1-1-2021

A NATURAL FIT FOR THE NATURAL STATE: THE EMERGENCE OF BLACK POWER ORGANIZATIONS IN ARKANSAS FROM 1968-1975

Maurice D. Gipson
University of Mississippi

A NATURAL FIT FOR THE NATURAL STATE: THE EMERGENCE OF BLACK POWER ORGANIZATIONS IN ARKANSAS FROM 1968-1975

by

Maurice D. Gipson

A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Arch Dalrymple III Department of History
The University of Mississippi

August 2021

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to explore how Black Arkansans on college campuses in rural towns navigated their local circumstances while embracing tenets of Black Power. By 1968, public PWIs in Arkansas were contending with an influx of Black students due to the gains of the Civil Rights Movement. Even though many of the universities had been integrated years and even decades earlier, they were still ill-equipped for the number of Black students that would enroll and descend upon the towns during this period.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to the memory of my grandfather, Eddie Turner, Sr.,
the baddest Arkansan I ever knew.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

If I could thank everyone that I have come into contact with during this journey, this section would undoubtedly be longer than the project. However, there are a few individuals that truly made this project possible. First, I continue to be in awe of what God can do! As a first-generation college student, I was not even supposed to finish college, let alone earn a Ph.D. I am always thankful for his blessings. Now, I begin my gratitude with my first history professor at LSU, my freshman year. Dr. Leonard Moore showed me how you can "keep it real" while teaching history. I was surprised every Tuesday and Thursday at 9am when he would share another aspect of African American history that I never knew about. That curiosity began in the fall of 2001 and led me to complete this project 20 years later. Dr. Moore also suggested that I do a community study so I can, "get out of school and start the real work." I will be forever grateful for his support. Next, I want to give a huge thanks to the person who first told me that, "Arkansas has something to say." Dr. Cherisse Jones-Branch has to be one of the biggest supporters and cheerleaders a person can have. She also makes a mean pound cake! Dr. Jones-Branch is one of the most brilliant scholars I have ever met, and she always had a nuanced evaluation of my work. Without Dr. Jones-Branch, I would not have gone to the University of Mississippi and more than likely would have never written about Arkansas. I appreciate her thoughtfulness and care for a young scholar.

As with many folks, my Ph.D. journey was filled with twists and turns but I managed to stay sane and make it through with the help of some awesome fellow graduate students. First,

my crew at the University of Memphis where I took some initial graduate history courses. Heather McNamee, Danyel Clark, and Evelyn Jackson were the absolute best trio of classmates. I want to thank Heather for always challenging me to be better since she is absolutely exceptional. I want to thank Danyel for always making me laugh, but also making me pay close attention to the voices of Black women. I want to thank Evelyn for her attention to detail and her love of HBCUs. Also at the University of Memphis were two professors who saw the best in me, even when I did not realize it. Dr. Susan Eva O'Donovan taught the first class I took at the University of Memphis, and I immediately thought I may be in over my head. She was hard, critical and demanding. Yet, she cared so much about me as a scholar and ALWAYS offered her support and guidance. It is because of her that I went from average teaching evaluations to almost the highest in the department. I want to thank her for helping me become the scholar I am today. Dr. Aram Goudsouzian is perhaps one of the most impactful professors at the University of Memphis and in the country. The scholars that he has mentored span the country and his scholarship is top notch. Yet even with his acclaim, he remained so down to earth and approachable. He offered to help me sharpen my focus to really understand African American history. Even though I did not stay at the University of Memphis, he offered wise (and sometimes wisecracks) words of encouragement and remained committed to me as a scholar. I thank Dr. Goudsouzian for laying the groundwork for my development in the field.

Next, I would like to thank my crew at the University of Mississippi. These folks made my five and a half hours drive bearable. My Louisiana lady Kelsey Pellettiere, my Memphis friend Jasmine Stansberry, my civil rights brother Chet Bush, my brother brother Jemar Tisby,

and my Guyana girl Estherine Adams were such a huge part of my life at UM. I have so many stories (that I will not share) of how we were able to navigate Oxford and enjoy our journeys. I consider each of them invaluable and look forward to seeing their stars shine brightly. It is impossible to get through graduate school without the help of awesome faculty members. First, Dr. Marc Lerner is perhaps one of the best graduate program coordinators in the world! He answered my emails around the clock and worked hard to get me to UM. I am forever grateful for his guidance. Dr. Jessica Wilkerson helped shape my analysis of women and was instrumental in providing me a useful gender framework. Lastly, I want to thank Dr. Zachary Kagan Guthrie for helping me to expand my analysis to include international (Africa) aspects.

Without a good committee, a graduate student can write forever. I am convinced I had the best dissertation committee. I want to thank Dr. Rebecca "Becky" Marchiel for her constant kindness and warmness. She cares so much about graduate students and their well-being. She also was the most excited to hear about my work in rural Arkansas. As a scholar of urban history, Dr. Marchiel was eager to "hear the other stories" that are told in rural America. I would also like to thank Dr. Jodi Skipper for serving as the external department evaluator. I am certain that her keen eye as an applied anthropologist really strengthened the final project. Dr. Garrett Felber is one of those rare scholars who has a passion for the past and wants to apply that passion to issues in the present. I want to thank Dr. Felber for always being open to hear my ideas and ready to offer his support and guidance. Lastly, I would like to thank the chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. Shennette Garrett-Scott. I could literally fill ten pages with words of gratitude, but I know she would tell me to "tighten it up" and "stop being so verbose." Dr. Garrett-Scott

was certainly not looking for a graduate student with her busy busy schedule, but I think I may have worn her down! Once she accepted me, she was literally all-in. Dr. Garrett-Scott was always able to find the hidden nuggets in my roughest of rough drafts. Even when I was completely overwhelmed, she always said something kind to get me back into action. Dr. Garrett-Scott is truly a super-star and I am grateful that she chose me to be in her orbit.

I would also like to thank some awesome mentors, colleagues and friends who helped me tremendously throughout this journey. Dr. Roderick Smothers, Dr. Gregory Vincent, Dr. Lonnie Williams, Dr. James Wesley Ward, Dr. Jubria Lewis, Dr. Brent Sherrance Russell, Dr. Gabriel Tait, Dr. I. Warren Sanders, Jamal Taylor, Arthur McDade, Nicholas Turner, Dennis Dent, Charles King and Charles Cornish provided inspiration at the times that I needed it most. To each of them, I say thanks.

I would also like to thank the people who made this project literally possible. The library staff at the University of Arkansas, Ms. Amy Allen, and the staff at the University of Arkansas-Monticello, Mr. Blake Denton and Ms. Annette Vincent. Also, this project benefited greatly from the personal stories of Arkansas activists. The oral histories were invaluable! I would like to thank each of the participants for their candor and most importantly their trust.

Last and certainly not least, I would like to thank my family. My mother, Deloris Turner Gipson has always been by champion since day one. She bought me every book I ever wanted and I look forward to handing her a copy of my book once it is published. As a single mother of four, she made sure we were loved. Thanks mommy! I am blessed to have three very supportive and caring sisters. Lakeidra, Divonna (Nicole) and Amanda shower me with love and affection

every time we talk. They are so proud of their “big” brother, that I never want to let them down. This journey is for all of us. I love each of you dearly along with my very active nieces and nephews. I also want to thank my wife Jasmine. She tells me that I am the smartest person she knows and one day I will begin to believe it. Thank you for constantly being there. I love and appreciate you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF IMAGES

INTRODUCTION

Countless activists during the Civil Rights Movement fought for the right to attend the institution of their choice, but newly arrived Black students on these campuses discovered that racism and other inequalities had not been adequately addressed. They often asked themselves, "How can I thrive here?" Instead of just relying on some of the proven strategies of the earlier Civil Rights Movement such as litigation, legislation, and boycotts, many Black students embraced Black Power strategy and tactics such as protest, occupation, and militancy to change the campus climate. Instead of viewing the campus as just a site of oppression and limited opportunity, which it certainly was, Black student activists used their voices to create sites of progression and justice. They were able to connect university sites to existing and emerging local movements to address what they viewed as the limitations of earlier strategies.[1] It is important to note that the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) and the Black Power Movement (BPM) are not the antithesis of one another but rather moments on the continuum of the long black freedom struggle.[2] Even though both the CRM and BPM were both concerned with political and economic justice, educational equity, and cultural awareness, the tactics and strategies utilized to accomplish these goals were different.[3]

---

[1] In the revision, the work will make a stronger connection between the campus movement and the local communities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was difficult to complete some of the necessary research.

[2] In a series of monographs, historian Peniel Joseph has made a compelling argument for looking at the CRM and BPM as a continuum of activism instead of separate movements. See Peniel L. Joseph, *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Peniel L. Joseph, ed., *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Holt Company, 2006).

[3] I will do stronger job of connecting the campus movements with local movements in the future revision.

One of the main goals of CRM and BP in this period was political and economic justice, which refers to activism that challenged white supremacist politics and white supremacist economic oppression. As it relates to the BP goal, this one of the riskiest because of the sheer magnitude of violence and the deadly risk involved with challenging the status quo. With segregation and Jim Crow fully entrenched in society and codified in many places, activists faced dangers in the 1960s that were substantially different. Yes, activists could be lynched, killed, maimed, and tortured during any period after slavery. However, the danger was much more imminent because of the growing racial hostility and white backlash due to limited gains made by Blacks (e.g. *Brown v. Board*, pushing of Voting Rights Act, and Civil Rights Act).

A second goal of the CRM and BP is educational equity. One of the greatest successes of the classic CRM is the success of desegregating schools. The *Brown v. Board* decision ruled that "separate but equal" was unconstitutional and school districts should move with all deliberate speed to desegregate public schools. While some school districts desegregated peacefully (Hoxie in Arkansas) others required federal intervention accompanied by the National Guard (Central High School in Little Rock). While public K-12 schools worked on compliance with the court decision, public higher education had its own set of challenges to confront. Once many colleges (mostly in the South) got past the problems associated with the initial enrollment of Black students in the 1950s early 1960s, such as separate dorms, cafeterias, and classrooms, many schools had no idea that they would be contending with radical demands from the successors of the initial cohorts, nor were they prepared to institute the necessary changes. On college campuses, it was Black students who demanded that they receive equitable treatment on campus. Thus, by embracing BP ideology, students were not going to be satisfied with just desegregation, but rather forced the university to contend with integration. To be clear, some BP

activists advocated for a separatism that would counter to integration. However, on college campuses, many Black students wanted to be integrated into campus life while still maintaining their Blackness. Part of the confusion is that integration and desegregation are often used interchangeably, yet they are completely different, but related, concepts of addressing racial exclusion. Desegregation refers to the legal process by which separation of races is ended. On the other hand, integration refers to the ways in which races interact with one another in a formerly segregated space.[4] While the CRM was largely successful in desegregating schools BPM wanted emphasize liberation through Black autonomy, which could be defined as self-definition, as well as self-defense what happens once Blacks were in these same schools.[5]

A final distinct goal of the CRM and BP is cultural awareness. During the classic CRM, Black activists found great value in highlighting the achievements and contributions of Blacks within this country. During the BP movement, activists embraced these same tenets and worked even harder to Blackness would be integrated into the fabric of the country and not just on the periphery. These activists would go on to coin the term "Black is Beautiful," which spawned the cultural arts movement within the BPM. While each of these CRM and BP goals are distinct from one another, I am not suggesting that they did not share commonality. In fact, their objectives were quite similar in that each goal was committed to protecting Blacks from institutional racism and violence, inspiring Black pride and supporting Black independence.

[4] Martin L. Krovetz, "Desegregation or Integration: Which is Our Goal?," *The Phi Delta Kappan,* 54, no. 4 (December 1972): 247-249.

[5] In the revision, this study will draw a clearer distinction between segregation and integration. The CRM emphasized conformity with white society in its stress on integration and assimilation into the American mainstream.

Additionally, each of these goals envisioned that they would be international in focus and not just domestic.

Many of the college students who first integrated college campuses came of age during the traditional CRM and were aware and appreciative of the legislative and legal accomplishments attributed to its success. However, these students were also critical of the earlier movement for not taking a more militant approach to overt racism and violence and were determined to employ new tactics to achieve change. Just as Blacks around the country were demanding substantive changes in their communities, so were Black Arkansans. By embracing Black Power ideology that worked for them, Black students on university campuses in rural towns in Arkansas were able to create change.

The convergences and divergences of the Black Power movement in rural Arkansas manifested in multiple ways that were similar, yet distinct from urban cities. Using rural as a descriptor of the town is important to this study since its characteristics make it vastly different than urban cities. Cities are typically more metropolitan and attract individuals from a variety of different places. Conversely, rural towns do not have the same types of transient populations. Although rural towns that have universities located within its limits attract transient populations, those individuals disproportionately represent the surrounding areas. This distinction means that even rural towns with a larger than normal population based on the university, still resembled and exhibited rural behaviors.[6]

---

[6] For books on Black Power in rural states see Lance Hill, *The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt* (New York: New York University Press, 2010); Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Crystal R. Sanders, *A Chance for Change: Head Start and Mississippi's Black Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Akinyele Umoja, *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement* (New York: New York University, 2013). In the revision, this study will place a greater emphasis on the local movements in rural towns.

Yet, Black students in rural university towns embraced various elements of Black Power and discarded others. Local political, economic, and social dynamics shaped their choices. This study makes a significant intervention in both the scholarship that magnifies the contributions of local people to national movements and conversations and to work that focuses on the southern roots of Black Power.[7] Arkansas serves as an excellent site for exploration of Black Power in the immediate years after the CRM because it is often left out of BP narratives. While Arkansas was not as deadly as its southern neighbors Mississippi and Alabama, it certainly was the site of horrific lynchings and mass murders prior to the CRM. Arkansas was also home to some of the most affluent Blacks in the country during the early to mid-twentieth century, but it also had immense poverty. These tensions provide an interesting foundation for activism in the state. Scholars have focused much attention on the Elaine Massacre, labor organization among tenant farmers, and integration of Central High School. The state's diverse legacy of activism, however, has largely been left out of histories of the civil rights movement in general and the Black Power movement specifically.[8]

Historiography

This study seeks to disrupt the narrative that Black Power as an organizing philosophy was concentrated in just urban cities and larger states. The meaning of BP has continued to be

[7] For some examples of local studies, see Emilye Crosby, *A Little Taste of Freedom: The Black Freedom Struggle in Claiborne County, Mississippi* (University of North Carolina Press, 2005); J. Todd Moye, *Let the People Decide: Black Freedom and White Resistance Movements in Sunflower County, Mississippi, 1945-1986* (University of North Carolina Press, 2004); William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (Oxford University Press, 1981). The revision will bring in multiple voices to show a greater range of experiences in Arkansas.

[8] For more information on Arkansas history with race relations see Nan Elizabeth Woodruff, *American Congo: The African American Freedom Struggle in the Delta* (Harvard University Press, 2009); Williard Gatewood and Jeannie Whayne, *The Arkansas Delta: Land of Paradox* (University of Arkansas Press, 1996); Richard Cortner, *A Mob Intent on Dealth: The NAACP and the Arkansas Riot Cases* (University of Connecticut Press, 1988); Fon Gordon, *Caste and Class: The Black Experience in Arkansas* (University of Georgia Press, 1995); Grif Stockley, *Blood in Their Eyes: The Elaine Race Massacres of 1919* (University of Arkansas Press, 2001); and Grif Stockley, *Ruled by Race: Black/White Relations in Arkansas from Slavery to the Present* (University of Arkansas Press, 2008).

debated since Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) shouted the words in 1966 during the Meredith March Against Fear. To be sure, Carmichael did not invent the term Black Power; the term had been in use since the late 19th century. However, this phrase would enter the imaginations of black activists for decades to come. Generally, BP has been associated with a militant shift in activism that is typically seen as contradicting the contemporary CRM. However, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm opined that "Black Power is concerned with organizing the rage of Black people."[9] Her observation lends credibility to the militant shift of the BPM in that rage was now a prominent feature of the organizing. This quote does not diminish the anger that Blacks felt during the CRM. However, Chisholm is suggesting that peaceful protest should no longer be considered the most prominent method of activism at that moment. Yet, it also concludes that Black Power is still about organizing Black people, in much the same way that the CRM was about organizing Black people. While Black Power may have been an outlet for Black People's rage, it also provided the opportunity to achieve Black Power's singular purpose: Black people controlling their own destinies.[10]

Historians often categorize Black Power by looking at various strains such as cultural nationalism, revolutionary nationalism, and separatism.[11] Due to its elasticity, it is important to understand that BP is not a monolith but, rather, a myriad collection of strategies. Even though activists envisioned BP in multiple ways, they often shared some basic tenets, such as

---

[9] Shirley Chisholm, "Speech at Howard University, April 21, 1969," http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/blackspeech/schisholm-2.html accessed February 20, 2021.
[10] Rhonda Williams, *Concrete Demands: The Search for Black Power in the 20th Century* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

[11] For further reading on the various strains of Black Power see; Komozi Woodard*, A Nation Within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1999); Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics Of Liberation In America* (New York: Random House, 1967); Nelson Peery, *Black Radical: The Education of an American Revolutionary*, New York: The New Press, 2007); John McCartney, *Black Power Ideologies: An Essay in African American Political Thought* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992); Kerry Pimblott, *Faith in Black Power: Religion, Race, and Resistance in Cairo, Illinois* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2017); William Van DeBurg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture*, 1965-1975 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); James Robenalt, *Ballots and Bullets: Black Power Politics and Urban Guerrilaa Warfare in 1968 Cleveland* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2018); Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

internationalization of the Black freedom struggle, economic independence, political independence, and the elimination of police brutality.

I find the aforementioned Black Power strains too limiting to adequately address Black Power in rural Arkansas.[12] One must focus on goals and the malleability of BP. When using goals as the framework instead of ideologies, three distinct commitments to Black Power become evident, particularly in the period 1968-1975. These goals are political and economic justice, educational equity, and cultural awareness. Political and economic justice refers to activism that challenged white supremacist politics and white supremacist economic oppression. Educational equity addressed the shortcomings of the desegregation of educational institutions. It sought to address the remaining issues left on campuses after desegregation. It sought to equalize conditions on campuses for all students. Lastly, cultural awareness called for the recognition of African and African diaspora culture. This study will argue that Black Power activists in Arkansas did not view themselves as ideologues, but rather used Black Power to fit their specific goals at a very specific time.

In order to better understand how these goals manifested in the period, it might be useful to think of BP as part of a larger struggle. For too long, scholars looked at the CRM and BPM as very distinct movements that occupied very specific time periods with very different goals. The CRM and BPM, however, are parts of a longer movement: the Black Freedom Struggle (BFS). The BFS can be traced back to Africans' earliest moments in the Americas. In order to conceptualize a long Black Freedom Struggle, this study will utilize frameworks by three noted historians. Sundiata Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang advocate for more defined timeframe for movements in their essay "The Long Movement as Vampire," and Jacqueline Dowd Hall's stresses in "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past" that we must situate movements within a larger framework of Black resistance both spatially and temporally. Since there is merit in both frameworks, I utilize both when focusing on Arkansas. Although

[12] Black Power is a malleable concept that can be utilized in numerous ways. Black Arkansans navigated their local circumstances by choosing various Black Power tenets to achieve their goals.

some have viewed the debates contained in these essays as counterarguments, it is useful to use aspects of both in analyzing movements.[13] Yet, it is still important to understand the key differences between the two.

Specifically, we can look at BP as a specific response to societal problems facing Blacks in any given era. For instance, the armed response of Blacks during the St. Louis massacre in 1917 and the Elaine massacre in 1919 so that Blacks were willing to respond to violent threats with violence. Besides self-armed responses, we have numerous examples of Blacks willing to take a different route than non-violent protests. In *Concrete Demands: The Search for Black Power in the 20th Century*, Rhonda Williams does an excellent job of highlighting the different responses to oppression that Blacks had during the Black Freedom Struggle. Those responses included embracing Black nationalism and Pan-Africanism, calling for decolonization of Africa, and radical protest to the deteriorating urban environment. By highlighting the BPM in rural Arkansas as part of the longer Black Freedom Struggle, the goals of the movement in the period, rather than ideological categories like cultural-nationalist or revolutionary, offer important clues to how Black Arkansans mobilized aspects of BP in the late 1960s to mid-1970s.[14]

The shift to BP is evident in discussions of the CRM in the deep South. Hasan Kwame Jefferies provides a vivid example of local people using armed self-defense as an organizing strategy in the face of immediate danger. In *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt*, Jefferies chronicles the actions of Black activists who created the Lowndes County Freedom Party (LCFP) to challenge the Lowndes County Democratic Party because the county party was completely controlled by white supremacists which meant that Blacks had no voice. The LCFP adopted armed self-defense as a tactic to show white supremacists that they stood ready to meet violence with violence. Even though the LCFP did

[13] Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "The 'Long Movement' as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," *The Journal of African American History*, vol. 92, No. 2 (Spring 2007) pp. 265-288; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 91, No. 4 (March 2005) pp. 1233-1263.

[14] Williams, Concrete Demands.

not win any elections in their third-party bid, they did signal to white supremacists that non-violence as an organizing principle was slowing fading away and that Black activists would no longer passively accept voter intimidation.[15]

Black activists in the deep South prioritized local economic and political issues related to their own cities and towns.[16] In *Local People*, John Dittmer highlights the local activists and grassroots movements in Mississippi. His monograph, written in the mid-1990s, is still important to understand activists' priorities and networks, but his work presents a narrative that suggests most activism was of a non-violent nature. However, Akinyele Umoja studies the exact same Mississippi as Dittmer, but Umojoa's *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement* centers Black Mississippians embrace of armed self-defense as a critical strategy to combat violent repression, economic exploitation, and disenfranchisement. One group in particular, the Deacons for Defense, shows that armed self-defense worked as a tactic to combat economic oppression. As a quasi-paramilitary group, the Deacons provided much needed protection for black business owners. While the Deacons were not afraid to use force, their mere presence acted as a deterrent for white supremacists. The political and economic justice goal of the BP provided activists a level of assurance that change was on the horizon.[17]

Dittmer's analysis of local movements is certainly helpful in studying local activism in Arkansas. Dittmer's highlighting the role of often overlooked small organizations such as COFO, parallel succinctly with the roles of overlooked organizations in Arkansas such as the

---

[15] Hasan Kwame Jefferies, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt* (New York: NYU Press, 2009).

[16] Charles Payne, *I Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (University of California Press, 1995); John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (University of Illinois Press, 1995); Neil McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (University of Illinois Press, 1990); Crystal Sanders, *Chance for Change: Head Start and Mississippi's Black Freedom Struggle* (University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Aram Goudsouzian, *Down to the Crossroads: Civil Rights, Black Power, and the Meredith March Against Fear* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Girroux, 2014); Susan Ashmore, *Carry Me Home: Birmingham, Alabama: The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

[17] To see an example of different narratives of local organizing see; John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995); Akinyele Umoja, *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Self-Defense in the Mississippi Freedom Movement* (New York: NYU Press, 2013).

Committee on Negro Organizations (CNO). However, Dittmer's lack of focus on militant or armed self-defense organizations does not allow for an assessment of different strategies throughout the long Black Freedom Struggle. Conversely, Akinyele Umoja does highlight the experiences of rural Black Mississippians and their reliance armed self-defense as an organizing strategy. This type of analysis that explores the shift in activism strategies is sorely missing from Arkansas' Black Power narratives, thereby obscuring a complete analysis of the movement.

While the goal of educational equity during the BP movement did not rely on armed self-defense in the way that the political and economic justice goal did, it certainly had its own unique characteristics. For one, this BP goal was spearheaded largely by students, which is not necessarily surprising since a vast number of CRM activists were students. However, much more surprising is perhaps the fact that many of the students demands were met without any outside intervention, such as litigation or laws. Considering that many of the civil rights changes in this country came about because of federal intervention (legislation and litigation), the fact that students were able to effect change on their campuses is remarkable. To be sure, there were certainly external factors, such as other campus protests, Black Panther Party, etc., that helped them in their goals. By remaining steadfast in their demands, Black student signaled their unwillingness to compromise on issues most important to them.

In identifying educational equity as a unique goal of the BPM in Arkansas, it is important to highlight that it does not refer to educational access. Educational access is merely the opportunity to go to a school of your choosing and is an issue that *Brown v. Board* was supposed to address. Conversely, educational equity refers to offering comparable educational experiences for Black students had once they arrived on predominately white campuses. To understand Black students' shift from gradualism to radicalism, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) provides an excellent case study.

SNCC was part of the classic CRM and eventually shifted ideology at the start of the BPM. As its inception, SNCC was considered the energetic wing of the CRM because of their youthfulness and willingness to engage in more dangerous types of activism such as the sit-ins

and voter registration drives. Working within the CRM structure worked during the earlier years of its formation. However, as priorities began to shift from southern rural areas to urban cities, SNCC took a more militant/separatist approach as they believed that Blacks should be in charge of their own destinies and their own affairs with little outside help. In his authoritative monograph, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*, Clayborne Carson marks the embracing of BP by these student activists as a logical step in the Black Freedom Struggle. The latter 1960s was a time of awakening for Black activists who were now starting to see the fruits of their labor pay off. With students beginning to focus their activities inward, it is no coincidence that they would begin to look at college campuses as the next battleground for Black liberation.

In an effort to further demonstrate the effectiveness of student organizing, specifically in Arkansas, Jennifer Wallach and John Kirk explore the Arkansas chapter of SNCC, or ArSNCC as the group came to be known. ArSNCC was similar in many ways to the parent organization in that it heavily relied on students and young activists to populate the organization. Additionally, ArSNCC activists worked tirelessly to register Black Arkansans to vote. What is most fascinating about ArSNCC is that they had a white project director and that their work became increasingly focused on the Delta region which had a high concentration of Blacks, as opposed to the cities.[18]

The death of Malcolm X would rock the nation and particularly BP activists. While Malcolm X predated the Black Power Movement, he inspired thousands of Black Power activists to embrace self-determination and uplift of the Black race. However, his death did not ignite students in the same way that Dr. Martin Luther King's death did in 1968. Black students all over the country would seek to memorialize King on their respective campuses.[19] Much to their

[18] Jennifer Jensen Wallach and John A. Kirk, ed. *ARSNICK: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Arkansas* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2011).

[19] In 1968, there were numerous memorials on college campuses for the death of Dr. King. However, many white students were ambivalent and at times hostile.

surprise, they were met with outward hostility by white students. This moment coupled with years of ill treatment on campus would lead to the birth of the Black Campus Movement (BCM) within the BPM in which Black students, emboldened by the successes of their peers, would demand substantial changes on their respective college campuses. Some students who participated in the BCM were also members of SNCC, but these student activists had goals that differed from those of SNCC. These changes ranged from better dorms to the hiring of Black professors. Black students protested at schools all over the country for better conditions.

Ibram Kendi chronicles numerous BP student groups in his book *The Black Campus Movement*. He shows that students at state universities, ivy league institutions, and private schools alike were all confronting the same issues; the equitable treatment of Black students on campus. This wave of activism is also responsible for the emergence of several Black Studies departments around the country. The educational equity goal of BP is responsible for much of the progress that occurred for Black students on college campuses during the late 1960s to early 1970s. I agree that the assassination of MLK motivated Arkansas students just as much as their peers around the country. However, while students around the country demanded Black Studies departments and Black professors, students at PWIs in Arkansas demanded that and much more.

Martha Biondi looks at the explosion of Black activism on college campuses in her book *The Black Revolution on Campus*. I agree with her assertion about Black Power that "the search for a new approach to racial reform had begun to take shape in the early 1960s, and accelerated after 1966, when most Black student organizations were formed."[20] Biondi recognized that while this new rhetoric and activism seemed sudden, it was a natural progression for young Black activists. However, Biondi's case studies focus on schools located in major U.S. cities which does not allow for an evaluation of schools in rural towns. As we will see in Arkansas, students certainly utilized BP rhetoric and activism. However, some of them were much slower

[20] Martha Biondi. *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 14.

highlight their links to BP because of local circumstances. This is a critical area that deserves attention.

The final Black Power goal this study addresses is perhaps one of the most recognizable as cultural nationalism. In Arkansas, this was a way of life for several young Blacks. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, you would have been hard pressed to not see a Black person donning a Dashiki or Afro or both. The reason being is because during this time period, there was a renewed interest in the black aesthetic and a focus on illustrating that "Black was Beautiful." Also, several organizations would develop whose sole object was to bring awareness to and celebrate Black culture. One of the largest organizations to proliferate this country and other countries abroad was Maulana Karenga's US Organization.[21] While the US organization was considered a BP organization, it was unique in that it focused on cultural African traditions such as Kwanzaa and Kawaida. Additionally, it was one of the only organizations to embrace the Swahilli language. In his book *Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, the US organization and Black Cultural Nationalism*, Scot Brown chronicles the rise and fall of the US Organization. He notes that the US Organization centered African culture and made cultural expression a main aspect of the BPM. Embracing the Black aesthetic was not limited to just formal organizations. Rather, Blacks throughout the country found ways to promote cultural awareness.[22]

The cultural awareness goal of BP would inspire a movement within a movement, the Black Arts movement, which would address the lack of visual and literary representation of Black people in this country and internationally. The forefather to the Black Arts Movement, the

[21] In the revision, this study will further explore gender and misogyny within BP.

[22] Scot Brown, *Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, the US organization and Black Cultural Nationalism* (New York: NYU Press, 2003); Tanisha C. Ford, *Dressed in Dreams: A Black Girl's Love Letter to the Power of Fashion* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2019); Paul C. Taylor, *Black is Beautiful: A Philosophy of Black Aesthetics* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, 2016); and Amy Abugo Ongiri, *Spectacular Blackness; The Cultural Politics of the Black Power Movement and the Search for a Black Aesthetic*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010).

1920's Harlem Renaissance, often receives the most attention when we think about Black literary emergence. However, there were other burgeoning arts movements elsewhere.[23] While the Harlem Renaissance was certainly critical to the New Negro Movement, the Black Arts Movement (BAM) of the 60s and 70s was just as critical to Black life. Specifically, BAM was not just a product of urban cities, but rather a nationwide effort to expand the Black arts for mass consumption.[24] James Smethurst helps to complicate the urban narrative in his monograph *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s*. Here, Smethurst argues that the south and north had just as much influence on literary nationalism as the east and west coast. This point is critically important to establishing cultural awareness as a broad goal of BP not just in cities, but also in rural towns. Artists in Illinois contributed to this movement by creating masterful illustrations of Black people just as thespians in Mississippi showcased their talents in the Free Southern Theatre.[25] These expressions of Black art provided a critical connection to the Black Power movement for rural Blacks. Even though this work explores aspects of the Black Arts movement in the South, they completely overlook Arkansas and the rich history of participation that exists in the state.

---

[23] Darlene Clark Hine and John McCluskey, eds., *The Black Chicago Renaissance*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2012); Christopher Robert Reed, *Roots of the Black Chicago Renaissance: New Negro Writers, Artists, and Intellectuals, 1893-1930* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2020).

[24] James E. Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s (*Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Lisa Gail Collins and Margo Natalie Crawford, eds., *New Thoughts on the Black Arts Movement*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006); David Robson. *The Black Arts Movement* (San Diego: Lucent Books, 2008); *Black Post Blackness: The Black Art Movement and Twenty-First Century Aesthetics* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2017); Tom Dent and Jerry Ward, Jr., *New Orleans Griot: The Tom Dent Reader* (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2018); Thomas C. Dent. "Beyond Rhetoric Toward a Black Southern Theater," *Black World*, (April 1971): 15–25.

