The National PTA, Race, and Civic Engagement, 1897-1970

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NOTES

Introduction


8. Skocpol, Ganz, and Munson, “A Nation of Organizers.” I discuss the extension of women’s reform efforts beyond the Progressive era in Christine Woyshner and Anne Meis


13. Some studies of the PTA focus on the organization’s impact on U.S. federal policy, pointing out that the organization did “a lot more than discussing literature, holding tea parties, and supporting local schools and projects for community betterment.” See Skocpol and Fiorina, “Making Sense of the Civic Engagement Debate,” 15; and Clemens, *The People’s Lobby*. Most of the research that examines the PTA focuses on its role in social welfare legislation and much less on how the organization influenced the school curriculum. See Robyn L. Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890–1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 93; Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work*, 167–90; Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 10, 494–522; and Sheila Rothman, *Woman’s Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, 1870 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 136–40. The assumption is that national legislative issues are much more relevant historically than the typical activities of PTA women, considered to be “more mundane,” such as organizing and staffing school lunchrooms, libraries, and health clinics. See Cutler, *Parents and Schools*, 73.


17. See, for example, research by Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers, 1992; Ladd-Taylor, Mother-Work, 1997; and Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform. The notion of multiple arenas or spheres of activities is explored in Anne Ruggles Gere, Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women’s Clubs, 1880–1920 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).


19. Reese, Power and the Promise of School Reform, 40, 215. While Reese’s study focused only on four medium-sized cities (Milwaukee, Toledo, Rochester, and Kansas City), its thesis can be extended to other rural, suburban, and urban regions around the country given the national network of the GFWC. Moreover, given that small cities had more voluntary associations per capita than medium-sized ones before 1910, much school reform was being undertaken by women’s organizations around the nation, even if they were not members of a federated organization. Skocpol et al., “How Americans Became Civic,” 52.


25. In fact, many individuals were members of a variety of civic associations. See Skocpol et al., “How Americans Became Civic,” 27–29. For membership overlap in women’s associations, see Scott, Natural Allies, 38, 49.


27. V. P. Franklin, “Introduction: Cultural Capital and African American Education,” Journal of African American History (Spring 2002): 177. See also V. P. Franklin, Cultural
Capital and Black Education: African American Communities and the Funding of Black Schools (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2004); Walker, Their Highest Potential; and Cecelski, Along Freedom Road. See also the special issue “Cultural Capital and African American Education,” Journal of African American History 87 (Spring 2002).


30. Higginbotham, Righteous Discontent, 2, 7. See the discussion in Skocpol, Diminished Democracy, 78–85; and Skocpol, Ganz, and Munson, “A Nation of Organizers,” 542. Not only did members in a geographic region see one another at regularly scheduled meetings but they also met others around the country at conventions and other administrative gatherings.

31. In this work I use the terms “white PTA” and “National Congress of Parents and Teachers,” or NCPT, to refer to the white or majority organization. I use the terms “black PTA,” “Colored Congress,” or “National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers” (NCPT) to refer to the segregated organization. I use the acronym PTA to connote broader ideas and activities common to both associations.


Chapter 1

1. Clara Bliss Finley as quoted in National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Through the Years: From the Scrapbook of Mrs. Mears (Washington, DC: National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1932), 43–44. Finley was a medical doctor who spoke on hygiene and played a key role in the founding of the National Congress of Mothers. She was influential in educating the first Board of Managers in rules of order. See National Congress of Mothers Minutes, April 5, 1897, and September 16, 1897, PTA Records, University of Illinois at Chicago, Special Collections Department, hereafter referred to as PTA Records, UIC. Toward the completion of this manuscript, the historical collection of the National PTA was moved from the organization’s headquarters to the University of Illinois at Chicago. Therefore, I cite the records as they were catalogued by the PTA, but cite them as being housed at UIC.

tried to keep her from stealing the spotlight and detracting from their agenda. At least one newspaper kept its observations to a minimum, noting, “Dr. Mary Walker is conspicuous at the Congress.” *The Evening Star*, 18 February 1897, as reprinted in NCPT, *Through the Years*, 48. Another was less discreet and reported that Walker tried to address the crowd on dress reform but “finally sat down amid laughter, hisses, and applause.” *The Washington Post*, 20 February 1897. On the Congress of Mothers’ position on corsets, see Alice McLellan Birney, “The Twentieth Century Girl: What We Expect of Her,” *Harper’s Bazaar* (May 26, 1900): 224–27.


5. Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 328–29; and Rothman, *Woman’s Proper Place*, 65–66. Though the focus of this chapter is on white women’s associations, it should be noted that middle-class black women were just as active in forming organizations. I discuss the role of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs in shaping the black PTA in the next chapter.


8. Scott explains that “over and over clubwomen spoke of their enterprise as a way of building bridges among women who tended to stick closely to people who shared their own religious, political, or family connections.” *Natural Allies*, 120.

9. *The Washington Post*, 19 February 1897, as reprinted in NCPT, *Through the Years*, 57–58; *The Philadelphia Record*, 20 February 1897; and *The Evening Star*, 18 February 1897, as reprinted in NCPT, *Through the Years*, 49. For hats staying on, see *The Boston Journal*, 21 February 1897; and *Union Springfield*, 23 February 1897. At least one report has Birney asking her audience whether she should remove her hat, and their voting no. See *Boston Herald*, 20 February 1897. The same event, as reported on in the *Chicago Tribune*, has Birney speaking from “under her violet-trimmed chapeau,” while the audience exposed their heads (20 February 1897).

also West Chester [Pennsylvania] News, 18 February 1897. In the early twentieth century, the right hat commanded respect because it connoted a woman’s class position.

11. Several years later, the issue was still discussed by NCM leaders. National Congress of Mothers, Quarterly Report 1, no. 1 (1900): 69, PTA Records, UIC. A PTA organizer from Illinois, Cora C. Bright, believed that she needed to represent herself in an appropriate manner to the public, and this involved selecting the appropriate hat for the occasion. See Bright’s recollections on finding the right hat to wear to “a high tea in honor of visiting educational dignitaries” and her relief that she “went to the tea in a borrowed hat, without disgracing the Congress” in Bright, “As It Was in the Beginning,” unpublished manuscript, 1932, 28–30, PTA Records, UIC.

12. Schlossman, “Before Home Start,” 436–67. Muncy refers to the time between 1900 and 1920 as the “era of educated motherhood because women were professionalizing their maternal work just as they were systematizing their charitable activities.” Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 56; see also Rothman, Woman’s Proper Place, 98–111; Ladd-Taylor, Mother-Work, 4; and Barbara Beatty, Emily D. Cahan, and Julia Grant, eds., When Science Encounters the Child: Education, Parenting, and Child Welfare in 20th Century America (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006).

13. NCPT, Through the Years, 44; and Ladd-Taylor, Mother-Work, 55. Educated motherhood was the Progressive Era ideal that made mothering a public duty. Rothman, Woman’s Proper Place, 97. See also chapter 3, “The Ideology of Educated Motherhood.” Rothman argues that Elizabeth Harrison, the noted kindergarten educator, gave educated motherhood the status of a profession (103). See also Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers, 353; and Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America (New York: Knopf, 1985).

14. Ladd-Taylor, Mother-Work, 3, 55. Skocpol sets the parameters for the maternalist era as 1900 to 1920. See Protecting Soldiers and Mothers, 11. Anne Firor Scott argues that the rare women’s association of this era tested boundaries of acceptability, but did not breech them, in Natural Allies, 81.

15. Skocpol has called the WCTU, the GFWC, and the PTA the “three great modern [women’s] federations.” See “Casting Wide Nets: Federalism and Extensive Associations in the Modernizing United States,” paper presented at Bertelsmann Science Foundation conference on the decline of social capital, Berlin, Germany, June 1997, 23, in author’s possession. In 1897, the year the NCM was organized, the GFWC had around 60,000 members, and the WCTU 143,000. In 1925, the GFWC had approximately 400,000 members, the WCTU 356,000, and the PTA 875,000. Data from Civic Engagement Project (CEP), under the direction of Theda Skocpol and Marshall Ganz, Harvard University, in author’s possession. Hereafter referred to as CEP Data.


17. Therefore, my analysis challenges Cutler’s assertion that the parent-teacher movement began in rural regions. See Parents and Schools, 20, 141. On the early organization of the National Congress of Mothers, see Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers, 333–36. Skocpol argues that the NCM coopted local clubs, bringing them into its membership in the early years. On the founding of the National Congress of Mothers, see Ladd-Taylor, Mother-Work, 46–50; and Schlossman, “Before Home Start,” 443–52.


19. Scott, Natural Allies, 154. Joan Marie Johnson provides a cogent argument about how southern women’s education at northern institutions shaped their public activism in


27. Skocpol, “Casting Wide Nets,” 23. The history of the founding of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union is somewhat similar. In 1874 during the temperance crusades in the Midwest, a group of Sunday school teachers met in Chautauqua to discuss their shared interest in temperance. Within a year they held the first convention in Cleve-


30. The cabinet ladies are listed in Rugg, "The Founding of the Congress," 14; and Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work,* 49.

31. Alice Birney to Phoebe Hearst, September 11, 1896, Phoebe A. Hearst Papers, BLUCB; emphasis in the original. Membership in the GFWC grew exponentially through the 1910s and doubled in the 1920s, going from 197,831 members in 1920 to 421,934 members just two years later (CEP data, in author's possession). See Scott, *Natural Allies,* 131, on state units of GFWC doubling under Henrotin’s leadership. Skocpol contrasts the two associations (GFWC and NCM), noting that the NCM was “rapidly organized from the top down,” unlike the GFWC. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers,* 334.


