

Journal of the Registry

~

A Platform for Inclusive Justice and Social Change



Fall, 2022

Special Edition w/student contributors

Copyright /Reproduction Notification

No portion of the *Journal of the Registry* may be copied, reproduced, sold, etc. without permission from the author/s and the oversight organization: The African American Registry.

Authors in this publication DONOT give permission to have their work reproduced without direction written permission.

Direct all questions to the *Journal of the Registry*

journal@aaregistry.org

Board of the Registry

Benjamin Mchie, Executive Director

Dr. Marc Mauseth, Finance Chair

Jonathan Marcus, Youth Program Chair

Dr. Yvonne Banks, Education Chair

Alexander Hines (advisory)

Lisa Tabor (advisory)

Sharman Barrett (advisory)

Dr. Kimberly Roan (advisory)

Dr. Antonia Wilcoxin (Advisory)

Joseph K. Selvaggio (Advisory)

Table of Contents

A Word	p.5
Yvonne Banks: In These Times: Thinking Collectively About Democracy	p.6
This Issue: Democracy In America	p.7
Julie Landsman: Reflections on Our History of Democracy: What Will It Take to Bring Democracy to America? Messages from Nicole Hanna Jones book: <i>1619</i>	p.8
Ben Mchie: The Dilemma of Fairness in America: (A Book report on Alexis de Tocqueville’s 1835 book), <i>Democracy in America</i>	p.13
Kim Colbert: How the U.S Underdeveloped Black Education And Denied True Democracy	p.20
Hardi Patel, Anyssa McCalls: Teaching Democracy using “Where I Am From” poetry.	p.36
Epilogue of Intent	p.42
About the founding Editors, Contributors, Guest Contributors	p.43
Call for Future Submissions	p.45



A Platform for Inclusive Justice and Social Change

A Word: As the *Journal of the Registry* we are a community ally and catalyst for social change through the advocacy of inclusive justice. Our primary goal is to offer an open source for voices, visions and thoughts that can get buried in the noise of racism at every level of society. The *Journal of the Registry* acknowledges the required perseverance of action on behalf of the Black community. Historically, we know that systemic change happens through consistent and pressing demands for policy change in America. We expect and will settle for nothing less regarding full citizenship that is equitable, and inclusive for Blacks in America. We stand today because of what has been done through the “feet on the ground” work of activists and allies. We remember and we carry the mantle of justice for today, and for the next generation. As agents of change we draw upon our skills, wills, resources, voices, allies, and all that is given to us as a people to engage in ways that remove all barriers of oppression against our people.

We want the Journal of the Registry to be a space that challenges communities, and propels those in positions of responsibility to make real, substantive changes necessary in order to bring about true equity for Blacks. Essential to the work of social change is found in the work of communities that seek a platform that is collaborative in removing the absence that often ignores systemic racism, and the impact it has on the thriving of Black communities.

The work of activists has a prominent platform here; as their day to day efforts are on the ground, and are often what bring about substantive rather than theoretical transformation. This journal welcomes readers and writers from many walks of life, from many cultures, and countries who are committed to transformation, accountability, and reparations. We understand the intersectionality of issues and groups, and want to further alliances with a wide range of people who have experiences, and ideas that bring us all together.

The Journal of the Registry is an evolving resource for supporting efforts to guide youth, and generations to come. As well, we need our elders, as we must not forget how we arrived here in the struggle for equity. This space draws on yesterday’s and today’s events to give added meaning to tomorrow’s outcomes. The Journal of the Registry pulls from the root of historical knowledge that frames the mirrors and windows of race, class and gender.

Our aim is to distribute nutritious intellectual, and emotional substance for all committed to engaging in the soul work of transformation. We are speaking of transformation that addresses

inclusive justice and social change for Black Americans. As you come to your community's junctures, we hope you find support in this space to rethink positions, and stimulate actions that change the lived experiences of all America.

These Times; Thinking Collectively About Democracy

Yvonne Banks

Closed Path

*I thought that my voyage had come to its end
at the last limit of my power,- -that the path before me was closed,
that provisions were exhausted
and the time come to take shelter in a silent obscurity.*

*But I find that thy will knows no end in me.
And when old words die out on the tongue,
new melodies break forth from the heart;
and where the old tracks are lost,
new country is revealed with its wonders.*

Rabindranath Tagore

The above poem written, by “Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941) who is best known as a poet, and in 1913 was the first non-European writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature” gives us, I believe what can be used as a comparison for what may be perceived as America's current social happenings.

(reference: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Rabindranath-Tagore>)

As active agents in this work of social equity you are invited to read the poem in a new way.

Try this:

Replace the singular use of “I” with the plurality of “We” for this nation, its diversity, its opportunities, its universal possibilities to do good for ALL this planet's inhabitants.

Next,

What do you denote? What do you find? What jumps out at you regarding words that can change the course of time? Do we have a new melody that truly sings for “We the People...?” What do we declare by what we pursue as new to revealed when we live in the truth of wonderment? Consider this, as an offering for us to think collectively about the concept of democracy in ways that are groundings for a New and Open Path.

Dr. Yvonne RB-Banks

Democracy in America: This issue

It occurred to us, at the Journal of the Registry, that in these perilous time especially, we are more and more aware of the threat to the democratic principles we claim to expose as Americans. Other questions came to our mind: Were we ever a full democracy in America? As a nation of teachers, professors, writers and activist artists, have we taught the truth of our history? What does it mean that new voter suppression laws are aimed at BIPOC and LGBTQ voters? What does it mean that there is a concerted national effort in some parts of the country to do away with books that include anti-racism content: be it stories, novels, history and essays? How can we provide people with the truth? The articles and poems in this journal include thoughts on history of anti-democracy in America as well as present day situations in our cities and schools.

We welcome responses and thoughts about democracy for the journal even after this issue has gone to press.

Did We Ever Experience Democracy in the USA?

Reflections on the book *1619 Project A True Origin Story* by Nikole Hannah Jones

Julie Landsman

I find myself writing at a time of great discouragement. In the face of a cruel national Supreme Court, a divided country, a denial of history, an attempt to censor the truth from reaching our children, and the ever present sorrow of gun violence, I cannot enter the territory of hope that Frederick Douglass, an African American escaped slave, acknowledges in his speech “What to the slave is the fourth of July?”. Speaking to a white male Americans at a time when slavery was the accepted practice of this United States he stated: “You glory in your refinement and your universal education yet you maintain a system as barbarous and dreadful as ever stained the character of a nation—a system begun in avarice, supported in pride and perpetuated in cruelty.” He elucidates this opening at length. And then: he goes on to say near the end of the speech: “I do not despair of this country. There are forces in operation , which must inevitably work the downfall of slavery....I therefore, leave off where I began, with hope.”

Reading these words again, during the month when we celebrate “Independence” I realize that if he, a tenuously freed slave, could still hold out for possibility of a just future, then the least I can do is garner the energy it takes to hope and join him in his belief. Yet I am haunted by the question: what would he say now, three hundred and seventy years since he wrote those words?

