

The Spread of Northern School Segregation, 1890–1940

Some of us went to some of the influential Negroes and told them, conditions being as they were, we thought it would be better to establish some separate schools for the colored people in the lower grades. That would give some of the colored people positions as teachers in the colored schools. They agreed to this and they were established.

– A white school official in Chester, Pennsylvania, 1922¹

The political influence that African Americans enjoyed in most northern states following the end of the Civil War that resulted in anti-segregation legislation had begun to fade by the end of the nineteenth century. White insistence on racial separation in northern schools increased in response to the northern migration of southern blacks that began during the last decade of the nineteenth century and exploded during and after World War I. This influx of southern blacks exacerbated racial tensions, and many white school officials who had tolerated school integration when the number of African Americans was relatively small began to insist on racial separation. By the late 1930s, northern school segregation was considerably more extensive than it had been at the turn of the century. Although much of this racial separation was due to residential segregation, in many communities school officials engaged in explicit racial assignments. For much of the North, the antisegregation legislation of the nineteenth century was long forgotten.

Growing White Hostility in Response to Migration of Southern Blacks

Northern commitments to racial equality deteriorated during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, contemporaneous with increasing white hostility to blacks in southern states. During the last

¹ Quoted in Duncan, *The Changing Race Relationship*, pp. 38–9.

decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, many northern whites began to insist on racial separation in various aspects of public life, including education. In 1890, the *New York Times*, which had previously championed black school desegregation efforts, criticized – in extraordinary fashion – a black parent in southern Illinois for seeking the admission of his children to a white school: “Some of the negroes insist that their children shall . . . be taught in the same schools [as white children.] The Constitution [of Illinois] seems to uphold this pretension, but the negroes are none the less foolish and ill advised to make it. . . . Whoever insists upon forcing himself where he is not wanted is a public nuisance, and his offensiveness is not in the least mitigated by the circumstance that he is black.” In 1906, the *New York Commercial* commented on the growing trend toward segregation across the country: “Northern sentiment on the race question is not at bottom a million miles away from Southern sentiment.” In 1916, Seth Low, a former mayor of New York City and president of Columbia University, wrote to Robert Moton, Booker T. Washington’s successor as president of Tuskegee Institute: “race purity is as strong an instinct at the North as it is at the South.” Racist southern educator Thomas Bailey, in his 1914 study *Race Orthodoxy in the South*, noted, in a self-serving manner, the decline in northern opposition to southern racism: “Is not the South being encouraged to treat the negroes as *aliens* by the growing discrimination against the negro in the North, a discrimination that is social as well as economic? Does not the South perceive that all the fire has gone out of the Northern philanthropic fight for the rights of man? *The North has surrendered!*”²

The migration of tens of thousands of southern blacks to northern cities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries exacerbated white hostility toward African Americans. Migration northward began in significant numbers during the 1890s. Whereas only 88,000 blacks left the South during the 1880s, 185,000 departed during the 1890s and 194,000 during the first decade of the twentieth century. Between 1890 and 1910, about 2.5 percent of the South’s black population moved north. Of the five northern states with the largest black populations in 1910 – Pennsylvania (191,000), New York (120,000), Ohio (110,000), Illinois (109,000), and New Jersey (88,000) – each experienced an increase in black population between 1900 and 1910

² For the *New York Times* quote, see “Race in Education,” *New York Times*, Jan. 16, 1890, p. 4; for the *New York Commercial* quote, see “Jim Crow School in New Jersey,” *Raleigh Daily News and Observer*, Feb. 18, 1906, p. 4; for the Low quote, see Fairclough, *Teaching Equality*, p. 21; for the Bailey quote, see Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, p. 113.

of over 25 percent. Urban population increases were even more dramatic. During the decade of the 1890s, the black populations of Chicago, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh doubled, while the populations of Detroit, New York, and Philadelphia also sharply increased. In 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois noted that "the most significant economic change among Negroes in the last ten or twenty years has been their influx into northern cities." This trend would continue. Between 1900 and 1910, the number of African Americans living in Chicago and New York increased by about 50 percent.³

Given the correlation between the enfranchisement of northern blacks and the increase in political influence that African Americans enjoyed in much of the North during the 1870s and 1880s, one might have expected this increase in black population during the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century to have positively affected the status of northern blacks. With a few exceptions, however, the status of northern blacks declined with the onset of the migration of southern blacks into northern cities. The special conditions of the 1870s and 1880s – Radical Republican commitments to removing legal disabilities imposed on African Americans, closely contested elections, and the paucity of black residents in much of the North – had faded by the early twentieth century. The growth of the northern city, populated by northern-born whites and blacks alongside growing numbers of European immigrants and southern blacks, produced an array of tensions that led to the diminishment of the status of African Americans. As historian Judy Mohraz has noted: "the rising percentage of Negroes in northern cities in the last decades of the nineteenth century altered the previous obscurity of the black residents and triggered varying degrees of racial hostility and tension. Heightened friction followed the greater visibility of Negroes in the early twentieth century city – on the streets, in residential areas, on the job, and in the schools."⁴

The migration of southern blacks during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries accompanied a rise in racist ideology across the country grounded in white supremacy. In the South, this racist ideology manifested itself in segregation laws and disfranchisement. In the North, many whites also began to embrace white supremacist views that dismissed blacks as inferior and unfit for full participation in white civilization. Leading scholars during the 1890s and the first decade of

³ For population data, see U.S. Bureau of Census, 1890, 1900, 1910; Diner, *A Very Different Age*, p. 131; Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, *Negro Education*, pp. 677–89. For the Du Bois quote, see Meier and Rudwick, *From Plantation to Ghetto*, p. 215.

⁴ Mohraz, *The Separate Problem*, pp. 3–4.

the twentieth century, particularly in the field of anthropology, offered scientific justifications for racial separation, rejecting notions that the poorer social outcomes of many blacks were due to environmental influences. University of Chicago anthropologist Frederick Starr, in an 1897 essay "The Degeneracy of the American Negro," emphasized inherent racial differences between blacks and whites: "[I]t is certain that race differences are real and persistent. . . . Study of criminality in the two races gives astonishing results. Of the total prisoners in the United States in 1890, nearly 30 per cent were colored; the negro, however forms but 11 per cent of the population. . . . Conditions of life and bad social opportunities cannot be urged in excuse. . . . The difference is *racial*." Starr held little optimism that education would improve the situation for African Americans: "What can be done? Not much. But faith in school-book education as a means of grace must die. . . . Recognition of difference between white men and black men is fundamental. The desire and effort to turn bright black boys into inefficient white men should cease. . . . [W]e may expect the race here to die and disappear; the sooner perhaps the better." Economist Frederick Hoffman, writing in 1896, agreed: "In marked contrast with the frequent assertions . . . that race is not important and that environment or conditions of life are the most important factors in the final result of the struggle for life, . . . we have here abundant evidence that we find in race and heredity the determining factors in the upward or downward course of mankind. . . . [T]he colored race is shown to be on the downward grade, tending toward a condition in which matters will be worse than they are now. . . . Neither religion nor education nor a higher degree of economic well-being have been able to raise the race from a low and anti-social condition. . . ."⁵

At the same time, many white Americans applied Darwinian notions of "survival of the fittest" to social relations, arguing that weaker groups, such as blacks, would fail while others would prosper. The burgeoning new "science" of eugenics lent support to notions of racial superiority. Two leading educational theorists of the early twentieth century, G. Stanley Hall and G. E. Partridge, articulated a "genetic philosophy of education" pursuant to which "[e]ach race must be educated and governed according to the stage of culture and development to which it belongs": "The greatest mistakes have been made in trying

⁵ For the rise of racist ideology, see Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 8; Hatfield, "The Impact of the New Deal," p. 20; Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, p. 70; Fishel, "The North and the Negro," p. 370; Baker, *From Savage to Negro*, p. 3. For the Starr quotes, see Starr, "The Degeneracy of the American Negro," pp. 17–18. For the Hoffman quote, see Hoffman, *Race Traits and Tendencies*, pp. 310, 312.

to cope with the negro question, in not understanding the nature of the negro, who is so different from the white man, both in body and mind, that the two races should not be treated alike in any particular. . . . [The negro] must be trained according to his own nature. . . . His whole training must centre in industry rather than in mental development disconnected from motor expression. . . . Given the proper conditions, the negro will make progress naturally toward a higher stage of civilisation, but he cannot be hurried by imitating the white man's nature."⁶

As the northern black population grew, so did opportunities for interracial conflict, as many whites began to fear competition for jobs, housing, and political influence. The immigration of millions of southern and eastern Europeans to northern cities during the 1880s had already triggered fears of job loss among native whites and anxieties about dilution of the "Anglo Saxon racial stock." The northward migration of southern blacks beginning during the 1890s provoked additional resentment among many white workers and exacerbated racial hostility. The Supreme Court's 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which legitimated "separate but equal," gave voice to what was already becoming the dominant mood throughout the country. Not surprisingly, the *Plessy* decision provoked minimal coverage in the nation's leading newspapers.⁷

This growing racial antagonism manifested itself in a variety of ways. Lynchings sharply increased in some midwestern states during the 1890s. The governor of Georgia, one of the nation's leaders in lynchings, attempted to condone his state's record by citing the large number of lynchings in Indiana. During the first decade of the twentieth century, a number of northern communities such as New York City, Philadelphia, Akron and Springfield (Ohio), Belville and Springfield (Illinois), and Evansville and Greensburg (Indiana) were torn by race riots. In several of these riots, white mobs destroyed homes and drove blacks out of the community. The Evansville riot, for example, triggered in part by white working-class apprehensions about economic competition from African Americans, left many dead or wounded, inflicted substantial damage on black homes and businesses, and caused

⁶ Partridge, *Genetic Philosophy of Education*, pp. 378, 379-80.

⁷ For immigration fears, see Klarman, *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights*, p. 12. For dilution of Anglo-Saxon stock, see Walker, "Restriction of Immigration," pp. 828-9 (arguing in the *Atlantic Monthly* that these new European immigrants, "degraded below our utmost conceptions" and "representing the worst failures in the struggle for existence," posed "great danger to the health and life of the nation"). For the reaction to *Plessy*, see Lofgren, *The Plessy Case*, pp. 196-7.

the evacuation of many blacks from the city. The Springfield, Illinois, riot of 1908 captured nationwide attention for its brutal attacks on black lives and property. William English Walling, a distinguished white writer who would later help found the NAACP, commented about the Springfield riot: "Either the spirit of the abolitionists, of Lincoln and of [Elijah] Lovejoy, must be revived . . . or [James K.] Vardaman and [Ben] Tillman will soon have transferred the race war to the North." Mississippi Governor Vardaman, for his part, commented that the Springfield riot would "cause the people of the North to look with more toleration upon the methods employed by the Southern people."⁸

Discrimination in public accommodations significantly increased during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed, as early as the 1890s, many communities in the racially liberal Western Reserve of Ohio began, for the first time, to experience racial discrimination in public accommodations. By the onset of World War I, many hotels and restaurants in Cleveland that had once freely served black customers had implemented a color line. At the same time, many northern state legislatures considered or enacted legislation banning interracial marriage during the first decade of the new century, as did Congress during the second decade of the century.⁹

Blacks who migrated north during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were confronted with increasing residential segregation. Indeed, many scholars have labeled the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as "the formative years of the black ghetto" in northern cities. For example, in Cleveland, which enjoyed considerable residential integration for most of the nineteenth century, an influx of blacks during the late nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century brought residential segregation, as restrictive real estate practices forced blacks into the Central Avenue area of the city.¹⁰

⁸ For lynchings, see, for example, "An Illinois Lynching," *Cleveland Gazette*, June 13, 1903, p. 1; for the Georgia governor, see Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana*, pp. 179–80. For race riots, see Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, pp. 443–4; Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, p. 351; Bigham, *Towns and Villages*, pp. 234–5. For the Walling and Vardaman quotes, see Walling, "The Race War in the North," p. 534.

⁹ For Cleveland segregation, see Washington, "The Black Struggle for Desegregated Quality Education," p. 79; Moore, "The Limits of Black Power," p. 13; "Euclid Ave. Store Tries Out Segregation," *Cleveland Advocate*, Sept. 25, 1920, p. 4; for interracial marriage bans, see Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, p. 212; Moore, *Leading the Race*, p. 206.

¹⁰ For the black ghetto quote, see Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*, p. 35; for Cleveland segregation, see Moore, "The Limits of Black Power," p. 12; Mosey, "Testing, Tracking, and Curriculum," pp. 17–18.