33. Alice M. Birney to Phoebe A. Hearst, September 11, 1896, Phoebe A. Hearst Papers, BLUCB. On the ideals of the kindergarten movement, see Beatty, *Preschool Education in America.*

34. *The New York Journal,* 9 December 1896; *The New York Sun,* 9 December 1896; and Mrs. Theodore W. Birney, “Scope and Aims of the National Congress of Mothers,” *Mothers’ Magazine* 1, no. 1 (1898): 1–21; from PTA Scrapbook, 1897, 1898. Unlike other women’s association leaders, NCM organizers exploited the press to their advantage,

35. Grant, Raising Baby by the Book, 15. NCPT, Through the Years, 17; NCM Minutes, January 22, 1897, and January 29, 1897, PTA Records, UIC. The letter-writing strategy was a common way of organizing large-scale associations in the nineteenth century. See Skocpol, “Casting Wide Nets,” and Richard R. John, Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995). On this tactic in the WCTU, see Bordin, Woman and Temperance, 50. She explains, “Willard wrote prominent clergyman in every state and territory asking for the names and addresses of women active or committed to the temperance cause. . . . Her travel and her letter-writing not only facilitated the growth of the Union but enhanced her personal prestige as well.”

36. Hofer, “National Congress of Mothers,” as quoted in NCPT, Through the Years, 21. Congress minutes note the receipt of around a half-dozen letters per day asking about its work. NCM Minutes, March 9, 1897; and NCM Minutes, January 15, 1897, PTA Records, UIC.

37. NCPT, Golden Jubilee History, 36, 45. The NCM relied on prominent men, in addition to Theodore Roosevelt, to help publicize the Mothers’ Congress. Muncy argues that women reformers needed the help of prominent men to succeed on the national level. Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 41. See also Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers, 337.

38. NCM Minutes, December 29, 1902, 87, PTA Records, UIC. Robyn Muncy argues that Kelley’s relationship with the Congress of Mothers was symbiotic, as her relationship with the NCM and GFWC “drew the leadership of those bodies and their millions of members into the network [of women reformers such as Kelley, Lillian Wald, and Jane Addams] as well.” Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion in America Reform, 1890–1935, 35. For more on Kelley’s activism, see Kathryn Kish Sklar, Florence Kelley and the Nation’s Work: The Rise of Women’s Political Culture, 1830–1900 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995).

39. National Congress of Mothers, Work and Words, 273–74. NCM Minutes, March 30, 1897, 4; and April 5, 1897, 47, PTA Records, UIC.


44. Rothman, Woman’s Proper Place, 131; and Birney as quoted in NCPT, Through the Years, 29. On clubwomen supporting suffrage, see Reese, Power and the Promise of School Reform, 32; Blair, The Clubwoman as Feminist; and Cutler, Parents and Schools.


49. Mrs. Theodore W. Birney, “Sympathetic Parenthood,” in National Congress of Mothers, *The Child in Home, School, and State: Report of the National Congress of Mothers* (Washington, DC: National Congress of Mothers, 1905), 165. Spencer’s five criteria that categorized the leading life activities that were to determine school curriculum were the following: “1. those activities which directly minister to self-preservation; 2. those activities which, by securing the necessaries of life, indirectly minister to self-preservation; 3. those activities which have for their end the rearing and discipline of offspring; 4. those activities which are involved in the maintenance of proper social and political relations; 5. those miscellaneous activities which fill up the leisure part of life, devoted to the gratification of tastes and feelings.” *Essays on Education, etc by Herbert Spencer*, 7. See also Kliebard, *Forging the American Curriculum*, 31.


53. Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 64; and NCM Minutes, April 5, 1897, 81, and September 16, 1897, 133, PTA Records, UIC. Hearst moved to California in September 1897, and the Board of Managers asked her to continue as its president, but she declined. Hearst did not even want her photo used in connection with the Congress; see NCM Minutes, September 15, 1897, PTA Records, UIC; and Alice M. Birney to Phoebe A. Hearst, May 14, 1900, Phoebe A. Hearst Papers, BLUCB.

54. NCM, *Second and Third Annual Conventions*, 153, Chicago, PTA Records, UIC.


58. CEP data, in author’s possession.
59. Reese, *Power and the Promise of School Reform*, 35. Reese’s book thoroughly details the activities of women’s clubs in four medium-sized Midwestern cities but refers to them as “grassroots.” As I argue in this chapter, the activities of women’s organizations, owing to their top-down coordination through major federations and the NEA, cannot necessarily be considered grassroots movements.


61. Rothman argues that clubwomen wanted to “transform public policy, to move from personal and private encounter to state action, to bring about compulsory legislation of one sort or another.” Rothman, *Woman’s Proper Place*, 135.

62. Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 482. In making this assertion, Skocpol points out that she disagrees with Muncy’s instrumental-professional and bureaucratic interpretation, in *Creating a Female Dominion*, that assumes that smaller groups of professionals were able to direct women’s federations. See Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 683n9. Tyack, *One Best System*, 6–8; Reese, *Power and the Promise of School Reform*; and Wayne J. Urban, *Gender, Race, and the National Education Association: Professionalism and Its Limitations* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2000).

63. Wayne J. Urban argues that women teachers were marginalized until 1917, when they began to enjoy a “relatively symbiotic” though not equitable relationship with the association. See Urban, “Courting the Woman Teacher,” 140. See also Urban, *Gender, Race, and the National Education Association*. In the 1960s the NEA became the trade union we know it to be today.


65. Mrs. O. Shepard Barnum, “Women’s Work in the Socialization of the Schools,” *NEA Proceedings*, 1908, 1236. All membership figures from CEP data, in author’s possession. In 1908, the combined membership of the three major women’s federations was roughly 260,000 (GFWC—63,000; PTA—10,000; WCTU—187,000). Adding the membership of the other organizations in the DWO brings the total close to 300,000.


68. Elmer Ellsworth Brown, “The Work of Women’s Organizations in Education:

69. Laura Drake Gill, “The Scope of the Department of Women’s Organizations,” *NEA Proceedings*, 1909, 71; and “Membership of the National Education Association,” *NEA Proceedings*, 1900, 4. See also Grant, *Raising Baby by the Book*, on women’s special capacity as mothers and as women to carry out reform work; and Scott, *Natural Allies*, on why and how women’s organizations gave them power in the public arena when men did not need such associations. For a contrasting view on the efforts of men’s voluntary membership associations in Progressive-Era educational reform, see Reese, *Power and the Promise of School Reform*.


71. Mary Frances Farnham, *NEA Proceedings*, 1911, 1109. Men had been welcomed to join the Department of Women’s Organizations, but it is unknown how many were members. See Gill, “The Scope of the Department of Women’s Organizations,” *NEA Proceedings*, 1909, 70–71; and Rothman, *Woman’s Proper Place*, 170.


78. “Summary of State Reports of Joint Committees and Affiliated Organizations [to the Department of School Patrons], 1910–1911,” *NEA Proceedings*. 1911, 1098, 1101;
“Secretary's Minutes, Department of School Patrons,” NEA Proceedings, 1916, 799; and Reese, Power and the Promise of School Reform, 218, 221.


83. Reese, Power and the Promise of School Reform, 205; and Cutler, Parents and Schools. Membership figures on the PTA and GFWC from CEP data, in author’s possession. NEA membership figures from “Membership of the National Education Association,” NEA Proceedings, 1930, 4. See also Urban, “Courting the Woman Teacher,” 143. Urban writes that this era signaled the beginning of the modern NEA and that James W. Crabtree, the organization’s secretary in 1917, is responsible for enlisting the support of women teachers, which resulted in the exponential growth in membership. By 1931, the NEA had 220,149 members.

84. Urban, Gender, Race, and the National Education Association, 18. Some confusion seems to have resulted from the phasing out of the department, because the PTA sent its dues in 1923, but they were promptly returned. See Minutes of the Board of Managers of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations, April 23, 1923, p. 2, Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 223, Box 7, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies, hereafter referred to as RIAS.

85. Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 103–4. The organizations included the GFWC, the National Consumers’ League, the National League of Women Voters, the National Women’s Trade Union League, the PTA, the AAUW, the WCTU, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs, the National Council of Jewish Women, and the American Home Economics Association, and, as Muncy explains, their top priority in 1920, when they were first organized, was the Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Act.


87. Reese argues that women’s organization’s reform efforts died down after the war, but I disagree. Women’s volunteerism in schools continued well into the twentieth century. Reese, Power and the Promise of School Reform, 227–29; and Woyshner and Knupfer, “Introduction: Women, Volunteerism, and Education,” 3–4. Putnam, Bowling Alone; and Skocpol, Diminished Democracy.
88. By 1930, the PTA had all forty-eight states in its membership and approximately 1.5 million members. CEP data, in author’s possession.

89. Bright, “As It Was in the Beginning,” 24–25. See also Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform.

90. Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, xiii. See also Reese, who demonstrates the alliances between volunteer and professional women, in Power and the Promise of School Reform, 43–44. For a discussion of the overlap of women’s clubs, see Scott, Natural Allies. See also Cutler, Parents and Schools, for a discussion of the spread of parent-teacher associations in rural and urban areas.

91. The PTA had originally purchased the building as a United Service Club for enlisted men. After the war, it converted it to its headquarters, but by 1920 the PTA leadership found the space too capacious to maintain. See NCPT, The PTA Story, 36–38; and “Minutes of the Board of Managers of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers,” Sept. 25–28, 1928, p. 11; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 227, Box 8, Schlesinger Library, RIAS.

Chapter 2


2. Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896); and NCCPT, Coral Anniversary History, 73.


5. Davis, Lifting as They Climb, 17; on the large proportion of teachers in the NACW, see Davis, Lifting as They Climb, 145, 299. See also Neverdon-Morton, Afro-American Women of the South. Shaw argues that the majority of black professional women worked as teachers well into the twentieth century, in What a Woman Ought to Be and Do, 141. James D. Anderson explains that the emphasis on self-help and self-determination was the


7. Giddings, When and Where I Enter, 100. See also Shaw, What a Woman Ought to Be and Do, 14–15. Shaw explains that black parents understood that their daughters needed to be above reproach morally; otherwise, educational and professional opportunities would be closed to them. Scott, Natural Allies, 147. The issue of contrasting ideologies toward womanhood between black and white women is explored in Linda M. Perkins, “The Role of Education in the Development of Black Feminist Thought, 1860–1920,” History of Education 22, no. 3 (1993): 265–75.