As I began to reread the monumental work, *The 1619 project: A New Origin Story* by Nicole Hannah-Jones for the opening the chapter on Democracy, I began to get a glimpse of where hope comes from. I believe it comes from struggle, from a tenacious belief in the possibility of justice that has guided and driven many African Americans from the slave ship, in which they arrived on the shores of the USA in 1619, to this day. In this chapter of the book we see the way democracy itself was denied to African Americans. Yet even now so many in power refuse to acknowledge, teach, speak about such a denial. Our unwillingness to acknowledge, teach and to

begin the act of reparations for the damage slavery wrought and the destruction to Indigenous Native Americans is as old as the country itself.

“Free Black people posed a danger to the country’s idea of itself as exceptional in its creed of freedom and equality; they held up a mirror into which the nation preferred not to peer. And So the inhumanity visited on Black people by every generation of white American justified the inhumanity of the past and the inequality of the present.” Hannah -Jones, p. 32

What this comes down to is that we have never had a true democracy. In a country founded on such an institution as slavery, and perpetuated by the continuation of apartheid of Black Americans while simultaneously on the taking of the lands of Indigenous people who lived here before the European ships arrived and forcing them into uninhabitable parts of the country where many starved, suffered and died, we have never lost the deep inequities of our system of government. Today many state legislators use their legislatures to create laws denying the vote to Black and Brown people.

“And to this day Black Americans, more than any group, embrace the democratic ideals of a common good. We are the most likely to support programs like universal health care and a higher minimum wage and to oppose programs that harm the most vulnerable.” p. 33, Hannah-Jones

This passage comes just one page later in the chapter on democracy. Its truth is evident. In communities and state houses, in congress and on the streets, this country has been moved by Black people to create conditions that make democracy possible: health, housing, a truly livable wage and voting rights. From slave rebellions to Black Lives Matter, we have witnessed a way to create finally, a true democratic country. We are far from exceptional, as we look at other countries where child care, health care, humane salaries allow all citizens to participate in their country’s future. In these countries a basic livable wage frees up time to work on committees,

boards, election monitoring, rather than having to hold down three jobs to be able to feed a family. The quality of living of its citizens is vital to the ability to maintain its democracy.

I do not deny the participation of white people in the movements for economic and social justice. There have been the Viola Liuzzos and the Casey Haydens, the individual legislators and teachers and social workers and doctors and lawyers who have supported and even spearheaded causes for housing, voting rights and decent schools. Yet I believe, after reading 1619, that Black Americans, Indigenous Americans, continue to risk their lives in great numbers in order to be able to live as free citizens in the USA. As a white female I have not had the same experience as a Black female in the health care system, in education or at work. (An aside: I believe, in this day and age, 2022, that my situation as a *woman* is indeed in jeopardy as well as that of my daughter -in -law and the grand daughters of my friends. Yet that is another discussion.)

As I read chapters in 1619,(and I name them here to make clear how all -encompassing this book is: *Origins, Democracy, Race, Sugar, Rear, Dispossession Capitalism, Politics, Citizenship,*

Self Defense, Punishment, Inheritance, Medicine, Church, Music, Healthcare, Traffic, Progress, Justice, I am struck by how it goes deep, how it peels away layers of ignorance and mis-perceptions I have had about the everyday lives of my neighbors, friends, co- workers. I am a person who has worked for racial justice since I was 18, in Boston during an uprising against school superintendent t Louise Day Hickes, through the 60's marching in DC and Alabama for voting rights, and on through my life of teaching in many contexts. Yet nothing has deepened my understanding of racism as much as this book. It is almost as if I absorbed history in a part of my emotional and rational life that I had not truly absorbed before. And what I realized from this reading is truly how much I owe to Black Americans and their allies, to Indigenous Americans and their supporters, to Asian and Latino Americans and their families and communities who have schooled me with great patience. This is not said out of a place of pity. It is said out of joy and its intersection with grief.

I am struck by Frederick Douglass' hope, by the willingness of so many to go to the streets now, 2022, again and again, at a time when hope seems a glimmer on a darkening plain. "I do not despair of this country". He says at the end of that speech.

So I vow to join him, then. To read, to absorb, to accept, that ultimately, at some visceral level, I will never *know* my Black sisters, my Native friends, my Black brothers' daily experience; yet I can come closer to *understanding*. We will continue to work together, to argue together, to eat and dance and live in connection with each other in the cause of perhaps, bringing democracy to America at last.

I am done believing that I have read enough to "get it". Done enough to know. Yet as imperfect as we are, all of us *keep on keeping on* as the song goes. We listen to the stories, the poems, the songs. We laugh too, always have.

"for people who have everything, they seem to know not a thing."

From the poem "Freedom is Not For Myself Alone", Robert Jones, Jr. p.126

Hannah-Jones

The importance of giving up the arrogance that comes from *having everything* in order to understand what it means" *to know not a thing*" is at the core of our story, our work. The book 1619 gives us the chance to recognize what we have not known in so many contexts. We will not remember every fact, poem, story, essay on these pages. Yet we will perhaps come together with a layer of comprehension we did not possess before opening the book.

What I believe it might do, as we gather together, is to articulate historical trauma: to recognize its existence and to own it-- its place in our nation's history. We can start there, trade tales, sing words, recognize the joy and delight also, the survival of music, art, philosophy and yes, the

endurance of a people who right now are working beside us to change the trajectory of oppression that has so long, and continues to, terrorize our country. We can listen. We can listen.

Resource: *The 1619 project: A New Origin Story* by Nicole Hannah-Jones, New York, 2021

Action Steps: Find out about school board elections in your town: What issues have come up regarding equity, diversity, inclusion? How can you support candidates, and those working for a true, multicultural curriculum?

When someone says something racist or simply untrue about history, race, people of color, do not remain silent. Challenge false claims, information, facts when they are spoken.

Join organizations that support anti-racism work: that create gardens in our cities, small towns: that advocate for text books that depict all of America for schools and libraries, that support candidates you believe in, that push for health care for all: these and other organizations are trying to make democracy possible for every American, every worker, every individual.

Work to promote Voting Rights: flexible times to turn in ballots, security on election day so that all may turn in their ballot safely, provisions for absentee voting, help for disabled voters, extended hours on election days.

The Dilemma of Fairness in America

(a book report on *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville)

Ben Mchie

This is a book report on Alexis de Tocqueville's 1835 hardcover *Democracy in America*. The author, **Alexis de Tocqueville**, was a French researcher sent to the United States in 1831 to study the American prison system. The result of his effort was a grand tour of the new nation (with particular emphasis on New England) and a two-volume work *that* remains a meaningful constitutional and community critiques. The book observed the 19th century applied government experiment. He would use his visit as a pretext for his conducting an in-depth examination of American society. It is an interesting critique of American race, class, and its public and private systems. On pages 2, 4, and 6; my book report will focus on three of the authors' conclusions. 1. The early directives of America's democracy. 2. Its racial and ethnic style with its white/purist profit-driven business in control of its citizens. 3. What did 13 colonial majority rules mean then, and what does it mean now.