[25] Kalamu ya Salaam. *The Magic of JuJu: An Appreciation of the Black Arts Movement*, (Chicago:Third World Press, 2016); Tom Dent and Jerry Ward, Jr. *New Orleans Griot: The Tom Dent Reader* (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2018); James Smethurst. "Black Arts South: Rethinking New Orleans and the Black Arts Movement in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina," in *Radicalism in the South since Reconstruction*, ed. Chris Green, Rachel Rubin, James Smethurst (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

Rural studies as a distinct area of inquiry is still developing as scholars debate the different frameworks, that can be used to understand non-urban places. Specifically, historians are asserting that rural does not have to necessarily mean agriculture and that rural studies offers a unique perspective that goes largely unnoticed.[26] To be sure, there are numerous books about the CRM that centers rural communities, but they do not necessarily use rural studies as a methodology.[27] Most of the historiography of race and rural studies focus on Blacks' activism in agricultural labor and on demonstration agents standing in the gap between county and federal agricultural agencies and Black farmers and communities.[28] However, there are a few notable

[26] "Roundtable: Why Does Agricultural History Matter?" *Agricultural History* 93, No. 4 (Fall 2019): 682-743; Shane Hamilton, "Theory and Theorizing in Agricultural History," *Agricultural History* 93, no. 3 (2019): 502-19; Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, "New Directions in Rural History," *Agricultural History* 81, no. 2 (2007): 155-58; Valerie Grim, "African American Landlords in the Rural South, 1870-1950: A Profile," *Agricultural History* 72, No. 2 (Spring, 1998): 399-416. With regard to women and gender in rural studies, Linda M. Ambrose, Jenny Barker Devine and Jeannie Whayne, "Revisiting Rural Women's History," *Agricultural History* 89, No. 3 (Summer, 2015): 380-387, though the discussion of African America women is very limited.

[27] Danielle McGuire, At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance-A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power, New York: Vintage Books, 2010; Timothy B. Tyson, Radio-Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

[28] About rural Black Arkansans, see Cherisse Jones-Branch, "'To Raise Standards among the Negroes': Jeanes Supervising Industrial Teachers in Rural Jim Crow Arkansas, 1909–1950," *Agricultural History* 93, no. 3 (2019): 412-436; Cherisse Jones-Branch, "An Uneasy Alliance: Farm Women and the United States Department of Agriculture, 1913–1965," *Federal History* 10 (April 2018): 98-114; Gary Zellar, "H. C. Ray and Racial Politics in the African American Extension Service Program in Arkansas, 1915-1929," *Agricultural History* 72, no. 2 (1998): 429-45; Melissa Walker, "Home Extension Work among African American Farm Women in East Tennessee, 1920-1939," *Agricultural History* 70, no. 3 (1996): 487-502. About rural Blacks in general, see Pete Daniel, *Dispossession: Discrimination against African American Farmers in the Age of Civil Rights* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); R. Douglas Hurt, ed., *African American life in the rural South, 1900-1950* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003). On the long civil rights struggle in Arkansas, see Carl H. Moneyhon, "Black Politics in Arkansas during the Gilded Age, 1876-1900," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (1985): 222-245; J. Morgan Kousser, "A Black Protest in the 'Era of Accommodation': Documents," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (1975): 149-178.

exceptions that engage in discussions of a wider range of Arkansas' activist history.[29] When you search for studies that center both BP and Rural studies, the results are even slimmer.[30]

This study intends to expand rural studies by applying some of its key tenets to Black Power. Additionally, rural university towns in Arkansas were important sites of activism even though the activism at times looked different. For instance, because of the community familiarity in rural spaces, some Black students were hesitant to join BP organizations for fear of embarrassing their families or bringing them trouble. Living in a rural community did not afford the type of anonymity that cities did. However, by utilizing rural studies as a framework, we recognize a new BP attribute, academic militancy. Academic militancy will be further explored in the subsequent chapters.[31]

To be sure, there are a few monographs that chronicle Black Power organizations that existed outside of urban city centers. However, many of those groups were formed in direct

---

[29] Selected essays in Guy Lancaster, ed., *The Elaine Massacre and Arkansas: A Century of Atrocity and Resistance, 1819-1919* (Fayetteville: Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, 2018); John A. Kirk, ed., *Race and Ethnicity in Arkansas: New Perspectives* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2015); Randy Finley, "Crossing the White Line: SNCC in Three Delta Towns, 1963–1967," in *Arsnick: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Arkansas*, eds. Jennifer Jensen Wallach and John A. Kirk (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2011): 54-68; Jennifer Jensen Wallach, "Replicating History in a Bad Way? White Activists and Black Power in SNCC's Arkansas Project," in *Arsnick: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Arkansas*, eds. Jennifer Jensen Wallach and John A. Kirk (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2011): 69-86; selected essays in John A. Kirk, *Beyond Little Rock: The Origins and Legacies of the Central High Crisis* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2007).

[30] Russell Rickford, "We Can't Grow Food on All This Concrete": The Land Question, Agrarianism, and Black Nationalist Thought in the Late 1960s and 1970s," *The Journal of American* History, 103, no. 4 (March 2017): 956-980; Alec Fazackerley Hickmott, "Black Land, Black Capital: Rural Development in the Shadows of the Sunbelt South, 1969–1976," *Journal of African American History*, 101, no. 4 (2016): 504-534; Mary G. Rolinson, *Grassroots Garveyism: The Universal Negro Improvement Association in the Rural South, 1920-1927* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Claudrena N. Harold, *The Rise and Fall of the Garvey Movement in the Urban South, 1918-1942* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[31] Academic militancy is a concept that continued to come up throughout this study. It will be further developed in a future work.

response to often times violent oppression.[32] While historians have chronicled how college campuses served as fertile recruitment ground for Black Power activists, colleges in Arkansas that are located within rural communities have not served as a site of exhaustive inquiry.[33] Additionally, these particular Arkansas groups were just as concerned about Black Arkansans across the state as they were the Black students on campus. Specifically, at least three colleges in the state, University of Arkansas, Southern Arkansas University and University of Arkansas-Monticello, had very active Black Power organizations that at times, looked very different than the traditional narrative usually portrays.[34] Studying these three universities in three distinct areas of the state, allows for a comparison of tactics, motives and strategies across different regions/populations.

[32] For books about Black Power and its origins see: Dan Berger, *Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press*, 2014); Ashley Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Robyn Spencer, *The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016); Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio-Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

[33] Ibram H. Rogers, *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1966-1972* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012). Rogers attributes student activism during this time period to be a part of what he calls the long Black student movement (LBSM) that encompasses 1919 to 1972. Students demanded more Black faculty, more Black courses, and more resources for Black students. He asserts that this new wave of activists served as recruits during the Black Power Movement.

[34] While there is not a consistent definition of Black Power or the Black Power Movement, activists in Arkansas at times embraced the notions of Afrocentricity embedded in some definitions of Black Power and at other times eschewed this notion in favor of interracial cooperation.

CHAPTER ONE
THE BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN ARKANSAS

Arkansas has a long history of civil rights activism that extends long before the typical starting point of 1940 and reaches beyond the so-called zenith of 1957 desegregation of all-white Central High School.

[1] Given limited analyses on other aspects of the Black freedom struggle in Arkansas, with the exception of the Elaine Massacre of 1919, it might appear that 1957 marked the denouement for civil rights activity in Arkansas. However, Arkansas has a long history of Black activism in the state. To be sure, Black Arkansans continued to confront battles with white segregationists long after 1957.[2] In order to better understand and fully appreciate the contributions of Black Arkansans to the Black Freedom Struggle, we must first expand the temporal limitations that have artificially bookmarked the most important moments of activism to the mid-twentieth century. Next, in addition to expanding the time frame of activism, it is important to expand the definition of activism to include overt, covert, implicit, and explicit acts which allows the discovery of sometimes overlooked activism. This chapter will highlight various periods of civil rights activity in Arkansas. While activism in Arkansas spans a much longer period, this chapter will begin the Reconstruction era and trace four major periods of activism through the late twentieth century: Legislative Achievements and Boycotts, 1868-1920; Building Capacity and

---

[1] John A. Kirk, *Redefining the Color Line: Black Activism in Little Rock, Arkansas, 1940-1970* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 11.

[2] Daisy Bates, *The Long Shadow of Little Rock: A Memoir* (Fayetteville, University of Arkansas Press, 2000): 115.

Working Together, 1920-1957; The Integration Years, 1957-1965; and Black Power 1965-1980. The final period is the major focus of this study and will receive substantive treatment throughout the dissertation.

Legislative Achievements and Boycotts, 1868-1920

Early Black activism in Arkansas concentrated on political and legislative achievements because of the number of free Blacks in Arkansas. In 1868, newly emancipated Black Arkansans played a decisive role in the election of the first six Black legislators ever elected to the Arkansas legislature. Between 1868 and 1893, at least eighty-six Black men served in the state legislature. Other Southern Reconstruction governments dwarf Arkansas's numbers. For example, Mississippi had over two hundred elected Black officials during the same time period.[3] Yet, the Black Arkansan legislators certainly made an impact. For instance, formerly enslaved State Representative Anderson L. Rush became the first African American to sponsor a piece of legislation that became law. House Bill 65, titled "An act to define the qualifications of jurors," set the qualifications for court juries. While innocuous on its face, Rush's bill would allow formerly enslaved Black men to serve on juries alongside whites. These types of bills were commonplace for Black legislators as they attempted to utilize their newfound freedom and authority to improve the lives of Black Arkansans.[4]

However, one should not think of these Black legislators as a monolith. For instance, their occupations ranged from a minister, lawyer, and even farmer. Even more, their individual wealth varied from $50 a year to well over $1,000. Their different class and geographical

[3] Eric Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders during Reconstruction*, revised ed. (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1996).

[4] Blake Wintory, "African-American Legislators (Nineteenth Century)," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/african-american-legislators-nineteenth-century-13932/. In the revised work, this study will focus on why legislative achievements were so critical during this period.

backgrounds at times caused the legislators to disagree on substantive issues such as education. However, most of the time they voted together in order to further the causes of civil rights in the state. Major studies of the first Black legislators in Arkansas invariably focus on their biographies instead of their legislative accomplishments and political diversity. By looking their biographies and not their collective impact, it is possible to see why the first Black legislators are not typically included in the long Black Freedom Struggle as it relates to civil rights. However, this view is inadequate and should be revised.[5]

Even though Representative Rush's bill passed with little fanfare, his colleague, Representative Reverend James T. White, had no such luck. Representative White introduced what would become Bill 59, which called for "punishing common carriers for making discrimination on account of color."[6] Although the bill had been previously tabled, it managed to make its way to the House floor after being amended. The scene that day on the floor vote was quite chaotic as several House members attempted to break quorum. Yet, Bill 59 overwhelming passed 52-11 with all of the Black legislators present voting in favor of the bill. The following day, the state's largest newspaper *The Daily Arkansas Gazette* remarked that this bill was "Africanising [*sic*] the state."[7] In a criticism of the large number of white legislators who supported the bill, the paper went on to say, "we have no objections to people becoming negroes if they have a taste that way."[8] These comments and the chaotic scene at the capitol highlight

---

[5] Chris W. Branam, "'The African Have Taken Arkansas': Political Activities of African Americans in the Reconstruction Legislature," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 73 (Autumn 2014): 233–267; Blake Wintory, "African American Legislators in the Arkansas General Assembly, 1868–1893: Another Look," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 65 (Winter 2006): 385–434.

[6] "Afternoon Session," *Weekly Arkansas Gazette (Little Rock, AR),* July 14, 1868.

[7] Ibid.

[8] "Scene in the House," *Daily Arkansas Gazette,* July 11, 1868.

how Black activists had to continually contend with creating change for Black Arkansans while also withstanding public backlash.[9]

The state Reconstruction governments provided notable victories for Blacks all across the South. What made these legislative successes even more significant is that Black legislators were involved in the process for the very first time. However, these legislative achievements would end in Arkansas just as they did elsewhere in the South after the failure of Reconstruction in the late 1870s and elude Black Arkansans for the next sixty years with Jim Crow being firmly entrenched. Yet, they remained undeterred in their quest for equality and equity. Effectively banned from holding office and voting, Black Arkansans looked to another mechanism for change: boycotts.

When the Arkansas legislature passed the earliest Jim Crow laws to provide separate accommodations for Blacks and whites in 1903, Black Arkansans across the state protested and used the boycott just as others were doing around the country.[10] The first day the law became effective, the streetcars had less than 10 percent of its Black ridership, which was the lowest it had been within a two-year period. The Black boycotters named themselves the We Walk League in a show of determination. The We Walk League showed their resolve as an organization by voting to fine any member found riding one of the streetcars. Representative Rev. White attempted to rationalize the law by saying that it "was better for the negro, as it

---

[9] Branam 237; "Afternoon Session," *Weekly Arkansas Gazette,* July 14, 1868; "Scene in the House," *Daily Arkansas Gazette,* July 11, 1868.

[10] "Jim Crow Bill Passed," *Arkansas Democrat*, February 21, 1903; *Arkansas Democrat*, March 13, 1903. For more information on streetcar boycotts in Arkansas see Fon Louise Gordon, *Caste and Class: The Black Experience in Arkansas, 1880–1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995); John William Grave, *Town and Country: Race Relations in an Urban-Rural Context, Arkansas, 1865–1905* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1990). For additional context on Jim Crow and streetcar boycotts, see Blair L.M. Kelley, *Right to Ride: Streetcar Boycotts and African American Citizenship in the Era of Plessy v. Ferguson (*Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

always assures him a seat if there is one vacant in the car."[11] This rationale may have convinced some whites of its fairness, but one elderly Black woman refused to be persuaded by it. At the 23rd Street stop in Little Rock, an unnamed Black women took a seat near the front and refused to move when the conductor asked her to do so. She said, "Go long, Mr. Conductor, I wuz bawn among white folks, raised wid 'em an' still lives wid 'em. Ize gwine ter ride in de kyars wid 'em. Ize gwine ter sit jes' where I pleases in dis here kyar."[12] This woman's comment shows that Black people were keenly aware of discrimination and refused to just willingly accept Jim Crow. Just thirty years prior, the Civil Rights Act of 1875 had been passed making it unlawful to segregate based on race. Now, in 1903, Black Arkansans were yet again fighting for rights in which they were once guaranteed.

The Streetcar Segregation Act (Act 104) of 1903 proved to be a lightening rod for Black Arkansans. Those white legislators who supported the bill claimed it would prevent social equality among the races while the range of reasons cited by those against the bill included questions about the bill's constitutionality and fears about the unintended consequence of ending free public education.[13] While whites remained split on the issue, Black were almost universally against the bill. Blacks mobilized across the state voiced their opposition. In the state capital of Little Rock, Blacks assembled at a local church to voice their displeasure. Blacks in the northeastern parts of the state also gathered publicly. Blacks in Fort Smith decided to voice their strong opposition by adopting a unanimous resolution on behalf of all Blacks in the town that

[11] In the revision, this study will further explicate the tensions within Black Arkansans' approaches to social and political change and better situate the Arkansas movement within regional and national legal challenges and activist responses. Additionally, it will include more explanation of post-Reconstruction Jim Crow legislation and Black activism through World War I, including education.

[13] "Debate on Segregation Takes Up Day in House," *Daily Arkansas Gazette,* January 26, 1905.

outlined their reasons for opposition. The resolution expressly called out the Governor and members of the legislature and asked all citizens of Arkansas to "unite and aid in defeating the measure."[14] One of the most stinging rebukes in the resolution said the following,

> While the colored people are to a large degree and have been the producers of wealth of the state, because of circumstances over which we have no control, we are not to the same degree the possessors of wealth. Yet, that we have made decided progress toward this and within the limited freedom, no one can gainsay. Still, in view of our comparatively small personal holdings, and our numbers with regard to the total population of the state, the passage of the segregation bill into law would be disastrous to the colored public schools of the state.[15]

This self-awareness of Black Arkansans was absolutely astonishing in the continued face of oppressive Jim Crow laws.

After two full days of debate, the Arkansas house voted 54-26 to postpone the bill indefinitely. While this may not seem like much progress, just two years earlier, that same Arkansas legislature voted 80-0 to enact a Jim Crow law for public accommodations. There were two major changes during this time period. The first is that Blacks from Mississippi and Alabama were now seeking opportunities in Arkansas and escaping the even more oppressive laws in those states. Second, and perhaps most important, Black Arkansans were showing that they were willing to not only speak up but also act whenever they felt injustice.[16] As Jim Crow became more and more entrenched in the South, Black Arkansans began to realize that in order to sustain success, they would have to pull their resources together and work collaboratively to achieve change.

---

[14] "Texarkana-Fort Smith Negroes Oppose Segregation," *Arkansas Democrat,* January 25, 1905.

[15] Ibid.

[16] "Jim Crow Bill Passed," *Arkansas Democrat*, February 21, 1903; *Arkansas Democrat*, March 13, 1903; "Segregation Postponed," *Arkansas Democrat*, January 29, 1905; "Segregation Bill Indefinitely Postponed," *The Osceola Times,* February 5, 1905; "Segregation Bill Held Up," *Fort Smith Times*, February 5, 1905.

Building Capacity and Working Together for Change, 1920-1954

Little Rock in the mid-twentieth century resembled most average-sized capitol cities. During the 1920s, Jim Crow laws were in full affect, and Black Arkansans contended with how to respond. Class differences within the Black community shaped their priorities and methods. Due to their divergent interests, just like the legislators fifty years prior, consensus was hard to come by at times. Middle-class Black families were interested in maintaining their status and were, at times, unwilling to challenge the status quo. Conversely the working class, with a surge of non-natives from surrounding states, were unwilling to bear the tremendous burden of Jim Crow. Yet, in the decades to come, both classes would realize just how important it was to work together for their shared interests.[17] In 1940, approximately a quarter of Little Rock residents were Black, and there were some educational institutions dedicated solely for educating Black kids. However, just like most other cities in the South, schools for Black children were woefully underfunded and in overall bad shape. Although this issue would not be universally addressed for another decade with the *Brown* decision, it did serve as the foundation for future legal fights such as the notable teacher pay equalization cases that came later.[18]

Although Arkansas is sometimes considered the "Upper South," it certainly mirrored its more southernmost counterparts in vicious ways. The presence of the NAACP was especially significant as the national organization was very selective of where it spent its limited resources. Its victory in gaining the release of the Black men jailed in connection with the Elaine Massacre gave it a track record of success in Arkansas that it could not always boast about in other places.

---

[17] In the revision, this study will provide a detailed analysis of class issues within the movement in the period and more detail about the movement in the interwar period, especially in the aftermath of Elaine and during the Great Depression, as well as activism during the WWII era.

[18] Gordon, *Caste and Class*; John Kirk, *Redefining the Color Line: Black Activism in Little Rock, Arkansas 1940-1970* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2002), 11.

Even with this victory, the NAACP was not overly interested in Arkansas in the early 1940s despite repeated requests for assistance from local branches.[19] Though his comments focus on Mississippi, historian John Dittmer's observation that opponents of civil rights were typically less threatening when the national media and organizations were involved but often reverted back to their destructive behavior after the national exposure had subsided apply equally to Arkansas.[20]

Although there are several explanations for this behavior, it is important to note the conflict this caused for local residents. For instance, many local white businesses did not want to be in the news for fear it would harm their businesses. This conflict enabled Little Rock residents to chart a new course of action that changed the landscape in Arkansas for the remainder of the movement. The lack of interest from the national office prompted lawyer and civil rights activist William Harold Flowers to create the Committee on Negro Organizations (CNO) in 1940 to provide a "single organization sufficient to serve the social, civic, political and economic needs of the people."[21] The CNO would be the first of several efforts that were primarily driven by local residents in response to a lack of participation by national organizations. The main focus for the CNO was to achieve gains through political action much like Blacks did during the reconstruction governments. However, in 1940 this proved to be problematic. Like in other states, the discrimination against Blacks in the political process was pronounced, overt, and often violent.[22] Blacks were not allowed to participate in the all-white

[19] Kirk, *Redefining*, 25.

[20] John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

[21] John A. Kirk, *Beyond Little Rock: The Origins and Legacies of the Central High Crisis* (Fayetteville, University of Arkansas Press, 2007), 60.

[22] The revision will include more examples.

Democratic Party and were discouraged from voting at all. Undeterred, Flowers and the CNO continued to emphasize the need to mobilize locally in order to affect change in the political process. With very little help from outside sources, Flowers and the CNO made significant strides in politics over the next decade. These localized efforts in Arkansas would eventually be overshadowed by national exposure and national organizations.[23] Flowers and the CNO were integral parts of Arkansas' long Black freedom struggle.

The Integration Years, 1954-1965

As Black Arkansans continued to fight against injustices, many could not imagine what was about to transpire in the capitol city. One of the biggest cases in the history of American education was decided in 1954. The landmark *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* held that state laws creating separate schools for Blacks and whites was unconstitutional. This decision sent shockwaves across the nation and left many southern states with a dilemma. After decades of segregated classrooms, how could desegregation occur without incident? While states differed in their approach, Arkansas Governor Francis Cherry declared that "Arkansas will obey the law."[24] Initially, these sentiments were echoed across the state. Looking at Fayetteville, Charleston, and Fort Smith, Arkansas, desegregation proceeded relatively quickly even though Little Rock was touted as the bellwether of the state. In fact, the small town of Hoxie in Arkansas was actually the first school district to desegregate in the state with relatively minor disruption.

However, it would not take long for unrest to develop in Arkansas. Several school boards developed plans to shut schools down in response to *Brown*, while others desegregated or

[23] Kirk, *Redefining*, 12-33. The revision will include specific examples of CNO achievements.

[24] Ibid., 86.

integrated without incident. Little Rock proved to be a pivotal battleground because it was the capitol city.[25] This would now provide the NAACP, through its local chapter at first and later through the national organization, a prime opportunity to join a highly publicized battle in Arkansas. The NAACP used lawyers through its Legal Defense Fund to challenge the constant defiance of the Supreme Court's order. After successful suits, several meetings and numerous hurdles, nine black students were able to enroll at Central High School. The NAACP ranks began to swell as more black Arkansans believed that they could accomplish even greater feats. However, as time moved on, this appeared to be a miscalculation.[26]

If Little Rock served as a bellwether for the state, all eyes were on Central High School to see if integration would truly work. By most accounts, the nine students who entered Central High encountered all manner of obstacles not the least of which was constant external pressure to succeed. The NAACP constantly monitored the students and encouraged them to stay at the school despite any hardships they may encounter. It is this posture that serves as the basis for some of the criticism of the NAACP. While the success of integration has been triumphed in the annals of history, it was not, of course, without its tragedies.[27]

---

[25] Kirk, *Redefining*, 90.

[26] The Central High desegregation was the culmination of numerous lawsuits against the Little Rock School district. Early lawsuits centered around the fact that students wanted to go to schools that were closer to their homes instead of having to travel great distances. The Superintendent came up with a strategy that many parents didn't agree with but it was initially upheld in the courts.

[27] The amount of books written about the Central High School integration is vast including memoirs, autobiographies, and scholarly monographs. For more information, see the following: Carlotta Walls Lanier, *A Mighty Long Way: My Journey to Justice at Little Rock Central High School* (New York: Random House, 2009); Daisey Bates, *The Long Shadow of Little Rock: A Memoir* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1986); Melba Pattillo Beals, *I Will Not Fear: My Story of a Lifetime of Building Faith Under Fire* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2018); John Kirk, *Beyond Little Rock: The Origins and Legacies of the Central High Crisis* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2007); Elizabeth Jacoway and C. Fred Williams, eds., *Understanding Little Rock Crisis: An Exercise in Remembrance and Reconciliation* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999).

The exposure and attention that the Central High School integration has received gives the impression that it was the first public secondary school to integrate in the state. Several school districts had integrated three years earlier to very little attention or exposure. However, due to Central High School being in Little Rock and the NAACP's interest and involvement, Central High has been centered in the integration discussion. However, early integration was less politically and more economically motivated.

When the city of Fayetteville announced that it would integrate its high school, there was little objection. Even though the announcement came after the *Brown* decision, the Fayetteville school board had been contemplating integration for some time. Prior to the decision to integrate, the Fayetteville School board had been spending over $5,000 a year to send its Black students to schools located in other areas of the state, sometimes as far as 200 miles away. Due to overcrowding and expense, the school board was left with no choice but to integrate.[28] Fayetteville was not alone either. The Charleston school board voted to allow Black students to attend the all-white school in order to save money.[29]

During the integration years, there was a split among the Black community. Integration as implemented by the state, meaning the integration and busing of Black children to predominately white schools, almost assuredly meant the closure of Black schools and the laying off of Black teachers and administrators. It also meant that Black students who had gone to school together their entire lives could potentially be separated. Even as Black Arkansans attempted to compromise, integration still moved ahead. On September 23 after months of delays, injunctions and lawsuits, nine Black students were escorted into Central High School by

[28] Jerry Vervack, "Road to Armageddon: *Arkansas and Brown v. Board of Education*, May 17, 1954, to September 2, 1957," (MA thesis, University of Arkansas, 1978), 14-15.

[29] Ibid.

the national guard which had been activated by President Johnson. To greet the students were white segregationists that yelled expletives and racial slurs. Yet, the students continued into the school, undeterred.[30] Over the next few months, there were feelings of helplessness as the students continued to be escorted to the school by national guardsmen. Eventually, the fanfare dissipated, and life returned to somewhat normalcy.[31]

Black Power: A New Approach, 1965-1980

Local white Arkansans were embarrassed by the scrutiny and spotlight that the integration brought to Little Rock. However, many whites still were not convinced that integration was right for Little Rock or the country. Having been dealt a serious blow, white segregationists were determined not to go down without a fight. Although the desegregation effort was "successful," segregationists begin devising other ways to prevent Blacks' from accessing civil rights. Southern whites had successfully deterred some Blacks from civil rights activism by exerting economic pressure. In Little Rock, Black activists who participated in the civil rights movement were punished. One would have to look no further than the case of Arkansas activist Daisy Bates.[32]

Daisy Bates was a noted black activist and president of the Arkansas State Conference of the NAACP.[33] In addition to her civil rights duties, her and her husband owned the *Arkansas State Press* which published a weekly paper statewide. In her memoir, Bates recalls being

---

[30] John Kirk, *Redefining the Color Line: Black Activism in Little Rock, Arkansas, 1940-1970* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 118-120.

[31] In the revision, this section will provide an analysis of Blacks who were against integration and other key events in the state.

[32]Ben Johnson. "After 1957: Resisting Integration in Little Rock," in *An Epitaph for Little Rock*, ed. John A. Kirk, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2008), 115.

[33] In the revision, the study will look at less famous Arkansans and the economic distress they faced.

visited by a white lady prior to the desegregation of Central High.[34] This white lady represented a group of "Southern Christian women" and was sent to persuade Bates to stop desegregation efforts.[35] If Bates refused, the woman said Bates would be destroyed.[36] This guarantee came to fruition two years after the desegregation of Central High. In a matter of weeks, years of hard work came unraveled. Several of the advertisers cancelled their ads in the newspaper because of pressure exerted from whites and after years of being one of the only black owned newspapers in the state, the Bates closed its doors for good. This is just one example of how local people had to deal with the ramifications of being a part of a national movement. Although Bates suggests she received widespread financial support from across the country, she did not mention receiving direct financial support from the NAACP or other national civil rights organizations but rather suggests donations from across the state. This was more than likely the case because the relationship between the NAACP and the Bates began to deteriorate.[37]

Even though Central High School was desegregated, Jim Crow still remained prevalent in Little Rock. With other issues to confront, activists in Little Rock began exploring other frontiers such as integrating businesses. In 1960, the NAACP was no longer actively involved in Little Rock on a national scale which left a leadership void that several local leaders sought to fill. "This internal factionalism had serious consequences in the ability of the black community to embrace national as well as local protest initiatives."[38] This could not have been more evident

---

[34] Daisey Bates, *The Long Shadow of Little Rock: A Memoir* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1986), 170.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] NAACP Papers: Folder 010624-001-0273-Mr. L.C. Bates, [Field Secretary, Arkansas] 1966-1969.

[38] Kirk, *Redefining*, 141.

than in the case of Philander Smith College students who staged the first sit-in at a Little Rock establishment. With the momentum of the student-led Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) sit-ins across the country, students in Little Rock were taking notice. However, with a lack of direction the sit-in was a failure and even resulted in a rebuke from Philander Smith's president. Local NAACP leaders attempted to organize a boycott of local segregated businesses, but that too failed. Even still, local activists continued their civil rights activities despite any substantial progress. With the failure of the sit-in and boycotts, many activists wanted to recreate a national "moment" and wanted to capitalize on the Freedom Rides.[39]

The Freedom Rides first initiated by members of CORE were widely successful in bringing national attention to the issue of segregation in public spaces bus terminals. Although widely successful nationally, this strategy also proved difficult to emulate in Little Rock. It was clear that activists could not maintain the movement without the direct assistance of national organizations or a more coordinated local effort. It is this notion that many historians believe that the most significant gains in Little Rock came by way of direct involvement from national organizations. However, it remains unclear just why national activism models failed subsequent to the desegregation effort despite the same organizations being present. One could argue that the change in focus as well as impending civil rights legislation could have been the reason that national activity was being eschewed in favor of local activism.

As mentioned above, local activism was not a new concept in Arkansas. Two decades prior in 1940, W.H. Flowers realized the importance of having a local presence for local issues. In the 1960s, that same realization resurfaced as a group of physicians formed the Council on

[39] Ibid., 148.

Community Affairs (COCA) whose purpose was to provide "unity and direction of purpose to black activism in the city."[40] COCA decided to utilize a different strategy that would include soliciting the help of whites to make the process of integration seamless. COCA began to enjoy support in both white and Black communities, which further eroded support of the NAACP and its influence in the state.[41] With the success of local efforts, activists were beginning to see the most meaningful change since 1957. Interestingly enough, without the support of local white business leaders, it is difficult to say that meaningful progress would have been attained regardless of the push from local black activists[42]

In the 1960s, several waves of local Black activism began to pop up around the state. As Little Rock was once the bellwether, other cities and towns began to address issues prevalent in their respective cities. Some communities continued to fight for desegregation of schools while others addressed housing discrimination, job discrimination, and political disenfranchisement. Local people realized once again that they had the power to effect positive change as long as they worked together towards a common goal. In some ways, it is this activism that truly changed Arkansas.

The successful integration of Central High School was predicated upon the time-tested strategy of non-direct action such as litigation. However, the next decade would usher in sustained direct-action protest that would give rise to a new direction in the Arkansas civil rights movement. As noted above, the footprint of national organizations began to recede as their

[40] Ibid., 150.

[41] Ibid., 158.

