In early 1929, Mag Hanna, a teacher in Conway, Mississippi, wrote to John Easom, the state agent for Negro education, to complain about local government policies for rural black schools. The complaint was that the new county superintendent was “cutting the colored schools short this term” and it included a plea for help from the state agent to extend the school term because “we as a race of people can not advance in education without a chance to do so.” 1 The state agent responded that it would not be possible to remedy the situation for the whole county without the support of the white superintendent and the “good white friends of Leake County,” but he did provide an application to get money from the Rosenwald Fund to extend the school term if money could be raised in the community toward the effort and teachers could be guaranteed a minimum salary. 2 While it would seem impossible that anyone outside of the local governing structure could be consulted on matters of educational policy in rural communities in the Jim Crow South, this teacher not only protested but also bypassed the local government to get an application for funding that could potentially have a significant impact on the county’s public schools. In spite of their relative marginalization from state and local political structures, rural black communities were able to participate in the development of educational policy in the South. Public-private collaboration between northern philanthropists and southern states promoted the development of an educational infrastructure that provided institutional sites for that participation and the means to mitigate against the strength of local politics.
In this article, I make two distinct contributions to the literature. The first is to the social science literature on organizational change, providing a more theoretical understanding of the ways in which rural blacks in the South, in spite of being isolated both geographically and through segregation, were able to establish links to political networks beyond their communities through schooling. The centralization of schools created the networks that rural communities needed to affect the public sphere. The second is that the use of a social science lens helps to reframe the historical literature on southern education and race by expanding definitions of black agency and the contributions of northern philanthropists. The more that schooling created links between rural communities and the political structure outside of them, the more rural blacks were able to participate in the development of policy. The dynamic effects of organizational change in the South are important to developing the historical narrative.

W. E. B. Du Bois documented the central role that southern blacks played in promoting their own education, and historians have expanded on his work by providing considerable evidence of the quantity and quality of their contributions to reform. These narratives show that teachers and community leaders were essential to educational development, and provide ample empirical evidence that members of the black community served as both a catalyst and a force for reform. However, there has not been a social and historical account that transcends individual cases, documenting more fully the institutional means by which the success of individual leaders and by extension, the community, was promoted and sustained. Christine Woyshner, in her study of the development of the national PTA, makes a similar case for the need to move beyond “local case histories that overlook translocal networks.”

In recent years, there has been a renewed focus on the relative strengths of policy history as a distinct disciplinary lens. Julian Zelizer described some of the advantages, including the ability to incorporate a broader range of actors into the historical narrative by exploring the dynamic relationship that exists between interest groups and institutions, and the possibility of exploring the temporal dimensions of social processes. While policy and organizational frameworks can provide a fresh perspective on any number of established historical narratives, one area where this seems to be particularly true is in southern education, where educational policy was developed during Jim Crow in a dynamic process that included state and local governments, private interests, and disenfranchised southern blacks. Research on Jeanes teachers in the South, especially when considered through the theoretical lens of neo-institutionalism, provides evidence that schooling was an
important institutional venue for promoting more formal and substantive participation in policy and political development than has been documented in the literature.

The Jeanes Fund, established with a formal bequest by Anna T. Jeanes in 1907, was to be applied for the sole purpose of “assisting and maintaining, in the southern United States, community, country and rural schools for the great class of negroes to whom the small rural community schools are alone available,” primarily through the appointment of supervising teachers in rural black communities. This fund was one of a number of philanthropies that promoted educational reform in the South in the early twentieth century through collaborative relationships with state and local governments. The earliest of these, the Peabody and Slater Funds, were established in 1867 and 1882, respectively, and funded a variety of projects. The Rosenwald Fund, established by Sears’ magnate Julius Rosenwald with initial gifts in 1912 and a formal endowment in 1917, is best known for its contributions toward the construction of school buildings, but also provided funding for a range of educational initiatives like school libraries. The General Education Board (GEB), funded by John D. Rockefeller Jr. in 1902, contributed to a range of initiatives and helped to coordinate and oversee the work of all the funds that were active in the South.

There is a rich body of literature that explores this philanthropic work. James Anderson argued in The Education of Blacks in the South that the inability of reformers to reach consensus around competing conceptions of the relationship of education to the political economy of the South thwarted educational reform for decades. Subsequent historians expanded the discussion, focusing more fully on issues of intentionality and its impact on reform, and asserted that the philanthropists provided relatively little funding for an agenda that promoted social injustice. Most historians of southern education would be quick to point out that the intentions of the philanthropists with regard to southern blacks determined the infrastructure, built specifically for industrial education in which menial skills were promoted without academic focus, rather than a classical, liberal arts curriculum. Indeed, the literature has provided a compelling indictment of philanthropists and the negative effects of their funding program, even in the case of the Jeanes teachers, whose appointments were often intended by philanthropists and southerners alike to support industrial education. The philanthropists have also been characterized as being part of one group and, indeed, the membership of their boards consisted of an interlocking directorate with some serving simultaneously on all three. However, these philanthropists differed greatly in terms
of religion, geography, and business background and there were differences in the way each operated within the context of Progressive reform.\footnote{11} As such, it is important not to make sweeping generalizations about their work in the South, but rather to build on more recent work that has considered the effects of reform at the local level.\footnote{12} Organizational change is typically a dynamic process with both intended and unintended consequences.

Scholars of new institutionalism and American political development have provided theoretical frameworks to explain the role of interest groups and institutions in policy and political development, but typically do not provide a theoretical basis for understanding black agency during this time period.\footnote{13} For example, Elisabeth Clemens, in her exploration of marginalized groups in the Progressive Era, explicitly excludes rural blacks during this time period from her analysis as being too marginal.\footnote{14} They were isolated by the lack of a broader community, and efforts at community organization could have political consequences.\footnote{15} Robert Lieberman illustrates the mechanisms by which institutions embody and make real socially and politically constructed racial differences.\footnote{16} His work could support the conception of blacks as marginal to educational policy development in the South because educational institutions established by northern philanthropists were intended to sustain social and economic practices defined by the color line, incorporating blacks into policy initiatives like industrial education that were designed not to promote educational progress but to further embed blacks in the labor market.\footnote{17} At the same time, Jill Quadagno, in her case study on Medicare, illustrates that the state can be an effective mechanism for reducing racial inequality if four criteria are met: interest groups must be able to mobilize political resources, institutions that reproduce systems of oppression must be shifted from the private to the public sphere, the rules and conditions for the distribution of benefits must be designed to reinforce racial equality, and the benefits must be provided on a continuous and universal basis.\footnote{18} It would appear that the racist ideology of northern philanthropists and southern whites was too pervasive for any of these criteria to be met with regard to educational equality.

These adverse conditions certainly limited the extent to which rural blacks could participate in policy development, and it would be overstating it to claim that blacks were able to mobilize in a significant way during this time period. However, rural blacks did participate in education policy and reform. First, a review of the southern reform process in education reveals that at the local level, black reformers were able to organize with the imprimatur of whites when it was based in the context of industrial education. As such, rural
blacks were able to replicate the organizational repertoires of schooling with impunity, similar to the process that Clemens describes. This form of organizing provided rural blacks with opportunities to participate in discussions about educational policy, and to promote their own vision for educational reform as part of a broader group of political actors with competing visions for change.

Second, while many rural black communities sought to retain control over their local schools, both public and private, the Jeanes teachers facilitated the increased bureaucratization of schooling and promoted its centralization in southern states. While the South can be defined by its localism, schooling helped to link black communities to the political and social structure outside their communities, helping to overcome the extent to which the local nature of the political system, especially in education, has often been to the detriment of racial equality. Recent scholarship has shown that strong political institutions are essential to the relationship between civil society and democracy, and that localism did much to promote and sustain discrimination and inequality in education.

