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Campbell, J.

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BY: CAMPBELL, J.

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CHAPTER FIVE

"THE SEED YOU SOW IN AFRICA:" SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Each year an increasing number of young men and women are sent from Africa, at the expense of the American Methodist Episcopalian body, to study in the negro universities of the United States. There they obtain a superficial veneer of knowledge, while breathing the atmosphere of race hatred which pervades these so-called seats of learning.

After the attainment of a more or less worthless degree, these students return to their own country to preach, with all the enthusiasm of youth and the obstinate conviction of the half-taught mind, a gospel usually far more political than religious.

A European missionary[1]

During the early years of the twentieth century, white South Africans levelled every variety of charge against the AME Church. The church was blamed for the Bambatha rebellion in Natal, the shortage of farm labor in the Free State and Transvaal, the fractious behavior of chiefs from Pondoland to Barotseland, and for an increase in "native insolence" across the region. Nothing so exercised white observers, however, as the spectacle of the church dispatching guileless young "natives" off to the United States for education. Dozens of missionaries and colonial officials commented on the American exodus in their testimony to the 1903-05 South African Native Affairs Commission, advancing grim prophecies of

[1]"The Menace of Ethiopianism," undated clipping from *Chambers Journal*, ca. 1904-05. Copy Grant scrapbook, Papers of the Archbishop of Cape Town, University of the Witwatersrand Archives.

what would happen when these "fanatical" and "half taught" students were turned loose among their "impressionable," "raw" countrymen. The Commission report, while at pains to debunk most of the rumors about the AME Church, accepted the need to stem the overseas traffic, and recommended the creation of a local African college. The result, twelve years and several commissions later, was the 'Inter-State Native College' at Fort Hare. A Free Church missionary, addressing the Nyasaland Legislative Council in the wake of the Chilembwe rebellion, compressed the school's rationale into a single sentence: "...the Governments of the different States had been compelled in self-defence to found an inter-state college for the higher education of natives as the best preventative of their going to America in search of it, and too often coming back with notions which were not suited for South Africa."[2]

Who were the students who travelled to America? What "notions" did they absorb there, and how were these suited or unsuited for colonial Africa? While little work has been done specifically on South African students, the movement of students from Africa to the United States has occasioned a substantial literature. Broadly speaking, historians have advanced two contrary hypotheses: that exposure to America was a radicalizing experience; or that it was a moderating one. Both hypotheses have usually been advanced by multiplying cases. Historians of the 'radicalizing' school cite American-educated nationalist leaders like Nmande Azikwe of Nigeria and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Nyasaland rebel John Chilembwe, and Hastings Banda, Chilembwe's countryman and first President of the independent state of Malawi. The stock figure

[2]*South African Native Affairs Commission* [*SANAC*] , 1903-1905, 5 vols. (Cape Town, 1904-05); *Report of the Select Committee on Native Education* (Cape Town, 1908). See also K.A. Hobart Houghton, *Native Higher Education* (Lovedale, n.d.); and *Africa's Golden Harvests: The Organ of the South African Compound and Interior Mission* 4,2 (1908), pp. 12-14. Dr. Robert Laws, quoted in George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Nyasaland Rising of 1915* (Edinburgh, 1958), p. 366. Chilembwe was an American-trained missionary who led a brief but bloody uprising against British rule shortly after the outbreak of World War I.

on the other side of the balance is James Aggrey of the Gold Coast, an educator, missionary, and apostle of "racial cooperation." Individuals like John Dube, the first President of the South African Native National Congress and self-proclaimed "Booker T. Washington of South Africa," have been made to serve double duty, depending on the predilections of particular historians.[3]

The one book length study of the educational traffic, Richard Ralston's "A Second Middle Passage," attempts a kind of synthesis by periodizing the educational trade, from its pre-1903 'religionist' phase to a post-World War I 'revolutionist' or nationalist phase. Yet even assuming the merits of the periodization (which, at least in the South African case, is problematic), Ralston's work shares the flaws characteristic of this literature, and indeed of much of African studies: the impulse to generalize on a continental scale; the reliance on 'paradigmatic' figures and overly stark dichotomies; the tendency to privilege the political; and the related tendency to compress individual consciousness into *a priori* categories like 'nationalism' and 'accommodation.' Equally seriously, Ralston's work focuses almost exclusively on the careers of the returned students,

[3]The literature is scattered but voluminous. The most thoughtful exposition is in Kenneth J. King's *Pan-Africanism and Education: A Study of Race Philanthropy and Education in the Southern States of America and East Africa* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 212-251. See also Shepperson and Price,*Independent African* ; R. Hunt Davis, "The Black American Education Component in African Responses to Colonialism in South Africa: (ca. 1890-1914)," *Journal of Southern African Affairs* 3,1 (1978); Walter L. Williams, *Black Americans and the Evangelization of Africa, 1877-1900* (Madison, 1982), pp. 141-160, 191-193; Edwin W. Smith, *Aggrey of Africa: A Study in Black and White* (New York, 1929); Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The Making of Malawi anc Zambia, 1873-1964* (Cambridge, MA, 1965), pp. 76-92, ff; Thomas C. Howard, "Black American Missionary Influence on the Origins of University Education in West Africa," in Sylvia Jacobs (ed.), *Black Americans and the Missionary Movement in Africa* (Westport, CT, 1982); and J.A. Sofola, *Dynamism in African Leadership: The American Influence* (Ibadan, 1981). On Dube, see William Manning Marable, "African Nationalist: The Life of John Langalibalele Dube," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maryland, 1976; R. Hunt Davis, "John L. Dube: A South African Exponent of Booker T. Washington," *Journal of African Studies* 2,4 (1975-76); and Shula Marks, "John Dube and the Ambiguities of Nationalism," in *The Ambiguities of Dependance in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth Century Natal* (Johannesburg, 1986)

taking both their early backgrounds and their experiences in the United States more or less as read. Without knowing who went to America or what they encountered there, we remain unable to explain *why* exposure to the United States produced the effects imputed to it, even if we could agree what those effects were.[4]

This chapter attempts to redress some of these deficiencies by examining the social origins, American experiences, and subsequent careers of about three dozen South Africans who studied in the United States under the auspices of the AME Church between 1894 and 1914. While small in numbers, this group was to have a profound impact on the AME Church's subsequent history in South Africa; virtually an entire generation of church leadership, including the first African-born AME Bishop, was recruited from its ranks. A number of these students also went on to play significant roles in the broader political and educational history of South Africa. While their experiences do not exhaust the range of meanings of American education, they do provide a vantage for examining some of the psychological, cultural, and political meanings of the "trans-Atlantic connection."

1. Social Origins

The AME-sponsored students were part of a century-long educational migration between Africa and the United States. In fact, the first blacks to matriculate at an American college were Africans: Bristol Yamma and John Quamine, two Gold Coast sailors, enrolled at the College of New Jersey (Princeton) in 1774. Their enrollment was the brainchild of a pair of New England divines, Samuel Hopkins and Ezra Stiles, who envisioned the sailors returning home as educated Christian missionaries. The experiment was interrupted by the Revolution, but the idea endured. In 1854, a group

[4]Richard Ralston, "A Second Middle Passage: African Student Sojourns in the United States During the Colonial Period and their Influence Upon the Character of African Leadership," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1972.

of Princeton graduates founded Ashmun Institute, later Lincoln University, for the explicit purpose of training blacks, African and Afro-American, for work in the missions of the "Dark Continent." Many black Americans were disenchanted by Lincoln's linkages with the American Colonization Society, but the school did attract several dozen African students, mostly Liberians, in the decades after the Civil War.[5]

The flow of African students to the United States swelled with the growth of the Afro-American mission movement. By the 1880s, black American missionaries, working under the auspices of both white and black denominations, had established themselves all along the West Coast of Africa and penetrated into the Congo. Like their European counterparts, black missionaries occasionally brought particularly talented converts home with them for training as ministers or teachers. As in European churches, the policy of training 'native' missionaries was an expedient one, which reflected the difficulty of recruiting volunteers for the African mission field. At the same time, the policy was broadly consistent with the ideology of African-American evangelism, particularly with the idea that blacks themselves had been tapped for the providential task of redeeming Africa. For black Americans convinced of the "providential destiny" argument yet reluctant to venture to Africa themselves, American-trained African missionaries offered ideal substitutes. Indeed, African students coming to the United States for training were portrayed as recapitulating the African-American experience, complete with the literal and metaphorical middle passage between savagery and civilization.[6]

By the last decades of the century, African students were scattered through several American colleges. Orishatukeh Faduma,

[5]Horace Mann Bond, "The Origin and Development of the Negro Church-Related College," *Journal of Negro Education* 29,3 (1960), pp. 217-226; Ralston, "A Second Middle Passage," pp. 3-4.

[6]On the Afro-American evanglical movement, see Williams, *Black Americans and the Evangelization of Africa* ; and chapter one, above.

destined to become a leading intellectual of the Pan-African movement, enrolled at Yale in 1891. In Nashville, Fisk University and Central Tennessee College both trained about a half dozen African students over the last quarter of the century, all from Sierra Leone and Liberia. The AME Church, after educating a group of Haitian "missionary students" in the 1870s, sponsored a handful of Americo-Liberian students in the 1880s and '90s at both Wilberforce University and Huntsville A&M. The AME Zion Church followed suit. James Aggrey, destined to become the most prominent product of the nineteenth century educational traffic, was one of four Fanti students brought to the United States in 1898 by an AME Zion missionary working in the Gold Coast. By that time, a number of white denominations, influenced by new, "scientific" racial ideologies, had begun to question the wisdom of entrusting authority to missionaries themselves just a generation or two removed from "barbarism." Such ideas, however, had less impact on Afro-American church leaders, who continued to portay the arrival of African students in America as a chapter in the unfolding drama of African redemption.[7]

Because early Afro-American mission activity was concentrated in West Africa, South African students entered the pipeline to the United States relatively late. With the exception of John Dube, who studied at Oberlin in the late 1880s, it is impossible to identify any black South African students in the United States prior to 1894, the year the members of the African Jubilee Choir arrived in North America. A previous chapter has discussed the origins of the ill-fated choir, and traced the circumstances which brought the stranded singers into the arms of the AME Church. The upshot of the encounter was the enrollment of a half-dozen young

[7]Reverdy C. Ransom, *Preface to History of A.M.E. Church* (Nashville, 1950), pp. 184-185; *Voice of Missions* , June, 1897; Smith, *Aggrey of Africa* , pp. 56-66; Walter L. Yates, "The History of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in West Africa, Liberia and Gold Coast, 1860-1900," Ph.D. dissertation, Hartford Theological Seminary, 1963. Articles by Fadumah can be found in the AME *Church Review* 9,1 (1892) and 12,1 (1895).

South Africans at Wilberforce University as church-supported "missionary students." One of these students, Charlotte Manye, initiated the correspondence which led to the establishment of the AME Church in South Africa.[8]

Charlotte Manye exhibited in almost archetypal fashion the pedigree of the first emigre students. Her father hailed from the Northern Transvaal, from the same area which produced Ethiopian Church founder Mangena Mokone. Sometime in the 1860s, 'Jan' Manye migrated to the Eastern Cape, hoping to earn money to buy a gun. Like thousands of such migrants, he was converted to Christianity along the way, probably at a Free Church mission station. He married another convert, an educated, Presbyterian woman of Mfengu stock, and settled into the world of the Eastern Cape peasantry. The couple apparently had just two children, Charlotte, born in 1871, and Kate, both of whom were educated in local mission schools. In the 1880s, the Manyes joined the trek of elite Africans to the Kimberley diamond fields, where Charlotte became a stalwart of the Free Church choir, under the direction of future Ethiopian leader Simon Sinamela. Blessed with a lilting soprano voice, Manye was the star attraction during the African Choir tours of Britain and North America. She enrolled at Wilberforce in early 1895, and graduated with a B.Sc. in 1901, a distinction which qualified her as South Africa's first black female college graduate.[9]

[8]See chapter two, above. Dube, the son of an ordained African minister, persuaded a missionary of the American Board to bring him to the U.S. for education in 1887. He studied for about two years in Oberlin's preparatory school, and later travelled the Great Lakes region on the chautauqua circuit, before returning to South Africa in 1892. He returned to America in 1896 to raise money for what eventually became Ohlange Institute. See Marable, "African Nationalist: The Life of John Langalibalele Dube."

[9]Typescript of interview with Kate Manye Makanya, ca. 1963, by Mrs. Margaret Nixon; Veit Erlmann, "'A Feeling of Prejudice'. Orpheus M. McAdoo and the Virginia Jubilee Singers in South Africa 1890-1898," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 14,3 (1988), pp. 331-350; T.D. Mweli Skota, *The African Yearly Register: Being an Illustrated National Biographical Dictionary (Who's Who) of Black Folks in Africa* (Johannesburg, 1932?), pp. 194-195. See also chapter two, above.