10. A History of the Iowa Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1900–1941, 42.

11. One such exception is the group of Colored Child Welfare Clubs of Washington, DC, which in 1908 decided to join the white PTA. See “The History of the District of Columbia Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1905–1955,” unpublished manuscript, p. 8, PTA Records, UIC. One must peruse PTA documents to cull other rare examples. Sometimes, the state reports in PTA publications reported on the activities of local colored parent-teachers’ associations, but only in brief. For example, see “National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations,” Child Welfare 12, no. 10 (1918): 211.

12. Mrs. Fred Wessels, “Report of the National Chairman on Extension Work among Colored People,” 1926, 6; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 224, Box 7, Schlesinger Library, RIAS; and Iowa Congress of Parents and Teachers, A History of the Iowa Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1900–1941, 42.

13. Overstreet and Overstreet, Where Children Come First, 267. Similarly, in the postbellum years, the freedpeople often resisted white oversight of their schools. See Anderson, The Education of Blacks in the South, 11–12; Ronald Butchart, Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedman’s Education, 1862–1875 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980); Jacqueline Jones, Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers


17. As quoted in Hortense Powdermaker, After Freedom: A Cultural Study in the Deep South (New York: Russell & Russell, 1939, 1968), 302. Powdermaker also revealed that whites in the town viewed education for blacks as a “generous gift from the other race,” since few blacks paid taxes (301).


20. Anderson, The Education of Blacks in the South, 211. Anderson argues that blacks viewed the industrial model of education with suspicion and resentment. The Education of Blacks in the South, 58, 85, 94, 96, and 109. Also see Johnson, Southern Ladies, New Women, 3; Hoffschwelle, The Rosenwald School, 11; and Leloudis, Schooling the New South, 200.


22. Teachers’ Associations developed similarly, from the ground up, beginning in the 1880s and became linked to a national organization, the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools, around 1907. In 1937 its name was changed to the American Teachers’ Association. Like the NACW, the NATCS claimed that it would not discriminate based on race. Thelma D. Perry, History of the American Teachers Association (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1975); and Karpinski, “A Visible Company of Professionals.”

23. Davis, Lifting as They Climb, xviii; and Higginbotham, Righteous Discontent, 1–2. The Woman’s Convention of the black Baptist Church in 1900 was 1 million strong (8).


27. National Congress of Mothers Minutes, May 21, 1900, 68, PTA Records, UIIC; and Murray, “Mothers’ Clubs among Colored Women,” 62–63. Unfortunately, the NCM minutes are silent on the reaction of those who asked her not to solicit donations and whether her plea was successful.

28. Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, Golden Anniversary History (Atlanta: Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, 1970), 8, PTA Records, UIIC; emphasis in original.


33. Davis, Lifting as They Climb, 43. For more on NACW women's efforts in fund-raising, education, and community improvement, see Shaw, What a Woman Ought to Be and Do, 172.


35. Davis, Lifting as They Climb, 307–9. As with the white PTA, it was not unusual for the leadership and membership of black women's clubs and parent-teacher associations to overlap. See, for example, the Mary McLeod Bethune Club of the Monterey Peninsula in California. Davis, Lifting as They Climb, 115–16.

36. Davis, Lifting as They Climb, 120–22.

38. FC Button to GEB, Report of FC Button, November 1913, p. 1, Folder 706, Box 81, “Kentucky Homemakers’ Clubs,” RG 1.1, General Education Board Papers, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC. The Kentucky State Association for Colored Teachers was the first state branch of the National Association for Teachers in Colored Schools, having been founded 1877. See Fultz, “Caught between a Rock and a Hard Place,” 3.

39. As quoted in FC Button to GEB, Report of FC Button, November 1913, p. 2, Folder 706, Box 81, “Kentucky Homemakers’ Clubs,” RG 1.1, General Education Board Papers, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.


42. Hoffschwelle, “‘Better Homes on Better Farms,’” 67, n16. Smith-Lever provided matching federal funding for farm and home demonstration work among white and black communities and was an extension of the first and second Morrill-Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890. See Kliebard, Struggle for the American Curriculum, 122.

43. “Extract from Sibley’s Report, June 1915—Agents of Homemakers’ Clubs,” Folder 150, Box 18, GEB Papers, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC. See also Anderson, The Education of Blacks in the South, 34; and Fairclough, A Class of Their Own, 245–46, on the preparation of Jeanes teachers for industrial education.

44. For example, see Presson to County Industrial Supervisors, February 12, 1918, Folder 227, Box 25, GEB Papers, RAC. On vacation schools, see Reese, Power and the Promise of School Reform. See also Kenneth M. Gold, School’s In: The History of Summer Education in American Public Schools (New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 2002). The section titled “The Chicago Woman's Club and Summer Vacation Schools” offers a glimpse at the scope of clubwomen’s work in this effort (159–67).


46. “Report of Jackson Davis,” October 1912, Folder 1762, Box 188, GEB Papers, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC. Davis is a formidable figure in the history of education in the South. In 1910 a grant from the Peabody Fund supported his appointment to the position of supervisor for Negro Schools in Virginia. By 1918 he became head of the GEB’s southern black education division. See Horace Mann Bond, Negro Education in Alabama: A Study in Cotton and Steel (New York: Atheneum, [1939] 1969), 273; Anderson, The

47. “Report of Jackson Davis,” November 1912, Folder 1762, Box 188, GEB Papers, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC; and NASC, The Jeanes Story, 60. Randolph was the first Jeanes teacher, her emphasis on community improvement and better instruction having been a model for the program. See also Hoffschwelle, Rosenwald Schools, 21–22; and Littlefield, “‘To Do the Next Needed Thing,’” 134.

48. “Report of Jackson Davis,” October 1912, Folder 1762, Box 188; J. A. Presson to Jeanes Industrial Agents, Nov. 6, 1917, Folder 227, Box 25; and Godard to the Home Makers Club Agents, January 26, 1915, Folder 597, Box 68, GEB Papers, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

49. NASC, The Jeanes Story, 60. In later years, the NCCPT recognized Randolph at its 1930 annual meeting for her role as a “pioneer in manual training for colored children.” See Mrs. Fred Wessels, “Report of Committee on Extension among Colored People,” September 1930, p. 25, Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 224, Box 7, Schlesinger Library, RIAS.


51. Shaw, What a Woman Ought to Be and Do, 57, 58; Fultz, “African American Teachers in the South, 1890–1940: Powerlessness and the Ironies of Expectation and Protest,” 408–9; and “Homemakers Club Work in Alabama,” n.d., Folder 150, Box 18, GEB Papers, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

52. Fields, Lemon Swamp and Other Places; and Littlefield, “A Yearly Contract with Everybody and His Brother,” 38; Mary J. Garner to Sibley, 15 April 1915, Folder 150, Box 18; Taylor to Button, 10 February 1915, Folder 706, Box 81; and Agents’ Weekly Reports of Lula M. Thomas, September 11, 1915, Folder 150, Box 18, GEB Papers, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC. Thomas is listed as a Jeanes supervisor from 1914–15 and 1919–20 in NASC, The Jeanes Story, 114.

53. Monthly Report of Medora Reed, Arkansas, March, 1919, Folder 227, Box 25, RAC. Medora Buchanan Reed worked as a Jeanes supervisor from Ashley County in 1912–13. By 1919 she had risen to a leadership position in which she worked directly under the Negro Schools Supervisor to coordinate Homemakers’ Clubs in her state. See NASC, The Jeanes Story, 115. Valinda Littlefield also documents the difficulties of travel and extensive work of the Jeanes teachers in “‘To Do the Next Needed Thing,’” 133–37.

54. Monthly Report of Medora Reed, Arkansas, April, 1919, Folder 227, Box 25, RAC. In the state of Georgia, for example, in 1917, Homemakers’ Clubs existed in twenty-four counties and enrolled 4,439 girls and their mothers as members. This was a very small percentage of the black population at the time, which stood at roughly 1.2 million. See U.S. Census Bureau, “Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910,” vol. 4. See also Hoffschwelle, “‘Better Homes on Better Farms,’” 53.

55. Kliebard, Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1995, 124; and Newbold to Buttrick, May 19, 1919, Folder 1048, Box 116, RAC.

56. This was recognized at the time. For example, Williamson to Sibley, October 24, 1915, Folder 150, Box 18, GEB Papers, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC. Hugh R. Williamson of Lowndes County in Alabama reported to Sibley, “The Homemakers Clubs
grew out of this organization as well as did Community Clubs of various kinds and some School Improvement Leagues. . . . [T]his County needs these Clubs around each school in the County.”

57. Four of the twelve state presidents of the Georgia Colored Congress from 1921–71 were Jeanes teachers. See NCCPT, Coral Anniversary History; and Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, Golden Anniversary.

58. Newbold to Sage, May 10, 1916, Folder 1048, Box 116, GEB Papers, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC. For additional references to Holland, see Newbold to Buttrick, Oct. 7, 1914; Newbold to Flexner, June 19, 1915; Newbold to Sage, June 15, 1916; Newbold to Sage, Oct. 4, 1916; Newbold to Sage, Dec. 2, 1916; Newbold to Davis, Dec. 30, 1916; Sage to Joyner, Mar. 1, 1918; and “Summarized Statement . . . 1919,” which notes that Holland is drawing a salary of $430, which is significantly higher than that of other Homemakers’ Club Agents, in Folder 1048, Box 116, GEB Papers, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC. See also Littlefield, “A Yearly Contract with Everybody and His Brother,” 45, 52 (nn44–45).