Finally, in those regions of the South where it was possible to shift schools more to a public sphere through state centralization, the Jeanes teachers were able both to mobilize political resources and promote universal education. Quadagno has shown that inequality can be reduced when decisions about the distribution of resources are brought into the public sphere and institutional arrangements that sustain oppression are transformed. In the case of education, the transfer of resources from private to public did not directly lead to a redistribution of power or resources, because the public sphere was dominated by a local racial state. However, the Jeanes program provided avenues for integrating more local institutions into the public sphere so that they could be regulated by the state, and in doing so, sought over time to reconstruct the public sphere. Schooling provided opportunities for community organizing, expanding political opportunities and the development of shared cognitions about education among members of the black community, factors that are crucial to the more formal insurgency that would later develop.

The centralization of schools was a precondition for any of the criteria that Quadagno outlines. This transfer of the educational infrastructure more fully to the public sphere ultimately affected the path dependency of racial incorporation that Lieberman describes.

It has not always been the case that shifting institutions from the private to the public sphere will be beneficial to oppressed groups. For rural blacks, the development of a centralized public school system that diminished local
control and with it efforts by communities to improve their own schools could be detrimental to progress. Historians have noted the number of high-quality private institutions for southern blacks that were converted to public schools that focused on industrial education or were closed down altogether in the name of educational progress. The willingness of the GEB to allow numerous institutions of varying quality to close has been viewed by many as evidence of their commitment to industrial education as a first priority and of the negative effects of centralization. However, from a more narrowly defined goal of institution building, the conversion of private academies into county training schools also helped to institutionalize a greater number of schools extending into higher grades and substantially increased the public system. While it is valid to argue that centralization might take away from the power that blacks were able to yield over their neighborhood schools, a principal cost of devolving power to small local units in the American state has been the tendency to place policymaking in the hands of oppressive local majorities, typically to the detriment of the black community.25

One interesting way to gauge the benefits of the institutionalization and centralization of public schooling in the South is to consider the work of the Jeanes teachers. The process of historicizing educational reform by time period in the South is complicated. Reform in one rural community would not be matched in another within the same period, despite coexisting in time and space. However, while progress was not linear and consistent, it did evolve over the period beginning with the appointment of the first Jeanes teacher in Virginia in 1909, and ending just as New Deal policies and war mobilization began to take effect. While the work of the Jeanes teachers has been discussed in the literature, it is useful to consider empirical evidence through the lens of social science theory in order to reconstruct the narrative of southern education, and in particular the role of schools.

Southern blacks faced a formidable challenge. Political development in the South was complicated by the strength of partisan politics, the hegemony of the planter class, a relatively weak state and local bureaucracy, and the racial politics that defined the social structure. A central feature is that sectional interests, often defended in terms of states’ rights, were strong determinants of policy development.26 The development of a state system of public schooling in the South required a long process of building the organizational capacity necessary to the developing educational system, and this process was facilitated by an array of public-private collaborations that took place between northern philanthropists and southern states, including programs such as State Agents for Negro education, county training schools, teacher training
programs, a philanthropic mode of giving that provided funding that both
cooexisted with state and local budgets and operated discretely, and the Jeanes
teachers. These operated in parallel fashion to existing political systems and
provided the institutional venues necessary for both philanthropists and
rural blacks to promote goals. Public-private collaboration has increasingly
been a focus of scholars of American political development and scholars are
looking much earlier in American history to consider the relationship
between collaboration and the development of the American political
system. The public schools that developed from this collaboration served as
an institutional site for rural blacks to engage in reform and challenge the
political structure of the South at the state and local levels.

However, the issue of local control and states rights created strict param-
eters around policy development. State centralization of schooling, as defined
by compulsory schooling, public support and taxation, and state regulations
and oversight, occurred over time in the South, with some regions making
progress relatively earlier than others. The average year for enacting compul-
sory schooling was 1912 in the South as compared to 1870 in the North, and
typically there were no measures in the South guaranteeing enforcement,
with school terms in some areas tied to agricultural cycles well into the
1930s. The total budget for public schooling was significantly smaller in the
South, with little incentive to generate greater revenues, especially at the local
level. The assignation of state funds to white county officials to allocate as
they wished and the dearth of legislated local taxes ensured that local com-
communities would fight for scarce resources, which were distributed to benefit
white schools first. The Rosenwald director for southern schools described
this problem in 1930: “I notice that about one-third of your [Mississippi]
counties spend less on Negro education than they receive from the state for
Negro education.” A report about South Carolina was similar. “At the end of
the first quarter of the century . . . whites represent 55 per cent of the total
enrollment but receive 95 per cent of the total appropriation for current
expenses leaving 5 per cent for the Negro enrollment constituting 45 per cent.”
Another report concluded, “The cause for this very disadvantageous situa-
tion has been attributed to various reasons, but the principal one is that the
available funds for school purposes are too limited to maintain the dual
system of schools up to the standard the whites desire for themselves and
neither the legal injunctions nor the common justice involved is sufficient to
protect the interests of the politically powerless group of Negroes.” Racial
politics and the nature of political development in the South created a land-
scape that affected the development of policy in every domain, including the
school curriculum, which was based on the Hampton model of industrial education.

This was a context in which blacks were clearly excluded from the social and political structure, and one in which merely providing additional resources or reallocating existing resources would not sufficiently redress their grievances. As one report explained, the situation facing southern blacks with regard to schooling “can be alleviated only through a change of attitude on the part of southern legislators, organization of Negro teachers and principals, and an influx of highly trained Negroes. . . . With this, however, the most potent necessity is a larger participation on the part of Negroes in the government of the states, through the exercises of the franchise.” Disenfranchise-ment meant that normal avenues to political power in the South were not open, options were restricted, and action was likely to invite repression. However, public-private collaboration, especially the appointment of a Jeanes teacher, provided an important means for rural blacks to participate.

The first Jeanes teacher was appointed in 1909 in Virginia and the appointments increased over subsequent decades. The GEB made an effort to appoint a teacher only in those counties where a significant portion of the population was black, or where more than ten black teachers were employed, with only 804 of the 1,415 counties considered eligible as late as 1933. Of the total counties, however, 213 counties (15 percent) employed these teachers by 1919, 354 (25 percent) by 1930, and 390 (28 percent) by 1935. However, the appointment of a teacher in one county might also influence changes in neighboring counties where no teacher was appointed. Reports from Kentucky discussed four Jeanes teachers who had organized sixty-four clubs, providing instruction to about 600 mothers and girls, resulting in the hire of additional supervising industrial teachers in McLean, Bourbon, and Madison Counties. They were selected and hired by the county superintendent and were to report to that office on a daily basis, with a part of their salary paid through the county tax funds in order to receive funding from the Jeanes Foundation. In order to be successful in these positions, the teachers had to answer to multiple constituencies, and ensure the support of local whites. The Jeanes teachers truly were “double agents” as Ann Chirhart has described them, serving not only metaphorically between two cultural ideals but also literally as experts on the payroll of northern philanthropists, who answered daily to local whites. Both the teachers and the organizations that they created had the imprimatur of the white community, insofar as it typically provided at least some of the funding for these positions, expecting them to result in community improvement and a commitment to industrial education.
Jackson Davis was appointed by the GEB to serve as the first state agent for Negro education in Virginia, where he hired the first Jeanes teacher in Henrico County in 1909. Davis outlined the importance of these positions to the achievement of industrial education as a defining feature of rural black education. He explained that whites would be willing to lift their objection to public schooling for rural blacks if philanthropists could “adjust the training of the negro to his needs,” based upon the Hampton model of industrial education, rather than a more liberal arts curriculum that might make them “dissatisfied with their environments.”

We must select a qualified well-trained negro teacher to supervise the rural schools in each county, and introduce the particular kinds of industrial and agricultural work that may be practical and useful to each particular locality. . . .The average negro teacher is . . . ambitious to use many books, and to teach the so-called “higher branches.” The supervising teacher will prevent this mistake by showing the teachers how to connect the school with the child’s everyday life through simple forms of industrial work, and by planning a course of study and work that will fit them for a useful and happy life in their own community.

The first circular letter from the Jeanes Fund to these teachers throughout the South explained that work would focus on both schools and communities and would vary by place, and then suggested that teachers keep in regular contact with schools officials, be willing to help fellow teachers, assist in organizing the people of the community into associations for self-help, cooperate with the minister or ministers of the community, and introduce industrial work.

