

Scholars on the Margin

Global Intellectual History of Anthropologists and Educationists of Color Trained at Columbia University, 1897-1937

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Introduction

When Langston Hughes walked into Hartley Hall at Columbia University on a September day in 1921 to ask about a room he had reserved several weeks prior, the white university employee stopped him: there was a problem.¹ With a startled face, she told him there were no rooms left in the dormitory. She questioned his reservation, calling other university offices to check and double-check the young poet's words. She questioned his identity, asking him if he were at the right place, if he were Mexican. Eventually, she realized Hughes was, in fact, a registered student—an Afro-American student—and that he had indeed made a reservation for a room on the first floor. The employee handed him the admittance slip to the dorm and thus began his first semester at Columbia.²

The following months Hughes spent at the university were, in his words, “miserable.” His aloof father, who was financing his education in New York, forced him to study at the School of Mines, now the School of Engineering and Sciences (SEAS), so that his son could be trained in what he deemed to be more practical disciplines like physics and math.³ To Langston who would become one of the main figures of the nascent Harlem Renaissance, his father's demands were overbearing. His passion in writing marked English as his subject of choice, but James Nathaniel Hughes made clear his belief that echoed the industrial ideals of Booker T. Washington—English was not lucrative.

Another poignant source of misery was the exclusion he experienced on Columbia's campus. When the young Hughes and his closest friend Yee Sing Chun, a Chinese-American boy from Honolulu, showed up at college dances, none of the girls paid any attention to the two. Nobody asked

¹ Manuscript letter, Langston Hughes to James Nathaniel Hughes, September 5, 1921, Folder 4206, Box 262, Series III, Langston Hughes Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea: An Autobiography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 83-85.

² Hughes, *The Big Sea*, 83-85.

³ Manuscript letter, Langston Hughes to James Nathaniel Hughes, December 19, 1921, Folder 4206-4208, Box 262, Series III, Langston Hughes Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

either to join a fraternity or a society—the main, if not only, ladder toward developing social connections on-campus. The only genial interactions with the popular students came when one wealthy white student would pester Hughes for help on French homework; after each time the two met, the boy would run off and take his car, full of Barnard girls, for a drive around the city without ever extending his classmate an invitation. When the soon-to-be literary giant tried out for the *Columbia Daily Spectator*, the white editors assigned him to gather stories of frat houses and society news—“an assignment impossible for a colored boy to fill, as they knew.” As Hughes recalls in his autobiography, at Columbia, “kids began to get a bit grown and girl-conscious and stand-offish and anti-Negro in the American way...that increases when kids take on the accepted social habits.”⁴

Hughes’ time at Columbia represents what feminist writer bell hooks refers to in *From Margin to Center* as “[life] in the margin...part of the whole but outside the main body.”⁵ As he admits in his autobiography, Hughes tried his best to spend as little time on-campus as possible. He found himself in Chinatown with Chun, in a theater downtown, in the office of the NAACP on Fifth Avenue, and, most of all, in Harlem. Hughes was simply displeased with his life on the margins of the university. He preferred the centers of emergent spaces for Black life, beyond the margins of Columbia. He left the university after just one academic year and his experience is telling. It conspicuously reflects the day-to-day experiences of many non-white students on-campus at the time—the distasteful patterns of racial exclusion that permeated student life and the grumbling undertones of white supremacy that occasionally culminated in violent outbursts by white Columbia men.⁶

⁴ Hughes, *The Big Sea*, 83-85.

⁵ bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), ix.

⁶ Thomas Germain, “Bright Spots Giving Sign in A Dark Sky,” (Seminar Paper, Columbia University and Slavery, Spring 2017), <https://bit.ly/3a5jGum>.

But the story of Hughes does not encapsulate the stories of others on the margins of the university. Certainly, most students of color, especially Black students at the undergraduate schools and most of the professional schools, experienced isolation and marginalization that were often humiliating and unbearable. However, some students lived, perhaps even thrived, within pockets of the university—namely, the Teachers College, the Summer Sessions, and the Department of Anthropology—where the notions of equality as well as interracial empathy began to germinate in the socio-intellectual sphere owing to interactions and connections across the color line. Therefore, when some professors kept the side doors of the ivory tower open to students of color in the early 1900s, the institution became a space of both marginalization and consolidation, regress and progress. Some students like Hughes quietly passed through the university that denied him amiable social connections and meaningful intellectual growth. Others stayed on the margins, the progressive pockets, advancing powerful careers in education and cultural research that would continue to mark Columbia as their bedrock. To the university, these students entering the New York City Ivy entailed its gradual adaptation to the changing needs of the era and the broader American society. To the students, the university signified a viable means of empowerment, a tool for shedding marginality, and a passageway from the margin to the center.

This paper ultimately aims to highlight the stories of the educationists and anthropologists of color who practiced the pedagogical and cultural theories of their professors to bring greater equality to the people within their communities. Their stories are all too readily overlooked, regardless of their pervasive impact on educational reform and cultural movements across the globe. To this day, they are eclipsed by their professors and white peers, as the ones remembered by history are almost always those who possess more “intellectual renown” in the academe, what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu

defines as symbolic capital—“authority displayed through the direction of a research team, scientific prestige measured through the recognition afforded by the scientific field... citations and translations...membership of the editorial committee of intellectual reviews,” and more.⁷ These students deserve to be remembered, not only because of their legacies that are tangible still, but also because, in many cases, they molded the foundational theories of their predecessors and thereby the academic landscape we inherit today. As an international student of color at the university, I deem the stories of these students—what they learned and how they shaped the world with what they learned—to be a part of university history that must be brought to the center.

⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), 79.

Contexts of Ethnoracial Diversity at Columbia

During the Progressive Era and the interwar period, Afro-American, Native American, and non-white foreign students were brought to American universities for a number of reasons. In the international context, the rise of imperialism and globalization brought attention to questions of empire and the minority. It broadened the horizon of the universities in terms of how education might be used to mitigate the growing number of minority immigrants at home as well as safeguard expanding American interests abroad. Federal politicians, college administrators, and philanthropists like Teddy Roosevelt, Nicholas Murray Butler, Andrew Carnegie sought to use the education of international students to maintain harmonious relations with foreign powers; education was their answer to what Americans called “the Chinese Problem” or “the Mexican Question.”⁸ For example, in light of the Boxer Indemnity that sparked outrage among Chinese students, diplomats, and merchants, Chinese boycott of U.S. goods after the Eight-Nation Alliance’s intervention in the Boxer Rebellion threatened American economic interests. In response, Theodore Roosevelt established the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship that effectively returned some of the Indemnity funds and brought Chinese students to American universities for the sake of smoothing relations with China.⁹ State-sanctioned education was, what lecturers at Columbia would call, “a different treatment from that of the negro or American Indian” that “Chinese temperament require[d].”¹⁰ It was the tool for, in the words of

⁸ “The Problem of China,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, October 28, 1902, Volume XLVI, Number 20, <https://bit.ly/2I6QJ5U>; “Mr. Chang Speaks on Problems of Chinese,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, November 1, 1919, Volume XLIV, Number 31, <https://bit.ly/2HvV425>; “Barnard Debates on Mexican Question,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, April 29, 1914, Volume LVII, Number 159, <https://bit.ly/320GOb8>; “Philo to Debate on the Mexican Question,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, February 21, 1916, Volume LIX, Number 104, <https://bit.ly/38BwhFz>; “Wilson Justified in Mexican Question,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, April 17, 1914, Volume LVII, Number 149, <https://bit.ly/2HxZYLX>.

⁹ Madeline Y. Hsu, “Chinese and American Collaborations through Educational Exchange during the Era of Exclusion, 1872–1955,” *Pacific Historical Review* 83, no. 2, Special Issue: Conversations on Transpacific History (May, 2014), 321.

¹⁰ “The Problem of China,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, October 28, 1902.

Columbia College Dean Frederick J. E. Woodbridge, “Americanizing the Foreigner.”¹¹ The effects of the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship were successful and visible at Columbia. As a number of established studies and primary sources indicate, the number of Chinese students reached hundreds by the beginning of the interwar period, mainly owing to those who arrived at Teachers College.¹²



“Chinese Students in Teachers College (1912-1913)”¹³

¹¹ “Institute Hears Cole in Lecture on Indians,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, February 10, 1920, Volume XLIV, Number 97, <https://bit.ly/32xT0QX>.

¹² “Many Chinese are Studying at T.C.,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, January 31, 1916, Volume LIX, Number 91, <https://bit.ly/398ynwZ>.

¹³ “Chinese Students in Teachers College (1912-1913),” Teachers College Archive Photograph Collection, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College.

In the American context, the failed project of Reconstruction and the closing of the American frontier announced by the 1890 census entailed a growing anxiety toward “the Negro question” and “the Indian problem.”¹⁴ Despite fierce opposition from anti-Black and anti-Native professors like William A. Dunning and John W. Burgess, here, too, some politicians, educators, administrators, and philanthropists agreed on education as the solution. For example, organized in 1911 by New York philanthropist Caroline Phelps Stokes, the Phelps Stokes Fund was one of the few philanthropic organizations that brought dozens of Afro-American, African, and Native American students to elite colleges and universities, particularly the Teachers College of Columbia.¹⁵ Led by Thomas Jesse Jones and James E. K. Aggrey—both students of Columbia sociologist Franklin Giddings—the organization collaborated with important scholars and institutions of Afro-American and Native American education in order to advance socio-economic development within Southern Black, African, and Indigenous communities. The fund, though it often collaborated with missionary organizations that were apologists for colonialism, aimed at racial uplift. During a time when many professors at the university embraced eugenics and promoted theories of racial hierarchies, the fund was one of few groups that helped turn the aforementioned progressive pockets of Columbia into perhaps some of the most diverse learning spaces within American higher education.

¹⁴ Census of Population and Housing, 1890, United States Census Bureau, Volume 1: Report on Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census, xxxiv; W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Study of the Negro Problems,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 11 (Jan., 1898), 1-23, <https://bit.ly/2HvOVmx>; “Lecture on the Negro Problem,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, April 20, 1904, Volume XLVII, Number 155, <https://bit.ly/37wxMnb>; “The Negro Problem Solved,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, May 5, 1904, Volume XLVII, Number 168, <https://bit.ly/321FDbk>; “The Negro Question,” *Yale Law Journal* 12, no. 8 (June, 1903), <https://bit.ly/3bVhRT4>; “The Indian Question,” *The Harvard Crimson*, January 21, 1892, <https://bit.ly/3bKBS8j>; Ray A. Brown, “The Indian Problem and the Law,” *Yale Law Journal* 39, no. 3 (Jan., 1930), <https://bit.ly/2P0UjSU>; L. Meriam et al, *The Problem of Indian Administration* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1928).

¹⁵Edward Henry Berman, “Education in Africa and America: A History of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1911-1945,” Dissertation, 1969, Teachers College, Columbia University.

In these contexts, ethnoracial diversity began to grow, albeit slowly, at the margins of Columbia as well as beyond, or outside, the margins—in Harlem, Chinatown, the Bronx, and so on. Meanwhile, the center of the university, Columbia College, did not see significant changes in the ethnoracial makeup of its student body. Many scholars of the university’s history, aligning with Robert McCaughey’s *Stand, Columbia*, often note the increase in white Catholics—and their replacement of Jewish students—as the only significant demographic change in the student body during this time.¹⁶ While the active opposition to admitting Jewish students must be recognized as a significant moment in Columbia’s history, there were other demographic transformations that must be noted. No sources directly report on the ethnoracial identity of students, but the *Annual Report* of the university in the early twentieth century always included information on the students’ state or country of origin for each affiliated school, undergraduate and graduate. This information reveals that the number of countries and states represented increased almost exponentially.¹⁷

As the number of students of color increased at the university, complex processes of socialization and racialization began to unfold on-campus. Constant intellectual exchange coincided with these social developments and students began to cultivate their own views on how to address ethnoracial difference. Most Afro-American, Native American, and international students of color decided on consolidation on the margins or beyond the circle of campus life, a process of those experiencing exclusion and isolation coming together to form communities of social and intellectual enrichment.

¹⁶ Robert A. McCaughey, *Stand, Columbia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Rosalind Rosenberg, *Changing the Subject: How the Women of Columbia Shaped the Way We Think About Sex and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 140.

¹⁷ Annual Reports of Columbia University, 1911, 1916, 1920, 1921, 1923, Collection of Annual Reports, Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

Only a few of them, generally East Asian or Latin American students involved in athletics, chose to assimilate to the socio-intellectual culture of the university's center, occupied by white male, often Christian, students. For example, V. K. Wellington Koo—a member of the Columbia College Class of 1909 who became a prominent Chinese statesman and interim President of the Republic of China—was editor-in-chief of the *Columbia Daily Spectator*, member of the Philolexian Society, part of the track team, *and* a member of the Delta Epsilon Rho fraternity.¹⁸ Koo had achieved all this eleven years before Langston Hughes and his friend Chun arrived on-campus. Carlos J. Echavarria—from Medellin, Colombia—was a captain of the football team, Vice-President of the Columbia College class of 1924, member of a secret society called Sachems, *and* a member of the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, which still exists on-campus today.¹⁹

The remaining majority of students of color chose consolidation, a term used by historian Rosalind Rosenberg in describing community-building by marginalized people. While those like Langston Hughes and Yee Sing Chun understandably chose to consolidate beyond, or outside, the margins of the university, others—most of them at the more progressive pockets of the university like Teachers College, the Summer Sessions, and the Department of Anthropology—chose to consolidate on the margins. In these spaces, students of color—Black, Native, Latinx, Asian, and more—began to interact with each other more frequently and challenged essentialist understandings of the superiority of any particular race or ethnicity through their interactions, whether in the dormitory, the dining hall, or the classroom. In these spaces, the physical and institutional margins of the university, many of them began to recognize that myths of ethnoracial hierarchies in intellect or cultural sophistication emerged

¹⁸ “Chinese Delegate Entertains Editor,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, January 4, 1909, Volume LII, No. 73, <https://bit.ly/2Dc2HbK>; “V. K. Wellington Koo,” in “Columbia C250: Columbians Ahead of Their Time,” <https://bit.ly/2Od0xz2>.

¹⁹ “Carlos J. Echavarria” in *The Columbian*, 1924, Collection of *The Columbian*, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, 110.

out of misunderstanding and ignorance. The reverberations of this recognition surpassed the boundaries of New York City, the United States, and the Western Hemisphere.

Isolation and Marginalization

In the Progressive Era and the interwar period, the center of student life at Columbia was almost always occupied by white students, particularly those who excelled at athletics and were involved in social fraternities. As such, most students of color, particularly Black students, were excluded from the center, isolated, and remained on the margins.

Loneliness was perhaps the most common experience for students of minority races and ethnicities, especially those who were not in Teachers College, Summer Sessions, or the Anthropology Department. Apart from the aforementioned story of Langston Hughes and his friend Yee Sing Chun, numerous other examples paint a picture of friendless lives on-campus. Winter of 1909, for example, Harry Edmonds, a YMCA official who founded the International House of New York next to Grant's Tomb in 1924, ran into a graduate student from China on the steps of Low Library. According to Edmonds, he told the student "Good morning." Such a simple greeting shocked the student and made him stand still on the steps. The student apparently looked at Edmonds and said, "Thank you for speaking to me. I've been in New York three weeks and you are the first person who has spoken to me."

²⁰ This interaction alone was responsible for inspiring Edmonds to create what is now one of the main communities of foreign students in New York City.

In the most extreme cases of marginalization, white Christian students responded with violence toward Black students. For example, there is the case of Frederick W. Wells—a 24-year-old

²⁰ "Our History," International House of New York City, Official Website of I-House NYC, <https://bit.ly/2Tb6eQt>.