Chicago also experienced an increase in segregationist pressure during the early twentieth century. White property owners urged real estate agents and property owners in white neighborhoods to sell or rent only to whites. The Hyde Park Improvement Protective Club in Chicago was especially aggressive in its efforts to keep blacks out, threatening to blacklist real estate firms that sold or rented housing to blacks and to boycott white merchants who did business with blacks. The Hyde Park club also attempted to buy property or leases from blacks who had purchased or rented property in white neighborhoods. Black families that resisted experienced vandalism. These efforts were successful: most of Hyde Park remained white until the middle of the twentieth century.¹¹

A few northern communities did more than insist on residential segregation. Some communities, such as Syracuse, Ohio, Lawrenceburg, Salem, and Ellwood, Indiana, simply forbade blacks to settle within their limits. One writer described the Syracuse practice in 1913: "When a colored man is seen in the town during the day he is generally told of these traditions and is warned to leave before sun-down. If he fails to take heed, he is surrounded at about the time that darkness begins, and is addressed by the leaders of the gang in about this language: 'No nigger is allowed to stay in this town overnight. . . . Get out of here now, and get out quick.' . . . The command is always effective, for it is backed by stones in the ready hands of boys none too friendly."¹²

Employment discrimination also increased throughout the North during the early twentieth century as blacks in many northern cities were pushed out of skilled labor positions. Between 1870 and 1910, the percentage of blacks in Cleveland working in skilled trades declined from 32 percent to 11 percent. In Gary, Indiana, the community's white leaders sponsored a "clean out the Negro" campaign in 1909 aimed at removing those black workers that U.S. Steel had brought to the city to build new factories. In 1911, the *Gary Evening Post* reported that "any Negro in Gary who hasn't got a job had better lose no time in getting one" and reported that fifty blacks had been run out of the city in the prior two days. Many industrial employers simply excluded blacks from employment, while union apprenticeship programs – essential for learning necessary job skills – were typically closed to blacks, as labor unions were frequently hostile to black workers.¹³

¹¹ Spear, *Black Chicago*, pp. 21–3.

¹² For exclusion of blacks from certain communities, see Thornbrough, "Segregation in Indiana," p. 596; Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, p. 443; for the quote, see Quillin, *The Color Line in Ohio*, p. 160.

¹³ For Cleveland, see Moore, "The Limits of Black Power," p. 13; for Gary, see Betten and Mohl, "The Evolution of Racism," p. 53 (quote, p. 54).

As a result, domestic work emerged as the most promising line of work for many northern blacks during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A survey in Philadelphia during the late 1890s found about 60 percent of all black working men and about 90 percent of black working women employed as low-paid domestics; these figures would hold constant for the next forty years. By comparison, fewer than 30 percent of white immigrants and about 10 percent of native-born white workers in Philadelphia were employed as domestics during this time period.¹⁴

Strikebreaking provided the best opportunity for blacks to secure higher-paid jobs during the early twentieth century. Such work was short term, however, as white workers generally reclaimed these jobs with the resolution of the strike. Moreover, the strikebreaking activities of African Americans provoked bitter antagonism from white workers. The hiring of black strikebreakers during the 1904 stockyards strike and the 1905 teamsters strike in Chicago, for example, triggered "the most serious racial conflicts" in that city's history.¹⁵

A dramatic example of this increasing racist sentiment in the North took place at Oberlin College in Ohio. Founded by abolitionists, Oberlin had been one of the first colleges in America to admit students without regard to race during the 1830s. Moreover, the town of Oberlin was one of the few northern communities during the 1830s and 1840s to admit black children to the public schools on a nonsegregated basis. Both the town and college were important antislavery outposts, serving as a stop on the Underground Railroad and as a training ground for teachers in the Freedmen's schools after the Civil War.¹⁶

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the racial idealism at Oberlin had faded. As early as 1882, white Oberlin students began to protest having to eat at the same dining hall tables with black students. Although the college president forbade racial segregation, pressure from white students for racial separation continued. In 1905, literary societies, a critical element in the Oberlin education, formally excluded black male students from membership, and in 1909 the college established separate housing for black female students. One white Oberlin student justified the exclusion of blacks from the literary societies in 1910 by citing larger patterns of societal discrimination: "[E]ven if he had been taken in and made one of us in every way, many of you older men know full well how small a degree of any such treatment he could receive outside Oberlin walls. Would you

¹⁴ Licht, *Getting Work*, p. 48.

¹⁵ Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*, pp. 13-14; Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 36 (quote).

¹⁶ Waite, "Permission to Remain among Us," pp. 3-4, 38-9.

tantalyze a human soul with the vision of a promised land from which an impassable gulf will soon shut him off?" The *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, no friend of Oberlin, reported the white students' position, noting that "the feeling against the African is shifting from the south to the north more and more, and the ultimatum of Oberlin's students is but added proof of that." Oberlin's president agreed: "I think the attitude of the students towards the colored question as a whole is merely a representative of the attitude of the whole north toward the question." Oberlin's president announced in 1914 that "I do not . . . see how we can avoid having some separate colored boarding houses for colored students." Mary Church Terrell, one of the school's most distinguished alumnae, replied: "I try to be optimistic in this wicked and cruel country . . . [but] nothing has come so near forcing me to give up hope, and resigning myself to the cruel fate which many people are certain awaits us, than the heartbreaking backsliding of Oberlin College."¹⁷

The Great Migration

During the First World War, hundreds of thousands of southern blacks moved north, launching what would become over the course of the next four decades the most significant internal migration in American history. This increase in the number of African Americans living in the North would further intensify antiblack sentiment among many whites.

Between 1915 and 1920, about 500,000 blacks left the South, moving to northern cities. Another 800,000 to 1 million southern blacks migrated north during the 1920s. All told, about 10 percent of blacks living in the South moved to the North between 1915 and 1930. Whereas in 1910 90 percent of the country's black population lived in the South, those demographics would dramatically shift over the course of the next half century. By 1960, half of the nation's black population lived outside the South.¹⁸

Those states receiving the largest number of black migrants during World War I were, in descending order, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio,

¹⁷ For a discussion of the increasing segregationist sentiment at Oberlin, see Waite, "Permission to Remain among Us," pp. 86–98, 117–18, 132–5. For quotes, see *ibid.*, pp. 121, 126, 128, 139, 142. See also letter from William Pickens to Frances J. Hosford, May 1, 1919, NAACP Papers, Box I-C-271 (efforts to exclude black students from Oberlin dormitories).

¹⁸ For demographic changes, see Trotter, *River Jordan*, p. 95; Hardy, "Race and Opportunity," p. v; Anyon, *Ghetto Schooling*, p. 61; Meier and Rudwick, *From Plantation to Ghetto*, p. 213. Between 1910 and 1940, approximately 1.8 million blacks left the South for the North in pursuit of better jobs. McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*, p. 80.

New York, and Michigan. Most black migrants settled in cities. Indeed, by 1920, almost 40 percent of northern blacks resided in just eight cities – New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Columbus – each of which experienced a dramatic increase in its black population as a result of the migration. For example, between 1910 and 1930, New York City's black population increased from 91,700 to 327,700; Chicago's from 44,100 to 233,900; Philadelphia's from 84,500 to 219,600; Detroit's from 5,700 to 120,100; and Cleveland's from 8,400 to 71,900. Smaller cities experienced sharp increases in their black population as well. The black population of Buffalo, for example, more than doubled between 1910 and 1920 and then doubled again between 1920 and 1925.¹⁹

Several factors contributed to the Great Migration of southern blacks to northern cities during and after World War I. Economic concerns were highly significant. First of all, sharp declines in southern agriculture due to the devastations of the boll weevil – that “ashy-colored rascal” – the reduction in cotton prices in 1913 and 1914, and the floods of 1915 and 1916 forced southern blacks to look elsewhere for work. These economic problems were coupled with the lure of employment opportunities in the North created by sharp declines in foreign immigration, the labor needs of wartime industry, and the loss of American workers to the battlefields of Europe. Immigration declines were particularly dramatic. Whereas 1,200,000 foreign immigrants entered the United States in 1914, only 110,000 arrived in 1918.²⁰

Desperate for labor, many northern industries during World War I sent labor agents to the South to recruit black workers. These recruitment efforts were aided by numerous northern black newspapers and journals that relentlessly promoted job opportunities in northern cities and devoted considerable time and space to the lives and wages of northern blacks compared to their southern counterparts. The most vigorous promoter of northern work opportunities was the *Chicago Defender*, which had become the most widely read and influential black newspaper in the nation. In response, many southern communities banned the sale of the *Chicago Defender* and tightened labor agent restrictions. Moreover, many migrants wrote or returned home for visits and encouraged their friends and families to come North, spreading tales of abundant work and good wages. Following the conclusion of

¹⁹ U.S. Bureau of Census, 1910, 1920, 1930; Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 139; Mosey, “Testing, Tracking, and Curriculum,” p. 13; Hine, “Black Migration to the Urban Midwest,” p. 242; Robisch, “Educational Segregation,” p. 24.

²⁰ Phillips, *Alabama North*, p. 43 (quote); Waller, “Holding Back the Dawn,” p. 127; Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 131.

World War I, the northern migration continued, fueled by the postwar industrial boom and restrictions on foreign immigration.²¹

Yet economic factors were not the only ones that accounted for the Great Migration. Many African Americans left the South to escape the region's racial oppression. In letters to the *Chicago Defender*, migrants cited hope for better treatment as a reason for departing as well as the lure of higher wages. As one black Alabamian wrote the *Chicago Defender* during World War I: "I am in the darkness of the south. . . . [P]lease help me to get of this low down country [where] I am counted as no more than a dog." Lynching also increased during World War I in parts of the South, almost doubling between 1917 and 1918 alone.²²

Some migrants were drawn northward by the promise of better educational opportunities, as southern black schools were grossly underfunded. Both migrants and northern black newspapers cited better schools as a major draw for migration. One Georgia migrant commented: "My children I wished to be educated in a different community than here. Where the school facilities are better and less prejudice [is] shown and in fact where advantages are better for our people in all respect." Studies of the Great Migration show that a very high percentage of migrant children quickly found their way into the public schools. The *Chicago Defender*, with some exaggeration, trumpeted "the splendid unrestricted system of learning in the northern cities," in comparison with southern schools, "where Jim-Crowism is to be the first lesson taught."²³

Racial integration, however, was not foremost on the minds of southern black migrants. As historian James Grossman has written of the migration to Chicago: "There is little evidence that black southerners coming to Chicago were especially interested in integration per se; most were more concerned about legal protection, political rights, and access to the paths of security or mobility. . . . In some aspects of everyday life, many newcomers looked forward to freedom from whites; they evinced little desire to attend integrated churches or spend leisure time with white people."²⁴

²¹ Buni, *Robert L. Vann*, p. 72; Barnett, "The Role of the Press," p. 479; Phillips, *AlabamaNorth*, p. 46; Spear, *Black Chicago*, pp. 184–5; Grossman, "Blowing the Trumpet," pp. 90–6; Diner, *A Very Different Age*, p. 153; Miller, "The Black Migration to Philadelphia," p. 316.

²² For the letter to the *Chicago Defender*, see Fultz, "'Agitate Then, Brother,'" p. 24; for the increase in lynchings, see Phillips, *AlabamaNorth*, pp. 44–5.

²³ For the importance of schools to migrants, see Waller, "Holding Back the Dawn," pp. 137, 145; Miller, "The Black Migration to Philadelphia," p. 346. For the quote from a Georgia migrant, see Marks, *Farewell – We're Good and Gone*, p. 77; for the quote from the *Chicago Defender*, see Homel, "The Politics of Public Education," p. 179.

²⁴ Grossman, *Land of Hope*, p. 161.

Impact of the Great Migration on White Hostility toward Blacks

The black migration during World War I and the postwar era dramatically increased racial tensions in the North and accelerated the racial separation that had already begun during the early twentieth century. "It is a gentle conceit of northern people that race prejudice is a vice peculiar to the south," Detroit minister Reinhold Niebuhr observed in 1927. "The tremendous migration of southern Negroes into the industrial centers of the north is rapidly dispelling this illusion." The arrival of southern blacks provoked profound anxiety in many northern whites. Cleveland City Manager W. R. Hopkins announced in 1925 that "I don't know of any problem confronting the city that contains more potential menace than the fact that 40,000 southern Negroes have been dumped into Cleveland within the last few years." White demands for segregation in public accommodations, housing, and education sharply increased during the 1920s. As Harvard Sitkoff has written of the Great Migration: "Some who followed the North Star looking for the Promised Land found hell instead: educational and residential segregation, dilapidated housing milked by white slumlords, discrimination by labor unions and employers, brutality by white policemen, and liquor and narcotics the only means of escape."²⁵

Public accommodations discrimination sharply increased in the wake of the Great Migration, as many restaurants, hotels, stores, and theaters employed a variety of tactics to discourage black patronage. As W. E. B. Du Bois noted in 1934, in the early twentieth century "not a single hotel in Boston dared to refuse colored guests," but after the Great Migration, there remained "few Boston hotels where colored people are received." This reversal was not confined to Boston. Du Bois also noted that "[i]n 1910, colored men could be entertained in the best hotels in Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago. Today [in 1934], there is not a single Northern city, except New York, where a Negro can be a guest at a first-class hotel." Black leader George Schuyler made a similar observation in 1937: "Literally thousands of hotels, theaters, tourist camps, restaurants, amusement parks, swimming pools, soda fountains and even some stores either completely bar or jim crow Negroes in hundreds of cities and towns in the 'free' North." Confronted with white hostility, many northern blacks simply gave up. The leading black newspaper in Indianapolis, the *Freeman*, commented: "We have learned to forego some rights that are common, and because we know the price. . . . We have not insisted that hotels should entertain our race, or the theaters, rights that are clearly ours." In fact,

²⁵ For the Niebuhr quote, see Niebuhr, "Race Prejudice in the North," p. 583; for the Hopkins quote, see "Hopkins, Schrembs and Jones," *Cleveland Gazette*, Jan. 31, 1925, p. 2; for the Sitkoff quote, see Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality*, p. 8.



