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ESSAY

Dancing with Jim Crow: The Chattanooga Embarrassment of the Methodist Episcopal Church

Paul W. Harris*

Minnesota State University Moorhead
*Corresponding author. E-mail: harrispa@mnstate.edu

Abstract
After the Civil War, northern Methodists undertook a successful mission to recruit a biracial membership in the South. Their Freedmen's Aid Society played a key role in outreach to African Americans, but when the denomination decided to use Society funds in aid of schools for Southern whites, a national controversy erupted over the refusal of Chattanooga University to admit African Americans. Caught between a principled commitment to racial brotherhood and the pressures of expediency to accommodate a growing white supremacist commitment to segregation, Methodists engaged in an agonized and heated debate over whether schools intended for whites should be allowed to exclude blacks. Divisions within the leadership of the Methodist Episcopal Church caught the attention of the national press and revealed the limits of even the most well-intentioned efforts to advance racial equality in the years after Reconstruction.

On an October day in 1886, Wilford Caulkins entered the printing office of T. C. Carter in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Carter published the *Methodist Advocate*, a paper that mostly circulated in the Southeast among white members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Caulkins had dropped by to check some proofs. In the office with Carter at the time was Rev. B. H. Johnson, the black pastor of the Wesley Chapel Methodist Church. Carter introduced the two visitors, and Johnson politely extended his hand in greeting. Caulkins refused to take it. Though he later claimed that he was merely distracted by the business at hand, it was clearly a deliberate snub, and Caulkins reportedly "turned away and said, 'No, sir.'"[1]

The incident was all too typical of the culture of segregation, and nothing would have come of the episode if not for the fact that Caulkins was the professor of ancient languages at Chattanooga University, which was already embroiled in a national controversy over its admissions policy. Johnson later accepted Caulkins's apology in the interest of racial peace and the welfare of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Like most African American members of the Church, Johnson had learned to tread carefully around the issue of social equality. From the vantage of the twenty-first century, it seems strange that the very phrase "social equality" was charged with emotional meaning in the late nineteenth-century South. Yet it was a highly sexualized animus that drew on fears of black males lusting after white women and invoked the dreaded prospect of

racial amalgamation. As long as the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments stood in the way of directly attacking legal and political equality, resistance to social equality provided a rallying cry for a reassertion of white supremacy, and it created the racial climate that gave rise to Jim Crow segregation and that justified lynching as a tool of racial control.[2]

Rev. Johnson thus had a legitimate reason to avoid stirring up whites' animosities, but there were larger issues at stake. The Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church had recently established Chattanooga University as part of the denomination's "white work" in the South. Methodism had split into northern and southern branches over the issue of slavery in 1844, and in the wake of the Civil War, the northern Methodist Episcopal Church had expanded back into the South by reaching out to both freed slaves and white Unionists. They founded the Freedmen's Aid Society in 1866 with the goal of building schools for the uplift of the freed slaves and the training of teachers and preachers. A remarkably large number of African Americans were drawn to the Church both by the educational opportunities thus offered and by its unique status as a biracial denomination. By the 1880s, the southern membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church numbered in the hundreds of thousands, with roughly equal numbers of whites and blacks.[3] No other Protestant denomination could boast anything close to their success in building a racially mixed membership.

That success runs counter to the dominant narrative about the black church after emancipation. Having heard more than enough of "servants, obey your masters" from white ministers during their enslavement, most freed slaves did indeed embrace religious separatism when given the opportunity to form their own churches.[4] Although the African Methodist Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal Zion denominations drew more adherents than the Methodist Episcopal Church with their message of "racial pride and independence,"[5] the sizable minority who joined the northern Methodists is indicative of a black church that was hardly monolithic. For many African Americans, the Methodist Episcopal Church offered autonomy and freedom of worship in their own congregations, along with the hope that fellowship with whites in a great national organization would help to break down racial prejudice.[6] Crucially, the Church's inclusiveness represented a principled stand against the spirit of racial caste.

In its conviction that opposing caste was vital to the ultimate elimination of slavery's morally corrupting legacy, the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodists was comparable to the American Missionary Association, its Congregationalist counterpart whose work Joe M. Richardson has described as "Christian Reconstruction." Both regarded education as the key to uplifting freed slaves and preparing them for full citizenship.[7] For both, Christian Reconstruction did not end in 1877, when President Rutherford B. Hayes withdrew the last federal troops from the South.[8] However, the relative success of Methodist evangelization, compared with the paltry numbers who joined the Congregationalist churches, made Christian Reconstruction a more fraught endeavor with them, one that actually more closely paralleled the tensions that brought an end to political Reconstruction. Because the Methodist Episcopal Church came to include the full spectrum of national attitudes, they were torn between the goals of promoting racial advancement and seeking sectional reunion. It was the ultimate incompatibility of standing with the black brethren against racial caste and reconciling with their southern white co-religionists that caused the explosion over Chattanooga University.

The lesson of Reconstruction may have been, in Leon Litwack's words, that white America would not "rearrange its values and priorities to grant to black Americans a

positive assistance commensurate with the inequalities they had suffered and the magnitude of the problems they faced."[9] Yet the African American members of the Methodist Episcopal Church continued to hope that cooperating on equal terms with whites in a great national institution like the Church would afford them vital white allies in the struggle for advancement. They did not expect that to happen overnight, and they accepted responsibility for raising their people up from the degrading and demoralizing legacy of slavery as a precondition for social acceptance. They clung as an article of faith, however, to "the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man" as the guiding ideal that would keep the Methodist Episcopal Church in the forefront of an evolution toward racial justice. That faith would be constantly tested by the Church's struggle to maintain an impossible balance between principle and expediency. As the Executive Committee of the Freedmen's Aid Society put it rather obscurely in an 1886 report, the policies of the Methodist Episcopal Church had been shaped by "the recognition of great principles and the sanction of an administration adjusted to existing conditions."[10] Unfortunately, those conditions included an unyielding commitment to white supremacy among their own white membership, a commitment whose grip on Southern institutions was only growing stronger toward the end of the nineteenth century. For northern Methodists, nothing in that period did more to highlight the strength of prejudice and the moral dilemmas of accommodating it than the categorical refusal of Chattanooga University to admit African American students.

