

COULD THE TEACHING OF AFRO-AMERICAN HISTORY IN MISSISSIPPI
ALTER THE SELF-CONCEPT OF MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL CHILDREN?

Dollie A. Hambrick

What happens to us if what we have contributed as a person is NEVER recognized as important? How can we feel good about ourselves if we have no feeling of inner success when studying our past and present contribution to society?

Teaching Afro-American history in Mississippi can alter the self-concept of Mississippi school children. Our children, meaning all children of Mississippi, must understand their past in order to appreciate themselves and each other. Once sure of our heritage, we will be sure of ourselves and can attach new significance regarding us as people. Pride in ourselves will then be transmitted to others.

If the concentrated discussion of Afro-American history is done in a week or a month, the whole idea is discounted. Therefore, the reaction of many will be that the Afro-Americans must not have contributed very much to our history. I look forward to the day when we include all year in a more positive continuous fashion, the Afro-Americans' contribution in the making of our world.

Teaching Afro-American history in our schools will aid in enhancing our self-concept and producing a person with a positive sense of self. Therefore, we will have a better understanding of where we came from and, more importantly, where we are going. This knowledge aids in strengthening the person's inner self, strengthening our family life, and the greater society's strengths as well. We then have a better student, who feels he or she is treated equitable (been included), by teachers as well as the

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the system, we also have a more productive work force. Feeling good about ourselves and other groups understanding Afro-American contributions, and not having the feeling that one group contributed all of the valuable components of our past, we see everyone gaining the superior feeling people have from working together in a positive way. This increases productivity with an enhanced self-concept and a respect for all groups' contributions.

We all suffer when others feel that the Afro-American's contributions are insignificant. When creativity is stifled, there is no positive reinforcement to stir the creativity, and we all feel the effects. This negative sense of self through lack of Afro-American content can do nothing but decrease trust and thus, communication is stifled. There are feelings of indifference and an inability to function - tardiness, etc.

There must also be more creativity involved as we seek to deliver this Afro-American content. Whether to the pre-schooler, the high school student, families, church groups, etc., let's be creative. For those who can't read, let's be creative; for those who can't see, let's be creative; for those who are retarded (mentally and/or physically), let's be creative. Being creative can make us all sensitive to the Afro-American experience. Let's make it come alive for people at all levels.

If reading is a problem, let's build the self-esteem which is there and hopefully, there can be some trust. Trust enough to risk embarrassment and discomfort. The self-concept must be built up by including Afro-American history for all of our children as we work for a better Mississippi.

The black children of Mississippi with positive continuous exposure to Afro-American history can move into a mental set filled with "I Can" rather than "I Can't." With a little work and an enhanced self-concept, great things can happen as we all work together for a better more alive Mississippi.

It can be done! Let's figure out how!

Group Summary

This group addressed itself to the question: Could the teaching of Afro-American History in Mississippi alter the self-concept of Mississippi children?

The group leader, Ms. Dollie Hambrick, Sociologist from Mississippi State University, addressed the group first. Ms. Hambrick: "What happens to us if what we do is never recognized as important? How can we feel good about ourselves if we never experience the inner feeling of success? The children of Mississippi with positive experience can move into a mental set filled with, "I can rather than I can't. With a little work and an enhanced self-concept, great things can happen whether in math, reading, etc." What Ms. Hambrick is contending is that the present negative self-concept that Black children have of themselves can be altered through the teaching of Black History in grades K-12. Ms. Hambrick further feels that the teaching of Black History to both Black and White children will alter not only the images that the children presently seem to have of each other but also the attitudes of teachers and administrators, as well.

Ms. Mildred Williams followed the group leader with a discussion of race acculturation. She went into the loss of the African's culture: language, religion, music, et al. She discussed the dehumanization which took place to subdue the captive. She referred to a dimension being lost in this process. Take away a man's culture, you have stripped him of a necessary part of his life. The Black child has not been taught about his own culture.

The next speaker Mr. Richard Porter went into the importance of altering not only the self-concept of Black children but the self-concept of White children as well. Once Black and White children learn that Blacks had a great part in building this great nation, children of both races will begin to respect each other. Mr. Porter feels that pluralistic society such as ours can best progress through understanding and respect.

Dr. Cleopatra Thompson sees the teaching of Black History an absolute necessity in the public schools in order to erase the horrible stereotypes that have been at the root of the low esteem that Blacks have held for one another. Teaching the facts will raise this self-esteem. Until recent years Blacks in America have felt ashamed to be associated with Africa. They had no roots. If Black History is put into the curriculum of the public schools, the Black children will find these roots and be proud of them. Once they do this, they will gradually develop self-pride. Ms. Williams used as a parallel the Choctaw Indians who have refused to be acculturated. Anyone familiar with these American Indians knows the Choctaws are proud of their heritage. They speak English as a second language; the Choctaw language is their native tongue. They are thoroughly familiar with the customs of the American White man, but they prefer to practice their own.

Mr. Sekupale N. Lewanika from southern Africa added the point that teaching the truth to Black children will help to remove the "brainwash" that has caused Black Americans to have a negative self-concept. Tell a child often enough that he is nothing, he will begin to believe it. Teaching the unbiased facts will alter the present concept, not all at once, but slowly.

Finally, Mr. Poole, the group recorder, added that in order for the teaching of Black History to alter the self-concept of Black children, the

teachers will first have to be taught the facts. Miseducation is dangerous and will create a situation worse than the present situation with no Black History at all.

Recorder,
Mr. James Poole

Persons mentioned in the preceding summary are:

1. Ms. Mildred Williams, Early Childhood Education Supervisor, State Department of Education.
2. Mr. Richard Porter, Graduate student, Jackson State University, studying economics.
3. Dr. Cleopatra Thompson, retired Dean of the School of Education at Jackson State University and active community worker.
4. Mr. Sekupale N. Lewanika, recent Jackson State University, Social Science Education Major, teaching at Piney Woods School, Piney Woods, Mississippi.

"Afro-American History and the K-12 Curriculum: New Challenges For Historians and the American Public Schools," by Samuel B. Ethridge, Special Assistant to the Executive Director of the National Education Association and staff coordinator for the NEA Review board.

Ethridge sees the implementation of new courses into the public school system as a difficult task, but one which can be achieved if the right kind of pressure is applied. In a very challenging and enlightening essay, Ethridge puts forth several possible ways of creating a more pluralistic society. Firstly, a concerted effort to eradicate racism is necessary so that all students will know their contributions to America, and be proud of them. Secondly, the recorders and publishers have to assume a more responsible role. These are two critical steps which are necessary if the study of ethnic history is to be a serious undertaking.