FIGURE 4 Sign in restaurant window, Lancaster, Ohio, 1930s. Reprinted from the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF33-6392-M4.

blacks would be excluded from most theaters, public hospitals, and public parks in Indianapolis, except on a segregated basis, until after World War II.²⁶

Although most northern states had enacted laws during the 1880s prohibiting racial discrimination in public accommodations, those laws were frequently disregarded during the 1920s and 1930s. Some states, like New Jersey, weakened their nineteenth-century public accommodations statutes in the wake of the migration of southern blacks. Moreover, prosecutors were reluctant to enforce the criminal aspects of public accommodations legislation, as juries frequently refused to convict despite clear violations. Private plaintiffs were dissuaded from filing suit by restrictive court decisions and the fact that successful litigation typically resulted in nominal damages, often not enough to cover court costs.²⁷

²⁶ For the first Du Bois quote, see Du Bois, "William Monroe Trotter," *The Crisis* (May 1934), p. 134; for the second quote, see Du Bois, "Postscript," *The Crisis* (Apr. 1934), pp. 115-17; for the Schuyler quote, see Schuyler, "Do We Really Want Equality?" p. 103; for the quote from the *Freeman*, see Thornbrough, "Segregation in Indiana," p. 597. For exclusion of Indianapolis blacks, see *United States v. Board of Commissioners*, 332 F. Supp. 655, 661 (S.D. Ind. 1971).

²⁷ For New Jersey, see Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant*, p. 142; for other limitations of these statutes, see Spear, *Black Chicago*, pp. 41-3, 207; Russell H. Davis, "Civil Rights in Cleveland 1912 through 1961," p. 15 (1973), Russell Howard Davis Papers, Container 9; for restrictive court decisions, see, for example, *Chocos v. Burden*, 74 Ind. App. 242 (1920), and *Harvey v. Sissle*, 53 Ohio App. 405 (1936).

One of the most striking effects of the Great Migration was a significant increase in northern urban residential segregation. As southern blacks settled in northern cities, they were segregated into certain neighborhoods through a series of private and public tactics. With the exception of Indianapolis, northern cities did not promulgate local ordinances requiring residential segregation, a tactic the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional in 1917, but did so with equal efficacy through racially restrictive covenants and discriminatory real estate practices, zoning regulations, and neighborhood associations. Throughout the North, local real estate agents steered black families away from white neighborhoods. In Cincinnati, for example, the local real estate board during the 1920s instructed its employees that "no agent shall rent or sell property to colored people in an established white section or neighborhood and this inhibition shall be particularly applicable to the hill tops and suburban property." White realtors in Indianapolis refused to show blacks homes in white neighborhoods and used a two-tier pricing structure: "a realistic market price to whites and a ridiculously inflated price to Negroes." Indianapolis newspaper want ads would continue to describe certain property "for colored" until the mid-1960s. In Chicago, the local real estate board took action in 1917 to restrict black migrants to certain blocks in the city, resolving that "each block . . . [in black neighborhoods] be filled solidly and that further expansion . . . be confined to contiguous blocks," and that "owners' societies . . . [be created] . . . in every white block for the purpose of mutual defense." Other cities, like Pittsburgh, followed suit. From 1924 until 1950, realtors throughout the nation subscribed to a national code that provided that "a realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood . . . members of any race or nationality, or any individual whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in the neighborhood."²⁸

In many parts of the North, vigilante violence accompanied black attempts to move into white neighborhoods or their refusal to vacate homes in white neighborhoods. One such incident provoked murder charges against Ossian Sweet, a black doctor in Detroit who confronted a white mob seeking to drive him from his home. Legal scholar John Frank has persuasively argued that the explosion of violence in racially

²⁸ For the Supreme Court decision, see *Buchanan v. Warley*, 245 U.S. 60 (1917); for other residential segregation tactics, see Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*, p. 233. For the Cincinnati quote, see Trotter, *River Jordan*, p. 106; for the Indianapolis discussion, see *United States v. Board of Commissioners*, 332 F. Supp. 655, 662-3 (S.D. Ind. 1971); for the Chicago discussion, see Mosey, "Testing, Tracking, and Curriculum," p. 16; *The Chicago Real Estate Board Bulletin*, Apr. 25, 1917, pp. 315-17; for Pittsburgh, see Buni, *Robert L. Vann*, p. 62; for the realtor code quote, see Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, pp. 25-6.

mixed neighborhoods during the 1910s and early 1920s helped persuade courts to uphold racially restrictive covenants.²⁹

Some governmental officials also played a role in the preservation of residential segregation. For example, in 1923, the mayor of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, ordered all black southern migrants to leave his town. Moreover, with the onset of federal loan programs in the 1930s, racial discrimination in housing continued. A 1933 report of the Federal Home Owners Loan Corporation stated that the presence of "Russian Jews of lower class, South Italians, Negroes, and Mexicans" caused declining property values and that in these neighborhoods no mortgages should be financed. Federal loans, available under the National Housing Act of 1934, encouraged residential segregation, as the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) rated the presence of blacks in a neighborhood a risk that factored into the availability of mortgages.³⁰

The effect of these various public and private acts of discrimination was dramatic. In 1910, only 30 percent of Chicago's African Americans lived in predominantly black neighborhoods; by 1920, a majority did so. In Cleveland, the number of census tracts with no black residents more than doubled between 1910 and 1920, from seventeen to thirty-eight. Racially restrictive covenants in San Francisco caused one black newspaper in that city to announce in 1927: "Residential Segregation is as real in California as in Mississippi. A mob is unnecessary. All that's needed is a neighbor[hood] meeting and agreement in writing not to rent, lease, or sell to blacks, and the Courts will do the rest." Even in Minnesota, neighborhoods embraced racially restrictive covenants during the 1920s despite having a paucity of African Americans.³¹

The Great Migration also triggered increasing violence toward blacks, particularly during and after World War I. Race riots erupted in several northern cities – including East St. Louis, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Syracuse, New York – sparked in part by white-black competition for jobs and housing. In East St. Louis, the hiring of black workers triggered mass destruction in the black community in 1917 by

²⁹ For vigilante violence, see "In Henry Sweet Trial," *Cleveland Gazette*, May 15, 1926, p. 1; "Three Telling Victories," *Cleveland Gazette*, June 13, 1925, p. 1; *Cleveland Gazette*, Feb. 20, 1926, p. 2; Meyer, *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door*, pp. 38–45. See also Frank, "Can the Courts Erase the Color Line?", p. 309 ("the cases of the 1920's appearing to condone restrictive covenants were a direct retreat because of the racial violence which shortly preceded them").

³⁰ For Johnstown, see *Cleveland Gazette*, Sept. 29, 1923, p. 2; for the 1933 report, see Anyon, *Ghetto Schooling*, pp. 62–3.

³¹ For Chicago, see Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 17; for Cleveland, see Reid, "Race, Class, Gender and the Teaching Profession," p. 39; for the 1927 quote, see Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, p. 236; for Minnesota, see Delton, "Forging of a Northern Strategy," p. 118.

a white mob that left 125 blacks dead and hundreds of others maimed. Some of the worst violence took place in Chicago. Between 1917 and 1921, fifty-eight racially inspired bombings took place there, most directed at the homes of black families in racially mixed neighborhoods. The most significant outbreak in Chicago was the July 1919 riot that took 38 lives and injured more than 500; blacks bore the brunt of the violence. Historian John Hope Franklin has called the last six months of 1919 "the greatest period of interracial strife the nation had ever witnessed." As a result of the violence, white demands for segregation increased. As the *Chicago Tribune* editorialized: "Despite the possible justice of Negro demands, the fact is that the races are not living in harmony. . . . How long will it be before segregation will be the only means of preventing murders?"³²

Employer and labor union discrimination against black workers increased in the wake of the Great Migration, particularly in skilled labor positions. White workers opposed hiring black workers, and employers readily acceded to this opposition. A survey by the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce between 1925 and 1930 found that the most frequent reason employers gave for their failure to hire black workers was that they were "unable or unwilling to mix white and Negro workers." White employers in Minneapolis refused to hire black workers except for certain jobs; as a result, 80 percent of the black men in Minneapolis in 1926 worked as porters, janitors, and night watchmen. White workers in an integrated munitions factory in Chicago during World War I placed a sign in the factory lavatory: "Niggers not allowed to use this toilet." Although the number of blacks employed in skilled and semiskilled work had dramatically increased during World War I, racial discrimination among both northern employers and northern unions sharply curtailed these advances after the conclusion of the war.³³

*Increase in Northern School Segregation in Response
to the Migration of Southern Blacks*

One important manifestation of this growing racial antagonism was a sharp increase in white insistence on school segregation. Despite state antisegregation laws, school segregation increased in much of

³² For East St. Louis, see Baker, *From Savage to Negro*, p. 138; for Chicago, see Spear, *Black Chicago*, pp. 211–16; for the Franklin quote, see Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, p. 480; for the *Chicago Tribune* quote, see Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 217.

³³ For the Cincinnati quote, see Trotter, *River Jordan*, pp. 101–2; for Minneapolis, see Delton, "Forging of a Northern Strategy," pp. 120–2; for the Chicago quote, see "Judge John Richardson Gives 'Jim Crow' Decision," *Ohio State Monitor*, Sept. 14, 1918, p. 4; for union discrimination, see Trotter, *Black Milwaukee*, pp. 46–7.

the North during the two decades prior to World War I, and then increased even more dramatically following the onset of the Great Migration.

A number of local school boards introduced school segregation between 1897 and 1910 – even in states that expressly prohibited such segregation – including Alton, Illinois (1897), Brooklyn, Illinois (1901), Sheffield, Massachusetts (1904), East Orange, New Jersey (1905), and Oxford, Pennsylvania (1909). Other northern school boards with a tradition of integrated schools fought to preserve racial mixing in the face of intense segregationist pressure. For example, Chicago schools had been desegregated since 1865, but white insistence on school segregation dramatically increased during the early twentieth century in response to the arrival of thousands of African Americans. One black Chicago attorney noted in 1910 of the growth of the city's black population since 1890: "Colored children have appeared in numbers in many schools. . . . [T]hese things have a tendency to cause whites to resort to jim crow tactics." Chicago whites sought both school board action and a city charter amendment to reverse a half-century history of integrated schools. A leader of the antiblack Hyde Park Improvement Protective Club announced in 1909 that "[i]t is only a question of time when there will be separate schools for Negroes throughout Illinois." Many white students joined the struggle for racial separation. In 1905, a group of white students in Chicago rioted when they were transferred to a predominantly black school, and in 1908 over 150 white students staged a boycott when they were transferred to an integrated school. Moreover, in 1909, when two black children were transferred to a white school, they were beaten by their new classmates. Although black resistance prevented explicit segregation during the first decade of the twentieth century, the Chicago school board did allow white children to transfer out of mixed schools and racially gerrymandered school attendance zones to increase racial cohesion.³⁴

During the first decade of the twentieth century, a few state legislatures altered their laws to permit segregation. In 1900, the Kansas

³⁴ For the increase in school segregation, see Meier and Rudwick, "Early Boycotts of Segregated Schools: The Alton, Illinois, Case"; Meier and Rudwick, "Early Boycotts of Segregated Schools: The East Orange, New Jersey, Experience"; Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town*, p. 135; "Arson Follows Race War," *New York Times*, Jan. 1, 1904, p. 7; "Bay State 'Jim Crow' School," *New York Times*, Jan 6, 1904, p. 1; "Negroes Win School Fight," *New York Times*, Feb. 12, 1906, p. 2. For the Chicago attorney quote, see Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 48; for the Hyde Park quote, see Mohraz, *The Separate Problem*, p. 100; for school riots in Chicago, see Spear, *Black Chicago*, pp. 44–5; for Chicago school board policies, see Mohraz, *The Separate Problem*, pp. 98–100; Spear, *Black Chicago*, pp. 204–5.

state legislature, in response to the murder of a white boy by an African American, enacted legislation permitting school segregation in the high schools of Kansas City. Thereafter, pressure for school segregation in other parts of Kansas increased. In 1906, the superintendent of the public schools of Kansas wrote his counterpart in North Carolina requesting information about North Carolina's school segregation statute: "There is a movement in Kansas looking toward the segregation of the races in the public schools, where the per cent of colored population will warrant the separation. . . . Have you any laws on the subject?" In 1909, the Kansas state legislature, in response to overwhelming demand, enacted special legislation allowing Wichita to segregate its schools, reversing a decision of the Kansas Supreme Court that had declared school segregation in Wichita unlawful. Arizona also enacted legislation in 1909 *permitted* school segregation throughout the state; in 1912, the Arizona legislature *mandated* segregation in all elementary schools and permitted local school officials to decide whether to segregate high schools. Specifically, if an Arizona high school had at least twenty-five black students, the local school board was obliged to hold a referendum on segregated schools if 15 percent of the electorate called for such an election. New Mexico enacted legislation permitting school segregation in 1923. In 1911, the Ohio legislature considered but ultimately declined to enact legislation that would have again permitted school segregation in the Buckeye state, while segregationists in New York sought similar legislation the same year.³⁵

In the wake of the Great Migration, school segregation sharply increased throughout the North, even in communities that had long enjoyed a tradition of racially mixed schools. As Kelly Miller of Howard University noted in 1929: "The issue of separate schooling is moving Northward with the rising tide of Negro migration. The color line in public education is vigorously asserting itself across the continent." Much of this increase in segregation took place in the southern portions of those states bordering the South. As a 1922 study of northern race relations aptly noted: "There is . . . along the Southern border of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Kansas a semi-legal

