DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 126 224 UD 016 206

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TITLE Educational Change in the Black Population of the United States and the South.
INSTITUTION Atlanta Univ., Ga.
PUB DATE Oct 74
NOTE 47p.; Paper presented at the W.E.B. DuBois Institute for the Study of the American Black (Atlanta, Georgia, October 1974)
AVAILABLE FROM Atlanta University, 223 Chestnut Street, Atlanta, Georgia 30313 ($1.50)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Change Agents; Cultural Environment; Cultural Factors; *Educational Change; *Historical Reviews; Minority Groups; National Demography; *Negro Education; *Negroes; *Negro History; Negro Population Trends; Negro Role; *Southern States
IDENTIFIERS *United States

ABSTRACT

The origins of the education of blacks, especially in the South, are traced, in order to comprehend the current educational situation. Two questions are investigated: first, whether the conclusion of the Civil War marks the beginning of a new educational era for the nineteenth century blacks; and second, whether there have in fact been real educational gains that go beyond normal expectations. The historical review in the first section indicates that it is not until the early twentieth century that the chains of the industrial education concept even began to be removed; and that any serious attempt to equalize expenditures for schools in the South does not occur until the 1954 court decision. A second section examines the demographic aspects of education. It focuses first on illiteracy, then on school enrollment, and finally an educational attainment. In the comparison of black-white education, however measured, a basic difficulty in making statistical comparisons arises: that of percentage increases. It is much easier for the oppressed groups to exhibit significant percentage gains than it is for the advantaged groups. Quantitative, if not qualitative, progress in Negro education has occurred at least in recent years despite a system that did everything in its power to block it until recently. (Author/AM)

EDUCATIONAL CHANGE IN THE BLACK POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOUTH

Leon F. Bouvier

"The gains in education made by blacks have certainly been impressive--just 100 years from slavery." How often we hear such generalizations bandied about in public. Indeed, some versions of this thesis have appeared in print ever more frequently in recent years. The Scammon-Wattenberg assertion that over half of all American blacks are now middle class is, of course, a prime, though simplistic example.[1] The more recent lead article in Time magazine[2] and the TV documentary onthe black middle class have further reinforced this relatively new line of reasoning, especially prevalent among liberal whites.

With respect to education, two questions warrant close investigation. First, is it appropriate to think in terms of one hundred years? Did the conclusion of the Civil War mark the beginning of a new educational era for the nineteenth century blacks? Second, have there in fact been <u>real</u> educational gains--gains that go beyond normal expectations?

A Brief Historical Excursion

To better comprehend the current educational situation, it is important to go back those one hundred years and briefly trace the origins of the educati on of blacks, especially in

the South. The well-known controversy between the views of Booker T. Washington, on one hand, and those of W.E.B. Dubois, on the other, lies at the heart of the kind of education blacks were to receive in ensuing years.

Even prior to the emergence of Washington as the leading black educator of his era, the idea that black education should be heavily "industrial" in content was being gradually accepted as the only sensible solution to the question of what to do about the schooling of former slaves. As early as 1872, S.C. Armstrong, the white founder of Hampton Institute, in addressing the National Educational Association, argued not only for separate but "different" types of schools for southern blacks. He stated that the Negro is "capable of acquiring knowledge to any degree, and, to a certain age, at least, with about the same facility as white children; but lacks the power to assimilate and digest it. The Negro matures sooner than the white, but does not have his steady development of mental strength up to advanced years. He is a child of the tropics, and the differentiation of races goes deeper than the skin."[3] By 1890 Armstrong's views were widely accepted and had replaced the liberal educational approaches of the earlier northern missionaries. So-called "industrial education" was in fact "Negro education."

It remained for Booker T. Washington, however, to truly establish industrial education for blacks--a training that would concentrate on preparing young men and women for roles as farmers, cooks, and mechanics. This was to be the principal

emphasis at Tuskegee Institute after its founding by Washington in 1881. Although it trained teachers, they were expected to learn about gardening and carpentry as well as grammar and arithmetic.[4] As Bullock has explained it: "This special education was grounded in two basic convictions: first, that the two races had to live together; second, that they could coexist symbiotically. He believed that the Negro's home was permanently in the South and that the interest of one race was inextricably tied to the other."[5] Washington further specified his views in his famous Atlanta speech in 1895--delivered at the Cotton States Expostion. It was there that he laid the ground rules which he hoped would result in racial peace. "Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our new life we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in Congress or the state legislature was more sought than real estate or industrial skill; that the political convention or stump speaking had more attraction than starting a dairy farm or being a truck driver." He added the admoniton to "Cast down your bucket where you are." To Negroes this meant: "Cast down in agriculture, mechanics, commerce domestic service and in the professions." To whites this meant "Cast down upon the eight millions of Negroes."--Negroes who would once again form the basic labor supply of the South.[6]

This marked change of direction from the earlier, more traditional methods of teaching espoused by northern

missionaries was embraced by the white southern power structure. As Embree states it: "Here was a way out. A Negro leader himself promised that schools and jobs and hospitals could be offered the race without the danger of the bugaboo of social equality. The Negroes were to stay in their place, and yet be trained to carry their share of the burdens. Their schooling was not to be in cultural subjects, but in the hand skills of farming and trades and domestic service."[7]

This change also had a number of unanticipated consequences. For some time, whites had complained about the expenses involved in educating former slaves--freemen who could not pay their share of the tax burden. This "special" type of education for blacks was used as an excuse for developing differential allocations of expenditures for schools. It was argued that it was less complex and less expensive than that needed by whites. "...the education required by the newly liberated Negro was simple, homely stuff, much less elaborate and expensive than that needed for white children."[8] The average length of the school year declined, at least for a while. Salary differentials between white and black teachers increased; per capita expenditures increased significantly for white schools while remaining static for Negro schools. This marked the beginning of a discriminatory pattern that was to persist into the 1950s--one important effect being the inferior quality of education historically offered in Negro schools; an effect that still haunts the nation to the present day.

Another unanticipated consequence of Washington's educational philosophy was the perpetuating of the caste system. It was assumed that Negroes would "stay in their place." They would be trained only to improve their work at jobs that they had traditionally performed in the first place. A slot had to be found for the Negro in southern society--it was to be at the bottom. But within that caste, there would be upper classes consisting of those trained to be teachers, preachers, and other professionals.

Still another unforeseen result of special education was that it was preparing young blacks for jobs that they realistically could not attain. The graduate with some expertise in agricultural science might hope to become a farm operator, but the white power structure would only allow him to remain a tenant farmer. More and more of the skilled occupations traditionally performed by slaves had been closed to the freemen and thus training in mechanics was of little value. Finally, the Industrial Revolution had reached the South and was causing substantial changes in the occupational structure of the region. People were being trained for jobs that were soon to be non-existent. Bullock summarizes it well:

> Contrary to what its designers had promised and what the Negro people had been led to expect, special education did not prove to be an effective tool of economic adjustment. The ideology and structure of industrial education failed to consider the trend of the American economy, despite the fact that our pattern of economic organization had already begun to make major shifts at the time the new educational idea was winning favor with southern and northern educators.[9]

At least until the early part of the twentieth century,

the special industrial "Negro" education was the typical training given black youth. It had only contributed to increases in the differences in educational expenditures and to a firmer caste system. It had abysmally failed to live up to its promise of providing a better life for the southern blacks.