[42] The revision will provide an in-depth and more nuanced analysis of interracial coalitions and other efforts in the midst of the classic CRM period, especially in housing, employment, and voting rights.

attention focused elsewhere in the country. This lack of national attention left local activists with a myriad of options to pursue.[43] Although unsuccessful, the first sit-ins held in Little Rock attracted the attention of local affluent Blacks in the city. In 1962, a small group of activists appealed to SNCC headquarters in Atlanta asking for its assistance. SNCC responded by sending William "Bill" Hansen, a white veteran of the movement, to Little Rock to help with the protest efforts. Upon arriving in Little Rock, Bill immediately noticed that there was much work to do as the city lacked the local infrastructure of other cities. Because of earlier failed sit-in attempts, Bill had a difficult time recruiting students with only a handful showing up for his first meeting.[44] This did not deter Hansen and he proceeded to devise a plan to integrate lunch counters. In a departure from previous SNCC demonstrations, Bill urged the students to avoid confrontation and instead try to reason with department store managers. This new strategy coupled with increased pressure from business leaders proved to be the turning point for sit-in demonstrations. A little less than a year after Bill Hansen arrived, major department store lunch counters in Little Rock had been desegregated.[45] The sit-ins were finally successful as a result of the renewed support amongst the local citizenry gave the movement an injection of support that had been lacking for the past few years. For instance, although SNCC was headed by an outsider, virtually all of the volunteers were local students from the area universities. Bill provided leadership, but the foot soldiers were almost exclusively local in contrast to the

[43] Jennifer Jensen Wallach and John A. Kirk, ed. *ARSNICK: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Arkansas* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press,2011), 6.

[44] Ibid., 15.

[45] Ibid., 21.

volunteers in Mississippi during Freedom Summer, who were almost exclusively from outside Mississippi.[46]

Buoyed by the latest victory, SNCC in Arkansas became the newest organizing apparatus and sought to extend its victories elsewhere in the state. SNCC turned to the eastern part of Arkansas and begin to employ its tactics in Pine Bluff and Helena. What Hansen and other SNCC volunteers encountered in eastern Arkansas was starkly different than that of the capital city. Although the group was accustomed to unsuccessful sit-ins, many were surprised at the lack of widespread support from black residents. However, after further investigation, they quickly realized that the battle for equality rest with economic empowerment rather than desegregation. For the civil rights movement in Arkansas, this would mark the beginning of the end of cooperation with national organizations.[47]

Part of the appeal of SNCC for local activists was the fact that the organization was at least willing to entertain the idea of nonviolence. However, proponents of nonviolent protest were beginning to change their tune as whites perpetrated more and more violence. In March 1965, the Arkansas state Capitol in Little Rock became a battleground for the second time in a decade. After the passage of the of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Capitol cafeteria was chartered as a private club in order to get around desegregation laws.[48] On March 11, approximately thirty members of the Arkansas chapter of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), mostly Philander Smith College students, attempted to purchase lunch at the cafeteria. After being denied service, SNCC members left the cafeteria, but immediately returned. The state

[46] Bill Hansen, interview by author, phone, August 15, 2016.

[47] Hansen, interview.

[48] Associated Press, "Little Rock Racial Demonstrators March on State Capitol Building," *Fayetteville Northwest Arkansas Times,* March 12, 1965.

police sprang into action and violently removed the group, which resulted in numerous injuries and a possible skull fracture for one of the members.[49]

The scene was so violent that the executive secretary of the Arkansas Council of Churches Rev. Sam J. Allen remarked that the police used "bar-room bouncer tactics" and insisted that the violence perpetrated on the protestors by the state police "ran a close second" to the violence that marchers faced in Selma, Alabama during that same time period.[50] The following week, approximately fifteen SNCC demonstrators attempted to enter the cafeteria and again were told to leave. This time after their removal, demonstrators formed a picket line in front of the capital with one person remarking, "we'd rather see it (the cafeteria) close than stay open like this."[51] In Arkansas, like elsewhere in the country, desegregation battles were being fought and won in the courtroom. However, some activists in Arkansas felt that court action was too slow.[52]

Not wanting a repeat of the previous violent demonstration, the Secretary of State (who also served as the incorporator of the private cafeteria, which was necessary to have a private entity at the capitol) met with a small group of the students but soon realized that this would not solve the issue as twenty-year-old student James Jones quipped, "We're not here for a conference…We came to eat."[53] This posture by students showed that they were less interested in the often times slow, long deliberative process that typically resulted in compromise, but rather wanted immediate results to their demands. On their third and final attempt a few days

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Associated Press, "State Troopers Remove Arkansas Demonstrators," *Shreveport Times*, March 19, 1965.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Associated Press, "Arkansas Police Bar Negro Try to Use Cafeteria," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, March 19, 1965.

later, two-dozen SNCC demonstrators attempted to enter the cafeteria but were removed this time by police wielding billy clubs and mustard gas.[54] This was perhaps the most chaotic scene of all the attempts as both demonstrators and state police attempted to escape the harmful gas fumes. The following day, the cafeteria closed its doors and did not reopen until weeks later when a judge ruled that the cafeteria had to be desegregated in accordance with the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution.[55] Even though most, including the governor, expected the judge's ruling that did not stop powerful whites from attempting to hold on to the last vestiges of segregation.[56] Up to this point, there had still been somewhat of a cooperative relationship between black and whites in working towards solutions for equality. However, now black Arkansans began to buy into Stokely Carmichael's espousal of armed self-defense.[57] As SNCC was deciding how to best address the needs of a divided citizenry, Carmichael capitalized on this lack of direction. Carmichael urged a more aggressive posture, as he believed nonviolence and cooperation had gotten blacks as far as they could go.[58] For a new group of young activists, this rhetoric was more than welcomed. Prior to SNCC's "official" departure in 1967, newly elected national chairman Stokely Carmichael visited the Arkansas project to discuss the new direction. Among the topics of discussion was the role of whites in the organization. Although Arkansas had enjoyed a modicum of cooperation among moderate whites and black activists, Carmichael was not much interested in collaboration. While he did not expressly forbid whites from participating in Arkansas, he made it clear that blacks should

[54] Lloyd Holbeck, "Negroes Ejected by Gas at Arkansas Cafeteria," *Casper Star-Tribune*, March 21, 1965.

[55] "Capitol Club is Ordered Desegregated," *El Dorado Times*, April 12, 1965.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Stokely Carmichael, *Black Power: The Politics Of Liberation In America* (New York: Random House, 1967), 60-75.

[58] Ibid., 50-51.

lead and maintain complete control over the activities. In essence, he welcomed an environment that embraced the ideology of Black Power. Shortly thereafter, Arkansas would officially join the Black Power Movement with the creation of the Black United Youth organization and several others that had an immediate impact in the state. Student activists were no longer willing to rely just on court action or silent direct action. As they embraced black power ideology, this would essentially mark a departure from the deliberative, court process and pivot to more direct action. The watershed moment playing out in the state's capitol gave black activists around the state the motivation and determination to change the power dynamics in their communities just as students helped change the power dynamics in the capitol.

Black Power Moves to Arkansas

The first documented Black power organization in Arkansas was the Black United Youth (BUY). Made up of some of the more-militant former members of SNCC, BUY was interested in economic empowerment.[59] Other community Black Power groups included the Council of the Liberation of Blacks (CLOB) and the Soul Institute. Each of these organizations had a unique purpose and was formed during the height of the black power movement in Arkansas. Not surprisingly, many of these groups were made up of militant Blacks that no longer felt other civil rights organizations had a place for them. These Black Power groups were similar to other Black Power organizations around the country in that the Arkansas groups were willing to be armed and willing to take control of their own destinies.

BUY, formed in 1966 in Little Rock with chapters around the state, was the most militant of all of the groups. Its founder, Bobby Brown, was no stranger to civil rights activity being introduced to activism at a young age. His sister, Minnijean Brown was one of the Little Rock

[59] In a revision, the study will look more closely at the differences among the respective groups.

Nine members who successfully integrated Central High School in Little Rock. Brown made no secret of the purpose of his organization. He suggested that it was an organization that would not shy away from direct confrontation with white people.[60] BUY had a nontraditional membership base that included a wide array of individuals from professional to gang members. One of its cornerstones was to ensure that African Americans had access to community resources. BUY did not exist for a long period of time, but it did manage to agitate during its existence. In a nod to its objection to non-violent tactics, BUY published an article in its newsletter titled, "Kill or Be Killed." They laid down the gauntlet for blacks suggesting that if they did not arm themselves, whites would kill them. Three years after its founding, Brown was arrested on charges of burglary and possession of stolen property. In return for agreeing to leave the state, the charges were dropped. The departure of Brown essentially marked the end of BUY.[61]

Although BUY would be the first Black Power organization in the state, it would certainly not be the last. Another short-lived, yet, noticeable organization was the Council of the Liberation of Blacks. Founded in 1969, this organization was actually founded by a group of professionals led by schoolteacher John Pascal. Unlike its predecessor, though, it was situated in Hot Springs, which is approximately seventy miles from Little Rock and one of the main concerns was the advancement of blacks through participating in local politics and economic boycotts.[62] In fact, one of its most successful protests drew a crowd of over 200 people that paved the way for blacks to participate in the Miss Arkansas Pageant. Just a year later, Velma

[60] James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (Washington DC: Open Hand Publishing, 1985), 200-210.

[61] James A. Kirk, "An Eyeball-to-Eyeball Kind of Organization": Black United Youth and the Black Power Movement in Arkansas," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (Autumn, 2016): 206-38.

[62] Associated Press, "CLOB Pickets Spa Store," *Hot Springs Sentinel-Record*, July 25, 1969.

Thomas became the first Black contestant to win the city pageant, and went on to become the first Black woman to compete in the pageant.[63]

As the proliferation of Black Power organizations continued to expand across the state, one of the great sources of recruits for them in were college campuses, which is not altogether surprising considering how many students had been involved in SNCC and the recent Capital protest. The following chapters will follow three of the more prominent college Black power organizations. Black power ideology would be a popular organizing for students and community members throughout much of the late 1960s and into the 1970s. As was the case around the country, there would be a precipitous decline in Black Power organizations as Black politicians were elected and organizing strategy shifted yet again. Even though it is often overlooked, Black activists in Arkansas, like many of their more metropolitan peers, also adopted Black Power as a philosophy to demand change in their communities. The following chapters will follow three of the more prominent college Black power organizations.

Arkansas has a storied civil rights history that should be explored through a lens that expands the temporal limitations of the modern civil rights movement. Noted Arkansas historian John Kirk suggests that Arkansas' Black activism did not "emerge out of the blue in 1957 and disappear in 1959."[64] Kirk's assessment could not be more accurate in that the spotlight of the Central High desegregation thrust Little Rock onto a national stage which made it the darling of several national civil rights organizations. However, what gets lost is the history of activism both before and after the spotlighted event.

---

[63] Associated Press, "Black Contestant Wins Miss Hot Springs Title," *Hot Springs Sentinel-Record*, June 21, 1970.

[64] John A. Kirk, "The Little Rock Crisis and Postwar Black Activism in Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, 66, no. 2 (July 2007): 242.

This chapter advocates for taking a more expansive view of civil rights activity allows a better understanding of the bursts of activity that occurred before and after the 1950s-1960s. With this more expansive focus, Arkansas' long Black Freedom Struggle narrative suggests that the freedom struggle continued beyond 1957 in a myriad of ways. Additionally, the move to Black Power ideology was the next logical step in Arkansas civil rights activism. The following chapter will take a look at the first Black Power organization founded on an Arkansas college campus.

CHAPTER TWO
"TO MAKE LIFE MEANINGFUL FOR EVERY STUDENT": BLACK AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRACY AND BLACK POWER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, 1968-1975

In January of 1948, Dr. Lewis Webster Jones had not even finished his first full year as president of the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, the flagship campus, before he began to receive mail from all around the state and region. The reason for dozens and dozens of postcards and letters was not to wish him well on his tenure but rather to give him advice, criticism, and commentary about a major decision he was about to make. The Arkansas legislature had just voted to allow the admission of Black students to graduate programs at the state's public universities. What had previously been a segregated university, the University of Arkansas was on the precipice of enrolling its first Black student. Yet, President Jones was keenly aware of what his decision would signal to both opponents and proponents of integration. On the one hand, Jones could communicate to some that he intended to "keep with the…traditions of the South" but to others express support for integration by admitting Black students to the school.[1] This chapter will explore the campus of the University of Arkansas and how Black students embraced Black Power in order to effect change on their campus.

On February 3, 1948, a World War II army combat veteran by the name of Silas H. Hunt officially enrolled into the University of Arkansas (UA) law school. What should have been a joyous experience with the other thirty students enrolled for the second term was much more

[1] See various items in Box 1, Folder 28 "Integration Correspondence, January-July 1948," University of Arkansas Office of the President Records, 1876-1972, MC 59, Series 3, Special Collections Department Repository, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, Arkansas, hereafter UA President Records.

solemn for Hunt for one specific reason: He was Black. Hunt was not exactly the first Black student to enroll at UA; that distinction goes to James McGahee who enrolled in 1872 during Reconstruction. Yet, Hunt is still considered a trailblazer as the first Black student after Reconstruction to enroll and attend a southern flagship institution.[2]

Hunt's enrollment was seen as progress in the South, but his experience resembled anything but that. Hunt attended segregated classes in which he would either sit in the basement or in the far back of a classroom. Additionally, Hunt was not allowed in any of the common spaces on campus, such as the student activity center. He even had trouble finding willing study partners. The campus reaction to his admission was mixed. One student remarked, "I'm against it. I doubt if he's interested as much in getting an education as trying to force the issue."[3] The "issue" to which the student referred was probably integration, which many Southerners equated with efforts by African Americans for social equality with whites and a violation of Southern norms. His was a common reaction as another student quipped, "I'm strictly against it. I don't want to associate with Negroes here or anywhere else. I doubt if this particular one is interested in an education; he is probably just setting a precedent."[4] While comments such as these were common, there were other students who felt much differently. Fred Smith from Hot Springs, Arkansas, said, "I'm for it. As a citizen of Arkansas and the United States, he should have equal opportunities with Whites. He must have a lot of courage to enroll here and is setting a good

---

[2] Out of all of the former confederate states, Arkansas admitted its first enrolled its first Black student prior to any of the others. The following is a list of state flagship universities and the year in which they admitted their first Black students post-Reconstruction: University of Virginia in 1950, University of North Carolina in 1951, Louisiana State University in1953, University of Texas in 1956, University of Alabama in1956, University of Florida in 1958, University of Georgia in 1961, University of Tennessee in 1961, University of Mississippi in1962, and University of South Carolina in 1963.

[3] "Students Voice Opinions on Admittance of Negro Students," *Arkansas Traveler,* February 3, 1948.

[4] Ibid.

example for his race."[5] Smith's statement reflects some of the optimism that white students felt as Blacks were integrating numerous schools across the country. Not all white students were immediately hostile to integration. Other students viewed integration in pragmatic terms. Hunt's fellow law student Robert B. Gibson remarked, "Until the Negro race has an accredited law school of their own in this state, which I hope is soon, I think they should have equal educational facilities here at the University, but segregation should be maintained, meaning separate classrooms."[6]

Despite the mixed reactions to his arrival, Hunt remained undeterred and focused on his studies. In fact, he rarely spoke about the historical nature of his admittance to the university and instead occasionally remarked that racial segregation would take generations to solve. While Hunt was accepted to the University, there still remained practical considerations to address. For starters, there were only about 200 Blacks in Fayetteville out of a total population nearing 15,000. Although many opponents of Hunt's admission hoped that he would not find available housing due to the small size of the Black population in Fayetteville and choose not to enroll, he in fact did find boarding at a private home. Hunt would prove to be a diligent student, once remarking that he did not have time for social events because he needed to "devote most of his time to studying." Yet, one can imagine the isolation Hunt felt as one Black student in a class of thirty white students of which he could not interact unless they wanted to.[7]

---

[5] "Negro Enrolls in University Law School," *Arkansas Traveler,* February 3, 1948.

[6] "Negro Enrolls in University Law School," *Arkansas Traveler,* February 3, 1948; "Students Voice Opinions on Admittance of Negro Students," *Arkansas Traveler,* February 3, 1948.

[7] "Negro Enrolls in University Law School," *Arkansas Traveler,* February 3, 1948; "Negro Law Student Studying Hard at Arkansas University; That's What Counts, Dean Says," *Northwest Arkansas Times*, February 26, 1948.

Although Hunt faced tremendous difficulties, he continued to work hard. However, he soon had to drop all of his courses due to being hospitalized with tuberculosis. Within a year of being admitted to the hospital, Hunt succumbed to his illness and died. Even though he was unable to finish his degree, Silas' admittance and subsequent enrollment was a huge success for the NAACP's educational-access strategy. This strategy entailed either suing state universities or, in the case of Silas Hunt, threatening to sue in order to get qualified Black students enrolled in graduate programs at predominately white universities. The NAACP litigated a series of cases that sought to overturn the separate but equal doctrine codified by *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896. As these cases made their way to the Supreme Court, governors of southern states gathered to propose regional graduate schools for their Black populations because few could afford to establish completely separate graduate schools of equal stature for Black students. Ultimately, regional schools never came to fruition, and, one by one, southern schools were integrated by a handful of Black students each year resulting in a small, yet meaningful core of what?[8]

While the NAACP's strategy of educational access was successful in getting Black students admitted to and enrolled in state flagship universities, the strategy was less successful in attaining educational equity, which is the notion that Black students would have comparable experiences and opportunities at these same campuses. To be sure, the court cases were a monumental achievement for Blacks around Arkansas. They were no longer limited to a handful of schools and did not have to travel far out of state to earn a college graduate degree. However,

[8] "Silas Hunt Sent to Springfield Hospital," *Northwest Arkansas Times*, August 7, 1948; "First Negro to Enter University of Arkansas Dies," *Hope Star*, April 23, 1949; "Bill for Separate Law School Up for Vote in Miss.," *Pittsburgh Courier*, February 14, 1948. *Plessy v. Ferguson* enshrined the legal doctrine of "separate but equal," until it was overturned by *Brown v. Board* in 1954. However, there was another pivotal case, *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada*, that forced states to admit Blacks into state university graduate schools. In *Missouri*, the court held that states that provided an education for whites had to provide in-state education for Blacks also. Since most states had already established undergraduate institutions for Blacks, this meant that Blacks would either be allowed to go to a state graduate program, or the state would have to create an equal Black graduate school.

there still was something missing on these predominately white institutions (PWI) campuses once they arrived. The schools did not offer any activities or organizations for Black students, nor did they attempt to establish a reflective community for these students.[9] However, this new, pioneering group of students integrating PWIs came of age at a time when Blacks looked at other organizing strategies to demand change. The growing sentiment both in Arkansas and around the country after World War II was for Blacks to take charge of their own destinies and not wait on change but demand it. Betten, one of the early Black students in the 60s, recalled, "Black Power gave us the impetus to get past many of the racist roadblocks set in our path." [10] As more and more Black students arrived at the Predominately White Institutions (PWIs), educational equity would come not through court cases but through Black Power.

Black Power at the University of Arkansas

One of the greatest sources of recruits for Black Power organizations in Arkansas were college campuses, which is not altogether surprising considering how many students had been involved in the 1965 Capitol protest. Scholars have noted that activism on college campuses should now be included in the long Black student movement in which Black students demanded equality and equity on predominately White campuses. According to Ibram X. Kendi (formerly Ibram H. Rogers), the long Black student movement encompasses 1919 to 1972. Students demanded more Black faculty, more Black courses, and more resources for Black students at PWIs. With the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* outlawing segregation in public education and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawing racial discrimination, increasingly black students enrolled at predominately white institutions across the south and mid-south with

[9] The revision will provide an in-depth and more nuanced analysis of interracial coalitions and other efforts in the midst of the classic CRM period, especially in housing, employment, and voting rights.
[10] Harold Betten, interview by author, phone, February 15, 2021.

Arkansas being no different. Despite the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, PWIs in Arkansas and elsewhere made little effort to accommodate Black students on those campuses beyond enrolling them. Fed up with the status quo and refusing to wait on the court to act like their predecessor did decades prior, students at Arkansas's flagship university embraced Black Power ideology and took full control of their circumstances with the formation of Black Americans for Democracy (BAD) during the spring semester of 1968.[11]

The University of Arkansas (UA) drew exceptional Black students from all over Arkansas and the Greater Delta region due to the legislature's 1948 mandate that higher education institutions in Arkansas integrate. Yet, issues of discrimination and hostility such as segregated sporting events and dorms plagued students on campus. Silas Hunt was forced to endure segregated classrooms and isolation on campus. Twenty years later, Black students had not only increased in number, but they were determined to demand a better environment and to be the generation that Hunt dreamed about decades prior.[12]

The 1960s presented multiple battlegrounds for the growing Black student population on campus. For starters, the University did admit Black students, but the residence halls remained segregated. Even though the Black students had not yet formed a collective group in the early sixties, they still found ways to band together for progress. In 1964, two Black students sued the university in federal court alleging discrimination on campus. Bob Whitfield and Joanna Edwards specifically petitioned the court to force UA to end racial discrimination in all facets of campus life, including housing, varsity athletics, hiring of instructors, social organizations, and

[11] Ibram H. Rogers, *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1966-1972* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012); Mordean Taylor Moore, "Black Student Unrest at the University of Arkansas" (M.A. Thesis, University of Arkansas, 1972).

[12] Charles F. Robinson II and Lonnie R. Williams, eds. *Remembrances in Black: Personal Perspectives of the African American Experience at the University of Arkansas* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2010), 47-150.

the recruitment of high school students. With about thirty Black students at UA during this time, Edwards knew that she and Whitfield were fighting for much more than just themselves. UA had a policy that required all women under the age of twenty-three to reside on campus. Yet, Black women could not live in the dormitories and were forced to stay in a dilapidated wooden house that the University purchased for Black women to live. Black men fared even worse as the University did not provide them a housing option at all, which forced them to look for local accommodations that were pretty scarce. Fortunately, some Black students were able to reside with local white families and were treated relatively well. Harold Betten, who boarded with a white family, recalls that the white families "never made us [the students] feel like they were doing us a favor."[13] Almost no students stayed in the predominately Black part of town because it was too far from the campus.[14]

In addition to equal housing opportunities, Edwards and Whitfield wanted to grow the number of Black students enrolled at UA. They insisted that UA follow the same guidelines to recruit Black students as they did white students, which required sending a recruiter to visit the high school. The UA President nor its trustees commented on the lawsuit, but Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus remarked that they (Edwards and Whitfield) "are more interested in trying to create disorder than they are in getting an education. Now they are attending the University and they have the opportunity for the education that can be received there, but they are apparently not satisfied."[15] Comments such as these from the Governor were not surprising at all and in many ways mirrored similar comments from decades earlier when UA was first

[13] Betten, Interview.

[14] "Negroes Ask End to All Discrimination," *The El Dorado Times*, August 18, 1964; Robinson and Williams, *Remembrances in Black*, 76.

[15] "U.A., Trustees Remain Silent About Suit Seeking Integration," *Northwest Arkansas Times*, August 19, 1964.

integrated. Still, the message was clear that officials were only willing to comply with the letter of the law, which stated that Blacks could attend state universities, and nothing else.

Following the filing of the federal suit, Edwards and Whitfield immediately filed an order seeking a preliminary injunction that would require UA to immediately admit all current Black students into the residence hall. Edwards and Whitfield argued that since the fall semester would begin prior to their lawsuit being heard, it was imperative that they be granted injunctive relief so that all Black students would have housing once the semester began. However, on a hearing of the merits, the federal judge declined to issue a preliminary injunction stating that there was insufficient evidence to admit an entire class of Black students in the residence halls since the only evidence presented came from Edwards and Whitfield. The judge reasoned that if he granted the relief sought on behalf of the class, his decision "might well disrupt seriously the orderly assignment of dormitory space which would be undesirable and might bring about undeserved inconvenience to other students who have reserved rooms in good faith which should not be done."[16] Even though the judge did not grant the injunctive relief sought for the entire class of Black students, he did open the integration door a little wider specifically for Edwards and Whitfield. The federal judge ordered UA to reconsider Edward's and Whitfield's housing applications and to allot them a room on a racially non-discriminatory basis.

Two months after Edwards and Whitfield filed the federal suit, UA President David Wiley Mullins announced that "the University of Arkansas will comply with the court direction. We shall proceed with housing of the students concerned, and they will be accorded the same treatment as all other students."[17] Mullins's statement signaled a victory, but it did not

[16] "Judge Opens U.A. Housing to Appellants," *Northwest Arkansas Times*, September 7, 1964.

[17] "Two Will Enter Dormitory," *The El Dorado Times*, September 10, 1964.

necessarily signal progress. True, Edwards and Whitfield were allowed to move on campus, but none of the other discriminatory practices were addressed either by the court or by the University. In fact, Edwards and Whitfield were the only two Black students allowed to move into the on-campus dorms that semester as a test to see if other Black students would be allowed to move in the following semester. Edwards noted that most of the other residents, "avoided her like the plague," but her experience in the dorms was largely uneventful.[18] Because of the distance from his housing to the campus (about a mile away), Whitfield was happy just to be able to be on campus and not have to walk as far to get to classes.

Edwards and Whitfield's lawsuit may appear to fit the educational-access strategy championed by the NAACP, but it was much more aligned with the new push for educational equity being championed across the country. As two veteran civil rights activists who were alums of the Pine Bluff SNCC project, Edwards and Whitfield both knew that litigation would only take them so far. They had to also be willing to continuously demand change concomitantly with their legal strategy. Lawsuits were successful at highlighting issues of inequity and, at times, forced the university to address issues. However, lawsuits did very little to change campus culture. Over the next few years, Black students would benefit from Edwards and Whitfield's success which empowered the students to work even harder to create change on the campus. However, the successors to Edwards and Whitfield were not interested in waiting on litigation; they demanded change now.

The Formation of BAD

By 1968, the UA had increased its Black student population exponentially from 36 in 1964 to a total of 133 out of approximately 10,000 students. UA was ill-prepared to deal with

[18] Robinson and Williams, *Remembrances in Black*, quote on 77, 144.

such an influx of Black students, even at such modest numbers, which resulted in a continuous hostile environment such as Black students being harassed and intentionally left out of campus activities. Besides the enrollment numbers, little had changed for Black students in the past decade. Fed up with the lack of equity and responsiveness from the administration, Black students banded together and made their grievances known in a very public way. In March of 1968, seventy-five black students (over half of the 133 enrolled at the time) met with the university president to discuss their grievances. Those grievances included the failure to recruit Black students, the insufficient number of Black athletes, the lack of Black instructors, and the playing of "Dixie" at official university functions. President Mullins met with the students and seemed genuinely concerned about their welfare. However, little changed on campus after the meeting.

In an effort to capitalize on their collective efforts, a number of the Black students got together and created Black Americans for Democracy (BAD). The purpose of BAD was to advocate for the needs of Black students. In a break from previous years, though, this group of students were willing to engage in both peaceful and disruptive demonstrations in order to get there point across. "We were literally trying to survive socially, academically and culturally. Yet, we were attacked for wanting basic survival," remembers Wendell Griffen, who was one of the first Black students at UA in the 1960s.[19]

Although the meeting with President Mullins did not yield the intended results, BAD would have another opportunity to flex its militant muscle. On April 4, 1968, shockwaves of hurt, anger, sadness, and rage were felt all across the world. An assassin's bullet took the life of

[19] Robinson and Williams, *Remembrances in Black*, 49; quote from Wendell Griffen, interview by author, phone, March 12.

one of the most prolific and well-known figures of the civil rights movement, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The day after his assassination in the wake of so many protests and so much anger, President Lyndon Johnson decided to address a joint session of Congress to address the fallout from King's assassination. In his remarks, President Johnson stated, "the nation can and shall and will overcome."[20] Yet, areas across the country evidently did not embrace those words in the same way as the nation continued to contend with racial violence in many areas.

In Fayetteville, Black students felt the pain of King's assassination like many others around the country. Yet, reactions to King's death varied. However, one reaction put BAD on a course to achieve unmeasurable success in the ensuing years. On April 10, 1968, six days after the assassination of King, the student newspaper published an editorial from Garland Hurst, a white student at UA, that was highly critical of Black people who protested and rioted across the country. Hurst stated that King's death had been too widely publicized and that if Black people truly followed King, they would not be breaking into buildings or responding violently to his death. He went on to hypothesize what King would have wanted, had he lived.[21]

Some Black students were upset that King's legacy was being questioned and wanted to make sure that they could offer a rebuttal to the letter. John Rowe, a Black student, wrote a scathing response that he acknowledged had "some racial overtones," but was necessary from his point of view.[22] The student newspaper declined to publish his letter and did not offer a reason. Rowe continued to try to meet with the editorial staff and other offices on campus. Finally, he met with Kay Carson, editor-elect of the student newspaper, who Rowe says agreed to publish

[20] "Johnson to Address Congress on Racial Crisis in King Death," *The Evening Sun*, April 5, 1968.

[21] "Views Voiced on King's Death," *Arkansas Traveler*, April 10, 1968.

[22] Ibid.

his letter. Carson would later deny agreeing to print the letter, and the newspaper never published Rowe's letter. Almost one month later, the stand-off between Black students and the newspaper reached its climax.

Rowe had exhausted all of the formal mechanisms to have his grievance addressed. With no options left, BAD members took matters into their own hands to address what they viewed as a blatant disregard for Black students. At approximately 7:00 a.m. on May 14, 1968, seventy protestors blocked the entrance to Hill Hall ,which housed the various publication offices as well as the printing office. The almost exclusively Black group of protestors stood side by side and prohibited anyone from entering the building, even the professors. By 8:30 a.m., the protestors allowed students to enter the building but still would not allow any newspaper staff to enter. The student government president Walter Slaughter immediately called an emergency meeting of the editorial board to discuss Rowe's grievance. During the open meeting, BAD President James Seawood demanded that Rowe's letter and a list of Black students' grievances be published in the newspaper. Additionally, Seawood called attention to the discriminatory editorial policy and asked the board to launch an investigation into the policy. Lastly, Seawood wanted to know why Blacks were not featured in the newspaper more often. Although the students were assured that they would receive fair coverage, the meeting ended with the editorial board upholding the editor's decision not to print Rowe's letter. Still, the editorial board affirmed its commitment of "promoting more harmonious communications and relationships with all segments of the University community with respect to student publications."[23]

[23] "*TRAVELER* Publication Blocked," *Arkansas Traveler*, May 15, 1968; "UA *Traveler* Resumes Publication After Sit-In," *Northwest Arkansas Times,* May 15, 1968; Moore, 37.

After seven straight hours, the protest and blockade ended at approximately 1:30 p.m. BAD had essentially succeeded in one of their goals: to disrupt printing of the student newspaper, which had never before been done. Even though all of their goals were not met, such as the editor resigning and the printing of Rowe's letter, the protest showed how Black students were moving away from litigation as a strategy toward embracing Black Power ideology. Seawood made a direct statement on why his organization decided to disrupt the university publication operation:

> [W]e felt like we had exhausted all the official channels. We sent a letter to Kay asking her to present the grievances. We talked to the Dean of Students. We tried to get [George] Lease [the student body president] to call a meeting of the board because we felt the issue important enough to call a meeting.[24]

Black students were realizing that they were not satisfied with the slow nature of litigation and begin to prefer the immediacy. They found that self-determination and physically confronting the power structure were key attributes of Black Power that were critical to them achieving their goals.

"It Will Not Raise the Black Man from Niggerdom": Concessions are not enough for Equality.

