This document is the combined third and fourth modules of a series of four. It is designed to help educators learn more about how the double biases of sex and race have affected the quality of black women's high school and college education in southern schools since the Civil War. The following topics are discussed: (1) education of black women before the Civil War; (2) the purpose of black's academic education; (3) the founding of black colleges; (4) founding of private and public high schools for blacks; (5) academic education in high schools and colleges from 1900 to 1950; (6) extracurricular life in high school and college; and (7) black women in academic education today. Also included are short articles on Mary McLeod Bethune, secondary vocational training, pay inequity, and college women of Atlanta University in 1900. Questions for discussion and activities for enrichment, and a bibliography are included. (PS)
Black Women's Academic Education in the South.

History of Black Women's Education in the South, 1865-Present. Instructional Modules for Education, MODULES III and IV

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Preface

This document is the combined third and fourth modules of four designed to help educators learn more about the double bias that has faced black women in Southern schools since the Civil War. It is hoped that learning about this heritage will sensitize them to black girls' and women's current educational needs and will help them appreciate black women's present successes, efforts to achieve, and achievements.

This document describes the historical development of elementary, vocational, high school, and college education for black girls and women in the South. Each contains notes, a bibliography, questions for discussion and suggested activities. The modules may be used separately or as a set.

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A number of individuals contributed expertise to the project, and a debt of gratitude is owed to them all. Drs. Faustine Jones-Wilson of Howard University and Beverly Guy-Sheftall of Spelman College reviewed the manuscript and made many helpful suggestions, though Dr. Ihle takes full responsibility for any inadequacies still remaining. Their insightful comments, patience, and enthusiasm are deeply appreciated. The module was also field-tested by undergraduates at James Madison University. Their assistance and that of their instructors, Dr. Violet A. Allain and Mr. George Joyce, offered the author valuable student and faculty perspectives on the module. The grant support staff of the Women's Educational Equity Act offered important counsel whenever called upon. Finally, John Blair Reeves, the author's husband, was a source of encouragement and the epitome of support. To all of these people, the author expresses appreciation.

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Introduction

When this grant was proposed, the module on black women's high school education was supposed to be entirely separate from the one on college education. However, research results dictated otherwise. They demonstrated such a close interrelationship between the two levels of schooling that separating them would have been artificial and necessitated unnecessary repetition of the arguments about blacks' higher education. The great majority of black women did not have Patterson's advantages. In seeking academic education on either the secondary or collegiate level, most of them had even more obstacles to overcome than did white women. In addition to barriers of sex and race, poverty and geographic location stood in their way more frequently than they did for white women. This situation was particularly characteristic of black women living in the South.

Because slaves had been forbidden by Southern laws to learn to read and write, it is not surprising that few ex-slaves of either sex were prepared to receive secondary or collegiate education during the first few decades after the Civil War. Opportunities for secondary education gradually

Before the Civil War

Before the Civil War black women had been admitted to a few private seminaries and to some public schools in the East and Middle West. Oberlin College in Ohio, for instance, had admitted them from its founding in 1835, and a few black women had graduated from its preparatory school and from its ladies seminary before the Civil War. Oberlin also produced the first black woman college graduate in the nation, Mary Jane Patterson, who completed the Oberlin college curriculum in 1862, nearly thirty years after the first white woman had earned a degree. Patterson had had some advantages unavailable to most black women. Although born in North Carolina of slave parents, she had been reared as a free black in Ohio, a state noted for its progressive Kowaliga School (Alabama), 1909. (General Education Board 1054. Alabama 29. Rockefeller Archive Center. Reprinted by permission.)
The Purpose of Blacks' Academic Education

The form of blacks' post-elementary education was publicly debated for nearly fifty years, from the founding of Hampton Institute in 1868 to the death of Booker T. Washington in 1915. The philosophy of the founders of Hampton and Tuskegee was that the overwhelming majority of blacks and the South as a whole could profit mainly from industrial and vocational training. (See Module 2 of this series “Black Women's Vocational Education.”) The other point of view, that blacks could profit from academic post-elementary education just as whites did, was argued persuasively by a number of black educators, the best known of whom was black sociologist and educator W.E.B. Du Bois.

Although Du Bois spoke and wrote primarily about college education for blacks, his points applied to secondary education as well. Educated at Fisk and Harvard, he knew the advantages of a liberal education. He argued that blacks needed to develop leaders and that could be done best by offering them the same type of liberal studies that were available to whites. This leadership would come from a “Talented Tenth” who could then work on uplifting the remainder of the race. Du Bois did not want simply a mirror of white education; he believed that blacks should be made aware of the accomplishments of their race and should be trained to serve others. To do so, black leaders would need data on the status of blacks, and he also supported the idea that black colleges should be the centers of sociological research on blacks.

Other supporters of academic education for blacks were not always as articulate as Du Bois, but they also argued that academic education could best produce leaders for black communities. Consequently, mainly academic institutions stressed their role in preparing people for the ministry and teaching. If the South were going to remain segregated, these needs had to be filled, and therefore academic education for at least a few was needed.

One white nineteenth century educator who supported college education for blacks was William Torrey Harris. Known both as a philosopher and as superintendent of the St. Louis, Missouri, public schools, Harris decried the movement toward industrial education for anyone because he thought that technology was growing so rapidly that a narrow industrial education would make its recipient obsolete. Instead, he advocated a traditional academic curriculum which would provide versatility in adjusting to a rapidly changing marketplace. Applying these ideas to blacks in the late 1890s made him, in this area, a man “before his time.”