Objections to the direction of this special education were occasionally raised--but were quickly discouraged. In 1907, for example, the governor of Georgia commented: "We can attend to the education of the darkey in the South without the aid of these Yankees and give them the education that they most need. I do not believe in the higher education of the darkey. He must be taught the trades. When he is taught the fine arts, he is educated above his caste, and it makes him unhappy."[10] Although differences of opinion among educators were still present, the decision of the third Capon Springs Convention was clear. Again quoting Bullock: "But the problem of educating the Negro masses still remained. What kind of education should be provided for them? Industrial education emerged as an emphatic answer."[11]

The decisions made at all three Capon Springs conferences significantly affected the type of schooling that Negroes would receive. First, because of the conditions under which most Negroes lived, industrial education had to be a major part of their training. "Slavery, it was believed, had shaped within their minds some undesireable attitudes that this type of education could remove."[12] Second, it was firmly believed that the "Negro had been educated away from his

natural environment and that his education should concern those fields available to him."[13] Third, there was a consensus that the Negro's industrial education should be directed toward increasing the labor value of his race.

Even before emancipation, American blacks had demonstrated a strong and intense desire for education. With freedom, increased schooling was seen as the ticket to social betterment. As with so many other ethnic groups, more education was the main hope for the upgrading of the next generation. Unlike other ethnic groups, this potential upgrading was almost totally obliterated by the white power structure. According to Bullock:

> Ever since their earliest contact with the printed page, southern Negroes had maintained an almost blind confidence in schooling. In many instances, their earliest interracial experiences had been the result of an involvement with the wealthiest and most cultured element of the white South. By the time of their emancipation, almost all of them had come to believe that those qualities of white people which they admired so much and tried so hard to emulate had resulted from formal education and that they too could acquire them if they once got the necessary schooling.[14]

With emancipation and during Reconstruction, politics became one way to rise in the social system. With disenfranchisement, their confidence in education as a means of upward mobility became even stronger.

We have noted that the decision to follow the advice of Washington in the development of special education for blacks was not embraced by all. Rather, it would seem more natural for the blacks to opt for the more traditional approach to

education. Some white educators also argued that Negroes needed more classical training--that this would better prepare them for positions of leadership. One such educator was William Harris, United States Commissioner of Education who, in 1899, stated that "education, intellectual and moral, is the only means yet discovered that is always sure to help people to help themselves."[15] In 1895 at Atlanta University he had this prophetic statement to say:

> As our civilization is largely derived from the Greeks and Romans, and as Negroes of America are to share it with the Anglo-Saxons, it is very important that the bright minds among them would get acquainted with it, as others have done, through the study of Latin and Greek. This is the more necessary, since, with the advance of civilization and the development of machinery, the proportion of manual laborers in every community is steadily diminishing, while the proportion of the directors of labor and other brain workers is correspondingly increasing.[16]

Uncomfortable stirrings of discontent were manifest among numerous segments of the black population by the turn of the century, and even prior to that time. While industrial education was maintained, efforts were constantly made (and sometimes successfully) to incorporate into the school system the traditional three R's; and into the colleges a truly liberal type of education. Horace Bumstead, white president of Atlanta University, correctly stated in 1905 that "We have too long made the mistake of regarding the race as a homogeneous mass instead of recognizing the diversity of its different classes."[17] He continued: "The masses may not be able to go to college, but they may send their representative to college, and when he comes home they will be wise by proxy."

As it remained for Washington to endorse the earlier

views espoused by Armstrong; so too it remained for a leading black intellectual to attempt to accomplish some of the suggestions put forward by Harris and Bumstead. That man, of course, was W.E.B. Dubois.. The long conflict between the advocates of industrial education like Booker T. Washington and those espousing classical education like W.E.B. Dubois is too familiar to repeat here. Clearly the failures of the special education movement contributed to the rise of the so-called New Negro. As Bullock has stated:

> What was later to be called the 'New Negro' was being shaped and through the literary efforts of this new breed, America's black people were to find a new concention of themselves and a deeper spiritual orientation.... The historical significance of this movement rests not solely upon the literary talent that it revealed but also upon the change in the Negro's intellectual convictions which it symbolized. The change was from an attitude of compromise to one of challenge. It meant that the Booker T. Washington philosophy that had prevailed for more than a generation had been condemned and was to be rejected by the Negro masses.[18]

We could perhaps add that it marked the coming of age of the teachings of Dubois--so concisely stated in Souls of Black Folk in 1903. In 1904 Dubois resigned from the Committee of Twelve which Washington had assembled and once again cried out his faith in the essential education of the talented tenth.

Soon after resigning, Dubois called together a selected group of black leaders to meet with him near Buffalo, N.Y. in July, 1905. This "Niagara Movement" "was to become the most effective of all the Negro's attempts to secure equality for himself."[19] The National Association for the Advancement

of Colored People was founded in 1910 and a major shift in strategy began to evolve. It should be emphasized that at this point in time the important shift, as far as education was concerned, was a break with the philosophy of Booker T. Washington. It was the beginning of a new period in which serious attempts would be made to educate blacks in the normal established American fashion--in the long range hope that perhaps some of the negative ramifications of industrial education would be eventually eliminated. The battle, of course, was just beginning.

The innumerable legal challenges undertaken by the NAACP are known to us all. Suffice it to say, at this time, that whereas the turn of the century marked the beginning of the gradual replacement of the Washington educational philosophy with that of Dubois; it was not until the 1950's that the effects of the long and tedious court battles began to be noticed. Until that time wide differentials in school expenditures were still rampant. The quality of the education offered blacks was far inferior to that offered whites--from elementary school through college in both the South and the North.

We are only twenty years beyond the end of that era. And in education, these most recent twenty years have not marked the onset of the best of all possible worlds--not when it comes to the education of black youth. Industrial education may have ceased being the accepted philosophy, but how many high school counsellors still advise black students to concentrate

on commercial rather than college preparatory programs--before looking at their academic records? As late as 1966, Huyck, basing his comments on a 1964 U.S. Office of Education survey, noted that "Lower proportions of Negro pupils than of white pupils have adequate books, laboratories, and gymnasiums. Teachers in Negro schools have had less academic exposure and are less mobile. Negro schools have more classes with low IQ pupils; they have fewer accelerated or college preparatory curricula and fewer opportunities for individual and group expression (music, journalism, and debate.)"[20] There is little evidence of any significant progress since 1964. Indeed, the District of Columbia is now very proud of the fact that Western High School, beginning this Fall of 1974, offers for the first time concentrations in such areas as music, fine arts and drama.