³⁵ For Kansas legislation, see Duncan, "The Changing Race Relationship," p. 37; for the quote, see "Segregation of Races: Kansas Superintendent of Schools Wants Information," *Raleigh Daily News and Observer*, Aug. 24, 1906, p. 5; for 1909 legislation reversing *Rowles v. Board of Education*, 76 Kan. 361 (1907), see Van Meeter, "Black Resistance to Segregation," pp. 73-4, 77; for Arizona and New Mexico statutes, see Murray, *States' Laws on Race and Color*, pp. 35-6, 290. For proposed Ohio legislation, see Montgomery, "Racial History of the Cincinnati and Suburban Schools," p. 95 (1983), Cincinnati Historical Society; for New York, see "To Demand Separate Schools for Negroes," *New York Times*, Jan. 18, 1911, p. 3.

segregation in the schools in force. At least, it amounts to a tacit understanding, in some of the towns, that the colored children must go to the colored schools, and that they will not be admitted to the schools attended by white children. In fact, in any Northern town where they are proportionately numerous, there is just the same tendency and desire to have them separated from the whites that there is in the South."³⁶

Northern school segregation during the post-World War I era took many forms. Although some racial separation was due to the burgeoning residential segregation of northern cities, much of it resulted from specific actions taken by local school officials to preserve racial separation. The most explicit form of school segregation was the establishment of separate schools for black and white children, with pupil assignments conducted on a racial basis. School segregation in New Jersey, for example, already widespread in the state's southern counties by the end of the nineteenth century, substantially increased during the first four decades of the twentieth century as school officials in many communities formally established dual school systems – sometimes by local ordinance – in which school assignments were explicitly based on race rather than geography. A 1925 report found: "[f]rom the university town of Princeton, including the capital city of Trenton, southward to Cape May, every city or town with a considerable Negro population supports the dual educational system, with a building for its white and a building for its Negro pupils of the grammar grades." A few southern counties in New Jersey segregated black students not only at the elementary school level but also at the high school level. A study published in the early 1950s noted striking similarities between segregation in southern New Jersey and the South throughout the first half of the twentieth century: "While most of New Jersey is geographically above the Mason-Dixon line, the history of its public school education, especially at the elementary and junior high school levels, has had more in common with states below than above the line. In the [state's] southern counties both basic policies and prevailing practices have been essentially similar to those of the Southern states."³⁷

But this increase in school segregation in New Jersey was not confined to the state's southern counties. During the two decades

³⁶ For the Miller quote, see Miller, "Is the Color Line Crumbling?," p. 284; for the 1922 study, see Duncan, "Changing Race Relationship," p. 37.

³⁷ For the 1925 study, see Granger, "Race Relations and the School System," p. 327. For other sources on the increase of segregation in New Jersey, see Crocco, Munro, and Weiler, *Pedagogies of Resistance*, p. 67; Payne, "Negroes in the Public Elementary Schools," p. 227; Weinberg, *A Chance to Learn*, p. 75; Mumford, "Double V in New Jersey," p. 25. For the 1950s study, see Williams and Ryan, *Schools in Transition*, p. 121.

following World War I, a few northern New Jersey communities, most of which had integrated their schools during the 1870s, reintroduced racially separate schools in response to the increase in black population. A 1939 report to the state legislature found that "in recent years . . . many communities in northern New Jersey have either instituted or plan to institute experiments of their own in separate school facilities." Across the state, the number of separate schools for African-American children increased by 35 percent between 1919 and 1935, and by 1940 there were more segregated schools in New Jersey than at any time since the enactment of the 1881 antisegregation legislation. This increase in school segregation clearly violated New Jersey law. As one lawyer noted, New Jersey engaged in the "theoretical admission of colored children to white schools by terms of legislation and simultaneously actual exclusion by method of administration."³⁸

School boards in other northern states also engaged in explicit racial assignments, rejecting the practice of assigning children to school based on geography. Many small towns in eastern Pennsylvania established racially separate schools during the 1910s and 1920s. Chester, for example, which had segregated its elementary schools in 1912, established a separate black junior high school in 1929 and a separate black senior high school in 1934. The Chester school board assigned all of the town's black children to Frederick Douglass High School and all of the white children to Chester High School. School authorities in Lower Oxford maintained a black and a white school across the street from each other, justifying such segregation on the grounds that black children are "not as bright as whites." Some Pennsylvania and New Jersey school districts retained geographic assignments, but nevertheless assigned white children who lived in "black" school districts to the closest white school and black children living in "white" school districts to the closest black school. Philadelphia engaged in this practice after the city experienced a fourfold increase in black population during and after World War I. The Philadelphia school superintendent explained in 1926 that "whenever the colored element was in predominance [at a given school] it was deemed wise to transfer all of the white students and faculty members and install a colored faculty." As a result, by the mid-1920s, almost one-third of Philadelphia's black students attended single-race schools, due in

³⁸ For the increase in New Jersey segregation, see Wright, *The Education of Negroes*, pp. 185, 194; Oak and Oak, "The Development of Separate Education in New Jersey," p. 110; Wright, "Racial Integration in the Public Schools," p. 282. For the 1939 report, see *Report of the New Jersey State Temporary Commission*, p. 41. For the lawyer quote, see Satterthwait, "The Color-Line in New Jersey," p. 395.

significant measure to the race-conscious assignment policies of the school board.³⁹

In some communities, school officials placed black children in a separate building on the grounds of a white school or in separate classrooms in an otherwise racially mixed school. For example, in Gary, Indiana, school officials established racially segregated elementary schools – East Pulaski and West Pulaski – on the same parcel of land, with separate teachers, classrooms, and American flags. The two schools operated on slightly different schedules to reduce racial interaction. In many counties in southern New Jersey, school buildings were divided into white and black sections, with white teachers for white children and black teachers for black children. Some Pennsylvania and New Jersey school districts established racially separate classrooms, with “Union Rooms” for black children of all ages and graded classrooms for whites. Although the Pennsylvania state legislature enacted legislation in 1925 prohibiting racially separate classrooms, the new legislation was frequently ignored.⁴⁰

³⁹ For segregation in eastern Pennsylvania, including Carlisle, Chester, Coatesville, Frankford, Germantown, Lansdown, Lower Oxford, Sharon Hill, Swarthmore, West Chester, and York, see “World War II Brought Change in Jim Crow School Pattern,” *York Gazette and Daily*, July 1, 1954, NAACP Papers, Box II-A-228; Letter from S. B. Randolph to National Office of the NAACP, July 1944, NAACP Papers, Box II-B-146; Duncan, “The Changing Race Relationship,” pp. 39–40; Hatfield, “The Impact of the New Deal,” pp. 205–6; Kennedy, *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward*, p. 194. For Chester, see “Chester Creates First Jim Crow High School in State,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, Feb. 22, 1934, p. 1; Mohraz, *The Separate Problem*, p. 92; *Murray v. School District of the City of Chester*, Bill of Complaint, May 29, 1934, Arthur Spingarn Papers, Box 33. For Lower Oxford, see “Say Negroes ‘Not Bright,’” *Houston Informer*, July 31, 1948, NAACP Papers, Box II-B-146; for assignment policies, see Kennedy, *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward*, p. 194; Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, “Negro Survey of Pennsylvania,” p. 58; Henri, *Black Migration*, p. 181; Mosey, “Testing, Tracking, and Curriculum,” pp. 13–14; “Annual Report of the Urban Colored Population Commission, State of New Jersey” (1945), Lett Papers. For the school superintendent quote, see Franklin, *The Education of Black Philadelphia*, p. 82. For Philadelphia patterns, see Franklin, *The Education of Black Philadelphia*, p. 66; Licht, *Getting Work*, p. 84; Daniels, “Schools,” pp. 178–82; “How Separate Schools Menace!” *Cleveland Gazette*, July 21, 1928, p. 1.

⁴⁰ For separate buildings and classrooms, see New Jersey Conference of Social Work, *The Negro in New Jersey*, p. 37; Granger, “Race Relations and the School System,” p. 329; Devore, “The Education of Blacks in New Jersey,” pp. 101–2, 144–5; Johnson, *The Negro in American Civilization*, pp. 268–9; *Report of the New Jersey State Temporary Commission*, p. 40; Henri, *Black Migration*, p. 181; Tyack, *The One Best System*, p. 124; Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, “Negro Survey of Pennsylvania,” pp. 58–9; Kennedy, *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward*, pp. 193–5. For Gary schools, see Tipton, *Community in Crisis*, p. 21; Millender, *Yesterday in Gary*, p. 57; for fenced playgrounds, see Payne, “Negroes in the Public Elementary Schools of the North,” p. 227; for failed legislation banning separate classrooms, see Letter from Theodore O. Spaulding

Several Ohio cities, including Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, and Dayton, also established racially separate classrooms in the wake of the Great Migration. Dayton, for example, established separate classrooms for black children in racially mixed schools in 1912, a practice it had previously used prior to the 1887 antisegregation legislation in Ohio. During World War I, a number of southern black families migrated to Dayton, many of whom settled in the attendance area of the Garfield elementary school, a white school. In 1917, the Dayton school board assigned these newly arrived black students to a poorly heated and maintained frame building behind the Garfield School to keep them separate from the white children educated inside the main building. These black students were crowded into classrooms with more than twice as many pupils as the classrooms in the main building that housed the white children. Even black children at Dayton's racially mixed orphanage were assigned across town to black classes at Garfield, whereas white orphans went to a nearby school, a practice that continued until after the 1954 *Brown* decision.⁴¹

Cleveland reversed its long-standing commitment to racially integrated schools during the 1920s by assigning black children to racially separate classrooms, prompting a local black newspaper, the *Call and Post*, to comment in 1928: "Daily it becomes more apparent that the virus of southern race prejudice is bearing its malignant fruit in this cosmopolitan city of Cleveland. With amazing rapidity it is spreading through the very arteries of this city – once famous for its liberality to minority groups." The trend towards segregation increased during the 1930s as the Cleveland school board began to assign most of the city's black high school students to Central High School, even those who lived closer to other high schools, and to permit white students who lived near Central High School to transfer to other schools.⁴²

Where there were too few black children to justify a racially separate classroom, some teachers insisted on racial separation within the classroom. Prior to the establishment of a separate black senior high

to Roy Wilkins, Mar. 25, 1940; Letter from W. M. Gilmore to Constance Baker Motley, Feb. 22, 1950, NAACP Papers, Box II-B-146; Untitled and undated article on Segregation in Northern Schools, NAACP Papers, Box II-B-137.

⁴¹ For racially separate classrooms in Ohio, see "'Jim Crow' School Rooms," *Cleveland Gazette*, May 22, 1937, p. 1; "Is the Ohio Supreme Court K.K.K.?" *Cleveland Gazette*, Apr. 4, 1925, p. 1; Porter, "The Problem of Negro Education," p. 124. For Dayton, see *Brinkman v. Gilligan*, 583 F.2d 243, 249, n.19 (6th Cir. 1978); *Board of Education v. State ex rel. Reese*, 114 Ohio St. 188 (1926); Watras, *Politics, Race, and Schools*, p. 85; Appendix to Brief in Opposition to Petition for Writ of Certiorari, pp. 3a, n.3, 5a, n.6, *Brinkmann v. Gilligan*, United States Supreme Court, 1979.

⁴² For integrated schools in Cleveland, see "Cleveland's Schools," *Cleveland Advocate*, Sept. 18, 1915, p. 4; Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*, pp. 182–4, 187 (quote, p. 187).

school in Chester, Pennsylvania, for example, some teachers required segregated seating. A white teacher in Dayton in the 1920s told a black student that "even though I was a good student I was not to sit in the front of the class because most of the colored children sat in the back." One Arizona school teacher went to an even greater extreme, placing a screen around the desk of a black student to shield him from his white classmates.⁴³

In some racially mixed schools, black and white children were segregated during recreational activities. For example, some New Jersey schools, as in Asbury Park, fenced their playgrounds to keep black and white children apart. A Wichita school also designated a specific part of the school playground for black children. Several school districts throughout the North, including districts in New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Kansas, excluded black students from high school swimming pools or else forced them to swim on Friday afternoons, after which the pools would be drained. Many northern school districts with racially mixed schools excluded black children from a variety of extracurricular activities such as athletics, the school band, and ROTC, forcing the black community to organize private extracurricular activities for their children. For example, during the early twentieth century, blacks in Portland, Oregon, used churches to stage plays and oratorical contests to provide black children with opportunities denied them in the public schools. Students at high school graduation ceremonies in Montclair, New Jersey, marched in a racially segregated fashion until the NAACP petitioned for an end to the practice in 1925.⁴⁴

⁴³ For racially separate seating, see "Girl Fought 'Jim-Crow,'" *Cleveland Gazette*, Apr. 4, 1931, p. 1 (Chester); Appendix to Brief in Opposition to Petition for Writ of Certiorari, p. 4a, n. 4, *Brinkmann v. Gilligan*, United States Supreme Court, 1979 (Dayton – quote); Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, p. 217 (Arizona).