Blacks were willing recipients of traditional academic education. Having rightly connected the educational attainment of whites with their socio-economic position, blacks were understandably eager to get that education for themselves. Consequently, their enthusiasm for the classical academic tradition was sometimes greater than their readiness to receive it. In some cases they failed to realize the extent of the academic preparation needed in order to tackle Greek, Latin, and other secondary subjects. Also, many of their schools may have been called “institutes,” “seminaries,” or “colleges,” they mainly functioned in their earliest years as elementary schools because a majority of the pupils had not had an earier opportunity to attend school and still needed to learn the academic basics. These schools may have offered secondary or even college courses to a small minority of their student body, but most of their classes were at the middle elementary level, what might be third through sixth grades today.

The black female's place in this controversy was frequently unclear. While educators debated the academic or vocational nature of blacks' post-elementary education and the degree of liberal studies needed, few argued over the nature of women's education. A woman's sex was her destiny. Indeed, many of the opinions expressed about black women's education sounded remarkably similar to what was said about white women's; although teacher training for women was fine, their main responsibility was to their husbands and their children. Virtually no one was interested in preparing women for community leadership except as teachers or as appendages to their husbands. Lucy C. Laney, black educator and feminist, outlined in 1899 the responsibilities of educated black women: to develop their family's hygiene habits, to teach young children, to instruct their less fortunate neighbors in proper housekeeping, to teach in church schools, and to inspire men and boys to improved ways of living.

Funding of the Colleges

Private Coeducational Colleges

Most of today's private black colleges can trace their origins to the early post Civil War decades when missionary groups founded numerous schools for the ex-slaves. The vast majority of these schools were coeducational because they needed as many students as possible to remain open. The schools which eventually evolved into colleges were generally in cities or rural areas where the black population was sizable because most blacks could not afford to travel long distances to pursue their education. Today most of the surviving institutions are in urban centers or in rural areas which have maintained large black populations.

Fisk University in Nashville is one of the oldest and most famous of the private black colleges. It was founded in 1865 by the American Missionary Association. Like many other black colleges, most of its student body in the nineteenth century were not in its college program but in its elementary, high school, or normal school. It also prepared young men to enter the ministry. Fisk was the first black college accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1930. In 1917 it reported that 42½% of its graduates were teachers, 19% homemakers, 7% were physicians, dentists, or pharmacists, and 3% were ministers. Other occupations reported included lawyers, business people, and civil servants. The Fisk women were largely normal graduates; of the reported 42½% who were teachers, 34% had completed normal training, and 7% had earned college degrees. The percentage of homemaker at that time also reflects the more comfortable economic status of educated blacks which allowed a larger portion of married women to stay at home; however, compared to the college-educated white community where a married woman working outside the home was exceptional, the percentage of black homemakers is quite low.

Atlanta was another center of black higher education. It contained Morris Brown College founded in 1881 by the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Clark College founded in 1870 by the Methodist Episcopal Church, Clark College University in 1867 by the American Missionary Association, and two single sex colleges—Morehouse for men and Spelman for women. In 1929 these colleges made a union under the guidance of the General Education Board, a philanthropy sponsored mainly by white businessmen, to improve education in the South. Although each retained its separate identity, they agreed to cross-list course

Before the Civil War

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developed in the late nineteenth century largely in private schools which frequently were founded by missionary societies. Collegiate education was generally a twentieth century development, evolving first from the private institutions just mentioned and later from state initiative. As these educational opportunities appeared, they stirred up considerable debate as to what was appropriate education for blacks beyond the elementary level. Black women's education was caught in the middle of this debate as well as in controversies about what was proper academic education for women.
Private Colleges for Women

Most of the Southern black colleges were coeducational, a situation which was not true for white schools. While considerable discussion regarding the propriety of coeducation for white women slowed their admission into men's private and public universities throughout the South, this debate was nearly absent in the development of Southern black women's education. Considering the facts that coeducation's effect upon student morality was the most controversial facet of the debate and that blacks' morality (and particularly that of black women) was frequently questioned, it is paradoxical that few educators presumed a need to educate the sexes apart from each other. The explanation lies in economics and the value system of the time. Operating one coeducational school was less expensive than two single sex ones, and money for black education was scarce. Furthermore, it could be hypothesized that despite their rhetoric few private charities or the public cared sufficiently about blacks to insist upon single sex schools to protect blacks' moral health.

There were a few exceptions to the coeducational status of black schools. Schools for women were frequently called seminaries, and the earliest for black women was founded on the border of the South in Washington, D.C., in 1851 by a New England white woman, Myrtle L. Miner. It was primarily a teacher training institute which became Miner Teachers College and is today a part of the coeducational University of the District of Columbia.

Within the South itself the earliest woman's school was Scotia Seminary in North Carolina, founded in 1866 by the Presbyterian Board of Missions. Like many black schools of its day, it was largely an elementary school for its earliest decades. Having as its purpose to train "women leaders in the education of and social service for their race," it is fitting that Scotia's most famous graduate was Mary McLeod Bethune, who later founded her own college. The seminary became Scotia Woman's College in 1916. The Presbyterians founded another black woman's seminary, the Barber Memorial Seminary of Anniston, Alabama, in 1896. It too eventually became a college, and in 1930 the two colleges united to become Barber-Scotia College. In 1954 the combined institution changed its charter and began admitting men.

Tillotson College in Austin, Texas, was a woman's school briefly. Founded by the American Missionary Association in 1877 as the coeducational Tillotson Collegiate and Normal Institute, it became a college in 1909 and excluded male students from 1928 to 1935. It joined Samuel Huston College to become Huston-Tillotson College in 1952.

The most famous of the black woman's schools was what evolved into Spelman College in Atlanta. It began as the Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary, founded in 1881 by New England teachers Sophia B. Packard and Harriet E. Giles, and was initially sponsored by the Woman's American Baptist Missionary Association. Designed primarily to teach religion, it was only open to black women over fifteen until it established a model school two years later for its teacher-education students. The year after its founding John D. Rockefeller Sr. heard Packard speak about the needs of the school and soon became its most generous financial supporter. Consequently, the school changed its name to Spelman Seminary in honor of Rockefeller's parents-in-law.