Two questions were posited at the outset of this paper. One was: "Is it appropriate to think in terms of 100 years? Did the end of the Civil War mark a new beginning for the nineteenth century Negro in terms of education?" The reply is an unqualified and resounding NO. It was not until the early twentieth century that the chains of the industrial education concept even began to be removed; it was not until after the 1954 Supreme Court decision that any serious attempt was made to at least equalize expenditures for schools in the South. It is only now that attention is finally focussing on the quality of the education of black youth throughout the nation.

Clearly, the United States has a long way to go before accomplishing truly high quality education for the majority of its black citizens, be it in the South or in the northern ghettos. Cahill and Pieper, in a recent article in Phylon, have this to add: "...there remains the very real problem of qualitative differences within the educational system, particularly as they may affect the opportunities for post-college graduate schooling and entry into the professions."[21]

Before turning to demographic data, we should glance briefly at a new phenomenon that is causing much concern for blacks and whites alike--affirmative action. This program, so despised by some factions of other ethnic groups, may well be the weapon that is needed to finally break the long range intergenerational effects of what Myrdal referred to as the vicious circle.[22] Despite the heroic efforts of groups like the NAACP, the Urban League, and others, the inherent racism of many whites still makes it extremely difficult for a properly qualified black to advance and succeed within the system. Few American enjoy quotas, but 300 years of slavery and serfdom may require the use of quotas until the vicious circle has been overcome.

However, there have been gross abuses of affirmative action, many attributable ironically to the long held stereotypes about American blacks. To many well intended whites, young black students are not supposed to be intelligent. For some, culturally deprived is synonymous with intellectually deprived. This has led to some peculiar developments--not

to the advantage of blacks. Thomas Sowell, in his recent controversial book, Black Education: Myths and Tragedies, explains it well:

> Many of the current academic policies toward black students revolve around a central myth which has been elaborated into a whole social theology. The main characters in this myth are (1) middle-class Negro, who has lost his 'true' identity, has not real concern for his people, does well on white men's tests because he is only a black white man himself, and who will pursue his own narrow self interests rather than the advancement of his race--as contrasted with (2) the 'real' black man, 'proud' of his identity, 'committed' to the advancement of black people, who is too steeped in his own culture to score well on white, culturally biased tests, but who has 'real' abilities, and who will put his educational and other opportunities at the service of his race.[23]

Sowell then goes on to cite example after example of truly qualified blacks being rejected from elite colleges and universities solely because of their high scores, while some far less prepared receive full tuition scholarships. Even within contemporary, well-intended programs like affirmative actions, blacks face the stereotypes long attributed to all members of the race. Affirmative action, and other programs intended to aid blacks are necessary. Perhaps Sowell exagerates, but it is important that anti-intellectual discrimination not be part of such programs.

The first century away from slavery has been fraught with difficulties obstructing black attempts to better themselves educationally--the first step towards overall social progress. The vicious circle has been allowed not only to operate but, in fact, has often been encouraged to become ever more vicious. Even this cursory summary of the past

one hundred years makes a mockery of the often heard comments that "They just don't care about educating themselves like some other groups do. Why don't they do something about it--pull themselves up by their own bootstraps." American blacks have had and continue to have an unabiding faith in education. The record on that is clear and, as we shall see, despite all the pitfalls, deliberate and otherwise, there has been incredible progress quantitatively if not qualitatively, at least in recent years. Progress, it should be added, that occurred despite a system that did everything in its power to block it--again until very recently.

The Demographic Aspects of Education

Before any group can attain a fairly high level of educational attainment, the proportion of its youth attending school must also be high. Even before this can occur, illiteracy must be almost totally eliminated. With this in mind, this demographic analysis will focus first on illiteracy, then on school enrollment, and finally on educational attainment.

In this comparison of black-white education, however measured, a basic difficulty in making statistical comparisons should be kept in mind. It is much easier for the oppressed group to exhibit significant percentage gains than it is for the advantaged group. Far too often authors rely solely on percentage increases to document their conclusions that differentials between whites and blacks are disappearing. For example, while

the median mean of black families was but 54 percent of that of their white counterparts in 1959, this had increased to 64 percent by 1970. However, the actual difference between the races in dollars and cents earned had in fact increased from $2,846 in 1959 to $3,957 in 1970. Incidentally, even this kind of progress had ceased. By 1973, black family incomes were but 60 percent of those of white and the real difference was $5,326.

Similarly in education, "Increasing the level of education from a median of four years of school completed to a median of six years completed is usually accomplished more rapidly than increasing the median from say, eleven years to thirteen years."[24] Thus blacks, being far behind whites in education historically, can be expected to register substantial so-called advances. It remains to be seen if these advances are in fact eliminating the differential in quality as well as in quantity.

Illiteracy: The primary dimension of education is whether a person can read or write in some language. Questions on illiteracy were included in the Census as early as 1840. However early data are of dubious quality and this analysis begins with the findings of the 1880 census which inquired as to whether the respondent (aged 10 or over) could either read or write. Illiteracy was defined as the inability to write regardless of the ability to read. As Folger and Nam have pointed out, "since the data showed that nearly all persons who were able to write could also read, the different

definitions did not greatly affect the statistics."[25] The question was included in all subsequent decennial censuses through 1930. With the almost total elimination of illiteracy, the question has not been included in more recent censuses although occasional special surveys have inquited into the topic.

In 1880 70 percent of all blacks aged 10 or over were illiterate and in the South, this proportion reached 75 percent. By 1900 it had dropped to less than 45 percent; 50 percent in the South. The highest illiteracy rates in 1880 were found in Georgia and Alabama (over 80 percent). By 1900 the rates in Georgia and Alabama were under 60 percent. In comparison, about one in ten of the United States white population was illiterate in 1880; slightly more than 6 percent in 1900. White illiteracy was much higher in the South where 20 percent could not read or write in 1880; 10 percent in 1900.

The improvement in two decades is remarkable indeed and gives strong evidence of the desire on the part of former slaves to receive some education--be it industrial or traditional. This is especially marked when looking at rates by age in 1900. Folger and Nam have remarked that, for the nation, "the marked changes in opportunities for Negroes to receive formal education were reflected in the strikingly different literacy rates between the older and the younger groups."[26] The situation was even more dramatic in the South. Among those 55 and over, whose "education" was presumably completed prior to emancipation, about 85 percent remained illiterate

at the turn of the century. But only 32 percent of those aged 10-14 could not read or write.

The decline in the number of illiterate blacks continued in the twentieth century. By 1930 less than 20 percent of southern blacks were illiterate and only 6 percent of those 10-14 could not read or write. This compared to 3.7 percent among native born white southerners. Interestingly, for the entire nation in 1930, while blacks had significantly higher illiteracy rates than whites (16.4 - 3.0), they nonetheless had lower rates than such white foreign born groups as the Portuguese, Italians, Syrians, Lithuanians, Poles, or Albanians.

