

INTEGRATING THE LIFE OF THE MIND: African Americans at the University of Chicago, 1870 - 1940

We all know something about how this nation's public schools were integrated. From *Brown vs. Board of Education* to the searing images from Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957 and Boston in the 1970s, we follow a trail of icons to tell the tale.

What about higher education? The anti-lynching campaigns of the early 20th century and later legal battles over housing and education were led by African Americans who often held advanced degrees. When and how were the nation's research universities and professional schools integrated? When and how, specifically, was the University of Chicago integrated?

The answer lies in a tale of two Universities: the Old University of Chicago, founded just before the Civil War in 1857, and the new University, founded in 1892.

The first class at the new University included both women and African Americans or, rather, one African American woman: Miss Cora Bell Jackson of Chicago. The new University of Chicago has, in other words, been continuously integrated with respect to gender, race, and religion. This origin was the legacy of the Old University whose archives, alumni, faculty, and basic policies its successor adopted.

The second to last president of the Old University, Galusha Anderson, had been a devoted Unionist during the Civil War. In 1884 during the Old University's foreclosure proceedings, he testified that the school had always admitted women and, from the date of the fifteenth amendment, African Americans. He was wrong on the first; close, on the latter.

The Old University of Chicago did not begin as an integrated institution. This changed when Judge Henry Booth, an idiosyncratic dean of the law school, admitted Mrs. Ada Kepley and Mr. Richard Dawson. They both graduated June 30, 1870, in a ceremony announced by the *Chicago Tribune* with the headline: "Woman, Negro graduate from University of Chicago Law School."

Judge Booth would later become a leading ethical humanist in Chicago and serve as an early President of the Chicago Ethical Society. Ethical humanism is a philosophical and religious doctrine committed to human equality. Now we can see also that Booth ranks among Chicago's activist deans, a quiet maker of radical decisions that prepared the University of Chicago to be the foremost producer of African American PhDs in the early 20th century.

By 1943 the University of Chicago had awarded at least forty-five PhDs to African Americans, more than any other university in the world. The intellectual work of these alumni shaped fields as diverse as sociology and cell biology, constructed new fields like African American history and literature, provided leadership at institutions like Howard University, Tuskegee Institute, and Morehouse College, and drove policy changes on pressing issues like lynching.

The first African American student to take an advanced degree at the University of Chicago was Monroe Nathan Work who earned his MA in Sociology in 1903. While a student at Chicago, Work formed a debate team with another African American student, Richard R. Wright, Jr. (no relation to the novelist). About this Work later recalled:

“ . . . I learned the importance of facts. Wright and I had the facts and we would always get the decision because the other fellows might say the facts we offered weren't so but they couldn't offer any against them. You can't argue with the facts. . . . It was then that I dedicated my life to the gathering of information, the compiling of exact knowledge concerning the Negro.”

In this exhibit you will learn how the University of Chicago came to be integrated and who its first African American students were. You will see that a few independent-minded administrators and scholars consistently helped clear the path. Finally, you will find that, like Work, these alumni commonly took from the University of Chicago a strong conviction that rigorous scholarship serves human progress.

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1. The Myth of Openness

Founded in 1857 at 35th St. and Cottage Grove by Baptists associated with Chicago's First Baptist Church, the original or Old University of Chicago never achieved a stable financial footing. Despite the aggressive efforts of its fifth and second-to-last president, Mr. Galusha Anderson, to raise money from philanthropists like John D. Rockefeller and Leland Stanford, the fledgling university found itself facing foreclosure in 1884.

Its history and financial straits are captured in great detail in the court testimony from the foreclosure proceedings. This document provides one of the only formal statements about the university's early policy with respect to women and African Americans.

Creating a myth that the university had always been open with respect to gender and race, President Anderson testified thus:

I am president of the university. . . I became president in February, 1878, and have been president a little over six years. The number of students, taking the preparatory, college, and law department, have numbered not far from three hundred a year...Not all students pay full tuition aside from scholarships; there is a law of the institution that the children of all Christian pastors shall be educated at half price, without respect to denomination. There has never been any distinction as to sex, nationality or religious belief, or political belief. We educate both sexes on the same footing precisely, and illustrate constantly the fifteenth amendment of the constitution of the United States as to color. Students come from all families, or any religious belief, or no religious belief.

2. The Truth and Controversy

President Galusha Anderson's rosy account (case 1) of a university continually open to women and African Americans obscures a more complicated story.