59. Butler as quoted in Neverdon-Morton, Afro-American Women of the South, 4; and Notes on Spelman Graduate Selena Sloan, as quoted in Shaw, What a Woman Ought to Be and Do, 100.


62. Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, Golden Anniversary History, 10; and NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 58–59.

63. Bishop Marteinne Montgomery, “The Activities of Parent-Teacher Associations in the Negro Schools of Alabama” (master’s thesis, University of Chicago, 1940), 6–7. See also Baker, Paradoxes of Desegregation, 7; Hoffschwelle, Rosenwald Schools, 43; and Fairclough, A Class of Their Own, 259.

64. “Handbook of the Alabama Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers,” n.d., Folder 47, Box 12, Papers of the Alabama Congress of Parents and Teachers Association, Auburn University, Montgomery, Alabama; NCCPT, Coral History, 60; and Davis, Lifting as They Climb, 11.

65. NCCPT, Coral History, 60; Bond, Negro Education in Alabama, chapter 14; and Vivian Gunn Morris and Curtis L. Morris, The Price They Paid: Desegregation in an African

66. Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, Golden Anniversary History, 29. Shaw details the perils of travel, explaining that many African Americans were “anxious travelers” in the Jim Crow South. Because of segregation and discrimination, many blacks offered their homes to travelers. What a Woman Ought to Be and Do, 43–44. See also Lerner, Black Women in White America, 468; and Littlefield, “To Do the Next Needed Thing,” 133.

67. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary History, 64; and Wessels, “Report of the National Chairman on Extension Work among Colored People,” 1926; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 224, Box 7, Schlesinger Library, RIAS. Parallels can be found in Delaware’s black and white teachers’ associations as discussed in Karpinski, “A Visible Company of Professionals,” 69.

68. Davis, Lifting as They Climb, 308–9; and NCCPT, Coral Anniversary History, 73, 79–80. NCCPT. W. W. Sanders supported African Americans having a greater say in education that included “formulating policy in the regulation of black common schools and participation in the predominantly white philanthropic boards.” See Fultz, “African American Teachers in the South, 1890–1940: Powerlessness and the Ironies of Expectation and Protest,” 413–14. Sanders also was well networked. He had served, for a decade, as executive secretary for the National Association for Teachers in Colored Schools. Furthermore, he was a member of both the Joint Committee of the American Teachers Association and National Education Association and the NAACP, and was on the Contributing and Advisory Staff of the Journal of Negro Education. See “In Memory of Dr. W. W. Sanders,” Our National Family (May 1952): 6.

69. See correspondence reprinted in Founder, the Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers. In Selena Sloan Butler Vertical File, located at the Atlanta University Center, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Archives Department (hereafter referred to as AUC). See also “Our Founders (State),” in Our Georgia Family (Jan. 1957): 25–26; and NCCPT, Coral Anniversary History, 65.

70. Mrs. Fred Wessels, “Report of the National Chairman on Extension Work Among Colored People,” 1926, 3; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 224, Box 7, Schlesinger Library, RIAS; Rouse, “Atlanta’s African–American Women’s Attack on Segregation, 1900–1920,” 21; “President’s Report,” April 18–19, 1923, and “President’s Report, April 14–15, 1925,” Selena Sloan Butler Vertical File, AUC. See also correspondence between Reeve and Butler reprinted in GCCPT, Golden Anniversary History, 180–85. There is a reference to a Colored Congress of Mothers and its president, Lucy Hall Briggs, in one collection, but I have not found any other evidence to corroborate its existence. See “Minutes of the Boards of Manager of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent–Teacher Associations,” April 23, 1923, 4; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 223, Box 7, Schlesinger Library, RIAS.

71. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary History, 8, 14. Others, such as Sanders’ organization in West Virginia, joined shortly after the NCCPT was organized.

72. Wessels, “Report of the National Chairman on Extension Work among Colored People,” 1926, 2; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 224, Box 7, Schlesinger Library, RIAS. See also NCCPT, Coral Anniversary History, 9.

73. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary History, 9.

74. Questionnaire, completed by Butler, Oct. 12, 1925, AUC; emphasis in original.

75. “Founders’ Day Quiz,” Our National Family 12, no. 2 (1950): 7. Other figures are
given as 3,500 members in 225 units (Press release, n.d., AUC); Butler to Reeve, March 22, 1926, AUC.


**Chapter 3**

1. Harris, Narvie J. interview by Kathryn Nasstrom, 11 June 1992, 11, 13, 36. Narvie J. Harris, Georgia Government Documentation Project, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University, Atlanta, hereafter referred to as GGDP. See also Narvie J. Harris and Dee Taylor, *African-American Education in DeKalb County: From the Collection of Narvie J. Harris* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1999), 8; and Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools*, 18. Hoffschwelle explains that many black schools in the early twentieth century were housed in "churches, fraternal lodges, stores, private homes, and farm buildings."


4. Narvie J. Harris interview, 11 June 1992, 39, GGDP. Even though the NCCPT was known among educational leaders, publicizing it and its benefits to the public and to schoolteachers remained a challenge. As late as 1953, a librarian at a “public library in a large city” requested copies of the organization’s journal, *Our National Family*, because she had been approached by schoolteachers who asked for information and materials on the program of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers. She responded, “We were embarrassed that we have nothing to give them, as we did not know about your organization.” “The National Congress [of Colored Parents and Teachers] Magazine,” *Our National Family* (Sept. 1953): 15.

5. Narvie J. Harris interview, 11 June 1992, 19, GGDP; and Harris and Taylor, *African-American Education in DeKalb County* See also Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools*, 216. Hoffschwelle argues that Jeanes teachers were “among the most prominent female community leaders in the rural South, holding their positions independently of any black school or principal.”


9. NCPT, Proceedings, 1928, 221.


11. NCPT, Proceedings, 1931, 165; and CEP data, in author’s possession, list a figure of 1,481,105 for 1930. Presumably, this figure represents only white members.


15. Johnson, *Southern Ladies, New Women*, 7–8. Johnson argues that South Carolina clubwomen were unique because of “their abilities both to fuse Southern identity construction with social reform work and to reconcile tradition with progress” (2). A “tentative” state PTA was organized in Columbia, SC, in 1921, which became an official unit of the NCPT in 1923. See “Dedication of Alice Birney School Brings Memories of PTAs History and Development,” *The [Charleston] News and Courier*, 3 March 1963, Mary K. Newton Papers, Folder 5, South Caroliniana Library, USC. In the 1920s, the membership of the South Carolina PTA surpassed that of the federated women’s clubs. See also CEP data, in author’s possession. For a case history on parent-teacher association work during the same time period in Upstate New York, see Keenan, “The Suburban PTA and the Good Life.”

16. Minutes, March 7, 1924; Minutes, April 4, 1924; and Minutes April 14, 1924, Parent Teacher Association of John’s Island [South Carolina], John’s Island Minutes, 1924–1931. South Caroliniana Library, USC.

17. Minutes, November 7, 1924, Parent Teacher Association of John’s Island [South Carolina], John’s Island Minutes, 1924–1931. South Caroliniana Library, USC. For examples of similar activities in black parent-teacher associations, see NCCPT, *Coral Anniversary*, 73 for West Virginia and 75 for North Carolina. Local PTA units also organized Scout troops in an effort to promote good citizenship and the values the experience taught. In 1953, the organization reported that 11,843 Boy Scout troops were being sponsored by black and white PTAs nationwide. See “News and Notes,” *Our National Family* (May 1953): 19.

18. Minutes, November 13, 1925, Parent Teacher Association of John’s Island [South Carolina], John’s Island Minutes, 1924–1931, South Caroliniana Library, USC. Examples of creative responses to roll call can be found elsewhere, such as the Minutes of the Lockport Mothers’ Club, in which members responded with the names of famous educators (March 27, 1908) and current events (November 27, 1908). Minutes, Oct. 2, 1903 to May 23, 1908, and Oct. 2, 1908 to May 23, 1913. See also advice given at PTA School to use a group of children at meetings and to never use the same group, a challenge in rural areas such as John’s Island. See “Model Parent-Teacher Meeting,” n.d., Mary K. Newton Papers, Folder 7, South Caroliniana Library, USC.

19. “Leads Parent-Teacher Class,” ca. 1928, and “Conducting P.-T.A. School,” n.d., unidentified newspaper clippings, Mary K. Newton Papers, Folder 7, South Caroliniana Library, USC. It is difficult to estimate the number of workshops held for black and white PTA members. In some cases, school administrators attended because they wanted to know more about the work of the organization and how to cooperate with local units and make best use of them. For example, see reference to workshop held at Columbia Teachers College in 1921 in PTA Minutes, October 18, 19, 20, 1922, in Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 222, Box 7, Schlesinger Library, RIAS; and Dr. Ada Hart Arlitt, *Parent Education Guidebook* (Chicago: National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1937).

20. Notes, n.d., Mary K. Newton Papers, Folder 7. On Newton’s state leadership roles, see correspondence in Folders 1, 2, and 3, Mary K. Newton Papers; Notes, ca. 1933, Mary K. Newton Papers, Folder 7, South Caroliniana Library, USC; and items, dated 1928–1933, in Mary K. Newton Papers, Folder 5, all in South Caroliniana Library, USC.

22. Minutes, December 2, 1927, Parent Teacher Association of John’s Island [South Carolina], John’s Island Minutes, 1924–1931; Minutes, January 13, 1928, Parent Teacher Association of John’s Island [South Carolina], John’s Island Minutes, 1924–1931; and Minutes, February 8, 1930, Parent Teacher Association of John’s Island [South Carolina], John’s Island Minutes, 1924–1931. South Caroliniana Library, USC. Additional references to meetings that welcomed men are found in the papers of the Lockport Mothers’ Club.