Data from a 1969 Census Bureau survey showed that for the nation, among persons 14 and over, a mere 0.7 percent of the whites were illiterate compared to 3.6 percent among blacks. While the latter remained higher, it represents a major accomplishment in a relatively short period of time. As Embree wrote in 1946: "A single index--the reduction of the illiteracy of the Negro from 95 percent in 1865 to less than 10 percent in 1940--shows that the various educational agencies at work have wrought miracles in three brief generations."[27]

It should be nevertheless emphasized that illiteracy is but the basic measure of educational achievement. To quote Folger and Nam: "Illiteracy, as usually defined, measures only the lower limit of what might be called the inability to communicate the written or printed word, and

it describes only the barest minimum level of educational attainment of the population."[28] Thus the concept, "functional illiteracy," has become more important and has been operationally defined as having completed less than five years of school.

School Enrollment: The rapid decline in illiteracy was matched by an equally rapid increase in school attendance by blacks. Here, however, regional differences have been substantial. In the South, less than 10 percent of all blacks between five and twenty attended school compared to 36 percent for whites in 1870. By 1900, 30 percent of the blacks were in school compared to 45 percent of the whites. The improvement continued into the twentieth century and by 1910, 43.7 percent of southern blacks 5-20 were attending school and 58.3 percent of the whites were enrolled. In the brief span of 40 years the proportion of black children in school had risen from less than 10 percent to well over 40 percent--a remarkable achievement especially under the conditions previously described.

Conditions were far superior for the 10 percent of the black population living in the North as figure 1 indicates. Even in 1870, school age blacks living outside the South were four times as likely to be in attendance as southern blacks; in 1900, the enrollment rate in the South was only 60 percent that of the non-South. Southern whites also did not fare very well in comparison with the rest of the nation. The South, as a region, has historically lagged behind in school attendance.

By 1930 well over half (58.5 percent) of all Southern black children were attending school; two-thirds of all whites were in school. Especially noteworthy was the fact that over 85 percent of those aged 7-13 were in school (93.4 percent for whites). Indeed, by 1930 the differences between blacks and whites were small up to age 17. However the proportion of whites aged 18-20 in school was almost double that of blacks indicating that college attendance remained a very limited option among blacks. Nevertheless, the gains made between 1870 and 1930--in a period when first industrial education was emphasized, and second, entirely discriminatory expenditures resulted in poor academic conditions--rank among the great achievements to be noted anywhere. To be sure, the quality of the education was admittedly inferior. Thus, although less than nine percentage points separated the races in school enrollment by 1930, the qualitative difference was undoubtedly far more significant.

Outside the South, similar progress took place and by 1930, racial differences were not substantial. However both blacks and whites living in the South were less likely to be attending school than their northern counterparts.

In noting the improvement in enrollment made between 1900 and 1910, the editors of the monumental work, Negro Population in the United States: 1790-1915, concluded;

> Reviewing the situation as a whole, while it is true that the proportion of Negro children not in school is large, not only in rural communities, but even in large cities; and although in the South,

> the proportion of Negroes not in school greatly exceeds the corresponding proportion of whites, still the data for school attendance presented in this chapter establishes the fact of rapid improvement in the condition of Negroes in the South. That there should have been an increase of 561,243 in the number of Negroes in school in the United States in 1910 compared with 1900, while the increase in population of corresponding age was very slight, is important; that of this number 535,506 should be in the South, including 216,872 children 5 to 9 years of age, is most significant. Should the next census show a similar advance, the Negro race in its school attendance will not stand far behind the white.[29]

Such advances have been noted but differences, though narrowing, persist to the present day throughout the nation. However, since 1950 these differences have been limited to the upper ages. As Price noted after examining the 1960 Census data for the South: "From ages 8 through 12, 98 percent or more of each age group was enrolled in school....Beginning with age 13, the proportion enrolled in school began to drop much more rapidly for nonwhites than for the total population, and by age 17 the proportion of nonwhites enrolled was nearly 10 percentage points below the proportion of the total population enrolled."[30] Price also noted that a larger proportion of blacks aged 5-6 were enrolled than was noted for whites--perhaps due to economic conditions forcing mothers to seek full-time employment. Indeed, economic conditions perhaps accounted for that phenomenon at one extreme of the age spectrum--that is, increased enrollment; as well as for the lower enrollment at the other end as black youths dropped out of school in large number in search of any type of job.

The data on school enrollment from the most recent Bureau

of the Census surveys seem to indicate at first glance that the prediction of 1910 has come true. While 54.4 percent of all blacks aged 3-34 were enrolled in school in Fall 1970, 54.2 percent of the whites of the same age were in school. In the South; the respective proportions were 54.8 and 50.7. However except for those aged 3-4 in nursery schools, the proportion of whites attending school was greater than that of blacks. The reasons for this apparently contradictory statistic lies in the different age structures of the two groups--blacks being significantly younger. Differences, however, were minimal through age 17 thus indicating some improvement over 1960. Beyond that age, differences grew again attesting to the fact that the very young (now of nursery age) benefit from Headstart programs (economic factor), while the proportion going to college remains below that of whites (economic factor). There nevertheless has been improvement in recent years. Close to 20% of all blacks, North and South, between 20 and 21 attend school; not too far behind the 30 percent among whites. With each decade some progress is to be noted but to this date, differences in school enrollment remain.

Changes in the proportion of blacks 18-24 not only enrolled in school, but actually attending college is a good indicator of educational progress; the more so since increasingly a college degree is the "ticket" to socio-economic advancement. Since 1965, there have been significant increases in the proportion of blacks enrolled in college--from 10 percent

of those 16-24 in 1965 to 16 percent in 1973. Over this same period, the proportion of whites attending college remained at about 25-26 percent suggesting that this may be the ultimate goal for blacks to attain.

The progress among black males has been especially marked--from 10 percent in 1965 to 19 percent in 1973--while the proportion among white males dropped from 34 percent to 29 percent. Again, however, such encouraging signs do not indicate the achievement of educational parity with whites. Indeed the recent Ford Foundation study on racial and ethnic enrollments in higher education shows that the number of blacks in college is still substantially less than their percent of the population. The report notes that in 1970, while whites (less Spanish sepaking ethnic groups) made up 83.2 percent of the total population they were 89.4 percent of the college population; blacks were 6.9 percent of the undergraduate enrollment by 11.1 percent of the total population. Progress has occurred despite the numerous adversities, but equality is far from being a fact in 1974.

When looking at the changes since 1870 however, the achievement becomes phenomenal. The differential between whites and blacks has declined substantially, as expected. When one group begins at 10 percent, relative improvement is bound to occur. But as just stated, differences persist especially at those ages when students should have the opportunity to attend college. Despite recent sometimes noble efforts on the part of government and educators, the proportion of blacks in college still lags behind that of whites and

the dropout rates remain substantially higher among blacks. The prediction of 1910 has not been realized as yet.

Educational Attainment: With the abandonment of the Census inquiry on literacy in 1950, attention centered on educational attainment and in 1940 a question was included which asked how many years of school had been completed by the respondent. This is perhaps the best quantitative measure of socio-educational progress limited as it is to the adult population aged 25 and over. It is closely related to occupation and income and thus gives a fairly good picture of the overall socio-economic situation of any group. Furthermore, as almost everyone has completed their education before reaching age 25, it is a definitive statement as compared to information on occupation or income--status indicators that can change at any time. Indeed, as Bogue has stated: "Educational attainment is the major determinant of the capacity of a person to participate on a high or on a low level. Hence educational attainment is the major determinant of this component."[31] (i.e. socio-economic status).

