

**BACKYARD BATTLES:  
LOCAL STRUGGLES FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN POLITICAL  
ADVANCEMENT IN BALTIMORE, 1920–1944**

**by**

**Angelique D. Jessup**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Political Science)  
in the University of Michigan  
2010

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Nancy E. Burns, Co-Chair  
Associate Professor Robert W. Mickey, Co-Chair  
Associate Professor Matthew D. Lassiter  
Professor Rogers Smith, University of Pennsylvania

© Angelique D. Jessup  
2010

To Steven, for everything spoken and unspoken.

## Acknowledgments

This dissertation process has been nothing short of an interesting journey, full of peaks and valleys, and more learning experiences than I can reasonably count. The doctoral experience has transformed my life in ways that stretch beyond books and the classroom. I am immensely grateful for having the privilege to go through this process (struggles and all) and for the excellent training I have received at the University of Michigan. I am deeply humbled by those that have supported me from the very beginning and through the final stages of my doctoral studies.

I would like to thank Steven, my husband and best friend. Thank you for listening to my dreams, nurturing them, and teaching me that all things are possible. Thank you for putting things in perspective when everything was fuzzy and scary. You have been with me from the beginning, when graduate school was just a thought and finding the perfect prom dress was my biggest priority. Words cannot describe my gratitude for your unconditional love and never faltering support of my ambitions. I am excited for wherever our next steps take us and cannot imagine having a more perfect partner to journey through life.

This dissertation is seeded in the many stories and debates of struggle and triumph discussed around dinner tables in Port-au-Prince and Miami on Haitian politics and black nationalism from the blood that runs through my Haitian lineage. At the same time, I owe so much to my black American ancestry and the stories of Alabama and South Carolina during Jim Crow and firsthand recollections of the March on Washington, segregated Baltimore, and the riots of the 1960s. Family history cannot be ignored. To my parents, Guy and Karen Douyon, I could not have made it this far without your continued support and belief in my ability to accomplish this. You answered all my “why, Mom and Dad” questions from the time I could talk, and always made me feel like this process was the next intuitive step. Thank you for calling at the right moments and encouraging me through the most difficult times. Many of these pages are marked with your motivation. To my sister, Maisha Douyon Cover, you made me laugh when I needed to laugh. You distracted me with good conversation with perfect timing. I cherish our impenetrable friendship and thank you for always cheering me on with vigor; you are nothing short of an amazing sister. I would also like to thank Chad Cover and Zora Lily Douyon Cover. Chad, you’ve helped me more than I think you realize. Thank you for brainstorming with me, reminding me that my project matters, and intriguing me with the historian’s perspective. Zora, you have brought a gigantic ray of light into this dissertation. Toward the end of this process, your voice and our time together has

reminded me that above all else, love and family always prevails. Many thanks also go to Steven and Geneva Jessup for your constant prayers and confidence in me. You made my numerous research trips to Baltimore and Washington, DC, comforting in a way only family can. You always saw the light at the end of this journey and reminded me to have big faith.

To my dissertation committee: Dr. Nancy Burns, Dr. Robert Mickey, Dr. Matthew Lassiter, and Dr. Rogers Smith—thank you for believing that this story needed to be told and guiding me. Nancy Burns advised me from my very first day of graduate school. Nancy, thank you for demystifying statistics, taking me on as a research assistant, and reminding me that this project is feasible and a piece of a larger conversation. Rob, I would like to thank you for introducing me to the field of American Political Development and pushing the boundaries of this project. I am grateful for your guidance and honing of my curiosity. Matt, thank you for introducing me to new scholarship and supporting my intellectual interests. Thank you also for your candid advice. Rogers Smith provided support at a crucial point in this process. Thank you for helping me see this project through completion and giving invaluable comments.

This project and my graduate studies could not be possible without generous financial support from a University of Michigan Rackham Merit Fellowship, departmental travel and research grants, and support in the final stages with a Gerald R. Ford fellowship. Many thanks go to Lili Kivisto for taking my calls and explaining prelims, candidacy, and the dissertation process thoroughly. Thanks also go to Michelle Spornhauer and Edie Goldenberg for your help during my time in residence at Michigan. Finally, my graduate studies were tremendously eased with financial support from a Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship.

So many friends and family members have taken my phone calls, prayed for me, and cheered me on every step of the way. My thanks do not measure your support over these years. I've been blessed to have a strong core of friends that I can always count on. I would like to thank Nerissa Holder Hall for being a wonderfully loyal and supportive friend. Thank you for each and every phone call and reminding me to celebrate the little victories. Thanks go to Stephanie Kull for praying for and with me, and for being one of my heroes. I would like to thank Carmen Leary Holloway for more than 15 years of friendship and for always believing in me.

To my TCNJ friends and family: Charlena Barnes, Cerrone Foster, Jamal Johnson, Shanelle Perez, Nicole Vitulli McNelis, Dr. Christopher Fisher, the late Dr. Gloria Harper Dickinson, Jim and Pat Boatwright, and Wayne Jackson—thank you providing inspiration for this project and encouraging me through this process. I built a strong and supportive network at the University of Michigan and would like to thank those that helped me get through this process. Grace Cho has been a great friend; her pep talks and inspiration encouraged me along the way. Thanks go to Chera Reid for her friendship and being a sounding board. Danie Stockmann always saw the glass half full, and I thank her for that. I could not imagine my graduate school years without the friendship of: Kim

Dorazio, Gena Flynn, Andrea Benjamin, Kenyatha Loftis, Melissa Wooten, Kamille Gentles, Ruth Nicole Brown, Melynda Price, Tehama Lopez, and Vesla Weaver.

To my friends and family in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Boise, Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Canada, for your encouragement and help: Erlene B. Wilson (for believing in my writing) and Charlie Wilson (thanks, bro); Madeleine and the late Guy Douyon, Sr.; Esther Berry; Jennifer “Jai” Harrison; Rudy and Regina Dillard; The Pressoirs; Yanick Douyon; Guileine, Brik, and Philip Kraft; Pierre, Ariel, Vanessa, and Pierre-Guy Douyon; Genevieve Douyon Flambert and family; Alix, Stefane, GuiAlix, and Aliane Douyon; Reginald, Sandra, Naike, and Tais Cohen; the Montreal Douyons; Chaz and Lia Howard; Brandon and Carol Croxton; Micah Mitchell Hines and Daron Hines; Michael Bowen Mitchell and family; Tyrone and Maisha Crosby; Josef Sorret; Terence and Kimberly Whitehead; Josh and Kari Kohn; DeLanie Valentine, Lorelei Walters; Ryan Bowers; Keri Faulhaber; Yaminah McKessey; Dirk Hall; the Holder family; Derrick Jessup and family; Joanne Ransome and family; Russell and Tameka Hardy; Monica Bevans; Jonathan and Dedra Harris; the Montgomery family; and the Jessup Family. Thanks and reverence go to those who came before me that were never afforded the opportunities with which I have been blessed.

Last, all thanks go to Jesus, my strength and my salvation. Above all, my graduate school experience has been one of developing and enduring faith. Philippians 4:13. Luke 17:6.

Angelique Jessup  
January 2010  
Queens, New York City

## Table of Contents

|   |      |
|---|------|
| <b>Dedication</b> .....   | ii   |
| <b>Acknowledgments</b> .....  | iii  |
| <b>List of Figures</b> .....  | viii |
| <b>List of Tables</b> .....   | ix   |
| <br>  |      |
| Chapter 1 .....   | 1    |
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....   | 1    |
| 1. Introduction .....   | 1    |
| 2. What the Literature Tells Us .....   | 5    |
| 3. The Argument .....   | 22   |
| 4. Case Selection and Research Design .....   | 24   |
| <br>  |      |
| Chapter 2 .....   | 52   |
| <b>SOCIAL WELFARE ACTIVISM</b> .....  | 52   |
| 1. Introduction .....   | 52   |
| 2. Existing Literature.....   | 53   |
| 3. Prescribing Change: Lessons from the “Lung Block District” .....                               | 56   |
| 4. Finding Leverage: Anti-Tavern Activism and the Emergence of Neighborhood<br>Associations ..... | 65   |
| 5. When Expertise Fails: Constraints and Opportunities in Lobbying for Playgrounds                | 79   |
| 6. Conclusion.....  | 87   |
| <br>  |      |
| Chapter 3 .....   | 89   |
| <b>EMPLOYMENT ACTIVISM</b> .....  | 89   |
| 1. Introduction .....   | 89   |
| 2. Existing Literature.....   | 91   |
| 3. Local Government: City Council and Integrating Political Appointments.....                     | 95   |
| 4. Grassroots Organizing: The City-Wide Young People’s Forum .....                                | 103  |
| 5. The Fight to Equalize Baltimore City Teacher Salaries.....                                     | 124  |
| 6. Federated Organization: Urban League Efforts to Integrate Employment Sectors                   | 139  |
| 7. Conclusion.....  | 143  |
| <br>  |      |
| Chapter 4 .....   | 145  |
| <b>ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACTIVISM</b> .....   | 145  |
| 1. Introduction .....   | 145  |
| 2. Existing Literature.....   | 146  |
| 3. The Monumental Golf Club and Golf Course Desegregation.....                                    | 149  |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 4. The Citizens Committee for Justice: How a Mass Coalition Orchestrated a Historic Movement..... | 157 |
| 5. Conclusion.....  | 187 |
| Chapter 5 .....   | 189 |
| <b>CONCLUSION</b> .....   | 189 |
| 1. Overview of Findings.....  | 189 |
| 2. The Nuances of Federated Organizing at the Local Level.....                                    | 193 |
| 3. Epilogue .....   | 202 |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....   | 207 |



## List of Figures

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Figure 1.1: Map of Baltimore and Concentration of Black Population, 1930 ..... | 34 |
| Figure 2.1: Map of Lung Block District.....                                    | 60 |

## List of Tables

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Table 1.1: <i>Baltimore Afro-American</i> Circulation Nationwide and Internationally, 1938.     | 25  |
| Table 1.2: Case Selection .....   | 32  |
| Table 1.3: Black Population, 1920: Border Cities .....  | 37  |
| Table 1.4: Black Population, 1930: Border Cities .....  | 37  |
| Table 1.5: Black Organizations, Greek Letter, and Fraternal Orders 1919–1945 .....              | 39  |
| Table 1.6: Black-Owned Businesses in Baltimore, 1929 .....                                      | 44  |
| Table 1.7: Black-Owned Businesses in Baltimore Compared to Other Cities, 1929 .....             | 44  |
| Table 1.8: Black Unions in Baltimore, 1920–1929 .....   | 45  |
| Table 1.9: Black Homeownership, 1930: Border Cities .....                                       | 46  |
| Table 1.10: Black Registered Voters: 1919 .....   | 47  |
| Table 1.11: Registered Voters by Race: 1920 .....   | 48  |
| Table 1.12: African Americans Elected to the Baltimore City Council: 1890–1967 .....            | 50  |
| Table 3.1: Presence of Black Organizations, Fraternal Orders, and Professionals 1919–1920 ..... | 100 |
| Table 3.2: Presence of Black Organizations, Fraternal Orders, and Professionals 1929–1930 ..... | 101 |
| Table 3.3: Sample of Forum Speakers and Topics .....  | 109 |
| Table 3.4: Leadership Structure of the City-Wide Young People’s Forum .....                     | 112 |
| Table 4.1: Organization Depth of the Citizens Committee for Justice .....                       | 169 |

Table 4.2 : Members of the Governor’s Commission on Problems Affecting the Negro  
Population..... 178

Table 4.3: Illustration of NAACP Division of Fees..... 185

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

“[T]here is plenty of evidence that the Negro is a very political animal. And that his political urges will find expression in other channels whenever he is deprived of participation in the usual political processes.”<sup>1</sup>

“[sic]Most of the Negroes who did vote, voted in the cities. It was in the cities that Negro suffrage was most discussed, whether privately, or publicly through the medium of newspapers, interracial bodies, and Negro welfare organizations. It was in the cities [sic] that elections occurred in which Negro votes were more or less openly solicited; it was in the cities that stories arose, sometimes verifiable, sometimes not, of an occasional Negro balance of power.”<sup>2</sup>

#### 1. Introduction

Mounting scholarship on the development of black political activism before the period generally known as the mainstream Civil Rights Movement—a time marked by rampant activism, federal intervention, and new legislative mandates—has opened the door for new questions and inquiries. Recent scholarly contributions have provided evidence for what has recently been coined the “long civil rights movement,” pushing a collective inquiry into cases and narratives of black activism and political life since emancipation.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ralph Bunche, *The Political Status of the Negro in the Age of FDR* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> Paul Lewinson, *Race, Class & Party: A History of Negro Suffrage and White Politics in the South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> Steven Hahn, *The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009); Risa Goluboff, *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2009); Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History*, 91:4, 2005.

There have been important contributions illuminating community-level black activism by political and social historians.<sup>4</sup> These studies have provided evidence of black activism long before the days of the Montgomery bus boycott or sit-ins and have intricately solidified our understandings of black activism in the decades before the national spotlight focused on the historic black freedom movement. Among social scientists, a budding debate on the structural conditions and institutional changes necessary for sparking substantive policy change has also brought to focus the need for deeper analyses.

This dissertation recognizes the importance of bridging these literatures—those that have provided us with fine-grain accounts of black life in the early twentieth century with the big picture, top-down institutional analyses concerned with bureaucratic and legislative responses. By investigating what black activists inherited from earlier activities, we stand to learn that when federal interventions emerged, black activists were not starting with a blank slate and instead had passed on a toolkit that could be activated. Additionally, a deeper analysis of local activism prior to the mainstream Civil Rights Movement demonstrates the *limits* of local black activism and why structural and institutional changes were necessary in order for black activists to secure larger successes in later years. Situating the analysis on local activism—in this project, the focus is on

---

<sup>4</sup> Earl Lewis, *In Their Own Interests: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth-Century Norfolk, Virginia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Leslie Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham: Gender, Class, and Black Community Development in the Jim Crow South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Glenda Gilmore, *Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Karen Ferguson, *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South, From Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003)

black Baltimore, and particularly middle-class black activists—allows us to observe the conditions in which race-based activism could take place before massive changes to the national racial landscape.

This project is motivated by some important unanswered questions in political science literature. First, several studies investigating black political attitudes and behavior begin with an analysis of black political behavior during or after the mainstream Civil Rights Movement. This literature has afforded us several useful and important analyses, but tells us less about the nature of black political engagement prior to the big changes occurring during and after the mainstream Civil Rights Movement and even less about the potential for local activism to set the stage for organizing work in later periods. Second, by embarking on serious inquiry into how institutions form and change over time, scholars in American Political Development (APD) have made great strides in explaining the institutional underpinnings of the growth of the social welfare state, political parties, institutional barriers, bureaucracies, and industrialization.<sup>5</sup> What the APD literature does not reveal is why black activists could not make larger gains without changes to structural conditions.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, *The Search for American Political Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); Richard Bense, *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859–1877* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forgoing of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862–1928* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Richard F. Bense, *The Political Economy of American Industrialization, 1877–1900*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).

<sup>6</sup> Paul Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); V.O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1949); Richard Valelly, *The Two Reconstructions: The Struggle for Black Enfranchisement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Robert C. Liberman, *Shifting the Color Line: Race and the American Welfare State*

APD scholars studying the development of the long Civil Rights Movement have argued that external conditions such as World War II and the Cold War, and the death of King Cotton were necessary components to the crystallization of huge shifts in the political landscape. According to these scholars, WWII paved the way for black activism, as increasing attention on American segregation and racism placed race and democracy on the worldwide stage. Criticism and skepticism from other countries not only instigated activism by black soldiers but also put the U.S. on the defensive in justifying its own race relations.<sup>7</sup> Although the APD literature reveals the fact that insufficient structural conditions were in place during much of the twentieth century and stymied any progress for substantial advances by black Americans, without prior experience in organizing grassroots movements, blacks would not have been able to capitalize on the structural changes in the manner in which they did. Therefore, there is a need to excavate the cases of local black activism before structural conditions changed to show the tools, methods, and strategies that were in practice when opportunities opened up.

In bringing to focus a community-level analysis, we learn that local activism was indeed present in black communities before the massive gains of the mainstream Civil Rights Movement. Some cases of local activism can be especially instructive and have not been fully exploited to build a more comprehensive narrative of the limits and

---

(Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1998); Edward G. Carmines and James A. Stimson, *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Suzanne Mettler, *Dividing Citizens: Gender and Federalism in New Deal Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> Philip Klinkner and Rogers Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1999); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Robin D.G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working class* (New York: Macmillan, 1994).

promise of local activism and the conditions that needed to be met to bring forward larger gains. This project seeks to contribute an additional piece to this growing area of scholarly inquiry and aims to fill in the gap of what we know from community-level studies and APD analyses. Building a bridge between community-level studies and institutional analyses also reveals what later activists inherited by way of experiences, successes and failures, methods of mobilization, strategies and tactics, and institutional partnerships that bolstered their efforts when structural changes took hold.

The main research question of this dissertation is: When did local black activists develop a proper fit between their existing resources, their mode of engagement on an issue, and the political environment in which they found themselves? In the same thread as Skocpol's finding that white clubwomen found innovative ways to penetrate bureaucracies by finding a complementary fit between their method of organizing and the institutional windows available to them, this dissertation is focused on understanding when and how local black activists found a proper fit to launch successful campaigns, and the limits that held them from launching bigger agendas. In addition to understanding how black activists developed proper fits to launch their campaigns, this project also asks how disadvantaged groups make use of existing resources to build new resources to bolster their chances for successful campaigns; how they build expertise; and how the structure of organizing hinders or expands outcomes for political success.

## **2. What the Literature Tells Us**

Several students of political participation and mobilization investigate the relationship between political inequalities and political behavior.<sup>8</sup> Scholars of black politics have devoted particular attention to the relationship between racial disparities and

---

<sup>8</sup> Throughout this dissertation, the terms "black" and "African American" are used interchangeably.



participation rates, racial consciousness, and racial attitudes.<sup>9</sup> The starting point for most studies in political science on black political participation begins with the 1965 Voting Rights Act.<sup>10</sup> Research using data from the later part of the twentieth century has also shown that African Americans become more involved in local politics when they are able to develop interracial coalitions and bargain for improvements in local goods and services.<sup>11</sup> Consistent throughout the literature on contemporary urban politics is the finding that African Americans have succeeded in making inroads in local-level politics.<sup>12</sup> While helpful in explaining contemporary politics, these frameworks also invite investigation of whether these models hold up over time and if African Americans have historically behaved differently at the local level.

Early studies of African American political behavior in the pre–Civil Rights North offer preliminary indications that African Americans were active in politics in

---

<sup>9</sup> Further discussions are found in: Henry E. Brady, Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, “Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (June 1995), pp. 271–294; Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry Brady, Norman H. Nie, “Race, Ethnicity and Political Resources: Participation in the United States,” *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (Oct., 1993), pp. 453–497. Kinder, Donald R. and Lynn M. Sanders, *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). Katherine Tate, *From Protest to Politics: The New Black Voters in American Elections* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Michael Dawson, *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Melissa Harris-Lacewell, *Barbershops, Bibles, and BET: Everyday Talk and Black Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Katherine Tate, *From Protest to Politics: The New Black Voters in American Elections* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* (New York: Macmillan, 1993); Patricia Gurin., S. Hatchett & J. S. Jackson, *Hope and Independence: Blacks’ Response to Electoral and Party Politics* (NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> Rufus P. Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb, “Protest Is Not Enough: A Theory of Political Incorporation,” *PS*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Summer, 1986), pp. 576–581.

<sup>12</sup> Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946–1988* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989); Rufus Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb, *Protest Is Not Enough: The Struggle of Blacks and Hispanics for Equality in Urban Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Keith Reeves, *Voting Hopes or Fears? White Voters, Black Candidates and Racial Politics in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Katherine Tate, *From Protest to Politics: The New Black Voters in American Elections* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Katherine Tate, *Black Faces in the Mirror: African Americans and Their Representatives in the U.S. Congress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

cities. DuBois, Gosnell, and Drake and Cayton offered keen insight into the strength of political machines in accumulating the black vote in Northern cities.<sup>13</sup> Through this literature, we learn detailed accounts of the strong organizing roots of the black middle class. In cities such as Chicago and Philadelphia, newly enfranchised African Americans were joining the NAACP and Urban League, becoming members of fraternal societies at records speeds, and planning efforts to gain influence at the local level. While this literature has painted a fuller picture of how blacks behaved politically once they moved on to new opportunities in the urbanized North, less explored among social scientists is how newly migrated blacks behaved politically when they moved to cities outside the solid North.

### **Political Participation and Mobilization: Classic Theories**

The participation literature generally falls into four categories: explaining who participates, determining factors that lead to participatory behavior, explaining why disparities occur, and investigating how people participate. According to Rosenstone and Hansen: “Participation is action directed explicitly toward influencing the distribution of social goods and social values.”<sup>14</sup> Other classic accounts of voting participation posit a rational choice model to explain voting participation—in these models, the cost of voting does not outweigh the benefits and a single vote makes a small mark on the actual

---

<sup>13</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, *Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), Harold Gosnell, *Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935); St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York: Harper Row, 1962).

<sup>14</sup> Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* (New York: Macmillan, 1993).

outcome. From this perspective, people vote because it makes them feel good and provides a sense of duty.<sup>15</sup>

Of course, political participation extends beyond the voting booth. Different modes of participation include: participating in campaign activities, contacting a government official individually or with a group, signing a petition, participating in a rally or boycott, and donating money.<sup>16</sup> Scholars of voter mobilization have shown that people participate because they become mobilized and usually have an incentive to participate; they want to be part of the group or perhaps have a stake on the outcome.<sup>17</sup> So who is mobilized and who participates? Many have illustrated that people participate because they have resources. The most important of these are institutional resources and socioeconomic resources. Socioeconomic resources include education and income; income generally increases with education, and those with the most education tend to participate the most on average.<sup>18</sup> Because education influences an individual's propensity to participate, women and minorities tend to participate less than white males. Drawing on the work of classical frameworks of political participation, recent studies have found that resources acquired in nonpolitical institutions such as the workplace, church, and voluntary organizations are also key determinants of levels of participation. People learn how to give presentations, talk to strangers on the phone, work among a group, and write memos at work. If people choose to get involved with church activities

---

<sup>15</sup> Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper Publishers, 1957), Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993.

<sup>16</sup> Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

<sup>17</sup> Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* (New York: Macmillan, 1993).

<sup>18</sup> Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

or voluntary organizations, they may mobilize others to join their cause, organize and attend meetings, make phone calls, or write letters.

Those who have few socioeconomic resources do not always get a chance to acquire certain institutional resources, such as workplace skills.<sup>19</sup> Having the necessary skills and resources is not an automatic ticket to participating, though. People have to be engaged and interested if they are going to devote their time. For example, Burns, Schlozman, and Verba found that women are not always engaged in politics because some perceive politics as a man's world. However, they have shown that when women are represented in politics, female citizens become more engaged.<sup>20</sup>

### **Black Political Participation**

Contemporary discussions of race and participation have mostly analyzed why African Americans participate differently and at different rates than whites do.<sup>21</sup> Although wide-scale studies of political participation have shown convincingly that education and income are key predictors of participation, studies also revealed that when socioeconomic status is controlled, blacks participate equally to whites.<sup>22</sup> Much of the work in political behavior found that race consciousness was also a key factor motivating blacks to vote beyond their socioeconomic status.<sup>23</sup> More recent studies have examined

---

<sup>19</sup> Nancy Burns and Kay Lehman Schlozman, *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Hanes Walton, *Invisible Politics: Black Political Behavior* (Albany: University of Albany Press, 1985); Katherine Tate, *From Protest to Politics: The New Black Voters in American Elections* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); Michael Dawson, *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African American Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

<sup>22</sup> Lawrence Bobo and Franklin D. Gilliam, "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment," 1990. *The American Political Science Review*, 84: 377-393; Katherine Tate, *From Protest to Politics: The New Black Voters in American Elections* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

<sup>23</sup> Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

the role of political context in black political behavior—namely how the emergence of black political candidates relates to political trust, engagement, and participation. This literature illustrates that a viable black candidate can spur mobilization efforts, and that given the context, black voters have been strategic in using nonvoting as a tool to express discontent.<sup>24</sup> Drawing on the work of black political incorporation at the local level, Bobo and Gilliam argue that blacks who live in “high empowerment” areas, as measured by black political representation at the local level, participate more than their white counterparts do in the same localities<sup>25</sup>. Their work looks specifically to local politics and opens up questions about how black politics may operate differently at the local level and about change over time in the political development of black politics.

Early studies of black political behavior can be traced to the works of Bunche, Key, Gosnell, and Drake and Cayton. Several analyses of black political participation before the Civil Rights Movement offer accounts of an anemic black polity and nearly nonexistent participation. Bunche and Key’s seminal studies highlighted that opportunities for black political participation were weak and virtually impossible because of one-party rule and rampant political intimidation across the Black Belt.<sup>26</sup> In most of these accounts, places where black Republicans were active in local politics are given consideration when analyzing Southern blacks because black Republicans did some work at mobilizing and brokering patronage. According to Hanes Walton, in cities where one-party rule was less oppressive, Black and Tan Republicans worked primarily at the state

---

<sup>24</sup> Katherine Tate, *From Protest to Politics: The New Black Voters in American Elections* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

<sup>25</sup> Lawrence Bobo and Franklin D. Gilliam, “Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment,” 1990. *The American Political Science Review*, 84: 377–393.

<sup>26</sup> Ralph Bunche, *The Political Status of the Negro in the Age of FDR* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1973), V. O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1984).

and national level, although he cautions that they should not be considered influential to the local politics of African Americans:

In some localities, indeed, the Black and Tan organizations became merely self-seeking groups with no concern for the welfare of the Black community. Because the Black and Tan leaders had no constituencies, like the lily-whites, they became primarily presidential rather than local groups . . . . Politicians are generally more concerned with getting elected and re-elected than with the promotion of social, economical, and racial justice, and the Black and Tans were politicians first and Blacks second.<sup>27</sup>

Literature on African American political participation outside the North painted a bleak picture for good reason—lynch mobs were rampant, the white primary ruled, and racial history of the region is clearly sordid. However, the landscape of black political behavior may be a bit more nuanced than previously analyzed. For example, we know that in large cities like Chicago, black politics was exceptionally alive, and in places like Mississippi, acts of politics were physically threatening and few and far between.

### **Social Movements Theories**

Some inside and others outside of political science have devoted a great deal of research to social movements. Social movement scholars contemplate how disadvantaged groups act on their grievances. The important questions center on how movements come to be, how they are sustained, and what leads to their success.<sup>28</sup> This literature teaches us that disadvantaged groups often have few resources and little institutional power to bring

---

<sup>27</sup> Hanes Walton, *Black Republicans the politics of the Black and Tans* (Metuchen NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1975) , p. 46.

<sup>28</sup> Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: The Free Press, 1984); Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Poor People’s Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995); John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory,” *American Journal of Sociology* (82)6:1212–1241, 1977; William A. Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1975).

to bear on the political system. However, political activism can occur when socially and politically disadvantaged groups have a “package” of resources and can connect themselves to a political opportunity. Tilly argues that insurgent groups rely on a repertoire or a collection of strategies and tactics that are unique to their situation.<sup>29</sup> Resources are bundled in various combinations depending on the context, and marginalized groups evaluate their environment and opportunities, applying resources and strategies to position themselves strategically to advance their goals.<sup>30</sup>

Scholars interested in social movements generally agree that three actors are present: the aggrieved group, bargaining elites, and officials that make sure that change is enforced. For instance, Meyer and Tarrow argue that social movements “are best defined as collective challenges to existing arrangements of power and distribution by people with common purposes and solidarity, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities.”<sup>31</sup> Classical social movement theorists argue that groups that endure strain or discontent eventually reach a threshold and their psychological response results in the sparking of a social movement. To many classical theorists, social movements erupt and do not evolve.

Other classical theorists believe that resources are directly connected to a group’s ability to coordinate and execute a mass movement. Dahl succinctly argues that “whenever a group of people believe that they are adversely affected by national policies or are about to be, they generally have extensive opportunities for presenting their case

---

<sup>29</sup> Charles Tilly, “Repertoires of Contention in America and Britain, 1750–1830,” in Mayer Zald and John D. McCarthy, eds., *The Dynamics of Social Movements: Resource Mobilization Social Control, and Tactics* (Lanham, NY: University Press, 1979).

<sup>31</sup> David Meyer, and Sidney Tarrow. *The Social Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century*. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), p. 4.

and for negotiations that may produce a more acceptable alternative.”<sup>32</sup> In Dahl’s perspective, everyone has an opportunity to tap into some method of change and can effectively negotiate with a third party. Building on classical theories, resource mobilization theorists take the idea of discontent further in explaining that opportunities can only crystallize if individuals put their resources into action—in order for movements to develop and operate, resources such as time, money, and organizational capacities must be present. According to resource mobilization theorists, social movements do not form because strained groups are subject to a cathartic psychological experience, but that strain and discontent are always present and relatively stable over time. Discontent is cumulative and can wax or wane; movements arise because resources become available to otherwise unorganized groups.<sup>33</sup>

Proponents of resource mobilization theory contend that resources aggregate and disaggregate over time—money, time, and physical space change as time goes by and movement formation occurs when the strained group can physically act on their condition. As McCarthy and Zald note, “because resources are necessary for engagement in social conflict, they must be aggregated for collective purposes...resource aggregation requires some minimal form of organization.”<sup>34</sup> Political scientists studying political participation look directly to resources to determine how an individual will behave. Resources play a prominent role in the way we come to understand how an average person becomes politically engaged. In the political behavior literature, we look to

---

<sup>32</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 23.

<sup>33</sup> Craig J. Jenkins and Charles Perrow, “Insurgency of the Powerless: Farm Worker Movements (1946–1972),” *American Sociological Review* 42(2):249–268, 1977.

<sup>34</sup> John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory,” *American Journal of Sociology* (82), p. 1216, 1977,



education and income to explain political engagement, whether or not people will vote, participate in a rally, sign a petition, and contribute money to a campaign.

A key element and possibly a weakness of resource mobilization theory is that disadvantaged groups accumulate resources via a third party. According to Jenkins and Perrow, “Collective action is rarely a viable option because of lack of resources and the threat of repression....When deprived groups do mobilize, it is due to the interjection of external resources.”<sup>35</sup> Gamson echoes this account and claims that the interests of disadvantaged groups are “organized out” of institutional processes because they lack bargaining power. When studying political activity among disadvantaged groups, we must consider the repertoire of resources that disadvantaged groups may hold before we conclude that advancement is solely the result of bargaining with an external elite.<sup>36</sup> Although disadvantaged groups may appear to be the political underdogs, resources of all kinds often play a key role in mobilization and movement strategies.

Charles Payne’s detailed analysis of the Mississippi Freedom summer found that the absence of external meddling enabled voter education schools to thrive. We learn that individuals removed from the economic power structure were able to create safe havens and organizational space for insurgents and were key to the movement’s success. Payne reveals a more complex arrangement of resource mobilization by showing that resources fostered within the disadvantaged group can be advantageous, because external actors may weaken movement progress.<sup>37</sup> Charles Tilly also brings to light the importance of resources in crafting tactics and strategies that are specific to the aggrieved group.

---

<sup>35</sup> Craig J. Jenkins and Charles Perrow, “Insurgency of the Powerless: Farm Worker Movements (1946–1972),” *American Sociological Review* 42(2), p. 251, 1977.

<sup>36</sup> William A. Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1975).

<sup>37</sup> Charles Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

According to Tilly, “Particular times, places, and populations have their own repertoires of collective action....”<sup>38</sup> Repertoires are distinct because they are fashioned separately by groups and molded and reshaped depending on context. For example, Southern blacks had a repertoire that consisted of black church resources and communication networks among domestic workers; Southern whites, on the other hand, did not create the same toolbox of cultural tactics and strategies. Also important to Tilly’s understanding of repertoires is that they vary in how effective they are. According to him, groups with a limited repertoire (i.e., a sparse toolbox) are in turn limited in how effective their group can be—they are limited in the nature of their activities and the effectiveness of their tactics. Last, Tilly believes that every group is faced with the decision of whether to use indigenous tactics that they are most familiar with or to create new tactics.

In Payne’s analysis, Southern blacks employed a specific repertoire of familiar tactics—beauticians, funeral directors, and everyday street hustlers were key actors in keeping communication networks thriving and providing organizations with space separate and apart from white spaces.<sup>39</sup> In Skocpol’s work, leaders employed tactics learned in the settlement house movement and with their women’s clubs to project a politics of motherhood that convinced male policymakers and was unique to the experiences learned in a gender segregated space. In Skocpol’s work, women recognized that white male policymakers had a certain reverence for motherhood and women’s work, and strategically positioned themselves as mothers and not as social agitators. Likewise,

---

<sup>38</sup> Charles Tilly, “Repertoires of Contention in America and Britain, 1750–1830,” in Mayer Zald and John D. McCarthy, eds., *The Dynamics of Social Movements: Resource Mobilization Social Control, and Tactics* (Lanham, NY: University Press, 1979).

<sup>39</sup> Charles Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

the hairdressers and local street hustlers in Payne's account maneuvered under the radar and integrated their political activity into their everyday life of African Americans in Mississippi.

We can better understand the relationship between institutional political opportunities and social movements by looking at the work of Theda Skocpol. Theda Skocpol introduces an institutional approach to explain that individual resources alone do not fully explain how citizens participate. In what she calls a structured polity approach, Skocpol argues that institutional change occurs when a group has the political opportunity to operate within an institutional niche.<sup>40</sup> In her case, white clubwomen had the opportunity to become bureaucrats in the emerging gendered social policy arena. Prior to women's suffrage, politicians were uncertain about the looming political power of a women's voting block and were more amenable to their political requests. White clubwomen also had the necessary resources to take advantage of their opportunity: They were educated, were trained social workers currently engaged in public interest work, and were members of federated women's clubs that stretched from small Midwestern towns to national headquarters. Skocpol's research not only established that federated civic associations have the potential to strongly influence policymaking via lobbying and networking but also highlighted how everyday people with the necessary tools can take advantage of opportunities within government institutions.<sup>41</sup>

An important lesson learned from the social movement literature is that the movement is dependent on the structure of politics as well as the ability to bargain with

---

<sup>40</sup> Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

<sup>41</sup> Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

elite actors. According to Doug McAdam, black insurgency during the Civil Rights Movement was a result of slowly simmering political opportunities and not of a sudden catalyst. He counts the Great Migration, the death of King Cotton, and the strengthening of black organizations as political opportunities that allowed social movement activity to develop. In this framework, several factors are crucial to the development of social insurgency, including: organizational readiness, insurgent consciousness, and a restructuring of political opportunities.<sup>42</sup>

Although much of the social movement literature deals with national movements, the key components of resources, bargaining power, and political opportunities can easily be applied to local politics. Jack Walker's work on Atlanta in the early sixties sheds light on how a local story of social movement activity differs from a national one. Walker and McAdam study the same movement, but Walker's local focus opens intricate discoveries. Walker finds that blacks Atlantans agreed on the goal of dismantling Jim Crow but differed on tactics.<sup>43</sup> Conservative blacks pushed for bargaining with white officials, whereas liberal blacks favored boycotts and protest.<sup>44</sup> Walker's work reveals the necessity to analyze local-level differences in how groups form strategies along with the heterogeneity imbedded in interest-group politics. McAdam also discusses dissention within black leadership, but his national analysis does not fully reveal the intricate stories of dissention at the local or regional level.

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Jack L. Walker, "Protest and Negotiation: A Case Study of Negro Leadership in Atlanta, Georgia," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 7(2): pp. 99–124, 1963.

<sup>44</sup> Jack L. Walker, "Protest and Negotiation: A Case Study of Negro Leadership in Atlanta, Georgia," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 7(2): pp. 99–124, 1963.

## **Black Institutions and Resources**

Gunnar Myrdal proclaimed that African Americans were hyper-involved in organizations.<sup>45</sup> Unlike whites, African Americans belonged to a collection of organizations that all had some motivation for improving racial conditions and/or opportunities for the disadvantaged. Historically, students of black politics have explained that black political participation must be studied alongside black organizations and institutions. A constant theme of almost any work on black politics is the argument that black institutions have been and remain the spine of any phenomena in black political behavior. Hanes Walton, W.E.B. DuBois, Harold Gosnell, and Drake and Cayton all hail the importance of the church, the independent black press, racial uplift organizations, and fraternal organizations in black politics. However, the most complete studies of black institutions center on either Northern cases or the inner workings of the Civil Rights era. For example, we learn that black institutions were key components that enabled black political influence in Chicago in the early twentieth century and that Southern blacks in Mississippi utilized informal and formal institutions to covertly mobilize during the heat of the Civil Rights Movement.<sup>46</sup> The obvious gap in the literature is the scarcity of studies on the role of black institutions in political life in multiple cities in the early twentieth century.

The precise reasons why black institutions such as the church, secret societies, black-owned businesses, and race uplift organizations were the basis of black politics are because every one of these institutions provided a safe space where ideas could be

---

<sup>45</sup> Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper Publishers, 1944).

<sup>46</sup> Harold Gosnell. *Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935); Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

generated and mobilization could occur without the presence of the white power structure. Black institutions were segregated in their own right and were places free of meddling from outsiders who were not committed to their cause. Further, black institutions allowed a space to challenge white supremacy because they were segregated. Whites did not attend black churches, were not widespread readers of black newspapers, and were not members of local black organizations—the imposed segregation of black institutions protected their politics and opened a space for mobilization to occur. African American institutions served an enormous role in teaching democratic principles and providing participatory tools that were later executed through formal politics. Black institutions were the places where African Americans were kept abreast of the political and social happenings of the day. It was the institutions that encouraged the vote, the rallies, and the petitions, be it through the pulpit, in a grassroots organization, or on the pages of the black press. Concepts of democracy and equality were foremost in black institutions, and an ideology of racial uplift was echoed in many organizations.

Recent historical monographs provide examples of political activism and participation occurring in unexpected places in the Jim Crow South. For example, in Ortiz's account, local black institutions in Florida crafted strategies and were extremely tactical in organizing voter registration drives at the local level and encouraging the vote on certain municipal matters.<sup>47</sup> The resulting mobilization drives often confused white elected officials, and the source of mobilization was generally never pinned down. As a result, black institutions had opportunities to do political work even if the institution was

---

<sup>47</sup> Paul Ortiz, "Eat Your Bread Without Butter, but Pay Your Poll Tax!" in *Time Longer Than Rope: A Century of African American Activism, 1850–1950*, ed. Charles M. Payne and Adam Green (New York: NYU Press, 2003).

not explicitly political in nature or in purpose. The real strength of black institutions came from the tradition of crosscutting memberships.

As Myrdal so accurately noticed, African Americans belonged to a plethora of organizations working toward similar goals. This means that in cities across the country, African Americans were members of multiple organizations in small localities. For example, a single individual might have been a general member in one organization, a secretary for their church auxiliary, and the treasurer of their fraternal organization. The concentration of leadership roles culminated in the building of a diverse political toolkit for many African Americans. The skills accumulated in each organizational role taught varying and useful political skills such as voting, rallying, letter writing, public speaking, and fundraising.

As Skocpol highlights, “The existence of more lodges in relation to any given size of population meant that black men and women not only had more opportunities for social intercourse; they also enjoyed extra opportunities to learn and exercise organizational skills by serving on working committees and holding officerships in fraternal organizations.”<sup>48</sup> In cities outside the North, fraternal organizations introduced organizational and political skills to all classes and offered resources previously afforded only to the middle class. Fraternal organizations broke class barriers by including poor blacks and also pushed on gender constraints with the presence of female fraternal orders.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Theda Skocpol, Arian Liazos, and Marshall Ganz, *What a Mighty Power We Can Be: African American Fraternal Groups and the Struggle for Racial Equality* (Princeton: Princeton Press, 2006).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid; Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*, (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

The web of black institutions stretching from fraternal orders to the black church, and organizations such as the NAACP allowed racial uplift work to operate in multiple arenas with varying levels of influence and exposure to white power structures. Secret societies and the black church had limited exposure to the white power structure, and that anonymity was valuable in pulling together agendas and actors without the threat of co-optation or violence. Institutions with more exposure, such as the NAACP, utilized their status to build coalitions and navigate access to political institutions.

The NAACP is generally regarded as the epitome of black organization and institutional strength.<sup>50</sup> The 1930s were a tremendous period of growth for the organization, and local branches proliferated in places beyond the North. Nationwide, NAACP membership increased from approximately 18,000 to 156,000 from the late thirties to the end of WWII.<sup>51</sup> I argue that in places like Baltimore, the NAACP worked in innovative ways at the local level that had lasting impacts on the future legal and legislative battles forged in the 1950s and 1960s. For example, data from the papers of the NAACP reveal that in Baltimore, the local branch of the NAACP spent much of its time trying to (1) create coalitions and multilayered networks among various black organizations to build resources to fight for local causes and (2) worked consistently on local issues and not as much on the legal or national issues that were encouraged by the national office.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup>Myrdal gives high praise to the NAACP in *American Dilemma*. Although the organization was prominent and federated across the US, Myrdal's study seeks to give an aggregate and aerial view of black life in the U.S. Therefore, his analysis misses out on the smaller local organizations that did the bulk of the grassroots work at the local level.

<sup>51</sup> Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 141.

<sup>52</sup> Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Papers of the National Association of Colored People.



Black fraternal organizations were another realm of institutional strength in the black community. In cities across the United States, secret societies enabled covert political mobilization. Organizations such as the Knights of Pythias, Prince Hall Masons, and the Easter Star had abundant membership rolls. Leaders of secret societies and fraternal organizations could effectively order their members to register to vote, pay their poll taxes, and cast their vote for a particular candidate.<sup>53</sup> Fraternal orders are further evidence of the bundling and interconnectedness of black organizations and institutions. Lodges run by black women and men had expansive membership rolls. Executive leadership from the NAACP were members of lodges, as were reverends and pastors, sorority leaders, and everyday people. As such, there is evidence that fraternal orders worked alongside and in tandem with other organizations. Donations moved between fraternal orders and larger racial uplift organizations such as the NAACP, resulting in the formation of an extensive web of black institutional resources that became a presence both inside and outside the public eye.<sup>54</sup>

### **3. The Argument**

Again, this dissertation helps to explain how and when black activists developed a proper fit to launch campaigns for local racial change. By “fit,” this project is concerned with how black activists made use of their organizational and institutional resources, their political environment, and their method of engaging and mobilizing on an issue to find ways to make political gains. Black Baltimoreans made real gains, but these gains were

---

<sup>53</sup> Paul Ortiz, “Eat Your Bread Without Butter, but Pay Your Poll Tax!” in *Time Longer Than Rope: A Century of African American Activism, 1850–1950*, ed. Charles M. Payne and Adam Green (New York: NYU Press, 2003).

