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## Race, Post-Reconstruction Politics, and the Birth of Federal Support for Black Colleges

**Abstract:** In 1890, Congress passed the Second Morrill Land-Grant Act, which provided federal resources to support the creation of nineteen Black land-grant colleges. At a historical and political moment when Black Americans faced a violently repressive backlash against what progress they had achieved during Reconstruction, the successful passage and implementation of this legislation was unlikely. How did congressional lawmakers successfully pass the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1890, and was the expansion of educational opportunity for African Americans a clearly expressed objective? Using historical analysis of primary sources, this analysis suggests that the 1890 legislation's investment in Black colleges reflected a politically expedient compromise between northern Radical Republicans who supported greater educational access for Black citizens and Southern Democrats who wished to expand higher educational opportunity in their region while also maintaining the segregated racial order of southern educational institutions.

**Keywords:** Historically Black colleges and universities, Morrill Land-Grant Act, Radical Republicans, Southern Democrats, African American education, Reconstruction

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Since 1837, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have provided one of the most significant sources of higher educational opportunity in the United States. For more than a century after Quaker philanthropist Richard Humphreys founded the Institute for Colored Youth in Pennsylvania (later known as Cheyney University), HBCUs offered the primary pathway to higher learning for Black Americans during an era when the majority of American colleges and universities routinely discriminated against them. HBCUs typically enrolled as many as 90 percent of African American college students until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited race-based discrimination in college admissions, thereby establishing a new era of integrated public and private higher education. During the 2018–2019 academic year, HBCUs educated nearly 2 percent of all American college students and approximately 9 percent of African American college students.<sup>1</sup> Although the proportion of students attending HBCUs has declined since the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, they remain a vital provider of higher educational opportunity, particularly for low-income and first-generation students. Moreover, they play an important role in American society, as their vast, multigenerational alumni base makes noteworthy contributions to social, economic, and political life.

The long-standing contributions that HBCUs have made to American political development are noteworthy. By providing historically marginalized Americans with access to higher education and the citizenship-enhancing knowledge, skills, and inclinations that tend to accompany it, Black colleges have played an important role in African Americans' movement toward full citizenship. HBCUs were an integral part of the nation's efforts to rebuild after the Civil War ended in 1865. Although the first Morrill Act of 1862 led to the establishment of higher educational institutions that disproportionately catered to white students, Black students would gain targeted support under the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1890.<sup>2</sup> This Second Morrill Act made it necessary for states operating segregated college systems to offer equal institutional opportunities for white and Black students. As a result, this program facilitated substantial growth in the number of publicly supported colleges serving African Americans.

Given the significance of Black colleges to the progress that African Americans have made since the mid-nineteenth century and to the history of higher education in the United States, it is striking that political scientists have devoted so little attention to these institutions that emerged during an era in which African Americans were marginalized participants in American political life. In fact, the creation of the Second Morrill Land-Grant Act, which

targeted substantial support to Black colleges, represents an interesting puzzle. Why did lawmakers create an empowering system of higher education for African Americans in 1890—at a post-Reconstruction political moment characterized by violently repressive backlash against Black citizens?

Using historical analysis of data from primary sources including the *Congressional Globe*, the *Congressional Record*, memoirs, and historical newspapers, this study investigates the passage of the 1890 Morrill Land-Grant Act in Congress and the influence that it had on educational opportunity for African Americans during the late nineteenth century. Historical analysis suggests that the 1890 legislation's investment in Black colleges reflected a politically expedient compromise between Radical Republicans from the North who expressed support for equal educational access for Black citizens and Southern Democrats whose refusal to support a policy that could disturb the racial order of public institutions in the South outweighed interest in expanding higher educational opportunity in their region.

While many recognize the significance of the Second Morrill Act for supporting the set of Historically Black Colleges and Universities that are often described as “1890 Institutions,” we have yet to fully consider the significance of the policy's complex political development and contradictory outcomes for the history of American higher education. By institutionalizing federal support for colleges providing instruction to Black students, the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1890 extended unprecedented government resources to Black colleges. In doing so, it helped to shape the educational landscape and set the stage for future advances in educational opportunity for African Americans. At the same time, the 1890 Morrill Land-Grant Act formally institutionalized the practice of “separate but equal” in education—six years before the supreme court passed down the landmark *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. The policy's peculiar approach to egalitarianism—requiring the allocation of federal funds to educate Black college students while simultaneously condoning racial segregation in higher education—is not only striking; it is also a stunning contradiction that illustrates the extent of compromise that Justin Morrill was willing to entertain to successfully pass legislation providing sustained support to land-grant colleges. The growth of Black colleges that resulted from passage of the 1890 Morrill Land-Grant Act reflected lawmakers' desire to extend additional support to agricultural interests, struggling southern states, and preexisting higher educational institutions, as much as—if not more than—their interest in targeting benefits to Black citizens. In analyzing the development of the 1890 Morrill Land-Grant Act, this article takes seriously the complex political factors shaping the government's role in establishing

institutions that would constitute the core of higher educational opportunity for African Americans for nearly a century.

## UNDERSTANDING THE EMERGENCE OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR BLACK COLLEGES

Although scholars have considered the legacy, effectiveness, and relevance of HBCUs, we have yet to fully examine the role that public policy has played in shaping their institutional development over time.<sup>3</sup> In particular, our understanding of the history of government support for Black colleges is limited—especially when it comes to the politics surrounding the creation of the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1890, which precipitated a wave of Black land-grant college creation.

Historical institutionalism offers valuable theoretical frameworks that help us to gain purchase on these questions. From this approach, we know that existing policy precedents often play a central role in shaping the development of subsequent policies. As Paul Pierson notes, public policies, once created, facilitate the establishment of interests and modes of operation that make it increasingly difficult to deviate from that particular policy pathway.<sup>4</sup> This type of “path dependence” tends to result in a locking-in of a particular type of policy, virtually invalidating previously viable alternatives. This dynamic also supports the creation of new coalitions of interested parties that can join forces to work toward particular policy ends. It seems plausible that the entrenchment of a land-grant approach for supporting national goals and the interests that emerged as a result of the 1862 Morrill Land-Grant Act were central to the creation of the follow-up legislation in 1890. By providing a policy model and by contributing to the political momentum necessary to get the Second Morrill Act through the legislative process, path dependency may have facilitated this significant expansion of government support for Black colleges.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, a broader political context shaped by white supremacy played an important role in shaping the path that this support for African Americans would take. The need to generate a diverse coalition that included Radical Republicans from the North, Southern Democrats, and agricultural interests contributed to a policy design that was riddled with contradiction. Our understanding of why the federal government promoted the growth of Black higher educational institutions after Reconstruction could be enhanced by taking seriously the long-standing feature of U.S. social policy development whereby national lawmakers took great care to craft proposals in a way that

anticipated the objections of Southern Democrats who took issue with the prospect of federal intervention that could lead to shifts in the racial order of life in their region.<sup>6</sup> Their willingness to forego valuable infusions of federal resources to maintain the social institution of segregation represented a powerful trump card. In what follows, I consider how these forces shaped the creation of the Second Morrill Land-Grant Act and fostered growth in the number of Black colleges operating in the United States.

### BLACK COLLEGES, RACE POLITICS, AND LAND GRANTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The 1837 founding of Cheyney University marked the birth of Black colleges in the United States. Soon thereafter, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church founded Ohio African University—later known as Wilberforce University—in 1843 and the Presbyterian Church established Lincoln University in Pennsylvania in 1854.<sup>7</sup> As Jackson and Nunn note, HBCUs were established “as a response to two realities in the United States”—one the result of formal laws and the other resulting from social norms—which severely limited African Americans’ access to the nation’s predominately white colleges and universities.<sup>8</sup> For many of the benefactors who supported the first Black colleges, sincere desire to help African Americans adjust to a new life after brutal years of forced servitude and other forms of degradation fueled their support. For others, support was driven by a desire to tame the supposedly “menacing” nature of the newly freed slaves.<sup>9</sup>

The early curriculum taught in these institutions consisted of both liberal arts and industrial training in areas such as manual labor for men and household skills for women, many of whom would go into domestic occupations. These institutions also provided training for the substantial proportion of African American men and women who would pursue jobs as teachers in segregated schools.<sup>10</sup> Given the vast disparities between Black and white primary education during the nineteenth century, Black colleges typically had the task of providing remedial academic training for their students.<sup>11</sup> In addition to serving a crucial function in helping African Americans to gain knowledge and skills that would help them to achieve socioeconomic mobility, Black colleges also provided important social benefits to the Black community, especially in the context of intense southern backlash against Black progress in the South. As Frank Hale notes, Black colleges and universities provided “an island of freedom in a sea of racial tyranny and imperialism” in the Old South.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Black colleges made critical investments in the nation’s most

marginalized people as they struggled to become full citizens in the midst of stunning social, economic, and political change.

