NPS Form 10-900-b

OMB No. 10024-0018

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

_X__ New Submission ___ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

The Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, Tennessee, 1942–1969

B. Associated Historic Contexts

1. Nashville's Early Civil Rights Movement, 1942–1957
2. Nashville Student Movement, 1958–1964
3. Nashville After the Civil Rights Act, 1965–1969

C. Form Prepared by

Name/Title: Robbie D. Jones and Carolyn Brackett – See Continuation Sheet C-3
Organization: Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc. Date: December 29, 2023
Street & Number: 204 Rivergate Parkway Telephone: 615–237–1001
City: Nashville State: TN Zip Code: 37072

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

State or Federal agency and bureau

DRAFT

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Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☒ Federal Agency
- ☒ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Appendices

National Park Service Grant Program Statement: This material was produced with assistance from the African American Civil Rights grant program, administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.

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E. Statement of Historic Contexts:

This Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) documents the history and typology of resources related to "The Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, Tennessee, 1942–1969." The MPDF provides a comprehensive historic context and chronological time frame for the development of the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville between 1942 and 1969 with a focus on the Nashville Student Movement and efforts to desegregate public accommodations from 1958 to 1964. It provides a historical overview of the city's Civil Rights Movement, which began soon after the end of the Civil War and continued through the World War II era, when the Southern Conference for Human Welfare established its headquarters in Nashville and Fisk University launched the Race Relations Institute, one of the first of its type in the nation. The Institute's interracial educational workshops in the 1940s set the stage for the city's nonviolent, direct-action training workshops in the 1950s that transformed Nashville into an epicenter for young civil rights leaders who changed the trajectory of American history. Hosted by activist churches and led by pastors influenced by Gandhian principles and the Social Gospel Movement—a Protestant social movement—the nonviolent training workshops gave rise to the Nashville Student Movement, which resulted in a sustained and successful effort to desegregate Nashville's public accommodations between 1958 and 1964. While centered on the public accommodations theme, the MPDF establishes the framework for the development of additional historic contexts focused on themes such as equal education, housing, voting rights, equal employment, or criminal injustice.

The following section contains a historical overview of Nashville's African American history between the Civil War and World War II. This introductory section sets the stage for the three historic contexts associated with Nashville's Civil Rights Movement from 1942 to 1969. It should be noted that when known, birth and death dates are provided for people referenced in the text. Additionally, properties in the text that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places or designated as National Historic Landmarks are cross referenced with the year of their listing and/or designation (i.e., NRHP, 1988; NHL, 2002).

Introduction: Roots of Nashville's Civil Rights Movement, 1866–1941

The Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, the capital of Tennessee, has deep roots, beginning soon after the end of the Civil War. Founded in 1779, Nashville served as the seat of government for Davidson County when the State of Tennessee was created in 1796. The Tennessee General Assembly designated the city as the permanent capital in 1843. Located in a border state in the slave-holding South, Nashville owed much of its prosperity to the 14,790 enslaved Black people who made up nearly a third of the county's population in 1860 as well as 1,209 free Blacks. That year, there were 2,153 enslavers in Davidson County including the City of Nashville's government which enslaved at least 60 people. At an active slave market in downtown Nashville, near the Public Square, Black people were bought, sold, or traded as a central part of the city's

economy. In 1860, as the country neared civil war, Nashville was a well-established and growing city with nearly 16,998 residents; another 30,057 people lived in the county outside the city limits.[1]

During the Civil War, Tennessee was the last state to secede from the U.S. and join the Confederate States of America. Following the war, Tennessee was the first state to rejoin the United States of America. In April 1865, as the nation entered the Reconstruction Era, Tennessee became the twentieth state to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which abolished slavery. In July 1866, Tennessee was the first former Confederate State to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment which granted citizenship to formerly enslaved people and specified that no state could "deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law."[2]

In January 1865, a few months before the Civil War ended, a group of African American men convened to issue the "Nashville Petition," asking for suffrage and the rights of citizenship. From August 7–10, 1865, the State Convention of Colored Men gathered at St. John's African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Nashville to make plans to pursue those rights as the institution of slavery dissolved. Among the many speakers was Major General Clinton B. Fisk (1828–1890), a white Civil War veteran and Tennessee's commissioner of the Bureau of Refuges, Freedman, and Abandoned Lands—a federal agency known as the Freedmen's Bureau. The Freedman's Bureau operated many programs between 1866 and 1872, including the establishment of schools. President Abraham Lincoln had signed the Freedman's Bureau into law on March 3, 1865. In February 1866, Congress voted to extend the legislation; however, President Andrew Johnson (1808–1875)—Tennessee's military governor during the war—vetoed the bill. In July 1866, Congress voted to override Johnson's veto of a revised version of the bill.[3]

Fisk began his talk at St. John's AME Church by observing "You could not do this four years ago, could you? A great change has taken place since that day. You are no longer slaves." Declaring his friendship and the commitment of the federal government to aid African Americans, Fisk told the crowd "The passing away of slavery has opened a new era, and it becomes necessary that the government should do something

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[1] Bobby L. Lovett, *The African-American History of Nashville, Tennessee, 1780–1930: Elites and Dilemmas,* University of Arkansas Press, 1999, 5–6; U.S. Population Census, Davidson County, Tennessee, 1860; U.S. Slave Census, Tennessee, 1860; "The Nashville Slave Market," historical marker, Tennessee Historical Commission, 2018.
[2] Robert Tracy McKenzie, "Reconstruction," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed April 3, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/reconstruction/; "14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Civil Rights (1868)," National Archives.
[3] McKenzie, "Reconstruction," 2018; "The Nashville Petition of 1865 and the Promise of Reconstruction: Part II," Emerging Civil War, accessed April 3, 2023, https://emergingcivilwar.com/2022/12/16/the-nashville-petition-of–1865-and-the-promise-of-reconstruction-part-ii/; "Freedmen's Bureau Acts of 1865 and 1866," United States Senate, accessed December 6, 2023, https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/FreedmensBureau.htm.

to aid you in passing from slavery to freedom. And therefore, the Freedmen's Bureau was established by an act of Congress on the 3d [third] of last March."[4]

In response to the Confederacy's loss, the end of the institution of slavery, and the passage of laws to aid African Americans, on December 24, 1865, a group of former Confederates formed the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in Pulaski, Tennessee. Devoted to white supremacy, the KKK grew quickly throughout the former Confederate states. For decades, the KKK used terror, racial violence, and murder against African Americans who attempted to establish schools, vote, or pursue their civil rights.[5]

Although the Tennessee General Assembly passed a law in 1867 giving Black men the right to vote, they could not hold office. Additionally, legislators refused to ratify the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which guaranteed that right. The Fifteenth Amendment became law in February 1870. (Tennessee did not officially ratify the amendment until 1997.) Black men first voted in a statewide election in 1867, electing an African American man to Nashville's Board of Aldermen; however, he could not assume office until 1868 when a law prohibiting Blacks from holding office was overturned. In 1868, ten aldermen and five members of Nashville City Council were African American men.[6]

During these years, the first Black neighborhood was established in Nashville. The Bass Street neighborhood near Edgehill was settled by formerly enslaved people who had been forced by the Union Army to build Fort Negley (NRHP, 1975) during the Civil War. From 1867 to 1869, the KKK held secret meetings in the fort's blockhouses. In the 1950s and 1960s, the neighborhood was razed as the result of urban renewal and construction of interstates.[7]

Progress in African American civil rights continued when Sampson W. Keeble (1833–1887), a Nashville barber, became the first Black Tennessean elected to the Tennessee General Assembly in 1872. Keeble was

[4] "Proceedings of the State Convention of Colored Men of the State of Tennessee: August 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th, 1865," Daily Press and Times Job Office, 1865, 1–36.
[5] Mark V. Wetherington, "Ku Klux Klan," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed March 27, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/ku-klux-klan/; "Confederate Veterans Establish the Ku Klux Klan," Equal Justice Initiative, accessed December 8, 2023, https://calendar.eji.org/racial-injustice/dec/24. Wetherington claims the KKK was established in May or early June 1866.
[6] "Jim Crow and Disenfranchisement of Southern Blacks," Tennessee State Library and Archives, accessed March 27, 2023, https://sharetngov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/aale/jimcrow.htm; McKenzie, "Reconstruction," 2018.
[7] "Reconstructing a Lost Neighborhood: MTSU-Vanderbilt Collaboration Unearths African American History at the Base of Fort Negley," accessed December 7, 2023, https://news.vanderbilt.edu/2021/10/20/mtsu-vanderbilt-collaboration-unearths-african-american-history-in-nashvilles-bass-street-neighborhood/.

a civic activist and participated in the August 1866 State Colored Men's Convention in Nashville where attendees lobbied the state legislature for the right to vote.[8]

Despite these gains, Tennessee soon followed other former Confederate states in enacting "Black code" laws intended to give white men control of the government and to segregate Black people, ensuring their inferior status in society. Between 1866 and 1955, the State of Tennessee enacted 23 laws including six mandating school segregation, three mandating separate accommodations on railroads, two segregating public accommodations, one for streetcars, and four outlawing marriages between Black and white people.[9]

Collectively the Black code laws were known as "Jim Crow laws." The name originated in the 1830s from a performance by Thomas Dartmouth "Daddy" Rice (1808–1860), a white man from New York. Painted in blackface and wearing shabby clothing, Rice performed "Jump, Jim Crow," a song and dance he claimed was modeled on an enslaved person. Rice performed the "Jim Crow" song-and-dance routine at theaters around the world. White audiences were receptive, and Jim Crow was commonplace at minstrel shows. The popularity of the minstrel shows led to the use of Jim Crow as a racial slur for African Americans.[10]

Passage of Jim Crow laws increased in the former Confederate states following the U.S. Supreme Court's overturn of the Civil Rights Act of 1875. In March 1875, three weeks after Congress passed the Act, the Tennessee General Assembly voted, in defiance of the Act, to permit hotels, public transportation, and amusement parks to refuse admission to any person for any reason. In 1883, the Supreme Court declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875—which guaranteed all citizens access to schools, theaters, churches, and other public accommodations—to be unconstitutional. In 1896, the Supreme Court further supported segregation in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, finding that "separate but equal" facilities for Black and white people were constitutional.[11]

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[8] Lovett 1999, 217; KBL, "Sampson Wesley Keeble," Tennessee State Library and Archives, 2012, accessed March 27, 2023, https://sharetngov.tnsosfiles.com/tsla/exhibits/aale/keeble.htm; Linda T. Wynn, "Sampson W. Keeble," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed March 27, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/sampson-w-keeble/.

[9] "Jim Crow Laws: Tennessee," Americans All, 2023, accessed March 28, 2023, https://americansall.org/legacy-story-group/jim-crow-laws-tennessee.

[10] "Origins of Jim Crow," Jim Crow Museum, Ferris State University, 2023, accessed March 28, 2023, https://jimcrowmuseum.ferris.edu/origins.htm.

[11] The Civil Rights Act became law on March 1, 1875. It required: "That all persons within the jurisdiction of the United States shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of inns, public conveyances on land or water, theaters, and other places of public amusement; subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law, and applicable alike to citizens of every race and color, regardless of any previous condition of servitude." The second section provided that any person denied access to these facilities on account of race would be entitled to monetary restitution under a federal court of law. "Tennessee Legalizes Racial Discrimination in Public Spaces Three Weeks After Federal

In Tennessee, additional Jim Crow laws included a public accommodations statute in 1885, transportation laws in 1891 and 1905, and statutes mandating segregated schools in 1901 and 1925. By the end of the nineteenth century, white legislators in the Tennessee General Assembly passed laws designed to restrict Black men's voting rights, including a poll tax and a literacy test.[12]

More threatening was the rise of lynching as a tool of control to re-establish white supremacy following the abolition of slavery. In Tennessee, there were 233 lynchings between 1877 and 1950. Although most occurred in the western section of Tennessee, at least six lynchings took place in Davidson County. In Nashville, in April 1892, a white mob lynched two Black men, Ephraim Grizzard (1847–1892) and his younger brother Henry Grizzard (1864–1892). The brothers were accused of assaulting two white girls in the Goodlettsville community near the Sumner County line. Seized during a manhunt before being charged or tried, Henry Grizzard was lynched on April 27 from a tree in Goodlettsville. Ephraim Grizzard was taken to the jail in downtown Nashville. On April 28, before he could be charged or tried, a white mob pulled Ephraim Grizzard from the jail and hung him from the nearby Woodland Street Bridge. The mob then riddled his body with bullets as thousands of spectators watched. Ephraim Grizzard's body was taken back to Goodlettsville and burned publicly to further terrorize local Black residents.[13]

The last documented lynching in Nashville occurred on December 14, 1924, along Nolensville Pike at the Williamson County line, when 15-year-old Samuel Smith was abducted from Nashville General Hospital following his arrest for an alleged robbery and shooting. A mob of white men took Smith to a site near the alleged robbery in Nolensville, hung him from a tree, and shot him multiple times. No one was ever charged for the murder.[14]

Civil Rights Act is Enacted," Equal Justice Initiative, accessed March 28, 2023, https://calendar.eji.org/racial-injustice/mar/23; "Landmark Legislation: Civil Rights Act of 1875," U.S. Senate.

[12] "Jim Crow Laws: Tennessee," Americans All, 2023.

[13] Gloria McKissack, "Lynching in Davidson County, Tennessee (1892–1924)," in Bobby L. Lovett, Linda T. Wynn, and Caroline Eller, editors, *Profiles of African Americans in Tennessee*, Nashville, Tennessee, 2021, 172–174; "Lynching in America," Equal Justice Initiative, accessed March 30, 2023, https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/. In 2019, the Equal Justice Initiative's Community Remembrance Project erected historic markers in downtown Nashville to commemorate the sites of the lynching of the Grizzard brothers, David Jones, and Joe Reed.

[14] "Samuel Smith," Historical Marker, Metropolitan Historical Commission, 2021. The marker was stolen in June 2023.

Emergence of the Black Middle Class

Nashville's African American population grew rapidly in the last half of the nineteenth century, reaching 36,523, or 36 percent, of the city's total population by 1910. By 1930, African Americans made up 28.5 percent of the population, a percentage that remained steady for the next 70 years.[15]

Many of Nashville's African American population were impoverished, living in crowded areas such as the downtown neighborhoods known as Hell's Half Acre and Black Bottom, so named because periodic floods left the streets covered in mud. As white residents fled the area in the 1880s, landlords rented substandard housing to African Americans who labored in menial jobs.[16]

While many African Americans struggled in poverty during the post-war period, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also saw the emergence of a thriving Black middle class in Nashville. Through advocacy and leadership, as well as support from some areas of the white community, African Americans engaged in building a new society through the establishment of schools, churches, and businesses. Social life grew through new fraternal organizations and clubs and lively entertainment venues for music and dancing. African American leaders also became politically active in demanding the rights of citizenship including suffrage and an end to Jim Crow laws.

Among the most active groups in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were African American women's clubs, operating in what became known as the Colored Women's Club Movement and engaging in multiple programs to improve the lives of the city's Black population. The first of these was the Phillis Wheatley Club, founded in 1895 by the wives of Nashville's Black leaders. Affiliated with the National Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, the club engaged in charitable works in Nashville as well as supporting missions in Africa. In 1897, the club hosted the first gathering of the National Association of Colored Women. In 1907, Nettie Langston Napier (1861–1938) founded the Day Home Club, a day care center where employed mothers could leave their children. A skilled fundraiser, Napier solicited financial support that allowed the club to provide meals, health care, and education at no cost.[17]

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[15] Bobby L. Lovett, "Black Bottom," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed March 27, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/black-bottom/.
[16] Lovett 1999, 73–75; Lovett 2018.
[17] Tara Mitchell Mielnik, "Phyllis Wheatley Club," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed December 8, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/phillis-wheatley-club/; Learotha Williams Jr., "Nettie Langston Napier," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 198–200. Named for Phillis Wheatley (1753–1784), an enslaved woman in Boston who became a well-known published poet, the club was originally located at 618 4th Avenue South.