During the fall semester, UA administrators were eager to not have a repeat of the tumultuous spring. The UA administration decided to be proactive in getting students involved in the governance of the university. They began to place students on most university committees that previously had been limited to just faculty and staff. While neither the president nor other administrators specifically said these changes were a result of the blockade by BAD, both the dean of students and academic vice president said publicly that they would not tolerate more

[24] "*TRAVELER* Publication Stymied by Demonstrators' Sit-In Yesterday," *Arkansas Traveler*, May 15, 1968; Moore, 37.

takeovers of University buildings or any disruptions of university activities. Both administrators were keenly aware of how student protests on college campuses were taking shape around Arkansas and the country.[25]Neither wanted to be held responsible for overseeing a tumultuous protest that could garner international headlines. Additionally, part of this new posture was a direct result of the criticisms both administrators faced for not calling UA police to remove BAD members from the blockade.[26] Even though the University was beginning to show that they were willing to work directly with students to solve issues, BAD was buoyed by their earlier success and continued to press for immediate change.[27]

While Black students celebrated other successes, such as the launch of the first Negro history course, Black students set their eyes on what they considered a decades-old issue: the playing of Dixie. Black students at the university had complained about the song Dixie since at least the early sixties. However, there was never an organized attempt to have the song removed. Because of their visibility and growing numbers, BAD began to form white allies and gain some support on campus. The biracial Arkansas Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (ARSNCC) had some moderate success bringing together Black and white activists in the state. In an effort to show broad support for the issues, members of BAD teamed up with white members of the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) to submit a petition to the student senate banning the song. Joe Neal, representing SSOC, made an impassioned plea to the senate on behalf of his group and BAD. Neal noted the history of Dixie as a song that originated in the North but came to the South as a battle song of the Confederacy during the Civil War:

> As students in a Southern university, we cannot ignore the reality around us: to do so is fool hardy. Ending the playing Dixie will not end poverty, it will not raise the black man

[25] The revision will include further contextualization with Black student movements across the South and USA
[26] The revision will add more about local reactions among Black and white locals and other Arkansans

[27] "Arkansas U Gives Students Bigger Role in Governing," *The Springfield News-Leader*, September 4, 1968.

> from 'niggerdom.' Nor will ending it dampen enthusiasm for any team that wins games. But as a symbol it will indicate a determination to rectify the injustice that our white definition of life is.[28]

Neal reasoned with his fellow white students in the senate that they should not vote to their vote should be a sign that the university was a new place. "Dixie in fact is a nice tune. When it no longer means white definition, white supremacy, white indifference to Black degradation it will probably be revived. But it will mean something different than it means now."[29]

Despite his plea, the delayed action on the playing of the song at official university athletic events. The Student Senate's rationale was that there was already a student petition circulating around campus that would put this issue on a referendum to the student body which they suggested would be the best way to express the sentiment of the campus. The delaying of this issue to a later time was not only strategic, but necessary due to very strong support for the song among the white student body. The petition referenced by the senate had garnered over 2,000 signatures which represented almost a fifth of the student population. In fact, immediately following the senate meeting, many students expressed their support for the song in the school newspaper. One such student wrote, "I cannot see the Negroes' case in demanding the abolition of the song Dixie. Demands such as this one are too often pushed past the point of rationality."[30] The student goes on to rationalize that the playing of Dixie was similar to Black students requesting Black history courses; both are intended to instill pride in the respective community, Dixie for southern whites and Black history courses for Black students. Another student

---

[28] "Black Dilemma on Campus Questioned," *Arkansas Traveler*, October 2, 1964; "Joe Neal on 'Dixie' Issue," *Arkansas Traveler*, December 18, 1968.

[29] Ibid.

[30] "*Dixie* Query: To Play or Not to Play," *Arkansas Traveler*, December 11, 1968; "Committee Presents Petition," *Arkansas Traveler*, December 19, 1968; "Reader Protests," *Arkansas Traveler*, December 19, 1968.

suggested that he was protesting the singing of We Shall Overcome by Black students because it is a radical song and if Blacks are opposed to racism, they should not be singing the song. Black students were enraged by this illogical thinking. Since their alliance with SSOC produced little results, BAD, once again took control of their own destinies and determined that they were more than equipped to advocate for themselves and on behalf of all Black students.

As the Spring semester opened, BAD continued to protesting the playing of "Dixie." While their actions did not have an immediate impact on campus, it certainly had a sizable impact around the state. Across the state in Jonesboro, a group of Black students at Arkansas State University formed the Black Student Association and protested against the playing of "Dixie" at a football game by waving placards during the game. The sizable group of students all left prior to the end of the game and started protesting at the university student center. Protests against the playing of the song were not limited to college campuses.

Down the street at Jonesboro High School, a group of Black students protested and eventually sued the school board over the playing of the song alleging that playing it was like a badge of slavery. About two hours to the west in Conway, six Black students forced the student council to vote on whether to play the song or not because the symbolism was offensive to Black students. Perhaps one of the biggest battles over the song outside of Fayetteville occurred in the small town of Texarkana. A group of almost 800 people showed up to a school board meeting to advocate for or oppose the playing of the song. The week prior, there was a major fight at the high school pep rally between white students and Black students once the band started playing "Dixie." In continuing to protest the song, Black students began wearing black gloves and throwing a fist in the air as a tribute to Black Power. At the meeting, white parents demanded

that the song continue to be played and that Black gloves be banned from the school.[31] The parent suggested that Black students were intimidating the white teachers, and something had to be done. Even though the board passed a resolution to continue playing "Dixie," about fifty students dropped out of the band in protest leaving the band with a little over half of its members.[32] Although none of the Black student activists were immediately successful in stopping the song from being played, their newfound Black Power ideology provided them with a strategy to not only highlight their issues but forced the white power structure to take notice and eventually make change for fear of further disruption.[33]

Back on campus at UA, BAD was planning for their own confrontation with the playing of "Dixie." Since the tabling of the issue at the senate meeting the previous year, BAD had been vocally opposing the song. Even though sentiment around the state began to slowly change about the song, it continued to be played at UA.[34] BAD members knew that they would have to create a major unyielding disruption protest in order for the University to take note, much as they did the previous year. Luckily, fortunes were in their favor this year. The UA Razorback football team was ranked number 2 in the polls and were set to take on the University of Texas

---

[31] During the Black Power movement, Black iconography such as black gloves, afros, and leather jackets became synonymous with the movement. For additional reading on Black Power iconography see; Tanisha C. Ford, *Liberated Threads: Black Women, Style, and the Global Politics of Soul* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015) and Amy Abugo Ongiri, *Spectacular Blackness: The Cultural Politics of the Black Power Movement and the Search for a Black Aesthetic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010).

[32] "Negroes Protest Playing Dixie at ASU game," *The Camden News*, November 10, 1969; "Dixie Suit is Dismissed, Termed 'Silly'," *Baxter Bulletin*, July 10, 1969;" To Play Dixie Despite Negro Protests," *Hope Star*, October 4, 1969; "Dixie is One of Key Issues at Board Meet," *Northwest Arkansas Times*, October 15, 1969; "Song Causes 50 Negroes to Drop Out," *Hope Star*, October 29, 1969.

[33] "Texarkana Under Racial Stress," *The Courier News*, December 1, 1969; "Resolution on Dixie by ASU Group," *Baxter Bulletin*, December 4, 1969. "Dixie" was such an inflammatory song because of its close connection to racist ideology from the confederate south.

[34] "Song of Slavery," *The Courier News*, November 4, 1969; "Letters to the Editor," *Baxter Bulletin*, November 6, 1969.

Longhorns who were ranked number 1. Billed as the game of the century, these two bitter rivals were set to play in Fayetteville on December 6, 1969.[35] As the school was in a frenzy with excitement, BAD knew that this would be the time to act. The week prior to the game, the school planned a pep rally to energize the students and fans for the big game. However, BAD had another plan. Approximately 70 black students took over the seats that were reserved for the band members to sit and play. Additionally, BAD members blocked the aisles of the Greek theatre so that the band could not enter the stage. BAD President Eugene Hunt stated that, "they wanted to explain their position about 'Dixie.' All we have asked was a chance to state our position. The most disgusting thing is that they didn't allow us to say it. We have appealed to everybody in the administration of any significance at all."[36] Eventually, the technicians turned off the microphones, but the BAD members would not leave the state. This forced the band to march and relocate the pep rally down the street. One BAD member Carl Moore quipped, "they can move the pep rally to Wilson Sharp, but where are you going to move the Texas game off the Astro Turf?"[37] While there was a reported threat to a local radio host, the protest ended without violence.[38] Yet, the UA administration and student government was much more concerned about what would happen at the game should *Dixie* be played.

For the entire week leading up to the game of the century, students on both sides of the issue spoke out through the student newspaper. A Black student named R. D. Tucker

---

[35] While the University of Arkansas did not have any Black football players until the 70s, the University of Texas did have its first Black player in 1968. For more information college football desegregation see Charles H. Martin, *Benching Jim Crow: The Rise and Fall of the Color Line in Southern College Sports, 1890-1980* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010) and Lane Demas, *Integrating the Gridiron: Black Civil Rights and American College Football* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010).

[36] "Negro Protest Against Dixie Disrupts UA Student Rally," *Northwest Arkansas Times*, November 26, 1969; "Dixie"UofA Black Student Disrupt Pep Rally," *Arkansas Traveler*, December 2, 1969.

[37] "Dixie"UofA Black Student Disrupt Pep Rally," *Arkansas Traveler*, December 2, 1969.

[38] "Negro Protest Against Dixie Disrupts UA Student Rally," *Northwest Arkansas Times*, November 26, 1969.

commented that, “the playing of ‘Dixie’ is just one manifestation of pervasive racism that has to be appropriately dealt with at this time.” The head drum major of the band white student commented, “to me, ‘Dixie’ is a fight song; I don’t think there are any racial overtones at all.” Even the assistant band director, D. G. Pittman entered the discussion by agreeing with his drum major that Dixie was a school fight song and that it did not have any racial overtones. Pittman says that, “I think ‘Dixie’ is a darn good tune. I admit it has some connotations.” What those connotations were, Pittman never admitted. However, based on the fervor of the Black students on campus, they certainly knew what he meant.[39]

As if the game of the century could not get in bigger, President Richard Nixon had decided to come to the game and the game would be nationally televised. Knowing that this would place UA on the world stage, the administration quickly sprang into action. First, the newly established University Senate Equity and Grievance Committee scheduled an open meeting in which all students interested in Dixie could attend and have their thoughts heard.[40] The student senate also met to discuss the issue and over 100 students Black and white students showed up to the meeting. The meeting broke into smaller discussion groups in which Black and white students gave their perspectives. The prevailing argument from white students was they did not mean any harm to Black students when they sang the song. BAD member Semon Thompson’s response to the argument was, “I’m telling you now, you are doing harm.” Several members of BAD made impassioned speeches that night such as the one from Mr. Cook which said in part, “this one thing [the playing of ‘Dixie’] hurts me, makes me mad and I tell you that and you ignore me. So you must consider me a non-human.” Prior to the vote, several senators

[39] All quotes from “Students Comment on Dixie,” *Arkansas Traveler*, December 2, 1969

[40] “Arkansas Has Gone Hog Wild,” *Hope Star*, December 3, 1969; “Dixie Meeting,” *Arkansas Traveler*, December 2, 1969.

indicated that they may personally feel one way, but they must also consider the wants of their respective constituency groups. To this argument, one BAD member responded, "if it was left up to the majority, neither she, nor any Black would be at the University." After approximately two hours, the student senate voted 28-6 to no longer play "Dixie" at university events. The reaction was swift from the majority white student body. There were many who accused the university of bending to minority rule. Others suggested that this was all done in an effort to keep public embarrassment from falling upon the campus. Yet, there was another group who thought that Black students were justified in their demands and the appropriate remedy was the discontinuance of the song. Even though the senate took a courageous stand, their resolution was non-binding on the president.[41]

After the vote, all eyes turned toward the University Senate Equity and Grievances (USEG) meeting, whose recommendation would carry a significant amount of weight. After meeting earlier in the week with over 300 students, the committee met for over four and a half hours. A student group produced a petition with 1,200 names signed to it that were against discontinuing the song. In summary, the petitions suggested that Student Senate resolution should be disregarded because it did not represent the views of the majority of the student body. The USEG meeting produced two recommendations. In an explanation of the committee's approach, chairman Dr. George Smith explained that the committee, "have to consider the ideas of varied throughout the campus, the alumni and friends of the university. A reasoned approach is the best approach." The first recommendation suggested that the UA band not play "Dixie" at any future university function. The committee reasoned that the University already had an

[41] All quotations from "Student Senate Votes 28-6 to Discontinue Playing Dixie," *Arkansas Traveler*, December 3, 1969; "Song, Symbol, Sacrifice?," *Arkansas Traveler*, December 3, 1969; UofA Students Speak Out on Dixie, *Arkansas Traveler*, December 3, 1969; Dixie-Polarization or Plight of Blacks?," *Arkansas Traveler*, December 3, 1969.

adequate official fight song, and there was no need for "Dixie." Yet, the committee also recognized the current environment on campus and made a second recommendation specifically for the upcoming Arkansas-Texas. It allowed the UA band to play "Dixie" but not the official fight song during the first half of the game at the band director's discretion. During the second half of the game, only the UA fight song would be played. The committee reasoned that if "Dixie" is continued to be played at the University than the "University is supporting principles of injustice—even though applicable to a small part of the student body." Both recommendations were sent to the university president and to the band director Dr. Worthington who had already sent a letter to the student senate stating that the band would no longer play "Dixie" if any university legislative body voted to discontinue it. The following day, President Mullins wrote a message to the campus community outlining that there would be no demonstrations permitted anywhere on campus except for previously authorized locations.[42]

In just two years' time, BAD had accomplished another goal due to their firm stance and unwillingness to compromise. As Black Power ideology continued to spread across the country, BAD had now established itself as a leading voice of Black Power in the state. While this notoriety was great for recruitment and credibility, it also placed a target on their back. The first such target came by way of the student disciplinary meeting. Due to their participation in the pep rally protest, individual members of BAD were referred to the student discipline committee for disruption of campus activities.[43] Even worse, the stakes were being raised from mere threats against the organization to actual violence. On the night the decision came down about "Dixie," Black student Darrell Brown was shot by a sniper in the leg. According to Brown, he was

[42] All quotations in "Equity, Grievances Committee Suggests Compromise for Dec. 6," *Arkansas Traveler*, December 4, 1969; "President's Message," *Arkansas Traveler*, December 5, 1969.

[43] "Pep Rally Incident Taken to UA Group," *Arkansas Traveler*, December 4, 1969.

jogging down the street when two cars approached him and yelled "Dixie" and "nigger get off the street."[44] After he dodged the moving car, a bullet struck Brown in the leg. BAD President Eugene Hunt remembered, "We [the Black students] were pretty scared. We don't feel that a person shot a Darrell Brown but at a Black."[45] The dean of law school offered a reward for any information on the assailant, but no one came forward. Much like their civil rights movement predecessors, Black Power activists also had to contend with violence in the face of their activism. Yet, these students were determined not to be intimidated. BAD went as far as contacting the National Guard for protection of Black students on campus.[46]

BAD Times

During the 1970 spring semester, UA officuals granted BAD an official office in the Student Union. With limited space and office options for students, the Student Union represented prime real estate and highly coveted by student organizations. Having an office in the Union established BAD as an official campus organization and elevated their status above similarly situated organizations. The campus appeared to finally be taking the concerns of Black students seriously as the newspaper articles had more Black coverage and official university lectures were given by high profile Black speakers.[47] Yet, it was only a matter of time before another battle would emerge for BAD.

While many individuals thought that the "Dixie" controversy had ended last fall, a group of students were successful in getting the issue on the ballot for a special referendum election in

---

[44] "UofA Student after Pep Rally by Unknown Sniper," *Arkansas Traveler*, December 8, 1969.

[45] Ibid.

[46] "Group Asks for Guard Protection," *The El Dorado Times*, December 6, 1969.

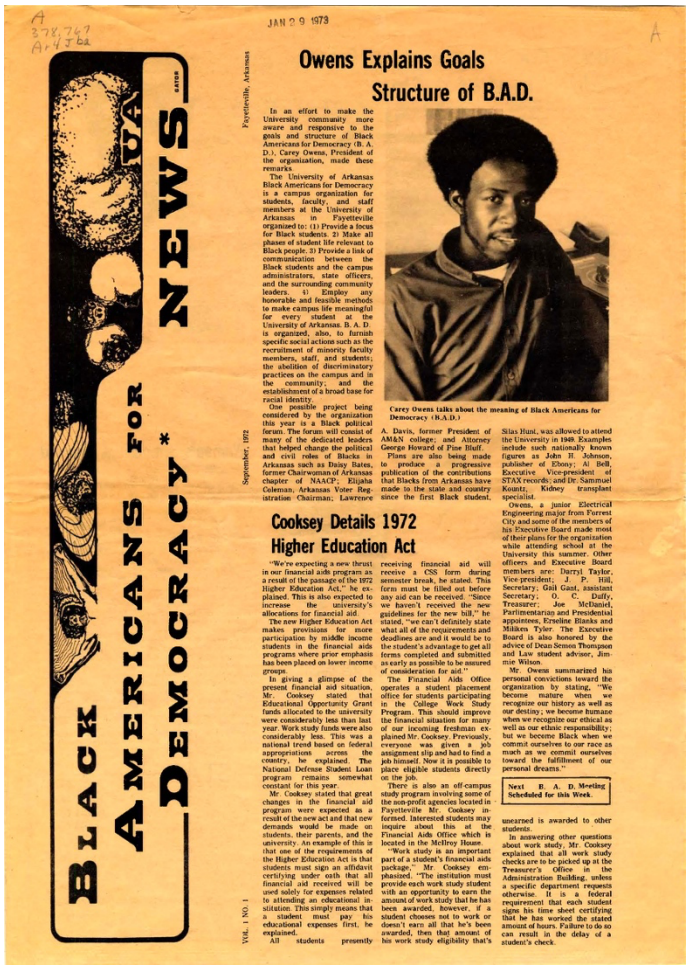
[47] "Union Office Grants Space to BAD," *Arkansas Traveler*, January 9, 1970; "Dick Gregory to Kick Off Symposium," *Arkansas Traveler*, February 2, 1970.

which the students would vote on whether the university would officially ban the song or allow it to be played. The mere mention of brining the "Dixie" back infuriated BAD members and the organization sprang into action. Seventy members of BAD forced their way into President Mullins office and threatened violence if the university began playing the song again. Throughout the five-hour standoff, militant members of the group repeated their claim that violence would occur on campus if the President did not decide at that moment.[48] "Dixie," however, was not the only concern of BAD this time. As they had now become the voice of the UA Black community, they brought a wide array of concerns including the alleged resignation of the newly hired Black Assistant Dean of Students Joe Tave. This new militant posture by BAD came as a surprise to President Mullen, but it should not have. Throughout the past year, Black students at campuses all over the country were taking a more militant approach to activism due to the rising popularity of Black Power and they were tackling more issues than just the student experience on campus. They were much more concerned with the Black community at large. However, it had mostly manifested in larger cities and almost never in Arkansas. Particularly in a small rural town like Fayetteville where the Black population was still small, BAD provided a collective voice and advocacy that could not exist without them. BAD members declared they would only leave the office in handcuffs or after they received assurance that the President would participate in discussions. Apparently satisfied by his answer, the members dispersed after five hours. The student body overwhelmingly support the referendum to continue playing the song. This signaled that white students remained unbothered by how harmful the song was for Black students. Additionally, the referendum convinced the members of BAD that the democratic process was not meant to address Black concerns. However, UA had just hired a

[48] "Black Sit-In Ends Peacefully," March 7, 1970.

new band director who vowed not to play the song if it hurt the university. And just like that, "Dixie" was dead.[49]

Image 2.1: The first edition of the BAD newspaper. Image 2.2 The newspaper staff wrote about campus events as well as opined about national events. Image 2.3 An important aspect of the paper was to promote the Black aesthetic on campus.



BLACK AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRACY* NEWS

Fayetteville, Arkansas

JAN 29 1973

Owens Explains Goals Structure of B.A.D.

In an effort to make the University community more aware and responsive to the goals and structure of Black Americans for Democracy (B. A. D.), Carey Owens, President of the organization, made these remarks

The University of Arkansas Black Americans for Democracy is a campus organization for students, faculty, and staff members at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville organized to: (1) Provide a focus for Black students. 2) Make all phases of student life relevant to Black people. 3) Provide a link of communication between the Black students and the campus administrators, state officers, and the surrounding community leaders. 4) Employ any honorable and feasible methods to make campus life meaningful for every student at the University of Arkansas. B. A. D. is organized, also, to furnish specific social actions such as the recruitment of minority faculty members, staff, and students; the abolition of discriminatory practices on the campus and in the community; and the establishment of a broad base for racial identity.

One possible project being considered by the organization this year is a Black political forum. The forum will consist of many of the dedicated leaders that helped change the political and civil roles of Blacks in Arkansas such as Daisy Bates, former Chairwoman of Arkansas chapter of NAACP; Elijaha Coleman, Arkansas Voter Registration Chairman; Lawrence A. Davis, former President of AM&N college; and Attorney George Howard of Pine Bluff.

Plans are also being made to produce a progressive publication of the contributions that Blacks from Arkansas have made to the state and country since the first Black student, Silas Hunt, was allowed to attend the University in 1948. Examples include such nationally known figures as John H. Johnson, publisher of Ebony; Al Bell, Executive Vice-president of STAX records; and Dr. Samuel Kountz, Kidney Transplant specialist.

Owens, a junior Electrical Engineering major from Forrest City and some of the members of his Executive Board made most of their plans for the organization while attending school at the University this summer. Other officers and Executive Board members are: Darryl Taylor, Vice-president; J. P. Hill, Secretary; Gail Gant, assistant Secretary; O. C. Duffy, Treasurer; Joe McDaniel, Parliamentarian and Presidential appointees, Erselne Blanks and Mildren Tyler. The Executive Board is also honored by the advice of Dean Semon Thompson and Law student advisor, Jimmie Wilson.

Mr. Owens summarized his personal convictions toward the organization by stating, "We become mature when we recognize our history as well as our destiny; we become humane when we recognize our ethical as well as our ethnic responsibility; but we become Black when we commit ourselves to our race as much as we commit ourselves toward the fulfillment of our personal dreams."

Carey Owens talks about the meaning of Black Americans for Democracy (B.A.D.)

Cooksey Details 1972 Higher Education Act

"We're expecting a new thrust in our financial aids programs as a result of the passage of the 1972 Higher Education Act," he explained. This is also expected to increase the university's allocations for financial aid.

The new Higher Education Act makes provisions for more participation by middle income students in the financial aids programs where prior emphasis has been placed on lower income groups.

In giving a glimpse of the present financial aid situation, Mr. Cooksey stated that Educational Opportunity Grant funds allocated to the university were considerably less than last year. Work study funds were also considerably less. This was a national trend based on federal appropriations across the country, he explained. The National Defense Student Loan program remains somewhat constant for this year.

Mr Cooksey stated that great changes in the financial aid program were expected as a result of the new act and that new demands would be made on students, their parents, and the university. An example of this is that one of the requirements of the Higher Education Act is that students must sign an affidavit certifying under oath that all financial aid received will be used solely for expenses related to attending an educational institution. This simply means that a student must pay his educational expenses first, he explained.

All students presently receiving financial aid will receive a CSS form during semester break, he stated. This form must be filled out before any aid can be received. "Since we haven't received the new guidelines for the new bill," he stated, "we can't definitely state what all of the requirements and deadlines are and it would be to the student's advantage to get all forms completed and submitted as early as possible to be assured of consideration for aid."

The Financial Aids Office operates a student placement office for students participating in the College Work Study Program. This should improve the financial situation for many of our incoming freshman explained Mr. Cooksey. Previously, everyone was given a job assignment slip and had to find a job himself. Now it is possible to place eligible students directly on the job.

There is also an off-campus study program involving some of the non-profit agencies located in Fayetteville Mr. Cooksey informed. Interested students may inquire about this of the Financial Aids Office which is located in the McIlroy House.

"Work study is an important part of a student's financial aids package," Mr. Cooksey emphasized. "The institution must provide each work study student with an opportunity to earn the amount of work study that he has been awarded, however. If a student chooses not to work or doesn't earn all that he's been awarded, then that amount of his work study eligibility that's unearned is awarded to other students.

In answering other questions about work study, Mr. Cooksey explained that all work study checks are to be picked up at the Treasurer's Office in the Administration Building, unless a specific department requests otherwise. It is a federal requirement that each student signs his time sheet certifying that he has worked the stated amount of hours. Failure to do so can result in the delay of a student's check.

Next B. A. D. Meeting Scheduled for this Week.

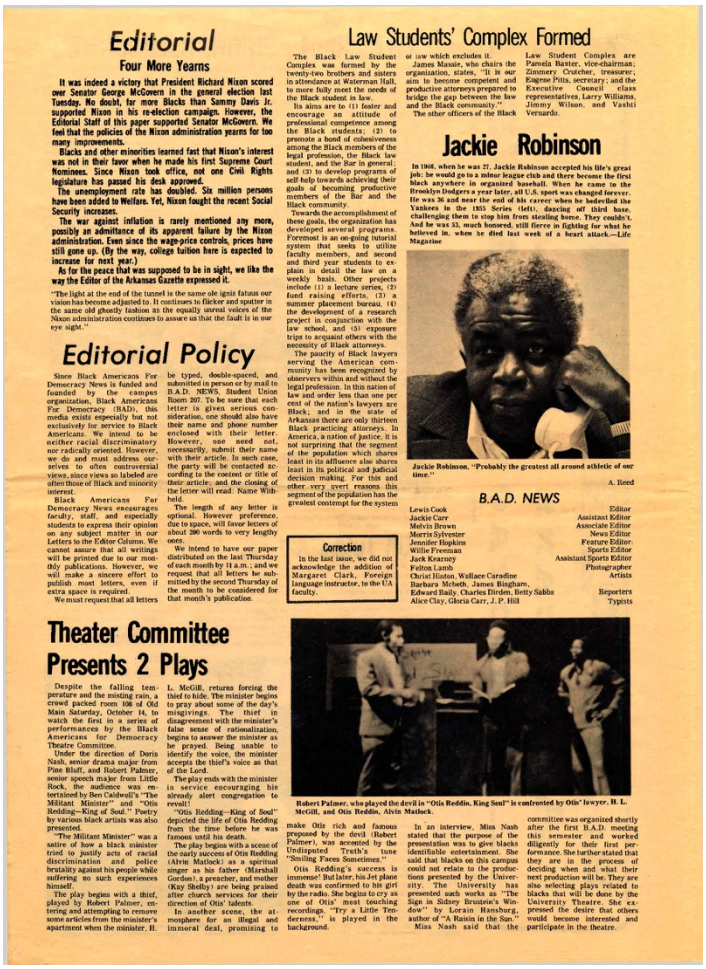
September, 1972

VOL. 1 NO. 1

Image 2.1: The first edition of the BAD newspaper.[50]

[49] Ibid.; "Dixie Questions Still Remain after Student Referendum," *Arkansas Traveler*, April 2, 1970.

[50] "BAD Times Collection: A Digital Collection of the Black Americans for Democracy Newspapers." Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, October 2015.



Editorial

Four More Yearns

It was indeed a victory that President Richard Nixon scored over Senator George McGovern in the general election last Tuesday. No doubt, far more Blacks than Sammy Davis Jr. supported Nixon in his re-election campaign. However, the Editorial Staff of this paper supported Senator McGovern. We feel that the policies of the Nixon administration yearns for too many improvements.

Blacks and other minorities learned fast that Nixon's interest was not in their favor when he made his first Supreme Court Nominees. Since Nixon took office, not one Civil Rights legislature has passed his desk approved.

The unemployment rate has doubled. Six million persons have been added to Welfare. Yet, Nixon fought the recent Social Security increases.

The war against inflation is rarely mentioned any more, possibly an admittance of its apparent failure by the Nixon administration. Even since the wage-price controls, prices have still gone up. (By the way, college tuition here is expected to increase for next year.)

As for the peace that was supposed to be in sight, we like the way the Editor of the Arkansas Gazette expressed it.

"The light at the end of the tunnel is the same ole ignis fatuus our vision has become adjusted to. It continues to flicker and sputter in the same old ghostly fashion as the equally unreal voices of the Nixon administration continues to assure us that the fault is in our eye sight."

Editorial Policy

Since Black Americans For Democracy News is funded and founded by the campus organization, Black Americans For Democracy (BAD), this media exists especially but not exclusively for service to Black Americans. We intend to be neither racial discriminatory nor radically oriented. However, we do and must address ourselves to often controversial views, since views so labeled are often those of Black and minority interest.

Black Americans For Democracy News encourages faculty, staff, and especially students to express their opinion on any subject matter in our Letters to the Editor Column. We cannot assure that all writings will be printed due to our monthly publications. However, we will make a sincere effort to publish most letters, even if extra space is required.

We must request that all letters be typed, double-spaced, and submitted in person or by mail to B.A.D. NEWS, Student Union Room 307. To be sure that each letter is given serious consideration, one should also have their name and phone number enclosed with their letter. However, one need not, necessarily, submit their name with their article. In such case, the party will be contacted according to the content or title of their article; and the closing of the letter will read: Name Withheld.

The length of any letter is optional. However preference, due to space, will favor letters of about 200 words to very lengthy ones.

We intend to have our paper distributed on the last Thursday of each month by 11 a.m.; and we request that all letters be submitted by the second Thursday of the month to be considered for that month's publication.

Law Students' Complex Formed

The Black Law Student Complex was formed by the twenty-two brothers and sisters in attendance at Waterman Hall, to more fully meet the needs of the Black student in law.

Its aims are to (1) foster and encourage an attitude of professional competence among the Black students; (2) to promote a bond of cohesiveness among the Black members of the legal profession, the Black law student, and the Bar in general; and (3) to develop programs of self-help towards achieving their goals of becoming productive members of the Bar and the Black community.

Towards the accomplishment of these goals, the organization has developed several programs. Foremost is an on-going tutorial system that seeks to utilize faculty members, and second and third year students to explain in detail the law on a weekly basis. Other projects include (1) a lecture series, (2) fund raising efforts, (3) a summer placement bureau, (4) the development of a research project in conjunction with the law school, and (5) exposure trips to acquaint others with the necessity of Black attorneys.

The paucity of Black lawyers serving the American community has been recognized by observers within and without the legal profession. In this nation of law and order less than one per cent of the nation's lawyers are Black; and in the state of Arkansas there are only thirteen Black practicing attorneys. In America, a nation of justice, it is not surprising that the segment of the population which shares least in its affluence also shares least in its political and judicial decision making. For this and other very overt reasons this segment of the population has the greatest contempt for the system or law which encludes it.

James Massie, who chairs the organization, states, "It is our aim to become competent and productive attorneys prepared to bridge the gap between the law and the Black community."

The other officers of the Black Law Student Complex are Pamela Baxter, vice-chairman; Zimmery Crutcher, treasurer; Eugene Pitts, secretary; and the Executive Council class representatives, Larry Williams, Jimmy Wilson, and Vashil Vernardo.

Correction

In the last issue, we did not acknowledge the addition of Margaret Clark, Foreign language instructor, to the UA faculty.