## Race and Education Policy during the Nineteenth Century

The politics of race played a central role in shaping educational opportunity for Black Americans during the nineteenth century. Education represented one of the most powerful threats to systems of oppression that buoyed the enslavement and subjugation of Africans and their descendants. Before the Civil War, restrictions on the education of Black Americans was a central tool that was used to promote white supremacy and Black marginalization. Many Americans recognized education as a foundational component of democracy, and white supremacists viewed it as a dangerous tool that could stir ideas about citizenship and freedom and equip Black Americans to resist social, political, and economic oppression.<sup>13</sup>

Public policies like antiliteracy laws institutionalized government commitments to white supremacy.<sup>14</sup> Attaching penalties like fines, whippings, and imprisonment to teaching enslaved people—and in some cases free Black people, as well—to read or write, these laws sought to weaken Black people by limiting their capacity to communicate with each other, forge passes, escape to freedom, and engage with antislavery literature and ideas. As Kim Tolley notes, in addition to fostering “the structural production of ignorance,” antiliteracy laws supported “messages about the intellectual inferiority of Africans [that] had supported the slave trade from the very beginning, and southerners continued to advance them to justify slavery.”<sup>15</sup> By one estimate, only 5 to 10 percent of enslaved Black Americans were literate before the Civil War.<sup>16</sup> Active suppression of Black educational opportunity was not restricted to the South. In the North and West, systems of school segregation denied free Black Americans equal access to quality education.

During the Civil War, Union Army generals provided educational resources for Black soldiers and formerly enslaved people, thereby establishing the first government support for the education of Black Americans. Black troops gained access to education at army training camps and through their regiments; and while they were not paid much, soldiers paid the salaries of their teachers out of their own earnings. The experience of Black soldiers at the Benton Barracks in Missouri led them to contribute \$6,380 to fund the creation of Lincoln University for Black students in 1866, which would later be designated as a land-grant college.<sup>17</sup>

By one estimate, thousands of Black Americans first accessed education through schools that were created or governed by the military.<sup>18</sup> Major General Ulysses S. Grant gave his appointees the authority to recruit teachers for formerly enslaved communities and to provide them with resources like housing, food, and transportation. He also gave them the authority to seize the homes of Confederate rebels to use for schools for Black students.<sup>19</sup>

In the wake of slavery, newly freed African Americans viewed education as crucial for improving their life chances, and many newly freed Black citizens embraced new opportunities to gain education for themselves and their children.<sup>20</sup> The Freedmen's Bureau opened a number of schools after the end of the Civil War, and Black Americans eagerly enrolled.<sup>21</sup> By 1866, nearly 100,000 African American students were enrolled in schools across eleven southern states. Five years later, the number reached nearly 150,000 students attending approximately 2,700 schools in the Southern United States.<sup>22</sup>

### Black Political Power and Education

By the mid-nineteenth century, political power, the rights of citizenship, and education were closely connected in the national psyche. When Abraham Lincoln became the first president to address the topic of Black suffrage in a speech that he delivered in April of 1865, he expressed support for Black suffrage among "the very intelligent," signaling his belief that education represented an important prerequisite to political participation.<sup>23</sup> With the emergence of Radical Reconstruction in 1867 and the federal government's efforts to ensure southern states' compliance with constitutional amendments guaranteeing the rights of citizenship to African Americans, Black citizens played an increasing role in politics.<sup>24</sup> During the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, African Americans served in a range of political roles from city council members and state representatives to members of Congress and even two U.S. Senators.<sup>25</sup> Education was a central priority among Black political leaders. In addition to working with white Republicans during southern constitutional conventions to drive the creation of public education systems, they supported state and federal efforts to provide educational opportunity for African Americans.<sup>26</sup>

Some states devoted substantial resources to educating their citizens. In South Carolina, which boasted a considerable number of African American state legislators during the Reconstruction era, lawmakers made free education a right guaranteed by the state's constitution. Although these provisions were structured to benefit both Black and white students, and even though

most states allocated more resources to educating white students than to Black students, many white southerners resented the expenses involved in providing education to African Americans.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, efforts to support education of the formerly enslaved met with backlash. In New Orleans, for example, local white authorities not only refused to support teachers assigned to Black schools; thugs went so far as to destroy the schools and kidnap the teachers.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, the perceived redistributive nature of education support—both in terms of economic redistribution and the redistribution of political power—shaped the politics surrounding the creation of early education policies. Moreover, in social, economic, and political contexts dominated by white supremacy, fears of this redistribution drove the creation of inferior educational provisions for Black Americans. As Kimberley Johnson notes, unequal education funding yielded “real fiscal benefits for whites, as money that should have been spent on black schools were diverted to white schools instead.”<sup>29</sup> James D. Anderson concurs, noting that “[t]his system of second-class education for blacks did not just happen. It was the logical outgrowth of a social ideology designed to adjust black southerners to racially qualified forms of political and economic subordination.”<sup>30</sup> With the dawn of the Jim Crow era in the late 1870s, white supremacists actively worked to institutionalize racial disparity by combating Black political power and limiting educational opportunity for Black people.<sup>31</sup> Within a political context characterized by reinvigorated white supremacy and contested Black political power, the fact that lawmakers would devote targeted resources to support land-grant colleges for Black Americans is remarkable.

### Land Grants as an Emerging Policy Tool

As the United States grappled with serious questions about citizenship, racial equality, and the balance of power between the federal government and the states, the mid-nineteenth century also saw rapid economic change. Large-scale agriculture and manufacturing rapidly replaced smaller family farms, and policy makers recognized the need for educational programs that could educate the next generation of farmers.<sup>32</sup> Representative Justin Smith Morrill, a member of Vermont’s congressional delegation and one of the founders of the Republican Party emerged as a champion of agricultural education and, more generally, the democratization of higher education, which had long been reserved for the elite classes. In this context of rapid economic and industrial change, it comes as little surprise that the Vermont congressman and agricultural ally turned his attention to providing educational opportunities for



young people—particularly those hailing from farm families and the working class—who were interested in studying agriculture and mechanics.

Morrill was an interesting advocate for democratic higher education. A largely self-educated businessman whose formal education ended when he was 15 years old, Morrill regretted that his family could not afford to send him to college. After a successful career in retail business enabled him to retire before the age of 40, Morrill embarked on what would become 44 years of public service in the House and the Senate.<sup>33</sup> Throughout his career, he was regarded as a “venerable, sedate, formal, almost Puritanistic” man whose quiet and thoughtful bearing garnered broad respect from his contemporaries.<sup>34</sup> Central to his contributions as a policy maker was his leadership in significantly expanding higher educational opportunity in the United States. Although, as Cross notes, Morrill “opposed women’s suffrage, the eight-hour workday and direct election of the president and senators” and he was known to view Blacks as socially inferior to whites, he nevertheless supported college education for the masses, including women and Blacks.<sup>35</sup> This was due, in no small part, to his belief that broad educational access was vital to the economic interests of the United States.<sup>36</sup>

In 1856, Morrill presented an innovative proposal to dedicate grants of federal land to support the establishment of at least one flagship university that would provide broad-reaching instruction in agriculture and mechanics, as well as other subjects, in each state.<sup>37</sup> He found support among farmers, education advocates, state college officials, and agricultural societies, as well as others interested in achieving federal investment in agricultural education and innovation.<sup>38</sup> Opponents of the bill—a substantial proportion of whom hailed from southern states—objected to the idea of the federal government interfering in education, which many felt was best reserved for the states. Although the House of Representatives and the Senate passed Morrill’s land-grant proposal in 1857, President James Buchanan vetoed it for this reason.<sup>39</sup> Facing strong opposition from President Buchanan and Southern Democrats in Congress, Morrill was unable to successfully reintroduce his measure for the next five years.<sup>40</sup>

It was the onset of Civil War in the spring of 1861 that gave the land-grant college proposal a fighting chance. With the secession of the Confederate States from the Union, many of the representatives who had objected to Morrill’s first proposal were no longer in Congress.<sup>41</sup> In addition to driving crucial political change that enhanced the viability of proposals for federal education support, the dramatic political shifts precipitated by the Civil War

made it possible and necessary for lawmakers to consider unprecedented measures for supporting education.

Morrill reintroduced his land-grant proposal to a more receptive audience in 1862. The legislation provided

*that there be granted to the several States, for the purposes hereinafter mentioned, an amount of public land, to be apportioned to each state a quantity equal to thirty thousand acres for each senator and representative in Congress to which the States are respectively entitled by the apportionment under the census of eighteen hundred and sixty... Any State which may take and claim the benefit of the provisions of this act shall provide, within five years, at least not less than one college.*<sup>42</sup>

The bill also clearly stated that the colleges receiving support must “teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts.”<sup>43</sup> While states were expected to offer agricultural and mechanical education as a central requirement to benefit from federal support, they were free to also provide education in a range of other subjects including “other scientific and classic studies, including military tactics.”<sup>44</sup>

Indeed, the proposal was crafted in a way that appealed to a variety of interests and garnered diverse support. As Edward Danforth Eddy, Jr. notes, some of the most noteworthy supporters of the proposal were farmers and representatives of agricultural interests, such as the United States Agricultural Society, who viewed the proposal as an opportunity to win support for farmers. The proposal appealed to educators—particularly, college presidents—who advocated on behalf of the legislation’s passage. It also found support among eastern states that enjoyed fewer opportunities than their western counterparts to share in land wealth, as well as politicians who were eager to court the support of farmers.<sup>45</sup> In the Senate, Morrill found a valuable partner in Sen. Benjamin Wade (R-OH) who offered strong support for the legislation.<sup>46</sup> In the House of Representatives, consideration was largely uneventful, which some have attributed to Justin Morrill’s political skill. Recalling an earlier characterization of the legislative process from which the first land-grant act emerged, Edward Danforth Eddy, Jr. notes that it “soared through the House in almost record time” after being discussed by only a handful of speakers.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, southern secession, Republican lawmakers’ interest in appealing to rural Americans, and the election of President Abraham Lincoln—who was particularly interested in providing

support to agricultural interests—boosted the probability that the proposal would become law.<sup>48</sup>