Ethridge is extremely concerned about the omission of significant developments and contributions made by minority peoples. For example, not only have Blacks been left out of White textbooks, but they have been slighted in Black accounts too: Blacks have been too busy doing to write. Therefore, if Black History is to be taught in the schools we first have to record it as fully as possible, and Blacks have to assume a special responsibility for recording and preserving their history.

In the final part of Ethridge's paper, he looks at means of influencing curriculum changes in the schools, and records seven possible methods: national government, regional boards, colleges, state legislatures, state boards of education, and test companies. However, he notes that for any of these things to take place parents and special interest groups have to become involved. As Ethridge sees it,

the government could play a part by withholding federal funds from schools who do not actively engage in the teaching of ethnic history. On the regional level implementation could be much easier; the teaching of Black History could be attained merely by adding a section to their standards. Colleges could require that freshmen have a specific number of units in Black History upon entrance. State legislators could have an impact by making Black History classes mandatory. This however, would require a majority vote, but if they are serious about educating persons for future challenges it could be done. State boards could require so many hours of Black History as a requirement for teacher certification. One of the greatest enticements for learning Black History perhaps could come from the testing companies. They could include sections on the ACT and SAT on Black History and culture. If this occurs, students, parents, teachers, counselors and principals would then be compelled to deal with Black History because their future would be directly linked to learning it.

AFRO AMERICAN HISTORY AND THE K-12 CURRICULUM
NEW CHALLENGES FOR HISTORIANS AND THE AMERICAN
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By
Samuel B. Ethridge

I wish to dedicate these remarks to my favorite bard and I ask you to listen carefully to some excerpts from one of her poems first published in 1937. Its message is as good as if it were written with this symposium in mind. My bard is an institution here at Jackson State. She is Margaret Walker (Alexander).

"For my people, everywhere, singing
their slave song repeatedly their
dirges, their ditties, their blues
and jubilees, praying their prayer
nightly to an unknown God, bending
their knees humbly to an unknown
God.

For the cramped bewildered years
we went to school to know the reasons
why, and the answers to, and the
people who and the places where and
the days when, in memory of the
bitter hours when we discovered we
were Black and poor and small and
different and nobody wondered and
nobody understood;"

In writing this paper I am making some assumptions that may or may not be true. I am assuming that many people in the audience are students of history, and some are administrators, parents, curriculum coordinators and that most of you work or will work primarily at the state or local level. I also assume that at least some of you hope to leave this conference and do something about what everyone agrees is a serious problem and what everyone agrees should have been done years ago.

If my assumptions are relatively correct, it seems to me that my best contribution to the conference is to reinforce the urgency of the task but at the same time give you some sense of the difficulty of the task without turning you off.

I will cover five topics in varying degrees.

(1) I will share with you a few personal experiences which influenced my approach to, as well as my attitude on the subject. I hope these vignettes will give historical perspective to the problem.

(2) I will refer to three events in the past which I think have some bearing on this conference; (A) the 1967 Yale Conference on Black Studies; (B) the 1968 attempt by Congressman James Scheuer of New York and others to establish a National Commission of Negro History and Culture; and (C) the efforts of James Banks and others in cooperation with the National Council for Social Studies.

(3) The contribution of John Lovell, a Howard University Professor of English and Drama in correcting a new myth about Black spirituals.

(4) Some general problems of historical bias which must be overcome before we get worthwhile American History, including contributions of Black, Red, Brown, Yellow and White.

(5) I will discuss briefly the competition and pressures for inclusion or exclusion of a variety of curricular content.

(6) I will leave the list of books which I used as references with Dr. Harrison for those who want to know more about what I've left unsaid.

But first I want to take advantage of this visit to Jackson State to present to your History Department a set of histories which are but a small segment of the Afro-American History which this symposium is about.

For the past eight years I have been involved in publishing the histories of the separate state teacher associations in the South. I say "separate" because this project involves the writing of both the Black and the White associations.

Up to this point we have worked on the history of the Black association. You will be pleased to know that the History of the Mississippi State Teachers Association was the first to be completed and that Jackson State was a part of that project. The author of the MTA History is your own Dr. Cleopatra Thompson.

I have recently been in conference with the Mississippi Association of the Educators and have reason to believe that the first history of the former White association will come from Mississippi also. The MTA History should also be available through MAE here in Jackson. Anyway, it is a pleasure to present, on behalf of NEA, these histories for placement along side The Jeanes Story, edited recently by Mississippi's State Director of Elementary Education, Ms. Mildred Williams.

I am pleased to present to you a copy of the MTA history; The History of the Tennessee Congress of Educators, The History of Virginia Teachers Association, by one of your symposium speakers, Dr. J. Rupert Picott; also The History of State Teachers Association of Texas; The History of the Florida State Teachers Association; The history of the Palmetto State Teachers Association(South Carolina);and The History of the West Virginia State Teachers Association. I am sure that Dr. Picott would want me to say that copies of all these histories are available from The Association For the Study of Afro-American Life and History, 1401 14th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

What is history to many of you was more or less contemporary for me. When I was a boy, Dr. George W. Carver was still alive. My grandmother

often related stories which she heard from Dr. Booker T. Washington at the county courthouse in Brewton, Alabama. My principal from Mobile had a summer home in Codess by the Gulf of Mexico, where Booker Washington relaxed, deep sea fishing and practiced his speeches under the tall pine trees. In her home there were a number of candid photos of Dr. Washington with catches of large fish.

When I entered Howard University, Ralph Bunche, E. Franklin Frazier, Alain Locke, Leo Hansbury, Rayford Logan, Sterling Brown, Owen Dodson, Dorothy Porter, Charles Drew and many other "greats" were still associated with the University. History was a daily occurrence.

I never actually studied a course in Black History, but I became familiar with many of the Black heroes in Negro literature. Richard Allen, Frederick Douglass, James Russwurm, David Walker, James Weldon Johnson, W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Kelly Miller, and Charles Wesley were all writers as well as historical figures.

Even though we always observed Negro History Week at the high school where I was a teacher (1948-54), I never really thought about Black History like you do today.

It was 1955 before I became fully aware of the Charles Wesleys and J. Rupert Picott's of the world. As a delegate to the 1955 National Education Association Convention in Chicago, I attended a joint session of the NEA and the American Teachers Association.