⁴⁴ For separate playgrounds, see Granger, "Race Relations and the School System," p. 329 (New Jersey); Payne, "Negroes in the Public Elementary Schools of the North," p. 227 (New Jersey); Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier*, p. 218 (Wichita). For separate swimming pools, see *Patterson v. Board of Education of Trenton*, 11 N.J. Misc. 179 (1933), *aff'd*, 112 N.J.L. 99 (1934) (Trenton); "Court Upholds Ban on Race Segregation," *New York Times*, Jan. 6, 1934, p. 17 (Trenton); Thomas, "Schooling as a Political Instrument," p. 587 (Buffalo); "Our Student Strike!" *Cleveland Gazette*, Sept. 27, 1930, p. 1 (Sandusky, Ohio); "Atlantic's 'Jim Crowists,'" *Cleveland Gazette*, June 7, 1924, p. 1 (Atlantic City); Tipton, *Community in Crisis*, pp. 25–6 (Gary); "Along the N.A.A.C.P. Battlefront," *The Crisis* 43 (June 1936), p. 182 (Kankakee, Illinois); "Victory against School Segregation," *Cleveland Gazette*, Apr. 26, 1924, p. 1 (Wichita). Other districts required black and white children to swim at separate times. Interview with Robert Carter, Aug. 7, 2003 (East Orange, New Jersey); Robisch, "Educational Segregation and Desegregation," p. 71 (Dayton, Ohio). For example, in Gary, school authorities during the early 1940s finally permitted black boys to swim in the school pool, but only on Fridays, and then required that the pool be thoroughly cleaned over

Some local school authorities preserved racial separation through racially gerrymandered school district lines accompanied by discriminatory transfer policies that permitted only white students to transfer to a school in another district. The experience in New Rochelle, New York, illustrates this practice. In 1889, school authorities closed New Rochelle's one black school, which dated from the antebellum era, and assigned the town's black children to white schools. Thereafter, black children in New Rochelle attended racially mixed schools. But in 1930, faced with a growing black population, the New Rochelle school board opened a new school, the Webster School, and racially gerrymandered its attendance zone lines so that it would be a predominantly white school, while the nearby Lincoln School would be a predominantly black school. The New Rochelle school board permitted all white children who lived in the Lincoln school district to transfer to the Webster School but denied black children living in the Lincoln district the same right. The effect of these actions was dramatic. Between 1930 and 1933, black enrollment at Lincoln increased from 25 to 75 percent, and by 1949 Lincoln was an all-black school. Finally, in 1949, confronted with the inequities of its transfer policy, the school board ceased to allow transfers, although it did not redraw its racially gerrymandered district lines.⁴⁵

Other school districts also used racial gerrymandering to preserve racial separation. The Columbus Board of Education – which had desegregated its schools and used racially mixed faculties during the 1880s – resegregated many of its schools during the early twentieth century through racially gerrymandered school district lines and the assignment of teachers on a racial basis. In 1909, the Columbus school board established a new elementary school in the middle of a black neighborhood and gerrymandered the school's attendance zone to preserve its character as a black school. As a result, the new school – Champion Elementary – was more than 90 percent black, whereas two other elementary schools, each about three blocks away, were less than 4 percent black. Many African Americans, fearing that the Champion

the weekend before white children used it again. Tipton, *Community in Crisis*, pp. 25–6. For exclusion of blacks from school activities, see Homel, "Two Worlds of Race?" pp. 241–2 (Chicago); Betten and Mohl, "The Evolution of Racism," pp. 54–5 (Gary); Wallis, *All We Had Was Each Other*, p. 6 (Madison County, Indiana); McElderry, "The Problem of the Color Line," p. 67 (Portland). For Montclair graduation ceremonies, see "Alter Graduation March," *New York Times*, June 13, 1925, p. 6.

⁴⁵ "Protest to Governor on 'Jim Crow' Schools," *New York Times*, Sept. 10, 1930, p. 22; *Taylor v. Board of Education of New Rochelle*, 191 F. Supp. 181, 184–6 (S.D.N.Y. 1961); United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Civil Rights U.S.A.: Public Schools Cities in the North and West*, pp. 46, 48, 68; Ment, "Racial Segregation in the Public Schools," pp. 264–73.

School's placement would lead to school segregation, had petitioned the school board – unsuccessfully – to build the school elsewhere, claiming that “the boundary lines of certain school districts in this city [had already] been drawn as to segregate colored children.” During the 1920s, the Columbus school board grew bolder in its segregation efforts, expanding its use of gerrymandered school districts and racially explicit teacher assignments to preserve the racial integrity of the city's schools. In addition, in 1925, the school board established a “portable school” to house black students living in a predominantly white neighborhood in the northern section of the city, rather than assign these children to a nearby white elementary school. A 1931 report from the Ohio director of education to the governor found that 1,269 black children in Columbus attended “special schools for colored children.” A 1937 report on the Columbus schools concluded that the problem of black education “seems to be met satisfactorily with separate schools wherever possible.” School district lines would remain racially gerrymandered in Columbus until after the 1954 *Brown* decision.⁴⁶

Chicago racially gerrymandered its school district lines as well. Prior to the Great Migration, Chicago school officials had largely resisted school segregation in the face of white pressure. But as the number of blacks living in Chicago sharply increased during and after World War I, pressure for school segregation mounted, as many whites argued that “white children should not be compelled to sit with colored children.” In response, school authorities racially gerrymandered school district lines and liberally granted white children transfers from predominantly black schools to which they had been assigned based on residence. Black children were denied such transfer rights. The effect of these practices was dramatic. Whereas in 1916, only one Chicago school – Keith Elementary – was 90 percent black and it enrolled only about 8 percent of the city's 4,500 black students, by 1930, 26 of the city's schools were at least 90 percent black and they enrolled about 82 percent of the city's 34,000 black students. These shifting patterns were due in significant measure to residential segregation caused by an

⁴⁶ For the discussion of Columbus, see “Would Draw a ‘Color Line’ in the Public Schools,” *Cleveland Gazette*, Sept. 26, 1903, p. 1; Columbus Board of Education Minutes, Sept. 30, 1907, May 11, 1908, June 8, 1908, cited in Testimony of W. A. Montgomery, Appendix, pp. 368–71, *Columbus Board of Education v. Penick*, 443 U.S. 449 (1979); Gerber, *Black Ohio and the Color Line*, pp. 266–7; Minor, “The Negro in Columbus,” pp. 147–53. For the black petition quote, see Brief for Respondents, p. 14, n. 12, *Columbus Board of Education v. Penick*, 443 U.S. 449 (1979); for the 1931 report, see *Penick v. Columbus Board of Education*, 519 F. Supp. 925, 929 (S.D. Ohio 1981); for the 1937 quote, see Robisch, “Educational Segregation and Desegregation,” p. 69.

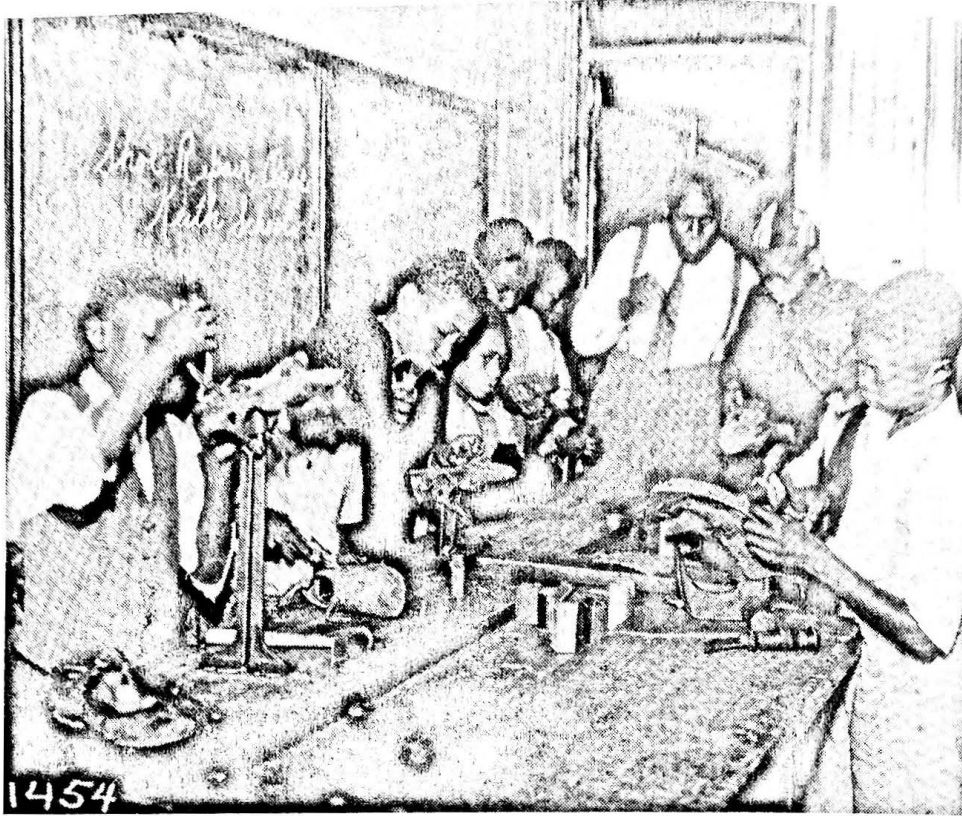


FIGURE 5 Students at Keith Elementary School, Chicago, 1936. National Archives photo, no. 69-N-5442-C (Works Progress Administration photo).

array of practices by realtors, mortgage lenders, and local politicians in response to the Great Migration that led to the creation of a rigid, permanent black ghetto in Chicago, but racially gerrymandered district lines also played a role. In 1945, the president of the Chicago NAACP would declare with some exaggeration: "We have segregated schools outright. . . . They are as much segregated as the schools in Savannah, Georgia, or Vicksburg, Mississippi."⁴⁷

Where racial gerrymandering could not preserve school segregation, some local school boards established "undistricted" attendance zones; white children living in these zones were permitted to attend certain designated white schools, but black children were required to attend a black school. Gary, Indiana, followed this strategy. Other northern school districts deployed undistricted attendance zones but only encouraged, not required, black children in those areas to attend separate black schools. Cincinnati, for example, had eliminated most of its separate black schools after the enactment of antisegregation

⁴⁷ For the discussion of Chicago, see Homel, "Two Worlds of Race?" pp. 241–2; Spear, *Black Chicago*, pp. 201–2, 204; Homel, *Down from Equality*, pp. 27–8. For the quote concerning whites sitting with blacks, see Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 205; for the quote from the NAACP president, see Homel, "Two Worlds of Race?" p. 242.

legislation in 1887, but the school board reestablished several black schools during the first three decades of the twentieth century. In residentially integrated areas of the city, the school board did not utilize geographic attendance zones; rather, the board maintained both white and colored schools. In theory, black children could choose the school they wished to attend, but frequent mistreatment in the white schools caused most to choose one of the colored schools. The Cincinnati school board would continue to exclude several black elementary schools, designated "Separate Schools," from the city's general geographic assignment plan until the early 1950s. By the same token, in the 1920s, the Cincinnati school board introduced a disciplinary policy pursuant to which black children in racially mixed schools who misbehaved were transferred to one of the separate colored schools.⁴⁸

Patterns of racial segregation varied between elementary schools and high schools. In many northern cities, such as Atlantic City, Camden, Trenton, Cincinnati, and Philadelphia, elementary schools were segregated, while high schools were integrated. However, some communities, such as Dayton, Ohio, and Chester, Pennsylvania, maintained segregated elementary schools and high schools. Some northern school districts provided elementary schools for black children but no high schools. Several school districts in southern Illinois, for example, excluded black children from all local high schools, requiring them to travel to segregated high schools in neighboring counties or, more typically, to go without.⁴⁹

In a few instances, black children were excluded from public schools altogether. For example, during the 1920s, as southern blacks moved to Oregon to work in the lumber industry, their children were denied entry into public schools in some communities. In the town of Maxville in eastern Oregon, the public schools barred black children, instead hiring a black woman to teach them in her home during the evenings. Some black children in Maxville traveled to other towns to attend school.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ For Gary, see Tipton, *Community in Crisis*, p. 22; for Cincinnati, see Washington, "The Black Struggle for Desegregated Quality Education," pp. 83, 101, 103; Montgomery, "Racial History of the Cincinnati and Suburban Public Schools," pp. 125-6 (1983), Cincinnati Historical Society.

⁴⁹ For variations in segregation, see Homel, "Two Worlds of Race?" p. 242; for exclusion of blacks from high school, see Valien, "Racial Desegregation," p. 304 (Illinois); "Gallipolis School Situation," *Ohio State Monitor*, Oct. 19, 1918, p. 8 (Ohio); Letter from William Hastie to Walter White, Oct. 2, 1933, Hastie Papers, Box 102-2 (New Jersey).

⁵⁰ McLagan, *A Peculiar Paradise*, pp. 111, 115, 123, 131, 135, 141, 165; see also letter from "Non de plume" to W. E. B. Du Bois, Apr. 9, 1914, NAACP Papers, Box II-L-14 (exclusion of blacks from public schools in Nogales, Arizona).



FIGURE 6 New York City school, 1937. National Archives photo, no. 69-N-9609 (Works Progress Administration photo).

To be sure, in some parts of the North, school segregation was minimal in the wake of the Great Migration. New England experienced the smallest increase in school segregation due in significant measure to the fact that relatively few southern blacks migrated to New England during and after World War I. New Haven, Connecticut, for example, experienced minimal school segregation during the first three decades of the twentieth century; during those years, black students comprised less than 3.5 percent of the New Haven student population. Both Boston and Providence, each of which also received relatively few black migrants during the Great Migration, also retained racially mixed schools. In fact, the black population in Rhode Island increased only slightly during the 1910s and actually *declined* during the 1920s.⁵¹

Patterns of segregation were also less rigid in New York City even though many blacks did migrate there during and after World War I. In fact, New York City is somewhat unique among northern cities,

⁵¹ For New Haven, see Homel, "Two Worlds of Race?" p. 241; Warner, *New Haven Negroes*, pp. 275–8; Ment, "Racial Segregation in the Public Schools," pp. 275–6; for Boston, see Daniels, *In Freedom's Birthplace*, p. 188; for Providence, see Perlmann, *Ethnic Differences*, pp. 182–3; for the Rhode Island black population, see U.S. Bureau of Census, 1910, 1920, 1930.