Although the southern members of Congress who had previously blocked the measure were no longer present to obstruct its progress, Rep. Morrill's land-grant proposal was not without opposition. Sen. Timothy Howe (R-WI) questioned the soundness of allocating public lands for the creation of colleges that would focus on agricultural education, saying "There is no reason why we should assume the agricultural education of the United States any more than its education in any other department or any other branch of science."<sup>49</sup> Sen. James Harlan (R-IA) raised objections to Howe's arguments and characterized opposition in the Senate as out of touch with broader interests:

This body is a body of lawyers. There are very few gentlemen here who are not professional lawyers... . Here, for the first time I believe in the history of the Senate, a proposition is made to make an appropriation of lands for the education of the children of the agriculturists of the nation, and it meets with strenuous opposition from a body of lawyers... . I do not believe if this proposition were submitted to a vote of the people of the country, that you could array one fiftieth of the voters against it."<sup>50</sup>

In addition to disagreement about the value of investing in agricultural education in the face of competing interests, conflict between eastern and western states also threatened to stall the proposal. Lawmakers hailing from western states feared that the land-grant policy would allow their eastern colleagues to force them into tying up western land in risky investments. Nevertheless, after lawmakers grappled with these issues, the Morrill Land-Grant Act passed in the Senate on June 11, 1862, with a vote of 32 in favor and 7 opposed. Eight days later, the House followed suit, voting 90 to 25 to pass the bill. Not surprisingly, 21 of the 25 "Nay" votes in the House were from members who hailed from western states.<sup>51</sup> President Abraham Lincoln signed it into law on July 2, 1862.

The creation of the First Morrill Land-Grant Act in 1862 was important for a number of reasons. It represented a victory for the farmer's movement, which had fought for federal aid for practical education since before the Civil War.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, it marked the entry of the federal government into the area of broad support for higher education and the establishment of the federal government as a central player in efforts to expand access to higher learning.

Furthermore, the policy was race neutral in that it did not restrict allocation of its benefits with respect to race. Thus, it promised to support higher educational opportunity for Black college students. For these reasons, the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 represents one of the most significant programs in the history of U.S. higher education policy. In addition to its significance for helping to democratize access to higher education in the United States, the land-grant policy also supported three Black colleges at the time of their founding or shortly thereafter: Mississippi's Alcorn State University (founded in 1871), Virginia's Hampton University (founded in 1868), and South Carolina's Claflin University (founded in 1869).<sup>53</sup> Although these were not the only Black colleges in existence when they were designated as land-grant colleges in 1871 (Alcorn State) and 1872 (Hampton and Claflin), these are the only Black colleges that received funding from the 1862 Morrill Land-Grant Act.

### Falling Short of Providing Equal Higher Educational Access for African Americans

Although southern lawmakers mounted some of the most vocal opposition to Morrill's early college land-grant proposal, the program provided southern states with valuable support as they struggled to rebuild after the Civil War came to an end and they were readmitted to the Union. Nevertheless, extending higher educational opportunity to African Americans threatened to disrupt white supremacy in the region. While the 1862 Morrill Land-Grant Act was race neutral in its statutory construction, most southern states failed to allocate the resources that it provided to higher educational institutions that served Black citizens. In Tennessee, for example, lawmakers did not readily extend federal land-grant benefits to Black Tennesseans, leading a group of fourteen Black state legislators to demand Black citizens' inclusion as land-grant beneficiaries in their state. As a result, the legislature provided a small number of Morrill scholarships for African Americans who could apply to attend the predominantly white University of Tennessee or historically Black institutions like Fisk University.<sup>54</sup>

The 1862 Morrill Land-Grant Act failed to explicitly address racial equity in higher educational access.<sup>55</sup> As Leedell Neyland notes, "[s]ince approximately 90 percent of the 4,000,000 blacks in America were in slavery, and since the approximately 250,000 "free Negroes" in southern states were highly circumscribed in their social interaction with whites, the early land-grant colleges became white bastions, barring blacks from admission by both custom and law."<sup>56</sup> Funding from the 1862 Morrill Land-grant Act went

overwhelmingly to white colleges and universities. In the few early cases in which land-grant support went to Black colleges, they failed to provide these schools with the same level of support that was allocated to land-grant colleges serving white students.<sup>57</sup> The First Morrill Land-Grant Act set the stage for a dual system of higher education, as it “generated and then highlighted the need to create Black colleges in order to secure a balance of federal support for African-American and White students in public higher educational institutions.”<sup>58</sup> It also paved the way for subsequent attempts to make good on the promise of democratized access to higher education.

### **POLITICAL POWER AND THE REPRESENTATION OF BLACK INTERESTS DURING RECONSTRUCTION**

Passage of the 1862 Morrill Land-grant Act marked an important first step toward democratizing access to higher education in the United States, ushering the federal government into the arena of providing broader access to higher education; yet it fell short of fully resolving some of the most powerful barriers to higher learning. Many of the land-grant colleges that had been created under the 1862 Act soon found themselves in desperate need of additional funding, as they were underresourced and struggled with lackluster enrollment, high rates of student attrition, subpar facilities, and considerable strains on faculty, including low pay and heavy workloads.<sup>59</sup> The burden of financial strain was particularly true for the few Black colleges that the policy supported, given that they received less support than white colleges.

The First Morrill Act also fell short in achieving its promise of providing educational opportunity for all, especially when it came to supporting African American students. Although the first Morrill Act did not explicitly exclude African Americans, in charging the states with implementing the policy, lawmakers enabled the overwhelming exclusion of Black citizens from its benefits. This was particularly true in the South where institutional segregation severely limited African Americans’ access to the region’s colleges and universities.

By the 1870s, the Civil War had come to an end and the politics of Reconstruction gripped the nation. As southern states began to reap the benefits of the 1862 land-grant policy upon gaining readmission to the Union, their discriminatory approach to program implementation thwarted its capacity to successfully democratize access to higher education and to make its benefits accessible to Black Americans. During this period, lawmakers began discussing whether the federal government should pursue a follow-up

policy to provide additional support to the struggling land-grant institutions. This discussion generated heated discussion about imperative of educating African Americans in light of their roles as citizens and voters. Black Americans represented a substantial portion of the South's population. In 1870, they comprised more than 50 percent of the population in Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina and more than 40 percent of the population in Florida, Georgia, and Virginia.<sup>60</sup>

In the years following Emancipation, African Americans had become a vocal interest group on the political landscape, and their increasing political participation at the mass and elite levels resulted in greater attention toward issues affecting Black citizens.<sup>61</sup> Black political engagement took numerous forms, from writing letters to Black newspapers to participating in state and national conventions to serving in elected and appointed office. During this period, approximately 50 percent of legislators in South Carolina's lower legislative chamber were Black, as were 42 percent of Louisiana's and 29 percent of Mississippi's.<sup>62</sup> Many Black Civil War veterans had returned to their communities with a desire to participate in leadership and public service, and their experiences with lackluster government support for both Black veterans and the broader Black community—illustrated, for example, by the collapse of the Freedmen's Bank in 1874, which resulted in the devastating loss of savings for Black depositors—often catalyzed political action.<sup>63</sup> Black churches and Black schools also served as powerful platforms for Black leaders and centers of Black social and political organization.<sup>64</sup>

Conventions of Black leaders provided valuable fora for highlighting the issues that mattered most to Black citizens—including the need to protect Black civil rights, concerns over efforts to restrict voter participation among Blacks, and the need for greater educational opportunity.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, as Millington Bergeson-Lockwood notes, "Black activists tackled questions of African Americans' place in American civic life and within the political party system through urban campaigns and local organizing."<sup>66</sup> Black newspapers similarly gave voice to African Americans' political perspectives and policy priorities, serving as an important tool for promoting political engagement.<sup>67</sup>

At the level of mass politics, politicians interested in attracting the support of newly enfranchised Black citizens began to pay greater attention to the issues facing Black Americans. Although Black citizens came to represent a reliable voting block for the Republican Party, some Black leaders urged Black voters to prevent the Party of Lincoln from taking their support for granted by offering to support candidates from other parties.<sup>68</sup> In addition to serving as a platform for Black interests, Black newspapers like Boston's *The Hub*

encouraged Black voter participation—even going so far as to publish the names of unregistered voters.<sup>69</sup>

## Black Education and the Ongoing Fight for Equality

While Black citizens worked to make their voices heard on the political landscape, they faced white supremacy and bold efforts—such as disenfranchisement policies like poll taxes and literacy tests—to curtail their civil rights and to squelch Black political power.<sup>70</sup> As James D. Anderson notes, the possibility that “blacks might achieve their fair share of political power” was a “nightmare” for white supremacists.<sup>71</sup> Educational discrimination was one tool that they used to fight this possibility. In Congress, deliberations over issues like civil rights and government support for education included numerous references to the changing racial dynamics of political power. For example, as the Senate debated proposals for civil rights legislation and proposals for integrated schools, Sen. Samuel Cox (D-NY) suggested that these measures would be the first steps down a slippery slope of unreasonable demands that could generate racial unrest. If Congress passed civil rights legislation but stopped short of providing for integrated schools, he argued, “the colored members here, and colored voters elsewhere, will not be satisfied.”<sup>72</sup> The *New York Times* also weighed in, expressing disagreement with proposals to bestow the federal government with the power to sanction schools that refused to accommodate Black students, conceding that “[t]he negroes must be educated,” and adding that

surely no one will pretend that among the means authorized by the Constitution of the United States for this purpose is the subjugation to a heavy fine of school-teachers and trustees who refuse to receive blacks with whites in State schools! This method of getting at the proposed object is at best clumsy and feeble. But it is also clearly unconstitutional, or, we might say, extra-constitutional.<sup>73</sup>