The institution now known as the Old University of Chicago was originally incorporated as the University of Chicago in 1857 on a ten-acre tract of land donated by Illinois Senator Stephen A. Douglas. Douglas' connection with the Kansas-Nebraska Act, regarded as a betrayal of the anti-slavery cause, was a source of great controversy for the new institution.

In 1867 Thomas Hoyne, prominent Chicago lawyer and future mayor-elect, told the story thus:

At the time that offer [of land] was made, Judge Douglas had excited throughout the country a great deal of popular clamor and opposition, on account specially of his agency in the passage of the Nebraska Bill. To use his own language—he could travel by the light of his own burning effigies from Washington to Chicago. Certain portions of the clergy drifting into the political hurricane against Douglas, convened a meeting long known as the “meeting of the twenty-five clergymen in Chicago,” to denounce the author of the Nebraska iniquity. Among the number called together happened to be one Baptist, the then pastor of the First Church in Chicago. Inheriting, very naturally, that hatred of intolerance that gave courage to the ancient colonial disciple of your church—Roger Williams—when driven out of Massachusetts Bay to Rhode Island, . . . he suggested to the reverend gentlemen that it might be the “right divine” of Douglas to interpret the oracles of the Constitution, and that it was no less sacred than the right claimed by them of so interpreting the oracles of the Word of god. The argument did not prevail but the courage and spirit of the protestant were never forgotten.

The dissenting Baptist, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Chicago, who rose to Douglas' defense was J.C. Burroughs. Burroughs became the first and longest-serving president of the Old University of Chicago.

3. Introductory case text is at the beginning of this document.

4. The Old University of Chicago: Toward Integration

The views of Stephen Douglas and Baptist ministers like Drs. Hague and Howard were only one side of an argument about race and education to be heard on the old University of Chicago campus in the 1860s and 1870s.

General S. A. Hurlbut, an important Union officer, who worked closely with Lincoln in a variety of roles, gave a speech in the chapel of the Old University on April 24, 1867, arguing for the importance of educating all “the children of the Republic,” including those who had recently been slaves.

And in 1868 Judge Henry Booth would be appointed as Dean of the Law School. Booth, a proponent of ethical humanism, which is a philosophical and religious doctrine committed to human equality, would also serve as an early president of the Chicago Ethical Society. His collaborations with Jane Addams would ultimately lead to one of Chicago’s settlement houses being named the Henry Booth House in his honor.

Dean Booth would admit to the law school the first woman and African American to receive degrees from the old University of Chicago.

5. The Old University of Chicago: Idiosyncratic Advocacy and Matters of Policy

On June 30, 1870, Mrs. Ada H. Kepley and Mr. Richard A. Dawson received bachelor of law degrees from the old University of Chicago. Mrs. Kepley and Mr. Dawson were probably the first woman and first African American, respectively, to receive degrees from the old University of Chicago.

Although Mrs. Kepley would be thwarted in her effort to pursue a legal career, she would eventually become a Unitarian minister and prominent suffragette. Mr. Dawson had a successful legal career in Arkansas where, in addition to his basic practice, he launched at least one civil rights suit concerning the right to be served in restaurants. He also served in the Arkansas state legislature.

On June 2, 1872, the faculty of the old University of Chicago voted to recommend Miss Alice R. Boise, the daughter of a faculty member, for the degrees of BA and MA. She may be the first woman to have received an undergraduate degree from the old University of Chicago. Three months later, faced with two more requests for admission by women, the faculty decided to consider the question of whether women should be admitted as a matter of policy.

On Friday September 13, 1872, they voted as follows:

Resolved that we recommend to the Board of Trustees that young ladies who wish to take either the regular classical or the regular scientific course in the University and such as are found on examination to give evidence of fitness and an earnest desire to complete special courses of study, be allowed to join the classes of the institution, either in the preparatory department or in the college, motion carried.

From this point forward, the old University of Chicago was integrated with respect to both race and gender, although the numbers of African American students would remain small for years to come.

6. Founding a new University & affirming prior commitments

The Old University of Chicago struggled from the start. The politics of founding donor Senator Stephen A. Douglas hindered fundraising, and the financial panic of 1857 rendered many initial subscriptions worthless.

In addition, the trustees proceeded with construction projects beyond the school's means, and the Chicago fire of 1871, followed by the financial panic of 1873 and the fire of 1874, pushed the school into greater jeopardy. Administratively, the university's situation was equally chaotic.