Spelman remained a seminary for nearly fifty years. However, it began offering college degrees in conjunction with the nearby black men's college Morehouse in 1901, but only a few women took advantage of the opportunity. By 1923 only 30 Spelman graduates had received college degrees. Spelman today is the better known of the two remaining black women's colleges.

Bennett College, the other surviving black woman's college, in Greensboro, North Carolina, was founded 1873 as a coeducational institution by the Methodists, and it did not become a woman's college until the college was reorganized in 1926. At that time the enrollment was largely female, and so the Women's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Church decided to make it a woman's college. Bennett has the distinction of being the last college ever to have had a woman president, Dr. Willa B. Player, who served from 1955 to 1966.
Public Colleges

The establishment of public higher education for blacks was due largely to three factors: the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, the need for teachers created by the proliferation of elementary schooling, and the need to produce community professionals and leaders. In addition, blacks themselves added pressure for the improvement of their public higher educational opportunities.

The first impetus for establishing state supported schools for blacks came largely from the Morrill Acts. Passed in 1862, the first Morrill Act provided funds that encouraged the states to establish agricultural and technical education for their citizens. After the war a number of Southern states founded appropriate institutions for whites, but only Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia used any of their funds for blacks. Mississippi founded in 1871 what is today known as Alcorn State, and South Carolina founded what is today South Carolina State College; Virginia used some of its funds to support programs at Hampton Institute. (See module two "Black Women's Vocational Education," for a discussion of Hampton.)

When the act was renewed in 1890, a provision ensured that funds would go to both races, and within a decade other Southern states began using Morrill funds to improve black education either by establishing a state-supported black institution or by assigning funds to an already established institution. Since the act specified agricultural and mechanical education, blacks frequently received junior high or high school level industrial education rather than the advanced college level technical and agricultural training that was offered to whites. The choices of each sex for the technical component were predictable: male students learned agricultural and mechanical trades while girls learned domestic science. At the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical Institute, the curriculum was weighted so heavily in favor of "male" subjects that black women were excluded from the school from 1900 to 1926.

The need for teachers was the second factor in the development of black public higher education. Most of the black Morrill schools had some sort of normal program for teacher training, though these programs until the 1910's or '20s were likely to be at the high school level. Normal training was especially important to the educational advancement of black women, who were more likely than men to become teachers. The normal programs also served as the highest quality public education that the state offered its black citizens. As late as 1910 the Colored Normal, Industrial, Agricultural, and Mechanical College of South Carolina, for instance, provided one of only two public high school programs for blacks in the entire state; in addition it ran a model school which provided a place in which student teachers could practice and a good quality elementary school for black children in the surrounding area. In addition to the advantages to the Morrill school's students, the normal school training helped its graduates improve the education of black children throughout the state.

The need for black community leaders and professionals was a third impetus in the establishment of black public colleges in the South, and it also influenced their growth. As education became more important in the smooth running of an increasingly complex economy and society, the southern states began to realize the necessity of having more educated black community leaders than the private black schools could produce. Thus the states began to establish or add on baccalaureate programs to the Morrill schools. Tennessee, which had previously assigned its Morrill funds to Knoxville College, proclaimed in 1909 that the purpose of its newly created Agricultural and State Normal School for Negroes was "to practically train its students that they may better grasp their great economic opportunity in becoming community leaders, farmers, and teachers." Its normal program was equivalent to two years of college until the mid 1920s, when it began a baccalaureate program. Virginia switched its Morrill funds from Hampton Institute to the Virginia State Normal and Industrial Institute in 1920 and authorized it two years later to begin offering a baccalaureate degree. Other Southern states did the same. As the level of black public higher education increased throughout the South, high school courses in the public colleges were gradually abandoned, reflecting the growth of high black high school education at the community level.

Founding the High Schools

Oddly enough, the development of the public high school in America generally came after the establishment of public higher education and public elementary education. Most of the country established public high schools between 1870 and 1900, but the establishment of high schools for either race in the South was mainly a twentieth century development. Because of the region's straitened economic situation and its largely agrarian economy which perceived little use for more than basic literacy, growth in the number of public high schools was slow until the turn of the century. Until then, most families that sought a high school education for their children enrolled them in private academies. This situation was true of blacks as well as whites, but because of black families' lack of funds, education, and nearby schools a black child was not as likely to send to a private academy as was a white one. In fact, for the first four decades after the Civil War, a black person with just three or four years of formal schooling was considered educated by the standards of the day.

Black secondary education gained in popularity largely through the efforts of Booker T. Washington and his campaign for industrial education. Consequently, early black secondary education had a far stronger vocational character than did white high school education of the time, and the role of academics as means of fostering critical thinking and developing a well rounded person was seldom considered. (See Module Two, "Black Women's Vocational Education.") Although black parents and children were often displeased with this industrial emphasis, most had little choice and settled for that type of secondary education rather than none at all. Many circumvented the industrial curriculum by taking the normal training which was offered in the high schools. It served as a "back door" through which blacks got the academic training they sought. This situation was true both in the private schools and later in the public ones.
Private High Schools

Especially in their early years private schools were generally divisions of larger entities—either the advanced section of an elementary school or the lower section of a college or junior college. When the first case was true, there were often few students enrolled at the high school level and instruction was poor; in the second case, frequently high school students comprised the majority of the entire institution, and the quality of work may have been good. At some of the larger black colleges, the secondary division may have served as a model school in which student teachers could practice. Schools which received funds from major philanthropies almost always accompanied their academic instruction with some degree of industrial work in keeping with the terms of their grant. In large cities which had publicly funded programs for industrial work, a private high school might exist as an academic alternative and be strictly academic. Avery Institute in Charleston, South Carolina, was an example of this. Founded in the 1860s by the American Missionary Association, Avery offered only normal training and college preparatory work. Typically, the high school program of a private school was called the preparatory level, implying its role in preparing students for college. If a school also trained teachers, it frequently had a normal track as well. Although the two tracks may have overlapped somewhat, the normal track generally assumed no more schooling afterwards. Paine College in Augusta, Georgia, had in 1925, for example, a junior high, a senior high, a two-year normal course, and a college program. The normal program led to teacher certification without additional college work. The normal course at Selma University in Alabama was described as “a high school course with Bible study throughout the four years and with elementary Psychology and methods, in the senior year.” Since more women than men went into teaching and more men than women went on to college, girls generally outnumbered boys in the normal track and were the minority in the preparatory.