The commitment to inclusiveness on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church had never entailed full integration. Rarely could one find a mixed-race Methodist congregation on Sunday, which by and large suited the preferences of both races. The aim of the Church's Northern leaders had always been to promote "*colored pastorates* for *colored people*," which carried the clear implication that building up their work among the freed slaves would have to develop along separate lines from their "white work." That also included separation at the level of annual conferences, which were usually organized by region. Separate conferences for African Americans had first emerged in 1864 in the areas that straddled the Mason-Dixon line, and the movement gradually spread to the Deep South at the insistence of white members.[11]

However, an issue did arise when the pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Birmingham, Alabama, advertised in the local paper that his church "is for white persons exclusively, and colored persons are not invited or expected to attend." The matter was brought to light a few weeks later by the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, whose target audience was the African American membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The paper saw in this "the spirit of Antichrist (for the spirit of caste is Antichrist)," and explained, "We have no objection to churches for white or colored, German, Spanish or French people, but we do most earnestly protest against churches from which any race, nation or color is excluded."[12] That fine distinction between intent and policy, between institutions "for" one group versus institutions explicitly excluding other groups, defined Methodist Episcopal Church policy toward schools as well and had been generally accepted. For African American leaders, that distinction was significant because of its long-term implications. If separation was a mere holdover from slavery, it could be overcome as the freed people rose in character and culture, but if it became a rule, it would legitimize and reinforce a hardened racism. As attested by Rev. A. K. Davis, the former lieutenant governor of Mississippi, the Birmingham episode had strengthened his growing conviction "that the prejudice against us is not so much on account of our former position, but a dishonorable, uncharitable, unchristian prejudice against color."[13]

The Birmingham affair did not rise to the level of controversy that would erupt around Chattanooga University, but there were direct connections between the episodes. Most directly, Rev. Hiram Revels, who had briefly served in the United States Senate from Mississippi during Reconstruction, wrote to the *Southwestern Christian Advocate* that he was disturbed by "those who have tried to defend [the Birmingham pastor's] course, and especially … Rev. John F. Spence, President of East Tennessee Wesleyan University."[14] Spence was a key player in the politics of Methodist higher education in Tennessee. On the other hand, black Methodists were heartened by the publicity the incident attracted. Daniel Hays, a leading black minister in Chattanooga, became convinced that agitation over the issue had done good "as an harbinger of reform" that would help the Church "gain purity and strength."[15] The issue caught the attention of the northern press, particularly *Zion's Herald*, the New England-based Methodist paper, and the New York *Independent*, a reformist paper with Congregationalist roots and considerable influence. William Hayes Ward, the editor of the *Independent* and one of the era's leading champions of integration, editorialized, "If the Methodist Episcopal Church surrenders, as some of its men in the South have done, to the claims of caste, its apostasy will be as deep and damnable as that of Judas." A heightened sensitivity to the danger that caste was infecting the Methodist Episcopal Church would help to fan the flames when the administration of Chattanooga University took an analogous stance. The *New York Freeman*, for example, in condemning discrimination at Chattanooga University, cited the Birmingham church as additional evidence that the Methodist Episcopal Church was riven by caste.[16]

The roots of the Chattanooga embarrassment can be traced to 1879, when the Freedmen's Aid Society paid the debts and took ownership of Ellijay Seminary, a school for whites in Georgia.[17] Prior to that time, the Freedmen's Aid Society had confined itself to schools for African Americans, and whites had taken responsibility for their schools through their annual conferences. However, the Freedmen's Aid Society Board of Managers felt that supporting the "white work" was essential, and their constitution offered a loophole where it stipulated that their mission was "to labor for the education and special aid of Freedmen and others."[18]

The meaning of the phrase "and others" became the focus of debate when delegates gathered in Cincinnati in May of 1880 for the quadrennial General Conference of the whole Church. John Spence, the president of East Tennessee Wesleyan University, came prepared to press the case for aiding white schools. At the General Conference, Spence represented the Holston Conference, an overwhelmingly white conference that extended across the southern Appalachians. The conference had established East Tennessee Wesleyan in 1867, and as late as 1881, the university advertised in Methodist papers that it "is for white people exclusively." Holston Conference continued to back the school to the best of its ability, but as soon as the Freedmen's Aid Society opened the door to aiding white schools, they petitioned for assistance.[19]

Spence was nothing if not aggressive. Once assured that the General Conference would not overturn the Freedmen's Aid Society's interpretation of "and others," Spence went further and proposed putting white and colored educational work "on a similar basis," with 25 percent of funds raised dedicated to white schools. That motion was tabled, but it was followed by a flurry of counterproposals. Turning all those motions aside, the General Conference adopted the recommendation of the Committee on Freedmen's Aid and Southern Work "to give such aid to [white] schools during the next quadrennium as can be done without embarrassment to the schools

among the Freedmen." The committee's report emphasized the need for continuing to expand their work among African Americans in light of oppression that threatened to reduce them to peonage, but they also urged Methodist pastors to stress the claims of both races in their fund-raising appeals.[20]

The African American membership was divided about the actions of the General Conference, but leading voices stood behind the Church. G. E. Cunningham chastised the critics in the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*: "We notice that some of our brethren are disposed to criticise [sic] the plan to build any school for the education of the white population. Be careful, my brethren, don't strike the hand that has done so much for you." Along with this politics of gratitude, others expressed a rather naive confidence in the moral force of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the power of its schools to overcome racism. Rev. I. B. Ford was certain that "the Freedmen's Aid Society is broad enough in its purpose and strong enough in its hold upon the sympathy and confidence of the public to amply provide for these schools," which he regarded as part of the Church's grand work in "introducing and developing a new civilization—a civilization more in harmony with the advanced Christian thought and sentiment of the age." Specifically, black Methodists hoped that bringing light and learning to whites would help to build interracial alliances in support of greater equality. The Mississippi Conference reported, "We recognize the fact that our strength and influence as a people depends largely upon the number of helpers and friends we have among all classes of people, and we shall therefore rejoice in every institution of learning, established by our church for any of our people. We look forward to the hour when time and the grace of God shall completely and gloriously save all the people from the last vestige of race prejudice."[21] The question was, could a message of racial brotherhood be effectively conveyed in separate schools?

Immediately after the 1880 General Conference, Spence went into action. He called together representatives from the five other white conferences in the southeast and invited Richard Rust, the Corresponding Secretary of the Freedmen's Aid Society, to attend. Meeting in Chattanooga in August, the Education Convention endorsed East Tennessee Wesleyan as the central university for "our people," but Rust was not convinced that its location in Athens was best. Two years later, a commission was established that was dominated by Rust, and it recommended the more accessible and prospering city of Chattanooga.[22] A rail transportation hub with a booming economy, Chattanooga won out largely because of the promise of financial backing from local citizens. Key backers included Rev. John J. Manker, pastor of the small but wealthy First Methodist Church; and Hiram S. Chamberlain, the man credited with founding the modern iron industry in the South. It is worth noting that Spence, Manker, and Chamberlain were all natives of Ohio and veterans of the Union army. "Carpetbaggers" they may have been, but radicals they were not. The New York *Christian Advocate* expected that Chattanooga's "population flowing in from all parts of the nation must naturally be free from sectional prejudices," but they were clearly not free from racial prejudices.[23] Local support presumed that it would be a university exclusively for whites, and Northern transplants supported racial segregation no less firmly than native whites.