Jackie Robinson

In 1946, when he was 27, Jackie Robinson accepted his life's great job: he would go to a minor league club and there become the first black anywhere in organized baseball. When he came to the Brooklyn Dodgers a year later, all U.S. sport was changed forever. He was 36 and near the end of his career when he bedevilled the Yankees in the 1955 Series (left), dancing off third base, challenging them to stop him from stealing home. They couldn't. And he was 53, much honored, still fierce in fighting for what he believed in, when he died last week of a heart attack.—Life Magazine

Jackie Robinson, "Probably the greatest all around athletic of our time."

A. Reed

B.A.D. NEWS

Lewis Cook	Editor
Jackie Carr	Assistant Editor
Melvin Brown	Associate Editor
Morris Sylvester	News Editor
Jennifer Hopkins	Feature Editor
Willie Freeman	Sports Editor
Jack Kearney	Assistant Sports Editor
Felton Lamb	Photographer
Christ Hinton, Wallace Caradine	Artists
Barbara Mcbeth, James Bingham, Edward Baily, Charles Birden, Betty Sabbs Alice Clay, Gloria Carr, J. P. Hill	Reporters Typists

Theater Committee Presents 2 Plays

Despite the falling temperature and the misting rain, a crowd packed room 106 of Old Main Saturday, October 14, to watch the first in a series of performances by the Black Americans for Democracy Theatre Committee.

Under the direction of Doris Nash, senior drama major from Pine Bluff, and Robert Palmer, senior speech major from Little Rock, the audience was entertained by Ben Caldwell's "The Militant Minister" and "Otis Redding—King of Soul." Poetry by various black artists was also presented.

"The Militant Minister" was a satire of how a black minister tried to justify acts of racial discrimination and police brutality against his people while suffering no such experiences himself.

The play begins with a thief, played by Robert Palmer, entering and attempting to remove some articles from the minister's apartment when the minister, H. L. McGill, returns forcing the thief to hide. The minister begins to pray about some of the day's misgivings. The thief in disagreement with the minister's false sense of rationalization, begins to answer the minister as he prayed. Being unable to identify the voice, the minister accepts the thief's voice as that of the Lord.

The play ends with the minister in service encouraging his already alert congregation to revolt!

"Otis Redding—King of Soul" depicted the life of Otis Redding from the time before he was famous until his death.

The play begins with a scene of the early success of Otis Redding (Alvin Matlock) as a spiritual singer as his father (Marshall Gordon), a preacher, and mother (Kay Shelby) are being praised after church services for their direction of Otis' talents.

In another scene, the atmosphere for an illegal and immoral deal, promising to make Otis rich and famous proposed by the devil (Robert Palmer), was accented by the Undisputed Truth's tune "Smiling Faces Sometimes."

Otis Redding's success is immense! But later, his Jet plane death was confirmed to his girl by the radio. She begins to cry as one of Otis' most touching recordings, "Try a Little Tenderness," is played in the background.

Robert Palmer, who played the devil in "Otis Reddin, King Soul" is confronted by Otis' lawyer, H. L. McGill, and Otis Reddin, Alvin Matlock.

In an interview, Miss Nash stated that the purpose of the presentation was to give blacks identifiable entertainment. She said that blacks on this campus could not relate to the productions presented by the University. The University has presented such works as "The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window" by Lorain Hansburg, author of "A Raisin in the Sun."

Miss Nash said that the committee was organized shortly after the first B.A.D. meeting this semester and worked diligently for their first performance. She further stated that they are in the process of deciding when and what their next production will be. They are also selecting plays related to blacks that will be done by the University Theatre. She expressed the desire that others would become interested and participate in the theatre.

Image 2.2: The newspaper staff wrote on a range of topics.[51]

[51] "BAD Times Collection: A Digital Collection of the Black Americans for Democracy Newspapers." Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, October 2015.

Janis Robinson Wins Pageant

Miss Robinson posed for a series of pictures after she won the Miss B. A. D. title.

Janis: "I Wanted To Cry"

"Oh! I was so surprised! When they called the winner, I was wondering if my name was Janice. I was completely numb. Then the girls started shaking and kissing me. I felt great! I wanted to cry."

Janice Robinson, a freshman pre-med major from El Dorado, Arkansas, was describing her reactions to winning the Miss B.A.D. title. "I thought I might have a chance at Miss Congeniality", Janice said, "I was surprised to be a finalist, and I didn't think I would go any further."

Janice contributes a lot of her success to her alertness to the spontaneous questions that each contestant had to answer. "I must have had some divine inspiration in helping me answer that question because I had never thought about it before," said Janice.

Miss Robinson expressed her thanks to all the contestants. She stated that all the girls had gotten along well and had agreed that regardless of the winner, their would be no hard feelings. Each of the contestants had agreed to help each other in this pageant as well as in other activities sponsored by the organization for Miss B.A.D. Janice expressed special thanks to Linda Hinton for her encouragement.

As an expression of her appreciation, Janice said that she would work hard to make other pageants as interesting and competitive as possible. Janice is expected to compete in other pageants during her reign. She hopes to enter the Miss Black Collegiate of Arkansas Pageant, the Miss Black Arkansas Pageant, and possibly the Miss Black America Pageant to be held next year.

The 2nd Annual Miss BAD Pageant was held on October 28 in the Arkansas Student Union. Janis Robinson, a freshman from El Dorado, Ark. won the title for Miss BAD 1972-73 in a close decision by the pageant judges. Faye Henderson won first runner up honors in the pageant and Erserline Blanks was selected as Miss Congeniality.

The pageant actually began with a tea hosted by Black Americans for Democracy president, Carey Owens. The purpose of the tea was to acquaint the judges with the contestants. However, the contestants were observed during the tea for poise, responsiveness and their social interactions.

The preliminaries for the pageant began Saturday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. During the preliminaries contestants performed three minute talent presentations of special interests, modeled casual attire, and answered questions on topic of specific interest to each contestant.

The judges selected the four finalists: Janis Robinson, Faye Henderson, Margaret Turner, and Joyce Taylor. They were announced at the beginning of the finals which started at 7:30 p.m. The finalists modeled formal apparel and answered questions of current interest on a local and national basis.

At the end of the pageant a vote was taken among the contestants to select the girl that they felt was most cooperative, best spirited, and who generated the most warmth among the women during the pageant. Erserline Blanks responded with a quick kiss for the pageant's Master of ceremonies, Darryl Taylor, as he presented her with a bouquet of flowers.

Tension increased as the four finalists were called back up on stage for the announcement of the winner of the pageant. Faye Henderson was announced as First runner-up and later Janis Robinson looked stunned as her name was called as the New Miss Black American for Democracy for 1972-73. Linda Hinton crowned her successor as the audience gave a standing ovation. The other contestants and friends hurried to congratulate Janis.

Linda Hinton crowned her successor, Janice Robinson, Miss BAD 1973.

This was the third year that a Miss BAD has been selected. The idea for a coed to represent Black Americans for Democracy started in 1970 and Gloria Carr was selected by the members of B.A.D. to reign as Sweetheart. Last year was the first time a formal pageant was held. Linda Hinton was selected by a panel of judges to reign as Miss BAD 1971-72. Both Linda Hinton and Gloria Carr worked closely with the pageant this year.

The criterion for Miss BAD are mental awareness, vibrant personality, talent, beauty, poise and dress. She must also exemplify racial pride and identity.

Miss BAD is expected to represent the organization in all of its campus functions, and be sensitive to the role nationally. She will be a representative of BAD in the Miss Black Collegiate of Arkansas pageant to be held this spring.

Faye Henderson, Junior from No. Little Rock was first Runner-up in the Miss BAD Pageat.

The Queen and her court. (L. to R.) Margaret Turner, Finalist; Faye Henderson, First Runner Up; Janice Robinson, Miss BAD 1973; Linda Hinton, Miss BAD 1972; Joyce Taylor, Finalist; and Erserline Blanks, Miss Congeniality.

Image 2.3: The Black Aesthetic in the BAD newspaper.[52]

[52] "BAD Times Collection: A Digital Collection of the Black Americans for Democracy Newspapers." Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, October 2015.

By 1971, BAD had begun to address issues of Black culture on campus. For example, the student newspaper had done a better job at including Black issues in the paper. However, many black students still did not trust the official student newspaper to adequately cover Black culture. As the voice of the Black community, BAD decided to take control of their own circumstances with production of the *Bad Times in 1971*.[53]

The *BAD Times* was created to give black students a mechanism to share their thoughts and concerns about being black on the campus. However, over the course of its publication *BAD Times* became more than just a student newspaper. It was the apparatus that connected black students at the University of Arkansas to Black people globally and to the Black Power Movement. In 1972, BAD's president Carey Owens explained that the organization was for students, faculty and staff at the university to

> (1) Provide a focus for Black students;
>
> (2) Make all phases of student life relevant to Black people;
>
> (3) Provide a link of communication between the Black students and the campus administrators, state officers, and the surrounding community leaders;
>
> (4) Employ any honorable and feasible methods to make campus life meaningful for every student at the University of Arkansas.[54]

According to Owens, BAD was not only concerned about campus life, but also establishing contacts within the broader community thereby suggesting its acute awareness of the inherent power of publicity and communication which were common attributes of the Black Arts

[53] Robinson and Williams, *Remembrances in Black*, 152.

[54] *BAD Times*, September 1972, "BAD Times Collection: A Digital Collection of the Black Americans for Democracy Newspapers." Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, October 2015. For brevity, the remaining citations will only include the issue and date.

Movement.[55]

With BAD as the leading voice for black students on campus, members began to assume control of their experiences on campus. When the organization felt that there were not enough social activities on campus, they created the Black Emphasis Week, which included black culture seminars, black music, black films and intramural sports games.[56] One of its signature events was the Miss BAD pageant, which showcased many Black women on campus who otherwise would not have been able to participate in a pageant due to the racism and discrimination that often excluded Black students.[57] BAD published photos from their pageants, which provided the campus and community with positive uplifting images of Black students on the campus. This type of awareness, Black Pride, was a hallmark of the Black Power Movement. BAD's activism was not limited to just the campus in Fayetteville. They frequently published articles that highlighted the issues that blacks faced on multiple campuses including the historically Black Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical and Normal College (now University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff).[58] One of BAD's major contributions was that it allowed students to express and confirm their blackness despite being on a predominately white campus. In a poem entitled "Black Is," the anonymous author provides a synopsis of what it means to be Black.

> "Black is the anger you feel in your heart, when the devil is breathing down your back. Black is getting angry when you see a 'brother' being brainwashed by the 'man,' and seeming to enjoy it. It's being able to share with your sister when she

[55] Robinson and Williams, *Remembrances in Black*, 152. The Black Arts Movement was a parallel movement within the Black Power era. Activists expressed their Blackness through literary and performative art. For more context on the Black Arts Movements see James Edward Smethurst *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Margo N. Crawford, *Black Post-Blackness: The Black Arts Movement and Twenty-First Century Aesthetics* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2017); James Smethurst, *Behold the Land: The Black Arts Movement in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

[56] *BAD Times*, October, 1971.

[57] *BAD Times,* November 1972.

[58] *BAD Times,* March, 1972.

> is hungry, even though it's her own fault. Or defending your manhood when a stare from the lady blonde tenses your every nerve. Black is being hungry and having nowhere to turn, but hesitant not to give a damn anyway. Black is retreating from the 'pig,' but just so long enough to get your 'heat' so you can deal too. Black is helping the morale of your 'sister,' by getting her off the 'corner,' for your benefit. Black is implementing plans while colored folk stand around and say 'it won't work anyway." Or going into your bag about unity when you see a blind colored boy wandering around trying to be 'white.' Black is telling the honky that you don't want his woman, because 'a sister is your glory.' Black is having the last word to say or the last bullet fired when 'he' confronts you. Or encouraging a trying brother for revolutionary causes, not dehumanize him because you don't agree. And the dream of your ancestors who fell for the things that you should nobly fight…for life! Black is getting high because every other avenue for expression is blocked, or stockaded. Black is getting angry at the landlord when he comes to collect the rent for the shanty you live in. Black is having to work like a mule for something you want, and find out you still can't have it. Black is walking over frozen ground and fell the bite of early morning cold against the soleless shoe. Or sitting in the 'out toilet' when it's twelve below zero and no top is on the building. Black is being frustrated when nobody will hire you, except to sweep a floor, or do their dishes. Black is watching your old man work the same job for forty cents an hour, but still respecting him. Black is love, black is sharing, black is warmth, black is being pushed back, but demanding your position. But black is not the nigger who thinks black and sleeps white, black is not the "Tom who thinks the 'man' loves him. Black is beautiful to the ears of the lonely man, whose blues just won't go away. Black is us, in unity, in strength, and in mass, to determine what we must be…to be liberated."[59]

The aforementioned poem "Black Is" is a perfect reflection of the difficulties that Black students faced on predominately white campuses. However, the author's final words demonstrate that he or she possessed a particular resolve. He or she understood that if Black students worked together, they would all be liberated. This type of rhetoric was not found on the University of Arkansas' campus prior to 1965. Just as the students embraced Black Power ideology in major cities around the country, so too did the students in Fayetteville on the UA campus in 1968. The author demonstrates not only the external issues faced by Blacks, but also some of the internal debates that range from colorism to assimilation. This type of consciousness was characteristic

[59] *BAD Times*, November, 1971.

of the time in which the students lived.[60]

BAD's work did not go unnoticed—or unpunished. In response to their numerous positive activities such as the pageant, intramural games, and dances, BAD saw their budget cut substantially by the university. While the historical record does not mention why the administration cut BAD's budget, the hostility towards BAD coincided with a general attack on Black Power organizations in the mid 1970s. Despite the budget cuts, BAD vowed to continue their work. However, money was not the organization's only issue. When BAD was formed in 1968, it was the only voice for Black students at the University of Arkansas and had been led by men since its inception. By 1975 several things changed, including the election of its first female president, Dinah G. Gant and the introduction of Black Greek fraternities and sororities.[61]

In an address to BAD members in September of 1975, Gant responded to a claim that "the first female would screw-up the organization." She stressed a message of unity, arguing that such an attitude undermined her and resembled "tactic[s] used by imperialistic Europeans."[62] Here, Gant's comments accomplish several goals. Not only did she grapple with competing interests among the Black students, she also confronted accusations of incompetency. "It was definitely a shock when I won," Gant remembers. "The guy I ran against came from a political family, and he thought he would win in a landslide."[63] Numerous scholars have studied the

---

[60] See works on race and beauty pageants during the CR and BP movements, including Tanisha Ford *Liberated Threads: Black Women, Style, and the Global Politics of Soul* (Chapel Hill: UNC Pres, 2017); Blain Roberts, *Pageants, Parlors, and Pretty Women: Race and Beauty in the Twentieth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: UNC, 2016); Maxine Leeds Craig, *Ain't I a Beauty Queen?:Black Women, Beauty, and the Politics of Race (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)* and Kimberly Brown Pellum, *Black Beauties*: *African American Pageant Queens in the Segregated South* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2020). The revision will provide a fuller discussion of the Black Power aesthetic as well as the pageants and other cultural events on campus

[61] *BAD Times*, September 1975. The revision will provide a fuller discussion on the backlash faced by BP groups.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Dana Gant, interview by author, phone, February 8, 2021.

complex gender roles within the Black Power movement and highlighted the multiple ways women negotiated their roles within Black Power organizations.[64] Additionally, Gant wanted to situate BAD among an international struggle in which Blacks were still fighting against European imperialism. This shows that students were acutely aware of the world they lived in just as they were aware of issues on their campuses. Gant's story shows that even a group as successful as BAD was not immune to the contours of the Black Power Movement.

The University of Arkansas was the first flagship institution in the South to admit Black students. However, their admittance was largely a token effort since the University did almost nothing to ensure their safety or success. Despite these challenges, Black students worked together in order to make their time on campus meaningful. By embracing Black Power, their advocacy took a different approach that centered militancy instead of accommodation. It was important for Black Arkansans to utilize aspects of Black Power that worked for them. On other campuses, students mobilized similar and different aspects of Black Power ideiology. For example, at the UA campus in Monticello, the Soul Society, unlike BAD, went to great lengths to not appear militant for fear of reprisal. Yet, the Soul Society still utilized important aspects of Black Power, including, at times, its associated militancy to their advantage.

[64] There has been a wave of new scholarship that investigates the ways in which women confronted traditional gender roles within Black Power organizations. For a reimagination of Black Power and gender see Ashley Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2019). For further reading on women roles in Black Power organizations see Ula Taylor's monograph on Black women in the Nation of Islam in *The Promise of Patriarch: Women and the Nation of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017) and Keisha Blain's monograph on Black women in nationalists movements in *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017). For a first person account see Angela Davis, *Angela Davis: An Autobiography (*Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974).

CHAPTER THREE
ALL YOU NEED IS SOUL: SOUL SOCIETY AND THE BLACK STUDENT EXPERIENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS-MONTICELLO, 1969-1980

When the first Black student entered Arkansas A&M College (name changed to University of Arkansas-Monticello (UAM) in 1971) in the summer of 1964, she did not intend to stay there. She enrolled in only one course: organic chemistry. Although Gathen had not intended to stay, UAM was much closer to her home than Arkansas A&M Normal College (now the University of Arkansas Pine-Bluff), a historically Black college (HBCU) located in the town of Pine Bluff, about fifty miles away from Monticello. The next year, in 1965, three additional Black students joined Gathen at UAM. In 1967, Gathen would become the first Black graduate of the University. This chapter will look at the ways in which the first group of Black students worked together to create change on campus. Unlike other Black groups around the state, these students would attempt to distance themselves from the emerging Black Power movement in an effort to appear less radical. Yet, they would eventually utilize some aspects of Black Power organizing when change did not come fast enough proving the malleability of BP.[1]

The integration of higher education in Arkansas was somewhat uneven. In some places, such as the state flagship University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, Blacks had attended since the 1940s. In other places, such as University of Arkansas-Monticello (UAM), Black students would enter during the height of the civil rights movement. Unlike some PWIs in the South, the first Black students to enroll at UAM would be met with little fanfare. For instance, white

[1] The first Black student's name is elusive in the historical record and cannot be accurately confirmed.

students and local townspeople met the first Black students to entering the universities in neighboring Alabama and Mississippi with stiff resistance and violence, which provided vivid imagery for newspapers all across the country. Yet, the presence of Black students on the UAM campus was not captured in either the school newspaper or the town's newspaper. Still, the Black students on campus would soon recognize that they needed to form their own community if they were to survive on a predominately white campus. As the Black enrollment quickly grew from four in 1965 to eighty-six in 1969, a 2,000% increase over a four-year period, Black students at UAM were in dire need of an organization that could represent their specific needs. Little did they realize that such an organization was on the horizon in the fall of 1969 or that it would work to promote equality and change on campus.[2]

Truman Tolefree was born about 100 miles south of Monticello in the town of Warren, Arkansas. He was the youngest of eleven children born into a sharecropping family. Tolefree's parents were sharecroppers who moved in search of work on different farms a few miles outside of Warren during the farming season. Although Tolefree's mother had only an eighth-grade education and his father had only a third-grade education, both parents stressed to their kids the need to get an education. "My parents always wanted us to do better than what they were able to do for themselves," Tolefree recalled. Out of eleven kids, seven finished high school and four went on to college. As for the others Tolefree suggests that they were born to early and had to help the family by working instead of finishing school. Even though many of the Tolefree children received some type of formal education, their schooling did not completely replace hard, physical labor. Tolefree remembers working several different jobs such as catching

[2] Donald Holley, "The End of an Era: Claude H. Babin and the Merger of Arkansas A&M College with the University of Arkansas," *Drew County Historical Journal* 17 (2002): 6-17.

chickens, picking tomatoes, and baling hay. However, it was on his very first job at age ten that he realized that everyone in the family had to work in order for the family to survive. "I remember my dad picked me to go to the cotton field with him to pick cotton." Instead of playing like some kids in the neighborhood, Tolefree spent hours in the cotton field. "It was here that I became very familiar with the segregated, Jim Crow South."[3]

Warren, known as the town of tall pines and pink tomatoes, was similar to many southern rural towns in the 1950s in that it was highly segregated, and Blacks were considered second class citizens. It had separate waiting rooms in the doctor's office for Blacks, separate restaurants and separate drinking fountains. Even the towns largest employer, the Potlatch Lumber Company followed a strict racial code. Employing approximately 60-70% of the men in Warren, Potlatch lumber company provided many of the families with a comfortable living. Yet, most of the desirable jobs went to white men, while the Black men had to settle for anything that was left. Even the joyous occasions sponsored by the company such as the annual Christmas Tree lighting celebration was segregated. Tolefree remembers that there was a line for Black kids and a line for white kids during the gift distribution. "It wasn't that surprising to us. It just was a way of life."[4]

Despite segregation, Black residents were able to carve out opportunities for themselves. For instance, Warren had a thriving Black business district called Catfish Town. For example, three Black physicians, a funeral home, two cleaners, and several juke joints provided services and entertainment to Black Warren residents. It was here, in Catfish Town, that Tolefree

[3] Truman Tolefree interview by author, phone, April 8, 2021.

[4] Quote in Tolefree, Interview; Ellen Compton Shipley, "The Arkansas Lumber Company in Warren, Bradley County,"*Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 60-68; "New Company Planning Plant in Arkansas," *Hope Star*, November 7, 1958.

realized that Blacks can be self-sufficient and somewhat thrive within the confines of a strict racial code. "We didn't even think about the segregation because there were more than enough Black businesses to meet our needs. In fact, integration hurt Black businesses more than segregation." Although Tolefree could not quantify how integration hurt Black businesses, Black-owned businesses experienced a steep decline between 1960 and 1970. Business was not the only place Blacks were able to find a sense of community and self-determination. Despite the 1954 *Brown* decision, kids in Warren continued to attend segregated schools well into 1970. Tolefree remembers his time at the all-Black Bradley County High School fondly. "Our principal, Mr. Thomas Brunson, had a sign at the end of the hallway that read 'Culture Out Loud.' In other words, he reminded us that we needed to know how to act and learn how to carry ourselves in order to survive in the world." In addition to Mr. Brunson's inspiration, the teachers motivated can cared about their students. "Our teachers were careful to look after us and provide us what we needed." Although the Bradley had far fewer resources than the all-white Warren County High School, the students there were determined to not allow resources to impede their determination. Bradley High had a great basketball team and even were allowed to create a track team. The year the track team was created, the track coach purchased two pairs of track shoes for the entire team. "No matter if you wore a size seven or a size eleven, you had to squeeze your feet into the shoes." Even though this was not the ideal way to run a track program, the Black students were excited to just have the opportunity to compete. "Nobody ever thought that they couldn't do it."[5]

Blacks in Warren certainly found ways to work with whites within the strict mores of the Jim Crow south. However, there also was a robust history of activism within the small Arkansas

[5] Tolefree, Interview.

town. In 1941, the Warren chapter of the NAACP boasted the largest membership, over 200 paid members, in the state of Arkansas. Under the leadership of its president, the charismatic physician Dr. J. A. White, the local chapter did not shy away from controversy or big issues. The Warren NAACP joined the Committee on Negro Organizations (CNO) in its fight for equal waiting rooms at the Warren bus depot. Prior to initiating formal proceedings, the CNO sent investigators to Warren to identify the issues with the waiting room. The investigators reported that the waiting room for Blacks was a small 12' x 12' room with dirty floors, sparse paint, one restroom for both men and women, and poor lighting. The nascent CNO, formed just a year prior, needed the local NAACP chapter in order to mobilize Blacks in Warren. Even more than numbers, the chapter's strength was evident as they provided protection for CNO founder W. H. Flowers when he was threatened during a visit to Warren. Soon, word spread that the Warren NAACP was a force in the fight against social injustice. The next year, membership ballooned to 350 paid members. The chapter did not limit their activities to just issues of equal rights. Often, they also lobbied for better roads or getting sewer lines in the Black parts of town. Nonetheless, it became clear that Blacks in Warren were not only willing to work within the Jim Crow structure, but also were willing to press for change when the need arose. Tolefree embraced both postures as he set out to attend the UAM in the fall of 1967.[6]

When it was time to go to college, four of Truman Tolefree's brothers chose the Arkansas AM&N (now University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff), which is a historically Black university in the town of Pine Bluff, located about fifty miles north of Warren. Although UAM was a much closer 15 miles, the school was still segregated, and no Blacks attended on a full-time basis prior

[6] "CNO Assured of NAACP Support in Bus Depot Fight," *Arkansas State Press*, July 11, 1941; John A. Kirk, "The Little Rock Crisis and Postwar Black Activism in Arkansas," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly,* Autumn 1997, 56, No. 3, pp. 273-293; "W. Harold Flowers is Threatened, Reports Say," *Arkansas State Press*, August 8, 1941; "Warren," *Arkansas State Press*, December 11, 1942; Tolefree, Interview.

to 1964. "I remember seeing my father and mother struggle to support my brothers when they were up in Pine Bluff. My father hitchhiked to Pine Bluff numerous times to take my brothers five or six dollars because he didn't have the money to both pay for a ride and to give my brothers money." Tolefree's decision to attend UAM had little to do with integration or being a trailblazer. Rather, he wanted to ease the burden on his parents. "Arkansas A&M was only fifteen miles away from our house. Why would I go that far away [to Pine Bluff] when I could go back and forth to Monticello down the street?" Tolefree certainly made the economical choice, but the tradeoff was that he went to school where only seventeen other Black students attended. "We knew each other because it was such a small number." [7]

Integration at UAM was mostly uneventful. Since the flagship institution had been integrated years prior and many other southern schools around the country were being integrated, many on the UAM campus felt that it was a foregone conclusion that Blacks would eventually enroll. In fact, when the first full-time Black students arrived in 1965, the newspaper printed an article with the headline, "A Growing Concern" and that article was not about the Black enrollees, but rather a complaint about campus parking. However, despite the lack of fanfare, University did very little to prepare for the enrollment of Black students. UAM did not have any Black instructors, Black organizations, or Black spaces for the newly arrived students. "The campus did not always feel outright hostile, but most of us did not actually feel welcomed," Tolefee remembers. "However, there were some incidents on campus that made us remember we were outsiders. One of the Black guys tried to live in the dorms, and when he went to his room one night, there was a swastika painted on his door and his car tires were slashed." Despite these overt racist acts, Black students continued to enroll at UAM, climbing to twenty-six in

[7] University enrollment numbers; Tolefree, Interview.

1968. Andrew D. Gregory was one of the Black enrollees during 1968 and reflected on his initial experience. [8]

> From my vantage point of time and hindsight, I know now that neither the administration or predominantly white student body was prepared for such a large influx of black students…. Thus, thrown together under those circumstances, the administration, the student body and the Black body viewed each other with studied skepticism, suspicion and distrust. We were oh so idealistic only to find that some things change while others remain constant.[9]

As the number of Black students grew, it became evident that they needed a voice on campus. While some of the continued enrollment came by word of mouth, the University also was forced to comply with the State Department of Health Education and Welfare (HEW), which facilitated compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. After the HEW visited campus, they provided the college with nine recommendations the college needed to address in order to comply with the Civil Rights Act. Among HEW's recommendations were the recruitment of students, the equal dissemination of financial aid information to Black students, and comparable recruitment of both white and Black faculty. With none of the Black students living on campus and having to commute every day, it was difficult to build a community for one another. "Although there weren't many of us, we still need some social interaction with one another. We were a close-knit group that depended on one another for encouragement, but we were being left out. We needed an avenue to have our collective voices heard," Tolefree states. In the spring of 1969, a small group of Black students got together to discuss ways in which they could form some type of union. Tolefree remembers their initial planning meeting very vividly. "We

[8] Ms. Classie Jones Green was the first Black graduate of the nursing program and was the first Black advisor of the Soul Society. In addition to her interview, she graciously allowed me to look through her personal archive of documents from her time at UAM. To distinguish between her interview and her archive, her archive will be denoted as the Green Archive. Whenever possible, I will provide the name of the document from the archive; Tolefree Inteview; UAM Enrollment Numbers; "Campus Parking: A Growing Concern," *Campus Herald*, October 8, 1965;

[9] UAM Archives: Vertical File-College History Box 1, Folder RR2, "Integration at UAM and the Public Schools."

needed an organization that could lobby for our interests. We did not want to necessarily be a Black radical group or anything like that. We just wanted a place at the table." After bouncing around ideas all night, they finally settled on a name for their new group: the Soul Society.[10]

The newly established Soul Society initially had one sole purpose; "to give Black students a voice in student affairs."[11] However, the group soon would establish an expanded scope as they would become an official voice of all Black students. The expanded "purposes" were:

1. To help promote unity among the student body, faculty, staff and administration.
2. To help promote Black awareness on the UAM campus and in the community.
3. To inform students of current issues on the UAM campus.
4. To help students develop leadership ability.
5. To help increase your spiritual growth.[12]

After determining the scope of the organization, the group needed to decide who would become its officers. "We were trying to figure out who would be president. It was between me and my good friend Leodis Strong. Since we were such great friends, we decided to flip a coin. I called heads, and it came out heads. So, I became president, and he became vice president," said Tolefree.[13] Selecting a president and vice president would prove one of the easier tasks for the newly established group. They also needed to find a faculty advisor so that it could become a recognized student organization on campus. "Where in the world were we going to find two white faculty members to serve as advisors?" Tolefree recalls asking. Luckily, a young history professor, Dr. Merrill Pritchard was just liberal enough to take on the challenge, but it still took

[10] All quotes from Tolefree Interview; "A&M Complies with HEW Request," [UAM] *Campus Herald*, March 14, 1969; "HEW Asks for Plan in State's Colleges," *Campus Herald*, March 14, 1969.

[11] "Soul Society," *Campus Herald,* April 18, 1970.

[12] UAM Archives: Vertical File-College History Box 1, Folder RR2, "African American Student Organizations."

[13] Tolefree, Interview.

some considerable convincing. Just as Soul Society was forming, UAM and other southern schools were contending with a surge of protest activity on college campuses. Additionally, the Black Panther Party was beginning to capture the imagination of a Black population eager for radical change. In some ways, the Soul Society benefited from the radicalism associated with Black Power. Tolefree remembers that UAM administrators were "nervous that we may start a revolution on campus, so they were eager to meet with us to discuss our grievances." Little did Mr. Tolefree or others realize, but a revolution was closer to happening than any of them realized.

As the Soul Society established itself on campus, several issues continued to plague Black students. For instance, many of the Black students lived in dormitories that did not have a washer and dryer. When two Black male students attempted to use the laundry facilities at another dormitory, which was standard practice, a few of the white student residents prevented them from using the washer and dryer. Once incident involved a Black woman student who placed a "Black is Beautiful" sticker on her dorm door only to have it replaced with a "White is Beautiful" sign. The incident that really got the Black students riled up occurred adjacent to campus. A Black student's car broke down and a white man asked if he needed help. Instead of taking the Black student to a mechanic, the white man took a detour and proceeded to beat the Black student up so badly that the black student required stitches. "These acts of aggression and violence were becoming more common for Black students, and something needed to be done," says Tolfree. Perhaps one of the biggest flashpoints was the playing of the unofficial school song, "Dixie." Although the issue of "Dixie" was a prevalent on many campuses throughout the South, it initially was not problematic at UAM. Black student Thedford Collins remembers "Dixie" vividly:

> For two years I have played in the band [and] I have always thought of "Dixie" as a fight song. Then at the homecoming game, we saw a boy marching around waving a Confederate flag. All of the Black band members stopped playing and they haven't played since.[14]

Fellow Black student Clifton Carter agreed. "I had seen it [Confederate flag] so much at pep rallies and everything, I thought it was the school flag."[15] Carter's comment shows how racist symbols were commonplace at southern schools were during this time. As Black students became more aware of the racial animus on campus, they were intent on having it addressed.