The bond between citizenship and property was the vessel of early Americanism, an experience that has placed Black and Native Americans outside the democratic project of the United States. Anti-Black racism does not declare that it is more appalling than other forms of oppression, but it is foundational. As slave property, black pain, and emotions (in general) remain discounted by whites. The style of white men and women or white Hispanics towards Ketanji Brown-Jackson Supreme Court hearings showcased this deep distain. Just as African American oppression is foundational, so, too, is the dispossession of Native Americans. 'Out of Sight, Out of Mind' describes the reservations and assigned land, tolerable to America's model of democracy,

This author leveled some of his sharpest criticism against American political leaders themselves. He was convinced that outstanding men avoided elected office to pursue their private ambitions and careers. Those who did seek public office, he believed, were often, naive, poorly educated and open to corruption. In the last sentence of *Democracy in America*, de Tocqueville wrote about the fate of Americans and all others who would choose the path of equality. "It depends

on themselves whether equality is to lead to servitude or freedom, knowledge or barbarism, prosperity or wretchedness."

1. In early America the early directives of democracy insisted the question, did the author find that slavery and anti-Black racism intersected with indigenous natives? Yes. The founding fathers were simultaneously concerned with Native Americans as a threat to their political and social order. In the founding documents. The term "Indian" shows up thirteen times in the Federalist Papers. In Federalist No. 24, Alexander Hamilton noted that acquiring land and maintaining a military against possible Native attacks were essential for the young nation's development. Federalist No. 54 uses the term three times and further cements that Blacks had been transformed into property. If we don't want to accept the relevance of anti-Blackness and anti-Native within the Federalist Papers, we can rely on a more objective analysis: Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.

Tocqueville traveled throughout the US and was an ethnographer of the US democratic project. His following quote support the (above) Federalist directive writings of Alexander Hamilton and James Madison. While some focus on his analysis of democracy, a key component of his series of essays is race.

He continues,

"Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident, and mild. It would be like the authority of a parent if, like that authority, its object was to prepare men for manhood; but it seeks, on the contrary, to keep them in perpetual childhood: it is well content that the people should rejoice, provided they think of nothing but rejoicing. For their happiness such a government willingly labors, but it chooses to be the sole agent and the only arbiter of that happiness; it provides for their security, foresees, and supplies their necessities, facilitates their pleasures, manages their principal concerns, directs their industry, regulates the descent of property, and subdivides their inheritances: what remains, but to spare them all the care of thinking and all the trouble of living?"

— Alexis De Tocqueville

In America Blacks and Indigenous Natives in urban districts and on reservations were major reasons why Joe Biden won the presidency. His predecessor's handling of the Coronavirus and racism were fundamental reasons why people voted him out. But the voters in Detroit, Philadelphia, the Navajo Nation, and youth put Biden in office. The importance of the Black and Indigenous vote underscores their importance to American democracy—a democracy that many, including French political philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville believed would never happen. He believed that Blacks, Natives, and whites would never live in the US on equal terms. In many ways, the ethnographer of white supremacy was correct.

Anti-Black racism and anti-Indigenous bigotry are as American as apple pie. It is embedded in this society and has remained a core part of US democracy. For example, the Nikole Hannah-Jones-led 1619 Project avows two historical facts: that slavery was foundational to the US economy, and that the founders developed their democracy through who could and who could not be a citizen based upon one's ownership of property. Citizenship was also based on who was property and who was not. Property ownership is a key feature of US democracy. However, the whole idea of property was constructed by two phenomena: African enslavement and Native American dispossession. Yet before Hannah-Jones' work, Derrick Bell, coined the phrase Critical Race Theory in 1971. Like Einstein's theory of relativity 1905, it factually shows how a scientific fact exist regardless of the human perception. The difference is Bell's is societal based on fact. The author was not alone in his curiosity about 19th century American democracies potential from France. Édouard de Laboulaye, a white-French jurist, poet, author, and anti-slavery activist and Frederic Bartholdi, white-French artist, and sculptor designed the Statue of Liberty for France as a gift to the United States of America for ending slavery.

In 19th century Europe, most critics of democracy believed that America would sooner or later descend into anarchy. De Tocqueville, however, saw another even more disturbing threat to American democracy. He feared that American citizens would become so satisfied with being equal that they would abandon their deep interest and involvement in self-government. If this should happen, cautioned de Tocqueville, government would grow more powerful and in a

kindly sort of way cover society with "a network of petty, complicated rules." Far from dissolving into anarchy, American government under these conditions could become as oppressive as any cruel European monarchy. Americans would end up having equality through abridged slavery.

2. America's ethnic style maintains a vertical, white/purist profit-driven business in control of its citizens. With this observation, de Tocqueville admired the early United States and there is much he felt the world could learn from this (then) young, rowdy, democracy on the North American continent. As both a historian and political philosopher, he examined American government at the federal, state, and local level weighing its qualities and burdens. He examined the role of women, the issue of slavery, the tensions between North and South and more. He was particularly struck by the level of civic engagement he witnesses amongst the average citizen, and by the constant pride Americans took in simply being citizens of a supposedly free republic.

A perceptive segment of the book came towards the end, when De Tocqueville expands philosophic and discusses how cultural dictatorship might manage to take hold within a democratic nation - even amongst a population as independent as that of the United States. The truth of his writing speaks for itself and it's worth quoting at length. What follows are two unequalled paragraphs of political analysis that ring even truer today than they did almost 200 years ago:

"I seek to trace the novel features under which despotism may appear in the world. The first thing that strikes the observation is an innumerable multitude of men, all equal and alike, incessantly endeavoring to procure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives. Each of them, living apart, is as a stranger to the fate of all the rest; his children and his private friends constitute to him the whole of mankind. As for the rest of his fellow citizens, he is close to them, but he does not see them; he touches them, but he does not feel them; he exists only in himself and for himself alone; and if his kindred still remain to him, he may be said at any rate to have lost his country."

— Alexis De Tocqueville

*Far from naïve during his travels and writings, several things bothered de Tocqueville about democracy. One of them was that in a society made up of equal citizens, the majority is always right. To de Tocqueville, many equals, just like a single all-powerful ruler, could abuse its power. Also, because American law applied is such a crude and sluggish tool, democracies work by drawing informal lines. Example, a majority could be based on the wealth in the hands of less than 5% of America's citizens. In a democracy, de Tocqueville argued, this abuse becomes the "tyranny of the majority." De Tocqueville did not claim that the tyranny of the majority yet existed to any great degree in America. Still, he saw evidence of it developing. Another early 18th century example, de Tocqueville found that in the North, free black males who had the right to vote often were discouraged from voting by the white majority. Since his publication, voting continues to be suppressed to nonwhites and poor citizens. Below he mentions:

“After having thus successively taken each member of the community in its powerful grasp and fashioned him at will, the supreme power then extends its arm over the whole community. It covers the surface of society with a network of small, complicated rules, minute, and uniform, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate, to rise above the crowd. The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent, and guided; men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting. Such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes, and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd.”