Mrs. Mary Williams of West Virginia was presiding at a meeting concerned with inclusion of Negroes in encyclopedias and textbooks. At that time I became acquainted with the series of books put out by the Association For the Study of Negro Life and History, and as principal of a small segregated elementary school, I ordered this series of Black History books for

our students. They needed no special encouragement to check them out. I never really got too concerned about the absence of Black persons from regular histories because in all of the schools in the Mobile system, there were adequate supplemental books by and about Blacks.

My first traumatic experience with reference to the absence of Black people in histories and other social studies books came in 1959. I was working in New York with the March of Dimes at the time but, I traveled quite a bit in the South and often wrote letters to school people in the South.

One day a Black secretary asked me a question which has continued to haunt me all these years and often helps to affect my attitude about Black History. Her exact words were: "Mr. Ethridge, you're always writing letters to people at a number of schools named Booker T. Washington. What did he do that so many schools would be named for him?" I took the next hour talking to her about Booker T. Washington and his contributions.

I am sure that I don't need to tell you that from that moment on I knew why Afro-American History should be taught up North as well as down South. I was 36 years old at the time and this was the first-fully grown, well-educated intelligent Black person I had ever seen who had no acquaintance with the contributions of Booker T. Washington.

In 1955, about a year after I joined the NEA staff, I was summoned a meeting of an ATA-NEA joint committee on merger. The merger talks to had come to a halt because of ATA's concern about a possible loss of teacher support for Negro History Week. The result was a pledge that after merger the NEA would be responsible for helping to stimulate teacher support for Negro History Week and that the assignment for coordinating

this activity would be mine.

From that point until now, I have been involved in a number of projects that directly impact on the subject before us today.

My first major involvement after the merger was the development of A Legacy of Honor, a color filmstrip with sound on contributions of the Negro to American History. Since most of our members are White and since many of them come from communities with little or no contacts with Black people or Black History, the film was designed to stimulate the interest of Whites in history.

In 1967, I was able to help do something about what we talked about at the 1955 ATA-NEA joint committee meeting. We sponsored a national conference on the treatment of minorities in histories and other textbooks.

I believe then and I believe now that textbooks, including histories, can be changed if the people who buy them, the people who print them, the people who use them, and the people who criticize them can agree. To the conference on the treatment of minorities in textbooks, we invited senior vice-presidents and senior editors of major textbook companies, civil rights leaders, state and local curriculum directors, local administrators, classroom teachers, teacher college directors, parents, and government officials.

Under a threat from school officials from major cities not to buy anymore books with severe omissions, textbook publishers pledged to improve their products and to stop putting out northern and southern editions of the same book.

In 1969 we conducted an anti-"melting-pot theory" conference with the keynote address by Jackson State's Alabama native Margaret Walker Alexander.

"The significant thing about the melting pot theory is that it didn't happen at all. Basically American institutions have always been white, and American society has perceived itself to be white. The choices open to disparate culture or community are to assimilate and disappear (into the main stream) or be isolated and relegated to second class citizenship or no citizenship at all."

In 1972 the NEA Representative Assembly passed a resolution calling for the development of a comprehensive multi-ethnic history textbook for schools. And it became my responsibility to coordinate this project. I thought that a team of historians of African, American Indian, Asian, European, and Mexican backgrounds could be assembled to sit down for a few weeks and hammer out a "true" American History.

In the fall of 1972, we assembled a group of multi-ethnic historians to develop an outline and a work plan for this "true" American History. At the end of two days, I came to the conclusion that no comprehensive history was possible at that time or any time soon. Each ethnic group had a distinctly different experience in America. Each has different points of reference. I concluded then and still believe that each group, for the present, must tell its own story as it sees it.

From this experience, I can support, at least on an interim basis, the teaching of Black History as a separate and supplementary course in American History.

However, the idea of Indians studying Indian History only or Blacks studying Black History only, Asians studying Asian History, Mexican Americans studying Mexican American History only, or Whites studying White History only is repulsive to me. It seems to me that the ideal interim history should contain all of these histories under one cover.

That is why in 1974 I coordinated a project under the Ethnic Heritage Studies Act that culminated in Roots of America, a multi-ethnic curriculum resource guide for junior high school social studies teachers. This guide contains under one cover units on:

Asian Americans
Black Americans
Italian Americans
Jewish Americans
Mexican Americans
Native Americans
Polish Americans and
Puerto Rican Americans

This study guide is still popular after being on the market for five years. The political support for a guide with 8 ethnic groups obviously is greater than any one dimensional guide.

Advocates of Black studies or Afro-American History courses may want to give serious consideration to this method as a strategy for getting authentic Black History into the hands of teachers and future teachers.

In addition to NEA efforts to assist the Association For the Study of Afro-American History in the promotion of Afro-American History Month (*note the change from my earlier reference to Negro History Week) NEA has been involved with the Martin Luther King Center for Social Change in promoting January 15 as a national holiday. While we have not yet been successful in this effort on the national level, we have had some modest success at the state and local levels. When I say we, I mean: "We teacher associations." In at least three states the bill to have a state holiday of January 15 has been spearheaded by NEA state affiliates.

Considering what has happened to other American holidays, we have some grave concerns about how January 15 will be celebrated. For example George Washington's birthday in many cities is a day set aside for bargain sales. America's birthday, July 4, is a day for picnics and

and Thanksgiving Day is a day for football games and stuffing ourselves with turkey. In order that children will not have to ask "what did Martin King do to deserve a holiday, we distribute to out state and local affiliates each year some materials on "How to celebrate January 15." We stress not only the life of Dr. King and his philosophy but also the civil rights movement and its meaning not only for Black people and the South but for all Americans, North and South.

A year ago we received a touching letter from a teacher in a small town in a New England state:

"Dear President Ryor:
I am a first grade teacher who received your letter about 'Freedom Hall' and the celebration of January 15. We had never talked about observing Dr. King's birthday in our school before. Since I received your letter, I have gone to our library and have found a very interesting book on the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I read it to my class. They enjoyed it so much that the teacher next door borrowed the book to read to the second grade. And when she finishes the third grade teacher is going to read it to her class."

I remember all over again the question raised by the secretary in New York who asked "what did Booker T. Washington do?"

In response to this concern we recently prepared an eleven-page unit on teaching about Martin Luther King, Jr., and distributed it to each of our 1.7 (plus) million members. To be sure that it was not overlooked, Dr. King's picture is featured on the cover of the fall issue of Today's Education, our magazine which featured the King unit.

We reprinted 25,000 copies to share with interested people who are not members. I have brought a few of those reprints to share with you.

The most traumatic experience for me in my entire life with reference to omission of Blacks from American History happened within the last twelve months.