At least four other choir members enrolled at Wilberforce in the winter of 1894-95: Magazo Fanele Sakie, James Nxanixani Kolombe, John Boyana Radasi, and Edward Magaya. While less is known of them, their pedigrees were apparently similar to Manye's. All hailed from well-worn mission fields of the Eastern Cape. Sakie and Kolombe, both Xhosa speakers, came from Ngqika, near Queenstown, long a stronghold of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. Radasi, the oldest of the singers at twenty-eight, came from Seymour; Magaya, at twenty-one the youngest, hailed from Cradock. Both were Mfengu, and probably adherents of the Free Church of Scotland. None of the four seems to have earned a Wilberforce degree. Kolombe was apparently driven back to South Africa by ill-health; Magaya tranferred to Lincoln University, from which he graduated in 1903. The fates of Radasi and Sakie remain obscure.[10]

Contrary to the assumptions of contemporaries (and some historians), these first students were not blank slates upon which African-American aspirations and sensibilities could be inscribed. On the contrary, they were products of a specific class at a very particular historical moment. All the singers were recruited from a narrow, highly conscious Christian elite, and what evidence we have suggests that they shared that group's characteristic attitudes -- the preoccupation with respectability, the commitment to western education, the ambivalent feelings of duty and disdain toward their "uncivilised" cousins. Culturally, the members of the African Choir were almost obsessively "progressive" -- indeed, they re-enacted the passage from 'barbarism' to 'civilisation' nightly, performing the first half of thoir shows in vernacular and traditional dress, the second in English and Victorian dress. All these attributes made the students uncannily receptive to Afro-American mission ideology, with its emphasis on redeeming Africa from the bondage of ignorance and sin. Within a month of their arrival, one of the

[10] *Voice of Missions* , Feb., March, 1895; Davis, "Black American Education Component," p. 73; Williams, *Black Americans and the Evangelization of Africa* , p. 191. Another South African, Thomas Katiya, graduated from Lincoln the same year as Magaya; he may also have been a member of the original African Choir.

students, probably Magazo Sakie, wrote a letter to the *Voice of Missions* pledging to use his education to help uplift "his" people. "To think of their condition almost breaks my heart," he confessed. The same missionary zeal was evident in Charlotte Manye's first college essay: "I wish there were more of our people here to enjoy the privileges of Wilberforce and then go back and teach our people so that our home may lose that awful name, 'the Dark Continent,' and be properly called the continent of light."[11]

Charlotte Manye played an instrumental role in extending the "privileges of Wilberforce" to other members of her class. Spurred by Manye's letters home, two of her Kimberley contemporaries, Chalmers Moss and Henry Msikinya, arrived at Wilberforce in mid-1896. The pair represented two of the most distinguished African families on the diamond fields. Chalmers Moss was the son of Joseph Singapy Moss, interpreter to the High Court of Griqualand West and perhaps the wealthiest African in Kimberley. A Lovedale graduate and a devout Presbyterian (Chalmers was named for a pioneer Scottish missionary), 'Mr. Interpreter Moss' exemplified the unflagging faith in education which was the signature of the nineteenth century African elite. In Kimberley, he was renowned for his ardent defense of classical education, and he no doubt leapt at the opportunity to obtain university training for his son. Henry Msikinya came from an equally illustrious family. His brother Jonas was court interpreter at Beaconsfield; his brother John was an ordained minister in the Primitive Methodist Church; yet another brother, David, was a minister in the Wesleyan (and later the AME) Church. While the elder Msikinyas schooled at Lovedale, Henry followed David to Healdtown, the premier Methodist school in South Africa. At the time the pair departed for America, Henry Msikinya was a twenty-six year old school teacher, respected in the community for his work directing the Wesleyan Church choir and for his skill as a debator. Tragically, Chalmers Moss died after a year in

[11] *Voice of Missions* , Feb., 1895, Nov., 1898.

the United States, but Msikinya completed his degree and returned home in 1901.[12]

Two other students, Charles Dube and Theodore Kakaza, arrived at Wilberforce at about the same time as Msikinya and Moss. At eighteen years each, the two were younger than their compatriots, but their experiences and consciousness were much the same. Dube was the son of an ordained American Board minister and the younger brother of John Dube, who had already begun to carve out a name for himself among Natal's *amakolwa* community. Like his more famous brother, Charles studied at the Congregational mission at Amanzimtoti before coming to America. Kakaza was also the son of an ordained minister, Gana Kakaza, who headed a Wesleyan congregation in Port Elizabeth. Like Msikinya, he was a graduate of Healdtown. How either Dube or Kakaza came to be at Wilberforce in the summer of 1896 is not clear. Dube was apparently dropped off at the school by his older brother, who travelled to the United States in 1896 to raise money for what eventually became Ohlange Institute. Kakaza probably enrolled at the school through the intercession of his father, who, despite his Wesleyan affiliation, was an outspoken AME sympathizer.[13]

James Tantsi and Marshall Maxeke, who arrived at the end of 1896, were the first students who came to Wilberforce with the explicit intention of training as AME missionaries -- they were, in fact, the two aspiring teachers referred to in Mangena Mokone's first

[12]Brian Willan, *Sol Plaatje: A Biography* (Johannesburg, 1985), pp. 33-41; James Stewart, *Lovedale: Past and Present. A Register of Two Thousand Names* (Lovedale, 1887), pp. 230, 239; J. R. Coan, "The Expansion of Missions of the A.M.E. Church in South Africa, 1896-1906," Ph.D. dissertation, Hartford Theological Seminary, 1963, pp. 455-457.

[13]*Voice of Missions* , Dec., 1898, Jan., 1900; Coan, "The Expansion of Missions," p. 455; Marable, "African Nationalist: The Life of John Langalibalele Dube," pp. 85, 106-107. Gana Kakaza had earned considerable notoriety in the 1880s for his defense of certain African customs. See Wallace George Mills, "The Role of African Clergy in the Reorientation of Xhosa Society to the Plural Society in the Cape Colony, 1850-1915," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1975, pp. 56, 314.

letter to Bishop Turner. In class terms, they were virtually indistinguishable from the other South Africans already enrolled at the school. Tantsi, eldest son of Ethiopian Church founder J.Z. Tantsi, had studied at Zonnebloem; Maxeke had trained at Lovedale, probably in the industrial department. The two were working together in Johannesburg as apprentice harness-makers by day and lay preachers by night when the opportunity to travel to America presented itself. With their arrival, the total number of South African students in the United States had grown to nearly a dozen.[14]

As word of Wilberforce filtered back across the Atlantic, African Christians from Cape Town to the Bechuanaland Protectorate determined to send their children. The enthusiasm was encouraged by itinerant AME ministers, at least some of whom lubricated their entry into old mission communities by promising free American education to the children of local notables. By the early years of the century, the AME Church was sponsoring about thirty South Africans in various U.S. colleges, at an annual cost of about $3,500. Of those who can be identified, virtually all were sprung from the same elite stratum which had produced the first emigre students. John Manye, for example, was evidently Charlotte's cousin. Mbulaleni Kuzwayo, Albert and David Sondezi, and Stephen Gumede all represented prominent *amakolwa* families in Natal. Sebopioa Molema, one of the Mafeking Molemas, was a graduate of Lovedale. His uncle and sponsor, Silas Molema, was South Africa's first black attorney, and Sebopioa hoped to follow him to the bar. Judging from a few surviving letters, Sebopioa -- in America, he used the Christian name 'Stephen' -- took great pride in his family's role as an "instigator of civilization" in South Africa. Here again was that missionary consciousness which would grow so luxuriantly in the soil of Wilberforce.[15]

[14]*Voice of Missions* , Sept., 1895, August, Sept., 1897; Skota, *The African Yearly Register* , pp. 70, 105-106, 267; M. Maxeke, "South African Graduates," in the *Christian Recorder* , July 14, 1927.

[15]*Voice of Missions* , March, 1899, April, 1900, July, 1901; Testimony of Bishop Levi Coppin, *SANAC* , v. 2, p. 221; Coan, "Expansion of Missions," pp. 455-457;

A number of AME ministers took advantage of their privileged positions in the church to arrange scholarships for their own children. J.Z. Tantsi, for example, had three children enrolled at Wilberforce at the turn of the century: Harsant arrived in 1898, two years behind James; later that same year, Tantsi prevailed upon the visiting Bishop Turner to take his daughter Adelaide to Wilberforce as well, somehow scraping together £100 to help pay her passage. Francis Macdonald Gow, a prominent member of Cape Town's 'Coloured' community and a leader of the AME Church in the Western Cape, likewise sent three children to America: Hannah, Francis Herman, and Levi Coppin, the latter the namesake of the American Bishop. Marcus Gabashane's son, Henry Barton, was only seventeen in 1898, when he arrived at Bishop Turner's Atlanta home with the dream of studying both religion and medicine. Younger still was Patrick Ngcayiya, the son of H.R. Ngcayiya, who was scarcely more than thirteen when he accompanied his father to the 1904 General Conference in America. The lad remained behind at Wilberforce and eventually earned a bachelor's degree, long after his father had left the AME Church to re-establish the Ethiopian Church. The last to arrive was Jonathan Mokone, son of the AME Church's South African founder. Mokone enrolled at Wilberforce University in about 1911, having graduated with the first class at Wilberforce Institute, a church-run school opened outside Johannesburg by the first returning students.[16]

Transvaal Archives Depot, Papers of the Secretary of Native Affairs [SNA] 241 2694/04. On Motema, see University of the Witwatersrand Archive, Plaatje-Motema Papers, files Aa1, Aa2.22, Ac; and interview with Morara Motema by Jim Campbell, April, 1986. Kuzwayo was probably the son of Mbiya Kuzwayo, a graduate of Lovedale; see Stewart, *Lovedale: Past and Present*, p. 132. The Sondezi brothers were apparently the sons of Joseph Sondezi, a leader of the Driefontein land-buying syndicate. See his testimony in *Minutes of Evidence of the Natal Native Lands Committee* (Cape Town, 1918); and Natal Archives Depot, Papers of the Secretary of Native Affairs (NSNA) 219 555/1896.

[16] *Voice of Missions*, July, Oct., Nov., 1898, Oct., 1899, March, 1900; Sara J. Duncan, *Progressive Missions in the South and Addresses* (Atlanta, 1906), p. 206; *Fifth Quadrennial Report of Payne Theological Seminary, Wilberforce, Ohio* (n.p., 1912), copy in Wilberforce University Archives, Arnett Papers [ARC] 287.8 G327.

Enthusiasm for U.S. education exposes again the basic paradox which underlay the South African AME Church's meteoric rise. The rush of students to Afro-American colleges bespoke enormous frustration with European missionaries, who were widely accused of artificially limiting Africans' educational preferment. At the same time, elite Africans continued to accept the substance of missionary teachings, particularly the idea that education was the key to individual and racial progress. Atop that conviction lay the greatly exaggerated notions about Afro-American wealth and refinement which had first appeared in the wake of the McAdoo Singers' celebrated tour. In such a context, "Negro" education emerged as a kind of panacea, which would wrench open all the doors which European mission education had promised, but failed, to open. Everywhere, the departure of students for America was portrayed in providential terms, as the seminal event in the birth of a new African civilization. Marcus Gabashane, a founder of the Ethiopian Church, summed up such attitudes in a letter to Bishop Turner which accompanied his son Henry to America. "My Lord, remember again, that this young man is the very seed you are going to sow in Africa."[17]

African Methodists in the United States doubtless found Gabashane's metaphor congenial. Churchmen like Henry Turner had long maintained that "civilization" would "bloom" in Africa only through black American agency. At the same time, however, church leaders were concerned by the mounting cost of the educational trade. With the opening of church schools in South Africa, scholarship money for African students began to dry up. The traffic

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See also J.M. Mokone, *The Life of Our Founder* (Johannesburg, 1935); and chapter six, below.