When discussing social progress as measured by increased educational attainment, it must be realized that any such progress is relative. Given the nature of American society, it can be realistically assumed that the educational attainment of the adult population will improve over time. A college education today is perhaps equivalent to a high school diploma some twenty or thirty years ago. Furthermore, as the oldest citizens, the beneficiaries of much less education, die off and are replaced by the younger who have had far more

educational opportunities, the result will necessarily yield higher average years of school completed. Such improvement is noted in the table below which summarizes the 1940-1970 findings for the nation for blacks and for whites.

Looking first at median school years completed, both groups have witnessed a significant increase. For the white population, the mode moved from an elementary school diploma (8 grades) to a high school diploma (12 grades)--an increase of 3.4 years. For blacks the increase was even more substantial--from 5.8 to 10.0 or 4.2 years of school. The proportion with a high school diploma and with a college degree has increased a great deal over the thirty year period. This is true of blacks and whites. Perhaps the greatest improvement is to be noted in the reduction of functional illiteracy among blacks from 41.8 percent in 1940 to 14.6 percent in 1970. In 1940, over 83 percent of the adult black population of the United States had no more than an elementary school ecucation--striking evidence of the inferior facilities available in the first few decades of the twentieth century.

Progress in educational attainment has been made by the total population and this is to be expected; but have blacks gained in the thirty year period? There is some evidence of slight relative progress--in median years of school for example. This is especially true of the period between 1960 and 1970. But to a great extent, the earlier improvements were the result of the major decline in the proportion having had less than eight grades of school. More recently,

increases have been quite marked among those completing high school. However, though progress has also occurred in the black proportion college trained, it remains small (4.4 percent) compared to that among whites (11.3 percent). The net gains have occurred at the lower rungs of the education ladder and though some catching up has taken place, much needs to be done before equality is achieved on the national level.

Turning to the south, impressive gains were registered between 1940 and 1950. However, between 1950 and 1960, Price, in his important article, "Educational Differences Between Negroes and Whites in the South" concluded that "the educational gap between Negroes and whites was widening in at least some parts of the South."[32] Utilizing data from the eleven truly southern states, he noted that while between 1940 and 1950 the median years of school completed differential increased in but three, no less than seven states, with another showing no change, registered increasing differences between 1950 and 1960. He concluded: "We have attributed the changes in the educational gap between Negroes and whites in the South to patterns of selective migration. It is almost certain that this is the basic factor, because there has been an increasing proportion of Negroes of school age enrolled in school."[33]

When studying national changes, migration is not a factor; it becomes important when analyzing any sub-area of the nation. Most post-war studies have noted that migrants tend to be better educated than either those remaining at

point of origin or those living at point of destination.[34] Until at least the early 1960's there had been a sizeable stream of blacks migrating out of the South with no compensating counterstream of blacks moving into the region. These out-migrants have generally been better educated than their counterparts left behind. Obviously such a pattern contributes to decreasing the overall educational attainment of the group living at point of origin--in this case, the South. Furthermore, if the difference among whites is not as great, that the interracial variation increases.

Looking at the 1970 data for the same eleven states suggests that the differential is no longer as large as noted by price one decade earlier. Of the same eleven states, only two (Arkansas and Tennessee) registered increasing educational differentials. In six states, the difference between blacks and whites was the lowest ever recorded. Clearly there has been a shift, and the increasing differential noted by Price based on 1960 data is no longer present in 1970.

Regional differences have also declined. The table below shows the proportion of the adult population of the South by years of school completed since 1960 and including the most recent 1972 survey. A half-year decline in differential is noted between 1960 and 1970. The proportion of college educated blacks increased from 3.1 percent to 4.8 percent in twelve years. However, the number with but an elementary school education remains much too large--half the black population 25 years of age or over in 1972. There is evidence

of progress and of a slight decrease in differential; nevertheless the difference remains substantial, even in 1972.

Returning to Price's warning that the exodus of better educated blacks from the South was contributing to an increase in educational differential, perhaps the cause of the change since 1960 can be attributed to the fact that the actual net out-migration of blacks was considerably smaller than ever recorded previously. Furthermore, while those leaving were admittedly much better educated than those remaining, their loss was compensated by the relatively large number of in-migrants who were equally well educated. The five year (1965-1970) migration data show that the educational attainment of those leaving and those entering the South Atlantic division were about the same. (Similar patterns were noted for the East and West South Central divisions.) For the first time, the South did not suffer from the exodus of better educated blacks to other sections of the nation. As the following tables indicate, the proportional educational distribution of the 1970 black population of the South Atlantic division would have been the same if no one entered or left between 1965 and 1970. No data are available for the first half of the decade, but presumably this changing pattern began earlier in the 1960's. Recent evidence suggests that it is continuing into the 1970's with even some hint of a positive net migration of blacks into the South for the first time. Furthermore, the scant data indicate that these may be better educated than those remaining in either the North or the South.[35]

Repeated reference to the remaining large proportion of poorly educated blacks has been made. This assertion warrants further investigation. The Bureau of the Census survey of March, 1972 provides some clues to its understanding. The male population can serve as an example. The median educational attainment difference between Southern white and black males 45 and over is 4.4 years. The difference among those 25–34 is a mere 1.5 years. For the nation, the respective differences are 3.4 and 0.7. This reflects the major advances that have taken place since the early 1960s. True, 23 percent of the younger adults in the South still have less than an eighth grade education; yet this is a far cry from the 82.8 percent among the elderly males. Improvements have occurred in the white population as well, but not to such an extent. This change most dramatically illustrates the progress that has taken place since integration of schools in fact occurred; it also dramatically illustrates the apparent generation gap that must be present to a much greater degree among blacks than among whites.

Has improvement taken place since 1870? The answer is YES. Has the gap between races been eliminated? The answer is NO, although it has been reduced. It must be remembered that the white population of the South has also been historically the least educated of all the regions. They too would be expected to have made great strides forward. Indeed, one can speculate as to whether the demands of southern blacks did not contribute to the improvement and to the extent of white public education as well. The first evidence of black

progress was in the rapid decline in illiteracy. Then the proportion in school showed signs of increasing even in the early part of this century. Finally, recent signs indicate that the educational attainment of blacks is climbing and the difference with whites is declining. To a considerable extent this is due to (1) increased school enrollment allowing for a better educated cohort to enter the 25-34 age group in 1970 than in 1960; (2) and in the South, to the rather surprising shift in migration patterns among blacks. The actual number declined in the 1960s and more important, it did not negatively affect the educational attainment of the region.

