racism was indeed a pillar in the foundations of mass public education. Moreover, despite narratives that position the North as distinct from the South, race and racialized slavery created intimate connections.

Chapter 5 Knowledge Unfits a Slave: Violence and Education During Antebellum Slavery, 1830-1865

After these laws has been passed, American slavery extended not as that of the ancients, only to the body, but also to the mind. –Carter Woodson, 1968

But who is responsible for the sadly immoral condition of this illiterate race in the South? I answer unhesitatingly, Their masters. –Octavia V. Rogers Albert, 1890[289]

In 1902, Lena Mason illustrated the incompatibility of education and slavery through her poem, "The Negro and Education."[290] Lena Mason was an African American poet and preacher who was born in Illinois, one month after the end of the Civil War. Mason's poem told the story of African American struggles for education, beginning the poem with slavery and its contradiction with the notion that all men are created equal.[291]

Said once a noble ruler,
Thomas Jefferson by name,

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[289] Carter Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (New York: Arno Press, Inc., 1968), 170. Doc Daniel Dowdy was quoted in Janet Duitsman Cornelius, *When I Can Read My Title Clear: Literacy, Slavery, and Religion in the Antebellum South* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 66; Octavia V. Rogers Albert, *The House of Bondage or Charlotte Brooks and Other Slaves* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1891). Albert, a former Georgia slave, condemned white slave owners for the slaves' illiteracy.

[290] Lena Mason's poem was featured in Dr. Daniel Wallace Culp's edited volume, *Twentieth Century Negro Literature, or Cyclopedia of Thought on the Vital Topics Relating to the American Negro by One Hundred of America's Greatest Negroes* (Naperville, IL: J. L. Nichols & Co., 1902), 445-446. Dr. Wallace compiled the book to address white ignorance of Blacks, as well as to provide African American youth with scholarly achievements of people of their own race. Dr. Culp was born a slave in South Carolina, becoming a preacher in 1879 and a medical doctor in 1891. Frustrated with the persistent portrayals of Black ignorance among whites, Dr. Culp held onto the hope that knowledge could help create better relations among the races, while also fostering pride and ambition among Blacks. For an analysis and documentation of the long tradition of Black counterhistories, see John Earnest, *Liberation Historiography: African American Writers and the Challenge of History, 1794-1861* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

[291] Mason was referring to the Declaration of Independence (1776), which states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Though this chapter examines the first half of Mason's poem, I'm including it in its entirety as Appendix D.

"All men are created equal,
All men are born the same."

God made the Negro equal
To any race above the grave,
Although once made a captive
And sold to man a slave.

Pointing out slavery's brutality in the third verse, she then implicated education and its relationship to slavery and freedom.

Of all the crimes recorded
Our histories do not tell
Of a single crime more brutal,
Or e'en a parallel.

It was said by men of wisdom (?)
"No knowledge shall they have,
For if you educate a Negro
You unfit him for a slave."

Fred Douglass' young mistress,
Moved by a power divine,
Determined she would let the rays
Of knowledge on him shine,

But her husband said,
"'Twill never do, 'Twill his way to freedom pave,
For if you educate a Negro
You unfit him for a slave."

Mason invoked Frederick Douglass' narrative where he described education, or literacy and knowledge, as "the direct pathway from slavery to freedom."[292] For Douglass, education would pave the way to freedom, in mind and in body. Hugh Auld, Douglass' enslaver, forbade young Douglass' education, proclaiming, "knowledge unfits a child to be a slave." In this sense, if

[292] Frederick Douglass, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass as an American Slave, Written by Himself* (Rochester, New York: The North Star Office, 1847), 50.

education *unfitted* a slave, a lack of education, or ignorance, *fitted* a slave.[293] In other words, education and slavery were incompatible. This notion of becoming *fit* or *unfit* for slavery indicated an intentional and directed process, the dynamics of which this chapter explores. Education served as an intervening force, and accordingly, access to knowledge, especially through literacy, became the means through which African Americans could navigate this process and reach freedom. Despite the power attributed to education, movement toward freedom was situated within the system of racialized slavery, a system that positioned whites as superior, and justified and legitimated violent subjugation of Blacks. For Mr. Auld, and many white enslavers, Black education had no place in a system of slavery, as slaves "should know nothing but the will of his master, and learn to obey it."[294] Thus, to "fit" a slave was to subjugate her, to position her within a constructed racialized hierarchy, and to keep her in subservience and ignorance.

Violence was essential to the system of slavery. In order to maintain this fit for enslavement, whites used violence to prevent the public and systemic education of Blacks, which included impeding Blacks from educating themselves. In his important book, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861,* Carter G. Woodson made a point to distinguish between slave societies pre-existing slavery in the United States. Specifically, he considered how the Greeks and Romans enslaved people in body, while the Americans set out to enslave both the body and the mind.[295] Violence featured prominently in these processes, from the direct, physical violence, to

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[293] Lena Mason's story of how education unfits a slave is not one generally centered in the history of mass education in the US. Rather, the accepted wisdom of history is aligned with Carl Kaestle's conception in *Pillars of the Republic* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983) that the foundations of mass public education came from Protestantism, republicanism, and capitalism. The South and slavery are tangential to this narrative as I pointed out in previous chapters.

[294] Frederick Douglass, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass as an American Slave, Written by Himself* (Rochester, New York: The North Star Office, 1847), quoted his enslaver, Hugh Auld, 49.

[295] Carter G. Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (New York: Arno Press, Inc., 1968), 54.

indirect, structural violence, and to cultural and symbolic violence. Enslavers enslaved Black bodies and attempted to enslave Black minds by trying to control what developed and shaped minds, especially literacy and education, delimiting permissible lessons as those which supported the system of slavery.[296] In this sense, slavery engendered lessons to fit a slave, which were taught through multiple modes of violence. These lessons were distinct from education as freedom, which included the freedom to engage with ideas and knowledge, especially through literacy. Enslaving bodies and minds required not only physical force, but also an intersecting and dynamic network of actors, institutions, behaviors, practices, and beliefs. This network relied on multiple modes of violence, represented across and among dimensions of social, economic, political, and cultural life.

With network and dimensions of violence in mind, this chapter examines the relationship between education, freedom, and violence from 1830-1860, and illuminates how the relationship between violence and education was shaped by racialized slavery in the antebellum South. Violence, I argue, was not an exception, but the rule. As debates about public schooling and Black education were raging in the northern states, the southern slave states were also grappling with education for Blacks, especially for those in bondage. As the 1830s ushered in waves of anti-slavery sentiment through Black literary societies, abolitionist societies, and slave narratives, white Southerners were hostile to ideas of Black freedom spreading to and throughout the South. In education, Black literacy and other means of knowledge production were systematically outlawed. In addition, Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831 stoked the white public imaginary about potential slave insurrections and violence against whites. To examine violence

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[296] Donald Warren, "Slavery as an American Educational Institution: Historiographical Inquiries," *Journal of Thought,* (Winter 2005); Anthony Gerald Albanese, *The Plantation School* (New York: Vantage Press, 1976).

in education, I first discuss how violence worked to fit a slave, and how knowledge unfit a slave by juxtaposing lessons of slavery that fit slaves with notions of education that unfit slaves. Following this, I define the state mechanisms and dynamics of power that served to legitimize violence against Black education. Finally, I demonstrate how the social relations of slavery enabled white perceptions of Black education as violent or potentially violent, further constructing notions of justification for white violence against Black education. I want to note that this chapter includes offensive and anti-Black language as well as violent details of Blacks' experiences. I elected to use the voices of the primary documents, with the intention of both representing history as it was, and demonstrating multiple modes of violence, which included how Black people were represented through language. In addition, Black people themselves, especially in slave testimonies, often used terms that would be considered offensive and even harmful in contemporary parlance.[297]

The Role of Violence in Fitting a Slave

To understand violence during slavery, and its connection to education, I apply a critical and multidimensional violence framework, as explained in chapter 2. This framework conceives of violence through its direct manifestations, structural and systemic impacts, and cultural legitimations. The use of direct, physical violence of punishments, for example, coupled with indirect, structural violence of racialized master-slave dynamics. Structural violence encompassed the systematic violence exerted on an exploited and subjugated social group.[298] In

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[297] Historians often grapple with how to represent historical actors and time periods, especially when that includes using incendiary language. I took my cues from scholars of color, like Kidada E. Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me* and Stephanie Rogers-Jones, *They Were Her Property*, to allow the voices of history to speak.

[298] Johan Galtung, "Violence: Direct, Structural and Cultural" in *Johan Galtung: Pioneer of Peace Research*, ed. Johan Galtung and Dietrich Fischer (Springer, 2013), 35-38. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-642-32481-9_3; Paul Farmer, "An Anthropology of Structural Violence," *Current Anthropology* 45, no. 3 (June 2004): 307.

addition, another dimension of violence was within the cultural realm, which included ideology, religion, and language. Cultural violence interpreted violence not through its physicality, but through its symbols and culture.[299] It also served to legitimate direct and structural violence, affirming the violence as necessary and right.[300] These forms of violence intersected and informed each other, and indicated not only actions and events, but also processes over time. In addition, violence occurred across levels of human and social interaction, such as the interpersonal interactions between the enslaved and their enslavers, as well as between social groups and institutions, and states and systems.

Like Berlin, Favreau, and Miller, I argue that direct, structural, and cultural violence was essential to slavery: "murders, beatings, mutilations, and humiliations—both petty and great—were an essential, not an incidental part of chattel bondage."[301] Direct, physical violence was indisputably a slave owner's tool during slavery. Throughout his documentary history, John Blassingame demonstrated that "the primary guarantee of obedience was the lash."[302] Whipping, flogging, beating, dismemberment, and other forms of corporal punishments were used on the enslaved as a means to control their minds and bodies.[303] Often categorized as punishments and management techniques, violence toward African Americans was enacted in the day-to-day interactions, embedded in the social and economic structures, and upheld by custom and law. In

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[299] Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, "Symbolic Violence," in *Violence in War and Peace: An* Anthology, *ed.* Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 272-274.

[300] Johan Galtung, "Cultural violence," in *The Journal of Peace Research* 20, no. 3 (1990), 291-305.

[301] Ira Berlin, Marc Favreau, and Steven F. Miller, *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk about Their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Emancipation* (New York: The New York Press, 2007), 7.

[302] John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 244.

[303] Ira Berlin, Marc Favreau, and Steven F. Miller, *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk about Their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Emancipation* (New York: The New York Press, 2007), xxiv.

response to accessing knowledge or education, enslaved Blacks could be punished for reading, looking at or having books, writing, and teaching. Amputation and the perceived or actual threat of it was a rampant punishment for expressions of literacy across the South.[304] Doc Daniel Dowdy, who was enslaved in Georgia, recalled, "the first time you was caught trying to read or write you was whipped with a cow-hide the next time with a cat-o-nine tails and the third time they cut the first joint offen your forefinger."[305] On the Louisiana plantation where she was enslaved, Sarah Benjamin recalled that any Black man, woman, or child who managed to acquire a competence in reading or writing was well-advised to keep that talent hidden. Benjamin recalled, "if yer learned ter write, dey would cut yer thumb er finger off."[306] For those who were willing to teach enslaved Blacks to read, it came with an explicit or implicit warning: keep the learning secret or you could lose your fingers. Henry Wright of Georgia, for example, received such a warning when he was taught to read by his enslaver's son.[307] The punishments for teaching enslaved Blacks were severe and could be deadly. For example, Joseph Booker was only three when his father, Albert, was whipped to death. Albert taught other enslaved Blacks to read and was accused of "spoiling the good niggers," for which he lost his life.[308] James Lucas

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[304] Blassingame, *The Slave Community,* 1979; Thomas L. Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978); Janet Duitsman Cornelius, *When I Can Read My Title Clear: Literacy, Slavery, and Religion in the Antebellum South* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), Berlin, Farveau, and Miller, *Remembering Slavery,* 2007.

[305] Doc Daniel Dowdy, cited in Janet Duitsman Cornelius, *When I Can Read My Title Clear,* 1991, 66. Doc Daniel Dowdy's testimony was from Rawick ed. Georgia, XIII (3), in George P. Rawick, ed. *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols (Westport, CT, 1972); Supplement, Series 1, 12 vols. (Westport: CT, 1977); Supplement 2, Series 2, 10 vols. (Westport, CT, 1980). Cornelius drew from testimonies of the formerly enslaved. Through these examples, formerly enslaved African Americans demonstrated their awareness of punishments for education, stemming from personal experiences or from people they knew and interacted with.

[306] Quoted in Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 52-53.

[307] Cornelius, *When I Can Read My Title Clear,* 65.

[308] Quoted in Cornelius, *When I Can Read My Title Clear*, 66.

recalled that his enslaver hung his best slave for teaching other slaves to spell. In these examples, the threat of direct violence on the body was a tool to constrain access to knowledge that could unfit Blacks for enslavement. One formerly enslaved Tennessee woman reflected on her childhood, concluding, "The white folks had beat all the learning out of me." She explained that she could not even pick up a book: "I would be looking at pictures, you know, and I would get a whipping."[309] Her experience highlighted both how notions of Black education and learning were embedded in literacy and books and how such access to knowledge was managed through violence.

These direct and physical expressions of violence intersected with structural violence. Structural violence, like physical violence, was also essential and encompassed the "routine, systemic violence slaveowners found necessary to reduce men and women to things," which was found in the everyday interactions of slave life.[310] In the system of racialized slavery, enslavers expected the enslaved to provide inexhaustible labor and to have behaviors they determined were commensurate with the status of a slave: hardworking, obedient, submissive, and loyal. As Governor James Henry Hammond of South Carolina noted to his overseer, "the negroes must be made to obey and to work."[311] Obedience was paramount; from plantation owners' perspectives, slaves should be disciplined and promote the planter's interest, which required good management and strict punishments.[312] Whites taught this lesson through the structures of labor

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[309] Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 52-23.

[310] Berlin, Farveau, and Miller, *Remembering Slavery*, 7.

[311] In Willie Lee Rose, *A Documentary History of Slavery in North America* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1999), 347.

[312] Blassingame, *The Slave Community;* Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, "An Essay on the Management of Slaves, and Especially on their Religious Instruction; Read before the Agricultural Society of St. John's Colleton. (Charleston, SC: A. F. Miller 1834); "Notions on the Management of Negroes, &c" in *The Farmer's Register* (Petersburg, Va.), 4, no. 8 (December 1, 1836), 492-496 and no. 9 (January, 1, 1837), 574-575, published in Willie Lee Rose's *Documentary History*, 359.

as well as through religion. William Wells Brown described how subservience was the focus of his religious instruction: "...in Missouri, and as far as I have any knowledge of slavery in the other states, the religious teaching consists in teaching the slave that he must never strike white man; that God made him for slave and that, when whipped, he must not find fault for the Bible says 'He that knoweth his master's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes!, And slave-holders find such religion very profitable to them."[313] Any education or knowledge deemed contrary to enslaver's interests, or to the interests of the institution of slavery, were subject to violent intervention.

Of course, those enslaved did not immediately become the subservient and submissive laborers of the planters' hoped for, and regardless of the various means enslavers used to manage the enslaved, punishments, and the threats of them, played a major role in shaping the social relations of slavery. Moreover, acceptance and application of punishments were not an aberration, but rather were the norm. Despite contrasting discourses of wicked, evil, or cruel masters and kind masters, most masters, and even some slaves engaged in direct violence against slaves.[314] An enslaver's manner did not make her violent (though it could be construed as such), but rather, violence was rooted in her role as an enslaver. In other words, violence was essential to slavery. White southerners (and some northerners) who romanticized racialized slavery often constructed an image of white benevolence and paternalism toward enslaved Blacks. Historian John Blassingame acknowledged enslavers "who were moral degenerates and sadists," but, he

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[313] William Wells Brown, *Illustrated Edition of the Life and Escape of Wm. Wells Brown from American Slavery, Written by Himself*, (London, UK: C. Gilpin, 1851), 82-83. John Blassingame pointed out that white preachers taught lessons of submission and obedience to the slaves.

[314] Kidada E. Williams drew on Black testimony after emancipation, chronicling how African Americans testified about their experiences with violence, choosing to share their trauma, which served as resistance against racialized violence. In *They Left Great Marks on Me: African American Testimonies of Racial Violence from Emancipation to World War I* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

continued, "quite frequently even the most cultured of planters were so inured to brutality that they thought little about punishment meted out to slaves."[315] Blassingame's distinction was an important one, highlighting how violence existed in cruel acts, but also within the system of slavery itself. James Pennington, who escaped enslavement, demonstrated how violence was inextricable from slavery in the preface to his narrative:

> THE SIN of slavery lies in the chattel principle, or relation. Especially have I felt anxious to save professing Christians, and my brethren in the ministry, from falling into a great mistake. My feelings are always outrage when I hear them speak of 'kind masters,' – 'Christian masters,' – 'the mildest form of slavery' – 'well fed and clothed slaves,' as extenuations of slavery; I am satisfied they either mean to pervert the truth, or they do not know what they say. The being of slavery, its soul and body, lives and moves in the chattel principle, the property principle, the bill of sale principle; the cart-whip, starvation, and nakedness, are its inevitable consequences to a greater or less extent, warring with the dispositions of men.[316]

As Pennington elucidated, enslavers who were considered kind and benevolent were still part of a violent system of racialized slavery, as by their very occupations as slaveowners, they had economic and legal power over the lives and humanity of their slaves.[317] Frederick Douglass also highlighted this sentiment: "Light had penetrated the moral dungeon where I had lain, and I saw the bloody whip for my back and the iron chain for my feet, and my *good, kind* master was the author of my situation. The revelation haunted me, stung me, and made me gloomy and miserable. As I writhed under the sting and torment of this knowledge I almost envied my fellow

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[315] Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Ante-bellum South.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972/1979), 262.

[316] James Pennington, *The Fugitive Blacksmith, or Events in the History of James W. C. Pennington*, 3rd edition (London, UK: Charles Gilpin, 1850), iv-v.

[317] Slave narratives and testimonies referenced *kind* or *good* masters. However, formerly enslaved Blacks also repeatedly mentioned the would rather be free than enslaved, and emancipation was rarely forthcoming in the antebellum South. Moreover, the *goodness* of a master did not render the condition of enslavement less violent. See Berlin, Favreau, and Miller, *Remembering Slavery,* 8-11.

slaves and their stupid indifference."[318] "Good" or "kind," enslavers were, as Douglass stated, "authors" of the enslaved situation. Additionally, a kind master was in no way a guarantee of non-violence or benevolence for slaves, as the racialized hierarchy positioned all whites as superior to Blacks, enslaved or free.[319] Thus, we must consider that violence was essential to slavery; it manifested in everyday life, and it was embedded into the very fabric of American social, cultural, political, and economic institutions.

To acknowledge violence as essential is not to completely diminish the agency of enslaved Blacks. Indeed, historians of slavery such as John Blassingame described the push and pull of a dynamic relationship between slaves and planters over time: "Southern whites not only adapted their language and religion to that of the slaves but also adapted agricultural practices, sexual attitudes, rhythm of life, architecture, food and social relations to African patterns."[320] This is not to diminish the brutal violence of white Southerners, but rather, to point out that even within a system of violent racial subjugation, enslaved Blacks attempted to shape their world. For example, some enslaved Blacks fought against the brutality of the overseers by cultivating favor with their enslaver. Some withheld their labor, destroyed crops, or engaged in physical violence, all of which was at great personal risk. Some learned to read in secret, using their literacy to gather news or to communicate with family. Similarly, Ira Berlin argued that relations

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[318] Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*, 55.

[319] Barbara Jean Fields, "Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America," *New Left Review*, no. 181 (1990): 95-118. Fields explained how racialized ideology developed in tandem with racialized slavery.

[320] Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 101. Scholars have highlighted enslaved Blacks' contributions and agency in their quest for freedom, equal rights, and education. For slave contributions, see Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985); Ira Berlin, Barbara J. Fields, Steven F. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, ed. *Free at Last: A Documentary History of Slavery, Freedom, and the Civil War* (New York: The New Press, 1992); Ira Berlin and Leslie S. Rowland, ed. *Families and Freedom: A Documentary History of African American Kinship in the Civil War Era* (New York: The New Press, 1997). For an account of Black women's experiences, see Leslie A. Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We: Women's Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

during slavery were negotiated to some degree: "although disenfranchised, slaves were not politically inert, and their politics—even absent an independent institutional basis—were as active as any."[321] Slaves were not passive, nor were they solely victims subject to masters' absolute dominance.[322] In other words, enslaved Blacks found ways to actively in shape their world, despite the violence of racialized enslavement. Thus, even in slavery, African Americans actively sought to construct their existence, especially in the realm of education. Further, Black people used education to resist white domination.[323]

Yet, even if some bondspeople had more autonomy than others, the fact remained they were still enslaved in a system of racialized bondage. The balance of power between whites and Blacks, and enslavers and the enslaved, was not equal and violence was wielded as a tool of power.[324] Moreover, exploitation of African Americans through forced and unpaid labor

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[321] Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African American Slaves* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 4-5; Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976) described the world made by the enslaved. Leslie Schwalm, in *A Hard Fight for We,* examined women's agency*;* James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988) and Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005*,* examined slaves, former slaves, and free Blacks cultivated education from reliance on self-teaching to establishing mass public education in the South.

[322] Eugene Genovese argued the paternalistic system of slavery in the South, whereby whites and Blacks lived and worked together, formed some semblance of a community, and "implicitly recognized the slaves' humanity" (5-6). In turn, the slaves used this to challenge their enslavement and racialized subordination (7). In *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*. For a discussion of slave resistance, see pp. 597-598. See also Thomas L. Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978); Herbert Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

[323] Historians illuminated how African Americans shaped their lives and created the institutions and supports, especially in education, that would nurture Black culture and autonomy, while also striving for a better and more equal world. See James D. Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*; Henry Allen Bullock, *History of Negro Education in the South*; Ronald Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*; Robert C. Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in the South, 1861-1870* (2010). Black education was critical to Black resistance to white domination, as demonstrated by John Blassingame, *The Slave Community*; Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity;* Janet Duitsman Cornelius, *When I Can Read My Title Clear;* Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll;* Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind;* and Joe William Trotter, Jr., *The African American Experience* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2001).

[324] Hannah Arendt refuted C Wright Mill's notion that violence is the ultimate form of power, pointing out "Power and violence, though they are distinct phenomena, usually appear together. Wherever they are combined, power, we have found, is the primary and predominant factor" (52). Violence, then, is instrumental, and also requires justification. In *On Violence* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Books, 1970).

certainly constituted structural violence. In addition, structures of violence were embedded in social and political institutions. For example, when the US Constitution positioned enslaved Blacks (or all persons who were *not free*) as three-fifths a person, and Black humanity was legally and socially denied, this constituted structural violence.[325] The legal and political system did not recognize slaves as fully human, and their rights as citizens were subsumed under the rights of property; thus, whites could invoke the slaves' status both as racially inferior and as property.[326] For example, their white masters, "kind" or otherwise, invoked their status as property when masters sold them or members of their family off to pay their debts; when a white patroller found recreation in beating or hunting enslaved Blacks; when an enslaver took a liking to an enslaved woman and forced sexual relations; and when the enslaved engaged in anything resembling education, be it reading, writing, or expressing knowledge and intelligence.[327] Attending to multiple domains of violence revealed that violence was extensive and ubiquitous, and that absence of direct, physical violence was not an absence of violence. On the contrary, systemic exploitation, domination, and dehumanization not only constituted structural violence,

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[325] The Constitution prior to the post-Civil War amendments did not explicitly use the term "slave" or "Black," but rather relied on seemingly race-neutral language, such as Article I, Section 2: "taxes...shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons… and excluding…three fifths of all other persons." Jacob Shallus, The Constitution of the United States: A Transcription, National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript. See also Donald E. Lively, *The Constitution and Race* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 1-5.

[326] Martha S. Jones' monograph, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), demonstrated how Black activists in Baltimore, Maryland, a slave state, drew on their birthright status to claim rights of citizenship in the antebellum era. This was despite the spirit of Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney's proclamation through the Dred Scott Case in 1857 that Blacks had no rights that whites had to respect.

[327] Octavia Rogers Albert, *House of Bondage,* wrote of Uncle Cephas, who was emancipated when his masters died, but was denied freedom when the will was found defective. Uncle Cephas and his family were sold to pay the estate taxes. Gladys Marie Fry, *Nightriders,* described how patrollers found entertainment in harming Blacks, 97-98; William Wells Brown, *Life and Escape,* described how Cynthia, who initially refused the white master's sexual advances, chose to give in rather than be whipped, which was not a choice at all.

but also provided a source of direct violence.[328] Thus, the power to enslave minds and bodies was a means for and a form of violence.

Not all intervention against Black literacy resulted in physical violence. Some whites controlled minds through denial of access. This was the case of Mrs. Caroline Sherman Andrews-Hill, who was born in Colombia County, Tennessee on September 16, 1829 to enslaved parents. Mrs. Andrews-Hill was a nursemaid within the main house, who found ways to listen in and remember the lessons tutors taught to her white charges. When the white enslavers realized her intelligence, however, she was no longer allowed near the children's study rooms. Though Mrs. Andrews-Hill did not recount physical violence, her access to education through the white children was barred, and she would not be able to learn to read and write until emancipation.[329]

Accessing education during slavery was accompanied by mechanisms of white control, which had the potential for direct violence. While some enslaved Blacks risked great harm to access education and literacy for themselves, they also risked harm by sharing that education with others. Hannah Crafts, enslaved and literate, was in charge of caring for the enslaved children. Crafts reflected, "how I longed to become their teacher, and open the door of knowledge to their minds by instructing them to read but it might not be. I could not have even hoped to escape detection and discovery would have entailed punishment on all."[330] Literacy

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[328] Galtung, "Violence: Direct, Structural and Cultural," 42.

[329] Caroline Sherman Andrews-Hill in *Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction*, ed. Hallie Q. Brown (Xenia, OH: The Aldine Publishing Company, 1926), 104.

[330] Hannah Crafts, *The Bondswoman's Narrative*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (New York: Warner Books, Inc., 2002), 12. Henry Louis Gates Jr. painstakingly determined that Hannah Crafts' novel was based on her life as a literate woman, a slave, and a mulatto. The novel described how Hannah became a fugitive and ended up a schoolteacher for Black children in New Jersey. Though the lines of fact and fiction were blurred, the research and annotations Gates provided suggested that Craft's story, perhaps the first novel to be published by an African American female fugitive slave, offered insights, both historical and literary.

would "open the door of knowledge" and help free minds, but it was not without the danger of direct violence, situated within the violent structure of racialized slavery.

Hannah Crafts' worry for enslaved children was not misplaced. Throughout slave narratives and testimonies, it was clear that children knew about their enslavement and the violence of punishments at a young age. It was also clear that violent lessons of slavery persisted. Though some children remembered games and treats during their childhood, they also remembered the shock of realizing their status as property.[331] Threats of physical violence and bearing witness to it were part of daily plantation life, and most children raised in slave quarters experienced the pains of white ownership.[332] Children were beaten by their masters, subjected to white children masters who enacted the same cruelty of their parents.[333]

Even when slave children didn't experience direct, physical violence, they were not removed from the trauma and violence inflicted on others. Nor were they removed from the structures of violence. In his study of education on plantations, Webber chronicled violent experiences of enslaved children, such as Charlotte Martin, who lost her brother after he was whipped to death for participating in a clandestine religious ceremony; Josiah Henson, whose father was lashed 100 times, bloodying his back and cutting off his ear; and William Wells Brown who saw his mother whipped because she was late to the fields. And as with adults, children were not spared from the threat of amputation: "children saw their friends divested of a

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[331] Daina Rima Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*: *The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2017), 35. Berry wrote that many enslaved children had the shocking realization of their enslaved status when they were sold or witnessed their first sale.

[332] Thomas L. Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978); William Wells Brown, *Life and Escape*; Charles Ball, Fifty Years in Chains, or, The Life of an American Slave (New York: H. Dayton, 1859); Berlin, Favreau, and Miller, *Remembering Slavery,* 91-97.

[333] Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, *White Women as Slave Owners in the American South* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 6.

finger for attempting to learn to read, escapees tortured, and grandparents put off the plantation and told by the white authorities to fend for themselves."[334] Enslaved Black children's identities as youth intersected with their social identities as enslaved and Black.[335] Regardless of the age children recognized themselves as enslaved, the violence of slavery and their positions as slaves surrounded them. Further, these memories persisted into adulthood and into freedom. When Charles Ball saw his mother flogged, the memory of it remained painful and endured well into his old age, as he described in his narrative.[336]

Mary Reynolds, who was enslaved on a plantation in Louisiana as a child, framed her learning in terms of her life on the plantation. Ms. Reynolds was taught by an old woman how to "scrape the fields" or cut the corn, who warned her of the overseer, "For the love of God, you better larn it right, or Solomon will beat the breath out you body."[337] Ms. Reynolds' experience highlighted how "the white world held them as slaves, and intended to use its power to make them behave like one."[338] That power included physical violence and the threat of it, and it also included the structures meant to fit slaves.[339] Henry Nix, who was born on the plantation of

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[334] Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers*, 20-21.