Union Mutual Life Insurance Company, the university's chief creditor, brought suit in 1881 to foreclose the mortgage it held against university property. In January 1885, the court found in favor of the company, and the trustees' hope of redeeming the property disappeared. In 1886, still seeking to right the ship, the trustees of the Old University tried to recruit William Rainey Harper into the presidency. He declined the invitation, and the school's doors closed a few months later.

Throughout these final years, friends of the Old University sought support from the country's leading Baptist philanthropist, John D. Rockefeller. Simultaneously but separately, a new denominational organization, the American Baptist Education Society, formed to support Baptist educational institutions. This group determined that Chicago was the right location for a new Baptist University. At this point the supporters of the Old University, John D. Rockefeller, and William Rainey Harper joined forces to found the new University of Chicago.

At its final meeting in 1890, the Board of Trustees of the original University of Chicago changed the name of the institution to the Old University of Chicago so that the new Baptist school being organized as a completely separate legal entity might be called the University of Chicago.

Although Harper had definite views about the educational policies of the new institution, he and the Board of Trustees would also build on the existing foundation: the new university continued to admit women and African-Americans.

7. Who were the first African Americans at the University of Chicago? An Old Question

We are not alone in asking the question: “Who were the first African Americans to attend the University of Chicago?”

A surprising number of letter writers contacted the office of the President between 1900 and 1920 to ask just that. Since the University did not organize student lists by race or ethnicity, this question was difficult to answer. The University Registrar did, however, note on a student’s transcript if he or she were “Negro” (See Case 19 for examples).

Originally these notations were in the form of marginal notes on the transcripts, but some time between 1908 and 1915, the Registrar’s Office added a line on the transcript form for entering a student’s racial identity.

The earliest African American undergraduate alumni were Cora B. Jackson (1896), Spencer Cornelius Dickerson (1897), Richard Robert Wright, Jr. (1901), Monroe Nathan Work (1902), John Wesley Hubert (1903), James Garfield Lemon (1904), Cecilia Johnson (1906), Dudley Weldon Woodard (1906), George Franklin Thompson (1908), Garfield Allen Curry (1910), Earl Edward Finch (1910), and Georgiana Simpson (1911).

The first four African American graduate alumni were Work (1903), Wright (1904), Charles H. Turner (1907), Woodard (1907), Carter G. Woodson (1908), and Ernest Everett Just (1916).

By 1943, at least forty - five African Americans had earned PhD degrees from the University of Chicago, more than from any other university in the country.

8. The Social Question- Round One

The title of this exhibit, “Integrating the Life of the Mind,” reflects the fact that African American students at the University of Chicago between 1870 and 1940 were integrated into the intellectual but not the social life of the institution.

As the University of Chicago moved forward as an institution integrated in intellectual pursuits, it repeatedly hit rocky waters when social questions emerged. The first controversies arose in 1907 through two separate but similar events.

In July of 1907, an African American alumna and graduate student, Miss Cecilia Johnson, was (it appears falsely) accused of having tried to pass for white in order to join a sorority. She was “out-ed” by a fellow student who worked surreptitiously as a stringer for the *Chicago Tribune*.

Miss Johnson left the University on account of the scandal and did not immediately return, despite a letter from Dean of Graduate Study and Acting-President Albion Small, condemning the episode of intolerance. She did, however, complete her Masters in education in 1920.

Later that summer, a second controversy arose. An African American student from Washington D.C., Georgiana Simpson, had enrolled for a BA degree. She had elected to live in Green Hall, a women’s dormitory, but her arrival occasioned protests from several white Southern women students.

Sophonisba Breckenridge, Head of Green Residence Hall and Secretary to Marion Talbot, Dean of Women, made an executive decision that Miss Simpson could stay in the dorms. In response, five of the protesting students moved from the dormitory. Upon his return from summer vacation, President Harry Pratt Judson reversed this decision and asked Miss Simpson to find residence off campus, which she did. This established an informal policy that African American students could not live on campus.

Secretary Breckenridge, Dean Talbot, and Dean Small were, like Dean Booth, activist administrators who chose to try to advance the cause of integration, in this case social as well as intellectual. In 1907 they failed in their efforts. In 1923 with a new president, they would get a second chance (see Case 13).