Whatever meaningful progress that has occurred in the nation has occurred in the quite recent past. "Black "catching up" is a recent phenomenon. Yet the overwhelming embrace of education by blacks since the opportunity was made available to them is equally evident in the decline in illiteracy and the rapid increase in school enrollment. Despite the legal and extralegal barriers which were maintained both in the South and the North, blacks nevertheless availed themselves of the crumbs offered them by the white power structure. The contest is far from over--and that contest will be waged equally in the North as well as in the South. The proportion of blacks in college remains significantly below that of whites. Yet a recent survey of the plans of high school seniors throughout the nation showed that about as many blacks and whites planned to enroll in college--45.6 among whites; 43.8 among blacks.[36] Whether these plans will materialize

remains to be seen.

On the other hand, the recent disclosures from the Bureau of the Census, especially with reference to income differentials, indicate that perhaps a "plateau" was reached in 1969.[37] Since then, and coinciding with the period of the Nixon administration, little if any continued progress has been observed. It may well be time for another massive effort by well intended blacks and whites to achieve racial parity in education, in occupation and in income, once and for all.

TABLE I

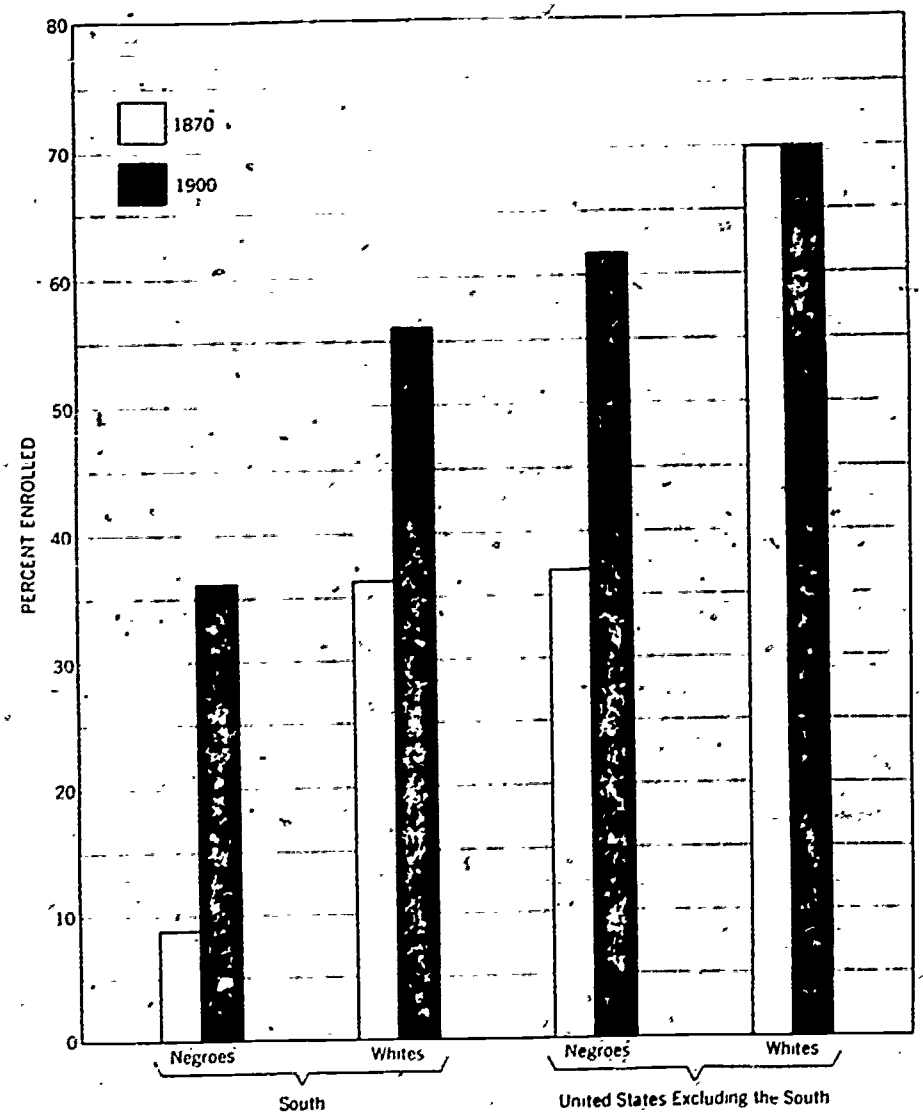
Percent Illiterate in the Population by Race: United States 1870 to 1969

(Data for 1870 to 1940 are for the population 10 years old and over; data for subsequent years are for the population 14 years old and over)

Year	Total	White	Other
1870	20.0	11.5	79.9
1880	17.0	9.4	70.0
1890	13.3	7.7	56.8
1900	10.7	6.2	44.5
1910	7.7	5.0	30.5
1920	6.0	4.0	23.0
1930	4.3	3.0	16.4
1940	2.9	2.0	11.5
1947	2.7	1.8	11.0
1952	2.5	1.8	10.2
1959	2.2	1.6	7.5
1969	1.0	0.7	3.6

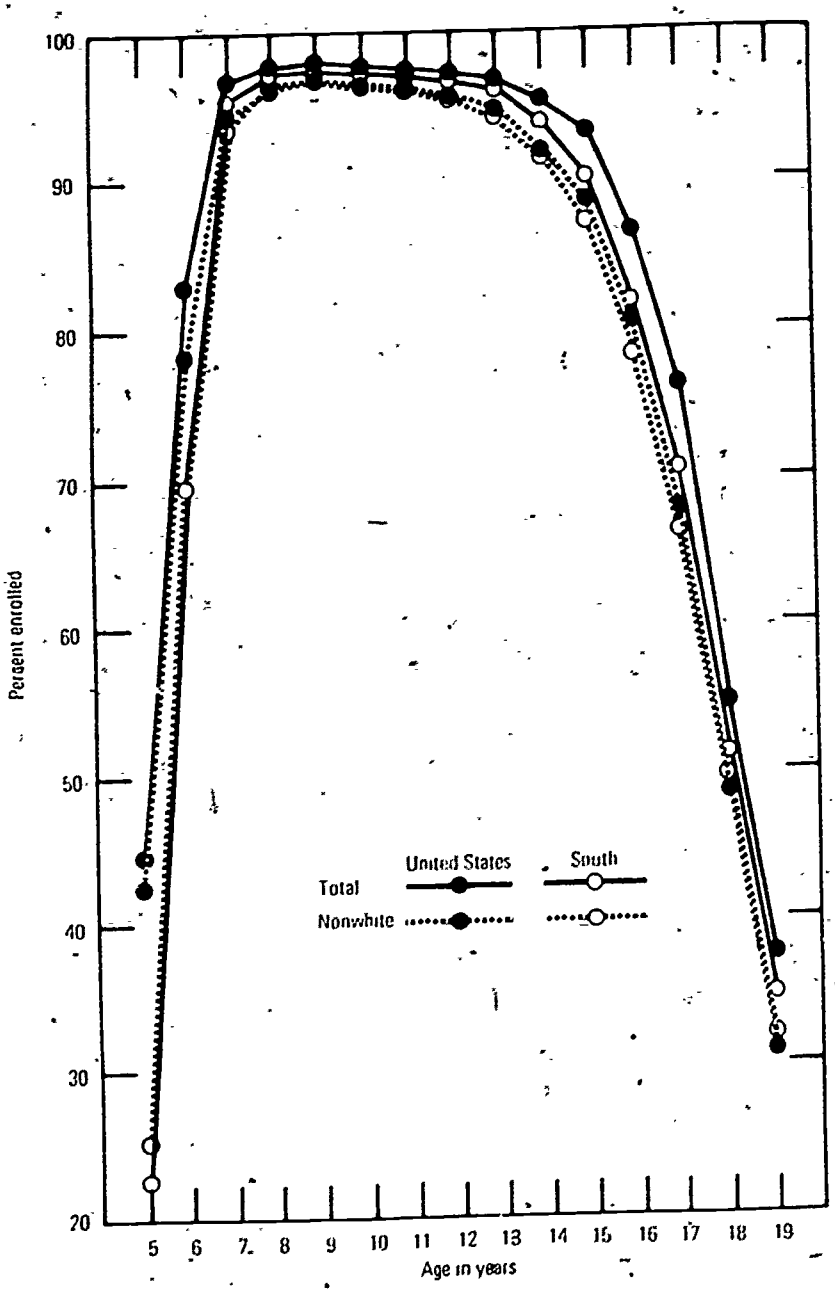
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, "Illiteracy in the United States: November 1969" Series P.20, No. 217, Table A.