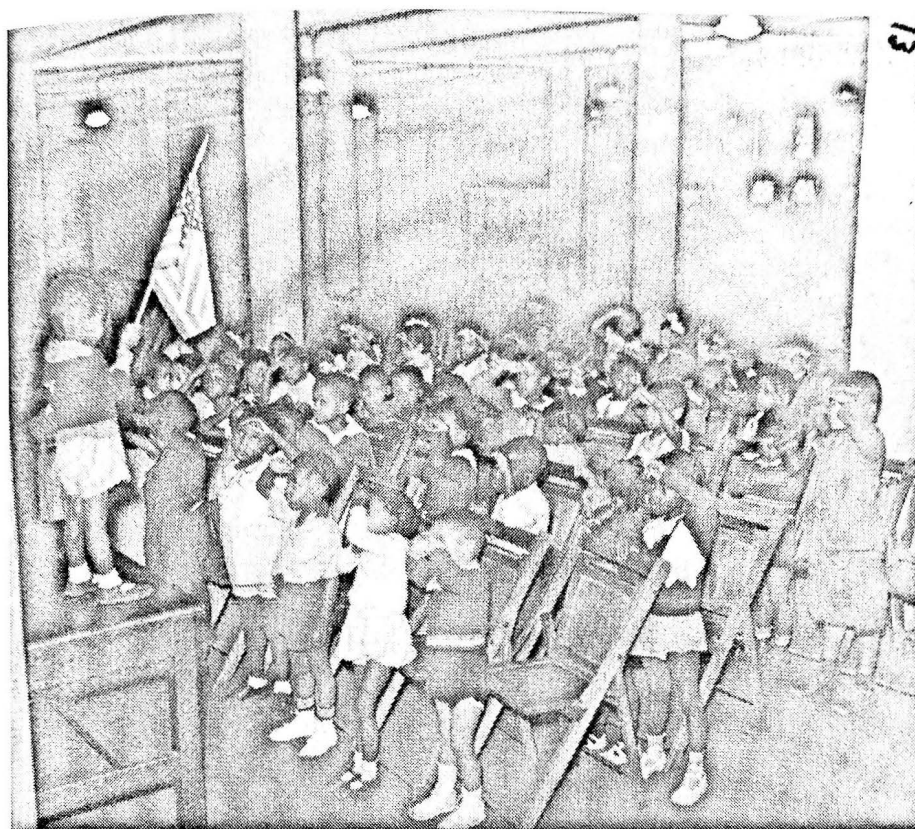


FIGURE 7 New York City school, 1930s. National Archives photo, no. 69-N-9597 (Works Progress Administration photo).

as it experienced a large black influx but generally declined to engage in deliberate efforts to segregate its schools during the 1910s and 1920s. A 1913 study of black education in New York City revealed that assignment patterns in the city's elementary schools were generally consistent with residential patterns. Another 1913 study found black students present in every school in the city. After World War I, black students in New York City were increasingly concentrated in certain schools due to residential segregation, but the NAACP made few claims of intentional segregation during the 1920s and 1930s and offered the New York City elementary schools as a model for other cities to emulate. Similarly, the biracial Mayor's Commission on Conditions in Harlem, appointed in 1935, made no mention of school segregation even though by 1934, Harlem had thirteen virtually all-black schools due to residential segregation. Alain Locke, upon reviewing the Mayor's Commission report, commented that "the comparative absence of racial discrimination in the school system is one of the bright features of the report." A 1939 report of the New York State Temporary Commission on the Condition of the Colored Urban Population, created by the state legislature, also found no intentional segregation

in New York City's elementary schools, although it did find that high school district lines had been gerrymandered in and around Harlem to preserve racial segregation.⁵²

In Indiana, the one northern state that expressly permitted school segregation by local option until the middle of the twentieth century, the number of racially separate schools sharply increased during the 1920s due to a variety of segregationist tactics. Indeed, by the 1930s, most of Indiana's larger cities had partial or complete school segregation, as did several smaller towns and cities, particularly in the southern counties of the state. Moreover, in 1935, the Indiana General Assembly took action in further support of school segregation. In 1907, the state legislature had provided for the closure of any public school with a daily average attendance of fewer than twelve students – a provision that led to integration in a few rural communities. In 1935, however, the legislature provided that that closure provision did not apply to separate black schools and ordered all school districts that had previously closed black schools pursuant to the 1907 statute to reopen them. As a federal judge later characterized the 1935 statute, the state legislature ordered local school authorities “to furnish a separate school building and teacher for the instruction of . . . one Negro child attending primary school rather than permit that child to attend a white school.” Despite the gross inefficiency of school segregation in certain areas, many Indiana school authorities retained their separate black schools. During the 1948–9 school year, for example, nine counties in Indiana averaged five or fewer students per grade in their separate black schools.⁵³

Indianapolis, though most of its black elementary schoolchildren had always attended racially separate schools, had never segregated its public high schools. In 1922, however, several white groups, including the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, petitioned the school board for the establishment of a separate black high school; thereafter, the board agreed to build such a school. The *Indianapolis Recorder*, a black newspaper, bemoaned the board's decision: “The Colored High School is to be a reality. Jim-Crowism is rapidly encroaching the colored citizens of Indianapolis. Color-phobia is rampant. First

⁵² For the first 1913 study, see Blascoer, *Colored School Children in New York*; for the second 1913 study, see Henri, *Black Migration*, p. 181; for New York schools after World War I, see Stern, “Jim Crow Goes to School in New York,” pp. 201–2; Ment, “Racial Segregation in the Public Schools,” pp. 228–9, 235–51; Thompson, “The Negro Separate School,” p. 242; Homel, “Two Worlds of Race?” p. 241. For the Locke quote, see Ment, “Racial Segregation in the Public Schools,” p. 245, n. 1.

⁵³ For the discussion of Indiana, see *United States v. Board of Commissioners*, 332 F. Supp. 655 (S.D. Ind. 1971) (quote, pp. 664–5); Reynolds, “The Challenge of Racial Equality,” p. 177.

came segregation in the theatres, department stores, and other public places. Next our own city park. Now . . . the Negroes' only weapon of defense has failed, the ballot. . . . Politicians no longer fear the wrath of the Negro vote."⁵⁴

As racial separation in northern public schools increased in response to the Great Migration, ignorance of the illegality of school segregation under state law remained widespread. One of the leading education texts of the period, Stanford Professor Ellwood Cubberley's *State and County Educational Reorganization*, published in 1914, noted that "[a]ny county or city school-district may also establish separate schools for children of the negro race, when there are enough to make such separate instruction advantageous," advice that ran directly contrary to the antisegregation legislation in most northern states. The same year, Cubberley wrote "an ideal state school code" that noted, again contrary to the law of most northern states, that school officials may set up separate schools for "defective, delinquent, or . . . negro" children. Finally, Cubberley erroneously advised local school districts that they could either provide separate secondary schools for their black students or else contract with a neighboring school district to educate them. Even the United States Bureau of Education displayed ignorance of the nineteenth-century antisegregation legislation. In a 1917 report, the Bureau made the preposterous claim that Pennsylvania and Illinois had "no law governing separation of the races in the public schools" – ignoring the fact that both of those states clearly prohibited school segregation by statute.⁵⁵

Reasons for the Increase in Northern School Segregation

This impetus toward increased school segregation in the early twentieth century had many causes. Central to white insistence on segregation was the influx of southern black children into northern school districts. Indeed, white insistence on school segregation was generally strongest in those cities that received the largest number of southern migrants and generally increased in proportion to the number of black children in the school district. A 1932 study of New Jersey schools, for example, found that when the black population in

⁵⁴ For Indianapolis segregation, see Thornbrough, "Segregation in Indiana," pp. 601–4; Williams and Ryan, *Schools in Transition*, p. 50. For the quote, see "Jim-Crow High School Reality, To Build in April," *Indianapolis Recorder*, Nov. 29, 1924, in NAACP Papers, Box I-D-58.

⁵⁵ For the first quote, see Cubberley, *State and County Educational Reorganization*, pp. 83–4; for the second quote, see *ibid.*, p. 4; for erroneous advice, see *ibid.*, pp. 83–4. For the final quote, see Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, *Negro Education*, pp. 677, 683, 688.

a given community reached 10 percent, pressure to segregate black children substantially increased.⁵⁶

Many white principals, teachers, and school boards justified school segregation on the grounds that the newly arrived southern migrant children were not equipped to engage in studies alongside white children because of their poor educational backgrounds. In the South, black children had typically attended school for only a few months a year, and the quality of southern black education was vastly inferior to that available in most northern schools. The Chicago Commission on Race Relations concluded in 1922 that "the great majority of the retarded Negro children were from southern states" and that their retardation was due in significant measure to their poor educational backgrounds. A 1926 survey of the Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research also found that most black children who had fallen behind their grade level were migrant children with inferior educational backgrounds.⁵⁷

As a result of their educational deficiencies, many black children were placed in classrooms in which they were considerably older than their peers. These age gaps, coupled with cultural differences, produced socialization problems that adversely affected the attitudes of white school administrators toward the migrant children. Black sociologist Charles Johnson reported in 1932 that when southern black children "come into northern schools . . . the usual problems of overage children develop. Truancy, delinquency and incorrigibility are expressions of this and require special and concerted efforts to correct."⁵⁸

Under the best of circumstances, the assimilation of poorly educated southern black children into northern schools would have required patience and care from teachers, most of whom were white. But many white teachers were neither prepared nor willing to assist these students in making the necessary adjustment to their new school. Instead, the limited academic preparation of the southern migrant children gave way to racist stereotypes about the deficiencies of

⁵⁶ For white insistence on segregation, see Henri, *Black Migration*, p. 182; Kennedy, *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward*, p. 193; for the New Jersey study, see Wright, *The Education of Negroes*, p. 192.

⁵⁷ For justifications of segregation, see Spear, *Black Chicago*, p. 204; Woofter, *Negro Problems in Cities* pp. 175-6; "The Segregation of Negro Children at Toms River, N.J.," *School and Society* 365 (Mar. 26, 1927); Meier and Rudwick, "Early Boycotts of Segregated Schools: The East Orange, New Jersey, Experience," pp. 23-4; Johnson, *The Negro in American Civilization*, p. 270; Kennedy, *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward*, pp. 196-8; Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago*, pp. 239, 256 (quote, p. 260). For Detroit survey, see Kennedy, *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward*, p. 199.

⁵⁸ For socialization problems, see Mosey, "Testing, Tracking, and Curriculum," p. 64; for the Johnson quote, see C. S. Johnson, "The Need of Social Work in Cities - in the North," January 30, 1932, p. 4, Johnson Papers, Box 166, Folder 16.

African Americans. Many white administrators openly urged school segregation, notwithstanding state laws that prohibited such action.

For example, a survey of educational attitudes among New Jersey school superintendents found widespread support for segregation. The superintendent of Trenton schools explained his support in 1927: "The problem of retardation is more serious among colored children than among any other racial group. I am inclined to believe that the further extension of segregation . . . is the only real practical solution." Philadelphia's school superintendent also urged separate schools in the early twentieth century: "[Segregation] has given to the colored child better opportunity to move at its [sic] own rate of progress through the materials of the curriculum, which rate of progress is in some respects different from the rate of progress of other children."⁵⁹

At the same time, many northern white teachers preferred school segregation. In a 1921 survey in Columbus, Ohio, 115 out of 130 school teachers reported that they favored school segregation. A majority of these teachers stated that black children were "backward" and impeded the progress of white children. Many of these teachers also believed that black children were inherently inferior to white children. When asked about the wisdom of racial mixing, one Columbus high school teacher remarked that "their capacities are not the same, thus one retards the possible progress of the other." Another Columbus school teacher commented that "[t]he very make-up of the races are different, and one race is repulsive to the other. Thus the teacher if she be of the white race cannot and will not give the attention to the negro that he should have."⁶⁰

Other northern educators shared these views. The assistant principal of a predominantly black school in Buffalo commented that "other children should not be mixed-up with the colored as their standard of morals is so much lower." In Gary, Indiana, most of the white teachers in a racially integrated school (but with segregated classrooms) petitioned their principal in 1918 to remove the black children from their school: "The promiscuous association of the white and colored pupils is a terrible thing. It should not be allowed, particularly in a school with a large number of foreign pupils. They will soon lose sight of the color line." The Gary teachers also complained that black children posed discipline problems due to their poor educational

⁵⁹ For racial stereotypes, see Frazier, *The Negro in the United States*, pp. 440-1; for the New Jersey survey, see *Report of the New Jersey State Temporary Commission*, pp. 38-42. For the Trenton superintendent quote, see Payne, "Negroes in the Public Elementary Schools," p. 230; for the Philadelphia superintendent quote, see Tyack, *The One Best System*, p. 227.