The early reports from the Jeanes teachers indicated that community organizing was an important part of their work. Most teachers reported organizing mothers’ clubs, homemakers’ clubs, girls’ clubs, boys’ clubs, and other types of agricultural clubs. A teacher in Fulton County, Georgia, reported that there was a homemakers’ club in every school, but that yard and garden committees were also formed with their own officers, meeting every Friday afternoon. The Summary of Reports for 1914–15 in Georgia noted that in 19 counties comprised of 533 schools, the Jeanes teachers visited 1,588 homes, formed 101 parents’ clubs, and organized 1,020 girls into canning clubs and 563 boys into corn clubs. The Jeanes teacher in Leake County, Mississippi, recognized the value of these groups when she responded to a question about the “special things” she had set out to do during the year and noted the “organization of people in the various communities into groups.”
The Jeanes teacher from Madison County, Kentucky, described his plans for community clubs.

I begin today to organize in every school district in Madison a “Negro Women's Homemakers” Club for the purpose of promoting domestic industry and domestic economy among the colored women and girls of Madison County. Each Club shall meet once a month at the Public School House, which thus becomes the social center of the district. Members will be required to wear at each meeting a simple and inexpensive uniform, consisting of a white cap and apron. Every club will be furnished with blanks on which to record each thing done by the members to beautify the home, to preserve food for family use, and to increase the scope of domestic activity.48

Like voluntary organizations, these school-based clubs were nonprofit, provided mutual aid, regularly enacted rituals stressing shared values and identities, and performed genuinely “civic” functions in that they participated in public occasions, in support of education and community service, and in legislative and policy campaigns.49 There is considerable evidence that black citizens participated in voluntary associations early in the century, especially the extent to which they embraced fraternal organizations and the church, and there was significant interest in joining these school-based organizations as evidenced by the number of citizens who were enrolled.50 The clubs were funded by northern philanthropists, primarily through salary support for the Jeanes teachers, and also with contributions for extension work by Smith-Lever funding from the federal government. While the teacher was often paid for an extra month or two of work beyond the school year, clubs were organized year around.

Southern whites often had little interest in school-based organizations and provided more cursory oversight. The state agent in Mississippi discussed the twenty-three Jeanes teachers appointed in that state in 1925, acknowledging that they are given “only a minimum amount of time which, of course, is a regret to us.”51 The teachers, who had little day-to-day oversight, could do far more than that asked of them. The use of organizational forms linked to a more traditional model of schooling that was intended by many southern whites to ensure the place of blacks as a laboring class in the South allowed rural blacks to secure a public presence in conversations about education, and helped to establish them as political actors. It was this latter role that provided significant latitude for mobilizing the black community both with regard to educational reform and beyond.
A teacher in Georgia reported that she had “successfully brought [teachers] together in frank discussion of their problems in a series of monthly meetings, which culminated in field day and joint commencement. These features brought together trustees and patrons and also marked the beginning of countywide interest in schools and their problems.”  

52 Most teachers organized commencement exercises and other school-based venues that would communicate their work to the black community, but showcase it to local whites. In Alabama in 1916, “Little fairs and exhibits were held in many communities, to which the public, both white and colored, came. The co-operation of leading white people has been no small factor in making the club work a decided success.”  

53 These organizations promoted rural uplift and community cooperation, which promoted successive change.  

54 The organizational repertoires of schooling, which was assumed by whites to be based primarily in an industrial training context, was not only perceived as nonthreatening to southern whites, but it was supported by them. While this created strict parameters around the behavior of the black community in policy settings, it also provided them with opportunities to engage within and beyond their communities. Indeed, Woyshner illustrates the extent to which the segregated black PTA was also able to participate within the national PTA and get considerable organizational power from it, because both groups promoted shared ideals of child welfare and parent education making black participation seem nonthreatening.  

55 When local citizens coalesced around rural and industrial education themes, these groups also could enhance literacy, share news, and promote more academic endeavors. In Noxabee County, Mississippi, the teacher reported that thirty of sixty-three county schools had been visited, and “at the homemaker club meetings, newspapers are read and reports made.”  

56 The Jeanes teacher in Spartanburg, South Carolina, wrote in her annual letter to the county teachers in 1919: “Realizing the need of our country’s service and the great demand for efficient leadership, I know that you have entered into the year’s work with an aim to make your school a community center and to use every educational force to encourage thrift, economy, and patriotism.”  

57 Health and homemaking not only brought the community together but also promoted education and linked the community to values beyond local concerns. It became evident to state agents early on that community organizations established by these teachers could have considerable influence and reach. The state agent for black education in North Carolina was explicit in his 1918 letter to teachers. “Organize in every community where possible clubs of girls and women in groups of ten to twenty, and urge food producing
and food saving. . . . [This] may help next fall in organizing many permanent Leagues for the promotion of all phases of real community work—schools, health, food, better homes, war-work, etc.” Indeed, the Jeanes teachers were expected to mobilize these groups for a range of social policy initiatives, including tuberculosis and vaccination campaigns, the war effort, and other goals determined outside of the black community. However, community building was a dynamic enterprise, providing a platform around which citizens could come together, at the same time that it provided opportunities to share information and exchange ideas.

Teacher reports to the philanthropists focused on the campaign for school and community improvement, which would ensure support from local whites, and often did so using the language of the industrial training curriculum that was promoted by both northern philanthropists and southern whites. However, while teachers assumed the task asked of them, community organizing provided a venue to raise funds to support the expansion of schooling, increasing bureaucratization and moving small local schools into the more public sphere through consolidation and state centralization.

A summary report for October 1923 of the Alabama Jeanes teachers detailed supervision in 995 schools in the state, 218 mothers’ clubs enrolling 1,744 members, and 1,509 parent-teacher associations. Within these groups, $5,309 in private funding was raised to support the addition of school buildings, the extension of the school term, and an increase in teacher salaries. Jackson Davis reported on work in Virginia in 1916, noting that “the first efforts of the colored people after they have been organized into School Improvement Leagues has been to get equipment and a decent schoolhouse. After this has been done, the next step is to lengthen the term.”

The existence of public-private collaboration between philanthropists and southern states provided important opportunities for rural blacks to participate in policy development, often circumventing the local political structure. It was not uncommon for arrangements with northern philanthropists to be initiated by the black community. In Pickens County, South Carolina, the Jeanes teacher described the process by which a Rosenwald School had been constructed:

One day while reading a Christian Index Journal I noticed a headline “Better Rural Schools.” . . . Where Mr. Julius Rosenwald was deeply interested in Better Negro School buildings and would give dollar for dollar in the erection of modern negro school buildings. I wrote him immediately for further information. He referred me to
Mr. C. J. Calloway, Rosenwald’s Agent. . . . From him I received all needed information. Filled with encouragement I began to advertise my project. . . . I tried to organize a school improvement association. I succeeded with three men and four women. The men were afraid to venture, so I had to assume all the responsibility. I bought two acres of land at a cost of $50.00. With my school improvement association we planned a school rally and raised $62.00. This paid for the land, which was encouraging.61

Like the introductory story about Conway, Mississippi, this teacher was also able to bypass the local government structure to extend the school term and promote minimum salaries for teachers. Once the funds were collected in the community, and there was some agreement from philanthropists to provide a budget, it would be difficult for the county to deny the extension or revoke it at a later date, thereby institutionalizing the goals of the black community. The gender dynamics are equally interesting. Women were often able to have greater success in organizing schools because they were perceived as non-threatening by local whites, especially given their role within the context of schooling. As the example illustrates, this point was not lost on the black community. It was also clear to philanthropists, who explicitly sought women to serve in these positions. Their view was supported by state agents like John Ellis in Mississippi, who wrote to the GEB in 1916 regarding this issue. “I concur heartily in the opinion that women, as a rule, are capable of doing more effective work than men. My experience in Lauderdale County and my observation during the past few weeks thoroughly convinces me of this fact, and I am wondering if it would be advisable to go any further than recommend the employment of women in preference to men for this work.”62

Almost every report from the Jeanes teachers included the amount of funds raised, typically through community organizations, to support the creation of organizational capacity. The double taxation of black communities to support schools was a grossly unfair policy that was both encouraged and managed by the county Jeanes teacher, usually under the direction and encouragement of the funders and the state agents. However, it also helped to ensure that the agenda of the black community would become institutionalized in local communities. As the infrastructure grew and public sentiment toward education evolved, it would be more difficult to take away these gains. As one GEB report stated, “It has been the policy of the Board gradually to withdraw support of activities in public education after having demonstrated the value of these activities, and to let the public school funds assume the
support of such activities.” The unjust tactic of using double taxation to prove “Negro self-help” was one that contributed in significant ways to both building and sustaining the infrastructure, creating an alternate revenue stream, managed by the state agent and the local Jeanes teacher. Over time, as organizational capacity grew, the ability of local partisan politicians to limit the development of educational opportunities for local blacks was lessened.