As I relate this experience keep in mind that I am keenly aware of the omissions in public school textbook, in encyclopedias, and other books meant for popular consumption. I am a vet at this business. Anyway, last spring, I had the honor of sharing in a symposium by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the Howard University Law School. My subject related to victories by Black teachers in the pre-Brown era, roughly 1945-52.

Since I am relatively familiar with teacher law and since I am personally acquainted with some of the plaintiffs (Gladys Bates from Mississippi, Vernon McDaniels from Florida, J.K. Haynes of Louisiana) I felt that I could do the research for such a paper in three or four hours. Since we are a teacher organization, I knew our library would have all the case citations and law books. Hence, it would be simply a matter of using the material.

When the first three law books revealed little if anything on the subject, I didn't get overly concerned. I could always keep looking. After the fifth and sixth references contained no material on the subject, I began to feel some anxiety, and so did the librarian who was assisting me. By the time we reached a dozen references two more librarians joined in the search. After nearly two hours we were able to find only two of the many cases which had been filed to secure equal pay for equal work for Black teachers and administrators. The only thing I could find was an encouraging footnote in a book by Jack Greenberg. It indicated that the record of the equal salary case could be found in the annual report of the NAACP and in Crisis magazine. With only two days left before the conference, I panicked at the thought of having to go to New York and dig up old NAACP reports.

Before I found the footnote, the meaning of omissions of Blacks from history came home to me in a way which it had never come before. Here I

was in the most complete library for teachers and the law in the United States. Yet, I could find only two references and a footnote on Black teacher victories.

But that didn't throw me, we've been left out all of our lives. And we always find a way out (I thought). I decided to go to the NEA Archives to find this information in the records of the American Teachers Association. The ATA journals reported that attorney Thurgood Marshall came to the meeting and that he and his staff reported on teacher cases but it gave no specifics. Then I remembered that in those days, the late forties and early fifties, the Black teacher could not afford to put much of their business in print for fear that it would be used against their leaders by school boards and the politicians of the era.

Fortunately the NAACP Washington Bureau has a complete set of Crisis magazine and as the footnote had indicated much of the information was in the Crisis magazine. But even Crisis did not offer the full answer. Some issues continued reports on cases and some did not. This uneven reporting simply indicated that during the height of the movement, we were so busy doing things we did not have time to write.

Then it occurred to me to look on my own book shelf in the histories of the Black Teacher Associations. I struck gold. Some of these histories which I presented to Dr. Harrison at the beginning of the program contain the only indepth accounts of the struggle for equal salaries which were waged in each state by the NAACP and the teachers five or six years before the 1954 pupil desegregation decision.

Anyway the project to publish the history of the state teachers associations took on new meaning for me. I have met recently with the authors of histories now being written in Arkansas and North Carolina and urged that they include the record of teacher cases from their state

and that they talk about the contributions of Black legislators from the post-Civil War period. I suggested that they write as if this is the last time they will be able to tell about contributions of their states' Black pioneers to the history of American education and for many this is the last time. Even though I have taken a college course in the history of Blacks in education, I didn't know until we produced the history of the Florida State Teachers Association that the first state superintendent of education in Florida was a Black man. How many of you knew that? His name was Jonathan C. Gibbs, a man of African descent, a graduate of Dartmouth College in 1852. Considered the most educated man in the state of Florida at the time, he was appointed by the Governor as superintendent of education in 1872 when the office was first established.

As already pointed out by Lerone Bennett in Before the Mayflower, many of these histories re-emphasize the fact that the Black dominated legislatures of the post-Civil War era in spite of their negative portrayal in some history books, were primarily responsible for the establishment of public education in the South. As originally established, the public education system was a non-segregated system even though some or most neighborhoods had a separate schools.

Even though I have studied the history of Blacks in education in college and have been a part of the writing of the histories of the Black teacher associations, most of whom have mentioned in some way the Anna T. Jeanes Fund, I never knew that Anna Jeanes turned the million trust over to Booker T. Washington, the president of Hampton at the time and the President-elect of the United States until I read the Jeanes story published recently by the Southern Education Foundation.

I relate these vignettes as a story of concern, and as a story of hope not as a story of accomplishments.

As you think about whether or not there should be Black History, I want to remember that intelligent, well-schooled Black secretary from the Bronx in the greatest city in the world who asked "who was Booker T. Washington and what did he do?" And the millions like her. I want you to think of the white first grade teacher in New England who said: "We have never talked about Martin Luther King's birthday", her town (and the thousands of towns like hers).

I want to emphasize that not only were the contributions of Black teachers left out of the law books written by White people, but also by Crisis and the ATA Journal, both written by Black people. Much of that history is still available. Somebody has to stop long enough to go and interview some of those pioneers who made it all possible; go to New York and find those annual reports and pull out the names of those teachers, who gave up their jobs and their homes so that we could get equal pay for equal work. Some plaintiffs in these cases are not available for interview. They were blown away by dynamite or disappeared under mysterious circumstances. But their families still exist and some have not yet thrown away their records, old papers and clippings.

What I hope these vignettes have illustrated is that even if Black History were accepted as a course today, it could not be properly taught because much of it has not yet been written. It will never be written unless you, and you and you write it. I emphasize this because many of you may think that it has all been written by Woodson, Wesley, Picott, Banks, Quarles, John Hope Franklin, Lerone Bennett and others. They have only scratched the surface.

Part 11 - Related Events

From the stories about Booker T. Washington told by my grandmother to the traumatic experience of my almost futile search for information on equal salaries covers a period of approximately 50 years. It has been only 85 years since W.E.B. DuBois published the monograph The Suppression of the African Slave Trade in 1895 and only 75 years since he established the Niagara movement which became the NAACP. It has been only 65 years since Carter G. Woodson founded the Association For the Study of Negro Life and History. It has been only 35 years since I learned of the efforts of the NEA-ATA joint committee, and it has been only 12 years since the first Black major Inter-Disciplinary Black Studies conference at Yale University in 1968.

I said all that to emphasize that both Black studies courses and the study of Afro-American History are both very young in comparison to other historical efforts. In forming a movement with one branch little more than a decade old and the other not yet a century old one should feel that he is on the cutting edge with much opportunity to influence the final outcome.

A. Yale Black Studies Conference

Armstead L. Robinson, one of the convenors of the 1968 Yale University Black Studies Symposium, described two major forces which must be overcome before any significant progress can be made in the concern before us.

1. Many educators hide behind a so called "Standard of Excellence" as a reason for resisting any kind of curriculum reform.
2. Many educators seriously question the assertion that the experiences of Black people either in Africa or in the New World are of sufficient depth to justify serious instruction on all levels.