— Alexis De Tocqueville

As the 44th (and only nonwhite) president wrote in his 2007 book "The Audacity of Hope":
“Maybe the critics are right. Maybe there's no escaping our great political divide, an endless clash of armies, and any attempts to alter the rules of engagement are futile. Or maybe the trivialization of politics has reached a point of no return. ... But I don't think so. They are out there, I think to myself, those ordinary citizens who have grown up in the midst of all the political and cultural battles, but who have found a way ... to make peace with their neighbors.”

3. What did 13 colonial majority rules mean then, and what does it mean now? I feel that Tocqueville's essay on the "Three Races" (chapter 10) sheds light on this. First, Tocqueville claimed that little connects Africans and Native Americans in the US except their subjugated position in society. He was astute to understand that "if their wrongs are not the same, they originate, at any rate, with the same authors." Who are the authors? The creators and ancestors of US democracy. Tocqueville concluded that Whites and Blacks would never "live in any country upon an equal footing," but for him, this was especially true in the United States. For Native Americans, he contended that "*the Indians will perish*" and "*from whichever side we consider the destinies of the aborigines of North America, their calamities appear to be irremediable.*" Native dispossession and the subsequent anti-Native racism in the US have, like anti-Black racism, remained a comparable cog of US democracy. If Tocqueville were to return today, would he make the claims he made then? It's probably. Native people did not fall into demise, but they are still under the yoke of US bondage. African Americans are hardly free. What can we learn from Tocqueville and democracy? First, American democracy is an unfinished project that will never reach its full potential until it makes right the problems it created with Black and Native peoples and itself. Black and Native histories have always been connected. If anti-Black and anti-Native racisms are principal elements of US democracy, then there will never be peace until they gain their freedom. If we are ever going to have an interracial democracy rooted in equality, liberty, and sovereignty, we, as Martin Luther King Jr. stated, "as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values." If the liberation of Black and Indigenous peoples is ever going to happen, we need to think differently about how we include them in democratic practices, and maybe, just maybe, listen to those who are advancing the idea of abolition! Abolition might not only save this democracy, but radically transform it. Because of the 19th century research and publication and publication the author did not encounter immigration to factor in his opinions. Also, the publication preceded the advent of Martin Luther Kings ode to "The Promise Land", a democratic blueprint term that has yet to be constructed. Governmental academics write and speak a lot about inequity. Very few challenge the direct relationship between race and inequity, Alexis De Tocqueville was an exception. Democracy in America is an important book to read, but it's also a book you must really want to read if you intend on

making your way fully through it. It's passages like those above that make one glad they undertook the journey.

Citations and References:

<https://www.supersummary.com/democracy-in-america/summary/>>Super
Summary.com

<https://www.thoughtco.com/democracy-in-america-3026749>>ThoughtCo.com

<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.2307/2716328>>University of Chicago
Press.edu

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2717685>>Jistor.org

<https://www.beaconbroadside.com/broadside/2020/11/what-alexis-de-tocqueville-told-us-about-democracy-and-the-future-of-black-and-native-americans-.html>>Beacon
Broadside.com

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/123913/the-audacity-of-hope-by-barack-obama/>>The Audacity of Hope

How the U.S. Underdeveloped Black Education

And Denied True Democracy

Kimberly Colbert

“It is our dreams that point the way to freedom.”

- Audre_Lourde

Introduction

The television image of incarcerated men, loading the bodies of people who succumbed to COVID into refrigerator trailers, was both shocking and not surprising. First, it brought home the scope of the pandemic and second, as a teacher, it brought home the reality of the school-to-prison nexus. How many of those men, mostly black, missed out on a liberatory education? What were the determining institutional factors in their schooling that failed them and how did that failure help to oppress their democratic rights as citizens? Once again freedom was denied.

There is no question that white supremacy played a powerful role in establishing the foundation for the ongoing underdevelopment of black education in the U.S. From the ancestors, who in enslavement, secretly taught themselves to read, to the newly freed and Reconstruction organizers who created their own schools and lobbied the federal government to fund a public education system, to modern-day education abolitionists who continue the fight for liberation and democracy. Black people have always understood and acted on the belief that education is critical to human existence. In fact, black people have historically been at the forefront of the fight for public education in the U.S., strategizing and organizing to make education a reality in their communities. Black people have given their own money, land, and labor to ensure that their

children have access to education. And still, education on the whole, is not meeting black students' needs.

Black folk fully recognize that institutional and systemic racism in education is intentional. The white power structure has historically interrupted, usurped and undermined Black agency around civil rights including education, spending billions of dollars over time to secure a white supremacist, capitalist education agenda, designed to systematically keep blacks undereducated for the benefit of the white-controlled economy. Today, we see that agenda has extended to include privatization and profiting off of a public civil right that black ancestors fought so hard to secure.

History

During the time of enslavement, black people took every opportunity to secretly educate themselves. The penalty of death posed no threat to those who were determined to learn. Frederick Douglass wrote, "Though conscious of the difficulty of learning without a teacher, I set out with high hope, and a fixed purpose, at whatever cost of trouble, to learn how to read" (Douglass 41).

Indeed, black folks' epic commitment to education precedes emancipation. Scholars record the establishment of schools in various locations in the South that were founded before 1865.

"Early black schools were established and supported through the Afro-Americans' own efforts. The first of these schools, according to current historiography, opened at Fortress Monroe, Virginia, in September 1861 under the leadership of Mary Peake, a black teacher. Primary historical sources, however,

demonstrate that slaves and free persons of color started schools even before the Fortress Monroe venture” (Anderson 7).

Following emancipation, black people led the fight for universal education. In Georgia, black leaders met with Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton and General William T. Sherman “to request support for the education of Georgia’s formerly enslaved. “Blacks emerged from slavery with a strong belief in the desirability of learning to read and write in the English vernacular. This meeting eventually led to the establishment of a formal system of free schools (10).

A quote from Booker T. Washington, whose educational philosophy will be discussed later in this text, reveals the magnitude of the formerly enslaved people’s desire to be educated in the American system. “It was a whole race trying to go to school” (5). Indeed the number of children and adults seeking education led formerly enslaved to establish schools of various forms, including Sabbath schools sponsored by churches. Unknown to many, poor whites benefited from this push by Blacks to educate its citizens.

Concurrent with the lobby for public education in Georgia, were the founding of free schools in Louisiana. There was limited help from federal and local dollars, but community funding and donations from abolitionist-minded missionaries and philanthropists provided the most support. When federal funding was cut, black leaders lobbied the government, demanding that a universal system of public education be formed. Despite barriers, black people continued to forge ahead, organizing learning cooperatives and associations (6) that serviced thousands of people. These organizations formed the basis for a wide-reaching system that would educate blacks throughout the South.

The pushback against Reconstruction affected the fight for universal education. Not only did white Southern planters fear the nurturing of personal agency through education, they also feared the political franchising of blacks, a connection to education identified by Frederick Douglass, “I now understood what to me had been a most perplexing difficulty—to wit, the white man’s power to enslave the black man. It was a grand achievement and I prized it highly. From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom” (Douglass 41).