While rural blacks were denied access to local party organizations, they developed instead cooperative ties between community school-based organizations and the state agents and private agencies that might promote their needs. This, in turn, helped to displace political parties in local communities as the critical component with regard to the development of educational policy. The archives contain many examples of rural black citizens and teachers who corresponded directly with northern philanthropists and their agents, which in turn provided access to state educational organizations. One incident from Mississippi is particularly instructive as reported by the state agent. The newly elected state superintendent of schools in 1935 had little experience with rural black schools,

knew practically nothing about them . . . [and] for months had not time to get out and visit Negro schools. . . . At once, a group of Negro leaders in the State were contacted. It was suggested to them that they ask for a conference with the new State Superintendent at the Vicksburg Negro school. . . . The State Agent and the State Superintendent and his wife . . . [visited] the Field Day exhibit of the Jeanes teacher of that county . . . [and] . . . became enthusiastic in his support of the Negro work. The following year he arranged for State funds to be given to the counties as a part of the salaries of the Jeanes Teachers.”

In the Harmony Consolidated Schools in Mississippi, a request had been made to the Rosenwald Fund to lengthen the school term, but it was denied because teachers there did not earn a minimum of $50 per month. At the urging of the Rosenwald director for southern schools, the state agent agreed to provide funds that were not locally available to increase teacher salaries so that private funds would be forthcoming to extend the school term, and then sent a letter to the superintendent of Harmony Schools informing him of the funded initiative. A similar incident was reported in Virginia when the state agent for black schools contacted the superintendent in Center Cross to initiate reform, the result of a letter and accompanying petitions that had been received from a black resident requesting that a county training school be established.
One notable example provides further evidence of the extent to which public-private collaboration and schooling could connect local communities to the political structures outside their local arena. The Alabama agent for the Rosenwald Fund reminisced about his experiences building schools. He recalled a visit to the town of Bexar, a small village with almost two hundred black children in Marion County. The residents there “represented a class of old settlers left over from slavery days, and they had made but little if any progress at all educationally or other wise. Some of them had never seen a state man or one who represented the ‘higher ups’ as they called us.” He explained that he was able to persuade them to try to build a school with the help of the Rosenwald Fund, in spite of being “at a loss when we told them they would have to raise seven hundred dollars. That sounded like a million to them.” However, they were successful in their efforts and a county training school was established.

Schooling also provided an institutional means for private interests to influence rural communities directly, again circumventing the local political structure. In 1932, Jackson Davis approved an allocation of $2,080 to continue the work of the “Negro Organization Society [which] has done, and is doing, valuable work in improving the Negro rural schools of Virginia. The Society organizes local leagues in the counties and in the different schools and stimulates the people to provide needed equipment for the schools and assist in bringing about better cooperation between parents and teachers.” The Jeanes teacher and county agricultural agent in Madison County, Tennessee, described events in Ingram, where a member of the county board and a prominent black citizen had opposed the building of a school, and in Atwater, where white residents had opposed a new school. “The County Board refused to act against the wishes of the white people objecting. . . . I heard the action of the people and got in touch with the Inter-Racial Secretary. We called a meeting in the community . . . and [the secretary] put squarely before the white committee the attitude of certain white residents in the Atwater community and the attitude of the County Board toward the Rosenwald building program. . . . The buildings in both communities are completed and are now in use.” In this example, this rural black community was given access to the Inter-Racial Cooperating Committee, which operated throughout the South to promote racial cooperation, and was essential to success in Ingram.

The GEB acknowledged after just a decade of Jeanes teacher appointments that if support for the Jeanes program was withdrawn, the “building of new schoolhouses, the improvement of teachers, and school improvement activities would be seriously hampered. . . . It is more than a coincidence that
the sixty percent of the counties of the South ranked by state agents as strong in negro education have Jeanes agents . . . and that an examination of the map of the southern states shows that in sections of the South where Rosenwald buildings are thickest, Jeanes agents in considerable numbers are also found.”

This may be merely illustrative of greater willingness in these communities to promote reform as evidenced by the hiring of a teacher in the first place. However, white reformers and superintendents often wanted these teachers for reasons that were anything but academic, which created a perception that these community-based organizations had little power. For example, in 1915 the state agent for black schools in North Carolina reported on a school visit to discuss the Jeanes program: “Supt. Blair was so much interested in reports of work done in other counties, he stated that he was going to get a barrel or more of lime for each of his negro schools, get the government recipe for making whitewash, then get his principals to urge the negro residents to whitewash their houses and premises, the schools, furnishing to each a bucketful or more of whitewash to do the work. Both these superintendents are anxious to have a supervisor.” Similarly, the state agent in Georgia reported in 1914 that more than six hundred boys and girls were members of homemaking clubs and the work had advanced far beyond expectations. “If the Negro is a resource of the State, and he is, why should he not be made as profitable resource as he may be? He is susceptible of training, since he can think, remember, will, and act, and it is only reasonable to think that he can be made a larger resource for good than he is.”

The infrastructure that was promoted was not value-free and the limitations of the industrial training curriculum were clear. However, it is not clear how pervasive this curriculum was, even in schools overseen by experts who were paid with philanthropic funds. In a fully segregated school system where local whites, even those involved with schooling, often cared little about black education, it is unlikely that there was significant, effective oversight of the curriculum in rural classrooms. With regard to Progressive reforms in general, the dynamic nature of organizational change required that experts employed often compromise ideals or act upon competing ideals in order to create an effective organizational structure. The Jeanes teachers and the organizations that they established ended up having considerable control over what actually was taught in the schools and in some states played a role in developing a state curriculum.

A set of 1919 reports from teachers across the South noted industrial training in almost every entry and also included a significant amount of information that mitigates against believing that it was pervasive. In Mitchell
County, Georgia, it was reported that there were forty-seven schools, and twenty that included work in industrial training. In this example, similar to others across the South, it appears that at first glance there was real progress in implementing an industrial training curriculum. However, in reality, less than half of the schools participated, and for those that did, it is not clear what it meant to “include work in industrial training.” A notable example was reported from Georgia in 1924, where the GEB visited various county schools and noted concern regarding the lack of industrial work: “One of the schools had no industrial work, and at least two of the schools are teaching Latin. . . . A loom was found still crated in one school, and in another school no use had ever been made of the loom provided. It appears that no one feels charged with the duty of giving these schools very close supervision.”

Progress for the philanthropists was measured by success at the state and local level, and those states in the Upper South made considerable progress toward the development of a centralized system of public schooling before those states in the Deep South. The array of relationships that developed regionally has potentially enormous implications for black agency, civil rights, and the institutionalization of education as part of state political development. Historians and sociologists have sought greater understanding of the impetus for social movements and have considered specifically the role of interest groups and institutions. Public schooling in the South, especially as it developed through public-private collaboration, played a stronger role in mobilizing interest groups than has been recognized and, in that regard, was particularly important to rural blacks.

Regional histories illustrate that local context had significant impact on the role of both black and white interest groups. Matthew Lassiter describes a divided white South that included groups of “white moderates” in the suburban Sunbelt. In Virginia, for example, more moderate white parents organized to prioritize the maintenance of public schools over efforts to resist desegregation. In states like Alabama and Mississippi, however, whites made every effort to create a singular response to desegregation and organized groups like Citizens Councils to promote massive resistance. The strength of massive resistance tended to be greater in the Deep South, and had a significant impact on the ability of rural blacks and more moderate whites in those regions to mobilize. These regional differences had an impact on the form that public-private partnerships took in the South and the role that rural blacks had within them.