Yet it was also from the North that the main outcry against racial exclusion arose. The *Independent* began to agitate the issue in April 1883, asking, "What is to be the character of Chattanooga University? Is it to be open to both races and sexes, or is it to be for whites alone?" In what would remain the crux of the problem for the denomination, the paper observed that they were receiving mixed messages:

> Bishop Warren, who presided over the committee on location, is reported to have said that the Methodist Episcopal Church opens its school-doors to both sexes and all races; but a Chattanooga gentleman, who is interested in the enterprise, deprecates, in a letter to the Chattanooga *Daily Times*, so "broad an expression." He understands that the University is for whites only and wants it to be known that he is not "in the slightest shadow of the ghost of a way sympathizing or aiding the establishment of a 'mixed school.'"[24]

Despite such reassurances, the nervous white citizens of Chattanooga were not forthcoming with the funds that the Freedmen's Aid Society had sought for the purchase of land, and the Society was forced to dip into its own coffers.[25]

Concern that the Methodist Episcopal Church was surrendering to caste was also growing within its own ranks. Soon after the *Independent* raised the alarm, the *Southwestern Christian Advocate* sought to rally the African American membership. They called on the Church to "never surrender the Christian doctrine of universal brotherhood … by building caste churches or caste schools." The fault lay with those who assumed "that the way to elevate men is not to assail their erroneous principles and sinful practices, but to pass over them and to accommodate ourselves, in our instruction, to their errors, sinful passions, and wicked prejudices."[26] Agitation also arose from students at all-black Clark University, who criticized the Freedmen's Aid Society for having no consistent policy on whether it would acquire land if the deed specified that a "school should be for whites alone." In the North, the main center of opposition to segregation in their schools came from the New England Conference. Leading the charge was John W. Hamilton, the dynamic pastor of People's Church in Boston who later became a corresponding secretary of the Freedmen's Aid Society and a Methodist bishop. One man who spoke for both New England and black students was J. W. E. Bowen. A native of New Orleans, Bowen was a great success story who had earned degrees from two Freedmen's Aid Society schools, New Orleans University and Central Tennessee College. He had come north in 1882 to attend Boston University, where he would acquire a Bachelor of Sacred Theology and a PhD. After the New England Conference went on record as "solidly against … the abominable caste system in our church," Bowen took it upon himself to try to drum up support elsewhere. He reported on their stand to the readers of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, and he wrote confidentially to other leading Methodists seeking their support.[27]

Meanwhile, the Freedmen's Aid Society had decided to establish a second university for whites in Little Rock, Arkansas. Ironically, the founding of Little Rock University aroused little controversy in part because of the existence in the same city of Philander Smith College, a school that the Methodist Episcopal Church had earlier created for African Americans. It seemed that here was one case where the Methodist policy of separate but equal schools worked, a success that was seized upon by the backers of Chattanooga University. John J. Manker pointed to Little Rock to publicly reassure the citizens of Chattanooga that their university also "will not be a mixed school."[28]

Little Rock University dedicated its new building in 1883, and their young president Edward Lewis, a Massachusetts native who had recently graduated from Boston University and would be hired away by Chattanooga University a few years later, reported enthusiastically about the dedication to the *Zion's Herald*. Lewis was particularly taken with Bishop Isaac Wiley's address, which Lewis described as "a simple statement of the Southern problem from the side of the facts and of practical experience." Wiley emphasized that two hundred years of slavery had left the races "far apart in

intelligence, in wealth, in social and family life" and that it was beyond the power of the church to bring them together. Under those circumstances, he argued that the best hope for overcoming inequality was to educate both races under the care of a single denomination. Lewis wrote:

> The Bishop made a tremendous hit by appealing to the colored people themselves to say who it is that bulldozes and cheats and reviles them—the educated white man or the ignorant ruffian. They all know the answer to this, and it isn't difficult for them to see the logic that requires for the equalizing of the races a liberal education for both.[29]

It was indeed a common theme that a New South was emerging in the post-Reconstruction era that would promote racial moderation in the interests of progress.[30]

Three months later, Bishop Wiley was again at the podium, this time for the groundbreaking ceremony in Chattanooga. Apparently, African Americans were not invited to this gathering, as the bishop's remarks were clearly aimed at a white audience. Rather than extolling the role of education in promoting racial reconciliation, Wiley made sectional reconciliation his theme. He intoned, "Here in this valley where battles were fought, in sight of the graves of the fallen heroes of both sides, where the South and North meet as brothers, let us shake hands together, forget the past and feel that we have a common destiny in the future." Such rhetoric found growing favor among whites throughout the nation and boded ill for any commitment to the cause of freedom for African Americans.[31]

The issue of mixed or separate schools came to a head at the 1884 General Conference in Philadelphia. Caught in the middle was Joseph C. Hartzell, the new assistant secretary of the Freedmen's Aid Society and the chair of the Committee on Freedmen's Aid and Work in the South at the General Conference. In those roles, Hartzell felt duty bound to stand by the actions of the Freedmen's Aid Society, but he also had strong ties to the African American membership. Hartzell was a remarkable figure who first gained notoriety as a young man when he rescued four sailors from drowning in Lake Michigan. He had come south in 1870 to lead mission work in New Orleans. As a presiding elder, he had opposed separate conferences, and as the founder and editor of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, he had given black Methodists an important voice. He had brought in A. E. P. Albert, a gifted former slave, as his assistant editor, and the two men shared a deep opposition to racial caste. Albert had continued to grow into a leadership role after Hartzell left in 1881 to become assistant to Richard Rust at the Freedmen's Aid Society, and he served at the 1884 General Conference as a delegate from Louisiana Conference and Secretary of the Committee on the State of the Church.[32]

After joining the administration of the Freedmen's Aid Society, Hartzell wrote to reassure the readers of the *Southwestern* that aiding white schools had not hurt funding for other schools because the white schools "have been almost entirely supported by the people themselves." He also reiterated his strong opposition to "every improper form of race prejudice," and as evidence that this was also the policy of the Freedmen's Aid Society, he recounted how they had refused a donation of property until the deed was revised to strike out the words "a school for whites."[33] How much the controversy troubled Hartzell can be glimpsed in the obsessive way he clipped every article about it he could find, ultimately filling over two hundred pages in two different scrapbooks. At

the General Conference, he succeeded in injecting his own divided loyalties into the proceedings. On the third day of the month-long General Conference, the delegates adopted his motion to direct "all petitions and memorials bearing upon the relation of the races in our churches … to the Committee on the State of the Church." As a result, both that committee and the Committee on Freedmen's Aid and Work in the South would weigh in on the issue of segregation. While the Freedmen's Aid committee was bound to support the work of the Freedmen's Aid Society, the opponents of caste gained the advantage in the Committee on the State of the Church and chose Hamilton to write their report.[34]

A series of resolutions on the subject were brought forward over the next several days. The most significant was presented by J. M. Shumpert of the Mississippi Conference. Citing the "great deal of discussion, both in the religious and secular press, of caste in the Methodist Episcopal Church," the resolution strongly condemned caste as "a curse" and "a sin … born of ignorance and hate." It urged that no "person in authority of Church or school property, belonging to or under the control of the Methodist Episcopal Church, should exclude any person or persons from their churches, schools, colleges, or universities, … on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."[35]