9. *Future Intellectuals: Monroe Nathan Work (AB 1902, AM 1903)*

Between 1870 and 1943 at least forty-five African Americans completed PhDs at the University of Chicago, more than at any other University. These alumni include the first African Americans to earn PhDs in medicine, education, business, and library science as well as the first African American woman to earn a PhD. Other African American students who took AB and AM degrees also went on to exceptionally distinguished scholarly careers. Cases 9- 16 introduce you to a few of them.

Monroe Nathan Work was born in 1866 to ex-slaves. The need to work to support ill family members slowed his schooling. He started high school at the age of 23 in Kansas and, upon completion, tried his hand as a teacher, preacher, and farmer before determining to enter seminary in Chicago.

After completing a theological degree in 1898, he entered the University of Chicago where he took an AB and AM in Sociology in 1902 and 1903. During this time, he published “The Negro and Crime in Chicago,” the first scholarly article by an African American to be published in the *American Journal of Sociology* (1901).

At the University of Chicago Work acquired a belief in facts and rigorous scholarship as a foundation for social progress (see Case 3). In his work as a mature scholar, he straddled the line between W. E. B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington in their debate over whether a liberal or vocational education would do most to advance the cause of racial equality.

In 1908 Work took a position as founding Director of a new Department of Records and Research at Washington’s Tuskegee Institute and from that position aggressively advanced empirical research into African American experience. Work’s major publication, the annual *Negro Year Book*, cataloged a remarkable array of demographic details about early 20th century African American life. Importantly, these texts also catalogued lynching statistics and, in so doing, finally helped focus the attention of American citizens on this problem.

Work served in this capacity at Tuskegee until retirement in 1938 but remained at the Institute continuing his work until he died in 1947.

10. *Future Intellectuals: Carter G. Woodson (AB and AM 1908)*

Carter G. Woodson is often called the “Father of African American History.” He spearheaded the 1926 creation by Congress of Negro History Week, which has since grown into Black History Month.

More importantly, Woodson founded several institutions that provided the infrastructure to support the new disciplines of African American history and African American literary criticism. These included two journals, *The Journal of Negro History* and *The Negro History Bulletin*, and a research institution, the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, which established a press to publish new work in African American studies.

Woodson was born in 1875. He took his AB degree at Berea College, the oldest continuously integrated college in the U.S., and received a second AB and a Masters degree in history at the University of Chicago in 1908. Then he earned his PhD in history at Harvard in 1912.

Woodson’s AM thesis focused on international relations in Europe in the 19th century. During his time as a student, themes in African American studies were not yet legitimate subjects for doctoral research. But Woodson’s journals and the work of the Association would legitimate research themes in African American history so that younger scholars would be able to pursue themes more directly connected to African American culture.

Woodson taught briefly at Howard University (1919-20) but spent most of his career as an independent scholar tending to the journals and association he had founded. He was a tireless fundraiser and advocate for these enterprises and died in 1950.

In September 2008 the University of Chicago opened a charter middle school named in his honor.

11. *Future Intellectuals: Ernest Everett Just (PhD 1916)*

Among accidents of history in the story of the integration of the University of Chicago was the presence within the zoology faculty of strong supporters of racial equality. Professors Warden Clyde Allee and Frank Lillie went out of their way to recruit and support African American students in the fields of zoology and marine biology.

Charles H. Turner, whose 1907 dissertation analyzed the homing pattern of ants, was the first African American to earn a PhD at the University of Chicago. Other African American students to study zoology in the early 20th century were Ernest Everett Just and Miss Roger Arliner Young.

Ernest Everett Just was born in 1883, earned a BA at Dartmouth in 1907, and immediately took a position teaching literature at Howard. While at Howard he made the acquaintance of Professor Frank Lillie, who encouraged him to pursue advanced degrees at the University of Chicago. Lillie, a future Dean of the Biological Sciences Division, was closely involved in the establishment of the marine biology center in Massachusetts known as Woods Hole, and he and colleagues like Allee involved African American students in research there even when securing their enrollment in courses of study was impossible.

Just began work with Lillie at Woods Hole but enrolled at the University of Chicago *in absentia* in 1911. He completed his PhD in zoology in 1916. Lillie supported Just throughout his career in pursuing research funds and opportunities beyond what his employer, Howard University, could provide. The two men maintained a life-long friendship.

During his dissertation research, Just made an important discovery about cell cleavage; his most important publication was *The Biology of the Cell Surface* (1939).