Education Leads the Way

In the years immediately following the Civil War, the establishment of schools was a priority for the City of Nashville. With aid from the Freedmen's Bureau, schools opened in Nashville and across the state including day schools for children, night schools for adults, and Sabbath schools. Instruction focused on reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography.[18]

In January 1866, the Fisk Free Colored School, named in honor of Clinton B. Fisk, opened in Nashville to offer a liberal arts education to formerly enslaved persons. Located at the abandoned site of Fort Gillem, a Union Army military fort constructed in 1862, and financially supported by the American Missionary Association (AMA), enrollment quickly reached 900 students. In 1867, the Tennessee General Assembly passed legislation to support free, segregated, public education. As the number of schools increased, the need for teachers became critical. To meet this need, the Fisk Free Colored School changed its mission to training teachers, and in August 1867 the school was renamed Fisk University. When it opened, Fisk's coeducational student body was integrated with both Black and white students; however, in 1901 Tennessee's Jim Crow laws made it illegal to enroll white students. The university became known for its liberal arts programs and the Jubilee Singers, an a cappella ensemble formed in 1871, toured the world to help raise funds for Fisk. In 1873, Fisk established a campus on a hilltop site at Jefferson Street and 18th Avenue North and built Jubilee Hall (NRHP, 1971; NHL, 1974) from 1873–1876 with funds raised by the Jubilee Singers.[19]

By the early twentieth century, Fisk University added African Americans to the faculty and staff. In 1947, Dr. Charles Spurgeon Johnson (1893–1956) became Fisk's first African American president. Located about two miles northwest of downtown, the 40-acre campus was crowned by Victorian Gothic-style architectural landmarks—such as Jubilee Hall, Fisk Memorial Chapel (NRHP, 1978), Bennett Hall, and Livingstone Hall—with lofty spires visible from across the city. In the 1920s and 1930s, Fisk attracted professors and students who helped give rise to an African American cultural renaissance that produced leading Black scholars and artists such as social philosopher W.E.B. Dubois (1868–1963), sociologist E. Franklin Frazier (1894–1962), historian John Pope Franklin (1915–2009), poet James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938), and painter Aaron Douglas (1899–1979). Some of Fisk's programs were on par with the nation's leading

[18] "Records of the Superintendent of Education for the State of Tennessee, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1870," Smithsonian Institution, 2023, accessed April 3, 2023, https://sova.si.edu/record/NMAAHC.FB.M1000.
[19] Lovett 1999, 73, 159; Reavis L. Mitchell Jr., "Fisk University," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed April 3, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/fisk-university/; Berle Pilsk and Percy Looney, "Fisk University Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1977. Fisk reutilized the military hospital barracks on 12th Street at Fort Gillem, which the Union army abandoned in 1865 after the war ended. One of the barracks was relocated to the current campus in 1873 and later reutilized as the performing arts department's "Little Theater."

universities, leading to its elite stature among the country's historically Black universities. This momentum continued in the mid-twentieth century when many of the liberal arts students at Fisk University played a pivotal role in leading nonviolent protests in opposition to the continued segregation of public accommodations.[20]

In the years following Fisk's founding, four more institutions of higher education for African Americans were established in Nashville, which was also home to several universities and colleges for white students. The numerous institutions of higher learning gave rise to Nashville's nickname, "Athens of the South." Many of the students and professors at these universities, both Black and white, participated in the nonviolent protests for civil rights in the mid-twentieth century.

In 1876, Meharry Medical College was founded as the medical division of Central Tennessee College, a Nashville school established by the Freedman's Aid Society and the Freedman's Bureau of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Named for the Meharry family (white Methodist donors), the college added a School of Dentistry in 1886 followed by a Pharmacy Department in 1889. Independently chartered in 1915 as a private, nonprofit school, Meharry was the first medical college for African Americans in the South. In 1931, Meharry merged with Hubbard Hospital, which opened in 1917. Hubbard Hospital was named in honor of Dr. George W. Hubbard (1841–1924), a white faculty member who led the creation of the hospital. Located in south Nashville, the Meharry campus included the president's house (NRHP, 1973) where Dr. Hubbard lived.[21]

In 1931, Meharry Medical College and Hubbard Hospital relocated to a new shared facility on a 22-acre campus adjacent to Fisk University. The campus included Lyttle Hall (NRHP, 1998), a nurse's building later named for Hulda Margaret Lyttle (1889–1983), a nurse at Meharry who became the first Black dean of a nursing school in the U.S. The main building featured an auditorium and Public Health Lecture Hall. By the mid-twentieth century, Meharry had become the nation's leading teaching college for training African

[20] Lovett 1999, 159; Mitchell, "Fisk University," 2018; Pilsk and Looney, 1977; Fisk Memorial Chapel is part of the Fisk University Historic District. Bennett Hall and Livingstone Hall are no longer extant.

[21] Reavis L. Mitchell Jr., "Meharry Medical College," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed April 3, 2023, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/meharry-medical-college–1876/; Albert G. Berry and E. Michael Fleener, "Hulda Margaret Lyttle Hall of Meharry Medical College," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1998; Reavis L. Mitchell Jr., "George Whipple Hubbard," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed April 3, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/george-whipple-hubbard/; May Dean Eberling, "Hubbard Home," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1973; Sandra Martin Parham. *Meharry Medical College*. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2021. Central Tennessee College grew out of Clarke Chapel, renamed Clark Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church in 1899.

Americans in the medical profession. Many aspiring physicians obtained their undergraduate and premedical education at Fisk and later graduated with medical degrees from Meharry[22]

In 1909, the Tennessee General Assembly created the Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial (A&I) State Normal School for Negroes as the first and only state-funded historically Black university in the state. Davidson County leaders made it clear they wanted the school in Nashville. In April 1910, the Court of Davidson County considered issuing bonds to enable a bid for the school. James Carroll "J.C." Napier (1845–1940), an attorney and civic leader who had been born into slavery, told the Court, "We want to go out in Davidson County and build you a Tuskegee," referencing the famed institute in Alabama. The Court responded with a unanimous vote to appropriate $60,000 in bonds. The *Nashville Globe*, the city's leading Black newspaper, proclaimed the act "the greatest piece of work ever done for the Negroes in the state. Never before has any county in the state showed that amount of interest in its Negro citizens."[23]

The Tennessee A&I State Normal School for Negroes was built about one mile west of Fisk University. When the school opened in 1912 with 247 students, an article in the *Nashville Globe* described the campus:

> On high ground, commanding magnificent views. The buildings are of brick, with stone trimmings, substantial in structure, heated by steam, lighted by electricity and supplied with other modern conveniences. The whole plant, including campus, five buildings, farm and equipment, covers one hundred sixty-five acres and represents an estimated valuation of nearly two hundred thousand dollars, which the state is investing for the education of its colored young men and women.[24]

In 1922, the school became a four-year teachers' college, and its name was changed to Tennessee Agricultural & Industrial State College, commonly known as Tennessee A&I. In the 1920s and 1930s, a multi-year building campaign resulted in the construction of a traditional collegiate quadrangle surrounded by Collegiate Gothic Revival-style buildings and structures, including science and engineering buildings, classrooms, administrative buildings, dormitories, a library, and recreational facilities (NRHP, 1996). Students at Tennessee A&I worked with livestock on the adjacent nearly 200-acre agricultural complex.[25]

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[22] Mitchell, "Meharry Medical College," 2018; Berry and Fleener, 1998; Parham 2021, 35, 40–42.
[23] "Negro Normal: County Gives $60,000 for Its Establishment," *Nashville Globe*, April 8, 1908, 2.; Bobby L. Lovett, "Tennessee State University," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed April 3, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/tennessee-state-university/
[24] "Many Teachers and Visitors Present," *Nashville Globe*, June 12, 1912, 2; "About TSU: An HBCU Legacy," accessed April 3, 2023, https://www.tnstate.edu/about_tsu/history.aspx.
[25] In the 1940s, the college added a graduate school and built more academic and recreational facilities to accommodate the growing enrollment. In 1951, the school achieved university status, although its name stayed the same until 1968 when it was changed to Tennessee State University (TSU). In the 1950s, the university's enrollment was around 4,000 students, and TSU

In 1924, American Baptist Theological Seminary opened as Nashville's fourth college for Black students. Plans for a seminary to train ministers began in 1913 through a partnership of the National Baptist Convention serving Black Baptists and Southern Baptist Convention serving white Baptists. The seminary held its first classes in 1916 in Memphis, before deciding in 1918 to relocate to Nashville. In 1921, the convention purchased 53 acres for a rural, riverside campus along White's Creek Pike in northeast Nashville. Construction was initiated in 1923 for the first building, Griggs Hall (NRHP, 2013), named after Dr. Sutton E. Griggs (1882–1933), the Black president of the seminary, and his father Dr. Allen R. Griggs, a former enslaved person who helped found the school. Griggs Hall housed a dormitory, dining hall, classrooms, and a library. The seminary officially opened on September 14, 1924.[26]

Addressing the audience at the dedication of Griggs Hall, Lacey Kirk (1871–1940), president of the National Baptist Convention, noted "the gift of this seminary will constitute the greatest contribution the white Baptists of the South could possibly make to their Negro brethren…in providing a better trained ministry for the Negroes, the white Baptists are paving the way for a more intelligent, cooperative, appreciative and religious people." Additional buildings were later constructed on the campus, including the J.B. Lawrence Administration Building in 1947 and the T.L. Holcomb Library in 1954 (both NRHP, 2013). Although the seminary's enrollment was less than 100 students in the 1950s and 1960s, several students at the seminary, under the tutelage of Rev. Smith, became leaders of Nashville's Civil Rights Movement. When the seminary was fully accredited in 1971, it changed its named to American Baptist College.[27]

In 1940, well-known African American evangelist Marshall Keeble (1878–1968) opened the Nashville Christian Institute (NCI) in north Nashville to provide African Americans with a Christian education and to train young men for the ministry. The NCI was the nation's only Church of Christ-associated school for

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claimed the third highest total number of graduates among historically Black universities. Until the name change to TSU took hold, the university was nearly universally known as Tennessee A&I. "About TSU: An HBCU Legacy," accessed April 3, 2023, https://www.tnstate.edu/about_tsu/history.aspx; Lovett, "Tennessee State University," 2018; Bobby L. Lovett, *A Touch of Greatness: A History of Tennessee State University*. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press 2012; Harrison Stamm and Carroll Van West. "Tennessee State University Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1996.

[26] Steve Hoskins, "American Baptist Theological Seminary," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed April 5, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/american-baptist-theological-seminary/; Carroll Van West, Elizabeth Humphreys, Amber Clawson, Jessica French, and Abigail Gautreau, "American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2013; Brian D. Page, "Sutton E. Griggs," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed July 2, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/sutton-e-griggs/.

[27] "A Rich History," accessed April 3, 2023, https://abcnash.edu/about/history/#1532528092256-5a7c9f42-4f98; "Baptist Theological Seminary for Negroes Dedicated Sunday," *Nashville Banner*, September 15, 1924, 14. J.B. Lawrence Administration Building and T.L. Holcomb Library were NRHP-listed as part of the American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District.

Black children and young adults. Enrollment at the coeducational institution grew through the 1940s and the small campus expanded to include a dormitory and Gymnasium/Auditorium (NRHP, 2005).[28]

Simultaneously with the founding of these four historically Black institutions, several white private universities and colleges opened in Nashville. Most were affiliated with religious institutions with culturally and politically conservative leadership and alumni donors. In 1875, Vanderbilt University, a Southern Methodist college, opened a Collegiate Gothic campus along fashionable West End Avenue. In 1911, the George Peabody College for Teachers relocated from downtown to a 50-acre Neoclassical campus (NRHP, 1966; NHL, 1965), inspired by Thomas Jefferson's design for the University of Virginia, adjacent to Vanderbilt. Peabody became a renowned school of education in the South. Vanderbilt aspired to be on par with the nation's elite liberal arts universities. (Vanderbilt and Peabody merged in 1979.)[29]

In 1923, the Scarritt College for Christian Workers relocated from Kansas City to Nashville, where it affiliated with the George Peabody College for Teachers. Scarritt was a coeducational college for training missionaries by the Methodist Church. Completed in 1928 adjacent to Peabody, the Scarritt campus (NRHP, 1982) was known for its architectural beauty, featuring several high-style Collegiate Gothic stone buildings. Scarritt's Wightman Hall, with its 115-foot-tall Gothic tower, was the city's tallest building at the time. In the 1930s, the college offered undergraduate and graduate degrees in the fields of family service, social work, and religious education.[30]

Other white coeducational, liberal arts colleges that operated in Nashville during this period included Trevecca Nazarene College, founded in 1901 as a private Bible training school affiliated with the Church of Nazarene. David Lipscomb College was founded in 1891 as a private Bible training school and seminary affiliated with the Church of Christ. Ward-Belmont College was founded in 1890 as a women's finishing

[28] West 2015, 79; Jaime Woodcock and Laura Stewart Holder, "Nashville Christian Institute Gymnasium," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2004. Although NCI students were prohibited from becoming involved in the Nashville Student Movement, several of the school's alumni went on to become involved in the Civil Rights Movement, including attorney Fred Gray (b.1930) of Alabama. Bobby Richey, a high school student at NCI, was nearly expelled in 1960 for being arrested during a sit-in. The school was chronically plagued with financial difficulties and closed in 1967. The gymnasium is the only remaining building on the former NCI campus.

[29] Frank B. Williams Jr., "Higher Education," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed July 2, 2013, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/higher-education/. Vanderbilt University's campus has three buildings individually listed in the NRHP, including Alumni Memorial Hall (2011), Gymnasium (1972), and Mechanical Engineering Hall (1978).