[335] Robin Bernstein discussed how childhood innocence in the nineteenth century was raced white (4-8), with Black children represented not as children, but as "pickaninnies" who did not feel pain (33-34). In *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

[336] Blassingame, *The Slave Community*; Charles Ball, *Slavery in the United States: A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball, a Black Man, Who Lived Forty Years in Maryland, South Carolina and Georgia, as a Slave Under Various Masters, and was One Year in the Navy with Commodore Barney, During the Late War,* (1837). For discussions about how African Americans would remember the violence they experienced during slavery no matter how much time had passed, see Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property,* Kidada E. Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me,* and Daina Rima Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh.*

[337] Quoted in Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers*, 23: Black children were generally sent to do full field work between the ages of ten and fourteen, though children who had to slave in the main house were often trained earlier. Younger children were not relieved from work; there were chores for the plantation and for their own families, both in the fields and in the house.
[338] Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers,* 23.

[339] For some enslavers, the threat of family separations was used as a means of control. See Berlin, Favreau, and Miller, *Remembering Slavery,* 31-48. To use James Pennington's term in *The Fugitive Blacksmith,* the "chattel principle" was structural violence in that it enabled enslavers to buy and sell humans, through the rationale of the rights of property, and codified through legal statutes.

Jasper Willis in Upson County, Georgia on March 15, 1848, did not learn to read and write while on the plantation. Similar to accounts by other formerly enslaved Blacks, Henry Nix distinguished between lessons of enslavement and education as literacy and learning when he explained to the interviewer what he was taught about reading and writing: "No, Mam, 'ole Marse' wuz sho hard about dat. He said 'Niggers' wuz made by de good Lawd to work, and onct when my Uncle stole a book and wuz a trying to learn how to read and write, Marse Jasper had the white doctor take off my Uncle's fo' finger right down to de 'fust jint'. Marster said he fixed dat darky as a sign fo de res uv 'em. No, Miss, we wuzn't larned!"[340] The lesson was clear: slaves were to be fit for labor, not learning.

Knowledge Unfits a Slave: Education and Freedom

Robust historical and scholarly evidence such as slave narratives and testimonials demonstrated that enslaved African Americans connected their education to freedoms of body and mind.[341] Thomas Jones, who learned to read while enslaved, connected his learning to his humanity, which was denied him as a slave: "I felt at night, as I went to my rest, that I was really beginning to be a *man*, preparing myself for a condition in bigger better and higher and happier

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[340] Henry Nix, interviewed on September 24, 1936, in *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves*, The Federal Writers Project, Volume IV, Georgia Narratives, Part 3 (Washington DC: 1941), 144.

[341] Education as freedom was a notion often explored in historical scholarship, with scholars documenting a model of education as freedom for slaves (John Hope Franklin, "Jim Crow Goes to School: The Genesis of Legal Segregation in Southern Schools," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 58, no. 22 (1959): 225-235; Woodson, *The Education of the Negro*) and how such a model threatened enslavers' order and power (Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*). In their chapter, "The Quest for "Book Learning": African American Education in Slavery and Freedom," Christopher M. Span and James D. Anderson explained that African Americans have sought freedom through education since 1619: "Book learning for liberation began the day the first Africans were brought to Virginia in 1619. These first Africans and their descendants learned early on that literacy and knowledge of English language, law, and custom were absolutely necessary in a slave-sanctioning society where freedom, indentured servitude, and enslavement were predicated on matters of contract law, property, literacy, and conversion to Christianity" (295). In *A Companion of African American History,* Edited by Alton Hornsby, Jr., Blackwell Publishing Ltd (2005).

than could belong to the ignorant *slave.*"[342] For Mr. Jones, education aided his transformation from an "ignorant slave" to a literate man. Through education, Mr. Jones cultivated his mind and expanded his consciousness. For Frederick Douglass the pathway from slavery to freedom was education. Like Mr. Jones, literacy was his tool, but it was what Douglass could do with the tool that proved significant. As Douglass read speeches by Lord Chatham, William Pitt, and Sheridan, he gained knowledge and intelligence: "The reading of these speeches added much to my limited stock of language, and enabled me to give tongue to many interesting thoughts which had often flashed through my mind and died away for want of words in which to give them utterance."[343] Yet, Douglass admitted the fruits from the tree of knowledge are both "bitter as well as sweet," for knowledge revealed his situation and increased his misery while also offering the means to escape (p. 55). Thinking rendered Douglass miserable and distressed, yet he points out, "liberty, as the inestimable birthright of every man, converted every object into an asserter of this right" (p. 55). There was no going back to a state of ignorance and no moving away from seeking freedom. In other words, knowledge unfitted him for a slave. In most cases, education was a broad concept encompassing the freedom to learn and to think, as well a narrow concept of literacy—reading and writing. It also included formalized mechanisms of education such as teaching and attending schools.

A direct relationship between literacy and freedom was demonstrated through slave narratives. Escaped slaves who found their way to freedom wrote autobiographical tales of their lives in bondage. These narratives, though following a burgeoning literary form, were a means for formerly enslaved Blacks to share their stories and their humanity during a time when

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[342] Quoted in Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 312.

[343] Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Boston, MA: Anti-Slavery Office, 1847), 54-55.

racialized slavery deemed enslaved Blacks as nothing more than chattel.[344] Literacy and documenting one's own experience were a means to assert identity and humanity.[345]

In addition, slave narratives not only described the many methods Blacks used to attain literacy, but also how literacy led directly to freedom. Freedom included both *freedom from* enslavement, as well as *freedom to* be human and pursue their inalienable rights.[346] For example, literate slaves could write their own passes, which were similar to permission slips allowing them to be outside the plantation, providing some freedom to move. The shackles of bondage were not only material, however, but manifested in systems of surveillance that included requiring enslaved Blacks to have passes, and hiring white patrollers to check for passes.[347] Written permission from the enslaver was normally required, and contained information such as the slaves' name, the owner's name, and the reason for the pass (such as hiring out or visiting relations). For some enslaved Blacks, literacy became a means through which they could subvert these structural shackles. For example, in the 1840s and 1850s Stephen Jordan used his literacy to visit his wife who was enslaved on a different plantation in Louisiana, about 20 miles away. Mr. Jordan recalled, "as I could read and write I used to write out passes for myself, so I could

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[344] Some things to consider when drawing on slave narratives were that many authors were men from the upper south (North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky), who were considered skilled (such as blacksmiths), and lived in towns rather than plantations. In addition, many wrote their narratives years after they escaped or were set free. See Randall M. Miller, *"Dear Master:" Letters of a Slave Family* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 12.

[345] Cornelius, *When I Can Read My Title Clear* wrote, "reading and writing, above all, pointed the way to freedom--first of all in the mind and spirit, and often in the body. Slave testimony, therefore, illustrates how acquiring reading and writing skills was an act of resistance against the slave system and an assertion of identity by the literate slave," 61.

[346] In 1807, G. W. F. Hegel posited in his master-slave dialectic that freedom means the ability to assign meaning to oneself, "pure self-existence, being-for-self," rather than "being-in-itself." Being for self is the individual agency to assign meaning to one's self. The enslaved Black was denied this freedom or agency, not only through the physical, ideological, and legal chains on his body, but also through chains of ignorance on his mind. In *Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. Peter Fuss and John Dobbins (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019), 233.

[347] See Gladys Marie Fry, "The Patrol System," 82-109, in *Night Riders in Black Folk History (*Knoxville*:* University of Tennessee Press, 1975), for a discussion of the patrol system and Black folk views of it. Also, see Sally Hadden, *Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

go and see my old wife; and I wrote passes for the other men on the place, so they could go and see their wives that lived off the place."[348] Stephen Jordan's story illuminated how he used his literacy to maintain a connection to his family, an expression of humanity that was denied by his status as chattel. Mr. Jordan's literacy also translated into freedom of movement for himself, and for other enslaved Blacks. Further, Mr. Jordan used whites' ignorance and illiteracy against them, which provided a means of resistance to white domination.[349]

Consider Louis Hughes' reminiscence about Tom, who had secretly learned to read. Tom's story demonstrated how, like Mr. Jordan, Tom used his literacy to connect to his family.

> Boss used to write to his [Tom's] parents (owners) occasionally, that his people might hear from him. The letters were to his mother, but sent in care of the white folks. Tom had progressed very fast in his secret studies, and could write enough to frame a letter. It seems it had been over a year since Boss had written for him, but nothing was said until one morning I heard Boss telling Tom to come to the barn to be whipped. He showed Tom three letters which he had written to his mother, and this so startled him that he said nothing.
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> I listened breathlessly to each word Boss said: 'Where did you learn to write?' asked he, 'and when did you learn? How long have you been writing your mother?' At that moment he produced the three letters which Tom had written. Boss, it seems, had mistrusted something, and spoke to the postmaster, telling him to stop any letters which Tom might mail for Virginia to his mother. The postmaster did as directed, for slaves had no rights which postmasters were bound to respect; hence, the letters fell into the master's hand instead of going to their destination. Tom, not hearing from his first letter, wrote a

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[348] Stephen Jordan told his story to Octavia Rogers Albert, which was published in her book, *The House of Bondage or Charlotte Brooks and Other Slaves* (1890). Mr. Jordan's enslaver would not allow enslaved Blacks to visit their husbands or wives on other plantations, and instead forced them into relationships with his own slaves. As such, Mr. Jordan wrote passes for himself and other husbands to visit their wives, and even wrote some free papers, which he copied from a free Black. He was caught with passes in his cabin, however, and his enslaver threatened to end his life. Instead, his enslaver said he would not allow Mr. Jordan to "spoil" his slaves and thus sold Mr. Jordan to another enslaver, 108.

[349] Gladys Marie Fry, *Night Riders,* 93-96. Fry explained that enslaved Blacks capitalized on whites' illiteracy and on whites' assumptions of Blacks' illiteracy. In addition, some slaves found ways to bypass the pass system so they could visit other plantations or attend clandestine religious meetings.

> second, then a third, never dreaming that they had been intercepted. Boss raged and Tom was severely whipped.[350]

Tom's story highlighted how his education provided a means to communicate with his mother. It also highlighted how Tom's autonomy expressed through posting letters came with a risk of punishment. Despite the risk, Tom's literacy provided a means to connect to his family. Maintaining family relationships were important to men and women in bondage, and as Tom's and Mr. Jordan's stories revealed, literacy could help facilitate human connection.

Though Tom's letters were intercepted, Tom was not defeated; he escaped from the plantation a few weeks after his beating. Because he could write, Tom was able to apply for work on a boat. Hughes wrote, "The captain did not hesitate to employ him, as it was common for slaves to be permitted to hire themselves out for wages which they were required to return, in whole or in part, to their masters."[351] To do so successfully, Tom wrote himself a pass, having seen other passes before. In this case, Tom wrote himself a pass to freedom. Education, then, was indeed a "direct pathway from slavery to freedom."[352]

Despite the seeming simplicity of Tom's escape, writing passes to freedom was enmeshed in the violence of enslavement. Blacks who escaped to freedom were not cavalier, as they would have to contend with the agents and mechanisms of slave management and control. This included hired patrollers, the use of tracking dogs, and suspicious or rapacious whites. In her book, *Night Riders,* Gladys-Marie Fry discussed how enslavers and their overseers and

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[350] Louis Hughes, *Thirty Years a Slave, From Bondage to Freedom. The Institution of Slavery as Seen on the Plantation and in the Home of the Planter* (Milwaukee, WI: South Side Printing Company, 1897), 102. Hughes did not offer dates throughout his narrative, only saying that he did not hear from Tom again until after the Civil War ended in 1865. Hughes was born in 1832 and remained enslaved until emancipation in 1863, and much of his narrative covered his adult live, which would have been mostly during the 1850s and 1860s.

[351] Hughes, *Thirty Years a Slave,* 103.

[352] Frederick Douglass, *Narrative in the Life*, when recalling the lesson that "knowledge unfits a child to be a slave," declared, "I instinctively assented to the proposition, and from that moment I understood the direct pathway from slavery to freedom," 50.

patrollers would exploit Black ignorance to instill fear and deliberately pass on false information.[353] Despite the dangers, however, some enslaved Blacks risked life and limb for their freedom. In addition, networks of Black knowledge facilitated the path to freedom. Slaves learned information through various agents—a free Black who had been kidnapped, through the hope of an escaped slave, white abolitionists, and elder slaves who shared stories of Africa. Literate slaves were able to follow the politics of the day, sharing within the quarters what the outcomes of an election would have meant for their freedom.[354] Henry Clay Bruce, who escaped from Missouri to Kansas, and was the brother of the first African American Senator Blanche Kelso Bruce, wrote, "A Colored man who could read was a very important fellow for they would come miles and bring stolen papers for him to read to them at night or on Sunday."[355] Further, it was common for Blacks in the South who had some education to share it with others who did not. Slaves would teach each other, secretly, in the quarters or in other clandestine spaces.[356] In some cases, slaves who visited nearby plantations, with permission or otherwise, would read to other slaves, teaching them religion, and literacy, and lessons of freedom. Such was the case with Charlotte Brooks and Jane Lee, both of whom were born in Virginia, but had been sold in Louisiana. Charlotte Brooks had to leave her entire family behind in Virginia, and longed to see them again. Sadly, she never would, but when she heard Jane Lee had come from Virginia, she found an immediate kinship. Some evenings, Ms. Lee would secretly visit Ms. Brooks and read

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[353] Gladys-Marie Fry, *Night Riders in Black Folk History (*Knoxville*:* University of Tennessee Press, 1975), 49-54.

[354] Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 192-193. Blassingame wrote, "The few slaves who learned to read gained immeasurable status in the quarters because they had a secret mirror on the outside world and could keep others informed of events which were transpiring there," 312.

[355] Henry Clay Bruce, *The New Man: Twenty-Nine Years a Slave, Twenty-Nine Years a Free Man* (New York: P. Anstadt & Sons, 1895).

[356] See Heather Andrea Williams (2009), *Self-Taught*. Also, see Grey Gundaker, "Hidden Education Among African Americans During Slavery," *Teachers College Record* 109, no. 7, July 2007, 1591–1612.

the Bible and sing hymns with her and others in the slave quarters. Though Ms. Lee did not teach Ms. Brooks to read or write, she did share lessons in freedom, which was knowledge that could unfit a slave.[357]

Black Literary Traditions as Resistance

Sharing lessons in freedom was part of a Black literary tradition established in the eighteenth century. As literacy was central to the struggle for African American freedom, free Blacks used literacy to speak to and for their race, which included arguing for education for black children, protesting slavery, and challenging white perceptions of Blacks. Educated Blacks knew they had an important role to play in denouncing slavery and in managing the morality of other Blacks, and they took to pen, paper, and press to assert their leadership. With freedom, the educated elite argued, Blacks could be productive and moral citizens, as it was bondage that denied their full development and potential.[358] The first issue of the *Freedom's Journal*, the first African American newspaper, was issued on March 16, 1827, printing a diversity of Black voices. Samuel Cornish and John Russworm started the journal with an explicit goal: "We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us."[359] Black activism through Black literary traditions were a powerful source of community support and activism. Though anti-slavery sentiment is often associated with abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison and organizations such as the American Anti-Slavery Society, African Americans addressed issues of citizenship, education, and slavery through the printed word. Black-authored pamphlets, which

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[357] Octavia V. Rogers Albert, *The House of Bondage or, Charlotte Brooks and Other Slaves* (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1891).

[358] Richard Newman, Patrick Rael, and Philip Lapsansky, eds., *Pamphlets of Protest: An Anthology of early African-American Protest Literature, 1790-1860* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001). See also Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein, eds., *Early African American Print Culture* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

[359] Quoted in Jacqueline Bacon, *Freedom's Journal: The First African American Newspaper* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 13. Bacon's monograph traced Black activism and literary traditions predating the 1830s.

gave black authors more autonomy.[360] While some authors took on issues of white power and dominance, others promoted Black power and pride as a means to combat American racism. This powerful literary tradition, shaped by black authors, free and formerly enslaved, demonstrated that African Americans' engagement in struggles for abolition, education, and equal rights were connected to education and literacy. In addition, some access to black knowledge and thought flowed through a shared knowledge network. Despite high rates of illiteracy in the South, there remained some access to knowledge as people either read aloud to others, like Ms. Lee and Ms. Brooks, or shared what they had read or learned. In addition, free blacks in the North shared their ideas, and would become critical in teaching the freedpeople.

Enslaving Minds and Bodies: Outlawing Black Literacy and Education During Slavery

When the interviewer asked Mr. William McWhorter, who was formerly enslaved in Georgia, about reading and writing, he responded,

> Lordy, Mistess, ain't nobody never told you it was again de law to larn a Nigger to read and write in slavery time? White folks would chop your hands off for dat quicker dan dey would for 'most anything else. Dat's jus' a sayin', 'chop your hands off.' Why, Mistess, a Nigger widout no hands wouldn't be able to wuk much, and his owner couldn't sell him for nigh as much as he could git for a slave wid good hands. Dey jus' beat 'em up bad when de cotched 'em studying' readin' and writin', but folks did tell 'bout some of de owners dat cut off one finger evvy time dey cotch a slave tryin' to git larnin'. How-some-ever, dere was some Niggers dat wanted larnin' so bad dey would slip out at night and meet in a deep gully whar dey would study by de light of light'ood torches; but one thing sho, dey better not let no white folks find out 'bout it, and if dey was lucky 'nough to be able to keep it up 'til dey larned to read de Bible, dey kept it a close secret.[361]

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[360] Newman, Rael, and Lapsansky, *Pamphlets of Protest.*

[361] William McWhorter, *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves*, The Federal Writers Project, Volume IV, Georgia Narratives, Part 3 (Washington DC: 1941), 97.

As Mr. McWhorter pointed out, criminalizing literacy meant codifying prohibitions against educating slaves, and included harsh punishments. Yet, despite the direct and structural violence, enslaved Blacks persisted in their efforts to learn. Secrecy, then, was paramount to Black education. Moreover, at a time when teaching and learning for enslaved Blacks was outlawed, accessing education was revolutionary.[362] Though laws regarding Black literacy were not uniformly enforced, they were widespread, and offered insights into the social disposition of the South. From 1829-1834, restrictive legislation was passed in Southern states prohibiting teaching reading, writing, or spelling, giving out books, and in some cases, preaching. Georgia and Louisiana had laws in place to prohibit teaching slaves to read and write, but in 1832, Alabama explicitly forbade spelling as well. Historian Eric Foner reported that the adult Black illiteracy rate in 1860 was over 90 percent, explaining that in the antebellum South, "every Southern state with the exception of Tennessee had prohibited the instruction of slaves."[363] Tennessee did, however, have laws that forbade anything that might incite a slave rebellion. This included assemblies of Blacks, free or enslaved, and consumption of incendiary pamphlets or speeches. Thus, literacy was implicated.

Literacy laws intersected with means to control and fit slaves, especially with respect to possible slave insurrections. Further, though slave societies have used legislation to control

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[362] Noel S. Anderson and Haroon Kharem wrote, "there were also laws throughout the Union that made teaching a slave and a slave learning to read, to write, or do math illegal. So becoming literate as a slave was not only criminal, it was revolutionary, in that it enabled an enslaved person to reclaim a sense of humanity in face of inhumane circumstances and develop skills of resistance and liberation." *Education as Freedom: African American Educational Thought and Activism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), xvi.

[363] Eric Foner 1990, 43; See Christopher M. Span and James D. Anderson, "The Quest for 'Book Learning:' African American Education in Slavery and Freedom," in *A Companion of African American History,* ed. Alton Hornsby, Jr., (Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005), 298-299 for a discussion of how historians have determined Black literacy rates. Though Carl Kaestle pointed out that antebellum literacy was rudimentary decoding at its best and that census estimates of literacy were often self-reported, without any standard measures, Eugene Genovese in *Roll, Jordan, Roll,* suggested that historical accounts of the South point to many plantations having at least one enslaved Black who was literate, which may have indicated a higher level (more than 5%) of basic literacy for enslaved Blacks.

slaves, particular to the southern US was that the cause for rebellion was literacy and religion.[364] In the wake of the Stono Slave rebellion in South Carolina in 1739, South Carolina passed the Negro Act of 1740:

> Whereas, the having slaves taught to write, or suffering them to be employed in writing, may be attended with great inconveniences; Be it enacted, that all and every person and persons whatsoever, who shall hereafter teach or cause any slave or slaves to be taught to write, or shall use or employ any slave as a scribe, in any manner of writing whatsoever, hereafter taught to write, every such person or persons shall, for every such offense, forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds.[365]

This statute, which was similarly instituted by other states like Georgia, embedded violence into the legal codes. To put this in context, this code also charged a fine of 100 pounds for "cruelly scaling or burning a slave, cutting out his tongue, putting out his eye, or depriving him of any limb." Thus, teaching literacy to a slave was as bad in terms of its punitive effects as removing a slave's eye, tongue, or limb.

Additionally, the punishments for teaching literacy to slaves changed depending on who was doing the teaching. Alabama's slave code had a provision that white teachers found teaching slaves would pay "not less than two hundred and fifty dollars, nor more than five hundred dollars," while a free person of color found teaching a slave to read or write would receive "thirty-nine lashes on the bare back" and be expected to leave Alabama within thirty days. If a

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[364] Cornelius 1991; Despite the restrictive legislation that limited the education of slaves from 1829-1834, teaching slaves was not completely banned in practice, as "white Southerners afraid of the power of the printed word in the hands of enslaved African-Americans had also been told for decades that all people should have access to the Bible" (11). Some enslavers worked around this contradiction by providing religious instruction orally. See Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 89.

[365] Extracts from the American slave code, 1820. For the context of colonial education of African Americans, see Carter, G. Woodson's *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*. Also see Bly (2011), who discussed the enslaved children who were sent to the Bray School. The school was founded by Ben Franklin, a slaveholder, with the goals of teaching the boys and girls to read and making them Christian. In addition, white school teachers enlisted enslaved aides to help teach other black students, free and enslaved; this tradition was established early on, despite South Carolina's 1740 Slave Code (and the other slave states who passed similar legislation) forbidding literacy and education. Further, Bly's work demonstrated how African Americans not only pursued their individual opportunity to gain their freedom through education, but also how self-teaching was a form of collective uplift.

slave was found teaching another slave, the punishment increased to 50 lashes and 100 for any offenses thereafter.

State legislation provided a mechanism to prevent Blacks from accessing education. In Louisiana, an act passed in 1830 prohibited anyone who would "write, print, publish, or distribute any thing having a tendency to produce discontent among the free colored population, or insubordination among the slaves," as they could be sentenced to "hard labor for life, or suffer death, at the discretion of the court."[366] In Louisiana, "discontent" and "insubordination" were connected to written, published, or printed material. Such were the materials of knowledge production—they could be distributed and shared, and could shape Black minds. These facets of learning, which were fundamental to reading and writing, and to expressions of human rights and citizenship, were viewed as potential threats or weapons. In addition, Louisiana's state statute prohibited free Blacks from entering the state.

Throughout the antebellum South, free Blacks were positioned as potential threats to the social order of racialized slavery. In 1856, *The Creole* of New Orleans referred to free Blacks and abolitionists as a "curse," and an "evil to be corrected," especially for establishing Black schools and churches: "I shall have occasion to refer to this subject in connection with the schools and churches that have been established by and for the use of the black population, and inquire by what law slaves are permitted to attend the former. There are evils in our midst which require correction, and these are of that class."[367] The author was denouncing how free Blacks

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[366] Williams, *History of the Negro Race in America,* 160. Georgia had a similar law, punishing free Blacks for teaching enslaved Blacks to read or write, 158.

[367] This column, from *The Creole* newspaper in New Orleans, was reported in the Frederick Douglass Paper on November 17, 1854 in an article titled "A Star Chamber in New Orleans," (Rochester, NY).

and abolitionists, "by their example and influence," diminished the value of chattel slaves. This suggested African Americans embodied a threat, with their weapons being expressions of education. Free Blacks were embodiments of freedom. Free Blacks represented knowledge and possibility, challenging the notion that enslavement was the only legitimate station for Black people. Free Blacks could also use their knowledge as a tool to educate other African Americans, rendering themselves as instruments of freedom. As potential teachers, free Blacks could foster literacy and learning, and facilitate Black freedom.

Violence and Fear of the Literate Slave: Education and Revolutionary Violence

Slave rebellions and insurrections were a direct form of resistance, and featured prominently in white fears.[368] The fear of Black uprising, which was a potent reality of Nat Turner's deadly insurrection in 1831, had southern whites in a panic. In the summer of 1831, Nat Turner, a preacher and a slave, led a rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia. In Turner's confession prior to his trial, which was made to the lawyer, Thomas R. Gray, Turner described how he was inspired by a sign from God to "arise and prepare myself, and slay my enemies with their own weapons."[369] Indeed, Turner did slay his enemies, beginning with his enslaver, Joseph Travis, and his family. On the 21st and 22nd of August 1831, sixty-one white people were killed, and over half were children.[370] Local militia killed or captured the rebels, save Nat Turner, who was found on October 30, tried on November 5, and executed by hanging on November 9, 1831.

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[368] See Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, for discussion of slave revolts in the 19th century United States, 592-597.

[369] Thomas R. Gray and Nat Turner, "The Confessions of Nat Turner" (1831). Zea E-Books in American Studies. Book 11.

[370] Ibid, 11. John Cromwell, "The Aftermath of Nat Turner's Insurrection," *The Journal of Negro History* 5, no. 2 (April 1920): 212. Later accounts of the aftermath cited 61 whites killed, but Thomas Gray's account in the *Confessions* cited 55.

Reports and reactions to Turner's rebellion illuminated how expressions of violence against oppression were framed by the oppressors. They also revealed that within an oppressed/oppressor dynamic, multiple dimensions of violence are at play. Further, these dimensions of violence were harnessed through physical and direct manifestations, as well as through the framings or justifications of the violence. For example, accounts of Nat Turner's rebellion framed the black insurgents as "savages," "ferocious miscreants," and "wretches."[371] And though those who joined the rebellion numbered somewhere around 60 enslaved and free Blacks, reports made the insurrection seem much larger. In a widely-published letter from the editor of the *Norfolk Herald*, a white newspaper, on August 24, 1831, two days after the rebellion, there was a sense of grave and looming danger about the band of insurgent slaves, "believed to have from 100 to 150 mounted men, and about the same number on foot. –They are armed with fowling pieces, clubs, &c. and have had an encounter with a small number of the militia, who killed six and took eight of them prisoners." By the end of the article, the author adds a 5-o'clock update: "it is said that 300 negroes, well mounted and armed, and headed by one or two white men, is the amount of the insurgent force."[372] The report was not accurate, but speculative and rumor-ridden, enlarging the threat to more than three times the actual number.[373]

The white response to the rebellion was violent and full of terror, with whites killing 120 Blacks within a day, most of whom were not involved in the insurrection.[374] Whites came with a

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[371] Gray and Turner, *Confessions;* Samuel Warner "Narrative of the Tragical scene."

[372] *Insurrection of the Blacks*, Letter from the editor of the Norfolk Herald to Wm. G. Lyford, of Baltimore. Norfolk, (August 24,1831), in Genius of Liberty 15, no 35,(September 3, 1831), Leesburg, VA: B. W. Sower.

[373] Interestingly, reports of whites killed seem consistent, in the range of 55-65. Of course, there was no need to inflate the number of white deaths; one death or even the perception of threat to a white life was enough to legitimize a violent white response.

[374] Cromwell, "The Aftermath of Nat Turner's Insurrection," 212.

vengeance to Southampton County, riding to various plantations where they tortured, mutilated, and killed Blacks. Slaves who were pointed out as untrustworthy were targeted, and if they tried to escape the terror, they were killed.[375] Whites who supported Black emancipation were also targeted. The rumors of Black violence no doubt fueled white rage and violence, but it also fueled white fears, not just in Virginia, but throughout the South. Nat Turner was thought to be everywhere, prompting whites to barricade their houses or even flee their homes to areas fortified by militias.[376] A Virginia legislator, Mr. MacDowell, seemed to capture the general sense of victimization and insecurity whites felt:

> It drove families from their homes, assembled women and children in crowds in every condition of weakness and infirmity, and every suffering that want and terror could inflict, to escape the terrible dread of domestic assassination. It erected a peaceful and confiding State into a military camp which outlawed from pity the unfortunate beings whose brothers had offended; which barred every door, penetrated every bosom with fear or suspicion, which so banished every sense of security from every man's dwelling; that, let but a hoof or horn break upon the silence of the night, and an aching throb would be driven to the heart. The husband would look to his weapon and the mother would shudder and weep upon her cradle. Was it the fear of Nat Turner and his deluded drunken handful of followers, which produced such effects? Was it this that induced distant counties where the very name of Southampton was strange to arm and equip for a struggle? No sir, it was the suspicion eternally attached to the slave himself, a suspicion that a Nat Turner might be in every family, that the same bloody deed might be acted over at any time and in any place, that the materials for it were spread through the land and were always ready for a like explosion.[377]

MacDowell's speech epitomized how whites feared Blacks. White fears were stoked by a threatening image of enslaved and free Blacks in the white mind, images that were fueled by speeches and newspapers, which often carried rumors of other insurrections.