Figure I PERCENT OF THE POPULATION 5 TO 19 YEARS OLD ENROLLED IN SCHOOL, BY RACE, FOR THE SOUTH AND THE UNITED STATES EXCLUDING THE SOUTH: 1870 AND 1900



Source: John K. Folger and Charles Nam, Education of the American Population, p. 19.

Figure II PERCENT OF THE POPULATION ENROLLED IN SCHOOL, BY AGE AND COLOR, FOR THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOUTH: 1960



Source: Daniel B. Price, Changing Characteristics of the Negro Population, p. 195..

TABLE II

Percent of the Population, 10 years of age And over, illiterate: South- 1880-1930

Year	Age	Race	
		Negro	White (Native Born)
1880	10 & over	75.6	21.0
1890	10 & over	60.7	14.8
1900	10 & over	48.0	11.3
	10-14	32.2	N.A.
	15-24	36.5	"
	25-34	44.1	"
	35-44	57.6	"
	45-54	72.8	"
	55-64	82.6	"
	65 & over	88.3	"
1910	10 & over	33.3	7.5
	10-14	20.2	5.0
	15-24	24.1	5.6
	25-34	28.1	6.2
	35-44	36.8	7.8
	45-54	51.9	11.2
	55-64	67.6	13.4
	65 & over	78.5	15.5
1920	10 & over	26.0	5.2
	10-14	12.4	2.5
	15-24	17.6	3.4
	25-34	21.7	4.1
	35-44	28.0	5.5
	45-54	39.1	7.5
	55-64	55.0	10.2
	65 & over	73.3	13.1
1930	10 & over	19.7	3.7
	10-14	6.1	1.3
	15-24	12.4	2.2
	25-34	17.1	2.9
	35-44	21.7	4.1
	45-54	29.6	5.7
	55-64	40.3	7.1
	65 & over	61.9	10.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915", and "Negroes in the U.S., 1920-1932" (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1918, 1934)

TABLE III

School Enrollment in the South by Race and Age: 1900-1910; 1930

Year	Age	Race (percent enrolled)	
		Negro	White
1900	5-9	21.7	34.6
	10-14	51.6	74.0
	15-20	17.3	31.4
	5-20	29.6	45.9
1910	5-9	39.5	53.1
	10-14	67.0	85.1
	15-20	26.6	39.5
	5-20	43.7	58.3
1930	5-6	85.6	93.4
	7-13	75.9	85.2
	14-15	44.9	55.7
	16-17	13.2	22.3
	18-20	27.8	40.3
	5-20	58.5	66.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, appropriate tables from 1900, 1910, and 1930.

TABLE IV

School Enrollment in the United States, And the South by Race and Age: 1970

Age	United States		South	
	Black	White	Black	White
3-4	14.4	12.1	12.3	11.3
5-6	67.8	73.1	58.0	60.1
7-13	95.8	97.5	95.3	96.6
14-15	93.7	96.3	92.8	94.6
16-17	84.3	90.1	83.0	85.8
18-19	47.7	57.7	48.5	53.5
20-21	18.2	32.2	18.9	27.9
22-24	8.8	15.2	8.1	12.7
25-34	4.9	6.2	4.0	5.0
3-34	54.4	54.2	54.8	50.7

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census Population: 1970 "General Social and Economic Characteristics", Final Report PCC(1)-C1 United States Summary, Tables 88 and 131.

TABLE V

College Enrollment of Persons 18-24:
1965, 1970, and 1973

Percent Enrolled

Sex	Black			White		
	1965	1970	1973	1965	1970	1973
Total	10	15	16	26	27	25
Male	10	16	19	34	34	29
Female	10	15	14	19	21	21

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Special Studies, Series P. 23, No. 48, "The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population of the United States, 1973", Table 49.

TABLE VI

Years of School Completed of Persons 25 years old And over by Race: 1940-1970

Yrs. of School Completed	Race and Year							
	White				Non-White			
	1940	1950	1960	1970	1940	1950	1960	1970
<5	10.9	8.9	6.7	4.5	41.8	32.9	23.7	14.6
5-7	17.4	15.2	12.8	9.1	29.9	28.9	24.3	18.7
8	29.8	21.7	18.1	13.0	11.9	11.8	12.9	10.5
1-3 HS	15.8	17.8	19.3	18.8	8.7	13.5	19.0	24.8
4 HS	15.3	22.0	25.8	32.2	4.5	7.9	12.9	21.2
1-3 COLL	5.9	7.8	9.3	11.1	1.9	2.9	4.1	5.9
4 COLL +	4.9	6.6	8.1	11.3	1.3	2.1	3.1	4.4
Median	8.7	9.7	10.9	12.1	5.8	6.9	8.2	10.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1970 "General Social and Economic Characteristics", Final Report PC (1)-C1 United States Summary, Table 75.

TABLE VII

Median Years of School Completed by Whites and Non-Whites, 25 Years of age and over, in Eleven Southern States, 1940-1970

State and Color	Years of School Completed 1940	1950	1960	1970
Alabama				
White	8.2	8.8	10.2	11.6
Non-White	4.5	5.4	6.5	8.1
Difference	3.7	3.4	3.7	3.5
Arkansas				
White	8.4	8.7	9.5	11.1
Non-White	5.2	5.6	6.5	8.9
Difference	3.2	3.1	3.0	3.1
Florida				
White	9.3	10.9	11.6	12.2
Non-White	5.2	5.8	7.0	8.8
Difference	4.1	5.1	4.6	3.4
Georgia				
White	8.1	8.8	10.3	11.5
Non-White	4.2	4.9	6.1	8.0
Difference	3.9	3.9	4.2	3.5
Louisiana				
White	8.1	8.8	10.5	12.0
Non-White	3.9	4.6	6.0	7.9
Difference	4.2	4.2	4.5	4.1
Mississippi				
White	8.9	9.9	11.0	12.1
Non-White	4.7	5.1	6.0	7.5
Difference	4.2	4.8	5.0	4.6
North Carolina				
White	7.7	8.6	9.8	11.1
Non-White	5.1	5.9	7.0	8.6
Difference	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.5

TABLE VII (cont.)