If Hartzell had hoped to avoid conflict in the Committee on Freedmen's Aid and Work in the South, he was disappointed. To write its report the Committee chose none other than John J. Manker, one of Chattanooga University's biggest boosters and its future professor of theology, but the Committee also included Hamilton and others of similar views. One of them later reported that "our committee, in spite of the efforts of its chairman, persisted in debating the color-line question." Indeed, under grilling from the Committee, "the agents of the Freedmen's Aid Society protested over and over … that no student had been excluded from any school under the control of the Society, because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Several important changes were in fact made to Manker's draft. Hamilton added strong language to the report's preamble emphasizing "equal rights," including not only "to the best facilities for intellectual and spiritual culture," but "in the exercise of a free and unconstrained choice in all social relations." He then succeeded in inserting a proviso into the resolution on separate schools that "there shall be no interference with the rights set forth in the preamble." The committee also struck out the word "separate" before a reference to "schools for the benefit of our white membership in the South."[36]

Confident that there was no conflict with the push in the Committee on the State of the Church to forbid exclusion, Hamilton and his allies voted for the report of the Committee on Freedmen's Aid and Work in the South, and it was adopted on the nineteenth day of the General Conference without apparent dissent. Yet the friends of Chattanooga University who supported exclusion clearly had a different view. They focused on the gist of the Committee's recommendations, which represented a clear victory for separate schools. Their report defended schools for whites with the claim that "their liberalizing effects upon public sentiments have greatly redounded to the advantage of our colored people." Because of "peculiar difficulties," they regarded the question of mixed schools as "one of expediency, which is to be left to the choice and administration of those on the ground and more immediately concerned."[37] As far as they were concerned, Chattanooga University's local administration was given free rein to keep out African American students if they chose.

That interpretation was in clear contradiction to the report of the Committee on the State of the Church that was presented five days later. They recommended "the policy of

the Methodist Episcopal Church to be, that no member of any society within the Church shall be excluded from public worship in any and every edifice of the denomination, and no student shall be excluded from instruction in any and every school under the supervision of the Church, because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." That success had not come easily. The Committee reportedly adopted the resolution by a single vote "after a long and heated discussion." When the report came to the floor of the General Conference, a firestorm ensued. A motion for indefinite postponement failed, as did a substitute motion claiming that "there is no call for any further action upon the relation of the races in our Church." Three more procedural motions were also defeated, and the report was adopted.[38] It was therefore permissible to support schools for whites as long as they were kept white by means other than excluding blacks. The 1884 General Conference thus left the schools issue in perfect confusion.

This contradictory policy might have succeeded if no African American students had been bold enough to apply to Chattanooga University. As the Board of Managers of the Freedmen's Aid Society later admitted, "it was not the expectation of the General Conference that any advantage would be taken of its deliverance on the subject by persons or parties interested in embarrassing the work of our Church, or of this Society."[39] Two other outcomes of the 1884 General Conference seem designed to prevent such an embarrassment. Richard Rust won reelection for corresponding secretary of the Freedmen's Aid Society, turning aside a challenge from Joseph Hartzell, and Marshall W. Taylor easily defeated A. E. P. Albert in the election for editor of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*. In the aftermath of the Birmingham affair, Taylor, another African American, had claimed on the basis of his own experiences in Ohio that "it is not a 'color' but a character line which exists in the M. E. Church." In contrast to Albert, Taylor counseled that African Americans in the Church "will have 'to labor and to wait' [and] guard against every thing that would urge us beyond our strength." Although leading black Methodists pointedly challenged his view, it made him popular with white delegates.[40] Editing an official denominational newspaper was as high an elective office as an African American had yet held in the Methodist Episcopal Church.[41] Taylor embraced the honor and made loyalty to the Church his first priority.

Indeed, the issue of separate schools went dormant for two years as construction continued on Chattanooga University's new campus. John J. Manker continued to reassure everyone that the General Conference's rule on "expediency" allowed the school to admit only white applicants. Their new building was the most expensive that the northern Methodists had yet built in the South, and when it was completed in 1886, they accepted their first applicants (fig. 1).[42] Among them were two young African Americans, William Wilson and Louis Gibbs. They were an exhorter and a steward working with Rev. Johnson at Wesley Chapel, but they "insisted that no one had put them up to" it, which was probably true. Wilson wrote that he "preferred to be in school with white boys to test my ability to compete with them in books." Manker tried in vain to dissuade them, and the trustees attempted with no greater success to keep the matter under wraps. A week later, three black women from Athens, Tennessee, added their applications to those of Wilson and Gibbs, and in October the story leaked out to the press. The *Independent* quickly seized on it, asking sarcastically, "What is the matter with the Negroes in the South that they are so slow to learn that if they want to stay in the Methodist Episcopal Church they must keep their place?"[43]

John Hamilton then wrote a scathing critique that the *Independent* published in November. Blaming the actions of the university on "political conniving," he rather

Figure 1. When it was completed in 1886, Old Main, the original building on the campus of Chattanooga University, was described by Freedmen's Aid Society officials as "the first and finest public edifice that is seen by the visitor" to the city. Tennessee Library Association, https://www.tnla.org/page/384.

tactlessly labeled the South a "medieval civilization." However, he offered a compelling argument that the General Conference resolution forbidding exclusion in their schools represented a considered, final, and unequivocal policy. His version of the General Conference proceedings drew the backing of several other delegates, most influential of which was that of Adna B. Leonard, the corresponding secretary of the Missionary Society.[44]

The controversy now exploded in the press.[45] For its part, the *Independent* kept up their attacks for the next several months. In reporting on the formal dedication of the university, they blasted Bishops Walden and Mallalieu for dodging the issue. The *Christian Advocate* responded by printing an excerpt from Bishop Walden's address, which simply reiterated the twin policies enacted at the General Conference and added nothing that would make sense of the apparent contradiction between them. Criticized for its silence on the issue, the *Christian Advocate* was provoked into offering its own perspective on the controversy. Trying to make the best of a bad situation, editor J. M. Buckley recommended that once the black students were admitted, the community should be assured that few others were likely to follow and then take steps to ensure they did not. The key was "to arrange all matters in the school so as to make the situation as little annoying to others as possible. This would have a tendency to keep whites from leaving and colored students from applying." To the *Independent* this "seems to imply a course of treatment of colored scholars in mixed schools as would prevent any colored person of self-respect from applying for admission." The suggestion that he supported harsh and degrading treatment to drive away African American applicants led Buckley to accuse the *Independent* of abandoning "truth and decency" and of inciting race prejudice by fanning the flames of controversy.[46]

The *Independent* was similarly critical of other Methodist papers. Though assured that many Methodists shared their indignation, they lamented that so little evidence of it appeared in the press. One exception was the *Northwestern Christian Advocate*, whose editor, Arthur Edwards, favored admitting the black applicants "Even if sent by the very Devil." Edwards did not believe that the resolution on expediency gave white administrators free rein, noting that leaving the question to "those on the ground" ought to include blacks as well. More commonly, Methodist papers held to the argument that the Church remained steadfast in its opposition to caste, but that sustaining separate schools was dictated by expediency. The *Independent* countered, "If caste is a wrong principle no amount of special pleading can make their action one of expediency or right." They even questioned whether it was merely a question of expediency, offering evidence that, in some quarters, leaders in the Methodist Episcopal Church regarded the exclusion of African Americans as itself a sound principle. The *Baltimore Methodist* was quoted as declaring that God "'created the races different—one white, the other colored'—and 'he evidently means that they shall remain separate in the home, in the social life, in educational and church work.'"[47] The whole episode exposed the profound lack of consensus within the Methodist Episcopal Church concerning the place of African Americans in the church and in society.