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[375] Ibid, 212.

[376] Ibid, 214.

[377] Quoted in Cromwell, "Aftermath of Nat Turner's Insurrection," 228-229. MacDowell's speech was originally printed in *The Richmond Enquirer*, January 15, 1832.

Early 20th century scholarly accounts of the Turner rebellion pulled from regional newspapers and state legislature reports to describe how whites would not be out after dark, and took precautions to protect themselves in their homes with barricades, night watches, and weapons, and some even relocated to areas where there were armed forces to protect them.[378] The brutality whites inflicted on Blacks included torture, burnings, amputations, and other "nameless atrocities."[379] White retaliation was not restricted to Virginia, however, as slaves in Georgia were tied to trees while militia men slashed them with apparent delight.[380] Further, rumors of conspiracies, arms stockpiling, and other murders abounded. In December 1831, Virginia's governor, John Floyd praised the armed response, and warned the people that plans for insurrection were widespread, being fueled by black preachers.[381] The weapons of these preachers were of the mind, through "inflammatory papers and pamphlets," distributed "either through the post office, or by agents sent for that purpose throughout our territory."[382]

Southern and Northern whites accused Nat Turner of turning other plantation slaves into "the instruments of their slaughter" by "representing to the poor deluded wretches the Blessings of Liberty, and the inhumanity and injustice of their being forced like brutes from the land of their nativity, and doomed without fault or crime to perpetual bondage and by those who were not more entitled to their liberty than themselves!"[383] Warner was against slavery, yet, the

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[378] Ibid, 212- 215.

[379] Ibid, 212.

[380] Ibid, 215.

[381] John Floyd, "Message to General Assembly," 1831.

[382] Cromwell, "Aftermath of Nat Turner's Insurrection," 219; Floyd, "Message to General Assembly."

[383] Samuel Warner, "Narrative of the tragical scene," 6.

condemnation he provided Nat Turner was not a condemnation against the violence of slavery, but against a man who led others to slaughter for exposing them to notions of liberty. Turner's teachings to the "wretches" was a problem. Moreover, in this "sudden and unlooked for revolt," it was General Nat, the "principal instigator," "the principal in command" who was at fault.[384]

Further blame for the rebellion was placed on free Blacks, as well as on "Northern incendiaries, tracts, Sunday schools, religion, reading, and writing?"[385] The impact of Nat Turner's rebellion was far-reaching, as states across the south seemingly uncovered plots for insurrection. In New Orleans, for example, reports of "handbills telling slaves to revolt against their masters," were coupled with reports that hundreds of Blacks "were armed and ready," and that "a stash of 1200 weapons were found in a black man's house."[386] In Southampton County, one white resident wrote, "I do not hesitate to believe that many negroes around us would join in a massacre as horrible as that which has taken place, if an opportunity should offer."[387]

For enslaved Blacks who were literate, exposure to printed material such as newspapers, pamphlets, and handbills gave them access to information beyond the confines of white overseers and plantation owners; Southern whites feared such printed materials, deeming them weapons.[388] A literate slave could have access to anti-slavery viewpoints, which would then fill her with ideas of freedom and unfit her as a slave. Planters certainly contributed their

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[384] Ibid, 17-18.

[385] Quoted in Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Travellers & Outlaws*, *Episodes in American History,* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1889), 322. Higginson was an abolitionist and minister who supported the use of violence to fight against slavery.

[386] Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Travellers & Outlaws*, *Episodes in American History,* Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1889, 311.

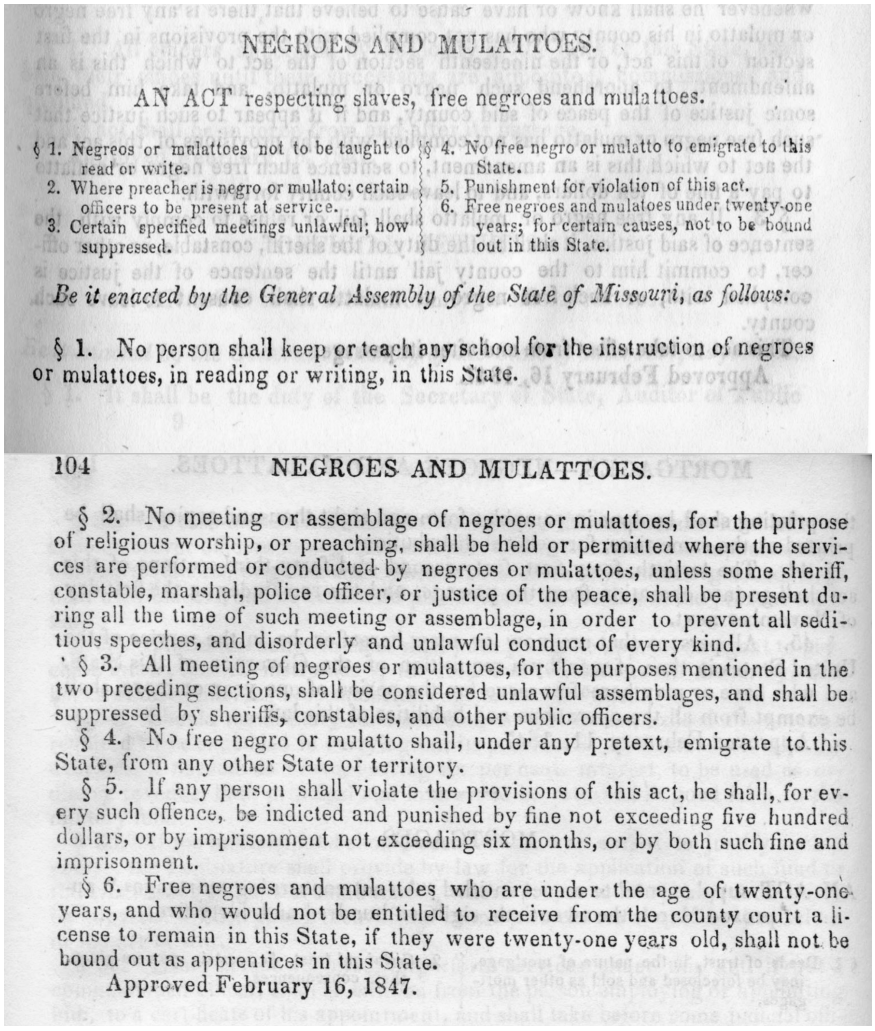
[387] Ibid, 314.

[388] Michael Kent Curtis, "The Curious History of Attempts to Suppress Antislavery Speech, Press, and Petition in 1835-37," *Northwestern University Law Review* 89, no. 3 (1995): 785-870.

perspectives to public discourse, while also having the power to label anti-slavery discourse as seditious, subversive, and dangerous. Abolitionist rhetoric that suggested an end to slavery was perceived as a threat to slave states. By decrying anti-slavery literature and discourse as a threat, enslavers and slave states legitimized violence to address the perceived threat. The power to address threats lay within states, and by demarcating knowledge and literacy as an enemy to the state, they legitimized the means to address threats. The means to address threats to states' security, were supported by states' control of the means of violence. Not only did states legitimize violence against Black bodies through racialized slavery, but also, they legitimized violence against Black minds, by framing tools of knowledge and education as dangerous and threatening.

Even after Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831, state laws continued to include anti-literacy sentiment and target free Black populations. The General Assembly of Missouri passed "An Act respecting slaves, free negroes and mulattoes" on February 16, 1847 (see Figure 7). Similar to other slave states in the south, this act forbade teaching reading and writing, emigration by free Blacks, and non-supervised religious assemblies.[389]

[389] Missouri State Archives, Missouri's African American History Collection, *African American History Initiative.*



NEGROES AND MULATTOES.

AN ACT respecting slaves, free negroes and mulattoes.

§ 1. Negroes or mulattoes not to be taught to read or write.
2. Where preacher is negro or mullato; certain officers to be present at service.
3. Certain specified meetings unlawful; how suppressed.
4. No free negro or mulatto to emigrate to this State.
5. Punishment for violation of this act.
6. Free negroes and mulatoes under twenty-one years; for certain causes, not to be bound out in this State.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

§ 1. No person shall keep or teach any school for the instruction of negroes or mulattoes, in reading or writing, in this State.

104 NEGROES AND MULATTOES.

§ 2. No meeting or assemblage of negroes or mulattoes, for the purpose of religious worship, or preaching, shall be held or permitted where the services are performed or conducted by negroes or mulattoes, unless some sheriff, constable, marshal, police officer, or justice of the peace, shall be present during all the time of such meeting or assemblage, in order to prevent all seditious speeches, and disorderly and unlawful conduct of every kind.

§ 3. All meeting of negroes or mulattoes, for the purposes mentioned in the two preceding sections, shall be considered unlawful assemblages, and shall be suppressed by sheriffs, constables, and other public officers.

§ 4. No free negro or mulatto shall, under any pretext, emigrate to this State, from any other State or territory.

§ 5. If any person shall violate the provisions of this act, he shall, for every such offence, be indicted and punished by fine not exceeding five hundred dollars, or by imprisonment not exceeding six months, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

§ 6. Free negroes and mulattoes who are under the age of twenty-one years, and who would not be entitled to receive from the county court a license to remain in this State, if they were twenty-one years old, shall not be bound out as apprentices in this State.

Approved February 16, 1847.

Figure 7: An Act Respecting Slaves, Free Negroes, and Mulattoes, 1847, Missouri State Archives, African American History Collection, African American History Initiative.

The perception of threat cannot be understood outside its racialized context. Racialized slavery and its underlying ideology constructed a social hierarchy based on perceptions of race. That a system denying Black humanity would produce "discontent" or "insubordination" was not to blame, placing the blame instead on those perceived to upset the system, provided an example of how violence was legitimized. In this sense, the system of racialized slavery and racial caste was not to blame for discontenting blacks, but rather, those who sought to challenge the system were. Moreover, their tools of knowledge were interpreted as weapons. Consequently, there was an implied recognition that knowledge would produce discontent of an unequal system. Thus,

knowledge and its perceived tools could challenge the social and economic system of racialized slavery and its embedded racialized hierarchy. Schools were a tangible scapegoat, but so too were other tools, manifestations, and embodiments of education.

Despite the potential for violence and persecution against Black education, some Blacks could and did access education through schools. Clandestine schools existed throughout the South, mostly in larger cities, though their locations and modes of secrecy varied. These Black led schools were taught and managed by Southern blacks, and despite white opposition and violence, were foundational to social institutions and Black resistance.[390] An enslaved girl, Susie King Taylor, was taught by a friend of her grandmother, Mary Woodhouse, who was a free African American in Savannah, Georgia. Mrs. Woodhouse taught about twenty-five to thirty children in the 1850s, and both the teacher and her students took caution: students entered only one at a time from the back entrance and wrapped their books to disguise them. Mrs. Woodhouse's trade as a seamstress likely helped maintain the school's secrecy as she could claim she was training them for skilled work.[391]

Controlling the Means of Violence: Plantation Owners as State Units

While state statutes legitimated direct violence in the form of punishments, as well as structural violence through a slave system that denied humanity and rights to African Americans, regulatory powers of mobility and labor were located within the planter class. The planter or

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[390] David Freedman, "African-American Schooling in the South Prior to 1861," *Journal of Negro History* 84, no. 1(Winter 1999): 1-47. Freedman wrote, "African-American taught and run schools prior to 1861 in the South constitute a significant community based effort to build and sustain institutions based on the social and cultural beliefs of those communities. These histories are critical to an understanding of the beliefs and values of Southern African-American communities, and to an understanding of how these beliefs and values formed the foundation on which communities built institutions in the face of overwhelming oppression. The widespread, successful efforts to create schools as institutions in the face of overwhelming repression provides critical knowledge about how African-Americans viewed themselves and made sense of the struggle for equality and justice," 38.

[391] Freedman, "African American Schooling," 10.

master class of slave and plantation owners held regulatory supremacy in law and custom, as they claimed responsibility for managing their enslaved labor force. For example, some states had regulations mandating penalties for a white person who harmed an enslaved Black person, because the white would in effect be harming property. In other words, the law regulated destruction of *property*. Penalties for harming enslaved Blacks and thus white property was not a penalty was not for the white enslavers, however, as enslavers had jurisdiction over their property. Whitemarsh Seabrook, an enslaver from South Carolina, explained that slaveowners had executive, legislative, and judicial powers," but not absolute power.[392] For example, a white who killed a slave committed murder, but only if other whites deemed it "felonious." In other words, enslavers could, in theory, be found guilty for harming an enslaved Black or causing them to "suffer in life, limb or member," but only if another white person was a witness (as Black testimony was not permitted). If the owner could show evidence or "by his own oath clear and exculpate himself," then the matter would be legally resolved. In both examples, the word of whites and white enslavers eclipsed any harm done to enslaved Blacks, even if the harm resulted in their death. Indeed, the rights of property reigned supreme, and enslaved Blacks were human property.[393] John Hope Franklin explained, "for all practical purposes the master was the source of law on the plantation; and, in the infrequent instances when he resorted to the law of the state to invoke his right over his human property, its interpretation and enforcement were at his hands."[394] In the antebellum south, the planter class formed a social structure that embedded the

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[392] Whitemarsh Seabrook, *An Essay on the Management of Slaves, and Especially, on Their Religious Instruction* (Charleston, SC: A. F. Miller, 1834), 4.

[393] Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers demonstrated how property rights superseded restrictions on gender in her monograph, *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019). Jones-Rogers explained how women enslavers found economic freedom through slave ownership at a time when they did not have the same legal rights as white men.

[394] John Hope Franklin, "Slavery and the Martial South," *The Journal of Negro History* 37 no 1 (1952): 36-53.

power to rule within individual planters and plantations. Collectively, planters may have formed a planter class, but individually, plantation owners held sovereignty over their own domains, which were defined in terms of property ownership.[395] Plantations in some sense functioned as state entities because they controlled the social and economic organization and regulation.[396]

Such governance had implications for the use of violence. Social theorists placed legitimate control of the means of violence in the dominion of nation-states, with military power and surveillance as a primary means of violence.[397] In the antebellum South, planters and their plantations served this role, situating the legitimate means of governance and violence within slave ownership. Functioning as state-like entities, "the planter class worked out a carefully constructed system of slavery laws, plantation rules, and social etiquette. Although these laws, rules, and points of etiquette differed from state to state and from plantation to plantation, they were fundamentally much alike through the ante-bellum South."[398] Laws, rules, and norms were constructed within the social and economic system of slavery as a means to control behavior, attitudes, and actions, all of which functioned as governance. These systems established a hierarchy in which racialized superiority and inferiority were positioned as "natural" and

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[395] The rights of property were determined by race as Cheryl Harris made clear in "Whiteness as property," especially pp. 1715-1725. Property was a legal distinction, and was legally wedded to whiteness. Further, whiteness was "built on both exclusion and racial subjugation," 1737.

[396] Anthony Giddens defined the "state" as an "apparatus of government or power, sometimes the overall social system subject to that government or power" (17) in *The Nation State and Violence, CA: University of California Press* (1985). Weber, in "Politics as a Vocation," defined the state in terms of territory, domination, legitimacy, and violence: "a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory," 78. Further, "the state is a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate (i.e., considered to be legitimate) violence," 78, in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Florence: Taylor & Francis Group (2013). It is a term often associated with the modern nation-state, but in this study I am referring to governance units, which include states within the United States as well as plantations, and the planter class who controlled them, in the South.

[397] Anthony Giddens, *The Nation State and Violence*, 13-17.

[398] Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers*, 32.

"innate."[399] In addition, planters, localities, and states often hired white patrollers to police slave behavior and movement.[400] This included night-time patrolling, demanding documentation that would allow black mobility or presence, and searching for potential weapons. These weapons of course included knives, guns, or other potential armaments, but they also included instruments of education and literacy, such as books, pens, paper, and pamphlets. Books, papers, pencils were considered tools of revolt.[401] A slave who possessed such items represented a potential threat. White fears of slave literacy were not unfounded; the rules whites created relied on slave illiteracy to limit their freedom of mobility. Slaves who could write did indeed write their own passes, some of whom, like Tom, literally wrote their own pass to freedom. In addition, both the enslaved and enslavers came to associate education with freedom.[402]

This is not to say that planters were not influenced by the social norms and customs of the time, such as codes of honor and religious beliefs, but these norms and customs were not necessarily cohesive or monolithic across the South.[403] There was, however, an intellectual shift that challenged eighteenth century aristocratic mores with the rise of the Jacksonian "common

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[399] Ibid, 32.

[400] Sally Hadden, in *Slave Patrols,* explained that white patrol units were often employed by municipalities and when summoned for duty, a patroller became a sanctioned officer of the state, like a judge or sheriff. This provided white patrollers with status among whites, as well in an official capacity. Further, this status served to protect patrollers from legal action of slaveholders who "disapproved of their brutal methods," 77. Further, enslaved Blacks were positioned as dangerous and were the primary targets of white surveillance and violence, 4.

[401] Sally Hadden *Slave Patrols*. Patrols searched slave quarters and were looking for weapons of revolt, which included "guns, scythes, knives, but also writing paper, books, and other indications of education," 106. Duties also included breaking up meetings of enslaved Blacks and patrolling town roads and areas around plantations.

[402] Span & Anderson, "The Quest for Book Learning," 297.

[403] For a discussion of white southern elite honor codes and antebellum violence in higher education, see John A. Reesman, "A School for Honor: South Carolina College and the Guard House Riot of 1856," in *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 84, no. 4 (October 1983): 195-213. Also see Bertram Wyatt Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South,* (New York: Oxford University Press,1982): 154-186.

man" movement and evangelism in the antebellum South.[404] Further, community will was expressed through "lynch law, vigilantism, and charivaris," which set racialized boundaries, reaffirmed white solidarity and superiority, and legitimized white violence against Black people.[405] Threats to the white social structure were deemed evil, and white southerners were obligated to destroy the threat in cyclical and ritualistic performances that included framing the insurrectionary activity, arousing white fears of Black rebellion, and executing conspirators.[406] This suggested that violence was accompanied by ideological and discursive processes that legitimated the violence.

In a similar vein, exacting obedience and fitting slaves for bondage was an ideological and discursive process whereby whites constructed images of the enslaved Black, characterizing him as lazy, brutish, immoral, and intellectually inferior.[407] Despite the popular Sambo stereotype (see Figure 8), which often infantilized enslaved Blacks, slaves were also positioned as violent, dangerous, and willing to destroy whites through rebellion. One of the greatest fears of slaveowners, and white southerners and northerners as well, was slave rebellion. In white

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[404] In the preface to Clement Eaton's study, *Freedom of Thought in the Old South*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press,1940) Eaton pointed to the Jacksonian movement of the 1820s-1830s as creating a notion that "the common man was a power to be reckoned with" (viii). Walter Johnson in *Soul by Soul, Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, extended this argument, and demonstrated that white men believed in the "rights of mastery" (81), which non-slaveowners could gain through slave ownership (see pp. 79-88).

[405] Bertram Wyatt-Brown, 1986, 154-155.

[406] Bertram Wyatt-Brown, 1986. Brown described white creation of and reaction to "insurrectionary scares" as a "mass ritual," which accompanied political and economic changes (such as wars and recessions), expressions of Black autonomy, and rivalries among whites themselves (158).

[407] African Americans, free or enslaved, Northern or Southern, were often represented by whites as immoral, savage, licentious, and prone to baser instincts. See Ronald Takaki, *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 111-115 for an analysis of white attitudes in the North, and 116-122 for white attitudes in the South.

minds, the slave could be loyal, obedient, and even affectionate, but he was also capable of great violence, and would direct it at whites given an opportunity.[408]

INSIDE OF A SLAVE WAREHOUSE.

Figure 8: Sambo from Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 1852. This image depicts Sambo in the center, who was "full black, of great size, very lively, voluble, and full of trick and grimace."*[409]

The contrast between the behaviors and attitudes whites wanted in enslaved Blacks, and how whites imagined the enslaved's nature, contributed to the systems of slave management.

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[408] The Sambo stereotype positioned Black plantation slaves as childlike, "docile but irresponsible, loyal but lazy, humble but chronically given to lying and stealing," and dependent on their masters (82), in Stanley Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life*, New York, The Universal Library, Grosset & Dunlap, 1959. John Blassingame complicated the debate about stereotypes, adding the images of *Jack* and *Nat*, with Jack being faithful, proud, uncooperative at times, and aware of wrongs against him. Nat was the rebellious and violent brute, stemming from Nat Turner (368), cited in George M. Fredrickson, "White images of black slaves in the Southern United States," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 292, no. 1 (1977): 368-375. For more about Sambo, see Joseph Boskin, *Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester* (Oxford University Press, 1988).

[409] Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Illustrated by George Cruikshank (London, UK: John Cassell, Ludgate Hill, 1852), 238. Stowe's novel became key literature in the 1850s' abolition movement, selling 300,000 copies in 1852 alone. Black scholars of the 1950s and 1960s such as James Baldwin criticized Stowe's novel for its Black caricatures and its representation of enslaved Blacks as too accepting of their fate. Contemporary Black historian Henry Louis Gates Jr. does not discount such criticism, but he also recognized Stowe's novel as a useful window into pre-Civil War America. See Edward Rothstein, "Digging Through the Literary Anthropology of Stowe's Uncle Tom," *New York Times* October 23, 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/23/arts/23conn.html.

These systems included employing slave patrollers to monitor slave behavior and movement; requiring passes to regulate slave mobility, especially off the plantation; hiring overseers to monitor and regulate slave labor and behaviors; and restricting slaves' time, knowledge, relationships, and activities.[410] In addition, whites use of Black insurrectionary activities as a means to unite whites in shared fears, and to reinforce white dominance and control wielded collective violence that served to maintain the institution of slavery. There was synergy between the plantation units and state and local governments which was mediated by racialized slavery. In cases of insurrection, state militias could be called in and were expected to use violent force to quell Black uprisings.[411] When David Walker, a free Black, published *The Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* in 1830, it was traced by white Southerners who were fearful of slave insurrections. Walker's *Appeal* called for immediate abolition and for whites to compare the language in the Declaration of Independence with "your cruelties and murders inflicted by your cruel and unmerciful fathers and yourselves on our fathers and on us—men who have never given your fathers or you the least provocation!!!!!!"[412] Walker also called on Blacks to take up arms if necessary. Whites defined the sharing and printing of Walker's anti-slavery pamphlet as violence against them and their reactions were brutal. Physical violence erupted in Georgetown, South Carolina, where whites lynched several Blacks, and in Augusta and Savannah, Georgia, where whites set fires.[413] Both mob and state violence were mobilized, as state governments in Louisiana and Virginia sent arms and troops to counties throughout the state. In this sense,

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[410] See John Blassingame, *The Slave Community*; Sally Hadden, *Slave Patrols*.

[411] Concern for having to stop insurrection was not just a southern phenomenon; Horace Mann worried that insurrection would draw in national and northern armed forces. See speech to Boston colonization society.

[412] David Walker, *The Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* (1830), 78.

[413] Cornelius, *When I Can Read My Title Clear.*

cultural violence through white imaginaries, discourses, and ideologies legitimated state and vigilante violence.

Of course, to talk about planters' power in this way also requires considering the role of agency, that is, the power of social actors to make change. Despite the power planters held, legitimated by the structure of slavery and state legal systems, social dynamics were neither fixed nor inevitable. Resistance and negotiation played a major role among social actors. African Americans asserted their humanity in a number of ways, and planters were forced to recognize that regardless of a legal status of chattel, African Americans were thinking and feeling men and women.[414] Nevertheless, the power to control social and economic relations lay with the slave masters, and was upheld and enforced through various means of violence, from the vigilante, to the community, to the state.

Fitting Slaves, Fitting Masters: Slavery as Violent and Educative

As the violence of slavery was fitting slaves, so too was it fitting masters. Writing in the late eighteenth century, Thomas Jefferson noted that "there must doubtless be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people produced by the existence of slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it ... thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny."[415] Jefferson connected violence to slavery, which was educative in that the day-to-

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[414] Walter Johnson cautioned historians of slavery against positioning power and agency as two ends of a continuum. Johnson wrote, "'agency', like 'power', is historically conditioned: it takes specific forms at specific times and places; it is thick with the material givenness of a moment in time" (9), in *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom,* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2013).

[415] Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," Query xviii (New York, NY: The Library of America, 1781/1984), 288.

day violence of slavery instructed whites in "tyranny," "despotism, and "degrading submissions."[416] Jefferson acknowledged that slavery's violence trained whites as masters through their subjugation of enslaved Blacks, and referred to slavery as morally and politically evil. Yet, Jefferson himself owned slaves, and despite his belief that enslaved Blacks should and would be emancipated, he was certain "that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government."[417] Jefferson was conflicted about the new republic's inability to do away with slavery and establish a peaceful multiracial society. Moreover, Jefferson considered Blacks racially inferior, with differences "fixed in nature."[418] Further, these differences in "nature" coupled with white behaviors and ideology to create "indelible lines of distinction" between the two races.[419] Thus, the violence of racialized slavery was simultaneously teaching whites the means of violence while also cultivating its legitimacy through customs and ideology.

Joseph C. Price, a free Black man from North Carolina, expanded on Jefferson's evolution of the violence of slavery and how it infected white children with beliefs of Black inferiority. "From the maternal knee, the table, the family altar, the forum, and the pulpit was the lesson taught that the person of sable hue and curly hair was a doomed, and therefore an inferior, race—not entitled to a place in the brotherhood of men. This impression, made on childhood's plastic nature, grew with his growth, and strengthened with the power of increasing years. To

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[416] Angulo argued that Jefferson blamed slavery for creating a "distinctively violent culture" relative to northern states. in Science, Slavery, Learning in old South, 2005.

[417] Thomas Jefferson, "The Autobiography," (New York, NY: The Library of America, 1821), 44.

[418] Writing in 1781, Jefferson was pointing out the challenges of emancipation of enslaved Blacks, suggesting that politically, racial divisions would be heightened, resulting in the "extermination of the one or the other race," 264. In this query, Jefferson's perspective was infused with scientific racism, which positioned racial difference and Black inferiority as biological fact. See Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped From the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016); Alan H. Goodman, Yolanda T. Moses, and Joseph L. Jones, *Race: Are We So Different?* (UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

[419] Thomas Jefferson, "The Autobiography," 44.

deepen the blot, and intensify the damning heresy, the law of the land wrote him down as a chattel, that is, cattle, and forbade the training of the mind and the culture of the heart, by making learning on his part, and teaching on the part of others, a crime."[420] In this speech Price described how white children learned to be enslavers, and to perceive their whiteness as superior to the blackness of the enslaved. The system of slavery infested social life, which included the home, the church, and other spaces of social interaction and engagement. In addition to reducing Blacks to a commodity that could be bought and sold, Price pointed out the system of slavery rendered Black education a crime, illustrating how enslavement of the body and mind was direct, structural, and cultural violence.

Some scholars have described slavery as an educative institution.[421] Indeed, formerly enslaved African Americans also likened slavery to a school, such as Jermain Loguen of Tennessee, who "had been taught, in the severest school, that he was a thing for others' uses, and that he must bend his head, body and mind in conformity to that idea in the presence of a superior race."[422] Embedded in Loguen's lesson was that he should conform to white expectations when engaging with whites. In other words, Loguen was *schooled* in inferiority and subordination. Such lessons may have been propagated, but they were not absolute. The story of Levi Branham, who was enslaved in Georgia, provided an example of how enslaved youth

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[420] Joseph C. Price, a notable orator and advocate for African Americans, spoke at the annual Meeting of the National Education Association in 1890. Reproduced in Eric Foner and Robert J. Branham ed. *Lift Every Voice: African American Oratory, 1789-1900* (Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 1988), 737.

[421] Donald Warren, "Slavery as an American Educational Institution: Historiographical Inquiries," *Journal of Thought,* (Winter 2005), 41-54. For a discussion of how white women learned to be slave masters, see Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press (2019), especially pp. 1-23.

[422] Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers*, 34. Jermain Loguen published his narrative in 1859 after his escape from bondage in Tennessee. Jermain Wesley Loguen, *The Rev. J. W. Loguen, as a Slave and as a Freeman. A Narrative of Real Life* (Syracuse, NY: J. G. K. Truair & Co., Stereotypers and Printers, Office of the Daily Journal, 1859).

cultivated their own ideas about freedom, while also conforming to lessons of the severest school. In the early 1860s, young Branham prayed at Sunday school, "O Lord, please help Abraham Lincoln to whip Jefferson Davis." Later, when his enslaver, Jim Edmonson, asked Branham what he prayed for, he replied, "oh Lord, please help Jefferson Davis to whip Abraham Lincoln," and was rewarded with a half-dollar. Levi Branham's hopes and prayers were not aligned with Jim Edmonson's, and by expressing views commensurate with his enslaver, Branham was rewarded rather than punished. In this way, Branham maintained his own hopes, while seeming to align with his master.[423] Branham's experience demonstrated how Blacks resisted white domination and enslavement of the mind.