23. See _South Carolina Parent-Teacher_ 23, no. 7 (April 1959), 3; _South Carolina Parent-Teacher_ 30, no. 5 (March 1965), 5; and Georgia Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, _Our Georgia Family_, 11.

24. See Cutler, _Parents and Schools_, 6, 11; and Walker, _Their Highest Potential_. Whereas Cutler argues that parents and teachers worked toward the same goals for different reasons, Vanessa Siddle Walker’s study of a black PTA in North Carolina argues that parents and teachers had the same goals, but different means.

25. Higginbotham argues this point in terms of the women’s auxiliary to the black Baptist church, an argument that can be applied to the black PTA. Higginbotham, _Righteous Discontent_, 12. The 1 percent benchmark was the criterion for voluntary associations to be a part of the Civic Engagement Project, Harvard University, under the direction of Theda Skocpol and Marshall Ganz. For an explanation of the 1 percent criterion, see Skocpol et al., “How Americans Became Civic,” 34. White PTA units boasted about their representation in the population: in 1924 the Georgia white PTA reported that it had 14,184 members, pointing out that was just over 1 percent of the population of the state. See “Growth of National Congress of Parents and Teachers 1920–1931,” in _Child Welfare_ 26, no. 1 (1931): 32–33. In contrast, the Georgia Colored PTA had 1,357 members in 64 schools in the state that year, which was only 0.05 percent of the black population of the state. See “President’s Report, Fourth Annual Conference, Georgia Colored PTA, April 29, 1924,” AUC.

26. Narvie J. Harris interview, 11 June 1992, 49–50, GGDP; “Minutes of the Board of Manager of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations,” April 23, 1923, 11; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 223, Box 7, Schlesinger Library, RIAS; and NCCPT, _Coral Anniversary_, 56.

27. Mrs. Fred Wessels, “Report of the National Chairman on Extension Work among Colored People,” 1926, 2; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 224, Box 7; “Minutes of the Board of Manager of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations,” September 21–24, 1926, 8; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 224, Box 7; and Mrs. Fred Wessels, “Report of the Committee of Extension among Colored People,” 1927, V–a; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 224, Box 7, Schlesinger Library, RIAS.

28. Mrs. Fred Wessels, “Suggested Plan of Work, Committee on Extension among Colored People,” July 1930; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 224, Box 28; and Mrs. Fred Wessels, “Report of the National Chairman on Extension Work among Colored People,” 1926, 3; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 224, Box 7, Schlesinger Library, RIAS. In 1927 the minimum number of associations was increased from ten to fifteen. See Mrs. Fred Wessels, “Report of the Committee of Extension among Colored People,” 1927, V; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 224, Box 7, Schlesinger Library, RIAS.
29. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 10, 11.
30. See Shaw, What a Woman Ought to Be and Do, 137; Perry, History of the American Teachers Association; and Urban, Gender, Race, and the National Education Association, especially chapter 6, “Desegregating the National Education Association, 1954–1978.” It was not unusual for black PTA state units to hold their annual meetings with the state teachers’ organizations. For example, Texas began holding its meetings with the Teachers State Association of Texas in 1925 and continued this practice until 1950, when the membership of the Texas Colored Congress of Parents and Teachers became too large to do so. See NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 66.
31. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 12; and Mrs. Fred Wessels, “Report of the National Chairman on Extension Work among Colored People,” 1926, 3; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 224, Box 7, Schlesinger Library, RIAS.
33. Figure 3.5 represents the years that state units joined the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers. Pennsylvania had segregated local units but no statewide black PTA; its local units did not affiliate with the NCCPT.
35. Herbert Hoover to Selena Sloan Butler, July 28, 1931, as quoted in NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 21. On the White House Conferences, see Grant, Raising Baby by the Book, 9, 10, 165, 171, 182, 185.
36. Minutes: Pre-Board Meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Sept. 21, 1931, 1 and 79; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 232, Box 8, Schlesinger Library, RIAS; and Wessels to Butler, n.d., as reprinted in NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 22.
37. Minutes, Pre-Board Meeting of the Executive Committee of the NCPT, Sept. 21, 1931, 79; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 224, Box 7, Schlesinger Library, RIAS and NCPT, Proceedings, 1937, 351.
38. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 24.
39. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 29, 60.
41. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 24–25. For ongoing examples of Founders’ Day celebrations, see the state journal for the Georgia Colored Congress, Our Georgia Family 16, no. 1 (1957): 24 and 18; and Our Georgia Family 16, no. 1 (1958): 7.
44. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 26, 27. Mack was on a scholarship provided by “the Congress,” as this history of the black PTA explains. However, it is not clear whether her studies were funded by the black or white association.
of the Activities and Potentialities for Achievement, 28. Butterworth, The Parent-Teacher Association and Its Work, 68–69. This challenges Cutler’s point that school administrators found PTA groups easier to manage. I believe that both are true and depended on individual school leaders. See Cutler, Parents and Schools, 3–4.

46. Holbeck’s study, published in 1934, relied on Butterworth’s data and replicated his findings. Holbeck, An Analysis of the Activities and Potentialities for Achievement, 14.

47. Butterworth, The Parent-Teacher Association and Its Work, 53–54, 64, 66; “Minutes of the Meeting of the National Board of Managers of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers,” September 20–23, 1927, 2; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 226, Box 8, Schlesinger Library, RIAS; and Holbeck, An Analysis of the Activities and Potentialities for Achievement, 44.


50. Butterworth, The Parent-Teacher Association and Its Work, 14–15; and Minutes, April 8, 1927, John’s Island PTA, USC. See also Minutes, October 1, 1926, John’s Island PTA, USC.

51. Lowest in “concern for promotion of educational objectives” was North Carolina (10.3 percent), followed by Virginia (13.5 percent) and Texas (14.6 percent). Butterworth, The Parent-Teacher Association and Its Work, 126–27. According to Butterworth, Virginia spent 74.4 percent of its activities on providing money for schools, with North Carolina and Texas following, at 64.4 percent and 60 percent, respectively (table IX, p. 124). See Butterworth, The Parent-Teacher Association and Its Work, 15.

52. Savage, “Cultural Capital and African American Agency,” 207; NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 53; and Walker, Their Highest Potential, 72, 75.

53. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 10, 15, 12, 57.

54. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 14.

55. NCCPT, Coral History, 14–17; Shaw, What a Woman Ought to Be and Do, 57; Roland E. Wolseley, The Black Press, USA, 2nd ed. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1992); and Henry Lewis Suggs, The Black Press in the South, 1865–1979 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983). Our National Family was published at least until 1968. Other states had their own PTA publications as well, although I could locate only Our Georgia Family at the Library of Congress. These publications of the Colored Congress operated on tight budgets. On the white PTAs endowment fund, see “Minutes of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers,” May 4–11, 1929, Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 228, Box 8, Schlesinger Library, RIAS. Proceeds from the sales of Martha Sprague Mason’s book, Parents and Teachers, went into the fund.

56. NCPT, Proceedings, 1929, 177; and Higginbotham, Righteous Discontent, 17–18.

57. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 26, 78. The 1940 study made use of published sources from the state and national black parent-teacher associations, questionnaires, and the 1939 annual reports of local units of the NCCPT in Alabama. The researcher sent questionnaires to 15 county organizers, 150 principals, and 75 PTA presidents and received
completed forms from 12 organizers, 124 principals, and 60 PTA presidents. She also conducted interviews. Montgomery, “Parent-Teacher Associations in the Negro Schools of Alabama,” 2. For sundry contests, see the chart titled “Number of times selected activities of the program committee are referred to in reports of local units,” 22. Vanessa Siddle Walker writes about popularity contests as one of the “best-remembered” fundraising events at the Caswell County School, in Their Highest Potential, 76–77.

58. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 51, 56; and Montgomery, “Parent-Teacher Associations in the Negro Schools of Alabama,” 33.

59. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 65; and Walker, Their Highest Potential, 48, 57, 61.

60. Narvie J. Harris interview, 11 June 1992, 23, GGDP.


64. Marguerite Smith Taylor, “Evaluation of the Program of the Colored Parent-Teachers Association in Missouri,” (master’s thesis, Lincoln University, August 1954), 9, 27–28. White PTA units continued, however, to hold fundraisers through the 1950s and beyond. A Halloween party co-sponsored by the Rock Hill, South Carolina, PTA and the local YMCA in 1950 was attended by over 4,000 people, which raised $100 each for five local units. See The South Carolina Parent-Teacher 8, no. 4 (1950): 1.

65. “State News,” Our National Family (Dec. 1951): 16; “News and Notes,” Our National Family (Feb. 1952): 18; and “News from the States,” Our National Family (May 1952): 18. For an example of a PTA reporting on inadequate school facilities, see “State News,” Our National Family (Dec. 1951): 16–17. This example shows how the Texas Colored Congress of Parents and Teachers found the conditions in a Dallas high school that had “no ventilation, no lighting system for class room service; is a breeding place for polio and TB and a menace to the eyes of students and teachers.” The same issue reveals similar efforts in Virginia to “Look at Our School Houses” (18).

66. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 83. Regarding white PTA fundraising, an article in the South Carolina Parent-Teacher explained, “Emphasis has been taken off fund raising to buy school furnishings, formerly a tiresome main function of PTA. School monies are used for those needs now. PTA is a sounding board for new ideas that later are referred to the school board such as the PTA-sponsored summer reading and recreation program here this year. Next summer it will be the school board’s baby.” See South Carolina Parent-Teacher 30, no. 3 (1964): 4.

67. Montgomery, “Parent-Teacher Associations in the Negro Schools of Alabama,” 35. See also Reese, Power and the Promise of School Reform; Gold, School’s In; and Cutler, Parents and Schools, for the role of women’s groups in school reform.