[17] *Voice of Missions*, Nov., 1898. See also chapter two, above. African frustration with missionary restrictiveness was well founded. In the fifty years after the first black South African earned a college degree, European missions produced only thirteen black matriculants. *Report of the Proceedings of the Second General Missionary Conference for South Africa Held at Johannesburg, July, 5-11, 1906* (Morija, 1907), p. 84.

was further slowed by Charles Smith, who flatly discouraged Africans from coming to America during his conflict-ridden eighteen months as resident Bishop of South Africa; those aspiring to higher education, Smith commented in a 1905 sermon, would be better off looking to Britain. By the end of the decade, the number of South Africans enrolled at Wilberforce University, the AME Church's educational flagship, had fallen from a 1904 high of about twenty to four or five, where it hovered until World War I.[18]

Long before that time, however, other South Africans not affiliated with the AME Church had begun to take advantage of the channel which the church had opened. In 1901, P.J. Mzimba, founder of the African Presbyterian Church, arrived in America with eight young men whom he enrolled at Lincoln University. By 1903, close to two dozen of Mzimba's followers were studying in the United States, the bulk at Lincoln and Tuskegee. Dozens of other young Africans embarked for America as individuals, seeking professional training not available in South Africa; the most conspicuous examples were future A.N.C. Presidents Pixley Seme and A.B. Xuma. In contrast to their AME counterparts, these students were generally responsible for paying their own passage and tuition, which ensured that they too were drawn exclusively from the ranks of the elite. Gordon Dana, for example, one of the young men sent to America by Mzimba's church, was the son of a prosperous Mfengu farmer in Qumbu District. Melrose Sishuba and John Sonjica, two members of the reconstituted 'Ethiopian' Church who sailed to America in 1910, possessed similar backgrounds. Both were ministers' sons, descended from two of the most successful "progressive" farming families in the Eastern Cape. What evidence there is suggests that these students shared the sense of personal exceptionalism and

[18] *Extracts of a Sermon by Bishop C.S. Smith* (n.p., 1905?), copy in the Orange Free State Archives Depot, Papers of the Advisor to the Native Affairs Branch (NAB) 1 26/1/05; "President's Report, 1912," ARC 287.8 G327; *The Twenty-fourth Quadrennial Report of the Parent Home and Foreign Missionary Department of the AME Church, 1908-1912* (n.p., 1912?), copy in Wilberforce Archives, AME Church Collection, Box 10

racial obligation so characteristic of their class. As Sonjica and Sishuba explained in a letter to Booker T. Washington, "What we desire is to obtain education and go back in Africa and be a light to our people."[19]

The experiences of these non-AME students suggest that life could be quite precarious for those who arrived in America unsponsored. Dana, for example, was unable to raise tuition after the death of his father, and returned to South Africa without the law degree he coveted. A.B. Xuma did eventually complete his medical degree, but only by interspersing his studies with long stretches working in stables, coal yards, and boiler rooms. Sishuba and Sonjica had trouble even finding a school that would accept them. They vainly canvassed for scholarships at Afro-American schools, and even enrolled briefly at a Canadian business college. Sonjica's fate is uncertain, but Sishuba, savings exhausted, survived by working as a railroad porter in Washington. He eventually hooked up with a Baptist association, which sponsored his training at a small school in Tennesee. He finally returned to South Africa after World War I.[20]

Given the paucity of documents, it is difficult to establish the scale of the pre-war trans-Atlantic traffic with any precision, but clearly it was considerable. In March, 1904, during the peak of the traffic, F.Z.S. Peregrino, a Cape Town newspaper editor and sometime government informant, reported that eighteen South Africans had passed through the city *en route* to America during the previous month alone. Seven years later, a Cape education official

[19] Stewart, *Lovedale: Past and Present*, pp. 37, 338, 524; Sishuba and Sonjica to B.T.W., Oct. 20, 1912, quoted in Davis, "Black American Education Component," p. 81, fn. 51; SNA 15 272/02; Cape Archives Depot, Government House Papers [GH] 35/84 (31).

[20] C. Nontshinga-Citashe, *Brief Outline of the History of the Ethiopian Church of South Africa* (Morija, 1957), pp. 92-94. The material on Dana is drawn from a 1976 interview which William Beinart graciously shared with me. On Xuma, see Skota, *African Yearly Register*, pp. 282-283. See also Davis, "Black American Education Component," pp. 72-73.

estimated that one hundred Africans from the Cape Colony alone were in or recently returned from the United States. A conservative estimate would place the total number of South African students passing through the United States between 1894 and 1914 somewhere between one hundred and one hundred fifty, perhaps fifty of whom travelled under the auspices of the AME Church. One would be hard pressed to find any significant black American college which did not host at least one South African student prior to World War I.[21]

World War I marked a watershed in the educational trade. The war scuttled trans-Atlantic passenger travel, preventing Africans from travelling to the United States and stranding many who were already there. After the war's end, the South African government made a concerted effort to stop the traffic. Beginning in about 1919, would-be emigrants to America were required to submit lengthy visa applications; to provide (European) character references; and to post £50 (later £100) against the costs of possible repatriation, a nearly prohibitive sum given the declining fortunes of the black middle classes in both city and countryside. The new policy was prompted primarily by the spectre of Garveyism, which rekindled fears of "Negro agitators" and led briefly to a ban on black American visitors to the Union. At the same time, the availability of "higher education" locally at Fort Hare gave colonial officials a rationale for acting against the educational trade, a not insubstantial consideration for an administration committed to maintaining an appearance of even-handed justice and "fair play."[22]

The net result of the new policy was to slice the number of students coming to America, while ensuring that those who did arrive continued to be drawn from only the most respectable black classes. For the most part, the students who made the passage in

[21]SNA 217 995/04; Papers of Union Native Affairs Department (NTS) 132 F243; GH 35/84 (31); Davis, "The Black American Education Component," p. 70.
[22]Transvaal Archives Depot, Papers of the Director of Native Labour (GNLB) 305 19/19/72; NTS 2692 4/301/1 v. 1.

the 1920s were sponsored by whites or by the AME Church, which soon recovered its hard-earned reputation for moderation and balance within government circles. Two students, Violet Makanya and Amelia Njongwana were sent to Tuskegee by the U.S. Phelps-Stokes Commission as part of an experimental program to introduce American-style vocational training to South Africa. Both were from prominent Christian families -- Makanya was probably the daughter of Kate Manye Makanya, sister of Charlotte Maxeke. The same organization may have sponsored Reuben Caluza and Q.M. Cele, both of whom found the comparatively safe harbor of Hampton Institute. Most of the AME-sponsored students continued to travel to Wilberforce University. All were drawn from the African middle class, such as it was. Eli Nyombolo was the son of an AME minister; Eva Mahuma was a schoolteacher; Pearl Ntsiko was the daughter of one of Mangena Mokone's original Marabastad parishioners. Hastings Banda, destined to become the most famous Wilberforce product, was a clerk at a Witwatersrand goldmine; capitalizing on his uncle's status as an AME minister, he succeeded in persuading the local AME Bishop to sponsor him to Wilberforce in 1924.[23]

In all, no more than two or three dozen South African students travelled to the United States in the 1920s. With the onset of depression in 1929, even this small trickle more or less evaporated. By that time, however, over a hundred young South Africans had made the pilgrimmage to America. What had they found?

2. The World of Wilberforce

One generalizes about African students' experiences in America at one's peril. Even a cursory examination uncovers southern Africans at two dozen colleges and institutes between 1894 and 1914. A few of the host schools were 'white' institutions

[23]NTS 2692 4/301/1 v.1; GNLB 305 19/19/72; NTS 2709 79/301; King, *Pan-Africanism and Education*, pp. 226-228; AME *Church Review* 46,1 (1929), pp. 33-37.

-- Columbia and Oberlin, for example; some, like Lincoln and Howard, had Afro-American student bodies but white faculty and administrators; a few had black student bodies and were black run. Host schools were northern and southern, rural and urban, affluent and impoverished. In terms of curriculum, they ran the gamut from Howard, which maintained a full slate of university liberal arts courses, to Hampton, which exemplified the gospel of industrial education then emerging as the American solution to the "race problem." The school which attracted the largest number of emigre students, however, was Wilberforce University, a small AME Church college outside Xenia, Ohio. Including the singers from the original African Choir, at least three dozen of the South African students who came to the United States prior to World War I came to Wilberforce.

Geographically and historically, Wilberforce and the surrounding countryside stood at the crossroads of North and South. While a part of the Old Northwest, history had lent the tranquil rivers and gently rolling hills of southwestern Ohio a distinctly southern flavor. The region's first white settlers were Virginians, who were deeded farms in sixteen counties of southern Ohio for service in the revolutionary army. Xenia, one of a number of small commercial and manufacturing centers in the region, was established in 1803, and settled primarily by migrants from Kentucky. Many farmers in the area planted tobacco, which was tended and harvested by gangs of slaves brought from across the Ohio. The southern ambiance was further sustained by the occasional columned portico, and by the annual passage of southern planters, who arrived each summer to take the waters at a number of resorts in the area. One of the most popular, Tawawa Springs, stood on the future site of Wilberforce University.[24]

[24]R.R. Wright, Jr. "The Negroes of Xenia, Ohio: A Social Study," *Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor* 48 (1903), pp. 1006-1044.

Racial practice in Ohio was shaped by this southern exposure. The state constitution, enacted in 1802, denied blacks the franchise, though mulattoes (those of at least fifty per cent white parentage) were classed as whites and permitted to vote. Within a year of statehood, the Ohio legislature passed the young nation's most notorious 'Black Codes.' At the same time, Ohio was home to a more liberal racial tradition. The populous counties of the 'Western Reserve' boasted a long anti-slavery tradition, and offered fertile soil for the Liberty, Free Soil, and Republican Parties. (In 1849, abolitionists in the Free Soil Party managed to secure the repeal of most of the state's Black Codes.) Ohio's facilities for black higher education were unique in America. Oberlin College was founded in 1833 and began to accept students "without regard to color" two years later. Wilberforce University was founded in 1856. That same year in nearby Yellow Springs, blacks were admitted to Antioch College, at the instigation of the school's young President, Horace Mann. During Reconstruction, Ohio was one of the first states to install a non-racial franchise, a move which conferred considerable political power on the state's growing black population.[25]

Black settlement in southwestern Ohio was pulsed by changes in the slave South. The majority of antebellum black settlers came from the upper South, especially Virginia and North Carolina. A few were fugitives, but the vast majority were freed slaves, manumitted during the afterglow of the Revolution or during the crisis of staple culture in the 1820s and '30s. Beginning in the 1830s, an increasing percentage of settlers were free people of color, driven north by the crescendo of harassment and violence called forth by Nat Turner's revolt. A significant proportion of both the manumitted and free-born contingents were the issue of southern planters and slave mothers. In a number of instances, planters who vacationed at Tawawa Springs purchased farms in the area for their natural

[25]This paragraph and much of what follows is culled from David Gerber's excellent *Black Ohio and the Color Line* (Urbana IL, 1976). See also William and Aimee Lee Cheek, "John Mercer Langston: Principle and Politics," in Leon Litwack and August Meier (eds.), *Black Leaders of the Nineteenth Century* (Champagne, IL, 1988).

children to settle, a few of which later became waystations on the underground railroad. Most of the black migrants settled in towns, where they worked as casual laborers or plied trades learned under slavery; those with the wherewithal to buy a horse or wagon, worked as draymen and hackers. In Xenia, two miles to the west of Wilberforce, about seventeen percent of the town's population -- more than eight hundred citizens -- were black. In proportional terms, Xenia had the largest Afro-American population in the state; in absolute terms, its black population ranked behind only nearby Cincinnati's.[26]

The flow of blacks into the region swelled with emancipation. Beginning in 1863, freedmen from across the upper South flooded across the Ohio, to pursue education, locate lost relatives, or simply to shake the dust of bondage from their feet. In the five years after the war, Xenia's black population more than doubled. It continued to rise throughout the century, despite an accelerating drift to the cities that began to strip the black population from much of rural and small town Ohio. Blacks were drawn to Xenia and to a handful of southwestern Ohio towns like it -- Chillicothe, Springfield, Yellow Springs -- by a unique combination of educational and economic opportunities. In contrast to the cities and towns of the Reserve, southwestern Ohio attracted relatively little European immigration, leaving blacks to fill many occupational niches occupied elsewhere by immigrants. In Springfield, for example, blacks worked in the iron foundries which opened in the 1880s. In Xenia, the local shoe factory was the province of the town's small Irish population, but blacks comprised the bulk of workers in the town's distillery, four cordage factories, and tobacco sorting plant. In the absence of white competition, a few blacks flourished as artisans; others took advantage of the substantial black market to open restaurants, barbershops and a range of small businesses. To southern blacks caught in the punishing cycle of tenancy, the reports which filtered back from southwestern Ohio must have strained belief. As a

[26]Wright, "The Negroes of Xenia," pp. 1014-1016; Gerber, *Black Ohio* , pp. 15-19.

pioneer sociologist studying the region in 1904 reported, "[A]ll negroes in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Kentucky know of Xenia and Springfield ... They regard these places as mecca."[27]

By the middle 1890s, when the train bearing the first of the South African students lurched into Xenia station, the town represented a curious amalgam of racial patterns and practices. At a time when small towns were being drained of blacks, the proportion of blacks in the city continued to grow. While places like Cleveland and Cincinnati possessed only embryonic ghettoes, Xenia showed a well-established pattern of racial segregation, with ninety percent of blacks crammed into a twenty block square area known to locals as the 'East End.' The community possessed a tiny "old" elite, made up of a few professionals who lived on the border of the East End and worshipped in white churches, as well as a more substantial 'post-segregation' elite. Racial institutions -- including a massive AME Church, two Baptist churches, and at least a dozen lodges and fraternal orders -- thrived. In contrast to the experience of southern blacks, however, the development of the internal resources of the black community implied no political retreat. On the contrary, the concentration of blacks in a single city ward, together with the persistence of a vital Republican Party organization, enabled blacks to exercise substantial political power. Xenia blacks maintained a member on the city council and a representative on the local board of education; on one occasion, Greene County sent a black man, AME Bishop Benjamin Arnett, to the state legislature. It was Arnett who introduced the 1887 bill revoking the remnants of Ohio's Black Codes, a bill which represented the high water mark in the post-bellum struggle for racial justice in the state. Ironically, the major provision of the Arnett Bill -- integrating public schools -- proved ineffectual in Xenia, where the concentration of blacks in the East End enabled local politicians to gerrymander segregated school districts. In

[27]Gerber, *Black Ohio* , p. 62-29, 278; Wright, "The Negroes of Xenia," pp. 1009-1011, 1023-1030.

tacit compensation, however, the town funded black education relatively generously.[28]

Exposure to Xenia probably did little or nothing to unsettle the inflated ideas about black American "progress" which the arriving students carried with them from South Africa. The town may not have been mecca, but compared to the conditions blacks experienced in South Africa -- compared, for that matter, with the condition of blacks in the rest of the United States -- Xenia presented a picture of remarkable prosperity and progress. Houses were tidy, if sometimes overcrowded, and yards in the East End were alive with flowers. Most families owned their own homes, however modest. The people, on the whole, seemed sober and industrious; a few boasted professional degrees and substantial fortunes. Education was a precious value to Xenia's blacks, and virtually all residents, aside from the newest southern migrants, possessed some schooling. (The literacy rate in the East End was only marginally below the national rate for all races, and a full third higher than the Afro-American average.) Adults could improve themselves by attending classes and lectures offered in the evening by teachers from nearby Wilberforce, while a local compulsory schooling ordinance ensured the nearly universal education of the young. At a time when most towns in Ohio offered only rudimentary elementary education for blacks, Xenia boasted a well-equipped black high school, which annually graduated about a dozen students, better than a quarter of the total number of black matriculants produced each year in the entire state of Ohio. Taken together, there was little in the town's aspect to indicate that black Americans were but three decades removed from bondage.[29]

[28]Helen Hoover Santmyer, *Ohio Town* (Columbus, OH, 1962), pp. 81-109; Wright, "The Negroes of Xenia," pp. 1012, 1040-1043; Gerber, *Black Ohio* , pp. 98-99, 158-161, 240-243.