Even as enslaved Blacks resisted through their learning and knowledge, exhibiting education was dangerous for a slave. While it remained true that most southern slaves could not read or write before the Civil War, those who could knew they risked physical violence by revealing their capabilities. Lunsford Lane, who was not permitted to read as a slave, but "succeeded, by stealth, in learning to read and write a little," purchased his own freedom in 1835.[424] and later recalled in his narrative that he actively diminished his intelligence and assets. In his narrative, Lane wrote,

> Ever after I entertained the first idea of being free, I had endeavored so to conduct myself as not to become obnoxious to the white inhabitants, knowing as I did their power, and

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[423] W E B Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Bantam Books, 1903/1989), described African American's double consciousness, whereby Blacks see themselves as they are perceived by a dominant other, 3. James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: CT, Yale University Press, 1990) described how within relations of power, subjugated groups create "public transcripts" in interactions with the dominant group, which serve as a means of resistance, 4-6. For an examination of how enslaved Blacks' engaged in critical literacy through correspondence with their enslavers, see Ben Schiller, "Learning their letters: Critical literacy, epistolary culture, and slavery in the antebellum South," *Southern Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (Spring 2008); 11-29. Schiller draws on Paulo Friere's notion of "critical literacy," making a distinction between *critical literacy,* or the ability to understand and critique forms of domination, and *practical literacy,* which is the ability to read and write.

[424] Lunsford Lane, *The Narrative of Lunsford Lane: Formerly of Raleigh, N.C., Embracing an Account of His Early Life, The Redemption by Purchase of Himself and Family from Slavery, and His Banishment from the Place of His Birth for the Crime of Wearing Colored Skin* (Boston, MA: Hewes and Watson's Print, 1848), iv.

> their hostility to the colored people. First, I had made no display of the little property or money I possessed, but in every way I wore as much as possible the aspect of poverty. Second, I had never appeared to be even so intelligent as I really was. This all colored people at the south, free and slaves, find it peculiarly necessary for their own comfort and safety to observe.[425]

In the realm of education, slaves knew that expressing knowledge could be viewed as acting above their station, or what many whites would consider insolence, and could lead to physical violence.[426] Slave deference to their masters and other whites was in part a means of survival, but it was also a means of resistance by hiding their knowledge and awareness in plain sight.[427] Knowledge, then, was a means of challenging notions of Black inferiority and fitness for slavery.

Though public support of schools through taxation was generally less in the South than throughout the North, some whites advocated for state systems of public education. The development of these systems of education was infused with white supremacy.[428] For some advocates of public education for whites, the distinction between the white planter class and the white labor class was subsumed under the racial distinction between free white and enslaved black. Most enslavers were not large plantation owners. Fifty to seventy-five percent of slave-owners (depending on the state) enslaved 5 or fewer Blacks.[429] Yet, whites of all social and

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[425] Lane, *The Narrative of Lunsford Lane,* 31.

[426] Christopher Span and James Anderson noted that enslaved Blacks had to contend with white opposition to Black education, more so than with legal restrictions. In "Quest for Book Learning," 2005.

[427] As a means of resistance, slaves were known for dissimulation, or concealing their true motives or thoughts. See James Scott for discussion of dissimulation in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, (1990), 2. Also, see Grey Gundaker, "Hidden Education Among African Americans During Slavery," *Teachers College Record* 109, no. 7 (July 2007): 1591–1612, for a discussion of how Blacks hid their education in plain sight.

[428] Rebecca Weissman, "*The Role of White Supremacy Amongst Opponents and Proponents of Mass Schooling in the South during the Common School era," Paedagogica Historica* 55, no. 5 (2019): 703-723. Also, though Blacks were excluded from public education, some Blacks owned taxable property, which meant they were paying taxes for schools, which were only available to whites. For example, A minister in St. Louis, Galusha Anderson, estimated the taxes to be a significant amount, around "hundreds of thousands of dollars" over the years, quoted in R. I. Brigham, "Negro Education in Ante Bellum Missouri," *The Journal of Negro History* 30, no. 4 (October 1945): 414.

[429] These figures are based on US Census data, 1850.

economic classes were positioned as members of a privileged group. *DeBow's Review*, a widely-circulated periodical in the antebellum South, distinguished between generally wealthy whites who were large-scale planters, bankers, and lawmakers, and other white workers. But these distinctions of class embedded a racialized entitlement, which was based on their racial distinction as whites who must "control and direct the slave labor of the State."[430] In a "slaveholding community," *DeBow's Review* posited, "the character of our labor...draws a broad line between the class who merely labor and the white population of the State, who are thus created a governing, privileged class." In this logic, Blacks "merely labor," but whites, be they poor or rich, lower or upper class, were a "governing" class for Black labor. *DeBow's Review* encapsulated this racialized logic when it considered public education for the Southern white labor class and the double task of the state: "It has to educate these men for work, but it has also so to educate them as to maintain their position as members of the white, privileged class of our society…"[431] Different jobs required different degrees and types of education, but regardless of the degree, *DeBow's* reasoned, the state "is required to afford that degree of education to every one of its white citizens which will enable him intelligently and actively to control and direct the slave labor of the State." In this sense, the common thread of public education was to ensure that whites could control Black labor.

Conclusion

As the United States moved closer to war in the mid-to-late 1850s, anti-slavery and pro-slavery campaigns intensified. Abolitionists continued to point to the horrors and immorality of

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[430] "The States' Duties in Regard to Popular Education," *DeBow's Review and Industrial Resources, Statistics, etc*. (February 1856): 148.

[431] "The States' Duties in Regard to Popular Education," *DeBow's Review,* 149.

Black enslavement while pro-slavery southerners, from their vantage, pointed to the horrors and immorality of Black freedom. In both camps, education was implicated. Abolitionists pointed to the denial of education for Blacks: "The Slave not being regarded as a member of Society, nor as a human being, the Government, instead of providing for his education, takes care to forbid it, as being inconsistent with the condition of chattelhood."[432] The enslaved's status as property thus engendered enslavement of mind and body. Enslavers agreed that education was not fit for slaves, whose role was to labor: "Freedom would be their doom," a Tennessee politician wrote, and "in teaching slaves to entertain wild and dangerous notions of liberty, the Abolitionists have thus jeopardized the commerce of the country and the manufacturing interests of the civilized world."[433] By the late 1850s, most Southerners placed blame on abolitionists in the North, suggesting the abolitionists' intent was to incite insurrection among enslaved Blacks.[434] Pro-slavery southerners blamed Northern intervention on their ignorance of Southern culture and defiance of the US Constitution, as they "promulgate to the world their purpose to immediately convert, without compensation, four millions of profitable and contented slaves into four millions of burdensome and discontented negroes."[435] Further, they framed abolitionism as "warlike," "belligerent," and employing weapons of the mind, such as speeches, pamphlets, and resolutions. "What spirit of man ever stood upon earth with bolder front and wielded fiercer weapons? Stirring harangues! Stern resolutions! Fretful memorials! Angry protests! Incendiary

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[432] William Goodell, "The American Slave Code," New York Anti-Slavery Society (1853): 319.

[433] Alfred Osborn Pope Nicholson was a politician and lawyer from Tennessee, who served as a senator, as well Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court. In the "Appendix to the Confederate States Almanac. Abolitionism from 1787 to 1861: A Compendium of Historical Facts, showing the Causes That Have Led to a Dissolution of the Union," *The Confederate States Almanac* (1861): 164.

[434] Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 80; Cornelius, *When I Can Read My Title*.

[435] Nicholson, "Appendix to the Confederate States Almanac," 124.

pamphlets at the South! Hostile legislation at the North!"[436] Nicholson described Northern appeals to the mind as warlike. In this rhetoric, measures to engage the mind were framed as weapons, and they were aimed at the white South. Weaponizing education and tools of the mind intensified as the war loomed closer, but the foundations had been set through laws, customs, and violence in the preceding decades.

Violence against Black education was legitimated through laws and customs, and justified as a tool to fit a slave. Yet, whites also defined violence to serve and preserve the dominant relations of power. For whites, educated blacks not only became unfit as slave labor, thus threatening the means of production and white economic superiority, but also became a threat to white dominance. In white minds, educated African Americans would incite other African Americans, who would then rise up against whites and invert the racial hierarchy to violently subjugate whites. Black education and Black freedom challenged these perceptions whites constructed and violently enforced, and thus were positioned as threats to the white ways of being.[437]

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[436] Ibid, 126.

[437] See *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975* by Jason Sokol (New York: Vintage Books, 2006) for a parallel of this threat during the Civil Rights movement of the 20th century.

Chapter 6 "A Perfect Reign of Terror:" White Violence and Black Education During the Reconstruction Era, 1863-1880

The horrors of those days can scarcely be imagined by those who know nothing about it. Why, madam, you ought to have been down here in 1868. That was the year in which Grant and Colfax ran for President and Vice-President, against Seymour and Blair. A perfect reign of terror existed all over the south. –Colonel Douglass Wilson, 1891[438]

At the turn of the 20th century, W. E. B. Du Bois wrote, "The opposition to Negro education in the South was at first bitter, and showed itself in ashes, insult, and blood; for the South believed an educated Negro to be a dangerous Negro. And the South was not wholly wrong; for education among all kinds of men always has had, and always will have, an element of danger and revolution, of dissatisfaction and discontent."[439] This powerful statement underlay how education can hold both emancipatory potential and potential fear of those emancipated. It also highlighted the interplay of opposition and resistance, the former of which manifested in violent white reactions to the establishment of schools for freedpeople, and the latter of which was evident through Black activism and persistence in the face of tremendous obstacles.[440]

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[438] Colonel Douglass Wilson, quoted in Octavia Victoria Rogers Albert, *House of Bondage or Charlotte Brooks and Other Slaves* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1891), 138.

[439] W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Freedmen's Bureau," *Atlantic Monthly* 87, no. 519 (March 1901), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1901/03/the-freedmens-bureau/308772/.

[440] Barbara Jeanne Fields characterized resistance as actions of individuals as well as collective struggles over time: "*Resistance* does not refer only to the fight that individuals, or collections of them, put up at any given time against those trying to impose on them. It refers also to the historical outcome of the struggle that has gone before, perhaps long enough before to have been hallowed by custom or formalized in law—as 'the rights of an Englishman', for example" (103). In "Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America*," New Left Review*, no. 181 (1990): 95-118.

The end of slavery and the Civil War was followed by the Reconstruction era from 1863-1877, a period that placed dominant social relations of power in question.[441] As James Anderson explained:

> The ex-slaves initiative in establishing and supporting a system of secular and Sabbath schools and in demanding free public education presented a new challenge to the dominant class whites. They were confronted with the possibility of an emerging literate black working class in the midst of a largely illiterate poor white class. This constituted a frontal assault on the racist myth of black inferiority which was so critical to the maintenance of the radical caste system upon which the planters' agrarian order was based.[442]

As Chapter 5 demonstrated, teaching slaves to read and write was expressly forbidden in most 19th century slave state statutes; yet, African Americans pursued knowledge at great risk of personal violence. Learning to read and write was often done in secret, and African Americans were generally wary of demonstrating their knowledge in the presence of whites. With emancipation in 1863, the freedpeople[443] were relentless in their educational endeavors, openly seeking education and using their newly legalized political and social power to establish and maintain schools across the South.[444] Violence, however, was predominant as whites targeted Black schools, Black and white teachers, and other expressions and embodiments of education. As formerly enslaved Blacks moved into public life, and demonstrated their autonomy, the white

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[441] Two prominent historians of Reconstruction, Eric Foner and David Blight designate Reconstruction from 1863-1877, which I follow. Eric Foner, *Reconstruction*: *America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1988); David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001).

[442] James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, *1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 19.

[443] Historical scholarship on the Reconstruction Era or the post-emancipation US uses the term "freedmen" to designate ex-slaves after the Emancipation Proclamation (1863) and the passage of the 13th amendment abolishing slavery (1865). In addition, education of former slaves in the 1860s and 1870s was often referred to as "freedmen's education." Throughout this chapter, I will use the term "freedpeople" to signify an inclusion of freedmen and freedwomen. The term "freedmen" will still be employed in the context of official titles, such as the Freedmen's Bureau or Freedmen's societies.

[444] Even before the War's end, African Americans were opening schools and demanding education. See Henry Allen Bullock, *History of Negro Education in the South* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967); Herbert G. Gutman, "Schools for Freedom: The Post-Emancipation Origins of Afro-American Education," in Herbert G. Gutman, *Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class,* ed. Ira Berlin (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 260-297 25-26; David Freedman, "African-American Schooling in the South Prior to 1861," *The Journal of Negro History* 84, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 1-47.

South responded with a regime of terror.[445] As this chapter will explore, white violence manifested in direct attacks against the people, institutions, and tools of freedom and learning. It will also unearth the structures of violence that continued to shape the development of public education, and how constructed meanings of race informed the purposes of education.

White Vigilante Violence: The Reign of Terror

When Anna Parkes was a child near Athens, Georgia, she and her mother, Liza, lived in a small cabin, near the gun factory. Before the Civil War, they were enslaved by Judge Joe Henry Lumpkin, whose home was not too far from the city. After the war, Anna recalled that many ex-slaves had a hard time finding housing, but her mother was able to pay for their home through her work as a laundress. Mrs. Parkes recalled her experience with the Ku Kluxers:

> One night, jes' after I got in bed, some mens come walkin' right in Ma's house widout knockin'. I jerked de cover up over my head quick and tried to hide. One of de mens axed us who she waz. Ma knowed his voice, so she said: 'You know me Mister Blank,' (she call him by his sho' nuff name) 'I'm Liza Lumpkin, and you know I used to b'long to Jedge Lumpkin.' De udders jes' laughed at him and said: 'Boy, she know you so you better not say nuffin' else.' Den anudder man axed Ma how she waz makin' a livin'. Ma knowed his voice too, and she called him by name and tole him us wuz takin' in washin' and livin' all right. Dey laughed at him too, and den anudder one axed her sompin' and she called his name when she answered him too. Den de leader say, 'Boys, us better git out of here. These here hoods and robes ain't doin' a bit of good here. She knows ev'ry one of us and can tell our names.' Den dey went out laughin' fit to kill, and dat wuz de onliest time de Ku Kluxers ever wuz at our house, leastways us s'posed dey wuz Ku Kluxers.[446]

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[445] Scholars who termed Reconstruction as a regime of terror include Hannah Rosen, *Terror in the Heart of Freedom*; Nicholas Lemann, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2006); Ronald Butchart, "Black Hope, White Power: Emancipation, Reconstruction and the Legacy of Unequal Schooling in the US South, 1861–1880," *Paedagogica Historica* 46, nos. 1-2 (2010), 33-50.

[446] Anna Parkes, interview in the *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves*, The Federal Writers Project, Volume IV, Georgia Narratives, Part 3 (Washington DC: 1941), 163.

A number of things can be gleaned from Anna Parks' chilling recollection of post-Civil War Reconstruction in Georgia: The men's complete disregard for the Lumpkin's home and privacy; their sense of entitlement to demand information about Liza Lumpkin's work; Anna Parkes' quiet fear as she hid under her covers; and the dignified courage and wit of her mother to use the men's names, and the name of her former master, to deter potential violence against her and her daughter.

Many women and men in the south did not fare as well as the Lumpkins, however. In the aftermath of the Civil War, white vigilante groups, such as the Nightriders, White Leaguers, and Ku Kluxers, took up the cause to redeem the South from the Negro and the Yankee.[447] White vigilante violence terrorized newly freed Blacks and the whites who were supporting them. Frank Bellew's image, "Visit of the Ku Klux" (Figure 9) was printed in *Harper's Weekly* on February 24, 1872. Similar to Anna Parkes' memory, the drawing depicted a simple family home being invaded by "Ku Kluxers," and with their hoods and guns, it was a menacing and violent visit.

[447] "Redeemer" or "redemption" was a term southern whites used to describe taking back the South from perceived Black rule and Northern, federal interference, and reinstating "home rule" based on white superiority. See Nicholas Lemann, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006). Lemann also explained how Southern white redeemers framed their violence and terror in terms of honor and glory.

Figure 9: Visit of the Ku Klux by Frank Bellew, Harper's Weekly, February 24, 1872

The violence of these groups was multifaceted: it was direct and physical, as whites beat and killed Black men and women across the South; it was sexual as white men raped Black women; it was psychological as threats of violence could be actualized at any time; it was material and symbolic, as they destroyed Black churches, homes, and schools; and it was cultural and ideological as whites proclaimed racial superiority to justify and legitimize their reigns of terror.

The perception of these white terrorists was often one of the poor, ignorant white man, who could not fathom Black expressions of autonomy, freedom, and equality, and especially, Black education. While this was true, white violence was not limited to poor or uneducated whites. Moreover, the violence of southern redeemers was not limited to direct violence, as structural and state sponsored violence worked in tandem. Laws, known as Black Codes, were

passed to limit black autonomy and mobility.[448] Former slaveowners formed economic partnerships with each other as a means to continue to control their labor.[449] Furthermore, systems of justice, including the national system, were defining Black citizenship and did not offer full rights or fairness to people of color. For example, of the whites who were known to have terrorized or murdered African Americans or destroyed their property in Louisiana and Mississippi during Reconstruction, none were ever convicted.[450] The cultural violence of white supremacy served in part to justify direct violence against African Americans. Henry Adams, a former slave and Union soldier who compiled a record of violence against blacks in Louisiana from 1865-1875. Adams' report included 683 victims of white violence, "every one of which went unpunished."[451] Such accounts demonstrated the structural violence of a legal system that does not punish, or even recognize violence against black bodies.

Colonel Douglass Wilson, a former Louisiana slave, described the Ku Klux Klan in this way: "at that time they were very bad and numerous in both Georgia and South Carolina, but they were equally bad in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and, in fact, throughout the South. They were known in some places as the White Camellias, the White Cohort, and other such names, but

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[448] See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 199-209. Black Codes were certainly rampant in Southern states, but Northern states passed them as well, such as in Chicago in February 1863. The Democratic council passed a "Black School Law" that required African American children to attend a segregated school. Degrees of blackness were instituted by the Board of Education whereby students with 1/8 or less of African ancestry could attend the white schools. In 1865, a Republican passed a new law that abolished segregation and the constitution (1870) and its statutes (1874 and 1889) rendered such discrimination illegal, in David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 115.

[449] In addition to planters working together, the Freedmen's Bureau also served planters' interests. Recounting the conditions in South Carolina, Leslie Schwalm's *A Hard Fight for We,* described the Bureau officer's role in 1865 to enforce the end of slavery, but also to "encourage the resumption of plantation labor, with freed people—men and women— receiving wages for the same labor they had performed as slaves," 162. She explained, "Lowcountry freed people…quickly learned that the US army was not unequivocally committed to defending black freedom as former slaves defined it," 164.

[450] It was often the case that whites who killed an African American were not punished for their actions. Lemann in, *Redemption,* wrote of General Philip Sheridan, sent by President Grant in 1875 to Louisiana to "restore order" amidst the anti-black violence, who documented 2141 blacks killed and 2115 wounded by whites since the end of the war, all without punishment, 11.

[451] Lemann, *Redemption*, 10.

after all they were nothing more nor less than the Confederate army that had surrendered at Appomattox that was really continuing sort of guerrilla warfare against Union men and the poor freedmen."[452] Northerners, especially Republicans and African Americans were thus defined as the enemy, who had to be destroyed in the name of white glory.[453]

White Fears of Black Supremacy

Throughout Southern newspapers, reports of Black education, franchise, and ascension to Congress framed them in terms of chaos, ignorance, and risk. So, too, did white Northerners, such as Thomas Nast, frame Black political power as chaotic.[454] Such framings not only fed white conceptions of Black inferiority, but also helped legitimize multiple means of violence, including physical and material violence, as well as the violence of dehumanization. Drawing on racialized characterizations such as the Sambo stereotype, some whites represented Blacks as foolish, undermining legitimate Black social and civic participation. For example, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* depicted simian caricatures of African Americans (see Figure 10), referring to them as mischievous, "untutored," and barbaric as they participated in a political rally.[455] Such characterizations were in the domain of cultural violence, as whites deflated Black humanity and intelligence through visual representations. The caricatures reinforced stereotypes

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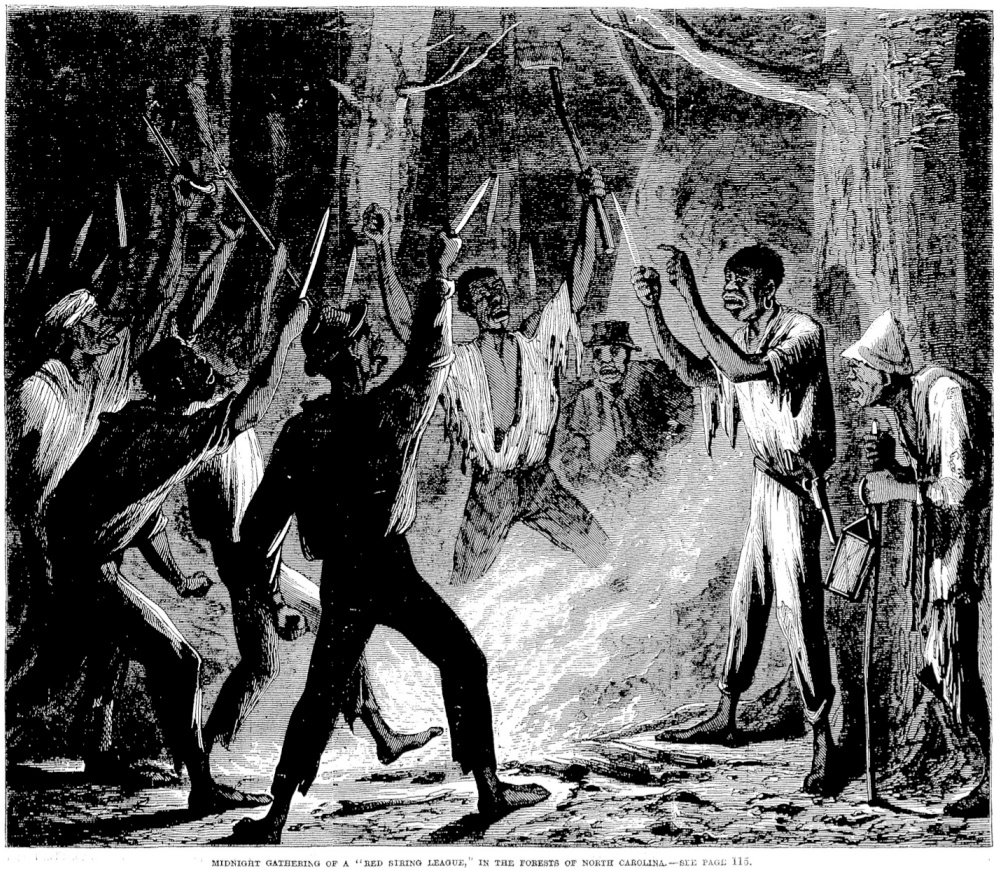
[452] Colonel Douglass Wilson, quoted in Rogers, *House of Bondage,* 135.

[453] Lemann, *Redemption*.

[454] For example, see Appendix E, "Colored Rule in a Reconstructed (?) State" by Thomas Nast, which depicted a fictionalized exchange between two Black Congressmen on the cover of *Harper's Weekly*, March 14, 1874.

[455] "Midnight Gathering of a 'Red String League,' in the Forests of North Carolina. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (New York, New York, Saturday, May 09, 1868; 115; Issue 658. The unnamed author suggested Blacks were taking their cues from white vigilante groups. The Red String League became part of the Union League, which recruited freedmen in support of Republican efforts in the South.

of African Americans.[456] Such characterizations also served to construct an imagined sense of the racialized Black, one that would discredit legitimate social and political action on account of inferior intelligence.[457]



MIDNIGHT GATHERING OF A "RED STRING LEAGUE," IN THE FORESTS OF NORTH CAROLINA.—SEE PAGE 115.

Figure 10: Midnight Gathering of a 'Red String League,' in the Forests of North Carolina, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, May 9, 1868

African Americans certainly called out such blatant misrepresentations, situating white portrayals of Blacks in racialized slavery. As Joseph C. Price informed educators at the National Education Association annual meeting in 1890, "for two hundred and fifty years the white man

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[456] George M. Fredrickson, "White Images of Black Slaves in the Southern United States," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 292, no. 1 (1977): 368-375.

[457] For an examination of white racial attitudes towards blacks from 1817 to 1914, see George M. Frederickson, *Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). See also Muhammad Khalifa, Ty-Ron M. O. Douglas, and Terah Venzant Chambers, "White Gazes of Black Detroit: *Milliken v. Bradley I*, Postcolonial Theory, and Persistent Inequalities," *Teachers College Record* 118 (March 2016), 6-10, who situated the *white imaginative,* or white perceptions of racialized stereotypes, in a history of white racial dominance over blacks and other communities of color.

of the South saw only the animal, or mechanical, side of the negro. Wherever he looked, there was degradation, ignorance, superstition, darkness there, and nothing more, as he thought."[458] As this image demonstrates, however, white depictions were not confined to Southern whites.

Moreover, Price also recounted white southern fears of Black supremacy: "This supremacy is feared on account of the ignorance of the negro voter. It is concluded that the majority of voters being ignorant, they would put ignorant or illiterate men in charge of the affairs of the county, State, or section; and this would work to the bankruptcy or destruction of the county, State or section thus governed or controlled. Hence, it is claimed that opposition to the exercise of negro franchise, by whatever means, is a patriotic duty—a matter of self-preservation."[459] Price described many whites' enduring fears that Black ignorance would shift political and economic power in ways that were detrimental. Indeed, Price was invited to the National Education Association meeting as an opposing speaker to Judge A. A. Gunby, a white Southerner who warned of the "menace of Negro rule" in the South, an argument white Southerners ferociously made and violently reinforced prior to and after Black men were granted voting rights in 1870 through the 15th amendment to the US Constitution. Martin Delany, a Black Freedmen's Bureau officer countered whites' "blasphemous lies" of Black ignorance and inaptitude for social and civic participation, reminding the freedmen that the Southern economy was built on Black labor: "You men and women, every one of you around me, made thousands and thousands of dollars. Only you were the means for masters to lead the idle and inglorious life, and to give his children the education, which he denied to you, for fear you may awake to

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[458] Joseph C. Price, 1890, in Eric Foner and Robert J. Branham ed. *Lift Every Voice: African American Oratory, 1789-1900* (Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 1988), 737-738. Price's speech followed a speech by Judge A. A. Gunby who warned of the "menace of Negro rule" in the South. Gunby, like many white Southerners at the NEA meeting wanted Blacks to be excluded from NEA membership.

[459] Ibid, 738.

conscience."[460] Whites in attendance, who were Union officers working for the Freedmen's Bureau, criticized Delany's speech, as they feared it would instill a sense of Black superiority and white inferiority. In effect, Black pride was positioned as a zero-sum threat to white superiority and dominance. As violence against Black education proliferated, it is important to note that in addition to the intensity of physical and material violence, structural and cultural violence were also in effect. Structures of marginalization that rendered Black intelligence as inferior were reproduced through cultural and discursive artifacts such as Figure 10, and served to justify acts to maintain stratification.

The shift from slavery to Reconstruction may have ushered in African American freedom and citizenship, but the racialized ideology that constructed and fueled white society had strong roots.[461] These roots were cultivated and maintained through violence—violence that permeated all spheres of social life: direct, structural, material, symbolic, cultural, and psychological. If education unfit a slave to be a slave, then it stood in parallel that education would unfit a laborer to be a laborer.[462] Furthermore, Black education and knowledge were a direct challenge to the caste-based social relations of racialized slavery.

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[460] Martin Delany counseled freedmen in South Carolina on July 23, 1865. Quoted in Edward Magdol and Edward M. Stoeber, "Martin R. Delany Counsels Freedmen," *The Journal of Negro History* 56, no. 4 (Oct. 1971), 305-306. For more about Delany, see Nell Irvin Painter, "Martin R. Delany: Elitism and Black Nationalism," in Leon Litwack and August Meier, eds., *Black Leaders of the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988). For a discussion of how Freedmens' Bureau's aims to resume plantation labor conflicted with how the freedpeople defined freedom, see Leslie Schwalm, 1997, 162-164.

[461] See Barbara Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America," *New Left Review*, no.181 (May/June 1990). She described racial ideology as a means for white people to make sense of a world where some groups, based on a racial construct, could be denied rights. For Fields, ideology is "the interpretation in thought of the social relations through which they constantly create and re-create their collective being, in all the varied forms their collective being may assume: family, clan, tribe, nation, class, party, business enterprise, church, army, club, and so on. As such, ideologies are not delusions but real, as real as the social relations for which they stand" (110).

[462] James Anderson described how planters felt that education "spoiled a good field hand" and that the demands of "Queen Cotton" (as Richard Wright called it in *Twelve Million Black Voices*) and other cash crop production was incommensurate with formal schooling, both of which continued through Reconstruction to the turn of the 20th century. In *Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 149.