Afro-American law student from Tennessee. When Wells came to Furnald Hall on Broadway in March of 1924, he went unnoticed by its white residents, because many assumed he was an employee of the dormitory.²¹ When a few Southern white men discovered that Wells was a student, they caused an uproar and demanded the University to remove Wells from the dorm on April 1. Dean Herbert Hawkes declined the request of Southern students who led the Furnald Hall Committee and the Southern students promised revenge through publicity. On April 2, several newspapers in the city ran stories about the situation in Furnald.²² On the night of April 3—according to various accounts—a group of men in white robes marched in formation to the center of South Field, carrying a seven-foot-tall wooden cross, wrapped in cloth drenched in kerosene. Just north of the College’s baseball diamond, a few yards from the statue of Thomas Jefferson, the hooded men planted the cross and set it aflame. As the fire engulfed the cross, concerned students banged on Room 528 of Furnald to warn Wells, while other students—presumably the Southern students who initially attempted to remove Wells—ran through the halls of the dorm screaming, “Put the nigger out,” and “Down with the Negro.”²³ Wells also received two anonymous death threats allegedly signed by the Klan.²⁴

Other white majority responses were not directed against individual Black students like the case of Wells, but rather emerged out of an anti-Black, anti-immigrant culture that exacerbated in the early twentieth century. For example, Blackface minstrelsy became more popular on-campus and the satirization of Black culture dominated student activities in the 1900s, 1910s, and 1920s. The Varsity

²¹ “FIERY CROSS BRINGS COLUMBIA NEGRO AID: Furnald Hall Students Rally to Wells’s Support After Emblem Burns on Campus,” *The New York Times*, April 4, 1924, <https://nyti.ms/2popg9m>.

²² “Negro At Columbia Defies His Critics,” *The New York Times*, April 3, 1924, <https://nyti.ms/35CQb2e>; “Call On Columbia To Dislodge Negro At Furnald Hall,” *New York World*, April 2, 1924; “Students Oppose Negro In Dormitory,” *New York American*, April 2, 1924.

²³ “Colored Law Student at Columbia University Is Object of Ku Klux Ire,” *New York Age*, April 12, 1924, <https://bit.ly/2pgOOgP>; “Fiery Cross Sends Three Detectives To Furnald Hall,” *New York World*, April 4, 1924.

²⁴ “Death Threats Sent To Columbia Negro,” *New York Times*, April 5, 1924, <https://nyti.ms/2VHWoFp/>

Show featured Blackface minstrel shows to attract large audiences.²⁵ A performing arts tradition called the Sophomore Show exclusively produced minstrel shows.²⁶ Music groups like the music groups like the Mandolin Club, Glee Club, and the Banjo Club also rehearsed “negro spirituals.”²⁷ Literary organizations and social groups also engaged in anti-Black activities. All-white literary societies of Barnard and Columbia often hosted readings of pieces by writers like Paul Laurence Dunbar to mock the “negro dialect.”²⁸ Clubs like the Columbia Southern Association invited speakers like the renowned white supremacist writer Thomas Dixon.²⁹ Students also invited those like David Griffith for a screening of “The Birth of the Nation.”³⁰

²⁵ “‘ISLE OF ILLUSIA’ First Performance of Varsity Show a Great Success,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, Volume XLVII, Number 128, March 15, 1904; “Players to Make Debut Tonight – Kenneth Webb, Author-Coach Tells How He Conceived Idea of Play,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, Volume LVIII, Number 147, April 12, 1915; “AUDIENCE TAKEN BY PIRATE HOARD AT HOTEL ASTOR,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, Volume LIX, Number 148, April 13, 1916.

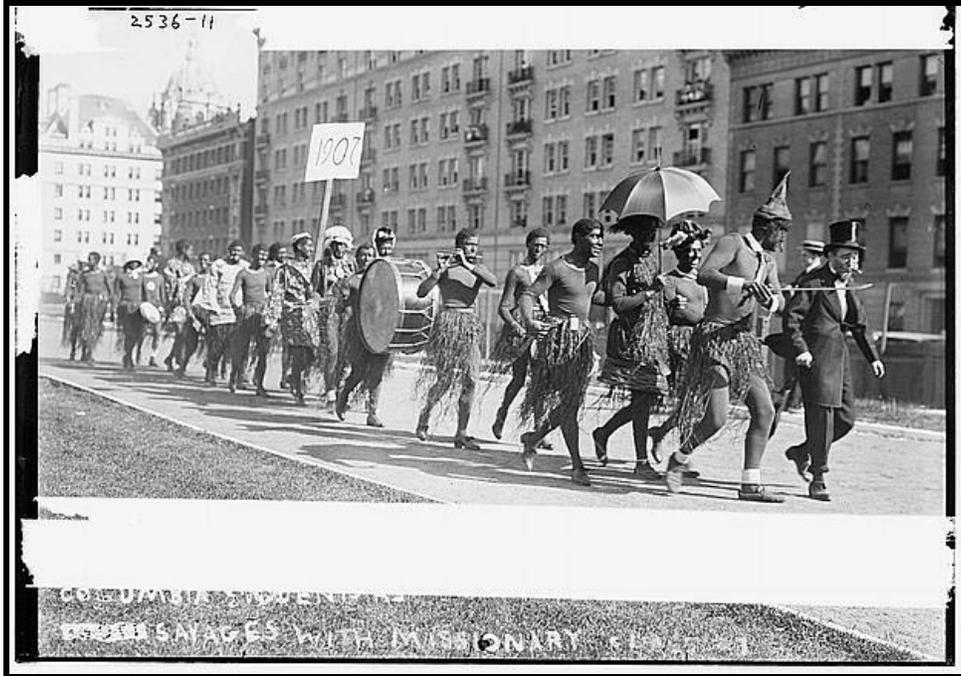
²⁶ “Soph Show Justifies a Continued Existence: Minstrel Show Screamingly Funny and Original,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, Volume LVIII, Number 60, December 4, 1914, <https://bit.ly/35zxRj>.

²⁷ Glee Club Concert Advertisements in *Columbia Daily Spectator*, Volume XLVII, Number 145, April 29, 1924, <https://bit.ly/35AGMrG>.

²⁸ “Barnard Meeting” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, Volume XLV, Number 10, November 10, 1901, <https://bit.ly/2VIMPWU>.

²⁹ “Southerners to Hear Thomas Dixon,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, Volume LIII, Number 167, May 6, 1910, <https://bit.ly/35J0KRk>.

³⁰ Lawrence Grief, “The Birth of a Nation and Columbia University: Racism and Activism in the Early Twentieth Century,” (Seminar Paper, Columbia University and Slavery, Spring 2017), <https://bit.ly/2VFzIWg>.



“Columbia Students as Savages with Missionary”³¹



“Columbia '09 Students as Zulus”³²

³¹ “Columbia Students as Zulu Savages with Missionary,” Bain News Service, Library of Congress, <https://bit.ly/2VGAlib>.

³² “Columbia '09 Students as Zulus,” Bain News Service, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2014691585/>.

Teachers College and the Summer Sessions were certainly not immune to anti-Black events and practices that permeated Columbia College. For years, Teachers College managed a scholarship called the “United Daughters of the Confederacy Prize,” which awarded a single white-Protestant descendant of a Confederate soldier to attend the institution.³³ The term “darkies” was frequently thrown around on-campus by those part of the universit-wide organization called the Southern Club, which, as noted already, collaborated with the despicable New York Southern Society and invited those Southern “dignataries” like the Klan-apologist Dixon to public events on-campus.³⁴ Furthermore, for decades, Black students were not allowed to reside on-campus in university-owned dormitories. In the 1917 *Announcement* for the University’s Summer Session, Columbia made it abundantly clear that “no special arrangements are made for colored students” and that “such students, in case they are unable to make arrangements with friends, are advised to write for information regarding rooms and board to the Residence Bureau.”³⁵ While when exactly Columbia stopped such a residential policy is unclear, the fact that it was in place in 1917 explains why the aforementioned white university employee of Hartley Hall was so startled to see Langston Hughes ask about *his* room in 1921.

However, owing to the sheer difference in the number of Afro-American, Native American, and foreign students of color as well as sympathetic faculty, Teachers College and the Summer Sessions, along with the Department of Anthropology, represented parts of the university in which students of color could come together to form their own communities and foster interracial understanding. Even

³³ Register of Students, 1916-1917, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College, 17.

³⁴ Jonathan Bronstein, “Southern Society at Columbia University, 1880s-1920s” (Seminar Paper, Columbia University and Slavery, Spring 2018), <https://bit.ly/2XHiDhN>; “Banquet of the Southern Club,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, March 24, 1899, Volume XLII, Number 11, <https://bit.ly/3bePrCM>; “Southern Club Officers for 1924,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, August 1, 1924, Volume XLVII, Number 179, <https://bit.ly/2VFglgi>; “Resents Use of Word,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, August 6, 1919, Volume XLIII, Number 69, <https://bit.ly/2RJp2Fq>; “On Being Insulted,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, Volume XLIII, Number 69, August 6, 1919.

³⁵ “Summer Session Announcement,” *Columbia University Bulletin of Information*, 1917, Collection of University Bulletin of Information, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, 17.

the white students and professors at these spaces began to, albeit slowly, understand that white people were not naturally and inherently superior to people of other races and ethnicities. They began to realize the importance of environment, education, and empathy. The relatively more hospitable social environment of these progressive pockets likely facilitated the arrival of students of color and rendered Columbia faculty's influence upon non-white communities and countries—what some call the Gobaal South—to be far-reaching. In turn, the social geniality inevitably facilitated the intellectual development on-campus.

Consolidation beyond the Margins

In *Changing the Subject*, an illuminating study of women at Columbia in the early twentieth century, Rosalind Rosenberg defines consolidation as “the flip side of containment.”³⁶ Rosenberg argues that the separation of women in higher education—their containment—also entailed their consolidation, a process of assemblage that actualized collective engagement in the pursuit of equality as well as critical thinking.³⁷ Drawing from this definition of consolidation as well as the aforementioned notion of Pierre Bourdieu's “symbolic capital,” I argue that students of marginalized ethnoracial identities adopted this process on and beyond the margins of the university to empower themselves with their own “symbolic capital” and resist the continued “symbolic violence” or “monopoly” of the center and those occupying it.³⁸

For most Black students, especially Afro-Americans, consolidation was the predominant route toward establishing a stable and fulfilling socio-intellectual life and it would have been only available at

³⁶ Rosenberg, *Changing the Subject*, 2.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, “Social Space and Symbolic Power,” *Sociological Theory* 7, no. 1 (Spring, 1989), 21, <https://bit.ly/2UZ2QJD>.

and near Columbia starting the first few decades of the twentieth century. As such, for those who attended Columbia before the 1900s, consolidation would have been hardly, if ever, attainable, mainly since the number of Black students at the university never surpassed the single digits and the period preceded the emergence of Black Harlem.³⁹ Those early Black students like James Priest of Liberia, who graduated from the School of Mines in 1877, or James Dickson Carr—who arrived at the Law School in 1892 and was allegedly the first Afro-American graduate of the Law School—did not have the means of consolidation on or near the university and definitely could not have assimilated to the social fabric of the Law School.⁴⁰ Their outstanding academic achievements, which brought students like Carr to Columbia in the first place, likely impressed upon the minds of their white peers a sense that they, too, could excel in academia of the white man. For example, Carr’s membership in Phi Beta Kappa, high grades in Administrative Law and Comparative Jurisprudence courses, or honors at graduation would have inevitably clarified to his white classmates that Afro-Americans, too, at the very least some of them, were intellectually capable of doing just as well, if not better.⁴¹ In this sense, the classroom would have been a space of social antagonism—of the “us vs. them” mentality—where all, consciously or unconsciously, understood the intellectual life within it as a field of power and struggle for the “symbolic capital” of education.⁴²

³⁹ Winston James, “Harlem’s Difference” in *Race Capital?: Harlem as Setting and Symbol*, ed. Andrew M. Fearnley and Daniel Martin (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 114, <https://bit.ly/32a2uSg>.

⁴⁰ Catalogue of Officers and Graduates of Columbia University, 1882, Collection of Catalogues, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, 201; Catalogue of Officers and Graduates of Columbia University, 1894-95, Collection of Catalogues, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, 96, 156; Peter A. Greene, “Number of Negro Students Increased Slowly Since 1877,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, April 26, 1967, <https://bit.ly/37zct11>; Paulina Fein, “The Treatment and Framing of Early Black Students at Columbia University” Seminar Paper, Columbia and Slavery, Spring 2018, <https://bit.ly/2wqMdmT>; Robert Bruce Slater, “The First Black Graduates of the Nation’s 50 Flagship State Universities,” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 13 (Autumn, 1996), 81, <https://bit.ly/38DJ5eL>; Peter Mazzei, “James Dickson Carr: First Black Graduate of Rutgers College,” *The Journal of the Rutgers University Libraries* 47, no.2 (1985), 96, <https://bit.ly/38DLzK7>; “Early Columbia University,” C250 Celebrates Timeline, Columbia 250, Columbia University, <https://bit.ly/2SALIII>. The 1882 Catalogue mentions James R. Priest and the 1894-95 Catalogue mentions James Dickson Carr as well as his courses of study.

⁴¹ “James D. Carr’s Fine Record,” *Broad Axe*, November 23, 1912, <https://bit.ly/2SPx2Es>.

⁴² Bourdieu, “Social Space and Symbolic Power,” 21-23.

Although Harlem became a predominantly and uniquely Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean neighborhood in the interwar period, in between 1900 and 1914, the dozens of Black students—most in Teachers College and the Summer Sessions and a few scattered across the undergraduate and other professional schools—were able to find avenues of consolidation beyond the margins of the campus. The establishment of Columbia’s first Black fraternity is an example. On June 5, 1909, the Eta chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity was founded to serve the Black college men of the city, including those at the City College of New York (CCNY) and New York University (NYU).⁴³ Among the seven founding members of the Eta chapter, five were from Columbia and two from NYU.⁴⁴ The letter by the Eta chapter’s founding members to the “Jewels” of Cornell—the founders of the fraternity itself—reveal just what kind of a space they envisioned and constructed. On May 1, 1909, the students wrote to their Cornell peers:

Dear Sirs:

We, the Negro students of Col. Un., realizing the need of a stronger bond, both socially and intellectually, do hereby present our application for membership. Hoping that this application will be favorably receive[d], we are

Yours truly
The Columbia Org.⁴⁵

Doubtless, as the letter implies, the men of Columbia faced ethnoracial isolation on-campus. Yet, unlike the aforementioned Priest or Carr, they had their peers to consolidate. So they did exactly that, regularly meeting in Hamilton Hall, which flanks *the* centerpoint of the Morningside campus with the Journalism building. They had the possibility of empowerment through community-building, or what

⁴³ “Fraternity & Chapter History,” Official Website of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, <https://www.sonsofeta.com/history>.

⁴⁴ Polly E. Bugros McLean, *Remembering Lucile: A Virginia Family’s Rise from Slavery and a Legacy Forged a Mile High* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2018), 207.

⁴⁵ Letter, Founders of Columbia Alpha Phi Alpha to “Jewels” of Cornell, May 1, 1909 in McLean, *Remembering Lucile*, 207. The original copy of the letter can be found in Tuskegee University Archives.

Bourdieu calls “world-making” through re-classification, which, in this case, signified reclassifying the fraternity as a Black community.⁴⁶

However, the invisibility of the fraternity in the university archives suggests that the organization, born out of marginality, operated *beyond* its margins despite existing near the center of the physical campus, since the lack of recognition of its existence effectively meant it did not exist within the university. During the first few decades of the twentieth century when the *Columbia Daily Spectator*—the student newspaper of the university—never failed to miss a day in reporting about fraternity affairs, was totally silent on the Eta chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, which met regularly in Hamilton Hall.⁴⁷ Not a single issue from 1909 mentions the fraternity’s establishment. In fact, the phrase “Negro fraternity” only first appears in the newspaper in 1921, when a chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi, the second Black fraternity to be founded on-campus, was approved to be established by the university.⁴⁸ The 1921 article, moreover, incorrectly indicates that the Kappa Alpha Psi is “the oldest negro college fraternity in existence,” meaning the paper’s editors were most likely unaware of Alpha Phi Alpha, the actual oldest.⁴⁹ This fact indicates that either brothers of Alpha Phi Alpha may have wanted to remain apart from the university, or the first “Negro fraternity” was simply of no interest to the *Spectator*’s editors, or both.