3. Many educators have an academic unwillingness to confront reality, especially an unpleasant and threatening reality. (VIII)

I assume that the convenors of this conference like the convenors of the Yale conference feel that students (of whatever color) can no longer be given a "myopic vision of America as a homogenous, placid, and idyllic land of the free and home of the braves." They felt that and I am sure you feel now that it is not good for our country's mental health for American students to be taught their country has never done anything wrong, never fought unjust wars or never exploited a neighbor or group of its citizens.

The participants at the Yale conference were concerned because America has not taken seriously the thesis of W.E.B. DuBois that the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line. They were likewise concerned as I am sure you are today that American Historians, writers and curriculum makers have not yet included the documents and findings of Carter G. Woodson in the social science curricula in any significant way.

Charles H. Taylor, one of the Yale conferees, pinpointed a fact which many advocates of Black History often do not consider in setting up their goals. Who needs it most, Blacks or Whites?

"The truth," says Taylor, "Is that Black America knows much more about White America than White America knows about Black America.."

Think about that: The average Black person in Jackson reads Jet, Ebony, The Jackson Advocate, the Jackson News and the Memphis Semitar. The average White is likely to read the latter.

Dr. Alvin Poussaint, noted Black psychiatrist, speaking to the Yale conference reinforces this point. He states that while it is important

for the sake of Black students to include African History and other non-western experience in the curriculum, it is perhaps more important that some of the courses be required for White students.

"When you live in a world in which Black (and other people of color) vastly outnumber whites, and when that world is shrinking (due to technology), it is very important that white students know and understand other cultures and other ways of thinking so that they may be able to modify and undo some of their biases and rigidity." (p. 209)

Poussaint goes on to indicate that it is not hard (at least for a psychiatrist) to see how racism in many people in America affects our foreign policy and how we treat other nations of the world — how we treat China, other Asian nations as well as people and nations of Africa.

The recent attempt by the American State Department to equate a Black king of boxing with kings and presidents of African nations is an illustration of our failure to understand that colonial days are over.

Poussaint warns historians to examine Black History very carefully for that Black sub-culture which represents the stigma of oppression. It is important to weed out adaptations which represents self-hatred and negative self-image from those which represent the positive and valuable side of the Black experience. Failure to do so may result in the error of actually perpetuating many aspects of the culture that are really manifestations (transformed) of White racism.

B. Negro History Bill (H.R. 12962)
(Hearings March 18, 1968)

I also wish to bring to your attention the attempt (through futile) on the part of some members of the U.S. Congress in 1968 to establish a national commission on Negro History and culture supported by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. That commission would have

reported to Congress on the best way to do the following:

- (1) Unearth, preserve and collect historical materials dealing with Negro History and culture.
- (2) Establish a museum of Negro History and culture,
- (3) Disseminate such materials.

I mention this for two reasons. First, I don't want you to feel isolated and alone in your efforts. Many other people share your goals. Secondly, the people who testified at the House hearings on the bill to establish this commission of Black heritage have already stated most eloquently the rationale for Afro-American History.

In an introduction to a book which includes most of the testimony on the bill, Howard Meyer, author of the Amendment Which Refused to Die and Army Life in a Black Regiment, expresses a concern that the full case of "White" heroes in American History hasn't been told and that the "White" villains not be made into heroes. He does not minimize the need for truth about Black contributions.

Unlike what is said in our histories, Thaddeus Stevens stood for brotherhood and decency. As a spokesperson for the conscience of America, his leadership was indispensable to the embodiment of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. "And who but a few Black or White Americans has ever heard of Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, main character in Colonel of the Black Regiment?"

New York Congressman James Scheuer, Chairman of the Select Sub-committee on Labor and Education who conducted the hearings, expressed remarks which I am sure would be endorsed by this symposium:

"Nowhere in our school books do we portray the magnificent contributions of thousands of Negro Americans to our art, our culture or our politics. The media today (press, radio, t.v.) also not only fail to portray

the distinguished past contributions of the Negro in America but his present contributions as well.."

"We must remedy this situation and this oversight, and this gap and this deficit, and this moral debt which America owes the Negro...."

"It is important for the white children to understand that their Negro friends and neighbors have come from a group that has a history, a present and a future and that they played a noble role not only in world but in American history."

Among the distinguished Americans to testify before the committee and presenting written statements were:

James Baldwin (author)
Dr. John W. Davis (LDF)
John Marsell (NAACP)
Mal Goode (ABC News)
Jackie Robinson
Dr. Charles Wesley
Senator Edward Brooke

While I recommend the reading of this testimony to each of you, I will mention here excerpts from Mal Goode only. Mal indicated that he had not read in but one recent history that here were Black soldiers with Gen. Andrew Jackson and Black sailors with Commodore Perry in the War of 1812. Mal continued:

"Most histories do not record in the Battle of Chapin's Farm in September, 1864, that 13 black soldiers won the Congressional Medal of Honor nor that a Black regiment (the 62 Infantry) fired the last shot of the Civil War in Brownsville, Texas. It is not generally known that Theodore Roosevelt fought the Battle of San Juan Hill with black soldiers."

Mal Goode cites statistics from World War 1 and 11 and Korea and wonders aloud if history will record that 90,000 deaths or about 18 per cent of the Americans killed in Vietnam were Black.

I hope that you will forgive me for inserting one more vignette. Phillip Droting, author of A Guide to Negro History (originally published by American Oil Company as a Guide to Negro Historical Monuments) likes to tell vignettes about his experience in researching army forts and army cemeteries.

Because of our proximity I want to relate the one about Natchez. Droting wrote to the superintendent at the Natchez National Cemetery and asked if there were any graves of Negroes there. The reply came back stating that there were none. Not satisfied with that answer, Droting contacted the Department of the Army in Washington. The official record shows that at the end of the Civil War, 2484 Black soldiers were buried in the Natchez National Cemetery.

Since that time they have been joined by many more Blacks dead from the Spanish American War, World War I and II, the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. You should read Droting, at least to find out about your own home state. Take your kids on a tour with Droting's Guide. I grew up in Mobile and taught in Mobile for 10 years and I never knew until I was thumbing through Droting preparing for this conference that Black infantry and artillery were with Admiral Farragut (He's the "Dam the torpedoes, full speed ahead" admiral) at the Battle of Mobile Bay or that Black soldiers took part in the capture of Ft. Morgan, Ft. Gaines and Mobile itself. I don't think Phil Droting knew that either when he did the first edition.