[30] In the 1950s, the Methodists expanded world missionary programs and enrolled increased. In 1952, Scarritt became the first white university to desegregate in Nashville when DeLaris Johnson-Risher (b.1930) and Lelia Robinson Dabbs (1930–2002) enrolled. Carroll Van West, "Scarritt College for Christian Teachers," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed July 2, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/scarritt-college-for-christian-workers/; "Scarritt Bennett Honors Black Women Who Integrated the All-White College 70 Years Ago," *The Tennessee Tribune*, March 24, 2022.

college. Aquinas College was founded in 1928 as a private Catholic religious school operated by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia. Research does not indicate that students from these small, private Christian colleges played significant roles in the Nashville Student Movement.[31]

In the years following the Civil War, public schools for Nashville's Black elementary through high school students were also established. Located in the downtown Black Bottom neighborhood, Pearl High School was built in 1883 to serve students in first through eighth grades, and in 1887, Meigs Colored School opened in east Nashville for ninth through eleventh grade classes. Classes for these grades were transferred to Pearl High School in 1897. A new Pearl High School building was constructed in 1915 near Fisk University.[32]

In 1920, Nashville became the headquarters for the Rosenwald Fund, a multi-state program to build schools for African Americans in the South. The program began with funding from Julius Rosenwald (1862–1932). Born to Jewish immigrants, Rosenwald amassed a fortune as head of the retail giant Sears, Roebuck and Company, headquartered in Chicago. In 1912, Rosenwald joined the board of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama (NHL, 1965; NRHP, 1966) and began providing funds to aid educational opportunities for African Americans. Tuskegee was headed by Booker T. Washington (1856–1915), a graduate of Fisk University who partnered with Rosenwald to develop plans and to build schools for African Americans throughout the South. In 1917, the Rosenwald Fund was created. Headquartered in Chicago, the fund operated on a requirement that communities match funds provided by the Rosenwald Fund.[33]

In 1920, Samuel Smith (1875–1956) became director of the school building program and established a southern office for the Rosenwald program in Nashville. The southern office was on the campus of George Peabody College for Teachers, where Smith studied rural school architecture with Fletcher B. Dresslar (1858–1930). By 1928, one-third of schools for Black students in the South were Rosenwald schools. When the program ended in 1932, 4,977 schools had been built in 15 states (including 354 in Tennessee), and 600,000 students attended Rosenwald schools. In 1928, the Rosenwald Fund inaugurated programs in higher

[31] Williams, "Higher Education," 2018. Trevecca Nazarene College became Trevecca Nazarene University in 1995. David Lipscomb College became Lipscomb University in 1988. Ward-Belmont College evolved into a Christian coeducational college operated by the Tennessee Baptist Convention in 1951. Centered on Belmont Mansion (NRHP, 1971), its name was changed to Belmont University in 1991 and it became a nondenominational Christian university in 2007. Aquinas evolved into Aquinas Junior College in 1961 and Aquinas College in 1994.
[32] Lovett 2018.
[33] Mary S. Hoffschwelle, "Julius Rosenwald Fund," *Tennessee Encyclopedia,* 2018, accessed March 27, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/julius-rosenwald-fund/; Oliver Arney, "Rosenwald Schools and the Importance of Preserving History," Tennessee State Museum, accessed April 4, 2023, https://tnmuseum.org/Stories/posts/rosenwald-schools-and-the-importance-of-preserving-history?locale=en_us.

education that resulted in major gifts to Fisk, Meharry, and Tennessee A&I. The fund's fellowship program supported hundreds of promising Black leaders, including sociologist professor Dr. Charles S. Johnson and librarian Arnaud Bontemps (1902–1973) at Fisk and Robert E. Clay (1875–1961), director of the Sunday School at Tennessee A&I. Clay served as the "Negro" state agent for Rosenwald schools in Tennessee from 1917 to 1937.[34]

A New Society Grows

As the city's African American colleges were established, new neighborhoods surrounded the educational campuses, creating thriving centers of commerce, entertainment, and worship, with much of the development concentrated along the Jefferson Street corridor in north Nashville. In the early twentieth century, the Abraham Lincoln Land Company and Realty Savings Banks and Trust Company sold lots in the Fisk University Place subdivision. A 1907 notice described the setting:

> The property is about three blocks south from the end of Jefferson Street. It begins with McLaughlin Avenue and runs west to the crest of a hill about one-fourth of a mile away. From almost every lot in the tract the view of Nashville is magnificent. In the foreground is Fisk University, with all the classic beauty of each of the buildings of this great institution shown in bold relief; to the left stretches before the eye ever-growing North Nashville, while in the distance beyond, to the fore and to the right, may be seen the Capitol and the other prominent buildings of the city proper.[35]

In 1905, the city's first private park for African Americans opened. Developed by businessman and civic leader Preston Taylor (1849–1931), Greenwood Recreational Park offered a variety of amusements including a ballpark, swimming pool, and picnic facilities. Located in southeast Nashville, the park provided a setting for the Tennessee Colored Fair Association's annual fair. The park operated until 1949.[36]

Greenwood Park preceded the first city park for African Americans by seven years. In 1912, Hadley Park opened on 34 acres between Fisk University and Tennessee A&I. At the park dedication on July 4, 1912, master of ceremonies Benjamin J. Carr told the crowd "As far as I know, this is the first instance in this country where a park of this size has been purchased for the exclusive use of the colored citizens of the

[34] Hoffschwelle, "Julius Rosenwald Fund," 2018; Bobby L. Lovett, "Robert E. Clay," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed December 4, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/robert-e-clay/.
[35] Reavis L. Mitchell Jr., "Jefferson Street," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 137–140; "Fisk University Place," *Nashville Globe*, February 15, 1907, 5.
[36] Lovett 1999, 124–125; "Tennessee Colored Fair Association: Second Annual Fair," *Nashville Globe*, July 23, 1909.

municipality, and it goes to say that in all the Southland there is no such city nor state that there is such good will and brotherly interest as exists between the black and white people of Nashville and Tennessee."[37]

Among the social organizations and activities for African Americans in the early twentieth century was the formation of a Girl Scout troop. Troops for white girls began organizing in Nashville during World War I. In 1919, members of the local Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) formed the "Blue Triangle," a separate branch, to offer "similar opportunities for the colored girl as for her sisters of the white race." The chapter only lasted a few years, but in 1924 social worker Josephine Groves (later Holloway) (1898–1988) revived the program at Bethlehem House, an interracial social settlement center where she was employed in the position of girls' worker. Holloway left the center soon after marrying. In 1933 she formed a new Girl Scout troop for Black girls and asked the Cumberland Valley Girl Scout Council (CVGSC) to register the troop, but the Council declined. However, in 1942, the CVGSC recognized her troops and in 1944 hired Holloway as its first Black professional worker. (The CVGSC integrated in 1951.)[38]

In 1938, the CVGSC invited First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962) to speak to the Girl Scouts at a fundraiser held in the Ryman Auditorium (NRHP, 1971; NHL, 2001), but she refused the request of the CVGSC to give a lecture separately to an African American audience. When Roosevelt spoke at the Ryman Auditorium, the CVGSC seated Blacks in the balcony, then called the "Confederate Gallery," and whites in the lower-level seats. The Fisk Jubilee Singers performed to an interracial audience of 1,500 people.[39]

With the development of automobiles, commercial development increased along Jefferson Street, which included grocery stores, pharmacies, hardware stores, clothing stores, gas stations, restaurants, bakeries, insurance agencies, dry cleaning establishments, barbers, beauty shops, tourist homes, and motels. By the 1930s, Jefferson Street entered what became known as its Golden Age (1935–1965), when it was home to some 80 percent of Nashville's Black-owned businesses (Figure 1). During these decades, "Jeff Street," as the corridor was commonly referred to, was buzzing with nightclubs pulsing with live music by famous entertainers such as B.B. King, Nat King Cole, Duke Ellington, Etta James, Jimi Hendrix, Diana Ross, among many others. Jefferson Street became a popular destination for Black tourists and travelers. The

[37] Lovett 1999, 126; "Hadley Park," accessed April 4, 2023, https://www.tclf.org/hadley-park; "Hadley Park Dedicated July Fourth," *Nashville Globe*, July 12, 1912, 2.
[38] Elisabeth Israels Perry, "Josephine Groves Holloway," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2028, accessed December 8, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/josephine-groves-holloway/; Elisabeth Israels Perry, "The Very Best Influence: Josephine Holloway and Girl Scouting in Nashville's African American Community," *Tennessee Historical quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Summer 1993), Tennessee Historical Society, 73–85; Janice E. Leone, "Bethlehem House," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed December 10, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/bethlehem-house/. The Bethlehem House was renamed Bethlehem Center in 1970; its 1929 building still stands at 1417 Charlotte Avenue.
[39] Perry 1993, 73–85.

Negro Motorist Green Book advertised many roadside businesses on Jefferson Street such the Delmar Hotel, Cozy Corner Tavern, Ebony Hut Restaurant, and Brown's Dinner Club.[40]

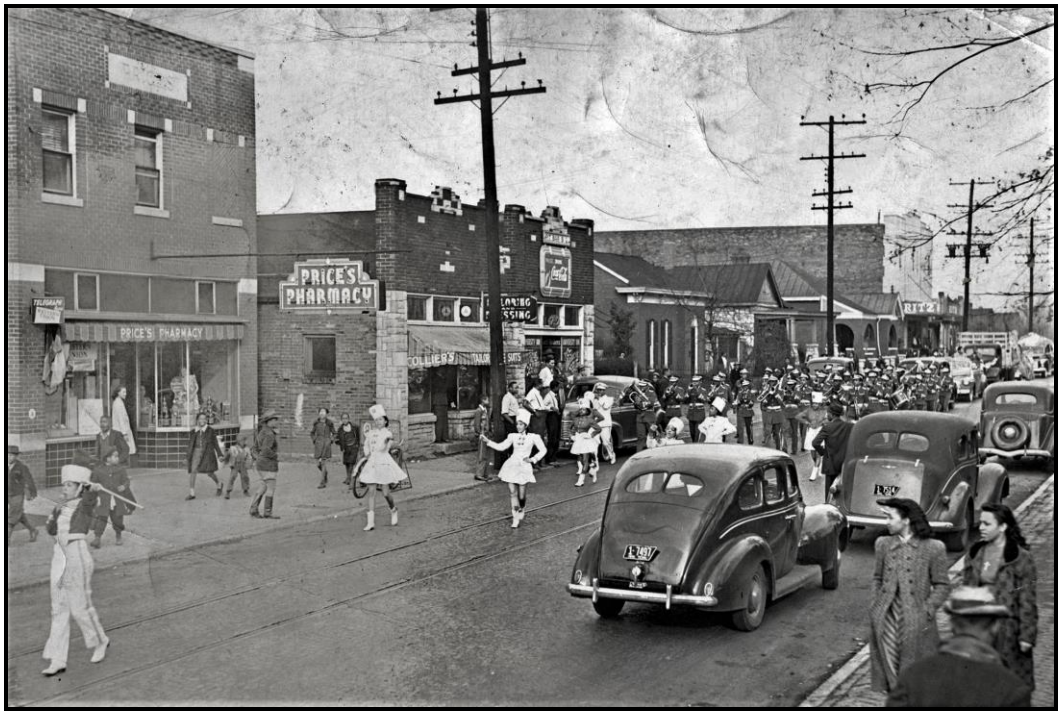

Figure 1. Photograph of Jefferson Street at Fisk University during the Pearl High School Homecoming Parade, 1942 (Source: Metro Nashville Archives).

From the earliest days of freedom, African Americans established numerous Nashville churches which served spiritual needs and that would eventually play a central role in the quest for civil rights. Some of the notable congregations include Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church (NRHP, 1980), organized in 1866, which met in several locations before the congregation constructed a Victorian Gothic-style church on Jefferson Street in 1905. The First Baptist Church's origins pre-date the Civil War when the white congregation at downtown's First Baptist Church welcomed free and enslaved Blacks to worship as early as 1834. Following the Civil War, African American members formed the First Colored Baptist Church of Nashville, later renamed Spruce Street Baptist Church. In the 1880s and 1890s, congregation members

[40] Reavis L. Mitchell Jr., "Jefferson Street," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2011, 137–139; Amie Thurber and Learotha Williams Jr., editors, *I'll Take You There: Exploring Nashville's Social Justice Sites*, Vanderbilt University Press, 2021, 78.

broke away and founded Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church and First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill. In 1866, formerly enslaved Randall B. Vandavall (1832–1898) established the First Baptist Church East Nashville.[41]

Other influential Black churches include Clark Memorial Methodist Church, established in 1865 in the downtown Black Bottom neighborhood before the congregation relocated in the 1930s to near Fisk University. St. John's African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church was the first AME congregation in Tennessee, established in 1863 as part of a plan to scatter AME churches throughout the state. Capers Memorial Colored Methodist Episcopal (CME) built a sanctuary off Charlotte Avenue in 1925 (NRHP, 1985). Established in 1911, Lee Chapel AME built a sanctuary on Scovel Street in 1947. Founded in 1932, the First Independent African Methodist Community Church completed a sanctuary at 1815 Knowles Street in 1941. In the 1960s, these churches these played crucial roles in the Nashville Student Movement.[42]

Advocacy and Activism

As Nashville's African American community established a new society with schools, churches, businesses, recreational and entertainment centers, and residential neighborhoods, they faced the unrelenting challenges of segregation and barriers to the full rights of citizenship. African American leaders responded to these challenges by rallying Black citizens to activism, partnering with supportive white citizens, and advocating for change to Nashville's white-controlled political and civic institutions.

In 1905, Black citizens protested a new law requiring separate street cars for Black and white riders. After several failed attempts by the Tennessee General Assembly to apply the "separate but equal" railroad coach law to street cars, legislation succeeded. On January 10, 1905, Davidson County's Representative Charles P. Fahey (1862–1915) introduced a bill "to separate white and colored passengers on streetcars." The law passed, requiring streetcar operators to post signs designating areas for Black and white passengers.[43]

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[41] Linda T. Wynn, "First Colored Baptist Church," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 89–91; Mount Zion: About Us," accessed April 4, 2023, https://www.mtzionnashville.org/about-us/.

[42] Thurber and Williams, *I'll Take You There*, 2021, 66–67; "The Black Church Digital Mapping Project," WPLN-FM, accessed April 4, 2023, https://www.wnpt.org/the-black-church-map/; "St Johns AME Church," accessed April 5, 2023, https://stjohnamenashville.wordpress.com/contact/; Carmelia D. Gregory, "Capers Memorial Christian Episcopal Church (1832)," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 51–53. The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was renamed the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in 1956. Capers Memorial CME Church was founded in 1832 as the McKendree African Mission and renamed Capers Chapel in 1851.

[43] Linda T. Wynn, "Nashville's Streetcar Boycott (1905–1907)," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 208–210.

Objection from the African American community was swift as streetcar boycotts began across the state. A local African American weekly newspaper, the *Clarion,* asked readers not to ride the streetcars, instead to "buy buggies, or if they could not, trim their corns, darn their socks, wear solid shoes and walk." As the law took effect on July 5, 1905, Nashville's African American community began a boycott of the Nashville Transit Company. In September 1905, a group of African American businessmen founded the Union Transportation Company with routes leading in all directions from the downtown to offer an alternative to Black riders. By the end of 1906, the company suspended service, the victim of new fees and other difficulties imposed by Nashville's government. The boycott ended by 1907, and separate car laws remained in place.[44]

An outcome of the boycott was the creation of a new newspaper, the *Nashville Globe,* in 1906. The newspaper corporation's officers were employees of the National Baptist Publishing Board, including Richard H. Boyd (1843–1922), founder of the publishing board in 1896 and head of the local chapter of the National Negro Business League; Henry A. Boyd (1876–1959), Dock A. Hart, J.O. Battle, and Charles Burrill. The first newspaper, published in January of 1906, focused on the streetcar boycott. Publication continued until 1960 with Henry Boyd taking over as editor upon the death of his father in 1922. The newspaper encouraged readers to purchase homes and to support locally owned Black businesses. Starting in 1909, editorials advocated for a state college for African Americans, culminating in the establishment of Tennessee A&I in 1912.[45]

In addition to the newspaper, publishing board, and other business interests, in 1911 Richard H. Boyd started a new business venture, the National Negro Doll Company, located at 519 Second Avenue North. The company was the first to market mass-produced Black dolls to African American consumers. Boyd announced the new company in a *Nashville Globe* advertisement: "Every person in Nashville or the vicinity who desires to have one of these dolls or who knows of any friend who wants a Negro doll can be supplied." The following year, another *Globe* advertisement proclaimed: "When you see a Negro doll in the arms of a

[44] Wynn, "Streetcar Boycott," 2021, 208–210; "50 Years Before Rosa Parks, A Bold Nashville Streetcar Protest Defied Segregation," accessed March 30, 2023, https://wpln.org/post/50-years-before-rosa-parks-a-bold-nashville-streetcar-protest-defied-segregation/.