[29]Wright, "The Negroes of Xenia," pp. 1020-1023, 1031-1040; Gerber, *Black Ohio* , p. 396.

Socially, politically, and intellectually, black Xenia was oriented toward Wilberforce University, and twice per year, on Founders' Day and Commencement Day, the entire community set out on the two mile journey to the campus. Wilberforce was founded in 1856, initially as a joint venture between the AME Church and the Cincinnati Conference of the white Methodist Episcopal Church. According to Daniel Payne, one of the founders and the resident AME Bishop at Wilberforce for most of the school's first forty years, the school catered initially to the natural children of southern planters, most of whom were barred from any formal education in the South. The Civil War, however, drove Wilberforce's "chief patrons into the rebel army," and brought the school to the brink of closure. In 1862, the Cincinnati Conference of the MEC was prepared to sell the school to the state for use as an asylum, when Payne intervened and bought it, for the price of its debt, in the name of the AME Church.[30]

As the century progressed, a remarkable elite community coalesced around the university. By the 1890s, perhaps one hundred and fifty Afro-Americans had settled in the vicinity of the school, representing some of the race's most distinguished families. Virtually all were first drawn to the area by the lure of education. The experience of Thomas and Francis Brown was typical. In the 1840s, the Browns left their Pittsburgh home and joined the community of expatriate blacks in Canada. After the Civil War, the couple returned to the United States, settling at Wilberforce to secure education for their children. The oldest child, Jere Brown, moved to Cleveland, where he distinguished himself as a lawyer and state legislator; the youngest, Hallie Quinn Brown remained at Wilberforce, where she lectured in Elocution and organized one of the first chapters of the National Association of Colored Women. Martin Delaney, pioneer pan-Africanist, settled at Wilberforce at about the time as the Browns; one of his daughters still lived in the

[30]Daniel Alexander Payne, *Annual and Retrospect of the First Decade of Wilberforce University* (Cincinnati, 1873), p. 4; Payne, *Recollections of Seventy Years* (New York, 1968, orig. pub. 1888), pp. 149-157; Frederick A. McGinnis, *A History and Interpretation of Wilberforce University* (Wilberforce, 1941).

community when the first South Africans arrived. Campbell Maxwell, a Xenia attorney and in the 1890s the U.S. Ambassador to Santo Domingo, was a fixture at the school, as was poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, who lived in nearby Dayton. At a time when most black Americans lurched from debt to debt, the average family at Wilberforce held about $2,500 in personal property. The air of affluence and respectability was further enhanced by the annual passage of the cream of black Ohio society, which flocked to Wilberforce each summer to share in the cultural life of the university and to take the waters once enjoyed by southern planters. Without question, this was the most educated and affluent black community in America, and the South African students were quickly gathered within its folds.[31]

The faculty to which the arriving students were exposed included some of the country's foremost black intellectuals. The young W.E.B. DuBois, recently returned from Germany and still affecting the gloves, cane and high silk hat of the continental intellectual, lectured the first students in English, German, and Classics. William S. Scarborough, who taught classical languages in the school's theological seminary, had risen from slavery to become one of the country's foremost philologists. Edward Clarke (later the namesake of Marshall and Charlotte Manye Maxeke's first child) lectured in Latin, and the venerable John G. Mitchell, one of the school's pioneers, remained on as Dean of the school's Theological Seminary. The school's Military Science Department (established in 1894 with a grant from the Cleveland administration) was headed by Lieutenant H. Charles Young, a graduate of West Point and at the time the only black commissioned officer in the United States Army. In the early years of the century, the faculty was supplemented by Theophilus Gould Steward, a retired major in the United States Army

[31]Hallie Q. Brown, *Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction* (Xenia, 1926), pp. 71-80, 90-91; William J. Simmons, *Men of Mark: Eminent, Progressive, Rising* (New York, 1968, orig. pub. 1887), pp. 113-117; Nell Irvin Painter, "Martin R. Delaney: Elitism and Black Nationalism," in Litwack and Meier, *Black Leaders of the Nineteenth Century.*

and a pioneering missionary during Reconstruction, and R.R. Wright, Jr., scion of one of black America's most celebrated families and a future AME Bishop. All these men were prominent members of the American Negro Academy.[32]

The nominal President of the University was Samuel T. Mitchell, but affairs at the school were largely run by the resident Bishop, Benjamin Arnett. Largely forgotten today, Arnett in the 1890s may have been the most influential black man in America. Born free in Kentucky and trained first as a school teacher, Arnett by the 1890s had accumulated a resume which virtually defined the ambit of the post-bellum northern black elite: Bishop and Financial Secretary of the AME Church, Secretary to the National Convention of Colored Men, National Vice President of the Anti-Saloon League, Grand Director of the Grand Order of Odd Fellows. A canny and ambitious man, Arnett was unswerving in his loyalty to the Republican Party, denouncing the Liberal schismatics in 1872 and expediently endorsing the party's retreat from Reconstruction four years later. His fealty eventually won the attention of Mark Hanna, chief Republican fixer in Ohio and the power behind Governor William McKinley. Hanna cherished voters of any color, and he saw in the ambitious Bishop of America's largest and most affluent black church a bridge to black voters in both the North and the South. He cultivated Arnett throughout McKinley's march to the White House; it was Arnett who delivered the invocation and benediction at the 1896

[32]Alfred A. Moss, *The American Negro Academy: Voice of the Talented Tenth* (Baton Rouge, 1981); *Ninth Quadrennial Report of Wilberforce University* (Wilberforce, 1900), copy in Arnett Papers, v. 83; W.E.B. DuBois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. DuBois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decades of its First Century* (New York, 1968), chapter XI, and DuBois, "The Future of Wilberforce University," *Journal of Negro Education* 9,4 (1941); Francis P. Weisenburger, "William Sanders Scarborough: Early Years and Life at Wilberforce," *Ohio History* 71,3 (1962) and 72,1 (1962). On the creation of the Military Science Department, see Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism 1850-1925* (Hamden, CT, 1978), p. 75. Moses attributes the "militarization" of black education, evident at Tuskegee and Hampton as well as Wilberforce, to a contemporary stereotype of the black race as "effeminate" and "dreamy," and in need of discipline to survive in the modern world. That perception, which many black intellectuals of the day shared, provided one of the rationales for industrial education.

National Republican Convention, and who delivered the Bible on which McKinley swore the oath of office. In the five years before McKinley's assassination, federal patronage to blacks was funnelled through the Bishop's Wilberforce home, in much the same way that McKinley's successor, Theodore Roosevelt, channelled patronage through Tuskegee. Arnett, then in his glory, took a special interest in the newly arrived South African students, especially Charlotte Manye, who he and his wife treated almost as a daughter. The South Africans were always welcome in his home, where they could chat with his guests, including Hanna, or avail themselves of a library which was double or triple the size of the University's own holdings.[33]

The individual who had the greatest influence on the young Africans, however, was a man that none of them ever met. Daniel Payne, the church's senior Bishop and a fixture at Wilberforce since its opening in 1856, died a few months before the arrival of the first South Africans at the school. Long after his death, however, he remained a presence on the campus. A shrivelled, puritanical man, Payne was born and raised among the free blacks of Charleston. With a tenacity that was to become legendary, Payne educated himself, eventually mastering French, Greek and Latin, mathematics, physical science, and theology. Apprenticed as a carpenter, he elected instead to devote himself to education, and opened a small school for blacks in Charleston, where he insisted on teaching a full classical curriculum, including science and ancient languages. The experiment was interrupted in the wake of the Nat Turner uprising, by legislation prohibiting all black education in South Carolina.

[33]William J. Simmons, *Men of Mark: Eminent, Progressive and Rising* (New York, 1968, orig. pub. 1887), pp. 883-891; Gerber, *Black Ohio* , pp. 214-220, 350-355; R.R. Wright, Jr., *The Bishops of the A.M.E. Church* (Nashville, 1963), pp. 78-82; August Meier, *Negro Thought in America , 1890-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington* (Ann Arbor, 1963).

Payne fled north, on a path which eventually carried him to the Bishopric.[34]

In his time, Payne's prestige, among blacks and whites alike, was second only to that of his friend, Frederick Douglass. Like Douglass, Payne saw Afro-Americans' future not in Africa but in the United States, and he was convinced that racial progress depended on blacks mastering the values and mores of the dominant society. This commitment to cultural assimilation, combined with Payne's own pietistic temper, made the tiny Bishop the scourge of anything which smacked of black distinctiveness, of any manners or mores which betrayed blacks' "primitive" origins or the blighting influence of slavery. Payne was skeptical, for example, of African-Americans' fascination with Africa, fearing that it appeared unpatriotic and distracted the race from the more pressing task of uplifting the untutored masses at home. Even more revealing was Payne's stance toward the prevailing mode of worship in black American churches, which he described as "heathenish," "disgraceful," and "disgusting." The creation of a Theological Seminary at Wilberforce in 1891 represented the culmination of a lifelong quest to lift the educational qualifications of the black ministry, which he regarded as a prerequisite to introducing a degree of decorum into black worship. His first goal, he explained in his memoirs, was "to improve the ministry; the second, to improve the people."[35]

Wilberforce University was Payne's proudest creation. It was Payne who inspired the founding of the school in 1856, and who redeemed the moribund institution six years later. When an arsonist burned the school to the ground the day after Lincoln's assassination, Payne patiently rebuilt it. Even after resigning the Presidency of the University in 1877, Payne maintained his

[34]Payne, *Recollections of Seventy Years* ; Simmons, *Men of Mark* , pp. 1078-1085; Wright, *Bishops of the AME Church* , pp. 266-279; J.R. Coan, *Daniel Alexander Payne: Christian Educator* (Philadelphia, 1935).

[35]Payne, quoted in C.S. Smith, *A History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Philadelphia, 1922), p. 376; Payne, *Recollections of Seventy Years* , p. 137.

episcopal see at Wilberforce, running the school, and for a time the entire AME Church, as a virtual fiefdom.

Wilberforce reflected all the attributes of its founder -- his piety, his obsession with self-improvement, and his commitment to blacks' eventual assimilation. In the true spirit of liberal education, the Wilberforce experience aimed to develop all an individual's faculties, moral, physical, and intellectual. Student life at Wilberforce was governed by a rigid code of conduct. Physical culture was a required course for male and female students alike, and all students were expected to contribute whatever labor was necessary to maintain the buildings and grounds. Long before the rise of Booker T. Washington, Payne stressed the virtues of manual labor, the obligation to racial service, the need for a balanced education which trained head, hands and heart in concert. What distinguished Wilberforce from a Hampton or Tuskegee, however, was its underlying faith in the intellectual potential of the black race. Students in both the Preparatory and Collegiate Divisions of Wilberforce confronted a full classical curriculum, featuring ancient and modern languages, mathematics, and science, which Payne understood as a species of natural philosophy. Rhetoric and composition bulked large in the curriculum, and frequent recitations encouraged proper elocution. Candidates for the ministry received training in everything from systematic theology to Hebrew, and the school even boasted a small Law Department. Four degrees were awarded: a Bachelor of Arts degree for those who completed the classical curriculum; a Bachelor of Divinity degree for graduates of Payne Theological Seminary; and Bachelors degrees in Science and Law.[36]

[36] *Annual Catalogue of Wilberforce University, 1897-98* , copy in Wilberforce Archives; Reverdy C. Ransom, *School Days at Wilberforce* (Springfield, OH, 1894). Ironically, Wilberforce clung to this nineteenth century educational ideal at the very time that white universities had begun to de-emphasize moral training and replace the structured classical curriculum with the elective system. See Laurence R. Vescey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago, 1965).