A new voice in opposition to caste emerged in the person of Wilbur P. Thirkield, the young dean of the Gammon School of Theology that the Methodist Episcopal Church had recently opened in Atlanta. Thirkield wrote a particularly pointed and insightful column for the New York *Christian Advocate.* He contended that, "instead of our white churches and schools availing to educate up, the tendency seems to be the other way. Instead of lifting people out of prejudice, … we, as a Church, are beginning to stand for the same prejudices." He regarded the situation in Chattanooga as a great test of the Church's principles if the two applicants whose "only crime is their color" were denied admission. Thirkield had been in the South long enough to hear the claim that co-education of the races "will tend toward social equality," and he called on the Church to "unmask this bugbear" and "to prove, as Berea College has for a score of years, that Christian recognition does not tend to amalgamation." He wrote, "It was a simple Church right, and not a social relation, that these young men were seeking of their Church—the right of equality before the civil law and the cross of Christ." Demonstrating an understanding of how racial stereotypes were warping those principles, he challenged, "The time has come when we should begin to treat the Negro race as individuals and not as a 'herd.'"[48]

While the storm was brewing over Chattanooga University's admissions policy, the Freedmen's Aid Society was quietly investigating Prof. Caulkins's snub of Rev. Johnson at the office of T. C. Carter. The incident had been reported to their executive committee in late October, and they had instructed Rust to look into it. If the allegation were confirmed, Bishop Walden was directed to bring it before the university's board of trustees and ask for Caulkins's resignation. The conflicting testimony received by Rust led to further inquiries by Bishop Walden in December and finally to hearings before the executive committee. By then, the story had been leaked to the *Independent.* The executive committee finally concluded, in a close vote, "that Prof. Caulkins did intentionally refuse to shake hands with the Rev. B. H. Johnson; that he does entertain sentiments that unfit him for a position in a school with which our Freedmen's Aid Society is officially connected, and that he should be asked to resign at once." They acknowledged, however, that "the power to dismiss teachers from the Chattanooga University is vested by the charter in its board of trustees."[49]

In Chattanooga, the board of trustees was unmoved. Meeting in January 1887, they cited the General Conference's rule and resolved, "That we deem it inexpedient to admit colored students to the University, and that the Faculty be instructed to administer accordingly." They argued that "in the present state of society in the South," admitting African Americans would "be fatal" to the institution. They further contended that it "would excite prejudice and passion, alienate the races, and prove especially detrimental to the interests of the colored people." They also refused to ask for Caulkins's resignation.[50]

Up until this point, it had been possible to argue in defense of the faculty at Chattanooga University, as did the *Northern Christian Advocate*, that "we have reason to believe that their hatred of caste and all the injustice connected with it is not less sincere and intense than that of their critics."[51] The Caulkins incident, however, offered clear evidence that a policy of excluding black students from Chattanooga University was not simply a matter of bowing to practical necessity; it reflected deep-seated prejudice on the part of Southern white authorities in the Methodist Episcopal Church. It thus rekindled interest in the whole issue of separate schools and was reported in papers from Boston as far west as St. Louis and Milwaukee. The *New York Freeman*, edited by renowned African American journalist T. Thomas Fortune, had been agitating the issue in the black press just as the *Independent* had in the white. On learning that the Chattanooga University trustees had refused to fire Caulkins, Fortune concluded, "It is evident that the bigoted and narrow-minded trustees are endeavoring to convert the University into an all-white, Negro-hating institution."[52]

More critics within the Methodist Episcopal Church also began to come forward. In Detroit, the Methodist Preachers' Meeting demanded "that no further appropriations be made from the Freedmen's Aid funds for the sustenance of Chattanooga University, until the present rejection of freedmen is annulled." Rev. T. B. Snowden of Centenary Biblical Institute, a Freedmen's Aid Society school in Baltimore, assured readers of *Zion's Herald* that "no white man was ever denied admission into any one of the freedmen's schools." In his view, "To educate men in their prejudice is a curse instead of a blessing," and any student unwilling to attend a mixed school "is not worthy of us or of an education, and ought to live and die in ignorance, let him be white or black." Daniel Hays stressed the "radical difference between an attempt to force the mixing of the races in churches and schools, and the effort to prevent the enactment of a law intended to prohibit such mixing." For him, the issue was personal, and he recalled, "On the plantation, in the days of my boyhood, I preferred colored children for my playmates, for no other reason than I knew then that white children were always ready to treat me as an inferior." He still preferred the company of his own race, "but if compelled to it by law, founded on caste prejudice, my will revolts."[53]

Rev. J. Will Jackson of Kansas City argued, "Unless this blatant outrage is condemned by the Church, it will stamp hypocrisy and insincerity upon her profession of interest in the elevation of the Negro. Such treatment imparts only venom to the existing race prejudice." He warned that if the policy against exclusion was not strictly enforced, the black man "will still possess a privilege granted him by an authority higher than the Methodist Episcopal Church—the privilege to go elsewhere." Jackson's column elicited rebuttals from G. W. Hughey of Carthage, Missouri, and T. Cotton of Erin, Tennessee. Hughey thought Jackson "has shown a remarkable lack of appreciation of the unyielding facts which underlie the whole fabric of Southern society." He contended that prejudice was more likely to be exacerbated by any "attempt to obliterate the [color] line," and he argued that maintaining separate but equal schools did not make them "a caste Church." Cotton, writing as a veteran of the Southern white work, called

Caulkins's behavior "entirely indefensible" and supported the goal of "a genuine brotherhood in the central South," but he had no use for "visionary and impracticable theories about mixed Conferences, congregations, and schools" and felt the best approach entailed "securing the co-operation of … men who represent the best element in both races."[54]

The dispute between the Freedmen's Aid Society and the Board of Trustees of Chattanooga University had reached an impasse. It had become a power struggle made particularly awkward by the fact that the university administration was answerable to two different boards: the local trustees and the managers of the Freedmen's Aid Society. Although the *Independent* fulminated over the university's charter from the state of Tennessee, which gave the Board of Trustees operational control over admissions and the faculty, in reality the Freedmen's Aid Society held the upper hand. Most importantly, the Freedmen's Aid Society owned the property. If the contract between them was ever terminated, as either party had the right to do with a year's notice, the Freedmen's Aid Society would take over unless the university could raise the money to reimburse their investment.[55]