The point is that the Commission on Black History and Culture is still needed. If one person, Phil Droting, could find out so much about Black History more or less as a hobby, how much more could a commission find?

C. National Council of Social Studies
Ethnic Studies Movement

In 1973, the National Council of Social Studies took a great step forward. Its 43rd yearbook was edited by a Black man, Dr. James Banks, Professor of Education at the University of Washington (Seattle). The title of the yearbook was Teaching Ethnic Studies, Concepts and Strategies for Social Change.

It contains articles on teaching cultural pluralism, racism in America, social justice for minorities, shattering the melting pot myth, teaching the Chicano experience, the Puerto Rican experience, the Asian experience, teaching Black studies and teaching Native American values and cultures, teaching the experiences of White ethnics and teaching the role of women in American history.

The units are well done and the yearbook received wide acclaim. By all normal standards, recognition by the National Council of Social Studies is tantamount to gaining acceptance in the American social studies curriculum. But the next step didn't occur. The National Council had responded to the Black revolution. It did several other worthwhile yearbooks but nothing that build on or improved upon its initial thrust.

General observations by Banks at the time may have relevance for this symposium.

"Publishers seeking quick profits have responded to the black history movement by producing a flood of textbooks and multimedia kits of dubious value."

"Few black history programs are sound because the goals of black studies remain confused, ambiguous and conflicting."

"Many teachers who teach black studies use new materials but traditional strategies."

"Without both new goals and new strategies black history will become just another fleeting fad."

Banks has very clear goals for Black History or any other social studies program but these goals are not widely shared by most educators.

According to Banks:

"The goal of Black history should be to help students develop the ability to make decisions that help resolve personal problems through social actionto help liberate Black Americans from physical and psychological captivity Thus the ultimate goal of black studies for black students is to make them social activists While these skills are needed by all students, black students need them most because they have been victimized by racism.

The three examples by Banks, Rep. Scheuer, the Yale Conference, are but a few examples of the kinds of activity spawned by DuBois, Woodson, Wesley, Mary Williams, Picott, and others which lead us to this symposium spawned by Dr. Harrison.

BLACK SONGS STOLEN TOO

I had planned to use Black Song:

The Forge and the Flame by Dr. John Lovell, as an example of what it takes for a scholar to disprove a myth. Incidentally, the late Dr. John Lovell was the father of former Jackson attorney, Tayna Lovell Banks, and one of my favorites among the Howard University "Great Teachers."

Because I have already spent so much time on other aspects of the paper, I will only tell you briefly what it does and let you have the joy of reading Black Song.

Many of us have grown up with the notion that the Negro spiritual belongs to us. Well, I have news for you. Some historians are now trying to take even our spirituals away from us by claiming that the slaves simply copied their songs from a ready-made "white" spiritual or hymn.

John Lovell, in Alex Haley fashion, has recaptured the spiritual and moves many times over its independent roots in Africa. Lovell's work shows how an English teacher or other nonhistorian can do the research necessary to prove a historical fact to disprove a myth.

A quote from the introduction may whet your appetite.

"I began to spend an average of 100 hours per week in libraries. I was carried into literature music, dance ethnomusicology, folklore, anthropology, theology philosophy, history, psychology and a dozen other fields. I had to travel all over the United States... I had to visit nine African countries... I had to visit Brazil and Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and the Bahamas. And because Europeans have become major interpreters of these songs, I had to visit five European countries "

"The black spiritual has outlasted, by more than a century, its original creators in the minds of Americans, without a sign of losing its strength. It has also built a large, new community in many parts of the world.

The sad part about Black Song is its indication that the thousand songs remaining are but a fraction of the total output. "Thousands of songs like 'Swing Low,' 'Oh Freedom,' and 'Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel' have vanished without a trace in the cold unpoetic atmosphere."

Part IV

NONRACIAL BIAS IN HISTORIES

Remarks by Banks with reference to the dubious quality of textbooks on Black history need further examination. Obviously, the textbook publishers want to do better if for no reason other than to make money. Why are they publishing dubious books?

Ray Billington, Professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, suggests that textbook authors seldom wear their prejudices proudly, and that they are often unaware of any bias and will challenge any critics who charge lack of objectivity.

He points out that there are several kinds of (nonracial) bias; (A) bias of inertia (B) unconscious falsification (C) bias of omission (D) bias in use of language (E) bias by cumulative implication.

(A) Inertia

"Bias by inertia means the failure of textbook writers to keep abreast of current scholarship thus perpetuating on their pages outworn legends that exhibit bias. It commonly takes the form of half-truths. Latest scholarly findings filter down slowly, usually appearing first in monographs, then in larger books and finally in textbooks. This process requires years, so that textbooks are often a generation behind current views.

(B) Bias by Omission

In order to write history free of prejudice, textbook authors must free themselves of localism, from inherited cultural traditions and much learned in their schooling. It is rooted in the common places of our lives, taught us at our mother's knee, deepened by folk tales of youth and perpetuated by our daily conversations with both friends and strangers.

(C) Bias by Omission

Historical writing, like any kind of writing, is an exercise in selection. From vast records of man's past, the writer must select relatively few items and arrange them to tell a meaningful story.

The items selected, the manner of arrangement and the weight given to each reveals both the competence and the bias of the author.

(D) Bias in Language

Language may perpetuate derogatory epitaphs which engender hostile impressions of race in the readers mind, or it may reveal subtle or subconscious nuanuces which are scarcely noticeable. There are vast differences in riot and revolt; between crowd and mob; between southern planter and slave buyer. Teachers and writers alike should remember that words change their meanings even over a short period of time. Long-range definitions change even more.

(E) Bias by Cumulative Implication

Without violating truths, a writer can assign such an array of virtues to his own group that the reader is unaware of the contributions of others. This form of bias uses all the other biases in concert with obvious results, distortion of history. "

Recommendations

Authors must be more aware of the fact that history is not a dead subject but one that changes as new knowledge becomes available. "New knowledge is not merely to be spread like frosting on a cake; it calls for a fresh cake."

Textbook writers should devote more thought to balance of their accounts.

The results would be a lessening of prejudice in history textbook, assuring future generations of a better training for life in a shrinking world.

HOW TO INFLUENCE CURRICULUM CHANGE

Getting into the curriculum is basically political. This can happen in a variety of ways.

A. Government

At the national level, it is all but impossible to force a school system to do anything. So the Federal government uses money to entice state or local systems to do things.

Money and agricultural surplus food are offered to those systems offering free or inexpensive lunch programs.