The marginality of the consolidated organizations signifies the fact that, despite the value of such groups, they were hard to maintain and other avenues of socio-intellectual development were often sought out by students of color, especially Black students. George W. A. Scott and John Doha

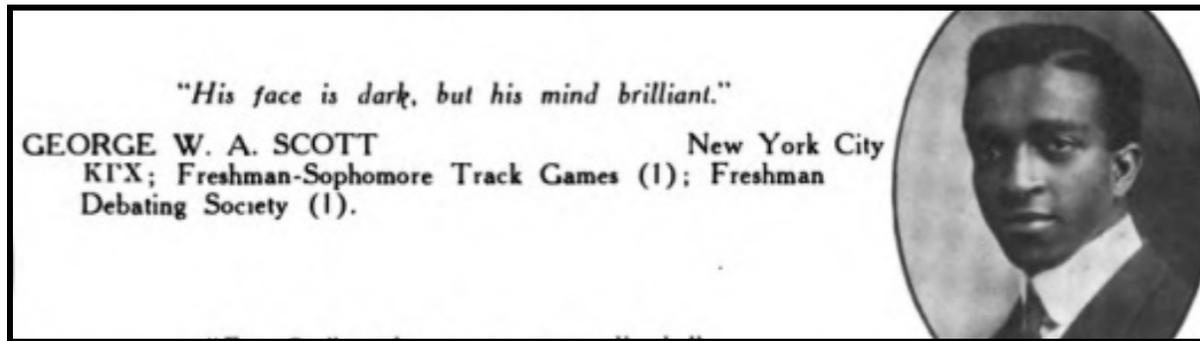
⁴⁶ Bourdieu, “Social Space and Symbolic Power,” 22-23.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 208.

⁴⁸ “Negro Fraternity to Form Local Chapter,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, February 4, 1921, vol. XLIV, no. 78, <https://bit.ly/2u6aw1M>. From 1921 until the 1960s, much like the Alphas, no news about the Kappas were reported by the *Spectator*.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Jones—two of the five Columbia men who founded the Eta chapter—are illuminating examples of Afro-American students who utilized both the consolidated groups on the margins of campus and extant communities beyond the university.



Yearbook page of George W. A. Scott in *The Columbian*, 1910⁵⁰

A Columbia College student, George W. A. Scott stood out from other Black students in the undergraduate schools, mainly because his academic performance was so exceptional. He was the second Black student in university history to ever win first prize in the prestigious Curtis Medals Contest and was the first to win prizes at the competition multiple times.⁵¹ Owing to the prestige of the contest, Scott inevitably garnered his white classmates attention. Among the few Black students in the College in 1910, he was the only one whose photo was included in *The Columbian*, the yearbook.⁵² The prejudice of his white classmates is conspicuous on the page mentioning Scott. The white editors of the yearbook included a caption for Scott that read “His face is dark, but his mind is brilliant.”⁵³ Moreover, Scott’s page does not indicate that he is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha, another piece of

⁵⁰ *The Columbian*, 1910, Collection of *The Columbian*, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

⁵¹ “Negro Wins Medal for ‘Child Slavery’ Oration,” *Wichita Searchlight*, April 22, 1911; “Plea for Children Wins: G. W. Scott Wins First Prize in Curtis Oratorical Contest,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, April 6, 1911, Volume LIV, Number 141, <https://bit.ly/2I7kyTC>; “Juniors Best Orators: Curtis Medals Awarded to D. R. Fox and G. W. A. Scott,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, April 2, 1910, Volume LIII, Number 138, <https://bit.ly/2PyP4Km>; “Scott Wins Gold Medal,” *Columbia Alumni News*, April 13, 1911, Volume 2, No. 28, 463. The first Black student to win the Curtis medal was Pixley Ka Isaka Seme of South Africa, who won it in 1906.

⁵² *The Columbian*, 1910, Collection of *The Columbian*, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

evidence signifying the invisibility of the Black fraternity on-campus.⁵⁴ In the face of such ignorance, Scott found refuge in his fraternity brothers as well as the Black activists in the city. For example, he, and other founding members of the Eta chapter, often interacted with leading Black intellectuals, including Assistant District Attorney of New York County Cornelius W. McDougal and W.E.B. Du Bois who later helped the Alpha brothers reorganize their chapter.⁵⁵

Much like Scott, Jones maintained an excellent intellectual career, but his life was more conspicuous beyond the walls of Columbia. Jones arrived at Columbia on scholarship through winning a competitive examination offered by the university in 1906.⁵⁶ Much like Carr, Jones was an outstanding student. He was the only Black student elected to Columbia's Phi Beta Kappa in the first half of the twentieth century and the only Black student inducted nationally in 1910.⁵⁷ A clearly brilliant mind, Jones' life in New York City effectively included two domains. The first was at the university, in various classrooms and in Hamilton Hall where the Alphas met for regular meetings. The second, was at the Tenderloin district, primarily the St. Mark's Lyceum of St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal Church at 231 West 53rd Street—the largest Black church in New York City at the time.⁵⁸ At the latter, Jones interacted and socialized with leading Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean intellectuals like the bibliophile George Young, activist Williana Jones, and, perhaps most importantly, the famed socialist Hubert Harrison.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ McLean, *Remembering Lucile*, 208; J. Clay Smith, Jr., *Emancipation: The Making of the Black Lawyer, 1844-1944* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 398.

⁵⁶ "John D. Jones Wins Scholarship," *The Freeman*, November 30, 1907, <https://bit.ly/2P4dICt>.

⁵⁷ Caldwell Titcomb, "The Earliest Black Members of Phi Beta Kappa," *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 33 (2001), 92-101.

⁵⁸ Jeffrey B. Perry, *Hubert Harrison: The Voice of Harlem Radicalism, 1883-1918* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 73.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Jones found friends like Harrison capable of helping him expand his mind and, in turn, similarly impacted the Black activists who joined him in debates at the Lyceum, “the literary organization for many of the best and most representative colored men and women in greater New York.”⁶⁰ On November 19, 1908, for example, Jones debated Harrison and two others on whether the issue of voter qualification concerns federal or states rights.⁶¹ Jones, then a junior in the College, won the debate and took the first prize while Harrison took the second prize. His influence on Harrison, “the father of Harlem radicalism,” was so profound that he marked Jones in his diary in 1908 as the only person of equal intellect who strengthened his mind.⁶²

Similar to Jones and Scott, Asian students and Latin American students sought consolidation. As they were able to find a greater number of peers from their backgrounds, forming identity-based groups was comparatively easier for these students. The Chinese Students’ Association, also known as the Chinese Students’ Club, was perhaps the first to form. With the help of the Chinese Consulate, eleven Chinese students in 1908 formed the Chinese Students Club for the purpose of “literary exercises and social entertainments.”⁶³ The same year in 1908, Latin American students of the university formed El Circulo Latino-Americano, which invited all Spanish-speaking students to join. The club, which remained active for a few years, produced Spanish plays and hosted its own dances.⁶⁴ In the interwar period, when the number of Indian students on-campus increased to reach a few dozens, the Organization of the Hindustan Association of Columbia University was formed.⁶⁵ Since

⁶⁰ J. E. Robinson, “St. Mark’s Lyceum,” *The New York Times*, February 22, 1907, <https://nyti.ms/2vJe3U4>.

⁶¹ McLean, *Remembering Lucile*, 206.

⁶² Perry, *Hubert Harrison*, 85.

⁶³ “Columbia’s Chinese Students Form Club,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, December 7, 1908, Volume LII, Number 61, <https://bit.ly/2PyL8ZU>.

⁶⁴ “El Circulo Latino-Americano to Meet,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, October 6, 1909, Volume LIII, Number 12, <https://bit.ly/3acA1xQ>; “Lo Positivo to be Staged: Annual Production of El Circulo Latino Americano is Ready—Dance and Reception Follows,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, April 12, 1910, Volume LIII, Number 146, <https://bit.ly/2wgUzGC>.

⁶⁵ “Will Organize Indian Club,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, December 14, 1922, Volume LXVII, Number 64, <https://bit.ly/3ajdYFT>.

the center of student life was inaccessible to most of these students of color, they came together, or consolidated, to create communities of their own that not only engaged in intellectual, but social and cultural activities. White students' exclusion of students of color effectively led to self-segregation and consolidation based on the color line. At Teachers College, the Summer Sessions, and the Department of Anthropology, however, the situation was different.

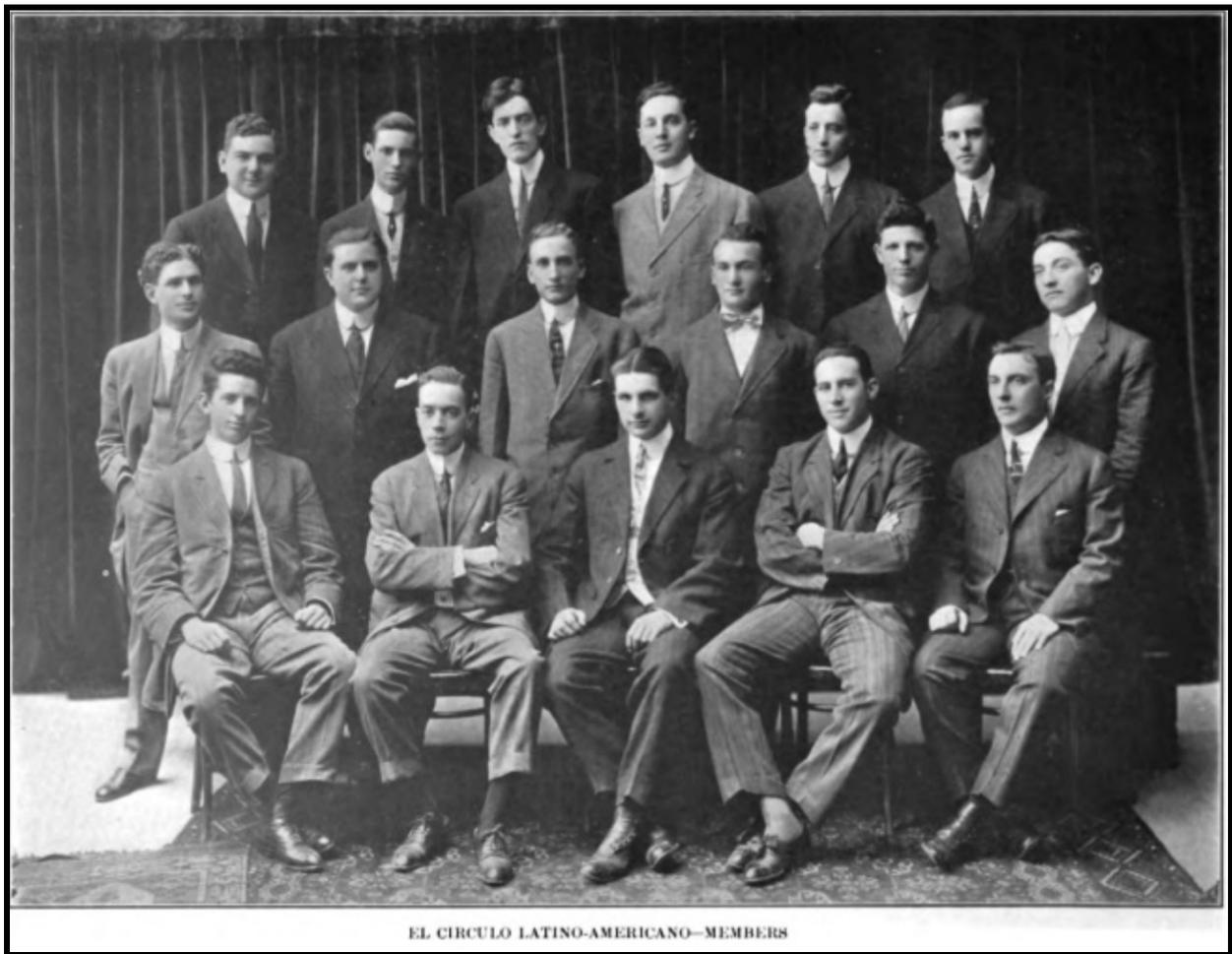


Photo of Latin American Club in *The Columbian*, 1911⁶⁶

⁶⁶ *The Columbian*, 1910, Collection of *The Columbian*, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

Consolidation on the Margins

Compared to other parts of the university—namely the undergraduate schools and various professional schools—Teachers College, the Summer Sessions, and the Anthropology Department were more progressive, more open to accepting students of minority races and ethnicities, and more prepared to use the school as a tool for ethnoracial uplift. While these parts of Columbia—at the physical and institutional fringes of the university—were, by no means, spaces of perfect social equality, they represented spaces in which, at the very least, greater equality became the implicit objective of their academic training. In turn, the students who came to Columbia and trained as educationists and anthropologists carried on this implicit goal of increasing equality, disseminating the ideas inherited from their relatively progressive professors to places beyond Morningside Heights.

Teachers College—and thereby the Summer Session that was effectively an extension of the College—brought together students of divergent backgrounds together through student groups and College-sponsored events. Consolidation, therefore, happened not simply according to the color line, but also across it. For international students, the College hosted events like Christmas socials, where the school offered holiday greetings in dozens of languages. In 1928, for example, the event featured greetings in twenty-one languages.⁶⁷ There were also student groups like the Cosmopolitan Club, which foreign students organized in 1908. The main purpose of the club was “bringing themselves into closer social relations” as well as devoting time to the “study of the social and educational conditions in the countries represented by members.”⁶⁸ These countries, in 1908, included Australia,

⁶⁷ “XMas Celebrations to be Held Daily: Teachers College Students will Give Concerts, Dances, and Special Services,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, December 18, 1928, Volume LII, Number 58, <https://bit.ly/3aivAlh>.

⁶⁸ “Foreign Students Organize Society,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, March 6, 1908, Volume LI, Number 119, <https://bit.ly/2wPL0yK>; “First Meeting of Cosmopolitan Club,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, October 7, 1909, Volume LIII, Number 13, <https://bit.ly/2VxkOTO>.

Japan, China, India, Persia, England, and Canada.⁶⁹ With the help of professors like Mabel Carney and Paul Monroe, who will be discussed further in the following section, Teachers College also organized groups like the Rural Club and the Negro Education Club, which brought together Black and white students as well as prominent figures in Afro-American education for social and intellectual purposes.

⁷⁰ These clubs, open to all students of Teachers College, fostered continuous interaction between students of all ethnicities and races, which led to growing empathy as well as alignment in educational vision. Through these clubs, students began to recognize that holding more socio-economic, cultural, or symbolic capital did not signify the superiority or dominance of a single nationality, ethnicity, or race.

The Department of Anthropology, though much smaller in student size than the Teachers College or the Summer Session, presented students of color with a closely-knit community between faculty and students. Franz Boas, the “father of American anthropology” and the department’s head, regularly hosted parties in his house as well as his students when they needed a place to stay.⁷¹ Despite the university’s lack of support, the small department managed to foster a community of intellectuals that challenged the scholarship of those at the center of Columbia’s intellectual life like John W. Burgess and William A. Dunning. The students and faculty both influenced and molded each others’ minds through their engagement in anthropology and their collective loyalty to Boasian theories rendered them as team players in the intellectual field of Columbia as well as that of anthropology and the broader American social sciences.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ “T.C. Rural Club Open Meeting Tonight: Problem of Negro Education Will be Discussed by Well-Known Authorities,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, December 14, 1922, Volume LXVII, Number 64, <https://bit.ly/2TbnmFL>; “Negro Club Meets Tonight,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, December 12, 1929, Volume LIII, Number 53, <https://bit.ly/2Vw5vec>.

⁷¹ Charles King, *Gods of the Upper Air: How a Circle of Renegade Anthropologists Reinvented Race, Sex, and Gender in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Doubleday, 2019), 216.