At the time of Reconstruction, universal education in the U.S. was in its infancy. National discourse centered on the general purpose of education, who should be educated, why, and how their education should be delivered. Abolition-minded white missionary societies wanted to see the formerly enslaved integrated into post-war society. They believed that education for all was necessary to create a citizenry that would support a developing industrial age. The white Northern elite began to favor a popular education system that would provide just enough education for lower class white males to advance in the labor force. They remained opposed any education for blacks. Growing labor demands forced white Southern planters and working-class whites, to reluctantly join the advocacy for public education.

When the Freedmen’s bureau, an agency, removed financial support for education, black leaders again formally lobbied to get the funding reinstated. At the same time, they began massive fundraising efforts with Northern philanthropists, not all of whom had the best interests of black people at heart. The philanthropists brought in white bankers; the public nature of these efforts opened the door for “reforms” designed to help rebuild the South. The resulting policies centered an insidious white supremacist agenda designed to keep blacks as manual laborers and politically disenfranchised. This was the foundation for the underdevelopment of black education for centuries to come.

The Hampton-Tuskegee Idea

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Friere characterizes education as a vehicle for interrupting oppression, a “practice of freedom” (Friere 79). Certainly, during The Reconstruction, black people organized their fight for education in this spirit. In response, the U.S. white power structure put in play an educational philosophy and plan that deliberately excised the liberating aspect of education from its praxis.

White usurpation of black agency in setting their own liberatory educational agenda is historic and is firmly planted in racist capitalism. The “Hampton Idea” was the brainchild of Samuel Chapman Armstrong. His unlikely alliance with Booker T. Washington set the stage for current deficit thinking around the abilities of black students and the purpose of education for black people.

The son of white missionaries to Hawaii, Armstrong was open about his racist belief that black and brown people were inferior to whites. He opposed their civil rights and made it his mission to educationally indoctrinate and train formerly enslaved black people for a continued life of physical menial labor in the South. To that end, he established the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. The “curriculum, values and ethos [of his school] represented his social class and ideology as properly as the moral foundation of the Sabbath schools, free schools, public schools and colleges represented the social and cultural values of the ex-slaves” (33).

Armstrong’s agenda was far more insidious than merely reinforcing a segregated society. “His major task was to carry this message to black southerners and seek to obtain their conscious or half-conscious complicity in their own victimization” (44). He found an ally in Booker T.

Washington. The formerly enslaved Washington was a student at Hampton and went on to found Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in 1881. Washington firmly believed that a classical liberal education which included the humanities would not serve blacks in their efforts to attain a better life, arguing that they had “a better chance in the South than in the North” for economic success (102).

While this unjust and oppressive ideology was clear to blacks who desired a classical liberal education, and their white allies, the Armstrong propaganda, soon dubbed the “Hampton Idea,” became very popular among white racist capitalists because of its potential to politically oppress and develop and sustain a menial labor pool. Once again, the economics of oppression rose to the surface as it had in England.

“The Hampton-Tuskegee philosophy, which requested black southerners to eschew politics and concentrate on economic development was not, as it has been hailed, a great compromise. It was a logical extension of an ideology that rejected black political power while recognizing that the South’s agricultural economy rested on the backs of black agricultural workers” (44).

Prominent whites including Theodore Roosevelt, Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. actively supported this educational philosophy and over time, gave hundreds of millions of dollars in support.

The Hampton Idea was disseminated via teacher education. Hampton, and later Tuskegee, were primarily Normal schools, which were designed to train teachers. Their education was no more than indoctrination in the spread of Armstrong’s philosophy.

In response to growing criticism about the lack of technical education, Hampton established a manual labor program in 1879, with Booker T. Washington as principal. This program promoted what leaders called character education, “designed partly to teach students steady work habits, practical knowledge, and Christian morals” (35).

Students who were admitted to the Hampton program were carefully screened for a “lower-than-average ability,” not as a tool for rejection, but acceptance. These students were held to a high standard of physical performance. As a result, many Hampton students rallied against the school’s racist practices. The complaints went largely ignored or dismissed.

Black community members and educational leaders and parents of the students were critical of the school as well. To be clear, black critics did not oppose vocational and technical education. Yet, the black community wanted an education grounded first in the classic liberal tradition. Hence their awareness as to what was the standard related to social class or advancement.

Booker T. Washington also faced harsh criticism. In an editorial published in the *Washington Bee* in 1896, Washington was characterized as, “assuring the white people of this country that negroes [sic] place is in the machine shop, at the plow, in the washtub and not in the schools of legal and medical professions; that he [the Negro] has no business to aspire to those places as they are reserved for the proud Caucasian” (65).

Armstrong’s Hampton Idea, which later evolved into the Hampton Tuskegee Idea combined the racist pedagogy and ideology of low expectations with economic greed, driving forces woven tightly into the fabric of modern-day, public education corporate reform and privatization. Like the Armstrong propaganda, this agenda falsely claims to be the anti-racist in

nature and beneficial to black students despite evidence to the contrary. In fact, the tools with which this false narrative is constructed (test scores, standardization, packaged curriculum, charter school real estate) allows today's white capitalists to profit directly from what should be a no-cost civil right in a variety.

Abolitionist Miriam Kaba characterizes “hope” as a discipline. Blacks have a rich history of exercising hope in their fight for a place in the democratic polity. The Great Migration is one example. Anderson notes that this migration “opened the way for a second crusade for black common schools in the rural South” (152). Public school attendance and the mass exodus North resulted in a shrinking labor force. As such, some Southerners recognized that these demands for education must be met in some form, to preserve the economy, and in turn, white supremacy. In a 1917 editorial appeal to the “most stubborn planters,” the *Mississippi Daily News* concluded that “black agricultural laborers should ‘continue to desert our farms, leaving thousands of fertile acres untilled,’ unless they received a ‘square deal’ in the matter of education” (152) Not surprisingly, the “deal” that black people received, wasn’t at all “square.” White concessions to the issue of black common schools began a financing pattern that perpetuated a long-standing practice of double taxation and personal donations, and instituted informal property and land grabs in the form of deeding private property donations to public entities (156).

It is important to amplify the level of emotional and psychological violence foisted on blacks by white supremacists in the South as they fought to attain educational and other freedoms and against de facto enslavement. Migrating from the deep South was not a simple matter of packing and catching a bus or train to the North. In *The Warmth of Other Suns*, Isabel Wilkerson describes a raging, vengeful South, filled with myriad barriers set up by whites to keep blacks from exercising their free will to leave. Wilkerson writes that an exodus for most

was downright life-threatening. Much thought and prayer on the part of the those migrating went into any leave-taking.

“Those trying to leave were rendered fugitives by definition and could not be certain they would be able to make it out. In Albany, Georgia, the police tore up tickets of colored passengers as they stood waiting to board, dashing their hopes of escape. . . In Summit, Mississippi, authorities simply closed the ticket office and did not let the northbound trains stop for the colored people waiting to get on” (Wilkerson 163).

If one was migrating, they told no one. Those who remained, continued to fight.