It is tempting to portray the Wilberforce of the 1890s as the last bastion of black college education in the dawning age of Booker T. Washington, but the truth is somewhat more complex. Despite the presence of a seminary and a few law courses, Wilberforce's claim to being a "university" was always something of a pretension, as Payne (and later DuBois) freely admitted. Throughout the nineteenth century, the bulk of students at the school were enrolled in the Preparatory rather than Collegiate Division; in its first half century, Wilberforce certainly awarded no more than fifty Bachelors degrees. Even those who completed the collegiate course rarely found their way into the professions, but instead gravitated toward teaching, just like their compatriots at "industrial" schools like Hampton and Tuskegee. The school possessed no library to speak of until 1904, when the Carnegie Foundation provided a grant for a building and books.[37]

What prevented Wilberforce from reaching the academic heights envisioned by Payne, and later attained by universities like Howard and Fisk, was simply lack of money. While Howard might receive a half million dollars per year from its white governors, Wilberforce depended almost solely on the mites of AME Church members. In a good year, the AME Education Department raised twenty thousand dollars, and even that had to be shared between a dozen church-sponsored colleges, each of which jealously defended its apportionment. A partial solution to the problem was found in 1888, when Ohio's Republican legislature, in a blatant act of political patronage, established a Commercial, Normal, and Industrial Department on the Wilberforce campus. Under the terms of the Department's charter, each state legislator awarded one scholarship to Wilberforce per year, enabling hundreds of young African-Americans to qualify as teachers or obtain certificates in any of a dozen training courses, including carpentry, bookkeeping, and domestic science. In the long term, the presence of a state-supported training institute on the campus of a church-run

[37] DuBois, "The Future of Wilberforce University."

university generated profound questions about the school's mission, as well as nearly insuperable problems of academic governance. In the more immediate term, however, the CNI Department brought hundreds of thousands of dollars in state aid to Wilberforce, without which neither the school not its vaunted university curriculum would have long survived. During the era of the South African students, at least, the relationship between Wilberforce and the CNI Department apparently worked smoothly. State-sponsored normal students completed all their liberal arts prerequisites within the university, while university students, including a number of the South African students, were able to avail themselves of industrial training. The essential point, for our purposes, is that the presence of the CNI Department did not initially signal any retreat from Bishop Payne's liberal ideal; on the contrary, it enabled Wilberforce to maintain a full slate of university courses at a time when most black schools were gravitating toward a more "practical" curriculum.[38]

The records of Wilberforce University have endured more than their share of fires and tempests, making it almost impossible to reconstruct the reception or day to day experiences of the South African students. On a campus with about four hundred students total, they were undoubtedly conspicuous, doubly so since Africa was already the subject on every tongue. Sermons, essay contests, lectures, monthly missionary meetings all dwelt on Africa, and while few at Wilberforce went so far as to endorse Bishop Turner's emigrationist schemes, most seem to have accepted that African-Americans possessed some kind of providential destiny to uplift their benighted cousins in Africa. Discussion of Africa apparently remained within the "Dark Continent" tradition, with the continent

[38]David Gerber, "Segregation, Separatism, and Sectarianism: Ohio Blacks and Wilberforce University's Effort to Obtain Federal Funds, 1891," *Journal of Negro Education* 45,1 (1976); *Annual Catalogue of Wilberforce University, 1897-98*, p. 10. See also "Industrial Department" file in Wilberforce Archives, especially the 1891 report by Sarah C.B. Scarborough. The Commercial, Normal and Industrial Department eventually cleaved off from Wilberforce to become Central State University.

simultaneously portrayed as a garden uncorrupted by man and a jungle befogged by ignorance and sin. By implication, the inhabitants of Africa were alternately childlike innocents or bloody savages. The reception of the first students reflected both preconceptions. Theodore Kakaza, for example, later indignantly recalled that a few of his fellow students "had the nerve to examine our anatomy, to see if they could observe the remnants of our forest ancestors." More subtle but no less revealing, groups of church women "adopted" a number of the Africans, despite the fact that most were well into their twenties. The women of the North Ohio Conference Woman's Mite Missionary Society, for example, adopted both Charlotte Manye, "that Rare Jewel," and later Adelaide Tantsi, "our dear sweet African daughter." Magazo Sakie was adopted by local church women, who, in the best missionary tradition, renamed him "Daniel Payne" in honor of their late Bishop.[39]

Such attitudes seem to have persisted even after the South African students were ensconsed at the school, despite the obvious fact that they were neither children nor savages. The winner of the 1899 Eliza Turner Prize, awarded each year for the best student essay on Africa, characterized Africa as "an uncouth, rugged child," and its people as a "slumbering" race. At monthly missionary meetings, students prayed for the future of "civilization" in Africa, and read of the heroic labors of Livingstone, Moffat, and the other missionary pioneers spreading light in the Dark Continent. In part, such attitudes could persist because the South Africans did little to contradict them. On the contrary, the image of a slumbering continent accorded quite well with the South African students' own perceptions; with the proviso, of course, that they counted themselves among the awakened. Charlotte Manye alone seems to

[39]Carrie Bell Lee, "The Future of Africa," reprinted in *Voice of Missions* , July, 1899; see also *Voice of Missions*, July, 1895 and Sept., 1898. Kakaza's recollection, from *Imvo Zabatsandu* , June 11, 1929, is quoted in Alexander Ball, "American Negro Influence on Black Nationalist and Proto-nationalist Movements in South Africa, 1898-1930," B.A. (Hons.) dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1979, p. 42. This duality in Afro-American perceptions of Africa was virtually identical to the duality in white perceptions of Afro-Americans a generation before.

have harbored a certain reverence for traditional life -- Africans had long worshipped God "in our own way," she was later wont to say -- yet even she could not resist shocking African-American audiences with lurid tales of ritual killings and snake-bedecked "witchdoctors." Hearing the South Africans' heart-wrenching descriptions of their homeland, listening to their renditions of fearful native "war songs," students at Wilberforce probably came away even more persuaded that Africa was crying out for redemption.[40]

Church leaders were quick to appreciate the South African students' value in promoting the cause of foreign missions. The African Choir was reconstituted on campus, and carted to no end of conventions and conferences. South African singers performed at Commencement and Founders' Day Celebrations, at the 1898 Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement, and at the 1900 and 1904 AME General Conferences. Black Americans, most of whom had never laid eyes on a native African, clamoured to see and hear and touch them. Church periodicals contained rapturous descriptions of their humility, piety and intelligence. In the students, such articles implied, Afro-Americans could glimpse Africa's future, and something of their own past. For a group of youths fresh from Africa, this reception was bracing stuff, which no doubt did much to intensify the convictions of duty and destiny which they had brought with them to America.[41]

The day to day life which the South African students experienced still followed Bishop Payne's spartan regime, with its

[40]McGinnis, *History...of Wilberforce* , p. 168; Hallie Q. Brown, *Pen Pictures of Pioneers of Wilberforce* (Xenia, 1937), p. 12; Charlotte Crogman Wright, "Mother Maxeke: An Appreciation," in *Beneath the Southern Cross: The Story of an American Bishop's Wife in South Africa* (New York, 1955), pp. 111-115. See also Manye's address to the 1901 Convention of the Ohio Conference Woman's Mite Missionary Society, copy in Arnett Papers, v. 64.

[41]See, for example, *Voice of Missions* , March, 1895, April, Sept., 1898, August, 1899. Henry Msikinya apparently addressed the Convention of the predominantly white Student Volunteer Convention on "The Condition of My People."

emphasis on self-control, punctuality, and hygiene. Payne was a notoriously early riser, and students at his school were up by 5:30 each morning, tidying their rooms and fetching coal and water for the day. Morning chapel commenced at 8:00. Classes followed, interrupted only by lunch and physical culture, which in the case of boys consisted of marching about the parade ground under the watchful eye of Lieutenant Young. Students enjoyed one hour of free time after dinner, before being dispatched to their rooms for a mandatory study period. Lights out -- lanterns out, actually, since the school remained without electricity -- was early, about 9:00 p.m. Weekends offered little respite from the routine, aside from a Saturday night bath and a second chapel service on Sundays. The monthly missionary meetings, a monthly temperance lecture, and regular elocution contests completed the circuit of the days. The iron routine was broken only during the annual revival, when classes were closed and the spirit given reign.[42]

A battery of rules helped create an atmosphere of rigid propriety. Use of alcohol or tobacco, gambling, profanity, insubordination, even leaving the school grounds without permission were all offenses warranting expulsion. "Associating" between the sexes was likewise a dismissable offense, a testament to Payne's preoccupation with stamping out any vestigial promiscuity left from slave days. Male and female students walked to recitation halls through different hallways, and when their paths did cross they were obliged to pass without speaking. The only social contact between the sexes came during monthly mixers -- closely chaperoned affairs which consisted of student couples marching arm in arm up and down the hallways to the strains of martial music. (Even here, students rotated partners after each song lest two students grow too attached to one another.) For their part, the South African students seem to have adjusted well to the regimen at the

[42]*Annual Catalogue of Wilberforce University, 1897-98* , p. 14; Ransom, *School Days*.

school. Surviving records of the school's Disciplinary Board reveal no cases involving South Africans.[43]

It is almost impossible to know what courses of study individual South Africans followed, due to both the loss of records and the curricular overlap between the Preparatory, Collegiate, and Normal Departments. Initially, all the arriving students, with the apparent exception of Henry Msikinya, were placed in preparatory classes to improve their English. Msikinya, a product of one of the Cape's most distinguished African families, entered Payne Theological Seminary, graduating with a B.D. in 1901. Charlotte Manye, likewise a product of the Kimberley elite, followed close behind him. After a year of remedial English, she enrolled in the 'Scientific' curriculum and was awarded a B.Sc. degree, also in 1901. Both returned to South Africa, he as an ordained minister and she as a teacher. Their peers took somewhat longer to complete their degrees. Theodore Kakaza graduated with a B.S. in 1902 and proceeded to Toronto to study medicine. Marshall Maxeke graduated with with an A.B. in 1903, the same year that Edward Magaya and Thomas Katiya, who had transferred from Wilberforce to Lincoln, obtained their arts degrees. All three returned to South Africa as teachers. Charles Dube and Adelaide Tantsi completed B.Sc. degrees in 1904 and '05 respectively, and Sebopioa Molema took a degree in law in 1906. James and Harsant Tantsi graduated with Divinity degrees in 1905 and '07, respectively, and both proceeded into the ministry. Probably a dozen others eventually completed degrees prior to or during World War I, but it is difficult to specify when or in what field.[44]

[43]McGinnis, *History...of Wilberforce University* , pp. 153-174; Wilberforce Archives, Committee on Discipline, Box 15.

[44]*Annual Catalogue of Wilberforce University, 1897-98* , pp. 29-36, 42-48; *Wilberforce Bulletin and Annual Catalogue, 1909-10* , pp. 137-141; and *Bulletin and Annual Catalogue, 1912-13* , pp. 151-153. Unfortunately, no other catalogue numbers from the period survive.

The evidence permits a few generalizations. It appears that about half of the students who came to Wilberforce completed bachelors degrees, though they frequently took seven or eight years to do so. Virtually all spent at least a year or two in the Wilberforce High School Department, usually to improve their English, before entering the Collegiate Division. Obviously students who came at a younger age or with less preparation spent a longer time in preparatory classes. Patrick Ngcayiya, for example, took a full five years to qualify for the Collegiate course and another five to finish his degree. Michael Seganoe spent twelve years at Wilberforce before failing eyesight drove him home, *sans* degree. Equally striking is the concentration of South African students in the liberal arts curriculum, a curriculum which led them almost inexorably into careers in teaching and the ministry. Only two of the early students, Sebopioa Molema and Stephen Gumede, pursued bachelors degrees in law, and only one, Theodore Kakaza, proceeded on to medical school. Finally, all of the early students had some exposure to "industrial education," and were doubtless familiar with the arguments advancec on behalf of this latest educational panacea. Kakaza, for example, learned typing in a Commercial, Normal and Industrial Department course; Thomas Kalane, who came to Wilberforce in about 1906, earned a printing diploma. Charlotte Manye and Adelaide Tantsi took courses in domestic science, while Charles Dube, Tantsi's future husband, studied carpentry, which undoubtedly helped prepare him for his future work at Ohlange Institute. Nonetheless, the first cadre of students at Wilberforce were generally not devotees of 'practical' education. They saw industrial training not as the essence of their educations but as an adjunct to it, as one more element preparing them for the responsibilities they would shortly assume back in South Africa.[45]

[45]Transvaal Archives Depot, Papers of the Transvaal Education Department (TAD) 843 G4091/144; *Annual Catalogue of Wilberforce University, 1897-98*, p. 76; *Journal of Proceedings of the Fifteenth Session of the Transvaal and Natal Annual Conferences of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (n.p., 1913), p. 10. (A copy of the Proceedings can be found in the Wilberforce Archives, AME Church Collection, Box 13.)