Teachers College, Summer Sessions, and Democratic Education

In 1880, philanthropist Grace Hoadley Dodge founded the Industrial Education Association (IEA) and created a “kitchen garden” school in Lower Manhattan to educate poor, immigrant girls on practical matters such as cooking and sewing.⁷² In less than two decades, the humble schoolhouse in Greenwich Village grew to become what we now know of as Teachers College of Columbia University, the country’s oldest and largest school dedicated to teacher education. The astronomical growth of the school signaled the emergence of new pedagogical credos in American education that had started to develop behind the walls of the “kitchen garden” school: that teaching ought to reflect an understanding of students’ needs and backgrounds and that it must be experimental, or open to new ways, so that it may determine the most relevant, meaningful, and effective way to teach each type of student. By the 1900s, these beliefs seeded by Dodge had become an unspoken mission of the school, permeating the curricula, research, and faculty. In turn, the students became devout educationists—an educator who practices a particular theory of education—who followed and disseminated the evolving “kitchen garden” school credos across the U.S. and the globe.

Among these educationists in training were Afro-American, Native American, and international students of color who arrived at Columbia owing to several progressive professors like James Earl Russell, Mabel Carney, Paul Monroe, John Dewey, and more. In fact, Teachers College, as mentioned previously, was the professional school of Columbia that brought in the most number of students of color during the early twentieth century. However, the logic behind admitting exceptional students of racial minorities often came out of a fusion between the “kitchen garden” school credos and an essentialist understanding of ethnoracial difference. As author Charles King notes in *Gods of the*

⁷² Andrew S. Dolkart, *Morningside Heights: A History of its Architecture and Development* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) 225-225; McCaughey, *Stand. Columbia*, 190; “A History of Anticipating—and Shaping—the Future,” official website of Columbia University Teachers College, <https://www.tc.columbia.edu/about/history/>.

Upper Air, many of the progressive professors at Teachers College believed the school was training “civilized aboriginals, as might have been said at the time, who would become credits to their race and help elevate their charges out of poverty and paganism.”⁷³ In many respects, each underrepresented student granted admission mirrored a Fanonian “colonized intellectual,” who adopts western values and serves as a bridge between the uneducated at the margins of the margin and the elite of the absolute center. While the professors’ intention to train more educationists of color for the purpose of racial uplift might have been genuine, their view of non-white students often entailed a lens of western, white supremacy. Despite the prejudiced logic, the professors’ influence on the students discussed in this paper was profound. They represented the reverberations of the “kitchen garden” school credos that reached the Kansas prairie, Mexico City, the Bay of Manilla, the coast of Ghana, and more.

⁷³ King, *Gods of the Upper Air*, 234.

The Faculty

A specialist in the fields of educational theory and educational psychology, John Dewey was the most influential professor of Teachers College and his educational theories mirrored the experimental and contextual approach of Dodge's "kitchen garden" school credos. At Teachers College, most students and many students of color adopted the Deweyan theories after taking classes with the philosopher himself or his like-minded colleagues like William Kilpatrick, who was Dewey's former student. Others embraced the teachings of professors like Mabel Carney, Paul Monroe, and the remaining progressive educators who aligned themselves with Deweyan theories, but had their own interpretations of the "kitchen garden" school credos.⁷⁴ At the very least, most of the faculty championed the Deweyan idea that the school was essentially a social institution where teaching that is open to new ideas and students' needs could help students learn to become a better member of society.

Dewey believed education to proceed by "the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race," which meant, to him, that "the only true education" could be achieved "through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself" that stimulates the student "to act as a member of a unity...emerge from his original narrowness of action and feeling...[and] conceive of himself from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which he belongs."⁷⁵ Indeed, his theory of education was deeply rooted in instrumentalism. *True* education was not a universal ideal, but rather dependent upon social and group contexts of a student, therefore different for each, yet similar in the goal of raising social consciousness among *all* so

⁷⁴ Lawrence Cremin et al, *A History of Teachers College* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), 33-34; Rosalind Rosenberg, *Changing the Subject: How the Women of Columbia Shaped the Way We Think about Sex and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 142-143; Liping Bu, "International Activism and Comparative Education: Pioneering Efforts of the International Institute of Teachers College, Columbia University," *Comparative Education Review* 41, no. 4 (Nov., 1997), 415, 424-426.

⁷⁵ John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed" in *John Dewey on Education: Selected Writings*, ed. Reginald D. Archambault (New York: Random House, 1964), 427.

that the resulting sympathies between them may promote, or maximize, group welfare. His theories were, in many respects, extended versions of the aforementioned “kitchen garden” school credos. The Deweyan goal of education was “full growth of *all* the individuals who make [democratic society]” so that it may “be true to itself.”⁷⁶ To achieve such a goal, the participation of the masses with all of their social differences was required. Underlying this theory of social education was a principle of diversity. Schools, much like a constitutional democratic society, were a “marketplace of ideas,” where the “free trade in ideas”—all different ideas—could facilitate the discovery of truth, whatever it may be.⁷⁷ An innovative thought or idea, Dewey recognized, did not emerge out of a vacuum, or in isolation. Rather, such ideas emerged from “an association in the sense of a connection and combination of things.”⁷⁸ Although he seldom commented on racism or racial progress, Dewey’s democratic education implicitly required the principle of diversity.

The aforementioned professors of Teachers College aligned with Dewey on this point. At the top of the administration, there was James Earl Russell, who became the first Dean of Teachers College in 1898 when the institution officially became one of Columbia’s professional schools. As Lawrence Cremin—acclaimed historian of education who served as the seventh president of Teachers College in the 1970s—notes in his *History of Teachers College*, Russell and the numerous scholars that the dean emeritus brought to the College aligned with Deweyan thought; “the whole College was subject to ideas of educational reform widely in circulation” and “Dewey, throughout his long years of teaching at Columbia, served directly to focus these ideas into very definite channels so that they left an indelible and inestimable impression upon the institution.”⁷⁹ The dean, in particular, was a proponent of liberal

⁷⁶ John Dewey, “The School and Society” in *John Dewey on Education*, 295. Emphasis added by author.

⁷⁷ *Abrams et al v. United States*, 250 U.S. 616 (1919) (Holmes, J., dissenting);

⁷⁸ John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems*, 1927, ed. Melvin L. Rogers (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 51.

⁷⁹ Cremin et al, *A History of Teachers College*, 45-46.

education who deemed education's ultimate goal to be serving the common good of society. He believed education must encourage "harmonious development of personal character and social efficiency to the highest degree of which each individual is capable."⁸⁰ Much like Dewey, for Russell, learning was dependent on social surroundings—from which a student acquired the "store of knowledge, customs, and habits that identifies him with his kind, and...trained [him] in the exercise of his rights and duties as a member of the social order."⁸¹ Russell and Dewey were both leading figures in the majority faction of progressive Teachers College professors that guided countless students who came to the institution from all corners of the U.S. and the world.

The correspondence between the two professors confirms this fact and suggests that Russell regarded Dewey and his theories to be important, if not superior. In one 1904 letter, for example, Russell practically begs Dewey to give lectures on problems of education to all College as well as university extension students, many of whom were Afro-American, Native American or foreign students of non-white races.⁸² Admitting to the philosopher that his theories have "already given such good promise of contributions in this field," the dean tells Dewey that "students wish to know...how you yourself view the problem [of modern education]...Anything that you decide to include [in the curriculum] will be heartily welcomed."⁸³ The dean's reverent tone to a professor technically subordinate to him illuminates the prominence and superiority of Dewey's theories. Thus, it would not be an understatement to say that when Columbia University president Seth Low accepted Russell's

⁸⁰ "Some Essentials of Education," Folder 901, Series 17, James Earl Russell Papers, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Libraries, Columbia University Teachers College, 2.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Letter, John Dewey to James Earl Russell, January 6, 1899 in *The Correspondence of John Dewey, 1871-2007*

⁸³ Letter, James E. Russell to John Dewey, June 1, 1904, in *John Dewey Correspondence, Volume 1: 1871-1918*, ed. Larry A. Hickman (Charlottesville, Virginia: InteLex Corporation, 1999), acquired online through Past Masters, <https://bit.ly/2R8hlZr>. Accessed January 15, 2020.

suggestion in letting Teachers College join the larger university as a “sovereign state,” the first dean of the College laid the foundation for it to effectively become a school of Dewey.⁸⁴

With an inarguable ally, if not follower, of Dewey at its head until 1926, Teachers College kept opening doors to an increasingly diverse pool of students to join its growing student body, which jumped from 200 at the turn of the century to nearly 5,000 by 1926.⁸⁵ One of the main avenues of attracting these students was the Summer Session, which was organized under Russell’s supervision for the first time in 1900 and began bringing thousands of students to Morningside Heights by the interwar period.⁸⁶

In the American context, the dean believed the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the South could only be achieved with Deweyan social education, which inevitably included the education of Afro-Americans for their social consciousness.⁸⁷ Russell was greatly interested in Southern schools. During the first several years of the 1900s, he joined American philanthropists on tours of Black colleges, where he encouraged Black students to come study at Teachers College.⁸⁸ As the reputation of Teachers College and its mission of social education rose under Russell’s tenure, even those like Booker T. Washington reached out to the dean, asking for his advice on how he might improve the education offered at schools like Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes. The correspondence of the two educators’ reveals a continuous exchange of ideas and, in several instances, Russell’s requests to Washington for Black students of education to be sent to New York.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ James Earl Russell, *Founding Teachers College: Reminiscences of the Dean Emeritus* (New York: Teachers College Bureau of Publications, 1937), 25-28.

⁸⁵ Annual Report of Columbia University (New York: Trustees of Columbia University, 1898), 12, Collection of Annual Reports, Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

⁸⁶ Cremin et al, *A History of Teachers College*, 67-68.

⁸⁷ Cremin et al, *A History of Teachers College*, 38.

⁸⁸ “Dean Russel Goes South,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, Volume XLVII, Number 156, April 21, 1904, <https://bit.ly/30tYDQO>; Rosenberg, *Changing the Subject*, 142.

⁸⁹ Letter, Booker T. Washington to James Earl Russell, June 11, 1903, in Booker T. Washington, *Booker T. Washington Papers, 1903-4*, ed. Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock, 7 vols (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), vol. 7,

One of the professors that Russell hired to expand and offer studies on Afro-American education was Mabel Carney, whose time at Teachers College led to dozens of Afro-American educators completing their doctoral degrees in fields like rural education and secondary education.⁹⁰ A Teachers College alumnus and a summer session instructor, Carney joined the faculty of the College during World War I and eventually became the chair of the Rural Education Department that she established with Russell's support in the 1920s.⁹¹ Aligning with Dewey's philosophy, Carney believed, rural education was essential in the rehabilitation of Southern schools as the social contexts of rural spaces necessitated a form of education that would best raise appropriate social consciousness among students within the unique setting. In her letter to Russell in 1923, Carney outlined reasons behind why the College needed a department dedicated to the field, which included "extreme neglect and indifference practiced toward rural schools...[and] characteristic differences of the country as contrasted with the city."⁹² She emphasized that the predominant vocation of farming in rural America was "more than a vocation" and that it was "a mode of living...characterized by a variety of attitudes, habits, prejudices, and ideals," which required educational theory and practice considerate of such social differences.⁹³

To Carney, and eventually Russell as well as other professors who joined Carney's department, it was clear that these characteristic social differences between urban and rural education in America involved Black Americans of the South. Furthermore, in the globalizing society of the interwar period,

178; Russell to Washington, May 4, 1901, in *Booker T. Washington Papers, 1901-2*, vol. 6, 104-105; Russell to Washington, June 5, 1901, *Booker T. Washington Papers, 1901-2*, vol. 6, 148-149.

⁹⁰ Mabel Carney, "Doctoral Dissertations and Projects Relating to the Education of Negroes," *Advanced School Digest* 7 (1942), 41-44, "Negro Education and Race Relations" folder, Vertical Files, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College.

⁹¹ "Biography of Mabel Carney," Teachers College Office of the President file, James E. Russell Collection, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College;

⁹² Letter, Mabel Carney to James E. Russell, May 114, 1923, Teachers College Office of the President file, James E. Russell Collection, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

Carney held that the general education of Afro-Americans was a matter so deeply intertwined with American democracy, as Carney wrote in a 1924 letter to a colleague, “I am still very deeply interested in the matter of offering a Unit course in Negro education or Race Relationships...because of the fundamental significance of this whole question of Negro education in our American democracy.”⁹⁴ Eventually approved in between 1925 and 1926, Carney’s course, every year, attracted 200 to 300 students, among whom included “white, colored, native, and foreign.”⁹⁵ Much like Russell, Carney was unmistakably a Deweyan. Under the professor and her department, dozens of Afro-American scholars from the South as well as the neighboring Harlem completed their graduate education during the decades between the two world wars; in fact, among the thirty-six dissertations written between 1929 and 1942, twenty-five were written by Black students at Teachers College.⁹⁶ Moreover, Carney helped create the Negro Education Club that allowed all students—Afro-American, white American, *and* foreign students—to join; the organization served as a complement to the International House of Columbia that similarly offered housing and dining facilities on a non-discriminatory basis to all international students.⁹⁷

In the global context, Russell’s multidimensional vision of education translated into a growing commitment toward increasing the number of faculty capable of teaching topics in international education, foreign scholars, and in-depth studies of education offered in lands beyond the U.S. Here,

⁹⁴ Letter, Mabel Carney to R. J. Leonard, December 13, 1924, Teachers College Office of the President file, James E. Russell Collection, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College.

⁹⁵ Letter, Mabel Carney to William F. Russell, undated, Folder 187, William F. Russell Papers, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College.

⁹⁶ Digests of Dissertation, 1925-1929, 1929-1931, 1932, 1933, 1935, 1937, 1938, 1940, 1941, 1942, Teachers College Archive, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College; Carney, “Doctoral Dissertations,” 41-44.

⁹⁷ “Meetings on Pueblo Indians and Negro Education Scheduled,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, December 13, 1922, Volume LXVII, Number 63, <https://bit.ly/379a7d4>; “Negro Club Meets Tonight,” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, December 12, 1929, Volume LIII, Number 53, <https://bit.ly/2R6cKXB>; Richard Glotzer, “The Career of Mabel Carney: The Study of Race and Rural Development in the United States and South Africa,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 29, no. 2 (1996), 317.

too, Carney's contributions were significant. Passionate about interracial cooperation and the egalitarian education of Black and Native peoples in the U.S. and beyond, Carney traveled several times to various nations in Latin America and Africa. In 1926, for example, Carney traveled to Africa with financial support from the British Ministry of Education and the International Missionary Council in order to create a survey of mission schools in British colonies of western Africa as well as South Africa; beginning with the Gold Coast, present-day Ghana, she visited Sierra Leone, Liberia, Kenya, Mozambique, Zanzibar, and Egypt.⁹⁸ In each colony or nation, she either met with Columbia alums and students, or encouraged students to come to Teachers College, or both. Her travels are well-documented in her *African Letters*, which was printed privately for College students and faculty. While these letters feature racist language that is perhaps inevitable for someone with a western, imperial lens toward whom she considered primitive or uncivilized, to those at Teachers College, they nonetheless offered some incisive observations and likely impacted the intellectual development of those students like James E. K. Aggrey of the Gold Coast and Kamba Simango of Mozambique.

Along with Carney, Paul Monroe, a specialist in the history of education, was crucial in turning Teachers College into a training ground of social education for global scholars. In 1923, with Dean Russell's approval and \$1,000,000 funding from the General Education Board founded by John D. Rockefeller, Monroe helped establish the International Institute at Teachers College.⁹⁹ Some existing works on the history of Teachers College address the centrality of Monroe in this aspect of the College, especially with regards to the education of Chinese students at Columbia who represented around half of the total number of international students.¹⁰⁰ However, Monroe touched students

⁹⁸ Mabel Carney, "African Letters," 1926, Teachers College Office of the President file, James E. Russell Collection, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College.

⁹⁹ Cremin et al, *A History of Teachers College*, 77.

¹⁰⁰ Weili Ye, "Nü Liuxuosheng": The Story of American-Educated Chinese Women, 1880s-1920s," *Modern China* 20, No. 3 (Jul., 1994), 315-346; Liping Bu, "International Activism and Comparative Education: Pioneering Efforts of the

across the globe. As the first Director of the School of Education and the International Institute, Monroe disseminated the theory of social education and, perhaps most notably, translated the theories into praxis in countries like the Philippines, Mexico, and Iraq. Underlying his work was a staunch belief in education's capacity to cultivate "international understanding and good will," since education was the best means of "the transfer of cultural elements."¹⁰¹ To his eyes, international students were intermediaries of cultural transfer—those who could foster "better understanding between the Orient and the Occident."¹⁰²

International Institute of Teachers College, Columbia University," *Comparative Education Review* 41, no. 4 (Nov., 1997), 413-434.