The story of black folks’ fight for education is a testament to the intentionality woven into their fight for freedom and access to democracy through education. Hampton and Tuskegee stand today as evidence: black folk used their interminable power of organization and reclamation to rip these schools from the hands of white racism and nurture them into renowned institutions of black learning. Building schools, both literally and figuratively is a continued legacy of black culture and community.

According to Anderson, building schools took place on two fronts: shaping pedagogy and securing the actual space in which education takes place, the school building. Anderson notes numerous examples of people living in abject poverty who sacrificed all they had to miraculously raise hundreds of thousands of dollars in the face of a system in which communities were constantly fleeced by systemic racism and white supremacy.

The narrative about white philanthropy around Black education has been misrepresented in colonized reports of history. The story actually begins with theft. Anderson writes, “in the early twentieth century whites all over the South seized the school funds belonging to the

disfranchised black citizens, gerrymandered school districts so as to exclude blacks from certain local tax benefits and expounded a racist ideology to provide moral justification of unequal treatment” (153). White policies regarding capital projects to build black schools carried an agenda that ultimately lined the pockets of white-controlled government and allowed white planters to maintain its system of racial victimization. This was true of the Rosenwald school building program in the early 1900’s.

In a country that had established a system of publicly funded common schools, black people in the rural South literally financed and built their own. “Black southerners paid their taxes as citizens, and while white taxpayers got a system of free public education, black taxpayers got virtually nothing except when they taxed themselves again” In recognition of Black ingenuity and resistance, scholars Monroe N. Work, Richard R. Wright, Jr. and W. E. B. DuBois labeled this practice traditions of “self-help.”

“Wright documented the large amounts of property and labor contributed by southern blacks to the construction of schoolhouses. . . Wright . . . discovered that many schoolhouses reported as public domain were paid for in large part by blacks through voluntary contributions. ‘The fact is,’ said Wright, ‘in most cases the Negroes, because of aid given them by the county fund, deeded them to the county’” (156).

The system of “self-help” is a narrative of both heroism and savagery. It reveals a rich cultural heritage of community care in the face of oppressive, unjust policies and laws that attempted to hinder progress at every turn in the fight for education. The level of financial sacrifice black people were willing to make is beyond imagination even by today’s standards. On the other hand, the system of taxation levied on black citizens forced them to be part of their own victimization.

Donating free labor was another aspect of the Rosenwald school program. County governments were willing to contribute only partial amounts to the construction of black schools. The rest of the financial responsibility was taken up by the Black community.

The magnitude of their work must not go unnoticed. Most rural Southern residents worked as agricultural laborers so the sacrifice of even providing a dollar was great. This worsened during the Great Depression. “It was particularly painful for black southerners to make private contributions for the maintenance of public schools during the late 1920s and 1930s because their already low incomes dropped sharply during these hard economic times” (173). And yet, in one county, they raised \$81,377.13 for the academic year 1930-31. “Dozens of such stories, said D. L. Smith, supervisor of rural schools in South Carolina, might be told to show the fine spirit of cooperation and the willing sacrifices made to secure schools.” (165). “The sacrifices made by the Negroes themselves, “bespeak for them the finest kind of interest in the education of their children. “said D.L. Lewis, supervisor of rural schools in South Carolina.

The Racial Contract

Black folk today continue to “build” their own schools in the fight for anti-racist, public education and access to democracy. The “cost” in a modern context is the compounded stress of fighting a racist system that is designed to deny their democratic rights as citizens. Similarly, blacks are taxed, yet their schools don’t provide ways for their children to receive a racially and culturally liberatory education that would make them truly democratic institutions.

Public education in the U.S. is commonly assumed to be part of a social contract between government and the polity. Essential to understanding what happened in the fight for black education is to understand the way in which this social contract is superseded by The Racial

Contract. “The peculiar contract to which I am referring,” says Charles Mills, author of *The Racial Contract*, “though based on the social contract tradition, that has been central to Western political theory, is not as a contract between everybody (‘we the people’) but just between the people who count, the people who really are people (‘we the white people’). So it is a Racial Contract” (Mills 10). Here democracy for everybody takes a hit.

The Racial Contract is flexible. It nimbly facilitates white supremacy such as the double taxation of blacks in the rural South. It is behind the adept application of violent Southern apartheid to black resistance. It is a ubiquitous shapeshifter that exists in myriad spaces and contexts, coercing its victims to be complicit in their victimization. Its ability to silence black voices and oppress black agency in the fight for education is chilling. The impact of The Racial Contract in the context of education, is the engine behind the perpetuation of disparities that affect black generational wealth, and political agency.

The Racial Contract is historic and not limited to the United States. Its dangers are clear. White people cannot escape its detrimental effects. “One has to learn to see the world wrongly, but with the assurance that this set of mistaken perceptions will be validated by white authority, whether religious or secular” (Mills 19). The Racial Contract that undergirds all of this on local, national, and international levels operates via an historic, curricular through-line of low expectations, criticism or outright attacks on critical pedagogy. The current, additional threat of privatization continues to be perpetuated for the purpose of sustaining a labor force for menial labor, whether in the fields of the South or convict leasing out of prisons throughout the U.S.

Conclusion

The Post-bellum Southern planters and mission societies are now words in history books. However, themes and motifs of their narratives haunt us today. Taking over where they left off are capitalist powers such as hedge fund managers and non-profit foundation execs who continue to foster a broken philosophy of education that relies on Eurocentric methods of educational assessment like standardized testing (which is beholden to stockholders) and grit. These self-proclaimed educational “stakeholders,” with no classroom experience train superintendencies, school boards, and plan local, state and national agendas in isolation, operating on implicit bias or racism to craft policies that reflect the same low expectations whites in the South held in regard to black students. Local, state and national standards are designed to weed out those who are not Eurocentrically skilled. The Rosenwald model is an example of the faulty way this country funds education. In large urban and rural areas districts are scraping for tax dollars to fund projects, including building and new technologies.

Civil Rights Leader Ella Baker defines the original meaning of “radical” as, “getting down to and understanding the root cause” (Carruthers 36). Dr. Bettina Love, author of *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom* understands this. “For centuries, we have tried to tweak, adjust and reform systems of injustice. These courageous efforts, righteous and just in their causes, are examples of the pursuits of freedom. However, we have learned from our collective freedom building as dark folx that tugging at the system of injustice is just the first step, as White rage will counter and bring in reinforcements to maintain injustice” (Love 90).

As traditional public schools lose enrollment to public and private charters, communities face school closures. Dr. Eve L. Ewing, author of *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School*

Changes on Chicago's South Side, chronicles the efforts of community members in the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago where community organizers ranging from elders to young folk staged a hunger strike in 2013 to save Dyett High School, named for a beloved black music educator, Walter Henri Dyett. They were successful in keeping the doors open despite fierce opposition from then Democratic Mayor Rahm Emmanuel. Chicago Public Schools, however, did not accept the community's carefully crafted curriculum plan, which had been written by students, subject area experts, educators, and community members. Ewing acknowledges the purpose of the fight and the reason why it needs to forge on,

“It’s a fight to say *not one more, not here, not today*. It’s a fight to say *you did this to my granddaddy and now you’re trying to do this to me, and I say not again*. This we insist, is our home. Broken though it may be, it remains beautiful, and we remain children of this place. We insist on a right to claim it, to shape it, to keep it. We took the freedom train to get here. Might as well do the work to get free” (Ewing166).