White Violence Against Black Education

Colonel Douglass Wilson, a Union officer who was formerly enslaved in Louisiana, described the riot of July 30, 1866 in New Orleans during the constitutional convention, recalling how hundreds of murdered black bodies laid on the streets and in the gutters. With these thoughts of violence, he then said,

> The children at school were also the object of the same murderous spirit. When we sent our children to school in the morning we had no idea that we should see them return home alive in the evening. Big white boys and half-grown men used to pelt them with stones and run them down with open knives, both to and from school. Sometimes they came home bruised, stabbed, beaten half to death, and sometimes quite dead. My own son himself was often thus beaten. He has on his forehead to-day a scar over his right eye which sadly tells the story of his trying experience in those days in his efforts to get an education.[463]

Having been wounded during his fight for freedom during the Civil War, both Colonel Wilson and his son bore scars, interpreted as marks of honor: "I was wounded in the war, trying to get my freedom, and he over the eye, trying to get an education. So we both call our scars marks of honor."[464] For Wilson and his son, the scars provided a tangible reminder of their struggles and achievements for freedom and education notwithstanding white violence.[465]

During Reconstruction, the establishment of African American schools was met with hostility, violence, and terror, more so toward education than to Blacks owning property.[466] White terror, through intimidation, threats, and direct violence was indeed a tool to undermine Black expressions of freedom and independence. It was no accident that white terror groups such

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[463] Colonel Douglass Wilson, quoted in Rogers, *House of Bondage*, 139-140.
[464] *House of Bondage*, 140.

[465] For an account of the debates and contestation regarding Black union soldiers during the Civil War, especially among political and military officials (most of whom were white), see Dudley Taylor Cornish, *The Sable Arm: Black Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865.*

[466] W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1935/1992).

as the Ku Klux Klan (or KKK, originated in 1866 in Pulaski, Tennessee), Knights of the White Camelia (established in 1867 in New Orleans), and the White League (established in 1874)[467] formed in "self-defense" to the work of restoring the South.[468] Members of the terror groups were committed to using fear and direct violence to suppress and control Black autonomy, and assert and maintain a system of white dominance and Black inferiority.[469] The ideology of slavery and white supremacy did not end with the end of the Civil War, and faced with the social, economic, and political reality of emancipation, slavery's ideology was contested and negotiated as Blacks and whites asserted their power.[470]

In a vivid characterization of white terror, nationally recognized political cartoonist Thomas Nast encapsulated the persistent violence against African Americans described by Colonel Wilson in *Patience on a Monument* (Figure 11).[471] Published in Harper's Weekly in1868, Nast's cartoon depicted a Black man and Union veteran who was forced to wait patiently atop a monument inscribed with instances of white supremacy and violence against Blacks. At the base of the memorial lay his family, his wife and two small children, slain. In the

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[467] Glenn M. Linden, *Voices from the Reconstruction Years, 1865-1877* (Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999), 204-205.

[468] Walter L. Fleming, *Documents Relating to Reconstruction* (Morgantown, WV, 1904). White vigilante and paramilitary groups formed after the Civil War to "resist" attacks on white Southern points of view and ways of life, and to contain what they perceived as threats: "the bad influence of the teachings of Northern missionaries and teachers who worked among the black population, spreading what the negroes took to be doctrines of social equality," "insolent and lawless blacks," "negro insurrection," federal troops that "uphold the plundering rulers," and "utter disregard of the interests of the intelligent and tax-paying part of the population," 5.

[469] Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People*; John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction after the Civil War* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

[470] Kwando Mbiassi Kinshasa, *Black Resistance to the Ku Klux Klan in the Wake of the Civil War* (Jefferson: North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., 2006).

[471] Thomas Nast, "Patience on a Monument*," Harper's Weekly, Oct. 10, 1868, 648.* For an account of Nast's work, see Albert Bigelow Paine, *Thomas Nast, His Period and His Pictures* (New York: Macmillan, 1904). By 1866, Thomas Nast was nationally recognized as "the foremost American caricaturist," p. 150 and by 1867, Nast's depictions were steeped in his calls for civic reform, which earned him notoriety as well as criticism. Members of the Union League in 1869 called him a "genius," who was devoted to preserving the union, 134.

background, Nast represented the context in antebellum and postbellum America, in the North and in the South. On the left of Figure 9 is a depiction of Northern white violence against Blacks which attacked and killed Black people, destroyed their homes, and set fire to a Black orphanage.[472] On the right, a robed Ku Klux Klan man aimed his pistol at the African American man. In the distance, a freedmen's school was ablaze, a tactic common to whites in the Reconstruction South. Further highlighting the violence are the images of two Black men, in the North, and in the South, who were lynched. The monument was erected from the violence of enslavement ("The whipping post," "Hunted down with blood-hounds," "Branded and manacled," "The auction block"), insults to Black humanity and intelligence ("Knowledge a sealed book," "A Negro has no rights which a white man is bound to respect," "Burning school-houses and churches"), and injustice and violence in the political and legal systems ("This is a white man's government," "Expelled from the jury box," "Negro killed-'One vote less'"). Nast was persistent in depicting white violence against Blacks during Reconstruction, in the North and in the South. Moreover, education was a common theme in Nast's cartoons, as he often depicted white attacks against it.[473] Though Nast's representation of white violence may seem dramatic and shocking, his portrayals were not inaccurate, and demonstrated both that anti-Black violence was extensive and that it was not solely a southern phenomenon.

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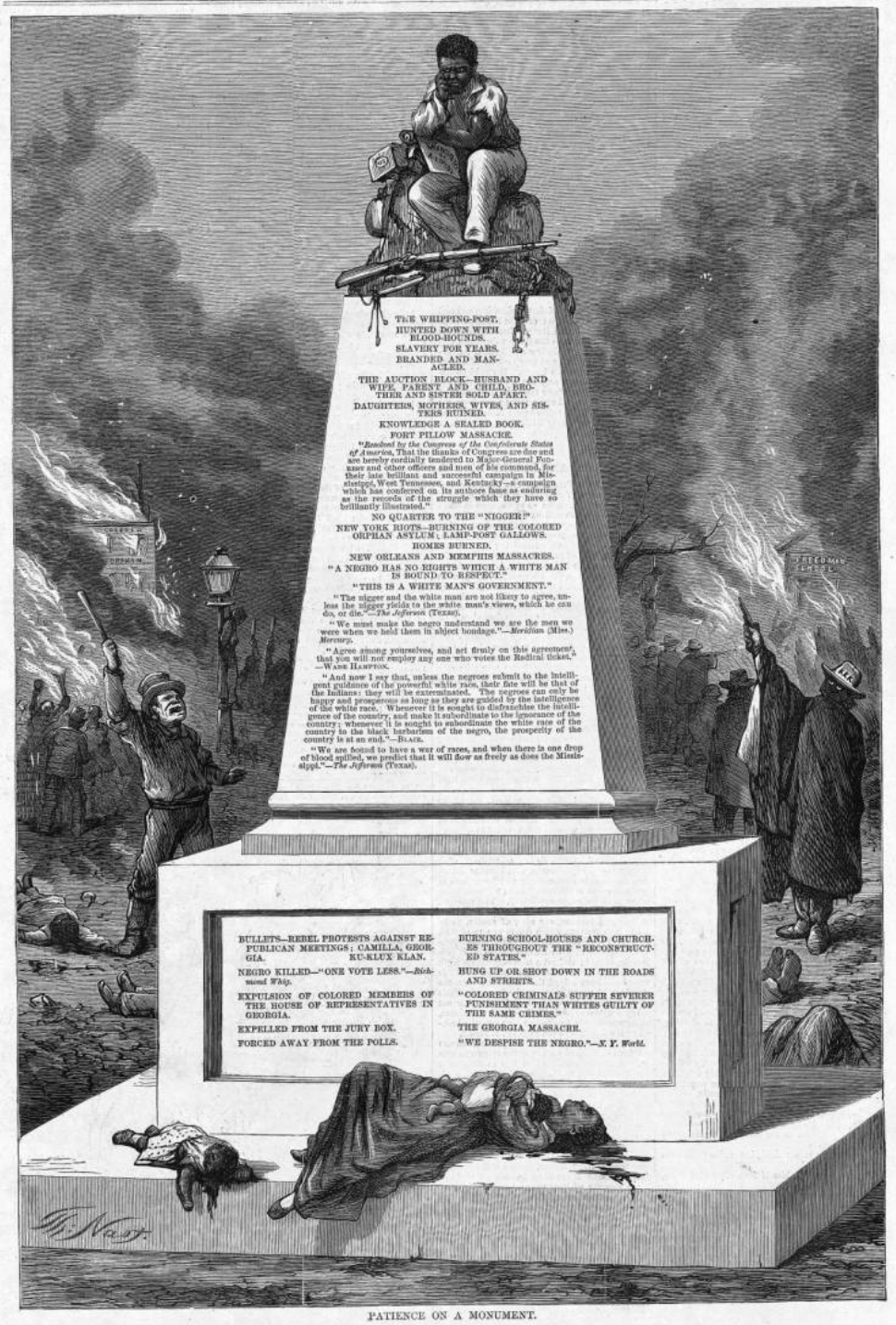
[472] Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 279-288. Harris detailed what came to be known as the Civil War Draft Riots, which began on July 13, 1863 and lasted for five days. White rioters attacked Black people, Black institutions, and symbols of "black political, economic, and social power," 282. In addition, whites who were considered sympathetic to Blacks were targeted, leading to some whites evicting Black residents for fear of property destruction.

[473] Benjamin Justice, "Thomas Nast and the Public School of the 1870s," *History of Education Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (Summer, 2005): 171-206. Justice pointed out that Nast used racial stereotypes to fuel his own agenda, especially when representing ignorance, 202. See Appendix E, Colored Rule in a Reconstructed (?) State by Thomas Nast, *Harper's Weekly*, March 14, 1874.



PATIENCE ON A MONUMENT.

Figure 11: Patience on a Monument by Thomas Nast, Harper's Weekly, October 10, 1868.

Indeed, the prevalence of white violence against Black education and knowledge persisted after emancipation and the Civil War. Incendiarism was common during southern Reconstruction, both in terms of its direct, violent destruction, and the threat of such violence, and whites commonly directed it at Black education. In January 1865, three months before the Civil War's end, whites burned an African American school in Donaldsville, Louisiana. In the following year, a riot in New Orleans broke out on July 30, killing 34 African Americans and 3 whites; four school buildings across the city were burned in its wake.[474] In addition to the violence in New Orleans, teachers were shot at in other parts of Louisiana in opposition to Black schools.[475] In 1866, whites burned down twelve Black schools, four Black churches, and 90 Black homes during the brutal race riots in Memphis, Tennessee (see Figure 12, "Scenes in Memphis"). Only three years later, nearly forty schools across the state went up in flames in a four-month period.[476] At Slaughters Neck, Delaware, the Black school burned down twice in 1869.[477] In the Tuskegee area of Kentucky in 1870, whites burned to the ground nearly every Black school and church.[478] Threats were rampant as well. The Ku Klux Klan threatened to kill an African American teacher in Holmesville, Avoyelles Parish for having a "nigger" school.[479] In 1865, whites burned down four Black schools in Maryland.[480] In 1874, the White League in

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[474] Howard A. White, *The Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1970).

[475] Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People; Louisiana Affairs, Report of the Select Committee on that Portion of the President's Message Relating to the Condition of the South*, House of Representatives, Report 261, Part 3, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1875).

[476] Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks*.

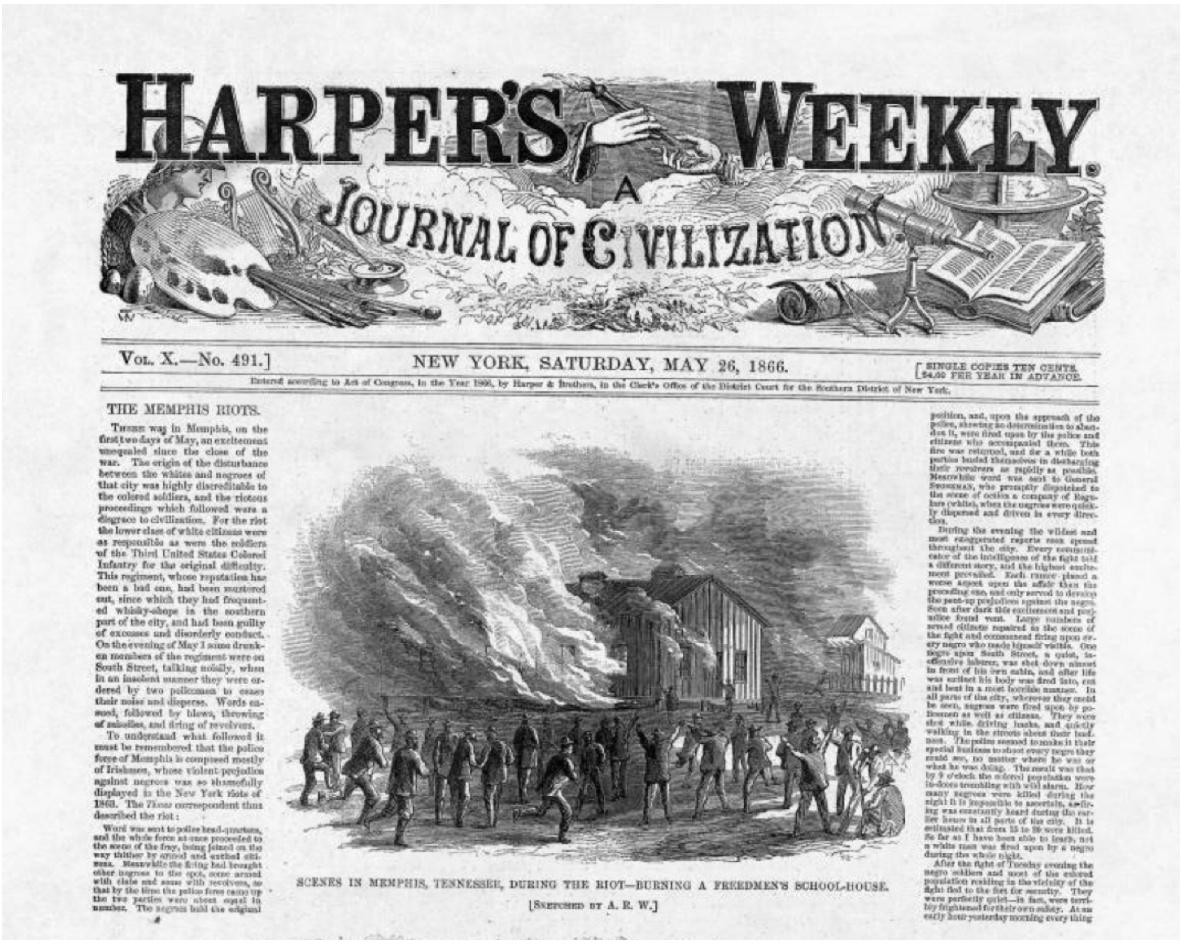
[477] J. W. Alvord, Eighth Semi-Annual Report, July 1, 1869, 13. Despite the burning, over 40 students persisted with their education, using a church as a schoolhouse. By January 1, 1870, the Black community rebuilt the school, with some financial support from the Bureau (as reported in the Ninth Annual Report), 12.

[478] Eric Foner, *Reconstruction*: *America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1988), 428.

[479] Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks*, 185.

[480] Ibid.

Bienville Parish in Louisiana "whipped and dr[ove] out" teachers at African American schools.[481] Hundreds of these cases exist across former slave states, in cities and towns, and are examples of the direct and violent attacks on Black people, Black education, and white allies.



HARPER'S WEEKLY

A JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION

VOL. X.—No. 491.] NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 26, 1866. [SINGLE COPIES TEN CENTS. $4.00 PER YEAR IN ADVANCE.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the Year 1866, by Harper & Brothers, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

THE MEMPHIS RIOTS.

SCENES IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, DURING THE RIOT—BURNING A FREEDMEN'S SCHOOL-HOUSE.

[SKETCHED BY A. R. W.]

Figure 12: Scenes in Memphis, Tennessee, During the Riot – Burning a Freedmen's School-House, Harper's Weekly, May 26, 1866.

In his political cartoon, Thomas Nast depicted the Reconstruction era as "worse than slavery," a sentiment frequently expressed by those who bore witness to Southern atrocities during Reconstruction, as white terror groups such as the KKK and White League ravaged and attacked

[481] *Louisiana Affairs, Report of the Select Committee on that Portion of the President's Message Relating to the Condition of the South*, House of Representatives, Report 261, Part 3, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1875), 89.

Blacks and Black institutions throughout the South (see Figure 13).[482] Nast's cartoon clearly implicated the African American struggle for education in the face of white violence, as evidenced by the spelling book next to the pool of blood and the burning schoolhouse in the background. In the accompanying article to Nast's cartoon, *Harper's Weekly* decried the persistent Southern attack on literacy and knowledge, which included threats against shops selling Northern periodicals such as *Harper's Weekly*.[483] As these examples highlight, white hostility against Black education was intense, especially as expressed by the violence and terror of vigilante groups, such as the KKK. But white hostility to Black schools was not reserved solely for white terror groups. White opposition to education also manifested as threats and obstruction to those who supported Black educators, such as landlords who would refuse housing to Black and white teachers.[484] In addition, some whites would obstruct deliveries of educational materials for freedpeople or refuse to pay the teachers.[485] In other cases, whites advised freedpeople's teachers to do what the redeemers asked, rather than risk further violence. In 1874, for example, Mr. Muncie, a Black teacher from Pennsylvania, who had initially been permitted to teach at a freedpeople's school in Bienville Parish, Louisiana, was attacked and nearly shot by

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[482] Localities also asked for state assistance against white vigilante violence. For example, Sheriff Norris in Warenton, Georgia wrote to Georgia's Governor in 1868 requesting military support "to keep order on account of the Ku Klux Klan's pursuit of former slave Perry Jeffers," reporting the freedpeople's "treatment is ten times worse than before the war." John C. Norris, "ALS to Rufus B. Bullock," 1868 November 13, African American History Collection, Clements Library, University of Michigan.

[483] "Worse than slavery," *Harper's Weekly* (October 24, 1874): 878, https://blackhistory.harpweek.com/7Illustrations/Reconstruction/UnionAsItWas.htm.

[484] *Louisiana Affairs, Report of the Select Committee on that Portion of the President's Message Relating to the Condition of the South*, House of Representatives, Report 261, Part 3, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1875), 320. Z. T. Wester a former Confederate soldier and Republican who became a teacher at a freedmen's school, was denied boarding in addition to threats on his life. In Louisiana, several tactics were used to sway Black voters, many of which intersected with Black educational access. For example, some Republican officials would promise schools for Black votes (460), while some Democratic officials accused Republican officials of mismanaging school funds (520, 550).

[485] *Louisiana Affairs, Report of the Condition of the South*, January 29, 1875, 235-237; Mr. Frye explained how the White League "broke up" his sister-in-law's school for freedpeople in Homer, Louisiana, by not paying her in full. In addition to threats to burn the school and their home, Mr. Frye, a Union soldier and Republican, had been threatened with death "too numerous to mention," 236.

an armed White League mob. After three months of teaching, Mr. Muncie was given ten hours to leave the parish, upon penalty of death. When Mr. Muncie went back to his school, whites "who were friendly toward him" urged him "to obey the order of banishment."[486] Attacks, expulsion, and threats coupled with the difficult work of establishing schools and teaching. In June of 1867 in Georgetown, Delaware, a white mob attacked the boarding house of a Black woman and freedpeople's teacher. The state superintendent of education reported that the teacher "received no personal injury," but, he continued, it "caused her to leave the school."[487] As these examples indicate, anyone educating the freedpeople could be targets of white violence, which certainly included actions by white redeemer and paramilitary groups, but also by other whites, not necessarily representing organized vigilante groups. Everyday violence persisted through insults, obstruction, "unfavorable feelings," "petty acts," and "bitter opposition."[488] In fact, the Freedmen's Bureau agents often reported the lack of physical violence as progress. When an "unfinished" building "intended for both a school and a church" was burned in Delaware in 1867, the city superintendent pointed out that "no personal violence has been offered to teachers during the quarter," which indicated that "public sentiment in the district is changing for the

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[486] Article from Monroe, Louisiana, titled, "White League Conditions in Bienville—Colored School Broken Up—Teacher Driven Away—Colored People Robbed of Their Arms—A Reign of Terror," included in the *Louisiana Affairs, Report of the Condition of the South* (January 29, 1875): 789.

[487] Alvord, *Fourth Semi-Annual Report* (July 1, 1867):12.

[488] These terms were frequently used by Freedmen's Bureau agents and state and local superintendents throughout John W. Alvord's ten Semi-Annual Reports, from January 1866-July 1870. John Alvord was the General Superintendent of Education of the Freedmen's Bureau. The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, known as the Freedmen's Bureau, was established in 1865 and headed by General Oliver Otis Howard (First Freedmen's Bureau Act, March 3, 1865). Congress voted to extend the life of the Bureau and its power, which President Andrew Johnson vetoed on the grounds that it violated states' rights. Johnson's veto was overridden by Congress and in July 1866, the second Freedmen's Bureau Act passed and included language regarding the conduct of schools in the South: "the Commissioner of this bureau shall at all times co-operate with private benevolent associations of citizens in aid of freedmen, and with agents and teachers, duly accredited and appointed by them, and shall hire or provide by lease, buildings for purposes of education whenever such associations shall, without cost to the Government, provide suitable teachers and means of instruction; and he shall furnish such protection as may be required for the safe conduct of such schools" (Section 13, Second Freedmen's Bureau Act, July 16, 1866).

better."[489] "Better" in this case was material destruction, indifference, and a lack of corporeal attacks.

Figure 13: Worse than Slavery by Thomas Nast, Harper's Weekly, October 24, 1874. Nast illustrated the intersection of violence, race, and education during Reconstruction.

In addition to the detriment of direct and physical violence, the trauma that persisted was also a form of violence. Colonel Wilson recalled the experience of a white teacher, Joel Brinkley, who taught freedpeople in Louisiana:

> I remember, just now, the case of Mr. Joel Brinkley, who was taken out of his schoolhouse, right before his scholars, in broad day time, and caned half to death by a mob of nearly a hundred of those hyenas. After that they gave him five hours in which to leave the town of Springdale, where he was teaching. After he started off they thought they ought to have killed him, so they started off after him to catch him, and they

[489] John Alvord, *Fifth Semi-Annual Report* (January 1, 1868): 19. The report also stated, "Indifference seems to be the best description now of public feeling, and this we regard as progress," 19.

> followed him for ten days, trying to catch him. He had to hide in the swamps, sleep in the cane-rows and ditches and under Negro cabins to save his life.[490]

Though Mr. Brinkley escaped to New Orleans to continue teaching, Colonel Wilson explained that the violence did not end with his escape.

> Mr. Brinkley, however, was fortunate to have gotten away with his life, notwithstanding the fact that he thereby contracted terrible constitutional troubles, from which he suffered many years. Hundreds of others were killed outright, their churches or school-houses burnt down, and their families driven away. They were equally murdered, however, some instantly, while others, like Mr. Brinkley, died a slower death.[491]

Colonel Wilson's insights demonstrated how violence persisted beyond the direct or physical event or act of violence. Conceptualizing the notion of "dying a slower death" as a form of violence is important to understanding how education became so laden with violence. Black and white teachers who taught Black children (and adults) certainly had to deal with the direct attacks and the trauma of such attacks. For many, like Colonel Wilson and his son, the scars would represent honor for their role in a struggle worth fighting for. This suggested processes of meaning-making whereby people transformed the memory and manifestations of violence into tools of resistance. Doing so aided African American persistence in their educational endeavors, even as their persistence aided in transforming collective memories of suffering and struggle into collective strivings.

Laying the Foundations: Black Education and Black Resistance During the Civil War

Even in the face of threats, murder, and arson, African Americans persisted and resisted white attempts to bar their educational access. Black contributions to their own education by way

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[490] Albert, *House of Bondage*, 136.

[491] Albert, *House of Bondage*, 137.

of activism, organizing, and self-funding demonstrated a "tradition of educational self-help."[492] Despite some support from philanthropists and the Freedman's Bureau, historian James Anderson argued, the education movement post-Civil War "is best understood as an expression of the ex-slaves' beliefs and behaviors."[493] Education was indeed central to African American improvement, autonomy, and self-determination, and, upon emancipation, free and freed Blacks sought to enact their freedom and independence.[494]

Despite limited opportunities for formal education during racialized slavery, African Americans pursued education in practice and in principle. Prior to the Civil War, the efforts of educators built laid foundations for freedmen's schooling.[495] Schools were established in the South by Black teachers and leaders with "sheer courage and moral commitment," strong personal initiative, and readiness.[496] Mary Peake was a Black educator who opened the first Union school at Fort Monroe in Virginia in September 1861, and it was "through her readiness," that "the first Negro school of the slave states to have the legal authority and protection of Union guns was taught by a Negro woman."[497] In addition to Black teachers opening schools, many Blacks sought training as teachers by attending night schools, such as the one opened by Mrs. L. Humphrey in Nashville, Tennessee in the fall of 1862. Recall that Mary D. Price also established a school in 1858 for Black children in New Orleans whites posting death threats on the school's

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[492] James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 12.

[493] Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South,* 6.

[494] Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*; Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*; Foner, *Reconstruction.*

[495] Bullock, *History of Negro Education*; Gutman, "Schools for Freedom"; Span and Anderson, "Quest for Book Learning."

[496] Bullock, *History of Negro Education*, 25.

[497] Ibid, 26.

door. In 1862, when federal rule took over New Orleans, Mrs. Price's school was a local base for the freedmen's educational movement.[498]

In some states, slaves' access to literacy and education occurred sooner than others, such as in Port Royal, South Carolina, where schools were established in 1862, during the Civil War.[499] In addition, some Blacks fleeing slavery learned to read at Union-held contraband (a pre-emancipation term for slaves) camps.[500] Education was an unrelenting desire for African Americans, and as they made their way to Union camps, they advocated for literacy instruction and schools. Such advocacy led John Eaton, Jr., an army chaplain under General Grant, who would later become General Superintendent of Freedmen in Tennessee and Arkansas, to set up grammar schools for Black refugees in 1862 in the Mississippi Valley. By the War's end in 1865, thousands of emancipated African Americans had learned to read.[501]

Heather Andrea Williams drew on narratives of formerly enslaved African Americans to highlight the incredible risks Blacks in the South undertook to learn to read. As Chapter 5 demonstrated, the threats of violence to which Williams referred were codified in laws and manifested in practice. Yet, the African American desire for literacy was so great, they persisted despite facing such violence:

> The freedpeople, not northern whites, initiated the educational movement in the South while the Civil War was being fought…it made perfect sense that someone who had climbed into a hole in the woods to attend school would, in freedom, sacrifice time and

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[498] Ibid, 26.

[499] Willie Lee Rose chronicled the Gideonites, one of the earliest groups of northern aid groups, who came to the Sea Islands in South Carolina in March 1862, in *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1964).

[500] Paul David Phillips, "The Education of Blacks in Tennessee During Reconstruction," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 98-109. Congress passed the first Confiscation Act in 1861 allowing for the "prize and capture" of all property used by the southern rebels. See Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 252.

[501] *Report of the General Superintendent of Freedmen, Department of the Tennessee and State of Arkansas*, John Eaton Jr. (Memphis, TN: 1866); Phillips, "Education of Blacks in Tennessee."

> money to build a schoolhouse. It rang true that people who waited up until ten o'clock at night to sneak off to class on the plantation would want to establish schools in the open as soon as they possibly could.[502]

This persistence served as the foundation of public education in the South. Indeed, "before Northern benevolent societies entered the South in 1862, before President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, and before Congress created the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau) in 1865, slaves and free persons of color had already begun to make plans for the systematic instruction of their illiterates. Early black schools were established and supported largely as a result of the African Americans' own efforts."[503]

Given this context, it should come as no surprise that more than one-third of all teachers in southern Black schools between 1861 and 1876 were African Americans.[504] Comprising twelve percent of the population in 1870, African American teachers from the North were twelve times more likely to teach in the South than northern whites, relative to the white population.[505] In 1865 alone over 400 schools were opened in the South by Black teachers. Though white missionaries and philanthropists had ideas about Black education, which they enacted through their teaching and curriculum, as well as through their donations and resources, Blacks raised money to build schools and pay teachers, spending over a million dollars on education by

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[502] Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 5.

[503] Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*, 4.

[504] Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People.*

[505] Ibid, 19.

1870.[506] Despite this evidence, some historians continue to view the teachers of the freedpeople as white, thus obscuring the history and contributions of African American teachers.[507]

There is no doubt that northern white abolitionists and benevolent societies had a powerful and critical influence on Black schooling in the South; whites provided financial, pedagogical, religious, and charitable support to the freedpeople. Like Northern Black teachers, Northern whites, many of whom were middle-class women and abolitionists, also traveled to southern states to open schools and teach the freedpeople, and for some, the education of African Americans was their life's mission.[508] White abolitionists and missionaries in the North viewed education as a means to help Blacks transition from slavery to freedom, which included filling social and economic roles. They also viewed religious instruction and reading the Bible as critical to salvation, civilization, and moral development. Yet, caution should be taken not to privilege white efforts to the point of obfuscating and diminishing the role of Black Americans. Moreover, white agendas were not free from the social, economic, and cultural contexts of the

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[506] Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*; William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction.* Indeed, in 1865 the *First Semi-Annual Report on the Schools for Freedmen* documented more than 1,500 teachers teaching more than 90,000 scholars. By the *Tenth Semi-Annual Report* in 1870, 9,307 teachers were working with 247,333 students in 4239 schools. Systems of Black education were developing across the South, with the numbers of students, teachers, and students rising each year.