¹⁰¹ Draft of speech, "Speech of 1924" Folder, Box 6b, Paul Monroe Papers, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College; Bu, "International Activism," 415-416.

¹⁰² Proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation, "International Institute Correspondence, Projects, Proposals, 1920s" Folder, Box 6a, Paul Monroe Papers, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College.

The Students

Students of color at Teachers College who went on to become educationists of the “kitchen garden” school credos can be broadly divided into two camps: the ones who followed John Dewey’s theories and the others who aligned with various major figures of the College like Carney and Monroe.

Among the students who followed Deweyan theories of education, Chinese students are perhaps most frequently mentioned in historical literature.¹⁰³ Their visibility partly owes itself to state-sanctioned measures such as the aforementioned Boxer Indemnity Scholarship that brought the number of Chinese students to be the highest among foreign students in early twentieth century American universities. At Teachers College, a group of Chinese students who studied with Dewey adopted the American professor’s pragmatist pedagogy and many participated in the May Fourth Movement of 1919 (五四运动)—an anti-imperialist politico-cultural movement sparked by students who opposed the outcomes of the Treaty of Versailles. These students of the American professor sought to massify the possession of intellectual and political power in their homeland. For example, the philosopher Hu Shih (胡適)—known as the “father of the Chinese literary renaissance.”¹⁰⁴ Thanks to the Indemnity Scholarship program, Hu studied first at Cornell, where he almost exclusively studied education and philosophy in his last couple years, participated in the Chinese Students’ Club and the Civic Club, *and* served as the president of the Cosmopolitan Club in Ithaca.¹⁰⁵ At Columbia, he studied with Dewey and continued to engage with his peers at Teachers College, both Chinese and

¹⁰³ Sor-Hoon Tan, “China’s Pragmatist Experiment in Democracy: Hu Shih’s Pragmatism and Dewey’s Influence in China,” *Metaphilosophy* 35, no. ½ (January 2004), 44-64, <https://bit.ly/3ahhbFg>; Liu Xing, “A Study of John Dewey’s 1919 Visits in Japan and China Based upon His Existing Correspondence,” *The Journal of Northeast Asian History* 13, no. 2 (Winter 2016), 9-31.

¹⁰⁴ Record of “Hu Shih, A.B. ’14” in Cornell University Alumni Records, Hu Shih Papers, Carl A. Kroch Library, Cornell University.

¹⁰⁵ Transcript of record of Hu Shih, Hu Shih Papers, Carl A. Kroch Library, Cornell University Library.; Record of “Hu Shih, A.B. ’14,” Hu Shih Papers, Cornell University Library.

non-Chinese. Both the intellectual and social dimensions of Hu’s life in America attest to the fact that he genuinely believed in pragmatism and its principle of diversity, or the inclusion of the masses. Beyond Morningside Heights, he went on to become one of the main leaders of the May Fourth Movement who advocated for the written vernacular Chinese over the obsolete classical Chinese. The logic behind Hu’s advocacy was undoubtedly rooted in Deweyan pragmatism. He knew that “true education,” as theorized by his mentor, would require an accessible language that could ensure the collective participation of all Chinese peoples, even the ethnoracial minorities.



“Hu Shih”¹⁰⁶ and “The Chinese Student Club at Teachers College”¹⁰⁷

While the Chinese students of Dewey like Hu are well-known, the stories of Dewey’s students at Teachers College from other parts of Asia have received comparatively less attention. Between 1926 and 1931, after the founding of Monroe’s International Institute, a number of Korean students studied with Dewey at Teachers College and helped reshape the education system of the country after the end of World War II.¹⁰⁸ Oh Chon-sok (오천석)—known to his American peers at Teachers College

¹⁰⁶ Photograph of Hu Shih in “Celebrating Hu Shih,” *Cornell Chronicle*, April 16, 2014, <https://bit.ly/2xAlfM>.

¹⁰⁷ “The Chinese Student Club at Teachers College,” Paul Monroe Papers, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College.

¹⁰⁸ Hyung-chan Kim, “American Influence on Korean Education,” *Educational Perspectives* 21, no. 4, (1982), 31.

as Paul Auh—was one of those Korean students who inherited Dewey’s philosophy during the interwar period.¹⁰⁹ Earning his doctorate in education in 1932, Oh traveled back to Korea and began lecturing at Bosong College, a professional school that is now one of the top three universities in Korea. However, his career was cut short when the Japanese deemed him to be too radical, which forced him to flee the country and live in Shanghai until 1945. With Korean liberation, as historian Hyung-chan Kim writes, Oh and other Korean students “became missionaries for education according to the gospel of John Dewey.”¹¹⁰ In 1945, Oh and fellow Teachers College alum Hwal-lan “Helen” Kim (김활란) who was the first Korean woman to earn a doctorate from the school—established the Korean Committee on Education, a prominent organization that worked with the U.S. in making policy recommendations on schools and staff across the country.¹¹¹ Both Oh and Kim spearheaded the widespread movement that democratized public education in postwar Korea. Their careers represented the pragmatist version of the “kitchen garden” school credos entering Korean educational thought.

Oh and Kim were not the first wave of Korean students to reach Teachers College. Children of European and American missionaries living on the peninsula had been attending Teachers College for almost a decade by the time of the Great Depression.¹¹² Native Koreans who were Christians began arriving at Teachers College after WWI. In the first couple years of 1920, for example, Paik Nam-suk attended Teachers College to earn a master’s degree in education.¹¹³ Paik was a son of a blind soothsayer who became one of the main figures of the missionary communities in Korea, which led Paik to enroll

¹⁰⁹ List of Foreign Students in Teachers College First Semester, 1930-1931, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College, 6.

¹¹⁰ List of Foreign Students in Teachers College, 1930-1931, Teachers College Archives, 6; Kim, “American Influence on Korean Education,” *Educational Perspectives*, 31.

¹¹¹ Michael J. Seth, *Education Fever: Society, Politics, and the Pursuit of Schooling in South Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), 37.

¹¹² List of Foreign Students in Teachers College, 1920-1921, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College. Florence Folwell from “Pyeng Yang, Korea,” for example, was from a missionary family that had moved to South Korea years prior.

¹¹³ List of Foreign Students, 1922, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College.

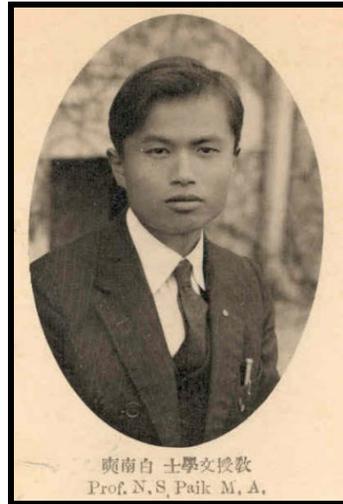
and excel at a missionary school in Korea. To Paik’s luck, the school was founded by Yun Chi-ho—a famed political activist and Methodist who became the first native-Korean president of Yon-Hi College—originally Chosun Christian College that is now Yonsei University, one of the top three universities in South Korea.¹¹⁴ Owing to his outstanding academic record, Paik got Yun’s support in studying education abroad. In many ways, Paik was the ideal foreign student for Teachers College—an English-speaking Christian, or, as King says, a “civilized aboriginal,” who was sent to learn the American way of teaching and who returned to their homeland to massify the study of English as well as American culture.¹¹⁵ Considering Paik’s life, his successors like the aforementioned Oh and Kim can be seen as Deweyan pioneers of democratic education in Korea who also were seen by their professors as brilliant aboriginals that would civilize the rest of their communities and countries.



Chon-sok “Paul” Oh¹¹⁶
TC Class of 1932



Hwal-lan “Helen” Kim¹¹⁷
TC Class of 1931



Paik Nam-suk¹¹⁸
TC Class of 1922

¹¹⁴ “Miss Porter Back from Trip Around the World,” *Teachers College Record* 24 (1923), 521.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Photograph, “제8대문교부장관 오천석,” CET0084994, 1960, Ministry of Education, National Archives of Korea (NAK).

¹¹⁷ Suh-young Yun, “Helen Kim: Mother of the *Korea Times*,” *The Korea Times*, November 11, 2011, <https://bit.ly/3clehkw>.

¹¹⁸ Photograph of Paik Nam-suk, Personal collection of Elder Park Hwan-Gyu of Oncheon-Jaeil Church, Busan, Republic of Korea.

Apart from Korea, another Asian country that felt the arrival of the pragmatist version of the “kitchen garden” school credos was the Philippines. Although rarely discussed in relation to Dewey, waves of Filipino students arrived at Teachers College in the first decades of the twentieth century. A member of the Teachers College class of 1910, Camilo Isias, for example, was one of the early Filipino students who inherited the pragmatist philosophy of democratic education from Dewey. Even then, at the close of the century’s first decade, Isias found Teachers College to be a space of both social and intellectual growth, as he mingled with students from all corners of the world as well as his own.

During his lifetime, Isias served as the first Filipino Superintendent of Schools, President of National University, and, by 1941, Chairman of the National Council of Education. With considerable influence over the education system of his country, Isias actualized the theories of education developed by his “unforgettable Professor,” whom he deemed to be “one of America’s greatest legacies.”¹¹⁹ In his 1940 work, *The Filipino Way of Life: The Pluralized Philosophy*, Isias writes that the Philippines as well as other countries of the modern world must “formulate a philosophy and adopt a way of life that serves as a guide to the citizen and the nation—a philosophy that vies cohesion to individual and collective endeavor and makes life purposeful and meaningful.”¹²⁰ Isias was an undeniable Deweyan. He later commented on America and Dewey: “Greece, through Plato and Aristotle, gave her legacy of philosophy. The Hebrews gave ethics and religion. India and China gave gifts of men and philosophers like Buddha and Confucius. America evolved pragmatism because of James and Dewey.”¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Lisandro E. Claudio, *Liberalism and the Postcolony: Thinking the State in 20th-Century Philippines* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2017), 32.

¹²⁰ Camilo Isias, *The Filipino Way of Life: The Pluralized Philosophy* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1940), x.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

Others like Osias followed his steps. Florentino Cayaco, Osias' ally and successor as president of National University, earned his Master of Education from Teachers College in 1922.¹²² Like Osias, Cayaco idolized Dewey. His grandson Francisco Cayaco commented in an interview, "Without a doubt...the influence of Columbia University's Teachers College is evident in his thinking and philosophy."¹²³ To him, John Dewey was "the most outstanding philosopher of contemporary civilization." He believed, like Dewey, that the ends of true education was "the attainment of democratic habits—sincerity instead of hatred, tolerance instead of bigotry, peace instead of war."¹²⁴ The ends of education could not merely be the self, the family, or the nation; it had to be the democratic experience, or living democracy. Cayaco put this theory into practice following the Liberation of the Philippines, first as the Undersecretary of Education and later as president of Arellano University, which, during Cayaco's tenure, grew from a school of 500 students to a university of eight branches with an average annual enrollment of 20,000.¹²⁵



Camilo O. Osias¹²⁶
TC Class of 1910



Florentino Cayaco¹²⁷
TC Class of 1922

¹²² List of Foreign Students, 1921-1922, October 31, 1921, Teachers College Archives, Gottesman Library, Columbia University Teachers College.

¹²³ Claudio, *Liberalism and the Postcolony*, 38.

¹²⁴ Florentino Cayaco, "Democracy and Nationalism," in *The Magus of Progressive Education*, 155.

¹²⁵ "Florentino Cayaco, Sr.," official website of Arellano University, <https://bit.ly/3bjEaRy>.

¹²⁶ "Camilo Osias," Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, <https://history.house.gov/People/Detail/19211>.

¹²⁷ "Florentino Cayaco, Sr.," official website of Arellano University, <https://bit.ly/3bjEaRy>.

Dewey's philosophy of democratic education touched students from India as well. While the American professor's students from India still remain largely unknown—apart from the eminent thinker and educationist B. R. Ambedkar who has been the subject of many recent works of the interwar's intellectual history—evidence suggests he, or his loyal Deweyan colleagues like Kilpatrick, shaped the beliefs of several Indian students at Teachers College. For example, Doss Johanson Manikam from Madras, a Christian student, attended Teachers College in the first couple years of the 1930s.¹²⁸ While there is no document that confirms whether or not Manikam took a course with Dewey during his time at Teachers College, several primary sources, including the master's thesis, suggest that he did indeed absorb the pragmatist's philosophy while he studied in New York City. In the "List of Foreign Students" from the first semester of the 1930-1931 academic year, Manikam is listed as one of two among twelve students from India specializing in educational psychology, one of Dewey's main fields at the College.¹²⁹ Moreover, the bibliography of his master's thesis cites just two professors of Teachers College, J.E. Russell and Dewey—the latter being the only one cited multiple times.¹³⁰ The body of the thesis also alludes to Deweyan theories. "[I]t is through education that love for the mother-country and proper citizenship could be established in India...the right mental attitude...proper sense of citizenship and nationalism," Manikam explains. It was the educationists' job to make sure this sense of citizenship and nationalism did not endanger "friendly and helpful international relationship." Only then, Manikam believed, India could overcome the "combination of enforced ignorance and over-done religion" that "not only made women in India to a large degree

¹²⁸ *The Union Theological Seminary Alumni Directory, 1836-1958* (New York: Alumni Office of the Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, 1958), 397.

¹²⁹ List of Foreign Students in Teachers College, 1930-1931, Teachers College Archives.

¹³⁰ Doss J. Manikam, "Nationalism and Education in India," (Master's thesis, Columbia University Teachers College, 1931), 22.

willing victims of social customs” but also “made the most formidable and the most effective opponents of all change or innovation.”¹³¹

In Latin America, too, Dewey’s students and their allies attempted to put the pragmatist’s theories into practice. In Mexico, for example, Moisés Sáenz—classmate of aforesaid Cayaco at Teachers College and a self-professed disciple of “Juan Dewey y Kilpatrick”—worked with other Mexican educationists to usher in a new generation of those who would follow the Deweyan model for the common man in post-Revolution Mexico: “an everyday man with extraordinary abilities and a practical *orientación para la vida* or ‘orientation to life.’”¹³² Sáenz knew the crux of Deweyan philosophy was experience. He knew that experiences, and resultant needs, of students must be centered in designing the appropriate school catering to people of a particular location and population, which meant that no one school, as Dewey would claim, could be the same.¹³³ Following this belief, Sáenz took on the task of reforming schools in rural Mexico, where the greatest impediment to any form of education was poverty. Taking into consideration the financial limitations to even building schoolhouses, “shady groves, ruined hacienda buildings, former churches, temporary huts, and village constructed community centers” became the classrooms, where students were taught that the school and society were inseparable.¹³⁴ Dewey writes in “My Pedagogic Creed” that education is “a social process, the school [being] simply that form of community life” in which every child can “share in the inherited resources of the race and...use his own powers for social ends.”¹³⁵ No matter how difficult it

¹³¹ Ibid, 22-23.