As black folk continue to organize their communities to fight injustice, they are being led by an intersectional cadre of knowledgeable, young activists who organize not only around the fight but around joy, love, community and selfcare. Organizer Charlene Carruthers, author of *Unapologetic, A Black, Queer and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements* rewrites Frederick Douglass famous quote, “I believe we must go further and say that power concedes nothing without an *organized demand*” (Carruthers XIII). Carruthers brings a deep understanding about the intersectional nature of black resistance. “I learned that change was not only possible, it was inevitable. I also learned that the change needed for my people has only come because we insisted on it. . . Our people can’t afford to leave any of our genius on the table” (Carruthers XIII, 46).

The images incarcerated workers loading body bags of the Covid deceased, will continue to haunt our nation even as a disciplined hope reveals organizing and fighting forces that are holding the education for black and brown students in a positive and creative space. Educator strikes hold promise for fair wages for hourly workers in the profession, most of whom are people of color, which means students will be able to see people who look like them in the school. White supremacy certainly has us in dark days and Black educators and others are still at the beck and call of white CEO's and corporate profiteers. However, lighting the way is a legacy of strength, resilience and resistance.

Perhaps, with the continuation of this legacy, our rightful place in the U.S democracy itself will one day be assured.

Questions for Discussion

1. What previous knowledge about the history of public education was challenged or validated by the article?
2. What previous knowledge about education reform, privatization and policy making was challenged or validated by the article?
3. What action steps do you feel are necessary to ensure a truly democratic, liberatory public education system?
4. In what ways did the article support or challenge your knowledge of the school to prison nexus? (Nexus is a word that indicates multiple connections to systems and institutions.)
5. What parts of the article support or challenge the conventional narrative about public education history?
6. Describe your feelings about black people being identified as the first and primary organizers around education for all.

Sources : Kim Colbert

Bibliography: Anderson, James D. *The Education of Blacks in the South: 1860-1935*. Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1988

Carruthers, Charlene A. *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements*. Beacon Press, 2019.

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. Edited by Robert G. O'Meally, Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003.

Ewing, Eve L. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side*. The University of Chicago Press, 2020.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum, 1993.

Kaba, Mariame. *We Do This Til We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice*. Haymarket Books, 2021.

Love, Bettina. *We Want to Do More than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*. Beacon, 2020.

Mills, Charles. *The Racial Contract*. Cornell University Press, 1999.

Rodney, Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Edited by Angela Y. Davis et al., Verso, 2018.

Shetterly, Margot Lee. *Hidden Figures*. Edited by Winifred Conkling et al., HarperCollins, 2018.

Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. Vintage Books, 2014.

Teaching Democracy Through poems: To understand how Where we Are From, is a step to understanding America

Hardi Patel and Anyssa McCall

Hardi Patel used the poem for her own background and then used it again to understand what she was reading.

Here she is to explain her thought process:

Hello Everyone!

Hardi Patel: A student's idea for using a poem "Where I am From" By George Ella Lyon as found on the iamfromproject.com website to understand issues in democracy she found in a novel she read for English class: a wonderful way to develop empathy for student readers.

* * *

My name is Hardi Patel and I am headed to grade 10 this September. At the beginning of last semester, for my grade 9 English Class, I was asked to create an "I Am From" poem. This was such a fun and insightful project; I really enjoyed it. You can view my class' published poems here:(<https://iamfromproject.com/2022/03/29/tina-chivers-class-from-niagara-falls-ontario-has-sent-another-group-of-marvelous-poems-enjoy/>)!

As well as that, we read the novel, *Dear Martin*, by Nic Stone as a class. This book was terrific and was so phenomenal! It was filled with hard truths and a lot of emotion. It showcased the truth about how racism affects people every day and how sometimes we don't even notice it's there. We spent the whole unit focused on the important question, "Are all men created equal?" Then later, at the end of the semester, I was asked to write a media piece about *Dear Martin*; I chose to write an I Am From poem from the perspective of the main character, Justyce McAllister.

If you have read *Dear Martin*, then I hope this poem allows you to reconnect to the story and see yourself in this character's shoes again. If you haven't read it, I hope this poem gives you a helpful overview and urges you to read this novel.

I Am From - Justyce's Perspective

By: Hardi Patel

I am from a bad neighborhood with just me and my mom

From learning to go right rather than wrong

I am from learning to trust even if their skin is white
From learning to fight with words for my rights

I am from playing video games with my best friend Manny
From debating with SJ and going to Blake's terrible parties
I am from being on and off with Melo
And from me and Jared sharing only a small "hello"

I am from almost always listening to my Mama
And from getting caught up with Jared and Blake's drama.
From trying to make it to the top, even when Trey always feels the need to tell me, "Mr. Smarty Pants", to stop

I am from always knowing I can go up to Doc
And from realizing showing compassion is just one drop
From realizing no matter how hard I try, I won't be able to let those cold metal handcuffs fly
I am from learning Castillo's dead, but it never mattered
From the cold metal cuffs still being felt by me in the shower

I am from understanding, there will always be jerks
And from learning it doesn't matter and not to assume the worst
From late-night conversations with SJ when there's no need to pretend
And from making mistakes I can learn from, in the end

I am from asking Martin for some guidance
And from not letting my voice rest in the silence
I am from learning to say my words and fight with peace
From understanding my life isn't missing a puzzle piece

I am from figuring out, they aren't trying to be insensitive; based on where they came from, it just comes out.

I am from learning to forgive just like Martin would

From making it clear that, "it's *aight* we good"

I am from believing no one should be alone

From everyone should have somewhere to call home

I am from finding out that compassion will win again and again opinions aside

I am from learning, just like Martin said, we should all be kind and look for what's on the inside

I am from trying always to look at people and understand

From trying to answer the big question, "are all men really created equal in the end?"

By: Hardi Patel

Thank You!

Anyssa McCalls used the same website to write her own “Where I am From” poem to describe her multi-generational Black family in America.

I am From

Anyssa McCalla

I am from green grass and deep soil
From the long lines of tired hard workers
Who made life happen even when they couldn't
Great-Grandmother, Grandmother, and Mommy
Who broke their backs trying to survive as single black mothers

I am from Great-grandmother.
She escaped the south to live up north.
made a farm for her children and great-grandchildren.
Owned a fish truck and gas station became entrepreneurs for the family.
She broke curses with her bare hands and gave us love to withstand in the world's way.
Gave us sharpshooters, blue jeans, and cowboy boots.
Making us stay true to our southern roots.

I am from Grandmother.
Most educated in her class but dropped out early due to the lack of money.
Worked in the family farm and high school lunches trying to keep ends up.
She had never seen her father since age sixteen and couldn't see him buried.
Mother of nine children but eventually becoming the mother of 8 living children.
“Eat your dinner and go to bed early; maybe we can see some horses in the morning.”
Telling me stories of life and great drives to the lake
Left wondering what life could've been.