<sup>54</sup> Theda Skocpol, Arian Liazos, and Marshall Ganz, *What a Mighty Power We Can Be: African American Fraternal Groups and the Struggle for Racial Equality* (Princeton: Princeton Press, 2006).

limited and did not wholeheartedly transform black Baltimore. Transformational changes would be ushered in years later as structural conditions opened up and political representation at the federal, state, and local level brought a new face to black politics, bringing a new era with new challenges and agendas.

This project takes on Baltimore, Maryland, from roughly 1920–1944, and situates the analysis in what scholars have often described as the nadir of black political activity—a time sandwiched between the rapid rise and fall of Reconstruction-era black political advances and the modern racial gains culminating from the 1950s and 1960s. I chose the 1920–1944 time period for this project because (1) the interwar period preceded historic political and social changes in American politics and (2) because since this project is interested in the nature of black activism, it was important to analyze a period in which black organizations were fully functioning. This project ends at roughly 1944 because by then black Baltimoreans had participated in the Annapolis march and had set in motion the Governor’s Commission to Study the Problems Affecting Colored People, which addressed the grievances expressed over several decades and launched the agenda that would shape the local contemporary Civil Rights agenda.

I argue that black activism flourished during this period and that activists were able to pass along a set of strategies and a method of building interwoven networks and overlapping networks in meaningful ways. Black activists in Baltimore developed detailed interwoven networks, and at times, doing so enabled them to lessen the collective action problem and communicate clear messages to a varied audience with consistent strategies. Further, this project makes an argument for the limits of black activism and the impediments to substantive change. Institutional barriers such as weak

political influence and minimal or absent political representation limited black campaigns to single issues rather than substantive system change. Although black activists did make attempts at widespread system change, I will discuss cases where they were most successful when crafting their expertise and placing their resources into a single issue that did not call for reverberating change to Baltimore politics. Last, it is important to note that the actors in this project are mostly middle-class activists. The main voices in each of the cases discussed in this project were middle-class, positioning this analysis within a class construct that had bearing on ideological frameworks, tactics utilized, and the agendas advanced. The cases discussed in future chapters pay close attention to how cross-class versus middle-class coalitions played out and how activists compiled their resources and tactics to find a successful fit to push for their gains.

#### **4. Case Selection and Research Design**

##### **Case Research**

In determining cases to be included for this project, I first conducted a complete scan of articles in the *Baltimore Afro-American* that made mention of strictly local issues. I scanned all available editorial pages and headlines from 1920–1945 in the newspaper, searched available historical databases, and followed leads from potential articles and secondary literature. The *Baltimore Afro-American* was one of the most prominent black newspapers in the country, ranking third in circulation behind the *Pittsburgh Courier* and *Chicago Defender* in 1935, and it grew to a circulation of 154,511 by 1942.<sup>55</sup> Much like other prominent black newspapers of its time, the *Afro-American* was the central and

---

<sup>55</sup> Hayward Farrar, *See What the Afro Says: The Afro-American, 1892–1950* (PhD dissertation, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983, pp 42–48). Other prominent black newspapers grew in the 1940s, however, the *Afro-American* continued to rank amongst the top in the country.

most influential mouthpiece on all social and political concerns in Baltimore and reported broadly on race relations across the country and internationally.<sup>56</sup>

**Table 1.1: Baltimore Afro-American Circulation Nationwide and Internationally, 1938<sup>57</sup>**

| City/Region  | Circulation |
|--|-------------|
| New England  | 3,626       |
| New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania                 | 10,019      |
| Philadelphia                                       | 12,372      |
| Baltimore  | 21,497      |
| Washington, DC                                     | 16,557      |
| Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina | 11,350      |
| Other states, Canada, International                | 5,929       |
| <b>Total Circulation: 81,485</b>                   |             |

In addition, I conducted research at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Library of Congress to collect material on the Baltimore NAACP and its relationship with the national office of the NAACP. Specifically, the research focused on local branch papers, administrative staff correspondence, annual reports, financial reports, special correspondence files, field secretary files, and campaign files. This data provided substantive clues to the larger story of the building of Baltimore’s black organizing tradition, the actors involved, the agenda setting, and the conflicts and tensions between the national office and the local branch.

This project also made extensive use of the Urban League archives held at the Library of Congress. In particular, archival material for annual reports, research

---

<sup>56</sup> Henry Lewis Suggs, *The Black Press in the Middle West, 1865–1985* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996).

<sup>57</sup> Hayward Farrar, *See What the Afro Says: The Afro-American, 1892–1950* (PhD dissertation, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983), p. 48.

department files, Baltimore Urban League records, and community department files were crucial to rounding out the story of activism that included partnerships with working-class labor groups. This project has also made full use of the private family archives of the Mitchell family—members of the Mitchell family represent key actors in this project. The Library of Congress holds a limited selection of records from the Mitchell family; however, this project includes records that are not publicly available. Research at the Mitchell family archives included a complete scan of records from Florence Snowden, Clarence Mitchell, Juanita Jackson Mitchell, Lillie Jackson, and Virginia Kiah. These archival records were crucial to data collected on the City-Wide Young People's Forum and neighborhood associations. Further, personal letters were invaluable to building a stronger narrative of the personal and familial networks embedded in Baltimore's organizing tradition.

Research for this project also included a complete scan of archival records of Sharp Street Memorial Church papers and the papers of Edward Lewis, both housed at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Additional research on state and local governmental records was conducted at the Enoch Pratt Library, the New York Public Library, and the Baltimore City Archives. Unfortunately, several municipal records have not been properly preserved and that limited the availability of municipal materials. Last, this project made use of the records of the First Colored Directory of Baltimore City from 1919–1945, made available by the Maryland State Archives and Morgan State University.

This projects draws on archival and newspaper records for several reasons. Black newspapers and archival sources provide detailed accounts of how agendas came to the

surface, who was involved, what mobilization tactics were unleashed, and how activities unfolded. Articles and editorials from the *Afro-American* are particularly useful in tracing the evolution of discussion and discontent around a particular issue on a weekly basis, and provide a front-row seat to organizational activity because meeting announcements are posted along with detailed accounts of leadership and issues discussed. There are limitations and biases to drawing from the *Afro-American* for news coverage. For one, this project does not place accounts from the mainstream white newspapers into the analysis. There were distinct reasons for not relying on white newspaper accounts—white newspapers did not report on black organizational activity and did not have access to the inner workings of black activists because of segregation and the absence of black reporters. White newspapers could be useful if this project included an analysis of the reactions and organizational activities of whites in Baltimore, but this project is focused on detailed accounts of black activism, making the *Afro-American* a suitable choice for analysis.

Several factors motivated my decision to utilize archival records from the NAACP and Urban League. While admittedly the archival sources utilized have their own limits and biases, they also have tremendous value. First, archival records from the Baltimore NAACP offered the most abundant and accurate accounts of the organization. These records displayed personal correspondence and conflict, important information on memberships, and annual reports on branch activity. The NAACP papers revealed a rare glimpse into the day-to-day activities of black organizing in Baltimore and its nuances. The limitations inherent in the NAACP papers are the voices that are not represented. The NAACP papers provided information on high-level leadership and not general

members or those not involved in branch activities. Therefore, what is missing from this analysis from the data standpoint is information on those on the periphery or outside leadership circles, and we know little about their levels of political engagement. Although this is a clear limitation of utilizing NAACP records for this analysis, there are no strong alternative records that would provide information on those standing on the margins of organizational activities.

Records from the Urban League were chosen for this analysis because they provided information on social scientific studies of black Baltimore along with detailed summaries of yearly activities. Urban League records were also chosen because they included information on black labor activities, which stood in contrast to the NAACP records. However, there are also limitations to the Urban League records. Unlike the NAACP records and newspaper accounts, Urban League records do not show deliberations and correspondence among individuals about strategies and tactics or agendas. Lastly, this project also includes records from the private archives of the Mitchell family. These records were useful in researching the actual inner workings of black activists in Baltimore—and in particular, their personal correspondence and mobilization tactics. However, it is important to note that this data source has its own biases because it reflects the work of one particular family rather than multiple actors. Although the private archival material has its own biases, it does offer firsthand information from black actors centrally involved in black activism during this time and is an important source of information.

## Focus on Local Politics and Case Selection

Because this dissertation argues that black activists made incremental political gains prior to the textbook Civil Rights Movement, it is appropriate that the research focuses on local-level activism. We would be analyzing black activism in the wrong places if the focus was at the federal or even state level, where blacks had little practice and no political representation and influence. For example, if this project focused on how black activists maneuvered within Congress or worked with their respective state legislators, our data would be greatly limited, because very few blacks were in positions of power at these levels. Alternatively, blacks were organizing in large numbers at the local level and putting pressure on local officials. The windows of opportunity and action were situated at the local level, and local politics served as a training ground for later activism in different times.

Cases were chosen for this project based on the following criteria: (1) they were strictly local battles and were sparked and carried out by local groups, (2) they involved activism and were not primarily legal in strategy or desired outcome, and (3) the cases occurred in different time periods but were finite in their duration.

I chose cases that were local battles because the purpose of this project is to demonstrate how local people battled over local issues. Cases in surrounding areas or those that extended beyond Baltimore were omitted.<sup>58</sup> Secondly, I honed in on cases that

---

<sup>58</sup> For example, in the 1930s, Thurgood Marshall led the NAACP legal team in extending the teacher salary equalization fight to the counties surrounding Baltimore City. These cases were omitted from this analysis because a legal strategy was the primary mode of activism and secondly because the activity stretched beyond Baltimore. For a complete history of these efforts, see Mark Tushnet, *NAACP's Legal Strategy against Segregated Education, 1925–1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987)



sparked mass or group activism and involved some level of group organization.<sup>59</sup>

Although much of the activity was situated in the legal realm, the objective of this project is to describe how groups mobilized locally, and not the path to legal redress.<sup>60</sup> Lastly, I chose cases that did not persist for decades.<sup>61</sup> For one, this was a logistical consideration to ensure that this project included a robust sample of several cases rather than to focus in on one protracted battle. This case strategy is not meant to diminish the importance of tracing the development of legal battles in the development of racial policy. In fact, several recent studies have illuminated the importance of early legal strategies in the development of black activism.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> I defined group organization as efforts mounted by a group of individuals with a leadership and membership structure. Group size or tenure of activity was not a determinate.

<sup>60</sup> To glean a deeper understanding of longer protracted battles that were hinged in the legal realm, see the Enoch Pratt library case and efforts to break down the color barrier in hiring practices. “Library Case Victory Seen as Avenue for Opportunity,” *Afro-American*, October 20, 1945; “Council Head Didn’t Know of Library Discrimination,” *Afro-American*, April 29, 1933; “Afro Reporter First Applicant for City Library School,” *Afro-American*, August 30, 1930; “Race Bias Banned in Baltimore Library,” *Afro-American*, April 28, 1945

<sup>61</sup> For example, see the prolonged fight for black representation on the local school board. My investigation of cases for this project revealed that black Baltimoreans fought for black school board representation from roughly 1920 to 1944 when a black school board member was appointed. To trace the decades long push for black representation on the school board see: “Will Not Commit: Mayor Tells Delegation That his Appointment to School Board Will Satisfy Colored Voters,” *Afro-American*, January 16, 1920; “A Superintendent of Colored Schools,” *Afro-American*, February 25, 1921; “The School Board,” *Afro-American*, March 22, 1930; “School Board Voted Down Strayer Recommendation for Real Head of Colored Schools,” *Afro-American*, May 12, 1922; “The School Board’s Jim Crow Reception to Teachers,” *Afro-American*, May 11, 1935; “School Shake-Up 10 Years Late,” *Afro-American*, June 30, 1934; “On School Board,” *Afro-American*, May 25, 1944; “Broening Balks at Negro Appointment,” *Afro-American*, April 26, 1930; “Mrs. Bauernschmidt Urges Uniformed Colored Police, Member on School Board,” *Afro-American*, May 9, 1942; “Mayor Repeats City Not Ready for Board Member,” *Afro-American*, March 28, 1942; “Mayor Names White Man to School Board,” *Afro-American*, May 17, 1941. Also, the lobby for black representation on city school boards was not isolated to Baltimore city with evidence that similar efforts were waged in other cities. For example, see: “On Chi School Board,” *Afro-American*, August 15, 1942; “D.C. School Board Member,” *Afro-American*, January 30, 1943.

<sup>62</sup> For a fuller analysis of the law in relation to the development of race policy in the United States see: Vesla M. Weaver, “Frontlash: Race and the Development of Punitive Crime Policy,” *Studies in American Political Development*, 21 (Fall 2007), 230-265; Megan Ming Frances, *Crime and Citizenship: The NAACP’s Campaign to End Racial Violence, 1909-1923* (dissertation Princeton University, 2008).

A total nine cases were chosen for analysis in this project:

- The Urban League's campaign to eradicate disease and clean up the "Lung Block;"
- Activism by neighborhood associations to remove taverns from black neighborhoods;
- The joint *Afro-American* and Urban League campaign to expand the city's playground system for black children;
- The Citizens Committee for Justice's mass march on Annapolis and their efforts to fight police brutality against blacks;
- The Monumental Golf Club's activism to desegregate city golf courses;
- Activism on behalf of black city council members for black political appointments;
- "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" activism launched by the City-Wide Young People's Forum;
- Urban League efforts to desegregate employment sectors;
- Organizational activism around the fight to equalize the salaries of black teachers

The cases chosen for this project vary by the type of organization carrying out the work, class dimension, and nature of effort. It was important to compare cases by the type of organization, because different groups had unique habits of organizing and constraints on their resources and mobilization abilities. These cases also vary in whether they were marked by middle-class or cross-class activism to show how different ideologies and actors involved approached and attempted different tactics and agendas. Last, in researching the cases for this project, it became clear that they fell into three specific issue domains. During the period analyzed, black activists in Baltimore primarily organized around social welfare, antidiscrimination, and employment.

**Table 1.2: Case Selection**

| <b>Type of Organization</b> | <b>Middle-Class Activism</b>       | <b>Cross-Class Activism</b>                      | <b>Issue Domain</b> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Federated                   | <b>Lung Block</b>                  |  | Social welfare      |
| Grassroots                  |                                    | <b>Anti-tavern fights</b>                        | Social welfare      |
| Federated                   | <b>Playground expansion</b>        |  | Social welfare      |
| Grassroots                  |                                    | <b>Police brutality</b>                          | Anti-discrimination |
| Hybrid federated            | <b>Golf course desegregation</b>   |  | Anti-discrimination |
| Formal politics             | <b>Constable appointments</b>      |  | Employment          |
| Grassroots                  |                                    | <b>“Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” campaign</b> | Employment          |
| Federated                   |                                    | <b>Urban League employment campaigns</b>         | Employment          |
| Grassroots                  | <b>Teacher salary equalization</b> |  | Employment          |

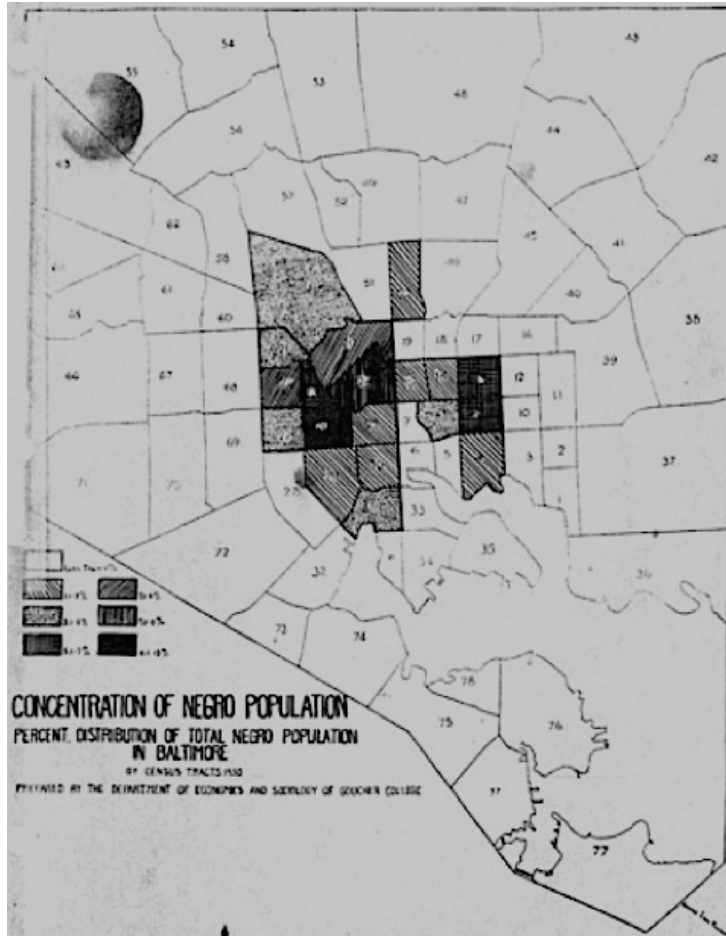
## Choice of Baltimore

This dissertation project presents an in-depth case study of the local black politics of Baltimore, Maryland, from roughly 1920–1945. Baltimore presents an interesting case because it was highly organized and was home to key black institutions, and it had a substantial black population compared to other border cities. Since this project is concerned with understanding the limits and successes of black activism before political opportunities opened up, Baltimore presents an interesting city because it embodied both Southern and Northern characteristics. Like other African Americans in some Southern and border cities, African Americans in Baltimore could vote at the local level and participated in voting drives. However, Baltimore had a separate institutionalized “colored” school system, but did not have segregated public transportation; Baltimore had no formal institutionalized Jim Crow legislation at the local level, but blacks were banned from department store floors, and white-only signs were intermittently located throughout the city. By 1910, a residential segregation ordinance was passed in Baltimore. This effort was initiated to exclude middle-class blacks from moving to certain blocks in the northwest section of the city, and what ensued was a heated legal battle lead by the local NAACP. In the end, the ordinance was rife with implementation challenges, but white homeowners continued to harass potential black residents.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Stephen Grant Meyer, *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door: Segregation And Racial Conflict in American Neighborhoods*. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

**Figure 1.1: Map of Baltimore and Concentration of Black Population, 1930<sup>64</sup>**



Recent attention on the contemporary politics of Baltimore has generated increased curiosity about the city. However, scholars have noted that studies are scant, and important lessons can be learned from Baltimore.

Yet as a city in-between North and South, it has rarely received the historical attention it deserves. Other cities in the Northeast and Midwest have been used for case studies of industrial growth—New York, Boston, Pittsburg, Milwaukee, and Detroit to name a few. Southern history has focused more upon the plantation economy: Urban studies have been less prevalent. Baltimore, therefore, has become something of a historiographical orphan.”<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> “Concentration of Negro Population: Percent Distribution of Total Negro Population in Baltimore by Census Tracts 1930.” Prepared by the Department of Economics and Sociology of Goucher College. Urban League Papers, Series 6, I: F Box 84, Research Department.

<sup>65</sup> Robert S. Wolff, “Racial Imaginings: Schooling and Society in Industrial Baltimore, 1860–1920” (PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1998), p. 44.

Scholars have investigated the local politics of African Americans in other border cities, and several important studies have focused on the development of black politics in Northern cities prior to the mainstream Civil Rights era.<sup>66</sup> There are indeed limitations to studying Baltimore—this project does not analyze the development of activism in the solid South, where a hostile political environment might have shaped different forms of activism and institutional constraints. In a similar respect, studying Baltimore looks different from what one may find in a bustling Northern city—Northern cities tended to blaze the trail for black political office-holding and incorporation during the interwar period. What makes Baltimore unique is what most scholars have coined its “in-betweenness” as a city with pieces of Southern mores and a Northern political economy.

Barbara Fields argued that as early as the nineteenth century, Baltimore and the state of Maryland in general was an important place occupying the “middle ground.” According to Fields, Maryland was different than other border states because of its bifurcated political economy.<sup>67</sup> The coastal areas of the state—mainly the Eastern Shore—were based on the slave economy, and Baltimore served as a major economic and

---

<sup>66</sup> Harold Gosnell, *Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935); St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York: Harper Row, 1962); Earl Lewis, *In Their Own Interests: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth-Century Norfolk, Virginia*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Joe William Trotter, *Black Milwaukee: the Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915–45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Kimberley L. Phillips, *Alabama North: African-American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915-45*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999; Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916–30*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940 to 1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>67</sup> Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland During the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

shipping portal between the South and Europe. Maryland was also home to the country's largest percentage of free blacks.<sup>68</sup> Maryland had the largest percentage of free blacks in 1850. Including states in the Upper South and other border states, Maryland's free black population was 74,723 in 1850, with the second-largest free black population trailing in Virginia with 54,333.<sup>69</sup> Simply stated, Maryland and Baltimore were the mecca for free blacks prior to the Civil War. By the Civil War, Baltimore was home to the largest free black community in the country and to the fourth-largest urban black community in the United States by 1910. By 1910, Baltimore had an estimated black population of 84,000.<sup>70</sup>

By 1930, the midway point of analysis for this project, Baltimore was considered a booming metropolis with a total population of 804,874. Baltimore was (and remains) a working-class city with a major shipping industry and steel plants that employed the newly arrived European immigrants and African Americans that migrated from the South and rural Maryland. A black middle class did thrive—including a black professional class and black-owned businesses; however, Baltimore did not approximate the black urban metropolis of a city like Chicago. Instead, Baltimore mirrored Cleveland and Washington, DC, more so than other cities with sizable black populations.

---

<sup>68</sup> Robert S. Wolff, "Racial Imaginings: Schooling and Society in Industrial Baltimore, 1860–1920" (PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1998), p. 45.

<sup>69</sup> Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland During the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> William George Paul, "The Shadow of Equality: The Negro in Baltimore 1864–1911," (PhD dissertation, History, University of Wisconsin, 1972), pp. 1–2.

**Table 1.3: Black Population, 1920: Border Cities**<sup>71</sup>

| <b>City</b>      | <b>% Black</b> |
|------------------|----------------|
| <b>Baltimore</b> | <b>14.8</b>    |
| Cincinnati       | 7.5            |
| Louisville       | 17.1           |
| St. Louis        | 9.0            |
| Washington, DC   | 25.1           |
| Wilmington       | 9.8            |

**Table 1.4: Black Population, 1930: Border Cities**<sup>72</sup>

| <b>City</b>      | <b>% Black</b> |
|------------------|----------------|
| <b>Baltimore</b> | <b>17.7</b>    |
| Cincinnati       | 10.6           |
| Louisville       | 15.4           |
| St. Louis        | 11.4           |
| Washington, DC   | 27.1           |
| Wilmington       | 11.3           |

---

<sup>71</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Negroes in the United States 1920–32*.

<sup>72</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Negroes in the United States 1920–32*.



Baltimore presents an important city to study black activism during the interwar years because a substantial and varied set of black organizations were in existence and abounded. Baltimore was home to key institutions—the local NAACP branch was established by 1920 and the Urban League shortly thereafter. Baltimore was also home to several fraternal, grassroots, and neighborhood organizations, along with the expected set of black sororities and fraternities. In his detailed report of black Baltimore in the mid-forties, Edward Lewis, the former secretary of the Baltimore Urban League, made note of black Baltimore’s organizational strength.

Organizationally speaking, Baltimore’s Negro community has been making real strides ahead...groups are in every play when there are critical issues or knotty discrimination problems to be solved. There has been real unity of action present in the projects that have been cited, and there is a growing tendency to recognize the importance of a “grand strategy” in planning pressure or educational campaigns.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Edward Lewis, *Profiles: Baltimore*, Journal of Educational Sociology (Jan. 1944), p. 294

**Table 1.5: Black Organizations, Greek Letters, and Fraternal Orders 1919–1945**

|  | 1919–1929 | 1930–1939 | 1940–1945 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| American Legion                                      |           | X         | X         |
| Adelphian Club                                       |           | X         | X         |
| African Methodist Episcopal Clergymen                | X         | X         | X         |
| Afro-American Club                                   |           | X         | X         |
| Altruistic Club of 20                                |           |           | X         |
| American Woodmen                                     | X         | X         | X         |
| Arch Social Club                                     | X         | X         | X         |
| Association for the Handicapped                      | X         | X         | X         |
| Association for the Promotion of Negro Business      |           | X         |           |
| Baptist Clergymen                                    | X         | X         | X         |
| Baptist Laymen Association                           |           | X         |           |
| Baptist Orphan Home                                  | X         |           |           |
| Baltimore Colored Symphony Orchestra                 |           | X         | X         |
| Baltimore Committee on Unemployment                  |           | X         |           |
| Baltimore Dramatic Club                              | X         |           |           |
| Baltimore Educational Association                    | X         |           |           |
| Baltimore Urban League                               | X         | X         | X         |
| Baptist Young People’s Convention                    |           |           | X         |
| Beauticians Association                              |           | X         | X         |
| Century Club   | X         |           |           |
| Child’s Study Association                            |           | X         | X         |
| Cheltenham Committee                                 |           | X         |           |
| Citizens’ Alliance for Social Security               |           | X         |           |
| Citizens Civic Committee                             |           |           | X         |
| Citizens Committee for Justice                       |           |           | X         |
| City-Wide Association of Teachers in Colored Schools |           | X         | X         |
| City-Wide Young People’s Forum                       |           | X         | X         |
| Civic League   |           |           | X         |
| Clef Club  |           |           | X         |
| Fourth Congressional District Republican League      |           | X         | X         |
| Colored Business Men’s Exchange                      | X         | X         |           |
| Colored Day Nursery                                  |           | X         |           |
| Colored Motion Picture Operators Union               |           |           | X         |
| Commission on the Higher Education of Negroes        |           | X         |           |
| Community Club                                       |           | X         |           |
| Cooperative Council of Christian Education           |           |           | X         |
| Cosmopolitan Choral Society                          | X         |           |           |
| Court of Calanthe                                    | X         | X         | X         |
| Day Nursery Association for Colored Children         | X         |           |           |
| Defense Council                                      | X         |           |           |
| Defense League                                       |           | X         |           |
| Dental Association                                   |           | X         |           |
| Douglass High School Alumni                          | X         | X         | X         |
| DuBois Circle  | X         |           |           |
| East Baltimore Citizens Association                  |           |           | X         |

|   | 1919–1929 | 1930–1939 | 1940–1945 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Elks Lodge, Monumental No. 3                        | X         | X         | X         |
| Elks Lodge, Pride of Baltimore                      | X         | X         | X         |
| Elks Lodge, Sampson W. Brooks                       | X         | X         | X         |
| Emergency Helping Hand Association                  |           |           | X         |
| Equal Rights League                                 | X         | X         |           |
| Ex-Grand Jurors Association                         |           | X         |           |
| Federal St. Neighborhood Club                       |           |           | X         |
| Frances E. Harper Temple of Elks                    |           |           | X         |
| The Great Southern Temple of Elks                   |           |           | X         |
| Eight Ounce Boys                                    |           |           | X         |
| Empty Stocking Club                                 | X         | X         | X         |
| Eva Jenifer Neighborhood Club                       | X         | X         | X         |
| Ex-Grand Jurors Association                         |           |           | X         |
| Federation of Colored Women's Clubs                 | X         | X         | X         |
| Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs                  | X         | X         | X         |
| Fishermen of Galilee                                |           | X         |           |
| Galilean Fishermen                                  | X         | X         | X         |
| Glass Blowers Association                           |           |           | X         |
| G.M.O.E.S. of Masons                                |           | X         | X         |
| Good Hope Lodge                                     | X         | X         | X         |
| Graduate Nurses Association                         |           |           | X         |
| Grand Order of St. Luke                             | X         | X         |           |
| G.U.O. Jobs   |           | X         | X         |
| G.U.O. Nazarites                                    |           | X         | X         |
| G.U.O. Odd Fellows                                  |           |           | X         |
| Henry Watson Children's Aid Society                 |           | X         | X         |
| Hod Carriers Union                                  | X         | X         |           |
| Housewives' League                                  |           | X         | X         |
| Howard Alumni Association                           | X         | X         | X         |
| Insurance Underwriters' Association of Baltimore    |           | X         |           |
| Interdenominational Ministers Alliance of Baltimore |           |           | X         |
| International Labor Defense                         |           | X         |           |
| International Longshoremen's Association            |           | X         | X         |
| Interracial Conference                              | X         |           |           |
| Knights of Columbus                                 |           | X         |           |
| Knights of Peter Claver                             |           | X         | X         |
| Knights of Pythias                                  | X         | X         | X         |
| Knights of St. John                                 |           |           | X         |
| Knights of St. John- Women's Division               |           | X         | X         |
| Ladies Guild of Morgan State College                |           | X         | X         |
| Ladies Guild of Provident Hospital                  |           | X         | X         |
| Lincoln Alumni Association                          | X         | X         | X         |
| Local No. 194 L.H.C.H & C.L.U. of A.                |           |           | X         |
| Longshoremen's Union                                | X         | X         |           |
| Maryland Association for Colored Blind              | X         |           |           |
| Maryland Association for Promotion of Business      |           | X         | X         |
| Maryland Association for Social Service             | X         |           |           |

|   | 1919–1929 | 1930–1939 | 1940–1945 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Maryland Interracial Commission                         |           | X         | X         |
| Maryland Federation of Colored Organizations            |           |           | X         |
| Maryland Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical Association | X         | X         | X         |
| Maryland Negro Democratic League                        |           | X         | X         |
| Maryland State Teachers Association                     | X         |           |           |
| Masonic Lodges  | X         | X         | X         |
| Medical Association                                     | X         | X         | X         |
| M.E. Ministers Meeting                                  |           |           | X         |
| M.E. Minters' Wives Association                         |           | X         | X         |
| Methodist Episcopal Clergymen                           | X         | X         |           |
| Ministerial Alliance                                    |           | X         |           |
| Mission Helpers' Day Nursery                            |           |           | X         |
| Mission Helpers' Guild                                  |           | X         | X         |
| Monumental Bar Association                              |           | X         | X         |
| Morgan State College Alumni Association                 | X         | X         | X         |
| Morning Glory Benevolent Association                    |           |           | X         |
| Moses Lodges  | X         | X         |           |
| Most Worshipful Hiram Grand Lodge                       | X         | X         | X         |
| Mt. Olive Beneficial Association                        |           | X         | X         |
| A.U.O.S.D of Moses                                      |           |           | X         |
| NAACP   | X         | X         | X         |
| National Mutual Improvement Association                 | X         |           |           |
| Nazarites   | X         | X         |           |
| Negro Advancement League                                |           |           | X         |
| Neighborhood Improvement League                         | X         |           |           |
| Northwest Maternal Health Center                        |           |           | X         |
| National Federation of Post Office Clerks               |           |           | X         |
| National Association of Postal Employees                | X         | X         | X         |
| O.E.S.G.M.  |           | X         |           |
| Odd Fellows   | X         | X         |           |
| Old Folks' Home, A.M.E. Church                          | X         |           |           |
| Opportunity Makers Club                                 |           | X         |           |
| Pharmaceutical Association                              | X         | X         | X         |
| Post Office Glee Club                                   |           | X         | X         |
| Pricilla Art Club                                       | X         |           |           |
| Professional Chauffeurs Aid Association of Maryland     |           | X         | X         |
| Progressive Engineers Association of Maryland           |           |           | X         |
| Prominent Club Women and Civic Workers                  |           | X         |           |
| Red Cross Branch  | X         |           |           |
| Regular Fellows Club                                    |           | X         |           |
| Republican City Committee                               |           | X         | X         |
| Schoolmaster's Club                                     | X         | X         | X         |
| Seven Wise Men  | X         | X         | X         |
| Seventeenth Ward Community Club                         |           | X         | X         |
| Sharp Street Community House                            | X         | X         | X         |
| Smart Set Club  |           | X         | X         |

|  | 1919–1929 | 1930–1939 | 1940–1945 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Social Worker's Round Table of Baltimore                   |           | X         | X         |
| South Baltimore Y Club                                     | X         | X         |           |
| St. Catherine's Home for Boys & Girls                      | X         |           |           |
| Temple of Elks   |           | X         |           |
| The Gay Sisters Club                                       |           |           | X         |
| The Great Southern Temple                                  |           | X         |           |
| The Time Girls   |           |           | X         |
| Total War Employment Committee                             |           |           | X         |
| Townsmen Progression Association                           |           |           | X         |
| UNIA   | X         |           |           |
| Underwriters Association of Maryland                       |           |           | X         |
| United Usher Board Association                             | X         | X         | X         |
| Union Political Club                                       |           | X         |           |
| W.C.T.U  |           | X         | X         |
| Women's Auxiliary of Medical Associations                  |           |           | X         |
| Women's Cooperative Civic League                           | X         | X         | X         |
| YMCA   | X         | X         | X         |
| Young Negro Progressive League                             | X         |           |           |
| YWCA   | X         | X         | X         |
| Walter Green Post No.14                                    |           | X         |           |
| Woman's Suffrage Organization                              | X         |           |           |
| Women's Interdenominational Missionary Union (Interracial) |           |           | X         |
| Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity                                 | X         | X         | X         |
| Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity                                 |           | X         | X         |
| Omega Psi Phi Fraternity                                   | X         | X         | X         |
| Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity                                  |           |           | X         |
| Pi Lamda Psi Fraternity                                    |           |           | X         |
| Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority                                 | X         | X         | X         |
| Delta Sigma Theta Sorority                                 | X         | X         | X         |
| Phi Delta Kappa Sorority                                   | X         | X         | X         |
| Zeta Phi Beta Sorority                                     | X         | X         | X         |
| Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity                                    |           | X         |           |

Paying attention to the class diversity in black Baltimore is important. Quite simply, black Baltimore was no monolith. Baltimore was home to a thriving black middle class that held key leadership positions in the city's most prominent black organizations. Census data also demonstrate that Baltimore had a sizable number of black-owned business that spanned from insurance businesses to barbershops.<sup>74</sup> Data on the black poor and working class in Baltimore is limited : Records on this population are scant and those outlining black labor activities are biased toward leadership rather than individual or mass-level political engagement.

In addition to researching the level of black-owned businesses in Baltimore compared to that of other cities, it is also useful to look into homeownership records. I looked to homeownership statistics in Baltimore compared to those of other border cities to better gauge class differences. The working-class nature of Baltimore provided a different landscape of black life compared to a city such as Washington, DC, or Atlanta at this time. What Baltimore allows us to investigate is a working-class city with a thriving black middle-class community and a strengthening organizational base that was situated at the North–South border.

---

<sup>74</sup> To gather a fuller picture of the growth of Baltimore's black professional class and businesses over time, see the First Colored Directory of Baltimore City.

**Table 1.6: Black-Owned Businesses in Baltimore, 1929<sup>75</sup>**

| Type of Business  | Percentage of Black Businesses |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Food (candy stores, groceries, meat markets, produce markets, bakeries, caterers, etc.) | 37.9                           |
| Automotive (gas stations, repair shops)   | 1.2                            |
| Apparel (clothing and furnishing)   | .50                            |
| Restaurants and food service  | 20.4                           |
| Cigar stores and stands   | 1.5                            |
| Coal and wood yards   | 6.3                            |
| Ice dealers   | .83                            |
| Drugstores  | 8.2                            |
| Miscellaneous retail stores   | 9.5                            |
| Secondhand stores   | 2.8                            |
| <b>Total number of stores N= 282</b>  |                                |

**Table 1.7: Black-Owned Businesses in Baltimore compared to other cities, 1929<sup>76</sup>**

| City             | Number of Black-Owned Businesses |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Atlanta          | 391                              |
| <b>Baltimore</b> | <b>282</b>                       |
| Birmingham       | 200                              |
| Chicago          | 815                              |
| Cleveland        | 215                              |
| Detroit          | 358                              |
| Houston          | 259                              |
| Memphis          | 379                              |
| New Orleans      | 771                              |
| New York         | 391                              |
| Philadelphia     | 787                              |
| Pittsburgh       | 150                              |
| Richmond         | 189                              |
| St. Louis        | 310                              |
| Washington, DC   | 244                              |

<sup>75</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Negroes in the United States 1920–32*.

<sup>76</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Negroes in the United States 1920–32*.

**Table 1.8: Black Unions in Baltimore, 1920–1929<sup>77</sup>**

| <b>Independent Black Unions</b>  |
|--|
| <p><b><u>Construction</u></b><br/>                     Consolidated Hod Carriers, No. 1<br/>                     International Building Laborers Protective Association, No. 3<br/>                     National Hod Carriers and Common Laborers, No. 124</p>                 |
| <p><b><u>Railroads</u></b><br/>                     Railway Men’s Benevolent and Protective Association<br/>                     Brotherhood of Dining Car Employees on the B and O<br/>                     National Alliance of Postal Employees</p>                         |
| <p><b><u>Other</u></b><br/>                     The Colored Projectionists Association of Baltimore<br/>                     Beauticians<br/>                     Waiters’ Exchange No. 836</p>  |
| <b>Locals of Predominantly White Unions</b>  |
| <p><b><u>Construction</u></b><br/>                     International Hod Carriers and Common Laborers</p>  |
| <p><b><u>Railroad</u></b><br/>                     Station Employees Association<br/>                     Freight Handlers and Station Employees</p>   |
| <p><b><u>Industrial and Transport</u></b><br/>                     Ship Caulkers<br/>                     International Longshoremen Association<br/>                     Amalgamated Steel Workers in 1920–21<br/>                     ACW<br/>                     ILGWU</p> |
| <p><b><u>Other</u></b><br/>                     Musicians Association<br/>                     Culinary Alliance<br/>                     Federal Employees</p>  |

<sup>77</sup> Table adapted from Andor Skotnes, *The Black Freedom Movement and the Workers’ Movement in Baltimore, 1930–1939* (Ph D thesis, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, 1991), p. 125.



**Table 1.9: Black homeownership, 1930: Border Cities<sup>78</sup>**

| City             | Percentage of Black Homeowners |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Baltimore</b> | <b>11.5</b>                    |
| Cincinnati       | 8.9                            |
| Louisville       | 20.1                           |
| St. Louis        | 9.3                            |
| Washington, DC   | 24.4                           |
| Wilmington       | 13.2                           |

### **Black Electoral Politics**

This dissertation places the focus on black activism rather than electoral politics because for the most part, securing policy gains through electoral influence was shaky through the 1920s and fully extinguished by 1931. Between 1919 and 1920, Baltimore’s black electorate grew substantially with the introduction of women’s suffrage. In April 1919, black Baltimore had an estimated 16,296 registered black voters, with the bulk of registrants residing in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> wards. By the 1920 presidential election and the increase of the female vote, registered black voters had swelled to 36,686, with an increasing black majority emerging in the 5<sup>th</sup> ward.

---

<sup>78</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Negroes in the United States 1920–32*.

**Table 1.10: Black Registered Voters: 1919<sup>79</sup>**

| <b>Ward</b>                             | <b>Total Registered</b> |
|---|-------------------------|
| 4                                       | 735                     |
| 5                                       | 954                     |
| 6                                       | 476                     |
| 7                                       | 651                     |
| 10                                      | 201                     |
| 11                                      | 1,108                   |
| 12                                      | 618                     |
| 14                                      | 2,152                   |
| 15                                      | 1,092                   |
| 16                                      | 889                     |
| 17                                      | 3,162                   |
| 18                                      | 891                     |
| 19                                      | 596                     |
| 20                                      | 154                     |
| 21                                      | 461                     |
| 22                                      | 669                     |
| 23                                      | 369                     |
| 25                                      | 294                     |
| 26                                      | 34                      |
| 27                                      | 219                     |
| 28                                      | 9                       |
| <b>Total Black Registrants: 16,296*</b> |                         |

<sup>79</sup> “16,296 Colored Voters Eligible in Baltimore City,” *Afro-American*, April 18, 1919. Note that the numbers in the table do not total 16,296 and are not reflective of all city wards. Areas with few African American residents are not included, explaining the slight discrepancy in totals.

**Table 1.11: Registered Voters by Race: 1920<sup>80</sup>**

| <b>Ward</b> | <b>Black Registrants</b>                   | <b>White Registrants</b>                    |
|-------------|--|---|
| 1           | 48   | 8,870                                       |
| 2           | 101  | 4,664                                       |
| 3           | 406  | 2,713                                       |
| 4           | 1,514                                      | 2,638                                       |
| 5           | 2,105                                      | 2,196                                       |
| 6           | 1,014                                      | 8,756                                       |
| 7           | 1,981                                      | 9,798                                       |
| 8           | 450  | 13,654                                      |
| 9           | 421  | 12,184                                      |
| 10          | 809  | 5,825                                       |
| 11          | 2,593                                      | 5,757                                       |
| 12          | 1,530                                      | 13,888                                      |
| 13          | 200  | 12,637                                      |
| 14          | 5,232                                      | 5,150                                       |
| 15          | 2,774                                      | 15,863                                      |
| 16          | 2,160                                      | 12,116                                      |
| 17          | 5,519                                      | 1,458                                       |
| 18          | 1,818                                      | 5,301                                       |
| 19          | 1,653                                      | 7,459                                       |
| 20          | 209  | 13,170                                      |
| 21          | 975  | 5,636                                       |
| 22          | 1,428                                      | 2,535                                       |
| 23          | 650  | 4,798                                       |
| 24          | 0  | 6,502                                       |
| 25          | 562  | 3,721                                       |
| 26          | 60   | 11,027                                      |
| 27          | 458  | 14,345                                      |
| 28          | 16   | 3,032                                       |
|             | <b>Total Black Registrants:<br/>36,686</b> | <b>Total White Registrants:<br/>215,693</b> |

The increase in the black electorate in 1920 catapulted discussions in City Hall on the looming growth of black electoral influence. As evidenced in the registration figures from 1920, blacks in the 5th ward were close to reaching a majority and were building enough influence to elect a third black councilman in the 5th ward. By 1920, the 5th ward included a total of 2,105

<sup>80</sup> “To Gerrymander Colored Voters?” *Afro American*, November 12, 1920

registered black voters and 2,196 registered white voters. The *Afro-American* reported that the increase in the 5th ward black voting bloc caused concern in City Hall:

Dissatisfaction has been expressed downtown for some time with the rapid rate at which the Fifth Ward was moving towards another colored City Councilman and one of the best ways to avoid this was to have the Governor redistrict the city. By gerrymandering the colored voters in the Fifth, Fourteenth, and Seventeenth Wards it would not be possible after that for them to form a majority in any single city ward and both representatives in the City Council would be lost.”<sup>81</sup>

The suspicion that City Hall would push for the suppression of the expanding black voting bloc came to fruition two years later, in 1922. In November 1922, Baltimoreans voted to change the structure of the city council from a two-branch council divided by wards to a one-branch city council organized around six council districts. Under the new city council, the structure of representation changed from each of the 28 wards electing a council member to each of the six districts electing three council members for a total 19 city council representatives.<sup>82</sup> Under the old system, the City Council was organized by branches—the First Branch was divided into 28 wards and the Second Branch was divided by district, with a total of ten members. The new organization of City Hall called for the removal of the First Branch ward-based system and preserved the structure of the Second Branch by adding eight new seats to be filled.<sup>83</sup>

Leadership within the black community did not endorse the new city council structure. Under the new system, no district would encompass a significant black voting presence. The new structure was orchestrated and advocated by Democratic white council members who effectively mobilized the necessary 10,000 voters to sign a petition supporting the call for a new system. The mainstream newspaper, the *Baltimore Sun*, urged readers to support the amendment in an attempt to curb machine politics in the City Council. The *Afro-American*, on the other hand,

---

<sup>81</sup> “To Gerrymander Colored Voters?” *Afro-American*, November 12, 1920.