How did they define those responsibilities? How did Wilberforce shape their political consciousness, their sense of themselves and of their role in South Africa's future? It is difficult to answer these questions with any precision, for the South African students were exposed to a range of political opinion at Wilberforce. They probably never met Frederick Douglass, a frequent visitor to the campus prior to his death in February, 1895, but they did hear the eulogy to Douglass which W.E.B. DuBois delivered in the Wilberforce chapel a few weeks later. Benjamin Arnett was there as a walking advertisement for political pragmatism. The students met the venerable Alexander Crummell at the 1896 Commencement, and Booker T. Washington two years later. Bishop Turner, still breathing the fire of African emigration, was a regular visitor to the campus, and never failed to stop and visit with the South Africans, especially after his own tour of their homeland. The entire AME House of Bishops, including Benjamin Tanner, Turner's great adversary, descended on the school at least once a year.[46]

Already debate rumbled along the fault lines that would cleave twentieth century Afro-American intellectual life. Should blacks capitalize on their votes and on existing anti-discrimination legislation to push for full equality or should they eschew politics? What was the role of the black intellectual? Did the future of the race lay in America or in Africa? The South African students no doubt confronted all of those questions at Wilberforce. Withal, the dominant influence on their outlook remained what might be called the 'moral assimilationism' associated with Payne and Crummell. Neither of these old churchmen was prepared to renounce politics, yet both remained convinced that full acceptance into the American mainstream would come only when blacks had demonstrated the

[46]DuBois' eulogy for Douglass was reprinted in the *Journal of Negro History* in 1964. See also Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism*, pp. 132-133; *Voice of Missions*, July, 1895; *Annual Catalogue of Wilberforce University, 1897-98*, p. 15. At least two of the Wilberforce students, David Sondezi and J.Kolombe, later corresponded with Washington. See Davis, "Black American Education Component," fns. 12, 56, 57.

intelligence, character, and moral fiber essential to responsible citizenship.

Probably the most important purveyor of that belief, at Wilberforce and indeed in the United States as a whole, was the young W.E.B. DuBois. DuBois' eulogy to Douglass and his *Conservation of Races*, published by the American Negro Academy in 1897, clearly bore the stamp of Crummell, who he ranked with Payne as black America's greatest leader. The paradox in DuBois' thought, of course, was that the assimilationist impulse co-existed with a kind of mystical racialism, a belief in the unity and special genius of the black race which owed more than a little to his youthful encounter with German philosophy. Nonetheless, DuBois at the end of the century spoke fluently the Crummellian language of racial uplift, which was nothing if not a European tongue. In *The Conservation of Races* for example, he wrote, "We believe that the first and greatest step toward the settlement of the present friction between the races ... lies in the correction of the immorality, crime and laziness among the Negroes themselves, which still remains as a heritage from slavery." The whole culture of Wilberforce -- the structured regimen, the elocution contests, even the fetish with hygiene -- reflected that conviction.[47]

Three aspects of the Wilberforce 'political culture' warrant special remark. First and most obviously, assimilation of white manners and mores was to be pursued from within separatist institutions. As much as Payne and his successors cherished their contacts with whites, virtually all the institutions which flowered within the Wilberforce community -- the Masons and Odd Fellows,

[47]"The Conservation of Races," in *The American Negro Academy Occasional Papers* (New York, 1969), p. 15. See also Anthony Appiah, "The Uncompleted Argument: DuBois and the Illusion of Race," in Henry L. Gates (ed.), *"Race," Writing and Difference* (Chicago, 1985). In *The Souls of Black Folk*, DuBois ranked Crummell and Payne as the most important black leaders of the nineteenth century. In his *Autobiography*, published in the 1960s, he still recalled the reverence he felt when he first met the aged Crummell at the 1896 Wilberforce Commencement. Afro-American historians will recognize how much this reading of DuBois owes to Wilson Moses' *Golden Age of Black Nationalism*; see particularly pp. 132-145, 156-169..

the National Association of Colored Women, the American Negro Academy -- were segregated or forthrightly racial. Obviously the university itself was a separatist institution, as was its sponsor, the AME Church. The key to this apparent paradox is to recognize that separatism was conceived as a means rather than an end. For most of the nineteenth century, separatist institutions were judged to offer the best opportunity for blacks to hone their leadership and organizational skills, and generally to exhibit those qualities of civility upon which their assumption into the dominant society was presumed to depend. Benjamin Arnett, who belonged to dozens of elite racial organizations, put the matter succinctly when he described the black Order of Odd Fellows as a "moral normal school" for the race. He might have added, but did not, that such groups also enabled blacks to escape the petty indignities and humiliations they often confronted in inter-racial organizations.[48]

Secondly, the vision articulated by Payne, Crummell, and the young DuBois was profoundly elitist, with the educated elite -- what DuBois, in 1897, still called "the better classes" -- cast as both the vehicle and vanguard of racial progress. Prominent individuals, through the conspicuousness of their attainments, would demonstrate to skeptical whites (as well as to the downtrodden of their own race) what the Afro-American could become if given the opportunity. At times, that analysis conduced to an almost biographical approach to racial progress, as evidenced by such books as Kletzing and Crogman's *Progress of a Race* and W.J. Simmons' massive *Men of Mark*. Implicit in this conception of the elite was a certain measured disdain toward the back masses. Leaders in the mould of Payne or Crummell constantly fretted that their efforts would be subverted by the masses, whose persistent indolence and vice reinforced the very prejudices acculturated leaders were endeavoring to break down. That anxiety was expressed in a preoccupation with "racial uplift," with using schools and churches to make the masses more industrious, abstemious, hygenic,

[48]Arnett, quoted in Gerber, *Black Ohio*, p. 161.

respectable, and so forth. On the surface, this preoccupation with what Payne called "racial service" smacks of Booker T. Washington, but the underlying conception was quite different. While not indifferent to the importance of developing the economic resources of the black community, assimilationist leaders still saw black 'underdevelopment' as more moral than material. And while Washington spoke of instilling a spirit of "self help" throughout the black community, leaders like Payne and Crummell tended to think of the black masses as inert, as a thing to be uplifted. They could ill-conceive that the masses might help themselves, still less that they might embody certain cultural attributes which should be respected and preserved.[49]

Finally, the political culture of Wilberforce was almost staggeringly optimistic. Ultimately, the whole assimilationist creed rested on the rather quaint expectation that prejudice would wilt before reason, that at a certain point the dominant society would recognize its folly and open its doors to blacks, or at least to the most respectable black classes. Benjamin Arnett expressed the conviction in a metaphor characteristic of the age: "If a man is worth a dollar, he will be treated as a dollar." Obviously such optimism could only be sustained outside the southern states. Indeed, it was increasingly difficult to sustain even in the relatively privileged world of Wilberforce. The 1890s saw a half-dozen lynchings in southern Ohio, at least one of which occurred while the South Africans were at Wilberforce. The passage of a tough anti-lynching bill in the state in 1898 helped restore the black community's confidence, but it was soon shaken again by two incidents of mob violence against blacks, in Akron in 1900 and, closer to home, in Springfield in 1904. Even Jim Crow seemed to be finding its way across the Ohio. For example, delegates to the 1900 AME Church General Conference in Columbus (where the African

[49]H.F. Kletzing and W.H. Crogman, *Progress of a Race..or..the Remarkable Advancement of the Afro-American* (New York, 1969, orig. pub. 1897); William J. Simmons, *Men of Mark: Eminent, Progressive and Rising* (New York, 1968, orig. pub. 1887); Moss, *The American Negro Academy* , pp. 296-297.

Choir performed) were chagrined to find themselves refused accommodation in the city's best hotels. In the long run, these forces would divest DuBois and intellectuals like him of many of their optimistic, liberal assumptions. In the short term, however, the gathering clouds of white reaction made the task of racial uplift seem all the more urgent.[50]

What is significant for our purposes is how neatly the canons of racial uplift dovetailed with convictions the Wilberforce students brought with them from South Africa. Indeed, it is scarcely possible to conceive an intellectual climate more congenial to them than Wilberforce. The terminology was somewhat different: where "progressive" South Africans contrasted the 'civilised' and the 'barbarous,' African-Americans spoke of the 'educated' and 'ignorant.' Nonetheless, the essential idea, of an acculturated elite lighting the way to racial progress (usually through the medium of racial institutions), was identical. Long before they set foot at Wilberforce, well-born individuals like Henry Msikinya, Charles Dube, and Theodore Kakaza had been taught to equate their own attainments with the progress of their race, and to harbor ambivalent feelings of duty and disdain toward the black masses. Ultimately, the southern black whose condition was lamented by Payne and DuBois was virtually indistinguishable from the "heathen" that Charlotte Manye and Henry Msikinya felt obliged to save. One group spoke of relics of slavery and the other of relics of barbarism, but the underlying conceptions of identity and obligation were the same.

In retrospect, what is striking about the Wilberforce experience is not the way in which it transformed African students' consciousness, but the way in which it honed convictions which they brought with them from South Africa. This is not to say that the

[50]Arnett, quoted in Gerber, *Black Ohio* , p. 173. See also pp. 249-259. DuBois movingly described the erosion of Wilberforce and its environs from a vessel of black hopes to a symbol of despair in his 1941 Commencement Address at the school. See DuBois, "The Future of Wilberforce University."

effect of their visit was minimal or unimportant. Human beings are generally more impressed by things which appear to confirm rather than challenge existing convictions. For these students, passing through Wilberforce at this particular historical moment, exposure to black America offered priceless vindication, a confirmation of the future which had been charted for them and for their race. Shielded as they had been from some of the more intractable realities of Afro-American life, they left the school with all the articles of their nineteenth century creed -- their devotion to respectability, their belief in education and "progress," their trust in the essential rectitude of "civilised" society -- intact. For them, as for many of their mentors at Wilberforce, life would be a long process of disillusionment.

3. The Journey Home

In 1904, Marshall Maxeke, newly returned to South Africa, appealed to the *Voice of Missions* for funds for a school which he and his new wife, Charotte Manye, had opened in the Northern Transvaal. There was little in the letter to indicate that its author was an African, little to distinguish it from a host of other missionary reports and appeals in the columns of the paper. On the contrary, Maxeke's letter reproduced almost exactly that mixture of condescension and romance which Africa unfailingly evoked in Afro-American missionaries and travellers. The editor of the *Voice of Missions* , with a amentable sense of geography but not without a certain poetic aptness, headlined the column "An Appeal from the Jungles."[51]

In describing the world in which he and his wife worked, Maxeke was probably indulging a little poetic license of his own, to appeal to African-American readers who continued to think of Africa as an undifferentiated Dark Continent. Nonetheless, the tone and idiom of the letter raise basic questions about the identity and

[51] *Voice of Missions* , April, July, 1904.

consciousness of Maxeke and all the returning students. What attitudes did the returning students harbor toward the people and culture they had left behind? What was the nature of their kinship with black America? How did the encounter with America shape the students' lives -- their careers, their political beliefs, their sense of themselves? Finally, how did the returning students respond when Africa's golden future, the providential awakening of which they were to be the instrument, failed to materialize?

A number of American-educated students delayed confronting such questions by remaining in the United States. Perhaps two dozen emigre students, including such future African Nationalist luminaries as A.B. Xuma and Hastings Banda, found pretenses to tarry in America, often for a decade or more. Francis Gow, destined to become the AME Church's first African-born Bishop, remained in America for almost twenty years before finally accepting a call back home. A handful of students flat out refused to return to South Africa. Hannah Gow married an Afro-American and stayed in the United States, as did John Manye. Theodore Kakaza went into medical practice in Indianapolis. Patrick Ngcayiya remained in the United States as a school teacher, a decision which devastated his father. At one point, the elder Ngcayiya wrote to Marcus Garvey, asking him to remind African students of their responsibilities to the country they had left behind.[52]

A few students came home briefly, but found themselves unable to readjust to South African life. Harsant Tantsi, who returned to South Africa in about 1908, remained for only a year or two before sailing back to America. He apparently settled in Michigan, where he was ordained an AME minister. Melrose Sishuba, after spending a dozen years in the United States, lived in South Africa only a few months before unsuccessfully applying for a

[52] Letter of H. Reed of Ngcayinya, Tvl [sic] to *Negro World* , April 21, 1923; *Christian Recorder* , July 14, 1927; *Wilberforce Bulletin and Annual Catalogue, 1909-10* , p. 138; and *Wilberforce Bulletin and Annual Catalogue, 1912-13* , p. 151.

passport to return. Most heartwrenching of all was the experience of Jonathan Mokone, son of the Ethiopian Church's founder and one of the last students to travel to Wilberforce prior to World War I. Mokone married a black American woman and postponed returning home for the better part of twenty years. In deference to his dying father, he returned to South Africa in 1930, but almost immediately set out to contrive a voyage back to America. In 1943, he attached a plaintive note to a visa application, in which he professed a lack of affinity with African people and complete ignorance of African languages. (By way of explanation, he noted that he was "a descendant of slaves" and thus grew up speaking Dutch; while presumably a reference to his father's *inboekseling* past, the slave reference suggests just how thoroughly he had internalized Afro-American history and culture.) "All my friends, school-mates and acquaintances are in America," Mokone concluded. "I have lost every contact with my people here (the natives) who regard me as a foreigner. This particular phrase would cover volumes."[53]