69. "Minutes of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers," May 23–28, 1927, 19–20; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 225, Box 8; "NCPT Convention Minutes, 1930," 29, Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 229, Box 8; Dr. Margaret Justine, "A Tentative Program—Committee on Home Economics," 1, Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 230, Box 8, Schlesinger Library, RIAS.


71. The NCCPT listed them as health and safety; worthy home membership; mastery of the tools, techniques, and spirit of learning; citizenship and world goodwill; vocational and economic effectiveness; wise use of leisure; and ethical character. NCCPT, *Coral Anniversary*, 18, 52, 54; and Montgomery, "Parent-Teacher Associations in the Negro Schools of Alabama," 38. The Summer Round-Up was a hugely successful PTA program that began in 1925 and lasted at least through the 1950s. Black and white PTA units that had Summer Round-Up programs enlisted medical professionals to give checkups to students prior to their enrolling in school. Each spring, the doctors and nurses, assisted by PTA volunteers, would give checkups and send notes home to parents letting them know of health matters that needed to be attended to by the time school started that fall. See also NCCPT, *Coral Anniversary*, 65; and Cutler, *Parents and Schools*, 106–8, for the Summer Round-Up in the white PTA.


74. For example, NCCPT, *Coral Anniversary*, 64.

Chapter 4


3. Crawford and Levitt, “Social Change and Civic Engagement,” 263. See also PTA data, CEP, in possession of the author; and NCCPT, *Coral Anniversary History*, for membership data. Putnam argues that the PTAs exponential growth during the first half of the twentieth century is “one of the most impressive organizational success stories in American history,” *Bowling Alone*, 56.


9. In fact, at the 1959 annual meeting of the NCCPT, a representative from the white PTA echoed the sentiments of the Congress of Mothers from decades earlier, as she remarked that the organization should not emphasize the “preparation of girls for motherhood, but of boys and girls for family life.” *Our National Family* (Sept. 1959): 10.


11. President’s report on National Convention held in Omaha, Nebraska, May 18–21, 1958, Minutes of the Board of Managers Meeting, September 10, 1958, Hardin, Kentucky, Kentucky Congress of Parents and Teachers Collection, Eastern Kentucky University, hereafter referred to as EKU. On the PTA during the war years, see, for example, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, “Supplemental Reports to the War Activities Questionnaire, 1942,” Folder 24, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1937–1965, Eunice Harper Leonard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC. On the curricular changes during this era, see Kliebard, *Struggle for the American Curriculum*, 178; and Zimmerman, *Whose America?* especially chapters 3 and 4.

Founders’ Day celebrations were held. See, for example, Our National Family for February 1952 and 1953.


17. Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers, 10, 495–522. See also the discussions of Sheppard-Towner in Ladd-Taylor, Mother-Work, 167–90; Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion, 173; and Rothman, Woman’s Proper Place, 136–53.

18. Elizabeth Tilton, “Legislative Department Report,” submitted May 8, 1922, 1; Elizabeth (Hewes) Tilton Papers, Folder 233, Box 8, Schlesinger Library, RIAS.

19. Mr. Knox Walter, “Committee on Citizenship Plan of Work for 1943–1946,” Folder 24, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1937–1965, Eunice Harper Leonard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC. On the women’s political lives after the Nineteenth Amendment, see Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers; Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion; and Rothman, Woman’s Proper Place.


Family (May–June 1951): 10; Our National Family (Sept.–Oct. 1949): 18; and Baker, Paradoxes of Desegregation, 46. Social reformer Florence Kelley had argued that blacks were suspicious of Sheppard-Towner because it supported states’ rights in the South, giving “federal sanction to the infamous Southern State Constitutions with their discrimination against the Negroes.” Florence Kelley to Mrs. Tilton, December 31, 1921, Folder 244, Box 8, National Congress of Mothers, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1928, Elizabeth Hewes Tilton Papers, Schlesinger Library, RIAS.

24. “School Lunch Certificate,” 1946, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1944–1951, Folder 34, Box 1; and Mrs. Paul H. Leonard to Mrs. William A. Hastings, April 1, 1944, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1944–1951, Folder 34, Box 1, Eunice Harper Leonard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC. For biographical information on Leonard, see Lillian Harris Dean, “Cancer Society organizer has led active and useful life of service: PTA and Crippled Children’s Society were also helped by her efforts,” South Carolina Methodist Advocate, 18 November 1965, Box 1, Folder 1, Biographical and Misc. Personal, 1865–1975; and “Accomplishments during the Administration of Mrs. Paul H. Leonard, as President of the South Carolina Congress of Parents and Teachers,” n.d., National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1952–1973, Folder 35, Box 1, Eunice Harper Leonard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC.

25. Reese, Power and the Promise of School Reform, 186; on the role of women’s clubs and parent groups, see chapter 8. “1947 Convention Findings, South Carolina Congress of Parents and Teachers, Charleston, SC,” ca. 1947, Folder 34, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1944–1951, Eunice Harper Leonard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC.


29. F. O. Washam, “History of the School Lunch Program,” July 9, 1943, 1–2; Folder 36, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1927–1943, emphasis in the original;
and H. E. Levine, “Background History of Federal Assistance to School Lunch Programs,”
July 24, 1945, 4; Folder 34, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1944–1951,
Eunice Harper Leonard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC. See also William R.
Brock, *Welfare, Democracy, and the New Deal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1988).

30. Minutes of the Cooperating Committee on School Lunches, September 11, 1944,
National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1944–1951, Folder 34, Box 1, Eunice Harper Leonard
Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC. See also Mrs. Paul H. Leonard, “School
Lunch Project,” *South Carolina Parent-Teacher* 7, no. 4 (1943): 2; Mrs. Paul H. Leonard
to Mrs. William A. Hastings, April 1, 1944, National Congress of Parents and Teachers,
1944–1951, Folder 34, Box 1; F. O. Washam, “History of the School Lunch Program,” July
9, 1943, 1, Folder 36, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1927–1943; and
H. E. Levine, “Background History of Federal Assistance to School Lunch Programs,” July
24, 1945, 5; Folder 34, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1944–1951,
Eunice Harper Leonard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC.

31. Eunice Leonard, Handwritten notes on PTA involvement, n.d., Folder 36, Box 1,
National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1927–1943, Eunice Harper Leonard Papers,
South Caroliniana Library, USC. See also Beatrice E. Morgan, “The President’s Message,”
*Our National Family* (Dec. 1951): 3; H. E. Levine, “Background History of Federal As-
sistance to School Lunch Programs,” July 24, 1945, 3; and “Participation in Community
School Lunch Programs Receiving USDA Assistance and Value of USDA Contribution
by States, July 1, 1944–June 30, 1945,” Folder 34, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and
Teachers, 1944–1951, Eunice Harper Leonard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC.

32. The PTA ran school lunch programs in 4,630 of the 40,309 schools serving lunches.
Mrs. Paul H. Leonard, National Congress of Parents and Teachers Report of School Lunch
Chairman, 1947–1948, 1; Folder 34, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers,
Chairman, 1947–1948, 2; Folder 34, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers,
1944–1951, Eunice Harper Leonard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC; and Beatrice

33. F. O. Washam, “History of the School Lunch Program,” July 9, 1943, 3, Folder 36,
Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1927–1943, Eunice Harper Leonard
Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC. The NCCPT also publicized the PTAs role in the
School Lunch Act in Beatrice E. Morgan, “The President’s Message,” *Our National Family*
(Dec. 1951): 3. Morgan discussed the fact that Louisiana led the nation in "Negro school
lunch participation.”

34. Mrs. Paul H. Leonard, National Congress of Parents and Teachers Report of School
Lunch Chairman, 1947–1948, 3–4; Folder 34, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers,
President’s Message,” *Our National Family* (Dec. 1951): 3; and Helen B. Nicely, “Report of

1946,” 2–3, Folder 24, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1937–1965; and
Ben F. Wyman, M.D., State Health Officer, Statement on influence of SCCPT, n.d., Folder
35, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1952–1973, Eunice Harper Leonard
For the health issues of the black PTA, see, for example, "Resolutions Passed by the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers in Atlanta, Georgia, June 19–21, 1949," *Our National Family* 12, no. 1 (1949): 9.


38. Zimmerman, *Whose America?*, 31. See also Nicholas V. Montalto, *A History of the Intercultural Educational Movement, 1924–1941* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982), 285, in which he argues that “such an approach may serve a variety of purposes.” School textbooks of this era document the curricular shift toward pluralism, as do extracurricular programs such as intercultural education, which taught about ethnic and racial difference and promoted cultural understanding. On George Counts’s textbooks and cultural pluralism, see Mirel, “Civic Education,” 149; for Harold Rugg’s texts, see Zimmerman, *Whose America?*, 249, n9. For intercultural education, see Montalto, *A History of the Intercultural Education Movement*.


42. Jamestown, New York PTA, Nov. 13, 1934 meeting; Oct. and Nov. 1936 meetings; April and Nov. 1942 meetings; “PTA Scrapbook,” located at Fenton Historical Society,
Jamestown, New York. See also Zimmerman, Whose America? and Pierce, Public Opinion.

43. Mrs. C. H. Thorpe, “Plan of Work Committee on Citizenship,” July 1930, Folder 230, Box 8, Minutes, May 1927, Elizabeth Hewes Tilton Papers, Schlesinger Library, RIAS. In 1922 the PTA withdrew from the National Council for the Prevention of War, an antiwar organization. At this time, the Congress of Mothers had been labeled, along with other women’s organizations, as subversive because of its antiwar stance. See Nancy F. Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 242, 248, 249. On the thinking of educational and political leaders of this time on “world-mindedness,” see Dorn, “The World’s Schoolmaster,” 303; Fuchs, “Educational Sciences, Morality and Politics,” 75–76.