[507] Much education historiography during the Reconstruction era has focused on efforts of the Freedmen's Bureau and Northern aid societies. Northern Aid Societies, or Benevolent societies, were secular and sectarian activists, abolitionists, and philanthropists who traveled south to aid the freedpeople in their transition from slavery to freedom. Efforts to establish education occurred before the war's end, as demonstrated by Willie Lee Rose's, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, and Jacqueline Jones', *Soldiers of Light and Love*: *Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865-1873* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980). These monographs made valuable contributions to education historiography, but they often centered efforts of whites, especially whites from the North.

[508] Caroline F. Putnam, a white teacher who ran a freedmen's school in Lottsburg, Virginia shared how women teachers felt: "Take out my work, and suffering and striving and job with these (colored) people, and I don't count the rest of my life worth having!" November 17, 1868, Carolyn Putnam Papers, 1868-1895, Box 1, Folder 2, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

industrial economy. William Watkins contended that missionary movements aiding the freedpeople's education "envisioned social progress within the emerging industrial order."[509]

Lessons in the Dominant Social Order and Economic Liberalism

These notions of a social order based in proscribed social and economic roles were evident in Freedmen's textbooks, written by "friends of the Negro," a term for whites who supported Black equality, many of whom also worked as agents of the Freedmen's Bureau. Saidiya Hartman described the freedpeople's handbooks as "pedagogical manuals" to instruct the freedpeople on appropriate conduct, morals, and manners. Hartman wrote:

> Through pedagogical manuals, freedmen's schools, and religious instruction, teachers, missionaries, and plantation managers strived to inculcate an acquisitive and self-interested ethic that would motivate the formerly enslaved to be dutiful and productive laborers. The indecorous, proud, and seemingly reckless behavior through which the newly emancipated asserted their freedom was to be corrected with proper doses of humility, responsibility, and restraint.[510]

Indeed, Brevet Major General Clinton Bowen Fisk, the Assistant Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, offered advice to the freedmen through lectures such as, "On Freedom," "On White folks," "On yourself," "On Contracts," "Free Labor," "The Little Folks," "Dishonesty," and "Religion."[511] Fisk advised the freedmen to avoid conflict with white people and their "old, strong prejudices:" "You know how easy it is to hurt a sore toe. Prejudices are like tender toes. Do not step on them when it is possible to avoid it. It can do you no good and may do much harm. It is better to have the good will than the ill will of even a dog. Strive to

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[509] Watkins, *White Architects of Black Education*, 15.

[510] Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 128.

[511] Clinton Bowen Fisk, *Plain Counsels for Freedmen: In Sixteen Brief Lectures* (Boston, MA: American Tract Society, 1866).

deserve the good will of all the white people."[512] While Fisk acknowledged the risk of provoking white ire, a risk for which the freedpeople were all too familiar, Fisk suggested the freedpeople must work to deserve the "good will of all the white people." Embedded in this statement is a notion that respect was not a given for emancipated Blacks. Also, Fisk suggested that those who were entrusted with giving respect were whites, thus, signifying a dominant white social order.

With respect to education, Fisk urged African American parents to teach their children to obey, to work, and to go to school. Fisk wrote,

> You can not well over-estimate the value of education. It is worth more to your child than money. Education makes the mind stronger, gives greater vigor and endurance to the body, and adds to the years of a man's life. Then it opens numerous roads to competence and to wealth. An educated man gets higher wages than an uneducated man, and he can do many more things.[513]

Fisk was a strong proponent of education, but he drew a clear connection between education, obedience, and work. Fisk's assessments aligned with many common school advocates and public education reformers. However, the purpose of education he laid out intersects with race, and with freedpeople's positions relative to whites. For example, in addition to becoming a good laborer, Lydia Maria Child's book, *The Freedmen's Book*, suggested African Americans pursue their life with a spirit of forgiveness toward their former masters.[514] Child was a white abolitionist and "friend of the Negroes," often writing in publications such as the Anti-Slavery

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[512] Fisk, *Plain Counsels for Freedmen*, 13.

[513] Fisk, *Plain Counsels for Freedmen,* 38-39.

[514] Robert C. Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in the South, 1861-1870* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010). Morris suggested the freedmen represented changing Northern white attitudes, which initially favored fighting for rights for African Americans, but became toned down by the 1870s. See William Watkins, *White Architects of Black Education,* who described how the ideology of northern philanthropists was infused into their support for African American education. Similarly, see also Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks*, who argued that social discipline instilled through education paralleled a liberal economic model, and served to bind African Americans to the church and to white values, 54.

Almanac. Such sentiment echoed Fisk's advice not to step on the toes of whites. The logic of the textbooks suggested that as African Americans "improved their financial, educational and moral condition," white racial attitudes would become more favorable toward Blacks. To do so would require effort, including conforming to standards of "intelligence, sobriety, and industry."[515] In this sense, equality for African Americans was not positioned as inalienable, but as something that had to be earned. Moreover, such textbooks were, in part, a means to instruct freedpeople, giving them lessons for surviving in a white world. Indeed, as textbooks whitewashed the freedmen's narratives by emphasizing white Southern paternalism, and removing slavery as a cause for the Civil War, even staunch pro-white South publications like *De Bow's Review* were willing to accept the lessons of these texts.[516] Moreover, there was a parallel between the oral religious instruction during slavery and the freedmen's instruction during Reconstruction. Southern clergy taught enslaved Blacks to obey their masters, even if they were cruel.[517] After emancipation, northern white aid societies embedded Black deference to white conduct into freedmen's lessons as well.

In effect, southern whites were predominantly against the unbiased instruction of Black children. Whites such as Tennessee Governor, William G. Brownlow, supported Black education, which included teaching Black children not to provoke whites.[518] In addition, some

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[515] Robert C. Morris, ed., *Freedmen's Schools and Textbooks*: *An AMS Reprint Series* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1980), 9.

[516] Morris, *Freedmen's Schools and Textbooks*, 11. *De Bow's Review* supported Fisk's *General Counsels for Freedmen* on account that it gave sound advice. See also Willie Lee Rose who distinguished between northern and southern paternalism: "the Northerner thought the freedman needed protection from his late master, and the Southerner thought he needed protection from himself," in *Rehearsal for Reconstruction,* 76.

[517] Robert Ryland, *A Scripture Catechism, for the Instruction of Children and Servants* (Richmond: Harrold & Murray, 1848), 139-140. The 52 lessons were prepared for the "oral instruction of the coloured people of the South."

[518] James Marten, *Children and Youth During the Civil War Era* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 155.

whites saw benefits for education in securing their labor force. Alvord reported changes in some white attitudes toward Black education. In the *Fifth Semi-Annual Report,* published in January 1868, Alvord wrote: "Some change of sentiment had been observed among the better classes of the south those of higher intelligence acknowledging that education must become universal — planters admitting that would secure more contented labor."[519] Teaching African American children morality and acceptable behaviors was important among educational actors, white and Black. Knowledge without morality would not suffice. The morals were generally Protestant and Christian in nature, but there was also the moral code of black-white interactions, which encouraged African Americans to be kind, forgiving, patient, deferent, and obedient to white authority. As Fisk's lessons demonstrated, this code was structured through a racialized hierarchy of white dominance, fortified by white violence.[520]

Addressing the "Baser Sort" through Education: Ignorance and the Race Problem

Black educators during the mid 19th century may have agreed that education and industry were key to racial uplift, but they rejected narratives of Black inferiority and submission. In addition, Blacks in the South and in the North viewed education as a means to economic and social mobility, ultimately improving the welfare of Black communities.[521] Education was not "a

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[519] John Alvord, *Fifth Semi-Annual Report* (January 1, 1868): 7.

[520] Expectations of obeying authority was not new to education. Indeed, the relationship between the teacher (or adult) and student (or child) was often framed as one of a superior and subordinate, with the subordinate providing unquestioning obedience to the superior. Education reformer, Horace Mann disagreed with such dynamics, and especially with using fear and punishments in schools, Horace Mann, "Lecture on Punishment in Schools," *Lectures on Education* (Boston, MA: Ide & Dutton, 1855), 310-345. However, the racialized hierarchy required the Black child not to be subordinate to her teachers, if she was even allowed to learn to read or to attend school, but also to other whites, including white children.

[521] Hugh Davis, *We Will Be Satisfied with Nothing Less: The African American Struggle for Equal Rights in the North during Reconstruction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011). Davis wrote of Northern Black activists during Reconstruction who saw the connection between education and suffrage, both of which were "vital components of a broad-based assault on racial prejudice and discrimination," 73. Having the vote would enable Blacks to put pressure on both white politicians and school officials.

panacea for all the ills of mankind," yet it was a means to a common humanity, to racial uplift, and to address the race problem.[522] Like Alvord, Price offered a solution for the race problem: more education, and not just for Blacks, but also for whites. "To educate one race and neglect the other, is to leave the problem half solved, for there is a class of whites in the South, to some extent, more degraded and hopeless in their mental and moral condition than the negro."[523] These "ignorant, lawless and vicious whites of the South," Price argued, "need education worse than many of the blacks."[524] Price named ignorance as a problem, while explicitly pointing to white ignorance.

Explanations for white violence and hostility toward Blacks and Black education often pointed to white ignorance and prejudice. Only one year after the end of the Civil War, reports from the Freedmen's Bureau pointed to the persistence of white supremacy:

> We cannot conceal the fact that multitudes, usually of the lower and baser classes, still bitterly oppose our schools. They will not consent that the negro shall be elevated. He must, as they conceive, always remain of a caste in all essential respects beneath themselves. They have been taught to believe this, and belief now is strengthened by both prejudice and passion. Nothing, therefore, but military force for some time to come, ever on the alert and instantly available, will prevent the frequent outbreak of every form of violence.[525]

This "baser class" of poor, uneducated whites were framed as a predominant obstacle to Black education and uplift. In January 1868, less than two years later, southern white sentiment against Black education remained hostile:

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[522] Joseph C. Price, speech to the National Educational Association, 1890, 739. The "race problem" comprised the relations between Blacks and whites, particularly in the South, but also across the US.

[523] Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998), 741.

[524] Joseph Price, in Foner and Branham, *Lift Every Voice,* 741.

[525] John Alvord, *Second Semi-Annual Report* (July 1, 1866): 2.

> Still multitudes bitterly opposed the schools. The baser sort had become more brutal than at first; they would not consent to the negro's elevation. He must, in their opinion, remain in every essential respect inferior to themselves. Teachers were proscribed and ill-treated, school-houses burned, and threats so strong that many schools could not be opened; and others, after a brief struggle, had to be closed. Southern men who felt that such outrages were inhuman, thought it not expedient, or had not the moral courage openly to defend the schools, and our correspondence continued to show that only military force for some time to come could prevent the frequent outbreak of every form of violence.[526]

Alvord highlighted both how whites enacted direct violence against Black education, as well as the violence of complicity by whites who lacked "moral courage to defend the schools." However, Alvord does not explicitly refer to complicit whites as the "baser sort." Alvord then continued to stress the resilience of Black and white teachers who persisted in teaching the freedpeople: "It is a marvel how the schools went on. The tenacity and high-souled courage of teachers were admirable. It was more than heroism. There seemed a divine inspiration over the whole work."[527] In this case, Alvord commended teachers for their work despite white violence and hostility.

Yet, the work to combat ignorance through education was complicated as it intersected issues both of violence and race. For instance, a common explanation for violence was ignorance. Indeed, ignorance was to blame for most social ills. It was the ignorant who committed crime, the ignorant who were indolent, superstitious, and improvident. The cure for ignorance generally boiled down to education. Alvord reported that whites in Tennessee, many of whom were uneducated, had prejudice against African Americans that manifested in sentiment as well as in laws (such as denying Blacks to sit on juries). His solution, however, was not to address white ignorance, but rather, the ignorance of Blacks: "Well planned agencies for

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[526] John Alvord, *Fifth Semi-Annual Report* (January 1, 1868): 8.

[527] Ibid, 8.

education in its widest sense must be furnished. The freedmen must be led out of the wilderness of ignorance, if it takes 40 years. We are under peculiar obligations to these people, which, if not discharged, retribution will come to us through their poverty and crime, and, perhaps, in the end, the popular violence which must be the result."[528] For Alvord and the Freedmen's Bureau, education would prevent Black crime and Black violence against white people. In this sense, the ignorant *Blacks* would lead insurrections and commit violence *against whites*.

Ignorance had moral implications as well. Those who argued that ignorance of Christianity resulted in crime, vice, and violence, offered education and literacy as a remedy. As the *Harper's Weekly* editorial staff claimed in 1866, Christian values would save America: "The superstitions, the vices, the unthriftiness, the loitering and indolent habits which slavery foisted on the whites and blacks alike, who were cursed by its presence in their midst, must be dispelled and supplanted by all the traits and virtues of a truly Christian civilization."[529] And how were the traits and virtues of Christianity to be taught? By the study of the Bible, which required an ability to read.

It was not just Black ignorance that presented problems for society, but white ignorance as well. In the *Fifth Semi-Annual Report on the Schools for Freedmen*, published in January 1868, General Superintendent John Alvord wrote: "Some change of sentiment had been observed among the better classes of the south those of higher intelligence acknowledging that education must become universal—planters admitting that would secure more contented labor."[530] Some

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[528] John Alvord, *Fifth Semi-Annual Report* (January 1, 1868): 42.

[529] "Education of the Freedmen," *Harper's Weekly* (February 10, 1866).

[530] John Alvord, *Fifth Semi-Annual Report* (January 1, 1868): 7.

African Americans forced this issue by negotiating lessons as part of their labor contracts, such as William H. Heard of rural Georgia.[531] In Alvord's assessment, however, the "better classes" of white southerners had "higher intelligence" and thus, were able to rationalize the need for Black education. In this vein, reducing ignorance among whites would continue to change white southern sentiment about Blacks and Black education. Yet, Alvord's reflections did not hold expectations of changing white supremacist ideology; rather, he connected Black education to securing "more contented labor." The intelligent white would see the advantage of Black education to his own interests, and thus support Black educational efforts, if only through sentiment. In this sense, violence was exceptionalized; that is, violence would be enacted in part due to ignorance. However, this conceptualization obscures structural discrimination and white supremacy as intersecting and co-constitutive forms of violence.

For some, addressing the race problem meant deciphering white opposition to Black education. Atticus Haygood, a white Southern Methodist Bishop, laid out four main white objections to Black education: 1) Ignorant men who oppose education, 2) stingy whites who would refuse to pay for education of Blacks or whites, 3) prejudiced whites who were against Blacks because they were Black, and 4) apprehensive whites who are fearful that education would "spoil him as a laborer" or fearful of social equality.[532] In Haywood's view, whites fell into two extremes: "One is in mortal terror lest the Negro should become somebody; the other is morbidly anxious that he should assert claims to what he is in no wise fitted for."[533] The theme

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[531] Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 55. Litwack wrote "from the earliest days of emancipation, many Blacks sought to condition their future employment on the availability of a schoolhouse and a teacher, insisting that the details be written into the labor contract."

[532] Atticus G. Haygood, *Pleas for Progress* (Nashville, TN: Publishing House of the M. E. Church, South, 1889). Haygood was a white Southern Methodist Bishop and president of Emory University.

[533] Haygood, *Pleas for Progress,* 17.

of *fitness* reinforces Haygood's perspectives of southern white viewpoints. Despite African American freedom and citizenship, many southern whites thought Blacks were only fit for labor. But it was not just the economic role Blacks played that drove white apprehension, but also Black social and cultural roles relative to whites. In a social system defined by white supremacy, Blacks could only be fit for that which served a white supremacist ideology. In this sense, then, whites expected Blacks not only to be workers, but also to be subservient to whites. Further, issues of impertinence and insolence were constructed through this white racial frame.[534] What constituted such offenses were wide-ranging, but Black intelligence was framed as an offense to southern white sentiments.[535] As Du Bois noted, "the Negroes were disliked and feared almost in exact proportion to their manifestation of intelligence and capacity."[536] Further white fears of Blacks "becoming somebody" or being what they were not "fitted for," was congruent with a social and economic system that was constructed through a white supremacist ideology. Moreover, while constructing a racialized economic role of laborer, whites were simultaneously constructing what Blacks could not be, i.e., owner, planter, or master. Should African Americans have education, white southerners feared, it would also lead to black assertions of superiority and dominance over whites. White supremacy ideology relied on racial subjugation, for without an inferior race, how could there be a superior one?

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[534] Joe Feagin, *The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-Framing* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

[535] Saidiya Hartman argued in *Scenes of Subjection* that when the social order of "black subordination and white dominance" was disrupted and challenged, charges of "improper conduct" or "behavior out of line with one's status" legitimated "extralegal forms of white violence," 148. Eric Foner in *Reconstruction*: *America's unfinished revolution, 1863-1877* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1988) documented reasons whites would murder blacks from Texas Freedmen's Bureau records, such as giving sass, not removing a hat, and just to see a Black man dead.

[536] Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 576.

In January 1869, Alvord continued to report progress, but he could not deny the reality of continued white outrage and resistance to Black education: "In several localities the same causes which retarded our operations last year have continued. Bitter opposition and frequent violence were manifested quite up to the late presidential election. For a time it became doubtful whether schools in such localities could go on at all. Subsequently, however, to that election, asperity and bitterness, as appears from the reports, gradually subsided; open violence mainly ceased, and now, with very few exceptions, organized opposition no longer exists. Still, old prejudices remain; equality of rights is, more or less, resisted, and the education of the freedmen throughout most of the southern States receives as yet too little practical encouragement."[537] Such assessments of white supremacy and white violence provided insights into white minds. The Reverend Benjamin H. Lee, an African American and president of Wilberforce University, went further, however, to critique structural violence and white supremacy, while also uplifting the power of the Black mind:

> I think they are compelled to admit that the Negro has a mind, for if they did not believe that he has, their act of holding him accountable to laws, which have been enacted for the government of men, would be very absurd. And again, if he does not posses the same moral powers; that characterize the mind of the white man, I would like for the white preacher and layman to tell me why they have always said that he did, and tell me what power of mind does the Negro lack to constitute him a man. They admit that he lacks none, but they say that his mind is inferior to a white man's, for it is not capable of the same degree of development. If white men had been treating the black man as their equals ever since they have been in this country; had given them access to their schools, colleges and all positions of honor, trust and profit, and after two hundred years trial they had found the Negro was not the white man's peer in intelligence and wealth, they would have cause to conclude that the Negro is inferior to the white man.[538]

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[537] John Alvord, *Seventh Semi-Annual Report* (January 1, 1869): 4.

[538] Benjamin. H. Lee, "Prejudice Against Color," *The Christian Recorder*, (Philadelphia, PA: November 7, 1878).

Reverend Lee reframed white fears of Black inferiority by pointing out that Black intelligence was indeed powerful, as evidenced by the persistent and multifaceted attempts to control Black minds. Moreover, African Americans had to contend with structural violence that barred Black access to schools and economic and social opportunities.

Hope, Optimism, and Black Self-Reliance in Education

As both the Bureau agents and freedpeople were aware, African Americans would be their own agents of change. Despite the multiple domains of violence African Americans continued to endure, federal intervention would cease, regardless of the need or impacts. Writing about Missouri, Alvord wrote that "ultimately the colored race must depend for permanent schools on themselves, and that competent teachers of their own color are imperatively required, I have felt that this institution ought to receive every encouragement that could be rendered it."[539] Alvord knew that Union troops played an important role in stopping violence against Freedmen's schools, teachers, and students, and though he may not have known for certain when Congress would remove its funding and recall federal troops, there was a recognition that the Southern states would again have control, and that African Americans would have to work within the state apparatuses. Yet, the African American experience was that of self-reliance even before the Freedmen's Bureau and Federal troops pulled out of southern states.

With the destruction of the South post-Civil War, southern states were not in a position to establish and pay for universal schooling, and without antebellum state-supported education systems, there was no cadre of teachers.[540] In Louisiana, for example, about 95 schools were in

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[539] John Alvord, *Fourth Semi-Annual Report* (July 1, 1867): 62.

[540] James D. Anderson," Ex-Slaves and the Rise of Universal Education in the New South, 1860-1880," *Education and the Rise of the New South*, ed. R. K. Goodenow and A. O White (Boston, MA: G.K. Hall, 1981).

operation in the New Orleans area by the end of 1864, which was taken over by the Freedmen's Bureau in 1865. Citing financial troubles, all Black schools under the Bureau's control were closed. The Black community immediately offered to pay for the schools by taxing themselves. Pledging their support, African Americans across the state exercised their civic rights and sent petitions calling for universal schooling.[541] This is not to say that Union troops did not deter white violence, but rather to point out that within structures of inequality, African Americans cultivated self-reliance prior to the Civil War, and with emancipation, continued to seek social and economic opportunities with or without federal or state support.

Such self-reliance was evident in a cartoon entitled "An Old Scholar," (Figure 14) published in *Harper's Weekly* on May 21, 1870. In the illustration, a 71-year old Black woman pursued her education in Virginia, paying ten cents a day. The woman's willingness to learn to read and write no matter her age highlighted how important education was to African Americans.

[541] Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South*.

Figure 14: An Old Scholar, Harper's Weekly, May 21, 1870.

In this cartoon, the author depicted her "kept in" during recess for missing a lesson. The author commented on her age, writing, "The idea! An old negro seventy-odd years of age kept in in play time." The underlying tragedy, however, was not her age, but rather that millions of enslaved Blacks were "kept inside," and unable to access education. Moreover, the woman's age was not a detriment, but a symbol of strength, as she was able to fulfill her desire for literacy and book learning. The lengths that African Americans would go for their education was palpable in public

sentiment during Reconstruction. Teachers especially described the willingness and desire of freedpeople to learn and the efforts they put forth.[542] Francis Ellen Watkins Harper, a poet, author, and teacher encapsulated Black enthusiasm and perseverance in her poem, "Learning to Read," which featured Aunt Chloe and her quest for book learning.

Very soon the Yankee teachers
Came down and set up school;
But, oh how the Rebs did hate it,--
It was again' their rule.

Our masters always tried to hide
Book learning from our eyes;
Knowledge did'nt agree with slavery--
'Twould make us all too wise.

But some of us would try to steal
A little from the book,
And put the words together,
And learn by hook or crook.

I remember Uncle Caldwell,
Who took pot liquor fat
And greased the pages of his book,
And hid it in his hat.

And had his master ever seen
The leaves upon his head,
He'd have thought them greasy papers,
But nothing to be read.

And there was Mr. Turner's Ben,
Who heard the children spell,
And picked the words right up by heart,
And learned to read 'em well.

Well, the Northern folks kept sending
The Yankee teachers down;
And they stood right up and helped us,

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[542] Throughout Freedmen's Records, freedpeople's teachers reported on the intelligence, perseverance, and engagement of the scholars. For example, see the subsections, "Extracts from Letters from Teachers" *The Freedmen's Record* 1, nos. 1-12 (Boston, MA: January-December, 1865).

Though Rebs did sneer and frown.

And, I longed to read my Bible,
For precious words it sad;
But when I begun to learn it,
Folks just shook their heads,

And said there is no use trying,
Oh! Chloe, you're too late;
But as I was rising sixty,
I had no time to wait.

So I got a pair of glasses,
And straight to work I went,
And never stopped till I could read
The hymns and Testament.

Then I got a little cabin
A place to call my own--
And I felt as independent
As the queen upon her throne.[543]

Donning her glasses, Aunt Chloe, like the woman from Virginia, pursued her longing to read the Bible, refusing to let anything obstruct her path any longer. Harper's poem acknowledged the feats of book learning that Blacks took upon themselves. Harper situated Black educational pursuits in the larger context of white Southern opposition, "how the rebs did hate it," and "though Rebs did sneer and frown," and of Yankee teachers and schools, "the Northern folks kept sending the Yankee teachers down." But perhaps more importantly, Harper positioned Black learners as the agents of their own education. This distinction was critical, especially given the persistence of white narratives of Black inferiority, in the North and in the South. Education

[543] Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, *Sketches of Southern Life* (Philadelphia: Ferguson Bros. & Co., Printers, 1891), 18-19. Harper was born to free Black parents in Baltimore, Maryland. She was a lecturer, abolitionist, poet, and teacher. Francis Smith Foster (Ed.) *A Brighter Coming Day: A Frances Ellen Watkins Harper reader* (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1990); Shirley J. Yee, *Black Women Abolitionists: A Study in Activism*, 1828-1860 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).

was freedom during slavery, and despite the violence of the Reconstruction era to prevent Black elevation and uplift, education continued to represent freedom and independence.

Education and Black Racial Uplift

Literacy and education accompanied racial uplift and a sense of pride throughout slavery and Reconstruction. African Americans continued to resist oppression through a strong moral character and work ethic, as well as a zeal and aptitude for learning that whites generally disregarded or actively and violently sought to curb. As the poet, abolitionist, and orator, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, wrote "with this brain power in our heads, with this muscle power in our hands, with the fetters stricken from the limbs of the black man, and the ballot put into his right hand, what is to hinder us as a people from advancing and taking our place among the powers of the western world."[544] Harper's comments about Black intellectual capacity situated the power within the Black child, rather than within the teacher or school. Her oration, published in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard,* pointed to the natural intelligence of African Americans. Though she did not diminish the power or importance of formal education and schooling, she focused on Black capability, which centered African Americans as the primary agents in the work of learning. For example, to those who would call the freedpeople ignorant and unfit to vote, Frances Ellen Harper recalled Southern African Americans' responses: "we are not so ignorant as to vote for a rebel."[545] This statement demonstrated to her generally white Republican audience that Black intelligence and good decision making was a reality. For Harper, not only were the freed Blacks advancing their own learning through public schools, but they

[544] Frances Ellen Harper, "Address of Frances Ellen Harper," *National Anti-Slavery Standard* 30, no. 3 (May 22, 1869). Harper spoke at the thirty-sixth anniversary of the American-Anti-Slavery Society meeting.

[545] Harper, "Address of Frances Ellen Harper," 2.

were not so ignorant as often described through American discourse. African Americans recognized their capabilities, even if whites and other Blacks did not: "I remember a woman said to me one day in South Carolina, 'I am better off than my mistress, because I can work, and she cannot.' That woman recognized her strength." African Americans had the ability to translate their knowledge into the productive work of citizens and laborers.

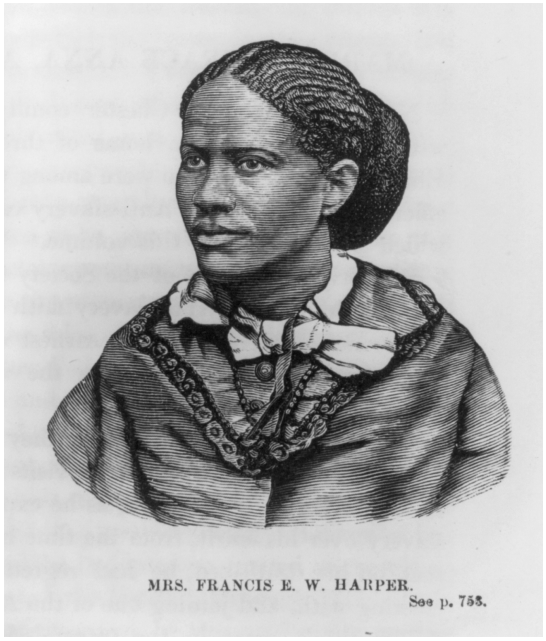

Figure 15: Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, 1872, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. In addition to her teachings and writings, Harper's work included activism for abolition, Black rights, women's suffrage, and anti-lynching laws. Harper was a nationally recognized figure during her lifetime and remains "one of the most important women in US history."[546]

Further, because of the uniquely situated social and historical situation of African Americans, the Black perspective mattered in ways that impacted education. For Black children to have Black teachers and professors was critical in the development of Black youth. As Edward

[546] Francis Smith Foster, ed., *A Brighter Coming Day: A Frances Ellen Watkins Harper reader* (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1990), 4. Black women's labor was critical in education and racial uplift, but it also took its toll. Though Harper tirelessly lectured, wrote, taught, and advocated, the issues of slavery and persistent violence against African Americans were on her mind. Reverend William Watkins, her uncle, was forced to close his school in 1850. In 1853 Maryland passed a law prohibiting free Blacks from the state, with enslavement as the punishment,10. Harper, who was in Ohio at the time, had dedicated herself to the cause of abolition. Still barred from Baltimore, Harper moved to Philadelphia, where she was a proponent of "Free Produce" or boycotts on products of slave labor. Watkins stood up in the face of white hostility, but knew that she was not safe as a free Black woman in the North. Watkins expressed feeling tired and wanting to be "among my own kindred and people," but, she reflected, "slavery comes up like a dark shadow between me and the home of my childhood," 17.