The Board of Trustees responded to the impasse by attempting just that, and a second January 1887 meeting launched a fund-raising campaign in hopes of buying out the Freedmen's Aid Society. It was a hopeless undertaking. They had fallen far short of their goal in the original campaign when Chattanooga's economy was booming, and the situation was worse in every respect now. At their February meeting, the Board of Managers of the Freedmen's Aid Society likewise resolved to terminate the contract unless their demands were met, and in March the trustees caved. Caulkins was ousted, and they agreed in the future to "cheerfully co-operate with the Freedmen's Aid Society in an earnest and faithful effort to conduct the institution as a school for whites, without the application of any rules of exclusion on grounds of 'race, color, or previous condition.'" Two of the trustees immediately resigned and the school's enrollment plummeted from 175 to 104, but the worst was over. The white annual conferences attempted to reverse the policy at the 1888 General Conference, but they only succeeded in changing the name of the Freedmen's Aid Society to the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society.[56]

Methodist leaders now rallied to prevent further damage. The heat of controversy had threatened fund-raising for the Freedmen's Aid Society, and it was vital to remind everyone that they were still doing important work.[57] A potentially greater danger was loss of membership. Nothing better illustrates the Methodist Episcopal Church's Southern dilemma than the mutual charges that the other side was fomenting racial antagonism and thereby threatening their work in the South. Given that white Southerners had no intention of integrating with blacks, trying to force the issue ran the risk of driving them into the arms of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which made no pretense of accepting African Americans.[58] On the other hand, if the black membership felt that the Church had capitulated to Jim Crow, they might desert the denomination for the African Methodist Episcopal Church or the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, which were always trying to convince them that they would never be treated as equals in a white-dominated denomination.[59]

In fact, neither of those fears came to pass. The loyalty of the African American members of the Methodist Episcopal Church is at times admirable and at times bordering on the pathetic. Particularly tragic was the case of Marshall W. Taylor, the new editor of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*. Taylor was born free to mixed-race parents in Louisville, Kentucky, but none of that had exempted him from the travails of African Americans. His first school was broken up when his teacher was tarred and feathered

and ridden out of town on a rail. His family was driven from Ghent, Kentucky, when his mother was accused of involvement with the Underground Railroad after she went to hear Frederick Douglass in Ohio. His rise through the ranks of the Methodist Episcopal Church to become editor of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate* was nothing short of heroic.[60]

In taking over the *Southwestern*, Taylor made it his first priority to defend the Methodist Episcopal Church against critics from the African Methodist churches. Central to that defense was the question of whether the Methodist Episcopal Church had surrendered to caste. Taylor's consistent position throughout the Chattanooga crisis held "that there is 'a color line but no caste line' in our Church. … It is not needful that the color line should be banished to secure perfect manhood and ecclesiastical rights to all members of our Church." The distinction was not easy to grasp. As Taylor explained it, the color line "is if not natural exceedingly convenient and expedient for us at present … as the immediate means of reaching the people on both sides of the line." On the other hand, "'color caste' … is a crime [and] a plain contravention of the Golden Rule."[61]

For whatever it was worth, the distinction between a color line and a caste line enabled Taylor to fully support the argument that separate schools were a necessary expedient. He went so far as to denounce the "radicalism" of the students who had applied to Chattanooga University when there were a number of schools nearby that would give them a good education. He argued that "an enforced effort to mingle the races … is doomed. … If it ever comes at all, it must come by the slow and steady progress of social transformation wrought out by the inculcation of right principles among the people by their consent where and as we find them."[62] Taylor's gradualist accommodation to the principle of separate but equal could lead to some rather tortured reasoning. He went so far as to argue that black Methodists should stay out of the argument, because segregation, having been enacted by whites, was for whites to fix. That stance seemed to leave no room for any kind of agitation against segregation by African Americans, and Taylor even echoed defenders of segregation in arguing that "it is no proof to us that Southern white man is unchristian or hates because he refuses to attend school or church with Negroes. It is simply his heritage and training."[63]

Taylor bemoaned the outpourings of "contempt and wrath" suffered by the Chattanooga University trustees and their defenders, a fair share of which was directed at him personally. The most cutting attack came from T. Thomas Fortune of the *New York Freeman*. In an editorial entitled "The Cringing Class of Negroes," Fortune excoriated Taylor who, in his efforts "to please his white superiors," was like "a great many Negroes in this country who stand forever ready to … bow and scrape to white villainy for a smile, a pat on the back, or a paltry consideration in cash." Taylor tried to keep up a brave front in the face of such attacks, but they must have taken a toll.[64] In September 1887, after only a year and a half on the job, he died. Although it is impossible to know if the strain had contributed to his demise, he was only 41 years old. Taylor deserved criticism, but he had a point when he opined, "If we can not mix [the races] in reality where is the use of any declaration that they may mix."[65] In fact, despite Chattanooga University's capitulation on its exclusion policy, no African American students ever attended the school.

The struggles of Chattanooga University convinced a number of Methodist leaders that the Freedmen's Aid Society had overextended by creating that school in addition to East Tennessee Wesleyan (which had been renamed Grant Memorial University). Among them was Joseph Hartzell, who had succeeded Richard Rust as corresponding secretary in 1888. Rust had been a friend to Chattanooga University, and though

Hartzell had no desire to further weaken the denomination's white schools, he felt that the sensible course was to merge the two schools.[66] It was not accomplished easily. Relations between the two schools had always been frosty, and the recent controversies had done nothing to assuage them. What finally emerged was a school split between the two campuses and dubbed U. S. Grant University. Hartzell's announcement of the merger celebrated, "God has put the Methodist Episcopal Church in this historic and glorious center that her power might be multiplied in aiding to solve the questions of ignorance, prejudice, and caste."[67] That remained to be seen.

In fact, an ugly epilogue to the Chattanooga affair took place in 1893. That year the trustees of U. S. Grant University replaced John Spence as chancellor with Bishop Isaac Joyce, who had resided in Chattanooga since his election to the episcopacy in 1888. Joyce had put a great deal of effort into building up the white work and was apparently quite popular with the people of the city, but Spence and his old ally T. C. Carter felt slighted.[68] In the midst of this brouhaha, Joyce was vilified for spending the night in the home of Rev. P. P. Brooks, an African American presiding elder. Joyce had come to Cleveland, Tennessee, to dedicate a new church and accepted Brooks's invitation despite efforts by local whites to dissuade him. Joyce was roundly condemned for "his ideas on social equality," and one local lawyer wrote, "The southern idea upon this question is not simply to eschew social equality with the negro, but to avoid anything tending to stir up the question." The flap was a patent overreaction, but the firestorm was fed by memories of the earlier controversy. The *Chattanooga News* editorialized, "It was Bishop Joyce who favored mixing the races in the Grant University, and as he is now chancellor, we suppose he will try to bring it about."[69] As if further confirmation was needed, the episode once again demonstrated the deep commitment of local whites to maintaining segregation."