[45] Bobby L. Lovett, "Henry Allen Boyd (1876–1959)," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 35–37; Christopher MacGregor Scribner, "*Nashville Globe*," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed March 30, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/nashville-globe/; Paul Harvey, "Henry A. Boyd," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed March 30, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/henry-allen-boyd/.

Negro girl, then you know that the child is being taught a lesson in race pride and race development which will not result in race suicide."[46]

The year of 1918 proved to be particularly active in Nashville, both among African American activists and among white supremacists. Activities included forming new organizations, hosting meetings, and holding social justice protest parades. Two new organizations formed that year to advocate for the interests of African Americans. The Inter-racial League of Tennessee formed with Dr. William J. Hale (1874–1944), president of Tennessee A&I, as league president. Annual conferences were held on the school's campus, where July 16 was celebrated annually as "Interracial Day" for more than two decades with as many as 1,000 people in attendance. The league's work focused on issues ranging from advocating for better schools to securing parks and playgrounds to sponsoring a statewide Health Week when ministers were asked to preach sermons on health and to ask their congregants to clean up their homes. Despite the league's "inter-racial" name, the organization was divided into white and Black branches. Both Black and white speakers at the July 1922 conference noted they "opposed social equality but urged that every means be taken to increase the understanding between the two races."[47]

Founded in New York in 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) protested lynching, segregation, and voting disenfranchisement. The first NAACP chapter in Tennessee formed in Memphis in 1917, with Nashville and Chattanooga forming chapters the following year.[48]

A resurgence of the KKK and other white supremacist groups across the South was sparked in part by the silent movie, *Birth of a Nation*, which premiered in 1915. Based on *The Clansmen*, published in 1905 by Rev. Thomas Dixon (1864–1946), the film promoted white supremacy. The book also depicted the Reconstruction era as filled with corrupt Yankee carpetbaggers who oppressed the former Confederate states until white Southern men restored order through the KKK which is presented as heroic. The film

[46] *Portraits of African American Life Since 1865,"* Nina Mjagkij, editor, Scholarly Resources Inc. Imprint, Wilmington, Delaware, 2003, 65–66; "Opening of the Negro Doll Season," *Nashville Globe,* October 6, 1911, 8; "When You See a Negro Doll," *Nashville Globe,* November 22, 1912, 22; Paul Harvey, "Richard Henry Boyd," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed March 30, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/richard-henry-boyd/.

[47] "Negroes of State to Observe Health Week," *The Tennessean,* March 26, 1922, 14; "One Thousand at Inter-racial Meet in Tennessee," *The Monitor,* Omaha, Nebraska, July 16, 1926, 1.

[48] Richard A. Couto, "National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)," *Tennessee Encyclopedia,* 2018, accessed April 6, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/national-association-for-the-advancement-of-colored-people-naacp/; Linda T. Wynn, "100th Anniversary of the NAACP," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles,* 2021, 2.

inflamed racial tensions across the U.S. by portraying formerly enslaved African Americans as either childlike or violent, with Black men attacking white women.[49]

On January 9, 1918, more than 200 white men attended an organizational meeting of the "Nashville klan No. 1" at the Columbia Union in downtown Nashville. Embodying the spirit of the KKK, the Nashville Klan placed advertisements in local newspapers featuring a white robed man riding a horse. The organization met weekly at their Klan Hall a few doors down from the Hermitage Hotel (NRHP, 1975; NHL, 2020).[50]

A month later, following a model set in 1917 by the New York State NAACP, some 2,000 African American men held a "Silent Parade" on February 20, 1918, in downtown Nashville. The parade was in protest of racial mob violence and lynchings, including the lynching of J.L. McIlherron on February 12 at Estill Springs in Franklin County. McIlherron had been tortured and burned alive while chained to a hickory tree. The white mob also shot Rev. G.W. Lych, a Black pastor at the Estill Springs AME Church, who had previously assisted in McIlherron's escape from the mob during the manhunt. The ghastly and gruesome murders made headlines across the U.S.[51]

With the Black men marching four abreast, the "great silent parade" began at the Colored YMCA at the corner of Charlotte Avenue (then Cedar Avenue) and 4th Avenue North and ended at the Tennessee State Capitol (NRHP, 1970; NHL, 1971). In the Legislative Hall at the capitol, three African American leaders pleaded with Governor Thomas C. Wye (1863–1953) to act in enforcing the law. Speakers included attorney and civic leader James C. Napier; Rev. W.S. Ellington (1865–1949), editor and secretary of the National Baptist Publishing Board and pastor of the First Baptist Church East Nashville; and Rev. John H. Grant, pastor of Payne Chapel AME Church. Governor Wye responded that he did not have the authority to call in the Tennessee Militia or power over local officials to follow state laws. The Interdenominational Ministers'

[49] Steven Mintz, "Historical Context: Birth of a Nation," The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History [2009–2023], accessed April 20, 2023, https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/teacher-resources/historical-context-birth-nation.
[50] "Columbia Union Holds Big Meeting," *The Tennessean*, January 10, 1918, 7; *The Tennessean*, March 6, 1918, 2; Advertisement, *The Tennessean*, August 23, 1919, 10; *The Crisis* Vol. 17, No. 5, March 1919, 229. The Klan Hall was at 226–228 6th Avenue North.
[51] *Nashville Globe*, "Two Thousand Men March in Silent Parade," February 22, 1918, 1, 8. On July 28, 1917, the NAACP organized a Silent Protest Parade in New York City with over 10,000 Black people marching silently down Fifth Avenue to Madison Square in protest of racial violence and discrimination, including lynchings in East St. Louis, Waco, and Memphis. The mass demonstration was conceived by James Weldon Johnson. Believed to the be the first mass protest in U.S. history, articles about the march were published by newspapers across the U.S., including extensive coverage by the *Nashville Globe*. In 1918, the *Nashville Globe* noted that Nashville's Silent Parade may have been the first and largest of its type in the South.

Alliance that organized the Silent Parade included Rev. W.R. Stephens, pastor of Clark Memorial Methodist Church, as chairman.[52]

On March 2, 1918, the *New York Age* published a report on the Nashville silent parade stating: "Two thousand Negroes marched in the silent parade in Nashville, Wednesday of last week. The demonstration was held to show the feelings of the colored citizens against lynchings for which Tennessee is becoming infamous." In October 1918, the "Vigilantes of Nashville" led a Saturday night silent parade, described by *Nashville Banner* as "not only impressive, but very suggestive. It suggested a recrudescence of the Ku-Klux days, when objectionable characters and objectionable measures were regulated quietly, swiftly and surely, and no questions asked."[53]

By the early decades of the twentieth century, African American women's clubs became increasingly active in the community's development. A leading local advocate for African American women and girls was Juno Frankie Pierce (1864–1954), president of the Negro Women's Reconstruction League, founder of the Nashville Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, and member of the YWCA Blue Triangle League's management committee.[54]

In May 1920, Pierce made history when she became the first Black woman to address an audience in the Tennessee State Capitol. The occasion was the inaugural convention of the Tennessee League of Women Voters, and the topic was the Nineteenth Amendment granting woman suffrage. (The amendment passed and became law in August 1920.) The opportunity to address the convention resulted from a rare alliance between white and Black women in the South. Asking "what will the Negro woman do with the vote?," Pierce answered her own question: "We will stand by the white women. We are interested in the same moral uplift of the community in which we live as you are." Additionally, Pierce said that Black women wanted "a state vocational school, and a child welfare department in the state, and more room in state schools." When the Tennessee General Assembly began debate on the amendment three months later, Pierce was not in the audience. She had not been invited by white suffragists who knew her presence could prevent ratification. Following passage of the amendment, Pierce succeeded in securing state funding for the Tennessee Vocational School for Colored Girls and served as the school's superintendent from 1923 until 1939.[55]

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[52] "Two Thousand Men March in Silent Parade," *Nashville Globe*, February 22, 1918, 1, 9; *Nashville Globe*, March 1, 1918, 1.
[53] *New York Age*, "News Notes," March 2, 1918, 4; *The Crisis*, Vol. 17, No. 5, March 1919, 229; *Nashville Banner*, October 15, 1918, 9.
[54] Carole Stanford Bucy, "Juno Frankie Pierce," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed April 5, 2023, http://tnency.utk.tennessee.edu/entries/juno-frankie-pierce/.
[55] Elaine Weiss. *The Woman's Hour,* New York: Penguin Random House, 2018: 187–188, 243–244, 339–340.

From May 12–15, 1930, Pierce presided over a Race Relations Conference held at Nashville's Clark Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church with interracial talks by George W. Gore (1901–1982), dean of Tennessee A&I, Louise Young (1892–1973) of Scarritt College, and Virginia Sutton of Fisk. Rev. A.L. DeMond, pastor of the Howard Congregational Church in Nashville, delivered the keynote address, "Winning Our Way." Delegates traveled to the conference from Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and North Carolina. Young was a white professor who taught race relations at Scarritt; she had previously taught at Black colleges in Georgia (Paine College) and Virginia (Hampton Institute).[56]

Fisk University and Early Civil Rights Efforts

Dr. Fayette Avery McKenzie (1872–1957), a white professor who previously taught at Ohio State University, served as president of Fisk from 1915 to 1925. Under his leadership, Fisk became the first Black university in the U.S to be certified as a "standard college." However, his strict code of conduct led to student protests and strikes. He closed the campus newspaper, abolished the student council, and banned Black fraternities, sororities, and athletic teams on campus. To appease local white donors, McKenzie banned interracial dances and integrated audiences at campus concerts as well as the NAACP. The protests led to the expulsion of five students and the transfer of several others to Howard University. Things came to a head in 1924, when W.E.B. Du Bois, a Fisk alumnus, wrote in the NAACP's magazine *The Crisis*, "Men and women of Black America: Let no decent Negro send his child to Fisk until Fayette McKenzie goes." In February 1925, students staged a campus protest that resulted in broken windows at Livingstone Hall. McKenzie called the police who arrested and charged seven students for inciting a riot. The ongoing controversy made national news, leading to McKenzie's resignation in April 1925.[57]

In February 1926, the Fisk board of trustees hired Dr. Thomas Elsa Jones (1888–1973), a white Quaker missionary, to serve as president. Jones was tasked with fundraising $100,000 to qualify the university for a $1 million endowment provided by the General Education Board, Carnegie Corporation, and others. Through Jones's aggressive fundraising, the university was able to secure the endowment that allowed it to

[56] *Nashville Banner*, May 18, 1930, 7; Oral Histories of the American South: Louise Payne, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, February 14, 1972, accessed December 15, 2023, https://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/playback.html?base_file=G-0066. A native of Memphis and graduate of Vanderbilt, in the 1930s, Young taught interracial workshops at Highlander Folk School and was later involved in the Nashville sit-ins. A native of Nashville, Gore served as the dean of Tennessee A&I from 1928–1950 and president of Florida A&M from 1950–1968 where he became a leader in the Tallahassee Civil Rights Movement.

[57] *Nashville Banner*, February 8, 1925:1, 6; *Nashville Banner*, April 24, 1925:16; *TIME*, February 16, 1925; *TIME*, March 1, 1926; Matthew Algeo, "Poisoned Gifts: How the president of a Black college ended up on the wrong side of W.E.B. Du Bois—and history," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 27, 2023, accessed December 26, 2023, https://thepenngazette.com/poisoned-gifts/.

build five new buildings, including Talley-Brady Hall, a modern chemistry building, and Cravath Library, an eight-story building with murals by artist Aaron Douglas. The endowment also funded campus master planning by the Olmsted Brothers. In June 1928, a two-day celebration was held in Nashville with John D. Rockefeller Jr. serving as commencement speaker at Fisk University, attended by Julius Rosenwald, Paul D. Cravath, and other wealthy donors from Chicago and New York. The chamber of commerce also hosted a dinner in their downtown headquarters as part of the celebration. The endowment allowed Fisk to advance scholastically and establish a new degree in music. With these improvements, the Fisk campus became one of the first historically Black colleges to be accepted to the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities with an "A" rating.[58]

In 1928, at a time when much of the advocacy and activism of African Americans focused on securing educational opportunities, putting an end to lynching, and creating a new society, Dr. Charles Spurgeon Johnson arrived at Fisk University with bigger plans to end discrimination and racism, starting with the city of Nashville. An African American sociologist, Johnson had previously served as associate executive secretary of Chicago's Commission on Race Relations and as the director of research and investigations at the National Urban League in New York. His work in Chicago focused on racial violence, including the race riots during the summer of 1919. As professor of sociology and later as department chair, Johnson positioned Fisk as a primary center for the study of African Americans and race relations in the United States.[59]

During his tenure, Johnson secured funding from multiple sources including the Social Science Research Council and the Julius Rosenwald Fund and published many books and papers about African Americans. From 1928–1933, Johnson's research assistant Ophelia Settle Egypt (1903–1984) led Fisk's famed "slave narrative project," resulting in interviews of 100 "Negro ex-slaves" from Tennessee and Kentucky. All interviewers were Black. In 1933, Johnson was named Director of Studies for the Institute of Race Relations at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. The institute was founded by the Committee on Race Relations of the Philadelphia Society of Friends. While maintaining his position on Fisk's faculty, Johnson directed the

[58] Lovett 2005, 5; Reavis L. Mitchell Jr., "Charles S. Johnson (1893–1956)," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 139–141; *The Tennessean*, June 6, 1928, 1, 5, 8, 9; Charles Johnson Papers 2004, 21; *Nashville Banner*, June 6, 1928, 1, 10; *Nashville Banner*, June 7, 1928, 3, 6; *The Tennessean*, June 5, 1928, 1, 5; *The Tennessean*, June 7, 1928, 1, 6, 8. Talley-Brady Hall and Cravath Library were NRHP-listed in 1978. The fundraising campaign was initiated in 1924 under the leadership of Dr. Fayette A. McKenzie, but stalled during the controversy leading to his resignation.

[59] Keith W. Berry, "Charles Johnson, Fisk University, and the Struggle for Civil Rights, 1945–1970." Dissertation: Florida State University, 2005, 18, 25.

summer institutes from 1933 through 1937. Johnson's work with the Institute of Race Relations at Swarthmore would later inspire formation of the Race Relations Institute at Fisk University.[60]

To connect to Nashville's Black community, in 1937 Johnson created the Fisk University Settlement which offered social and recreational opportunities and a "People's College" that offered courses ranging from business to reading, civics, and dramatics. A Children's School continued into the 1950s when it was the only non-segregated elementary school in the city. In 1947, Johnson became the first Black president of Fisk University. Johnson increased the university's enrollment, doubled its budget, and enhanced its reputation as a top-notch liberal arts university. In 1949, the Carol Van Vechten Gallery opened under the direction of Pearl Creswell (1912–1994) with world class works of art donated by American painter Georgia O'Keefe. The collection featured avant-garde works by internationally celebrated artists including O'Keeffe, Alfred Stieglitz, Charles Demuth, Marsden Hartley, Diego Rivera, Paul Cezanne, Pablo Picasso, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, John Marin, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, among many others. To house the collection, the original Fisk Gymnasium and Mechanical Arts Building (NRHP, 1978) was converted into the Van Vechten Art Gallery.[61]

The Social Gospel Movement

As African Americans sought progress, equality, and justice through education, legal and political systems, a new Protestant social effort emerged, known as the Social Gospel Movement. In Nashville, the Social Gospel Movement was led by Dr. Alva Wilmot Taylor (1871–1957), a Disciples of Christ minister and professor of religion in Vanderbilt University's School of Religion.