Lavoisier Blackshear, an African American teacher and administrator who taught at public and normal schools across Texas, wrote,

> The Negro public school teacher has been more than a mere school-keeper. No class of educators in any race has done more, all things considered. The colored teacher has been a herald of civilization to the youth of his people. His superior culture and character have acted as a powerful stimulus to the easily roused imagination of the colored youth, and the black boy feels, in the presence of the black 'professah,' to him the embodiment of learning, that he too can become 'something.'[547]

Blackshear highlighted the importance of students learning from someone who was like them. Alice Dunbar Nelson, a poet and journalist, agreed with Blackshear, pointing out that whites and Blacks teach Black children differently:

> How many young students of history in the white-taught schools remember being drilled to revere the glorious memory of Lincoln and Sumner and Garrison and Wendell Phillips, and how few remember being drilled to remember Crispus Attucks and the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth Massachusetts? How many students of literature are taught of the first woman writer in America to earn distinction, Margaret Hutchinson, but how few are reminded of her contemporary, Phyllis Wheatley?
>
> It is unreasonable, of course, to expect any Caucasian to remember these things, or if remembering them, to be able to point them out with the same amount of pride and persistence that a Negro in the same position would. And therein lies the secret of the foundation of a family, a government, a nation—pride. Pride in what has been done, in what may be done, in the ability to reach the very highest point that may be reached. With that quality instilled in the young from the very first, the foundation for individual achievement is firmly laid; and what more can we ask of any education?[548]

Nelson's comments outlined the principles of education as those which develop within children a sense of pride in their history and a sense of capability and potential for children to achieve. But

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[547] E. L. Blackshear, "What is the Negro Teacher Doing in the Matter of Uplifting His Race?" In *Twentieth Century Negro Literature or a Cyclopedia of Thought on the Vital Topics Relating to the American Negro* ed. Daniel Wallace Culp (Naperville, IL: J. L. Nichols & Co., 1902), 337.

[548] Alice Dunbar Nelson, "Is it Time for the Negro Colleges in the South to Be Put into the Hands of Negro Teachers?" In *Twentieth Century Negro Literature,* ed. Daniel Wallace Culp, 140.

to see pride in their history would require African American children to learn about African American historical figures, knowledge about which Nelson did not expect white teachers to have.

> Alice Dunbar Nelson went further, calling out the white standard as problematic:
>
> For so long have the whites been held up to the young people as the only ones whom it is worth while taking as models; for so long have the ignorant of the race been taught that their best efforts after all, are hardly worth while, that wherever possible, it behooves us to place over the masses those of their own race who have themselves attained to that dignity to which the education of the schools tend.[549]

Nelson was critiquing those who did not think Black educators were as suited to teach Black children as white educators. Certainly, white teachers had access to educational opportunities that were denied to Blacks, both enslaved and free. But it was not only access to educational opportunities Nelson was pointing out, but also how white institutions (e.g., public and normal schools) and white teachers were framed as superior to Blacks. Educated Blacks did argue for higher standards of Black teachers during Reconstruction, and so too did some Blacks of the rural south. Former Louisiana slave, John Goodwin, argued for well trained teachers to teach the freedpeople, pointing out "the blind cannot lead the blind."[550] Yet, this debate was one rooted in slavery; with Black literacy viewed as threatening to southern whites, learning to read and write was a clandestine enterprise. Despite the secrecy, it was common for African Americans in the South who had some literacy to share it with others who did not. In such a scenario, a slave who knew one letter more than another slave could lead to a teaching moment. By the end of Reconstruction, with the roots of the dual system of education firmly planted, Black education

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[549] Nelson, *Twentieth Century Negro Literature*, 139.

[550] Quoted in Albert, *House of Bondage*, 57.

embodied both a call for excellence and a recognition that it would continue to require collective efforts of the Black community.

Nelson's observations also illuminated the intersection of historical memory and education in that 1) the stories of a nation were taught through schooling, and 2) the stories were selected to develop a sense of pride in the nation.[551] As the freedmen's textbooks demonstrated (see chapter 2), educational materials had agendas, both explicit and latent, to share the moral and social codes. They also carried within the stories of the nation, with heroes such as Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln taking center stage as the representatives of American life and culture. Yet, African American heroes were largely absent from these materials. There were stories that featured Black characters, but the characters tended to embody a trope of Blackness with the intent of instructing Black children (and freed adults) in the social and moral norms.

Black Racial Uplift and Resistance to White Narratives of Inferiority

Black teachers had what Thomas Washington Talley called a "double stimulus" to be the best teachers they could. Writing at the turn of the 20th century, Talley wrote:

> There is little or no recognition of individual merit except in so far as it meets the approval of his Southern white neighbor. Such being the case, the Negro teacher, realizing that their own elevation comes only through and in so far as the whole race is elevated, have a double stimulus for zealously doing their best work; first their love for the race which naturally springs up between those of the same blood and of the same descent, and second a selfish reason—their personal elevation, which only comes through the elevation of the whole race.[552]

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[551] Joseph Moreau made a similar argument in *School Book Nation: Conflicts over American History Textbooks from the Civil War to the Present* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 52-91. The battle over a national memory as represented through American history textbooks was waged across familiar regional and political lines, with abolitionists and former confederates on divergent sides. In Southern textbooks, especially, Black soldiers and Black leaders were erased from the narratives. See also the role of historians in nation-building in Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob*, Telling the Truth about History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994), 91-125.

[552] T. W. Talley, "What is the Negro Teacher Doing in the Matter of Uplifting His Race?" In *Twentieth Century Negro Literature* ed. Daniel Wallace Culp (Naperville, IL: J. L. Nichols & Co., 1902), 339.

As education was key to freedom, education was also key to racial uplift. As Mary B. Talbert, a black educator from Oberlin, Ohio reflected,

> When we consider the fact that the Negro was of such import that laws were made making it a misdemeanor to educate the Negro, both before and after the Civil War; when we consider the Greek text books of Professor Scarborough of Wilberforce used by one of the oldest Colleges in America; when we consider the Presidents and Principals of various Negro schools in our country, such as Livingston, N. C.; Spellman Seminary, Atlanta, Ga.; Wilberforce, Ohio; Virginia Normal and Collegiate; Shaw University; when we consider the place that our honored clergy occupy among the intellectual men of the world; when we consider the work of Booker T. Washington, we must admit that the love of knowledge seems to be intuitive. No people ever learned more in so short a time.[553]

Talbert's assessment of racial uplift also located intelligence and a love of learning within African Americans. Her assessment was in stark contrast with the barrage of white sentiment about the ignorance and intellectual inferiority of blacks. At times, Talbert's comments were also at odds with what some Blacks thought of some within their race, at least as they expressed to the white interviewers of the Federal Works Project interviews. For example, Alec Pope, who was formerly enslaved in Georgia, told his interviewer that a display of sass to a white man could get a Black man shot. For Pope, it was important for blacks to know their place among whites, and if a Black man did get shot for sass, "it would serve him right."[554] Similarly, William McWhorter admitted that some Blacks deserved white punishments. McWhorter recalled how the nightriders, violent white vigilante groups such as the KKK, attacked freepeople's displays of autonomy:

> Schools was sot up for slaves not long atter dey was sot free, and a few of de old Marsters give deir Niggers a little land, but not many of 'em done dat. Jus' as de Niggers was

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[553] Mary B. Talbert, "Did the American Negro Make, in the Nineteenth Century, Achievements Along the Lines of Wealth, Morality, Education, Etc., Commensurate with His Opportunities? If So, What Achievements Did He Make?" In *Twentieth Century Negro Literature,* 19.

[554] Alec Pope, in *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States from Interviews with Former Slaves*, The Federal Writers Project, Volume IV, Georgia Narratives, Part 3 (Washington DC: 1941), 176.

> branchin' out and startin' to live lak free folks, dem nightriders come 'long beatin', cuttin', and slashin' 'em up, but I 'spects some of dem Niggers needed evvy lick dey got.[555]

Statements that some Blacks had punishments coming their way is a theme found throughout WPA interviews. And while such comments may seem to be in stark contrast with the sentiment of Black pride such that Mary B. Talbert and Frances Ellen Harper championed, there are several explanatory paths to consider. First, for Alec Pope and William McWhorter, ignorance did not lay in their illiteracy, but in ignoring the potential for violence in interactions with whites. In the violent, racialized hierarchy of slavery, survival required multiple tactics, including an awareness of how to behave as a Black person in front of a white person. In this line of reasoning, Pope and McWhorter were embodying the very intelligence these women spoke of: their awareness of white violence against Blacks was such that they adapted their behaviors and expected other Blacks to do so as well.

Second, these men were aware of the structures of violence that accompanied a master-slave relationship. As McWhorter told his interviewer,

> Marse Joe McWhorter and his wife, Miss Emily Key, owed us, and dey was jus' as good to us as dey could be. Mistess, you knows white folks had to make slaves what b'longed to 'em mind and behave deyselfs in dem days or else dere woulda been a heap of trouble.[556]

McWhorter recognized the chattel system that denied his freedom of mind and body. Resistance to oppression was expressed in many ways, accompanied by an awareness of the violent system of racialized slavery as well as the various tools to navigate it. One of those tools for slaves was

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[555] William McWhorter in *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States from Interviews with Former Slaves*, The Federal Writers Project, Volume IV, Georgia Narratives, Part 3 (Washington DC: 1941), 102.

[556] Ibid, 95.

to show deference to whites, and to admonish other slaves who did not.[557] These lessons of slavery persisted in freedmen's lessons.

Evidence for hope for freedom, often coupled with a faith in God, and connected to education, can be found throughout the historical record, in the narratives of former slaves, in the speeches of abolitionists, and in the reports of teachers. During Reconstruction, when white violence and terror against African Americans reigned with a fury in the south, hope was still evident. Charlotte Brooks, a freedwoman from Louisiana, referred to "the good times" during Reconstruction, on account of children being able to attend schools. Despite lamenting the economic conditions that still required children to work on plantations and farms, and thus cut their schooling short, her comments demonstrate a degree of optimism: "So few of the children can go to school about here. We have school six months in this town, and you can see the children coming for a little while, and then they have to leave to go to work in the cane-field. All are poor, and they have to work to get something to eat. The children learn to read a little, and after that they leave school. I know a few go off to New Orleans sometimes to school, but only two or three. O, I wish the good times had come when I was young!"[558]

Yet, there was a tension between the hopeful optimism that propelled people to survive and even thrive and the reality of the violence that continued from slavery to Reconstruction. Charlotte Brooks recognized that while a few children were able to continue their education in New Orleans, most children could not. Being illiterate herself, she noted that children gained

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[557] Both deference and dissimulation were tools of resistance and survival. See James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: CT, Yale University Press, 1990). In addition, both Pope and McWhorter's interviewers were white women, which may have impacted how they framed their stories. Many WPA interviewees positioned their former masters as mostly kind, and diminished the everyday violence.

[558] Albert, *House of Bondage*, 48.

some literacy, which was more than she could have done during slavery. Further, she rejoiced in "the good times," but also bemoaned her own lack of educational opportunity.

Colonel Douglass Wilson also saw a bright future for African Americans: "If our people did so well when only a few years removed from the house of bondage, wherein they were not permitted to learn to read and write under penalty of death or something next to it, what may we not expect of them with the advances they have since made and are making."[559] Wilson continued:

> No people similarly situated have ever made the progress in every department of life that our people have made, since the world began. Why, just think of it! Twenty-seven years ago we did not own a foot of land, not a cottage in this wilderness, not a house, not a church, not a school-house, not even a name.
>
> We had no marriage-tie, not a legal family — nothing but the public highways, closely guarded by black laws and vagrancy laws, upon which to stand. But to-day we have two millions of our children in school, we have about eighteen thousand colored professors and teachers, twenty thousand young men and women in schools of higher grade, two hundred newspapers, over two million members in the Methodist and Baptist Churches alone, and we own over three hundred million dollars' worth of property in this Southern country. Over a million and a half of our people can now read and write. We are crowding the bar, the pulpit, and all the trades, and every avenue of civilized life, and doing credit to the age in which we live.[560]

Colonel Wilson's emphasis on what Blacks had accomplished was optimistic and hopeful. Wilson, with his scars of honor, knew violence. But, he also knew power, which was expressed through Black educational achievements. Lena Mason echoed Wilson's sentiment through her

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[559] Albert, *House of Bondage,* 143.

[560] Ibid, 144-145.

poem, “The Negro and Education,” that knowledge, indeed, unfit a slave. “Pressing on and upward,” Mason wrote, “we shall never more be slaves.”[561]

When the Negro gained his freedom
Of body and of soul,
He caught the wheels of progress,
Gave them another roll.

He was held near three long centuries
In slavery's dismal cave,
But now he is educated
And unfitted for a slave.

He's able to fill any place
On this terrestrial ball,
All the way from country teacher
To the legislative hall.

He has proved himself a hero,
A soldier true and brave,
And now he's educated
And unfit to be a slave.

We have lawyers and we've doctors,
Teachers and preachers brave,
And a host of noble women,
Who have safely crossed the wave.

We are pressing on and upward,
And for education crave,
For it's written now in history,
We shall never more be slaves.[562]

[561] Lena Mason, “The Negro and Education,” in *Twentieth Century Negro Literature* ed. Daniel Wallace Culp (1902), 445-446.

[562] Mason, 445-446. See Appendix D for the poem in its entirety.

Chapter 7 Nuancing the Narrative of Mass Public Education

An intersectional analysis of racism and violence is critical to understanding the development of mass public education in the US. As I conclude my critical historical inquiry, I want to return to my conceptual framework, which drew on three theoretical lenses, Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Violence/Peace and Conflict Studies. Critical Theory informed the questions I asked, as well as the analysis of the power dynamics in which historical actors and events were situated, and the dialectical nature of struggles for education within systems of oppression. Critical Race Theory pushed me to position racism as central to my analysis. Peace and Conflict Studies helped me nuance direct violence, giving shape and visibility to how structural and cultural violence intersected and informed acts of violence. Further, my critical violence framework positioned violence within the intersecting domains of direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence. A critical violence framework helped me see not only that violence was essential in the foundations of education, but also how violence shifted, reproduced, and adapted. For enslaved Blacks who described being schooled in submission, violence was educative. For free Blacks who sought access to public education, structural violence that denied their legal status as citizens helped whites legitimize their exclusion from public schools. The ideology of white supremacy that fed fears of miscegenation was cultural violence that retained a sense of permanence as it flowed through time.[563]

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[563] Johan Galtung wrote, "direct violence is an event; structural violence a process with its up and downs, and cultural violence a 'permanent', remaining essentially the same for long periods given the slow transformations of basic culture," in *Johan Galtung Pioneer of Peace Research,* Johan Galtung and Dietrich Fischer, eds. (Heidelberg, Germany: Springer, 2013), 46.

The *Whiteness as Property* Principle in Mass Public Education

Throughout this dissertation, I engaged with the concept of *whiteness a property*, a tenet in Critical Race Theory central to my analysis. Cheryl Harris defined *whiteness as property* as a socially defined group identity that "assumes the form of the exclusive right to determine the rules."[564] In the paragraphs that follow, I take a deeper dive into the concept of *whiteness as property*, and then demonstrate how *whiteness as property* intersects multiple dimensions of violence. Following this, I will apply the frame to the foundations of mass public education as explored in my study.

Harris explained how the American legal system during the middle nineteenth century defined race as a biological category, distinguished specifically by how much Black blood one had. "Racial identity was governed by blood," Harris explained, and court cases consistently demonstrated that "white was preferred."[565] Harris, whose legal analysis is foundational to Critical Race Theory, explained the impact of these assumptions:

> This legal assumption of race as blood-borne was predicated on the pseudo-sciences of eugenics and craniology that saw their major development during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The legal definition of race was the 'objective' test propounded by racist theorists of the day who described race to be immutable, scientific, biologically determined—an unsullied fact of the blood rather than a volatile and violently imposed regime of racial hierarchy.[566]

Construing social differences as natural or a "fact of the blood" obscured the "regime of racial hierarchy," which imbued whites of European ancestry as having the right to possess Native land and control Black labor. Beliefs in such biological distinctions were rampant in the nineteenth

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[564] Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (June 1993): 1766.

[565] Harris, "Whiteness as Property," 1739.

[566] Ibid, 1739.

century, permeating social relations and social institutions. These distinctions are examples of cultural violence. Cultural violence includes domains of culture that serve to animate and legitimate structural and direct violence.[567] In this case, pseudo-scientific theories that recognized "race" as biological, immutable, and a fact of nature justified social differences and legitimated acts to maintain these differences. Further, Harris' work highlighted how the dimensions of violence—cultural, structural, and direct—work in tandem. Racialized ideologies, which whites developed through the system of racialized slavery, constructed categories of race to justify the subjugation of one group by another.[568] Ideology, which is constructed through language and discourse, was a means for people make sense of the world around them, which included their "collective being," such as family, nation, or race.[569] In other words, ideology informed social identities. Pseudo-scientific theories provided language to differences people could perceive, such as skin color. Moreover, notions of collective being, for the *self*, and for the *other*, had embedded value. Whites exalted their *whiteness* by disparaging *blackness*. This harkens back to Toni Morrison's dyad of *not free, not me*, whereby whites constructed their identity as whites and as free in opposition to enslaved Blacks.[570] Though framed in opposition, however, they were not opposites as whiteness incorporated dominance over blackness.[571] Such is cultural violence, as ideology, language, discourse, and science (which is another way of

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[567] Johan Galtung, "Cultural Violence," in *The Journal of Peace Research* 20, no. 3 (1990): 291-305.

[568] Barbara Jeanne Fields, "Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America*," New Left Review*, no. 181 (1990).

[569] Fields, "Slavery, Race, and Ideology,"110.

[570] Considering slavery, Toni Morrison wrote in 1993, that the "construction of blackness *and* enslavement could be found not only the not-free but also, with the dramatic polarity created by skin color, the projection of the not-me," 38. In *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

[571] Harris, "Whiteness as Property," 1710, note 3.

understanding the world) devalue one group and venerate another.

Building case law that used race-based categories was a process of structural violence, whereby one group was systematically rendered less than another group.[572] This devaluation was situated within unequal relations of power and racial dominance.[573] In this racialized hierarchy, whites were positioned as dominant, and as deserving or entitled to property rights. Blacks, however, were not only positioned as socially distinct from whites, but also within a position of exploitation by whites. Put differently, whites placed legal distinctions of property on enslaved Blacks, while also placing legal distinctions of ownership on whites. In this regard, cultural violence (racialized ideology) thus legitimated structural violence (exploitation).

In addition, this structure of domination, the "regime of racial hierarchy," was reinforced by direct violence. Corporeal violence that could kill, maim, or hurt was essential to racialized slavery. Slave narratives, slave testimonies, planter diaries, Congressional hearings — historical sources affirm the prevalence of direct violence in the antebellum and postbellum eras. Direct violence also manifested by denying enslaved Blacks their well-being. In other words, family separations, malnutrition, forced pregnancies—all were sources of direct violence. Moreover, enslavement itself was direct violence as it deprived humans of a basic need: their freedom.

The *whiteness as property* principle explains how the right to determine the rules and the right to exclude and oppress Blacks became embedded in whiteness.[574] Struggles for Black access to public education exemplified the force of white entitlement as whites used denial, segregation, obstruction, and physical violence as a means to establish racialized parameters for

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[572] See Harris, "Whiteness as Property," 1739, note 138 for legal decisions that determined "Negro blood." These decisions positioned blackness as "that which taints" whiteness, 1737.

[573] Ibid, 1766.

[574] Ibid, 1737.

public education. For example, William Cooper Nell's observations that whites deemed educated Blacks as "intruders" within "sacred" white spaces of education highlighted white entitlement. With this logic, whites were entitled to determine inclusion and exclusion. In effect, such entitlement positioned Blacks as intruding on white space. The same logic also entitled whites to take action to maintain their domination. Given that white domination was constructed through Black subjugation, Blacks who asserted their rights as equals presented a challenge to white entitlements. As my study has shown, whites responded to these perceived challenges to their dominance in multiple ways. In the North, whites physically attacked Black schools, Black students, and white and Black teachers, as was the case of Prudence Crandall's School for Colored Girls in Connecticut. Whites also used state and local policy to deny access to public funds for Black schools, embedding racialized parameters into their legal systems. State and local policies and statutes proscribed Black mobility, placing restrictions on free Black immigration.

Anti-slavery abolitionists, who were "friends of the Negro," established racialized parameters of education for Blacks as well. Indeed, some whites supported education for Black people, and sometimes funded education through their philanthropy, but this support was not absent an agenda that supported a white vision of Black education and the role Blacks should play in a white-dominant social order. On the contrary, whites consistently maintained that Blacks know their place in the social order of white supremacy. Many white education reformers perceived education as a means to cultivate moral development steeped in a Protestant ethic for white and Black children, in the North and in the South. However, this notion of a common moral and civic curriculum was constructed through a racialized hierarchy of white supremacy. For white reformers, Black children could certainly learn moral lessons, but they could not do so

with white children. In addition, central to such lessons was that Blacks should remain deferential to whites, upholding the white dominant status quo.

Reviewing the Research Questions

The following section refers back to my research questions, which asked how racism manifested during the common school eras, how Blacks distinguished education as a path to literation and citizenship, and how whites justified and legitimized violence against Black literacy and educational life. I engaged in this research in part to interrupt a master narrative about the development of public education in the United States during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. The master narrative has touted public education as a triumph of democracy and progress, without situating that triumph in its racialized and violent contexts. Racialized slavery impacted the foundations of US institutions, of which education was an important one. Further, racism was a powerful and pervasive dynamic throughout US social, political, economic and cultural development and history. Despite racialized slavery being represented as a Southern exploit, its impact and influence permeated spatial boundaries. In part this was due to identity formation—from the self to the citizen—which was constructed through the dynamic and violent processes of racialized othering and exploitation.

The common school eras of the North and the South represented social and cultural projects steeped in racialized slavery and white supremacy. In this regard, structures of racism and ideologies of white supremacy were forms of violence, even as they also legitimated and set the stage for direct violence. The white enslaver whipping enslaved Blacks for learning to read was a clear manifestation of violence. But violence was also the white education reformers of common school movement excluding people of color because of racist ideology.

I also engaged in this research to show that racism was not only pervasive, but that it was

a manifestation, a means, and a justification of violence across multiple dimensions. Contemporary education historians acknowledge that anti-Black racism permeated burgeoning school systems across the United States in the 19th century, but admittance that racism existed must be accompanied with analysis of racism as both violent and foundational, as essential to American social, political, and cultural life. Karl Kaestle's work through *Pillars of the Republic* offered evidence that white education reformers were anti-Black, and that racial justice and racial equality were sacrificed in the larger project of creating public systems of education for white children. Despite this evidence and acknowledgement that Northern white education reformers consistently chose to exclude Blacks from public education, however, Kaestle did not acknowledge such exclusion and white supremacy as violence. Indeed, when Kaestle wrote that public schools "abused different *cultures*," forcing assimilation to a Protestant ethic, Black people were reduced to a cultural entity.[575] In effect, this reduction ignored African Americans as a people. It also served to diminish and disregard the role of race and racism.

As I discussed in my introduction, legal scholar and pioneering critical race theorist, Derrick Bell, named whites' fear of black inundation a one of the components of systemic racism in the US.[576] My dissertation has demonstrated that white fears were vast and varied, and that white violence in its multiple forms accompanied these fears. As my work has shown, in the north, whites feared southern Blacks would leave their places in the south and flood the north.[577] In the south, the white imaginary was full of fears of slave revolts that would unleash Black

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[575] Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 72, emphasis added.

[576] Derrick Bell, *Race, Racism, and American Law* (New York, NY: Aspen Publishers, 2008), 55.

[577] See also George Frederickson, *Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Determination, 1817-1914* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1971).

vengeance on whites. Southern whites carried these pre-war anxieties of Black rebellion into the Reconstruction era. The staggering white violence and white opposition to Black freedom during the Reconstruction era was in part a fear of Black control.[578] As Blacks asserted their rights of citizenship and personhood, whites responded with violence. Whites translated Black assertions of independence, autonomy, and freedom into Black uprising.[579] In other words, rather than see Black expressions of political and economic engagement as a right of citizenship, whites reframed it as a threat towards them. Whites positioned Blacks who challenged their own subordination as insolent, as out of line, as thus legitimated white violence.[580]

Though Northern efforts for common schooling have been framed as the opposite of the South, this dissertation has demonstrated through Black experiences that despite not having racialized slavery, white Northern racism, white supremacy, violence, and exclusion were pervasive. White uplift in segregated schools was not a model of freedom and liberation, but rather a different form of subjugation. Free states were not slave states, but the institutions and social relations intersected with racism, which challenges the prevalent framework of North-South opposition. Northern racial prejudices expected blacks to remain in their place, both in terms of remaining in the South and not mixing with whites to dilute the so-called racial purity of the white race. Despite calls in the North for black suffrage and equal rights, such sentiment of equality was steeped in the racialized hierarchy of white supremacy. The common school

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[578] Historian Rayford Logan argued this was the case especially in states with large African American populations, such as Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina. In *The Betrayal of the Negro: From Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1997/1965).

[579] See also Leslie Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We: Women's Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 186, for a similar analysis regarding Black demands for land and labor.

[580] Saidiya V. Hartman *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1997), 148; Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1988).

movement in the North was a white supremacist political project, and it has been an error and a deficiency in educational historiography to define the common school movement in the North in opposition to racialized slavery in the South.

As my work demonstrated, violence did not stop Black people from advocating for their rights, creating networks of support and activism, drawing on their collective resources, and forging alliances with white abolitionists and philanthropists. Further, literacy and documenting one's own experience were a means to assert identity and humanity. As a result, African Americans followed a tradition of Black self-help.[581] Black newspapers and journals, Black literary societies, Black churches, and Black schools cultivated racial pride, intellectual development, and cultural cohesion. This is not to suggest some monolithic or singular Black way of being or thinking, but rather to suggest that Black people cultivated and facilitated their education regardless of white opinions, beliefs, and actions. In other words, Black education was not a reactionary endeavor. The pursuit of knowledge and cultivation of the mind—or learning—was innate. Despite white use of violence and state power to create racialized boundaries for education, Black Americans, free, enslaved, and freed, persisted in individual and collective endeavors for education, cultivating knowledge networks that served as sites of learning and resistance.

When Henry Bibb reflected on his enslavement in the preface to his narrative, he recalled: "I can truly say, that I have been educated in the school of adversity, whips, and chains. Experience and observation have been my principal teachers, with the exception of three weeks

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[581] James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, *1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

schooling which I have had the good fortune to receive since my escape from the 'graveyard of the mind,' or the dark prison of human bondage."[582] For Bibb, the violence of enslavement was educative, as he was taught through the violence of "adversity, whips, and chains." This was no metaphor; Bibb, like most formerly enslaved Blacks who penned their narratives, described the harrowing violence of racialized slavery. Whites used the force of the whip to assert a primary lesson: that a slave should know nothing but the master's will. This violence included the physical and direct violence on his body, as well as the violence that reduced him to chattel. Further, prohibitions on Black literacy and education was also violence. Recognizing this, Henry Bibb and his Black abolitionist colleagues declared education as "emphatically the most effectual protection to personal or political liberty with which the human family can be armed."[583] In this sense, education would not only serve as the pathway to freedom, but also guarantee freedom of the mind as a right of citizenship. Education was a tool of power.

White hostility toward black education was to be found across the nation. And this hostility was not solely directed at institutions of education, such as schools, but at any expression or embodiment of Black learning. Just as Black education through its manifestation in Black schools was a target of white hostility and regulation in the North, so too were free Blacks targeted, with multiple states in the North and South prohibiting free Blacks in their state. When Black people advanced politically, economically, and socially, white people responded with hostility and violence.

In sum, violence and racism were pervasive and shaped the development of systems of

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[582] Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave, Written by Himself* (New York: Macdonald & Lee, Printers, 1850).

[583] Henry Bibb, John T. Fisher, and James D. Tinsley, "An Address to the Colored Inhabitants of North America," September 1851, in *The Black Abolitionist Papers, Volume II, Canada, 1830-1865,* ed. Peter C. Ripley (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 173.

public education in the North and South. Black education was connected to freedom, citizenship, self-determination, and humanity and as such, challenged white supremacist social and economic power structures. In the antebellum South, for example, Blacks positioned education and liberty as the pathway to freedom of the mind and body. Southern whites agreed, but sought to keep Blacks enslaved, and thus violently responded to Black educational efforts such as reading and writing.

During Reconstruction, white vigilantes who burned down Black schools and attacked Black people and their white allies understood that education could be a path to freedom and citizenship, and determined that Blacks should not have such a path. Structural and cultural violence during racialized slavery had defined whiteness as privileged and entitled, and such violence legitimated direct white-enacted violence against enslaved Blacks during slavery. So too, did such violence legitimate direct white-enacted violence against freed Blacks during Reconstruction. Thus, whites defined and enacted violence to serve and preserve the dominant relations of power, which specifically targeted Black education. Whites conceived of educated Blacks as a danger and a threat to *whites* and to *whiteness*, and as such warranted white responses to contain or destroy the perceived threats.

Racialized slavery and the ideology of white supremacy was foundational to the development of US public education in the North and the South. Violence, which enabled and reinforced the racialized hierarchy of white supremacy across multiple dimensions, was not the exception, but the rule. It is in illuminating these processes of othering and dimensions of violence that we may disrupt, or at the very least challenge, constructed realities that have the potential for such violent actualities. As such, the narrative of mass public education in the US must be nuanced.