Embittered by American race relations, Just spent the 1930s in Europe, returning to America as Europe headed to war. He died in New Jersey in 1941.

12. *Future Intellectuals: Georgiana Simpson (AB 1911, PhD 1921)*

Three African American women earned PhDs at American universities in 1921; they were the first African American women to do so. Georgiana Simpson was one. Her chosen field was German philology. She had written a Masters thesis entitled “The Phonology of Merigarto,” a study of an Early Middle High German poem. Her doctoral dissertation, written under the supervision of Martin Schütze, focused on German Romanticism and was entitled “Herder’s Conception of Das Volk.”

Simpson was born in 1866 and earned an AB at the University of Chicago in 1911, mostly with summer and correspondence courses. She began pursuing her graduate work immediately through further summer courses (1915-1919) while also teaching at Dunbar High School in Washington D.C., a school from which many of the early 20th century’s most distinguished African Americans emerged. After two years in full-time residence at the University of Chicago (1919-1921), Simpson earned her AM and PhD in German philology.

Whereas Simpson’s original scholarly training had nothing to do with African American themes, like Woodson she also found ways to employ her philological skills toward increased understanding of African American history and literature. Her last major publication was a critical edition and translation from the French of a biography of Toussaint L’Ouverture, the leader of the Haitian slave rebellion and father of free Haiti. (See case 23).

She joined the faculty of Howard in 1931 and died in 1944.

Simpson’s time at the University of Chicago was important not simply for its scholarly significance. Simpson also found herself both in 1907 and in 1920 and 1921 at the center of debates over where and how Negro students would be housed.

Whereas she and Miss Cecilia Johnson had occasioned controversies over social integration in 1907 (see Case 8), the controversies of 1920-21 (see Case 13) had more serious origins: first, a national conversation about how to house Negro students at elite institutions prompted by policy choices at Harvard and, second, the Chicago race riots of 1919, which occurred during one of the summers of Simpson’s residence.

13. The Social Question- Round Two

The decade of the 1920s brought a decisive shift in the level of integration on the University of Chicago campus. Whereas President Harry Pratt Judson had resisted social integration, the new President, Ernest DeWitt Burton, who took office in 1923, initiated broader consideration of the question, soliciting advice from colleagues at other institutions and also from his daughter, who worked for the Y. W. C. A.

Under Burton's leadership, the University administration addressed the issue of social integration self-consciously; committees were formed to develop a policy on housing. The result was a decision to admit African Americans to the dormitories.

The environment must also have improved more generally as a result of Burton's leadership. By the late 1920s we can find as many as nine African American students in a single yearbook and we see these students now participating alongside white students in the life of the institution, for instance in extra-curricular activities like the Spanish Club and the Women's Basketball Team.

The 1920s also saw the formation of a club called the "Interracial Group."

14. *Future Intellectuals: Albert and Katherine Dunham*

Perhaps the most famous African American alumna of the University of Chicago even today is dancer Katherine Dunham. Her brother Albert had preceded her to the University, where he earned an AB, MA, and PhD degree in Philosophy (1928, 1931, 1933).

Albert (born in 1907) and Katherine (born in 1909) were raised in Glen Ellyn and Joliet, Illinois. Katherine matriculated at the University in 1928 and gravitated to the intellectual circles surrounding Professor of Anthropology, and later Dean of the Social Sciences, Robert Redfield. Her future husband and set designer, Canadian John Pratt, was also a student of Redfield, as were other artistically-inclined students, for instance the future writer Marian Minus, with whom the novelist Richard Wright was for a time in love.

Dunham soon left the University to pursue both dance and ethnographic study of dance in the Caribbean on a Julius Rosenwald Fellowship under the supervision of Melville Herskovitz of Northwestern University. She returned to the University and earned her PhB in 1936. She immediately began pursuit of a PhD in Anthropology.

The coursework with Redfield provided Dunham and her fellow students with access to non-Western cultural traditions, which they then drew on throughout their lives to fuel their artistic production. Deciding that her true calling was the theater, Dunham moved to New York and founded the Katherine Dunham Dance Company.

She died in 2006 as one of the artistic luminaries of the United States.

15. *Future Intellectuals:* Benjamin Mays (AM 1925, PhD 1935)

Most famous as a mentor of Martin Luther King, Jr. during King's time as a student at Morehouse, Benjamin Mays was born in Epworth, South Carolina, in 1894.