<sup>82</sup> Graphic, page one. *Afro-American*, November 3, 1922.

<sup>83</sup> Hayward Farrar, *See What the Afro Say: The Afro-American, 1892–1950*. (Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1983) p. 216.

launched a call for increased voter registration and urged all black voters to vote against the amendment. Just days before the final registration deadline, the *Afro-American* clearly outlined the consequences of the amendment and warned that “Since colored people have the majority in no legislative district, they will be unable to elect a single colored man or woman to the Council.”<sup>84</sup> The warnings were prudent—the majority of voters in Baltimore voted for a change in the structure of the city council, and the newly formed districts greatly diluted black electoral influence for decades. In the first vote after the enactment of the new city council structure, no black city council members were elected and black Baltimore had virtually no black elected officials from 1931 to 1954.

**Table 1.12: African Americans Elected to the Baltimore City Council, 1890–1967**

| <b>Period in Office</b> | <b>Councilmember</b>                      |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1890–1891               | Harry S. Cummings                         |
| 1891–1892               | Harry S. Cummings                         |
| 1895–1896               | Dr. John Marcus Cargill                   |
| 1896–1897               | Dr. John Marcus Cargill                   |
| 1897–1898               | Harry S. Cummings                         |
| 1898–1899               | Harry S. Cummings                         |
| 1899–1901               | Hiram Watty                               |
| 1901–1903               | Hiram Watty                               |
| 1903–1905               | Hiram Watty                               |
| 1907–1911               | Harry S. Cummings                         |
| 1911–1915               | Harry S. Cummings                         |
| 1915–1919               | Harry S. Cummings                         |
| 1919–1923               | Warner T. McGuinn & William T. Fitzgerald |
| 1923–1927               | <b>No representation</b>                  |
| 1927–1931               | Walter S. Emerson & Warner T. McGuinn     |
| 1931–1954               | <b>No representation</b>                  |
| 1955–1959               | Walter T. Dixon                           |
| 1959–1963               | Walter T. Dixon                           |
| 1963–1967               | Walter T. Dixon & Henry G. Parks          |

<sup>84</sup> “Colored Voters Slow Getting on the Books,” *Afro-American*, October 6, 1922.

This project compares the development of African American activism and political participation in Baltimore over time and through different issue domains, and pays particular attention to when activists developed a complementary fit between their existing resources, their political environment, and their mode of mobilization. The chapters in this project are organized around three issue domains that vary in middle-class versus cross-class coalitions: (1) social welfare activism, (2) employment activism, and (3) anti-discrimination activism. Each chapter elaborates on cases that demonstrate the successes and constraints of political engagement in black Baltimore.

Chapter 2 looks to cases of social welfare activism and discusses the Lung Block campaign, anti-tavern activism, and efforts to expand the city park system in black neighborhoods. This chapter demonstrates how black activists made strategic attempts to position their expertise and skill set to exploit available openings in local politics. In Chapter 3, I examine cases of employment activism and look specifically to patronage appointments, teacher salary equalization, and employment discrimination. Chapter 3 helps to show how black activists utilized different sets of organizing structures and that different modes of organizing were consequential to the tactics unleashed and the issues they fought for. Chapter 4 continues the analysis of how black Baltimoreans organized and became politically active. In Chapter 4, I look to cases of anti-discrimination activism and analyze golf course desegregation and the mass effort against police brutality that ushered in the city's first campaign for multifaceted system change. This chapter works to show that black activists amassed resources in intricate and innovative ways to bolster their political influence and strengthen their leverage with local policymakers. Chapter 5 is the final chapter, and offers unanswered questions, an epilogue, and potential next steps for research endeavors.

## Chapter 2

### SOCIAL WELFARE ACTIVISM

“Taverns in such areas are tearing down our youth faster than the church and school can build them up. We are appealing to you legislators to help us help you make Baltimore a better place to live in.” —Lillie Jackson, February 27, 1943<sup>85</sup>

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter demonstrates the ways that organizations cultivated their expertise internally. In doing so, this chapter specifically looks to instances of social welfare activism. The chapter demonstrates that disadvantaged groups have attempted to take advantage of political openings that complement their expertise, and in some ways have found a good fit to launch activist activities by matching their expertise with institutional opportunities. Lack of access to broader political incorporation sometimes helped groups to target their expertise toward issues where they figured they had the most leverage. The analysis in this chapter uncovers that disadvantaged groups found holes in local politics where they could actively participate and utilize their expertise. In some cases, they succeeded in measuring where they had more leverage and access.

This chapter begins with the example of the 1925 Urban League campaign to eradicate the “Lung Block” comprising a few blocks in one of the black community’s

---

<sup>85</sup> Quote by Lillie Jackson in public hearing of the McClayton liquor-law revision bill. “Baltimore Leaders Speak at Public Hearing on Liquor Law Revision,” *Afro-American*, February 27, 1943.

most poverty-stricken sections. I argue that the Lung Block campaign is an example of middle-class activism and that the Urban League knowingly molding its expertise in social scientific investigations to take on the project. Second, this chapter moves on to a discussion of the vast network of neighborhood associations that lobbied against the granting of liquor licenses in black neighborhoods. Through the tavern battles we observe cross-class activism. The tavern battles show how a group of mainly women, and not all middle-class, organized their various neighborhoods and took advantage of access to public hearings to fight against the passage of liquor licenses. I argue that because of the resources and expertise many members already held via their ties to other established organizations, they recognized that the expanded access to lobbying against liquor license could be advantageous to them. Lastly, this chapter analyzes the failed attempt to lobby for the building of playgrounds in black neighborhoods in the 1920s. This example demonstrates how individual expertise is not enough—the failure to cultivate expertise within a larger organizational apparatus proved limiting as middle-class black activists did not have the political influence for system-wide change and failed to build a cross-class coalition that included all community members.

## **2. Existing Literature**

Mounting scholarship has made note of the usefulness of expertise in helping disadvantaged groups foster influence. Most recently, Laura Evans' comprehensive analysis of how American Indian tribes have been able to broker influence by cultivating expertise is especially helpful.



Evans argued that:

Tribes, and other political actors situated at the margins of economic, social, and electoral power, are not well positioned to wholly reformulate federal programs or to win large federal allocations towards their needs. Tribes have, however, gained nuanced forms of assistance from their sustained relationships with sympathetic actors within the federal government, a kind of relationship that I refer to as an institutional niche. By carefully managing institutional niches, tribes have provoked marginal changes in federal policy; changes that then deliver, unobtrusively, useful support.<sup>86</sup>

This study is informed by her findings. However, Evans takes issue with how tribe members bulked up their expertise with the assistance of outsiders. The assumption posits that marginalized groups do not have access to a full set of resources and can sometimes learn from outside actors that serve to bolster skills rather than co-opt. This chapter is concerned with how expertise is fostered internally. Although it is important to understand how groups can find innovative ways to build alliances with outsiders to shore up their resources, there is also reason to pay attention to details on how groups use their circumstances to build expertise.

We have reason to believe that African Americans in particular cultivated expertise internally—and we stand to learn new details on how this worked in the years prior to the Civil Rights era. Several political scientists have emphasized the particular role that racial identity and group consciousness has played in black communities in strengthening political engagement. Many argued that race consciousness and identity has been utilized in strategic ways in the black community and that racial identity often serves as the catalyst for political engagement.<sup>87</sup> Scholars have also found that race

---

<sup>86</sup> Laura E. Evans, *Influencing Powerful Partners: American Federalism and Strategies of Tribal Governments*. PhD dissertation. University of Michigan, Department of Political Science, 2005, p. 70

<sup>87</sup> Pamela Johnston Conover, “The Influence of Group Identifications on Political Perception and Evaluation.” *Journal of Politics* 46 (3): 760–785, 1984; Michael C. Dawson, *Behind the Mule: Race and*

consciousness plays a significant role in measures of political participation when black and whites are compared.<sup>88</sup> Other race politics scholars have identified how African Americans have historically developed expertise and resources in ways that are confined to the segregated spaces embedded in black communities.

Segregated spaces have worked to build indigenous expertise in black communities. In Charles Payne's detailed analysis of the Mississippi Freedom Summer, he notes that indigenous resources added to the strength and the success of the voter education schools. According to Payne, it was the absence of external meddling that enabled voter education schools to thrive. We learn that individuals removed from the economic power structure were able to create safe havens and organizational space for insurgents and were key to the movement's success.<sup>89</sup> Uncommon actors cultivate expertise in Payne's analysis as well. He finds that hairdressers and local street hustlers maneuvered under the radar and found areas to utilize their expertise in managing communication networks. As we learned in Payne, segregation was not entirely limiting, because it allowed those economically independent from white power structures to use their resources and segregated spaces in advantageous ways.

Recent work on black politics reveals a similar pattern. Melissa Harris-Lacewell demonstrates that private spaces such as barbershops and beauty salons can operate as

---

*Class in African American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Patricia Gurin, Shirley Hatchett, and James S. Jackson, *Hope and Independence: Blacks' Response to Electoral and Party Politics*. (New York: Russell Sage, 1989); Arthur Miller, Patricia Gurin, Gerald Gurin, and Oksana Malanchuk, "Group-Consciousness and Political Participation," *American Political Science Review* 25: 494–511, 1981; Katherine Tate, *From Protest to Politics: The New Black Voters in America* (New York: Russell Sage, 1993).

<sup>88</sup> See Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*, (New York: Harper and Row), 1972; Lawrence Bobo and Franklin D. Gilliam, "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment," *The American Political Science Review*, 84: 377–393, 1990.

<sup>89</sup> Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

centers where group consciousness is developed. She argues that these segregated spaces afford privacy where networks develop and political engagement can thrive.<sup>90</sup> This analysis looks to race organizations as places where political engagement and participation thrived internally.

Several scholars have rightly pointed to the black church as the most longstanding incubator of expertise within the black community. Undoubtedly, the black church has been crucial to cultivating mass participation in black communities and has historically been considered the institution in the black community where organizing skills are honed.<sup>91</sup> Existing literature has emphasized the fact that African Americans have crafted expertise and resources internally. This chapter offers an analysis to learn how black Baltimoreans sometimes strategically utilized their internal expertise to launch political battles.

### **3. Prescribing Change: Lessons from the “Lung Block District”**

The first functioning federated organization in Baltimore was the Urban League. The Urban League launched a successful attempt to negotiate with local government officials in 1925 to clean up blighted areas in black areas. The presence of the Urban League did not represent the city’s first foray into federated racial uplift organizations, but it does mark the first successful large-scale one.<sup>92</sup> What differentiated the Urban League from other organizations in the city during this time was the nature of its

---

<sup>90</sup> Melissa V. Harris-Lacewell, *Barbershops, Bibles, and BET: Everyday Talk and Black Political Talk*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

<sup>91</sup> See Frederick Harris, “Something Within: Religion as a Mobilizer of African American Political Activism.” *Journal of Politics* 56: 42–68, 1994; Franklin E. Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken, 1964); , Allison Calhoun-Brown, “African American Church and Political Mobilization: The Psychological Impact of Organizational Resources,” *Journal of Politics* 58” 935–953, 1996. .

<sup>92</sup> For example, the NAACP was established in Baltimore prior to the development of the Urban League. However, the NAACP was marked by more fits and starts in the early years compared to the Urban League.

membership and methods of building capacity, partnerships, and networks. The Urban League channeled its expertise in ways that proved advantageous to the issues at hand. Additionally, members crafted tactics that complemented their expertise as middle-class activists.

By 1923, the Urban League was a fully functioning organization and possessed expertise in finding ways to engage with city agencies and leaders in local government. Much of the Urban League's skills were fostered by its beginnings as a merger between the Baltimore Interracial Commission and the national Urban League office. After teaming up with the national Urban League office to design and carry out a survey of black workers, the Baltimore Interracial Commission began the process of transforming into the first local branch of the Urban League in the city.<sup>93</sup> The Interracial Commission was officially folded into the Urban League in late 1924 and marked the city's first attempt at an interracial race uplift organization. From the outset, the newly formed Urban League was an example in partnership-building and capitalizing on networks that interlocked.

The executive board consisted of eight African Americans with representation from prominent middle-class activists such as Carl Murphy of the *Afro-American*, former councilman William Fitzgerald, and clubwoman Sarah Fernandis of the Women's Cooperative Civic League; the board also included eleven white members, many of whom had ties to Johns Hopkins University.<sup>94</sup> The head leadership provides an example—Johns Hopkins University professor Broadus Mitchell, white, served as the organization's first president. The very nature of the Urban League's leadership provides

---

<sup>93</sup> "The Baltimore Industrial Survey," *Afro-American*. July 13, 1923.

<sup>94</sup> "Urban League to Begin Here December 1<sup>st</sup>," *Afro-American*, November 29, 1924

reason to suspect that different resources could be leveraged and their tactics and mobilization schemes were influenced by middle-class ideologies.

The white members brought their own set of expertise. Dr. Broadus Mitchell possessed social science skills and institutional influence by virtue of his role at Johns Hopkins and his educational accomplishments. Similarly, Lillian Lottier was on the pulse of the two largest race uplift organizations in Baltimore and was credited with helping to revive the local NAACP branch. Records from the NAACP indicate that Lottier played a pivotal role in bringing the dormant NAACP to life.

Some time ago, Mrs. Lillian Lottier and Miss Margaret Williams began a movement to revive the work of the local branch which had been somewhat inactive for the last five years. The work of these women resulted in a financial drive which enabled the organization to meet its full quota of the national budget for the first time in five years. But in addition it also brought about a complete revival of the work of the branch.<sup>95</sup>

Although Lottier would eventually step down from her role as NAACP president as she continued to focus on Urban League activities, she remained a member of the executive board of the NAACP and maintained her dual connections to both organizations.

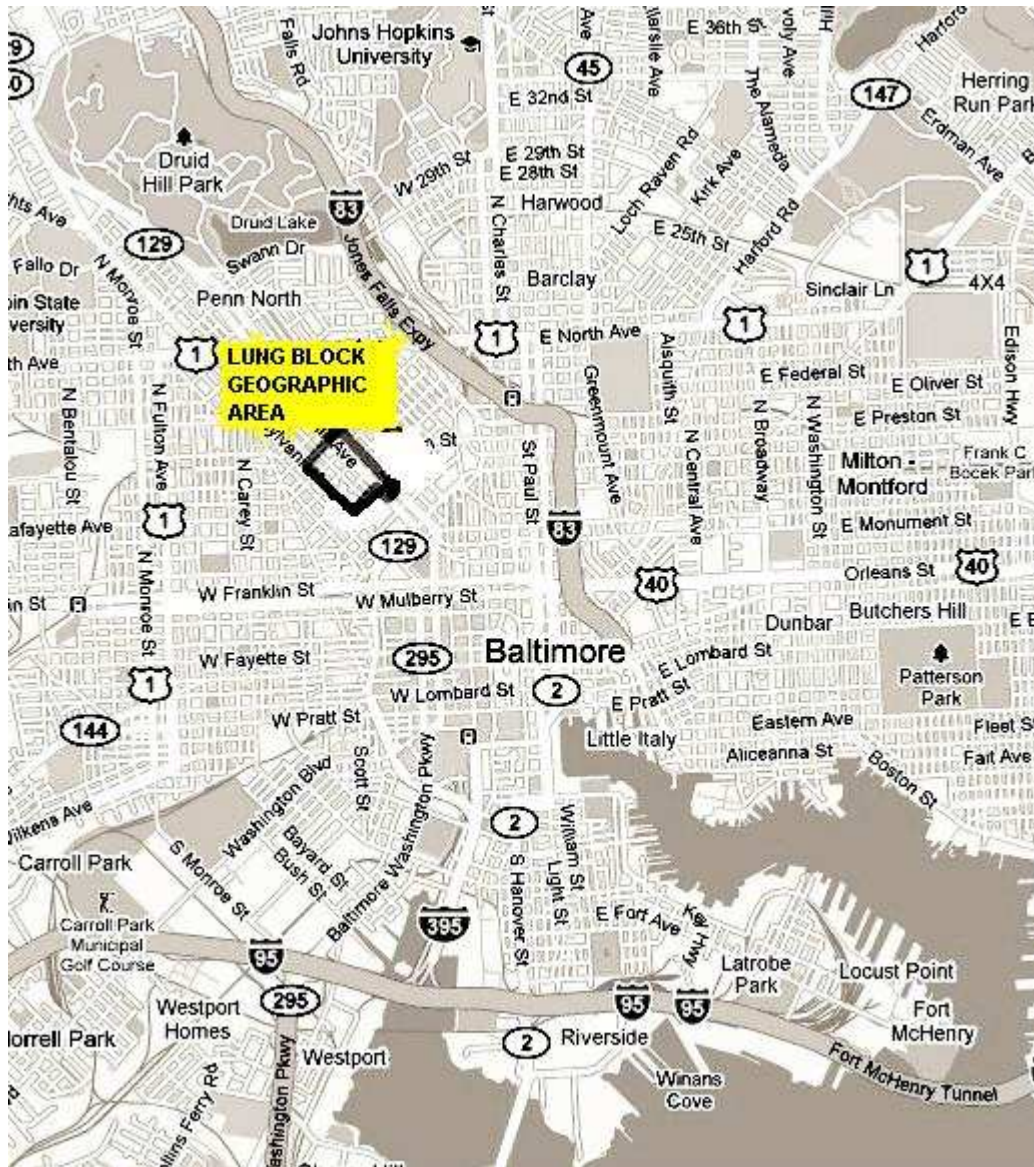
The expertise and embedded networks that Urban League leaders brought to the table helped to shape different strategies for actions that resulted in more favorable outcomes—they matched their expertise as middle-class activists with their strategy and methods. The campaign to eradicate unhealthy conditions in the “Lung Block District” offers a useful example of how disadvantaged groups can apply their expertise strategically and advance demands when there is evidence of organizational strength.

---

<sup>95</sup> “Koger Heads Local N.A.A.C.P in 1925. *Afro-American*, January 17, 1925. Papers of the NAACP. Box I:G84, Folder #14

The “Lung Block District” was situated near the major black commercial district and was a small poverty-stricken, heavily concentrated area with skyrocketing cases of tuberculosis. Table 2.1 provides a closer look into the boundaries of the Lung Block, determined by the Urban League to be the section bounded by Biddle, Druid Hill, Pennsylvania, and Hoffman streets. The Lung Block District was situated in West Baltimore below Druid Hill Park and north of downtown. Table 2.2 illustrates the concentration of blacks living in Baltimore in 1930. As with the majority of cities then (and presently), blacks were populated in concentrated clusters in the city and spatial segregation was highly visible. In comparing both tables, it is evident that the location of the Lung Block District coincides with one of the areas of largest population concentrations of blacks.

Figure 2.1: Map of Lung Block District<sup>96</sup>



The Urban League took special interest in the Lung Block District when the city announced plans to build an elementary school in the area. Early on, the Urban League partnered with Morgan State College (the all-black local college) to initiate a house-to-house canvas of homes in the Lung Block District to compile a report on the crime,

<sup>96</sup> Map accessed from Google Maps: <http://maps.google.com>, November 8, 2009.

poverty, and health statistics of the area.<sup>97</sup> The strategy behind the canvas was to become equipped with enough statistics and figures to present a convincing case to the various heads of city agencies to make improvement to the area. The canvassing effort required partnering and coordination across different groups along with mobilization and analysis of the findings.

These tasks were congruent with the expertise of the executive leadership—they possessed the research expertise and were well networked. The Lung Block campaign also represents a well-thought-out and structured strategy—the Urban League first conducted research and solidified partnerships and then lobbied with influential city officials to demand improvements. This strategy was enabled by a strong base of organizational allies with shared interests and ideologies—as a result, the Urban League appeared stronger and better equipped in the eyes of city officials.

The Urban League put forward a multipronged approach to lobbying for improved conditions. It first enlisted the help of Dr. Brown, a sociology professor at Morgan State College , who recruited his students to conduct the house-to house canvas. By partnering with Dr. Brown—a move that was most likely made possible because of Broadus Mitchell’s networks as a professor at Johns Hopkins—the Urban League managed to build a new partner and also to engage the participation of young black students in the city.<sup>98</sup> The influence of Broadus Mitchell’s expertise in research is evidenced in the additional steps that the Urban League took in building a convincing argument.

---

<sup>97</sup> “Urban League to Study Lung Block,” *Afro-American*, March 7, 1925.

<sup>98</sup> “Urban League Work Summarized to Date,” *Afro-American*, March 28, 1925.



The Urban League created a questionnaire to schoolchildren residing in the area and reported that more than 900 had been collected and analyzed; it requested statistics and records from the Criminal Justice Commission; and it partnered with the Family Welfare Association to analyze any records of charitable giving to the area.<sup>99</sup> Research findings were sent directly to city officials with influence to make improvements to each specific problem addressed—for example, health data on the Lung Block District were sent directly to the head of the city Health Department.<sup>100</sup> The multipronged approach was detailed but not unrealistic given the knowledge base and expertise of Urban League leaders. Work was put into conducting research and also presenting findings to city officials.

The expertise and influence of Carl Murphy, who served as editor of the *Baltimore Afro-American* and advisory council member for the Urban League, was utilized. He used his journalistic freedom to highlight the Lung Block District as a salient and pressing issue. The *Baltimore Afro-American* published a series of updates over the course of several weeks on the progress to clean up the Lung Block District. Each report included a detailed example with images of the problems in the area and the status of improvements. The first report noted that the “... alley is still unpaved and unvisited by the street cleaning department. Garbage and rubbish accumulate, making the odors on a hot night unbearable.”<sup>101</sup> Within a week of publishing the report, the Urban League provided further updates to the *Baltimore Afro-American*, informing readers that there had been correspondence between the Urban League and city officials and that swift action was underway.

---

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> “In the Lung District #1,” *Afro-American*, August 15, 1925.

The wooden joists across the alley keep the nearby houses from falling in. A ramshackle house plastered with billboard signs has been an eyesore for years. Stewart Pucell, engineer of highways in the Department of Public Works told Secretary Moss of the Urban League this week, that streets in the Lung district would be paved as rapidly as possible. William D. Larkins, engineer of street cleaning department called conference of foremen of district street cleaners and police officials...Means were devised to clean away refuse and keep it clean.<sup>102</sup>

Urban League photo shows abandoned dwelling on Walnut Street. The streets are unpaved. Efforts to clean up this district, which has the highest crime and death rate in the city, began last week...the superintendent of garbage collection has agreed to put an additional day a week on cleaning rubbish from streets and alleys.<sup>103</sup>

The Urban League also worked to build allies during this campaign—records indicate that it sought out partnerships with the Sharp Street Community House (an affiliate of Sharp Street Baptist Church), the Maryland Tuberculosis Association, and the YMCA.<sup>104</sup> It is also important to note that some of these partnerships may not have been accessible if the Baltimore Urban League had not been interracial in design and leadership. The partnership with the Maryland Tuberculosis Association (an all-white organization) raises questions on whether such a partnership would have been as seamless to broker if the branch were entirely composed of and led by black Baltimoreans.

The research-driven approach buttressed by strong partnership-building proved successful. In this case, I argue that the expertise of the Urban League leadership was complementary to the task at hand. Different tactics and strategies could have been unleashed—meaning that taking a research and partnership approach was not merely coincidental. For example, the strategy could have simply included lobbying directly to

---

<sup>102</sup> “In the Lung District #2,” *Afro-American*, August 22, 1925.

<sup>103</sup> “In the Lung District #3” *Afro-American*, August 29, 1925.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

City Hall and city officials, or the Urban League could have launched a cross-class coalition and involved the residents living in the Lung Block to lobby for change. Instead it took advantage of its research expertise and the multiple affiliations of its leadership to build a larger base of support. In essence, the members utilized their expertise as middle-class professionals to build a mobilization scheme that allowed them to best practice their talents and find leverage with city officials.

We cannot attribute the entire success of the Urban League Lung Block District campaign solely to a change in strategy that took full advantage of the expertise of the League's leadership or the partnership-building that may have strengthened lobbying with city officials. It is important to also discuss the political opportunities during this time—the emerging opportunities and the absent ones. Foremost, the Urban League maneuvered this campaign during a period of absent local political representation of black elected officials. The Lung Block District existed before the departure of black representation in the city, and emphasis on cleaning up the area was precipitated by plans to build the new school. Although no causal relationship can be derived from the lack of black representation and the outcome of the Lung Block campaign, it is important to note that descriptive and/or substantive representation did not play a factor in how the Urban League leadership launched its strategy.

Also, the Lung Block campaign occurred during a period of municipal growth in Public Works departments across the country during this time. The timing of the Lung Block campaign should not be understated. It was during this period that garbage collection systems, sewage systems, police forces, and street cleaning started to solidify in cities across the country after the tremendous growth during the Progressive Era a few

years earlier. This means that the Urban League managed to lobby city agencies that were relatively new and carried less institutional baggage—the task did not involve working within a political machine and working directly with city council members. The very nature of the lobbying efforts—within the bureaucratic realm of local politics—was a political opportunity in itself.

The Urban League’s response to the Lung Block District was prescriptive in nature and action was spurred by new plans by local government. In crafting a response to the blight in the Lung Block District, the Urban League was able to harness its expertise to a single issue with a clear solution. This eased coordination for a straightforward and prescriptive strategy to remove trash from sidewalks and alleys, which ultimately, in their eyes, improved conditions in preparation for the building of the new elementary school. It is important to note that after achieving success in getting the city to step up garbage removal from the area, the Urban League did not devote any additional time to improving the Lung Block District and focused its efforts on conducting citywide surveys studying the overall social, health, and economic status of black Baltimore. This does not necessarily mean that the Urban League was uninterested in the problems of the Lung Block District, but is indicative of how it organized its time and invested its expertise toward finding well-researched solutions to issues.

#### **4. Finding Leverage: Anti-Tavern Activism and the Emergence of Neighborhood Associations**

Between 1937 and 1942, five black neighborhood organizations were formed with the purpose of fighting commercial zoning in their neighborhoods.<sup>105</sup> They were the

---

<sup>105</sup> Activism surrounding taverns in black neighborhoods was not unique to Baltimore. DuBois discusses locations of taverns and their effect on black community life in W.E.B. Dubois, *Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

Northwest Residential Protective Association, West End Improvement Association, Lafayette Square Improvement Association, East Baltimore Residential Protective Association, and the Northeast Protective and Improvement Association.<sup>106</sup> Each of these organizations took on zoning issues in its neighborhood with the primary issue usually involving the restriction or prevention of taverns in the area. These neighborhood associations took on the fight to block liquor license appointments and exploited their access to public hearings and involved blacks of multiple class levels. They applied their expertise and mobilization skills and found an opening in local government that allowed them more influence to improve outcomes.

The Northwest Residential Protective Association (NRPA) was the first neighborhood organization formed. The founder and president, Florence Snowden, spearheaded the development of the four additional neighborhood associations to serve as auxiliaries. The NRPA was also the largest of the neighborhood associations. By 1945, it had a membership totaling 1,000 property owners.<sup>107</sup> Incidentally, Florence Snowden was also the sister of Lillie Jackson, president of the local NAACP, and aunt to Juanita Jackson Mitchell, president of the City-Wide Young People's Forum and the Citizens Committee for Justice. In addition to her role as president of the NRPA, Florence Snowden served on the executive board of the NAACP and was a member of two fraternal organizations.

Snowden was the main actor behind the tavern and zoning battles during this period. The tavern zoning fights demonstrate the ability of indigenous neighborhood groups to lobby local government when there is an opening for greater access. Resources

---

<sup>106</sup> "Civic Worker Named to AFRO Hall of Fame," *Afro-American*, March 8, 1941.

<sup>107</sup> "Early Closing of Taverns Endorsed," *Afro-American*, October 13, 1945.

and expertise were abundant. Many of the tavern battles were victories for the black activists, and their path to success was evidenced by a strong core of resources that were shared with the NAACP and local churches. These neighborhood groups shared legal counsel with the local NAACP, and the vast network of neighborhood associations spread across different locations in the city helped to build a larger network of churches and other organizations. Members of the neighborhood associations had multiple memberships and a broad reach—and neighborhood associations were situated in areas known for housing Baltimore’s black middle class along with working-class blacks. A closer look at their activity reveals how they cultivated their expertise internally and took advantage of public hearings to gain influence with local officials.

An in-depth look into the opposition surrounding the opening of taverns and other commercial businesses better explains the expertise and methods of grassroots organizing in the 1930s and 1940s. The NRPA and its affiliates were tremendously successful in these efforts—they recruited large memberships and sustained their efforts for several years. They also became very well acquainted with City Hall and the Liquor License Commission, and built influence and relationships with city officials. The neighborhood associations focused on micro issues concerned with their immediate surroundings. The cases of zoning battles demonstrate that those with little political influence and absent representation in local government can function effectively by harnessing their resources and making use of existing connections with larger established organizations to buttress their manpower and expertise.

## **Examples of Tavern and Zoning Fights**

Consistencies are evident in the cases of neighborhood groups blocking the opening of taverns and other commercial interests deemed harmful to their neighborhoods. In most instances, protests were mounted by large groups of neighborhood residents and led by their respective neighborhood association. In each case, protests were targeted to the local governmental entity responsible for making decisions, and members took advantage of public hearings. Neighborhood association leaders brought their dissatisfaction to the City Council, the city and state Liquor License Commissions, and the Board of Estimates. And women were often at the helm of leadership—men were members of the executive leadership of neighborhood associations, but evidence points to the trend that more often than not, male representation was mostly limited to black clergymen and women were overwhelmingly members of neighborhood associations.

I argue that the nature of zoning battles was advantageous to neighborhood groups because zoning hearings were open to the public. Neighborhood associations did not have to curry favor to gain access to zoning meetings, although most of their efforts also involved speaking directly with local officials to gain influence in advance of the hearings. It took influence to persuade local officials, but there were fewer barriers to camping out in the office of the Mayor or visiting the zoning board director for a chance to express dissatisfaction and demands. Neighborhood-based political participation required buy-in and mobilization of a solid group of residents. Additionally, zoning hearings offered fertile ground for neighborhood groups because local input was valued and had the potential to be persuasive. At its most elemental level, neighborhood groups

mobilized a defined geographic area and specialized in bringing heightened awareness to issues pertaining to their neighborhood.

Unlike the voting booth, participating in zoning hearings did not require registration or experience in the voting process. As long as neighborhood groups recruited enough people and got them fired up about the issue, there was the potential to have influence on outcomes. Moreover, in a sense zoning issues were tailor-made for autonomous indigenous organizations with access to these resources on the ground, because in order to find success at zoning meetings, a strong showing of neighborhood support was necessary.

The agenda-setting specific to larger federated organizations constrained opportunities to explore local issues that were not in line with specified goals and issues. For example, the NAACP national office often required local branches to devote their work to specified activities in order to orchestrate wholesale efforts on a national scale and to coordinate letter-writing campaigns, petitions, telegrams, for example. Zoning issues did not fall under the greater rubric of the NAACP that focused on expelling racism, discrimination, and segregation. Because zoning issues were strictly local and did not have any legal ramifications, it would not have been endorsed as a worthy case by the national office or would have been considered a distraction. For example, during this time, the NAACP spent a good deal of time participating in the letter-writing campaigns that the national office requested. Correspondence between the local NAACP leadership and the national office included correspondence such as: “My dear Mr. Walter White—



we have just written our six congressmen in Washington, as you requested. Sincerely yours, Lillie M. Jackson.”<sup>108</sup>

At the organizational level, autonomous indigenous organizations did not have to muster through as many bureaucratic steps or clear their mobilization plans through any external governing body—decisions were agreed upon by the groups’ executive board and did not have to be approved by multiple levels of leadership. They could, however, borrow and share resources from larger federated organizations if they had a strong enough relationship. In Baltimore and with Florence Snowden serving as the pioneer of these neighborhood associations, information- and resource-sharing did not pose an obstacle because she was the sister of the NAACP president and served as campaign chairwoman for the NAACP as well.

A discussion of the growth and work of neighborhood associations in Baltimore would be incomplete without mention of the general national trend in woman-led organizing around issues pertaining to the home and family. The zoning fights demonstrate that in Baltimore, much like as in other cities, neighborhood organizing offered women opportunities to mobilize around issues connected to the family and home. In several places around the country, women were better able to tackle issues that touched on the family and children, and leveraged gender bias to gain legitimacy over these policy areas and garner influence as the expert and activist around family and children. The Baltimore case is no exception to this.<sup>109</sup> However, Baltimore was unique

---

<sup>108</sup> Papers of the NAACP. Letter from Lillie Jackson to Walter White, February 1, 1937, Box 1: G86 Folder 1.

<sup>109</sup> Earline Rae Ferguson, *A Community Affair: African-American Women’s Club Work in Indianapolis, 1879–1917* (PhD dissertation, Department of History, Indiana University, 1997); Jacqueline A Rouse, *Lugenia Burns Hope: Black Southern Reformer* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989); Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991);

in that a woman was the president of the NAACP branch for several decades and led a branch that ranked within the top five of the largest and most active branches in the country. In other cities, women were highly active and often orchestrated much of the work, but gender bias limited them from holding the highest positions of leadership in their local branch.

Cases of the zoning fights reveal several patterns. Similar tactics and strategies were employed for multiple issues and different types of zoning battles. Each case revealed cross-class coalitions marked by some level of mass petition-signing or protests and communication with local government officials. The zoning battles spanned from efforts to restrict grocery store owners from displaying chicken coops to a five-year legal battle to restrict the building of a tavern in close proximity to a school and church. The efforts were preventative and reactive. For example, in 1940, the Northwest Residential Protective Association lobbied the city council to block the opening of a grocery store in their neighborhood. According to accounts:

Representatives of the Northwest Residential Protective Association and the homeowners of the 1200 block of McCulloh Street are scheduled to stage a mass protest before the city council, Monday, against the proposed opening of a grocery store at 1203 McCulloh Street. It was learned that a white grocer...plans to move his business to 1203 [McCulloh Street]. On Monday at 3 p.m., the city council will hold a public hearing to determine whether or not the grocer should be granted this permission, thereby changing the block from a residential to a first class commercial. If the transfer is granted, it was pointed out, the block will be opened to almost any type of business, at least it will be possible for a merchant to open a tavern in the block.<sup>110</sup>

The McCulloh grocery case was preventative—the goal of the Northwest Residential Protective Association was to stop the possibility of heightened commercial growth that

---

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “African American Women’s History and the Metalanguage of Race,” *Signs* 17: 251–274, 1992; Glenda Gilmore, *Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

<sup>110</sup> “Residents Fight Proposed Store,” *Afro-American*, February 10, 1940.

might include taverns. Further reports indicate that members of the Northwest Residential Protective Association and homeowners did in fact follow through on their plans and protested at the city council public hearing.

This case highlights the motives behind many of these protests. For one, leaders of the neighborhood associations were acting preventatively and aiming to steer white business owners from expanding commercial opportunities. Latent in the language of the reporting is a subtle racial politics that suggests that black leaders of the neighborhood associations were distrustful of the aspirations of white business owners and were making attempts to maintain their neighborhoods as enclaves where black businesses could thrive. Regardless of the underpinning race and class politics of the zoning fights, it is clear that mechanisms were at play in these battles and that leaders of neighborhood associations worked to build multiple partnerships and support both within and outside of City Hall.

In the 1203 McCulloh Street grocer fight, the Northwest Residential Protective Association was not automatically successful. In some instances, protest was not enough. Amidst protesting at the city council hearing, the City Planning Commission, Zoning Board, and the City Council voted to approve grocer's plans. However, upon losing the initial fight, the Northwest Residential Protective Association lobbied to the mayor for a veto of the measure and were successful in persuading Mayor Jackson to overturn the ruling and block the white grocer from opening his store.<sup>111</sup> This move demonstrates that leadership from the Northwest Residential Protective Association had an established rapport with the mayor and could leverage enough influence to persuade him. Florence Snowden's family associations—with her sister leading a strong a powerful NAACP by

---

<sup>111</sup> "A New Champion," *Afro-American*, June 1, 1940.

that time—and her extended family networks with other influential black institutions in the city helped to bridge a relationship and familiarity with the mayor that was invaluable in lobbying.

It should also be mentioned that besides building a relationship with the mayor, the Northwest Residential Protective Association had previous experience fighting against commercial interests in the same section of McCulloh Street. Therefore, it possessed the expertise and the experience. Three years prior, it was successful in blocking the approval of a liquor license to a nearby white fraternal lodge. Reports from a battle against a liquor license shows that:

Members of the Northwest Improvement Association leaving Baltimore courthouse after successfully protesting the granting of a class “C” license to the Walter Green Post, American Legion at 1308 McCulloh Street. The Liquor License Commission decided that the location was too near two churches and a school.”<sup>112</sup>

It is clear that the NRPA had experience in putting forth an organized effort around zoning issues. In the article describing the 1937 victory, an image is also provided that shows a large group of people that participated in the hearing to block the liquor license. In both McCulloh Street cases, mass-level protest was evident. We can surmise that residents in that immediate area had experience with mobilization around similar issues and were confident that their efforts could be put to good use.

Some zoning fights were much more clean-cut than the McCulloh grocer case. And each of the cases have similar ingredients of protest, large group participation, and at times, legal counsel from W.A.C. Hughes—a veteran of the City-Wide Young People’s Forum and legal advisor to the local NAACP. Two cases stand out, both revolving around different types of zoning issues, but both demonstrating swift organizing and

---

<sup>112</sup> “There Will Be No Beer Sold in Their Neighborhood,” *Afro-American*, July 31, 1937.

similar patterns. The patterns in tactics hint that neighborhood associations shared information and orchestrated their efforts. One case demonstrates the work of an auxiliary of the Northwest Residential Protective Association and shows how expertise was copied under auxiliaries.

In 1940, the West End Improvement Association protested against a cluster of store owners' displaying chicken coops in front of the stores. There is no existing evidence that describes the development of the West End Improvement Association. Potential explanations for its creation include that the neighborhood association grew with the help of Florence Snowden in response to a zoning issue on the west side of the city (although a search for this evidence yielded no clues), or perhaps the West End Improvement Association grew naturally out of the Northwest Residential Protective Association with the hopes of pollinating neighborhood groups throughout black neighborhoods.

Much like with the NRPA, a black woman was the president of the West End Improvement Association. The West End Improvement Association employed similar tactics as well. To fight against the store owners, the West End Improvement Association voiced its protest and filed a formal complaint with the Board of Estimates. In the end, the Board of Estimates ruled that chicken coops could not be displayed on sidewalks in front of stores.<sup>113</sup> The West End Improvement Association targeted its protest to the Board of Estimates because the grievance against the grocery store owners did not involve a specific zoning issue or an application for a liquor license. In short, the chicken coop battle did not involve fighting against something new on the horizon, but was a fight against what it considered a neighborhood blight.

---

<sup>113</sup> "Board Ruling Bans Coops on Sidewalk," *Afro-American*, July 20, 1940.

This strategy reveals that leaders from the West End Improvement Association had expertise and knew whom to talk to and who had influence over certain decisions. There is no evidence that the WEIA stumbled or had to make multiple attempts to discover who to put pressure on. Again, this experience connects to the work and networks of Florence Snowden. The West End Improvement Association fell under the umbrella of the Northwest Improvement Association, so resources and information were easily shared because its leadership had deep linkages with other local organizations such as the NAACP. However, working autonomously from the NAACP in organizational structure was advantageous and allowed for quick and seamless information- and resource-sharing.

Another case of the patterns in tactics can be seen in the Northwest Residential Protective Association's fight against liquor advertising on local buildings. Again, a protest was formed and neighborhood residents were brought into the fight. The issue at question with the liquor advertising was whether the Convery Sign Company had permission to post signs advertising wines. Much like other efforts, the Northwest Residential Protective Association launched its protest at the public zoning hearing scheduled to discuss the presence of the advertisement. Records indicate that the NRPA organized testimony from several long-standing residents of the block to speak out against the advertisements.

The Convery Sign Company argued that it had recently bought space in the building and that a sign had always been on the building for several years. The NRPA countered with testimony from long-standing residents that could speak to the Convery Sign Company's charges. The residents argued that "although a small tin painted sign had

been nailed up there for a few years, there never was a large sign of any kind on the walls.”<sup>114</sup> This case points out that the Northwest Residential Protective Association and its affiliates honed their expertise in organizing protest and displaying evidence from neighborhood residents to persuade city boards. In fact, in the Convery Sign Company case, the chairman of the zoning board expressed to the Convery Sign Company that “I would like to help you, but the overwhelming evidence is too strong.”<sup>115</sup>

The five-year legal battle mounted by the Northeast Protective and Improvement Association to block the opening of the Federico Tavern is important to analyze. Starting in 1940, the NPIA fought against plans to open the Federico Tavern across from Dunbar High School (an all-black school) and First Baptist Church. The NPIA initially filed an appeal with the State Liquor License Board to protest the renewal of the tavern’s liquor license.<sup>116</sup> This demonstrates that the neighborhood association escalated their efforts past the local liquor board—a move that was made possible because of the resource in W.A.C. Hughes as legal counsel.

By this point in Baltimore’s black organizing, W.A.C. Hughes had fostered a relationship with Thurgood Marshall and Charles Hamilton Houston, both of whom were in close proximity in Washington, DC. His exposure to these relationships helped equip him with stronger skills and access to expertise to work on this case. On the legal side, the case of Federico Tavern shows legal stamina from both parties involved. W.A.C. Hughes and the Northeast Protective and Improvement Association successfully appealed the State Liquor License Board and blocked the renewal of the liquor license for Federico

---

<sup>114</sup> “Ban Wine Ad on Building Residents Win Fight,” *Afro-American*, September 27, 1941.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> “Protective Group Protests Renewal of Tavern License and Files Appeal,” *Afro-American*, May 9, 1942.

Tavern in 1942. However, the owners of the tavern fought back by filing a case in Circuit Court arguing that they were refused a full hearing in the decision to refuse their liquor license.<sup>117</sup> In what can best be described as a back and forth legal battle that required money and time from all parties involved, the Northeast Protective and Improvement Association accumulated all of its available resources and allies to protest over the course of five years. In the end, the Northeast Protective and Improvement Association, with the help of multiple legal maneuverings, neighborhood residents, black churches, school groups, neighborhood association auxiliaries, and the NAACP, ultimately won the effort and the Federico Tavern was closed.<sup>118</sup>

The Federico Tavern battle should not only be discussed in regards to its legal work. The trajectory of the Northeast Protective and Improvement Association differs in some important ways from the activity surrounding other neighborhood associations. Details of the participation and mobilization of groups against the Federico Tavern reveal slight differences. Mobilization efforts were aimed at galvanizing the immediate church and school community—evidence of a tailoring of strategies to make the most of the mobilization potential of those directly affected.