In the final analysis, both Bishop Joyce and his critics were representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which, as the nation's largest denomination, contained within itself a cross-section of opinions on race. Those opinions in the late nineteenth century tilted increasingly toward a belief in white supremacy, and, like political Reconstruction, Christian Reconstruction in the Methodist Episcopal Church came to a disappointing end. When the northern Methodists came south, they could not avoid the snares of Jim Crow. They tried instead to dance around them. It was a sorry spectacle, but not an abject surrender. The Methodist Episcopal Church faced unique challenges as the only biracial denomination of any size in the country. The hope that uniting the races in this way and conferring an equal status on both would give rise to brotherhood remained a distant dream in the context of late nineteenth-century race relations, but it left a legacy to be taken up by a Second Reconstruction in the era of the civil rights movement. Leading voices in the denomination had borne witness that accommodating segregation is no way to overcome racial stereotypes and suspicions. Though they were thwarted in their efforts to put that principle into practice, even a nominal opposition to racial caste served, like the Civil War amendments to the Constitution, as a standing rebuke to America's racial hypocrisy. Black Methodists and their white allies fully expected that the road forward would be long and contested, and they fought on.[70]

Notes

1 *The Independent*, Dec. 9, 1886, 21; Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Lovingood, *The University of Chattanooga: Sixty Years* (Chattanooga, TN: University of Chattanooga, 1947), 38–39; John Longwith,

Light upon a Hill: The University at Chattanooga, 1886–1996 (Chattanooga: University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, 2000), 30–33.

2 Nell Irvin Painter, "'Social Equality,' Miscegenation, Labor, and Power" in *The Evolution of Southern Culture*, ed. Numan V. Bartley (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988); Forrest G. Wood, *Black Scare: The Racial Response to Emancipation and Reconstruction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), ch. 7; Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 166–75; Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 136–45; Joel Williamson, *A Rage for Order: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 84, 121.

3 J. C. Hartzell, "Our Schools in the South," *Zion's Herald*, May 13, 1885, gave the total Southern membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church as 420,000, an eight-fold increase in twenty years. See also James M. McPherson, *The Abolitionist Legacy: From Reconstruction to the NAACP* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 149.

4 Katharine L. Dvorak, *An African-American Exodus: The Segregation of the Southern Churches* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson, 1991); William E. Montgomery, *Under their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South, 1865–1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993). Paul Harvey, a distinguished historian of religion, makes a telling error in this regard in *Through the Storm, Through the Night: A History of African American Christianity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 72. In drawing data from Montgomery, he mistakenly gives the total number of black adherents in the Methodist Episcopal Church as 60,000, when that was actually the increase over 1890. Their actual black membership was over 308,000, so Harvey's figure was off by a factor of five.

5 Reginald Hildebrand, *The Times Were Strange and Stirring: Methodist Preachers and the Crisis of Emancipation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 55.

6 Daniel W. Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863–1877* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 73–79, identifies five themes in the religious aspirations of African Americans during Reconstruction. In general, the vision of those who joined the Methodist Episcopal Church differed only slightly from those who joined the African Methodist denominations. All rejected the submissiveness espoused by their former masters and embraced preachers of their own race. All shared an intense desire for education and welcomed Northern assistance as long as it did not entail Northern control. The major point of contention involved the degree to which African Americans should pursue independent organization to control their own affairs, and it was on that ground that denominational rivalry was largely waged. Similarly, Charles F. Irons emphasizes similar aspirations among black Baptists in Virginia and North Carolina, regardless of the ecclesiastical relations they sought with white Baptists. Charles F. Irons, "'Two Divisions of the Same Great Army': Ecclesiastical Separation by Race and the Millennium" in *Apocalypse and Millennium in the American Civil War Era*, eds. Ben Wright and Zachary W. Dresser (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 194–216.

7 Joe M. Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861–1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 18–22. This connection was earlier recognized by Ralph E. Morrow in *Northern Methodism and Reconstruction* (Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1956), but Morrow wrote from the perspective of the Dunning school, regarding Methodist missionaries as meddling interlopers.

8 The concept of a "long Reconstruction" has been gaining traction even in the area of political reconstruction; cf. W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "The Future of Reconstruction Studies," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7:1 (Mar. 2017): 7. In scholarship on religious reconstruction, Richardson's work has been joined most notably by James B. Bennett, *Religion and the Rise of Jim Crow in New Orleans* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005). Nonetheless, most of the voluminous literature on the freedmen's education movement is still focused on the Reconstruction era as commonly understood, partly owing to historians' fascination with the Northern women who came South to teach. Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Ann Short Chirhart, *Torches of Light: Georgia Teachers and the Coming of the Modern South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005); Carol Faulkner, *Women's Radical Reconstruction: The Freedmen's Aid Movement* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Elizabeth Jacoway, *Yankee Missionaries in the South: The Penn School Experiment* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1980); Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865–*

1873 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Richard C. Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in the South, 1861–1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964).

9 Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Knopf, 1979), xiv. Other seminal works on Reconstruction include Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988); and Steven Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003).

10 "Separate Conferences and Schools," *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, for 1886* (Cincinnati, OH: Western Methodist Book Concern, 1886), 17; Hildebrand, *The Times Were Strange and Stirring*, 82–109; Morrow, *Northern Methodism and Reconstruction*, 181–200; McPherson, *The Abolitionist Legacy*, 227–34.

11 Paul W. Harris, "Separation, Inclusion, and the Development of Black Leadership in the Methodist Episcopal Church," *Methodist History* LVI:1 (Oct. 2017): 17–20; L. M. Hagood, *The Colored Man in the Methodist Episcopal Church* (1890; rpt. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 139–41, 167–69, 199–206; Hildebrand, *The Times Were Strange and Stirring*, 110–17; C. N. Grandison, "The Spread of Methodism in the South," *Southwestern Christian Advocate* [hereafter *SWCA*], Dec. 3, 1891. Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion*, 133–37, discusses the founding of the Holston and Tennessee Conferences, each of which initially had a somewhat mixed-race membership, though Holston was overwhelmingly white and Tennessee predominantly black.

12 "Caste," *SWCA*, Oct. 5, 1882.

13 A. K. Davis, "The Birmingham Matter," *SWCA*, Jan. 11, 1883.

14 H. R. Revels, "The Birmingham Matter," *SWCA*, Dec. 21, 1882.

15 D. W. Hays, "The 'Color Line' Again," *What They Say; Or, Echoes from Birmingham* (New Orleans: Southwestern Office, 1883), 23.