State and Color	Years of School Completed 1940	1950	1960	1970
South Carolina				
White	8.5	9.0	10.3	11.4
Non-White	3.9	4.8	5.9	7.7
Difference	4.6	4.2	4.4	3.7
Tennessee				
White	8.3	8.6	9.0	11.1
Non-White	5.8	6.5	7.5	8.8
Difference	2.5	2.1	1.5	2.3
Texas				
White	8.9	9.7	10.8	11.9
Non-White	6.1	7.0	8.1	9.8
Difference	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.1
Virginia				
White	7.9	9.3	10.8	12.1
Non-White	5.1	6.1	7.2	8.7
Difference	2.8	3.2	3.6	3.4

(a) Underlined differenees indicate an increase in the educational gap

Source: 1940-1960 Daniel Price, "Educational Differentials between Negroes and Whites in the South" Demography Vol. 5, No. 1, 1968, Table 1; 1970 U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population 1970, "General Social and Economic Characteristics" Final State Reports.

TABLE VIII

Educational Attainment for Persons Aged 25 years and over by Race, South: 1960-1970-1972

Years of School Completed	1960		1970		1972	
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
-8	27.7	59.3	19.6	43.1	16.4	39.8
8	13.9	10.7	11.0	10.2	10.3	9.6
1-3 HS	18.8	15.1	20.6	22.5	16.9	22.8
4 HS	22.7	8.9	27.4	15.5	33.0	19.0
1-3 COLL	9.0	2.9	10.5	4.1	11.0	4.0
4 COLL +	7.9	3.1	10.9	4.6	12.4	4.8
Median	10.3	6.7	11.8	8.7	12.2	9.1

Source: 1960-1970 Edward E. Cahill and Hanns Pieper, "Closing the Educational Gap: The South Versus the United States", Phylon, March, 1974, Table 1; 1972 U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 243, "Educational Attainment: March 1972." Table 8.

TABLE IX

Educational Attainment of Blacks 25 years of age and sex in South Atlantic Division by Migration Status: 1970

Years of School Completed	Born in Division Living in Division in 1965 & 1970 ("non-Migrants")	Not in Division in 1965 but Living in Div. in 1970 ("in-migrants")	in Division in 1965 but not living there in 1970 ("out-migrants")
8 & under	48.0	19.6	21.5
1-3 HS	25.6	22.0	23.6
4 HS	17.7	33.7	31.2
1-3 COLL	4.2	12.3	10.5
4 COLL +	4.5	12.4	13.2

Source: Derived from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1970, Subject Reports PC (2)-2D, "Lifetime and Recent Migration" Table 13.

TABLE X

Educational Attainment of Black Population 25 years of age and over in the South Atlantic division in 1970

Years of School Completed	A No. of Persons	(%)	B No. of Persons	(%)
8 & under	1,063,430	(46.5)	1,067,779	(46.5)
1-3 HS	580,204	(25.4)	584,685	(25.4)
4 HS	420,620	(18.4)	423,810	(18.4)
1-3 COLL	105,462	(4.6)	105,894	(4.6)
4 COLL +	115,650	(5.1)	118,073	(5.1)
Total	2,285,366	(100.0)	2,300,241	(100.0)

A= The Actual 1970 Population

B= The Hypothetical 1970 Population assumes no migration in or out between 1965 and 1970

FOOTNOTES

1. Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg, "Black Progress and Liberal Rhetoric", Commentary, April, 1973. For a rebuttal see "Black Progress: A Dissent" by Robert Buchanan, Washington Star-News, May 27, 1973.

2. Time, "Annual Rising Black Middle Class," June 17, 1974, p. 19.

3. Addresses and Journal of Proceedings of the National Education Association (Albany, N.Y., 1872) pp. 175-176.

4. Henry Allen Bullock, A History of Negro Education in the South, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967) p. 82.

5. Bullock, p. 80

6. Bullock, p. 81

7. Edwin K. Embree, The Story of a Tenth of the Nation, (New York: The Viking Press, 1946) p. 94

8. Embree, p. 90

9. Bullock, p. 185

10. Atlanta Journal, April 24, 1901, as quoted in Charles Dabney, Universal Education in the South, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936) p. 46

11. Bullock, p. 100

12. Bullock, p. 101

13. Bullock, p. 102

14. Bullock, p. 169

15. Isobel C. Barrows, ed., First Mohonk Conference on the Negro Question, June, 1890 (Boston: G.H. Ellis, 1890) p. 12

16. The Journal of Education, 42:332 (Nov., 1 1895) as quoted in Bullock, p. 78

17. Proceedings of the Third Capon Springs Conference for Education in the South, (Capon Springs, W. Virginia 1900) p. 55

18. Bullock, p. 199

19. Bullock, p. 211 For more recent documentation of Dubois educational philosophy, see his The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques 1906-1960, ed. by Herbert Aptheker (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1973). Se also the review of the above by Edward K. Weaver in Phylon, June, 1974, p. 229-234.

20. Earl E. Huyck, "White-Non White Differentials: Overview and Implications" Demography, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1966, p. 557.

21. Edward E. Cahill and Hanns Pieper, "Closing the Educational Gap: The South Versus the United States," Phylon, March, 1974, p. 53

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25. John K. Folger and Charles B. Nam, Education of the American Population, U.S. Bureau of the Census, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967) p. 111.

26. Folger and Nam, p. 116.

27. Embree, p. 103

28. Folger and Nam, p. 128

29. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1918) p. 390

30. Daniel O. Price, Changing Characteristics of the Negro Population, U.S. Bureau of the Census, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969) p. 196

31. Donald Bogue, Principles of Demography (New York: John Wiley Co., 1969) p. 434

32. Price, "Educational Differences Between Negroes and Whites in the South" p. 24

33. Price, p. 33

34. See, for example, John J. Macisco, Leon F. Bouvier and Marth Renzi, "Migration Status, Education of Husband and

Wife and Fertility in Puerto Rico: 1960" Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly, April 1969; Leon F. Bouvier, John J. Macisco, and Alvan Zarate, "Towards a Framework for the Analysis of Differential Migration: The Case of Education", Paper presented at the 8th World Congress of Sociology, Toronto, August 1974.

35. Washington Post, "A New Frontier for Blacks" August 24, 1974, p. 1

36. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Report, Series P-20, no. 252, "College Plans of High School Seniors: October 1972," p. 1

37. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Special Studies, Series P-23, No. 48. "The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population of the United States, 1973." pp. 13-26.