What eventually became one of the most famous normal and preparatory schools for black women in the South was founded by Mary McLeod Bethune in Daytona, Florida, in 1904. All boarding students were women, though men were admitted as day students. In 1923 the school united with the Cookman Institute for boys. Although initially offering some industrial training, the Bethune-Cookman Collegiate Institute rapidly became a college preparatory institution and by 1925 was cited as “the best secondary school for Negroes in Florida.” Bethune interrupted her presidency in the 1930s to serve as the head of the National Youth Administration program under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a position which brought recognition to both herself and institution she had created. (For more information about Bethune, see the excerpt from the interview with Lucy Miller Mitchell.)

A few private black high schools did not evolve into colleges. One of the most famous, the Palmer Memorial Institute in North Carolina, was founded in 1901 by a black woman, Charlotte Hawkins Brown. It remained as a college preparatory boarding school for the children of elite black families until 1971 when it closed its doors as the increasing availability of quality public education for blacks precipitated a decline in enrollment. Still functioning in Mississippi as a private college preparatory school for blacks is the Piney Woods Country Life School, founded in 1909 by a black graduate of the University of Iowa, Lawrence C. Jones.

Public High Schools

Between 1900 and 1915 the South established over 600 four-year public high schools for whites and nearly 600 three-year ones, but only 64 public ones existed for blacks, and they were located mainly in cities. Supplementing those were county training schools which were begun in rural areas beginning in the 1910s, but they seldom included more than two years of high school work. (See module 2, “Black Women’s Vocational Education.”) Consequently, black youths’ opportunity to get a high school education was highly dependent upon their geographical location and their economic circumstances. Urban youth had more access to schooling than did their rural counterparts; if no high school were available and a family had money to spend on education, a person could be sent to board at a private black school, but most black families had to depend on public facilities.

Another factor in access appeared to be sex. A 1923 study of under-age and over-age students in the county training schools indirectly produced results that indicated that black girls were more likely than black boys to continue their education. The survey showed that although substantially more girls than boys attended the county training schools at every level—1 through 12—the difference grew wiser in the upper grades. Nearly 10% more girls attended than boys overall, but in the upper grades alone—9 through 12—the difference grew to 42%. This trend reflected the practice of many Southern black families of sending the older sons to work after elementary school to help

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The Character of Mary McLeod Bethune

With Mrs. Bethune, there were just no short cuts, and another part of the character training, shall I call it, would be through these phrases that she would use, like “Whatever you do, do it to the best of your ability.” Over and over, you would find, “Whatever you do, do it to the best of your ability,” and so this feeling about the thoroughness—to this day, any kind of sloppiness dishonors me greatly. I think another contribution that I would say she made to my life, Cheryl, was her attitude toward work. For instance, she would say, “Any work is honest however humble,” and “In whatever you do, strive to be an artist.” Wasn’t that a concept? To have it drilled into you, that whatever you do, strive to be an artist.

Orderliness was another concept that became a part of my life, and even as I grow to be almost eighty years old, I cannot bear to be disorderly. It may be just a tiny thing, but it does become a part of the expression of your living. I can remember many times, as adolescents, we had to get up and put those clothes in a neat way in our chairs. I give those little incidents because it shows a facet of this woman and the influence that she had on these students.

This was a woman of strong religious beliefs. We all had to gather once a day—and this was a small group of 150 girls—for her chapel talks. And I say here that she wove into the fabric of our life deep religious fervor; it was all there. And she gave to us a feeling that through God’s power anything was possible. And I give those little incidents because it shows a facet of this woman and the influence that she had on these students.

Excerpt from interview of Lucy Miller Mitchell by Cheryl Gilkes, June 12 and 24 and July 1, 6, and 25, 1977. Black Women’s Oral History Project, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Printed by permission. After graduating from college, Miller subsequently taught for a year in Bethune’s school.
Public High Schools
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support the family, while girls and sometimes younger sons remained in school. Completing a high school education improved black girls' chances of finding good positions—most often in teaching—and lessened their chances of being molested by white men because of the need to be employed in their homes or businesses as domestic servants. Their education also served as a family's economic insurance because the employment of black men was sometimes uncertain and unstable. This trend continued in many black colleges; more women than men attended. However, at the more prestigious black institutions whose students were more likely to come from families with greater economic security, more men than women earned college degrees; women typically enrolled in normal programs.

The development of public black high schools in Virginia was perhaps typical of their development elsewhere in the South; but, since Virginia generally provided better public education than did many other Southern states, its record on black public high schools may have actually been better. Virginia's first public high school for blacks was organized in 1873 in Petersburg, which had a large black population, and a second in Richmond in 1876; two more were established by 1900. Then progress slowed as the popularity of industrial education for blacks grew and less attention was paid to academics. Although the number of white high schools in the state grew from 50 to 360 between 1905 and 1910, only three more high schools were established for blacks between 1900 and 1920. Instead, numerous rural areas established county training schools for blacks which offered industrial education and junior high work. In the early 1920s eight other Virginia cities began steps toward creating public black high schools.