After the launching of sputnik, the National Science Foundation offered money for purchase of science equipment and supplies and money to teachers to take special workshops or to get advanced degrees in science. The Emergency School Assistance Act makes funds available to schools under a court order or HEW compliance.

A simple amendment to this act could make a specified portion of those funds available for instruction in Afro-American History as a way of assisting with the process of desegregation. It could make funds available from ESA for teacher training in Black culture and history.

B. Regional Boards

The regional accrediting associations could, if they wanted to do so, encourage the growth of Black history simply by inserting a section in the standards. It could ask the system or school to explain how it provides for its students to understand Black culture and history. You know what would happen.

C. Colleges

Colleges could make a difference simply by requiring that freshmen will bring "X" number of units in social studies, one-half unit of which will be in Black History

D. State Legislature

State legislatures could make courses in Black History mandatory by a simple majority vote.

E. State Boards of Education

Some state boards of education have added Human relations courses and Ethnic Studies as requirements for teacher certification.

Since states have separate standards for state accreditation, a state could require a half unit in Black studies, above and beyond regional accreditation standards, if the majority of the Board so decides.

F. Local Boards of Education

Local Boards of Education have great discretionary power to set standards as long as local standards do not violate state and regional standards.

In larger cities where Blacks and other minorities compromise the majority on the Board of Education or the majority of the students, local courses in Afro-American History, Puerto Rican History, Chicano Heritage and Culture are being offered as electives, if not requirements.

G. Test Companies

A section of the SAT or ACT dealing with Afro-American History and culture would do more than any other single action to cause the growth of courses in Black History throughout the nation.

Parents and counselors would insist on these courses in order that children from their district have an equal chance to score high on the test

which is a passport to higher education.

The kind of activities which I have described cannot be done easily, but they can be done if people have the will to do it. I do not recommend them. I mention these tools so that you won't think that the task ahead is impossible.

Look at your own curriculums for courses in high schools which were nonexistent in all but a few schools just a few years ago:

- Driver Training
- Sex Education
- Drug Abuse Control
- Family Planning
- Key Punch Operation
- Environment Protection
- Career Education

Trace the history of how any of these got in the curriculum and you will find that either parents and/or some special interest group lobbied some political body to get that program in. That's how it works through politics not logic.

The uprisings in Watts, Detroit, Newark, Washington, D.C. and scores of other cities, particularly those which followed the death of Dr. Martin Luther Kings, Jr., and the Black student revolts on the various college campuses in the sixties gave initial rise to the Black studies movement.

Inflation and the "Proposition 13 mentality have combined to close down many of the programs. Counter forces are even now at work that may again force America to undertake curriculum reform. Recent events on the international scene make it important to understand Islamic thought, philosophy, politics and culture in our self-defense. The reaction of African countries to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan may send us scurrying to our books to learn more about the "non-Tarzan

history and culture of Africa.

My challenge to the historians and future historians here and elsewhere is to be ready with authentic history when the time comes. Neither our domestic interest nor our foreign interest can much longer be served (if it ever could be) by distorted history with plantation or sweat shop mentality.

The days of business as usual and American history as we have known it are numbered, to say the least.

I'll conclude with other excerpts from Walker which I think could have been also written with this symposium in mind.

For my people standing, staring,
trying to fashion a better way from
confusion, from hypocrisy, and misunder-
standing, trying to fashion a world
that will hold all the people, all
the faces, all the Adams and Eves
and their countless generations.

Let a new earth rise. Let a new
world be born... Let a second generation
full of courage issue forth,
let a people loving freedom come
to growth. let a beauty full of healing
and strength of final clenching
be the pulsing in our spirits and
our blood. Let the martial songs
be written, let the dirges disappear.
Let a race of men now rise and take
control.

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Group Summary

Topic: "What Are The Alternative Ways of Requiring the Teaching of Afro-American History?"

This report is intended to reflect the varied opinions and views of participants in the group regarding the alternative ways of requiring the teaching of Afro-American History.

The overall objectives of the group were 1) to discuss some of the logical approaches and strategies for requiring the teaching of Afro-American History, and 2) to discern how these approaches and strategies could best contribute toward the creation of unbiased and objective truths concerning the teaching of Afro-American History.

The first session consisted of a question and answer period regarding the alternative ways of requiring the teaching of Afro-American History. The major question asked was "Why are we concerned with the teaching of Afro-American History?" The concensus of the group was that black children by right are entitled to learn and know the history of their culture and heritage.

Other positions on the subject from Group IV Sessions include the following:

- . Integrating Afro-American History into the curriculum rather than a separate course to parallel the contributions of Blacks with those of other ethnic groups.
- . Teaching of Afro-American History should not be limited to the schools but rather begin at home with family background and history. (The parent, therefore becomes a primary force behind the teaching of Afro-American History.)
- . Supporting legislation such as the bill introduced by Representative Robert Clark in the House of Representatives stipulating that history accurately reflect the social, economic, cultural, and political contributions of all racial, and ethnic groups in the state of Mississippi (H. B. No. 625, see attached).
- . Working with the State Textbook Commission to get approved textbooks that accurately reflect the contributions of Afro-Americans.

- . Analyzing the present required curriculum of teacher-education programs and suggest revising and/or including an Afro-American History component.
- . Involving the community in general in developing the kinds of problem-solving processes needed to form a basis for equal educational opportunity.

These fundamental issues should be recapitulated and coupled with legal maneuvers and political activities to increase interest among those individuals in position to make the necessary change.

The group discussion concluded with some basic strategies for requiring the teaching of Afro-American History. These strategies involve participation at the local, county and state levels.

Locally, it is possible for school districts and municipalities to develop regulations that would support the teaching of Afro-American History. On the county level, school boards have the power to support curriculums that reflect Afro-American History. Finally, on the state level, legislators should receive pressure from parents and teacher associations to require the teaching of Afro-American History.

In summary, Group IV surmised that the teaching of Afro-American History is an important aspect of the educational process. It provides for an understanding and deeper appreciation for a person's cultural and intellectual capacity. It will contribute toward the complete education for young people; it will give them not only power of concentration but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate and, finally, it will help to communicate not only knowledge of the race but experiences of social living as well.

Recorder,

Ms. Norma Alexander

"Heritage for a New America": An Evaluation

By

Peggy W. Prenshaw

This forum, held at Jackson State University, 27-28 February 1980, addressed the issue of whether Mississippi should require the teaching of Afro-American History to students from the kindergarted level through the twelfth grade (K-12). The conference effectively brought citizens together to discuss the issue, particularly to consider (1) whether a need for such a requirement exists and (2) what the consequences of its enactment would be.