While all the Black students realized that there were mounting racial issues on campus, a strategy on moving forward took time to develop. On one side, a more radical faction wanted to replicate tactics used by the Black Panther Party such as militancy and armed self-defense. Conversely, another group wanted to work within the structure to achieve incremental results. "It was not lost upon us that we were still living in the South, albeit one that was slowly integrating. Yet, many of our parents would have not approved of radical protest or taking over a building," Tolefree admits. Two Black women students at UAM suggested there were little, if any, Black radicals on campus, and it was time for "uncle Toms" to join them in the fight for equality.[16] In some sort of a compromise, the Black students would be neither radical nor accommodationist. Instead, they would be militant. While the exact definition of militancy was elusive, the characteristics included not taking "no" for an answer and remaining unified despite internal differences. This type of academic militancy became increasingly common on campuses

---

[14] Quote in "Black Students Want Acceptance," *Campus Herald*, May 16, 1969; "Negroes in Arkansas' 'white' Colleges, *Arkansas Democrat*, March 26, 1969.

[15] Quote in "Black Students Want Acceptance," *Campus Herald*, May 16, 1969.

[16] "Militancy spreading on Arkansas College Campuses," *Arkansas Democrat,* March 28, 1969.

around Arkansas and provided useful as an organizing strategy for a heterogeneous Black student population that needed results.

In March of 1969, the Soul Society marched to UAM President Claude Babin's office with a list of demands. When the students arrived, numerous campus deans and representatives from the county greeted them. The students demanded to speak with President Babin, but they were told he was out of town. Not to be deterred, the students presented the list of demands to the administrators assembled. The demands included adding Black studies courses to the curriculum, and hiring Black dorm parents and instructors, and increasing Black representation in student activities. Much to the group's surprise, their presentation of demands was met with relative ease. Many in the group thought that the administration would reject their demands or act slowly to implement them. Tolefree was a participant in the march and remembered that the audience was sympathetic to the Black students assembled. "Everyone in attendance seemed genuinely interested in assisting us. I also believe they feared what could potentially happen on campus if they did not listen to us." The Soul Society left that meeting with assurances that the administration would make a serious effort to address their concerns. Following the meeting, the Soul Society resolved that sticking together was their greatest chance for survival. One day, a group of Soul Society members appeared in class wearing Black gloves. While the members contended they were only "trying to stand out from the rest of the students," it was clear they were sending a message to campus that the Black students were united and organized.[17]

While some PWI campuses in Arkansas were slow to address the concerns of their Black students, UAM moved swiftly. During the fall semester of 1969, just four short months after the Soul Society met with the administration, UAM launched its first Black studies courses. The

[17] Quote from "Black Students Want Acceptance," *Campus Herald,* May 16, 1969; Tolefree interview.

first course was an upper-level course that discussed "the Negro in American History and Culture." The second course was a lower-level symposium course about Black history. Having two courses on Black history was a huge win for the Soul Society. University administrators were surprised by the appeal of the course: Twice as many white students enrolled as Black students in the upper-level course. Additionally, UAM hired its first Black worker in the campus bookstore. The immediate changes were cause for celebration, but some of the actions afterward were cause for concern. For instance, during this same fall semester, President Babin announced that would make changes to the campus policies regarding protest. Babin suggested that it was important that students knew what would be permitted and what would not be permitted on campus. This new posture by the administration signaled to the Soul Society that they may have to change their tactics to continue their success. It was clear that the administration did not want to garner headlines for Black students protesting on campus. "We were not able to rely on active protest, but we were still determined to provide a place for Black students on the campus," Tolefree suggested.[18]

By 1970, the Soul Society had over fifty active members, all of whom were Black. To expand its reach, it began to embrace collaboration with other campus entities. It even opened its membership to all races, but no white students joined. Still, the Soul Society was resolute in its efforts to "reflect and preserve the Black student body…at A&M." One of the ongoing issues was that UAM still had not provided activities specifically for Black students to engage socially. Besides the strides made in the fall of 1969, progress began to slow tremendously the subsequent year. Though the group had earlier stated that it would not protest on campus due to the new

[18] "Black Studies is Received 'Successfully,'" *Campus Herald*, October 10. 1969; "Colleges Take Steps to Prevent Riots," *Campus Herald, October 19, 1969;* Tolefree, Interview.

regulations, many of its members were not satisfied with the slow progress. Thus, on March 18, 1971, approximately 100 students marched to the administration building shouting "It's time for a change!" Unlike the prior meeting with administrators in 1969, this time President Babin was there and agreed to meet with a delegation of the student protesters. This time, the students did not present just a few recommendations, but rather a list of twelve demands. Those demands were:

1. Black Dorm Mother.
2. Black Security Officers.
3. More Blacks in Administrative positions.
4. More respect for maids in Male dormitories.
5. More jobs for Black students (dorm counselors, secretaries, etc.)
6. More Blacks in SGA [Student Government Association] lecture series and Black bands for SGA dances.
7. More emphasis on recruiting Black students.
8. Permanent meeting place and organization room for Soul Society
9. Blacks included in Homecoming Royalty.
10. Afro-America section in library with past and present Black publications to reflect Black achievements.
11. Meaningful Afro-American history courses in curriculum.
12. Black faculty members.[19]

President Babin and his staff spent considerable time with the students discussing each demand and committed to working on each of them. Tolefree, who was present in the meeting, remembers Dr. Babin being genuinely concerned with the welfare of the Black students. "I think that Dr. Babin really did want us to feel welcomed on campus. We did not get everything, but we certainly made strides."[20] As the Soul Society began to address the social well-being of the Black students at UAM, they did not rely solely on the UAM administration for relief. In the

[19] "Soul Society is Active Group," *Campus Herald,* March 26, 1971; Peaceful Demonstration Brings Attention to A&M Campus, *Campus Herald*, March 26, 1971.

[20] Ibid.; Tolefree, Interview.

years to come, they would create spaces and activities for themselves such as Black Emphasis Week and the establishment of Black fraternities.

As a result of the spring protest, UAM would hire its first Black dorm mother, Ms. Ernestine Stanley in 1972. The following year, UAM finally hired its first full-time African American professor Dr. Louis C. Dunlap. Dunlap taught in the Math and Sciences department. One of the biggest changes for the Soul Society came by way of the organization's advisor.[21] Having been advised by white faculty and staff members since its inception, the Soul Society would soon get one of their own as an advisor, Classie (née Jones) Green, who also happened to be the first African American to graduate from the UAM nursing department. Green remembers vividly how she got back to UAM:

> I was working at a hospital in Pine Bluff making great money, but it was the night shift. I got a call from the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs who remembered me from my time on campus. He asked me if I would be interested in coming back to campus to be the school nurse. My time at UAM was not bad at all, but I know some of the Black students had difficult times. I wanted to come back for them.[22]

For Green, it was critical that Black students become involved in campus life. As advisor, her first order of business was to help the Soul Society establish signature programs for Black students on campus. However, she did not just want any type of programs. Rather, she wanted everything the Soul Society did to instill a sense of pride in Black students. Thus, Black Emphasis Week was born.[23]

For the first time on the UAM campus, Black students had something they could literally call their own that was created by their own. Black Emphasis Week served not only as an

---

[21] The revision will include more biographies of administrators and the white advisors of Soul Society.

[22] Classie Green, interview by author, in-person, November 23, 2020.

[23] Ibid.; "Forty Years of Achievement: Notable African American students at UAM," *Drew County Historical Journal* 21 (2006): 41-46.

opportunity to highlight the contributions of Blacks in society; it was also a celebration of Blackness, Black culture, and the Black aesthetic. "Black is Beautiful was a powerful sentiment during that time and I wanted all of our Black students to embrace it," Green reflected. While it is true that the Soul Society no longer protested or marched on campus, they still embraced Black power ideology through their desire to create and maintain Black spaces. Black Emphasis week began with a political forum, followed by a fashion show and a gospel concert. All of these events were well attended, but the highlight of the week was the Miss BOSS. (Black Organizations of Social and Service Groups) Pageant. Prior to the establishment of the Miss B.O.S.S. pageant, there was no mechanism in which Black women could compete in the Miss UAM pageant. However, the winner of Miss BOSS pageant was eligible to compete in the Miss UAM pageant. "The Miss BOSS pageant was certainly a marvelous event. However, we taught the young women more than just beauty pageant techniques. We also discussed life skills," remember Ms. Green.[24]

The Soul Society was a unique Black power organization in that it worked extremely hard not to be categorized as such for fear of reprisal. Yet, its members knew that it had to embrace aspects of Black Power in order to accomplish some of its initial goals. In the end, the Soul Society adapted to its local circumstances and choose the path most suitable to it. No two BP organizations were the same, even if their goals were similar. The Soul Society shows that even the possibility of radicalism could be just as helpful as actually being radical. The next chapter also shows how Black students worked together to create change on campus. However, this next group started out as a biracial organization with the hopes of creating harmony on

[24] Green, Interview.

campus. However, in a highly segregated rural town, those hopes would quickly dissipate and Black students would eventually create an organization dedicated exclusively to Black progress.

CHAPTER FOUR
UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE'RE BLACK: STUDENTS UNITED FOR RIGHTS AND EQUALITY AND THE BLACK STUDENT ASSOCIATION AT SOUTHERN STATE COLLEGE, 1968-1973

In December of 1968, the Reverend James Schoenrock, pastor of the College View Baptist Church in Magnolia, Arkansas, uttered the following words, "Our church is not an integrated church and some of our people are not prepared at this time for integrated church services." In typical Christian fashion, he would go on to defend himself and his congregation by saying, "I don't have a feeling of segregation [and] I don't feel my church does. But under the circumstances, there's not much we can do. The time element is not right."[1] In Arkansas, like other places in the South, communities were still grappling with the passage of the 1965 Civil Rights Act which outlawed segregation in public places. Unbeknownst to Rev. Schoenrock at the time, his actions would provide the impetus for a group of Black and white students to directly challenge Jim Crow. Yet, their fight would come at a great cost to some as a biracial organization gave way to the formation of an exclusively Black group.

This chapter will trace the origins of the biracial advocacy group Student United for Rights and Equality (SURE) at Southern State College in Magnolia, and it shows how their initial idealism of working cooperatively among the races failed and provided a pathway for Black students to embrace Black Power ideology with the formation of the Black Student Association. This chapter will also explore the limitations and difficulties of biracial activist

[1] "Church Not Integrated, Pastor Says," *Baxter Bulletin* (Mountain Home, Arkansas), December 26, 1968.

groups. Additionally, this chapter will show how Black students dissolved the biracial group in favor of a more BP focused organization.

The year 1968 was a critical one for race relations on college campuses. With the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Black students were not only afraid for the future, but were increasingly skeptical of nonviolent peaceful protest. At campuses all around the country, Black students were embracing Black Power ideology in that they wanted to take complete control of their destinies and wanted Black people to be responsible for their own progress. They were forming organizations dedicated specifically to Black people and the issues they faced. This attitude manifested in numerous other ways, such as demanding more Black faculty and greater opportunities for Black students. In Magnolia, Arkansas, on the campus of Southern State College (now Southern Arkansas University), Black students forged a different path to attain equality that was both familiar, yet foreign during at this specific time.

In an effort to unite rather than divide, a group of Black and white students formed the SURE on the campus of Southern State College in October of 1968. The stated purpose of the group was to "promot[ing] human rights, social interests and to further understanding among all students regarding race, nationality and religion."[2] In order to accomplish this goal, the organization adopted five purposes:

> To provide an organized program of leadership and participation among representatives of all races, nationalities, and religions; to provide service to the college to assist in realization of its goals; to stimulate closer relationships among members of all races, nationalities, and religions; to provide members an opportunity to develop philosophies regarding human relations; and, to provide recognition for members for contributions in assisting SURE to fulfill its purposes.[3]

---

[2] "SURE Holds Rally, Schedules Meeting," *The Bray*, October 25, 1968.

[3] Paula Killian Agee, "*Pickings V. Bruce*: Students United for Rights and Equality," in *First Amendment Studies in Arkansas: The Richard S. Arnold Prize Essays* by Stephen Smith, Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2016.

Despite Black students forming more separatist groups on college campuses all around the country and even elsewhere in Arkansas, SURE decided to take an approach the more closely resembled the early days of another student-led organization in which both Black and white activists worked together on issues of civil rights and activists of both races enjoyed leadership roles throughout the organization: the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In the spring of 1960, students around the country participated in protests to desegregate public accommodations. Specifically, they held sit-ins at lunch counters to force the establishments to serve Blacks. In North Carolina, a group of students from area universities were challenging restaurants on an almost daily basis. Sometimes they were successful, and other times they were not. However, their passion for purpose did not go unnoticed by the legacy civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Dr. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). To capture and perhaps control this energy, the older organizations suggested that they convene a conference in which the students could come together and discuss a collective strategy to move forward. Convened by veteran civil rights activist Ella Baker, the initial SNCC conference was held during the spring of 1960 and held in Raleigh, North Carolina, where Baker lived and where significant sit-in activity had occurred. While the older civil rights organizations did not want students determining the strategic approach of the movement, Baker felt that if she tried to pressure the students to operate within existing organizations, that they would immediately reject that overture. Instead, Baker encouraged the students to embrace their own ideas about the civil rights movement.[4]

[4] Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981). Carson presents one of the most complete histories of SNCC by providing in-depth treatment of its formation, existence and ultimate demise. He utilizes extensive interviews, meeting minutes and his own personal

SNCC attracted activists from all over the country to participate in SNCC projects. Additionally, SNCC provided much needed support to other student-led civil rights organizations such as their assistance with the freedom rides sponsored by the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE). Freedom rides were journeys by student activists throughout the south for the purpose of desegregating bus terminal eating facilities. SNCC's support of the freedom ride campaign would a wave of student militancy that would manifest fully years later.[5] In addition to assisting other groups, SNCC began to go through a crisis of identity as members debated which approach to take; nonviolent direct action or voter registration. SNCC did indeed continue to participate in some nonviolent direct action, but overwhelming they turned their attention to voter registration. One of the most successful voter registration projects occurred in the civil rights battle ground of Mississippi in what has been called Freedom Summer.[6]

The Mississippi Summer Project brought together veteran Mississippi Black activists with northern white students that were interested in fighting for change. Although white volunteers were accepted into the Project, Black activists and local Blacks were both ambivalent

---

interactions to form the basis of the book. For additional background information about SNCC, see Iwan Morgan and Phillip Davies eds. *From Sit-Ins to SNCC: The Student Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2012); for biographies and firsthand accounts of individual SNCC members and supporters see, Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Faith S. Holdsaert et.al eds., *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010); James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); Cleveland Sellers, *The River of No Return: The Autobiography of a Black Militant and the Life and Death of SNCC (*Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1990); John Lewis, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement (*New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998); Kwame Ture, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture),* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003); for books about SNCC and their various projects see, Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Jon N. Hale, *The Freedom Schools: Student Activists in The Mississippi Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Columbia University, 2016).

[5] Carson, *In Struggle*, 33.

[6] Ibid., 31. SNCC workers referred to the summer project as the Mississippi Summer project to distinguish it from other projects within the state. Because of the creation of freedom schools which focused on voter education but also included Black history, scholars and activists refer to the Mississippi Summer Project as Freedom Summer.

and skeptical of their presence.[7] Yet, white volunteers were critical in helping over 17,000 Mississippi Blacks fill out voter registration forms.[8] Shortly after SNCC's Mississippi Summer Project came to its conclusion, a growing rift within the organization would completely transform the organization. In 1966, SNCC once again had its annual officer election. Veteran activist John Lewis had been chairman since 1963 and looked forward to retaining his chairmanship as was customary. However, since his election in 1963, SNCC members had increasingly embraced more militant rhetoric and many of them were no longer willing to embrace nonviolence as an exclusive modality of activism. The division of membership allowed for the potential candidacy of another member whose ideology closely aligned with a growing faction of SNCC. That member was Stokely Carmichael. Carmichael was a veteran SNCC member who was played a large role in organizing Blacks across the Alabama black belt. Carmichael advocated for a Black militant political movement in which Blacks would completely control their own political party. After two different elections, Carmichael would win the chairmanship from Lewis which resulted in a dramatic shift in philosophy and approach. In one of his first interviews, Carmichael was quoted as saying he would not first the organization's white organizers, "but if they want to organize, they can organize white people. Negroes will organize the Negroes." This move toward Black nationalism did not happen in a vacuum but was the result of years of activists organizing in the south and beginning to become more conscious about their blackness and embracing it fully.[9] As Black radicalism spread across the country, SNCC's influence and reach began to wane. What began as a promising interracial

[7] Ibid., 112.

[8] Ibid., 117.

[9] Ibid., 204.

organization was a shell of itself by 1968. Still, their early successes provided a roadmap for SURE in Magnolia at Southern State College (SSC).[10]

SURE's founding was immediately lauded on campus for their effort in bringing both Blacks and whites together. White student newspaper columnist Joe Weissman went to great lengths to show that SURE was a different kind of civil rights organization. Although the Black and white students held offices equally, the president, Ernest Pickings Jr., of the group was Black. Weissman states, "Contrary to some mistaken opinion, SURE is not a radical subversive movement dedicated to seizing Overstreet Hall and shouting obscenities from classroom windows." Weissman wanted to demonstrate that not all Black students were radicals during the turbulent 1968 year and that SURE members wanted to "promote its goals through intelligent, democratic participation in administrative affairs."[11] Perhaps Weissman truly believed in the statements he wrote in the school newspaper. Perhaps he wanted to assuage his white counterparts that SSC was different than other schools. However, his words are all too familiar when you think about the on-going tension between activists' strategies. Just like the raging ideological debates of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X years prior, students on college campuses were trying to navigate the complexity of maintaining white allies while also pushing for substantive change.

Unlike their peers at other universities in the state, SURE activists sought to change not only the campus climate, but also the climate in the town of Magnolia. In 1969, Arkansas was working towards progress in its capital city, but that did not translate into widespread progress throughout many of the small rural towns, like Magnolia. Still largely segregated, the town of

[10] An earlier chapter discussed ArSNCC in greater detail. This discussion about SNCC is used to highlight how a national biracial organization eventually shifted toward BP ideology.

[11] *The Bray*, October, 25, 1968.

Magnolia was not amenable to groups like SURE and made sure that they did not feel welcome.[12] One of the stark realities of this segregation came in the form of access to public spaces. For example, students on campus all drank from the same water fountain, but in the town, water fountains were labeled for "colored" and "whites" only, and doctor's offices had separate waiting rooms for whites and blacks.[13] Besides the strict racial hierarchy in Magnolia, Blacks also had to contend with extrajudicial violence, such as the killing of a Black man by a police officer because the Black man was rumored to have had an affair with white woman. Despite the inherent risks for Blacks, SURE members began their work both on campus and in the community.[14]

Shortly after SURE's formation, they held a campus wide rally in which all students were invited. The group wanted to fulfill its purpose in promoting understanding among the races. The list of speakers included both white and Black students and featured the student senate president, president of the Psychology Club, and two Black officers from SURE. The rally was successful and provided optimism for the future of biracial cooperation.[15] SURE next turned its attention toward making Magnolia a better place for its residents. SURE members worked with the town to compete for a grant in which Magnolia could implement a series of self-improvement projects. While none of these activities raised serious concern, campus president Dr. Imon Bruce grew increasingly concerned with student activism as he was keenly aware of several campus incidents occurring around the country during the spring and fall of 1968. In an

---

[12] James F. Willis, *Southern Arkansas University: The Mulerider School's Centennial History, 1909–2009* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2009), 113-120.

[13] Paula Killian Agee, "Pickings v. Bruce: Students United for Rights and Equality" in *First Amendment Studies in Arkansas* by Stephen Smith. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2016. p. 3

[14] Ibid., 4.

[15] *The Bray*, October 25, 1968. The revision will provide additional information on the rally.

effort to prevent any type of protest on the campus, Bruce met with SURE during its November meeting. During the meeting, Bruce recited the expectations of students which included the "responsibility to become educated and a competent citizen of the state and nation, both of which share the cost of his education."[16] A glaringly omission from this list was protest, which, of course, Bruce wanted to avoid. He reasoned with the group that the most effective way to create change would be through the university shared governance process which included students on most committees. The meeting ended uneventful and SURE continued to plan its community activities. However, the following month, the stage would be slowly set for a years' long battle that ended with a court ruling, the end of one organization and the emergence of another.

Since many SURE members were active in the community, they mostly knew where in the town they could go safely and interact with both races without disrupting the informal social restrictions.[17] One such place was church. Five Black students attended an all-white church that was close to campus. The young women were welcomed during their first visit and decided to return another Sunday due to the hospitality. However, when they arrived and took their seats, a church official motioned for them to come with him into the church lobby. Once here, he told them that the church was not prepared for integration and he would be happy to provide them transportation to another church if they would like. The group decided to leave after the man opened the door for them. Because of the incident, SURE voted to write a letter to the church. The following Sunday, SURE members showed up, this time two white and three Black members. When the members arrived, they handed Schroenrock the letter they had prepared which stated in part that, "the ejected students were exercising their rights to freedom of worship

[16] *The Bray*, November 22, 1968.

[17] The revision will add additional information on the workforce grant that SURE worked to secure for the town of Magnolia.

in a church of their choice and theirs was a purely individual action."[18] SURE's goal from the beginning, was to create an opportunity for dialogue between the races without appearing to be too political or radical. SURE reiterated this point by saying that "since promotion of social understanding and human rights are among the primary purposes of our organization, we feel obligated to inquire into the situation."[19] SURE contended that they only wanted to know the policies of the church and if the church as open to integration. Even with the seemingly soft language of the letter, SURE drew the ire of President Bruce after Rev. Schroenrock called him after receipt of the letter. In an attempt to downplay SURE's involvement, Bruce suggested that only a couple of members were responsible for getting the organization involved as, "the students in this organization are not inclined to this sort of thing."[20]

Despite Bruce's insistence that SURE was not the culprit, he still proceeded with disciplinary action against members and advisors. He demanded that both faculty advisors to resign since they both approved the writing of the letter. Bruce also asked the student who wrote the letter to resign his position. All three resigned their formal positions but remained affiliated with the organization. Lastly, Bruce placed SURE on probation for the remainder of the school year and could only participate in campus activities. All of these actions were done because SURE dared to question the racial order in Magnolia.[21] President Bruce had been empowered by the board to run the school how he saw fit, and he was determined to use that power to unilaterally punish those who did not abide by his rules.

---

[18] "Church Not Integrated, Pastor Says," *Baxtor Bulletin* (Mountain Home), December 26, 1968; Letter written by Steven J. Bouley, Chairman of SURE Public Relations Committee.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid. The revision will provide additional context on the relationship between segregation and religion.

[21] *Pickings et al. v. Bruce et al.,* 430 F.2d 595 (United States Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, August 6, 1970).

Despite Bruce's oppressive tactics, SURE would not just accept his actions and were determined to fight the sanctions. Steven Bouley, SURE publicity chair, appealed his removal from office to the student senate. The senate was responsible for determining whether SURE violated its charter by sending a letter to the church. Dean of Students Donald Haefner testified at the hearing and stated that, "the role of the institution is an educational facility rather than a course of social change."[22] He also noted that the only people at the university that had a right to write letters for off-campus were the president and the business manager. The senate concluded that SURE was in violation of their purposes and goals and the senate subsequently censured the organization. Following the senate's action, President Bruce released a statement in which he accused SURE of not trying to further the good will between the races. He stated that relations between black and white student have regressed and not progressed since SURE's formation.[23] While some of Bruce's commentary was more hyperbole than fact, he was also worried about a visit from the state Health, Education and Welfare committee that was coming to campus to investigate whether the school was complying with federal civil rights policy.

In a scathing rebuke, the SURE officers penned a response in the newspaper that called their punishment a "crucifixion rather than censure." In their letter, they continued to advocate for a unified approach and welcomed anyone from the campus community to join the organization.[24] While they never called out Bruce by name, they did thank those who gave them a fair assessment and said they only have compassion and forgiveness for those that did not. Part of SURE's visible frustration was the fact that they were genuinely trying to work within the

---

[22] Quote form "Peaceful Integration Disrupted, Bruce Says," *The Bray*, January 31, 1969.

[23] "Peaceful Integration Disrupted, Bruce Says," *The Bray*, January 31, 1969.

[24] "Special Senate Session Discusses, Votes on Action of SURE Officer,"*The Bray*, January 10, 1969; "SURE Asks for Equal Treatment; Explains Plans, Past Actions," *The Bray,* February 28, 1969.

university structure to address inequities among the races in a collaborative manner. However, once those activities left the confines of the campus, the group met immediate resistance and swift consequences. While other student groups were able to leverage protests into successful meetings with administrators, SURE had no such luck since protesting was counter to their founding principles.

During the spring semester, SURE remained on probation, but it was not precluded from hosting campus activities. For the second time in one academic year, SURE would encounter the wrath of President Bruce. As part of its campus programming, SURE invited Joe Neal who was a representative of the Southern Students Organizing Committee (SSOC). Neal was supposed to give a talk and show an AFL-CIO produced film. President Bruce found out about Neal's visit one day prior to Neal's arrival. Bruce immediately informed SURE's president and advisors that they need to rescind the invitation to Neal. However, SURE did not follow through on Bruce's edict. Neal came to campus for the program and there was not a single incident. Still, President Bruce was furious that his directive was not followed. He instructed the dean of students to temporarily suspend SURE's charter for disobeying the request to cancel the program. Dean Haefner told SURE's president that the student senate and student affairs committee would review the suspension and that the final decision would come from him subject to appeal to the President and the Board of Trustees.[25]

SURE was no stranger to the student senate process, since they had just been before the senate the prior semester.[26] As they prepared for the hearing, SURE members thought of ways in which they could strengthen their case. Instead of appealing to morals, they decided to charge

[25] *Pickings et al. v. Bruce et al.,* 430 F.2d 595 (United States Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, August 6, 1970).

[26] The revision will have a deeper discussion of repressive administrative procedures.

the university administration with infringing upon their rights as students. The student set out with the duty to review both SURE's claims and the administration's claims. Dean Haefner appearing for the university shared that the administration was skeptical of SSOC because of its seemingly radical politics. The administration feared that the visit by Joe Neal would not be constructive for higher education. The senate upheld the temporary suspension by a close vote of 18 to 15. However, they also voted to recommend to the student affairs committee that SURE's charter not be revoked.[27]

SURE's story could have ended right at the moment the senate voted to uphold the temporary suspension. However, the group showed a strong resolve for wanting to fight for their rights as well as the rights of others. Approximately five days after the student senate voted, SURE commenced a lawsuit in the United States District Court which mirrored NAACP legal tactics. They asked for declaratory judgement and injunctive relief. SURE alleged in their suit that the university through its administrators infringed upon their constitutional rights, particularly their freedom of speech. SURE also alleged that they had been targeted and harassed by the university for its civil rights activities. For the next year, SURE plead their case in court. Their initial suit was dismissed, but they appealed to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals which found that Southern State College did find that the suspension was an unfair restriction upon free speech.[28] SURE had finally won. For once, President Bruce could not wield his authority in a way that dispossessed SURE members of their rights. SURE was vindicated. In keeping with his contrary ways, Bruce commented after the hearing that the Court

[27] "SURE Receives Senate Backing," *The Bray*, March 28, 1969.

[28] *Pickings et al. v. Bruce et al.,* 430 F.2d 595 (United States Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, August 6, 1970).

of Appeals was wrong, but that he would not appeal.[29] Although SURE was reinstated, the constant harassment, threats and court cases took its toll on the members. With many of the members gone from Southern State, the organization was severely depleted. Those who remained, decided that it was time to try a new strategy to obtain equity and rights. They decided to concentrate on Black issues, that Black students could solve. They soon realized that an organization like SURE would only invite further scrutiny because of its biracial makeup. Therefore, the decision was made to form an exclusively Black group, thus the Black Student Association was born.

A New Yorker Comes South: The First President of the Black Student Association

Although SURE was only in existence for three years, their story permeated throughout campus, especially the actions of President Bruce. In an effort to stay off of his radar, Black students selectively recruited other Black students to join the new Black Student Association. While many of the new recruits had no idea of the SURE story, many of them had no desire for a multi-racial coalition. It was now the 1971 and Black Power was no longer a nascent movement but rather a guiding principle for Black activists coming of age. One of those activists was a wise, strong, independent Black woman from Bedstuy, New York by the name of Katherine "Kandi" Corbett.