44. Miss Agnes Samuelson, “Committee on School Education: Plan of Work for 1943–1946,” Folder 24, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1937–1965; and Mrs. Harry M. Mulberry, “Committee on Reading and Library Service: Plan of Work for 1943–1946,” 1; Folder 24, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1937–1965, Eunice Harper Leonard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC. See also Overstreet and Overstreet, Where Children Come First, 158.


46. A review of the indices to every issue of the NCPT’s main publication, National Parent-Teacher, from its first issue, September 1934, to June 1971, when desegregation of the PTA was complete, turned up only about a dozen articles on eradicating racism and teaching for tolerance. Before September 1934, the journal was called Child Welfare.


61. I perused the extant issues of *Our National Family* from 1949 to 1968 at the Library of Congress, roughly 75 in all. Each issue had at least several features on the importance of PTA work in relation to racial uplift and equality.


67. South Carolina Congress of Parents and Teachers, “Annual Reports, 1953, Sixth District South Carolina Congress of Parents and Teachers,” 1; Folder 35, Box 1, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1952–1973, 1–2, Eunice Harper Leonard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC. On the activities of black PTAs, see Walker, Their Highest Potential, and the pages of Georgia’s state journal, Our Georgia Family.

68. NCCPT, Coral Anniversary, 30–31; and Our National Family (Sept. 1953): 11.

Chapter 5

1. Our Georgia Family (Fall 1970): 4; and Our National Family (Dec. 1955): 15. See also Fultz, who argues that black educators typically accepted the losses that came with desegregation as a sacrifice for the greater good. Fultz, “Caught between a Rock and a Hard Place,” 14–16.

2. “National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers Convene in Historic Convention,” Our Georgia Family 29, no. 4 (1970): 8; and NCPT, The PTA Story, 117. Membership figures from CEP data, in possession of the author. As Crawford and Levitt explain, PTA membership declined from approximately 50 members per 100 families in the early 1960s to fewer than 20 members per 100 families with children under age eighteen in the early 1980s. Crawford and Levitt, “Social Change and Civic Engagement,” 250. See also Putnam, Bowling Alone, 55–57, for declining PTA membership and women’s changing roles and PTA membership (194–96).


10. The 2 percent figure is cited in many places; one of the original reports is H. W. Horowitz and K. L. Karst, Law, Lawyers, and Social Change (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969). Many sources document the desegregation strategies, the following of which I found most useful: Cecelski, Along Freedom Road; Jones, “Desegregation and Social Reform since 1954,” 161, 163; and William M. Gordon, “The Implementation of Desegregation Plans since Brown,” Journal of Negro Education 63, 3 (1994): 310–22. Various strategies, such as freedom of choice, are discussed in a case history of Holly Springs, Mississippi, in Callejo-Pérez, Southern Hospitality. Baker discusses additional means, such as teacher testing, in Paradoxes of Desegregation.


19. A report in 1955 lists the membership at 25,000, when the black PTA for that state only had a thousand members. Therefore, the figure represents black and white members. See James H. Snowden, “Delaware Prepares the People,” Our National Family (March 1955): 18–19. West Virginia likewise presents a rare case, since it, like Delaware, announced that its state units unified right after Brown, but each continued to convene its state Colored Congress and report on activities to the NCCPT journal through the mid-1960s.

21. Don Shoemaker, ed., *With All Deliberate Speed: Segregation-Desegregation in Southern Schools* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 152; NCCPT, *Coral Anniversary*, 76; and *Our National Family* (March 1958): 15. One report in *Our National Family* explained that because of the “rapid progress of integration” in DC, a workshop was postponed because all school personnel were being utilized for the effort. See *Our National Family* (March 1955): 20. The actual figure by which the integrated DC Congress grew was 12,744 from 1955 to 1956, which was one thousand members fewer than the total in the District’s Colored Congress. It is unclear what happened to the extra thousand members, though the record suggests that they protested the merger and decided to remain independent. PTA membership data, CEP, in possession of the author.

22. NCCPT, *Coral Anniversary*, 69. Although separate records were not kept on the numbers of black and white members, in 1961 it was estimated that 6,000 African Americans belonged to Missouri’s Congress of Parents and Teachers. *Our National Family* (Sept. 1955): 15; and *Our National Family* (June 1955).

23. See *Our National Family* (June 1956): 7; and *Our National Family* (Sept. 1956): 9. Most of the available documentation on the PTA is of white units, which not only tell only one side of the story but also often fail to include accounts of the process of unification. For example, nearly all of the self-published histories of southern state PTAs leave out the integration of their PTA. Kentucky’s *Diamond Jubilee History* reports on many activities and accomplishments of the KCPT during the administration of Mrs. George C. Spoonamore, Jr. (1969–71). The theme of her administration was “Facing Up to a Changing World,” which KCPT historians describe as a focus on “Children’s Emotional Health, Judicial Concern for Children in Trouble, Smoking and Health, and Financing Public Education.” Not once is the integration of the state unit with the Kentucky Colored Congress mentioned in this history. See KCPT, *Diamond Jubilee 1918–1993* (KCPT, n.d.).

In perusing the *South Carolina Parent-Teacher*, I noted that although an entire issue was devoted to the ESEA, there was no mention of desegregation. See *South Carolina Parent-Teacher* 31, no. 5 (Feb. 1966). Likewise, I could not locate discussions of race, the Brown decision, or desegregation of schools in the journal from 1950 to 1970 despite its inclusion of such topics as school consolidation, world citizenship, and international relations. A discussion of Brotherhood Week in 1967 referred only to religious diversity and cooperation “among different groups.” The pattern is repeated in other collections.

24. NCCPT, *Coral Anniversary*, 79–80; and CEP data, in possession of the author. The last recorded membership figure for the Kentucky Colored Congress was 1,620 in 1957. In the extensive KCPT collection housed at Eastern Kentucky University, the only references to its segregated association I could locate were in the minutes of the Board of Managers meetings. The black and white state organizations did not unify until 1966, and it is difficult to establish the point at which the white organization included the membership figures of the Colored Congress.

25. KCPT, Pre-Convention Meeting of Board of Managers, Monday, April 25, 1955, Box 4, Executive Committee Minutes, January 1954–April 1956, EKU.

26. KCPT, Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, September 14, 1955, Box 4, Executive Committee Minutes, January 1954–April 1956, EKU; and Coleman, “Desegregation of the Public Schools in Kentucky,” 254. Coleman argues that the “favorable state context” was due to the low percentage of African Americans in the population, its location as a border state, and its history of less-restrictive segregation (258). Louisville appears to present a unique case, however, since it was considered a “mecca” for black teachers who had lost their jobs in other school districts and the larger percentage of

27. KCPT, Executive Committee Meeting, Frankfort, Kentucky, July 18, 1956, Box 5, Executive Committee Minutes, July 18, 1956–April 23, 1970, EKU. See also KCPT, Minutes of the Pre-Convention Board of Managers Meeting, April 30–May 1, 1956, Box 4, Executive Committee Minutes, January 1954–April 1956, EKU.


29. KCPT, Minutes of the Board of Managers, January 11, 1961, Box 5, Executive Committee Minutes, July 18, 1956–April 23, 1970; and KCPT, Report of the Special Committee on Group Relations, April 6, 1961, Box 5, Executive Committee Minutes, July 18, 1956–April 23, 1970, EKU.


Folder 26, Box 16, AUM; Mary N. Sellers to Mrs. Rollin Brown, March 1, 1956, Folder 26, Box 16, AUM; and Mrs. Rollin Brown to Mrs. Sellers, March 27, 1956, Folder 6, Box 14, AUM.

37. Alabama Congress of Parents and Teachers to Executive Committee of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, September 14, 1956, Folder 6, Box 14, emphasis added; and ACPT, “For Your Information,” September 14, 1956, Folder 6, Box 14, AUM. See also “Integration Stand Revised by P-TA,” Alabama Journal, 28 September 1956, Folder 26, Box 16, AUM.

38. As quoted in ACPT, “For Your Information,” September 14, 1956, Folder 6, Box 14, AUM; emphasis in original. Further research will determine the extent to which the NCPT worked with the NAACP on desegregation. See Richard Kluger, Simple Justice, especially chapter 24.

39. Narvie J. Harris interview, 11 June 1992, 53–56, GGDP. For example, PTA president Mayme Williams was an NAACP member. See Our National Family (Sept. 1953): 3. See Nasstrom, “Women and the Civil Rights Movement,” 169; and Fairclough, A Class of Their Own, 382. See also Cecelski, Along Freedom Road and Our National Family, on the fact that most African Americans supported the NAACP (10).

40. Nasstrom, “Women and the Civil Rights Movement,” 128. She argues that the NAACP was led by black Baptist ministers, and women were relegated to supporting roles.


44. E. L. White to Fanny Nelson, July 30, 1956, Folder 26, Box 16; and Mrs. Harry Nelson to Mr. E. L. White, August 1, 1956, Folder 26, Box 16, AUM.

45. Mrs. J. H. Rutledge to Dear Council President, August 1, 1956, Folder 26, Box 16, AUM.

46. “P-TA Chapters to Get Letter on National Group’s Stand,” Alabama Journal, 2 August 1956, Folder 26, Box 16; Mrs. G. J. Simpkin to “Gentlemen,” August 27, 1956, Folder 26, Box 6; and Mary to Martha [Rutledge], August 25, 1956, Folder 26, Box 6, AUM.

47. R. J. Lawrence to Mrs. James Hepburn, August 9, 1956, Folder 26, Box 6, AUM.

48. Mrs. J. H. Rutledge to “Dear PTA Member,” August 1956, Folder 26, Box 6, AUM. Perhaps because she did not give a clear denial, or as she put it, “I believe that would be better [to leave it out] because it might stir up trouble,” Rutledge deleted the paragraph from the final version, but left it in only for the members of the Montgomery County Council PTA, since she wanted to challenge McLaurine’s leadership in that district. Martha [Rutledge] to Fanny [Mitchell Nelson], August 27, 1956, Folder 26, Box 6, AUM.