After graduating with honors in philosophy from Bates College in 1917, Mays accepted a teaching position in mathematics at Morehouse College and entered the Divinity School at the University of Chicago in 1921, attending during summers. In 1922 he added the pastorship of Shiloh Baptist Church in Atlanta to his duties but returned to the University of Chicago for the academic year in 1924, completing his AM in the New Testament later that year.

Mays remained enrolled in the doctoral program but simultaneously expanded his duties in the South, working for the Florida Urban League and the National Y. M. C. A. on behalf of black colleges in South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Tennessee. Again, he attended the University of Chicago mainly during the summer but in 1932 returned for a full academic year.

In 1934 he was appointed Dean of the School of Religion at Howard University and in 1935 his PhD was conferred for the thesis, "The Idea of God in Contemporary Negro Literature," making this one of the first dissertations outside the field of sociology to focus specifically on African American studies.

From 1940 to 1967 Mays served as president of Morehouse where he met King in 1944. His eulogy at King's funeral service was heard by 12,000 mourners. Mays died in 1984.

16. *Future Intellectuals: Lorenzo Dow Turner (PhD 1926)*

Lorenzo Dow Turner was the first African American to earn a PhD in English at the University of Chicago.

Born in 1895 in North Carolina, he earned a BA from Howard in 1914 and an MA in English from Harvard in 1917. He immediately began teaching at Howard, serving as the chair of the Department of English from 1917 to 1928, while also working toward his PhD at the University of Chicago. Writing a dissertation on anti-slavery sentiment in American language prior to 1865, he earned his PhD in 1926.

Shortly after completing his doctorate, Turner moved from Howard to Fisk University, where he remained as chair of the Department of English until 1946.

The major publication of his scholarly career was *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (University of Chicago Press, 1949). A linguist, Turner's project in this book was to unearth the African origins of an African American dialect that previous scholars had taken to be simply "bad English." His research work for the project took him to the Sea Islands off the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia (1932-33), Brazil (1940-41), London (1936-37), and Paris (1937). The book continues to be valuable to scholars today.

At Fisk, Turner designed one of the first programs in African Studies and in 1946 he took up a position at Roosevelt University in Chicago as Chairman of a new African Studies Program. Turner retired from Roosevelt in 1970 and died in 1972.

17. Models & Mentors

By the time Cora Bell Jackson enrolled at the University of Chicago in 1892 distinguished African Americans had already long been making strong, public arguments about the value of education to African Americans. They had also exhibited that value through their own achievements. Both Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington had been born in slavery yet achieved great distinction as intellectual and political leaders.

At a White House reception after Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, Douglass was at first refused entrance. When admitted and greeted by the President, Lincoln did not merely shake his hand and let him go but tried to speak with him. According to his own account, Douglass tried to break the greeting, indicating that many other people were waiting to greet Lincoln. But Lincoln held him and asked him what Douglass had thought of the speech earlier that day for, Lincoln said, he valued no one's opinion so much as Douglass'.

Not born until 1868, but in 1895 the first African American to earn a PhD at Harvard, W. E. B. DuBois would join the ranks of Douglass and Washington and with them frame the public conversation about race and education. What sorts of educational institutions were needed to advance the cause of racial equality and liberate African Americans from conditions of oppression?

The intellectual and institutional contributions of these three revered figures shaped the world in which African American students of the early 20th century cut their own course. Faculty at the University of Chicago requested that the flag be lowered to half mast when Douglass died. Booker T. Washington lectured at the University in 1910.

But these students often also had close, personal connections to these illustrious men. Upon his graduation, Work would have to make decisions about whether to ally himself with Washington or DuBois. Georgiana Simpson knew Douglass and was raised in the house of his widow in Washington, D.C.

18. Patrons

While distinguished African Americans of an earlier generation, like Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, and W. E. B. DuBois, served as mentors and models for young African Americans pursuing degrees at institutions like the University of Chicago, patrons both inside the University and out were also important to the success of these students.

As we have seen (case 11), faculty in the department of zoology, like Warden Clyde Allee and Frank Lillie, were unusually supportive of African American students. In the Social Sciences, sociologist Robert Park and anthropologist Robert Redfield trained large numbers of African American students. And in the Humanities, the Chairman of the English Department, John M. Manly, was especially supportive of Lorenzo Dow Turner while Martin Schütze of the German Department went out of his way to support Georgiana Simpson's professional development.