Social reform for southern blacks in Virginia and in North Carolina has been seen less as an effort to ensure equality and more as a means to provide
limited reforms that would reduce racial tension. Through a form of “managed race relations,” whites supported separation and disenfranchisement but rejected the rigid oppression and violence characteristic of the Deep South, instead providing a certain amount of black education and economic uplift with the expectation of complete deference. In these areas, whites created paternalistic organizations that would ensure the continuance of Jim Crow while simultaneously promoting limited reform and better race relations. In this regard, states like Virginia might have been eager to delegate responsibility to philanthropic organizations, and both groups might have encouraged the participation of rural blacks as a means of addressing the communities’ grievances in a managed and limited way. The Jeanes program was one important manifestation of the collaboration that existed between the public and private entities. As the Virginia state supervisor of black schools pointed out in 1919, “There is undoubtedly a very general feeling among the people that the splendid patriotism of the Negroes is deserving of some recognition and while financial limitations may stand in the way of our doing much that we would like to do, yet in increasing the efficiency of the work of this group of women we have a chance to make a very large contribution to the progress of the Negroes at a relatively slight increase of cost.”

Indeed, between 1924 and 1927, the total number of teachers actually decreased in the states of the Deep South from 123 to 104 but increased in the remaining states from 178 to 203. Significant progress was made in Kentucky, where the superintendent of public instruction in 1929 called for a “relaxation of the Jeanes program of separate supervision of colored schools with a program of general supervision of all schools within a local (county) jurisdiction, all getting the services of the same supervisors.”

While an important element of the reform agenda was the creation of a trained and certified teaching force that was in line with the industrial training agenda early on, by the 1930s expectations in those areas of the South in which greater centralization had been achieved were more consistently aligned with a call for greater academic training, especially for certification purposes. In 1927, the North Carolina State Superintendent of Education wrote to the GEB for funding, noting:

Elementary schools for negroes cannot be improved and built up until we get better high schools turning out high school graduates who are capable of going to the normal schools and coming back better prepared for teaching. In other words, so long as the teaching profession stays on the level of the elementary school, we will never
be able to make the elementary school what it ought to be. The best work that can be done right now to build up the whole situation for the negroes, as I see it, is to strengthen the high schools.\(^{88}\)

The more schools became centralized and public, the more likely it was that policy would evolve to the benefit of the black community through longer terms, higher salaries, and secondary schools.

Reports from North Carolina, beginning with the appointment of the state agent in 1913, consistently spoke to industrial training efforts, yet the state agent also appointed Annie Holland to promote teacher training in rural black communities consistently throughout the state. She started as a North Carolina Jeanes teacher, was appointed in 1916 as supervisor of Jeanes teachers, and in 1921 became the state supervisor for elementary schools for the Division of Negro Education, responsible for visiting schools and supervising Jeanes teacher work in rural communities. Her 1926 suggestive outline for supervising teachers included additional teacher training programs, standardized tests, parent/teacher associations, and school libraries and provided for six units of work, the first of which was “to improve the quality of teaching” and the last of which was to “direct the teaching of industrial work.”\(^{89}\) She also noted that community cooperation could be developed through Parent Teacher Associations, community clubs, and school-benefit entertainments.\(^{90}\)

She seems to have had enormous influence in that state as evidenced by the comments made by the North Carolina state agent for Negro education in 1930, who advocated “the same course for Negro high schools that the white high schools had.”\(^{91}\)

Philanthropists were explicit about their desire to consolidate schools, promoting state centralization, and Jeanes teachers were central to the effort. The Rosenwald Fund reported in 1925 that consolidation was gaining in favor, with “wretched one-room schools being abandoned for the centrally located larger school. There is a steady increase in the provision of transporting the children by bus. . . . The County Training School idea is growing so rapidly that it is being followed closely by greatly increased enthusiasm for high schools for Negroes.”\(^{92}\) In a meeting with state agents in 1930, some superintendents expressed a concern that the consolidated schools were actually more expensive than smaller community schools. The field director for the Rosenwald Fund promoted consolidation as “largely a high school proposition with colored pupils, because 80% of the pupils transported are in the high school grades.” A South Carolina superintendent explained that in three counties the “question of consolidation was in reality a question of whether
The Negro children were to have access to an accredited high school.” A North Carolina superintendent explained that consolidation in his county diminished the number of teachers by forty-one, and that “this saving in teachers’ salaries offset the cost of transportation.” While black schools were clearly underfunded, the provision of transportation costs for centralized schools was an expenditure that expanded and institutionalized educational opportunity in rural areas. When the GEB organized the 1925 conference for state agents, the agenda included a report on the number of accredited black high schools in the South, provisions for state affiliation and supervision, high school curricula, how to improve the quality of instruction, the attendance campaign, teacher training, the relation of state departments of education to Jeanes teachers, and the explicit question, “What is now needed to stimulate the growth of Negro four-year high schools?”

Philanthropic funds promoted centralization in other ways. Rosenwald Fund applications were quite explicit in the expectations that they raised for counties. At the bottom of each form in 1929–30, the application stated, “In accepting aid of one-half the salaries the first year, one-third the second year, and one-fourth the third year from the Julius Rosenwald Fund, the school authorities agree to carry on the extended term without further aid.” In addition, each application required the county to note the monthly salaries of teachers in order to ensure that minimum salaries were provided before aid would be given. In 1930, the Mississippi state agent was informed that requests for term extension would be granted by units, like counties, rather than for individual schools so that the institutionalization of extended terms could be concentrated in broader areas.

Indeed, Mississippi lagged far behind states further north with regard to centralization. The Mississippi state superintendent for schools wrote to representatives of the GEB in 1929 regarding his ideas for how instruction could be improved in rural schools. “Would you, then, think well of a scheme of supervision worked out by the teachers in the county training schools as a result of group conferences in which the state supervisor participated in preference to one arbitrarily imposed by the state supervisor?” The GEB agents responded that the idea of a “democratic program of supervision” seemed unclear, but reminded the state superintendent that it was a sound idea to formulate a program of supervision. “Nevertheless, it seems essential that a scheme of supervision or improvement of instruction be set up that can be carried on by the principal in charge, by the county superintendent, or by some other supervisory agent in the absence of a state supervisor. I feel that it would be very essential for you and Mr. Easom to agree upon the objectives
to be carried out in a plan of improvement of instruction in county training schools, and agree also upon the method to be used in achieving these objectives.”

In states in the Deep South, like Mississippi, where there was less interest in managing racial tensions and less willingness to promote any kind of education to rural blacks, the public might have been less willing to develop these public-private relationships, and consolidation and state centralization of black schools was less successful. Collaboration there was more likely promoted and leveraged by philanthropists. Because poverty and low levels of education made blacks less aware of their rights and more dependent upon the whites around them for economic survival, residents of the Deep South would have been less likely to mobilize, and black agency in education reform there was more covert than in the Upper South. While North Carolina and Virginia may have had relatively less difficulty in making a case for limited education reform through managed race relations, it was not uncommon in the Deep South for arrangements with northern philanthropists to be initiated by the black community, rather than the state. Rural blacks, especially Jeanes teachers, might have had a more powerful role in this collaboration, often initiating reform directly with private funders, albeit with fewer tangible results.

The state agent for black education in Mississippi wrote to the superintendent of schools in Forest, Mississippi, and reported that “the negro principal came into this office a day or so ago asking us for additional aid to take care of the salary of a fifth teacher. From what he said about conditions, it seems that there is really a need for this additional teacher, but this department has very little money for negro schools.” Unlike North Carolina, where centralization resulted in extensive data collection about that state’s schools for both blacks and whites, the state agent in Mississippi in 1928 could not provide any evidence to support the principal’s request. Further, the agent continued in the letter to discuss with the superintendent $300 that had been given in the previous year to purchase equipment for the black schools. “Of course in the nature of the case, if this Home Science equipment is not purchased and there is no Home Science work done in the school, it seems that this fund should be returned.” Again, unlike counterparts further north, this agent seemed to have little understanding of how funds were used, and little dialogue with county officials about the nature of education in rural areas. In another example, a resident of Dundee, Mississippi, had written to Robert Moton, principal of the Tuskegee Institute, to complain about the short term of the schools in Tunica County, Mississippi. Moton brought the
complaint to the attention of the Rosenwald Fund, and the fund then contacted the Mississippi state agent. At this point, the state agent merely wrote the resident who had complained and told him to take the matter to the white county superintendent. However, the Rosenwald agent simultaneously wrote to the resident informing him of their action, thereby opening a direct line of communication between the community and the Rosenwald Fund. Demographics and other factors influenced political development, especially in the form of state centralization of schools. However, even limited centralization provided important avenues of black participation in policy development.