Born into a working-class family with an African American mother and an Irish father, Katherine Riley was destined to be a change agent, but it would not be easy. Her father did whatever he had to in order to provide for his family and most people in the neighborhood did not even know he was white, but rather they thought he was Gullah Geechee from South Carolina or creole from Louisiana. While his whiteness was not an issue in the neighborhood,

[29] "Southern S. Says Ruling Was Wrong," *Hope Star* (Hope, Arkansas), August 17, 1970.

his street life had a profound effect on the family. Her father was a street fighter who did not mind a confrontation if he felt someone was messing with him. From age four through age eleven, her father was incarcerated which left the family with one less provider. "People would make a mockery of my family because of who my dad was. They never realized the toll it took on our family to take the bus for hours all the way to upstate New York and the find out your dad is on lockdown and can't see you." Katherine reflected. While it was not easy, Katherine's mother worked as a nurse's aide to support the family. Besides providing for the family, Katherine's mother was very protective of her children telling them that their father was in a big hospital rather than in prison. Katherine and her brother did not even know their father had been incarcerated until he came home from prison. Once her father was released, he never returned to prison and made sure to instill in his children a hard work ethic as he never wanted them to experience being in prison. "I remember the day my father came home. It was one of the proudest days of my life."[30]

Growing up in New York City during the 1960s presented opportunity as well as challenge. As immigrants continued to migrant to the New York City in search of better lives for them and their family, the city had to contend with deteriorating race relations among Blacks and whites, particularly the police, in the city. In the summer of 1964, just as Corbett was getting ready to enter the eighth grade, New York City was rocked with by the killing of a fifteen-year old Black kid. While the specific facts have been disputed by the police and eyewitness accounts, there are some aspects of the incident that remain consistent. At about 9:20am on July 15, a couple of Black kids were playing around across the street from the school where they were attending summer classes. Patrick Lynch, the white superintendent of the apartment building,

[30] Dr. Katherine "Kandi" Corbett, interview by author, phone, March 2, 2021.

was outside cleaning off the sidewalk with a hose. In an attempt to kid the Black teenagers to leave from in front of the apartment complex, Lynch began to spray water on the teenagers. Eyewitness Shirley Robinson, a 14-year old Black girl who was also a student, heard Lynch provoke the young men by saying, "I'm going to wash all the black off you." Afterwards, a few of the young men began throwing bottles and trashcan covers at Lynch which made him run into the building. 15-year-old James Powell ran in the building after Lynch, but emerged moments later laughing. Just as this was happening, an off-duty white police officer, Lieutenant Thomas Gilligan, overheard the commotion while he was at a nearby store. Gilligan claimed that Powell approached him with a knife drawn. Gilligan also claims that he showed his badge to Powell, but Powell continued to approach him which resulted in Gilligan firing his service weapon once which struck Powell in the hand. He then proceeded to fire two additional shots in which one hit Powell in the stomach and the other hit an apartment window. Powell fell immediately and his body lay lifeless on the concrete. Robinson said that she did not see a knife in Powell's hand at any time. Actually, none of the eyewitnesses saw a pocketknife at all; only Gilligan's black revolver.[31]

The scene after the killing of James Powell was chaotic. In the relatively quiet predominately white neighborhood, hundreds of Black teenagers amassed each day to go to summer school. On this day, as more of them arrived, they refused to go into the school and instead, immediately descended onto the scene and threw bottles and cans at the police. As the additional officers arrived in steel helmet riot gear to disperse the crowd, the students began to move on down the street and to other parts of the city. One young Black woman yelled, "shoot

[31] "Negro Boy Killed; 300 Harass Police; Teenagers Hurl Cans and Bottles after Shotting by Off-Duty Officer," *The New York Times*, July 17, 1964.

another nigger," while another one shouted, "this is worse than the south! Don't shoot unarmed negroes." While the police managed to quiet the crowd on the scene, they had no idea what would happen over the next as outraged young Blacks took to the streets to denounce police brutality and demand accountability. The day after the Powell's murder, over 300 young Blacks showed up to the exact same spot that Powell was killed with signs that read "Stop Killer Cops," and "End Police Brutality." Initially, the police were armed with night sticks, but they were later ordered to put them away. Police Commissioner Michael Murphy promised a full investigation of the shooting even though Gilligan claimed it was self-defense. The following day, over 200 people showed up at a Harlem funeral parlor to pay their respects to James Powell and his family. As the processional past the casket continued, a counterprotest led by the U.S. Nationalist Party was being was occurring a few blocks down the road. The Nationalist Party was a right-wing group that wanted to end school integration, abolish the Human Rights Commission and ban all civil rights demonstrations among many other demands. They also called for the arrest of Bayard Rustin and James Farmer for inciting a riot. The counterprotest drew about 100 people, which included several Blacks who heckled the entire proceedings. While both CORE and the NAACP called for investigations into the murder, it was mostly young Blacks who kept the pressure on the police department. Civil rights leaders called for the immediate suspension and arrest on suspension of murder of Lt. Gilligan. Over the next six days there were over 132 people arrested and 100 injured in New York City and the surrounding Burroughs as the entire 26,000-man police force was put on emergency duty which included

twelve hours on and twelve hours off. At least one Black man was shot to death also. It was reported that this was the largest riot in Harlem in two decades.[32]

The violence of the summer was not lost upon Katherine Corbett as she witnessed the protests but was not allowed to participate in any of them due to her parents fear of danger or possible imprisonment. Yet, she had been impacted by the sacrifices of so many people her own age who were determined to make life better for Blacks. The following fall, Corbett noticed that New York began to hire more Black teachers for its middle and high school; many of them coming from the South. "This was the first time that I had somebody that looked like me who said that I could actually go to college, that I could do more than be a cook or a nurse's aide. The Black teachers really cared." Corbett had never been to the south, but her introduction to compassionate Blacks from the region made her think that maybe it was not as bad of a place as she had heard.

Because of the inspiration from her Black teachers in middle school, Corbett was determined to go to college. In New York City, many of the high schools tried to steer Black students into the vocational diploma track instead of the Regent's diploma track which was for students who were pursing academically competitive colleges. Unfortunately for Corbett, her parents did not believe that she should go to college and refused to pay for it if she did go. When Corbett talked with her high school counselor, he encouraged her to take the vocational track and become a nurse's aide. She refused and graduated with the Regent's diploma. With no money

[32] "Negro Boy Killed; 300 Harass Police; Teenagers Hurl Cans and Bottles after Shotting by Off-Duty Officer," *The New York Times*, July 17, 1964; "Negroes Death Spurs Mobbing of N.Y. Police," *Arkansas Gazette*, July 17, 1964; "Crowd Protests N.Y. Shotting of Negro Youth," *Arkansas Gazette*, July 18, 1964; "A Boy Mourned in Harlem; Nationalists Assail CORE," *New York Daily News*, July 19, 1964; "Harlem Ripped By Race Riot; CORE Jeered," *Wellsville Daily Reporter*, July 20, 1964; "Civil Rights Leaders Demand Suspension of Cop Who Slew Boy: 3 Persons Shot; Scores Injured Over Weekend," *The Daily Messenger* (Canandaigua, New York), July 20, 1964.

to attend college, Katherine's prospects were limited. However, she soon got the opportunity of a lifetime when she met her boyfriend and soon to be husband, Eddie Corbett.[33]

Eddie Corbett is a native New Yorker from the Bedford Stuyvesant area and was an outstanding track athlete in high school. Eddie was a member of the state championship track team and was a pretty good student as well. He credits his success to his high school track coach who would go around every Friday to check to see how the young men were doing. If they were doing good, he would reward them. If they were cutting up in class, then they would have extra practice and run the risk of missing a game or meet. "Nobody expected kids from Bed-Stuy to become anything and people certainly did not think we would graduate," Eddie Corbett remembers. After the season, the track coach sent out letters about his athletes all around the country to schools that had recently integrated. The coach did not want the young Black men to stay in the neighborhood because he feared they would just party all the time and never make it out. Most of the athletes that had graduated from this school went to HBCUs like Howard and North Carolina A&T, but the coach wanted the current guys to be the first to go to all white schools.

In 1967, Coach Rip Powell from Southern State College in Arkansas recruited Eddie Corbett to the school in an effort to compete in the growing competitive conference. Eddie was recruited along with two other Black guys and the year they arrived; the track team won a championship. The following year, they beat much bigger schools such as Texas and Arkansas and won an additional championship. All this success led to Coach Rip Powell being promoted from track coach to the highly coveted head football coach. Due to his success on the field and his warm personality, Coach Powell hired Eddie to be a student assistant and athletic recruiter.

[33] K. Corbett, Interview; New York State Education Department Diploma Requirements Archives.

Eddie's job was to pick up the Black recruits from Chicago, New York and other major cities and show them around the campus.

As a trusted member of Powell's team, Corbett was encouraged to make Magnolia a more permanent home. During one of the off-seasons, Eddie and Katherine married, but Katherine still lived in New York while Eddie was down in Magnolia. This soon changed as the school encouraged Eddie Corbett to bring his wife to Magnolia where she could go to school for free. Even though this was a kind gesture, the school also had a vested interest in not having a single Black man on campus without companionship. "By having a wife, they figured I was much more responsible and not subject to acting a fool."[34] Eddie Corbett never met a stranger and got along with everybody. Southern State College probably assumed they were getting a woman version of Eddie since they were both from the same New York neighborhood and they were married. Unfortunately for SSC, they were in for quite a surprise.[35]

A President for the People

When Katherine Corbett arrived in Magnolia in 1970, the SURE controversy had essentially subsided, and not many folks around campus or around town were talking about it. "I had never heard of SURE and quite frankly, would not have been that interested in it anyway," Katherine reflected. As Katherine was getting acclimated to life in the south, she soon realized that for all its challenges, New York City was still further along than Magnolia, Arkansas. She worked alongside her husband as a dorm parent, and they lived in a little apartment on campus. Katherine got a real southern welcome when she had to fill in for her husband one day on his recruitment duties. The cafeteria happened to be closed when the recruit came into town.

[34] Eddie Corbett, interview by author, phone, March 2, 2021.

[35] Ibid.

Knowing that he was hungry because of the long trip, Katherine decided to take him to one of the local eateries. The difference between this recruit and the recruits her husband typically escorted is this recruit was white while the others were typically Black. Knowing the Jim Crow was very much alive in Magnolia, Katherine made sure to show that the white recruit was paying for his own food. Unbeknownst to her, an angry mob had appeared outside which even included police officer. Someone from the restaurant called President Bruce to share that there was a student in the restaurant trying to cause a disturbance. President Bruce promptly called Eddie Corbett and remarked, "Corbett, you got a niggra' gal in there with one of our boys and you got to go in there and get him out." Eddie Corbett asked Bruce to describe the lady, and once Bruce finished, Corbett replied, "That's not a niggra gal, that's my wife! She is taking the recruit to get some food on my behalf because I could not go." The President was satisfied with the answer and within minutes, the cars and the mob outside the restaurant pulled off.[36]

In addition to getting used to the Jim Crow south rules regarding dining, Katherine also confronted another issue she was not accustomed. As part of her entrance into the college, she had to have a physical done. The Dean of women sent her to the local doctor that worked with the college. After arriving, Katherine sat for an hour, two hours and two and a half hours. During this time, multiple white patients were going in and out of the office. She noticed that several of the white patients were staring at her strangely, but she did not give it much thought since the college sent her to this specific office. Finally, after waiting almost three hours, she went up to the receptionist desk to inquire why her wait was so long. The receptionist asked Katherine to wait a minute while she conferred with a nurse. The receptionist came back and apologized to Katherine and said that she could now go to her waiting room. Puzzled, Katherine

[36] K. Corbett, Interview.

asked where was her waiting room and the receptionist gave Katherine directions to another part of the building. Being from New York, Katherine assumed that there were multiple numbered waiting rooms for individual patients to sit in. What she found, is still vividly imprinted in her mind. "There was the long hallway and when I turned into the room, there were all these Black folks huddled up sitting on broken, tattered furniture waiting to see the doctor." Katherine had no idea that there was a "colored" entrance in the back of the building that she was supposed to come through. She immediately turned around, went out the front door and gave the receptionist a killer look, one she had seen her father give multiple times. She slammed the door so hard that she thought she had broken the glass. Katherine went back to campus furious and went straight to the dean's office and asked why the dean sent her to a segregated doctor's office. The dean apologized profusely and claimed that she had no idea that the doctor's office was segregated. Katherine refused to go back to get a physical which made the dean find her another doctor who did not have segregated waiting room. While Katherine was willing to personally take risks, she never required the same from any of the students she came across while on campus. She was cognizant of the murder of a Black man a few years prior and did not want to put any Blacks in danger. [37]

Later that year, Glen Winston, former member of SURE and one of the plaintiffs in the suit against the university, approached Katherine Corbett about starting a Black organization on campus for Black students. Katherine initially thought that she was being recruited just so the group could get the five members required to be an official student organization. However, she soon realized that she was being recruited specifically because she was from the north and had no ties to the former organization. While Katherine thought that Winston would be a natural

[37] K. Corbett, Interview.

choice for president, he soon left SSC for another university which left the new organization without a leader. Katherine was unanimously selected as the president of the newly formed Black Student Association (BSA) because her peers new that she was fearless and that she had their best interests at heart. Katherine did not take this responsibility lightly and vowed that the BSA would work on behalf of Black students but would operate within the university system. She knew that she could only push so far before violent reprisals affected the group.[38]

Even though Corbett did not initially consider the early BSA a Black Power organization she is quick to say that she embraced much of the Black Power ideology such as Black empowerment, Black self-sufficiency, and militancy. Katherine is quick to point out that the Black students on campus were not militant in a self-armed defense way, but rather, they were committed to Black excellence at all costs. This notion of academic militancy was pervasive throughout the campus as Corbett notes that Black students had to earn an A just to get a B or earn an "A+++++" in order to get an A. Since many of the students had parents who told them to "go down there and get an education and stay out of trouble," members of the BSA could not hold the same types of protests that their peers around the state did. However, some of the early goals of the BSA were to give Black a voice in school affairs, to instill school pride in Black students, and to promote campus engagement among Black students.

Instead of focusing on integration or working with White students on civil rights issues, Corbett's BSA focused on ways in which they could impact the Magnolia community. The BSA gave away food and clothing to people throughout the community. Even though the focus was on Black families, there were white families that benefited as well. Also, the BSA focused on ways in which they could make experiences equitable for elementary students. For instance, the

[38] K. Corbett, Interview; Willis, *Mulerider*, 264.

schools were integrated in Magnolia, but the experiences of the students were different. Buses would pick Black kids up for school, but they would not take them home after any extracurricular activities. When the school district hosted puppet shows after school, Black students could not go because they would have no way home since they could not ride the school bus with white kids. Corbett recruited BSA members to volunteer to drive the Black kids home after school. Corbett was insistent on not forcing the bus company to drive the Black kids home, something SURE would have more than likely instigated. Instead, the BSA under Corbett's leadership wanted to show whites, that Blacks can do it on their own.

Blacks can be self-sufficient. Additionally, when there was no Boy Scout troop in Magnolia for Black boys, Corbett made sure they would not miss out on the opportunity. Corbett got her husband to volunteer to help out. There was a Boy Scout Jublilee in which many of the Black boys wanted to go. So Eddie Corbett went down to the church and told the parents that he would take all the boys to the jubilee that wanted to go. Eddie rented a U-Haul truck and went back to the church to pick up the kids and the fathers that would help chaperone. Once he got there, the kids and parents were all excited despite none of the boys having the standard Boy Scouts uniform or any camping supplies whatsoever. Still, they were just appreciative of having the opportunity to do something that they had never done before. In a showing of Black unity, many of the mothers got together to prepare food for the journey and to scrounge up supplies like blankets. The always resourceful Eddie went to the secondhand (thrift) store and found enough green shirts for all twenty boys.

Once all the supplies were loaded, twenty Black boys and five fathers made makeshift seats in the back of the U-Haul. They left the U-Haul gate halfway open so that they could see. Eddie drove incredibly slow so that nobody fell out of the truck. Once they arrived at the Jubilee,

all of the white kids looked in utter amazement while their families looked in total shock at twenty-five Black males all getting out of a U-Haul truck with somewhat matching green shirts and jeans. Corbett, the fathers, and the Black boys sat around the campfire eating fried chicken and collard greens while their white counterparts ate hotdogs. The white Boy Scouts were excited to see so many Black boys and some of the inquired about how they could get one of the cool special uniforms like the Black troop. "When I opened the back of that U-Haul truck gate, I could see the mouths of the white fathers drop as they were trying to figure out if it was an invasion," Eddie recalled.[39]

Katherine insists that the BSA stayed in the clear because nobody on campus or off-campus could complain about their activities since what the BSA did was not controversial. "How could [Imon] Bruce target us for giving food and clothing to the needy? How could he be upset about us taking Black boys to camps? I was less concerned about forcing anything onto anybody." The largest challenge she faced was being a so-called Yankee Black woman from the north. Initially, Katherine wanted to push for more radical change. However, she soon realized it was not her job to push a particular agenda onto the folks in the south, but rather it was her responsibility to support them and provide opportunities. One of those opportunities came in the form of Black art. As a native New Yorker, Katherine was accustomed to seeing positive images of Blacks on tv and on the big screen. However, to her surprise, Magnolia had never shown a Black movie. This would be quickly remedied as she brought Sidney Poitier version of *A Raisin in the Sun*. Other Black artistic endeavors included a fashion show, a dance and a pageant, none of which occurred prior to the founding of the BSA. Like others during the time Katherine took advantage of the growing Black Arts Movement and wanted to make sure that Blacks on campus

[39] K. Corbett, Interview; E. Corbett, Interview.

and within Magnolia could be proud of Black imagery. “This was activism for us.” For the next two years, Corbett served as president of the BSA and the organization’s membership swelled. There were no censures, suspensions or charter revocations. A Yankee biracial woman from New York found a way to inspire and empower Black students and the Black community without having to confront the university power structure. Katherine Corbett’s leadership laid the foundation for the BSA’s continued growth and continued impact.

By 1973, Katherine and her husband were proud parents of a baby girl and were getting ready to graduate and start their lives. With the BSA having made great strides, it was critically important to select the right leader to head the group after Katherine’s successful tenure. While the initial group looked to an outsider who was a non-native of the state, the next president would come from a small town right down the road from the campus.

Terry Calahan grew up in Camden, Arkansas which is a little over thirty miles away from Magnolia. Terry’s upbringing was unique in that he was one of eight children, but he was raised by his mother’s sister. “In the country, it was common for big families to allow one of their kids to be raised by an aunt if she did not have any kids. I was the one who went to live with my aunt.”[40] Although Terry moved with his aunt, he was literally down the street from his siblings and parents. “Most of the Black people lived across the tracks, so I did not miss out on anything,” Calahan reflected. The Black community in Camden was pretty close knit and embraced the notion of “it takes a village to raise a child.” The Black community was pretty self-sufficient and were most proud of their state championship basketball team. However, the close-knit Black community would soon face calls for school integration. This “forced integration” was met with stiff opposition from the Black community as they were more than

[40] Terry Calahan, interview by author, phone, March 20, 2021.

satisfied with their current all Black school. Despite their opposition, Black kids were forced to attend previously all white schools. “Nobody ever came and asked what we wanted. If they would have, we would have told them that we wanted to stay in our own neighborhood.” Part of the reason for such strong opposition is that Black community members felt they would lose Black compassionate teachers who really cared about their children. Also, they would lose the autonomy that came along with having their own school. Also, because of the redistricting plan, there would be a decrease in the workforce that would disproportionately affect Black teachers. Yet, integration continued and by the following year, the schools were integrated and faced a multitude of challenges such as vandalism and fighting.

Terry Calahan faced a dilemma. For most of his life, he believed that his Black elders “got along to get along.” He asserts that everyone in the community did the best they could, which included embracing Dr. Martin Luther King’s call for nonviolence. However, Terry was beginning to develop his own personality and ideas. He spent time following Malcolm X and he really enjoyed the idea of “by any means necessary.” “I do not necessarily mean that we must use violence or become armed, however, I take that statement to mean that we must survive at all costs,” Terry remembers. During his junior year, Calahan was ready to make his statement. During a pep rally, him and ten other students got up in the middle of the show and proceeded to walk out of the gym. One of the white coaches grabbed one of the Black students by the arm and then a riot broke out. Him and ten other students were expelled from the school. Seven others were charged with simple assault of the white football coach. However, Calahan remembers some white teachers treating Black students poorly and he refused to take it. So that he could finish his studies, Calahan’s parents sent him to live with another aunt in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Here, Calahan would go to an all-Black high school where he thrived. "The Black community in Wisconsin was small, but powerful![41]

Although Calahan missed his family in Arkansas, he began to immediately notice the difference between Milwaukee and Camden. The most noticeable difference was just how much more progressive and outspoken Blacks were in Milwaukee, than in Camden. Calahan remarked, "It seems like every day, Black activists were marching and actively protesting in the streets. You just did not see that in Camden." While his assessment is true, there was a big reason why Milwaukee appeared more activist than the small-town Arkansas town; the Black Panthers had a chapter in Milwaukee, but not in Camden. This fact is not completely lost upon Calahan. "We really did the best we could in Camden. There was no one coming to our rescue if were as militant as the Panthers." The Milwaukee Black Panthers had a profound effect on Terry Calahan. Terry arrived in Milwaukee just as racial tensions had reached another boiling point since the riots of 1967.

Just a couple months prior to his arrival, two Black Panther Party members were convicted of attempted murder for their alleged role in the non-fatal shooting of a white police officer. The trial of the "Milwaukee Three," as their supporters called them, drew attention all over the state and region. In fact, the court had to implement revised security measures after two Panthers were arrested for carrying firearms inside the courthouse. The visible presence of the Panthers in Milwaukee and their militancy inspired Calahan to adopt their approach. More importantly, he credits his time in Milwaukee for awakening his Black consciousness. He went

[41] Calahan, Interview; "Winning Championship Has Brought Much Pride to Lincoln," *The Camden News,* April 19, 1969; "Judge Takes Cases Under Advisement," *The Camden News,* October 28, 1970; "Attendance Zones for Camden School District Students," *The Camden News,* April 6, 1970; "Vandals Spray Paint on New Camden High School," *The Camden News*, April 20, 1970; "Student Unrest at Camden High School," *The Camden News*, April 17, 1970; "Judge Holds Coach Not Guilty; Assessed Fines Against Youths," *The Camden News*, November 3, 1970.

to an all-Black high school where teachers encouraged them to have pride in the African diaspora and he hung out with Black radicals that dreamed of a utopian Black society. Upon graduation from high school, Calahan came back to Arkansas to be with his girlfriend, instead of accepting his full ride scholarship to University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Although his parents were furious that he did not attend the school that offered him a scholarship, they were still happy that he was home. With SSC less than 40 miles down the road, Calahan decided to attend along with his girlfriend. When he arrived on campus, he was eager to utilize many of the Black Power strategies that he had learned while coming of age in Milwaukee.[42]

A Different Direction, but the Same Goals

Calahan immediately became involved in campus life as soon as he got to campus in 1972. At this point in his life, he was very outspoken because that's what he saw Blacks in Milwaukee. Because of his outspokenness, he was usually sought after by other Black students on campus for advice. The BSA utilized an open floor voting process, so any member could run. Calahan was nominated and overwhelming selected to be the next president of the organization. While he was thrilled with the progress the group had made, he felt that it lacked a strong Afrocentric image. One reason for this was because there was not a great deal of unity among the Black students on campus. Calahan set to change that.

Wisconsin was a heavily unionized state, and Calahan wanted to bring that approach to SSC. "We had no collective bargaining, because we were not a collective unit. I felt that if we could leverage our collective identity, to implement long lasting change," Calahan remembers. The goal of the BSA under his leadership was to give Black students an organization to address

[42] Calahan, Interview; "400 at U. Rally Back Protest by Black Panthers," *The Capital Times* (Madison, Wisconsin), May 20, 1970; "Panthers are Convicted in Milwaukee," *The Oshkosh Northwestern*, September 23, 1970; "Police Arrest 2 Before Panther Court Hearing," *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 8, 1970.

issues and concerns related to their experiences on campus. Additionally, Calahan wanted to expose as many of his colleagues to experiences outside of Arkansas since so many were from small towns and had never been outside of the state. One way he did this was convincing the SSC administration to pay for students to go to the second annual PUSH Expo in Chicago. Surprisingly, the university paid for Calahan and several other students to attend the 5-day event. The PUSH Expo was sponsored by the PUSH (People United to Save Humanity) Coalition was founded in 1971 by the Rev. Jesse Jackson who had been one of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s top lieutenants in the Southern Christian Leadership Coalition. The PUSH Coalition came about as leaders in the SCLC rushed to feel the leadership void left by Dr. King's assassination. Rev. Jackson split off from the group and declared that PUSH Coalition will be much more militant and active in the community than the SCLC. The PUSH Expo was one of the biggest initiatives of the Coalition. The Expo was held at Chicago's Amphitheatre and hosted over 600 booths and thousands of guests from all over the country through the entirety of the expo. Rev. Jackson was able to draw in businesses such as Xerox and IBM and plenty of star power such as actor Sydney Poitier and singer Al Green. The theme of the expo was "Save The Black Colleges," which spoke to the issues faces not only Black colleges, but also Black students. It is this aspect of the Expo that Calahan and his fellow BSA members gravitated toward. The Expo provided several sessions aimed at Black economics and Black entrepreneurship such as the session titled "Black Men in Business." One of the main objectives, according to Rev. Jackson, was "to apply conscious pressure." The BSA group from SSC were transformed during their trip to Chicago and came back to Magnolia energized to create change.[43]

---

[43] Calahan, Interview; "Jesse's YULE Gift; PUSH for Blacks," *The Chicago Tribune*, December 19, 1971; Wonderous PUSH Expo," *Philadelphia Daily News*, September 20, 1973; "Expo '73 Champions The Struggle of The Black Colleges," *The Atlanta Voice*, October 13, 1973; "Minority Enterprise," *The Chicago Tribune*, September 17, 1973.

Embracing Blackness came easy to Calahan but promoting that concept on SSC's campus remained challenging. For one, the BSA could not prohibit whites from joining the organization. To get around this university regulation, the group made sure to emphasis the "Black" whenever they spoke about the organization. While whites did come support many of the events, there was not a record of many, if any, actually joining the organization and certainly no white student was an officer. One of the ideas brought back from the Expo, was the need for Black students to provide resources to their communities. The BSA instituted weekend cleanups in the Black neighborhood and hosted several career days for school aged Black children. Under Calahan's leadership, the BSA wanted to identify with the Black Freedom struggle both domestically and abroad. To accomplish this goal, Calahan required members to be knowledgeable about current events such as apartheid in Africa and Muhammad Ali's stance on civil rights. Lastly, Calahan wanted to ensure that Black students saw positive representations of themselves, so he routinely invited big name speakers such as Carl Stokes and Julian Bond. He also was able to convince popular Black musicians to come to campus such as Bill Withers and the Cornelius Brothers and Sister Rose. "If we were going to be on this predominately white campus paying fees like everybody else, we were going to have some Blackness as well throughout campus life."[44]

One area that Calahan felt most passionately was advocating for Black students. Initially Calahan tried to convince every Black student on campus to join the BSA so that they would have collective power. However, he met great resistance from several Black students including athletes and cheerleaders. He also found that some students were expressly forbidden by their parents to join the group for fear of reprisal. Calahan penned a scathing rebuke to these individuals in an opinion piece for the school newspaper. In it, Calahan says,

[44] Calahan, Interview.

> Many of us refuse to accept Black history, which cuts us off completely from our African ancestry. For example, some black athletes (not all) do not and will not under any circumstances accept our culture, for they fell like bourgeoisie people not really made it anywhere. Sure, they make All-AIC, All-American and All-NAIA, but do they every concentrate on just making plain ole' All-African or just pitch in and be black or build a better Black Students Association. With your skill, knowledge and pull, we can have the best Association around. Remember Superstar, how do you think you got where you are. When you fail to produce what "THEY" want, you will come back to "US."[45]

He went on to call for the complete destruction of Dubois' double-consciousness idea in favor of an integration into Blackness. Even though Calahan initially balked at Blacks who would not join, he eventually softened his approach. He realized that the way to Black liberation has many paths and it was not his job to criticize anybody else's path. He also realized that athletes could lose their scholarships or middle class families could potentially lose jobs if they participated in any type of perceived Black Freedom struggle activities. Calahan sent a message to all Black students that the BSA was here for them, regardless of their membership status. With that call, numerous students sought the BSA out to help them with an assortment of issues such as a Black football player being hurt during a game and not taken to the hospital, to a young lady who was said to be too dark to join the cheerleading squad. Neither of these students were members of the BSA, but Calahan and the rest of the group always helped. "Black students called SSC, Suffering State College. However, I was determined that not one Black student would suffer if I could do something about it."[46]

The SSC benefited from two very uniquely different civil rights organizations. The first, SURE, ended before it could really even get started for fear that it would radicalize the campus. The second, BSA stayed under the radar by focusing on common problems that both races faced such as poverty and educational opportunities. With this built-up credibility, the BSA was then

[45] "Writer Expresses 'Consciousness'," *The Bray*, March 9, 1973.

[46] Calahan, Interview.

able to pivot to a much more Afrocentric approach that centered Blackness and focused almost exclusively on Black people and Black problems. Regardless of which approach you preferred, it is undeniable that Magnolia, Arkansas, benefited from each.

Conclusion

Although the Black Power Movement began over fifty years ago, its complexity is still cause for both debate and scholarship. One of the primary reasons for this is the way in which Black Power was malleable. Each of the three organizations examined here had members who considered themselves radical, gradualist and at times, accommodationist. Yet, each organization embraced different aspects of Black Power to fit their local circumstances. In Fayetteville, the publicity spotlight always shined brightly on the state's flagship. Therefore, Black students could take a militant stance and occupy campus buildings for hours without violent reprisal. Conversely, students in Magnolia had to find other creative ways to express their Black Power because the town would not tolerate overt activism. And still, even when you try to somewhat distance yourself from Black Power, it still provides useful as a latent threat, just as students in Monticello quickly learned.

No group had an exclusive license for the expression or meaning of Black Power. Many of the people interviewed for this project had varying interpretations of Black Power and what it meant for them during their younger years. Yet, each of them wholeheartedly believed that they work they did within their organizations was absolutely necessary for the advancement of Black people in Arkansas. Indeed, if one goal for Black Power was to empower Black people to control their destinies, then these Black Arkansans succeeded. As scholars continue to explore Black Power, it is imperative that they leave the city and venture further in small university towns. There, they will find brave students who were determined to cede their power or their

Blackness for sake of attending a PWI. They succeeded at embracing both which firmly ements Arkansas within the Black Power Movement.

Bibliography

Archival Sources

Little Rock, Arkansas
State Library

Fayetteville, Arkansas
University of Arkansas Archives-Special Collections

Monticello, Arkansas
University of Arkansas-Monticello Archives

Jonesboro, Arkansas
Arkansas State University Archives

Washington, D.C.
Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress

Jackson, Mississippi
State Library

Oral History Interviews

Harold Betten
Terry Calahan
Eddie Corbett
Katherine "Kandi" Corbett
Dinah Gant
Classie Green
Wendell Griffen
William "Bill" Hansen
Charles King
Truman Tolefree
Lonnie Williams

Periodicals

Arkansas Gazette (Little Rock, AR)
Arkansas State Press (Little Rock, AR)
El Dorado Times (El Dorado, AR)
Chicago Defender (Chicago, IL)
Northwest Arkansas Times (Fayetteville, AR)
Shreveport Times (Shreveport, LA)
Minneapolis Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN)
Memphis World (Memphis, TN)
Casper Star-Tribune (Casper, WY)

Hot Springs Sentinel-Record (Hot Springs, AR)
BAD Times
Weekly Arkansas Gazette
Dailey Arkansas Gazette
Arkansas Democrat
Osceolo Times
Fort Smith Times
Arkansas Traveler
Hope Star
Blytheville Courier News
Pittsburgh Courier
Springfield News-Leader
Baxter Bulletin
Campus Herald
Wellsville Daily Reporter
The Daily Messenger
The Camden News
The Oshhosh Northwestern
Wisconsin State Journal
The Chicago Tribune
Philadelphia Daily News
The Atlanta Voice

Secondary Sources

Ashmore, Susan. *Carry Me Home: Birmingham, Alabama: The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013.

Bates, Daisy. *The Long Shadow of Little Rock: A Memoir*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press 2000.

Beals, Melba P. *I Will Not Fear: My Story of a Lifetime of Building Faith Under Fire*. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2018.

Berger, Dan Berger. *Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press*, 2014.

Biondi, Martha. *The Black Revolution on Campus*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014.

Blain, Keisha. *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.

Brown, Scot. *Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, the US organization and Black Cultural Nationalism*. New York: NYU Press, 2003.

Carmichael, Stokely. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation In America*. New York, Random House, 1967.

Carson, Clayborne. *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Chafe, William H. *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Cleaver, Eldridge. *Soul On Ice*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968.

Collins, Lisa Gail and Margo Natalie Crawford, eds. *New Thoughts on the Black Arts Movement*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006;

Cortner, Richard. *A Mob Intent on Death: The NAACP and the Arkansas Riot Cases.* Storrs, CT: University of Connecticut Press, 1988)

Crawford, Margo N. *Black Post-Blackness: The Black Arts Movement and Twenty-First Century Aesthetics*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2017.

Crosby, Emilye. *A Little Taste of Freedom: The Black Freedom Struggle in Claiborne County, Mississippi.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Daniel, Pete. *Dispossession: Discrimination against African American Farmers in the Age of Civil Rights*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013.

Davis, Angela. *Angela Davis: An Autobiography.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974.

Demas, Lane. *Integrating the Gridiron: Black Civil Rights and American College Football*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010.

Dent, Tom and Jerry Ward, Jr. *New Orleans Griot: The Tom Dent Reader*. New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2018.

Dittmer, John. *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi.* Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1995.

Farmer, Ashley N. *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Foner, Eric. *Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders during Reconstruction*, revised ed. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1996.