Despite such sentiments, Black Americans used their newfound political power to advocate for greater educational opportunity. A number of Black delegates who participated in their states’ Reconstruction Era constitutional conventions advocated for integrated education in their states. South Carolina’s Robert Smith played an active role in bringing about free, publicly supported compulsory education that would reach all citizens in the state.<sup>74</sup>

Other African American delegates focused on fighting efforts by Southern Democrats to ensure racial segregation in the region.<sup>75</sup>

With the end of Reconstruction, as the federal government withdrew from monitoring southern states to ensure that they were complying with laws requiring equal treatment for Black citizens, African Americans and their educational institutions lost an important source of protection. A number of state governments began to use states' rights arguments to strengthen racial segregation. Not surprisingly, this renewed commitment to the separation of whites and Blacks in the South affected educational opportunities for African Americans in the region. Black colleges, for example, ran the risk of losing government support if their egalitarian admissions policies were found to be in violation of Jim Crow laws. In 1887, when inspectors found that Atlanta University enrolled the children of white faculty and staff members, the predominantly Black college lost its state funding. As southern lawmakers gained power in federal and state governments, Black colleges that promoted vocational training were more likely to receive support than those that provided training that focused on the liberal arts.<sup>76</sup> As Williams and Ashley note, "[w]hen the federal government abandoned Reconstruction, it removed the buffer that had been erected between hostile southern legislatures and Black citizens."<sup>77</sup> By 1890, the strides that Black citizens had made in the 28 years following the end of slavery gave way to intensive backlash characterized by racially motivated violence and southern Democrats' active efforts to suppress Black citizens' rights and to relieve them of the rights that they had gained during Reconstruction.<sup>78</sup>

## THE SECOND MORRILL LAND-GRANT ACT AND ENHANCING SUPPORT FOR BLACK COLLEGES

In February of 1872—a decade after the passage of the first land-grant act—Justin Morrill, who had by then become a member of the United States Senate, made a first attempt to pass follow-up legislation that would provide additional federal support to the 1862 land-grant colleges. Over the next 18 years, he would present versions of this proposal in hopes of correcting the shortcomings of the 1862 Act. Originally designed by members of the Executive Committee of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations, including its leader, Pennsylvania State College President George W. Atherton, the second land-grant proposal sought to venture beyond the one-time land grants that were provided in the 1862 Act to offer



annual grants that would support the maintenance of these programs over time.<sup>79</sup>

Building a coalition of groups with competing visions of land-grant education was critical for Morrill's ability to extend additional support to the struggling land-grant colleges. Land-grant college presidents, led by Henry E. Alvord from Maryland Agricultural College and George W. Atherton from Pennsylvania State College, mounted an active campaign in support of the Second Morrill Land-Grant bill.<sup>80</sup> Their interest in obtaining additional government support for their colleges was driven by the numerous challenges that they faced including a general lack in college preparatory curriculum that strained their resources, trouble maintaining enrollment, limited resources with which to support faculty, and subpar facilities.<sup>81</sup> In advocating for additional land-grant legislation, college presidents conveyed their support for a "broad-gauge" approach to higher education—one that centered on science and that combined application with comprehensive study in foundational principles and theories.

The representatives of agricultural interests, led by the Grange, were also active participants in debates over possible follow-up land-grant legislation.<sup>82</sup> In contrast to the college presidents' support for a comprehensive, scientific approach to land-grant higher education, farm community advocates insisted on a "narrow-gauge" approach to land-grant education that focused on practical instruction in the areas of agriculture and mechanics.<sup>83</sup> Many of them had supported the 1862 Morrill Land-Grant Act on the grounds that it promised to expand support for utilitarian agricultural education—as opposed to the more dominant forms of instruction in the basic sciences and classics—which would be particularly valuable to the children of farmers. However, by the 1870s, many were critical of the policy, which they felt had done little for farmers. Grangers' interest in the Second Morrill Act centered on enhancing support for farmers and agricultural interests in education.

Although evidence does not suggest that advocates for Black higher education figured prominently in lobbying efforts the way that college presidents and agricultural advocates did, it seems plausible that Black state legislators' efforts to secure the benefits of the 1862 land-grant act for African American college students—as was the case in Tennessee—represented another important consideration as Morrill worked to draft passable follow-up legislation.<sup>84</sup> Morrill needed only to look at the politics surrounding consideration of the Blair Education Bill, which was repeatedly rejected by the Democrats in Congress during the 1880s, to observe how questions of racial equity could shape the prospects of education policy proposals.

The Blair Bill proposed creating a permanent, federally funded, national system of public common (or elementary) schools in the United States, which held great promise for promoting racial equity and, as a result, generated some of the most heated battles in the history of Congress.<sup>85</sup> Created with the intention of providing much-needed educational support for common schools, which would significantly improve educational opportunity for Black Americans, the proposal drew opposition on the grounds that it would give the federal government license to interfere with the existing system of schools. Indeed, the bill's allowance for the federal government to inspect common schools operating within the program struck some as particularly egregious.<sup>86</sup>

While populists and members of the Grange—prominent segments of the agricultural constituency that Morrill was hoping to win as supporters of his second land-grant proposal—supported public education, which they viewed as vital to the interests of farmers and their children, their support generally stopped short of accepting models that would extend benefits to Black students. As Charles Postel notes, “the Grange, in the South as well as the North, was a white organization.”<sup>87</sup> In the South, white populists and white Democrats were often in alignment when it came to supporting white supremacy.<sup>88</sup> In Mississippi, for example, Grange members objected to efforts by Republican state government officials to establish free, separate public schools for white students and Black students, taking issue with having white tax dollars support Black education.<sup>89</sup> In North Carolina, white populists' support for public education stopped short of providing state funds for Black elementary and secondary schools. In Alabama, white Populists actually attempted to shift public funds away from Black schools to white schools. And, in Kansas, advocacy efforts in support of higher education failed to address racial disparities.<sup>90</sup> These positions were at least somewhat influenced by planters' use of child labor and their interest in retaining access to Black children to work in their fields.<sup>91</sup> Like state level efforts to extend educational opportunity to Black Americans, the Blair Bill threatened to interfere with the South's white supremacist order.

In addition to the possible objections of white populists and Southern Democrats, Morrill also needed to consider the interests of Northern Republicans who counted Black citizens among their Party's loyal supporters. Educational opportunity was an issue of central importance for Black voters and Black legislators during the late 1860s and 1870s. With the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, white Republicans were interested in appealing to Black male voters who counted educational opportunity among their policy priorities. In Maryland, for example, this drove Republican legislators' efforts

to pass a state law requiring that each district provide a public school for Black students.<sup>92</sup> The Second Morrill Land-Grant Act aligned with support for Black educational opportunity.

### Repeated Attempts at a Second Morrill Act

As Morrill worked to adapt his follow-up land-grant proposal to account for the demands of diverse constituencies and changing political contexts, the issue of racial equality and the question of whether to force southern institutions to accommodate Black citizens or to allow “separate but equal” accommodations emerged. In February of 1873, Morrill introduced his follow-up land-grant proposal and Rep. Henry Wilson (R-MA) submitted an amendment requiring that states benefiting from the program would provide college access in a way that made “no distinction on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”<sup>93</sup> This was a noteworthy departure from the 1862 land-grant act, which did not explicitly require that states provide higher educational opportunities for Black students.<sup>94</sup> Although the measure failed to gain passage, language explicitly ensuring that benefits would be allocated equally to Black and white citizens became a feature of all subsequent proposals.

On January 25, 1876, Sen. Morrill submitted yet another proposal to provide additional support for the land-grant colleges. Though the proposal proved unsuccessful, Senate deliberations again revealed the surprisingly egalitarian efforts of some lawmakers. On April 26 of that year, Sen. Samuel Maxey (D-TX) raised the issue of needing to provide more funds for the South, which was struggling to provide dual, segregated school systems for their students. That same day, in extensive remarks in support of the proposal, Sen. Justin Morrill offered a clear statement of the legislation’s inclusion of African Americans:

But it may be objected that this policy includes all, without regard to race or color; and why not? Are we to praise freedom and shirk the duty of making it better than slavery? Having emancipated a whole race, shall it be said there our duty ends, leaving the race as cumberers of the ground, to live or to wilt and perish, as the case may be? They are members of the American family—forever in sight—and their advancement concerns us all. While swiftly forgetting all they ever

knew as slaves, shall they have no opportunity to learn anything as freemen? They are to be the sources of great strength or of great weaknesses, of glory or shame.<sup>95</sup>

This debate marked a significant moment in the political development of land-grant higher education policy and the support that it would ultimately provide for African Americans, as Black colleges typically bore the brunt of hardship generated by scarce funding. Moreover, this discussion raised crucial questions about the government's responsibility for promoting full citizenship for African Americans in during the final years of the Reconstruction era.<sup>96</sup>

On March 24, 1879, Sen. Ambrose Burnside (R-RI) spearheaded another attempt to pass Morrill's follow-up land-grant bill. Although the proposal would again prove unsuccessful, this round of legislative debate proved particularly interesting. Alabama's Spencer Morgan successfully added an amendment that required land-grant colleges to admit women. In 1880, African American activist and former slave Frederick Douglass wrote to Sen. Morrill expressing support for his land-grant measure saying,

Allow me to thank you for your very able, comprehensive and timely speech on the position to devote a part of the proceeds of the Public lands to educational purposes.... Having been a slave, I have learned the value of education in part from my own destitution of it. One of the perfections of this plea of yours for universal education is that it avoids every thing calculated to raise against the measure prejudice of race and color.