Chapter 8 Epilogue: Remembering as Resistance

As I see it, critical race theory recognizes that revolutionizing a culture begins with the radical assessment of it. –Derrick Bell, 1995[584]

Violence, today, is on America's collective mind.

As the Black Lives Matter movement has gained national attention with protests for racial justice across cities and towns in the United States, a predominant theme of the protests as I conclude this dissertation in the fall of 2020 is the persistent violence against Black Americans. Social media has enabled Americans to witness footage of police and white vigilantes killing and attacking Black citizens. From Ahmaud Aubery, to George Floyd, to Breonna Taylor, and so many who have suffered prior, the deaths of Blacks at the hands of whites are on America's collective mind.

In addition, counter-rhetoric has emphasized the violence protesters enacted such as looting and clashing with police. Moreover, the flames of white fears are stoked through political and media campaigns, as well as through extreme right organizations, and individual citizens. People of color, and especially African Americans, are discursively painted as threats to American ways of being, with the potential to enact violence against the average American. In addition to positioning "American" in contrast to people of color, or as white, such discourses are also couched in notions of patriotism.

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[584] Derrick Bell, "Who's Afraid of Critical Race Theory," *University of Illinois Law Review*, no. 4 (1995): 893.

Consider, for example, that on September 4, 2020, the current Trump presidential administration issued a memo ordering an end to federal anti-racism training, calling it "a sickness." The memo, which was sent to executive department heads, specifically targeted Critical Race Theory:

> The President has directed me to ensure that Federal agencies cease and desist from using taxpayer dollars to fund these **divisive, un-American propaganda training sessions**. Accordingly, to that end, the Office of Management and Budget will shortly issue more detailed guidance on implementing the President's directive. In the meantime, all agencies are directed to begin to identify all contracts or other agency spending related to any training on **"critical race theory," "white privilege,"** or any other training or propaganda effort that teaches or suggests either (1) that the United States is an inherently racist or evil country or (2) that any race or ethnicity is inherently racist or evil.[585]

The memo continued:

"The **divisive, false, and demeaning propaganda** of the **critical race theory movement** is contrary to all we stand for as Americans and should have no place in the Federal government."

The current administration's attempts to reframe Critical Race Theory's analysis of the United States demonstrates how people engage in framing processes through discourse. In this case, CRT is positioned as "divisive," "un-American," "demeaning," and "false" for suggesting that racism exists. In addition, the term "propaganda" signifies something that is misleading, and when coupled with nationalist rhetoric, it also signals that something is a threat. In this case, the perceived threat is the critical outlook, and given this is coming from the President of the United States, such threats imply the potentiality for state action, as well as for violent responses within the citizenry.

There are other processes at work as well, which include the intersecting acts of forgetting and erasure. Sociologist Joe Feagin argued that a persistent problem in social theory and policy analysis regarding racial oppression is that such analysis is often absent historical

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[585] "Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, M-20-34, from Russell Vought, Director, *Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget* (Washington DC: September 4, 2020), emphasis added.

context, and thus does not link present day social realities to the distant and immediate past. He wrote, "whites prefer to forget the past centuries and to mentally separate that past of antiblack oppression form the present-day racial situation—with many seeking to assert an absence of serious racial problems today and thereby to reduce pressures for major changes."[586] Put differently, the process of erasing the experiences of people of color from historical memory is an active one that requires constant attention and participation. Further, deficit narratives of communities of color have perpetuated a myth that communities of color do not value their education.[587] Such perspectives keep the role of racialized violence in the shadows. Further, these narratives do not account for historical processes, such as how efforts to attain education intersected with various efforts to manage, control, or deny it. Thus, to counteract erasure of the histories and experiences of people of color requires remembering.

Indeed, the October 2020 issue of the Atlantic published an article titled, "The New Reconstruction" with the tagline, "The United States has its best opportunity in 150 years to belatedly fulfill its promise as a multiracial democracy."[588] The author offered a window of optimism, suggesting that despite the presidential administrations' narrow, anti-CRT focus, the American people do want things to change. In this sense, there is a role for socially committed and critical historians to offer narratives that demonstrate not just past oppressions, but also the power of resistance. Throughout this study, I pointed out that antebellum and postbellum violence was not the exception, but the rule. In addition, I argued that framing violence only in

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[586] Joe Feagin, *Systemic Racism: A Theory of Oppression* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 34.

[587] Gloria Ladson-Billings, "Pushing Past the Achievement Gap: An Essay on the Language of Deficit," *The Journal of Negro Education* 76, no. 3 (Summer 2007).

[588] Adam Serwer, October 2020, Accessed on September 14, 2020 https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/10/the-next-reconstruction/615475/

terms of direct acts obscures structural and cultural violence, which work in tandem to enable and legitimate direct and physical violence. Yet, I also demonstrated how people transformed their scars into memories of triumph. In the face of tremendous obstacles, Black people have persisted in their educational efforts, individually and collectively. And is this not worth remembering? Racialized slavery was part of the foundations of the American republic. Yet, to continue to deny our collective history, as difficult of a history as it is, will not help the American people to reach "the Reconstruction moment."

As the contemporary moment demonstrates, leaving out racialized slavery and violence in the history of American education is not an issue only within historical scholarship, but one that spans social and political institution within the US. Even as the current US president referred to teaching the history of slavery as "indoctrination," writers and scholars have pushed back to remind the US public that actual indoctrination comes from a perpetuated myth of American exceptionalism that erases and distorts the oppression and violence that were essential in the foundations of US social and economic institutions and culture.[589] As this study has shown, there is a long tradition of construction and framing processes in education history. Historians may provide the material for collective memory, but neither history nor memory are free from power dynamics and the politics of interpretation.[590]

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[589] Clint Smith in *The Atlantic*, September 24, 2020, questioned teaching slavery in schools through a "one-dimensional mythology of exceptionalism," which is advocated by the current Trump administration's emphasis on "patriotic education." Anderson pointed out that America's social, political, and economic legitimacy is based on "an ahistorical myth--one that embraces all that makes America exceptional, without reckoning with the fact that so much of what created exceptional lives for some citizens was made possible by the intergenerational oppression of millions of others. The study of slavery aptly demonstrates these contradictions and entanglements." https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/09/real-stakes-fight-over-history/616455/

[590] See David W. Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race Memory, and The American Civil War* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 1-5, for a discussion of the confluence of history and memory.

In 1935, Du Bois wrote "we have too often a deliberate attempt so to change the facts of history that the story will make pleasant reading for Americans."[591] Du Bois' observation begs the question, with an emphasis on "pleasantness," how does the US deal with its difficult and violent past? The short answer is that it does not. But the complex answer, which much of this work explored, suggests that remembering and forgetting are active processes, which can serve as a form of violence through the erasure and devaluation of oppressed groups and experiences, and as a means to legitimate direct and structural violence. But, so too, can remembering serve as a form of resistance, and as a means to interrupt, destabilize, and counter multiple forms of violence. As Feagin elucidated,

> Individual and collective memories are central to the reality of racial oppression, both in the past and the present. For black Americans, collective memories of past experiences move along the generations and assist in honing strategies for resistance to systemic racism. The accurate perpetuation of these strategies has been essential for individual and group survival.[592]

In this sense, remembering becomes an act of resistance to domination and oppression. Indeed, scholars of color have challenged and countered the dominant, hegemonic narratives in education history, challenging the ideological scripts of white supremacy. The current moment reveals that this struggle over how and by whom the historical narrative is represented is far from over. Critical scholars have a role to play and must remain vigilant in confronting and dismantling dominant narratives that dismiss the role of slavery and violence in education, and social institutions more broadly.

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[591] W. E. B. Dubois, *Black Reconstruction*, 1935.

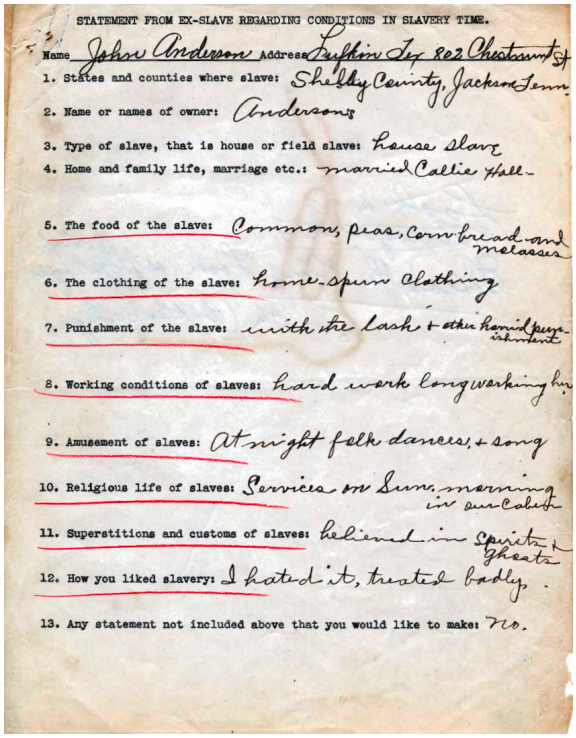
[592] Feagin, *Systemic Racism: A Theory of Oppression,* 82. Feagin was referring to formerly enslaved African Americans and how they saw how violence and racialized slavery negatively impacted the oppressed and the oppressors. Frederick Douglass and Harriett Jacobs were profoundly intimate with notions of liberty and justice, and taught America more about being a democracy than any of the founding white fathers could have.

In the preface to a 2018 report about how slavery is taught in American schools, Hasan Jeffries wrote, "the central role that slavery played in the development of the United States is beyond dispute. And yet, we the people do not like to talk about slavery, or even think about it, much less teach it or learn it."[593] This study offers insights into how racialized slavery and violence are embedded in the foundation of the US. This is not a dissertation about the way we teach history; rather, it is about the way we *do* history, the way history is constructed, and what that means for how we understand the foundations of education. Yet, teaching, doing, and understanding are not mutually exclusive concepts. Rather they are co-constitutive, partners in the story of how public education came to be. My dissertation examined the role of violence in the historical foundations of education. In doing so, I reframed and extended the common school story, which has continually positioned racialized slavery and violence on the periphery. Centering racialized slavery and violence offered insights into the meanings and purposes of education, such as freedom, autonomy, liberation, humanity, and citizenship, as well as why struggles for education were so important. Fights against oppression and for democracy are embedded into the foundations of education in the US, and by examining the role of racialized slavery and violence in these struggles, the significance and efforts of African Americans shine like a beacon on shadows that threaten to eclipse in perpetuity. In other words, the shared history of American education requires examining education as raced, founded on violence and racism, but also as a site of resistance and triumph, especially for African Americans.

[593] Quoted in Hasan Kwame Jeffries, "Teaching Hard History: American Slavery," *Southern Poverty Law Center*, January 31, 2018, 5.

Appendices

Appendix A: Slave Testimony of John Anderson (Tennessee)



STATEMENT FROM EX-SLAVE REGARDING CONDITIONS IN SLAVERY TIME.

Name John Anderson Address Fairfax Tex 802 Chestnut St

1. States and counties where slave: Shelby County, Jackson Tenn.
2. Name or names of owner: Andersons
3. Type of slave, that is house or field slave: house slave
4. Home and family life, marriage etc.: married Callie Hall.
5. The food of the slave: Common, peas, Corn bread and molasses
6. The clothing of the slave: home-spun clothing
7. Punishment of the slave: with the lash + other harmful punishment
8. Working conditions of slaves: hard work long working hrs
9. Amusement of slaves: At night folk dances + song
10. Religious life of slaves: Services on Sun. morning in our Cabin
11. Superstitions and customs of slaves: believed in Spirits + Ghosts
12. How you liked slavery: I hated it, treated badly.
13. Any statement not included above that you would like to make: No.

Figure 16: Slave Testimony of John Anderson (Tennessee)

John Anderson's testimony is part of the John B. Cade "Opinions Regarding Slavery: Slave Narratives, 1822-1865," a digital collection of interviews with formerly enslaved African Americans. Southern University. John B. Cade began collecting these testimonies in 1929 with his history students, who were African American teachers training at Southern University's normal school. Cade and his students' interviews began seven years prior to the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Writers' Project (FWP) from 1936-1938.[594] I share this testimony (and the following two testimonies in Appendix B and Appendix C) to demonstrate texts I used in my analysis, especially for those who are not familiar with the testimonies of the formerly enslaved. Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, an historically Black university, has digitized the collection, which can be downloaded from their website.

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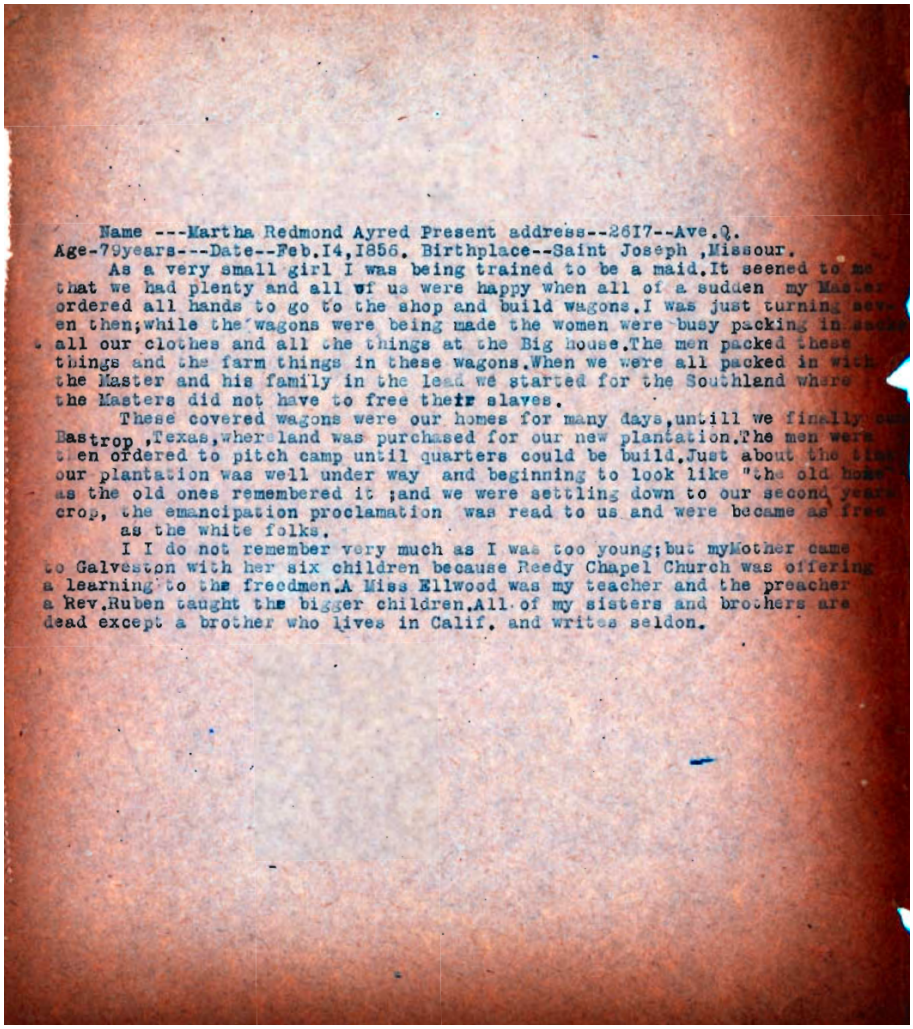
[594] John B. Cade Slave Narratives Collection, 1822-1865, Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, http://7008.sydneyplus.com/final/Portal/SouthernUniversity.aspx?component=AABC&record=296fb82a-d012-4396-bd3c-8f18c5e4f8f3. John B. Cade, "Out of the Mouths of Ex-Slaves," *The Journal of Negro History* 20, no. 3 (July 1935): 294-337.

Appendix B: Slave Testimony of Martha Redmond Ayred (Missouri)

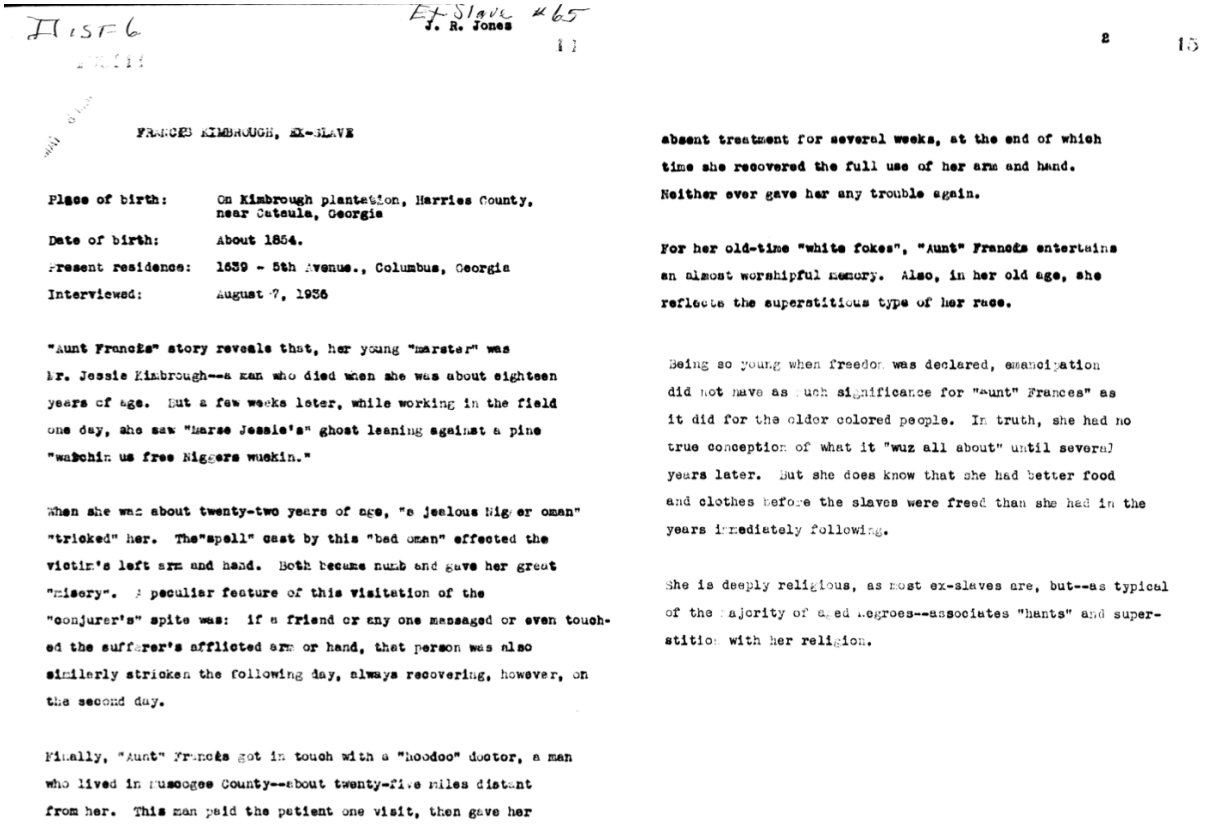


Name ---Martha Redmond Ayred Present address--2617--Ave.Q.
Age-79years---Date--Feb.14,1856. Birthplace--Saint Joseph ,Missour.
As a very small girl I was being trained to be a maid.It seened to me that we had plenty and all of us were happy when all of a sudden my Master ordered all hands to go to the shop and build wagons.I was just turning seven then;while the wagons were being made the women were busy packing in sacks all our clothes and all the things at the Big House.The men packed these things and the farm things in these wagons.When we were all packed in with the Master and his family in the lead we started for the Southland where the Masters did not have to free their slaves.
These covered wagons were our homes for many days,untill we finally came Bastrop ,Texas,where land was purchased for our new plantation.The men were then ordered to pitch camp until quarters could be build.Just about the time our plantation was well under way and beginning to look like "the old home" as the old ones remembered it ;and we were settling down to our second years crop, the emancipation proclamation was read to us and were became as free as the white folks.
I I do not remember very much as I was too young;but myMother came to Galveston with her six children because Reedy Chapel Church was offering a learning to the freedmen.A Miss Ellwood was my teacher and the preacher a Rev.Ruben taught the bigger children.All of my sisters and brothers are dead except a brother who lives in Calif. and writes seldon.

Figure 17: Slave Testimony of Martha Redmond Ayred (Missouri)

Martha Redmond Ayred's testimony is also from the John B. Cade collection "Opinions Regarding Slavery: Slave Narratives, 1822-1865." The testimonies of formerly enslaved African Americans answered similar questions from interviewers (see Chapter 3, Sources of Black Voices), which produced a range of responses. Yet, even in a brief interview transcript like Ms. Ayred's, we gain some insight into her experiences during enslavement and after emancipation.

Appendix C: Slave Testimony of Frances Kimbrough (Georgia)



Ex-Slave #65
J. R. Jones

2 15

FRANCES KIMBROUGH, EX-SLAVE

Place of birth: On Kimbrough plantation, Harries County, near Catsula, Georgia

Date of birth: About 1854.

Present residence: 1639 - 5th Avenue., Columbus, Georgia

Interviewed: August 7, 1936

"Aunt Frances" story reveals that, her young "marster" was Mr. Jessie Kimbrough--a man who died when she was about eighteen years of age. But a few weeks later, while working in the field one day, she saw "Marse Jessie's" ghost leaning against a pine "watchin us free Niggers wuckin."

When she was about twenty-two years of age, "a jealous Nigger oman" "tricked" her. The"spell" cast by this "bad oman" effected the victim's left arm and hand. Both became numb and gave her great "misery". A peculiar feature of this visitation of the "conjurer's" spite was: if a friend or any one massaged or even touched the sufferer's afflicted arm or hand, that person was also similarly stricken the following day, always recovering, however, on the second day.

Finally, "Aunt" Frances got in touch with a "hoodoo" doctor, a man who lived in Muscogee County--about twenty-five miles distant from her. This man paid the patient one visit, then gave her absent treatment for several weeks, at the end of which time she recovered the full use of her arm and hand. Neither ever gave her any trouble again.

For her old-time "white folkes", "Aunt" Frances entertains an almost worshipful memory. Also, in her old age, she reflects the superstitious type of her race.

Being so young when freedom was declared, emancipation did not have as much significance for "Aunt" Frances" as it did for the older colored people. In truth, she had no true conception of what it "wuz all about" until several years later. But she does know that she had better food and clothes before the slaves were freed than she had in the years immediately following.

She is deeply religious, as most ex-slaves are, but--as typical of the majority of aged Negroes--associates "hants" and superstition with her religion.

Figure 18: Slave Testimony of Frances Kimbrough (Georgia)

Frances Kimbrough's testimony is from the Works Progress Administration Federal Writers' Project.[595] The three testimonials in Appendices 1a, 1b, and 1c do not reflect some of the testimonies that were transcribed in dialect. However, some examples within chapters 5 and 6, such as Mr. McWhorter's, demonstrate how interviewers transcribed speech patterns in their interviews with formerly enslaved Blacks. The testimonies in these appendices are meant to offer an example of what these texts look like—what information interviewers gathered, what participants shared, and how the testimonials were represented.

[595] Interview with Frances Kimbrough, by J. R. Jones. In *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States from Interviews with Former Slaves*, vol 3, part 3, Georgia Narratives. Typewritten Records Prepared by the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938. Assembled by The Library of Congress Progress Works Project Administration (Washington DC: 1941), 14-15.

Appendix D: The Negro in Education by Lena Mason, 1902

Said once a noble ruler,
Thomas Jefferson by name,
"All men are created equal,
All men are born the same."

God made the Negro equal
To any race above the grave,
Although once made a captive
And sold to man a slave.

Of all the crimes recorded
Our histories do not tell
Of a single crime more brutal,
Or e'en a parallel.

It was said by men of wisdom (?)
"No knowledge shall they have,
For if you educate a Negro
You unfit him for a slave."

Fred Douglass' young mistress,
Moved by a power divine,
Determined she would let the rays
Of knowledge on him shine,

But her husband said,
"'Twill never do, 'Twill his way to freedom pave,
For if you educate a Negro
You unfit him for a slave."

But there is no mortal being
Who can the wheels of progress stay;
An all-wise God intended
He should see the light of day.

God drew back the sable curtains
That shut out wisdom's rays,
He did give unto him knowledge
And unfit him for a slave.

But God's works were not completed,
For he had made decree,
Since all men are born equal,
Then all men shall be free.

He removed the yoke of bondage,
And unto him freedom gave;
He did educate the Negro
And unfit him for a slave.

When the Negro gained his freedom
Of body and of soul,
He caught the wheels of progress,
Gave them another roll.

He was held near three long centuries
In slavery's dismal cave,
But now he is educated
And unfitted for a slave.

He's able to fill any place
On this terrestrial ball,
All the way from country teacher
To the legislative hall.

He has proved himself a hero,
A soldier true and brave,
And now he's educated
And unfit to be a slave.

We have lawyers and we've doctors,
Teachers and preachers brave,
And a host of noble women,
Who have safely crossed the wave.

We are pressing on and upward,
And for education crave,
For it's written now in history,
We shall never more be slaves

Appendix E: Colored Rule in a Reconstructed (?) State by Thomas Nast

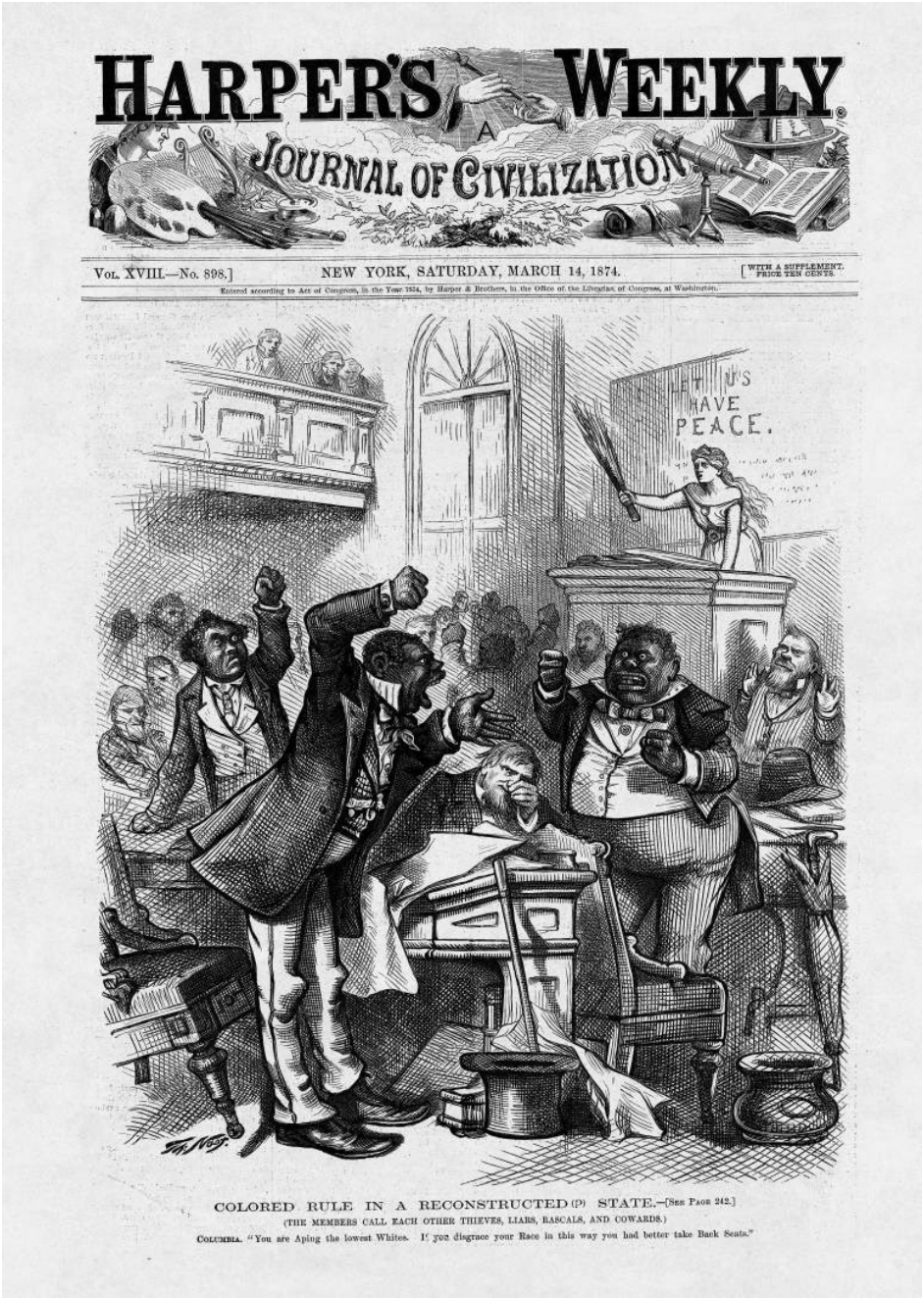


Figure 19: Colored Rule in a Reconstructed (?) State by Thomas Nast, Harper's Weekly*, March 14, 1874*

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