Because of the scarcity of high schools and poverty of many black families, the rate of high school attendance in the first third of the century remained low. Although more high schools were built in the 1920s and 1930s, only 26.5% of Southern blacks still lived in counties in 1932-33 that provided less than four years of public high school work. The percentages varied from highs of 58% in Arkansas and 51% in Mississippi to lows of 3% in North Carolina and 0% and 4% respectively in the border states of Delaware and Maryland. In the Southern and border states the total number of four-year high schools for blacks was 807, but only 367 of them were accredited by their respective state accrediting bodies. While 33.5% of white high school age in the South were actually enrolled in high school, only less than 5% of blacks were.

As the century wore on, high school attendance and graduation rates slowly increased. By 1940 9.8% of the total black population were high school graduates, and ten years later that percentage had increased to 14.4. This increase reflected national trends towards more education, but it also reflected developments in the Southern black communities. Even though blacks had been effectively denied voting rights since the turn of the century, they had become an increasingly noticeable influence in local development. The series of lawsuits which integrated Southern public graduate schools, the struggle for salary equalization between black and white teachers, and simple pressure from the black community had stimulated the development and expansion of black high school education. White Southern politicians were beginning to realize that if they truly wished to maintain segregated public schooling, the facilities would honestly have to be equal. Although their motives for improving black high schools were faulty, the result was improved educational opportunity.

The 1954 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka case, which declared that segregated schools were inherently unequal, dashed the hopes of many white Southerners of maintaining segregated schools, and the region began a very slow process of integrating its schools. One of the most famous incidents in this process was the integration of Little Rock High School in 1957, and six girls were among the nine black students who tried to enroll. The resulting resistance by Arkansas's governor forced the involvement of the federal government and then the closing of all the city's public schools for a year.

Secondary Vocational Training

Dr. Faustine C. Jones-Williams, now a professor at Howard University and author of A Traditional Model of Educational Excellence: Dunbar High School of Little Rock, Arkansas, recalled her experiences at Dunbar in the 1940s in an interview with the author September 27, 1985:

EELI: Did the curriculum of Dunbar offer different courses according to sex, such as home economics for girls and shop for boys?

FJW: Yes. I remember that the girls had a year of Clothing in seventh grade and a year of Foods in eighth grade. In ninth grade, girls took Laundry. These were required courses in grades 7-9. It is interesting that white girls did not have laundry included in their curriculum.

As best as I can recall, elective courses in Clothing & Foods were offered girls in 10, 11, 12. Trade Clothing was a vocational option for girls. This choice could be made singly—a vocational only—or with regular high school required courses. The latter option provided the female graduate with a regular high school diploma and a trade certificate that would make her employable as a tailor or a "finished" seamstress—say at high-class department store or a women's fashion store.

With respect to Foods, I recall that we had several kitchens with varying degrees of equipment and sophistication. There was an "unfinished" kitchen where service techniques were emphasized. We were taught to set the table properly, and how to serve the family and guests correctly. There was a green or blue kitchen where "intermediate" facilities, and a white kitchen with deluxe features. The idea was that girls would be prepared to cook and serve in any kind of kitchen in different types of homes. I am sure that it was assumed that many of us would be domestic servants or laundry workers.

Our laundry course included heavy commercial equipment use, as well as home-style washers and how to iron on commercial presses as well as how to use a regular home-type iron. We learned to stretch curtains (after starching them heavily) on the pronged stretchers. Most of us hated Laundry, but liked Clothing and Foods well enough at the 7th and 8th grade levels. . .

In the 11th grade many of us, girls and boys, took bookkeeping—even though we were college-bound. We also took Geometry. We had to be employable, if need be.

In the 12th grade many girls (including me), took shorthand and typing. Our teachers were strict and always emphasized doing things right. Only a few boys took shorthand and typing, for males were ridiculed if they selected this "female" option.
Shaping Academic Education, 1900-1950

The Colleges

As was the case with high school attendance, black women were more likely to attend college than men, thus reversing the trend among whites. However, black women were enrolled more frequently than men in normal programs and the number of their baccalaureate degrees did not outnumber men's until 1930.23 Black women's post-secondary education was designed more for practical work in the black community than as traditional academic studies; most women in the early and mid-twentieth century became teachers or homemakers.24 At Paine College in Augusta, Georgia, at the end of the Second World War 70% of graduates were women, 90% of whom went into teaching; after the war more women began moving into social work and other fields. Women tended to return to rural areas while men migrated to large cities, entering teaching, the ministry, and postal and government jobs.25 This pattern was typical throughout the South.

Inability of financially strapped institutions to provide adequate laboratories and facilities. In 1940 a survey reported that 29% of black college students chose vocational majors (agriculture, industrial arts, home economics), 22.6% chose humanities, and 22.3% chose education. Between 1940 and 1963 the number of black vocational majors declined from 29% to 6.1%; other majors experiencing losses were the humanities and physical science. Simultaneously the number of blacks choosing business, education, the arts, health, and social sciences increased.26

Pay Inequity: One Woman's Experience

In 1921 the first three black women ever to receive Ph.D. degrees graduated within several weeks of each other. One of them, Eva Beatrice Dykes, taught at Howard University for a number of years before assuming a position at Oakwood College in Alabama where the following incident occurred.

One of the men teachers here, by the name of Sumpter, said to me, "Oh, Miss Dykes, did you get your promotion?" And I said, "What promotion?" And he said, "Well, you know, all the teachers were promoted." I said, "Well, I didn't get any promotion." So when I saw President Peterson, I said to him, "President Peterson, I understand that some of the teachers got a promotion. And I didn't get one." And he said to me in his inimitable way, with his hands stretched out wide—I can see him now, standing on the steps of Morean Hall—"Well, you are a woman. That's why you didn't get it." And he was one of my dear friends.