⁶⁰ Harshman, "Race Contact in Columbus," pp. 19-20.

backgrounds and the age disparity between many black and white children.⁶¹

Many white education scholars argued that black children would fare better in separate schools under the tutelage of black teachers.⁶² Louis A. Pechstein, dean of the University of Cincinnati School of Education and a prominent northern white educator, wrote in 1929: "While all would prefer to have democracy in education, this goal has not been reached and is not likely to be reached in the northern cities studied, since the separation of the races in all walks of life is operating and seems likely to continue. . . . [T]he ideal separate public school for negroes in northern cities will, under a staff of well-trained negro teachers, function in providing a closer parent-pupil-teacher relation as well as a clearer insight into the treatment of mental deficiency, social maladjustments, special disabilities, and irregularities in behavior."⁶³

Many northern school officials were blatantly racist in their resistance to pupil integration, arguing that black children were inherently inferior and not fit to associate with white children. A white principal in Atlantic City, New Jersey, explained his support for school segregation: "I believe in segregation. . . . [Black children] are like little animals. There is no civilization in their homes. They shouldn't hold up white children who have had these things for centuries. They are not as clean. They are careless about their bodies. Why should we contaminate our race?" Another white school principal in Toms River, New Jersey, dismissed an objection by black parents to the midyear removal of thirty black students from their racially mixed school to a poorly equipped church: "I've just returned from a trip to Texas, and, believe me, they know how to treat colored people down there. . . . Why, if these people had done in Texas what they've done here, or had done it in any of the Southern states, they'd have been lynched. They would have gone to whatever school the whites told them to and be mighty glad to have the chance." The president of the Westhampton Township, New Jersey, Board of Education announced in 1939 that "[o]ur plan is to have a separate school for colored children from the first grade through high school. The reason is because the colored children are objectionable." Not surprisingly, many black leaders called New Jersey the "Mississippi of the north."⁶⁴

⁶¹ For the Buffalo quote, see Mosey, "Testing, Tracking, and Curriculum," p. 63; for the Gary discussion and quote, see Cohen, *Children of the Mill*, p. 69.

⁶² Frazier, *The Negro in the United States*, p. 441.

⁶³ Pechstein, "The Problem of Negro Education," pp. 197-8.

⁶⁴ For the Atlantic City quote, see Johnson, *Background to Patterns of Negro Segregation*, p. 198; for the Toms River quote, see Wilson, "Citizens Protest to Governor," *Pittsburgh*

Such racist attitudes were prevalent among school administrators in other parts of the North as well. In Madison, Indiana, one student recalled the white school superintendent visiting his black school: “[He talked] to us like we were just something that came in from darkest Africa or somewhere. He told us that we were worthless, dumb, that we couldn’t learn anything, that we would never learn. I will never forget it.” Upon hearing a white student comment that “if Negroes should ever try to enroll in our school, we’ll get machine guns and see that they leave as quick as they came,” a white principal in Gary replied: “I wouldn’t blame them either, might even help them.”⁶⁵

Many white parents also opposed school integration. When a teacher in Flushing, New York, in 1911 required a white girl to dance with a black boy, provoking taunts from her white classmates that she was a “nigger’s partner,” white parents demanded a return to separate schools. A 1921 study in Columbus, Ohio, found that a majority of white parents surveyed objected to racially mixed schools on the grounds that black children were backward and that their presence in the classroom retarded white children in their school work. Such parental attitudes were widespread. One white man in Gary urged school segregation: “After all, they came from Africa quite recently, and as slaves at that. They have no tradition of civilization and education as we have. . . . They are still dirty, lazy, loud and not too pleasant to have living nearby.”⁶⁶

Many white students also expressed strong opposition to the presence of black children in their classrooms. White high school students in Cincinnati engaged in an unsuccessful strike to exclude their black classmates in 1916. In 1919, white students in Gallipolis, Ohio, conducted a boycott to protest a court decision that black children could not be excluded from their school. White high school students in Darby, Pennsylvania, unsuccessfully protested the announcement of a black student as their valedictorian in 1924 and threatened to hold separate commencement exercises. White students in Gary engaged in a massive walkout in 1927 when a few black students were assigned to their school; eventually, school authorities did reassign most of the

Courier, Apr. 2, 1927, p. 1; for the Westhampton quote, see *Report of the New Jersey State Temporary Commission*, p. 41; for the Mississippi quote, see Morse, “New Jersey, New Laboratory in Race Relations,” p. 156. The *New Jersey Herald News* reported in 1941 that white teachers in Trenton “have a reputation for gross prejudice against colored children.” “Little Hitlers in School System,” *New Jersey Herald News*, Feb. 22, 1941, p. 8.

⁶⁵ For the Madison quote, see Wallis, *All We Had Was Each Other*, p. 65; for the Gary quote, see Tipton, *Community in Crisis*, p. 99.

⁶⁶ For Flushing, see “To Demand Separate Schools for Negroes,” *New York Times*, Jan. 18, 1911, p. 3; for the Columbus study, see Harshman, “Race Contact in Columbus,” pp. 16–18; for the Gary quote, see Tipton, *Community in Crisis*, p. 16.

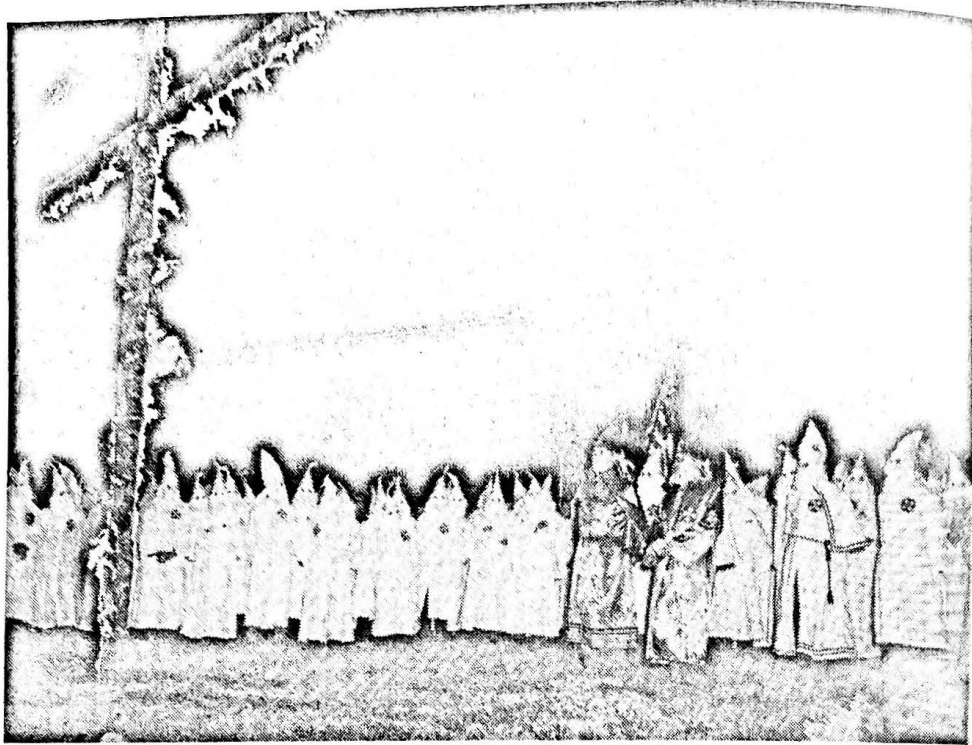


FIGURE 8 Ku Klux Klan cross burning, Indianapolis, 1920s. Reprinted with permission of the Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis Recorder Collection, P0303, Box 81, Folder 14.

black students to another school. To be sure, some northern white students did oppose racial segregation, particularly when the numbers of black children were quite small. In 1929, more than 400 white students in Dorchester, Massachusetts, refused to hold their high school prom at a hotel that announced that it would exclude the school's sole black student.⁶⁷

Moreover, the Ku Klux Klan experienced a striking resurgence throughout much of the North and West during the 1920s and 1930s that led to increased pressure for school segregation. In many northern communities, newly energized Klan groups pressured school officials to establish or maintain segregated schools. The Grand Dragon of the Indiana Klan urged support in 1924 for a variety of positions including "White American supremacy and the segregating of Negroes, especially in schools." Klan support contributed to the establishment of

⁶⁷ For the Cincinnati strike, see "No Racial Lines for Cincinnati Schools," *New York Age*, Feb. 3, 1916, p. 1; for the Gallipolis boycott, see "Court Refuses to Stand for Segregation in Public Schools," *Colorado Statesman*, Jan. 25, 1919, in NAACP Papers, Box I-C-405; for the Darby protest, see *Cleveland Gazette*, July 26, 1924, p. 2; for the Gary walkout, see Betten and Mohl, "The Evolution of Racism," p. 55; for the Dorchester prom, see "400 White Hi Grads Loyal," *Cleveland Gazette*, July 27, 1929, p. 2.

the first segregated high school in Indianapolis. In Ohio, the Klan waged a public campaign for both school segregation and a ban on interracial marriage throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. George McCord, superintendent of the Springfield, Ohio, schools during that city's reestablishment of segregated schools during the early 1920s, along with two members of the local school board, were Klan members. The Columbus, New Jersey, school superintendent during the 1920s was also a local Klan leader. In 1922, the rare hiring of a black teacher to teach white children in Hackensack, New Jersey, prompted a Ku Klux Klan parade in opposition and a barrage of threats. Similarly, in 1936, the Klan threatened to intervene in a school segregation dispute in East Orange, New Jersey. The Oregon Klan used death threats to drive the only black resident out of Oregon City and threatened blacks who moved into white neighborhoods in Portland.⁶⁸

At the same time, many educational theorists of the 1920s urged a "scientific basis for educational policy" that included ability groupings, intelligence tests, and a differentiated curriculum for slower learners. White educators used intelligence testing, which became increasingly popular during the 1910s, to support their notions of the intellectual inferiority of blacks and to justify school segregation. Indeed, African Americans migrated north in large numbers at a time when prevailing social science described blacks as a "social problem" and many educational researchers made scientific claims of black intellectual inferiority. For example, Lewis Terman, a prominent professor of psychology at Stanford and an important figure in the eugenics movement, concluded in an influential 1916 book, *The Measurement of Intelligence*, that low levels of intelligence were "very, very common among Spanish-Indian and Mexican families of the Southwest and also among negroes" and that these deficiencies were "racial, or at least inherent in the family stocks from which they come." Terman also believed that intelligence tests could be used to forecast a child's later station in

⁶⁸ For resurgence of the Klan, see Trotter, *River Jordan*, p. 105; for the Indiana quote, see Proclamation of Grand Dragon of Ku Klux Klan, Realm of Indiana, Nov. 1924, NAACP Papers, Box I-G-63; for the Klan in Indianapolis, see Press Release, "N.A.A.C.P. Contributes \$200 to Fight Indianapolis School Segregation," Mar. 20, 1925, NAACP Papers, Box I-D-58; for the Klan in Ohio, see "Kluxers Out in the Open," *Cleveland Gazette*, Oct. 3, 1931, p. 1; *Cleveland Gazette*, Feb. 21, 1925, p. 2; "The Dayton School Fight," *Cleveland Gazette*, June 20, 1925, p. 2; "Ku Klux Klan Victory!" *Cleveland Gazette*, June 13, 1925, p. 2; for the Klan in New Jersey, see Moore, "Full Citizenship in New Jersey," p. 272; Morrow, *Way Down South Up North*, pp. 94-5; "Black Legion Shows Hand in New Jersey School Teacher Campaign," *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, Aug. 22, 1936, p. 10; for the Klan in Oregon, see McLagan, *A Peculiar Paradise*, pp. 138-40.

life, which would "be of great value . . . in planning the differentiated curriculum here recommended."⁶⁹

The wartime intelligence tests given to Army recruits provided further fodder for those who believed in the intellectual inferiority of black children, as the scores of white soldiers were, on average, higher than the scores of black soldiers. Many white psychologists concluded that the lower test scores of certain racial and ethnic group members were due to their inherent inferiority. For example, University of Oregon psychologist Kimball Young, a protege of Lewis Terman, concluded that the poorer test results of Latin American and southern European children were due to a "considerable negroid strain" in their population and that "amalgamation of inferior with average and superior" groups must be avoided. Schools were encouraged to separate children accordingly.⁷⁰

Black scholars attacked this reliance on intelligence testing to justify school segregation. *Opportunity*, the journal of the National Urban League, emerged as a leading voice of black scholars during the 1920s, including Horace Mann Bond, E. Franklin Frazier, Howard H. Long, Ira de A. Reid, Alain Locke, Joseph St. Clair Price, and Charles Johnson, the last of whom served as the publication's editor from 1925 until 1928. *Opportunity* published a number of articles attacking the use of intelligence testing to suggest that black children were intellectually inferior. Johnson published a major critique of the Army intelligence testing in 1923, arguing that the tests did not support a theory of inherent black inferiority, but rather demonstrated that blacks had had poorer educational opportunities. Johnson noted that black recruits from northern states, on average, scored significantly higher than did white recruits from southern states due to better educational opportunities in northern schools. In another article in *Opportunity*, Long concluded that "extreme advocates of race superiority who are also devotees of mental tests" would "be put to their wit's end" in trying to harmonize their point of view with "the state of affairs revealed by the army tests."⁷¹

⁶⁹ For the use of intelligence tests, see Priest, "A Historical Study of the Royal Elementary School," p. 39; Du Bois, "Literacy Tests in the Army," p. 86; for claims of black inferiority, see Tyack, *The One Best System*, p. 217. For the first Terman quote, see Terman, *The Measurement of Intelligence*, p. 91; for the second quote, see Terman, et al., *Intelligence Tests and School Reorganization*, p. 28.

⁷⁰ For psychologist views, see Thomas, "Black Intellectuals," p. 477; for Young's views, see Hendrick, *The Education of Non-Whites*, p. 88; Mosey, "Testing, Tracking, and Curriculum," p. 23.

⁷¹ For *Opportunity*, see Fultz, "'Agitate Then, Brother,'" pp. 213-14; for Johnson's views, see Johnson, "Mental Measurements of Negro Groups," pp. 21-5; for the Long quote, see Long, "Race and Mental Tests," p. 28.