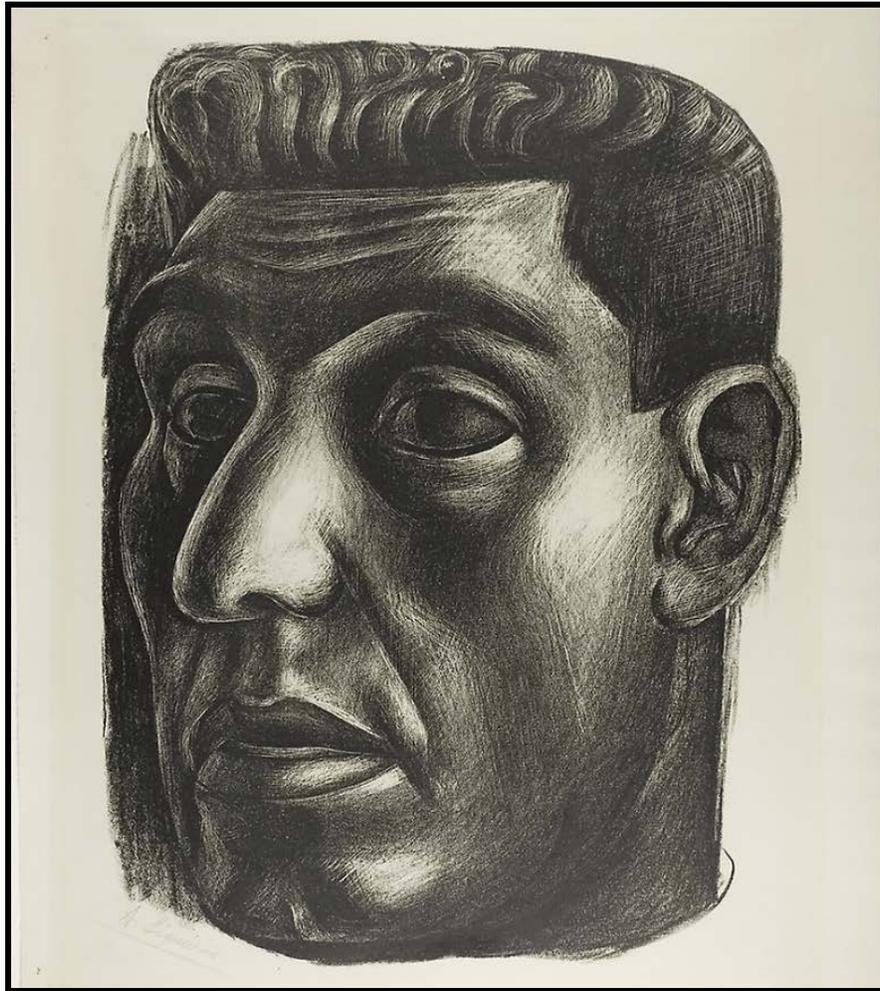
¹³² Victor J. Rodriguez, “Radical Dewey: Deweyan Pedagogy in Mexico, 1915-1923” *Education and Culture* 29, no.2 (2013), 85.

¹³³ Sister Joseph Mary Raby

¹³⁴ Edmund T. Hamann, *Moisés Sáenz: Vigencia de su Legado* (Monterrey, Mexico: Fondo Editorial de Nuevo León, 2015), 54.

¹³⁵ George E. Axtelle and Joe R. Burnett, “Dewey on Education and Schooling,” *Guide to the Works of John Dewey*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), 259.

was to massify public education, he believed it was his duty—as the leader in the Mexican progressive movement and as Undersecretary of Education—to do so for “democratic justice.”¹³⁶ While the nature of Sáenz’s influence is still debated, he certainly left an indelible mark on Mexican education.



Portrait of Moisés Sáenz¹³⁷
TC Class of 1922

¹³⁶ Moisés Sáenz, *Some Mexican Problems* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1926), 77; Ruben Flores, *Backroads Pragmatists: Mexico’s Melting Pot and Civil Rights in the United States* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 43-45

¹³⁷ David Alfaro Siqueiros, “Moisés Sáenz,” Lithograph on cream wove paper, 1931, Mexico, Art Institute of Chicago, <https://bit.ly/2Vepv4n>. According to the Art Institute, Siqueiros, a Marxist activist and painter, admired Sáenz so much that he created this portrait.

Dewey became familiar in Mexico and the broader Latin America through students like Sáenz, but he was not the only professor of Teachers College who had a connection to the region. In fact, Mabel Carney, as the head of the Rural Education Department, witnessed the transcontinental dissemination of her educational thought via her own students. Countless students in Teachers College, both American and international, took courses in her department and chose rural education as their specialization until her retirement in 1942. Among these students was Juanita de Fromen Molina, a Nicaraguan educationist who studied rural education under Carney's supervision.¹³⁸ During her time at Columbia, Molina was an active student leader. In 1921, while she was still a student at Teachers College, the Nicaraguan Consul asked her to visit the Institute of Applied Agriculture on Long Island with Josefa Toledo de Aguerri—a famed suffragist, pioneer for education of women in Nicaragua, and Molina's friend.¹³⁹ Nicaragua was about to create an "agricultural, educational institution which would have for its object the introduction of modern agricultural methods in the country" and the government wanted Molina and Aguerri to inform it on how similar schools in the U.S. operated on a daily basis.¹⁴⁰ In 1922, at the International Congress of Teachers in California, she represented the foreign students of Teachers College.¹⁴¹ The next year, while completing her master's degree, Molina represented the university at the Pan-American Congress. In 1924, the Nicaraguan government appointed Molina to be the vice minister of education, which apparently made Molina the first woman to be offered a cabinet post in a Latin American country.¹⁴² While Molina rejected the

¹³⁸ List of Foreign Students, 1921-1922, Teachers College Archives.

¹³⁹ "Now for Better Farming," *Long Island Agriculturalist* 4 (January, 1921), 15, 20.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁴¹ Helena Hill Weed, "In Memory of Juanita Molina de Fromen, 1893-1934: Nicaraguan Member of the Inter-American Commission of Women," MC 546, Sequence 95, Subseries A, Series V, Doris Stevens Papers, Radcliffe Institute, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University, 1-2.

¹⁴² Victoria González-Rivera, *Before the Revolution: Women's Rights and Right-Wing Politics in Nicaragua* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2011), 36.

offer, she went on to teach at various schools in the U.S. and Nicaragua. In the final decade of the interwar period, she served as the Nicaraguan delegate to the Inter-American Commission of Women, working with suffragist Doris Stevens in securing the legal rights to women's education across the Americas.



Juanita Molina de Fromén¹⁴³
TC Class of 1923

¹⁴³ Photograph of Juanita Molina de Fromén, MC 546, Sequence 82, Subseries A, Series V, Doris Stevens Papers, Radcliffe Institute, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University.

Apart from her Latin American students like Molina, Carney also experimented with interracial classes in the region. In 1935, about a decade after Dewey visited the aforesaid Sáenz and referred to Mexico as the country with the greatest “spiritual union between the scholastic activities and those of the community,” Carney conducted a summer course in Mexico, where she brought Black and white South Africans to experience and learn from the improvements in rural education that received Dewey’s praise.¹⁴⁴ Much like the aforementioned Negro Education Club and the Negro Education Lecture Series that she had started a decade before, the lecture in Mexico was supposed to bring together Black and white students in what she deemed to be neutral ground. She did exactly that.

Although Carney’s career in education was at times tainted by the prejudices of the time-space she occupied, Carney’s philosophy in “negro education”—coupled with her work in rural education—was unique and powerful in Progressive and interwar United States. The principle of industrial-practical education by Booker T. Washington collided with the pseudo-eugenic principle of the talented tenth by Du Bois in her thought. Despite her own western-imperial lens that viewed her students as civilized aboriginals who could go on to civilize their primitive counterparts, her philosophy seems to have genuinely aimed at bringing the marginalized to the center, namely the rural poor as well as people of African descent. It inevitably impacted many of her incredible students like Jane Ellen McAllister, a Mississippi-born educationist who became the first Afro-American woman to earn a Ph.D in education and the sixth Black woman in the world to receive a doctorate.¹⁴⁵ McAllister entered Teachers College in 1926 and completed her requirements for the degree by 1928, writing

¹⁴⁴ Glotzer, “The Career of Mabel Carney,” 332, <https://bit.ly/2yhsz6V>; Walter G. Daniel, “Current Trends and Events of National Importance in Negro Education, Section A: Negro Welfare and Mabel Carney at Teachers College, Columbia University,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 11, no. 4 (October, 1942), 560, <https://bit.ly/2XIS0ZW>.

¹⁴⁵ Winona Williams-Burns, “Jane Ellen McAllister: Pioneer for Excellence in Teacher Education,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 51, no.3 (Summer, 1982), 345-346.

“The Training of Negro Teachers in Louisiana” under Carney’s supervision.¹⁴⁶ Carney deemed McAllister’s dissertation to be one of the best: “The real history of American Negro education on the advanced level in Teachers College began with the pioneer effort of Doctor Jane Ellen McAllister in 1929,” she said.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, McAllister was brilliant and illustrious. She taught at Southern University, Fisk University, Miners Teachers College, Grambling State University, and Jackson State University.¹⁴⁸ By the 1930s, she was so well-known within the world of Afro-American education. Her peers and politicians recognized her for excellence in teaching and even Du Bois became curious about McAllister that he sent Columbia a letter in 1935, asking the university about whether she actually earned her doctorate at Teachers College and about her Mississippi address.¹⁴⁹ Most importantly, her students praised her for “helping them to develop habits of discipline and a love for learning.” And in all those years of teaching, McAllister kept up with the work and theories of education by her Columbia mentor Carney.¹⁵⁰

Other important Carneyans trained at Teachers College included numerous other Afro-American as well as students Africans and Afro-Carribeans. Otelia Cromwell, the late professor of English at Miner Teachers College, earned her master’s from Teachers College in 1910, which allowed her to pursue her doctorate in English at Yale as the first Afro-American to do so.¹⁵¹ The aforesaid Kamba Simango of Southern Rhodesia studied with Carney in 1922 and earned his master’s

¹⁴⁶ Jane Ellen McAllister, “The Training of the Negro in Louisiana” (Ph.D Dissertation: Columbia University Teachers College, 1929).

¹⁴⁷ Mabel Carney, “Doctoral Dissertations and Projects Relating to the Education of Negroes,” *Advanced School Digest*, Teachers College, Columbia University, (February 1942), 1.

¹⁴⁸ Williams-Burns, “Jane Ellen McAllister,” 348-352.

¹⁴⁹ Letter, Edward J. Grant of Columbia University to W.E.B. Du Bois, November 11, 1935, Series 1A, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

¹⁵⁰ Collected Documents by Mabel Carney, Folder 32, Box 4, Jane Ellen McAllister papers, Henry T. Sampson Library, Jackson State University.

¹⁵¹ “Otelia Cromwell Biography and Bibliography,” Women Faculty Forum of Yale University, Yale University.

in education.¹⁵² He participated in the Pan-African Congress organized by Du Bois, devoted his life to missionary education in several African nations, and collaborated with those leading the Anthropology Department at Columbia.¹⁵³ Maurice Dartigue of Haiti studied rural education with Carney and later served as Administrator of Rural Schools, Director of Rural Education and, by the outset of WWII, Minister of Education, all through which he maintained contact with Carney.¹⁵⁴ After the war, he entered the international stage and began working toward improving the state of labor, agriculture, and education in Africa through the United Nations and UNESCO.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, Eva Mahuma Morake studied rural education with Carney and later became the first woman principal of Wilberforce Institute in South Africa that was founded by the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church.¹⁵⁶ Morake was, like McAllister, an exceptional student and caught the eyes of Du Bois, as the latter jotted down on a page of his notebook: “Mrs Eva Mahuma Morake...the first South African to receive a M.A. degree.”¹⁵⁷ Morake was, in fact, deemed to be so accomplished that she participated in the New Education Fellowship (NEF) Conference in Cape Town and Johannesburg in 1934, in which just two professors of Columbia’s Teachers College participated—John Dewey and Mabel Carney.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵² List of Foreign Students, First Semester, 1921-1922, Teachers College Archives.

¹⁵³ “Pan African Congress third biennial sessions,” November 1923, Series 1A, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst; “Graduates and Ex-Students,” *The Southern Workman* 49 (1920), 189. *The Southern Workman* was published monthly by the Hampton Institute Press.

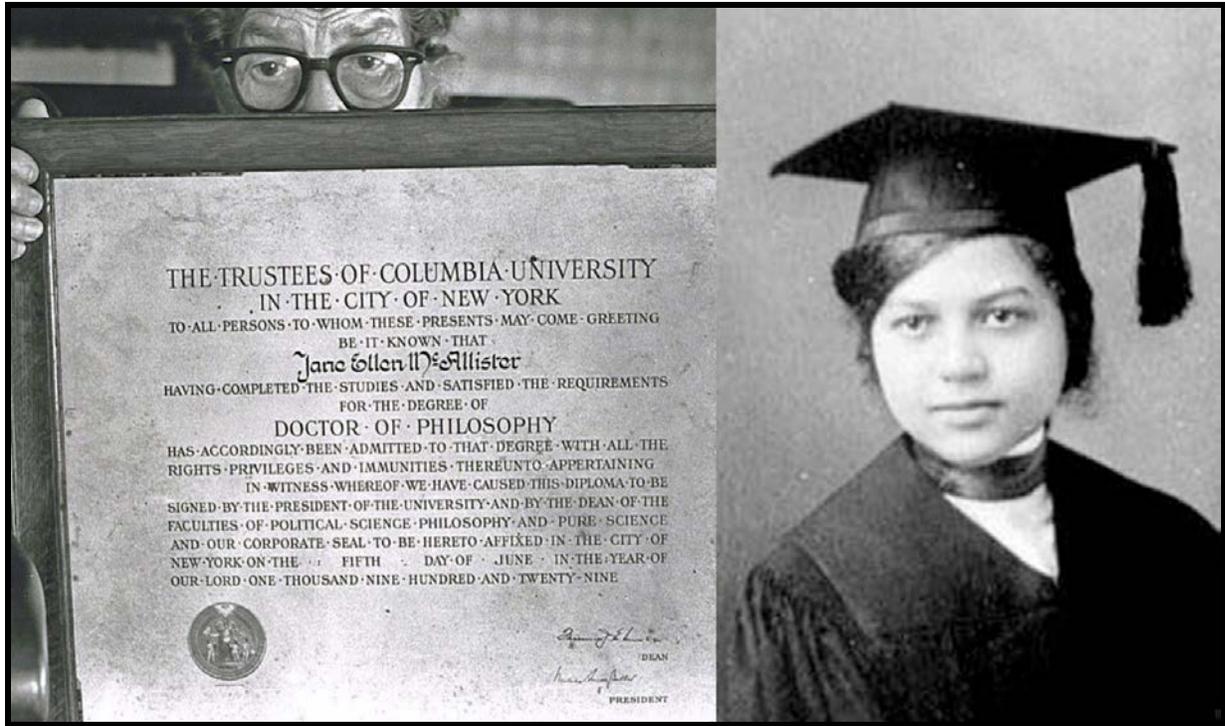
¹⁵⁴ Letters between Carney and Dartigue, various dates, SC MG 303, Box 1 and Box 2, Maurice Dartigue papers, Schomburg Center, New York Public Library.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

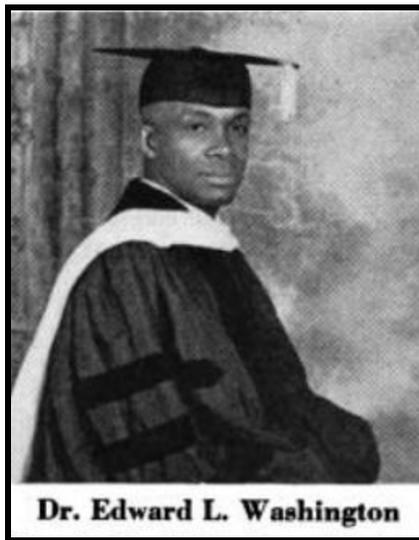
¹⁵⁶ List of Foreign Students, First Semester, 1930-1931, Teachers College Archives.

¹⁵⁷ “Educational accomplishments of Eva Mahuma Morake,” 1932, Series 1, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

¹⁵⁸ Peter Kallaway, *The Changing Face of Colonial Education in Africa: Education, Science and Development* (Taylor and Francis, 2020), section titled, “The NEF conference in 1934 and social anthropology.”



Jane Ellen McAllister, her Ph.D diploma, and graduation photo¹⁵⁹



Edward L. Washington¹⁶⁰
TC Class of 1936¹⁶³



Otelia Cromwell¹⁶¹
TC Class of 1910¹⁶⁴



Kamba Simango¹⁶²
TC Class of 1923

¹⁵⁹ Joe Levine, "Celebrating a Landmark Southern Educator—and TC Hero," August 7, 2019, Teachers College Newsroom, <https://bit.ly/2wRGVL2>.