It is truly remarkable that in areas of the Deep South, schooling might offer an institutional means for rural blacks to promote public-private collaboration; they were able covertly to promote action with the imprimatur of whites because it was within the context of schooling. Kenneth Andrews, in his analysis of the Mississippi social movement, points out that teachers would have been less likely to mobilize because of their dependence on local communities for employment. However, from the perspective of the public-private relationships that developed in that state, there were a number of teachers who were actually on the payroll of the northern philanthropists who might still fear economic reprisal, but had relatively more power, not only giving them access to information outside of the community but also making connections between the institution of schooling and forces outside the local arena. These schools facilitated the mobilization of local blacks, and opportunities for individual effort, during both Jim Crow and in the face of the massive resistance that came with Brown v. Board of Education.

The design of the developing educational system would have affected the distribution of political authority with regard to education and the interplay between all of the groups involved in promoting, or blocking, reform. In this regard, it is not surprising that a majority of lawsuits began in those states where blacks had greater opportunity to organize through schooling. Mark Tushnet, in his work on the NAACP’s legal strategy against segregation, points out that the NAACP began working in the 1930s toward desegregation by building a set of precedent cases across the South, but as late as 1961 not a single educational desegregation suit had been filed in Mississippi. Adam Fairclough gives credit to the NAACP in Alabama for promoting desegregation and acknowledges the extent to which the school building program mobilized the local black communities, creating solidarity and a common goal in education, as well as the extent to which the NAACP considered the teaching profession to be a good source for membership.
The role of these teachers, with formal avenues to state agents and the philanthropic organizations, evolved over time into much more than had originally been envisioned, bringing some discomfort to northerners and southerners alike. In 1925, at a meeting of all the state agents, the head of the Jeanes Fund reported that “originally . . . their purpose was largely to relate the Negro home a little more closely to the Negro school, to help instruction, and to teach simple industries. Now in some instances these teachers are used largely to direct the Negro school system of a county.”

He questioned whether the Jeanes county teachers had departed too much from their original work. The position had originally been defined as “more a community worker than a professional teacher.” However, after two decades, three distinct types of teacher had evolved:

In counties where the Jeanes agent has an unusually strong personality and qualities of leadership, the county superintendent has come to depend more and more upon this agent for the management of the Negro schools. This second type of Jeanes agent, who has developed from the first type, now frequently recommends the Negro teachers for the county schools, conducts teachers’ meetings and teachers’ institutes, promotes and directs the building of schoolhouses, and performs other administrative duties. A third type of Jeanes agent is the agent that gives most of her time to supervising classroom work, testing pupils, conducting teachers’ reading courses and working for the improvement of instruction.

As the de facto superintendent of the black schools, the job of each teacher was extensive and clearly gave them responsibility for policy within the local black schools. By the 1930s, the majority was pedagogically focused, and their work included supervising classrooms, testing pupils, and improving the curriculum.

In July 1932, the superintendent of schools in King George County, Virginia, sent an application to the Anna T. Jeanes Foundation requesting funding for a teacher who would supervise instruction in the county’s rural black schools. This particular application was significant because the superintendent noted that the appointment would provide a means for rural black teachers there to make “contact with the school board,” given that “our local school boards permit the colored supervisor to sit-in at our meetings and represent his people.” Although Jeanes supervisors were not always explicitly invited or even allowed to sit at the table with the local white school board, schooling clearly played an important role in granting legitimacy to rural blacks in policy discussions.
While progress was significantly slower in the Deep South, the Jeanes teachers there still promoted centralization and networks that could open opportunities for participation in policy development. A state network of Georgia Jeanes teachers issued monthly reports in order to share accomplishments and news with other teachers across the state, but also with the state division and with philanthropic agents, and the teacher in Dooley reported that a district teachers’ association meeting was held with representatives from seven counties present. In 1935, Helen Whiting was appointed the Georgia State Supervisor of Colored Elementary Schools in the Division of Negro Education, and began to administer reading achievement tests throughout the state by the end of her first year. She issued regular “itinerary reports” about her work in the field, including suggestions to teachers that would promote centralization, such as adopting the State Reading Program in counties and seeking assistance from the county supervisor. The Georgia state agent, reflecting upon a decade of progress, noted that “the State Agents for Negro Schools, unlike the other state school supervisors, are free to move in and out among both white and Negro groups without considering the political implications of every step taken . . . the counties in Georgia now provide secondary schools for Negroes at public expense . . . , [which] has been accomplished by visiting the various counties and outlining a program with the stimulus of state and philanthropic funds.”

Much credit has been given to the black churches in the South for their role in community organizing, and where the church was administratively part of a broader national or state organization, it could have a profound role in connecting the community outward. However, the schools also had this ability through their connection to northern philanthropists, state and local political systems, and, as an institution that was largely ignored, as a site for mobilization. Teachers there were able to encourage institutional innovation at the local level. As society became more interdependent, this was a crucial link to the social and political structure that disenfranchisement kept out of reach, and an important institutional site for participating in the development of policy. Jackson Davis, acting as field agent for the GEB, was asked to describe the accomplishments of the Jeanes teachers. “They succeeded in organizing the people into school community associations and bringing to bear the united sentiment of the community in favor of better school buildings, longer terms and more practical work in the schools by introducing simple industries. . . . The schools lost their isolation.”

Public-private collaboration was essential to education development in the South and ultimately resulted in a stronger centralized school system. The
concept of “agency” can be defined along a continuum that includes anything from subtle forms of resistance to group insurgency. However, black teachers were able to engage with collaborative relationships, and in doing so exercised agency more broadly defined, helped to establish centralized administrative capacity in the lower tiers of government, and undermined the strength of sectional interests. It is not possible truly to understand black agency in the South without understanding the institutional venues in which it operated. Schooling helped to make political opportunity structures more permeable. In addition to people like Annie Holland and Helen Whiting, public-private collaboration and centralization also provided venues for blacks like W. T. B. Williams, who served as a field agent for the Jeanes Fund, and Hollis Frissel as principal of the Tuskegee Institute, to have significant influence on policy decision that affected rural communities. The actions of individual reformers were important, but it is essential also to understand the broader dynamic of interest groups and institutions that challenged the political structure. Schooling provided an institutional venue for rural blacks to mobilize, and it should be placed more centrally in the reform dynamic as an early institutional site for the mobilization of blacks.

Rural black reformers recognized the value of promoting an education system not just as an end in itself, especially given the value placed on it as the antithesis to slavery, but also as a means to create avenues for greater participation in the political and social structure. They participated in the expansion of government at the local level through their efforts to create organizational capacity, and promoted voluntary organizations that created a common culture within and beyond local communities and broadened frames of support for their own agenda. In this regard, both conceptually and institutionally, “education” became the central meeting point for reformers, and the place in which organizational forms, parallel structures, and new identities were created ultimately to overcome southern opposition to educational advancement. Both of these ideals converged in the form of schooling, which became a unifying organizational venue. Local school-based organizations became central to the creation of a more bureaucratic state by facilitating the institutionalism of reforms at the local level and providing links to policy initiatives that emerged from philanthropists and their agents outside the community.