In fact, in some northern states, such as Ohio, black recruits scored on average higher than white recruits from almost every southern state. As one contemporary noted sarcastically: "A [white] southerner can still boast of being above a 'n-r,' as long as he is certain that the latter is not a New York or Ohio Negro." Black educator Horace Mann Bond conducted a study of the Army intelligence tests, correlating the test results with various educational data such as teachers' salaries, state funding, length of the school term, and school attendance. Bond concluded: "the indisputable truth [is] that Alpha [the Army test] measures environment, and not native and inherent capacity. Instead of furnishing the material for racial propagandists and agitators, it should show the sad deficiency of opportunity which is the lot of every child, white or black, whose misfortune it is to be born and reared in a community backward and reactionary in cultural and educational avenues of expression."⁷²

Other contemporary data supported the view that educational success was influenced significantly by educational opportunity. A study of Chicago schoolchildren in 1920 found "relatively little difference between the reading accomplishments of . . . [Chicago-born] colored pupils and white pupils who have had the advantages of the same method of instruction and environment." This same report, however, found that the reading scores of southern black migrant children were considerably lower than those of both whites and blacks born in Chicago. Subsequent tests would also show the effect of cultural factors such as educational opportunities and parents' vocation on pupils' achievement test scores.⁷³

Some white psychologists rejected the notion that differing educational opportunities accounted for the differences between northern and southern black intelligence scores. When confronted with the sharp variations in test results between southern and northern blacks, Princeton's Carl Brigham in his 1922 analysis of the World War I Army intelligence test data, *A Study of American Intelligence*, claimed, with no apparent support, that the higher scores of northern blacks were due

⁷² For black recruit scores, see C. S. Johnson, "Mr. Waring and the Lonely Crowd," Jan. 10, 1954, p. 6, Johnson Papers, Box 166, Folder 10; for the "boast" quote, see "Boasted 'Bunk,'" *Cleveland Gazette*, Dec. 8, 1923, p. 1 (reprint of an article in *Pearson's Magazine* by Herbert Alexander); for the Bond quote, see Bond, "What the Army 'Intelligence' Tests Measured," p. 201.

⁷³ For the Chicago study, see Daniel, "A History of Discrimination Against Black Students," p. 151. The 1922 Chicago Commission on Race Relations, charged with investigating the 1919 riot, found that "Negro children born in the North had, as a rule, no higher rate of retardation" than white children. Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago*, p. 261. For other tests, see Thomas, "Black Intellectuals," pp. 482-5.

in part to their "admixture of white blood" and that "the more intelligent negro" had migrated north. Brigham dismissed the notion that the dramatic differences in educational opportunities between North and South could fully explain the test score differences.⁷⁴

But many other psychologists during the 1920s and 1930s challenged this notion of black inferiority. In fact, during this period, social scientists increasingly argued that culture and environment were largely responsible for observable differences between social groups. Sociologists Franz Boas, E. Franklin Frazier, Robert Park, and Edward Reuter would be particularly influential in their assault on widely held assumptions that the poor social outcomes of many blacks were due to innate inferiority. For example, in 1927, Reuter, a University of Iowa sociologist, published a book, *The American Race Problem*, in which he concluded that the intelligence test score gap was due not to "any innate intellectual difference" between whites and blacks but to "a difference in education and in educational opportunity."⁷⁵

Moreover, during the 1930s, Columbia University psychologist Otto Klineberg found that blacks who migrated north were no more intelligent than those who remained behind, but that their length of residence in the North did positively influence their test scores – confirming the positive impact of superior northern education. Klineberg's *Race Differences*, published in 1935, found no compelling evidence of inherent race differences and concluded that social and cultural environment accounted for test scores differences. In particular, Klineberg, who administered intelligence test scores to more than 3,000 Harlem blacks, found that the longer southern-born black children remained in the North, the higher their intelligence scores were. Klineberg would later offer testimony in one of the cases that comprised *Brown v. Board of Education* that blacks had the same learning abilities as whites. Other studies supported Klineberg's conclusions. For example, studies of children in Los Angeles during the early 1930s found that black students had slightly higher IQs than white students; contemporaneous studies in New York City found the test scores of the two racial groups to be roughly equivalent.⁷⁶

At the same time that many northern white educators insisted on separate schooling for African Americans, assimilation of white

⁷⁴ Brigham, *A Study of American Intelligence*, p. 192.

⁷⁵ For social scientists, see Scott, *Contempt and Pity*, pp. 19–70; for the Reuter quote, see Reuter, *The American Race Problem*, p. 89.

⁷⁶ For Klineberg, see Klineberg, "The Question of Negro Intelligence," pp. 361–7; Klineberg, *Race Differences*, pp. 184–9; Pettigrew, *Negro American Intelligence*, p. 18; Kluger, *Simple Justice*, p. 439. For other studies see Klineberg, *Race Differences*, pp. 183, 185–9; Hendrick, *The Education of Non-Whites*, p. 89.

immigrant children remained a central imperative of contemporary educational theory. Though many white immigrant children came from poor backgrounds, experienced dismal living conditions, and spoke no English, white administrators and teachers were generally confident in the ability of the public school to assimilate them. They deplored the isolation of white ethnic groups in their own neighborhoods and communities and urged assimilation into the American mainstream. As one New York educator noted: "In a commonwealth such as the United States social inequalities are largely the result of difference in up-bringing, and to this extent the problem of assimilation is one of *education* in the broadest sense of the word. In all progressive communities the school is recognized as the chief instrument of socialization and civilization." Although this assimilationist perspective played a central role in urban educational theory in the early twentieth century, in many northern communities it did not include the black southern migrant.⁷⁷

Curricular Variations for White and Black Children

In addition to school segregation, many northern white school authorities during the first four decades of the twentieth century urged separate "tracks" for black (and, in some instances, certain immigrant) children with different curricula on the grounds that they were intellectually ill-equipped to engage in rigorous academic study. Proponents of separate tracks also argued that the reality of employment discrimination rendered certain educational pursuits superfluous for black children. This sorting out of students into separate tracks, an early twentieth-century educational innovation, frequently placed black students in the lowest curricular levels. In many school districts, such as that of Buffalo, psychological and intelligence tests were used during and after World War I for the purpose of placing certain students – typically black children who had recently migrated from the South – in dead-end special classes or schools that emphasized low-skill training, such as broom- and rug-making. Black girls in Buffalo were frequently placed in the Domestic Arts Curriculum, which the director described in 1926: "The girls, most of them Negro and many of them strangers to our gates, are divided into small working groups. . . . The actual sewing is but a medium for putting over much necessary instruction in hygiene of person and clothing and worthy home membership." Another school administrator described these special programs as designed to teach children "habits of industry,

⁷⁷ For the quote, see Tyack, *The One Best System*, p. 233.

accuracy, promptness, loyalty to superiors, obedience, courtesy, patience, respect for the rights of others and care of equipment." Preparing black children to assume a particular social and economic role in society emerged as an important educational goal in many northern school districts during the 1920s. Many immigrant children from southern and eastern Europe also landed in these separate tracks.⁷⁸

Many of these vocational schools tended to be in dismal condition. Buffalo's vocational school for black children was housed in a building that had been closed in 1918 due to "intolerable conditions." A 1931 United States Office of Education survey of the Buffalo schools found in the city's "development" school "loose and broken boards on landings, dark corners with no means of lighting and an old, inefficient boiler system. Loose plaster threatened the safety of children and the lavatory arrangements were totally unsanitary and unworthy of any modern school system."⁷⁹

Other northern cities followed similar patterns. In Cleveland, school administrators reduced elective courses such as foreign languages in black schools during the 1920s and increased vocational courses such as cooking, sewing, and manual shop work. A 1933 study found that in the predominantly black Central High School in Cleveland, the majority of students studied no math, and home economics courses placed primary emphasis on laundry procedures. In Providence, Rhode Island, the percentage of black students at the city's Technical High School, which provided basic vocational training, sharply increased between 1915 and 1925. As historian Joel Perlmann has noted, "by 1925, when the Tech program had become clearly identified as the less academically elite and less socially elite program, and the more likely to prepare students for manual work, black males were concentrated there." Black girls were also concentrated in the Tech program, where they were taught cooking and sewing rather than typing and stenography.⁸⁰

By the same token, black children were frequently excluded from those technical schools that provided training for skilled labor

⁷⁸ For the discussion of tracks, see Tyack, *The One Best System*, p. 221; for the discussion of Buffalo vocational education, see Thomas, "Urban Schooling for Black Migrant Youth," p. 282. For the first quote, see Mosey, "Testing, Tracking, and Curriculum," pp. 65, 68-71, 76-7; for the second quote, see *ibid.*, p. 72 (quoting Principal James Farrell).

⁷⁹ For Buffalo vocational education, see Mosey, "Testing, Tracking, and Curriculum," p. 66; for the Survey quote, see *ibid.*, pp. 91-2.

⁸⁰ For Cleveland, see Homel, "Two Worlds of Race?" p. 252; Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*, pp. 182-4; Lieberman, *A Piece of the Pie*, pp. 236-7; Mosey, "Testing, Tracking, and Curriculum," pp. 28-9. For the Perlmann quote, see Perlmann, *Ethnic Differences*, p. 183.

positions. Such exclusions were justified in part on the grounds that skilled labor jobs would not be available to black workers. Buffalo was one such city. Members of the Buffalo Board of Education concluded that vocational education in skilled trades made no sense for black students because no employer would hire them. Accordingly, the Buffalo Technical High School, which offered training in skilled trades and which was located across the street from a black school, had only 10 black students out of 1,400 in 1923. During the 1930s, black students in Buffalo were not allowed to attend classes in aircraft construction because the Curtiss-Wright and Bell Aircraft Corporations publicly announced that they did not employ black workers. The Buffalo Urban League, noting the discrimination among Buffalo's labor unions, reported in 1939: "The complete absence of Negroes in the vocational schools was striking. Vocational instruction, undoubtedly, holds the greatest opportunity for the minority race in the community to improve their social position." In Cleveland, the school board operated a trade school to train the city's youth for skilled labor positions. Local unions, however, controlled admission to the program, which led to the exclusion of most black children from the school. This racial discrimination continued until at least the mid-1950s; in 1956, the local school board finally adopted a policy of nondiscrimination for the trade school.⁸¹

Blacks confronted barriers to vocational training for skilled labor positions in New York City as well. The Mayor's Commission on Conditions in Harlem found in its 1936 report extensive channeling of black students into low-skill vocational courses, such as domestic science, while discouraging enrollment in academic courses or high-skill vocational courses. The Mayor's Commission explained: "These [school] advisers, often reflecting the traditional belief concerning the capacity of the Negro for purely academic pursuits, direct these girls into vocational courses. But there are restrictions concerning vocational courses. These educational advisers discourage the Negro girls from taking the commercial courses on the ground that opportunities are not open to Negro girls in the commercial field." In 1933, a counselor at the Girls' High School in Brooklyn discouraged a black girl from taking courses that would prepare her to study medicine, stating erroneously that "they weren't allowing Negroes to study medicine." The Mayor's Commission found that school authorities placed many black girls in the "dumping ground" of the Harlem annex to the Straubmuller Textile High School, where there were no

⁸¹ For Buffalo, see Thomas, "Urban Schooling for Black Migrant Youth," pp. 276-81 (quote, p. 281); Mosey, "Testing, Tracking, and Curriculum," pp. 106-8; for Cleveland, see Moore, "The Limits of Black Power," pp. 61-3.

facilities for training in meaningful work, and excluded black boys from "real vocational training" at the Manhattan Trade School for Boys. The Commission blamed this exclusion in part "on the principals who make the selection and partly on the American Federation of Labor's policies in regard to the Negro in certain trades." The 1939 report of the New York State Temporary Commission on the Condition of the Colored Urban Population concluded that school officials, encouraged by trade union discrimination, shunted black students into courses with limited vocational opportunities. As one city official conceded: "Let's not mince words; let's be practical about this matter; the Negro is not employed in certain trades, so why permit him to waste his time taking such courses." The Mayor's Commission indicted the policy as "narrow in outlook and vicious in consequence. It is the completion of a vicious cycle in that Negroes cannot find jobs without training and they are refused training because they might not be able to find the jobs."⁸²

Blacks understood the effects of these exclusions. An investigator in New York reported that the exclusion of black children from skilled vocational training programs "was sapping the ambition of colored boys and girls, and that they were not making the effort put out by their parents and grandparents to secure an education." A 1940 study of black high school graduates found that the more education black persons received, the more job dissatisfaction they experienced because so many higher-level jobs were foreclosed to blacks.⁸³

African Americans had made substantial strides toward full inclusion in the public education systems of the North during the late nineteenth century, but the migration of hundreds of thousands of southern blacks into northern cities during the early twentieth century provoked renewed white insistence on racial separation in much of the North. Stung by this growing web of racial separation, the northern black community divided on the appropriate response. The 1920s and 1930s would bring the greatest turmoil around the issue of northern school segregation since Reconstruction.

⁸² For vocational schools in New York City, see Stern, "Jim Crow Goes to School in New York," p. 202; Ment, "Racial Segregation in the Public Schools," pp. 251-2 (first quote, *ibid.*, p. 252; second quote, *ibid.*, p. 250; third quote, *ibid.*, p. 253; fourth and fifth quotes, *ibid.*, p. 254).

⁸³ Quote in Blascoer, *Colored School Children in New York*, pp. 18-19; 1940 study in Tyack, *The One Best System*, p. 222.