Ultimately, however, the vast majority of the American-educated students returned to South Africa and lived out their lives there. They returned with a variety of motivations and expectations, but in the end what seems to have drawn most of them homeward was duty, the conviction of racial obligation nurtured in the soil of Wilberforce. Among the AME contingent, at least, most of the students regarded their education as a kind of entailment, which implied a responsibility to share what they had acquired. Charlotte Manye Maxeke, the first Wilberforce student to return to South Africa, was the embodiment of that impulse *par excellence*. Yet even an individual as positively saintly as Mrs. Maxeke harbored a certain ambivalence toward Africans and African culture. Like virtually all the returning students, she went to considerable lengths to keep her contacts with black America alive, and

[53]On Tantsi, see AME *Church Review* 41,3 (1925) and *The African Leader*, Sept. 17, 1932; on Sishuba, NTS 2692 4/301/1 v.1; on Mokone, NTS 2719 394/301.

responded with alacrity when the opportunity to return to America for a visit presented itself.[54]

Marriage patterns provide the best evidence of just how much importance the returning students attached to their American affiliations. Among South Africa's elite Christians, as among their traditionalist forbears, marriage represented a primary expression of one's social identity. Judging from marriage selections, an American diploma ensured that one's spouse would be drawn only from the most rarified stratum of the Christian elite. A number of the students married one another. Charlotte Manye and Marshall Maxeke, for example, were married within months of being reunited in South Africa, as were Adelaide Tantsi and Charles Dube. James Tantsi's wife, Ntombi, was a well-educated Sierra Leonean whom he apparently met at Wilberforce. (Given the restrictions on "associating" between the sexes at the school, it is difficult to imagine how such romances blossomed.) More striking still, at least a dozen of the emigre students, including a number of future leaders of the AME Church, disdained African mates altogether, and married Afro-Americans. In contrast, black American missionaries and travellers seldom if ever married Africans.[55]

No one illustrates the psychological dimensions of marriage selection better than A.B. Xuma, a graduate of Tuskegee and Minnesota medical school, who later went on to become President of the African National Congress. Xuma met his first wife, Amanda Mason, in the United States. Mason was an Americo-Liberian and a Wilberforce graduate, who had spent several years as an AME missionary in West Africa. She accompanied Xuma back to South Africa in the late 1920s, but died within a few years' time. Xuma wished to remarry, yet he had little interest in marrying a South African. Instead, he determined to win an Afro-American bride, to

[54]NTS 7601 9/328.

[55]Natal Archives Depot, Papers of the Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) 56 176/1912; "Wilberforce Bulletin and Annual Catalogue, 1909-10," pp. 140-141; C.G. Wright, *Beneath the Southern Cross*, p. 105.

the extent that he actually asked a friend travelling to the United States to apprise him of any suitable candidates. Astonishingly, the gambit succeeded: the friend referred him to Madie Hall, daughter of a distinguished North Carolina family and an officer of the black YWCA. After a lengthy courtship, conducted almost exclusively by mail, Ms. Hall became the second Mrs. Xuma. The moral of the story, of course, rests in Xuma's conviction that only in America could he find a wife who shared his perspective and experience, not to mention his social status. More broadly, the episode illustrates the extraordinary self-consciousness of the returning students, their unflagging sense of personal exceptionalism. The result, in Xuma's case at least, was profoundly paradoxical. Here was a man so conscious of his role as a "leader of the race," so preoccupied with vindicating African potential in his own life, that he could no longer conceive of marrying an African.[56]

Given their convictions of obligation and exceptionalism, the returning students naturally gravitated toward careers in the ministry and teaching. Within the Wilberforce contingent alone, the roster of future AME ministers included Henry Msikinya, Marshall Maxeke, James and Harsant Tantsi, Edward Magaya, Jonathan Mokone and Abraham Lawrence. Virtually all of the students devoted considerable chunks of their lives to African education. Msikinya taught at AME schools in the Western Cape and Transvaal before his premature death in 1912. Charlotte and Marshall Maxeke opened a succession of schools in the Northern Transvaal, on the Witwatersrand, and in the Transkei. Adelaide Tantsi taught at the controversial 'Ethiopian' school at Klipspruit, before moving to Natal to join her betrothed, Charles Dube, who served until his death as

[56]On Amanda Mason Xuma, see L.L. Berry, *A Century of Missions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1840-1940* (New York, 1942), pp. 137, 155; and *Umteteli wa Bantu*, May 5, 1934. The correspondence with Ms. Hall is in the University of the Witwatersrand Archives, Xuma Papers [ABX] ; see ABX 250636 and ABX 110139. Mbulelo Mzamane has written a wrenching short story about the fate of an American-educated South African and his African-American wife, apparently based on Xuma. See "Soweto Bride," in *Mzala: The Stories of Mbulelo Mzamane* (Johannesburg, 1981).

Headmaster of his brother John's Ohlange Institute. Msikinya, James and Harsant Tantsi, Francis Gow, Marshall Maxeke, and Edward Magaya all served at various times as principal of Wilberforce Institute, a teacher-training school south of Johannesburg which became the focus of AME educational efforts in South Africa. Needless to say, such careers were generally ill-paying, especially in an impecunious institution like the AME Church.[57]

Given the popular expectations unleashed by the opening of the trans-Atlantic educational traffic, there is a measure of irony here. While there was never any real consensus as to what African-American education could or would do, at least some of its African proponents saw it as an avenue to something other than the ministerial and teaching careers which represented the upper limit to which graduates of European mission schools could aspire. "We have been sending our children to [mission] schools where they have been trained to be Evangelists and school teachers," headman Enoch Mamba complained to the South African Native Affairs Commission in 1904. "There are too many of the school teachers and they cannot get work, they are not trained for anything else, whereas in America they will get into a place where they will get cheap education, and wider education than they get in these Mission schools." Yet in the end, it was to these familiar elite occupations that most of the returning students gravitated. In short, most ended up in precisely the professions they would likely have found had they never gone to the United States.[58]

[57]Chronological list of AME South African ordinees in the D.P. and E.M. Gordon Papers, University of the Western Cape Archives. In contrast to the U.S. AME Church, which was large enough to afford its leaders quite comfortable livings, the South African church could not even pay regular salaries to its ministers and teachers. Even American-educated leaders remained dependent on the largesse of their impoverished congregants, and many endured considerable financial hardship.

[58]Enoch Mamba, testimony to *SANAC*, v. 2, p. 1043. On Mamba, see "A Voice in the Big House," in William Beinart and Colin Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1987). See also chapter four, above.

Mamba's testimony reveals again the abiding faith in education which was such a part of the consciousness of the African mission elite. In a period of accelerating racial proscription, many African Christians continued to believe that what handicapped them was education rather than race; obtain a college degree and colonial society would yet deliver on its promise. That assumption was a canard, as the handful of students who returned from Wilberforce with professional degrees quickly discovered. The case of Sebopioa Molema, who earned a bachelors degree in Law from Wilberforce and went on to qualify as an attorney, was fairly typical. The Cape government refused to recognize his American legal credential; and declined to help him find a London firm where he could complete the articles necessary for certification. After spending nearly a decade training as a lawyer, Molema ended up working as a magistrate's interpreter and later as a clerk in a small business, precisely the niches he would likely have found had he never gone to America. Would-be doctors, engineers and businessmen were likewise hamstrung by various formal and informal proscriptions, often aimed directly at the American educated. In the end, the two dozen or so African professionals who managed to scrape out a living in South Africa in the first third of the twentieth century were virtually all British-trained.[59]

[59]Aspiring doctors, for example, were also required to possess a British credential, a policy with far less intrinsic logic than the like policy for lawyers. In the end, the only American-educated medical doctor to practice in South Africa during the first half of the century was A.B. Xuma, who supplemented his American degree with a residency in Edinburgh. Hastings Banda also completed the necessary British credentials and was poised to return to South Africa, when the Second World War stranded him in England. After the war, he returned not to South Africa but to his native Nyasaland, eventually becoming the first President of the independent state of Malawi. Colonial officials, being British-educated themselves, evinced considerable faith in the moderating influence of British education, at least compared to the black American variety. By the 1930s, however, British universities had produced a radical pan-African intellectual tradition, and South African officials had become more circumspect. In 1939, in fact, the Union Native Affairs Department, in concert with the South African Institute of Race Relations, attempted to establish a hostel for South African students in Britain, the better to supervise their intellectual development. See correspondence in the Xuma Papers, May-June 1939. Kenneth King has observed that, among East African students in the 1930s, the British-educated usually returned far more politicized than their American-educated counterparts. See King, *Pan-*

For all of that, it would be singularly misleading to imply that all the returning students entered the ministry and teaching out of expediency, or because more attractive professional outlets were blocked. Among the Wilberforce contingent at least, what is striking is not how many students were frustrated in their ambitions to become doctors and lawyers, but rather how few exhibited such an ambition. Of all the AME-sponsored students, only two, Molema and Stephen Gumede, majored in law; while only Theodore Kakaza and Henry Gabashane elected to study medicine. The rest were committed from the outset to careers in teaching and the ministry, finding in these familiar occupations callings commensurate with their sense of themselves and their convictions about responsible "race leadership." For them, as for generations of educated Africans before them, missionary work offered a refuge from ambivalence, a kind of professional resolution to the conflicting feelings of devotion and disdain which they harbored toward the world they had left behind.[60]

These students left an enduring imprint on the South African AME Church. From 1901, when the first students arrived back from Wilberforce, until well into the 1950s, the upper echelon of AME leadership was recruited almost exclusively from the ranks of the American educated. U.S. graduates superintended schools, trained ministers, and occupied the most prominent pulpits. Charlotte Manye Maxeke was the founder and, for the better part of four decades, the guiding spirit of the South African Woman's Missionary Society. During the frequent absences of resident Bishops, James Tantsi and Francis Gow served as South African General

Africanism and Education , pp. 249-250. On Molema, see Transvaal Archives Depot, Papers of the Governor General (GG) 886 28/16 and 28/18; SNA 473 2468/10; and correspondence in the Plaatje-Molema Papers.

[60]Kakaza apparently remained in the United States practicing medicine; Gabashane seems to have opened a medical mission in Swaziland after returning from Meharry Medical College; Gumede can last be traced to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he was probably studying law. In sum, none of the four non-missionary students seems ever to have practiced his profession in South Africa.

Superintendents, with authority over finance, ministerial assignments, and so forth; Gow eventually became the AME Church's first African-born Bishop. On balance, these returning students probably did more to shape the tenor and tone of South African church life than their nominal overseers from America.

What evidence there is suggests that the American-educated students devoted their energies to preserving the AME Church's reputation as the most respectable and "progressive" of African institutions. Like their mentors at Wilberforce University, these students generally saw the church as both a vehicle for 'uplifting' the downtrodden of the race, and a forum for elite Africans to exhibit their own cultural credentials. The schools they founded thus enshrined all Bishop Payne's ideas about instilling piety and character along with knowledge. (AME Church educational initiatives are examined in detail in the chapter which follows.) It is more difficult, in the absence of sermons or systematic interviewing, to gauge the character of their preaching, but here too they seem to have been preoccupied with maintaining an appropriately respectable demeanor. Most of the returning students apparently shared Payne's distaste for overly enthusiastic preaching. The only demonstrable exception is Charlotte Manye, who, while obviously never ordained, could deliver a thumping sermon worthy of the best black American preacher. On the whole, however, the returning students apparently made little effort to introduce Afro-American preaching styles in their South African congregations, a fact which surprised (and disappointed) a number of visiting American Bishops.[61]

[61]Bishop Turner complained in 1898 that the church's South African ministers were too respectable. What they needed, he argued, was less "book" and more "gospel preaching." Levi Coppin, resident Bishop during the return of the first students, made virtually the same comment, as did R.R. Wright, resident Bishop from 1936-40.

Between the example of Charlotte Manye and impressions gained at AME services in South Africa today, it appears that enthusiastic preaching in the church has generally remained the province of women. It is possible that the Afro-American "gospel preaching" tradition resonated with indigenous traditions of spirit possession, which in Bantu cultures was generally a female phenomenon. A transcript of Charlotte

This same preoccupation with respectability characterized the American contingent's forays into the political arena. Given their sense of themselves, as well as the prestige which an American education conferred, it was probably inevitable that the returning students would be well represented in the leadership ranks of African political movements. This phenomenon, in South Africa and in the continent generally, has led a number of historians to suggest the existence of some kind of causal link between Afro-American education and African "nationalism." With some minor variations, they have argued that exposure to America provided African students with a broader perspective on problems of race and colonialism, which enabled some at least to question the legitimacy or necessity of white rule. Equally importantly, America confronted African students with the spectacle of a black population undivided by language or ethnicity, a critical model for aspiring nationalists.[62]

In broad terms, the equation of American-education and nationalist consciousness is appropriate. Exposure to America does seem to have reinforced visiting students' tendency to think in pan-ethnic terms. A number of U.S. educated students became involved with the Congress movement, and virtually all routinely invoked black America as a model of unity to be emulated. A few cultivated a kind of antiquarian interest in "tribal" history and culture; but none, with the partial exception of John Dube, felt any real ethnic loyalty, or considered such loyalties relevant to the problems or politics of their era. Ultimately, however, the nationalist label can conceal as much as it reveals. In the end, what distinguished the American-educated students was less their 'nationalism' than their enduring commitment to 'moral assimilation' -- to the conviction, exemplified by Daniel Payne, that blacks could earn their way into

Manye delivering a revival sermon to a crowd of European missionaries makes interesting reading. See *The Evangelisation of South Africa[:] Being the Report of the Sixth General Missionary Conference of South Africa Held at Johannesburg* (Cape Town, 1925), pp. 127-134.