Collage Class. Huston-Tillotson College. (General Education Board records. 1054. 849 Annual Report, 1952. Rockefeller Archive Center. Reprinted by permission.)
Shaping Academic Education

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no immediate major curricular shifts, and a number of her conclusions were simply ahead of their time. Although the number of black students studying the social sciences grew from 11.7% in 1940 to 17% in 1963 and students were gradually given more control over campus life, Slove's concern about the purpose of women's education and women as college officials did not receive widespread attention. As the decades wore on, black women's majors gradually changed. In 1963 their top choices of major were elementary education, social science, education, English, and biology.

Nursing also became an increasingly popular major in mid-century as hospital based nurse training gave way to college based nurse education with attendant baccalaureate degrees. Black women headed up two of the earliest degree granting nursing programs: Rita Miller at Dillard University in New Orleans and Mary Elizabeth Lancaster Carnegie at Florida A & M.

Other careers which became increasingly popular with women college students in the mid-twentieth century were social work and librarianship. Since both of these often required advanced degrees and opportunities for blacks to do graduate work in most Southern states were limited, Atlanta University became the center of preparation for both of these areas.

Women were represented on the faculty of nearly every black college. They tended to hold the lower faculty ranks and teach in traditionally women's areas (teacher training, fine arts, home economics). Many served as matrons in the women's residence hall or as deans of women. In a number of cases they did not have degrees commensurate with male faculty which may have been a factor in their lower pay, but the pay inequality was n't always true as the excerpt on pay inequity reveals.

Spelman, quite possibly because it was a women's college, had more women on the faculty than most schools; in fact, it had all female presidents, albeit white ones, until 1953.

High School Curriculum

Many of the early black high schools combined academic and industrial programs. The latter were generally favored by whites and more educators of either race who thought that industrial education built character and provided more useful skills and more rapid assimilation of blacks into the work force. The first major national report on black education, published in 1916, decried black resistance to industrial education and black's faith in academics. Black families, however, often favored academic programs because they correctly perceived that an academic education was likely to lead to better jobs or an opportunity for further education. Many families actually moved to new communities where they thought their children could get better schooling; in cases where only industrial education was provided, they struggled to pay tuition to private academic schools. Sadie Green Oglesby, a well known black educator and civic leader in Charleston, South Carolina, was taken out of the nearby public high school in the 1940s and placed in Avery High School, a private academy, because her father did not approve of the public school's agricultural curriculum.

The high school curriculum remained predictably stereotyped with girls taking home economics and boys taking shop. One of the most outstanding black public high schools in the South, Dunbar in Little Rock, Arkansas, offered a complete line of vocational courses along with a full complement of academic offerings. (See the interview with Dr. C. C. Jones-Wilson.) Slowly, however, the demand for academics first in urban areas and then in rural ones forced the inclusion of increasing numbers of academic courses in black high schools.

Extra Curricular Life

High School

Extracurricular life for black secondary students was somewhat dependent on the type of institution offering the instruction. Private black boarding schools, which frequently served students from rural areas where no public high school was yet available, had rules similar to those in black colleges with stricter rules for girls than boys. In the 1940s, for instance, Cotton Plant Academy, located in a town of same name in Arkansas, allowed boys to leave the campus unchaperoned but not the girls. However, regardless of whether a school was public or private, good manners were stressed more for girls than for boys.

One of the most highly touted public high schools for blacks in the South, Dunbar in Little Rock, opened its doors in the late 1920s and by 1930 offered an array of extracurricular activities. Many, like Student Council, Health Club, Thrift Club, Citizenship Club, Monitor's Club, Library Club, Orchestra, Story Tellers Club, Dramatic Club, Science Club were open to both sexes, but the focus of some of them like health, thrift, and citizenship appeared to be an echo of the character training so prevalent in earlier black education. Other clubs served only one sex. The boys could choose from Boy Scouts, several athletic clubs, and the Boys' Glee Club, while the girls could participate in the Girls' Reserve, Campfire Girls, one athletic club, and a Girls' Glee Club. By the 1940 activities were less sex-segregated and more closely resembled high schools today: most clubs were not restricted by gender, and the Glee Clubs had been combined into a choir. The girls had cheerleading and basketball.

College

Extracurricular life at virtually all Southern black colleges in the first half of the twentieth century was restrictive and even Victorian. Although the degree of restriction varied from one institution to another and lessened as the decades moved on, much of early twentieth century black college life was emmeshed in regulations and rules that are quite foreign to college students today. Behind these rules lay subtle racism and sexism. A number of colleges justified their close scrutiny of students' lives as a means of improving blacks' perceived low moral standards and of educating them in proper ways of living. Since the moral reputation of black women was even less highly regarded than that of their male counterparts, women to live under tighter rules. Moral improvement was the most frequent reason cited for tight control of students, but there was a more subtle one. College trustees, administrators, and faculty were fearful that a freer atmosphere might prompt student actions which would generate unfavorable publicity, jeopardize future philanthropic or legislative support, and diminish relations with the surrounding community. Consequently, rules that had been abolished in white institutions long ago persisted in a number of black institutions well into the twentieth century.