Originating in Protestant churches in the 1880s, the Social Gospel Movement campaigned for social justice, racial equality, women's rights, labor reform, and alleviation of poverty. Social Gospel adherents spoke out against the lynching of African Americans, supported Prohibition, and advocated for education and health care. Tenants of the Social Gospel Movement would inspire the core goals and values of the Civil Rights

[60] Barry Everett Lee, "The Nashville Civil Rights Movement: A Study of the Phenomenon of Intentional Leadership Development and its Consequences for Local Movements and the National Civil Rights Movement." Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2010, 37; Berry, 2005, 35, 46; 2010, 37. The first of its type in the U.S., Fisk's slave narrative project was the impetus for the WPA's renowned Slave Narrative Project during the Great Depression. The Fisk interviews were published in 1945 in a 322-page paperback book designated Social Science Source Document No. 1. Egypt's papers are housed at Howard University.

[61] Berry, 2005: 35, 39; Reavis L. Mitchell Jr., "Van Vechten Art Gallery at Fisk University," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed June 23, 2023, https://tennessee-architecture.com/pearl-and-i-t-creswell-house-international-style-at-fisk-university/. The Fisk Gymnasium is NRHP-listed as part of the Fisk University Historic District.

Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, most notably in Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington in 1963.[62]

Taylor's introduction of the Social Gospel Movement in his classes was a refutation of the Agrarians. Initiated by a group of Vanderbilt professors, the Agrarian Movement gained fame with the 1930 publication of *I'll Take My Stand* which painted a picture of southern identity dependent on white male supremacy and in danger of overthrow by African Americans and women. The Agrarians asserted that the South should be built on agrarian lifestyle and should reject industrialization.[63]

Historian Erin T. Chandler noted: "Against this backdrop, Taylor concentrated on reforming society through advancing the rights of women, nonwhite men and those at the bottom of the American class system with hopes of making the world, not just the South, a 'beloved community.'"[64]

Arriving at Vanderbilt University's School of Religion in 1928, Taylor's optimism was reflected in a letter praising the school's "liberal spirit" as he began to incorporate the Social Gospel Movement philosophy into his courses. While embracing all the tenants of the Social Gospel Movement, Taylor focused on issues related to improving relations between white and Black people. In 1928, Taylor began coordinating visits between white students at Vanderbilt and Black students at Fisk.[65]

Taylor's students embraced and spread his teachings throughout the South. In 1932, two of his students, Howard Anderson "Buck" Kester (1904–1997) and Donald Lee "Don" West (1906–1992), along with James A. Dombrowski (1897–1983), helped establish the Highlander Folk School (NRHP, 2021) on a farm near Monteagle, Tennessee. Modeled after Danish folk schools in Denmark, Highlander became a key training ground for civil rights activists. Several Vanderbilt students and professors, including Don West and education department chair Dr. Joseph K. Hart (1876–1949), had recently visited the Danish folk schools. Taylor and Hart served on Highlander's advisory committee and were involved in contentious labor issues such as the coal miners' strikes from 1932–1933 at Wilder, Tennessee. Under Taylor's direction, Kester completed a study on the practices of Black ministers in Nashville and to advocate for social justice

[62] New World Encyclopedia contributors, "Social Gospel," *New World Encyclopedia*, 2023, accessed April 7, 2023, https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Social_Gospel.
[63] Erin T. Chandler, "Voices of Southern Radicalism: Prophetic Voices, Agrarian Consciousness, and the Fight for Human Welfare," Dissertation, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, 2015, 23.
[64] Chandler 2015, 26.
[65] Chandler 2015, 40, 43; Angela Jeannine Smith, "The Early Years of Highlander Folk School and Its Adversaries: 1932-1942," Thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, 2007, 91–93.

activism through churches. Hart helped West find a job at the Martha O'Bryan Settlement House near Fisk University.[66]

In 1934, Vanderbilt fired Hart, allegedly due to his unconventional teaching methods, after he refused to resign. Although Taylor's classes drew large enrollments, in November 1936 Vanderbilt fired Taylor, who later wrote that he believed his position "was abolished because of my friendship for colored folk and labor." John E. Edgerton (1879–1938), a powerful anti-union industrialist, and James Stahlman (1893–1976), conservative publisher of the *Nashville Banner*, were instrumental in getting Taylor fired. Both served on the Vanderbilt board of trustees, and both were adversaries of Highlander. Taylor was "known as a socialist and a bit of a radical," according to an FBI informant. "Taylor had long been associated with communists and liberal elements in the vicinity of Nashville and the southeastern states." Another FBI informant claimed that Taylor "was responsible for converting [Don] West to communism."[67]

After Vanderbilt fired Taylor in 1936, he was immediately hired by Fisk University. Within two months of Taylor's arrival, Fisk announced the formation of a community training school for religious workers in Talley-Brady Hall, which would open with an address by Taylor. He also joined several liberal organizations such as the Council of Southern Mountain Workers and the interracial Fellowship of Southern Churchmen (FSC) founded in 1934 at Monteagle. James Dombrowski conceived the FSC to bring together like-minded southerners many of whom were involved with Highlander. Karl Paul Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971), a prominent Protestant theologian and political philosopher, founded the FSC's Committee on Economic and Racial Justice.[68]

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[66] John M. Glen. *Highlander: No Ordinary School*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996, 1–26; Chandler 2015, 43, 46; Deron R. Boyles, "Joseph Kinmont Hart and Vanderbilt University: The Rise and Fall of a Department of Education, 1930–1934," *Educational Policy Studies Faculty Publications*, Georgia State University, 2003, 22–25. Letter from Alva W. Taylor to Rayford W. Logan, February 16, 1938; W.E.B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts, Amherst Libraries; James J. Lorence, *A Hard Journey: The Life of Don West*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana-Champaign, 2007, 22; Smith 2007, 76–77, 86, 92–94; Adams 1992, 65–67; Boyles 2003, 29. One of Dr. Hart's most vocal students at Vanderbilt was Ben West, editor of the *Vanderbilt Hustler* newspaper and future mayor of Nashville during the Civil Rights Movement. Don West also studied under Dr. Willard Uphaus (1890–1983), a Vanderbilt religion professor with leftist viewpoints and advocate for racial equality. Albert E. Barnett (1895–1961), a Methodist minister and religion professor at Scarritt, assisted in founding Highlander.

[67] Glen 1996, 1–26; Chandler 2015, 43, 46; FBI Files, Alva Taylor, 1950; FBI Files, Don West, 1956; Lorence 2007, 22; Smith 2007, 76–77, 86, 92–94; Adams 1992, 65–67; Boyles 2003, 29. In 1933–1934, Hart gave talks in Nashville and Knoxville about the need for radical educational reform by the TVA as part of its social welfare reform programs. In the fall of 1934 also dedicated a class at Vanderbilt to TVA. His firing made front page news in Nashville and Knoxville.

[68] Smith 2007, 76–77, 94; Chander 2015, 45, "Dr. Alva W. Taylor to Fill New Post on Fisk Faculty," *Nashville Banner*, September 20, 1936, 1; "Religious Training School to Open," *Nashville Banner*, November 17, 1936, 16; *Nashville Banner*, Nov.

The New Deal Impacts Nashville's African American Community

The onset of the Great Depression greatly affected Nashville's African American community as workers lost their jobs and Black-owned businesses closed in the downtown Cedar Street area, the heart of the African American business district. Despite these challenges, the Jefferson Street area, patronized by more affluent, middle-class Black residents, continued to grow. Beginning in the mid–1930s, New Deal agencies provided relief funding for the construction of public projects including new schools, public housing, recreational facilities, parks, infrastructure, and government buildings. Funding was provided primarily by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Public Works Administration (PWA). Downtown Nashville was heavily impacted by the PWA, which funded the demolition of urban townhouses surrounding the Capitol and the historic courthouse and city hall on the Public Square. At the Capitol, the PWA funded construction of the John Sevier State Office Building (NRHP, 2011) and Tennessee State Supreme Court Building (NRHP, 2014) and at the Public Square, a City Market, and the Davidson County Public Building and Courthouse (NRHP, 1987). The Public Square projects cost over $2.6 million. The PWA also provided $1.6 million for construction of a downtown U.S. Post Office (NRHP, 1984). These PWA Moderne-style buildings transformed Nashville's civic landscape.[69]

In 1935, the WPA provided $148,183 to Tennessee A&I for facilities including two residence buildings, 20 tennis courts, a field house, football stadium, baseball bleachers, track field, stable and tool house, lake equipment, and a stone fence at the campus entrance. Local Tennessee A&I supporters raised another $75,000 to support the WPA projects. Also, that year, the college announced dedication plans for six new buildings valued at more than $1 million. Buildings included a new library, residence hall for women, industrial arts building, science building, administration building, and health building. The dedication announcement stated that the structures "represent the completion of a building program which was

14, 1936, 10; Robert F. Martin, "Critique of Southern Society and Vision of a New Order: The Fellowship of Southern Churchmen, 1934-1957," *Church History*, Vol. 52 (March 1983), 66–70; Don Donahue, "Prophets of a New Social Order: Presbyterians and the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen, 1934-1963," *American Presbyterians*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (Fall 1996), 209-221; Elizabeth Gillespie McRae, "Fellowship of Southern Churchmen," *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, 2006, accessed April 11, 2023, https://www.ncpedia.org/fellowship-southern-churchmen. In 1939, the FSC established its headquarters at Black Mountain, North Carolina.

[69] Carroll Van West. *Nashville Architecture: A Guide to the City*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2015:xxx-xxvi, 9–10, 24, 30–32, 46–47. Mitchell 2011; "Fisk University Place," *Nashville Globe*, February 15, 1907, 5; Carroll Van West. *Tennessee's New Deal Landscapes: A Guidebook*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001, 14–17, 29–36, 55–56, 81–82. The City Market was later converted into the Nashville police department and jail.

formulated in 1927." The announcement did not indicate if federal funds were provided for the buildings, but they may have received funding from the Public Works Administration (PWA).[70]

In 1936, $336,000 in PWA funding supported construction of a new Art Deco-style building for Pearl High School (NRHP, 2002) to replace the existing overcrowded school. Designed by McKissack and McKissack, a prominent Black architectural firm in Nashville, to accommodate 1,500 students, the school was located near Fisk, Meharry, and Tennessee A&I. The $2 million school featured "music rooms, library, rooms for biology, chemistry, physics, food and clothing laboratories for girls and industrial arts for boys, gymnasium, auditorium, and other rooms needed to round out the well-appointed building." At the time, Pearl High School was considered one of the finest Black high school complexes in the South.[71]

In 1939, PWA funded construction of Cameron Junior High School (NRHP, 2005) which was completed in 1940. The school was designed by architect Henry C. Hibbs (1882–1949) who designed many buildings in Nashville including Fisk's Cravath Library and several academic buildings at Vanderbilt, Meharry, and Ward-Belmont women's college. In 1954, McKissack and McKissack designed a large addition for Cameron, when the school transitioned to serve as a senior high school.[72]

These federal New Deal projects reinforced the city's segregation practices and policies as facilities were specified for Black or white occupants. In 1935, as plans for Pearl High School were underway, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes (1874–1952) announced the construction of two segregated model public housing developments in north Nashville: Cheatham Place for white residents and Andrew Jackson Courts for Black residents. Funded by the PWA, the Andrew Jackson Courts public housing development included two, three, four, and five-room rowhouse apartments, housing nearly 400 families. Located adjacent to Fisk University, sociologist professor Dr. Charles Johnson referred to the 22-acre project as "a rare opportunity to introduce enlightened social planning and guidance" into the neighborhood; however, many residents opposed the public housing project since it required demolition of middle-class housing and

[70] West 2015, 84–85; West 2001: 103; "Tennessee State University Improvements," accessed April 10, 2023, https://livingnewdeal.org/us/tn/nashville-tn.
[71] Mary S. Hoffschwelle, "Public Education in Tennessee," in *Trials and Triumphs: Tennesseans' Search for Citizenship, Community, and Opportunity*, Middle Tennessee State University, 2014; "New Pearl High School for Negroes Nears Completion," *The Tennessean,* April 14, 1937, 9; West 2015, 76–77; West 2001, 102.
[72] West 2001, 100; "Cameron High School," accessed April 10, 2023, https://livingnewdeal.org/us/tn/nashville-tn/; James Hoobler, "Henry Clossen Hibbs," *Tennessee Encyclopedia,* 2018, accessed April 10, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/henry-clossen-hibbs/.

Black churches. Upon completion in May 1938, an announcement invited visitors to tour Andrew Jackson Courts, "Nashville's New Modern Housing Project for Negroes," noting "White People Also Invited."[73]

The WPA and PWA also funded the Fisk University Social Center, which Johnson founded in 1937 for students to complete fieldwork and community outreach with the "People's College." Located in the former Bertha Fensterwald Social Center, a Jewish social center that operated from 1909 to 1937, the Fisk center supported educational, health, social services, and recreational programs for working class Black residents. The WPA offered an "Adult School" at its downtown facility with free classes open to the public. The classes were taught by students from the People's College. The Fisk social center operated a daycare with a nursery, Boys' and Girls' clubs, and a playground with a gym. Fisk also partnered with the city's health department to offer weekly well-baby clinics and health demonstrations for Black mothers.[74]

Historic Context 1: Nashville's Early Civil Rights Movement, 1942–1957

In the decades after the end of the Civil War through the 1930s, African American leaders and white supporters focused on building a new Nashville that offered educational resources, political engagement, housing, business opportunities, and cultural activities for Black citizens. These successful developments emerged in the shadow of increasing Jim Crow segregation laws and threats of violence, resulting in a divided city where African Americans consistently received fewer public resources and were excluded from planning decisions about Nashville's future development.

The 1940s and 1950s brought new opportunities along with new challenges for Nashville's African American community. Local events placed Nashville on the national stage for race relations in different ways. These included hosting an interracial conference and a race relations institute—both intended to support civil rights; implementing the nation's first federally funded urban renewal project, which destroyed hundreds of Black-owned homes, businesses, and churches; and the bombing of Hattie Cotton Elementary School and the Jewish Community Center in resistance to school desegregation.

During these years, the leadership of educators, ministers, and civic leaders, both Black and white, positioned Nashville for a nonviolent, interracial civil rights student movement to emerge at the end of the 1950s. Events during these decades connected Nashville to a growing national network of Black and white civil rights advocates that would bring leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968) to the city in

[73] "Work to Start at Early Date, Cost $1,482,000, Payroll $411,000," *Nashville Banner*, June 21, 1935, 1; "Visit Andrew Jackson Courts," *The Tennessean*, May 15, 1938, 6; West 2001, 136–137; West 2015, 68–69.
[74] Charles Johnson Papers 2004, 4; West 2001, 101; *Nashville Banner*, November 4, 1938, 28; *Nashville Banner*, January 6, 1939, 20; Roseman 2010, 427–428; *The Tennessean*, April 6, 1938, 18.

support of local action and would elevate local leaders including James M. Lawson Jr. (b.1928), John Lewis (1940–2020), Diane Nash (b.1938), Rev. C.T. Vivian (1924–2020), Bernard Lafayette (b.1940), James Bevel (1936–2008), and others to become national leaders of the Civil Right Movement of the 1960s.