In addition to these academic patrons, many of these students were supported financially by Julius Rosenwald through his Rosenwald Fellows Program. Just and Dunham were only two of the many fellows supported by this program designed to foster artistic and intellectual creativity.

Similarly, Rosenwald's philanthropic efforts were critical to the success of Carter Woodson's institution building projects.

19. Strategies for Coping with the Social Issue

In the early 20th century the University of Chicago welcomed African American students intellectually but not socially.

Yearbooks from the earliest years provide no evidence that African Americans participated in campus activities. These students appear to have been fairly isolated. They often took leaves of absence, also indicated on their transcripts, in order to work and build up their savings to support their studies. And quite commonly, as their transcripts indicate, these students did most of their coursework during the summer.

In the 1920s and 1930s we begin to see a change. By the end of the 1920s yearbooks show an interracial club and we see African American students participating alongside white students in other clubs, for instance the Spanish Club and the Y. W. C. A. (see Case 13).

Moreover, in the 1930s and 1940s an interracial artistic milieu grew in the vicinity of the campus, connecting students to a broader social network off-campus of artists participating in institutions like the Southside Community Arts Center and the writing workshops held at the George Cleveland Hall Branch of the Chicago Public Library.

In these contexts, students like Katherine Dunham, John Pratt, and Marian Minus collaborated with fellow artists like novelist Richard Wright, poets Margaret Walker and Langston Hughes, and artist Charles Sebree.

20. Networks

In the early decades of the 20th century African American PhDs could generally find academic employment only in black colleges and universities like Howard, Morehouse, Fisk, Tuskegee, and Spelman. One exception to this was Julian Herman Lewis (PhD 1915). The first African American to earn a PhD in medicine, Lewis became an associate professor of pathology at the University of Chicago after completing his degree. But not until 1948 when Allison Davis (PhD anthropology, 1942) was tenured at the University of Chicago would non-black institutions begin regular hiring of African American faculty. The early black alumni of the University of Chicago therefore moved in a relatively small professional network and would collaborate with one another for the rest of their lives.

Most of them published at some point in Carter Woodson's journals (*The Journal of Negro History* or *The Negro History Bulletin*) or with the press of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. In 1921 Charles Johnson (PhD Sociology, 1917; President of Fisk, 1946-56) founded another important journal *Opportunity: A Journal of Negro Life*, an organ of the National Urban League. The tables of contents of that journal repeatedly show Chicago alumni publishing side-by-side in the same issue.

Finally, these African American alumni frequently encouraged their own students at institutions like Howard and Tuskegee to go on to the University of Chicago for graduate school. Ernest Just, for instance, directed his student at Howard, Roger Arliner Young, to graduate study at the University of Chicago.

21. *A credit to the race or a race man?* Studying Science

As African Americans made their way into institutions of higher learning in the late 19th and early 20th century, they sought to satisfy individual intellectual curiosities but also inevitably faced the question of what it meant to be a member of a minority group and to pursue a PhD.

While each of these alumni had his or her own intellectual reasons for choosing a particular course of study, each student inevitably also sought to explain how his or her attainment contributed to the advancement of African Americans. This question generally settled into two alternatives. Did the scholar view him or herself as a credit to the race or as a race man or woman?

In the early 19th century the segregationist Senator John C. Calhoun had said that “if he could find a Negro who knew the Greek syntax, he would then believe that the Negro was a human being and should be treated as a man.” In 1881 William Scarborough, the first African American to join the Modern Language Association, published *First Lessons in Greek*, a textbook used in several colleges and universities. By proving what he, a black man, could accomplish, Scarborough sought to be a credit to his race.

By contrast, Monroe Nathan Work was a “race man.” He took up as his scholarly theme sociological issues relating directly to African American experience. His first publication was, “The Negro and Crime in Chicago” (1901), and in another term paper, “The Importance of Sociology to the Negro,” Work argued that “no group suffered more because of lack of knowledge concerning themselves.” Work consequently “dedicated his life to the gathering of information, the compiling of exact knowledge concerning the Negro.”

As you will see in cases 21-23, African American scientists in the early 20th century tended to think of themselves as being “a credit to their race” and sociologists were more likely to be “race men” while historians and philologists merged the two approaches.

22. *A credit to the race or a race man? Studying sociology*

Chicago's most famous early African American alumni were sociologists: Monroe Nathan Work, Charles Johnson, E. Franklin Frazier, Horace Cayton, St. Clair Drake, and Allison Davis. They studied with white social scientists like Albion Small, W. I. Thomas, Charles R. Henderson, Robert Park, Robert Redfield, and Louis Wirth, who themselves had principal research interests in race.