Other zoning efforts showed that neighborhood residents were the primary participants in the protest and also did not directly involve institutions such as the church and school. Institutions can serve as an important resource for recruitment and information-sharing; they also have their own resources of leaders who often have honed their own sets of skills, and those might be helpful in partnering on mobilization efforts that directly impact them. Reports from the Federico case contend that leadership from

---

<sup>117</sup> “E. Baltimore Tavern Case Being Aired,” *Afro-American*, September 26, 1942.

<sup>118</sup> “Outstanding Stories in Baltimore During 1944,” *Afro-American*, January 13, 1945.



First Baptist Church were active in the protest, along with residents of the block, members of the local NAACP, and members of the Dunbar High School Parent-Teacher Association.<sup>119</sup>

The Northwest Residential Protective Association also partnered with institutions that were not exclusively black institutions . It made attempts to convince the school board to partner with it on the issue, for example. Reports from the *Afro-American* detail efforts by the Northeast Protective and Improvement Association, the Dunbar High School PTA, church leadership, neighborhood residents, and the NAACP to speak at the school board meeting to present their case to close Federico Tavern. Although the effort was made, the school board did not partner in their cause, stating that it only got involved in liquor license issues when the establishment in question was within 300 feet of school buildings.<sup>120</sup> The attempts by the NPIA show us that efforts to partner were not always easily achieved and that neighborhood groups found more allies within the black community than outside of it. This also speaks to the limits of their weak influence within local politics. With the presence of constraints to build allies within local government bodies, their best option was to hone resources within their community.

The previous cases highlight the proliferation of neighborhood groups in black neighborhoods and demonstrate that expertise was evident in neighborhood politics. By building on expertise developed in other organizational arenas, the leaders of neighborhood associations managed to orchestrate similar strategies and tactics across a range of zoning issues. The strength of neighborhood associations was the ability to fire up people block by block on issues pertaining to their immediate neighborhoods. Zoning

---

<sup>119</sup> “No Hearing Date Set on E. Baltimore Tavern,” *Afro-American*, June 5, 1943. See also, “School Board Asked to Help Close Tavern,” *Afro-American*, June 12, 1943.

<sup>120</sup> “School Board Asked to Help Close Tavern,” *Afro-American*, June 12, 1943.

issues surrounding the granting of liquor and commercial licenses were by design municipal issues that were worked out in a neighborhood context. Public hearings were open, and the opposition stood to gain if they could effectively mobilize their neighbors. Simply stated, zoning is a neighborhood issue and black neighborhood associations were a complementary fit.

## **5. When Expertise Fails: Constraints and Opportunities in Lobbying for Playgrounds**

In the spring of 1924, Carl Murphy and the *Baltimore Afro-American* began efforts to push the city Park Board to develop a citywide system of playgrounds in black neighborhoods.<sup>121</sup> The playground debate would last for two years and would later coincide with the Urban League Lung Block campaign efforts discussed earlier in this chapter. The playground debate is important to study for a few reasons. This case reveals the life span of a lobbying effort through different phases of organizational strength and shows how expertise can fail.

The impetus for the playground push had no connection to new initiatives put in place by the city Park Board. The lobby for playgrounds for black children started from a clean slate, requiring leaders to be innovative and selective with the scope of their demands and the strategies developed. Carl Murphy first called for several parks to be developed across the city that black children could easily walk to. The initial diagnosis and proposal was for the entire city park system to be revamped and improved for the black community. The framing of the playground debate touched on class. Carl Murphy

---

<sup>121</sup> “More Playgrounds Needed,” *Afro-American*, May 30, 1924; “Playground and Parks,” *Afro-American*, August 8, 1924.

believed that black children, regardless of class, should have access to a neighborhood park and that it was the city's responsibility to ensure that parks were available.

At the early stages of the debate on new playgrounds, the *Afro-American* insisted that the lack of parks was fully the responsibility of the city Park Board.<sup>122</sup> There is no indication that Carl Murphy considered the role that neighborhood activism could play in advocating for playgrounds. His expertise in communicating issues and identifying the actors responsible as editor of the *Afro-American* were mimicked in the strategy to lobby for playgrounds. Early on the playground debate sparked no mobilization and no petitions from those beyond the *Afro-American* staff. Neighborhood protest would emerge as the debate unfolded, but knowledge of how to measure the pulse of a community and mobilize was outside of Carl Murphy's toolbox of expertise.

The playground debate was Murphy's brainchild, and his role can best be described as a political entrepreneur in this matter. The push to revamp city playgrounds represents lobbying between a black institution and city government to innovate change at the local level. An analysis of how the *Afro-American* lobbied with city government helps to explain how narrow coordination across available resources can both hinder opportunities for everyday people to become political engaged and lead to failure. As an institution within the black community, the *Afro-American* operated differently than many other race uplift organizations.

The paper was foremost a business operation with a strong advocacy agenda, but was not part of a larger federated organization or a local grassroots organization. In this way, the movement of the *Afro-American* as an important institution presents an interesting example for studying the way that various actors made attempts to bring about

---

<sup>122</sup> "Playgrounds Again," *Afro-American*, June 13, 1925.

change at the local level. There was no executive board or various committees to take on specific political projects—but the paper did have a staff of 32 people by 1924 and bureaus in Philadelphia, Washington, DC, and New York.<sup>123</sup> The paper aimed to increase circulation and membership rolls like other organizations. But it is still important to investigate the behavior of the *Afro-American* as an institution that took on neighborhood issues in black Baltimore, and the playground debate provides a clear example of this. Scholars have emphasized the importance of the black press and the *Baltimore Afro-American* in particular as a highly political new source:

...The black press was for years one of the few segments of the American news media that actively championed, in its articles and editorials, the struggle of blacks for full equality in the United States. In that sense, the black press, along with civil rights organizations and other black community groups, was an agent for protest and change.<sup>124</sup>

The initial strategy in 1924 of the *Afro-American* was to lobby directly to the Park Board for citywide parks for black children.<sup>125</sup> Two months into the push for playgrounds, Carl Murphy abandoned direct bargaining efforts with the Park Board and directly lobbied Mayor Jackson. When he shifted the focus from the Park Board to Mayor Jackson, he also broadened the demands and changed the overall strategy. Most likely disgruntled by lack of progress with the Park Board, Murphy asked Mayor Jackson to create an auxiliary committee composed entirely of black Baltimoreans to serve as a liaison between the Mayor and the Park Board. This shift signals a distrust of the Park Board and shows that in an environment with no black representation in City Hall, efforts

---

<sup>123</sup> Hayward Farrar, *See What the Afro Says: The Afro-American, 1892–1950* (PhD dissertation, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983), pp. 35 & 40.

<sup>124</sup> Hayward Farrar, *See What the Afro Says: The Afro-American, 1892–1950* (PhD dissertation, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983).

<sup>125</sup> “More Playgrounds Needed, *Afro-American*. May 30, 1924.

were made to build in black representation within local government.<sup>126</sup> Murphy's push for a black auxiliary committee would have provided proxy representation on park and recreation matters.

It is unclear whether Carl Murphy's attempt to develop a black auxiliary committee was rooted in hopes to secure black representation on the Park Board or if his motives were simply to fill the void in black representation in City Hall. Regardless of his reasons, given the lack of political resources available at the time—specifically, no black council members and weak or absent black organizations—Carl Murphy was attempting to build resources and black influence. A feature of his role as a political entrepreneur was that he created the agenda and could work without the constraints of a larger body; however, unlike in other cases in this chapter, his expertise was not matched with other resources or additional leadership. The complete absence of a broader roster of leadership and the failure to network with other black elites proved consequential. Carl Murphy's efforts can be characterized as innovating an issue rather than reacting to a problem as in the Lung Block District case or fitting expertise into an opening in local political processes as seen in the zoning battles.

A pitfall of innovating issues with little resources is that it is harder to anticipate roadblocks. There is virtually no evidence that Carl Murphy or other employees at the *Afro-American* organized in any way to anticipate any roadblocks—such as one that became reality when Mayor Jackson would not appoint a black auxiliary to the Park Board. Faced with no political influence in City Hall and no organizations willing to

---

<sup>126</sup> The playground battle was launched shortly after Warner McGuinn and William Fitzgerald lost their seats after the restructuring of city council seats.

become partners on innovating new issues, Murphy had few opportunities for any attempts to mobilize around the park system.

After one full year of attempts to reform the park system, the *Afro-American* leadership shifted from calling for the Mayor and Park Board to develop playgrounds in each black neighborhood to directing their efforts directly on a particular area called Perkins Square and pushing for the development of a playground there. This shift represented a change in their demands from making changes to the entire system to honing in on a single demand. The shift to refocus efforts to the development of a playground in the Perkins Square area does not appear to be done at random : This decision was most likely a deliberate attempt to build a playground in an area that the black middle class enjoyed when hosting public events. More specifically, black clubwomen held an annual “flower mart” at Perkins Square as part of their fundraising campaign for the Women’s Civic Cooperative League. In short, Perkins Square represented a notable area in the city where middle-class blacks had vested interests.

The importance of the *Afro-American* in making a shift in strategy a year later should not be understated. By this time, the *Afro* was able to recruit the help of the newly emerged Urban League. The Urban League brought its own unique set of resources in investigation and providing social scientific approaches. We can surmise that Carl Murphy was able to bring the Urban League on board because he played a role in the Lung Block District campaign and could expand the strategy with additional networks.

Under the new plan to focus efforts on the Perkins Square playground, the *Afro-American* editorial staff proposed a solution based on the calculation that 500 children lived in close proximity and would be served by the playground. This approach differed

from the initial singular efforts of Carl Murphy a year prior—gone were the calls to wholeheartedly change the city park system by developing neighborhood parks in every black neighborhood. The new strategy moved towards building a more simplistic and feasible response to a single issue. The influence of the Urban League’s method is clear in a new, calculated approach to build a case to the Park Board. Evidence of more partnering beyond the Urban League is also apparent in the second year of the playground push. The NAACP papers reveal that women started to organize in their homes to aid in the drive to develop a playground in Perkins Square:

Mrs. Murphy’s Neighborhood Club is thriving splendidly. The Club cannot any longer be accommodated in the members’ homes and subsequent meetings are to be held in the lecture room of a Methodist Church in that locality...The Club has an immediate objective the securing of playground equipment for the Perkins Square Playground.<sup>127</sup>

Besides a change in the presence of organizational resources, the second year of lobbying also marked a newly appointed Park Board president. The new *Afro-American*, Urban League, and NAACP coalition made efforts to take advantage of this change. As mentioned earlier, in the previous year, the *Afro-American* acted alone and initially reached out to the Park Board to lobby directly for change. Revisiting the same strategy, the *Afro-American* leadership and the Urban League secretary met one-on-one with the new Park Board president to discuss the inadequacies of city playgrounds and to urge the development of a Perkins Square playground.

It can be surmised that black leadership appealed to the Park Board president rather than Mayor Jackson because the president was newly appointed and black leadership was making an effort to take advantage of the opportunity to make a fresh

---

<sup>127</sup> Papers of the NAACP. Box I: G84, Folder #14. Unfortunately, there was no more mention of the activities of this club in the NAACP papers and no trace of its activities in the *Afro* pages.

demand to a new face. The *Afro-American* leadership was also optimistic that its lobbying efforts with a changed Park Board would be successful. Exuding confidence not displayed in earlier efforts, the *Afro-American* hailed that “at the meeting of the Park Board Friday, G.H. Mackey, *Afro* Sports Editor, was on hand to make a plea directly to the officials and the Perkins Square project was adopted.” However, any burst of optimism was quickly shot down weeks later when those pushing for the Perkins Square playground were faced with a setback that they had not anticipated.

What middle-class activists had not factored in was dissension from working-class residents in the Perkins Square community. In a pointed cartoon responding to community opposition, the *Afro-American* argued that “We Always Have Them With Us” and compares their delegation to the community delegation. Engaging in class dialogue, the *Afro-American* portrayed its delegation as middle-class professionals and the community delegation as working-class and pedestrian. The inference of the cartoon was that the community delegation confused the president of the Park Board and erased any efforts to present a united front of black leadership to the Board. Middle-class black activists heading the effort failed to anticipate dissension and protest within the black community and also failed to engage black community members in and around Perkins Square through canvassing and mobilization. Because the push for the expansion for parks occurred prior to the successes of the neighborhood clubs, it is possible that the failure to mobilize at a cross-class neighborhood level was an issue of lack of experience in mobilizing across class.

In an editorial, Carl Murphy argued that the Perkins Square proposal to the Park Board has been “halted temporarily by protests of petitions circulating in two of the



neighboring churches...It is to be hoped in the interest of the public welfare and for the sake of the children they will withdraw their protests and back the playground project.”<sup>128</sup>

The protesting and petition campaign that Perkins Square community members participated in signals direct activism that was not anticipated by those advocating for a Perkins Square park. This also hints at class friction. Second, protesting by community members reveals a lack of cohesiveness and communication within Baltimore’s black leadership.

The failure to anticipate and remedy challenges presented by the neighborhood opposition would eventually lead to the failure of the playground effort. The editorial staff at the *Afro-American* made a serious plea for greater neighborhood mobilization after facing the setbacks from the neighborhood opposition. The paper argued “It is the duty of the neighborhood associations in these sections as well as the parent-teachers associations to take the steps to secure the needed play spaces.”<sup>129</sup> The Park Board ignored the request of the *Afro-American*, and discussion of a Perkins Square playground ceased—in fact, there are no records of mobilization or lobbying for or against the playground after the final editorial arguing for heightened neighborhood organizing. Although the second year of lobbying for an expanded park system included a larger coalition of actors, the playground battle was not well executed, unlike the Lung Block District and zoning fights. None of the actors working on expanding the park system had expertise in innovating new policy at the neighborhood level. Bringing new issues and demands to the table rather than lobbying for improvements was new to black Baltimore at this time. The Urban League had succeeded in prescribing change to a single issue and

---

<sup>128</sup> June 6, 1925 editorial.

<sup>129</sup> June 13, 1925 editorial.

cleaning up a blighted area, but it brought no new innovations to the fore. The neighborhood associations fighting against zoning licenses had accumulated expertise at a time of enormous organizational strength in the city and benefited from applying their strategy to an opening in local politics. Made plain, the playground battle suffered from too little experience and expertise on developing new initiatives and negotiating with local officials.

## **6. Conclusion**

This chapter has aimed to demonstrate that resources were cultivated internally in ways that sometimes proved advantageous. Three cases have been described: (1) the Urban League Lung Block District campaign, (2) the work of neighborhood associations to fight liquor and commercial zoning licenses, and (3) efforts early in Baltimore's black organizing tradition to expand the city park system. In each of these cases, I have outlined how expertise was utilized and pointed out when the effort involved middle-class versus cross-class activism.

We learned from the Lung Block District campaign that the Urban League amassed expertise in social scientific investigations and strategically exploited that skill set to build its case to city officials. The Urban League did not advance any protest tactics or methods outside of its expertise and was ultimately successful. Similarly, neighborhood associations mostly led by women found an opening in the processes of local government and used their strength in neighborhood mobilizing to fight against liquor and commercial zoning licenses. What we also learned from neighborhood associations is that expertise can be shared with other organizational affiliations, and black associations in Baltimore often wore multiple organizational hats that enabled them

to borrow resources from different places. Lastly, by analyzing the failed attempt by Carl Murphy and his coalition to expand the park system in black neighborhoods, we learn that expertise is not enough if the timing is wrong and the initiative new. Expertise is most useful when an organization has had experience testing it out or is familiar with the issue at hand.

Scholars of racial politics often look to the mainstream Civil Rights Movement or later to highlight the resources imbedded in black institutions that spur political activity. These cases uncover evidence of active mobilization around improvement to social welfare in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Blacks were engaged politically during this period—they made attempts to bargain with City Hall and city officials, organized petition drives, and participated in direct action. Although important gains were made, it is also true that barriers to political influence slowed massive change. The Urban League was victorious in cleaning up the Lung Block, but it did not possess the influence with City Hall to revamp housing for poor blacks. And women leading the charge against taverns were the most victorious in making broad change but were also limited by not having any political representation at the local level to help solidify their demands.

## Chapter 3

### EMPLOYMENT ACTIVISM

“So nigh to grandeur is our dust, So near to God is man, When duty whispers low, Thou must, Youth replies: I can!”<sup>1</sup> - Motto of the City-Wide Young People’s Forum

#### 1. Introduction

There are several lessons in scholarship that discuss the effectiveness of federated organizations in enhancing the resources of politically weak groups.<sup>2</sup> Although much stands to be learned from studies that explain how multiple levels of unified agenda-setting can positively impact information and resource-sharing, less is known about different forms of organizational structures that political underdogs employ. In this chapter, I examine how organizational structure impacts the strategies advanced in campaigns for integration. By taking a closer look at cases where black Baltimoreans made attempts to integrate, we notice multiple tactics in exactly how they organized. The path to lobby for integration at the local level was organized by federated organizations in some instances. However, there are also cases where different organizational structures were present

---

<sup>1</sup> Mitchell Family Private Archives, City-Wide Young People’s Forum Annual Intercollegiate, Oratorical, Vocal & Instrumental Contest, Program 1933–1936. City-Wide Young People’s Forum Motto.

<sup>2</sup> Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995).

For example, in some cases, efforts were put forward by off-shoot grassroots organizations linked to a larger federated organization, and also by purely grassroots organizations with no ties to larger racial uplift organizations.

These cases reveal that the way a group is organized can have an effect on the strategies that they devise. Moreover, the cases in this chapter show how class factors into how organizations build mobilization strategies. This chapter takes a closer look at four cases:

1. The push to appoint black court constables for the first time in the city's history; this effort was led by black city council members and marked by middle-class activism.
2. The picketing of white-owned grocery stores as part of a "don't buy where you can't work campaign;" this effort was put forward by a grassroots organization and included cross-class activism.
3. Efforts by black teachers to equalize their salaries; this effort was developed by a grassroots organization and characterized by middle-class activism.
4. Efforts by the Baltimore Urban League to break the color line in employment and housing sectors; this was organized by a federated organization and is best characterized as cross-class activism.

I argue that these cases reveal that there are benefits and trade-offs to certain types of organizational structures. These cases also illustrate the heterogeneity of black organizing during this period—in both structure and mobilization strategies. Because grassroots organizations are generally more autonomous and are not beholden to any overarching institution, they can sometimes take on more risk and include a broader coalition. We see this play out with the City-Wide Young People's Forum and their efforts to boycott city grocery stores. However, what the City-Wide Young People's Forum also demonstrates is that resource-rich grassroots organizations stand to gain the most. Groups can gain from federated organizations by having the benefit of accumulated

resources and a defined agenda to guide them; however, federated organizations have their own constraints because of the multiple levels of oversight, and oversight can limit strategy-building. Last, I argue that in the case of organizing for integration via local government, the consequences are dire if there is no effort to partner or build coalitions with groups outside of government. Local governmental channels can go just so far if the group is marred by little political strength, and the court constable appointment case helps to show the outcome of weak political influence and absent partnerships.

I also argue that regardless of the outcome, a closer examination of how blacks in Baltimore organized during this period teaches us about the way different organizational repertoires evolved. The accounts in this chapter do not intend to downplay or reshape the important work on social movements and organizational change. What I do attempt to emphasize is that by examining black organizing in Baltimore, we learn about autonomous groups that stood to gain because they were more able to advance riskier strategies. As it turns out, the development of autonomous organizations in the early 1930s would be consequential to black organizing in the city and would have an impact on strategy-building in later years.

## **2. Existing Literature**

A growing body of literature examines the role of a group's organizational structure and the strategies it employs. In Skocpol's seminal work, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, she finds that a federated organizational structure proved advantageous to white club women. In her analysis, women with very little political influence were able to convert their organizational strength into political resources, and the multilayered structure of federated women's clubs made them tangible tools to penetrate every layer of

government. The ability of women's clubs to have a presence at the small town hall meeting all the way up to a national council of women's clubs allowed tactics and strategies to permeate and proved crucial to their ability to garner influence at various levels of government.<sup>1</sup>

Skocpol cautions that the impact of federated women's clubs was not random. Instead, she argues that clubwomen pursued their most rigorous work when there was a political opportunity for them to put their organizational prowess to work. She states: "In turn, this happened at a historical juncture when male-only U.S. political parties were weakened, when state legislators were more sensitive to moralistic waves of public opinion than to partisan controls, and when U.S. courts were willing to accept labor regulations for women but not for men."<sup>2</sup> Skocpol's work is important in grounding our understanding of the limits and promise of federated organizations when timing is considered.

In her complete investigation inside the movement to pass the ERA amendment, Jane Mansbridge uncovers that autonomous organizing is not always advantageous. The decentralized structure of ERA organizing opened the door for local groups to have a great deal of autonomy. However, the autonomy of local groups clashed with the multilayered structure of ERA organizing nationwide and resulted in the failure of local groups to adopt unifying strategies with national leadership.<sup>3</sup> Kathleen Blee stressed the importance of studying the movement formation of previously underrepresented groups that launch disturbing movements that seek to advance inequality.

---

<sup>1</sup> Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

Blee argues that several lessons can be learned from the organizing tradition of women of the Klan. She notes that the organizational structure of “Women of the Ku Klux Klan” (WKKK) was highly detailed and that women appropriated gender politics into how they organized.

The women’s Klan copied the regalia, militarism, hierarchy, and political stances of the male Ku Klux Klan but insisted that they were no mere appendage of the KKK, claiming autonomy and a special mission for Klanswomen. They used the KKK’s call for supremacy of white, native-born Protestants and interpreted it in a gender-specific way...<sup>4</sup>

Blee’s investigation also uncovered that many of the recruitment strategies of the WKKK involved personal and family connections. The analyses in this chapter are partly informed by Blee’s finding that members were characterized by “extrafamilial involvement.” She finds that members were highly active and involved in more than one activity organization, and leaders were both civically and socially engaged and had communication skills and established networks.<sup>5</sup> Cases in this chapter, and specifically the work of the City-Wide Young People’s Forum, were also characterized by what Blee would coin extrafamilial involvement.

Newer work contributes to our understanding of variations of federated organizing and how different groups take on different forms of federated organizing. Skocpol and Oser stress that African Americans in particular were members of federated fraternal organizations in large proportions and played key roles in mobilizing for racial change.<sup>6</sup> Liazos and Ganz shed light on the importance of including fraternal

---

<sup>4</sup> Kathleen M. Blee, “Women in the 1920s Ku Klux Klan Movement,” *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring 1991), p. 58.

<sup>5</sup> Kathleen M. Blee, “Women in the 1920s Ku Klux Klan Movement,” *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring 1991), pp. 57–77.

<sup>6</sup> Theda Skocpol and Jennifer Lynn Oser, “Organization Despite Adversity: The Origins and Development of African American Fraternal Associations,” *Social Science History*, 28:3 (Fall 2004), 367–437.



organizations in our understanding of civil rights activism. They find that the intricate federated networks, secret traditions, and effective communication channels matched with existing resources of the members themselves were crucial to legal activism. Their work adds a crucial piece to our understanding of not only how black organizations crafted strategies for racial change but also the heterogeneity of black organizations that played important roles in civil rights activism.<sup>7</sup>

The work of Elisabeth Clemens teaches us that understanding the outcomes of different organizational structures may in fact be more complex. She finds that in the face of barriers to participating in electoral politics, white women created innovative methods to penetrate politics.<sup>8</sup> We learn that new organizational structures can form in response to exogenous factors and limited access in politics. Sometimes those not previously influential in politics can be the architects of new structures and modes of mobilizing. And Clemens' analysis also illustrates that political underdogs can develop new organizational structures in patchwork fashion—by taking elements of different organizational repertoires to form a new method. In the same vein, Glenda Gilmore makes a similar point in showing that black clubwomen in North Carolina created new modes of organizing in the face of blocked access during the Progressive Era. In Gilmore's examination, black clubwomen found new ways to organize both in structure via black women's clubs and through strategy by brokering for local and state services for blacks under the guise of women's work.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Ariane Liazos and Marshal Ganz, "Duty to the Race: African American Fraternal Orders and the Legal Defense of the Right to Organize," *Social Science History*, 28:3 (Fall 2004), 485–534.

<sup>8</sup> Elisabeth Clemens, "Organizational Repertoires and Institutional Change: Women's Groups and the Transformation of U.S. Politics, 1890–1920," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 98, No. 4 (Jan. 1993) p. 758.

<sup>9</sup> Glenda Gilmore. *Gender and Jim Crow: women and the politics of white supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

In relation to the cases in this chapter, Clemens finds that "...the majority of organizational activity by women's groups involved a much more eclectic process of copying and transforming multiple models of organization."<sup>10</sup> Two cases in this chapter show a similar pattern. Blacks in Baltimore created new organizational repertoires in response to the resources available and in keeping with the political opportunities available at the time. When resources such as knowledge and experience are available, modes of organization can stretch beyond classic organizational models, and autonomous models can develop. What is key is that when groups organize autonomously, they are free from oversight and strategies can be expanded.

### **3. Local Government: City Council and Integrating Political Appointments**

In 1920, black city council members Warner McGuinn and William Fitzgerald lost the battle to appoint four black court constables—an attempt to garner patronage resources and a move that would have integrated the post of court appointees that assisted with clerical duties. The court constable battle provides a good illustration of the limits of the black council members' influence in local party politics. In May 1920, McGuinn and Fitzgerald each nominated two black men from their districts for court constable—a measure that required a procedural vote from the majority of council members for the appointments to be upheld.<sup>11</sup> Records indicate that both councilmen had strong opinions and expectations on the constable vote from the early stages: "Messrs. McGuinn and Fitzgerald have announced that the Council must accept the colored candidates or none. If any change in the measure is made, it will have to be done on the floor of the Council

---

<sup>10</sup> Elisabeth Clemens, "Organizational Repertoires and Institutional Change: Women's Groups and the Transformation of U.S. Politics, 1890–1920, *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 98, No. 4 (Jan. 1993) p. 792.

<sup>11</sup> "The Constable Deal," *Afro-American*, May 14, 1920.

when the bill is reported next Monday, and the vote will be a matter of record.”<sup>12</sup> The limited influence that both McGuinn and Fitzgerald held within the local Republican Party is clear from the beginning of the constable vote.

By 1920, the city council held 18 Democrats and 9 Republicans, with the Democrats broken into the Kelly and Mahon factions. Members of the Mahon faction were also key members of the Joint Committee of Police and Jails responsible for constable appointments, providing them with important influence. Warner McGuinn also sat on the Joint Committee of Police and Jails. He was outnumbered and had limited influence. Recognizing the powerful influence of the Mahon faction, white Republicans in the Council bargained with the Mahon faction and struck a deal to block the vote of the black constables in return for additional white constable appointees. And in a clear strategic decision of timing, white Republican council members struck the deal with the Mahon faction while McGuinn and Fitzgerald were attending the Republican National Convention and therefore unable to resist these movements.<sup>13</sup>

What unfolded reveals the constraints of black office-holding in Baltimore. Knowing of the absence of McGuinn and Fitzgerald, the City Solicitor and leading white Republicans arranged a meeting with Walter Emerson—a prominent black leader who also sat as the executive of the 14<sup>th</sup> ward with McGuinn. The maneuvers of the white Republican leadership point to an overt effort to capitalize on the timing of their bargaining and to utilize Emerson as a proxy when information-sharing between the black city councilmen was weak. During the meeting, they requested that Emerson endorse removing all black constables in the vote and when he rejected that offer, they

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> “Republicans Join Democrats to bar Colored Constables,” *Afro-American*, June 11, 1920.

proposed that the list be shortened from four appointees to two. Again, Emerson rejected their proposals and vehemently argued: “We have a right to name four men and we are insisting on it without any kind of compromise. Failure of the leading Republicans in the Council to stand by our nominees is one of the rankest deals colored voters have gotten since Broening was elected Mayor.”<sup>14</sup>

Although there are no records available detailing correspondence between McGuinn, Fitzgerald, and Emerson, it is clear that they were unified on their demands for installing all four black constables. This is most likely explained by the fact that this period marked a watershed moment because two black council members were elected in 1919 for the first time in the city’s history. This case also sheds light on race politics and the general racial climate in the city during this period. White councilmen went on record during city council sessions to persuade their colleagues against the vote, with one explicitly stating, “Don’t vote for any ordinance with the names of nigger constables in it.”<sup>15</sup> The advancement of four black men to these court positions incited racial animus inside the city council. In his final plea to the city council, Warner McGuinn argued against the campaign mounted by a coalition of white Republicans and the Democratic Mahon faction to wholeheartedly bar black appointees solely on the basis of race.

Colored letter carriers deliver mail to your doors. Now these constables have no power, no authority. They simple serve processes of the courts. Simply because a man is colored ought not be a bar to his holding this or any other political position. Should you pass this ordinance you are saying, no matter how intelligent a man may be, how god-fearing he may be, however much taxes he may pay, the fact of his colored blood bars him from holding public office.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> “City Councilman McGuinn’s Speech for Colored Constables,” *Afro-American*, June 18, 1920

For the most part, white councilmen were united in their efforts to block any increase in black political presence and also recognized that doing so would benefit their own political endeavors by increasing the number of white political appointees. The brokering of constable appointments between the white Republican leaders and the leading Democratic Mahon faction aligns Baltimore local politics along a similar spectrum with other Southern cities characterized by lily-white Republicans working in opposition to black Republicans. Both Bunche and Walton showed how white Republicans in the South, lacking majority influence at the local level, made overt efforts to distance themselves and sometimes prevent advances by black Republicans.<sup>17</sup> In short, when white Republicans in Baltimore were presented with the opportunity to broaden their influence within white communities, they brokered with the Mahon faction and knowingly killed the chance for any black political appointments.

The joining of forces resulted in the entire Mahon faction and all white Republicans voting for removing black constable appointees, a final move that left white Republicans appointing 22 constables, the Mahon Democrats appointing 34 constables, the white Kelly Democrats with no constable appointments, and black Republicans also without appointments.<sup>18</sup>

Protest on the part of McGuinn and Fitzgerald was carried out, with McGuinn leading the charge. However, McGuinn's protest did not include mobilizing any resources—he arranged no meetings or protests and initiated no petition drives. His push for integration was solely driven within the confines of City Hall.

---

<sup>17</sup> Ralph Bunche, *The Political Status of the Negro*, p. 81; Hanes Walton, *Black Republicans: The Politics of the Black and Tans* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1975).

<sup>18</sup> "Republicans Join Democrats to Bar Colored Constables," *Afro-American*, June 11, 1920.

McGuinn built no alliances with outside partners—most likely because at this period in Baltimore there were few opportunities to build partnerships. The Urban League had not developed local branches and the NAACP was just starting to develop. By taking a closer look at the landscape of black and fraternal organizations and professions from 1919 to 1920, we gain additional insight into the resources available during this time. In contrast to later years, 1919 to 1920 represented a time of organizational infancy for black Baltimore. The court constable battle happened at a time when organizational growth was just beginning to ramp up across the board for black Americans, when WWI had recently come to a close, and when the mass migration of black Americans from the South and rural parts of Maryland was just underway. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 compare the presence of black organizations, fraternal orders, and professionals across a span of a decade, 1920 and 1930.

**Table 3.1: Presence of Black Organizations, Fraternal Orders, and Professionals, 1919–1920<sup>19</sup>**

| <b>ORGANIZATIONS &amp; FRATERNAL ORDERS</b>            |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Baltimore Medical Association                          | Grant United Order of Odd Fellows  |
| Baltimore Educational Association                      | H.W.A. Grand Lodge, F.J.A. Masonry |
| Day Nursery Association for Colored Children           | Order of Moses                     |
| Maryland Colored Public Health Association             | I.B.P.O. of Elks                   |
| The Colored High School Alumni Association             | Grand United Order of Nazarites    |
| The Dubois Circle                                      | Knights of Pythians                |
| Woman’s Suffrage Organization                          | Galilean Fishermen                 |
| Woman’s Cooperative Civic League                       | Order of Good Hopes                |
| Eva Jeaifer Neighborhood Club                          | G.U.O of Chaldeans                 |
| YMCA   | Good Samaritans                    |
| YWCA   |                                    |
| Maryland Association for Colored Blind                 |                                    |
| Neighborhood Improvement League                        |                                    |
| Maryland Medical Dental and Pharmaceutical Association |                                    |
| NAACP  |                                    |
| Maryland Association for Social Service                |                                    |
| The Defense Council                                    |                                    |
| Red Cross Branch                                       |                                    |
| Arch Social No, 1                                      |                                    |
| Cosmopolitan Choral Society                            |                                    |
| Maryland State Colored Teachers Association            |                                    |
| Baltimore Dramatic Club                                |                                    |
| Pricilla Art Club                                      |                                    |
| <b>BLACK PROFESSIONALS</b>                             |                                    |
| Post office workers; 70                                |                                    |
| Custom house workers; 27                               |                                    |
| Pharmacists and pharmacy assistants; 19                |                                    |
| Physicians; 32   |                                    |
| Dentists; 13   |                                    |
| Real estate and insurance; 28                          |                                    |
| Notaries; 10   |                                    |
| Lawyers; 19  |                                    |
| Probation officers; 1                                  |                                    |
| Bankers; 2   |                                    |
| Undertakers; 21  |                                    |
| Chiropodists; 7  |                                    |

<sup>19</sup>“First Colored Professional, Clerical, Skilled & Business Directory of Baltimore City,” 7<sup>th</sup> Edition 1919-1920, Maryland State Archives, SC 5339-56-7

**Table 3.2: Presence of Black Organizations, Fraternal Orders, and Professionals, 1929–1930<sup>20</sup>**

| <b>ORGANIZATIONS &amp; FRATERNAL ORDERS</b> |   |
|---|---|
| African Methodist Episcopal Clergymen       | Elks Lodge  |
| Colored Business Men’s Exchange             | Schoolmasters Club                                |
| Young Women’s Christian Association         | Hod Carrier Union                                 |
| Galilean Fisherman Lodge                    | Longshoremen’s Union                              |
| Fishermen of Galilee                        | Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity                        |
| Sharp Street Community House.               | Baptist Laymen Association                        |
| Lincoln Alumni Association                  | Methodist Episcopal Clergymen                     |
| Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs Care    | Bar Association                                   |
| Knights of Pythias                          | Baltimore Urban League                            |
| Mason Lodges                                | Medical Association                               |
| Moses Lodges                                | Pharmaceutical Association                        |
| N.A.A.C.P.                                  | Dental Association                                |
| Postal Employers                            | Defense League                                    |
| Women’s Co-operative Civic League           | Zeta Phi Beta Sorority                            |
| Maryland Inter-Racial Commission            | Equal Rights League                               |
| Odd Fellows                                 | Baptist Clergymen                                 |
| Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity                  | Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs                |
| Douglass High School Alumni                 | <i>Baltimore Afro-American</i>                    |
| YMCA  | Omega Phi Psi Fraternity                          |
| Seven Wise Men                              | Colored Day Nursery                               |
| Good Hope Lodge                             | South Baltimore Y Club                            |
| Nazarites                                   | Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority                        |
| Howard Alumni Association                   | Delta Sigma Theta Sorority                        |
| Morgan College Alumni Association           | Phi Delta Kappa Sorority                          |
| Health Week Committee                       | Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity                        |
| Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity                     | Arch Social                                       |
| Grand United Order of St. Luke              | Day Nursery and Kindergarten for Colored Children |
| United Usher Board Association              | Most Worshipful Hiram Grand Lodge                 |
| The Adelpian Club                           | Court Calanthe                                    |
| <b>BLACK PROFESSIONALS</b>                  |   |
| Pharmacists and pharmacy assistants; 21     |   |
| Physicians; 61                              |   |
| Dentists; 24                                |   |
| Social workers; 34                          |   |
| Notaries; 15                                |   |
| Lawyers; 28                                 |   |

<sup>20</sup>“First Colored Professional, Clerical, Skilled & Business Directory of Baltimore City,” 17<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1929–1930, Maryland State Archives, SC 5339-56-17.



We learn that by 1930, Baltimore's black population is more highly organized across various sectors and that more black professionals have moved to the city by this time. Other scholars have emphasized the importance of politically weak groups in building partnerships with outside groups. For example, in Clarence Stone's examination of black politics in Atlanta over time, he argues that partnerships between the black elite and business leaders were key to making substantive changes.<sup>21</sup> Records indicate that in 1920, McGuinn did not make attempts to build partnerships outside of City Hall. Councilman McGuinn took on the battle as one person, perhaps because of little time, decreased political engagement, or perhaps because there was little incentive to other blacks to join in on the fight.

When the issue of constable appointments came to the surface again two years later in 1922, Councilman Fitzgerald played a stronger role in organizing a delegation to build a coalition of blacks to lobby for the appointments. There are no records indicating the shift in strategy. We can surmise that in the span of two years, organizational growth and resources within the black community grew and that the black council members had an opportunity to think about and reshape their strategy.

The coalition that Councilman Fitzgerald organized was not robust. He called on four black civic leaders to lobby the mayor for black court constable appointments. In short, black council members were ill-equipped to utilize their role as elected officials to garner support on municipal issues. Although the effort in 1922 involved the new tactic to build a four-man coalition, their efforts failed for the second time and no black court constables were appointed.

---

<sup>21</sup> Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946–1988*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989).

The *Afro-American* recounted:

Both colored councilmen protested last year without avail. Similar protests made this year when the terms of the constables expired have so far proved equally affrontless. A delegation headed by Mr. Fitzgerald and consisting of Charles Hall, Walter Emerson, John C, W Grayson and Albert John called on the Mayor by appointment last Saturday. The appointment of colored constables for the 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> wards was discussed but it is understood that the Mayor declared that his 'hands are tied.' This means that the colored councilmen must nominate white men for these jobs again.<sup>22</sup>

What the case of the court constables reveals is that black elites benefited when there were organizational resources available to them and when blacks in the city were politically engaged. When organizational resources and talent are available and willing to act, leaders are better able to customize their strategy within the parameters of their organizational structure. Other cases in this chapter demonstrate that when matched with robust organizational resources, mobilization and political strategies tend to develop in ways that fit into the structure of the organization. One other note: The court constable case offers a window into challenges mounted by black elected officials in a period before mass political incorporation of African Americans at the municipal level. But what this case shows is their political weakness and constraints as minorities in City Hall. The flourishing of alternative modes of mobilization and organizing on behalf of black Baltimoreans is partly understood as a response to the failures of formal politics and institutions to bring about racial change.

#### **4. Grassroots Organizing: The City-Wide Young People's Forum**

The emergence of the City-Wide Young People's Forum—commonly called the “Forum”—is representative of a change in the scope and strategy of organizing in Baltimore. Made plainly, the Forum introduced grassroots autonomous organizations as

---

<sup>22</sup> “14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Wards Will Get No Constables,” *Afro American*, May 26, 1922.

influential components to the city's organizing tradition. The City-Wide Young People's Forum was formed in October 1931 by two sisters—Baltimore natives Juanita and Virginia Jackson. Juanita Jackson was the Forum president and her leadership extended for years to come. The Forum in structure and shape mirrored the organizing tradition that several scholars have described as crucial to the development of political engagement and activity of blacks in later years.<sup>23</sup> However, in a fashion much different from the Urban League, the NAACP, or a fraternal organization, the Forum was structured around a speaker followed by an open discussion where those in attendance had the opportunity to ask questions and engage and disagree with the speaker.

A closer analysis of the Forum shows how an autonomous grassroots organization with no formal attachments to other organizations or structures made use of resources and engaged in political activity. The Forum was also the most active local black organization in Baltimore in the early 1930s—it included the largest membership roll and mobilized the largest group of black across class. The Forum shows how organizational structure factors into strategies devised and the important role of autonomous grassroots organizations in mobilizing black Baltimoreans.

### **How the Forum Functioned**

At its core, the Forum was created in the midst of the Depression as a response to the weakened outlook for black youth and as an effort to spark civic engagement.

Knowing the constrained employment opportunities, the Forum situated advocating for

---

<sup>23</sup> Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: The Free Press, 1984); Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

equal employment opportunities at the center of its mission.<sup>24</sup> Juanita Jackson noted that she found the need to create the Forum upon returning to Baltimore after college and recognizing the dearth of opportunities for black youth. According to Jackson, she envisioned the Forum as a space for black youth, regardless of class:

to amplify the spiritual, cultural, and intellectual life of the people, by presenting speakers on varied and timely topics; to enlist the interests and efforts of a larger group of young people; to cultivate the interests and invite the co-operation of a larger group of older people; to make more fruitful and less superficial inter-racial contact.<sup>25</sup>

Activating political engagement and broadening the scope of individuals active in the social and political life of Baltimore across racial lines was an important goal of the Forum. The Forum introduced a new organizational repertoire to Baltimore in both substance and structure. It employed a different configuration of resources, and its organizational structure by design encouraged civic and political engagement. The Forum differed from other organizations in Baltimore up to this time.

Unlike the NAACP or Urban League, those who participated in the Forum were exposed to a mass meeting on a weekly basis—and because they functioned autonomously, they were able to implement meetings and mass mobilization in ways that did not require adhering to a larger federated protocol. The Forum was structured as a series of organized speakers featuring elites at the local, state, and national level to discuss the pressing issues concerning black life and politics. Meetings were held every Friday evening at Bethel A.M.E. Church to accommodate large crowds. Meeting turnout was impressive. By its second year, the Forum had a membership of 400 Baltimoreans and reported “representing thirty-two churches and nine denominations which presents its

---

<sup>24</sup> Andor Skotnes, *The Black Freedom Movement and the Workers' Movement in Baltimore, 1930–1939* (PhD thesis, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, 1991).

<sup>25</sup> “City-Wide Forum to Have Many Speakers,” *Afro-American*, September 17, 1932, p. 9.

program every Friday night to an audience that ranges from one to two thousand people.”<sup>26</sup>

The sheer numbers of individuals engaging in Forum meetings makes plain the importance of analyzing this organization. By studying how participation was fostered and how everyday people had opportunities to get involved we can start to piece together the story of how black Baltimoreans became politically engaged during a period of sweeping economic changes. Another significant difference of the Forum was that it was created by youth not already established in the black elite circles of the city. This does not mean that the Jackson sisters did not have access to black elites—they were not completely removed from the centers of black influence, because their mother, Lillie Jackson, was highly active and connected to black leadership and was the president of the NAACP. Their connectedness to black elite circles in Baltimore and their family relation to the president of the NAACP were crucial to building resources and knowledge and utilizing information networks.