Matters of Vital Interest to the Nation

Between 1938 and 1946, the Southern Conference for Human Welfare (SCHW) played a pivotal role in the Civil Rights Movement. Formed at Birmingham in 1938, the interracial SCHW organization was comprised of white southern liberals and leftists including representatives from labor unions as well as Black activists. Although the SCHW's primary mission was to promote President Franklin D. Roosevelt's (1882–1945) New Deal policies in the South, the SCHW also embraced civil rights for African Americans through actions such as a campaign to abolish the poll tax for voting. Held over four days in November 1938, the first SCHW conference at Birmingham's Municipal Auditorium (NRHP, 2006) drew over 1,500 delegates, Black and white, from 13 states. According to historian John Egerton (1935–2013), to that point, there had "never been such a gathering as this in the South, such a diverse convocation of progressives from every stratum of the society."[75]

During the 1938 conference, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt gave a speech at an event opened to the public, which drew some 6,000 people, both Black and white. At first, they sat intermingled among one another. However, the Birmingham police commissioner, Eugene "Bull" Connor, forced the interracial audience to segregate, with Black and white people separated by the center aisle, to comply with a city ordinance that prevented Black and white people from sitting together in city-owned facilities. When Roosevelt initially sat in the "colored side," she was told she must move due to the ordinance. Instead, she defiantly sat in a chair at the front facing the entire audience. In 1940, the SCHW held its second interracial conference at Chattanooga's Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Auditorium (NRHP, 1980) with some 1,000 delegates. Roosevelt attended the conference and visited Highlander Folk School, where she lunched with James Dombrowski and Lucy Randolph Mason (1882–1959), a prominent labor activist and founding member of the SCHW.[76]

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[75] John Egerton, *Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation before the Civil Rights Movement in the South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994, 185–197; Graham Lay, "An Honorable Defeat: The Southern Conference for Human Welfare and the radical prehistory of the Civil Rights movement," *Medium* blog, September 17, 2018, accessed June 5, 2023, https://medium.com/@grahamlay/an-honorable-defeat-the-southern-conference-for-human-welfare-and-the-prehistory-of-the-civil-7004b41716be.

[76] Egerton 1994, 193–194; Smith 2007, 110; Lovett 2005, 7. The Municipal Auditorium is NRHP-listed as part of the Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District. The 1940 conference was attended by Charles S. Johnson from Fisk, William J. Hale,

In January 1942, the SCHW relocated its headquarters from Birmingham to Nashville and appointed James A. Dombrowski, a staff member at Highlander Folk School, as its executive director. Dombrowski sought to press the issue of race relations further than Highlander's labor agenda permitted at that time. Dombrowski left Monteagle, Tennessee, on January 3 and moved to the Noel Hotel (NRHP, 1982) in downtown Nashville. He had the SCHW papers and office equipment moved from Birmingham. Dr. Alva Taylor at Vanderbilt helped locate an inexpensive office in the downtown Presbyterian Building.[77]

In 1932, Dombrowski, a white Christian Socialist committed to social justice, had cofounded the Highlander Folk School, which became a training center for many civil rights activists. Joining Dombrowski in the SCHW's leadership was Clark Foreman (1902–1977), who was appointed chairman of the board of directors. Foreman's witness of a lynching of a Black man while he was a college student in Georgia initiated his commitment to racial justice including advocating for SCHW to fight for anti-lynching laws.[78]

A call for the Nashville SCHW conference, scheduled for April 19–21, 1942, at the War Memorial Auditorium (NRHP, 2017), was issued to residents in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. Located downtown, the auditorium was a public facility owned and operated by the state of Tennessee.[79]

Planned by Dombrowski, the conference began on Sunday evening as more than 500 Black and white delegates from 16 southern states sat together. However, unlike in Birmingham, local police allowed the interracial audience to sit intermingled in the state-owned facility. Conference events took place at the Noel Hotel, Hermitage Hotel, Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA), and War Memorial Auditorium. Approximately one-third of the attendees were Black. Conference sessions included discussion groups focused on industrial and agricultural production, youth civilian and military training, and citizenship and civil liberties. Despite the interracial nature of the conference, all discussion groups were facilitated by

president of Tennessee A&I, and Robert C. Weaver, a Black assistant secretary with the U.S. Department of the Interior. David E. Lilienthal with the TVA was a cosponsor.

[77] Adams 1992, 132–137. Dombrowski lived in the Noel Hotel from 1942–1943 and the downtown Memorial Apartment Hotel from 1944–1946. The Presbyterian Building was located 150–152 4th Avenue North; it is no longer extant.

[78] Lay 2018; Adams 1992, 132–137.

[79] "Southern Conference for Human Welfare Agenda, April 19–21, 1942," Lowcountry Digital Library, Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston.

white men. Charles S. Johnson of Fisk University was a conference sponsor. During the conference, Alva Taylor was elected secretary and treasurer of the board of directors.[80]

Mary McLeod Bethune (1875–1955), president of Bethune-Cookman College (NRHP, 1996) in Florida, addressed the opening session, which was open to the public and attended by an interracial audience of 2,500 people. Bethune, a well-known civil rights activist, was a close friend of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and served on President Roosevelt's Black advisory board. The following day, the First Lady presented to Bethune the SCHW's Thomas Jefferson Award, given annually to the "outstanding Southerner of the year."[81] In her acceptance remarks, Bethune referenced the battles underway in the world war and the battles for civil rights on the home front, noting:

> As the Negro people march into battle, they know that there are many hindrances to full participation in the country's battle for freedom; but march they must, and march they will, because they do understand that every hope they have for full democracy hinges upon the outcome of the war. The fate of the Negro goes hand in hand with the fate of America. We either go up or down as America goes. These are days for a united purpose to fight that victory that we must have, for without it we'll all sink together.[82]

On April 21, 1942, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt reported in her popular "My Day" column, appearing in more than 60 newspapers across the country, that she was in Nashville attending the biannual meeting of the SCHW. Roosevelt told her four million readers "I always feel that these conferences touch on matters that are of vital interest to the whole nation, and I wish that more people from many parts of the country could attend them."[83]

Roosevelt presented a second Thomas Jefferson Award to Dr. Frank Porter Graham (1886–1972), president of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As one of the founders of the SCHW, Graham served as the organization's first chairman and made the theme of his keynote address at the first conference in 1938

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[80] Southern Conference for Human Welfare Agenda, 1942; Adams 1992, 137–140; *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, April 21,1942, 13; *The Tennessean*, April 21, 1942, 3; *Nashville Banner*, April 18, 1942, 3; *Nashville Banner*, April 20, 1942, 1–2; Lovett 2005, 8, 13. While in town, Bethune delivered at talk at during the Sunday School hour at Tennessee A&I (Lovett 2005, 13; *Nashville Banner*, April 17, 1942, 15).

[81] Southern Conference for Human Welfare Agenda, 1942; "Worker Wednesday," The National World War II Museum, accessed June 5, 2023, http://www.nww2m.com/2012/04/worker-wednesday-8/; *Nashville Banner*, April 18, 1942, 3; *Nashville Banner*, April 20, 1942, 1–2.

[82] *Nashville Banner*, April 20, 1942, 1–2.

[83] Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day, April 21, 1942," *The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Digital Edition* (2017), accessed June 3, 2023, https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1942&_f=md056165.

"equal and exact justice for all." A highlight of the conference was a concert by Paul Robeson (1898–1976), the African American singer's first performance in the South. Roosevelt reported in her "My Day" column that the concert was "thrilling," especially as Robeson and the Fisk Jubilee Singers joined in singing "I Am An American."[84]

From its beginning, the SCHW experienced challenges from members' dueling affiliations with communism and socialism, which "exacerbated extant tensions, both between radicals and moderate liberals and between those Progressives who supported or repudiated the notion of purging Communists from the SCHW." The SCHW was also excoriated for its focus on race relations and desegregation with commentary accusing the organization of a "professional agitation effort to force by revolutionary means a solution to a Southern problem which will be solved by Southern white and Negro leaders in their own way…." Despite these tensions, Dombrowski stabilized the organization's funding, implemented new programs and activities including sponsoring a speaking tour of the South for Mary McLeod Bethune, formed a committee known as the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF) to support the study of economic problems in the South, organized voter registration campaigns, and advocated for elimination of the poll tax.[85]

In late 1942, Dombrowski launched a new SCHW publication, *The Southern Patriot*. With the onset of the United States' entry into World War II, Dombrowski moved SCHW beyond supporting New Deal policies by combining the country's fight against fascism with the need for equal economic opportunities. Dombrowski described the publication's intent to reach "the mass of unconverted Southerners who economically and patriotically have every reason to support a liberal war policy, but whose ideas are distorted by sentiment and prejudice."[86]

Over the next few years, *The Southern Patriot* reported on a variety of topics including reports from the SCHW's annual conference, discussions of America's future after the end of the world war—including a front-page article by Eleanor Roosevelt (bylined "Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt") titled "What Will Happen to Women War Workers in Post-War America"—and book reviews such as a glowing review of Dr. Charles S.

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[84]Southern Conference for Human Welfare Agenda, 1942; "The Carolina Story: A Virtual Museum of University History," accessed June 5, 2023, https://museum.unc.edu/exhibits/show/graham/graham-with-eleanor-roosevelt; Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day, April 22, 1942," *The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Digital Edition* (2017), accessed June 5, 2023, https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1942&_f=md056166.

[85] Graham Lay, "An Honorable Defeat: The Southern Conference for Human Welfare and the radical prehistory of the Civil Rights movement," *Medium*, 2018, accessed June 5, 2023, https://medium.com/@grahamlay/an-honorable-defeat-the-southern-conference-for-human-welfare-and-the-prehistory-of-the-civil-7004b41716be; "SCHW 'Tennessee Committee' To be Formed Here Saturday," *Nashville Banner*, May 17, 1946, 1; "Communist Daily Worker Comes to Southern Conference for Human Welfare Here" *Nashville Banner*, July 30, 1945, 1.

[86]Lay, "Honorable Defeat," 2018; *The Southern Patriot*, 1942–1946, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

Johnson's "Patterns of Negro Segregation," which declared that the book "goes into every phase of racial discrimination with a scientist's regard for facts."[87]

The Southern Patriot also printed readers' letters both for and against the SCHW's goals. In 1944, Hugh S. Morrison (1905–1978), professor in the Department of Art and Archaeology at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, wrote, "I wish to support now, your fight against the poll tax in the Southern States. I have felt strong approval of other aspects of the fight for an enlightened South that you are waging. More power to you! Fighting for an idea is the worthiest kind of fighting…You've got some people cheering on the sidelines a long way north in New Hampshire."[88]

A reader from Mississippi submitted a letter opposing the SCHW's positions. The reader was Senator Theodore Bilbo (1877–1947), a KKK member who had attended George Peabody and Vanderbilt. Addressing his letter to Dombrowski on U.S. Senate letterhead stationery, Bilbo began by telling Dombrowski he had received the publication "that your un-American, negro social equality, communistic, mongrel outfit is sending throughout the country…Of course your immediate aim is to secure the passage of the undemocratic, un-American, anti poll tax bill which is now pending [in Congress]….If I were called upon to name the Number One Enemy of the South today it would be the Southern Conference for Human Welfare." In 1944, the U.S. House Committee on Un-American Activities had determined the SCHW was a "Communist Front Organization."[89]

The Southern Patriot devoted a full page to print Bilbo's letter under the headline "A Letter We're Proud Of." Readers were invited to "Be a Number One Enemy of Bilboism: Join the Southern Conference for Human Welfare."[90]

Mary McLeod Bethune's speaking tour in nine southern cities in January 1946 set an ambitious goal of raising $100,000 for the SCHW. In preparation for the event, Dombrowski and Nashville attorneys Fyke Farmer (1901–1997) and Albert Williams appeared before Nashville's Board of Education to request use of the auditorium of Hume-Fogg High School (NRHP, 1974) "for the appearance of a Negro speaker before a

[87] "What Will Happen to Women War Workers in Post-War America," *The Southern Patriot,* Volume 2, Number 4, April 1944, 1.; "The Facts on Segregation," *The Southern Patriot,* Volume 1, Number 4, April 1943.
[88] "A New Englander Discovers the New South," *The Southern Patriot,* Volume 2, Number 2, February 1944, 5.
[89] "A Letter We're Proud Of," *The Southern Patriot,* Volume 4, Number 1, January 1946, 8; FBI Files for James Dombrowski, 1955.
[90] Ibid.

mixed group on some subject of her own choosing." The board denied the request, stating that a rule required use of the building only for school purposes.[91]

While in Nashville, Bethune was a guest in the home of civic leader Juno Frankie Pierce, who lived on Meharry Boulevard near Tennessee A&I, when the speaking tour launched at the downtown Spruce Street Baptist Church on January 17, 1946. Speaking on the topic "Making Democracy Live," Bethune called for racial equality in the South and asserted, "The ballot is the thing that will give you strength…at least 20,000 of Nashville's Negroes must vote in order to make the local political administrations take note."[92]

Although news accounts did not record the speaking tour's success in raising money for the SCHW, newspapers in cities where Bethune spoke reported on her address to large audiences. In Winston-Salem, North Carolina, some 1,200 citizens came to hear remarks by Dombrowski and others before Bethune took the stage to state "we want love and equal opportunities in all walks of life." In an address in Greensboro, North Carolina, Bethune called for abolition of the poll tax and fair employment practices and "denounced racial separation and discrimination."[93]

In November 1946, the SCHW convened its final conference in New Orleans before relocating its headquarters to that city the following year. By this time, the SCHW was regularly identified as a communist affiliated group by the *Nashville Banner*, which published statements that "the Southern Conference for Human Welfare has been branded by government agencies as a Communist front group" and "[Monroe] Schaff, a businessman and retired Army officer, warned of the dangers of such Red-front organizations as the Southern Conference for Human Welfare."[94]

Accusations of communist affiliation increased in 1943 when Margaret "Marge" Gelders Frantz (1922–2015) joined the SCHW staff as Dombrowski's assistant in Nashville. Frantz had joined the Young Communist League in 1935 and remained active in that party for the next 20 years. Frantz later recalled "Jim Dombrowski was never in the Party, but he was not at all hostile to the Party, and he knew where I stood." Frantz soon took over the responsibility of editing *The Southern Patriot* although she recalled "My

[91] "School Use Denied," *Chattanooga Daily Times*, January 13, 1946, 8; Lovett 2005, 15; *Nashville Banner*, January 12, 1946, 10; *The Tennessean*, January 19, 1946, 3; *The Tennessean*, January 8, 1946, 3. Bethune spoke in Nashville, Birmingham, Mobile, Jacksonville, Savannah, Atlanta, Greensboro, Durham, and Winston-Salem.
[92] "Racial Equality Said Big Need of South," *The Tennessean*, January 19, 1946, 3; *Nashville Banner*, January 12, 1946, 10. Alva Taylor also spoke at the event at Spruce Street Baptist Church.
[93] "Hundreds Hear Dr. Bethune," *Twin City Sentinel*, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, January 28, 1946, 8; "Speaker at Local College Urges Fair Wages for All," *The Greensboro Record*, Greensboro, North Carolina, January 25, 1946, 2.
[94] "SCHW 'Tennessee Committee' To be Formed Here Saturday," *Nashville Banner*, May 17, 1946, 1; "Group Named to Probe Red Activities Here," *Nashville Banner*, May 11, 1946, 1.

name was never on the masthead…not because I was a woman, it was because of my leftwing connections."[95]

In July 1945, the *Nashville Banner* printed a front-page story lambasting SCHW's communist connections. The story featured a picture of Frantz sitting at an interracial session at the Race Relations Institute at Fisk University with a circle drawn around her head. Frantz was characterized as "no introvert. Before the Pinkos changed their procedure she left plenty of tracks…she marched in parades, carried placards with brave slogans, wore aprons with messages and indulged in the cheap martyrdom of getting herself arrested."[96]

The SCHW's move to New Orleans ended Frantz's job and resulted in the organization's hiring of their first African American staff member when Edmonia W. Grant (1903–1992) of Nashville became the SCHW's associate administrator. A member of the SCHW since its founding in 1938, Grant had served on the staff of Charles S. Johnson at Fisk University where she worked as a field researcher investigating segregated schools in Louisiana.[97]

Over the next two years, funding dwindled and conflict between Dombrowski and Foreman weakened the SCHW. In 1948, Congress's House Un-American Activities Committee brought charges of anti-Americanism and support for communism against the SCHW allegedly due to the organization's neutral position on the Cold War. On November 1948, a few SCHW members gathered in Monticello, Virginia, where they passed a resolution retaining the Educational Fund and designating its sole purpose as ending of segregation in the South. The next day, the group voted to disband the SCHW.[98]

The *Nashville Banner* continued to reference SCHW as a Communist organization even after its demise. In May 1949, the newspaper ran a series of unverified articles by Paul Crouch (1903–1955), a former communist who became a paid federal government informer. Coinciding with his testimony to the House Un-American Activities Committee, Crouch penned the articles which maintained there were 60,000 active communists in the United States and more than 1,000 in the U.S. military.