I see no great or happy future for my race or for the Republic outside general education and it seems to me that you, dear sir, standing where you can do no better work for the nation than to press this idea upon the nation's mind and heart.<sup>97</sup>

Despite appeals to egalitarian ends, support for federal land-grant college aid also reflected the resentment of southern states that continued to grapple with supporting dual systems of educational institutions for white and Black citizens.

On February 24, 1880, Rep. James R. Chalmers (D-MS) addressed the House of Representatives to argue on behalf of yet another federal land-grant proposal that would alleviate some of this burden on southern states. Speaking passionately in support of the bill, he called it “an act of simple justice.”<sup>98</sup> According to Chalmers,

[W]hile the Southern States have contributed all the aid in their power much remains to be done. The Government which made citizens and voters of four millions of emancipated slaves against the consent of the States in which they resided should not leave those States to bear all the burdens of educating them up to the proper standard of citizenship.<sup>99</sup>

During the remainder of this decade, Morrill presented three additional, unsuccessful, land-grant college support proposals. The ensuing debates over whether the federal government should provide land grants to support higher education included ample appeals to the burden shouldered by southern states that refused to devote all of their federal funds toward one racially unified system of higher education. In 1884, Senator James George (D-MS) argued that “there is a burden thrown upon the white people of Mississippi, who are not rich, not only of educating their own children but all the children of the colored people, who number 175,000 more than the whites, and ... [blacks] pay very little of this burden.”<sup>100</sup> Then-Senator, and future U.S. President, Benjamin Harrison (R-IN) responded, noting the significance of proposed education legislation for Black citizens saying,

I am not familiar with the present condition of the colored people in any of the States except my own, but I have more than once in the course of my life had opportunity to notice the hunger of the Black man for education.... I have seen old men past the meridian of life, yes, well on toward its end, after a hard day's work in the company's kitchen, lying prone upon the ground before the camp fire with spelling-books in their hands painfully trying to fasten in their memories the names and outlines of the letters of the alphabet. Every philanthropist must sympathize with the blind thus groping toward the light.<sup>101</sup>

As these statements reveal, a follow-up land-grant proposal that elided over the issue of race was unlikely to satisfy the broad coalition that Morrill needed to secure the passage of his bill. While the 1862 legislation was silent regarding questions of race and land-grant resource distribution, new Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction political contexts that included unprecedented exercise of political power among Black citizens and backlash from white supremacists threatened by the prospect of a new racial order characterized by equal opportunity made it unlikely that Morrill could pass a second land-grant policy that did not explicitly address the issue of race.

### Success on the Seventh Try: Passing the Second Morrill Land-Grant Act in 1890

At the beginning of a new decade, and after six unsuccessful attempts to pass a second college land-grant-policy, Sen. Morrill changed his strategy. Although previous versions had reflected his hope of capitalizing on congressional interest in democratizing access to common schools, he concluded that conflating support for colleges and common schools needlessly complicated his efforts to gain additional support for land-grant colleges, and he removed that provision from the bill.<sup>102</sup> On April 3, 1890, he introduced S. 4714. Focusing squarely on providing support for land-grant colleges, the bill proposed allocating an additional \$15,000 (later increased to \$25,000) annually to support the land-grant colleges in each state. It also provided that resources would be equitably divided between white and Black schools in areas that offered racially separated higher educational facilities

The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1890 sought to address racial disparity in higher educational access by using federal regulation, stipulating that

no money shall be paid out under this act to any State or Territory for the support and maintenance of a college where a distinction of race or color is made in the admission of students, but the establishment and maintenance of such colleges separately for white and colored students shall be held to be in compliance with the provisions of this act if the funds received in such State or Territory be equitably divided.<sup>103</sup>

By withholding funds from states that refused to offer educational opportunity to Black citizens, the policy offered a “stick” to accompany the “carrot” of

federal education support that was established by the 1862 land-grant legislation. The bill went on to say that the legislatures of states that decided to maintain separate institutions “of like character” for Black and white students would devise

a just and equitable division of the fund to be received under this act between one college for white students and one institution for colored students established as aforesaid, which shall be divided into two parts and paid accordingly, and thereupon such institution for colored students shall be entitled to the benefits of this act and subject to its provisions, as much as it would have been if it had been included under the act of eighteen hundred and sixty-two.<sup>104</sup>

This stipulation reflects the Senate debate over race and the allocation of funds under Morrill’s new proposal, which was fueled by the objections of southern members who took issue with federal attempts to interfere with the racial order of their educational facilities. As a result of this debate, the Second Morrill Act gave the states two options when it came to handling admissions at land-grant colleges: (1) they could either demonstrate a policy of race-blind admissions or (2) they could establish a separate higher educational institution to accommodate students of color. Either way, the states were required to provide Black and white students with access to the higher education benefits provided by the first land-grant act.<sup>105</sup>

Morrill’s effort to provide additional support to land-grant colleges was strengthened by active lobbying by representatives from the colleges that had received support under the 1862 Act and that were desperate for additional funding.<sup>106</sup> He also enjoyed the support of populist lawmakers who saw higher education as a valuable mechanism for promoting greater socioeconomic equality between elites and the working class.<sup>107</sup> Despite this interest, however, many white populists objected to efforts to use educational opportunity to promote racial equality and were suspicious of policy proposals that could yield a move in that direction. Just days before Morrill introduced his land-grant proposal to Congress in 1890, this type of objection and suspicion had doomed the Blair Education Bill.<sup>108</sup> It also contributed to Morrill’s decision to jettison support for common schools from his newest proposal in hopes of securing support from the Grange.<sup>109</sup>

During the summer of 1890, the Senate passed the Second Morrill Land-Grant Act without a recorded vote, and the House of Representatives voted in

favor of the measure by a vote of 135-39.<sup>110</sup> On August 30, 1890, President Benjamin Harrison signed the Second Morrill Land-Grant Act (PL 51-831) into law. Ultimately, it took Justin Morrill seven attempts to successfully pass the Second Morrill Land-Grant Act. By connecting sustained government support for land-grant colleges to the requirement that states either provide African American students with admission to their existing land-grant colleges or designate separate land-grant colleges for Black students, the legislation's passage marked an important moment in the history of African American higher education. The legislation supported the establishment of 17 land-grant colleges in the South that served African Americans.<sup>111</sup> Yet as Eddy notes, the 1890 land-grant bill "is one of the few instances in Federal legislation in which there is both an injunction against discrimination and a specification that 'separate but equal' satisfies the mandate."<sup>112</sup> Indeed, the majority of the southern states opted to establish separate postsecondary institutions for African American students instead of integrating existing land-grant colleges. This landmark policy and its contradictions illustrate just how hard-won educational opportunities for Black Americans have been and the deep roots of racial stratification that have shaped them.

#### **CONCLUSION: THE POST-RECONSTRUCTION ROOTS OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS**

Historical analysis of the politics surrounding the creation of the Second Morrill Land-Grant Act yields valuable insight into why lawmakers passed such a path-breaking program in 1890 and brings into greater focus our understanding of the long-standing relationship between the government and historically Black colleges and universities. The successful passage of the Second Morrill Land-Grant Act and the wave of Black land-grant college creation that it generated reflected Justin Morrill's effectiveness at building a coalition among diverse interests that emerged from the First Morrill Land-Grant Act. While we have come to associate the 1890 Morrill Land-Grant Act with the targeted support for Black colleges that it enabled, it is important to note that its creation was also driven by the desire to provide federal resources to agricultural interests, struggling southern states, and preexisting higher educational institutions—many of which were not concerned with extending educational opportunities to African Americans. Although central proponents of this legislation supported the notion of providing African Americans with equitable access to quality higher education in theory, in practice they were willing to compromise on that objective to secure the legislation's



passage, consenting to the creation of racially segregated educational institutions that would receive unequal government support.

As the history of U.S. social policy has revealed, policies that extend government benefits often require the introduction of government regulation to ensure that those benefits are allocated without discrimination. Such was the case with the 1890 land-grant policy. By requiring that states offer higher educational support for Black and white students under the 1890 land-grant policy, lawmakers attached a legislative “stick” to accompany the “carrot” of federal support for higher education that was first established under the 1862 Morrill Act.<sup>113</sup> By passing the Second Morrill Land-Grant Act, lawmakers sparked significant expansion of higher educational opportunity for African Americans, yet they also institutionalized a system of separate but equal public accommodation that would become a mainstay of the Jim Crow era.

In the context of intense racial inequality and segregation during the post-Reconstruction period, government support for HBCUs could be characterized as having something akin to “universal” reach.<sup>114</sup> Historical analysis suggests that lawmakers provided substantial support to Black colleges and universities when such support was perceived as yielding broad-reaching, politically valuable benefits—in this case, a mechanism for directing government resources to white and Black students while maintaining the system of racial segregation in the South. As Kimberley Johnson notes in her powerful description of segregated education, it was an arena where “white supremacy and its obverse, white paternalism, could be most visibly displayed... . Segregated and unequal education was designed to visibly reflect and maintain the subordinated status of African Americans.”<sup>115</sup> In facilitating the creation of a segregated system of higher education, the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1890 helped reinforce white supremacy by condoning the institutionalization of Black marginalization, which was central to the South’s political agenda after Reconstruction.