Participants in the forum came from varied backgrounds—teachers, preachers, parents, professors, agency heads, public officials, and citizens who were concerned with the issue under discussion. Outstanding features of the program were the group sessions, which provided ample opportunity for the participants to ask questions and offer their individual thoughts and concerns, and the major addresses, especially that of Dr. Ivory Phillips of Jackson State University, who gave a closely reasoned and detailed argument in favor of requiring the teaching of Afro-American History. The involvement of a number of prominent Mississippi citizens in the planning and programming of the forum further enhanced its success and impact.

Overall, the forum was successful in identifying the humanistic concerns inherent in this issue; how the knowledge of one's heritage affects his or her self concept and vision of the future; how the study of the humanities, especially that of language development and the social sciences, enables students of diverse cultures to better understand one another; and what kind of responsibility the school in a pluralistic

society has to provide coverage of the heritage and experience of all students.

Following are specific comments about the different parts of the forum and some recommendations for possible changes in future programs replicated from this model.

1. Major Speakers

In his opening address Dr. J. Rupert Picott stressed the importance of a knowledge on one's heritage ("a basic ingredient for living") and explained the influence that "imagery" has on one's life ("a permanent determinant of existence"). In order for all youth to know the heritage and achievement of Afro-Americans, it is necessary, he pointed out, to bring out the facts of this heritage and achievement in the general studies taught in the public schools.

Dr. Ivory Phillips gave very detailed information about the need for including Afro-American History in the school curriculum, as well as the advantage to ensue for both Black and White youth. He identified the poor self-concept that many Black children grow up with as an obstacle to improve economic status among adult Black citizens. In legitimatizing the study of Afro-American History, he reasoned, the society, reflected in the school, legitimatizes the worth and achievement of Black citizens. And conversely, he pointed out, excluding Blacks' achievements from the texts and class discussion gives an unstated but powerful sign that nothing in the Black heritage and experience is worth studying.

Mr. Samuel Ethridge focused his remarks on the relative recentness of Afro-American History, noting from his own experience the difficulty of locating pre-Brown court decisions in legal histories. He called upon those who support the inclusion of Afro-American History in the school

curriculum to further inform themselves and, through their own research, to amplify and extend the historical record of Black Americans.

II. Group Sessions

Perhaps because they appeared early in the program, Picott and Phillips seemed to elicit the strongest reaction and commentary from the small groups.

The topics assigned to the four groups differed slightly, and they seemed not to be sufficiently distinct to warrant being separate topics. At some point, in fact, most of the groups considered all four of the topic questions.

On the other hand, by maintaining their separate group identification for all three discussion sessions, the groups did seem to establish a rapport that enhanced interest and participation. Unfortunately, some participants who came on Wednesday night did not return on Thursday, and there was a slight break in the continuity and a need for "starting over" for the newcomers in the morning. A certain drop-and-add pattern seems unavoidable, however, and the group leaders were adept at furnishing the needed transition from one session to another. In fact, in the three groups I observed, the group leaders, with the help of the recorders, provided strong encouragement and ample opportunity for participation by everyone attending the forum.

III. Debate

The debate confused some participants. Mr. Ethridge was extremely effective in his spirited presentation as an opponent of the requirement of Afro-American History in the school curriculum. Because he had earlier spoken in favor of some of the positions he seemed to attack in the debate, his "role" as spokesman for the contrary side of the

argument struck some listeners as a puzzling, sudden reversal of his stance, and struck others as very clever role-playing, so skillfully done that they took it as an ironical and witty situation. With his explanation at the conclusion that he was seriously putting forth the serious arguments made by those who opposed requiring the teaching of Afro-American history in the schools, he clarified his position somewhat.

Professor Phillips restated and extended some of the arguments he had offered in his earlier speech. Both debaters were most effective in clarifying the points of conflict, and the moderator, Mildred Williams, maintained a good balance in the exchange between speakers and an open atmosphere that encouraged questions and comments.

IV. Recommendations for future programs

The structure of the forum at Jackson State University was effective in eliciting discussion of the topic; however, the forum had several distinctive features that could be modified in future programs. In particular, the two-day format might be reduced to a one-day program for groups who decide that the shorter meeting would best serve their needs. For groups who would prefer to lessen the polarization of attitudes toward the issue ("Should the state of Mississippi require that students, K-12, be taught Afro-American History?"), a title such as "The Place of Afro-American History in the School Curriculum, K-12" might serve as an alternative.

Other specific recommendations are as follow:

A. Arrangement of topics for speeches and discussion

An optional arrangement would be one that moves from the general and philosophical issues to the specific one that examines alternatives and options for implementing the teaching of Afro-American History in the

schools. Differing slightly from the Jackson State model, major speakers might consider the following order of questions.

1. Why is the teaching of Afro-American History important to Mississippi and America?

2. What is the current status of the teaching of Afro-American History, K-12 in Mississippi and in America?

3. What options and alternatives exist or strengthen the study of Afro-American History in Mississippi schools?

B. Group sessions

It is helpful to have groups remain intact for the series of discussions, whether for a one-day or two-day meeting. However, rather than assign different topics to each group (since the distinctions are slight), future project directors might ask the groups to consider the address preceding the group discussion and react to it. For example, groups meeting during the first session might discuss an address on why the teaching of Afro-American History is important to Mississippi and to America, giving special attention to the importance of the humanities in the curriculum, the need of Black and White youth for a comprehensive view of history, and the significance of studying the Afro-American heritage and experience for the Black child's self-concept. If the forum is shortened to one day, questions 2 and 3 might be combined for discussion by the groups.

C. Debate

The debate can be an effective strategy for sharpening the contrasting positions. A less divisive strategy for airing the different positions might be a brief dramatization (10-15 minutes) in which some professors in the humanities or other participants might engage in role playing. For

instance, a scene of several students talking to a teacher about their history text, or about some special project or supplementary reading assignments, could raise the issues and points of disagreement that are likely to be expressed by the society at large. Or, a scene dramatizing a curriculum planning meeting of the social science teachers in a city school system might bring out differing positions and problems. At the conclusion of the scene, the audience should be invited to question or comment upon some feature of the scene just presented.

Placing the debate at the conclusion of the program, just prior to the presentation of final reports from the groups, may undercut the work of the groups. Perhaps the debate (or the role playing) would be more effective if it were substituted for one of the formal addresses or, better, if placed immediately after the first address and just prior to the first group discussion session. This arrangement would stimulate group reaction and allow participants a chance to respond to the issues raised.