¹⁶⁰ "Gets Ph.D.," *The Crisis* 43-44, W.E.B. Du Bois, ed. (1936), 316.

¹⁶¹ "Beginnings: Otelia Cromwell," official website of Smith College Libraries, Smith College, <https://bit.ly/34O20SX>.

¹⁶² Leon P. Spencer, *Toward an African Church in Mozambique: Kamba Simango and the Protestant Community in Manica and Sofala* (Mzuni Press, 2013), cover image.

¹⁶³ "The American Negro in College, 1935-1936," *The Crisis* 43-44, W.E.B. Du Bois, ed. (1936), 234.

One of the most enduring legacies of Carneyan thought in education is perhaps interracial education. Certainly, numerous students inherited her belief in the cooperation between races. Edward L. Washington, the first Black American student to earn two doctorates, went on to become the head of Thomas Jefferson High School in Brooklyn, where he oversaw the curriculum for over 2,000 boys, “ninety-nine percent of whom [we]re white.”¹⁶⁵ However, the Carneyan educationist who became the most staunch supporter of interracial education and cooperation was perhaps the aforesaid James E. K. Aggrey. A leader in missionary education in Africa, Aggrey studied with Carney and Monroe. During his time at Columbia—at Teachers College and the Summer Sessions—Aggrey, like most students mentioned here, interacted with classmates of various races and ethnicities. These interactions helped prove to others and himself that with interracial understanding, much of the prejudice between, say, Black and white people could be overcome and could facilitate societal progress. This recognition was essential for Aggrey, as he came to believe “the only way [for a Black man] to prosper in the white man’s world was to follow the precepts of the one Negro who had succeeded in the white establishment—Booker T. Washington.”¹⁶⁶ Aggrey “repeated utterances that there were two sides to the racial question” and firmly supported interracial cooperation; he emphasized that Black people, both Africans and Afro-Americans, must “learn to accept help wherever they found it...and to remember that the Anglo-Saxons, whatever their faults had been more successful in dealing with backward races than any other people. In history.” Such a perspective emerged out of his time in America, especially at Teachers College.

¹⁶⁴ “Otelia Cromwell Biography and Bibliography,” Women Faculty Forum of Yale University, Yale University, <https://bit.ly/2z2cdzk>.

¹⁶⁵ “Gets Ph.D.,” *The Crisis* 43-44, W.E.B. Du Bois, ed. (1936), 316.

¹⁶⁶ Edward H. Berman, “American Influence on African Education: The Role of the Phelps-Stokes Fund’s Education Commissions,” *Comparative Education Review* 15, No. 2, Colonialism and Education (June, 1971), 139.

Take, for example, the following anecdote about one of Aggrey's Summer Session classes. On August 26, 1914, toward the end of his second summer session at Columbia, Aggrey wrote to his friend W. J. "Zeus" Trent about his experiences.¹⁶⁷ Spending the majority of his letter talking about his time in sociology class, he explains to Zeus that initially the students around him—most of whom were Anglo-Saxons—treated him with hostility as he was the only Black student in the class. He writes, "one day I discovered there were southerners in the class, and even among the northerners there was objection to a coloured man being admitted...to white Social clubs. That was a chance for me to discuss the race question from a sociological point of view."¹⁶⁸

As Aggrey notes in his letter, he made sure to "make no enemies."¹⁶⁹ He explains to Trent that he waited until his class held an "open parliament" and he made sure to "discuss the race question from a sociological point of view."¹⁷⁰ He writes:

I said, I am going back South to teach Sociology, and if my views were untruths I was willing to be corrected. I did not want sentiment, but sense, not fiction but fact...before I had spoken ten minutes, [Giddings] halted me and paid me the compliment and told the class that from what he had learned from conversation with me, and what Dr. [Jesse] Jones had told him, I was fully able to answer all questions, that I had had ample opportunities to study the Race question from every angle—even more advantageous than those of Dubois and Washington...Dr. Giddings agreed with me, and we all decided that it is either through fear or ignorance that the coloured is mistreated.¹⁷¹

Through his speech in front of the whole class, Aggrey made friends and "won them all."¹⁷² One student, a white reverend, approached him afterward and asked Aggrey to preach for him. Among the

¹⁶⁷ Letter, J. E. K. Aggrey to W. J. Trent, August 26, 1914, Box 147-3, Series C, J. E. K. Aggrey Collection, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University; Mentioned in Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, 102-105; Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, 100.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 100-101.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁷⁰ Letter, J. E. K. Aggrey to W. J. Trent, August 26, 1914, Aggrey Collection.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*.

¹⁷² Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, 104.

eleven students in the class, four turned out to be especially in alignment with him in terms of his views on Afro-American and African education. They were two Anglo-Saxon men and one Jewish woman. Furthermore, when Aggrey wrote a Latin poem that was published in a student magazine, the professor read the poem in front of the whole class. “I was uproariously cheered by the whole class, a Southerner being the first to rise to my seat and shake my hand in congratulations,” Aggrey recalled to Trent. He emphasized the fact that “all congratulated me, thanked me, and said they were going to get copies to keep.”¹⁷³ At this one sociology course of the 1914 Summer Session, students from all corners of the country realized that ethnoracial difference did not signify differential capacities intellect. Indeed, they, even the white Southern men, realized that “through fear or ignorance...the coloured is mistreated.”

Aggrey’s anecdote about connecting with white students, even from the South, is not unique. While neither Teachers College nor the Summer Sessions were a utopia of ethnoracial equality, they offered each student enough peers from their hometown or homeland to consolidate according to the color line. The aforementioned Oh Chon-sok and Kim Hwal-lan interacted with each other on-campus and went on to become two of the three most important leaders of Korean democratic education. Hu Shih of China had many Chinese classmates at the College who led the May Fourth Movement with him. Osias of the Philippines interacted with other Filipinos at the College like his roommate, who would also help advance the progressive movement in Filipino education.¹⁷⁴ McAllister had a close friend in Naomi Rushing, who after studying at Teachers College went on to become the librarian of Howard University.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Letter, J. E. K. Aggrey to W. J. Trent, August 26, 1914, Aggrey Collection.

¹⁷⁴ Claudio, *Liberalism and Postcolony*, 37.

¹⁷⁵ Williams-Burns, “Jane Ellen McAllister,” 345.

More importantly, Teachers College and the Summer Sessions stand out as interracial and crosscultural connections began to form within the student body as well as between professors and students. Aggrey, as noted, had his friends from all parts of the U.S., as well as a friend from Japan who taught him Japanese. Sáenz was a classmate of Cayaco as well as Simango. Simango had numerous friends at the College, both white and Black. Juanita Molina was “active in the establishment of International House...and was at one time leader of the Spanish American group there.”¹⁷⁶ Partly owing to the number of students of color who arrived on-campus that allowed each group, or various groups, of ethnic and non-white students to consolidate, these social interactions would have inevitably opened the eyes of the students to “the other.” It would have aroused within each student a sense of pride in their own unique ethnoracial identity as well as empathy toward those of other identities. And within the walls of the campus, the interactions in the dining halls, the dormitories, and the classrooms would have, just as Aggrey’s story tells, slowly changed and shaped the minds of each student, planting in them the belief that all people could succeed with proper education. As this belief translated stayed with students carrying the Deweyan or Carneyan vision of the “kitchen garden” school credos, it touched all corners of the globe. In turn, those like Dewey and Carney enjoyed the accumulation of their “symbolic capital,” eclipsing the outstanding careers and legacies of their students that remain critically relevant today.

¹⁷⁶ Weed, “In Memory of Juanita Molina de Frome,” Doris Stevens Papers, 1.

Department of Anthropology and Boasian Ethnologists

Established in 1902, the Department of Anthropology—the first of its kind in the United States—attracted students from across the globe to engage with the nascent discipline. Unlike the influence of John Dewey and Mabel Carney on Teachers College, the impact of Franz Boas on the anthropology department was clear and comprehensive, since Boas, as its chair, supervised its curricula, research, and recruitment. Throughout his tenure from 1902 to 1936, therefore, the “father of American anthropology” molded hundreds of students from various backgrounds. This project aims to specifically highlight the ethnoracial diversity of Boas’ pupils from the interwar period and illuminate the careers of students who pioneered Afro-American, Native American, West African, and Latin American ethnology and shared a vision of using anthropology for social progress.¹⁷⁷

The Faculty

Boas was central to the development of an ethnoracially diverse circle of cultural anthropologists at Columbia partly owing to his prominence in the discipline. In 1896, just a year before the university moved to its current location in Morningside Heights, Boas arrived at Columbia to teach a general introductory course in physical anthropology.¹⁷⁸ During those first years of anthropology teaching at Columbia in the 1890s, Boas was one of three instructors alongside William Z. Ripley and Livingston Farrand.¹⁷⁹ Ripley did not stay at Columbia for long. He left the department in 1899, as he was an economist by training and his work in racial anthropology, rooted in scientific racism, neither gained much momentum in the field nor received support from Farrand or Boas.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ “History,” Department of Anthropology, Columbia University, accessed January 25, <https://bit.ly/3b7ICmT>.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Sally Falk Moore, “Department of Anthropology” in R. Gordon Hoxie et al, *A History of the Faculty of Political Science Columbia University* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 149.

¹⁸⁰ Moore, “Department of Anthropology,” 150; Heather Winlow, “Mapping Moral Geographies: W. Z. Ripley’s Races of Europe and the United States” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96, no. 1 (Mar., 2006), 129.

Farrand lasted longer. Appointed as a professor of the department in 1903, he continued teaching until 1914, when he resigned his position and eventually became president of Cornell in 1921.¹⁸¹ By the time he arrived at Columbia, Boas had served as chief assistant in anthropology at the World Columbian Exposition and chief curator of the Columbian Museum in Chicago. When he began teaching at Columbia College in 1896, he also started a job as assistant curator of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH).¹⁸² His career progressed with each year and his reputation rose accordingly. With the publication of his popular works like *The Mind of Primitive Man* in 1911, Boas took control of the department, which, with the addition of his interwar pupils, would become what Charles King refers to as the “Boas circle” in his magisterial study from last year, *Gods of the Upper Air*.¹⁸³ The department at Columbia was, in short, one of and by Franz Uri Boas.

Owing to the centrality of Boas in the department and the discipline, the writings and ideas of the German anthropologist had an outsized influence on his interwar pupils. Two theories are especially relevant. The first and perhaps the most famous is his theory of cultural relativism, the idea that an individual’s beliefs and practices must be understood based on that person’s own culture, not according to another culture’s system of values.¹⁸⁴ The second is historical particularism, which marks each society as having a particular history that cannot be defined by universal laws. Rooted in cultural relativism, this theory necessitated the knowledge of one society’s particular history in understanding the truth of its major components, such as culture.¹⁸⁵ Boas, therefore, believed in collecting individual and historical accounts of culture in order to best understand—and, necessarily, preserve, or

¹⁸¹ “Livingston Farrand,” Office of the President, Cornell University, accessed January 26, <https://bit.ly/38ZbP1p>.

¹⁸² Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt, *Franz Boas: The Emergence of the Anthropologist* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), xix.

¹⁸³ King, *Gods of the Upper Air*, 8, 10, 293.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 8-9.

¹⁸⁵ *A Dictionary of Social Sciences*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), s.v. “Historical Particularism,” 212.

salvage—every community and society of all peoples. In order to accomplish such an enormous—or arguably impossible—task, Boas sought students from diverse backgrounds.

Principles of equality, diversity, and toleration of difference underlie these Boasian theories. The anthropologist believed divergent paths in history could lead to similarities in culture or the same level of cultural development. He rejected popular theories of the time that promoted the superiority of a single race or culture and opposed the works of colleagues like the aforesaid Ripley and ethnocentrists like Madison Grant.¹⁸⁶ To Boas, ethnoracial, or biological, differences did not define what scholars categorized as the primitive and the civilized. Rather, a difference in cultural inheritance or level of cultural achievement produced by the particular environment and historical experience accounted for the categorical binary.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, a particular environment of a society was connected to environments of other societies and historical experience involved the diffusion and exchange of customs.

These ideas of Boas began to develop in the late-1800s and culminated into the belief that “[t]he valuing of purity...should give way to the view, validated by observation, that mixing is the natural state of the world.”¹⁸⁸ In an article for *Science* magazine in 1887, for example, Boas argues, “civilization is not something absolute, but that it is relative, and that our ideas and conceptions are true only so far as our civilization goes.”¹⁸⁹ In an address from 1894, Boas writes about ancient civilizations that “[i]deas and inventions were carried from one to the other...each people which

¹⁸⁶ Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race or the Racial Basis of European History* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1916).

¹⁸⁷ Rohini Shukla, “B. R. Ambedkar and the Study of Religion at Columbia University: Castes in India, Gender and Primitivity,” *Borderlines*, February 1, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2RThTwn>; Tisa Wenger, *We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 74-75.

¹⁸⁸ King, *Gods of the Upper Air*, 9.

¹⁸⁹ Franz Boas, “Letters to the Editor,” *Science* 17, no. 9 (June 17, 1887), 589, <https://bit.ly/2u2Ml4t>.

participated in the ancient civilization added to the culture of the others...we must bow to the genius of all, whatever race they may represent.”¹⁹⁰ Lastly, in *The Mind of Primitive Man* Boas echoes his words from the past with a hint of humanism in the last paragraph. “I hope...that the data of anthropology teach us a greater tolerance of forms of civilization different from our own,” Boas notes, “that we should learn to look upon the foreign races...with the conviction, that, as all races have contributed in the past to cultural progress.”¹⁹¹ The 1938 reprint of the same text features an edited last paragraph that further accentuates the importance of diversity. Indicating that “if we were to select the best of mankind, that all races and all nationalities would be represented,” the anthropologist declares “we shall treasure and cultivate the variety of forms that human thought and activity has taken, and abhor, as leading to complete stagnation, all attempts to impress one pattern of thought upon whole nations or even upon the whole.”¹⁹²

As Boas inarguably valued diversity, he also, perhaps inevitably, believed in the power of ethnoracial pride for marginalized races and ethnicities, which touched many of his contemporaries. On October 11, 1905, for example, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote to Boas and invited him to participate in the eleventh Atlanta Conference, which was on “the Negro Physique.”¹⁹³ Du Bois also invited Boas to speak before the audience at that year’s commencement.¹⁹⁴ Boas accepted both invitations and, at Atlanta, he urged Afro-American students to take pride in their race. Citing the fact that, in the early years of human history, “the European was still satisfied with crude stone tools...[while] the African

¹⁹⁰ Franz Boas, “Human Faculty as Determined By Race,” *Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science* 43 (1894), 5.

¹⁹¹ Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), 278.

¹⁹² Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), 272.

¹⁹³ Letter, W.E.B. Du Bois to Franz Boas, October 11, 1905, Mss.B.B61, “Correspondents D,” Series I: Correspondence, Franz Boas Papers (FBP), American Philosophical Society Library (APSL).

¹⁹⁴ Letter, W.E.B. Du Bois to Franz Boas, March 31, 1906, Mss.B.B61, “Correspondents D,” Series I: Correspondence, FBP, APSL; letter, W.E.B. Du Bois to Franz Boas, April 28, 1906, Mss.B.B61, “Correspondents D,” Series I: Correspondence, FBP, APSL.

had invented...the art of smelting iron,” Boas urged all to “confidently look to the home of your ancestors” whenever “it is claimed that your race is doomed to economic inferiority.”¹⁹⁵ In his 1939 book titled *Black Folk Then and Now*, Du Bois recalled Boas’ speech. Citing Boas as one of “eminent men of science,” he writes that “Franz Boas came to Atlanta University where I was teaching History in 1906 and said to the graduating class: You need not be ashamed of your African past...I was too astonished to speak.”¹⁹⁶ Du Bois had not considered the longstanding history of African nations—the past told by Boas concerning “black kingdoms south of the Sahara.” Through Boas, the theorist of double consciousness “came then and afterwards to realize how the silence and neglect of science can let truth utterly disappear or even be unconsciously distorted.”¹⁹⁷

The department that Boas created was filled with those anthropologists who were, like Du Bois, touched by the German social scientist’s commitment to truth through what they deemed to be a science of society. The Boasian professors who are perhaps best known today are Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, owing to their research that revolutionized the understanding of race and gender. Other important scholars within the department included the founding figure of African and Afro-American studies Melville Herskovitz and the Russian-born anthropologist Alexander Goldenweiser, who taught at Columbia for a few years during the WWI and interwar periods before moving on to the New School. The common aspect of these professors was the fact that all of them were students of Boas at one time. As such, for those like Zora Neale Hurston, Columbus Kamba Simango, and Ella Cara Deloria, their professors were predecessors in the Boasian circle. Regardless of

¹⁹⁵ Lee D. Baker, “Columbia University’s Franz Boas: He Led the Undoing of Scientific Racism,” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 22 (Winter, 1998-1999), 96.