Historical analysis of the political development of the 1890 Morrill Land-Grant Act also reveals an important insight regarding path dependency. While the model helps to explain lawmakers’ continued use of land-grants when supporting higher education in 1890, it may understate the role that politics plays in shaping subsequent policy development. When presenting the 1862 Morrill Land-Grant Act, Justin Morrill presented the program as a textbook case of what Ted Lowi described as distributive policy.<sup>116</sup> Like other programs that were employed as mechanisms for state building during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the First Morrill Act appeared to target public resources broadly, in a way that would benefit the entire country. Moreover,

the program provided federal support to each of the states rather than disbursing limited benefits that elicit competition among them. In a sense, everyone would be “winners.” It was Morrill’s emphasis on the proposal’s distributive design that enabled him to attract the support necessary to successfully marshal it through the legislative process.

In the decades following the passage of the First Morrill Act, however, dramatic social and political change helped to make the program’s redistributive elements more pronounced. As Black Americans occupied their new roles as citizens and participants in the exercise of political power, their attempts at full inclusion in higher education—which were driven by legitimate claims per the statute’s construction—were met with resistance and institutional discrimination. As newly empowered Black citizens sought access to higher educational opportunities that would have gone uncontested in their reservation for whites prior to Reconstruction, the redistribution of higher educational opportunity posed a challenge to the racial order of the South. As Justin Morrill worked to create a new land-grant policy, he had to grapple with questions related to this redistribution and to expect the political contention that redistributive policy proposals attract.

As this case illustrates, existing policies shape the nature and scope of expectations for subsequent policies. At the same time, political dynamics act like railroad switches, creating curves that manipulate the course of policy development. In creating the 1890 Morrill Land-Grant Act, lawmakers continued down the path of using land-grant aid to support higher education, but they built both discrimination and opportunity into the policy. In doing so, they illustrated how path dependency can shape the direction of policy development while stopping short of dictating the nuances of policy design. Politics plays a role here. Even when existing policies foster movement down a particular policy path, politics continues to play a role in shaping the form that new policies take.

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## NOTES

1. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), “Fast Facts: Back-to-School Statistics.” (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2021), <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts>; National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2016), <http://nces.ed.gov>; Walter Recharde Allen and Joseph O. Jewell, “A Backward Glance Forward: Past, Present, and Future Perspectives on Historically Black Colleges and Universities,” *The Review of Higher*

*Education* 25, no. 3 (Spring 2002): 241–61, 255; Marybeth Gasman, “The Changing Face of Historically Black Colleges and Universities,” *Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions* (May 2013), [https://repository.upenn.edu/gse\\_pubs/335](https://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/335).

2. The First Morrill Land-Grant Act overwhelmingly supported white institutions. Only four states used part of their funding under the 1862 Land-Grant policy to support Black land-grant colleges. Under the 1890 legislation, however, five southern states designated existing publicly supported Black colleges as land-grant institutions, and six states established new public colleges for Black students. Six other states designated existing private Black colleges as land-grant institutions. In all, the 17 of the 69 land-grant colleges receiving support from the Morrill Land-Grant Act were Black colleges. See Edward Danforth Eddy Jr., *Colleges for Our Land and Time: The Land-Grant Idea in American Education* (1956; repr., New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 44, 102–03, 257.

3. For analysis of the legacy, effectiveness, and ongoing relevance of HBCUs, see Allen and Jewell, “A Backward Glance Forward, 241–61; Marybeth Gasman, “African American Female Students at Historically Black Colleges: Historical and Contemporary Considerations,” in *From Diplomas to Doctorates: The Success of Black Women in Higher Education and Its Implications for Equal Educational Opportunities for All*, eds. V. Barbara Bush, Crystal Renee Chambers, and MaryBeth Walpole (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2009); Cynthia L. Jackson and Eleanor F. Nunn, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2003); Mikyong Minsun Kim and Clifton F. Conrad, “The Impact of Historically Black Colleges and Universities on the Academic Success of African-American Students,” *Research in Higher Education* 47, no. 4 (March 2006): 399–427.

4. Paul Pierson, “When Effect Becomes Cause: Policy Feedback and Political Change,” *World Politics* 4, no. 5 (July 1993): 595–628.

5. The use of land grants to fund education predated the Civil War. The Land Ordinance of 1785 included the provision of federal land grants for the establishment of common schools. In the years after, the federal government provided additional grants of land to support education, as well as internal infrastructural improvements, such as road and railroad construction. See Roger L. Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education: George W. Atherton and the Land-Grant Movement*. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 35.

6. For analysis of how this phenomenon operated on the politics of higher education policy development during the mid-twentieth century, see Deondra Rose, *Citizens by Degree: Higher Education Policy and the Changing Gender Dynamics of American Citizenship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Rose, Deondra, “The Public Policy Roots of Women’s Increasing College Degree Attainment: The NDEA of 1958 and the HEA of 1965,” *Studies in American Political Development* 30, no. 1 (April 2016): 62–93.

7. As was the case with many higher educational institutions established during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, Lincoln College and other Black post-secondary institutions did not admit women until the mid-twentieth century. See, for example, Jackson and Nunn, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, 2.

8. The bulk of the remaining HBCUs were founded during Reconstruction. It was during this period that lawmakers founded Shaw University (1865), Howard University

(1867), and other prominent Black colleges. See Jackson and Nunn, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, 3–4.

9. While Black colleges were crucial to inducting newly freed slaves into their roles as citizens after Emancipation, it is also important to note that the first Black colleges served free Black Americans who were subject to constant efforts to deny their claims to citizenship during the antebellum era. See Gasman, “African American Female Students at Historically Black Colleges,” 74; Martha Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

10. Gasman, “African American Female Students at Historically Black Colleges,” 74.

11. Jackson and Nunn, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, 2–3, 7–8.

12. Frank W. Hale Jr., *How Black Colleges Empower Black Students: Lessons for Higher Education* (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2006), 8.

13. The risk of economic abuse was a particularly powerful reason for Black Americans to advocate for educational opportunity. Planters and others who benefited from Black labor frequently used confusing contracts to take advantage of formerly enslaved workers. See James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 18.

14. South Carolina enacted the first antiliteracy law in 1740, and seven of the eleven southern states that joined the Confederacy during the Civil War had passed such laws by 1823. See Kim Tolley, “Slavery,” in *Miseducation: A History of Ignorance-Making in America and Abroad*, ed. A. J. Angulo (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 13–33, 13–14; Christopher M. Span and Brenda N. Sanya, “Education and the African Diaspora,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Education*, eds. John L. Rury and Eileen H. Tamura (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019); Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, 2.

15. Kim Tolley, “Slavery,” 13–33, 29.

16. Christopher M. Span and Brenda N. Sanya, “Education and the African Diaspora,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Education*, eds. John L. Rury and Eileen H. Tamura (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 401.

17. John W. Blassingame, “The Union Army as an Educational Institution for Negroes, 1862-1865,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 34, no. 2 (Spring 1965): 152–59, 156.

18. John W. Blassingame, “The Union Army as an Educational Institution for Negroes, 1862-1865,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 34, no. 2 (Spring 1965): 1.

19. John W. Blassingame, “The Union Army as an Educational Institution for Negroes, 1862-1865,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 34, no. 2 (Spring 1965): 152–53.

20. In the years following the Civil War, formerly enslaved people played a central role in the movement for public education in the United States. Their early self-help efforts in establishing literacy programs and creating schools came as a surprise to Northern missionaries and Freedmen’s Bureau representatives who presumed to be the first to engage in this space. These efforts, however, were tested by the overwhelming effect of poverty that made it necessary for Black communities to seek outside support from the Freedmen’s Bureau and benevolent societies. See James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, 6–9; see also Eric Foner, *Reconstruction Updated Edition: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 2014), 97–98.