The importance of the Forum’s developing autonomously and apart from any existing organizations should not be understated. Its autonomy allowed for a different configuration of resources and a method of organizing that did not require input or permission from a larger body. As such, new mobilization efforts were tested and new leadership was developed. What is also key about the development of the Forum is the beginning of a family leadership tradition in the Jackson and Mitchell families that would

---

<sup>26</sup> “City-Wide Young People’s Forum Second Annual Intercollegiate Contest,” April 28, 1933. Mitchell Family Private Archives. Although the Forum’s founders hailed from the black middle class, its religious diversity is an indication that the organization included people from multiple backgrounds. There are no records of the exact demographics of Forum membership, but the fact that members came from six denominations hints to the possibility that there was class diversity. We can gather that if six denominations were represented, Forum members probably included black denominations with middle-class dominance such African Methodist Episcopal alongside Baptist, Pentecostal, Catholic, and storefront churches more frequently characteristic of the working and lower class.

eventually represent the base of political influence and black politics in Baltimore for many years to come. Juanita Jackson would later serve as assistant to Walter White in the national office of the NAACP in 1935 and continue to work in the city of Baltimore on issues of race uplift and equality alongside her husband, mother, sisters, and aunts—and each would become highly active in protest and lobbying efforts with local government.<sup>27</sup>

Lillie Jackson would eventually become the president of the Baltimore NAACP branch also in 1935 and would be credited with reshaping the branch and ushering in an era of tremendous organizational growth and political activity and protest. Because of the embedded family connections, it is difficult to analyze the work of the Forum and Juanita Jackson in the same way as we would other race uplift organizations of the time. For one, the very tight family connections that helped to shape the Forum and its work differ from those of other organizations with a federated structure, such as the NAACP, and smaller local organizations, such as fraternal and grassroots organizations. The Forum is an important case, however, because it adds complexity to our understanding of the different modes of influence and networking that blacks and potentially other politically disadvantaged groups can use.

At its most elementary level, the Forum was a local organization with deep family linkages that set the groundwork for later work instrumental to Baltimore's black politics. The Forum had a full bevy of resources and managed to build up a strong and large membership base and invite an impressive group of speakers. The Forum was Baltimore's first nonfederated grassroots organization that succeeded at coordinating efforts across organizations, building partnerships, facilitating dialogue and debate, and finally translating these skills into action. The Forum worked as an incubator of talent

---

<sup>27</sup> "Baltimore Business Women," *Afro-American*, December 7, 1935.

beyond its family networks. Its major would reshape the local NAACP and take on bigger battles. For example, the Forum's legal advisor would later become the Baltimore branch's lawyer, and members of the executive board later served on the local NAACP executive board.<sup>28</sup>

The roster of meeting speakers points to the prominence of the Forum as a viable organization in Baltimore and demonstrates its ability to utilize its autonomous structure to build an expansive agenda. The vast list of speakers demonstrates the networking and coordination skills of Juanita Jackson and the Forum's ability to build a wide-reaching agenda that was not situated in a specific area. Its work differed from a federated organization such as the NAACP or the Urban League because it did not have a strict agenda to follow. Although the NAACP would later evolve, in the early years, the agenda was focused on anti-lynching and legal redress, and it later moved to campaigns for integration. The Urban League by design was tightly bound by an agenda to develop better employment opportunities for blacks. Important agenda topics ranged from a woman's role in politics to the economic outlook for blacks in the city.

---

<sup>28</sup> And adding to a continuation of family influence, Juanita Jackson would go on to marry Clarence Mitchell. Clarence Mitchell was a contemporary of Thurgood Marshall and would later become Baltimore's first black congressperson. The Mitchell family became arguably Baltimore's most influential black political family for decades onward.

**Table 3.3: Sample of Forum Speakers and Topics<sup>29</sup>**

| Selected Speakers   |   |
|---|---|
| Dr. Rayford W. Logan, Journal of Negro History  | Oscar DePriest , Congressman, Chicago         |
| Mary McLeod Bethune, Bethune-Cookman College  | Illinois                                      |
| Dr. David Weglein, Baltimore City Schools   | William Pickens, Field Secretary of the       |
| Mr. Elmer A. Carter, Opportunity Magazine   | NAACP   |
| Mrs. Marie Bauernschmidt, Public School Association of Baltimore                        | Mabel Byrd, National Recovery Administration  |
| Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, Editor, Crisis NAACP   | Walter White, Executive Secretary, NAACP      |
| Judge Bayard Williams, People’s Court, Baltimore  | NAACP   |
| Dr. Channing Tobias, National YMCA  | Dr. Charles H. Houston, Howard University Law |
| Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., Abyssinia Baptist Church                                      | Dr. E. Franklin Frazier, Fisk University      |
| Mr. Ira De A. Reid, National Urban League   | Miss Mary White Ovington, Treasurer NAACP,    |
|   | Mr. Edward Lewis, Baltimore Urban League      |
|   | Roy S. Wilkins, Assistant Secretary NAACP     |
|   | Congressman Arthur Mitchell, Illinois         |
| Selected Topics   |   |
| The Depression and the Negro  |   |
| Lifted to Service   |   |
| Political Symposium: “My Party’s Program”   |   |
| The Progress of Colored Schools   |   |
| Symposium: “Have Women Made a Mess of Politics?”  |   |
| The Future of the Darker Races  |   |
| A Fraternal Symposium: “What My Fraternity Is Doing for Humanity”                       |   |
| What’s the Matter with Race Relations?  |   |
| What the Negro Should Expect from the New Deal  |   |
| A Symposium: “Know Your City”   |   |
| Debate: “Should the Negro Leave the South?”   |   |
| Shall the Negro Cross the Color Line?   |   |
| Present-Day Tendencies in the Development of Women                                      |   |
| Negro Leaders at the Cross-Roads  |   |
| The Significance of Recent Developments in Racial Consciousness                         |   |
| Are we Facing Interracial War?  |   |
| What the State Administration Means to the Colored Group                                |   |
| Effects of Discrimination in Educational Opportunities in Maryland and a Plan of Attack |   |
| Unemployment Insurance  |   |

<sup>29</sup> City-Wide Young People’s Forum Year-End Annual Program, 1933–1936. Also see “Two Awarded Scholarships by Forum Group,” *Afro-American*, June 25, 1932, p. 19. “City Wide Forum to Have Many Speakers,” *Afro-American*, September 17, 1932, p. 9; “Director Wood Quits Forum Barrage,” *Afro-American*, November 12, 1932, p. 8; “Wise Cracks and Feathers Fly at City Wide Forum Debate,” *Afro-American*, October 29, 1932; “Stay in Cities, Elmer Carter Tells Forum,” *Afro-American*, November 19, 1932; “North Is Worse, South Better Mary Bethune,” *Afro-American*, October 22, 1932.



The Forum meetings were highly attended, lending to the contention that grassroots organizing matched with resources and strong leadership effectively mobilized people. The *Afro-American* reported that nearly 1,000 people attended Forum meetings on a regular basis.<sup>30</sup> This attendance is impressive. For one, the sheer number of people that attended the meetings gives reason to believe that the Forum was not an entirely elite organization that served to facilitate discussion only among the black elite; instead, the Forum and its activities included blacks from all walks of life. Also, the Forum operated at the height of the Depression and managed to have tremendous turnout with very little incentives beyond an impressive set of speakers and spirited debate.

Scholars have noted how the accumulation of political skills can help groups with weaker political influence.<sup>31</sup> These skills can be learned on the job, at church, and in civic groups, to name a few places. The organizational structure of the Forum helps to inform our understanding of the types of political skills the Forum helped to hone.<sup>32</sup> By 1934, the organizational structure of the Forum was extensive. With close to 30 members comprising the executive leadership, the organization's structure offered participants multiple opportunities to learn a variety of skills such as letter and memo writing, communication skills, and voting. By taking a closer look at the organizational structure,

---

<sup>30</sup> "City Wide Forum to Have Many Speakers," *Afro-American*, September 17, 1932, p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Nancy Burns, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Sidney Verba, *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001).

<sup>32</sup> Through the Forum, everyday blacks had the opportunity to engage in an organization differently than other race uplift organizations at the time—no membership was required to participate in the meetings, and political engagement was actively at work in each meeting by virtue of its format of speakers and discussion. When important issues arose in the city, Forum meetings were organized to bring in city leaders. For example, a Forum meeting in 1932 featured Dr. Francis Wood, the director of Colored Schools in Baltimore. Reports from the meeting explain that two members of the Forum's executive board pushed Dr. Wood on two issues: hiring practices for black teachers and the lagging improvements for black high schools. President Juanita Jackson challenged: "...In times of depression, it [is] the first duty of every community to supply jobs for its own tax-payers and citizens before giving jobs to outsiders." See: "Director Wood Quits Forum Barrage," *Afro-American*, November 12, 1932, p. 8.

it is clear that the Forum borrowed institutional remnants from other sectors. The Forum was autonomous and not linked to a larger organization, so its design was innovative in that components from other institutions were mimicked in the building of its organizational structure.

For example, the Forum borrowed from: (1) the black church in creating a chorus and sick committee, (2) governmental institutions in creating a ways and means committee, and (3) the NAACP in placing a legal advisor on the executive board. This *mélange* of different institutional elements is most likely influenced by the overlapping experiences of the Forum's leadership in the church and organizations such as the NAACP. There was a leadership post for each moving part of the organization. Remnants of the black church are evidenced in the position of the chairman and vice chairman of ushers and the chorus. Pieces from the NAACP show up in the Forum's legal advisor position, social committee, and membership committee (also evident in local NAACP branches).<sup>33</sup> What is clear about the organizational structure of the Forum was that it was robust and illustrative of the knowledge base and education of its leadership. Reaching beyond a grassroots organization, the Forum allowed lots of people to get involved and polish their organizing and participatory skills.

---

<sup>33</sup> Annual reports of local NAACP branches reveal the strict structure of the NAACP. The national office specifically organized branches around distinctive core areas and required that local branches report within those areas.

**Table 3.4: Leadership Structure of the City-Wide Young People’s Forum** <sup>34</sup>

|  |
|--|
| President                                      |
| Vice President (n= 7)                          |
| Secretary (n= 5)                               |
| Finance Chairman                               |
| Treasurer                                      |
| Assistant Treasurer                            |
| Legal Advisor                                  |
| Business Manager                               |
| Chairman of Ushers                             |
| Vice Chairman of Ushers                        |
| Chairman of Ways and Means Committee           |
| Chairman of Program Committee                  |
| Chairman Constitution & Research Committee     |
| Chairman Student Aid and Scholarship Committee |
| Chairman of Sick Committee                     |
| Chairman of Auditing Committee                 |
| Chairman of Social Committee                   |
| Chairman Auditing Committee                    |
| Chairman Publicity Committee                   |
| Chairman Membership Committee                  |
| Director of City Wide Young People’s Chorus    |

It is also important to note how the Forum shared resources with the NAACP. As stated previously, Juanita Jackson Mitchell was the daughter of Lillie Jackson, president of the NAACP. The nature of their familial relationship enabled a seamless sharing of resources. Although the Forum functioned autonomously from the NAACP, it is clear that both organizations worked together closely, and archival records demonstrate that the

<sup>34</sup> Mitchell Family Private Archives. “The City-Wide Young People’s Forum: Third Annual Intercollegiate, Oratorical, Vocal & Instrumental Contest.” Program. Friday, April 27, 1934.

NAACP used the Forum for mobilizing new members and expanding its scope of political action. Lillie Jackson explained:

The City-Wide Young People's Forum gives me an opportunity to make my appeal for memberships as well as to announce our recital. It is through the Forum every Friday night, one week in each section of the city, that we keep alive the interest in our branch. Juanita's presence the first Friday in each month at Bethel A.M.E. Church keeps the large crowds from all over the city coming. Thus, any announcement given on that night reaches the whole city. It is she who plans and helps the officers keep live programs every Friday night. We are depending on this young, enthusiastic group to help our local branch to get the public sentiment in favor of High Schools in Baltimore County and colored policemen in Baltimore. They are starting out with petitions for colored policemen tomorrow night at the Forum which meets at my church (Sharp St. M.E. Church). Behind the petitions of probably 6,000 names, the local branch will send our committee to see the Governor, then we'll get other fraternal, social, and religious organizations to go. Mr. Carl Murphy, with whom I've talked, is giving us his whole hearted support and he will also go as a newspaper editor fighting for Negro policemen... We had about eight hundred people in all that snow. So you can see what the Forum will mean for our local NAACP. It will be a mouth-piece for us.<sup>35</sup>

### **The Forum and Political Action**

The political activity of the Forum centered on equal access to employment. This is understandable, because the organization was at its peak during the Depression years. The Forum organized around the employment of black librarians, black teachers, and store clerks and the equal distribution of social welfare services. Starting in 1932, the Forum lobbied officials from the public library system to open the qualification process for black librarians. This battle would last for several years and eventually culminate decades later through the courts. Further, the Forum teamed up with the Urban League in 1933 to increase the number of black social workers appointed by the Baltimore Emergency Relief Commission. Records indicate that the Forum worked directly with the

---

<sup>35</sup> NAACP Papers Box I: G85 Folder 9 1936. Letter from Lillie Jackson to Walter White, February 16, 1936.

Urban League in conducting research on black social workers and the Baltimore Emergency Relief Commission, and also helped interracial groups to advance their work on this issue.

Judging from the expertise and makeup of the Urban League during this period, we can surmise that the Urban League probably took the lead on the research and bringing in interracial contacts. The Forum, on the other hand, provided legal expertise and organized a petition drive. According the Forum records:

Under the leadership of the legal advisor, Attorney W.A.C. Hughes, Jr., petitions with thousands of signatures were presented to the proper authorities in each case....As a result of this effort, in conjunction with the efforts of the Urban League, during September and October of 1933, five more Social Workers were appointed by the Baltimore Emergency Relief Commission, which number has been increased to sixteen during 1934.<sup>36</sup>

An analysis of the Forum's political activity shows that the organization helped to spearhead collaborative efforts by offering resources and that it possessed the skills to lobby local officials and organize petition drives, raise funds and distribute resources, and campaign for candidates running for office. The Forum played a pivotal role in partnering and offering legal expertise during Baltimore's "Buy Where You Can Work" campaign. The campaign was originally orchestrated by a single individual with no prior connection to Baltimore—Kiowa Costonie, a traveling motivational speaker who had experience leading a similar campaign in Pittsburgh. It is important to note that "Buy Where You Can Work" campaigns were spreading across the country at this time and not limited to

---

<sup>36</sup> Mitchell Family Private Archives. "The City-Wide Young People's Forum- Third Annual Intercollegiate, Oratorical, Vocal & Instrumental Contest." Program. Friday, April 27, 1934.

Baltimore.<sup>37</sup> This case is important to analyze because it shows how the Forum found a niche and crafted a mobilizing strategy.

The Forum possessed both the organizational autonomy and the skills to assist in the boycott efforts surrounding the campaign. The basic facts of the “Buy Where You Can Work” campaign are clear and well documented. In November 1933, Kiowa Costonie launched a boycott and picket of the A&P grocery stores to persuade the grocery’s leadership to hire local blacks. This boycott was organized after verbal communication with management at the A&P stores stalled and was unsuccessful.

Forum records indicate that the Forum was involved with Costonie’s movement and boycott and that they worked in partnership.<sup>38</sup> Although the full efforts of the Forum’s cooperation is not entirely outlined, we can hypothesize that the Forum assisted in communicating the details of the boycott and soliciting picket participants at its weekly meetings. The result of the A&P boycott was successful: After three days of boycotting and picketing, A&P leadership conceded and offered 38 young black men clerk positions.<sup>39</sup> The timing of the A&P boycott speaks to the ability of a group with the status of a political underdog to increase its chances for success when it can latch onto a politically opportune moment. Operating without constraints or permission, the Forum was able to tackle this campaign for integration. Although the Depression and the economic landscape did not guarantee the success of the A&P boycott, the Forum was

---

<sup>37</sup> See Lizabeth Cohen. *A Consumer's Republic: the Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003).

<sup>38</sup> Mitchell Family Private Archives “The City-Wide Young People’s Forum: Third Annual Intercollegiate, Oratorical, Vocal & Instrumental Contest.” Program. Friday, April 27, 1934, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

able to muster the necessary resources to launch the boycott via its established networks of speakers and the black elites to which they were attached.

Political opportunity, however, does not guarantee success. Just weeks after the success of the A&P boycott, again, the Forum and Mr. Costonie joined forces to expand their boycotting and picketing efforts to local merchants in black neighborhoods that did not employ blacks. In this venture, the strategy was not directed at one single store chain; instead they aimed to convince multiple white merchants on the 1700 block of Pennsylvania Avenue to employ young black women.<sup>40</sup> The same strategy was applied to the second round of lobbying for jobs for young blacks. After unsuccessfully discussing the push for black employment with white store owners, the Forum organized a boycott and picket of the stores in identical fashion. The economic climate and the timing of the A&P and the Pennsylvania Avenue campaigns were the same. However, the outcomes were drastically different.

After a week of boycotting and picketing (as opposed to three days in the A&P campaign), the Pennsylvania Avenue store owners filed a court injunction to halt picketing.<sup>41</sup> The reasons behind the different behavior of the Pennsylvania Avenue store owners is not entirely clear. Perhaps these store owners had observed the experiences of the A&P campaign and had more time to coordinate and put forward an organized effort against the black picketers. Another possibility is that the white store owners were able to coordinate and effectively pull together their resources to fight the picketers and that the A&P leadership could not afford to fight the picketers on its own. In this sense,

---

<sup>40</sup> Mitchell Family Private Archives. "The City-Wide Young People's Forum: Third Annual Intercollegiate, Oratorical, Vocal & Instrumental Contest." Program. Friday, April 27, 1934, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Mitchell Family Private Archives. "The City-Wide Young People's Forum: Third Annual Intercollegiate, Oratorical, Vocal & Instrumental Contest." Program. Friday, April 27, 1934, p. 4.

broadening their efforts to target a group of stores rather than one chain hindered the picketers. More simply stated, the Forum expanded its effort to fighting a multiple set of actors without broadening its resources, and this disparity allowed the white store owners to put forward a stronger defense.

The second attempt by the Forum provides a good example of how emerging groups with few political resources navigate failures and reconfigure their resources. In this case, a deeper analysis into the Forum's response to the picketing injunction demonstrates complex layers of organizing and the beginnings of intersecting networks for Baltimore's local black leadership. I argue that the autonomous grassroots structure of the Forum encouraged innovative mobilization schemes and strategy-building. It is also important to note that the Forum devised new strategies at a time when the NAACP was not flourishing—although other organizations were important, the NAACP in particular was notable for mobilizing at the local and state level to improve race relations.

First off, in response to the injunction placed on the black picketers, the Forum took charge and furnished the legal counsel to respond to the case. The Forum dispatched the organization's legal advisor, W.A.C. Hughes, and recruited former city councilman Warner T. McGuinn.<sup>42</sup> The success in securing McGuinn speaks to the Forum's existing networks with seasoned black leaders and its ability to garner the participation of talent outside its core membership of young black Baltimoreans. What complicates our analysis of the Forum's political activity is the existence of the complex networks of Juanita Jackson, the Forum's president. Although Ms. Jackson was the president of the Forum, evidence also points to the fact that she was at the helm of leadership for the local

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.



NAACP Booster Club and coordinated efforts surrounding the picket injunction on behalf of the NAACP as well.

An article from the Baltimore *Afro-American* tells that Walter White, secretary for the national office of the NAACP, was a keynote speaker at a local NAACP meeting organized by Juanita Jackson under the auspices of the Booster Club. At the meeting, Walter White spoke on the picketing injunction and urged those in attendance to continue the fight. According to the review by the *Afro-American*, Walter White offered his opinion on the next steps for mounting a strategy:

He pointed out that although the persons and organizations active in the fight had been restrained by court order, a number of other groups and individuals could take up the battle. Every church, lodge, club, and especially the local branch of the NAACP was asked to begin a program of struggle that would bring the merchants into line....“The NAACP is ready to take the injunction question to the Supreme Court if necessary,” he said, and advised the people to have money ready to use for the bail of persons arrested for taking part in the boycott.<sup>43</sup>

The fact that Juanita Jackson served as NAACP Booster Club president and orchestrated the mass meeting with Walter White as speaker raises questions.

The obvious question is why Ms. Jackson wore multiple hats to push forward the same issues and demands. A related question is whether her intersecting organizational affiliations were coincidental or orchestrated efforts to take on multiple leadership roles to bolster influence and strengthen strategies. What *is* clear is that Juanita Jackson organized Mr. White’s speaking engagement separate and apart from her work as the Forum president. In fact, a presentation of the facts reveals a curious chain of events. The Forum actually hosted Walter White as the keynote speaker at one of its Friday sessions

---

<sup>43</sup> “Go to Jail if Necessary: Walter White,” *Afro-American*, December 23, 1933, p. 9.

on December 1, 1933, to discuss the topic “Shall the Negro Cross the Color Line?”<sup>44</sup> The *Afro-American* reports that a few weeks later, Juanita Jackson again organized a meeting for the NAACP to have Walter White speak on the national office’s legal work and the beginning action steps for the University of Maryland Law School admissions case.<sup>45</sup> The article describes that in discussing the topic of legal cases, Mr. White naturally commented on the current situation surrounding the picket injunction.

This chain of events signals a few potential hypotheses. One possibility is that Juanita Jackson’s heightened civic engagement allowed her to strategically utilize her affiliations and leadership posts. For example, since the NAACP was mostly focused on strategies surrounding legal redress at the time, through her dual posts as Booster Club and Forum president, she was able to take advantage of the current priorities of the NAACP to integrate her expertise and heavy involvement in the picket case. Had she not had the influence or experience with the picket case as Forum president, we can imagine that the details of the picket case may not have gotten direct access to Walter White or endorsement and committed help from the national office either.

In holding dual leadership positions, Juanita Jackson streamlined her influence and bypassed the need to coordinate efforts across multiple organizations. Furthermore, the dual influence and networks that Juanita Jackson demonstrated at this time would be replicated in following years and would mark the key strategy of later race politics efforts as additional movements were mounted by autonomous grassroots organizations. In this respect, the political behavior of Juanita Jackson during this period is important and consequential to making a significant imprint on how local organizations built the

---

<sup>44</sup> Mitchell Family Private Archives. “The City-Wide Young People’s Forum: Third Annual Intercollegiate, Oratorical, Vocal & Instrumental Contest.” Program. Friday, April 27, 1934, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> “Go to Jail if Necessary: Walter White,” *Afro-American*, December 23, 1933, p. 9.

capacity to organize and mobilize black Baltimoreans. In brief, in the absence of a flourishing NAACP and within the constraints of the agenda-setting of the Urban League, the mass mobilization of blacks in Baltimore was orchestrated by an autonomous grassroots organization that harnessed resources from multiple areas and crafted innovative strategies.

Adding to the complexity of Juanita Jackson's networks and leadership positions, a deeper analysis into the picket injunction case reveals a more nuanced system of mobilizing. Although the Forum furnished legal counsel and raised funds for the picket case, another group also became very much involved—the Citizens Committee, under the leadership of Lillie Jackson, mother to Juanita. The timing of events suggests that the Citizens Committee became involved after the Forum lost the picket case—the judge ruled the injunction on the picketers to be permanent, and the Forum followed up by making plans for an appeal.<sup>46</sup> The *Afro-American* reports that the Citizens Committee organized a mass meeting to raise funds for the appeal and led the efforts by raising the largest sum among other black organizations also urged to contribute.<sup>47</sup> Although it is unclear why the Citizens Committee was formed and took on the challenge to raise funds, it is important to note that a series of additional autonomous organizations were formed in response to Forum activities.

It is also important to explain that the growth in political activity in black Baltimore did not develop without tension and differing opinions. In fact, not all parties agreed over the methods and strategies employed. Tensions mounted between Kiowa Costonie, the Forum, and the Citizens Committee. What is also clear is that these tensions

---

<sup>46</sup> “Judge Makes Injunction Permanent,” *Afro-American*, June 2, 1934, p. 7.

<sup>47</sup> “Citizens Roll in Funds at Mass Meeting,” *Afro-American*, June 16, 1934, p. 11.

were echoed within the larger black community and discussed on the editorial pages of the *Afro-American*. After losing the initial picket case, the Forum and the Citizens Committee expanded their legal strategy and solicited help from the national office of the NAACP to assist with the appeal. The move to bring the NAACP legal counsel into the picket case shifted the scope of the issue from a purely local effort to one involving people outside of Baltimore. The NAACP brought in Charles Houston, then Dean of Howard University Law School, to take the lead on the picket appeal.

In a sign of mounting tensions surrounding the NAACP legal team, an editorial by Clarence Mitchell (who sat on the executive leadership of the Forum) noted that several Baltimoreans responded to the NAACP's arrival with the attitude that no more money or action was needed. His editorial also explained that the NAACP lawyers were not strongly welcomed by some: "Two good attorneys, who so far have gotten more kicks than compliments or dollars, are employed on the case and need the moral support of every person in Baltimore's population."<sup>48</sup> But the strongest tensions appear to have been with Mr. Costonie and over strategies. With the ushering in of the NAACP legal team, it was clear that the strategy had shifted from a focus on direct action and protest to one of well-honed legal maneuverings. This emphasizes the constraints that the NAACP as a federated organization brought on board in regards to strategy. The mobilization shifted away from mass activism via boycott efforts and mass meetings to one of accumulating the resources and legal expertise to succeed in the courts.

It is clear that the shift in strategy was laced with differences in class and available resources—Mr. Costonie was a political entrepreneur in his own right with no solidified Baltimore pedigree, and those leading the charge in established organizations

---

<sup>48</sup> "Observations and Reflections" column, by Clarence Mitchell, June 20, 1934, p. 4.

such as the Forum and the Citizens Committee were college-educated and Baltimore natives. Clarence Mitchell's editorial also reveals that these tensions were played out in a debate between Mr. Costonie and the organizational base over using the \$2,000 raised for the appeal to open up black-owned businesses fully run and staffed by black Baltimoreans rather than using the funds for a legal fight.

Mr. Mitchell argued against using the monies to open up black-owned businesses. He posited that more resources beyond money were needed to build and run a store, and that black Baltimoreans did not possess those additional resources at the time—Clarence Mitchell offered that black clerks could gain experience first, and with hard work, build the capital and experience to open their own stores.<sup>49</sup> The tensions embedded within the Forum's efforts as an autonomous grassroots organization that worked in partnership with the NAACP legal team speak to the fact that conflict was present in all organizational structures. Because of the lack of an institutionalized structure, the Forum was exposed to internal strife and conflict. The disagreements with Mr. Costonie are not surprising.<sup>50</sup>

All over the country, black communities were sifting through strategies to fight racial battles, and discussions often surrounded the push to advance direct action and black self-reliance versus methods to make systemic changes to institutions. In Baltimore, the decision was made to make systemic change to institutions, but there was also an understanding of the value of the protest, boycott, and picket, and it would be misleading to describe the Forum as an organization without class diversity. In an

---

<sup>49</sup> "Observations and Reflections" column, by Clarence Mitchell, June 20, 1934, p. 4.

<sup>50</sup> It should be noted that Kiowa Costonie eventually left Baltimore and migrated to another city (much like his arrival in the city from Pittsburgh). Unfortunately, there are no existing records of Mr. Costonie's work. We can surmise that his dismissal was connected to dissatisfaction with the new direction of the picket case. See "Pastors Assail Costonie for Leaving City," *Afro-American*, July 7, 1934.

analysis of the tensions and variety in opinions over the picket case, it would be remiss not to also include the editorial commentary of Ralph Matthews of the *Afro-American*.

Matthews was known for offering opinions contrary to those of Baltimore's black elites. In speaking on the picket case appeal and the arrival of the NAACP legal team, Matthews urged black Baltimoreans not to put full stock into the right to picket, and to use the picket battle as an opportunity to bring together the city's black organizations and resources to improve race pride. In essence, he was urging black Baltimoreans to use this time to ignite race consciousness and to work together on a larger platform beyond the picket fight.

We should not, however, permit ourselves to lose our sense of proportion. Getting jobs for our youth is the important issue, not the right to wear signs on our backs and parade....The picket decision prohibits demonstrations in front of stores, but it does not and cannot prohibit a silent, passive campaign of education in our lodges, churches, schools and community gatherings. There the vital blows must be struck....That offensive should be carried on within the race, creating race pride and racial unity. The picket is only a weapon of warfare. If the enemy has captured our sword, we should not plead with him to give it back. Let us drag out our cannon.<sup>51</sup>

It is difficult to untangle how big a role class and resource differences came to play in advancing a heightened legal effort with the national NAACP, but it is clear that during the Depression era, Baltimore's leadership became much more robust and the Forum took the reins on organizing and mobilizing in full scale.

The Forum's work extended far beyond its legal efforts evidenced in the picketing case. In fact, the picketing case was just one of the many political activities of the organization. In addition to weekly discussions led by nationally renowned speakers on race, the Forum worked the hardest on opening up employment for black youth. In March 1934, the Forum opened an office specifically devoted to providing employment services

---

<sup>51</sup> "Sifting the News Column," by Ralph Matthews, *Afro-American*, June 20, 1934, p. 4.

to the city's out-of-work black youth.<sup>52</sup> And speaking to the political skills and resources that the Forum had acquired, the space for the employment center was donated by one its sponsors. This provides clues to the fact that the Forum was fairly prominent and skilled in working effectively with its partners.

When strengthening influence with local institutions, the Forum did not act alone. Instead it utilized its existing partnerships and networks with black organizations to bring forward a unified contingent of black interests. By having no ties to institutional protocol, the Forum was able to expose everyday blacks to the many variants of local politics, and the combined leadership skills of Juanita Jackson and her networks and knowledge base enabled the Forum to develop as an intricate grassroots organization with influence.

### **5. The Fight to Equalize Baltimore City Teacher Salaries**

Issues surrounding education, including integration, school improvements, salary equalization, and the appointment of a black member to the school board, persisted for several decades, with the first discussions around these issues starting to churn at the turn of the century. The most robust instances of black political participation surrounding schools were not local in scope and were marked by legal methods at the core. Therefore, it is difficult to isolate the trajectory of campaigns for school equality. However, a closer analysis of Baltimore school politics between 1924 and 1927 does reveal the blending of civic participation and legal redress to take on school issues. In later years, where school issues took on more prominence, we notice that the climate of political opportunities differed and efforts were punctuated by an influential local and national NAACP.

---

<sup>52</sup> Mitchell Family Private Archives. "The City-Wide Young People's Forum: Third Annual Intercollegiate, Oratorical, Vocal & Instrumental Contest." Program. Friday, April 26, 1935.

Because an entire project could be devoted to changes over time in local school policy and activism, I have chosen instead to hone in on specific cases that involved civic groups and local government in methods that stretched beyond legal means and centered on local issues. The Defense League's fight to equalize black teachers' salaries in Baltimore City from 1924 to 1927 represented the first effort by a black civic group to mount a legal rather than legislative campaign at the local level.<sup>53</sup>

The fight to equalize black teacher salaries in Baltimore represented a move to change local school policy. Black leaders would join forces over several decades to fight against school segregation and for the improvement of school facilities for black children. However, what the Defense League case reveals is how local groups in the 1920s mounted efforts for local policy change. The Defense League's efforts unfold two lessons: (1) how middle-class black activists responded to a political environment immediately following an abrupt change in political representation and (2) how conflict and disunity factored into the absence of coordinated efforts or partnering between black civic organizations and black institutions. What the city salary equalization case teaches us is that even in the midst of mounting a successful effort, there is evidence of a failure to configure resources in ways that capitalized on the resources available at the time.

Civic groups committed to racial uplift were not unified on issues relating to school policy. In fact, between 1923 and 1927, several groups stood in opposition and were in conflict over school issues. Three groups operated with similar and often overlapping demands and were in opposition and not in partnership. The Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs was the largest group, representing 10,000 members and a notable leadership of prominent black elites and white liberal elites. Laura Wheatley, former

---

<sup>53</sup> "A New Weapon," *Afro-American*, August 1, 1925.



committee head of the 1920 NAACP membership campaign, served as president, and other members of the executive leadership included Sarah Fernandis, president of the Women's Cooperative Civic League, Maurice Ross, executive secretary of the Urban League, Dr. Broadus Mitchell, the white president of the Urban League, Rev. Charles Briggs, and two other white members.<sup>54</sup> The Schoolmasters Club—a smaller civic group of black male teachers—also advocated for the equalization of teacher salaries. Lastly, the Defense League also became involved and was comprised of prominent black attorneys, clergy, and also former council members William Fitzgerald and Warner McGuinn. At first glance, it appears that both the Defense League and the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs had the most robust resources. The Defense League had legal expertise and support from two former council members already familiar with the politics of the school board and the inner workings of City Hall. The Federation, on the other hand, could recruit from a large base of parents and teachers, and its leadership brought together several influential race uplift organizations and black institutions, and involved interracial participation. The question then is: Did the group with the most robust resources lead the charge? And, were the most powerful groups able to join forces and buttress their communication, experience, and membership resources in ways that proved advantageous?

In 1924, the state legislature passed a law “prohibiting any discrimination on account of sex in the payment of city and State employees.” The Baltimore City Council followed up by ruling that this law extended to its teachers and appropriated \$50,000 to the school budget to raise salaries. However, the attorney general further ruled that the gender discrimination law did not apply to black teachers, signaling an effort to make a

---

<sup>54</sup> “Three Delegations Clash in School Board Meeting,” *Afro-American*, May 23, 1925.

clear distinction between gender and race equality.<sup>55</sup> The Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs would eventually not take the lead on pressing for salary equalization and would instead be trumped by the legal strategy of the Defense League. However, in the end neither group would be responsible for successfully negotiating with City Hall because the Schoolmaster's Club would eventually get the promise from Mayor Jackson to equalize the salaries of black teachers. There is reason to believe that this was a peculiar outcome. The group with the least amount of resources caught the ear of City Hall, and the group with an abundance of resources appears to have electively removed itself from becoming involved in the fight for equal salaries. All this begs the question: Why did the Federation not deliver on carrying out a fight on teacher salaries when it appears that it had expertise across an organizational continuum and robust membership? The Federation stayed away from legal matters and instead stuck to issues where it could work directly with City Hall, such as city services and representation. Moreover, why do we see no evidence of partnering between organizations?

First off, any coordinated effort between the Defense League and the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs did not happen because both groups were in conflict with each other. The source of the conflict is not clear, but what is evident is that the conflict sits at the center of the salary equalization fight. Nearly a year after the state legislature ruled against gender discrimination for city employees, the Defense League held a mass meeting outlining its objectives for the year. Records indicate that the Defense League had been in existence for just one year and was inactive during its first year—but in the meeting, Defense League leadership decided to tackle the issue of salary equalization.

---

<sup>55</sup> "Defense League's Injunction," *Afro-American*, June 27, 1925.

What is important to note beyond the agenda-setting at the Defense League's meeting is that leadership from the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs attended. According to reports from the *Afro-American*, "Despite the fact that the President Dr. Harry McCard asked for comment from the audience, Dr. B. M. Rhetta, Dr. Edward J. Wheatley, and Mrs. Laura J. Wheatley, president of the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs, were ruled out of order when they attempted to speak. Objections by W. Ashbie Hawkins were sustained, and when speakers protested the chair's ruling, the meeting was quickly adjourned."<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately, there is no available evidence suggesting the reason for the conflict between the Defense League and the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs. We can surmise that whatever conflict arose was brewing for some time and that Harry McCard of the Defense League shut down comments from the Federation because of anticipation of an opposing viewpoint or instigation of more conflict. The scuffle between the Defense League and the Federation would not be terribly important had it been an isolated event. However, conflict persisted and was consequential to any possibility to partner or collaborate on behalf of equal salaries.

Merely days after the Defense League held its mass meeting, leadership from the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs conducted an arranged private meeting with the school board. This speaks to its knowledge of maneuvering within city government and the scope of its access—elements of its expertise that could be helpful if matched with a collaborative effort. Again, conflict arose when leadership from both the Defense League and the Schoolmasters Club showed up unannounced and demanded that they be present

---

<sup>56</sup> "Steamroller Oiled at Mass Meeting," *Afro-American*, May 23, 1925.

at the meeting.<sup>57</sup> As expected, the school board reiterated that the meeting with the Federation was a closed meeting and that all other parties had to arrange their own private meeting. In the meeting, the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs outlined its recommendations to the school board. These recommendations included: the appointment of a director of black schools, repairs and improvements to needy schools, and speediness in filling vacancies in black schools.<sup>58</sup>

What was not included in the Federation's recommendations was the equalization of salaries. The Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs went on record endorsing the equalization of salaries but opted not to lobby when meeting with the school board. It is clear is that the Federation stayed away from meddling in local policy change and instead opted to focus on school improvement and increased hiring. This strategy would not require mobilization of its massive membership rolls and would instead involve bargaining and lobbying between the Federation's leadership, the school board, and City Hall. This strategy was most likely put forward because of the influence of the Urban League leadership (the president and secretary of the local Urban League sat on the executive board of the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs). The decision by the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs to avoid a fight to equalize teacher salaries suggests its reticence to share its resources and join the charge with other groups and hints at the influence and ultimate constraints of the Urban League methods at this time.

In the early 1920s, the Urban League was not interested in challenging local policy, and as other chapters demonstrated, it honed in on building expertise around

---

<sup>57</sup> "Three Delegations Clash in School Board Meeting," *Afro-American*, May 23, 1925. The presence of the Schoolmasters Club alongside the Defense League suggests that there was some level of coordination between both of these groups. A thorough scan uncovered no evidence of partnering, however.

<sup>58</sup> "Three Delegations Clash in School Board Meeting," *Afro-American*, May 23, 1925.

fighting for neighborhood issues and sticking to “block by block” battles that relied on copious research and social scientific investigations. The Urban League was gaining traction with local government during this time, and it is likely that members of the Urban League advocated to mount a series of lobbying efforts with the school board and City Hall and not to pursue a mobilization effort that shifted from their proven strategy. Salary equalization did not fall under neighborhood improvement, and therefore the balance of the Federation of Parent-Teacher Club leadership steered clear of collaborating with other groups in order to maintain its existing method of pressure politics.

What is also clear is that the Federation for Parent-Teacher Clubs was not in communication with either the Defense League or Schoolmasters Club. While the Federation was making efforts to lobby with the school board for a director of black schools and school improvement, the Defense League was busy ramping up its efforts to push the city to equalize teacher salaries. The Defense League put forward a different strategy in comparison to the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs. The Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs went directly to the school board to push for changes authorized by the school board, and the Defense League reached out to the Board of Estimates, which oversaw the fiscal arm of local government. It is probable that the Defense League went about a different strategy in reaching out to the Board of Estimates because two of the Defense League members were former city council members and had knowledge of the different threads of local government tied to the implementation of salary equalization.<sup>59</sup> What is clear from the path to equalize city teacher salaries up to this point is that groups committed to racial uplift simply failed to join together. Personal conflicts and strict

---

<sup>59</sup> “Teacher Salary Equalization May Be Race Issue,” *Afro-American*, May 30, 1925.

attachments to organizational methods hampered partnerships and collaboration. And the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs, arguably the group with the largest membership base, behaved in the most rigid fashion.

In comparison to the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs, the Defense League demonstrated that it was able to remain flexible in the midst of challenges. When faced with no response from the Board of Estimates and school board, the Defense League used its legal resources and filed an injunction to halt the release of funds in the budget earmarked for the increase of salaries for white teachers. This move would later paralyze any movement of the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs and halt its efforts. The Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs' lobby on other school issues was trumped by the legal expertise of the Defense League—and the legal strategy marked the first instance of legal activism by blacks in Baltimore up to this time.<sup>60</sup> According to reports from the *Afro-American*, “Appeals to the School Board, the Mayor, and the Board of Estimates to remedy this defect [have] fallen on deaf ears, [and an] injunction was secured upon which a hearing will be staged July 6<sup>th</sup>.”<sup>61</sup> The Defense League had the personnel resources to carry out a legal fight. Former council member Warner McGuinn served as the primary spokesperson and legal counsel alongside prominent lawyer and member Ashbie Hawkins. Moreover, members of the Defense League comprised an influential group of black community members including former council member William Fitzgerald, the pastor of Bethel AME Church, notable physicians, and attorneys.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> “A New Weapon,” *Afro-American*, August 1, 1925.

<sup>61</sup> “Defense League’s Injunction,” *Afro-American*, June 27, 1925.

<sup>62</sup> “School Funds Held Up by Injunction,” *Afro-American*, June 27, 1925.

A case can be made for the Defense League's anticipating that filing an injunction would upset white teachers who were awaiting a salary increase.<sup>63</sup> Members of the Defense League had the knowledge and expertise to understand the ramifications of the injunction. The city's response to the injunction was predictable—spokespersons for the city argued that they would fight against the injunction being made permanent so they could go ahead with equalizing the salaries of white female teachers.<sup>64</sup> The Defense League submitted the injunction on June 11, 1925. Within a month, the Board of Estimates and the School Board were effective in delaying a response on the injunction and failed to make any changes to their plans to equalize the salaries of white teachers only. By July 11, 1925, the Board of Estimates prolonged any movement on the injunction by ruling that:

It is understood that the School Board will submit to the Board of Estimates a list showing the effect of the salary equalization plan adopted...and that no increases in compensation shall be paid until the list to be so submitted shall be approved by the Board of Estimates. The action of the Board of Estimates is not to be considered as fixing or approving the policy to be followed in the adoption of future budgets. The motion was adopted unanimously.<sup>65</sup>

In making this ruling, the Board of Estimates essentially extended the injunction debate by providing the School Board with more time to craft its strategy to fight the injunction and also to test the mettle of the Defense League's stamina to continue the fight. It is important to note the multiple layers of influence between City Hall, the Board of Estimates, and the School Board during the injunction fight. The desire of the Defense League was to ultimately win the fight over teacher salaries in the legal realm, forcing the School Board to change its policy on salary equalization by race and gender and the

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> "City Demurs in School Salary Case," *Afro-American*, July 11, 1925.

<sup>65</sup> "Equalization of Salaries Postponed," *Afro-American*, June 20, 1925.

Board of Estimates to make fiscal changes with dispersing funds. What is interesting is that although the Defense League initially lobbied with City Hall to no avail, during the injunction fight, both the mayor and city council president went on record endorsing the inclusion of black teachers for salary equalization.<sup>66</sup>

It is not entirely clear why City Hall openly endorsed race and gender salary equalization in contrast to the School Board and Board of Estimates, although a potential electoral reason was to gain favor in the black community in anticipation of the upcoming 1927 election. This is especially unclear given the fact that during the injunction battle, City Hall revealed that it did not make provisions in the 1926 budget for race and gender salary equalization.<sup>67</sup> Regardless of the favorable endorsement from City Hall, the Defense League continued to face inaction from the Board of Estimates and School Board on the injunction. Again, the Defense League was flexible amidst the challenges and adjusted its strategy. In an effort to intensify its legal strategy, the Defense League filed a writ of mandamus in January 1926.