Black women in college were treated differently from men because their life roles were considered distinctive and their morality in greater jeopardy, perceptions that were slow to change. Evidence of these distinctions were common in college literature. From 1894 until early 1950's, for instance, the Fisk University Catalog carried a statement that it recognized "the absolute necessity of the right education of the girls and young women of the race whose elevation and advancement it was founded to promote. The highest interest of every race and community depends largely upon the intelligence, frugality, virtue, and noble aspirations of its women." A Spelman alumna noted that the aim of her alma mater was to "train homemakers, teachers and nurses, and through religious influences to help elevate the Negro race as a whole." This special attitude toward women affected all aspects of their college lives. In addition to the impact it made on their curricula, it affected their dress, habits, and relations with the other sex. (See excerpt "College
clubs for women and five for men in 1926.43 Beginning in the early 1900s these societies met on Saturday nights and considered these organizations so important for the participating students but also to attract the students of both sexes who were prepared to work outside the home. Social activism became an increasingly prominent dimension to black women’s extracurricular life as the twentieth century wore on. In the 1930s a number of black colleges ran workshops and clinics to improve black health and home life, and women often initiated their organization. Women demonstrated a more public activism in the 1950s and 1960s as they participated in civil rights activities. In 1956 Atherine Lucy, the daughter of a sharecropper, became the first black to be admitted to the University of Alabama. Although she was expelled three days after her admission because of violence directed against her, her courageous stand set an example for others. In 1963 Vivian Malone became the first black to graduate from the university. Spelman students participated in many civil rights activities taking place in Atlanta, and one Spelman graduate, Marian Wright Edelman, was involved in the founding of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. She subsequently became the first black woman to pass the bar in Mississippi. Later she founded and led the Children’s Defense Fund, a nonprofit children’s advocacy group in Washington, D.C. In 1980 she became the second woman and the first black to chair Spelman’s Board of Trustees.45

In 1972 the passage of the amendments to the Higher Education Act brought a new dimension of equity into the education of all women. The portion of the act known as Title IX said that: No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

By the time the government developed regulations interpreting Title IX, educators were already braced for some changes. Although Title IX’s biggest impact has come in the area of equity in athletics, it stimulated other changes too. In the realm of education, Title IX was for women what Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act was for blacks. Title IX was followed two years later.

**College Women of Atlanta University: 1900**

**GFB: Why didn’t they let boarding students, why didn’t they let them go off campus?**

**BEU:** Well, they went off campus only by permission and with a matron, with somebody who took them. The girls would go to town on Saturday afternoon. Other afternoons, I guess some other afternoons, but there was a woman who came and chaperoned the girls. Boys were allowed to go off campus certain hours after school, but the girls were not. The girls stayed on the campus unless they had special permission and were accompanied by somebody who was in charge.

**GFB:** Right. Because I know that happened at Spelman, the young ladies used to have to wear their dresses and gloves when they went downtown. Was that required of A. U. girls?

**BEU:** No.

**GFB:** No?

**BEU:** No, they didn’t have to do that. They expected them to look presentable, of course. All I know is I just wore whatever I had. It was very presentable because I came from the country, and my mother made all of my clothes; they were very simple dresses and I was small.


Black Women in Academic Education Today

It is difficult to know what is happening to blacks in academic education today because recent data are often promptly published and are not often broken down by race and sex. Some observers claim that research about minorities in higher education is insufficient and that recent cutbacks and delays have even made the situation worse. The main government report about higher education, the Higher Education General Information Survey, has been running so far behind in recent years that its data are less useful than they could be.47 Howard University's Institute for the Study of Educational Policy, which was established in 1974 as a research center on issues affecting the educational needs of minorities in higher education, has recently been dismantled as a result of budget cuts. Added to this problem is the fact that few studies which have been done have examined minority groups by sex. It is likely that many disseminators of data simply assume that all blacks have the same educational experience regardless of sex and that all women have the same experience regardless of race, assumptions which unwittingly display racist and sexist attitudes. Because of this lack of sufficiently specific data, it is difficult to assess accurately what is happening to black women. The data that are available indicate both increasing achievement and persistent problems.

Secondary Schools Today

Black women of high school age have lost ground in the past decade due in part to the related problems of poverty, insufficient education, teenage pregnancy, and the lack of available jobs. More fourteen and fifteen year-old black women dropped out of school in 1981 (3%) than ten years earlier (1%); although the figures for black males of the same age also climbed during that period, the rise in male dropouts went only from 2.3% to 2.7%. For sixteen and seventeen year olds the news was better as the dropout rate decreased over the same period, but the decrease was not so sharp for females (9.2% to 8.7%) as for males (9.4% to 7.2%).48 These figures may reflect the problems of the high pregnancy rate among teenage blacks. Although the actual rate of teenage pregnancy is now declining among blacks (but still increasing for whites), black girls currently account for half of all teenage births.49 The need for child care may be only one disincentive to remaining in school. The fact that each year of school does not currently increase employment for blacks may be another.50 These factors are prime contributors to single black women heading the poorest families in the country with a median income of $7510 in 1981.51 Given these data, it is not surprising that between 1970 and 1982, households headed by black females increased from 28 to 41% compared to a 9% to 12% increase for whites.52 These data on the dropout rate, job availability, and poverty combine to predict a depressing and worsening cycle of deprivation.

For black women who remain in high school, the news is better. They outperform their male counterparts but are still seriously deficient in academic achievement. Thirty-eight percent of black females, ages 14 to 17, are not performing at grade level as compared to 43% of males, according to the National Black Child Development Institute.53 A study of mathematics education by the National Assessment of Educational Progress noted that blacks of all ages gained more than whites in mathematical knowledge between 1977 and 1981, but the study did not break down the data by sex.54 Another study of black female participation in mathematics courses, however, indicates a need for counseling, student-teacher interaction, and administrative leadership for making a substantial difference in mathematics achievement.55 Overall, blacks of either sex and women of any race are less likely to enroll in an academic high school curriculum and are more likely to be in a vocational program than white males or other races.56 This limits the numbers of black women who can continue their education.

Higher Education Today

Since the percentage of black high school graduates attending college has dropped 11% between 1975 and 1981, the current overall pattern of blacks' college enrollment is not encouraging.57 Whereas approximately 32% of whites go on to college, only 27.8% of blacks do.58 Blacks and women are both underrepresented in academic education. Blacks, who form 11.7% of the population, only account for 9.9% of academic postsecondary education. Likewise, women disproportionately choose vocational postsecondary education.59 In spite of these statistics, black women appear to have made modest gains in college attendance in recent decades. Black women formed 55% of the black college student population in 1962-63, 52% in 1973, and 58% in 1982.60 Although these gains are not dramatic, they seem impressive as a counter-trend to blacks' overall drop in college attendance.