21. In 1865, the federal government created the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands—also known as the Freedmen’s Bureau—to extend medical, social, and educational services to more than four million newly freed African Americans. See Philip Dray, *Capitol Men: The Epic Story of Reconstruction through the Lives of the First Black Congressmen* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008), 46–47.
22. “Negro Education: The Progress Made by the Freedmen since the War,” *New York Times*, July 7, 1875, 2.
23. Richard M. Valelly, *The Two Reconstructions: The Struggle for Black Enfranchisement* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 2.
24. Judy Bussell LeForge, “Alabama’s Colored Conventions and the Exodus Movement, 1871–1879,” *The Alabama Review* 63, no. 1 (January 2010): 3–29, 8.
25. Bobby L. Lovett, *America’s Historically Black Colleges & Universities: A Narrative History from the Nineteenth Century into the Twenty-First Century* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2011), 25.
26. James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935*, 19–20.
27. John F. Marszalek, *A Black Congressman in the Age of Jim Crow: South Carolina’s George Washington Murray* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), 4.
28. John W. Blassingame, “The Union Army as an Educational Institution for Negroes, 1862–1865,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 34, no. 2 (Spring 1965): 154.
29. Kimberley Johnson, *Reforming Jim Crow: Southern Politics and State in the Age before Brown* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 15.
30. James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935*, 3.
31. Johnson, *Reforming Jim Crow*, 7.
32. Describing his commitment to supporting the education of farmers across the nation Morrill said, “being myself the son of a hard-handed blacksmith ... I could not overlook mechanics in any measure intended to aid the industrial classes in the procurement of an education that might exalt their usefulness.” See Michael D. Parsons, *Power and Politics: Federal Higher Education Policy Making in the 1990s* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 29. As Elizabeth Sanders notes, the rise of large-scale agriculture also contributed to farmers’ intense focus on political engagement: “while nineteenth-century industrialization appeared to offer labor a workplace alternative to political action, the commercialization of agriculture made politics all the more urgent for farmers.” See Elizabeth Sanders, *Roots of Reform: Farmers, Workers, and the American State 1877–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 101.
33. “Justin S. Morrill,” Profile. United States Senate Biographical Directory, accessed September 11, 2018, [https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Justin\\_S\\_Morrill.htm](https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Justin_S_Morrill.htm).
34. “Statesmen as Friends: The Most Faithful Chums Often Differ Politically,” *Aberdeen Daily News* (Aberdeen, SD), February 5, 1890, 4; See also “Conkling and Justin Morrill,” *Kansas City Evening Star* (Kansas City, MO), February 1, 1881, 2; “Senator Morrill at Grant’s Reception,” *New-York Tribune* (New York, NY), February 17, 1886, 8; “Senate; Hon. Justin Morrill,” *Pawtucket Times* (Pawtucket, Rhode Island), December 28, 1898, 4; “Senator Justin Morrill Dead: Venerable Vermont Statesman Passes Away,” *The Kansas Semi-Weekly Capital* (Topeka, KS), December 30, 1898, 8.

35. Coy F. Cross, *Justin Smith Morrill: Father of the Land-Grant Colleges* (East Lansing: Michigan University Press, 1999), 1, 11.

36. Morrill, Justin Smith, *Archived Papers, Manuscript Division* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1874).

37. It is important to note that Morrill's status as the author of the land-grant proposals that bore his name has been a topic of debate. During the early 1850s, higher education reformer and Illinois College professor Jonathan B. Turner drafted a plan for an industrial university, which morphed into a plan for an agricultural college. Central to this plan was the idea that federal support from Congress in the form of land grants could help to expand educational access to the industrial classes of farmers, mechanics, and other laborers. The Second Morrill Act also appeared to reflect the contributions of authors aside from Justin Morrill. Pennsylvania State College President George W. Atherton may have helped to revise—if not draft—the proposals that Morrill presented to Congress in 1873 and 1875. See Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education*, 37–38; 138; Charles I. Abramson, W. Stephen Damron, Michael Dicks, and Peter M. A. Sherwood, "History and Mission," in Robert J. Sternberg, ed. *The Modern Land-Grant University* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2014), 6; Parsons, *Power and Politics*, 29.

38. Sanders, *Roots of Reform*, 316; Mary Summers, "Conflicting Visions: Farmers' Movements and the Making of the United States Department of Agriculture" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1999).

39. Democratic President James Buchanan was a supporter of slavery who supported southern states' position on slavery and viewed Black Americans as noncitizens. See Lovett, *America's Historically Black Colleges & Universities*, 25.

40. During one such futile attempt to bring the land-grant college proposal to the floor, Rep. Morrill offered a passionate entreaty to his colleagues in the House. After pointing out the dearth of federal policy devoted to agricultural and mechanical interests and recognizing the efforts that foreign nations had taken to promote the education of their students, he characterized the allocation of public lands for higher education as in line with historical precedent: "While agriculture has been a neglected field of legislation, it does not now call for the exercise of novel constitutional power. Congress has long asserted the right to dispose of the public lands to establish school funds and universities, and no one now questions the soundness of such a policy. This measure is but an extension of the same principle over a wider field." See Cong. Globe, 35th Cong., 1st Sess. 1692–1698 (1858).

41. Parsons, *Power and Politics*.

42. The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862, Pub. L. No. 37-130.

43. The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862, Pub. L. No. 37-130; see also, Abramson, et al., "History and Mission," 8.

44. Abramson, et al., "History and Mission," 9; Morrill, *Archived Papers*.

45. Edward Danforth Eddy Jr., *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, 34.

46. Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, 34.

47. This nod to Justin Morrill's political acumen may have been an exaggeration. While evidence from the *Congressional Globe* supports the idea that House deliberations on the "Agricultural Colleges" proposal were surprisingly compact, it also reveals more extensive deliberations in the Senate. See Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, 27; Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d Sess. 33, 99 (1861); Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d Sess. 2769–2770 (1862);

Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d Sess. 2275–2279 (1862); Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d Sess. 2328–2329 (1862); Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d Sess. 2440–2443 (1862).

48. Abramson, et al., “History and Mission,” 8; Parsons, *Power and Politics*, 30.

49. Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d Sess. 2628 (1862).

50. Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d Sess. 2629 (1862).

51. Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, 35.

52. Farmers would remain invested in policies that catered to agricultural interests. In addition to their close monitoring of the 1862 land-grant proposal as well as its 1890 follow-up bill, advocates for farming and agriculture supported the 1887 Hatch Act, which gave state land-grant colleges \$15,000 each to support the establishment of agricultural experiment stations. In addition to enhancing the relationship between land-grant colleges and farming communities, the policy provided an infusion of federal resources into these institutions. See Sanders, *Roots of Reform*, 315; Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education*, 3.

53. Jackson and Nunn, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, 14; Leedell W. Neyland, *Historically Black Land-Grant Institutions and the Development of Agriculture and Home Economics 1890-1990* (Tallahassee: Florida A&M University Foundation, 1990), 3, 16.

54. Lovett, *America's Historically Black Colleges & Universities*, 25–26.

55. Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, 44.

56. Neyland, *Historically Black Land-Grant Institutions*, 2.

57. Gasman, “African American Female Students at Historically Black Colleges,” 75; Jackson and Nunn, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, 16.

58. Jeanita W. Richardson and J. John Harris, “Brown and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs): A Paradox of Desegregation Policy,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 73, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 365–78, 371; see also M. Christopher Brown and James Earl Davis, “The Historically Black College as Social Contract, Social Capital and Social Equalizer,” *Peabody Journal of Education* 76, no. 1 (January 2001): 31–49, 36.

59. David Carleton, *Student's Guide to Landmark Congressional Laws on Education* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 53; Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education*, 3.

60. James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, 40.

61. Eric Foner and Olivia Mahoney, *America's Reconstruction: People and Politics after the Civil War* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995), 93. Approximately 50 percent of members serving in the South Carolina state house during the Reconstruction era were Black. See Richard M. Velely, *The Two Reconstructions: The Struggle for Black Enfranchisement* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 3. In 1876, 162 African Americans held political office in the United States (52). As Foner and Mahoney note, “[t]he presence of Black officeholders and their white allies made a real difference in Southern life, ensuring that those accused of crimes would be tried before juries of their peers, and enforcing fairness in such prosaic aspects of local government as road repair, tax assessment, and poor relief.” See Foner and Mahoney, *America's Reconstruction*, 94–95. The ascent of Black Americans to positions of political power during Reconstruction proved shocking to many white Americans. As John Marszalek notes about white South Carolinians at the time, they “refused to accept the idea of an equal [B]lack participation in politics

and life, so they labeled everything the Reconstruction governments did as corrupt.” See Marszalek, *A Black Congressman in the Age of Jim Crow*, 5.

62. Valeyly, *The Two Reconstructions*, 3.

63. Millington Bergeson-Lockwood, “No Longer Pliant Tools: Urban Politics and Conflicts over African American Partisanship in 1880s Boston, Massachusetts,” *Journal of Urban History* 44, no. 2 (March 2018): 169–86; Stephen R. Robinson, “Rethinking Black Urban Politics in the 1880s: The Case of William Gaston in Post-Reconstruction Alabama,” *The Alabama Review* 66, no. 1 (January 2013): 3–29.

64. Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (1988; repr., New York: Harper & Row, 2014), 100; Stephen R. Robinson, “Rethinking Black Urban Politics in the 1880s: The Case of William Gaston in Post-Reconstruction Alabama,” *The Alabama Review* 66, no. 1 (January 2013): 3–29, 4–5.

65. While the historical record suggests that African Americans’ political engagement provided an avenue for advocating for Black political and civil rights, including educational and employment opportunities, evidence does not point to direct lobbying on the part of African American colleges during the Reconstruction period. This may have reflected the tension between the “self-help” approach and the use of state funds, which at times required political concessions. As Stephen Robinson notes in his analysis of the role that William Gaston played in post-Reconstruction Alabama, acquiring state funding sometimes required “compromises,” such as “disengagement with politics in the public sphere.” As a result, some viewed a “self-help” approach characterized by the creation of self-funded, nonsectarian colleges as in line with broader Black political interests. See David A. Joens, “Illinois Colored Conventions of the 1880s,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 110, no. 3–4 (December 2017): 305–24; Judy Bussell LeForge, “Alabama’s Colored Conventions and the Exodus Movement, 1871-1879,” *The Alabama Review* 63, no. 1 (January 2010): 3–29.