[62]See footnotes 3 and 4, above.

the dominant society. Most of the students' defining political attributes flowed from this conviction. Insofar as progress was conceived as a process of racial upliftment, the returned students were necessarily gradualists. They were preoccupied with decorum, certainly to a much greater degree than Mangena Mokone and the first generation of Ethiopian leadership. Whether forwarding a profession of loyalty to the crown or delivering a petition to protest the latest government depredation, the students were attentive to protocol, lest some imperfection in the medium vitiate the message. Above all, they were elitists. However much concern and devotion they evinced for their 'uncivilised' bretheren, they had little faith in their political judgment. To them, political leadership was the province of the uplifted, of the "representative" men and women who had already attained the plane of civilization to which the mass of Africans were presumed to aspire.[63]

The assumed role of "representative" race leaders was two-fold: on one hand, they inspired the benighted of their own race; on the other, they demonstrated to skeptical whites what Africans could achieve if given the opportunity. As in the United States, the emphasis on elite role models produced an almost biographical approach to racial progress. The classic expression of that approach came in a biographical sketch of Charlotte Manye Maxeke, written by A.B. Xuma shortly after his return from the United States. In the pamphlet, entitled "What an Educated African Girl Can Do," Xuma measured Mrs. Maxeke's greatness along three dimensions: in the spur her example provided to other Africans; in her tireless efforts to serve and uplift the lowly of her race; and in the model of respectability and achievement she presented to white South Africans. The final point was underscored by a string of

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[63]See, for example, Charlotte Maxeke's injunctions against "the disease of tribalism," quoted in Ellen Kuzwayo, *Call Me Woman* (London, 1985), pp. 102-103. On Dube and Zulu nationalism, see Shula Marks, "John Dube and the Ambiguities of Nationalism." Elite protocol is explored in J. Campbell, "T.D. Mweli Skota and the Making and Unmaking of a Black Elite," paper delivered to the University of the Witwatersrand History Workshop, February, 1987.

testimonials from Europeans hailing her grace, character, and "well balanced mind." The thesis of the pamphlet was summarized in a foreward contributed by W.E.B. DuBois, who had taught the young Charlotte Manye at Wilberforce and thereafter followed her career with interest. After praising her achievements in the face of both racial and sex prejudice, DuBois concluded: "I think that what Mrs. Maxeke has accomplished should encourage all men, and especially those of African descent. And in addition to that, it should inspire the white residents of South Africa and of America to revise their hastily-made judgments concerning the possibilities of the Negro race."[64]

Like his assimilationist mentors in America, Xuma naturally assumed that racial leadership would devolve upon individuals like Mrs. Maxeke (and himself). He was particularly sensitive to charges that the years in America had 'deracialised' the returning students, and instead presented overseas education as a prerequisite for progressive racial leadership. In a 1929 article, for example, Xuma catalogued the achievements of the likes of Maxeke, John Dube, and the Cambridge-educated D.D.T. Jabavu, before concluding:

> These people are well educated, civilised, and, above all, cultured. They more fully appreciate their people's aspirations as well as their limitations because they themselves have a broader outlook and wider experience ... They plead the cause of the Bantu with dignity and consideration. They have a sincere and heartfelt sympathy for their backward brother and would like to see him rise up to their own level, at least, in outlook. They voice his legitimate claims and interpret his wishes to the white man, intelligently and rationally. These people are really the safest bridge for race contact in the present state of race relations in South Africa.[65]

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[64]Alfred B. Xuma, *Charlotte Manye: What an Educated African Girl Can Do* (n.p., 1930), foreword by W.E.B. DuBois, copy in the Xuma Papers, Box S, file 38.
[65]*Umteteli wa Bantu* , Sept. 7, 1929.

Given their sense of themselves as 'bridges' between the races, American-educated students were invariably well-represented on the various inter-racial 'consultative' bodies which South African liberalism threw up in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s. At one point in the1920s, for example, the Johannesburg Joint Council boasted three American graduates -- James Tantsi and Charlotte and Marshall Maxeke. The Wilberforce contingent was prominent in the "Joint Conferences of Europeans and Bantu" in the 1930s, and in the 1940s Francis Gow chaired the controversial wartime Coloured Advisory Committee. Many black leaders boycotted such institutions, denouncing them as transparent attempts to canalize popular grievances; yet to the American-educated students, participation was almost second nature. Such institutions, however flawed, provided the only forums in South Africa where representative Africans could demonstrate their intellectual and political maturity to a group of open-minded and (ostensibly) influential whites. Given their conception of themselves and their role, such an opportunity could not be passed.[66]

As the years passed, more and more of the erstwhile students' political energies were consumed trying to shore up the eroding economic position of the "representative" class. In the years before final passage of the 1913 Native Lands Act, Pixley Seme, a graduate of Columbia, helped organize both the African Farmers' Association and the South African Native National Congress. John Dube served as first President of the Congress; his brother, Charles, testified to the 1916 Beaumont Commission on behalf of native landowners. In the 1920s, James Tantsi led a native deputation protesting the government's plans to repeal the tax exemption which traditionally attached to registration certificates and letters of exemption. He surfaced again later in the decade, as one of the authors of a Johannesburg Joint Council pamphlet attacking the Hertzog Bills.

[66]Rosters and minutes, ca. 1927-28, Papers of the Johnnesburg Joint Council, University of the Witwatersrand Archives. On Gow, see chapter six, below.

Predictably, the Council focused on the provisions strengthening tribal tenure and blocking cooperative land purchases by "detribalised" natives. The bills, the pamphlet argued, "do not take into account the progressive Native (a large and increasing class) who has become detribalised and for whom tribal conditions are a mark of barbarism from which he has emerged." From Tantsi's perspective, an attack on the economic position of "the progressive Native" menaced the very foundation of racial progress.[67]

Even as state legislation menaced 'progressive Natives' from above, the emergence of new and more militant political organizations eroded their position from below. Given the importance they attached to respectability and protocol, most American-educated leaders instinctively opposed the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union, which failed to conform to their conceptions of appropriate and progressive race leadership. With the exceptions of Melrose Sishuba, a peripheral member of the Port Elizabeth chapter, it is impossible to identify any American-educated students affiliated with the I.C.U. On the contrary, most were overtly hostile to the new union. Charles Dube, for example, served throughout the 1920s as an officer of the Natal Native Congress, the most hidebound of the provincial congresses and an implacable foe of the I.C.U. In fact, there is some evidence that Dube was awarded title to a small sugar plantation by the Natal government, in recognition of his work against the I.C.U. Marshall

[67]Testimony of Charles Dube in *Report of the Natives Land Commission* (Cape Town, 1916), v. 2, p. 458; R. Cloete, "The Ideology of Self Help in the Natal Native Congress from 1910 to the Early 1920s," paper to the Conference on the History of Opposition in Southern Africa, University of the Witwatersrand, January, 1979. On the tax deputation, see GNLB 368 112/26/72. (Letters of exemption and registration certificates were granted to Africans who had attained a prescribed level of education, to free them from some aspects of the pass laws.) See also the Joint Council's pamphlet, *General Hertzog's Solution of the Native Question, No. 1* (Johannesburg, 1928), copy in University of the Witwatersrand Archives, Skota Papers. The narrow compass of Tantsi's political endeavors is doubly striking when it is contrasted with that of his youngest brother, Nimrod, who served on the national executive of the South African Communist Party during the very period that James sat on the Joint Council. Perhaps significantly, Nimrod Tantsi was the only of J.Z. Tantsi's children *not* educated in America.

Maxeke likewise opposed the Union, and led capital's offensive against it from his office as editor of *Umteteli wa Bantu*. *Umteteli*, launched by the Chamber of Mines to court "responsible" African opinion in the wake of the 1919 black miners' strike, heaped derision on the I.C.U., countering their leaders' militant rhetoric with endless essays on "responsible" race leadership and on the progress black Americans had made by disdaining politics.[68]

The South Africa Garvey movement, which succeeded the I.C.U. and in some areas overlapped with it, elicited a similar response from the American-educated, who distrusted its strident tone and mass appeal. Ironically, it appears that the movement awakened considerable enthusiasm among the AME Church's rank and file, who saw the emphasis on black unity and liberation from America as perfectly in keeping with the traditions of their own church. The church's American-educated leaders, however, well appreciated the distinction and did what they could to squelch the interest. In 1927, for example, a resident of Evaton, likely a student at Wilberforce Institute, wrote to Garvey's *Negro World* to complain that "native ministers are against us[;] they don't allow us to hold any meetings in churches or schools because they have this spirit of a white man, keep nigger down." At the time, Francis Gow, one of the most prominent of the AME Church's American contingent, was Principal of the school and pastor of the Evaton congregation. James Tantsi took a similar line. Tantsi was actually travelling in the United States during the massive 1920 U.N.I.A. convention in New York. On his return, he assured the Bloemfontein Superintendent of Locations that he had taken no interest in the convention, which the "better class Negro is keeping away from." Garvey, he reported, in a comment profoundly revealing of his own beliefs about political leadership, "is simply working on the Negroes' passions and anti-white feelings." At the same time, Maxeke maintained a steady fire

[68]Transvaal Archives Depot, Papers of the Minister of Justice (JUS) 918 1/18/26, v. 9; NTS 4/301/1 v.1. On Dube's farm, see the letter of his son in the papers of his estate, in Natal Archives Depot, MSCE 793/1947.

against the movement in the pages of *Umteteli wa Bantu*. One exasperated Garveyite finally asked rhetorically, "Who is the editor," Maxeke or his white patrons?[69]

The predicament of a host of American-educated political leaders, and indeed of a whole generation of assimilationist leadership, was distilled in that one question. The task which these leaders had set for themselves forced them to try to serve two quite incompatible masters -- whites, whom they sought to influence, and blacks, whom they presumed to lead. Lacking even the political leverage which a limited franchise conferred on Afro-Americans, they were forced to subsist on a diet of white concessions, which could be extracted only through the most craven demonstrations of 'balance' and 'maturity.' This posture, together with their manifest lack of results, left them acutely vulnerable to the rise of new and more popular leaders, who derided their methods and questioned their motives. From a historian's perspective, the assimilationists were the first group ground under by the remorseless dialectic of twentieth-century South African black politics. From their own perspective, they were victims of their race's inability to discern its true leaders. A.B. Xuma, who watched control of the African National Congress fall to the young turks of the Youth League in the years after World War II, developed that lament into a virtual soliloquy.

Through it all, the American-educated students steered to the lodestar of assimilation; to do otherwise required acknowledging that their entire lives had been organized around a fiction, and that is something few people are prepared to do. Most contented themselves with their role in the church, and with occasional visits to the United States, where they could again bask in effusions of attention and praise. Despite American education's manifest failure

[69]Undated clipping, *Negro World*, ca. April, 1927. (My thanks to Tim Couzens for this clipping.) See also NTS 1681 2/276 v.1; and excerpt from the journal *Black Man*, quoted in *Umteteli wa Bantu*, July 30, 1921.

to deliver on its promise in their own lives, most continued to place great stock in it, to the extent that they contemplated sending their own children to the United States for education. At least two 'second generation' students, Frederick Dube and Edward Clarke Maxeke, travelled to America in the 1920s. Dube, the son of Charles Dube and Adelaide Tantsi and John Dube's heir apparent at Ohlange, travelled to the United States in 1926, studying at Morehead State and briefly at Columbia Teachers' College. His life reprised the frustrations of his elders. His marriage fractured when his Afro-American wife proved unable to adjust to life in South Africa. Professionally, he was stymied when a group of Ohlange Institute's ostensible patrons took over the school and appointed a European Principal and Headmaster. Fate was scarcely kinder to Maxeke, the only child of Charlotte and Marshall Maxeke and namesake of a Wilberforce University Latin professor. Maxeke enrolled at the AME Church's Morris Brown College in 1923 and remained in the United States through 1938, when he returned to South Africa to teach at Wilberforce Institute. He was quickly disillusioned, however, and elected to return to America. He died there in the early 1940s, a few years after his mother.[70]

The Wilberforce students were creatures of the gloaming. In their consciousness and character, they represented the finest flower of South Africa's nineteenth century mission culture. They could scarcely have been better suited for the world of Wilberforce, which was, in its own way, in twilight. By the time the first students returned home, Crummell had joined Payne in death, while DuBois, disillusioned, had begun an intellectual trek which would eventually take him back to Africa. South Africa, in their absence, had been changed utterly, by war and by an imperial reconstruction which mocked elite Africans' dreams of a social order based on character rather than race. As the decades passed, the returning students found themselves confined to the margins politically and

[70]NTS 2708 60/301; Skota, *African Yearly Register* , p. 193; Marable, "African Nationalist: The Life of John Dube," pp. 325-329, 363.

relentlessly ground down economically. Most died in poverty and obscurity. It was a singularly cruel fate for people who had once dared imagine themselves the instruments of providence.