In what the *Afro-American* editorial staff had earlier encouraged as a “new weapon” to fight racial injustice, the writ of mandamus took the injunction one step forward by arguing that the practice of paying high salaries to white male teachers and low salaries to black female teachers violated state law and constituted race and gender discrimination.<sup>68</sup> The Defense League anticipated a heightened legal fight by submitting the writ of mandamus—according to law, by submitting the mandamus, the issue would be required to be settled in court. However, the Defense League’s efforts fell short when

---

<sup>66</sup> “Equalization of Salaries Postponed,” *Afro-American*, June 20, 1925.

<sup>67</sup> “Hi Teachers’ Salary Case Up Wednesday,” *Afro-American*, November 28, 1925

<sup>68</sup> “City Must File Its Answer Soon,” *Afro-American*, January 23, 1926.



the judge in charge of the case overruled on the matter and ordered the City Solicitor to complete an answer within 30 days rather than file with the court.<sup>69</sup>

This would result in a tremendous setback for the Defense League because its renewed efforts up to this point were dependent on arguing its case in court. The setback, however, is not surprising given the fact that this represented the first effort by black elites in the city to mount a legal battle and that this attempt predates the availability of a well-organized NAACP legal team. The City Solicitor would later follow up with a response to the Defense League's writ of mandamus and extinguish any momentum in its cause. In its response, the city made clear its system of segregated schools and argued for no changes to the salaries of black teachers on the grounds that black male and female teachers were treated equally.

[The] Frederick Douglass Senior-Junior High School (devoted exclusively to the colored race and taught by the colored race) was omitted for the reason that no discrimination exists in the pay of colored male and colored female teachers in that school. These defendants say that fixing of salaries is entirely a matter for these defendants, and that there is no law of this state which requires that salaries for colored teachers shall be the same for white teachers.<sup>70</sup>

Equally important is the absence of any evidence of mobilization or partnering. The Defense League's members had expertise and experience with the law and city government, but there is no indication of discussions with other parties such as the NAACP or the Schoolmasters' Club to bolster its efforts by activating other groups to join the cause. Much like the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs, the Defense League acted alone, even though other voices had already chimed in. And since evidence points to the fact that black civic groups were already well versed with organizing delegations to

---

<sup>69</sup> "City Must File Its Answer Soon," *Afro-American*, January 23, 1926.

<sup>70</sup> "Answer Filed by Assistant City Solicitor Wallace in Public School Salary Fight," *Afro-American*, February 2, 1926.

lobby City Hall, it is important to note the absence of any direct lobbying with local officials during the final phases.

It appears that up to this point, strategies and efforts did not overlap, and when groups opted to shift directions, they did not seek to broaden their toolbox of resources by reaching out to others who were fighting a similar battle. Instead, the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs and the Defense League responded to setbacks by abandoning the fight rather than asking for help in places sympathetic to the issue at hand. Conflict and disagreement limited this possibility. Had the Defense League collaborated with the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs or Schoolmasters Club, it would have amassed a membership base including teachers, and had the Defense League continued to lobby directly to City Hall in partnership with members from other groups, we can imagine that the mode of mobilization would have stretched beyond the legal realm and the opportunity for mass activism would have presented itself.<sup>71</sup>

The lack of partnership building between the Defense League, the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs, and the Schoolmasters Clubs represents one large missed opportunity for black teachers, parents, and black leaders to mount a fight. But there are also very good reasons to understand the lack of partnership-building and the absence of a larger group fighting for salary equalization. Perhaps the lack of activism by black teachers was wise and calculated based on their intentions to keep their jobs and not incite any conflict to that end. However, this explanation does not make complete sense because in the end, the Schoolmasters Club—a group composed of black male teachers—would persist in its efforts to push for salary equalization and succeed.

---

<sup>71</sup> The Defense League was a fairly new organization that was formed in 1925. Because it represented a new organization in the city, it had a smaller membership base and could have benefited from teaming up with a more populous group.

The work to equalize black teacher's salaries in Baltimore ended on a peculiar note. Records on the lobbying efforts of the Schoolmasters Club are very slim. However, in the end, Mayor Jackson ultimately worked with the Schoolmasters Club to announce equalization of black teacher salaries for the 1927 budget. Although it is not strange that the mayor made this announcement in anticipation of the local elections, what is interesting is that he chose to reach out to the Schoolmasters Club. Since records on the Schoolmasters Club are limited, we can glean very little on how the Schoolmasters garnered the ear of the mayor. We can hypothesize that the mayor decided to work through a relatively neutral group in hopes of not causing any political cleavages within the black community. The Schoolmasters Club did not include prominent black lawyers and former council members or top leadership from the Urban League.

This case introduces how black Baltimoreans failed to effectively partner across groups with similar agendas. It shows is that they sometimes worked within issue silos, and as a result, mass activism did not become an option and the demands remained narrowly focused. As stated earlier in this chapter, this case of the early fight for salary equalization was followed by additional campaigns put forth by the NAACP legal team to challenge salary differences across the state. What the lack of partnering also suggests is that its failure may have also hindered the growth of the agenda. Although it remains an important feat that black teachers in the city were granted equal salaries, it should be noted that in the end, the issue at hand remained narrowly construed. I argue that the lack of collaboration between the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs, Defense League, and Schoolmasters Club helped to shape the limited agenda. We can hypothesize that had these groups found ways to break through their conflict and work together, they would

have come to the table with an elongated set of demands simply by nature of their multiple interests. This in turn would have transformed the salary equalization fight into a multi-issue agenda that touched on various grievances related to unsatisfactory schools for black children.

### **Was weak organization to blame for a failure of partnership building?**

Arguably, the failure of the Federation of Parent-Teacher Clubs, Defense League, and Schoolmasters Club to join forces and resources encourages a consideration of the status of organizational readiness in Baltimore at the time. Some may argue that partnerships were mired by few opportunities to effectively organize. In reality, black Baltimore did face a weak organizational outlook during the years of the salary equalization battle compared to later periods. Baltimore was not unique to other cities that were also ramping up. Larger federated organizations like the NAACP and Urban League were just beginning to proliferate in cities in the North and border states.

Records indicate that the Baltimore branch of the NAACP was undergoing its own fits and starts over the course of the salary equalization fight. For example, there were logistical difficulties between the national office and the local branch. Records indicate that in the early 1920s, the local branch had difficulty getting buy-in from people in the community because the national office was slow to properly process memberships and deliver the *Crisis* to members.<sup>72</sup> By 1922, the local branch was making attempts to build the membership base and focused most of its mass-level activity on building momentum to help the national office with its charge to advocate for anti-lynching legislation.

---

<sup>72</sup> Papers of the National Association of Colored People. February 9, 1921. Letter to James Weldon Johnson from Laura Wheatley. Section I, Box G84, Folder #12

The Baltimore Branch of the NAACP has a present membership of 265 members and a standing executive committee of 15 members. The Branch conducted a number of investigations through its legal redress committee in an effort to secure justice for those accused of crimes or the victims of crimes... An Anti-lynching Mass Meeting was held June 6 at Bethel Church. Representative Dyer addressed a gathering of nearly 2000 people. 230 memberships were secured. A second Anti-lynching mass meeting is planned for the near future with Senator France as speaker.<sup>73</sup>

During the exact timing of the salary equalization fight, the local NAACP suffered from uneven leadership. The lack of steady leadership with the local NAACP was not isolated; what the trajectory of the salary equalization fight shows is a general weakness in leadership across the board and no strong efforts to overcome the collective action problem.

I argue that weaknesses in organizational readiness do not account for the failure of partnerships. When presented with the opportunity to collaborate on teacher salaries and school improvement, the three organizations involved stuck to themselves and were unable to overcome internal conflicts. No leader emerged to harness the membership, knowledge, and experience of the three organizations lobbying on behalf of black teachers. A comparative view of other cities shows that even without an established NAACP or larger organizational apparatus, partnering sometimes did flourish. For example, in 1905, blacks in Nashville were able to launch a boycott of the segregated streetcars. Black business leaders and clergy teamed up in bringing forth economic resources and enabling communication networks through the church to mobilize everyday blacks to join the boycott. When blacks in Memphis attempted to mimic the Nashville boycott, black clergy refused to participate, and any possibility for partnering

---

<sup>73</sup> Papers of the National Association of Colored People. June 21, 1922. Report of the Baltimore Branch of the NAACP. Section I, Box G84, Folder #12

floundered.<sup>74</sup> It is important that we do not consider weak organizational readiness to be a death wish to any efforts to build coalitions and work together. Doing so would silence the examples of political entrepreneurs emerging as strong leaders and instances when groups overcome collective action.

## **6. Federated Organization: Urban League Efforts to Integrate Employment Sectors**

The Baltimore Urban League was formed in 1924 with the mission “To make studies of existing conditions among Negroes, and to promote, encourage, assist, and engage in any kind of work to improve these conditions.”<sup>75</sup> The focus in the early years of the Baltimore Urban League was social scientific inquiry into the economic and social welfare of blacks in the city.

The Urban League specialized in lobbying for economic opportunity. Often these efforts involved integrating employment sectors previously denied to black workers. As a federated organization, the Urban League operated in a methodical fashion. As previously mentioned, in the early years, the Urban League conducted a series of investigations of black life in Baltimore.<sup>76</sup> The early years are also marked by pushes for improved training and facilities for blacks (see Chapter 2 for a deeper discussion). For example, in 1928, the Urban League weighed into the debate over segregated department stores in Baltimore.

---

<sup>74</sup> Lester Lamon, *Black Tennesseans 1900–1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977, pp. 25–36).

<sup>75</sup> Baltimore Urban League Annual Report, 1933–34. Urban League Paper Series 13 I: N Box 5 Annual Report

<sup>76</sup> Investigations were common in Urban League branches in other cities. For a comprehensive understanding, see “Social Inadequacy and the Negro Population of Maryland: A Preliminary Report on the Findings of the Survey of the Baltimore Negro by Ira De A. Reid.” Urban League Papers, Series 6, I:F Box 84, Community Surveys; and “The Negro Community of Baltimore: A Summary Report of a Social Study conducted for the Baltimore Urban League, by Ira De A. Reid, 1935” in Urban League Papers, Series 13, I:N Box 5.

Plans to take some organized action in the situation created by united action of many stores in the downtown section barring colored trade were made at a meeting held at the Baltimore Urban League Tuesday evening....Several plans of meeting the situation discussed at the meeting included making a complete survey of white and colored stores which would cater to the group. It was especially pointed out that now would be an excellent time to begin the building up of race enterprises. A committee to take the matter up with the Women's Civic League and other clubs was appointed....<sup>77</sup>

Maurice Moss, Executive Secretary of the Urban League, opened a discussion on the local department store situation, where a number of leading houses have banned colored trade....He urged a campaign of education to build up colored trade, train efficient personnel and produce finance to operate them.<sup>78</sup>

Judge J. N. Ullman, president of the League, declared that in the matter of selecting whomsoever they wished as customers and shutting their doors to those persons they did not wish, the stores were within their legal rights, according to his knowledge of the law....Judge Ullman pointed out that by attacking the fundamental problems of constructive economic welfare, the league hoped to make conditions wherein such problems as these would solve themselves.<sup>79</sup>

It is clear from the department store battle that the Urban League preferred to take a measured approach to the issue. It did not advocate for boycotting of stores or other riskier tactics. Instead, it suggested conducting a survey of stores and building up the capacity to train black workers for store positions so that black employment in stores could be sustained. Boycott efforts were seen as jeopardizing long-term change. Later years would mark a shift to lobbying with employers and local officials to break down barriers to black employment.

Urban League strategies and tactics did not change much over time, and they employed a fairly formulaic method when lobbying for the expansion of economic opportunities. A few cases of the League's work in the 1930s and 1940s demonstrate this.

---

<sup>77</sup> "Women Move to Act in Store Insults," *Afro-American*, October 13, 1928.

<sup>78</sup> "Mrs. Gaines Heads Women's Federation," *Afro-American*, November 3, 1928.

<sup>79</sup> "To Launch Store Job Campaign," *Afro-American*, March 29, 1930.

Six Negro case workers have been appointed by the Baltimore Emergency Relief Commission and two colored interviewers have been placed in the new Transience Bureau operated by the Government. These results were the results of recommendations made by the League to relief authorities on the advantages of using colored personnel in the treatment of Negro relief problems.<sup>80</sup>

Between 1933 and 1934, the Urban League lobbied the Baltimore Emergency Relief Commission to advocate for black employment on the new sectors opened under New Deal policy. The tactics used did not involve mass mobilization, as there is no evidence of mass meetings or engaging its membership in any way; however, its efforts to open employment sectors were aimed at opening the doors for middle-class and working-class blacks. The Urban League behaved much differently than the City-Wide Young People's Forum on employment matters. The same practice of negotiating with officials to break the color barrier in employment extended into the 1940s. Cases from the Urban League Annual Reports from 1940 and 1941 reveal that negotiating with officials remained the primary strategy for opening employment barriers.

When Negro carpenters applied for work in the early stages of the work at Ft. Meade, officials in charge of construction and of the carpenters' union told them "no plans had been made to use colored mechanics." At this point the League entered the picture and negotiated with the Consolidated Engineering Company, with officials of the Local No. 101 and with the office of Dr. Robert C. Weaver, Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense....A total of 147 Negro carpenters have been employed and they have chalked up an enviable record....This achievement was based on two years of organization work carried on by the League, through the Baltimore Building Trades Association. Local No. 544, International Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor....<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> "Baltimore Urban League Annual Report 1933-34," Urban League Papers, Series 13 I: N Box 5.

<sup>81</sup> "Baltimore Urban League Annual Report 1940," Urban League Papers, Series 13 I: N Box 5.



A Negro electrician was employed on a construction job at Edgewood Arsenal as a result of work done by our Industrial Department. It was the first time in the history of Baltimore, that a Negro was admitted into the Electrical Workers Union, A.F. of L. The League's Executive secured this opening and helped to iron out the problems of union affiliation involved.<sup>82</sup>

A final case of the League's efforts demonstrates its work outside of economic issues.

Although the bulk of its work centered on getting blacks into jobs previously unavailable, work was also focused on social welfare. For example, in 1943, the Urban League was a key partner in working with the federal and local housing authority to build public housing for blacks.

Staff members have worked closely with the Federal Public Housing Authority, the National Housing Agency, Baltimore Housing Authority, and the Citizens Planning and Housing Association in matters of site selection, obtaining pertinent data and interpreting housing needs. Both in the matter of temporary housing for the immigrant Negro war workers and permanent housing the League has given guidance and direction....The League has also supplied private builders with scientific data on Negro family life, income, etc., which was used in plans for additional housing developments now being constructed for Negro workers in several areas of the city and surrounding territory.<sup>83</sup>

The Urban League went about this in similar fashion to other campaigns to improve social welfare. Much like its efforts to clean up the Lung Block described in Chapter 2, the Urban League conducted an investigation and used data to help inform its work with officials.

By taking a closer look at efforts launched by federated organizations we can observe that the Urban League followed a certain protocol. For the most part, it steered away from expanding its tactics and strategy into mass activism and preferred to network and build partnerships with outside elites. This method is well documented in the

---

<sup>82</sup> "Baltimore Urban League Annual Report 1941," Urban League Papers, Series 13 I: N Box 5.

<sup>83</sup> "Baltimore Urban League Annual Report 1943," Urban League Papers, Series 13 I: N Box 5.

behavior of the Urban League in other cities. For example, Richard Thomas' study of Detroit from 1915 to 1945 notes that the Detroit Urban League adopted skills in networking and “and cooperated with other institutions, organizations, agencies, and individuals in carrying out its mission of serving the needs of the black urban community.”<sup>84</sup> Because of its federated structure, the Urban League behaved similarly across the country. This method allowed it to unify its efforts. However, it is also clear that its organizational structure did not allow for expansion into riskier tactics and strategies—this work was left to autonomous grassroots organizations and sometimes offshoot organizations.

## **7. Conclusion**

This chapter has examined how different structures of organizing matter in the tactics and strategies that a group utilizes. There is mounting scholarship that discusses the benefit of organizational strength in building the capacity and influence of underrepresented groups. This chapter provided additional complexity to how we understand the impact of organizational strength by looking at the nature of organizing. I honed in specifically on cases of organizing around issues of employment. Four different organizational structures were compared—city council representation, autonomous grassroots organizing, offshoot organizing from a larger federated organization, and work pushed forward by a notable federated organization.

This investigation found that when faced with different constraints and flexibilities within organizational structures, groups devised different types of tactics and strategies. In some cases the structure of organizing was not successful. For example,

---

<sup>84</sup> Richard Thomas, *Life for Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915–1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992) p. 81.

because of weak influence in City Hall, black council members were unable to move their agendas. Other cases demonstrated successful organizing structures. For example, the City-Wide Young People's Forum was not formally attached to any larger organization and therefore did not have to navigate through any institutional protocol to devise mobilization strategies. As a result, we find that its strategies were riskier and evolved in response to changes in events. Without the constraint of having to abide by the rules and protocol of a larger organization, the Forum was able to innovate and made important gains. The findings of this chapter do not advocate for one organizing structure over another. Instead, by demonstrating how methods of organizing differed within organizational structures, we are better able to piece together a fuller portrait of how black activists found new openings to mount their challenges.

## Chapter 4

### ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACTIVISM

“There’s a new Negro emerging today. Two years ago it would not have happened in Baltimore, but today we’ve had enough—we’ve gotten up the nerve to March on Annapolis and we don’t give a damn what happens. We believe it is better to die fighting for freedom than to live a slave.”<sup>1</sup> — Adam Clayton Powell, April 25, 1942

#### 1. Introduction

In this chapter I ask: How can the configuration of internal organizational resources have a bearing on how black activists find the proper fit to push for demands? These resources include: communication skills, expertise, experience, and membership. Although disadvantaged groups often have fewer resources to count on in comparison to other groups, it still stands that what they do with the limited amount they have matters. In short, how resources are used can be consequential to the outcome. In this chapter I investigate how black Baltimoreans used the resources available to them when organizing against discrimination. This chapter shows that when faced with various circumstances, black activists responded and configured their resources in different ways. The two cases discussed in this chapter also illuminate the underpinnings of class-based activism.

---

<sup>1</sup> “We Won’t Stand Abuse Any Longer, Powell Tells 1,200,” *Afro-American*, April 25, 1942. Adam Clayton Powell speech at mass meeting.

The case of golf course desegregation during the Depression years sheds light on the continuing discussion of how the ideologies and goals of middle-class blacks were at times in sharp contrast to the everyday realities and struggles of working-class and poor blacks.<sup>1</sup> The other case discussed in this chapter shows how a grassroots organization developed a multifaceted mobilization strategy that relied on cross-class activism to fight against police brutality. The cases in this chapter occurred during different time periods and at different periods of organizational strength. Therefore, the cases do not demonstrate causation. However, these cases show that in times of riper opportunities and increased organizational strength, resources can be better designed. Although the configuration of resources was not singularly responsible for the outcomes of these cases, a closer analysis of how local groups made use of their resources—and specifically how they packaged them—helps to explain how disadvantaged groups make use of coalitions and partnerships within their own community and build a storehouse of resources without relying on external actors. I find that black Baltimoreans were more successful when they found ways to customize their resources in ways that allowed them to partner and build upon a unique and complex web of existing layered networks that allowed them to exert pressure politics in more effective ways.

## **2. Existing Literature**

Several studies of social movements have made note of the importance of how resources are configured within the disadvantaged group. They note that how a group positions its resources can influence the outcome. In Aldon Morris' effective analysis of the modern-day Civil Rights Movement and the protest organizations in Montgomery,

---

<sup>1</sup> Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

Alabama, he stresses the importance of how a disadvantaged group makes use of its resources and how those configurations can have lasting impacts on the strategies employed. In Morris' estimation, some configurations work better not only in light of the problem at hand but also in relation to how the masses will react and participate. For example, Morris explains that the formal organizational structure of the NAACP was not the best-positioned resource for the formation of the Montgomery bus boycott, and instead leaders had to craft new resources and institutions within existing resources and institutions. New resource configurations were formed, and grassroots organizations "were able to organize the black masses because they themselves were mass-based organizations that had grown directly out of a mass-based institution, the black church."<sup>2</sup>

In Morris' investigation, local NAACP leaders were cognizant of the limits of advancing the NAACP to tackle the bus boycott and decided to reconfigure their resources and form a new organization grown organically from the NAACP to take on the bus boycott. In their estimation, the "red tape" and the limits of the organizational structure of the NAACP would negatively impact their chances for success.<sup>3</sup> Morris also notes that the bureaucratic structure and the formal nature of the NAACP was not the most complementary resource for the tasks of the bus boycott. Instead, local-level groups at the grassroots were best-positioned to build the movement and to gain the trust and participation of the masses."<sup>4</sup>

McAdam also analyzed the modern-day Civil Rights Movement to make an argument on the configuration of a disadvantaged groups resources. McAdam argued that

---

<sup>2</sup> Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: Free Press, 1984) p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 48.

without the accumulation of a stockpile of resources, weak groups are not able to effectively capitalize on sociopolitical shifts to make change and bring about their demands. McAdam also argued that disadvantaged groups have the potential to marshal their own indigenous resources in effective ways but that involvement from external groups can have dire outcomes and lead to co-optation.<sup>5</sup> Other scholars have posited theories in contrast to McAdam and argued that external involvement is a crucial component of success for disadvantaged groups (McCarthy and Zald).<sup>6</sup> Seen in this light, the assumption is that disadvantaged groups are resource-poor and that more robust external influences help disadvantaged groups to better utilize their resources. Evans offered a key element to the debate on how resources matter and argued that although political underdogs may have fewer resources, they have demonstrated the ability to cultivate some resources internally and found creative ways to locate institutional holes to further strengthen other resources.<sup>7</sup>

Evans therefore offers an “in between” perspective: She doesn’t argue that external actors ruin efforts by disadvantaged groups nor does she extol that bottom-up movements must be solely orchestrated with indigenous resources. This project does not intend to add to the debate over whether the cultivation of indigenous resources is necessary to fending off co-optation. Instead, at the micro level, this paper provides an in-depth look into how disadvantaged groups used their indigenous resources and the consequences of their behavior. In short, I look to how groups improvised and crafted

---

<sup>5</sup> Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982)

<sup>6</sup> John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory,” *American Journal of Sociology* (82)6:1212–1241, 1977.

<sup>7</sup> Laura Evans, *Influencing Powerful Partners: American Federalism and Strategies of Tribal Governments* (dissertation, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2005).

what they had available to them amidst exogenous circumstances such as the economic climate, political shifts, or the size of the black community, for example. What I find and argue in this chapter is that disadvantaged groups sometimes incubate their indigenous resources in innovative ways and the result is a complex web of internal and overlapping networks that can have important outcomes.

### **3. The Monumental Golf Club and Golf Course Desegregation**

In the summer of 1934, the Monumental Golf Club led the charge in negotiating with the mayor and Park Board to grant exclusive rights to black golfers to play at the municipal Carroll Park golf course. The drive to secure rights for black golfers represents a peculiar issue given the economic realities of the period. The timing of the golf integration battle may initially appear unusual. Admittedly, the golf case is not fully inclusive of the concerns of black Baltimoreans in the Depression era. What this case does reveal is the heterogeneity of black organizing at this time. Although golf desegregation should not be classified as the norm in terms of black organizing, it is important that we do not ignore the presence of black middle-class activism and the lessons learned from how they organized. Existing work has cautioned the inclusiveness of uplift ideology and middle-class agenda-setting.

Although blacks believed they were opposing racism by emphasizing class differences, uplift ideology had as much to do with race as class...Uplift, among its other connotations, also represented the struggle for a positive black identity in a deeply racist society, turning the pejorative designation of race into a source of dignity and self-affirmation through an ideology of class differentiation, self-help, and interdependence.<sup>8</sup>

Kevin Gaines raises doubts on uplift ideology exercised by elite African Americans. He argues that a cultural politics largely based on class differences resulted in reinforcing

---

<sup>8</sup> Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 3.



racist ideologies and broke down unifying efforts in black communities. Although the golf desegregation case has theoretical linkages to Gaines' argument on the actual utility of racial uplift ideology to advance substantial change, we are able to observe the inner workings of middle-class activism when examined strictly as a case of anti-discrimination activism. I also found that even though golf course desegregation has class characteristics, the timing was partly strategic. With the city losing potential funds because of decreased usage during the economic downturn, middle-class activists argued that segregation was bad economically. They argued that opening the course to blacks would bring in new and consistent dollars. For example, the *Afro-American* claimed that golf course desegregation was "a good lesson in economic segregation," because increased access to public golf courses would immediately improve the city economy.<sup>9</sup>

It should also be noted that although golfing represented a middle-class sport, considerations of costliness were taken into consideration when the Monumental Golf Club mounted its efforts. In its early stages, there were discussions surrounding the potential drawbacks of the cost associated with buying golf equipment and ways to circumvent expenses. A meeting recap published in the *Afro-American* recounted:

The matter of golf equipment costs was also discussed, and statements of several of the club members who have made purchases recently disclosed that the essential clubs, a bag, tees and six balls could be purchased for considerably less than \$10. The fear was expressed that misunderstanding of the expenses involved had interfered with the plans of numerous prospective players who did not own equipment.<sup>10</sup>

The golf course battle was not crafted entirely as a middle-class issue, although it is clear that realities of class are inherent. It is clear that the purchase of golf equipment and the

---

<sup>9</sup> Victor Gray, "Prosperity Follows Liberal Policy at Carroll Park Links," *Afro-American*, May 25, 1935.

<sup>10</sup> "Golfers Determine to Enter Court if Course Is Lost," *Afro-American*, September 15, 1934.

fees to play were prohibitive for a large segment of Baltimore's black population. Given that, the analysis of the push for a black golf course should be understood as an effort that targeted racial exclusion but did not mobilize the masses per se. The golf course case is worthy to include in this project for a few reasons. Foremost, case selection has been guided by instances where Baltimoreans have taken on local issues that require working with local institutions or parties. The golf course case represents the work of a local group working with the Park Board and City Hall. Secondly, cases were chosen that involved local people who devised innovative ways to spark civic engagement.

### **The Work of the Monumental Golf Club**

The Monumental Golf Club developed as an offshoot organization of the Baltimore Urban League—a federated organization grounded in improving the employment opportunities for blacks. In ways that mirrored the work of the City-Wide Young People's Forum, the golf course battle demonstrates the ways that black Baltimoreans created new organizational structures. And also like the Forum, members of the Monumental Golf Club utilized their resources and the availability of layered networks. For example, Edward Lewis was the president of the Urban League and also served as the president of the Monumental Golf Club, which for the most part served middle-class interests. His layered networks speak to Juanita Jackson's involvement with the NAACP and her work with the City-Wide Young People's Forum. These cases ultimately demonstrate the complexity of affiliations and the ways that individuals mimicked their leadership into other organizational structures.

The Monumental Golf Club was formed in 1934 for the specific purpose of persuading Mayor Jackson to open up opportunities for black golfers. Up to this point,

black golfers did not have access to municipal golf courses. Moreover, at the time, black golf clubs were active in other parts of the country as well, so there was nothing particularly unique about the existence of a black golf club in Baltimore. Both Chicago and Washington, DC, boasted black golf clubs that organized regional tournaments.<sup>11</sup> There is evidence that black golfers from Washington, DC, interfaced with Baltimore's black golfers. More importantly, golfers from both cities discussed racial exclusion in their respective cities.<sup>12</sup> Urban League president Edward Lewis was at the helm of leadership, along with two doctors and one attorney.<sup>13</sup>

The club found early success in its push to get exclusive access. Initially, the Park Board ruled in favor of the Monumental Golf Club and granted Carroll Park golf course as the first exclusively black golf course in the city. The success was shortlived after whites that lived in and around Carroll Park protested the ruling. Reacting to constituents, Mayor Jackson suspended his call to offer unlimited access to black golfers in response to the white protesters, and ordered further investigation into the matter. At its early stages, there is virtually no evidence that the Monumental Golf Club participated in any partnering or cooperation with other organizations after the ruling was suspended. This is surprising, given the growing organizational strength in the city at the time. Instead, in acting as an offshoot organization of the Urban League, the Monumental Golf Club did little to stray away from the formality of the Urban League and chose not to advance riskier strategies such as picketing. In comparison to the workings of the Forum, that operated strictly autonomously, the strategies of the Monumental Golf Club were more in

---

<sup>11</sup> See "Chicago Awaits Golf Tourney," *Afro American*, August 19, 1933, and "D.C. Golfers Tie in Medal Tourney," *Afro-American*, August 4, 1934.

<sup>12</sup> "D.C. and Baltimore Golfers on Lily-White Course," *Afro-American*, September 8, 1934.

<sup>13</sup> "Board Approves \$22,000 Proposal by Golf Club," *Afro-American*, November 27, 1937.

line with the habits of the Urban League. The main difference was that the Urban League took on issues of employment access and social welfare, and this effort had everything to do with leisure and integration (and advocating for access to places of leisure was not in the purview of the Urban League).

Instead of broadening its influence amidst adversity, the Club met with Mayor Jackson directly and offered a proposal that would let black golfers play on the golf course exclusively on Saturdays and allow the Park Board to sort through the protests and demands of the white citizens during the week. This move signals both a commitment to mounting tight-knit strategies and also confidence in persuading city government directly. We can surmise that Edward Lewis gravitated to this strategy because his work with the Urban League involved direct contact with city officials and he was behaving much like he would with the Urban League, merely representing a different group with a different agenda. In short, the leadership was the same and the initial strategies remained the same. The narrow strategy to rely solely on city officials was not without opposition.

Carl Murphy, editor of the *Afro-American*, was clear in his disappointment with the golf club's strategy. Murphy offered a more aggressive strategy that borrowed from the experiences of the grocery store picketers. Murphy argued that the black golfers should play golf at the course and make the necessary arrangements to inform the police in advance. Demonstrating knowledge of NAACP strategies, Carl Murphy argued that the police would arrest any protesters, and since there was no official Jim Crow law barring black golfers from playing at Carroll Park, a test case could be developed.

Instead of setting up for themselves a Jim Crow course, local golfers should present themselves at any of the municipal courses, making sure in advance that a police officer will be present to make an arrest. In view of the fact that Rule No. 1 of the park board is that the facilities of all parks should be open to all citizens, a test case in the courts should settle once and for all the rights of colored citizens in that respect. That, after all, is the principal issue involved.<sup>14</sup>

Carl Murphy spoke out against an all-black course and favored taking efforts to integrate the city's courses—a move that would involve preparations for a legal battle to challenge the validity of segregated city park space. His arguments are indicative of his continued correspondence with the national office of the NAACP during this time. Carl Murphy would later sit on the national office's board of directors and stay in constant communication regarding the leadership of the local NAACP branch while the golf course battle was simmering.

Heeding Carl Murphy's suggestions, the Monumental Golf Club decided to pursue a test case only if the ruling of the park board was reversed upon the scheduled neighborhood meeting between the Park Board and the white residents of Carroll Park. Equipped with members from the black Baltimore elite, the Monumental Golf Club announced that club attorney, Dallas Nicholas, had prepared a writ of mandamus in anticipation of any ruling that would forbid black golfers from using Carroll Park.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Golf Course Hearing and Aftermath**

Neighborhood organizing from the opposition stymied the advances of black leaders. White residents of Carroll Park launched an organized attack against the original park board ruling and had more political influence than the black delegation. According to reports, three city councilmen, a Methodist minister, and 13 community members were

---

<sup>14</sup> Editorial, *Afro-American*, September 1, 1934.

<sup>15</sup> "Players Under Guard as Park Course Opens," *Afro-American*, September 8, 1934.

represented at the park board meeting to hear the grievances of the white residents.<sup>16</sup> The park board decided to reverse its original ruling and decided that effective immediately, the black golfers would be given exclusive rights to the course on Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays of each week and on the first and third Sundays of each month.<sup>17</sup> After the reversal of the Park Board's ruling, Carl Murphy again spoke out on future actions:

We hope that those who sponsor the movement to wipe Jim Crow and restriction out of public places will use the same determination and fight of which the radicals are capable and tell the park board that they will not only play on the Carroll Park course whenever they please but will also fight to have all courses open to them.<sup>18</sup>

The Monumental Golf Club did not bend to Carl Murphy's calls and did not advance its efforts through the courts. Instead, the golf club's leadership went back to discussions with City Hall with the goal of improving golf courses. Their discussions with City Hall surrounding improvements to the course again involved singular efforts that mirrored their leadership experiences with the Urban League.

In contrasting the work of the City-Wide Young People's Forum and the Monumental Golf Club, what sticks out is that the golf club was led by the president of an established organization, whereas Juanita Jackson was an emerging leader with no solidified leadership responsibilities to another organization. Perhaps Edward Lewis did not advance a strategy that involved any partnerships or cooperation with other groups because he relied on the networks and resources available as president of the Urban League. Regardless of the motives behind different strategies, the experiences of the Monumental Golf Club highlight how the organizational structure of an offshoot

---

<sup>16</sup> "Golfers' Time Slashed," *Afro-American*, September 22, 1934.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* Also, note that white community members admitted to not using the golf course. Their complaints surrounded seeing too many black people during the week and the threat of black folk infiltrating their neighborhood.

<sup>18</sup> Editorial, *Afro-American*, September 22, 1934.

organization with deep formal connections to a federated organization often mimic rather than expand strategies. An important question is what evidence is available to make the connection between the Monumental Golf Club and the Urban League?

Archival records from the Urban League show that upon securing golfing privileges, the Urban League announced that it had in fact been responsible for the success.

Golfing Privileges for Negroes Secured by League. The League's secretary has been working quietly since January 1934 to secure the right for Negro golfers to play on municipal course. On August 15<sup>th</sup> the Board of Park Commissioners agreed to turn over the Carroll Park Golf Course for the exclusive use of Negro golfers. To George L. Nichols, General Superintendent of Public Parks and Squares and to the Board of Park Commissioners the Baltimore Urban League extends its plaudits for this new venture. It has been necessary for Negro golfers to go either to Washington or Philadelphia to play the game.<sup>19</sup>

The fact that the Urban League claimed victory with no mention of the Monumental Golf Club raises complexities. Because correspondence records are not available, there is no precise way to ascertain the politics behind this. However, we can hypothesize a few possibilities. For one, it is possible that Secretary Lewis "quietly" formed the Monumental Golf Club and purposely informed the Urban League of his efforts after achieving success. This announcement is the only record of the golf course desegregation, leading to the possibility that this was not an organized campaign set forth by the Urban League. It is also possible that the practice of forming offshoot organizations with targeted objectives may have been commonplace among leadership. By doing so, leaders could strategically bypass institutional protocol, oversight, and communication with a larger body. Institutional protocol could be perceived as taking too long or limiting tactics.

---

<sup>19</sup> Urban League Papers. Box 28, Series 4, Baltimore File 1935-1939. "Golfing Privileges for Negroes Secured by League," August 20, 1934.

The Monumental Golf Club continued its work after solidifying golf course access. Records also indicate that issues concerning the golf course remained under the label and auspices of the Monumental Golf Club even though archives show that the Urban League claimed success. In 1937, three years after negotiating for black access to Carroll Park, the Monumental Golf Club successfully worked with the mayor to secure a total \$22,000 in budget appropriations for improvements and a clubhouse for Carroll Park golf course.<sup>20</sup>

#### **4. The Citizens Committee for Justice: How a Mass Coalition Orchestrated a Historic Movement**

What this next case shows is how resources can be cultivated in unique ways without external support. This dissertation does not argue that external support is a direct ticket to co-optation or a movement's demise. Several studies have demonstrated that external support can be viewed in ways that transcend dichotomies and lift up interactive models. The case described in this chapter demonstrates how complex partnering can be designed around overlapping networks. It shows that mass cross-class coalitions can be built. And this case also reveals that grassroots organizations can cultivate mass coalitions. When it comes to the configuration of resources, this case shows how hyper-organization eased partnership-building. Because members had multiple affiliations, their allegiances helped to pave the way for seamless coalition-building. In effect, hyper-organization actually helped to overcome collective action.

This chapter also poses a question that may appear peculiar initially: How do personal connections have a bearing on an organization's ability to partner? This chapter would be incomplete without a deeper analysis of the organizational leadership of Juanita

---

<sup>20</sup> "Board Approves \$22,000 Proposal by Golf Club," *Afro-American*, November 27, 1937.



Jackson Mitchell, Virginia Jackson Kiah, Florence Snowden, and Lillie Jackson—these four women, mother, aunt, and daughters were key actors in this case. This case works to show how having family ties factors into an organization's ability to harness resources and minimize collective action.

## **Background**

On January 31, 1942, Private Thomas Broadus was shot to death in the back by an off-duty Baltimore policeman. Reports from the shooting describe that Private Broadus was shot after attempting to hail a cab—he got in a physical altercation with the policeman that later resulted in his untimely death. What we learn from a closer analysis of the Private Broadus murder and its aftermath is it is not only another case of heightened racial tensions marked by violence between black soldiers and whites during wartime. In addition, his murder and its aftermath worked as a catalyst for heightened participation and civic engagement by the masses, and also played a tremendous factor in bringing together a multifaceted coalition of black leaders and organizations in Baltimore. Black Baltimoreans became politically engaged when local groups found ways to make use of layered resources and interlocking networks to bolster mobilization schemes and activate participation. Resources were layered in that memberships, knowledge bases, information networks, and leaderships were configured in ways that enabled multiple organizations with often layered membership bases and the same leaders to come together, but all under the guise of separate organizations working together. Networks also were interlocking. Rather than staying within issue and/or organizational silos, what we notice in this case is that actors engaged and talked to each other across and organizations.

Local black activists in Baltimore took on the Private Broadus murder in ways that varied from earlier attempts to improve local racial conditions. What ensued was a use of resources and mobilization tactics that aimed to target a much more comprehensive platform than in previous examples. Black activists in the city protested the murder and used the incident to springboard a widespread and comprehensive attack on local and state race relations, political appointments, and the general social and economic welfare of black Baltimoreans citywide.

Nearly two months after the death of Private Broadus, a reported 2,000 black Baltimoreans marched on the steps of the State House in Annapolis, Maryland, in protest. In the short run, the murder of Private Broadus was a tragic event that prompted black leaders in Baltimore to organize a mass march to protest racial injustice. However, the larger picture of the Broadus murder adds to our understanding of African American political participation and activism. I argue that the murder of Private Broadus did not merely launch a singular act of political mobilization but that the events following the murder set in motion a larger strategy of political action for black leaders in Baltimore that were long-lasting. The aftermath of the Broadus murder also reveals the political activity of an autonomous organization that developed out of the NAACP, and how its status as an independent organization helped to break down barriers and usher in opportunities for partnering and collaboration.

### **The Death of Private Thomas Broadus**

Police brutality against young black men and women in Baltimore was nothing new to black leaders in Baltimore city and had been a salient issue for decades. By 1942,

Baltimore City employed no uniformed black policemen (although one uniformed black policewoman had been appointed), and several African Americans had died at the hands of members of the police force.<sup>21</sup> A 1930 editorial in the *Afro-American* titled “Murderous Cops” reported that eight people had been killed by police officers in the last six years. What the *Afro-American* took issue with was that the majority of the murders occurred at the hands of policemen in the Northwestern District—the area comprising the bulk of the African American population. The *Afro-American* reasoned that “If police can be gentlemen in southeast Baltimore, they can be gentlemen in the northwestern part of the city” and that “The trouble is police brutality in Baltimore has gone as far as some people are to stand.”<sup>22</sup>

The 1938–39 annual report of the Baltimore NAACP discussed the murder of four young black men shot and killed by policemen and called for the local branch to work more intensely on issues of police brutality via the courts.<sup>23</sup> Records from the private family archives of the Mitchell family reveal that Lillie Jackson and the Baltimore NAACP were deeply concerned about police brutality and were active in testing out new strategies after failed attempts.

---

<sup>21</sup> Starting in 1923, the *Afro-American* started advocating for changes to the police department. Up until the Broadus murder, the newspaper was the loudest voice on the issue and took it on as a consistent theme. To learn a more in-depth history of advocating on issues relating to the police department and police brutality, see Hayward Farrar, *See What the Afro Says: The Afro-American, 1892–1950* (PhD dissertation, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983), pp. 207–211.

<sup>22</sup> *Afro-American*, March 29, 1930.

<sup>23</sup> Papers of the National Association of Colored People. October 24, 1940. Report of the Legal Committee. Section II, Box C76, Folder #1

In a letter written by Juanita Jackson Mitchell, we see evidence of attempts to reach out to the State House and concern over the viability of the NAACP in mounting a picket against Baltimore police stations.

Things are pretty tense. Mamma wrote to the Gov. for an appointment today—Monday—for a city-wide delegation and so far he hasn't answered the letter. Things are at a standstill. So we don't know what. The NAACP lost the case of the grocer—Freeland in So. Baltimore who was so badly beaten. The grand jury refused to indict the man. So! We're getting ready to have a big protest mass meeting. We'd like to picket the police stations but are afraid they'll beat us up. So we are in the midst of preparation.<sup>24</sup>

This correspondence offers a glimpse into how information was shared between Juanita Jackson Mitchell and other members of her family (namely between her husband and mother). Moreover, we notice that the Baltimore NAACP endorsed protest tactics in 1941, but concern over their lack of influence and racial violence encouraged a more tacit strategy to lobby the governor. Evidence presented later in this chapter will show that after the Private Broadus murder in 1942, the NAACP would work collaboratively with the newly formed Citizens Committee for Justice and build a hybrid strategy that entailed mass protest and lobbying at the State House.

The facts of the Private Broadus murder have been well documented. According to official reports, Broadus spent the evening socializing with a few black soldiers from his base and two young black women along Pennsylvania Avenue—a social and commercial hub for black Baltimoreans—on the evening of the killing. Private Broadus was making attempts to hail a cab when the officer interjected and instructed the cabdriver to drive away because the cab was not licensed.<sup>25</sup> Private Broadus became

---

<sup>24</sup> Letter to Clarence Mitchell from Juanita Jackson Mitchell, June 2, 1941. Private Mitchell Family Archives. This letter is also evidence of the correspondence embedded in familial networks.

<sup>25</sup> No official reports or newspaper articles discuss the fact that the cab was unlicensed—there is probably a clear racial spin to this. In black neighborhoods, cab licensing was hard to come by.

upset and reportedly told the officer that he “wanted a colored cab and had a right to spend his money with whomever he chose.”<sup>26</sup> Broadus was promptly arrested and upon resisting arrest got into a physical altercation with the officer. As Broadus and the officer struggled, Broadus managed to break free and ran away—as he ran, the officer shot him in the back, killing him.<sup>27</sup>

Although tragic, the story of Private Broadus’ murder was not entirely unique during the war years. Robin Kelley argues that several black WWII soldiers rejected white officials such as policemen and bus drivers not simply because they were angry but also because they were making systematic efforts to protest white power structures. In Kelley’s estimation, these acts of deviance contributed to the larger narrative of black protest in the Jim Crow and Civil Rights eras.<sup>28</sup> Kelley’s analysis fits into a larger body of scholarship that argues that WWII was a catalyst moment for opening new political opportunities for blacks, and that worldwide focus on American race relations provided important political leverage for black activism. Scholars who emphasize the importance of WWII on American race politics also argue that the origins of the mainstream Civil Rights Movement should be attributed to the political and economic changes precipitated by WWII.<sup>29</sup>

Police brutality was an important issue in the black press in addition to the local NAACP. In fact, in cities across the country, the NAACP was bolstering its legal teams

---

<sup>26</sup> *Afro American*, February 2, 1942. Front page.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Healy, Report of the Governor’s Commission on Problems Affecting the Negro Population, p. 3. March 1943.