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[95] "Voices of Feminism Oral History Project: Marge Frantz," Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, 2005. Margaret Frantz and her husband Laurent Frantz lived with Alva Taylor in Green Hills. The FBI regularly monitored their mail (FBI Files for Don West 1956, 248).
[96] "Communist Daily Worker Comes to Southern Conference for Human Welfare Here" *Nashville Banner*, July 30, 1945, 1.
[97] "Negro to Aid Dombrowski With SCHW," *Nashville Banner*, February 15, 1947, 1; Jonathan van Harmelen," "Edmonia White Grant: A Black Woman Standing Up for Japanese Americans," Discover Nikkei, 2021, accessed June 6, 2023, https://discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2021/4/20/edmonia-white-grant/. A graduate of Pearl High School, Grant held degrees from Howard University (1924), Fisk (1933), where she studied under Dr. Johnson, and Columbia (1958).
[98] Lay, "Honorable Defeat," 2018.

Under a headline announcing: "Negro Revolt Task Assigned to SCHW," Crouch declared "one of the most ambitious, and most dangerous, aspects of Communist plans concerns the South," because communists had "agreed that any Soviet war against the U.S. would need a Negro revolt in the South. If a Negro revolt could be achieved, any amount of attention would be merited. The Southern Conference for Human Welfare was the vehicle to carry out the idea of a Negro revolt from 1938 until recently when the job was assigned to the Southern Educational Conference."[99]

One of the Most Constructive Efforts: Fisk Race Relations Institute

In January 1942, the AMA established a Race Relations Department (RRD) at Fisk University and Charles S. Johnson as its director. Johnson was then in his fourteenth year at Fisk. The goal of the RRD was to establish ministries of reconciliation associated with stressed race relations in the U.S. The AMA's race relations program was based out of Fisk's Department of Social Sciences, led by Johnson. The AMA wished to identify and develop courses that taught constructive ways to deal with racially tense areas, develop educational and community resources to prevent racial clashes, and assist communities in addressing racial problems. The program would work with churches, labor organizations, and youth groups.[100]

The work of the Fisk RRD began formally in January 1943. The AMA program was funded in part by the Julius Rosenwald Fund, which had a southern office at George Peabody after 1920. In 1942, towards the end of the Rosenwald Fund's years of operation, director Edwin R. Embree directed its focus on race relations. Johnson sought to expand the educational outreach of the program beyond schoolchildren and college students to the public. He felt the public could benefit from the dissemination of literature, musical programs, poetry readings, and folk plays. Johnson imagined that lecturers could highlight their talent and influence local newspapers to correct false and harmful statements about Black people. He also felt that Black and white people could organize meetings on public affairs with a focus on other topics besides racial problems.[101]

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[99] "Negro Revolt Task Assigned to SCHW," *Nashville Banner*, May 14, 1949, 1.
[100] Katrina M. Sanders, *Intelligent and Effective Direction: The Fisk University Race Relations Institute and the Struggle for Civil Rights, 1944–1969,"* Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., New York, 2005, 15–16, 22; Katrina Marie Sanders, "Building Racial Tolerance Through Education: The Fisk University Race Relations Institute, 1944–1969," Dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1997.
[101] Sanders 2005, 16–20; Chianti Dorsey, "The Race Relations Department: A 1940s Interracial Think Tank, Amistad Research Center, April 12, 2016, accessed April 30, 2023, https://www.amdigital.co.uk/insights/blog/race-relations-department; "Race Relations in America: Surveys and Papers from The Amistad Research Center, 1943–1970, Amistad Research Center, 2023, accessed April 30, 2023, https://www.amdigital.co.uk/collection/race-relations-in-america.

One of the most successful programs developed by Fisk's RRD was the Race Relations Institute (RRI), created by Johnson in 1942. The RRI brought together Black and white educators, social scientists, elected officials, civic leaders, and college students to focus on building racial tolerance and understanding. Although initially planned as a one-time event in 1944, the immediate success of the RRI resulted in annual summer gatherings for the next twenty-five years.[102]

Sponsored by the AMA, the first summer gathering of the RRI was held in Fisk University's Bennett Hall, the social sciences building, from July 3–21, 1944. Among the 137 attendees were 81 white people, 55 African Americans, and one Japanese American (Figure 2). The agenda reflected Johnson's belief that societal change would result from presenting facts about African Americans and cultivating a dialogue between Black and white people. Agendas in the RRI's early years were filled with as many as 90 lectures over the three-week period with later programs averaging 40 lectures. Speakers represented universities from across the country, including Yale, Howard, Randolph-Macon, Columbia, Atlanta, Scarritt, Duke, Harvard, University of Chicago, and the University of North Carolina. Throughout the three-week RRI, news articles about the gathering were published across the state almost daily and in cities such as Detroit, Kansas City, New Orleans, Cincinnati, Little Rock, Atlanta, Boston, Charleston, and Washington D.C.[103]

An editorial in *The Tennessean* newspaper praised the Institute, saying it "represents one of the most constructive efforts the South has known for an intensive study of the problems in human relationships arising from racial differences."[104]

The first Institute set a template for future Institutes by featuring speakers on a variety of topics. Dr. Charles H. Thompson (1895–1980), editor of the *Journal of Negro Education* and dean of Howard University, told the audience that "Negro educational opportunities [are] a barometer of race relations both North and South" and bringing "Negro schools up to the standards of white schools, at the present rate of progress, will require 85 years and the expenditure of $150,000,000." Thompson also noted "Negro teachers, with 80 percent as much training as whites and 30 percent more children to teach, receive only 50 percent as much salary."[105]

William Townsend (1895–1957), International President of the Transport Service Employees of America, focused his remarks at the RRI on the need to join labor unions and urged the adoption of a "'bread and

[102] Sanders 2005, 22; Houston 2012; Dorsey 2016.
[103] Berry 2005, 85; Lee 2010, 42; Dorsey 2016.
[104] "Race Relations Institute," *The Tennessean*, July 6, 1944, 8.
[105] "Will Take 85 Years to Bring Negro Schools To Standard of White," *Jackson Sun*, Jackson, Tennessee, July 13, 1944, 9.

butter' philosophy for Negro and white workers relative to mutual participation in interracial labor unions. We should think with our minds and not with our skins."[106]

Figure 2. Photograph of the Race Relations Institute at Fisk University, circa 1945 (Source: Nashville Public Library, Special Collections).

Dr. Liston Pope (1909–1974), a social ethics professor at Yale University, called on churches to organize "pressure groups" to improve race relations. "The church must either act or remain silent," Pope told the RRI audience, adding that "nearly all social issues today are determined by organized pressure groups that know what they want and set out to get it."[107]

[106] "CFEP Member On Racial Relations Program At Fisk," *Kingsport Times*, Kingsport, Tennessee, July 12, 1944, 9.
[107] "Racial Peace Up To Church, Says Speaker," *Knoxville Journal*, July 9, 1944, 2.

At the conclusion of the RRI in a summary session, Johnson returned to his guiding belief that the problem of race relations was "founded upon invalid assumptions regarding the character of different groups." Looking toward the end of the world war, Johnson spoke optimistically of changes that could come from the "rapid flow from war to peacetime work [which] will create a basis for continued Negro gains. Much of the postwar economic fortunes will determine race relations."[108]

As an outgrowth of the RRI, in July 1944, the American Friends Service Committee held a summer work camp to build the Youth Center for Negroes in north Nashville with the aid of Black residents and white Quakers. *Time* magazine noted this was the first interracial work camp in the South. Spearheaded by Johnson and Fisk president Dr. Thomas Elsa Jones, a white Quaker, the eight-week camp consisted of 25 young men and women from 15 states and two foreign countries. The students lived and worked together as a demonstration of interracial cooperation.[109]

In May 1945, Fisk hosted the interracial conference of the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen. That summer, Fisk offered a summer school class on race relations and southern rural life in conjunction with the RRI. The course included workshops at the Fisk-Allen Rural White Center, a demonstration Rosenwald school in Whiteville, Tennessee. The Allen-White School (NRHP, 2005) was part of Fisk's Southern Rural Life Program, directed by Charles S. Johnson, where teachers interned.[110]

In 1946, Johnson was chosen as the first African American president of Fisk University with a formal inauguration held on November 7, 1947. The inauguration was an outdoor ceremony in front of Cravath Library with an audience of 2,500 people including some 200 delegates representing educational institutions and universities throughout the U.S. Johnson's inauguration was celebrated with a concert at the Ryman Auditorium and a four-day program of public seminars at Fisk that included large interracial audiences at Memorial Chapel. At the time, Fisk had a $4 million endowment, nearly 1,000 students, and nationally prominent programs in sociology and music.[111]

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[108] "Racial Issues Must Be Controlled Or Eliminated, Institute Is Told," *Chattanooga Daily Times*, Chattanooga, Tennessee, July 22, 1944, 7.
[109] *Nashville Banner*, July 29, 1944, 2; *The Black Dispatch* [Langston, Oklahoma], October 4, 1944, 5. The Youth Center for Negroes was located at 1621 18th Avenue North; it is no longer extant.
[110] *Nashville Banner*, May 31, 1945, 12; Martin 1983, 75; Carroll Van West, "Allen-White School, Hardeman County, Tennessee," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2005, Section 8:2, 5–6.
[111] *Nashville Banner*, November 4, 1947, 14; *Nashville Banner*, November 5, 1947, 21; *Nashville Banner*, November 6, 1947, 14; *Nashville Banner*, November 8, 1947, 5; *The Tennessean*, November 4, 1947, 7; *The Tennessean*, November 6, 1947, 34; *The Tennessean*, November 7, 1947, 1, 6, 20; *The Tennessean*, November 8, 1947, 2; *The Tennessean*, November 9, 1947, 24.

In 1948, Dr. Herman H. Long (1912–1976) became head of the RRI. Johnson and Long had previously coauthored the first comprehensive study on race restrictive housing covenants. The study was filed as part of a case before the U.S. Supreme Court contesting covenants. In May 1948, the court issued a unanimous decision ruling against the use of race restrictive housing agreements. That year, the RRI reached an enrollment of more than 500 attendees, representing nearly every state in the country. The RRI incorporated several formats including round table discussions, seminars, consultations, and lectures.[112]

During the following year, the RRI began to clearly state the goal of equal rights with the theme "Implementing Civil Rights." The three-week gathering drew special notice from a speech given by Nashville Vice Mayor Raphael Benjamin "Ben" West (1911–1974) which he titled "Progressive Government in a Southern City." West's speech at Fisk shocked Nashville's white residents as he criticized white Southerners for not treating everyone equally. West also worked with the Solid Block, a civic and political organization formed to further Black involvement in local politics, to spearhead a 1949 ordinance to change districts for municipal elections, helping create majority Black districts. West's stance on equal rights at the 1949 RRI foreshadowed a critical position he would later take as mayor of Nashville at the height of the student Civil Rights Movement.[113]

In 1949, Johnson invited Dr. August Nelson Fuson (1913–2006), a leading physicist, to join the faculty at Fisk. Fuson and his wife Marian Fuson (b.1920) were white Quaker pacifists and active in the Civil Rights Movement. August Fuson served as chair of the Nashville chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) and facilitated fundraising for movement organizations. Quakers had been meeting informally at Fisk since the 1920s. The Fusons continued the tradition by hosting weekly Quaker Friends meetings in their home on the Fisk University campus and helped increase membership for the Nashville chapter of the NAACP. The Quaker meetings hosted by the Fusons drew Black and white students from Fisk, Peabody, Scarritt, Vanderbilt, and Tennessee A&I. They were also in frequent contact with civil rights leaders across the U.S.[114]

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[112] "Covenants Hailed As Victory," *Ohio Daily-Express*, Dayton, Ohio, May 15, 1948, 1; Lee 2010, 43; "Fisk Institute of Race Relations To Be Held June 26 to July 16," *Ohio Daily-Express*, Dayton, Ohio, April 7, 1948, 3.
[113] Berry 2005, 90; Benjamin Houston, *The Nashville Way: Racial Etiquette and the Struggle for Social Justice in a Southern City.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012.
[114] Nelson Fuson Family Papers, Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, 2007, accessed December 4, 2023, https://archives.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/resources/5261nefu; Nelson and Marian Fuson Papers, Vanderbilt University Special Collections, accessed December 4, 2023, https://collections.library.vanderbilt.edu/repositories/2/resources/1721; Marian D. Fuson, Interview with Gail Newbold, Barbara Walker, and David Williamson, September 17, 2009, in "A Decade of Friendly Persuasion: Celebrating Ten Years of Peace Vigils in Kennett Square," 2012, Electronic Document, accessed December 4, 2023, https://www.helencorson.org/The%20Vigil%20at%20Kennett%20Square.html; Nashville Friends Meeting, "Brief History of

In July 1954, forty-two days after the U.S. Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision ruled segregated schools to be unconstitutional, the RRI convened with Johnson giving the opening address titled "The Future is Here." Thurgood Marshall (1908–1993), the NAACP's chief litigator for the Supreme Court case, was a key speaker. Addressing the RRI attendees at Fisk Memorial Chapel, Marshall lambasted southern leaders who were already planning to circumvent the ruling declaring "Few people are confused or misled by the rantings of some state governors who vow that they will never follow the law of the land." When the governors "attempt to put their speeches into official action, they will be flat up against the federal laws which not only give relief in the civil courts but also provide criminal penalties against those state officers who deprive persons of rights guaranteed by the constitution." Following Marshall's remarks, Ben West, who had been elected mayor in 1951, presented to the attorney the key to the city and honorary citizenship. Although Nashville's two white-owned newspapers, *The Tennessean* and *Nashville Banner*, reported that Marshall would address the RRI, neither paper reported on the mayor's presentation.[115]

In 1954 the RRI convened in the then brand-new Park-Johnson Hall; a modern two-story classroom building located on Phillips Street next to Fisk Memorial Chapel. The RRI convened in this building every summer until 1969.