49. “Cloverdale P-TA Group Votes to Stay with National Group,” The Montgomery Advertiser, 28 August 1956, Folder 26, Box 16, AUM.
50. “State Not Bound by National PTA Integration Moves, Chief Asserts,” The Anniston Star, 29 August 1956, Folder 26, Box 16; and “Alabama PTA Head Cites Separate School Stand,” The Birmingham News, 31 August 1956, Folder 26, Box 16, AUM.


53. “Integration Stand Revised by P-TA,” Alabama Journal, 28 September 1956, Folder 26, Box 16; “Two More Montgomery Units to End National P-TA Link,” Montgomery Advertiser, 10 October 1956, Folder 26, Box 16; and “To Break Original County Unit,” Montgomery Advertiser, 11 October 1956, Folder 26, Box 16, AUM. See also “Martin PTA Decides to Join National Body Again,” The Birmingham News, Folder 26, Box 16, AUM.

54. Membership in 1956 was 212,923; and in 1957 it was 190,450. During the Depression, ACPT membership had dropped from 21,000 to 13,000 (1932 to 1933), only to return to the original figure the following year. In 1960 ACPT membership was 215,391 and grew to an all-time high of 232,462 in 1966 before it began to decline again. CEP data, in possession of the author.

55. Our National Family (Dec. 1956): 8. Alabama’s Colored Congress grew by 30 percent from 1953 to 1958 amid the controversy in the white units, increasing its membership from 23,000 to 33,000. Kathryn Nasstrom explains that it was difficult even to conduct an anonymous poll of white PTA workers on whether or not they supported the desegregation of Atlanta’s public schools, which revealed “how the controversial nature of school desegregation discouraged open discussion.” In “Women, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Politics of Historical Memory in Atlanta, 1946–1973,” 145.


58. See Coral Anniversary, 62; and Our National Family, the publication of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers. Membership data are scant and sometimes contradictory on the black PTA. “Dedication to Ethel Woodrick Kight,” Our Georgia Family 27, no. 2 (1968): 15. See also Our National Family (Sept. 1957): 3.

20; and *Our National Family* (March 1967): 22. Educational leaders in Tennessee were also unsuccessful in visiting white PTA meetings right after the *Brown* decision to promote the benefits of desegregation. See Shoemaker, *With All Deliberate Speed*, 51.


62. GCCPT, *Golden Anniversary History*, 144, PTA Records, UIC. In contrast, the NCPT magazine, *National Parent-Teacher*, throughout the 1960s and 1970s made little mention of the black PTA or the merger.


65. See, for example, Mrs. Jerome Z. Morris to Mrs. Harry Nelson, January 29, 1963; and Mrs. Jerome Z. Morris to Mrs. Harry Nelson, March 27, 1963, in Folder 47, Box 12, AUM. In this correspondence Morris, the president of the Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, apologizes to the president of the white Congress, Nelson, for the “constant flow of mail to you from our units.”


67. See Alabama Congress of Parents and Teachers [white], Executive Committee Minutes, 1965. The outgoing ACPT president listed information to be passed on to her successor, Mrs. John R. Lathram, as “Committees considered but not to be announced or listed” in her notes for the meeting that year. The Group Relations Committee was listed with the white members Mrs. H. C. Wright, Mr. W. T. McKee, and Dr. Kermit A. Johnson, the superintendent of the Jefferson County Public Schools. See Folder 1, Box 4, AUM. As a result of the secretive nature of these meetings, the minutes—if there were any—were not archived with the rest of the Alabama PTA collection.

68. *Our National Family* (Dec. 1966): 20; and Mrs. Harry Nelson to Mr. Thomas, January 22, 1968, Folder 47, Box 12, ACPT Collection, AUM. Even with all the tumult around them, leaders sought to avoid controversy on the public stage. Ethel Bell, president of the Alabama Colored Congress, assured Lathram that she did not expect her to “get on the spot, or wave out into controversial issues of our times.” Mrs. Ethel L. Bell to Mrs. John R. Lathram, March 10, 1966, Folder 47, Box 12, ACPT Collection, AUM. This kind of relationship was common in the southern units with segregated congresses. See also “Convention Highlights,” *Our Georgia Family* 29, no. 7 (1970): 8; and “Two Georgia Congresses Existing Side by Side,” *Our Georgia Family* 29, no. 4 (1970): 10.


70. Mrs. John R. Lathram to Mrs. Jennelle Moorhead, ca. Feb. 6, 1967, Folder 47, Box 12; and Ethel L. Bell to Mrs. John R. Lathram, February 6, 1967, Folder 47, Box 12, AUM.

71. Bell later explained to Lathram why she had invited the national officers: “We did that because we felt there were [sic] some information that would have been pertinent to
our thinking. That made the committee larger than we wanted it to be. I sincerely hope that [white state president] Mrs. Nelson can understand that it was not an intention to ‘over do’ the thing.” Ethel L. Bell to Mrs. John R. Lathram, March 9, 1967, Folder 47, Box 12, AUM.

72. Mrs. Forte, Minutes of the Intergroup Relations Committee Meeting, March 8, 1967, Folder 47, Box 12; Questionnaire on Intergroup Relations Committee, ca. March 1967, Folder 47, Box 12, ACPT Collection; and Mrs. William O. Jones to Mrs. John R. Lathram, September 25, 1969, Folder 47, Box 12, ACPT Collection, AUM.

73. Mrs. Irvin R. Hendryson to “Presidents of the Following [white] State Congresses . . . ,” May 1, 1969, Folder 47, Box 12, ACPT Collection. Tennessee and Maryland merged their segregated PTAs in 1967, while the state units in Texas and Arkansas integrated in 1969. Rev. R. L. Hope to All Principals, Presidents, and Principals of PTA Council, White, October 1, 1969, Folder 47, Box 12; and Dot to Fan, September 25, 1969, Folder 47, Box 12, ACPT Collection, AUM; emphasis in original.


77. Rev. R. L. Hope to All Principals, Presidents, and Principals of PTA Council, White, October 1, 1969, Folder 47, Box 12, AUM.

78. Mrs. H. Eugene Gibbons to Dr. Cranford H. Burns, October 1969, Folder 7, Box 12, AUM. On the job losses teachers and principals faced, see Fultz, “The Displacement of Black Educators Post-Brown.”


80. “Two Georgia Congresses Existing Side by Side,” Our Georgia Family 29, no. 4 (1970): 10; and “President’s Message,” Our Georgia Family 29, no. 4 (1970): 3. See Our National Family (Sept. 1955), in which the Kansas Colored Congress votes to be dissolved (15) and Missouri’s leaders are listed as members of a “dissolved” organization (17); and Narvie J. Harris, “Projecting,” in GCCPT, Golden Anniversary History, 1969, 143.

81. Mrs. L. M. Gill to Mrs. W. O. Jones, March 14, 1970, Folder 47, Box 12; Mrs. W. O. Jones to Mrs. L. M. Gill, March 26, 1970, Folder 47, Box 12; and Mrs. W. O. Jones to Mrs. L. M. Gill, April 3, 1970, Folder 47, Box 12, AUM.

82. Alabama Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, Proposed Resolutions, April 4, 1970, Folder 47, Box 12, AUM.

83. Alabama Congress of Parents and Teachers, Minutes, Pre-Convention Board of Managers’ Meeting, April 22, 1970, Folder 48, Box 12, emphasis in original; and Alabama Congress of Parents and Teachers, “A Statement of Position,” April 24, 1970, Folder 48, Box 12, AUM.

84. National Congress of Parents and Teachers, “Plan for Unification of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers,” 1970, Folder 47, Box 12, ACPT Collection, AUM. All life members in the
NCCPT also were automatically made life members in the NCPT. See “Golden Anniversary Convention,” *Our Georgia Family* 29, no. 4 (1970): 4.


87. Victoria Radaviche to L. M. Gill, September 4, 1970, Folder 47, Box 12; and Mrs. Wm. O. Jones to Mrs. L. M. Gill, September 5, 1970, Folder 47, Box 12, ACPT Collection, AUM. See also L. M. Gill to Mrs. Leon S. Price, August 28, 1970, Folder 47, Box 12, ACPT Collection, AUM.


89. Mrs. L. M. Gill to Mrs. Leon S. Price, October 26, 1970, Folder 47, Box 12; and Mrs. Leon S. Price to Mrs. L. M. Gill, November 3, 1970, Folder 47, Box 12, ACPT Collection, AUM.


91. See Mrs. W. O. Jones to Mrs. L. M. Gill, January 14, 1971; Gill to Jones, January 17, 1971; and Gill to Jones, February 1, 1971, Folder 47, Box 12, ACPT Collection, AUM.

92. Gill to Jones, March 1, 1970, Folder 47, Box 12, ACPT Collection; and L. M. Gill to P.T.A. Co-Workers, February 5, 1971, Folder 47, Box 12, ACPT Collection, AUM.


94. Gill to Jones, March 17, 1971, Folder 47, Box 12; and Mrs. William O. Jones to Mrs. C. G. Watkins, March 29, 1971, Folder 47, Box 12, ACPT Collection, AUM.

95. Mrs. Leon S. Price to Mrs. William O. Jones, April 5, 1971, Folder 47, Box 12; and L. M. Gill to Mrs. W. O. Jones, April 19, 1971, Folder 48, Box 12, ACPT Collection, AUM.


99. “National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers Convene in Historic Convention,” *Our Georgia Family* 29, no. 4 (1970): 8; and Harris and Taylor, *African-American Education in DeKalb County*, 32–33. The Narvie Harris Traditional Theme School in DeKalb County is her legacy, and one of its guiding principles is parental and community involvement. See http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/narvieharris/.


Epilogue


2. “Plan for Unification of the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers,” 1970, Folder 47, Box 12, AUM.