66. Millington Bergeson-Lockwood, “No Longer Pliant Tools,” 182.

67. Millington Bergeson-Lockwood, “No Longer Pliant Tools,” 173; Robinson, “Rethinking Black Urban Politics.”

68. By the late 1870s, many African Americans were questioning their loyalty to the “Party of Lincoln.” The congressional compromise of 1877 that precipitated the election of President Rutherford B. Hayes in exchange for the removal of federal troops from the South and ongoing efforts to undo newly achieved rights of Black Americans throughout the country led many African Americans to question their loyalty to the Republican Party. See Millington Bergeson-Lockwood, “No Longer Pliant Tools,” 170–72.

69. Millington Bergeson-Lockwood, “No Longer Pliant Tools,” 173.

70. Johnson, *Reforming Jim Crow*, 15.

71. James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, 40.

72. 2 Cong. Rec. H616 (daily ed. January 13, 1874) (statement of Rep. Samuel Cox).

73. “A Dangerous Tendency,” *The New York Times*, September 22, 1874, 4.

74. Dray, *Capitol Men*, 46–47.

75. See, for example, Michael W. Fitzgerald, *Splendid Failure: Postwar Reconstruction in the American South* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2007). In this context, advocating for racial equality often proved dangerous, and some Black leaders took pains to reassure their white colleagues that they had no desire for racial equality. For example, William H. Gray, a



freeborn Black delegate to Arkansas's constitutional convention, reassured his colleagues that he "wanted this a white man's government" and that he was content to allow them to "do the legislating as they had the intelligence and wealth." Fitzgerald, *Splendid Failure*, 86.

76. Juan Williams and Dwayne Ashley, *I'll Find a Way or Make One* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 76–77.

77. Williams and Ashley, *I'll Find a Way or Make One*, 77.

78. In South Carolina, for example, although 60 percent of the state's citizens in 1890 were Black, they cast only 17 percent of votes in 1888—compared with the 50 percent of all votes that they cast in 1876. See Marszalek, *A Black Congressman in the Age of Jim Crow*, 26.

79. Carleton, *Student's Guide to Landmark Congressional Laws*, 54; Cong. Globe, 42nd Cong., 2d Sess. 1177 (1872).

80. Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education*, 6.

81. Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, 83–84.

82. Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, 101; 2 Cong. Rec., S4139 (daily ed. May 22, 1874) (statement of Rep. Justin Morrill); Sanders, *Roots of Reform*, 315; Scott Gelber, *The University and the People: Envisioning American Higher Education in an Era of Populist Protest* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 26.

83. Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education*, 83; Earle D. Ross, *Democracy's College: The Land-Grant Movement in the Formative Stage* (Ames: The Iowa State College Press), 87–89.

84. See, e.g., Lovett, *America's Historically Black Colleges & Universities*, 25–26. The preponderance of Black citizens' educational advocacy focused on the creation of common schools, which likely signaled an emphasis on providing basic educational infrastructure, as well as ambivalence toward entrusting white lawmakers and administrators with acting in the interests of Black colleges. See Gelber, *The University and the People*, 57; James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, 193.

85. Thomas Adams Upchurch, *Legislating Racism: The Billion Dollar Congress and the Birth of Jim Crow* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky), 47.

86. Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education*, 141–42.

87. Charles Postel, *Equality: An American Dilemma, 1866-1896* (New York: Ferrer, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), 79–80.

88. Postel, *Equality: An American Dilemma, 1866-1896*, 308. While local Grange organizations did not explicitly deny membership to African Americans, as Theodore Saloutos notes, the inclusion of Black members "was the exception rather than the rule." Some local Grange chapters were accused of acting in concert with the Ku Klux Klan, embracing efforts in the areas of wages and labor intended to reverse the progress that Black citizens had made in the wake of Emancipation. See Theodore Saloutos, "The Grange in the South, 1870-1877," *The Journal of Southern History* 19, no. 4 (November 1953): 473–87, 477.

89. James S. Ferguson, "The Grange and Farmer Education in Mississippi," *The Journal of Southern History* 8, no. 4 (November 1942): 497–512, 500. Interestingly, while Black educational opportunity was not central to the Grange's advocacy, the organization did support higher education for women, viewing it as important to agricultural interests. See, e.g., James S. Ferguson, "The Grange and Farmer Education in Mississippi," 504.

90. Gelber, *The University and the People*, 56–57.

91. James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, 23.

92. “African Americans and Education during Reconstruction: The Tolsons’ Chapel Schools,” National Park Service, accessed May 31, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/african-americans-and-education-during-reconstruction-the-tolson-s-chapel-schools.htm>.

93. Cong. Globe, 42nd Cong., 3d Sess. 1710 (1873).

94. Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, 102. The addition of this language to discourse on equality in government support for land-grant colleges likely reflects the central role that discussions of racial equality had during the 42nd Congress. A year prior, the Senate had considered a supplemental civil rights bill and engaged in spirited debate over the incorporation of this same nondiscrimination language. See Cong. Globe, 42nd Cong., 2d Sess. 429–34 (1872).

95. 4 Cong. Rec. S2763 (daily ed. April 26, 1876) (statement of Sen. Justin Morrill).

96. During his remarks on behalf of his land grant college aid proposal, Sen. Justin Morrill highlighted the reciprocal responsibilities of citizenship, casting the provision of educational opportunity as a national duty: “To support the character of our national Government and its honor every citizen willingly stands ready to sacrifice not only property but life itself; and shall it be said for this the Government is to do nothing in return? Are there no reciprocal duties? . . . The character of a nation clearly does not altogether depend upon its geology, climate, soil, oysters, and terrapins, but very much upon its governmental and educational institutions and upon that growth of manhood which is their ripened product.” See 4 Cong. Rec. S2763 (daily ed. April 26, 1876) (statement of Sen. Justin Morrill).

97. “Letter from Frederick Douglass to Hon. Justin S. Morrill,” (January 1880). Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; see also Cross, *Justin Smith Morrill*.

98. Chalmers’s fellow Mississippian, Blanche Bruce (R-MS), introduced a similar version of the bill in the Senate at the same time. See 10 Cong. Rec. A14 (daily ed. February 24, 1880) (statement of Rep. James R. Chalmers).

99. See 10 Cong. Rec. A14 (daily ed. February 24, 1880) (statement of Rep. James R. Chalmers).

100. 15 Cong. Rec. S2244 (daily ed. March 25, 1884) (statement of Sen. James George).

101. 15 Cong. Rec. S2244 (daily ed. March 25, 1884) (statement of Sen. Benjamin Harrison).

102. It was the advice of his Senate colleague Henry Blair—the longtime champion of public support for common schools—that drove Morrill’s decision to remove support for public common schools from the Second Morrill Land-Grant proposal in April of 1890. See David Carleton, *Student’s Guide to Landmark Congressional Laws on Education* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 56.

103. The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1890, Pub. L. No. 51-841.

104. The Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1890, Pub. L. No. 51-841.

105. 21 Cong. Rec. S6241–6351 (daily ed. June 19–20, 1890).

106. Carleton, *Student’s Guide to Landmark Congressional Laws*, 57.

107. Scott Gelber, “The Populist Vision for Land-Grant Universities, 1880-1900,” in *The Land-Grant Colleges and the Reshaping of American Higher Education*, eds. Roger L. Geiger and Nathan M. Sorber (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2013), 165–66. However, on the subject of racial equity, it is important to note that while some populists expressed interest in providing women with higher educational opportunities that “could reduce the drudgery of fieldwork and prepare women to work as teachers, telegraph operators, or

clerks in case of economic depression or widowhood, populist support for educational egalitarian generally stopped short of supporting educational opportunity for [B]lack Americans.” See Gelber, “The Populist Vision,” 172; Scott M. Gelber, *The University and the People: Envisioning American Higher Education in an Era of Populist Protest* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 57.

108. The differing fates of Morrill’s Land-Grant Bill and the Blair Bill to support a system of public common schools likely reflected intense controversy over the prospect of federal oversight of southern institutions. While the Blair Bill provided for federal government supervision of common schools, the absence of such a provision in the Morrill Bill likely contributed to its success. Moreover, agricultural interests such as the Farmer’s Alliance were adamantly against the Blair Bill, whereas Justin Morrill was able to win the support of farmers in building a coalition to support his land-grant act. See Thomas Adams Upchurch, *Legislating Racism: The Billion Dollar Congress and the Birth of Jim Crow* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky), 47; Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education*, 142–43.

109. Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, 101.

110. Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education*, 145–48.

111. Jackson and Nunn, *Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, 13.

112. Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, 102. According to Eddy, this policy “accomplished for [African Americans] of the South what the first act in 1862 had accomplished for the men and women of other races.” Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, 258.

113. It was also the case with the mid-twentieth century higher education policies that were intended to expand access to colleges and universities. Although the federal government offered need-based financial aid to make college affordable, institutional discrimination against women and racial minorities limited higher educational access. As a result, lawmakers followed up on financial aid programs with regulatory policies that would ensure that all students enjoyed access to colleges and universities benefiting from federal funding. See Deondra Rose, *Citizens by Degree: Higher Education Policy and the Changing Gender Dynamics of American Citizenship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021); Deondra Rose, “Higher Education and the Transformation of American Citizenship,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50, no. 2 (April 2017): 403–07.

114. See Theda Skocpol, “Targeting within Universalism: Politically Viable Policies to Combat Poverty in the United States,” in *the Urban Underclass*, eds. Christopher Jencks and Paul E. Peterson (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1991).

115. Johnson, *Reforming Jim Crow*, 117–18.

116. Theodore J. Lowi, “American Business, Public Policy, Case-Studies, and Political Theory,” *World Politics* 16, no. 4 (July 1964): 677–715.