It would be overstating it to make the claim that the black community mobilized between 1909 and 1935 as an organized interest group in the South, or to claim that it had a formally defined role in policy development. However, education reformers were able to mobilize the community through
schooling in a more organized manner than has been recognized. Schools helped to promote expanding political opportunities, organizational strength, and shared cognitions in the community. The black community, especially through the work of the Jeanes teachers, was able to utilize the organizational repertoires of schooling to connect local institutions to the political structures outside rural communities, creating political innovation and promoting reform. Southern blacks did indeed have an instrument for constructing new collective identities; schooling served as a link to alternative models of political organization and participation far earlier than what has typically been attributed to the community. Through schools, teachers were able to exploit and even initiate the public-private collaborations that developed between philanthropists and state and local governments in order to institutionalize reforms, especially through state centralization. The insurgency that developed in later decades is indebted to the organizational structures and community mobilization that occurred through schooling.

It is important to recognize that moving beyond narrow interpretations of philanthropic intentionality can actually expand our understanding of what was possible with regard to black agency during this time period. Both black and white reformers promoted and compromised ideals in order to garner political support. Indeed, in the same way that the Progressive Era was a critical precursor to the development of a more centralized national state as seen in the New Deal, the early development of rural schooling in the South was an important precursor to a more centralized bureaucracy around schooling at the state level in the South and the organization of rural blacks into interest groups. The story of southern education development can significantly add to our understanding of interest groups and institutions.

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NOTES

1. Mag Hanna to Percy H. Easom, 21 February 1929, Box 8012, Series 2342 (Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson); hereafter MDAH.
2. Percy H. Easom to Mag Hanna, 27 February 1929, Box 8012, Series 2342, MDAH.


6. “Certificate of Incorporation of Negro Rural School Fund,” 20 November 1907, Folder 1920, Box 202, Papers of the General Education Board (Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, N.Y.); hereafter RAC-GEB.


9. Anderson and Moss, Dangerous Donations; Adam Fairclough, Teaching Equality; and Hoffschwelle, The Rosenwald Schools of the American South.

10. Louis Harlan, Separate and Unequal (New York, 1968); Anderson and Moss, Dangerous Donations; Anderson, The Education of Blacks in the South; and Hoffschwelle, The Rosenwald Schools.

11. There are a number of examples of these differences. George Foster Peabody noted that Anna Jeanes had specified with her original gift that it should be expended on the advice of Booker T. Washington and Hollis Frissel, both of whom served on the board of the Jeanes Fund. George Foster Peabody to F. K. Rogers, 12 December 1918, Folder 2121, Box 221, RAC-GEB. See also Daniel Rodgers, “In Search of Progressivism,” Reviews in American History 10 (December 1982): 113–82; and James J. Connolly, The Triumph of Ethnic Progressivism: Urban Political Culture in Boston, 1900–1925 (Cambridge, 1998). As Connolly points about the Irish community, “We must recognize the plasticity of Progressivism. . . . It was a public language open to manipulation by those with access to the public sphere. . . . These men and women fashioned their own specific versions of Progressivism, just as their upper- and middle-class Yankee counterparts did.” For a discussion of the relationship between philanthropic concerns and progressive reforms, see Ellen Lagemann, in Private Power for the Public Good: A History of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Middletown, Conn., 1983), 3; and Judith Sealandor, Private Wealth and Public Life: Foundation Philanthropy and the Reshaping of American Social Policy from the Progressive Era to the New Deal (Baltimore, 1997). See also the histories about specific philanthropies, including Hoffschwelle, The Rosenwald Schools of the American South; Anderson, The Education of Blacks in the South; Fosdick, Adventure in Giving.


15. Ibid., 152.


17. See Lieberman, *Shifting the Color Line*, 5–12, for a discussion of incorporation.


22. Ibid., 73.


24. Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform: 1890–1935* (New York, 1991). Muncy describes the Progressive female reformers who promoted social reforms that influenced the creation of a welfare state and criticizes white, middle-class women who sought to prescribe policy based upon the narrow view of “experts” rather than needs as defined by the recipient community. She notes that regardless of intent, “when one group in society designs policy for another, the result will prove intrusive and to some degree authoritarian” (63).

26. Werum, “Sectionalism and Racial Politics”; Richard Bensel, Sectionalism and American Political Development, 1880–1980 (Madison, 1987); Quadagno and Street, “Ideology and Public Policy,” 60. While the GEB did shift its agenda more to a focus on higher education after 1919, the original agenda and the parallel systems that developed with it continued to be implemented and sustained in the South. See “General Education Board, Negro Education,” Folder 14, Box 27, Southern Education Foundation Records (Archives and Special Collections, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center, Atlanta); hereafter SEF-AUC.

27. See Frederick M. Hess, ed., With the Best of Intentions: How Philanthropy Is Reshaping K-12 Education (Cambridge, 2005), which discusses contemporary philanthropy and notes the importance of creating parallel systems and organizational capacity as an effective means to promote sustained reform. For a discussion of how southern parochialism helped to promote change through incremental local reforms through local institution building, see Ann-Marie Szymanski, "Beyond Parochialism: Southern Progressivism, Prohibition, and State-Building." Journal of Southern History 69 (February 2003): 107–37. For a discussion particular to schooling, see Joan Malczewski, “Weak State, Stronger Schools: Northern Philanthropy and Organizational Change in the Jim Crow South,” Journal of Southern History 75 (November 2009).

28. Malczewski, “Weak State, Stronger Schools.” There is evidence in the literature that the absence of a stronger federal system of government meant that institutions such as regulatory agencies and political party structures were developed to address legislative and social policy needs, forming parallel systems that were essential to establishing new policy, enacting reform, and ensuring bureaucratic management over social policy in the Progressive Era. See Stephen Skowronek, Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877–1920 (Cambridge, 1982); Bensel, Sectionalism and American Political Development; Scott James, "Prelude to Progressivism: Party Decay, Populism, and the Doctrine of 'Free and Unrestricted Competition' in American Antitrust Policy, 1890–1897," Studies in American Political Development 13 (Fall 1999), 288–336.


33. S. L. Smith to W. C. Strahan, 29 March 1930, Box 8013, Series 2342, MDAH.

34. "The Durham Fact-Finding Conference, April 17, 18, and 19, 1929," Folder 983, Box 97, Series 3.8, RAC-GB, 7–11.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., 13.

37. "Survey of Jeanes Teacher Areas in 14 States," 1 March 1933, Folder 17, Box 19, SEF-AUC.

38. See “Rural Supervising Industrial Teachers, 1919–20,” Folder 2122, Box 221, Series 1, Subseries 2, RAC-GB; “Survey of Jeanes Teacher Areas in 14 States,” 1 March 1933, Folder 17, Box 19; "Teachers and County Supervisors of Negro Schools,” 1927–30, Folder 2125, Box 222, Series 1.2, RAC-GB; Arthur D. Wright to Trevor Arnett, 7 October 1935, Folder 1931, Box 203, Series 1.2, RAC-GB.

39. Summary of Reports of Mr. F. C. Button, State Agent for Negro Rural Schools of Kentucky, 1 January 1916–31 December 1916, Folder 4, Box 34, SEF-AUC, Ky 1.

40. By 1935, for 390 Jeanes teachers in the South, the Jeanes Fund provided $105,230 (33 percent) of the total budget of $316,262, with the remaining $211,032 (67 percent) provided by public funds. North Carolina and Virginia provided the highest percentage of public funding (80 percent), while Alabama and Arkansas provided the lowest percentage (50 percent). Jeanes Fund 1935–36, attachment found in Arthur Wright to Trevor Arnett, 7 October 1935, Folder 1931, Box 203, Series 1.2, RAC-GB.


42. Jackson Davis to Wycliffe Rose, 2 September 1910, Folder Wycliffe Rose, Box 6, The Papers and Photographs of Jackson Davis (Alderman Memorial Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville).

43. Ibid.

44. Circular Letter to Extension and Supervising Teachers and Organizers, April 7, 1910,” Folder 2125, Box 222, Series 1.2, RAC-GB.

45. “Notes from Reports of Georgia Jeanes Teachers at Conference, March 28, 1919,” Folder 2125, Box 222, Series 1.2, RAC-GB.

46. “Summary of Reports from the Jeanes Industrial Workers Scholastic Year 1914–1915,” Folder 586, Box 67, Series 1.1, RAC-GB.