<sup>28</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Macmillan, 1994.)

<sup>29</sup> Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Daniel Kryder, *Divided Arsenal: Race and the American State During World War II* (New York : Cambridge University Press, 2000); Philip Klinkner and Rogers Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America* (Chicago, the University of Chicago Press, 1999).

to fight on several fronts, with police brutality being one of the major charges. It is key to note that although organizational strength was relatively high, the mode of participation was rooted in legal means when the NAACP got involved. The national and local NAACP were not inexperienced with responding to incidents of police brutality, and the national office had precedents to draw from. However, what this case reveals moves outside of the NAACP and mobilization through the courts. Within a week of the murder, the Baltimore NAACP, under the leadership of President Lillie Jackson, set out to galvanize a larger organizational alliance to put forth a legal challenge.

The local NAACP was the first organization to respond. To mobilize for legal redress surrounding the murder, Lillie Jackson dropped in on the executive board meetings of prominent black organizations throughout the city and encouraged them to take action against the Private Broadus death. Jackson not only spoke out against the murders but also tasked other black organizations with sending telegrams to local and state government officials to protest their outrage and to push for a serious investigation into the Private Broadus murder and police brutality against African Americans in the city as a whole.<sup>30</sup> This mobilization tactic was used in addition to a legal strategy more characteristic of the NAACP at the time.

Speaking specifically to Baltimore, the local branch had its own experiences in prior years with devising strategies to react to police brutality cases. In 1938, the local NAACP attempted to launch a legal attack to confront deaths of blacks by city policemen. Their attempts in years prior were characterized by failed efforts through the courts. Between 1938 and 1939, the local branch attorney W.A.C. Hughes worked to put pressure on the state attorney's office to bring the cases of police killings in front of a

---

<sup>30</sup> *Afro-American*, February 10, 1942.

grand jury. The local NAACP was initially successful with lobbying the state to recommend that the case and the officers involved go before the grand jury. However, the case fell flat when the local judge refused to hold the trial.<sup>31</sup> Lacking political influence, the local branch's legal efforts were diminished by its marginalized status.

The local branch moved to advance the same strategy with the Broadus murder. The use of the same response and tactics speaks to what was probably the influence of the national office of the NAACP in molding and providing resources and funds to help local branches carry out cases involving police brutality. Again, mirroring previous attempts, the legal counsel for the local branch managed to get the case to the grand jury. And again, the first step in the legal battle was successful, with the grand jury determining that it found "a presentment of unlawful homicide against Bender and the State's Attorney prepared the usual indictment."<sup>32</sup> In almost identical fashion to the NAACP's attempts a few years earlier, the case faltered and was dismissed when the grand jury abruptly changed its mind and ruled that there was not enough evidence for an indictment.<sup>33</sup>

What we discover in a closer analysis of the Broadus case is that an offshoot organization, the Citizens Committee for Justice (CCJ), developed from the NAACP and utilized different strategies and tactics that were not focused on the courts. By moving away from a legal strategy, the CCJ was able to develop its capacity for partnering and collaboration. When groups stick to a legal strategy, they essentially constrain their ability to mount strategies that require a deeper set of resources that are mostly found when groups collaborate. Legal strategies are often not about mass activism. By sticking

---

<sup>31</sup> Papers of the National Association of Colored People. October 24, 1940. Report of the Legal Committee. Section II, Box C76, Folder #1.

<sup>32</sup> Report of the Governor's Commission on Problems Affecting the Negro Population. Joseph Healy, Chairman. March 1943. Page 3.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

to them, groups remove the need to reach across their networks and join forces with other like-minded parties.

Additionally, the local NAACP branch was constrained in the tactics and strategies that it could advance because of a strict protocol imposed by the national office, and the Citizens Committee for Justice could work autonomously but also in partnership with the NAACP. After the NAACP's failed legal fight against the officer involved in the Broadus death, the political activity around the issue shifted from a legal battle. The new focus moved from one of embedded racism in the police department to a highly organized campaign forged primarily by an offshoot organization of the NAACP to push for not only an end to police brutality but also to pursue other issues. The shift in strategy after the failed legal attempt reminds us that building partnerships can expand agendas and issue platforms.

### **The Emergence of the Citizens Committee for Justice**

Emerging from the Private Broadus murder was the creation of the Citizens Committee for Justice (CCJ), an autonomous offshoot organization of the NAACP. The CCJ was an umbrella organization of black leaders representing all sectors that utilized several tactics beyond the courts. In many ways, the CCJ was also a massive coalition of black-led groups. The CCJ was formed by Juanita Jackson Mitchell, former president of the City-Wide Young People's Forum and daughter of NAACP president Lillie Jackson. The CCJ organized the mass march at the State Capitol, lobbied state and local officials, executed petition drives, and hosted a series of rallying meetings— all resulting in one of the most important moments in black politics in Baltimore at the time.



At the heart of the CCJ was the belief that all black organizations across the city must work as partners to weave a thick layer of black organizational strength to build influence with local and state officials to shift local policy. Meetings were held at the offices of the *Baltimore Afro-American*, with editor and chief Carl Murphy serving as the chairman. Carl Murphy was a longtime friend of the Jackson and Mitchell families and also sat on the board of directors of the national office of the NAACP—he therefore had interlocking networks with the organizational leadership and had layered resources because he was active in several black organizations at varying levels. Juanita Jackson Mitchell served as the director and clergyman Reverend E.W. White was the secretary. Both Mitchell and White brought their own set of layered networks that could be utilized: Grassroots organization, NAACP leadership, and clergy relationships capture a brief snapshot of the knowledge and experience that they brought to the table.

What is peculiar about the emergence of the CCJ is that although Murphy and Mitchell had deep ties to the NAACP, there is no record of consistent correspondence with the national office regarding the Broadus murder or the Annapolis March. This could mean that either the national office was not fully informed of their activities or that it decided against becoming involved in the work of the CCJ. The most robust evidence of involvement with the national office included reference in the *Baltimore Afro-American* of a member of the legal team speaking at a mass meeting encouraging participating. According to reports from the *Afro-American*, Dean Ransome of the national legal staff announced that “if we are willing to march on Berlin and Tokyo, we

must be willing to march on Annapolis first. If we're going to fight for this country, let's make it a country worth fighting for."<sup>34</sup>

The CCJ fully demonstrates how political underdogs find ways to build extensive partnerships. What the CCJ displays is how resources were strategically configured to aggregate nearly every corner of black organizing in the city. Ralph Bunche argued, "There is plenty of evidence that the Negro is a very political animal. And that his political urges will find expression in other channels whenever he is deprived of participation in the usual political processes."<sup>35</sup> I draw on this discovery to better illustrate how disadvantaged groups found new channels to package their resources. Nearly 200 organizations joined together over the course of two months to contribute their membership base, leadership, funds, space, and experience to execute the march on the State House.

The organizations that became part of the Citizens Committee were a vastly representative group ranging from labor organizations such as the Glass Blowers' Association and the Women's Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters to the National Civic Symphony Society. Churches, fraternal, educational, mainstream racial uplift, and grassroots organizations were all represented in the CCJ. As such, it would be inaccurate to characterize the work of the CCJ and the Annapolis March as an occurrence of black elite activism. Black Baltimoreans representing different economic classes helped to organize and sign petitions, speak to local officials, orchestrate mass meetings, and attend meetings and rallies, and took time off work to protest at the State House during a weekday.

---

<sup>34</sup> "We Won't Stand Abuse Any Longer, Powell Tells 1,200," *Afro-American*, April 25, 1942.

<sup>35</sup> Ralph Bunche, *The Political Status of the Negro in the Age of FDR* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 87.

The vastness of the CCJ's work was bolstered by its leadership's ability to bring in a diverse group of partners. Because the leadership of the CCJ was connected to major levers in the black community and also had personal connections, conflict did not override as in the salary equalization case. Moreover, committee heads had access to mobilizing people from labor unions, churches, and education, community, civic, and fraternal organizations. And those that were targeted to participate were targeted in multiple ways and on more than one front because they became involved via their hyper-organization. For example, one could learn about participating in the CCJ efforts via a church, sorority, and neighborhood group that was involved. And further, by harnessing leadership from nearly every black organization in the city, the CCJ leadership helped to overcome the collective action problem by creating one seamless organization with an agenda that was threaded throughout the city's organizational landscape.

**Table 4.1: Organization Depth of the Citizens Committee for Justice**

| LABOR ORGANIZATION   | CHURCH  | FRATERNAL & CIVIC GROUPS  |
|--|---|---|
| Plumbers Association<br>Colored Master Beauticians<br>International Bed Carriers Union<br>International Longshoremen's Association<br>Glass Bottle Blowers Association<br>Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters<br>Women's Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters<br>Colored Motion Picture Operators Union<br>Association of Negro Technicians<br>Steel Workers Organization of Colored Workers<br>United Transport Services Employees of America<br>Workers Council<br>#14 American Legion | Unity Christian Church<br>Zion Methodist Church<br>St. James Episcopal<br>Whatcoat Methodist Church<br>New Metropolitan Baptist Church<br>First Baptist Church<br>Metropolitan Methodist Church<br>Olivet Christian Church<br>Baptists Ministerial Alliance<br>Bishop of the Methodist Church<br>North Baltimore District<br>Superintendent of the Methodist Church<br>United Baptists Missionary Convention of MD<br>South Baltimore District<br>Superintendent of the Methodist Church<br>Baptists Ministers Conference of Baltimore Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance Morningstar Baptist Church<br>Enon Baptist Church<br>Union Baptist Church<br>Olivet Christian Church<br>Baptist Ministerial Alliance<br>Sharp Street Baptist Church | Sharp Street Community House<br>Youth Council NAACP<br>PTA Douglass High School<br>Omega Psi Phi<br>Temple of Elks<br>Northwest Residential Protective Association<br>West Baltimore Citizens League<br>YWCA<br>Asco Club<br>Phi Beta Sigma<br>Falcon Rod and Gun Club<br>Brilliant Start Temple<br>Nazarites<br>East Baltimore Citizens League<br>Women Auxiliary Legion Post<br>Eastern Star<br>Great Southern Temple<br>Elks<br>NAACP<br>Urban League<br>National Alliance of Post Office Employees Masonic Grand Lodge of Maryland, Business and Professional Girls<br>Monumental Lodge of Elks<br>Pride of Baltimore Elks<br>Douglass Practical Nurses Club<br>Women's Auxiliary St. James Church<br>Jolly Lads Pleasure Club<br>Baltimore Citizens League<br>Underwriters Association<br>Alpha Kappa Alpha<br>Women's Society<br>Big Sisters<br>Clean Block Campaign<br>Harper Temple Elks, Beauticians Association<br>East Baltimore Residential Protective Association<br>National Civic Symphony |
| POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS  | EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS   |   |
| Republican Club<br>Colored Democrats Club<br>Young MD Colored Democrats<br>Citywide Republican Club<br>Women's Society Metropolitan Baptists Church<br>Republican Voters League of Maryland  | PTA Dunbar High School<br>National Association of College Women<br>National Association of College Women Morgan State College<br>Student Council  |   |

The CCJ devised a comprehensive set of demands to challenge local policy. These demands included:

1. For Mayor Howard Jackson to appoint a black member of school board to fill one of three vacancies on the board;
2. A thorough investigation into police brutality;
3. For the city to hire uniformed rather than plain-clothed black policemen;
4. For Mayor Jackson to appoint a black magistrate to the Northwest Police District;
5. For the city to hire an additional black policewoman;
6. The appointment of a black magistrate;
7. For the Governor to appoint a black member of the Crownsville State Hospital Board;
8. For the Governor to appoint a black member of the Henryton Sanatorium Board.<sup>1</sup>

The CCJ displayed expertise in building partnerships and a solid organizational structure in ways that strongly mirrored the structure of both the NAACP and the City-Wide Young People's Forum. The CCJ replicated models that worked in the past. This offers evidence for how autonomous offshoot organizations functioned—many were led by seasoned leaders in the community who utilized the lessons learned from their previous experiences and implemented a set of best practices in how to package different resources. For example, the CCJ designed an elaborate committee system. To mobilize partnering organizations and strategize around the best tactics to enforce these demands, the Citizens Committee set up the following committees—Civic, Fraternal, Speakers, Cars and Transport, Placard and Pamphlets, Social Welfare, Mass Meeting, Labor, and Petitions.

Each of these committees opened an opportunity for black Baltimoreans from various socioeconomic ladders and varying organizational memberships to fully participate in protest politics. In addition to the expertise and leadership resources of the

---

<sup>1</sup> *Afro-American*, April 14, 1942.

CCJ coalition, how else were resources used and packaged in important ways? One of the key features of the Annapolis March was the actual physical movement of everyday blacks to the march. For this to succeed, transportation had to be organized and paid for, people had to be mobilized and convinced to attend the march during a weekday, and logistical details had to be determined. The CCJ worked to overcome these problems by organizing mass meetings at churches to get the word out. To raise funds to finance the march, the CCJ used these meetings to garner funds. For example, the *Afro-American* reported that “Mrs. Juanita Jackson Mitchell, director of the committee, made an appeal for an offering to finance the trip, to pay for buses, trains and cars to transport marchers free of charge. Over \$200 was collected at the meeting, and prior contributions totaled \$300.”<sup>2</sup>

Black organizations and churches that comprised the CCJ enabled mass participation. The various tentacles of the CCJ provided both the supply of members and the work they needed to carry out their agenda. The mass coalition also helped to fund the efforts. The work of Nancy Burns, Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Scholzman, and Theda Skocpol all points to some contention that the civic engagement and political education of citizens are very important pieces to understanding how mobilization works and how people become engaged and participate in politics.<sup>3</sup> They all display how ordinary people can become involved in politics and play important roles when there is a strong enough organizational apparatus to pass along important skills. Even if activists

---

<sup>2</sup> “We Won’t Stand Abuse Any Longer, Powell Tells 1,200,” *Afro-American*, April 25, 1942.

<sup>3</sup> Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995); Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Scholzman, and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Nancy Burns, Kay Lehman Scholzman, and Sidney Verba, *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

did not know it at the time, the organizational planning and detailed structure of the CCJ afforded a tremendous opportunity to local blacks from all walks of life to learn intimately about the various components of political activism and also planted fertile seeds for an organizing tradition.

### **March Strategy and Mobilization**

The strategy of the CCJ was essentially a two-pronged approach—to push for large changes at the local level and to begin making strides at the state level. The CCJ's lobbying efforts started at the local level, where it arranged to meet with the mayor of Baltimore to see if some of their demands could be met in short order. Approximately three weeks prior to the Annapolis March, the CCJ met with the mayor and designated Carl Murphy to be the spokesperson at the meeting. Members of the Citizens Committee went into the meeting with the stance that they represented nearly 1,000 black leaders in the city of Baltimore from all spheres of influence and were an important voting bloc that could not be ignored. Therefore, it was a strategic move to build a large coalition to demonstrate to city leadership that the CCJ comprised a substantive bloc of voters and influence.

At the meeting, the CCJ made two specific demands: First, it sought the appointment of a black magistrate to the Northwest Police District and second, leadership urged the mayor to fill one of three vacancies on the school board with a black member. These demands were not new: In fact, black leaders in the city had lobbied for decades for the appointment of a black school board member.<sup>4</sup> The decision to present this issue again should come with little surprise—at this point black leaders were banded together

---

<sup>4</sup> See Hayward Farrar, *See What the Afro Says: The Afro-American, 1892–1950* (PhD dissertation, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983).

and were hopeful that they had more leverage in their coalition. However, none of their demands was influential in City Hall. Again, efforts to bring about substantive change were unsuccessful and indicative of their weak influence in terms of actually achieving results on issues that would change the scope of representation and formal political incorporation.

The bulk of the Annapolis March strategy occurred at the committee level. Each CCJ committee head lobbied with local officials leading up to the march to press for their demands. For example, Edward Lewis, secretary of the local Urban League, headed the crime committee and lobbied the police commissioner for a thorough investigation into police brutality and to push for increased hiring of black policemen. Lewis lobbied repeatedly but to no avail with the police commissioners. After meeting on multiple occasions to press for the concerns of the black community, Lewis' direct efforts to get the police commissioner to agree to concrete changes before the march failed to deliver. Other members of the CCJ leadership used the weeks leading up to the Annapolis March to press for their assigned concerns. And in showing that their efforts were geared toward taking advantage of the potential political opportunity that the Broadus death could bring, much of the lobbying was targeting beyond the death with the goal of spotlighting several issues that disproportionately affected Baltimore's black community. The ability to stretch the agenda beyond police brutality was enabled by the partnerships that defined the group—and by bringing together diverse resources with different areas of expertise, the Annapolis March and the Broadus murder materialized into a multifaceted campaign.



A closer look at the committee leadership of the CCJ brings to light the layered resources.

- Linwood Koger, a prominent civic and political leader, represented labor interest and asked for the appointment of an African American magistrate;
- Donald Boyce presented petitions asking for the removal of Police Commissioner Stanton; Urban League executive secretary Edward Lewis led the charge on the municipal level to reform the police department;
- Harry Cole, youth committee head and member of the NAACP Youth League, was utilized as the youth voice to represent black soldiers fighting for democracy;
- Local NAACP branch attorney W.A.C. Hughes, Jr., asked for an investigation into all police killings in the city;
- Dr. Ralph Young asked for African American membership on the Maryland Tuberculosis Commission;
- Dr. George Crawly, president of the United Baptist Convention of Maryland, urged that the Crownsville State Hospital for the Insane hire African Americans and offer representation on the board;
- Vergie Waters, president of the Colored State Beauticians Board, lobbied for African American representation on the State Beautician Board;<sup>5</sup>
- Lillie Jackson, president of the local branch of the NAACP, worked to encourage the hiring of an additional African American policewoman;
- Carl Murphy, editor of the *Baltimore Afro-American* and board member of the national office of the NAACP, was lead spokesperson;

---

<sup>5</sup> Mobilization around beauty training and the beautician profession occurred in other places as well. Julia Kirk Blackwelder argues that “Through the first six decades of the twentieth century the grooming of women’s hair occupied an important place in African American identity politics, and employment in cosmetology, or ‘beauty culture,’ offered women of color one of the few occupational options away from field, factory, and kitchen.” In the 1930s, municipal governments started to require that those working in beauty professions obtain licenses. According to Blackwelder, black beauticians heeded the new institutional innovations and became involved in civic organizations. As such, municipal and state policies surrounding the beauty profession became integrated in the agenda-setting of black organizations. See Julia Kirk Blackwelder, *Styling Jim Crow: African American Beauty Training During Segregation* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2003).

- Juanita Jackson Mitchell, daughter of Lillie Jackson, founder of the City-Wide Young People's Forum, and former staff member for the national office of the NAACP, was the founder and president of the CCJ.

The CCJ's strategy was also displayed in the planning of the mass rally the Thursday evening prior to the march. Amidst a packed crowd of 1,600 at the Sharp Street Church, Adam Clayton Powell—the newly elected councilman from New York—addressed black Baltimoreans to encourage large turnout for the day ahead. In reality, the turnout was notable, especially given that it was held on a weekday with a reported 2,000 in attendance. One of the most interesting observations from the Annapolis March was the inclusiveness of the organizing. The march occurred on a weekday, and many did not go to work the day of the march. Instead, they waited in line with hundreds to board chartered buses at the Sharp Street Memorial Church—a system that was orchestrated by the CCJ and its committee structure to spur massive participation and a feature that points to the march not being an elite gathering. Those in attendance represented members from black labor organizations to local churches to leaders of exclusive social clubs. On the day of the march, members of the CCJ met for two hours with three state officials, Governor Herbert O'Connor, State Comptroller Millard Tawes, and Secretary of State Thomas Jones, and presented their grievances in depth and offered their demands.

### **The March on Annapolis: The Development and Aftermath**

On Friday, April 24, 1942, nearly 2,000 black Baltimoreans traveled 35 miles to protest and lobby for improvements to the political, economic, and social welfare of black Baltimore. Juanita Jackson Mitchell, director of the Citizens Committee for Justice and head organizer, firmly expressed to Governor O'Connor that the march was the outgrowth of “desperation” in the African American community and that black leaders

were thoroughly frustrated with the “smart-aleck” police brutality that white police officers imposed on black men and women.<sup>6</sup> Juanita Mitchell went on to emphasize to the Governor that the 2,000 African American citizens in attendance were all citizens of Baltimore and represented a collective 150 political, social, civic, fraternal, church, and labor groups.<sup>7</sup> Again, evidence points to an overt strategy to bring together a coalition of organizations in order to apply additional pressure to policymakers. Mitchell was deliberate in emphasizing the mass coalition of organizations that joined together. This technique shows how political underdogs bargained with political elites of influence. In her opening remarks to Governor O’Conor, Mitchell also stressed that in addition to the vast collection of organizations represented on that day, the NAACP also represented 6,000 paid members and was committed to their fight.<sup>8</sup> Although the CCJ was not transparent about its activities with the NAACP, when the time came for it to demonstrate its strength, Juanita Mitchell made the point to position the NAACP as an enormous resource backed mainly by black Baltimoreans.

Mitchell’s demands were firm and sharply directed—speaking on behalf of the entire coalition of black organizations and institutions in Baltimore, she argued that “We don’t need any go between [politicians]” and that the demands outlined should be addressed with no delay or lag time “but next week, so we can report to our people.”<sup>9</sup> In her insistence that action be swift in order for CCJ representatives to “report to [the] people,” we can surmise that by design Juanita Mitchell expected the CCJ to serve as an

---

<sup>6</sup> *Afro-American*, April 28, 1942.

<sup>7</sup> Report of the Governor’s Commission on Problems Affecting the Negro Population. Joseph Healy, Chairman. March 1943, p. ii; *Afro-American*. April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1942.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

aggregate resource whereby leaders would share information and dispatch talent to assist with next steps.

The goal of the meeting was to send a strong message to all appointed and elected officials in Baltimore and Maryland that black Baltimoreans demanded better representation, more jobs, and better city- and state-run facilities. Additionally, the Annapolis March was intended to send a strong message that black Baltimoreans were organized en masse and in partnership. The demands of Mitchell and the rest of the black leadership contingent were that they would continue to agitate until city and state officials made changes to institutions and political processes that were rooted in racial injustice.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Governor O'Connor did not agree to any immediate changes. Instead, he noted that he did not expect such large and vast representation and was impressed with the thoroughness of each presentation.<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that this was the first organized and direct effort to lobby at the state level for black leaders in Baltimore. As a result of the march, O'Connor agreed to appoint a committee to study the issues raised at the hearing, forming the Governor's Commission to Study Problems Affecting Colored People. Across many cities, governors and mayors set up similar commissions. This committee was formed as a direct result of the march on the State House and shows that although the CCJ was initially unsuccessful in forcing change, its efforts helped to initiate a presence and set up the groundwork for the opening of influence at the state and local level.

---

<sup>10</sup> "2,000 Join in March," *Afro-American*, April 28, 1942.

## The Governor's Commission to Study Problems Affecting Colored People

The Citizens Committee for Justice was prominent in the early stages of the Governor's Commission. Governor O'Connor chose 18 leaders, 5 of whom were African American, to sit on the Commission. Of those, three black members on the Commission had served as committee heads under the CCJ. Local NAACP president Lillie Jackson served on the Commission along with Urban League head Edward Lewis. Linwood Koger, the CCJ's intermediary on labor issues, also was awarded a post on the Commission, in addition to the wife of former black councilman William Fitzgerald.

**Table 4.2 : Members of the Governor's Commission on Problems Affecting the Negro Population<sup>11</sup>**

| Name                    | Profession                        | Race  |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Glen D. Brown           | Educator                          | White |
| Bishop M. H. Davis      | Clergyman                         | Black |
| James Drury             | Labor Executive                   | White |
| Mrs. William Fitzgerald | Civic Leader                      | Black |
| Joseph Healy            | Industrialist                     | White |
| Albert D. Hutzler       | Merchant                          | White |
| Lillie Jackson          | Civic Leader                      | Black |
| David S. Jenkins        | Educator                          | White |
| Linwood Koger           | Attorney                          | Black |
| Dr. E. Paul Knotts      | Physician                         | White |
| Edward S. Lewis         | Executive Secretary, Urban League | Black |
| J. C. Mattingly         | Retired Judge                     | White |
| Frank Ober              | Attorney                          | White |
| Charles A. Piper        | Banker                            | White |
| Dr. R. H. Riley         | State Director of Health          | White |
| John N. Scarff          | Architect                         | White |
| Daniel Siemon           | Personnel Director                | White |
| Judge M. A. Soper       | United States Judge               | White |

<sup>11</sup> Report of the Governor's Commission on Problems Affecting the Negro Population. Joseph Healy, Chairman. March 1943, p. 3.

The bulk of members on the Commission were from the white elite—judges, business leaders, a school superintendent, and a member of the state hospital board made up the white representation. The Citizens Committee took clear steps to stay in front of the Governor’s Commission and was present at the Commission’s first meeting. The appointment of some CCJ leaders to the Governor’s Commission allowed the CCJ to remain deeply involved. In an effort to continue the push for their demands, Carl Murphy, chairman of the CCJ, reiterated the demands outlined at the Annapolis March and provided each Commission member with documents outlining the CCJ demands. Although black leaders in Baltimore were hoping that their constant efforts would yield major change, many were cautiously optimistic that any substantive change would evolve. As Carl Murphy expressed to Mayor Howard Jackson a few days prior to the Annapolis campaign, “Let us say at the outset that this is not a matter of sudden decision, but on the other hand, it is a step that has been taken repeatedly year after year and administration after administration for more than a quarter of a century.”<sup>12</sup>

At the May meeting of the local branch of the NAACP, Commission member and Urban League Secretary Edward Lewis spoke in front of 350 people. Speaking on behalf on the Commission, Lewis made all efforts to assure everyone that the Commission would not be a symbolic group aimed to quiet demands but that he and other black members on the Commission would work for their demands. Lewis also encouraged attendees to directly present their demands to the Commission. The initial hopes and expectations of the Commission were high. Black leaders in Baltimore grew increasingly

---

<sup>12</sup>Report of the Governor’s Commission on Problems Affecting the Negro Population. Joseph Healy, Chairman. March 1943, p. 19.

disappointed and began speaking out on the Commission's progress within a few months of its existence. By September 1942, about four months after the creation of the Commission, Marse Calloway, local African American Republican Party leader and member of the CCJ, spoke out publicly about his dissatisfaction with Governor O'Connor and the Commission.<sup>13</sup> The dissatisfaction of CCJ members speaks to a larger point—although this case presents the trajectory of black Baltimore's first successful campaign to build a mass coalition for local policy change, what is also revealed is that political activity during this period did not yield wholesale success.

### **The Work of the Commission**

By design, the work of the Governor's Commission was more symbolic than action-based. The Commission was set up with six subcommittees and charged with the task of conducting research on a specified topic area and writing a comprehensive report that would be used as a springboard for potential policy change. The six committees included Housing, Health, Employment, Education, Police and Liquor Problems, and County Problems. Early dissatisfaction expressed by members of the black community was that only three committees had completed their research and culminated their findings and policy recommendations by the January deadline. However, some progress was made. The most notable success by January included:

1. The appointment of the city's second African American policewoman;
2. The recommendation by the subcommittee on Police Problems that the governor bring to trial the officer who shot Private Broadus;
3. The subcommittee on employment recommended that black institutions be staffed exclusively by black employees and supervised by black-led boards;

---

<sup>13</sup> "Commission Plans Report," *Afro-American*, September 5, 1942.

4. The subcommittee on housing concluded that housing in the black community was dangerous and disproportionately inferior to housing available to whites;<sup>14</sup>
5. The appointment of a black member to the Crownsville State Hospital.<sup>15</sup>

To the spokespersons for the black community, these recommendations were not enough. As expressed on the editorial pages of the *Afro-American*, “Of late, Governor O’Conor has been consistent in disdaining suggestions for the welfare of colored people made by his commissions.”<sup>16</sup> According to the *Afro-American*, the Commission failed woefully in making any immediate changes that would substantively improve the welfare of black Baltimoreans. Although they were pleased with the black appointment to the Crownsville Hospital Board and the appointment of an additional black policewoman, they were dismayed when Mayor Jackson filled the school board’s vacant spot with a white member. According to black leaders, white leaders failed to deliver on matters pertaining to feasible and immediate political appointments. Later years would deliver uniformed black policemen, a black school board member, and housing reform geared to poor blacks.<sup>17</sup> However, in a forceful editorial published almost year after the creation of the Commission, Carl Murphy expressed his outrage. Murphy argued that the final report did not broadly take on the major issues that black leaders had demanded, and he was particularly disappointed with the Governor and Mayor because many of the

---

<sup>14</sup> Advances #1-#4: Report of the Governor’s Commission on Problems Affecting the Negro Population. Joseph Healy, Chairman. March 1943.

<sup>15</sup> “A Forward Move,” *Afro-American*, October 2, 1943.

<sup>16</sup> “Governor O’Conor’s Commissions,” *Baltimore-Afro American*, July 31, 1943.

<sup>17</sup> An epilogue summarizing later events is described later in this dissertation. To gather a full description of later events, see Hayward Farrar, *See What the Afro Says: The Afro-American, 1892–1950* (PhD dissertation, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983) pp. 207–211.



recommended improvements only required their leadership and approval and they failed to make good on their promises.<sup>18</sup>

### **Why the Citizens Committee for Justice and Not the NAACP?**

One of the biggest surprises of the 1942 Annapolis March is that it was not organized and carried out by the NAACP. I argue that the CCJ spearheaded and carried out the march and pushed for demands at the local level because on some issues, the goals and agendas of the NAACP were incongruent with the desires of local black leaders. Additionally, the CCJ is a case of how autonomous organizations have more leeway to configure resources in unique ways. Prior to the larger successes at the federal level, the NAACP spent a lot of time ramping up branches across the country and increasing their national influence. As a result, salient issues for the national office of the NAACP revolved around the amelioration of issues that had legal ramifications with the potential to reverberate in other places. The local policy goals of Baltimore's black leadership did not attract the national leadership of the NAACP (as opposed to local legal battles), and conversely, black leadership in Baltimore did not wish to be encumbered by the external oversight of the NAACP. The Annapolis March and its aftermath is in stark contrast to the NAACP's involvement in fighting for the equalization of teachers' salaries. Although the case did not involve Baltimore city proper and rather focused on its surrounding counties, this legal battle heavily involved the national office legal counsel and primarily Thurgood Marshall. What the Maryland-wide teacher salary case helps to demonstrate is that the NAACP national office was most interested and involved in instances regarding legal redress where precedents could be made to help further battles.

---

<sup>18</sup> "The Burden Is on Dr. O'Connor," *Afro-American*, August 14, 1943.

The demands that the CCJ outlined did not connect to legal issues.<sup>19</sup> There were also technical reasons that better explain why the CCJ, an autonomous organization, would emerge as the group leading this charge. Local NAACP leaders had to abide by strict rules on budgeting and financing, publicity, and correspondence with the national office. Allowing the NAACP to steer the ship may have slowed down mobilization efforts and would have surely called to question the specific demands imposed and strategies used.

Why the CCJ emerged as an offshoot of the NAACP and why its tactics and strategies differentiated from the NAACP's previous attempts is important to understand. For one, the local NAACP did not further pursue the Broadus case after it failed in the grand jury because it was constrained by the agenda-setting and protocol put forth by the national office. The national office had a structured and organized system, and rolled out agendas that were sometimes incongruent to the wishes and wants of the local branch. Correspondence from the national office shows that a good deal of correspondence between the local and national office revolved around national campaigns to send letters to officials at the federal level to support or protest legislation. In Baltimore specifically, the local branch leadership and citizens that joined had local demands and simply wanted their membership dollars to go toward improving their conditions. We see evidence of this echoed by Lillie Jackson's correspondence with the national office.

We have had a number of people ask about what the branch proposes to do about racial discrimination in the Baltimore department stores. What is the status of this situation?"<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Mark Tushnet, *NAACP's Legal Strategy Against Segregated Education, 1925–1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

<sup>20</sup> Papers of the National Association of Colored People. September 19, 1940. Letter from Juanita Jackson Mitchell to Walter White. Section II, Box C76, Folder #1.

I cannot understand how the National Office expects a President of a Local Branch to keep alive the interest of its community by always raising money to help others, and not to help themselves. We have many Local Problems, and when a Community designates its giving to a Specific Cause, in keeping with the aims of the Association, I cannot see how a local branch can raise money for one cause and appropriate it for another cause.<sup>21</sup>

Lillie Jackson's correspondence illustrates a clear frustration with the national office.

Judging from her criticisms of the national office's lack of support over local work, we can hypothesize that the formation of the CCJ by her daughter is not merely coincidence. Familial networks were key to the development of the CCJ and its goal to bring together a coalition of organizations. Without the larger apparatus of the national office, we can surmise that both Lillie Jackson and Juanita Mitchell, both whom were intricately connected to the NAACP, recognized that the CCJ needed to have a deep organizational base and a large network.

The formation of the CCJ also signaled a strategic move to break from the rules of the NAACP and to have full control over financial resources. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the large base of the CCJ was used to fundraise in the absence of a larger organization like the NAACP that could finance the work. The push for independence on financial matters reflects a confidence in funding the work and also the necessity of building partnerships to lobby on local issues and pull off the Annapolis March. A closer look at the financial relationship between the local and national NAACP is helpful and hints at the incentive to utilizing an autonomous indigenous organization such as the CCJ with deep resources and expertise.

---

<sup>21</sup> Papers of the National Association of Colored People. May 27, 1937. Letter from Lillie Jackson to Walter White. Section I, Box G86, Folder #1.

**Table 4.3: Illustration of NAACP Division of Fees<sup>22</sup>**

|                                       | <b>Amount Paid by Member</b> | <b>Retain for Local Branch</b> | <b>Remit to National Office</b> |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Regular Membership                    | \$1.00                       | \$.50                          | \$.50                           |
| Crisis Membership                     | \$2.50                       | \$.50                          | \$2.00                          |
| Blue Certificate                      | \$5.00                       | \$1.25                         | \$3.75                          |
| Gold Certificate                      | \$10.00                      | \$3.75                         | \$6.25                          |
| Junior and College Chapter Membership | \$.50                        | \$.25                          | \$.25                           |
| Contributors                          | \$25.00 or more              | \$10.00                        | Remainder to National Office    |

Table 4.3 breaks down the financial relationship between the local branches and the national office. What it ultimately demonstrates is that local branches stood to lose money that could potentially be used for local issues, because on average, half or more of membership dues were required to be remitted to the national office. And as expressed by Lillie Jackson in an earlier example, local branch leaders were often stymied and frustrated by the fact that they would mobilize and recruit memberships on the grounds of how the NAACP could improve the status of black Baltimore and be forced to send off a large bulk of the funds for purposes not connected to the city. The financial drain of local branches and their financial relationship with the national office give reason to believe that autonomous organizations like the CCJ were developed strategically for the purpose of recruiting and mobilizing around local issues with the freedom to utilize funds and resources safe from meddling from outside groups. In the larger sense, this also illustrates how political underdogs analyze their resources and make adjustments to make sure that they get the most out of what they have.

---

<sup>22</sup> Papers of the National Association of Colored People. Section II, Box C76, Folder #2.

Further indications of the strategic decision to work via an offshoot autonomous organization includes the little correspondence with the national office on their work and planning for the march. A complete scan of office correspondence during the months that the CCJ was active revealed one piece of correspondence between the local and national office. Carl Murphy reached out to Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary at the time, informing the national office of the work underway. Murphy specifically asked that “We shall need in addition Thurgood or Andy or somebody who can keep our pickets out of jail. Will you be kind enough to call me at the office...so that we can discuss what is best to be done.”<sup>23</sup> This singular correspondence is the extent of evidence of communication on the issue with the national office. There is no reply from the national office, and as stated earlier, one newspaper reports a member of the national legal team attending a mass meeting.

On the one-year anniversary of the March on Annapolis, black leaders in Baltimore had come to the disappointing conclusion that they “asked for a hog, [and] got a pig knuckle.” Speaking pointedly to Mayor Jackson, Carl Murphy argued that the Mayor “failed” the black community and would not support his reelection in the coming month.<sup>24</sup> Although black leaders in Baltimore were disappointed by the lack of action from City Hall and the State House, by 1943, the CCJ was phased out and its leaders moved the agenda to the local NAACP. Now under the rubric of the NAACP, leadership from the CCJ helped to create a police school to train blacks on passing the police examination. The NAACP also worked as an intermediary between the police force and the locals to advocate for the hiring of black policemen. The move from the CCJ to the

---

<sup>23</sup> Papers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Section II. Box C76, Folder #3. March 20, 1942. Letter from Carl Murphy to Walter White/Roy Wilkins.

<sup>24</sup> In fact, the Mayor did not win his bid for reelection.

local NAACP reveals the fluidity of the partnership and the strategic movement of resources. The CCJ did the work of public activism and advocacy, and the local NAACP took on the identity of developing a program that could garner attention and potentially receive support from the national office with the hopes of being replicated in other places.

## **5. Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the packaging of resources by black organizations in Baltimore. It has presented two cases: (1) the attempt to desegregate Carroll Park golf course and (2) the Citizens Committee for Justice and its campaign to fight discrimination and police brutality. This investigation showed that when political underdogs respond to their circumstances and find innovative ways to package their resources, there can be impacts on the outcome.

The findings from the Monumental Golf Club case show that sometimes federated structures were more nuanced. The golf course desegregation case brought to the surface how middle-class activists launched campaigns closely connected with their individual interests. We found that leadership from the Urban League learned new ways to package its expertise and resources and copied institutional experiences to better position itself for success. This chapter also analyzed the work of the Citizens Committee for Justice (CCJ) and how a mass coalition was formed to advocate for system-wide change. The CCJ benefited from building its coalition out of a set of interlocking networks and layered resources and later dispatching this arrangement in its efforts to unleash pressure politics. A deeper analysis of the CCJ revealed an interesting phenomenon—leaders in the coalition were hyperorganized, and the success of bringing in such a comprehensive

group of partners enabled the CCJ to pull together individuals who filled multiple roles. These diverse roles were fashioned into aggregate resources that were helpful in organizing the Annapolis March movement and lobbying for local policy change.

Lastly, the case of the CCJ also brings a new element to our analysis of participation and organizational networks. Key actors of the CCJ were either family members or close friends. Because the networks were so close-knit, information could be passed on even more seamlessly, and overcoming the collective action problem took on a new dimension. In all, the cases analyzed in this chapter show that resources can be reshaped and repositioned in ways that affect the process of gaining influence and making demands when groups collaborate and join forces.

## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION

“Now to tell the Baltimore people that the money they raise to fight segregation in our city will have to be turned over to the National Office would kill the Baltimore Branch immediately. In fact, we could not turn the money raised for the Meade’s Case over to the National Office, for it’s the people’s money, and they raised it for that purpose.”<sup>1</sup>— Lillie Jackson, May 27, 1937

#### 1. Overview of Findings

The central goal of this project was to investigate the successes and limits of black activism in Baltimore before significant structural and institutional changes, and to demonstrate how black activists went about navigating the best fit to put forward their goals. Most political participation scholarship dates the beginnings of black political activity after the passage of the Voting Rights Act and the heyday of the Civil Rights Movement. This project posited that we stand to learn a great deal about black political participation by refocusing our attention on the local conditions immediately prior to federal intervention. This project has illuminated cases of success and failure at the local level. At its most basic level, this paper has provided evidence that black political participation was not dormant in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Additionally, the cases of success in this project also reveal that black activists were limited by a lack of political influence and representation, and as a result could make important incremental changes but not wholesale changes to the racial landscape of Baltimore politics.

---

<sup>1</sup> Papers of the National Association of Colored People. May 27, 1937. Letter from Lillie Jackson to Walter White. Section I, Box G86, Folder #1.



This project also shows that black activists at the local level tailored their expertise, packaged their resources, and built strategies in a concerted effort to find congruence between their limited influence and the limited openings of local political institutions. My investigation suggests that black Baltimoreans, and blacks in other cities during this time, accumulated a potent set of resources via a web of interlocking relationships and networks, and organizational resources that were layered in advantageous ways. In each case of successful mass mobilization and participation we find evidence of actors that were intricately connected and that organizational partnerships resulted in resource sharing. For example, friend, cousin, and sibling relationships were used in building partnerships and sharing expertise. Likewise, individuals were hyperorganized and affiliated with several organizations at the same time. This enabled them to build a toolbox of resources from different places to use toward similar goals.

This project has also uncovered that different structures of organizing matter. There are clear differences between how a federated organization behaves in comparison to how a grassroots or offshoot federated organization responds to the issue at hand. Organizational configurations factor into the constraints and opportunities for different modes of mobilizing. Different organizational configurations have their merits as well. For example, federated organizations have the potential to offer disadvantaged groups a new set of resources and credibility to external actors. On the other hand, federated organizations generally have strict institutional protocols and processes that can block innovation at the local level. We also learn that when grassroots organizations are well

resourced and have the benefit of borrowing and partnering with organizations bringing different skill sets, they have both the autonomy and the protection to test out riskier strategies.

The discovery that disadvantaged groups find ways to tailor their expertise to their political environment provides further insight into the political strategies of African Americans in a period considered a dormant episode in black politics. Archival records analyzed in this project reveal that black leaders in Baltimore were very concerned about the problems in their neighborhood and communities. Although they recognized the importance of national campaigns to end racial violence and efforts at the legislative level to implement substantive racial policy changes, they were also deeply committed to the politics in their backyard. This project finds that in some instances black Baltimoreans found opportunities in local government that matched their set of expertise and exploited these opportunities. In the larger sense, this teaches us that although groups on the margins may lack influence, they can sometimes tailor their expertise to limited openings in local government.

Finally, this project instigates new questions and areas of inquiry. At the outset of this project, I fully expected to learn a great deal about the trajectory of black organizing at the local level. What came as a surprise was the emergence of family and familial networks. A common thread of success in the cases analyzed in this project were family networks, and particularly gendered family networks. Female-headed familial and friend networks were central to partnership-building and resource acquisition. This showed up in the leadership of Lillie Jackson, Juanita Jackson Mitchell, Virginia Jackson Kiah, and Florence Snowden. What differentiated these women from those in other analyses of

gendered politics is that their work was not firmly situated in the woman's sphere. They built networks with black male elites and found their niche in mobilizing black Baltimoreans through various organizations. Their agendas were not constrained by gender mores either. They tackled unemployment, police brutality, education, and social welfare issues. This dissertation project offers an alternative snapshot into gender and black organizing during the interwar period. In this project we find that Lillie Jackson revamped and led the second-largest NAACP branch in the country and that her leadership persisted over time.