As Professor Kenneth Warren puts it, "It is arguable that the School of Sociology here at the University of Chicago . . . invented the modern study of race, and conversely, that the modern study of race invented the School of Sociology."

Charles Johnson's study of the 1919 Chicago race riots, *The Negro in Chicago*, became the leading model for future commission reports (see Case 12). Similarly, Horace Cayton and St. Clair Drake's monumental *Black Metropolis* (1945), a landmark study of black and urban life, remains in print today.

The Chicago School of Sociology was, however, controversial. Here is the 1944 *Journal of Negro History* obituary for Robert Park:

Dr. Park had many qualities to be admired. He was serious, methodical and practical in his approach to men and things. He was not the least emotional. He had no love for the Negro as such. He was merely interested in the Negro and his problems as he was in the plight and problems of other elements of the social order....

In all his contact with the Negroes of this country and others abroad, however, Dr. Park failed to understand the race thoroughly. In his theory of the conflict and fusion of cultures he insisted that the American Negro retained little of what he brought from Africa except his temperament. Negro and white scholars who have recently studied the race in both hemispheres have uprooted this theory.

Unfortunately, emotional Negroes trained under Dr. Park at the University of Chicago have carried this theory to the extreme and insist that the Negro is a race without a culture. Dr. Park, however, was not guilty of such extravagant statement. He merely failed to analyze properly what he observed among Negroes.

23. *A credit to the race or a race man? Studying history*

Carter Woodson, the “Father of Black History,” had very definite ideas about how the discipline of African American history should be developed.

In a 1927 letter explaining himself, Woodson wrote:

The fact is that the so-called history teaching in our schools and colleges is downright propaganda, an effort to praise one race and to decry the other to justify social repression and exploitation. The world is still in darkness as to the actual progress of mankind. . . . The Association [for the Study of Negro Life and History] is trying to bring before the world the whole truth that the truth may make men free. To do this it has decided not only to publish informing books but to offer by mail instruction in Negro life and history. . . for the special benefit of those who would like to study the aspects of African civilization which were neglected in the schools in which they were trained.

Woodson did not himself begin his academic career by pursuing such goals. His 1908 Masters thesis (case 10) focused on 19th-century Europe. Only after he proved himself as a historian by writing about Europe did he turn to topics like early Negro education in West Virginia and free Negro owners of slaves in the United States in 1830.

Similarly, between 1915 and 1921, Georgiana Simpson proved herself as a philologist by researching medieval German literature and German Romanticism. Only after completing this work did she apply her scholarly tools to African American culture, producing in 1924 a translation and edition of a biography of the Haitian revolutionary leader Toussaint L’Ouverture.

Woodson’s books about African American experience and Simpson’s edition of the L’Ouverture biography were both published by the press of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH), thereby establishing models for scholarship in African American studies.

24. The Black Metropolis Research Consortium

This exhibit is sponsored by the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, an unincorporated Chicago-based association of libraries, universities, and other archival institutions with major holdings of materials that document African American and African diasporic culture, history, and politics, with a specific focus on materials relating to Chicago. The BMRC is dedicated to making its members' relevant holdings broadly accessible. The University of Chicago serves as Host Institution of the BMRC.

The City of Chicago holds one of the richest and most valuable treasure troves of African-American related archival material in the country. The archival materials are not concentrated in a single institution (although some institutions, like the Vivian G. Harsh Collection of the Chicago Public Library and the DuSable Museum of African American History have especially rich holdings).

Particular archival collections are often split up between different institutions, and much of this valuable archival material has not yet been "processed." This means that no finding aids have yet been produced for these materials and it is consequently impossible for researchers to learn of their existence other than by word of mouth. This rich archive will best be made accessible through collaborative effort.

The work of the Consortium to preserve valuable African American history is guided by BMRC Executive Director, Vera Davis, by Consortium Archivist, Tamar Dougherty, and by a nine-person Board chaired by Dr. Adam Green, Associate Professor in the Department of History at the University of Chicago. The BMRC is proud of its involvement with this exhibit, which celebrates the ongoing contribution of African Americans to the life of the mind here at the University, throughout Chicago, and across the nation and the world.

For further information about the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, please visit its web site: www.blackmetropolisresearch.org.