16 Quoted in *SWCA*, Feb. 8, 1883; "Is This Thing Religion? If So, Give Us a Sample of Deviltry," *New York Freeman*, Feb. 26, 1887. On Ward, see McPherson, *The Abolitionist Legacy*, 224 et passim.

17 Executive Committee meeting of Dec. 13, 1879, Board and Committee Meetings, 1866–1896, *Freedmen's Aid Society Records, 1866–1932* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources).

18 Govan and Lovingood, *University of Chattanooga,* 12–15; "Separate Conferences and Schools," 19.

19 Govan and Lovingood, *University of Chattanooga,* 10–13; "The East Tennessee Wesleyan University," *Western Christian Advocate*, Sept. 14, 1881, 294.

20 *Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Held in Cincinnati, May 1–28, 1880*, ed. George Woodruff (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1880), 188, 281, 292–93, 343–45. Tellingly, in the middle of the debate, the African American members of the Holston Conference asked to be organized into a separate conference.

21 G. E. Cunningham, "'We Be Brethren,'" *SWCA*, May 24, 1883; I. B. Ford, "The General Conference and the South," *SWCA*, Apr. 15, 1880; "Mississippi Conference: Report on Freedmen's Aid Society," *SWCA*, Feb. 2, 1882.

22 Govan and Lovingood, *University of Chattanooga,* 16–19; "The Educational Convention at Chattanooga," *Christian Advocate*, Sept. 9, 1880; "Our Central University at Chattanooga," *Christian Advocate,* Mar. 11, 1886; Executive Committee meetings of Oct. 23, 1880 and Oct. 19, 1881, Board and Committee Meetings, 1866–1896, *Freedmen's Aid Society Records, 1866–1932.*

23 Longwith, *Light upon a Hill*, 3, 13; Govan and Lovingood, *University of Chattanooga*, 12; "Past Presidents and Chancellors," University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (http://www.utc.edu/chancellor/past-presidents-chancellors.php); "Hiram Sanborn Chamberlain," *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, version 2.0 (tennesseeencyclopedia.net/ entry.php?rec=225); *The Independent*, Feb. 24, 1887; "A University in the South," *Christian Advocate*, Feb. 13, 1873.

24 "Editorial Notes," *The Independent*, Apr. 12, 1883.

25 Executive Committee meeting of May 26, 1883, Board and Committee Meetings, 1866–1896, *Freedmen's Aid Society Records, 1866–1932.*

26 "The 'Northern' and Color Line People," *SWCA*, May 24, 1883.

27 *The Independent,* May 29, 1884, 18; J. R. Van Pelt, "John Wesley Edward Bowen," *Journal of Negro History*, 19 (Apr. 1934): 217–18; "Editorial Notes," *SWCA* (Apr. 17, 1884); "New England on Caste,"

SWCA, May 1, 1884; duplicates of confidential letters by Bowen to Revs. Peck, Albert, and Westbrook, in Joseph C. Hartzell papers, General Commission on Archives and History, United Methodist Church [hereafter GCAH].

28 Manker quoted in Govan and Lovingood, *University of Chattanooga*, 35–37.

29 E. S. Lewis, "Little Rock University," *Zion's Herald*, Nov. 7, 1883.

30 McPherson, *The Abolitionist Legacy*, 107–10; Williamson, *A Rage for Order*, 72–78.

31 "The Chattanooga University," *SWCA*, Feb. 14, 1884; David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001).

32 James B. Bennett, *Religion and the Rise of Jim Crow in New Orleans* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 21–46, 71–74.

33 J. C. Hartzell, "Our Southern Educational Work," *SWCA*, June 21, 1883.

34 *Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Held at Philadelphia, May 1–28, 1884*, ed. David S. Monroe (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1884), 82–83, 299–300, 305; J. W. Hamilton, "The Blacks Must Not Apply," *Independent,* Nov. 18, 1886.

35 *Journal of the General Conference*, 128, 107, 127, 142, 148, 158–59, 170, 180, 203, 224.

36 Hamilton, "The Blacks Must Not Apply"; J E. Bills, *Buffalo Advocate*, Nov. 30, 1886.

37 *Journal of the General Conference*, 252, 256, 365–66.

38 Ibid., 334, 280, 245–48; "Caste's Tactics in the Last General Conference" by One Who Was There, *Independent*, Feb. 10, 1887.

39 "The Chattanooga Problem," *Christian Advocate*, Mar. 3, 1887.

40 Marshall W. Taylor, "What I Know About a Color Line in the M. E. Church"; D. W. Hays, "The 'Color Line' Again"; and J. M. Shumpert, "Is It Christ, Color-Line, or Caste?" all in *What They Say*, 10–28.

41 The previous highest office that a black person had held was that of missionary bishop resident in Liberia; Taylor turned down election to that office before the vote for editor of the *Southwestern. Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Held at Philadelphia, May 1–28, 1884*, 234–35, 248, 254, 246–48.

42 "Tennessee's Theological University," *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat,* June 2, 1884; J. M. Walden and R. S. Rust, "Our Central Church at Chattanooga," *Zion's Herald*, Mar. 17, 1886.

43 Longwith, 21, 28–29; "'Negro Cheek,'" *The Independent*, Oct. 14, 1886; J. W. Hamilton, "Good Students, But 'Poor Men in Vile Raiment,'" *Zion's Herald*, Feb. 10, 1887.

44 Hamilton, "The Blacks Must Not Apply"; A. B. Leonard, "Chattanooga University and the General Conference," *Western Christian Advocate*, undated clipping in Hartzell papers, GCAH.

45 Hartzell filled two scrapbooks with articles on the controversy, and even he did not find everything; cf. "Items," *The Friend*, Dec. 4, 1886; "Ministers' Meeting. Methodists Discuss the Subject of 'The Church in the South,'" *Boston Daily Advertiser,* Dec. 21, 1886.

46 "Bishop Walden at Chattanooga," *Christian Advocate*, Nov. 25, 1886; "Independent of Truth and Decency," *Christian Advocate*, Feb. 17, 1887.

47 *The Independent,* Nov. 4, 1886, and Dec. 16, 1886; "Expediency or Principle, *The Independent*, Dec. 9, 1886; "Editorial Passing Comment," *Northwestern Christian Advocate*, Feb. 9, 1887.

48 Wilbur P. Thirkield, "Principle or Policy in our Southern Work—Which?" *Christian Advocate*, Dec. 9, 1886.

49 "Statement from the Executive Committee of the Freedmen's Aid Society in the case of Professor Caulkins," *Christian Advocate*, Jan. 6, 1887; "Expediency or Principle, *The Independent*, Dec. 9, 1886; "The Churches," *Zion's Herald*, Jan. 5, 1887.

50 "The Chattanooga Problem," *Christian Advocate*, Mar. 3, 1887.

51 "Color-Caste in Our Southern Work," *Northern Christian Advocate*, Nov. 25, 1866. The paper's editor at first doubted the truth of the story about Caulkins: "The Independent's 'Facts,'" *Northern Christian Advocate*, Dec. 23, 1886.

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