Linking with the tenor of gender and race politics in Baltimore during this period, this project also reveals that more study is needed on the inner workings of familial and friend networks in local organizing. What impacts do familial relations have on information networks—is it a benefit or can it lead to failure? How do actors utilize family as a resource? Where do familial networks fit into our understanding of the development of gender politics and the woman's sphere? Where do we place alternative forms of networking such as family ties into the larger rubric of alternative methods of organizing among the oppressed? Where does family fit into our understanding of black politics; are there unique features to black political and familial life? This analysis contributes to our understanding of the trajectory of black political participation. Through the cases of failure and success in this dissertation project, we learn that black political activity was not dormant before the height of the Civil Rights era, but instead that blacks at the local level sometimes found ways to maneuver and shape the resources on hand to have a voice in local politics.

## 2. The Nuances of Federated Organizing at the Local Level

Up until this point, this project has made an effort to uncover cases of multiple organizations in black Baltimore that worked to improve local racial conditions. This dissertation did not take on the charge of dissecting the political trajectory of the Baltimore NAACP. Although this too warrants an important undertaking, one of the goals of this project is to argue that we stand to learn a great deal from grassroots and offshoot organizations in addition to larger organizations like the NAACP. Nevertheless, this project would be incomplete without a discussion of the Baltimore NAACP. The importance of the NAACP as one of the seminal racial uplift organizations is indisputable and well documented. The NAACP and its federated structure proliferated to small cities and towns across the U.S. and in both rural and urban spaces, pushing forward a unified method to fight segregation and discrimination.<sup>1</sup> Through the NAACP, numerous test cases were promoted that ultimately set the tone for some of the country's largest advances in race policy.

At the local level, the NAACP was generally the most well-known race-based organization and responsible for igniting political activism and participation nationwide. Research for this project reflects the importance of the NAACP. As discussed in previous

---

<sup>1</sup>Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper Publishers, 1944); Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915–1972* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1995); Peter Lau, *Freedom Road Territory: The Politics of Civil Rights Struggle in South Carolina During the Jim Crow Era* (PhD dissertation, Rutgers University, 2002); Howard Beeth and Cary D. Wintz, eds., *Black Dixie: Afro-Texan History and Culture in Houston* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1992); Paul Ortiz, “Eat Your Bread Without Butter, But Pay Your Poll Tax!” In *Time Longer Than Rope: A Century of African American Activism, 1850–1950*, ed. Charles M. Payne and Adam Green (New York: NYU Press, 2003); Merline Pitre, *In Struggle Against Jim Crow: Lulu B. White and the NAACP, 1900–1957* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999); Beth Thompkins Bates, “A New Crowd Challenges the Agenda of the Old Guard in the NAACP, 1933–1941,” *The American Historical Review*, 2:1997, pp. 340–377.

chapters, the NAACP was partly responsible for jump-starting offshoot organizations and had the largest membership role in the city and in the country during the interwar years.

By 1944, the Baltimore NAACP was the second-largest branch in the country.<sup>2</sup> Local branch reports to the NAACP national office record that the branch had a total 11,387 members and in 1943 held 23 branch membership meetings, 12 executive committee meetings, and five mass meetings.<sup>3</sup> Branch membership activity did not slow down in 1944, with Virginia Kiah, membership secretary, and incidentally sister to Juanita Jackson, organizing a membership drive with 1,000 workers and 30 churches on board as partners for the campaign.<sup>4</sup> Further, membership reports at the height of the 1944 campaign placed membership at 21,719 in November 1944.<sup>5</sup>

The success of the Baltimore NAACP should not be understated. However, a closer investigation reveals that the local branch thrived amidst continued tension with the national office over its right to organize independent local campaigns. I argue that the Baltimore NAACP contributes an additional piece to our understanding of local organizing and shows that local NAACP branches sometimes employed special tactics to fight for their right to advocate for local issues. The Baltimore NAACP was deeply concerned about issues in its own backyard, and the national office of the NAACP was not always amenable. The relationships between local branches and the national office were not always harmonious, and there were consequences to organizing within the

---

<sup>2</sup> Publicity Release, April 13, 1944. Papers of the NAACP, Part II, Box C77, Folder 1.

<sup>3</sup> Financial Statement for year ending December 31, 1943. Papers of the NAACP, Part II, Box C 77, Folder 1.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Virginia Kiah, Membership Secretary, to Walter White." September 6, 1944. Papers of the NAACP, Part II, Box C77, Folder 2.

<sup>5</sup> Papers of the NAACP, Part II, Box C307, Folder 7.

confines of a federated organization. What follows is a detailed example of trajectory this tension.

The Baltimore NAACP was revived in 1935 under the leadership of Lillie Jackson. Prior to 1935, the Baltimore NAACP was plagued by several fits and starts. By 1936, the local branch was beginning to thrive. Evidence of the Baltimore NAACP's advocating for autonomy over local issues is clear early on. In September 1936, Lillie Jackson asked Walter White for permission to utilize funds raised during the branch's baby contest for the Baltimore County high school case carried out by Thurgood Marshall.<sup>6</sup> Walter White denied her request explaining that:

Your request regarding the baby contest and the proceeds from it places the national office in a most difficult position.... Here is the other side of the picture: First, only the national board of directors has the authority to grant deviations from the division of fees and funds raised by special effort as laid down in the branch constitution. Secondly, if the national office makes an exception on division of fees and funds raised by special effort to one branch, we could not consistently refuse similar requests from other branches. Third, the national office is pressed by so many demands from all over the country, many of them from areas where local conditions make it difficult for local people to fight against injustice, that the national office is in dire need of funds, especially for legal defense.<sup>7</sup>

Lillie Jackson complied with Walter White's wishes.<sup>8</sup> However, this exchange should not be overlooked for several reasons.

For one, the reasoning behind the Baltimore branch's request to utilize funds from the baby contest signals an attempt to preserve its own treasury funds. Many branches

---

<sup>6</sup> Letter to Walter White from Lillie Jackson. September 11, 1936. Papers of the NAACP, Box I: G85, Folder 11. The Baltimore County high school case was an effort to integrate Catonsville High School. A black student was -denied access to the high school and ordered to register at an all=black high school in Baltimore city. Thurgood Marshall and the Baltimore NAACP lost the case.

<sup>7</sup> Letter to Lillie Jackson from Walter White. September 16, 1936. Papers of the NAACP, Box I: G85, Folder 11.

<sup>8</sup> Letter to Walter White from Lillie Jackson. September 17, 1936. Papers of the NAACP, Box I: G85 Folder 11.

across the country conducted baby contests to raise funds, and a portion of the funds would go to the national office. By using baby contest funds exclusively for the Baltimore County desegregation case, the local branch would be able to keep more funds in its treasury for local efforts. With the refusal by Walter White to use baby contest funds for the desegregation case, the Baltimore branch was responsible for separately raising funds for the desegregation case in addition to its regular activities. As a result, a good portion of the funds raised at the local level would be used for the Baltimore County case and would go towards the national office, leaving the branch with few opportunities to raise funds to devote to local efforts.

It should also be noted that the Baltimore branch did not advocate to take on the Baltimore County school desegregation case. Baltimore County was a rural area situated outside the city and had no direct bearing on the issues the local branch was fighting for in the city. Instead, the Baltimore County school desegregation case was initiated by Thurgood Marshall and the national office as a larger effort to focus on legal redress and integration of public institutions. There is evidence that the local branch was not in full support of having to devote funds to the Baltimore County school desegregation case. A few months after requesting that the baby contest funds be used strictly for the school desegregation case, Lillie Jackson argued again for greater financial freedom from the national office:

The Executive Committee decided at its meeting this week not to accept the \$1,000.00 apportionment for the year 1937. The Branch feels that after sending \$300.00 for Xmas Seals in January, and \$240.00 for buttons in February, plus memberships, that they have already paid their apportionment for 1937, and hope you will credit them as such. In view of the fact they are paying the cost of the Baltimore County Case, which has to date cost over \$1,000.00 and depleted our treasury, it will be impossible to give any more money to the National Office.<sup>9</sup>

Lillie Jackson's continued persistence in negotiating with the national office for greater financial independence is clear. The correspondence above highlights the fragility of funds at the local level. Lillie Jackson not only outlined that financial responsibilities to the national office depleted the treasury for the local branch but she also hinted at the fact that the Baltimore County case was a hindrance to Baltimore branch. Additional evidence from 1937 provides more reason to believe that the desire to advance local agendas sometimes clashed with financial constraints imposed by the national office.

Although the Baltimore branch did not appear enthused to finance the Baltimore County case, it was anxious to take on a local case of residential segregation in Baltimore City. Again, Lillie Jackson pleaded with Walter White over the allocation of funds to tackle local work. In May 1937, Lillie Jackson asked Walter White for permission to utilize all funds raised at their annual mass meeting to fight for a local residential segregation case. Lillie Jackson emphasized that this case was "a local condition that needs immediate action."<sup>10</sup> Walter White's response to Lillie Jackson demonstrates tension between the national office and the Baltimore branch. Walter White sent a response to Lillie Jackson that indicated his dissatisfaction with the Baltimore branch in

---

<sup>9</sup> Letter to William Pickens, Director of Branches from Lillie Jackson. April 14, 1937. Papers of the NAACP, Box I: G86, Folder 1.

<sup>10</sup> Letter to Walter White from Lillie Jackson. May 21, 1937, Papers of the NAACP, Box I: G86, Folder 1.



attempting to maneuver outside of the national office protocol, and for wanting to take on a cause that was not initiated by or in line with the national office agenda at the time.

I do not have authority to grant this request, such authority being vested solely in the Board of Directors...May I say, however, personally and on behalf of the executives of the National Office, that this request will be difficult for the National Office to grant. The National Office has had to spend during recent years so much money in Baltimore, in addition to the services of its staff and the obligations upon us, particularly during this present fight for the anti-lynching bills....As you, of course, are well aware, we have to render aid in a great many places in the deep south where it is not as physically safe for Negroes to be active in the name of the NAACP as in a somewhat more enlightened city like Baltimore.<sup>11</sup>

The incongruence between the goals of a local branch and the national office is demonstrated in Walter White's response. From the perspective of the national office, Lillie Jackson's request was unfathomable given its investment in ramping up the Baltimore branch in concert with their larger national agenda. From the perspective of Lillie Jackson and the local branch, much of what the national office rallied around did not relate to the lives of black Baltimoreans, and its oversight hindered their freedom to carry out local work. I argue that the experiences of the Baltimore branch are indicative of a larger phenomenon during this time. Given the focus of the national office on agendas such as anti-lynching and legal redress, we can surmise that in places that were not situated in the deep South, local branches probably struggled with the national NAACP to solidify local activism.

Archival records indicate that by 1941, the local branch had abandoned attempts to negotiate with the national office over financial independence for supporting local work. Evidence from the 1940s points to the local branch's devising new strategies to

---

<sup>11</sup> Special Delivery: Letter to Lillie Jackson from Walter White. May 22, 1937. Papers of the NAACP, Box I: G86 Folder 1 1937.

finance local work in ways that stepped outside the bounds of institutional protocol. In 1941, Ella Baker worked as a campaign director for the national NAACP office and assisted with the Baltimore branch campaign. During her time at the Baltimore branch she noticed that, “It appears that some of the larger contributions, especially from the colored contributors, may be withheld from the general campaign quota and earmarked as donations to the local branch.”<sup>12</sup> And as Chapter 4 argued, the financial constraints imposed by the national office may have sparked the development of other grassroots organizations connected to the Baltimore NAACP, such as the Citizens Committee for Justice.

The Ella Baker correspondence provides evidence that the Baltimore NAACP was indeed developing alternative strategies to strengthen its work at the local level. As Table 4.3 demonstrates, the national office took home sometimes more than 50 percent of funds raised by local branches. This surely put a strain on the budgets of local branches, especially since local advancements and achievements served as the primary incentive to encourage new memberships and maintain member involvement. Archival evidence of the importance of maintaining local efforts to provide an incentive is made plain by Lillie Jackson.

I cannot understand how the National Office expects a President of a Local Branch to keep alive the interest of its community by always raising money to help others, and not to help themselves. We have many Local Problems, and when a Community designates its giving to a Specific Cause, in keeping with the aims of the Association I cannot see how a local branch can raise money for one cause and appropriate it for another cause, and keep up the interests.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Ella Baker to Walter White. October 4 1941. Papers of the NAACP, Part II, Box C307, Folder 4, Ella Baker File.

<sup>13</sup> Papers of the National Association of Colored People. May 27, 1937. Letter from Lillie Jackson to Walter White. Section I, Box G86, Folder #1.

Scholars have noted the importance of incentives in stimulating political participation.<sup>14</sup> In the case of the Baltimore NAACP, it found ways to circumvent the constraints of the national office to build incentives for membership. Although the national office was helpful in providing support and resources, and the NAACP brand was valuable when building partnerships or lobbying for their demands, there were indeed consequences to being part of a larger federated organization. In short, the lack of financial independence to mount local campaigns posed constraints on the ability of local NAACP branches to recruit new members and provide incentives for participation.

The Baltimore branch continued its strategy to set aside local funds separate and apart from the national office well into the 1940s. The discovery by Ella Baker would later wash over because of more heightened conflict between Ella Baker and the Baltimore branch over campaign methods. Nevertheless, by 1944 we also notice that conflict between the national office and Baltimore branch over allocations of funds. During the 1944 membership campaign, Donald Jones, national office campaign director, noticed that leadership from the Baltimore branch collected memberships strictly for local purposes during its annual membership campaign.

While working as Campaign Director with the Baltimore Branch NAACP September 15-October 27, I observed, on the part of Mrs. Lillie Jackson, Mrs. Virginia Kiah, Mrs. Mitchell and others participating as solicitors in the campaign, the practice of soliciting “donations” for the local branch to almost the exclusion of large memberships.... The grand total of the above is \$704.00. Of this, \$641.00 was retained summarily by the Baltimore Branch, \$63.00 classified as memberships. Of the \$63.00 the National Office gets \$55.500—which means that of \$704.00, the National Office does not get \$434.25, to which it is entitled under the Constitution.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Mancur Olson, Jr., *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965); Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. (New York: Macmillan, 1993); Dennis Chong, *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>15</sup> Memo to Walter White from Donald Jones. November 9, 1944. Papers of the NAACP, Part II, Box C77,

Again, Walter White chimed in that this practice was not permitted by the branch without permission from the national office. According to White, only emergencies warranted the practice of local branches raising funds for local initiatives with no proceeds going to the national office. In Walter White's correspondence, we also notice a more blatant chiding of local branches in general and his insistence that they work within institutional protocol. In discussing the necessity of local branches' obtaining permission for autonomous local work, Walter White exclaimed, "Were it not adopted and followed, there is no telling for what purposes some branches might raise and spend money which in turn might conceivably do irreparable harm to the Association."<sup>16</sup>

Walter White's concern about how local branch autonomy would harm the larger mission of the NAACP is clear. This speaks to the general finding of this project that alternative forms of organizing were created in response to the constraints of federated organizations such as the NAACP. And although Walter White and the national office were concerned about the inner workings of local branches, evidence points to the fact that admonishment did not always stop local leaders from acting on their own agendas.

For example, correspondence from Donald Jones, campaign director from the national office, demonstrates Lillie Jackson's reluctance to cease the Baltimore branch's practice of securing membership funds for local purposes. Donald Jones recounted that when he informed Lillie Jackson of the proper protocol to obtain permission from the national office in order to raise local funds, "She in turn informed me that her branch needed money for its operation, and it was their practice and that it was going to be

---

Folder 2.

<sup>16</sup> Letter from Walter White to Carl Murphy. November 8, 1944. Papers of the NAACP, Part II, Box C307, Folder 7.

continued.”<sup>17</sup> In the end, the national office had limited leverage in imposing rules. As stated earlier, the Baltimore branch was the second-largest in the nation by 1944, and drastically interrupting the relationship between the Baltimore branch and the national office could have painful effects on both sides. What is clear beyond the conflicts between local branches and the national office is that their relationship was not always amicable. Further, this investigation of the Baltimore NAACP and the city’s larger black organizing tradition brings forward new directions of inquiry into how local blacks became politically active during a period often described as the nadir of black politics. Judging from the Baltimore case, we learn that innovative methods of organizing were developed. Further, new organizational repertoires were created in response to constrained institutional structures in order to maintain incentives for mass participation.

### **3. Epilogue**

This dissertation discussed several cases of black political participation at the local level in Baltimore from the 1920s through the 1940s. Clearly, this project in scope does not provide an entire analysis of how black Baltimoreans maneuvered in and out of state and local political institutions for political advancement. However, this project does provide reason to believe that black activists learned from earlier success and failures and amassed a set of resources and experiences that were bequeathed and utilized in later years. The case of the Citizens Committee for Justice is an example of a lesson learned. Juanita Jackson Mitchell “practiced” her skill set in mobilizing the masses during her tenure as Forum president and refined those skills with more resources in the fight against police brutality. A brief look into the agendas put forward by black activists after the

---

<sup>17</sup> Letter from Donald Jones to Walter White. November 22, 1944. Papers of the NAACP, Part II, Box C307, Folder 7.

Annapolis March is important and shows vestiges of an organizing tradition that was developed in the early years.

According to NAACP records from 1947, similar issues from earlier years were put on the agenda. Membership campaign literature from 1947 outlines the work of the NAACP during that year:<sup>18</sup>

- “Fighting now for the right to use city-owned Mount Pleasant Golf Course.”
- “Have fought continuously for adequate recreational facilities for colored children in schools, playgrounds.”
- “Cooperated with other agencies in fight for adequate sites for additional housing projects. Continued fight for improvement of privately built homes in Cherry Hill.”
- “Had ‘colored’ signs removed from public lavatories at Municipal Airport.”
- “Responsible for placement of 12 colored librarians and opened the Enoch Pratt Library Training Course for Colored.”
- “Fighting for employment for colored operators in Baltimore Transit System and C&P Telephone Company”
- “Conduct each year a Police Training School to prepare candidate for the police examination.”
- “Seeking prosecution of Raymond H. Wilson, rookie policeman, responsible for unwarranted killing of Navy veteran Benjamin Mason, Jr., father of three small children, who was shot in the back on August 29, 1947.”

What is notable from this list is the continuance of issues that came up in earlier years and discussed in this dissertation. For example, the fight for revamping the city’s parks and playgrounds system in black neighborhoods continued and seems to have ramped up, work toward public golf course use remained a key issue, and the NAACP persisted in integration efforts. Key to the list of issues in 1947 is the continued focus on police brutality. It is important to observe that by the late 1940s, the Baltimore NAACP had expanded its tactics and strategies into legal work, showing that it had evolved from relying mostly on mass-level work. This is partly because of the general trend in the

---

<sup>18</sup> Mitchell Family Private Archives, NAACP Membership Campaign Booklet, 1947.

NAACP nationwide, but is also indicative of the expertise of the NAACP leadership and the lessons it learned in the 1930s and '40s.

By the late 1940s and moving into the 1950s, the executive leadership of Baltimore NAACP had amassed substantive legal expertise. Lillie Jackson, president of the local branch, would serve at her post until 1969, and shortly thereafter created a new civil rights organization called Freedom House. She would also later go on to receive an advanced degree at Morgan State College in 1956, bolstering the resources available to black activists in the city.<sup>19</sup>

Juanita Jackson Mitchell, a key actor in this dissertation, became the first black woman in Maryland to receive a law degree and was admitted to the bar in 1950. Upon earning her law degree, she would devote most of her efforts to legal redress and worked primarily through the NAACP. Specifically, she led legal actions to open schools and public accommodations to blacks in Maryland and worked side by side with Thurgood Marshall on the integration of parks in Baltimore and Annapolis, a move that echoes the earlier work of Carl Murphy and Mitchell's method of building partnerships with other groups.<sup>20</sup> The ties between Juanita Jackson Mitchell, her husband, Clarence Mitchell, Thurgood Marshall, and the rest of the national NAACP legal team is evidenced by the fact that the Baltimore NAACP was the headquarters for the NAACP legal team during the *Brown v. Board* case.

Finally, Clarence Mitchell became the national labor secretary for the NAACP in 1945 and one of the most prominent figures of the mainstream Civil Rights Movement. Prior to that, he was the executive secretary for the St. Paul Minnesota Urban League and

---

<sup>19</sup> "Dr. Lillie Jackson, 86, Was Veteran NAACP Leader," *Afro-American*, July 12, 1975.

<sup>20</sup> "Juanita J. Mitchell, 79, Lawyer in Maryland Civil Rights Battles," *The New York Times*, July 9, 1992.

the assistant director of the Negro Manpower Service in the War Manpower Commission—again showing that black activists in Baltimore made repeated efforts to build multiple networks. Although he only shows up periodically in this dissertation project, his impact on local and national racial politics is undoubted. Clarence Mitchell spent the majority of his career as a lobbyist for the NAACP and was known to many in Washington as the 101<sup>st</sup> Senator. Specifically, he was noted as “...a burly veteran of countless legislative skirmishes and undertakings, [who] played a particularly prominent role in passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968.”<sup>21</sup>

This brief epilogue shows that key actors in the early years of Baltimore’s black politics later went on to become some of the most active members of the mainstream Civil Rights Movement.

Last, it is important to briefly sketch out a research agenda for future work. This dissertation makes a strong attempt to contribute to the growing American Political Development literature on the Long Civil Rights Movement and the development of black activism amid severe institutional constraints. However, additional questions continue to mount and new research agendas are crucial to progressing this important work. Key questions to explore in further work include delving deeper into efforts by working-class black activists. The data on middle-class activism is more abundant and has driven the bulk of scholarship. What is unclear in the literature is how and when working-class and middle-class activists worked together. Did black activists of different class levels interact at the organizational level and to what extent? Further, much of the work on middle-class uplift ideology portrays a black middle class that was dichotomous to working-class blacks—were these cleavages rigid and did working-class blacks have a

---

<sup>21</sup> “Clarence M. Mitchell Is Dead: NAACP Lobbyist Till ’78,” *The New York Times*, March 20, 1984.



say in agenda-setting? To answer these questions, we will need to take a closer look at the records of labor organizations, read black newspapers with a discriminating eye toward letters to the editor and special columnists, and scrub the census data to learn more about residential patterns. Undertaking a more thorough analysis of these records will demonstrate a fuller picture of how middle- and working-class blacks lived together and what was on their minds.

Finally, beyond the next steps in finding more robust answers to how black political activity emerged, this dissertation takes a step to reveal the early work of some of the country's most ardent civil rights activists. The cases and analyses in this dissertation bring forward the early traces of the civil rights era and reveal a piece of a larger story of how mass-level black political participation developed.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### **Archives and Collections Consulted**

First Colored Directory of Baltimore City: 1919–1945, Maryland State Archives and Morgan State University

Mitchell Family Private Archives, Baltimore Maryland

Edward Lewis Papers: 1918–1986, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Sharp Street Memorial United Church Records: 1873–1993, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Papers of the NAACP, Library of Congress

Urban League Papers, Library of Congress

Baltimore City Archives

### **Published Materials: Books, Articles, Dissertations**

Bates, Beth Thompkins. 1997. "A New Crowd Challenges the Agenda of the Old Guard in the NAACP, 1933–1941." *The American Historical Review*, 2:1997, pp. 340–377.

Beeth, Howard and Cary D. Wintz, eds. 1992. *Black Dixie: Afro-Texan History and Culture in Houston*. College Station: Texas A&M Press.

Bensel, Richard. 1990. *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859–1877*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bensel, Richard. 2000. *The Political Economy of American Industrialization, 1877–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blackwelder, Julia Kirk. 2003. *Styling Jim Crow: African American Beauty Training During Segregation*. College Station: Texas A&M Press.

Blee, Kathleen. 1991. "Women in the 1920s Ku Klux Klan Movement." *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring, 1991), pp. 55–77.

Bobo, Lawrence, and Franklin D. Gilliam. 1990. "Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment." *The American Political Science Review*, 84: 377–393.

- Brady, Henry, Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (June 1995), pp. 271–294.
- Brown, Leslie. 2008. *Upbuilding Black Durham: Gender, Class, and Black Community Development in the Jim Crow South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Browning, Rufus, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb. "Protest Is Not Enough: A Theory of Political Incorporation." *PS*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Summer, 1986), pp. 576–581.
- Browning, Rufus, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb. 1984. *Protest Is Not Enough: The Struggle of Blacks and Hispanics for Equality in Urban Politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bunche, Ralph. 1973. *The Political Status of the Negro in the Age of FDR*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Burns, Nancy, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 2001. *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Calhoun-Brown, Allison. 1996. "African American Church and Political Mobilization: The Psychological Impact of Organizational Resources." *Journal of Politics*, 58: 935–953.
- Carmines, Edward G. and James A. Stimson. 1989. *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Carpenter, Daniel. 2001. *The Forgoing of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862–1928*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Chong, Dennis. 1991. *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Clemens, Elisabeth. 1993. "Organizational Repertoires and Institutional Change: Women's Groups and the Transformation of U.S. Politics, 1890–1920." *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 98, No. 4, pp. 755–798.
- Cohen, Lizabeth. 2003. *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*. New York: Knopf.
- Conover, Pamela Johnston. 1984. "The Influence of Group Identifications on Political Perception and Evaluation." *Journal of Politics*, 46 (3): 760–785.
- Countryman, Matthew. 2006. *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- Dahl, Robert A. 1961. *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Dawson, Michael. 1994. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African American Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Drake, St. Clair and Horace Cayton. 1962. *Black metropolis: A study of Negro Life in a Northern City*. New York: Harper Row.
- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper Publishers.
- Dubois, W.E.B. 1996. *Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Dudziak, Mary. 2000. *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Evans, Laura E. 2005. *Influencing Powerful Partners: American Federalism and Strategies of Tribal Governments*. PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, Department of Political Science.
- Fairclough, Adam. 1995. *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915–1972*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press.
- Farrar, Hayward. 1983. *See What the Afro Says: The Baltimore Afro-American, 1892–1950*. PhD dissertation, Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Fields, Barbara Jean. 1985. *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland During the Nineteenth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Ferguson, Earline Rae. 1997. *A Community Affair: African-American Women's Club Work in Indianapolis, 1879–1917*. PhD dissertation, Indiana University.
- Ferguson, Karen. 2002. *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Frazier, Franklin E. 1964. *The Negro Church in America*. New York: Schocken.
- Frances, Megan Ming. 2008. *Crime and Citizenship: The NAACP's Campaign to End Racial Violence, 1909–1923*. PhD dissertation, Princeton University.
- Frymer, Paul. 1999. *Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gaines, Kevin. 1996. *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. Durham: University of North Carolina Press.

- Gamson, William A. 1975. *The Strategy of Social Protest*. Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press.
- Gilmore, Glenda. 1996. *Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896–1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Goldfield, Michael. 1997. *The Color of Politics: Race and Mainsprings of American Politics*. New York: The New Press.
- Goluboff, Risa Lauren. 2007. *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Gosnell, Harold. 1935. *Negro Politicians: The Rise of Negro Politics in Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gottlieb, Peter. 1987. *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916–30*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Gurin, Patricia, Shirley Hatchett, and James S. Jackson. 1989. *Hope and independence: Blacks' response to electoral and party politics*. New York: Russell Sage
- Hahn, Steven. 2003. *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South, From Slavery to the Great Migration*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Hahn, Steven. 2009. *The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd. 2005. "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past." *Journal of American History*, 91:4.
- Harris, Frederick, 1994. "Something Within: Religion as a Mobilizer of African American Political Activism." *Journal of Politics*, 56: 42-68
- Harris-Lacewell, Melissa. 2004. *Barbershops, Bibles, and BET: Everyday Talk and Black Political Thought*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. 1992. "African American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race." *Signs*, 17: 251–274.
- Healy, Joseph. 1943. Report of the Governor's Commission on Problems Affecting the Negro Population. Maryland.
- Hero, Rodney. 2003. "Social Capital and Racial Inequality in America." *Perspectives on Politics*, 1: 2003, pp. 113–122.

- Hirsch, Arnold R. 1983. *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940 to 1960*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jenkins, Craig J., and Charles Perrow. 1977. "Insurgency of the Powerless: Farm Worker Movements (1946–1972)." *American Sociological Review*, 42(2):249-268.
- Key, V. O. 1949. *Southern Politics in State and Nation*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Kelley, Robin. 1994. *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*. New York: Macmillan.
- Kinder, Donald R. and Lynn M. Sanders. 1996. *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Klinkner, Philip and Rogers M. Smith. 1999. *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kryder, Daniel. 2000. *Divided Arsenal: Race and the American State During World War II*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lamon, Lester. 1977. *Black Tennesseans 1900–1930*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.
- Lau, Peter. 2002. *Freedom Road Territory: The Politics of Civil Rights Struggle in South Carolina During the Jim Crow Era*. PhD. dissertation, Rutgers University.
- Lee, Taeku. 2002. *Mobilizing Public Opinion: Black Insurgency and Racial Attitudes in the Civil Rights Era*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lewinson, Paul. 1932. *Race, Class & Party: A History of Negro Suffrage and White Politics in the South*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lewis, Earl. 1991. *In Their Own Interests: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth-Century Norfolk, Virginia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lewis, Edward. "Profiles: Baltimore." *Journal of Educational Sociology*, Jan. 1944.
- Liazos, Ariane and Marshal Ganz. 2004. "Duty to the Race: African American Fraternal Orders and the Legal Defense of the Right to Organize." *Social Science History*, 28:3, pp. 485–534.
- Lieberman, Robert. 1998. *Shifting the Color Line: Race and the American Welfare State*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
- Mansbridge, Jane J. 1986. *Why We Lost the ERA*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- McAdam, Doug. 1982. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McCarthy, John D., and Mayer N. Zald. 1977. “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory.” *American Journal of Sociology*, (82)6:1212–1241.
- Mettle, Suzzane. 1998. *Dividing Citizens: Gender and Federalism in New Deal Policy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Meyer, David and Sidney Tarrow. 1998. *The Social Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Miller, Arthur, Patricia Gurin, Gerald Gurin, and Oksana Malanchuk. 1981. “Group-Consciousness and Political Participation.” *American Political Science Review*, 25: 494–511.
- Morris, Aldons. 1984. *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*. New York: The Free Press.
- Muncy, Robyn. 1991. *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Meyer, Stephen Grant. 2000. *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door: Segregation and Racial Conflict in American Neighborhoods*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Myrdal, Myrdal. 1944. *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. New York: Harper Publishers.
- Olson, Mancur, Jr. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Orr, Marion. 1999. *Black Social Capital: The Politics of School Reform in Baltimore, 1986–1998*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Orren, Karen and Stephen Skowronek. 2004. *The Search for American Political Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ortiz, Paul. 2003. “Eat Your Bread Without Butter, But Pay Your Poll Tax!” in Charles M. Payne and Adam Green, eds. *Time Longer Than Rope: A Century of African American Activism, 1850–1950*. New York: New York University Press.
- Paul, William George. 1972. *The Shadow of Equality: The Negro in Baltimore 1864–1911*. PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin.
- Phillips, Kimberley L. 1999. *Alabama North: African-American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915–45*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

- Pitre, Merline. 1999. *In Struggle Against Jim Crow: Lulu B. White and the NAACP, 1900–1957*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press.
- Piven, Frances Fox, and Richard A. Cloward. 1979. *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Reeves, Keith. 1997. *Voting Hopes or Fears? White Voters, Black Candidates and Racial Politics in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rosenstone, Steven J., and John Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy In America*. New York: Macmillan.
- Rouse, Jacqueline A. 1989. *Lugenia Burns Hope: Black Southern Reformer*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Skocpol, Theda. 1992. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Skocpol, Theda, Arian Liazos, and Marshall Ganz, 2006. *What a Mighty Power We Can Be : African American Fraternal Groups and the Struggle for Racial Equality*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Press.
- Skocpol, Theda, and Jennifer Lynn Oser. 2004. "Organization Despite Adversity: The Origins and Development of African American Fraternal Associations." *Social Science History*, 28:3, pp. 367–437.
- Skotnes, Andor. 1991. *The Black Freedom Movement and the Workers' Movement in Baltimore, 1930–1939*. PhD dissertation, Rutgers University.
- Skowronek, Stephen. 1982. *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877–1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stone, Clarence. 1989. *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946–1988*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Suggs, Henry Lewis. 1996. *The Black Press in the Middle West, 1865–1985*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.
- Sugrue, Thomas. 1997. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.



- Sugrue, Thomas. J. 2009. *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. Array New York: Random House.
- Sullivan, Patricia. 1996. *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Tate, Katherine. 1993. *From Protest to Politics: The New Black Voters in American Elections*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Tate, Katherine. 2003. *Black Faces in the Mirror: African Americans and Their Representatives in the U.S. Congress*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Thomas, Richard. 1992. *Life for Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Tilly, Charles. 1979. "Repertoires of Contention in America and Britain, 1750–1830" in *The Dynamics of Social Movements: Resource Mobilization, Social Control and Tactics*, ed. Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy, 126-155. Cambridge: Winthrop Publishers.
- Trotter, Joe William. 1985. *Black Milwaukee: the Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915–45*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Tushnet, Mark V. 1994. *Making Civil Rights Law: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court, 1936–1961*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Negroes in the United States, 1920–32*.
- Valelly, Richard. 2004. *The Two Reconstructions: The Struggle for Black Enfranchisement*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Verba, Sidney, and Norman H. Nie. 1972. *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry Brady, Norman H. Nie. "Race, Ethnicity and Political Resources: Participation in the United States." *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (Oct., 1993), pp. 453–497.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Walker, Jack. 1963. "Protest and Negotiation: A Case Study of Negro Leadership in Atlanta, Georgia." *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 7(2): pp. 99–124 .
- Walton, Hanes. 1975. *Black Republicans the Politics of the Black and Tans*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.

Walton, Hanes. 1985. *Invisible Politics: Black Political Behavior*. Albany: University of Albany Press.

Weaver, Vesla. 2007. "Frontlash: Race and the Development of Punitive Crime Policy." *Studies in American Political Development*, 21 (Fall 2007), 230–265.

Wolff, Robert. 1998. "Racial Imaginings: Schooling and Society in Industrial Baltimore, 1860–1920." PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota.

Woodward, C. Vann. 1955. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Zald, Mayer and John D. McCarthy, eds. *The Dynamics of Social Movements: Resource Mobilization Social Control, and Tactics*. Lanham, NY: University Press.

### **News Articles Consulted**

"Baltimore Leaders Speak at Public Hearing on Liquor Law Revision," *Baltimore Afro-American*, February 27, 1943.

"Says Colored People Will Move on Eutaw Place," *Baltimore Afro-American*, February 27, 1920.

"Council Vote for Theatre Over Vigorous Protest of Mr. McGuinn," *Baltimore Afro-American*, March 12, 1920.

"Second Delegation Visits Mayor," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 2, 1920.

"Mayor Vetoes Project for Avenue Theatre," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 16, 1920.

"Women Plan Flower Mart," *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 11, 1923.

"Flower Mart Is Social Event of Next Week," *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 21, 1927.

"To Hold Flower Mart," *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 23, 1925.

"At the Flower Mart," *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 1, 1923.

"The Baltimore Industrial Survey," *Baltimore Afro-American*, July 13, 1923.

"Urban League to Begin Here December 1<sup>st</sup>," *Baltimore Afro-American*, November 29, 1924.

"Koger Heads Local N.A.A.C.P in 1925." *Baltimore Afro-American*, January 17, 1925.

"Urban League to Study Lung Block," *Baltimore Afro-American*, March 7, 1925.

“Urban League Work Summarized to Date,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, March 28, 1925.

“In the Lung District #1,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 15, 1925.

“In the Lung District #2,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 22, 1925.

“In the Lung District #3” *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 29, 1925.

“Civic Worker Named to AFRO Hall of Fame,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, March 8, 1941.

“Early Closing of Taverns Endorsed,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, October 13, 1945.

“Residents Fight Proposed Store,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, February 10, 1940.

“A New Champion,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 1, 1940.

“There Will Be No Beer Sold in Their Neighborhood,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, July 31, 1937.

“Board Ruling Bans Coops on Sidewalk,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, July 20, 1940.

“Ban Wine Ad on Building Residents Win Fight,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 27, 1941.

“Ban Wine Ad on Building Residents Win Fight,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 27, 1941.

“Protective Group Protests Renewal of Tavern License and Files Appeal,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 9, 1942.

“E. Baltimore Tavern Case Being Aired,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 26, 1942.

“Outstanding Stories in Baltimore During 1944,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, January 13, 1945.

“No Hearing Date Set on E. Baltimore Tavern,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 5, 1943.

“School Board Asked to Help Close Tavern,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 12, 1943.

“School Board Asked to Help Close Tavern,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 12, 1943.

“More Playgrounds Needed,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 30, 1924.

“Playground and Parks,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 8, 1924.

“Playgrounds Again,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 13, 1925.

“More Playgrounds Needed,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 30, 1924.

“Editorial,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 6, 1925.

“Editorial,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 13, 1925.

“Mayor Will Ask Library Board as to Color Bar,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 13, 1930.

“Where Stand Mayor and Councilmen,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 6, 1930.

“NAACP Plans Test Case of Library Policy,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 5, 1943.

“Library Case Victory Seen as Avenue for Opportunity,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, October 20, 1945.

“The Constable Deal,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 14, 1920.

“Republicans Join Democrats to bar Colored Constables.” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 11, 1920.

“City Councilman McGuinn’s Speech for Colored Constables,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 18, 1920.

“14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Wards Will Get No Constables,” *Baltimore Afro-American*. May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1922.

“Graphic,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, November 3, 1922.

“36,922 Voters Have Registered,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, October 16, 1920.

“Colored Voters Slow Getting on the Books,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, October 6, 1922.

“City Wide Forum to Have Many Speakers,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 17, 1932.

“Baltimore Business Women,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, December 7, 1935.

“Two Awarded Scholarships by Forum Group,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 25, 1932.

“City Wide Forum to Have Many Speakers,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 17, 1932.

“Director Wood Quits Forum Barrage,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, November 12, 1932.

“Wise Cracks and Feathers Fly at City Wide Forum Debate,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, October 29, 1932.

“Stay in Cities, Elmer Carter Tells Forum,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, November 19, 1932.

“North is Worse, South Better Mary Bethune,” *Baltimore Afro- American*, October 22, 1932.

“City Wide Forum to Have Many Speakers,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 17, 1932.

“Director Wood Quits Forum Barrage,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, November 12, 1932.

“Go to Jail if Necessary- Walter White,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, December 23, 1933.

“Judge Makes Injunction Permanent,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 2, 1934.

“Citizens Roll in Funds at Mass Meeting,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 16, 1934.

“Observations and Reflections Column.” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 20 , 1934.

“Pastors Assail Costonie for Leaving City,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, July 7, 1934.

“Sifting the News Column,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 20 , 1934.

“Prosperity Follows Liberal Policy at Carroll Park Links,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 25, 1935.

“Golfers Determine to Enter Court if Course is Lost.” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 15, 1934.

“Chicago Awaits Golf Tourney,” *Baltimore Afro-American*. August 19, 1933.

“D.C. Golfers Tie in Medal Tourney,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 4, 1934.

“D.C. and Baltimore Golfers on Lily-White Course,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 8, 1934.

“Board Approves \$22,000 Proposal by Golf Club,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, November 27, 1937.

“Editorial,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 1, 1934.

“Players Under Guard as Park Course Opens,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 8, 1934.

“Golfers Time Slashed,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 22, 1934.

“Editorial,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 22, 1934.

“Board Approves \$22,000 Proposal by Golf Club,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, November 27, 1937.

“Women Move to Act in Store Insults,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, October 13, 1928.

“Mrs. Gaines Heads Women’s Federation,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, November 3, 1928.

“To Launch Store Job Campaign,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, March 29, 1930.

“We Won’t Stand Abuse Any Longer, Powell Tells 1,200” *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 25, 1942.

“Library Case Victory Seen as Avenue for Opportunity,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, October 20, 1945.

“Council Head Didn’t Know of Library Discrimination,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 29, 1933.

“Afro Reporter First Applicant for City Library School,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 30, 1930.

“Race Bias Banned in Baltimore Library,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 28, 1945.

“Will Not Commit: Mayor Tells Delegation That His Appointment to School Board Will Satisfy Colored Voters,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, January 16, 1920.

“A Superintendent of Colored Schools,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, February 25, 1921.

“The School Board,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, March 22, 1930.

“School Board Voted Down Strayer Recommendation for Real Head of Colored Schools,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 12, 1922.

“The School Board’s Jim Crow Reception to Teachers,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 11, 1935.

“School Shake-Up 10 Years Late,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 30, 1934.

“On School Board,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 25, 1944.

“Broening Balks at Negro Appointment,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 26, 1930.

“Mrs. Bauernschmidt Urges Uniformed Colored Police, Member on School Board,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 9, 1942.

“Mayor Repeats City Not Ready for Board Member,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, March 28, 1942.

“Mayor Names White Man to School Board,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 17, 1941.

“On Chi School Board,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 15, 1942.

“D.C. School Board Member,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, January 30, 1943.

“A New Weapon,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 1, 1925.

“Three Delegations Clash in School Board Meeting,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 23, 1925.

“Defense League’s Injunction,” *Baltimore Afro- American*, June 27, 1925.

“Steamroller Oiled at Mass Meeting,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 23, 1925.

“Three Delegations Clash in School Board Meeting,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 23, 1925.

“Three Delegations Clash in School Board Meeting,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 23, 1925.

“Teacher Salary Equalization May be Race Issue,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, May 30, 1925.

“A New Weapon,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 1, 1925.

“Defense League’s Injunction,” *Baltimore Afro- American*, June 27, 1925.

“School Funds Held up by Injunction,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 27, 1925.

“City Demurs in School Salary Case,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, July 11, 1925.

“Equalization of Salaries Postponed,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 20, 1925.

“Equalization of Salaries Postponed,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 20, 1925.

“Hi Teachers’ Salary Case Up Wednesday,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, November 28, 1925.

“City Must File its Answer Soon,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, January 23, 1926.

“Answer Filed By Assistant City Solicitor Wallace in Public School Salary Fight,” *Afro-American*, February 2, 1926.

“We Won’t Stand Abuse Any Longer, Powell Tells 1,200,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 25, 1942.

“Front Page Headline,” *Baltimore Afro-American*. April 14, 1942.

“Commission Plans Report,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, September 5, 1942.

“A Forward Move,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, October 2, 1943.

“The Burden Is on Dr. O’Conor,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 14, 1943.

“Dr. Lillie Jackson, 86, Was Veteran NAACP Leader,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, July 12, 1975.

“Juanita J. Mitchell, 79, Lawyer in Maryland Civil Rights Battles,” *The New York Times*, July 9, 1992.

“Clarence M. Mitchell is Dead: NAACP Lobbyist Till ’78,” *The New York Times*, March 20, 1984.