¹⁹⁶ W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Folk Then and Now: An Essay in the History and Sociology of the Negro Race* (New York: Henry Holt Company, 1939), vii; Vernon J. Williams, *Rethinking Race: Franz Boas and his Contemporaries* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 74; Baker, “Columbia University’s Franz Boas,” 96.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

whether they were a student or a professor, the research of each influenced and informed that of the other and the anthropologists developed a culture within the department and the discipline that challenged established notions of nationality, ethnicity, and race.

The Students

In 1904—two years after he established the first Department of Anthropology in America—Franz Boas wrote to Booker T. Washington about a “young gentleman, Mr. J. E. Aggrey, of Livingstone College...a full-blood negro,” who he wanted to invite to Columbia so that he could study under the anthropologist.¹⁹⁸ In the letter, which was the first of two letters Boas ever sent to Washington, the Columbia anthropologist explains to Washington that his colleagues at the Summer Session described Aggrey as “a very bright man” who had potential to continue his studies at the university beyond the summer of 1904.¹⁹⁹

It might perhaps be possible for him to study for two or three years and to take his degree of master of arts, and then to obtain a position in one of the higher schools established for his race. It is of course evident that if he developed into a good scientist, he could do excellent work particularly in Africa, which would be of the very greatest service to science. This is a consideration which makes me desirous of assisting him.²⁰⁰

While the correspondence with Washington proved to be futile, it indicated that Boas was seeking students from the Summer Sessions and the Teachers College to join his department, likely since he knew those two spaces attracted the most students of color to the university. Considering this fact, students of color at the Anthropology Department can be broadly divided into two groups. Those who began their Columbia education at Teachers College and those who did not. The first group includes names already mentioned like Columbus Kamba Simango as well as new ones that will be

¹⁹⁸ Letter, Franz Boas to Booker T. Washington, November 30, 1904, “Correspondents W-Z,” Series I: Correspondence, FBP, APSL.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

detailed herein like Ernest Kalibala of Uganda, Reuben Caluza of South Africa, and Ella Deloria of the Dakota Sioux. The second included those like the literary giant Zora Neale Hurston.

In most cases, the first group of students were taught or supervised by Carney, who gradually became a friend of Boas and began “sharing” her best students. The first student that effectively became a bridge between Carney and Boas was Simango. Arriving at Teachers College in 1919, Simango had, for a few years, studied at Hampton Institute, where he met the ethnomusicologist Natalie Curtis. Studying under Carney’s supervision in the Rural Education department, Simango knew Curtis’ friend and “father of American anthropology” was a professor at his university. On November 24, 1919, Curtis stepped in to help the self-proclaimed fan of Boas’ *The Mind of the Primitive Man*. She wrote:

My dear Dr. Boas.

May I introduce to you Kamba Simango, from Portuguese East Africa, a full-blood [sic] native of the Vandau tribe, who speaks zulu as well as his own tongue and came to his country direct from Africa. He was sent by missionaries to take the industrial and Academic training at Hampton Institute, where he promoted last year. Simango is now studying at Columbia and is most anxious to me[e]t you because of his great interest in your book “The Mind of the Primitive Man.” If you have time to see Simango I should be most glad.²⁰¹

From there started a decade-long relationship. Boas and Simango met a few months after Curtis’ introduction and the two began collaborating on Ndau grammar and language, used in central Mozambique and southeastern Zimbabwe today. That year, Boas reached out to philanthropist and banker George F. Peabody so that he could finance Simango’s inaugural research project. On May 5, 1920, Boas wrote to Peabody that he wanted Simango to “capture and systematize everything that [he] knew [about Africa] and then to write it up and ultimately send it back in the form of a more refined

²⁰¹ Letter, Natalie Curtis to Franz Boas, November 24, 1919, Mss.B.B61, “Correspondents C,” Series I: Correspondence, FBP, APSL.

anthropological analysis.”²⁰² Peabody responded with excitement and pledged to support the project financially. The collaboration between the student and the professor began in September of that year.

In a way, Boas’ words to Peabody bring the familiar critiques of him to mind—that Boas took advantage of his students in poverty in order to fortify his theories in anthropology as well as academic standing. The critique is, by no means, unfounded. However, Boas’ commitment to truth and the preservation of cultures was inarguably genuine. As Zora Neale Hurston writes in her autobiography, Boas was “the greatest anthropologist alive, for two reasons...his insatiable hunger for knowledge and then more knowledge...his genius for pure objectivity.”²⁰³ Furthermore, as noted before, what Boas offered to his students was more than training in anthropological research. To his students of color, he offered them a small yet tightly-knit community, or rather family. When Simango began to work with him in the summer of 1920, for example, Boas offered his student to stay with him and his wife in New Jersey at their home, where he would often host dinner parties for his colleagues and students in the department.²⁰⁴ In 1923, however, the American Board of missionaries sent Simango and his wife Kathleen to London then Lisbon to learn Portuguese so that they may work in the missionary education system of Mozambique. Likely dismayed by the development, Boas wrote to Simango informing him that he had written a letter of recommendation on his behalf to José Vasconcellos, a Portuguese ethnographer.²⁰⁵ Clearly, Boas was invested in Simango, partly because he would be a helpful “native informant,” but also because he genuinely believed his student could excel in the field of cultural anthropology that he deemed to be so central in modern society. If Boas was exclusively

²⁰² Letter, Franz Boas to George F. Peabody, May 5, 1920, Mss.B.B61, “Correspondents P,” Series I: Correspondence, FBP, APSL.

²⁰³ Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991), 127.

²⁰⁴ Letter, Franz Boas to Kamba Simango, September 9, 1920, Mss.B.B61, “Correspondents S,” Series I: Correspondence, FBP, APSL.

²⁰⁵ Letter, Franz Boas to Kamba Simango, May 28, 1923, Mss.B.B61, “Correspondents S,” Series I: Correspondence, FBP, APSL.

concerned about his intellectual renown, or “symbolic capital,” it seems unlikely he would recommend Simango to another established anthropologist of the time.

Boas had plenty of reason to believe in Simango’s potential. Earlier in 1923, Melville Herskovits—founding figure of African and Afro-American studies in U.S. academia—arrived at Columbia to complete his doctorate in anthropology, unsurprisingly since Columbia’s department was the apex in the country. When Herskovits sought Boas’ help in identifying information about the Vandau tribe, Boas introduced Herskovits to Simango. With the help of Simango, Herskovits completed his doctoral dissertation, “Cattle Complex in East Africa,” and published it in the *American Anthropologist*, in which “Mr. Simango” appears six times within both the body of the text as well as the footnotes.²⁰⁶ The collaboration with Herskovits was, in essence, the beginning of a domino effect. In the late 1920s and into the 1930s, Simango collaborated with various ethnographers like the missionary Henri-Alexandre Junod and Dora Earthy.²⁰⁷ Similarly, Herskovits and other white graduate students continued to collaborate with students of color studying and working in the department, which would set the groundwork for the budding field of African and Afro-American anthropology.²⁰⁸

There was, for instance, Ernest B. Kalibala of Uganda.²⁰⁹ When Boas found out Kalibala was studying at Teachers College in 1930, he did not hesitate to reach out. He secured a small grant for Kalibala and immediately contacted him so he could work with May Mandelbaum, Boas’ doctoral student at the time.²¹⁰ Their collaboration resulted in a new translated edition of a book on the

²⁰⁶ Melville J. Herskovits, *American Anthropologist* 28, No. 2 (Apr., 1926), <https://bit.ly/2zaAqDP>, 362, 371, 374, 375, 382.

²⁰⁷ Lorenzo Macagno, “Anthropology and Pan-Africanism at the Margins of the Portuguese Empire: Trajectories of Kamba Simango” in *Luso-Tropicalism and Its Discontents: The Making and Unmaking of Racial Exceptionalism*, Warwick Anderson et al, ed. (New York: Berghan, 2019), 69-72.

²⁰⁸ King, *Gods of the Upper Air*, 196; Ruth L. Bunzel, “May Mandelbaum Edel,”

²⁰⁹ List of Foreign Students, First Semester, 1930-1931, Teachers College Archives, 1.

²¹⁰ Ruth L. Bunzel, “Obituary: May Mandelbaum Edel,” *American Anthropologist* 39, no. 1 (August 1966), 2.

Baganda by the Ugandan political leader Apollo Kaggwa.²¹¹ Furthermore, there was Reuben Tholakele Caluza of South Africa, one of Carney's students who Boas attempted to bring to the department, but could not owing to financial limitations from the Depression.²¹² While Caluza was never hired officially, the two still maintained correspondence with each other. In the summer of 1936, for example, Boas wrote to Caluza: "I am glad to hear that you are getting on well and I trust you will let me know whether you succeed in your attempts to collect South African folk music."²¹³ Caluza wrote back to him in the fall, informing of his status and the sources Boas could check for the folk music of his homeland.²¹⁴

Perhaps the most famous student of color who joined the department after studying in Teachers College was Ella Cara Deloria. Much like Caluza, Kalibala, and Simango, when Boas heard about a Dakota Sioux woman studying in Teachers College, he did not hesitate to reach out. In their first meeting, Boas quizzed her on Dakota grammar, and once he was assured she knew the language, hired her to help with a Dakota class on a regular basis. Deloria's involvement in anthropology took a brief intermission for a few years when she worked as the head of physical education at Haskell Institute, a federally run boarding school for tribal children, which is unsurprising considering her alma mater that saw her as the "civilized aboriginal."²¹⁵ Through the connection to Boas, she became deeply involved in the project of cultural preservation via ethnology. She helped her professor debunk previous works, such as James R. Walker's research on the Sioux ritual of sun dance.²¹⁶ She co-authored

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² List of Foreign Students, First Semester, 1930-1931, Teachers College Archives, 1.

²¹³ Letter, Franz Boas to R. Tholakele Caluza, June 2, 1936, Mss.B.B61, "Correspondents C," Series I: Correspondence, FBP, APSL.

²¹⁴ Letter, R. Tholakele Caluza to Franz Boas, September 14, 1936, Mss.B.B61, "Correspondents C," Series I: Correspondence, FBP, APSL.

²¹⁵ King, *Gods of the Upper Air*, 235.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 236.

texts with him, edited his manuscripts, and followed his theories in anthropology devoutly. In doing so, she sacrificed her finances, energy, and time, but paved the way for Native American studies to take its space on the margins of the social scientific academe.

And within the aforementioned second group of students of color, the best known Boasian was Hurston. A graduate of Barnard College, and a native of Eatonville, Florida, Hurston never studied with Carney, Monroe, or Dewey, though she initially nurtured a dream of becoming a teacher by earning a degree in education.²¹⁷ At Barnard, she took a diverse array of courses, including French, zoology, economics, and more. In her transcript from 1928, English is the subject that appears most frequently as she took four classes in the department that academic year. The second is anthropology, as she took three courses in the subject, the first of which was in 1925 with Gladys Reichard who, so impressed with Hurston's work, brought her to Boas' attention.²¹⁸ Boas immediately brought Hurston to the department. The summer after her first year at Barnard, Hurston worked as a field researcher for Boas. From then on, Boas remained *the* dominant figure in the education of Hurston and a number of sources confirm this.

The story of Hurston is crucial to this project, mainly because it offers a glimpse into just what kind of a figure Boas was to his students in his circle of anthropologists. In her autobiography, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, Hurston explains her relationship to “the king of kings... ‘Papa Franz.’” She clearly implies that the department under Boas was not simply an intellectual space, but a social one—a community tied together with a commitment toward truth as well as Boas. Her reverent language reveals that the approval from and a close relationship with “Papa Franz” was coveted by all within the circle. “That man can make people work the hardest with just a look or a word, than anyone else in

²¹⁷ Maria Eugenia Cotera, *Native Speakers: Ella Deloria, Zora Neale Hurston, Jovita Gonzaelez and the Poetics of Culture* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2008), 78.

²¹⁸ Transcript of Record, Zora Neale Hurston, February 29, 1928, Barnard College Archives.

creation,” she writes. “He is idolized by everybody who takes his orders.” Furthermore, her words show a clear pride in the fact that she was one of the few students who Boas kept close by his side. According to Hurston, at a department party in Boas’ house, she had asked Boas about the nickname she and other students adopted, to which he responded with a smile, “Of course, Zora is my daughter. Certainly!”²¹⁹

During his tenure at Columbia University, Boas founded a department that welcomed students from all corners of the globe. Throughout his academic life, he introduced his students to each other, so that they could exchange their knowledge and ideas in preserving the cultural knowledge that remained on the margins of society. While the legacy of Boas’ scholarship is certainly up for debate, his influence on his students of color was certainly a force of empowerment. The community that Boas constructed was hospitable. In that space, the social connections of Boas’ students of various races fueled the intellectual projects they engaged in and vice versa, which, in most parts of the university, the country, or the world was unprecedented.

²¹⁹ Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991), 123. The first edition of Hurston’s autobiography was published in 1942, the same year Boas died.



Ella Cara Deloria²²⁰



Haskell Institute²²¹



Zora Neale Hurston, standing behind a tree, in BC Class of 1927 Portrait²²²

²²⁰ "Ella Deloria's Scrapbook," Personal and Professional Papers of Ella Deloria, Dakota Indian Foundation, 26.

²²¹ Photo of Haskell Institute Building, P27652, Folder 1, Photograph Collection, Archive of the National Museum of the American Indian.

²²² Portrait of Barnard College Class of 1927, Photograph Collection, Barnard College Archives

Conclusion

The stories of educationists and anthropologists of color trained at Columbia University's Teachers College, Summer Sessions, and the Department of Anthropology in the Progressive Era as well as the interwar period are ones that are only beginning to enter, or have not yet entered, popular discourse in academia as well as the public. While neither professors of Teachers College nor those of the Anthropology Department can be deemed as perfect anti-racist pioneers of the early twentieth century, the fact remains that their students certainly inherited a legacy of tolerance and a principle of diversity that are marked as the essential ideals of democratic liberalism.

The significance of these stories cannot simply be that they are stories on the margin. The true meaning of these stories comes from the very fact that the students' contributions and their legacies are overlooked when their impact was indelible. Even today, the writings and research of Hurston, Deloria, Simango, and others preserve knowledge that remains critically important in academia, politics, and the arts. Even today, students across the globe are attending Peking University in China, Arellano University in the Philippines, Wilberforce University in South Africa, and more.

Returning to the narrative of Langston Hughes, perhaps the poet left Columbia because, at the university, no professor offered him to stay at their house, nobody offered to share a home-cooked meal with him, and no more than one classmate was willing to be his true friend. Perhaps his story would have been different had he been a student with a social and intellectual community that was stimulating and supportive. More so than ever, what the aforesaid Bourdieu studied as the "sociology of knowledge" seems relevant, since social connections pervade the academic space and cannot be separated from intellectual endeavors. Especially now, in the midst of a global pandemic, it seems like the school truly is a micro-society, in which those who possess the supportive social networks, those at

the center, are far more likely to thrive. It is my hope that we, as members of this university, can recognize who are lacking such connections, as intellectual efforts are likely futile without them. I hope that this project will be a testament to the necessity of true diversity and inclusion, since truth—whatever it may be—cannot be reached without a plurality of voices, which can only be acquired if we are willing to open up and let them take centerstage.

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