Remaining in college can be a challenge. Although the dropout rate for minorities is similar to that of whites after controlling for socioeconomic factors, 46% of black college-bound seniors in 1981 came from families with incomes of less than $12,000.61 Exacerbating the situation is that both blacks and women are likely to receive less financial aid than white men. In 1983 blacks received 4.7% less financial aid than they did in 1978, and women on the average receive less financial aid than men.62 In 1981-82 a woman's average grant was $1,236 as compared to a man's $1,373; low-income women received fewer Guaranteed Student Loans than did low-income men, and women are currently not allowed to count child-care expenses in computing their need.63 The result of the likelihood of less financial aid is that minority women will attend less expensive institutions and for shorter periods of time, thus decreasing their earning power; opportunities for career advancement, and chances for earning graduate degrees.

Since 1970 and the beginning of court-ordered desegregation of public institutions, blacks of both sexes have become increasingly dispersed throughout the educational system: in 1976 18% of black students attended traditionally black institutions; in 1982 the percentage was down to 16.1%.64 The number of black women's colleges has remained at two with Bennett in Greensboro, North Carolina, and Spelman, in Atlanta with a record enrollment of nearly 1700. Although college graduation rates among black students overall have decreased from 65% in the 1930s to 45-60% in 1978, black women are graduating in ever higher numbers.65 In 1976 they comprised 56% of black graduating seniors and 59% in 1981.
What happens to black women in college has attracted little research. The most recent and best known study of black college women was part of a larger study conducted by Jacqueline Fleming. In surveying black college students in both black and white colleges to determine which kind of college served black students better, she found that female students of either race became less assertive when they were educated with men. She learned that black women sometimes feel that they are less competent than men but that facts of their performance prove otherwise. In black colleges black women lose social assertiveness skills but not in predominantly white colleges where few black men are available. Nevertheless black women in white colleges suffer "from emotional pain, social isolation, or aroused fears about their competence." For black women, both predominantly white and predominantly black schools have their strengths and weaknesses for intellectual and personal growth.

Data on postgraduate education indicate that this level of education remains a source of critical concern. Although black enrollment in first-professional degree programs has increased significantly in recent years, blacks comprise only 5% of the total professional enrollment. Black women, however, represent 46% of total black enrollment in U.S. medical schools as compared to white women's 31% of total white enrollment. Blacks like whites appear to be moving away from graduate school in favor of professional studies, and their enrollment in graduate study has declined. Between 1974 and 1980 black graduate enrollment dropped 8%. This decline will seriously affect the availability of the black faculty in higher education who serve as role models to students of all races.

Questions for Discussion
1. How did the purpose of black women's academic education evolve over the years? What is it today? To what degree, if at all, should race and/or sex be variables in determining a person's education?
2. Supporters of women's colleges argue that an all-female environment produces graduates who are more likely to achieve than are female graduates of coeducational institutions. Recent research demonstrates, for instance, that a higher percentage of graduates of women's colleges are accepted into medical school than graduates of coeducational ones. What were the factors in developing coeducational or single-sex institutions for blacks in the South? Do you think that the rigid rules of black coeducational colleges of the early 1900's produced an enhanced environment for their women students? Why or why not?
3. Even today, the choice of students' college majors is significantly affected by the sex. This study illustrated that historically race has also been a factor. How has choice of major affected individuals' subsequent lives? To what degree should effort be made to steer people into or away from particular majors today?
4. What are some of the historical reasons that black women tend to pursue more education than black men? Do those reasons still hold true today? What kind of implication does their larger attendance hold for their future?

Activities
1. Investigate one of the historically black sororities. Information could be obtained from a chapter on a nearby campus or from a group's national office. The addresses are
2. Examine some old high school yearbooks or annuals. Consider tracing the evolution of high school activities at a traditionally black high school through a number of years or compare activities with those in a traditionally white high school of the same year. What conclusions can you draw from your examination?
3. Interview a black graduate of a particular kind of school (women's or coeducational, segregated or integrated, public or private) and compare the interviewee's memories to the generalizations of this module.
4. Where was an historically black high school or college in your area, learn about its current situation. How did efforts to integrate and to provide equal educational opportunity affect the institution? Develop hypotheses about the reasons for its current status.

Notes
11. Interview of Sadie Green Oglesby, Charleston, South Carolina, by Elizabeth L. Igle, October 4, 1985.

continued on page 12
Notes continued from page 11


I am grateful to my consultant Dr. Faustine C. Jones-Wilson for providing much of the information in this paragraph.


Noble, Table 2.


Thompson, "Introduction", 264.


McGrath, p. 81.


McGrath, p. 80 and 81.


Jones, I, 43.

Interview with Sadie Green Oglesby.

Interview with Betty Bryant, Gary, Indiana, by Faustine C. Jones-Wilson, October 15, 1985.


Guy-Sheffall and Stewart, p. 100.

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"Tracking the Situation: 'We Just Don't Have Adequate Data,' " *Education Week*, April 17, 1985, p. 14.


"Traditional Families—A Dying Breed?" *Education Week*, May 14, 1986, p. 22.

"Equality and Excellence, pp. 7-8.


"Equality and Excellence, p. 5.


"Equality and Excellence, p. 27.


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"Minorities, p. 177.

McGrath, p. 85; *The American Reference Book, ed. Mabel M. Smythe, Table IX, p. 441; Minorities*, p. 11.

"Equality and Excellence, p. 2.


"Women and Aid," p. 3.

"Minorities, Table 6, p. 12.

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"Equality and Excellence, p. 17.


"Minorities, ACE, p. 11 and Table 12, p. 15.

Minorities, ACE, Table 8, p. 13.

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