I am from Mommy

High school dropout due to lack of money.

Broken homes and crazy families, She took care of it all.

Survival is all she knew, never dreamt because it wouldn't come true.

She never knew her father but met his new family in her 30s at his wake.

Stress is all she knows and fighting for her children is all she can do.

Telling me the lost tales of life and staying true to the black roots.

Left wondering what life could've been.

I am from Dad

An immigrant from Jamaica who came here to have something new.

He gave me the best stories and Jamaican tales.

Reggae songs that made a culture.

Burying his father at a young age, fearing that he could not see his best days.

A dreamer and traveler whose passport is stamped in places I've never thought about.

Seen presidents and been inside of the White House.

A construction worker who retired early.

Never left wondering of what life could have been.

I am daughter

I am from high school dropouts and realist vs dreamers.

I am from old country folks and new-age storytellers.

I am a dreamer and lover.

I am the sister of 5 on my mom's side and three on my dad's.

Burying my father at 17 and still trying to make peace here at 19.

I am from deep memories in farms, cities, and hectic homes.

I am from trying to save the family and keep the peace..

I am southern at heart, and Jamaican blood runs in me.

I am a creative woman who loves dancing, traveling, and fighting for what is right.

Lover of writing, reading, adventures, and music

I am a deep thinker and believer in good things

I am from Connecticut trees, Southern Roots, and Jamaican love.

I am a first-generation college student.

I am Anyssa McCalla.



Epilogue of Intent

African American Registry's philosophy speaks to classrooms and communities equitably with a moral compass; the *Journal of the Registry* is an extension of this commitment.

Examples of ethical morals we teach and learn from are:

- History + Culture = heritage
- Episodes/people/location = timeline
- Learning spaces through mirrors and windows result from intersectionality.

Descendants of American slavery must appreciate Black women more, all African Americans are able to read the *Journal of the Registry* because a Black woman chose to live through the middle passage.

Research reveals that over time support from indigenous, white and immigrant communities have been consistent. Through 500 years of agrarian, industrial and technological commerce, African Americans have responded to white oppression with more representation than any other non-white group.

One of the primary purposes of the *Journal of the Registry* is to generate deeper thoughts and feelings. The work of the journal is intended to foster increased understanding and move people to action.

Your question and/or comments are encouraged.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. J. Mehta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

Founder, Exec Director, African American Registry

About the Founding Co-Editors

Benjamin Mchie, is founder and executive director of the African American Registry®. He approaches the opening concept of the *Journal of the Registry* with over 50 combined years of anti-racism work. Through engagements in classroom education, college partnerships he has built an impressive resume of community advocacy. He has received numerous accolades that include MTV award nominations and Emmy award-winning multimedia and global recognitions. He recently received the State of MN 2017 lifetime achievement award and the University of Minnesota's 2020 Richard Olden Beard award. His professional services have allowed him to develop effective global strategies to educate, inform, learn and teach onsite and through the world wide web. Mr. Mchie's approach to instructing humanity is to examine spaces where race and social equity intersect; focusing on wisdoms that come from the intelligence found in what some reference as standard education. Alaye

Julie Landsman taught in the Minneapolis Public Schools for 28 years, and in a number of colleges and universities. Her books *Basic Needs: A Year with Street Kids in a City School*, *A White Teacher Talks About Race* and *Growing up White* are used in classrooms today. Her work with the Registry, her consulting with numerous school districts in the country, have convinced her that *re-imagining* education is essential for our survival as a democracy. Her vision would center students' stories and communities in the creation of curriculum. She believes the *Journal of the Registry* can be a place to consider the crucial question: "to whose benefit" are schools established today? Whose voices are heard and whose history, whose poetry, whose narratives are absent? Julie has great faith in the brilliance of social justice educators, both young and old white and Black and Brown and Asian to bring about a seismic shift in how we teach our nations' children. In this inaugural issue she leads out with critical insight to shape the work ahead.

Yvonne RB-Banks, Ed.D. comes to the *Journal of the Registry* editorial board with over 35 years in education; as a teacher, professor, and administrator. Her travels, both domestically and internationally, have allowed her to explore many diverse topics as, researcher, author, consultant, speaker and world citizen. Her latest publication, *Insightful Souls & Intentional Hearts: Black Women and Allies in Higher Education*, brings forth strategies that support Black women's educational journey and beyond. Her hope for the *Journal of the Registry* is wrapped in advocacy for educational equity. Essential to Dr. RB-Banks is her current work with the Association of Black Women in Higher Education, and the Coalition for Teachers of Color and American Indians; both organizations target social/educational challenges rooted in historical barriers tied to race in America. She is excited for the voices that the *Journal of the Registry* will bring forth, as it seeks to broaden the narrative, and bring fresh thoughts to needed topics across many fields that touch the lives of those least heard in society.

Guest Contributors

Kimberly Colbert has been teaching English Language Arts at St. Paul Public Schools' Central High School for 25 years. She began her career as an education support professional (ESP) while earning her M.A. in Teaching. Kimberly worked for three years as the racial equity organizer for Education Minnesota, the state educator union. She recently returned to the classroom.

Hardi Patel: I go to AN Myer Secondary School in Niagara Falls, Ontario. I am in grade 10 as of the 2022-2023 academic year. I am currently living in Niagara-on-the-lake, Ontario.

Anyssa McCall: Hi I am Anyssa McCalla! I am a writer currently attending Manchester Community College currently and am majoring in communications (media and journalism). I write to heal and hopefully to inspire. I hope you enjoy reading this and hope you feel the warmth.

Open Call for Submissions

Dear Author,

You are cordially invited to submit your academic work, tied to the related themes outlined below for consideration in the next Journal of the Registry.

All submissions undergo a review and evaluation by our editorial board.

Thanks, and Regards,

Benjamin Mchie, Executive Director

African American Registry®

Minneapolis, Long Beach

Open Themes and Guidelines

America's Public Schools

The Miseducation of Black and Brown Students

Equity and Inclusion

The Economic of America's Public Schools

STEM: The Exclusion of Black Students

Extra-Curricular: The Lack of Access for Students of Color

Grow Your Own: Support Youth for Social Justice Advocacy

Given recent court rulings and state restrictions our next issue will be about women. We are aware of women's work and activism and we welcome poems, essays, articles and thoughts on your role, your life and culture, your passionate concerns. Students and adults from levels of education encouraged to send. What comes at the intersection of your life as a woman and the world you live in? What role does poverty play in your life? How do you negotiate the roles of multiple identities, including gender? Where should we go from here as a community, and country to support women's autonomy?

Word limit: 1200 words maximum

Bio: 50 words

Required: Submit only original work, not previously published, copyright guidelines followed

Style: MLA (all citations/references/must be documented/verifiable)

Copyright: Citation of any work/s should follow required guidelines of standard copyright protocols

Delivery: Send all submissions for review

March-April, 2023

to: journal@aaregistry.org