47. Jeanes Agent’s Final or Term Report from Oda Kirkland, 1928, S2342, Box 7988, MDAH.

48. Summary of Reports of Mr. F. C. Button, State Agent for Negro Rural Schools of Kentucky, 1 January 1916–31 December 1916, Box 34, Folder 4, SEF-AUC.


50. See Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, 2001), who argues that black citizens have been less civically engaged historically due to slavery and the resulting problems of social capital. Theda Skocpol and Jennifer Lynn Oser refute his argument by trying to recapture the history of African American fraternal associations that were popular between the time of slavery

51. Bira Hilbun to Frank Bachman, 22 April 1925, Folder 872, Box 97, Series 1.1, RAC-GEB.
52. Georgia Jeanes Teacher Final Report from Jasper County, 1935, Subfiles Director, Box 1, Papers of the Division of Education/Negro Education (Georgia State Archives, Atlanta).
56. “Notes Made from Reports of Mississippi Jeanes Teachers at Conference of Louisiana and Mississippi Jeanes Teachers,” 20 March 1919, Folder 2125, Box 222, Series 1.2, RAC-GEB.
57. Mary E. Foster to Friends and Co-Workers, January 1918, Folder 1200, Box 131, Series 1.1, RAC-GEB.
58. Newbold to Home-Makers’ Club Agents, 29 May 1918, Folder 1044, Box 115, Series 1.1, RAC-GEB.
59. Alabama Consolidated Report of Jeanes Teachers for the month ending 31 October 1923, Folder 2122, Box 221, Series 1.2, RAC-GEB.
60. Jackson Davis to Wallace Buttrick, 13 July 1916, Folder 2121, Box 221, Series 1.2, RAC-GEB.
61. Report of Miss Mary Sanifer, Folder 10, Box 76 (Rosenwald Fund Archives, Franklin Library at Fisk University), hereafter RFA.
62. Jon R. Ellis to James H. Dillard, 21 March 1916, Folder 871, Box 97, Series 1.1, RAC-GEB.
63. “Supplement to ‘Negro Public Education in the South,’” 1927, Folder 3297, Box 315, Series 1.2, RAC-GEB, 10.
64. Some Results of the Work of the State Agent in Mississippi, January 1938, Folder 873, Box 97, Series 1.1, RAC-GEB, 10.
65. W. C. Strahan to G. L. Orr, 27 March 1930, Box 8013, Series 2342, MDAH.
67. By M. H. Griffith, undated recollections from work begun as the Rosenwald agent in 1921, Folder 10, Box 76, RFA, 3.
68. “A Brief Summary of Some of the Accomplishments in Inter-Racial Cooperation within the Past Three Years,” Folder 2, Box 76, RFA, 1.
69. Newbold to Home-Makers’ Club Agents, 29 May 1918, Folder 1044, Box 115, Series 1.1, RAC-GEB.
70. Report of N. C. Newbold, “State Agent Negro Rural Schools for the Month of February, 1915,” Folder 1042, Box 115, Series 1, RAC-GEB.
73. See Wiebe, The Search for Order; and Balogh, “Reorganizing the Organizational Synthesis.”
74. “Notes Made from Reports of Georgia Jeanes Teachers at Conference,” 28 March 1919, Folder 2125, Box 222, Series 1.2, RAC-GEB.
75. Reports on Visits to County Training Schools in Georgia, 8 January–11 January 1924, Folder 596, Box 67, Series 1.1, RAC-GEB.
76. In 1927, the GEB ranked the fourteen southern states according to their standing in the provision of education for rural blacks, based upon a composite of each state’s standing in literacy, teacher salaries, number of pupils per teacher, the length of the school term, the proportion of counties having high school facilities and Jeanes teachers, and the percent of student population enrolled. The highest seven states in the South, in order of their composite ranking were Maryland, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Texas, Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. The lowest seven states in order of composite ranking were Arkansas, Florida, South Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, and Alabama. “Negro Public Education in the South: A Confidential Report for the Officers of the General Education Board, 1927,” Folder 1, Box 33, SEF-AUC, 7.
77. McAdam, Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency; Clemens, The People’s Lobby; Kenneth Andrews, Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: The Mississippi Civil Rights Movement and Its Legacy (Chicago, 2004); Skocpol and Oser, “Organization Despite Adversity”; Camp and Kent, “‘What a Mighty Power We can Be.’”
79. Lassiter and Lewis, ed., The Moderates’ Dilemma. Exceptions are evident, the result of the unique political context in particular communities. For example, Prince Edward County, which chose to close schools for a number of years rather than integrate, was relatively conservative for the Upper South, while efforts in Tuskegee were relatively liberal for the Deep South. For more information on each of these counties, see Lassiter and Lewis, ed., The Moderates’ Dilemma, and Norrell, Reaping the Whirlwind.
80. Lassiter, The Silent Majority, 27. For a similar perspective in Virginia politics, see Lassiter and Lewis, ed., The Moderates’ Dilemma. There were also moderate whites in the Deep South, as Joseph Crespino discussed in his narrative about the practical segregationists in Mississippi. See Crespino, In Search of Another Country.


Arthur D. Wright to Division Superintendents and School Trustees, 28 June 1919, Folder 8, Box 2, Papers of the State Board of Education (Library of Virginia, Richmond).

“Public Money for Jeanes Work and County Training Schools,” 12 May 1927, Folder 2125, Box 222, Series 1.2, RAC-GE. The states recording a decrease in the aggregated total include South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

Superintendent W. C. Bell to Trevor Arnett, President of the General Education Board, 15 June 1929, Folder 4, Box 188, RFA.

A. T. Allen to Dr. F. P. Bachman, 23 April 1927, Folder 1075, Box 118, Series 1.1, RAC-GE.

A Suggestive Outline for Jeanes Supervising Teachers by Annie W. Holland, 1925, Folder 2125, Box 222, Series 12, RAC-GE.

Conference of State Agents of Rural Schools for Negroes, 5 and 6 June 1930, Folder 5, Box 188, RFA, 26.

The Julius Rosenwald Fund Annual Report, 1924–25, Folder 1, Box 81, RFA, 7.

“Conference of State Agents of Rural Schools for Negroes,” 5 and 6 June 1930, Folder 5, Box 188, RFA, 5–6.


Application for Aid in Extension of Negro School Term, First Year, Box 8013, Series 2342, MDAH.

Percy H. Easom to S. L. Smith, 25 February 1930, Box 8013, Series 2342, MDAH.

W. C. Strahan to Jackson Davis and Leo Favrot, 13 September 1929, Box 7986, Series 2342, MDAH.

Leo Favrot to W. C. Strahan, 17 September 1929, Box 7986, Series 2342, MDAH.


Percy H. Easom to W. H. Joyner, 23 August 1928, Box 7986, Series 2342, MDAH.

Ibid.

Percy H. Easom to Wm. H. Harrison, 6 January 1930, Box 8013, Series 2342, MDAH.

S. L. Smith to Wm. H. Harrison, 4 January 1930, Box 8013, Series 2342, MDAH.


110. “Conference of State Agents for Rural Schools for Negroes,” 7–8 January 1925, Folder 2000, Box 208, Series 1.2, RAC-GEB.

111. Ibid.


113. Ibid.

114. “Application for Jeanes Fund Aid;” 20 July 1932, Folder 6, Box 23, SEF-AUC.


116. “Statement Covering the General Activities of the State Agents of Negro Schools in Georgia,” attachment in Robert Cousins to Leo Favrot, 17 January 1928, Folder 589, Box 67, Series 1.1; “Itinerary Report Trips to Morgan and Taliaferro Counties by H. A. Whiting, 1935,” Folder Helen Whiting Itinerary, 1935–36, Box 2, Series Negro Education Division Director Subfiles (Georgia State Archives, Atlanta), 5.


118. Statement Covering the General Activities of the State Agents of Negro Schools in Georgia, attachment in Robert Cousins to Leo Favrot, 17 January 1928, Folder 589, Box 67, Series 1.1.

119. Some notes regarding a meeting of state agents at Hampton, circa 1924, Folder 1998, Box 208, Series 1.2, RAC-GEB.


123. Balogh, “Reorganizing the Organizational Synthesis.”