Ford, Tanisha C. *Dressed in Dreams*: *A Black Girl's Love Letter to the Power of Fashion.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 2019.

Forman, James. *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*. Washington DC: Open Hand Publishing, 1985.

Gatewood, Williard and Jeannie Whayne. *The Arkansas Delta: Land of Paradox.* University of Arkansas Press, 1996.

Gordon, Fon. *Caste and Class: The Black Experience in Arkansas.* University of Georgia Press, 1995.

Goudsouzian, Aram. *Down to the Crossroads: Civil Rights, Black Power, and the Meredith March Against Fear*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2015.

Grave, John William. *Town and Country: Race Relations in an Urban-Rural Context, Arkansas, 1865–1905*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1990.

Hale, Jon N. *The Freedom Schools: Student Activists in The Mississippi Civil Rights Movement*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.

Harold, Claudrena N. *The Rise and Fall of the Garvey Movement in the Urban South, 1918-1942*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Hill, Lance. *The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Hine, Darlene Clark and John McCluskey, eds. *The Black Chicago Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2012.

Holdsaert, Faith S. et.al eds., *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010.

Hurt, R. Douglas, ed. *African American life in the rural South, 1900-1950*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003.

Jacoway, Elizabeth and C. Fred Williams, eds. *Understanding Little Rock Crisis: An Exercise in Remembrance and Reconciliation*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999.

Jeffries, Hasan Kwame. *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt*. New York: New York University Press, 2010.

Joseph, Peniel E. *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Joseph, Peniel E, ed.*Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America*. New York: Holt Company, 2006.

Kelley, Blair L.M. *Right to Ride: Streetcar Boycotts and African American Citizenship in the Era of Plessy v. Ferguson.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

Kirk, John A. *Beyond Little Rock: The Origins and Legacies of the Central High Crisis.* Fayetteville, University of Arkansas Press, 2007.

--- *Redefining the Color Line: Black Activism in Little Rock, Arkansas, 1940-1970*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002.

Kirk, John, ed. *Race and Ethnicity in Arkansas: New Perspectives*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2015.

Lancaster, Guy, ed. *The Elaine Massacre and Arkansas: A Century of Atrocity and Resistance, 1819-1919*. Fayetteville: Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, 2018.

Lanier, Carlotta Walls *A Mighty Long Way: My Journey to Justice at Little Rock Central High School*. New York: Random House, 2009.

Lewis, John. *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement,* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998.

Marsh, Charles. *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Martin, Charles H., *Benching Jim Crow: The Rise and Fall of the Color Line in Southern College Sports, 1890-1980*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010

McAdam, Doug. *Freedom Summer*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

McCartney, John. *Black Power Ideologies: An Essay in African American Political Thought*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992

McGuire, Danielle. *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance-A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*. New York: Vintage Books, 2010.

McMillen, Neil. *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow.* Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

McRae, Elizabeth. *Mothers of Massive Resistance: White Women and the Politics of White Supremacy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Morgan, Gordon G., and Izola Preston. *The Edge of Campus: A Journal of the Black Experience at the University of Arkansas*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1990.

Morgan, Iwan and Phillip Davies eds. *From Sit-Ins to SNCC: The Student Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2012.

Moye, J. Todd. *Let the People Decide: Black Freedom and White Resistance Movements in Sunflower County, Mississippi, 1945-1986.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Ogbar, Jeffrey O.G. *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

Ongiri, Amy Abugo. *Spectacular Blackness*: *The Cultural Politics of the Black Power Movement and the Search for a Black Aesthetic*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010;

Oshinsky, David. *"Worse than Slavery":Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice*. New York: Simon and Schuster Publishing, 1997.

Patterson, James T. *Brown v Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Payne, Charles. *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Peery, Nelson. *Black Radical: The Education of an American Revolutionary*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007.

Pickings et al. v. Bruce et al., 430 F.2d 595 (United States Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, August 6, 1970).

Pimblott, Kerry. *Faith in Black Power: Religion, Race, and Resistance in Cairo, Illinois*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2017

Ransby, Barbara. *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Reed, Christopher Robert. *Roots of the Black Chicago Renaissance: New Negro Writers, Artists, and Intellectuals, 1893-1930*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2020.

Robenalt, James. *Ballots and Bullets: Black Power Politics and Urban Guerrilaa Warfare in 1968 Cleveland*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2018.

Robinson, II, Charles F. and Lonnie R. Williams, eds. *Remembrances in Black: Personal Perspectives of the African American Experience at the University of Arkansas*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2010.

Robson, David. *The Black Arts Movement*. San Diego: Lucent Books, 2008.
Rolinson, Mary G. *Grassroots Garveyism: The Universal Negro Improvement Association in the Rural South, 1920-1927*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

Rogers, Ibram H. *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1966-1972.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.

Rojas, Fabio. *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.

Salaam, Kalamu ya. *The Magic of JuJu: An Appreciation of the Black Arts Movement*. Chicago: Third World Press, 2016.

Sanders, Crystal. *A Chance for Change: Head Start and Mississippi's Black Freedom Struggle.* Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2016.

Sellers, Cleveland. *The River of No Return: The Autobiography of a Black Militant and the Life and Death of SNCC.* Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1990.

Smethurst, James. *Behold the Land: The Black Arts Movement in the South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021.

---. *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Smith, Calvin. *Educating the Masses: The Unfolding History of Black School Administrators in Arkansas, 1900-2000.* Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2003.

Spencer, Robyn. *The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

Stockley, Grif. *Blood in Their Eyes: The Elaine Race Massacres of 1919.* University of Arkansas Press, 2001.

--- *Ruled by Race: Black/White Relations in Arkansas from Slavery to the Present.* Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2008.

Taylor, Paul C. *Black is Beautiful: A Philosophy of Black Aesthetics*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, 2016.

Taylor, Ula Yvette. *The Promise of Patriarch: Women and the Nation of Islam*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Ture, Kwame and Charles V. Hamilton. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation In America*. New York: Random House, 1967.

Ture, Kwame, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture).* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003.

Tyson, Timothy B. *Radio-Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

Umoja, Akinyele. *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement*. New York: New York University, 2013.

Van DeBurg, William. *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture*, 1965-1975. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Wallach, Jennifer Jensen and John A. Kirk, ed. *ARSNICK: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Arkansas*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2011.

Ward, Jason Morgan. *Defending White Democracy: The Making of a Segregationist Movement and the Remaking of Racial Politcs, 1936-1965*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

Williams, Rhonda. "Black Women, Urban Politics, and the Engendering Black Power" in *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era* ed. by Peniel Joseph. New York: Routledge Publishing, 2006.

Williams, Rhonda. *Concrete Demands: The Search for Black Power in the 20th Century*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Willis, James F. *Southern Arkansas University: The Mulerider School's Centennial History, 1909–2009*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2009.

Woodard, Komozi. *A Nation Within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Woodruff, Nann. *American Congo: The African American Freedom Struggle in the Delta.* Harvard University Press, 2009.

Articles and Book Chapters in Edited Volumes

Agee, Paula Killian. "*Pickings V. Bruce*: Students United for Rights and Equality," in *First Amendment Studies in Arkansas: The Richard S. Arnold Prize Essays* by Stephen Smith, Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2016.

Ambrose, Linda M., Jenny Barker Devine and Jeannie Whayne, "Revisiting Rural Women's History," *Agricultural History* 89, No. 3 (Summer, 2015): 380-387.

Branam, Chris W. "'The African Have Taken Arkansas': Political Activities of African Americans in the Reconstruction Legislature." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 73 (Autumn 2014): 233–267.

Cha-Jua, Sundiata Keita and Clarence Lang, "The 'Long Movement' as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," *The Journal of African American History*, vol. 92, No. 2 (Spring 2007) pp. 265-288.

Cruse, Harold W. "The Little Rock National Black Political Convention." *Black World* 23 (October 1974): 10–17.

Daniels, Ron. "The National Black Political Assembly: Building Independent Black Politics in the 1980s." *The Black Scholar* 15, no. 4 (1984): 34-44.

Dent, Thomas, "Beyond Rhetoric Toward a Black Southern Theater," *Black World*, April 1971, 15–25.

Finley, Randy. "Crossing the White Line: SNCC in Three Delta Towns, 1963–1967," in *Arsnick: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Arkansas*, edited by Jennifer Jensen Wallach and John A. Kirk (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2011), 54-68.

Grim, Valerie. "African American Landlords in the Rural South, 1870-1950: A Profile," *Agricultural History* 72, No. 2 (Spring, 1998): 399-416.

Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd. "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 91, No. 4 (March 2005) pp. 1233-1263.

Hamilton, Shane. "Theory and Theorizing in Agricultural History," *Agricultural History* 93, no. 3 (2019): 502-19.

Heady, Mary and Annette Vincent. "Forty Years of Achievement: Notable African American students at UAM," *Drew County Historical Journal*, vol. 21, 2006, pp.41-46.

Hickmott, Alec F. "Black Land, Black Capital: Rural Development in the Shadows of the Sunbelt South, 1969–1976," *Journal of African American History* 101, no. 4 (2016): 504-534

Holley, Donald. “The End of an Era: Claude H. Babin and the Merger of Arkansas A&M College with the University of Arkansas,” *Drew County Historical Journal* Volume 17, 2002. pp. 6-17.

Johnson, Ben. “After 1957: Resisting Integration in Little Rock,” *An Epitaph for Little Rock*, ed. John A. Kirk. Fayetteville, University of Arkansas Press, 2008.

Jones-Branch, Cherisse. “An Uneasy Alliance”: Farm Women and the United States Department of Agriculture, 1913–1965,” *Federal History* 10 (April 2018): 98-114.

--- “‘To Raise Standards among the Negroes’: Jeanes Supervising Industrial Teachers in Rural Jim Crow Arkansas, 1909–1950,” *Agricultural History* 93, no. 3 (2019): 412-436.

Joseph, Peniel. "The Black Power Movement: A State of the Field." *Journal Of American History* 96, no. 3 (December 2009): 751-776

---“The Black Power Movement, Democracy, and America in the King Years.” *The American Historical Review*, 114, no. 4 (October 2009).

Kirk, John. “The Little Rock Crisis and Postwar Black Activism in Arkansas,” *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, 66, no. 2 (July 2007).

---"An "Eyeball-to-Eyeball Kind of Organization": Black United Youth and the Black Power Movement in Arkansas." *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (Autumn, 2016): 206-38.

Kousser, J. Morgan. “A Black Protest in the ‘Era of Accommodation’: Documents,” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (1975): 149-178.

Krovetz, Martin. “Desegregation or Integration: Which is Our Goal?,” *The Phi Delta Kappan,* vol. 54, no. 4 (December 1972), pp. 247-249.

Mithun, Jacquline S. “Black Power and Community Change: An Assessment.” *Journal of Black Studies*, 7 no. 3 (March 1977).

Moneyhon, Carl H. “Black Politics in Arkansas during the Gilded Age, 1876-1900,” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (1985): 222-245;

Okie, William et. al. “Roundtable: Why Does Agricultural History Matter?” *Agricultural History* 93, No. 4 (Fall 2019): 682-743.

Rickford, Russell. “We Can’t Grow Food on All This Concrete”: The Land Question, Agrarianism, and Black Nationalist Thought in the Late 1960s and 1970s,” *The Journal of American History*, vol. 103, issue 4 (March 2017), pp.956-980

Riney-Kehrberg, Pamela. “New Directions in Rural History,” *Agricultural History* 81, no. 2 (2007): 155-58

Rogers, O.A. “The Elaine Race Riots” *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, 19, no. 2 (July 1960).

Shipley, Ellen Compton. “The Arkansas Lumber Company in Warren, Bradley County,” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly,* Spring 1987, vol 46, no. 1, pp. 60-68.

Smethurst, James. “Black Arts South: Rethinking New Orleans and the Black Arts Movement in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina,” in *Radicalism in the South since Reconstruction*, Chris Green, Rachel Rubin, James Smethurst. Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2006.

Springer, Kimberly. “Black Feminists Respond to Black Power Masculinism” in *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*. ed. by Peniel Joseph. New York: Routledge Publishing, 2006.

Walker, Melissa. “Home Extension Work among African American Farm Women in East Tennessee, 1920-1939,” *Agricultural History* 70, no. 3 (1996): 487-502

Wallach, Jennifer Jensen. “Replicating History in a Bad Way? White Activists and Black Power in SNCC's Arkansas Project,” *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, 67, no. 3 (Autumn 2008) 268-287.

Wintory, Blake. “African American Legislators in the Arkansas General Assembly, 1868–1893: Another Look.” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 65 (Winter 2006): 385–434

Zeller, Gary. “H. C. Ray and Racial Politics in the African American Extension Service Program in Arkansas, 1915-1929,” *Agricultural History* 72, no. 2 (1998): 429-445.

Dissertations, Theses and Unpublished Papers

Moore, Mordean Taylor. “Black Student Unrest at the University of Arkansas” Master’s thesis, University of Arkansas, 1972.

Vervack, Jerry. “Road to Armageddon: *Arkansas and Brown v. Board of Education*, May 17, 1954, to September 2, 1957.” MA thesis, University of Arkansas, 1978.

MAURICE D. GIPSON
Curriculum Vitae

PRESENT POSITION
Vice Chancellor for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity
University of Missouri

CONTACT INFORMATION
mdgipson@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Ph.D., History
University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS
Dissertation Title: "A Natural Fit for the Natural State: The Emergence of Black Power organizations in Arkansas from 1968-1975.

Graduate Minor in Gender Studies
University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS

M.A., U.S. History
Missouri State University, Springfield, MO

J.D., Law
Focus area in Civil Rights
Southern University Law Center, Baton Rouge, LA

B.G.S., Interdisciplinary Studies
Concentrations areas: English, History and African and African American Studies
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA.

Certificate-Executive Leadership in Fund Raising
George H. Heyman Jr. Center for Philanthropy and Fundraising at New York University
Thurgood Marshall College Fund Initiative
New York, NY

Louisiana Bar License
Currently Active

LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND QUALITIES

Administrative Area: Institutional Advancement and Development
Relevant Positions Held:
Director of Annual Fund
Director of Development/Senior Development Officer
Institutional Advancement & Diversity Consultant

- Develop annual fund material for fundraising initiatives and proposals
- Oversee direct mailing projects
- Wrote and/or influenced federal grants totaling $15 million
- Recruit and train volunteers and staff on fundraising methods
- Prepare yearly fundraising projections and goals
- Identify new revenue sources from foundations and corporations
- Increase alumni giving through innovative fundraising techniques
- Organize fundraising drives through special activities
- Provide fundraising leadership and oversight
- Direct staff in identifying, cultivating, soliciting and stewarding major gifts from internal and external funding sources
- Establish yearly fundraising goals that align with University strategic plan
- Plan and promote fundraising special events
- Maintain active portfolio of major donors and philanthropists
- Develop grant proposals
- Research current trends in higher education
- Present workshops on Teaching Excellence research
- Assist in external fundraising efforts
- Facilitate discussions on poverty and other socioeconomic issues
- Prepare year-end analysis reports
- Develop and expand use of grassroots fundraising special events

Administrative Area: Academic Affairs and Research
Relevant Positions Held:
Instructor
Graduate Research Assistant
HLC Self-Study Committee Criterion Chair

- Chair accreditation criterion/standard for institution governed by the Higher Learning Commission
- Lead undergraduate and graduate research initiatives
- Teach undergraduate level courses

Administrative Area: Diversity
Relevant Positions Held:
Vice Chancellor
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Diversity
Special Assistant to the Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement
Diversity Student Coordinator

- Lead University diversity operations and strategic direction of the office
- Manage a budget of approximately $4 million
- Implement effective strategic recruitment and retention initiatives for diverse faculty, staff and students
- Direct the Center for Inclusive Excellence and Research
- Provide campus training on diversity topics and trends
- Lead university affirmative action and diversity shared governance committee
- Prepare university diversity strategic plan
- Develop affirmative action plans for offices and departments
- Supervise professional staff and direct office activities
- Serve as the Chancellor's representative on the Arkansas Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (Ark-LSAMP) committee
- Collaborate with community partners to increase university engagement with area stakeholders
- Manage and coordinate the Vice President's strategic minority mentoring initiatives
- Serve as a member of the Vice President's senior staff
- Supervise and coordinate the work of assigned personnel
- Assist with the creation and delivery of training for Division program staff
- Create unit/program annual giving plans and implement associated strategies
- Evaluate the effectiveness of unit planning and strategy outcomes
- Assist with the development of advisory boards
- Participate in external meetings, events and activities to promote the Division
- Create and maintain database consisting of over 5000 minority students
- Solicit internal and external funds for program development
- Provide statistical analysis of minority student trends to administration officials
- Develop university student diversity plan
- Train students, staff and faculty on diversity issues
- Extract data from various databases to compile annual diversity report
- Develop strategic community and university partnerships

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

7/20 – Present
Vice Chancellor
University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

Reporting directly to the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor serves as member of the Chancellor's Executive Cabinet and is the university's Chief Diversity Officer. The Vice Chancellor is responsible for the overall direction and management of the Division of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity. The VCIDE is responsible for working collaboratively with vice chancellors, deans, assistant and associate vice chancellors, directors, faculty, staff, students, and external constituents to advance inclusion and diversity as core values of the university and central to its mission. The VCIDE has a budget of approximately $4.6 million and direct oversight over the Division which includes the following: office of inclusive excellence, office of Title IX and Civil

Rights, department of social justice, office of access and leadership development, office of accessibility and ADA, LGBTQ resource center, multicultural center, relationship and sexual violence prevention center and the Gaines/Oldham Black culture center.

2/15 – 7/20
Vice Chancellor
Assistant Vice Chancellor & Chief Diversity Officer (2015-2017)
Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, AR

Reporting directly to the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor serves as member of the Chancellor's Executive Team and the Chancellor's Executive Council and is the university's Chief Diversity Officer. The Vice Chancellor is responsible for the overall direction and management of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement and the University's strategic diversity plan. The VCDCE is responsible for working collaboratively with vice chancellors, deans, assistant and associate vice chancellors, directors, faculty, staff, students, and external constituents to advance diversity and inclusion as core values of the university and central to its mission. The VCDCE works with academic units to develop affirmative action plans for hiring faculty and staff. The VCDCE has direct oversight for the office of community engagement, office of multicultural affairs, non-traditional student services, office of access and accommodations, office of military and veteran student success, office of faculty diversity initiatives. Additionally, the VCDCE works collaboratively with all campus units to provide resources and assistance to minority student groups, to aid in providing academic support, financial aid, scholarships, student employment, and recruitment and student development services.

Notable Accomplishments:

- Increased overall minority student enrollment for 3 consecutive years.
- Won the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award two years in a row (First time the school has ever won the award and still the only institution in Arkansas to receive the honor.)
- Increased community partnerships by 50%.
- Developed strategic partnerships with 10 HBCUs for our graduate school pipeline.
- Established faculty diversity initiative which resulted in 100% tenure and promotion of cohort members.

08/13-02/15
Special Assistant to the Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement
University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX

As a member of the Vice President's Senior Leadership Team, the Special Assistant is responsible for managing various outreach projects as well as implementing mentoring models that align with the My Brothers' Keeper Initiative. The Special Assistant is responsible for interfacing with community members to advance community engagement goals. Community stakeholders include elected officials, non-profit executives, minority organization, faith-based

organizations and university alumni groups. Coordinated and supervised efforts which support the academic advisement, academic support services, orientation, retention and career planning and placement of minority students. Worked cooperatively with all offices to develop sensitivity to the needs of minority students through education, counseling and programming.

Notable Accomplishments:

- Developed curriculum for My Brothers' Keeper Presidential Initiative which reached over 100,000 young men of color.
- Increased community engagement efforts by 25%.
- Planned and implemented first ever Black Student Athlete Conference.

08/12-08/13
Director of Annual Fund
Wiley College, Marshall, TX

Reporting to the Vice President for Institutional Advancement, the Director actively identifies, cultivates, solicits and stewards a portfolio of annual giving prospects, including alumni, parents, and friends of the College, to attain the Annual Fund goal. Additionally, the Director is instrumental in developing components of the College's capital campaign. The Director works closely and collaboratively with the president, vice presidents, key trustees and members of the advancement services, alumni programs, and marketing and communications staff.

Notable Accomplishments:

- Increased yearly fundraising total by 15%.
- Instituted a new fundraising platform through text message which increased giving rate by 10%.
- Increased student giving by 50%.

08/11-08/12
Director of Development/Senior Development Officer
Huston-Tillotson University, Austin, TX

As the senior development officer under the Vice President, the Director is directly responsible for strategic planning, overseeing annual goals and objectives, management of fiscal and personnel resources, program development, assessment and evaluation, and development of policies and procedures. Serve as the senior advisor to the Vice President on every aspect of private and external fund-raising, private resource management, and federal grant management. Responsible for establishing a comprehensive fundraising program inclusive of annual and planned giving programs, corporate development, prospect management and the full array of advancement services.

Notable Accomplishments:

- Increased special event fundraising by 30%.
- Increased corporate partnerships by 10%.
- Received over $2 million in grant funding.

08/07-08/10
Institutional Advancement and Diversity Consultant
Langston University, Langston, OK

On a contractual basis, assisted the Vice President for Institutional Advancement with on-going projects in furtherance of University goals. Specifically developed a strategic plan to address poverty in the state and provided educational resources for those affected by poverty. Additionally, provided the VPIA with research on successfully implementing affirmative action plans. Served as a research advisor on Excellence in Teaching grant.

08/02-08/06
Student Diversity Coordinator
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA
In this student-worker role, the coordinator is responsible for developing a sustainable mentoring program that addresses the needs of minority students. Additionally, under the supervision of the director, the coordinator will develop strategic university and community partnerships. The coordinator provides an analysis of student diversity trends at the request of any stakeholders. The coordinator collaborates with numerous departments including student life, residential life, academic affairs and Greek life in order to promote diversity programming.

PROFESSIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE

8/15 – Present
Instructor
Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, AR

Responsible for the instruction of an undergraduate course in diversity housed within the College of Education and courses in United States History housed within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences; developing course syllabi, course reading materials, student learning outcomes, student performance standards and class lectures; advising students; coordinating research initiatives and other departmental projects as assigned by the Chair and/or Dean.

08/10-08/11
Middle School Teacher
Ferriday Junior High School, Ferriday, LA

Responsible for the instruction of various science subjects. Create instructional resources for use in the classroom. Plan, prepare and deliver instructional activities. Create positive educational climate for students to learn in. Meet course and school-wide student performance goals. Participate in ongoing training sessions. Create lesson plans and modify accordingly throughout the year. Maintain grade books. Grade papers and perform other administrative duties as needed. Create projects designed to enhance lectures. Read and stay abreast of current topics in education. Create lesson plans. Utilize various curriculum resources. Integrate competencies, goals, and objectives into lesson plans. Utilize curricula that reflect the diverse educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of the students served. Develop incentives to keep participants in class. Develop professional relationships with other agencies and programs.

Utilize public library resources. Work with program coordinators to ensure initiatives are being met. Tutor students on an individual basis. Establish and communicate clear objectives for all learning activities. Prepare and distribute required reports. Observe and evaluate student's performance. Manage student behavior in the classroom by invoking approved disciplinary procedures.

COURSES TAUGHT/ABILITY TO TEACH

Course Title	Course Number	Level
Physical Science	N/A	Middle School Education
Life Science	N/A	Middle School Education
Earth Science	N/A	Middle School Education
Intro to Research Methods and Writing	Research Program	Undergraduate
Diversity in Sport and Athletics	PE 4863	Undergraduate
United States History to 1877	HST 2763	Undergraduate
United States History Since 1877	HST 2773	Undergraduate
African American History I	HST 3673	Undergraduate
African American History II	HST 3683	Undergraduate
US Civil Rights Movement	HST 3853	Undergraduate

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS
(Peer-Reviewed)

Articles

Gipson, Maurice. "...To Make Life Meaningful for Every Student": Black Americans for Democracy (BAD) and Black Power at the University of Arkansas, 1968-1975," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*. (in progress)

Gipson, Maurice. "Beyond Little Rock: Shifting Strategies for Civil Rights after the Central High School Integration," *Journal of Southern History*. (in progress)

Gipson, Maurice. "Black Women, Black Movies and Black Power: Using Feminist Framework to Interpret Black Women Imagery during the 1970s," *Journal of Black Studies*. (in progress)

Book Reviews

Donaldson, Le'Trice. *Duty Beyond the Battlefield: African American Soldiers. Fight for Racial Uplift, Citizenship, and Manhood, 1870-1920. Journal of African American History.*

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

09/2020 **Panel Chair: Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) Annual Conference**

Panel Title: To House the Spirit and Set It Free: Religious Spaces as Sites of Activism Virtual

09/2020 **Presenter: Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) Annual Conference**
Paper Title: All You Need is Soul: The Soul Society's Quest for Equality at the University of Arkansas-Monticello, 1969-1980.
Virtual

03/2020 **Presenter: Arch Dalrymple III Department of History Spring Colloquium Series (*canceled due to COVID-19*)**
Paper Title: Cooperation, Integration or Agitation: The Long Civil Rights Movement in Arkansas
Oxford, MS

03/2020 **Presenter: Isom Student Gender Conference (*canceled due to COVID-19*)**
Paper Title: Black Women, Black Movies and Black Power: Black Women Imagery during the 1970s.
Oxford, MS

12/2019 **Panel Chair: Making and Unmaking Mass Incarceration (MUMI) Conference**
Panel Title: Ending Women's Incarceration
Oxford, MS

10/2019 **Presenter: Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) Annual Conference**
Paper Title: Beyond Little Rock: Black Power at Arkansas PWIs
Charleston, SC

03/2019 **Presenter: Southeast Regional Graduate Student Conference**
Paper Title: We Got Power, Black Power: Black Nationalism and Black Power in Arkansas
Tallahassee, FL

10/2018 **Presenter: University of Memphis Graduate Association of African American History Conference**
Paper Title: Decentralizing Central High School: Civil Rights Activism in Arkansas after the Central High School Integration in Little Rock
Memphis, TN

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

03/2019 **Presenter: National Association for Diversity Officers in Higher Education Annual Conference**

Topic: Stop Wandering Through the Wilderness: Strategies for CDOs to Increase Faculty Diversity
Philadelphia, PA

05/2018 **Presenter: National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (NCORE)**
Title: "Continuing to Lead the Way" Alphas in Higher Education: Preparing the next Generation of Diverse Leaders in the Academy
New Orleans, LA

04/2016 **Presenter: Arkansas Student Affairs Association Spring Drive-In Conference**
Title: Diversity and Inclusion: Are We Listening
Russellville, AR

02/2016 **Presenter: MLK Nonviolence Youth Summit**
Title: Exploring Leadership through Diversity
Jonesboro, AR

02/2016 **Presenter: ASU-Newport (Main Campus) Student Development Seminar**
Title: Making the Case for Diversity
Newport, AR

02/2016 **Presenter: ASU-Newport (Jonesboro Campus) Student Development Seminar**
Title: Making the Case for Diversity
Jonesboro, AR

02/2016 **Presenter: ASU-Newport (Marked Tree Campus) Student Development Seminar**
Title: Making the Case for Diversity
Marked Tree, AR

11/2015 **Presenter: Senior Communications Student Seminar**
Title: Understanding Cultural Competency
Jonesboro, AR

06/2015 **Trainer: Upward Bound Counselor Training**
Topic: Cultural Sensitivity
Jonesboro, AR

06/2015 **Trainer: Summer Bridge Mentor Training**
Topic: Cultural Awareness
Jonesboro, AR

06/2015 **Presenter: Alpha Phi Alpha Leadership Academy**
Title: Hazing: A Threat to the Fraternity's Continued Existence
Baltimore, MD

06/2014 **Presenter: Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color**
Title: How to Create Effective Mentoring Models
Austin, TX

HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICE and LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

08/2019-07/2020
Diversity, Equity and Student Success Conference Planning Team
Association of American Colleges and Universities

01/2018-07/2020
Chancellor's Executive Team
Arkansas State University

01/2018—07/2020
Chancellor's Executive Council
Arkansas State University

09/2017-07/2020
Chancellor's Commission on Completion
Arkansas State University

02/2015 – 12/2017
Vice-Chancellor's Executive Leadership Team
Arkansas State University

02/2015 – 07/2020
Lecture-Concert Committee (Shared-Governance)
Arkansas State University

02/2015 – 07/2020
Student Disciplinary Committee (Shared-Governance)
Arkansas State University

02/2015 – 07/2020
University Diversity and Affirmative Action Committee (Shared-Governance)
Arkansas State University

02/2015 – 07/2020
International Students and Scholars Committee (Shared-Governance)
Arkansas State University

02/2015 – Present
Financial Aid and Scholarships Committee (Shared-Governance)

Arkansas State University

02/2015 – 07/2020
Disability Services Committee (Shared-Governance)
Arkansas State University

02/2015 – 07/2020
Development, Communications and Alumni Committee (Shared-Governance)
Arkansas State University

02/2015 – 07/2020
Buildings, Grounds and Facilities Committee (Shared-Governance)
Arkansas State University

02/2015 – 07/2020
Undergraduate Graduation and Academic Appeals Committee (Shared-Governance)
Arkansas State University

02/2015 – 07/2020
Undergraduate Enrollment and Academic Policy Committee (Shared-Governance)
Arkansas State University

02/2015 – 07/2020
Undergraduate Admission Appeals Committee (Shared-Governance)
Arkansas State University

08/2013-02/2015
Vice-President's Senior Leadership Team
University of Texas at Austin

08/2012-08/2013
President's Administrative Council
Wiley College

08/2011-08/2012
Vice-President's Senior Leadership Team
Huston-Tillotson University

STUDENT SERVICE and STUDENT DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

Advisory/Leadership Experience
Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, AR

- Faculty Advisor, Brother 2 Brother
- Chapter Advisor, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.-Theta Upsilon Chapter

Wiley College, Marshall, TX

- Faculty Advisor, Senior Class
- Chapter Advisor, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.-Alpha Sigma Chapter

Seminars/Workshops Conducted for Student Groups and Organizations

- Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA
- University of Louisiana-Lafayette
- Langston University, Langston, OK
- Huston-Tillotson University, Austin, TX
- Wiley College, Marshall, TX
- University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
- Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, AR

Seminar/Workshop Topics:

- Diversity
- Institutional Equity
- Cultural Competency
- Hazing Prevention
- Campus Leadership
- Officer Training
- Fundraising Techniques
- Study Skills
- Effective Programming

FELLOWSHIPS/AWARDS

Excellence in Inclusivity Fellowship-University of Mississippi
NADOHE CDO Fellow-National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education
AASCU Millennium Leadership Institute (MLI) Fellow-American Association of State Colleges and Universities
Arch Dalrymple III Research Grant

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS (Current and Past)

Member, National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE)
Member, American Bar Association (ABA)
Member, College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR)
Member, Black Graduate Professional Student Association (BGPSA)
Member, American Historical Association (AHA)
Executive Board Member, Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)
Member, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society

CORPORATE, CIVIC AND COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIPS (Current and Past)

Archon, Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, Inc. (The Boule)
Member, Mu Omicron Lambda Chapter, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
Member, Arkansas Humanities Council
Past Member, National Board of Directors, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Past Regional Vice President, Southwestern Region, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
Past President, NPHC-LSU Chapter
Member, 100 Black Men-Austin Chapter
Member, Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church