Change Is Coming

In July 1942, three months after an interracial group sat together for the SCHW's conference, a violent incident on a bus bound for Nashville illustrated the city's entrenched—though often conflicted—attitudes toward segregation. Events began when Bayard Rustin (1912–1987), a Black activist and Quaker who had recently begun working for the FOR, boarded a bus in Louisville, Kentucky. Rustin, a devotee of pacifism and nonviolence as a path to social change and racial justice, joined the like-minded FOR and spoke to audiences in churches, colleges, and other venues, logging 20,000 miles in his first year. Rustin was regularly met with discrimination—the refusal of service in a restaurant or a haircut in a barber shop—but Nashville would be the scene of greatest discrimination and violence for Rustin.[116]

After boarding the bus in Louisville, Rustin took a seat in the whites-only section. Upon being told to move to the back, Rustin informed the driver "My friend, I believe that is an unjust law. If I were to sit in back, I would be condoning injustice." The bus stopped near Nashville, and policemen boarded, demanding that

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Nashville Friends Meeting," 2023, Electronic Document, accessed December 4, 2023, https://www.quakercloud.org/cloud/pages/brief-history-friends-nashville.

[115] Ibid, 92; "NAACP Lawyer Hits Action on Segregation," *Advocate*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, July 8, 1954, 22; "Publisher's Corner," *Minneapolis Spokesman*, July 16, 1954, 3

[116] "Before Montgomery: Bayard Rustin and the Right for Racial Justice During World War II," The National World War II Museum, accessed June 7, 2023, https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/bayard-rustin-racial-justice-world-war-ii.

Rustin move. As Rustin continued to repeat "I believe that I have a right to sit here," police officers dragged him outside and beat him. Drawing on his strong belief in nonviolence, Rustin told the officers "There is no need to beat me. I am not resisting you."[117]

Three white men then got off the bus and demanded that the police stop beating Rustin. One of the men informed Rustin "Don't worry. I'll be there [in Nashville] to see that you get justice." As Rustin arrived at the Davidson County Courthouse, the man was already there and called to him "I'm here to see that you get justice."[118]

Rustin was brought before Ben West, then the assistant district attorney, where he recounted the events from Louisville to Nashville. After hearing from Rustin and the police officers, West dismissed Rustin and dropped the charges. It is unknown if the white police officers faced any consequences. The arrest and police beating had a profound impact on Rustin, spurring him to fight for civil rights for decades to come.[119]

While the Nashville-based SCHW and Fisk University's RRI sought societal change on a national scale, local African American leaders also emerged in decades of the 1940s and 1950s to address local issues of inequity and to build a unified voice for the city's Black residents. Of particular importance to Nashville's early civil rights movement was the presence of African American attorneys including Coyness Loyal "C.L." Ennix Sr. (1901–1984) and Z. Alexander Looby (1899–1972). Ennix received his law degree from Howard University and gained admission to the Tennessee bar in 1932. Looby earned his law degree from Columbia University, followed by a Doctor of Juristic Science from New York University, and came to Nashville in 1926 to teach at Fisk University. In 1929, Looby was admitted to the Tennessee bar and became legal director of the Nashville chapter of the NAACP.[120]

In 1932, Ennix and Looby founded Nashville's Kent College of Law where they trained African American men like future civil rights activists Robert E. Lillard (1907–1991) and Mose Davies (1918–2008), to become attorneys. Ennix and Looby had their offices in the downtown Masonic Temple, an Egyptian Revival-style building completed in 1928 next to the Bijou Theater—two of Nashville's most prominent Black landmarks (Figure 3). Operating from the Masonic Building, Kent was Nashville's first law school

[117] Bayard Rustin, "Nonviolence versus Jim Crow," Electronic Document, July 31, 1942, accessed June 7, 2023, https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/nonviolence-versus-jim-crow/.
[118] Rustin 1942.
[119] Rustin 1942; George C. Wolfe, director, *Rustin*, Higher Ground Production Company, 2023, 106 minutes, https://www.netflix.com/title/81111528. Rustin would become a notable leader in Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, organizing the 1963 March on Washington and other events.
[120] Bobby L. Lovett and Lois McDougald, "Coyness L. Ennix Sr. (1901–1984)," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 84–86; Linda T. Wynn, "Z. Alexander Looby (1899–1972)," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 167–168.

for Black students since the old Central Tennessee College's department of law (1877–1911). Between 1933 and 1947, the school educated some 90 students.[121]

Figure 3. Photograph of the Bijou Theater (center) and Masonic Temple (left center) with the Tennessee State Capitol in the background, circa 1955 (Source: Metro Nashville Archives).

In July 1942, Harold Thomas (1905–1968), a graduate of Fisk University and a teacher at Pearl High School, won a lawsuit which charged the Nashville Board of Education with salary discrimination against Nashville's Black teachers. Thomas was paid $110 per month while white teachers with similar credentials were paid $135 per month. Looby and NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall represented Thomas in U.S. district court, then located in the Federal Office Building (NRHP, 1972). Citing the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, Judge Elmer D. Davies (1889–1957) noted that while the Board of Education paid differing salaries based on the types of schools, "The court is unable to reconcile the theories with the true facts in the case and finds it has been the consistent policy of the City Board of Education to pay colored teachers' salaries that have been considerably lower than the salaries of white teachers, although the eligibility qualifications and experience are the same, and the sole reason for this difference is because of

[121] Lovett and McDougald 2021, 84–86; Lovett and Wynn 1996, 40–41, 75–76; Lovett 2005, 3.

race and color the Negro teachers." In acceptance of the court's decision, the school board equalized salaries within a few months.[122]

In 1946, Ennix founded the "Solid Block," a civic and political organization, initially formed to register African Americans to vote and to demand abolition of the poll tax. The Solid Block soon expanded its aims to include electing Blacks to office and to advocate for a variety of issues including hiring African American men as police officers, integrating the public library, and appointing an African American to the local school board.[123]

The Solid Block's inaugural meeting at the Spruce Street Baptist Church on January 27, 1946, drew 350 attendees to hear keynote speaker A. Philip Randolph (1889–1979), national president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP). By the late 1940s, Randolph was a towering figure in civil rights activities. He devoted ten years to organizing the BSCP to give the all-Black Pullman porters collective bargaining rights and threatening a march on Washington in 1941 when President Roosevelt refused to issue an executive order banning discrimination in the defense industry.[124]

Clearly aware of the situation in the city, Randolph told the audience "75 percent of the Negro homes in Nashville are without running water [and] the infant and maternal Negro death rate in Nashville is materially higher than the death rate for whites." Randolph denounced segregation which "has done much to make the South the poorhouse of the nation and the number one economic problem in the country. As slavery was uneconomic and passed out of existence, so is segregation uneconomic and so will it pass out of existence."[125]

Ennix outlined the two primary aims of the Solid Block: "to get every city block of Negro citizens solid, as to being registered, poll tax paid, and voting," and "once agreed on an issue, Negroes would vote together in a solid block on that issue." For the next few years, the Solid Block engaged in a variety of social issues. In October 1947, a series of discussions focused on the question "should Negroes trade with businesses

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[122] "Davies Bans Discrimination in White, Negro Teachers' Pay," *Nashville Banner,* July 28, 1942, 1; "Pearl High Teacher Won Wage Suit Here in July," *The Tennessean,* April 1, 1943, 12; "Nashville Now and Then: A Marshall Plan for Equity," *Nashville Post,* April 11, 2008.
[123] Lovett et al, *Profiles of African Americans* 2021, 87.
[124] "Negroes Form Block Vote Plan; Randolph Asks Fight for FEPC," *Nashville Banner,* January 28, 1946, 8; "A. Philip Randolph," AFL-CIO, accessed June 8, 2023, https://aflcio.org/about/history/labor-history-people/asa-philip-randolph. Roosevelt relented and signed the order; Randolph cancelled the march. Roosevelt also established the Fair Employment Practices Commission to enforce the order.
[125] "Negroes Form Block Vote Plan; Randolph Asks Fight for FEPC," *Nashville Banner,* January 28, 1946, 8.

operated by Negroes regardless of difference in price and quality" with Z. Alexander Looby arguing the affirmative and Tennessee A&I history professor Merle R. Eppse (1893–1967) defending the negative.[126]

At a January 1948 meeting, Ennix told the audience, "The Solid Block is determined to continue to clamor for those things Negroes are entitled to." For this meeting, the focus was on demanding the addition of Black men to the city's police force. By April 1948, Nashville Mayor Thomas L. Cummings (1891–1968) announced his plan to hire "five or six Negro apprentice policemen" adding that the Black police officers would only patrol in Black neighborhoods.[127]

In 1949, Ennix announced the Solid Block's membership had reached 4,000. Over the following months, the organization waged a vigorous campaign to add a Black member to Nashville's Board of Education. Additionally, the group commissioned a study of Chattanooga's public library system, which had recently opened its whites-only library facilities to Black citizens, "with a view to recommending a similar arrangement in Nashville." That same year, the Nashville chapter of the NAACP petitioned the library board to open the main downtown Carnegie library to African Americans. In 1950, the Nashville Public Library director Dr. Robert Alvarez (1912–1997) announced that "although the library board has not changed its policy with reference to Negroes, it had agreed to allow them to use the main library for material they can't get at the Gay Street branch." In 1952, a new "Negro branch" was constructed next to Hadley Park, the only library facility available to African Americans, replacing the previous "Negro branch" located downtown.[128]

In 1946, the same year the Solid Block formed, a race riot in Columbia, located about 45 miles south of Nashville, brought NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall to the state and drew the SCHW and Nashville attorney Z. Alexander Looby into the aftermath. On February 25, 1946, James Stephenson, a young Black man who had recently completed service in the U.S. Navy, accompanied his mother, Gladys Stephenson, to a department store on the downtown square to pick up a radio that had been left for repair. Finding that she had been charged for repair, but the radio still did not work, Gladys Stephenson protested, and white store clerk William Fleming slapped her. James Stephenson and Fleming began to argue, and during the scuffle Stephenson pushed the clerk through a plate glass window. A crowd of white men gathered and began beating the Stephensons who were then arrested and charged with disturbing the peace. They pleaded guilty

[126] "Solid Block Begins Series," *The Tennessean,* October 26, 1947, 64.
[127] "Mayor Plans Negro Police for Nashville," *Nashville Banner,* April 15, 1948, 12; Tommie Morton-Young, *Black America Series: Nashville, Tennessee*, Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina, 2000, 77.
[128] "Solid Block Seeks Negro for City Education Board," *Nashville Banner,* June 30, 1949, 43; "NAACP Urges Library Be Opened to Negroes," *The Tennessean,* June 17, 1949, 44; "Limited Library Use Granted to Negroes," *The Tennessean,* April 15, 1950, 3; "A Boom in Reading," *The Tennessean,* June 8, 1952, 104. The Nashville Carnegie "Negro" Branch operated just west of downtown from 1919 to 1949, when it was demolished for redevelopment.

and paid a fifty-dollar fine, but James Stephenson was promptly rearrested when the clerk's father swore out an arrest warrant accusing him of assault with intent to commit murder, a felony. A Black businessman, Julius Blair, posted bond, and all parties in the dispute went their separate ways.[129]

However, that evening a white mob gathered around the courthouse. As Columbia's Black residents and military veterans learned of the situation many armed themselves. Four patrolmen soon arrived in the Black neighborhood of Mink Slide after hearing gun shots and were injured. By the next morning, local and state police officers descended on the neighborhood as rioting began, resulting in destroyed homes and businesses and the arrest of more than 100 Black residents. Policemen searched homes without warrants and took about 300 firearms. No white residents were arrested, and none of the arrested Black residents were granted bail or allowed legal counsel. On February 28, local policemen killed two Black prisoners in custody.[130]

Marshall was sent to Columbia to defend the 25 Black men charged with rioting and attempted murder. When Marshall became ill, Looby, joined by white Chattanooga attorney Maurice Weaver and Howard Law School professor Leon Ransom (1900–1954), defended the men in a trial that received national newspaper coverage. The trial was moved to nearby Lawrenceburg where the jury's acquittal of 23 of the defendants stunned those in the courtroom. During the trial, Looby implored the judge to instruct the prosecuting attorney "to show proper respect to Negro witnesses" and objected to Assistant District Attorney General Paul Bumpus's reference to a witness as a "n----r woman." Looby told the judge "If your Honor would put himself in the place of these people, but no, that's impossible. You cannot know how a Negro feels. If I were God Almighty, I would make all white people black for just five minutes." Recovered from his illness, Marshall represented the remaining two defendants in their appeal. One was found guilty by the all-white, male jury.[131]

As the attorneys headed back to Nashville, they were followed by several cars, including a police car. The attorneys were stopped, and Marshall was arrested for being drunk even though he had not been drinking. Although the officer told the other attorneys that Marshall would be returned to Columbia, they followed the police car as it turned down a dirt road, realizing that the police planned to lynch Marshall. The presence of

[129] Egerton 1994, 363–364; Carroll Van West, "Columbia Race Riot, 1946," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed December 4, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/columbia-race-riot-1946/; "America's first post-World War II race riot led to the near-lynching of Thurgood Marshall," *The Washington Post,* February 25, 2021.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Egerton 1994, 364–365; West, "Columbia Race Riot," 2018; "Bumpus Insults Witness," *Pittsburgh Courier,* Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 5, 1946, 1; "Pertinent Viewpoints," *St. Paul Recorder,* Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 18, 1946, 4; "America's first post-World War II race riot led to the near-lynching of Thurgood Marshall," *The Washington Post,* February 25, 2021.

Looby and the other attorneys deterred the police officers and the crowd of white men who were waiting on the roadside. Marshall was taken back to Columbia where a judge dismissed the charge of drunkenness. Upon hearing about the events, Black residents escorted Marshall, Looby, Weaver, and Ransom out of Columbia.[132]

The SCHW became involved when staffer Margaret Frantz and husband Laurent Brown Frantz traveled to Columbia to investigate the events. As representatives of the SCHW, the couple were planning to attend the founding meeting of the Civil Rights Congress in Detroit. The new organization merged three groups with ties to the Communist Party—the International Labor Defense, National Negro Congress, and National Federation for Constitutional Liberties. Laurent Frantz invited some residents from Columbia to join them in attending the conference.[133]

Margaret Frantz later recalled the "interesting experience" of flying out of Nashville's airport: "[Southern] airports didn't have separate waiting rooms for Blacks because there were so few Blacks who flew on airplanes, but there was a sign that made it clear it was a white waiting room. We had a joint delegation from Columbia, Black and white…so we just sat in the white waiting room, and they didn't want to kick us out because we had tickets. So they just came in and took down the sign."[134]

During this period, Nashville's two major white-owned newspapers were the *Nashville Banner*, a conservative evening paper, and *The Tennessean*, a progressive morning paper. As the new decade began in 1950, James G. Stahlman (1893–1976), owner of the conservative *Nashville Banner*, made the surprising decision to hire African American news reporter Robert Churchwell Sr. (1917–2009). Stahlman became the paper's city editor in 1912 and inherited the newspaper from his grandfather in 1930. He served as publisher until he sold the paper in 1972. Stahlman's decision was not based on integrating the newspaper staff but was intended to attract more Black subscribers.[135]

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[132] Ibid.
[133] "Voices of Feminism Oral History Project: Marge Frantz," Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, 2005. Laurent Frantz was from Knoxville.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Dixie Rose, "Robert Churchwell: Nashville's Pioneering Journalist," Nashville Public Library, December 8, 2018, accessed June 12, 2023, https://www.library.nashville.org/blog/2018/12/robert-churchwell-nashvilles-pioneering-journalist; Houston 2012; Robert Churchwell Jr., interview with Natalie Bell, September 19, 2023. According to Churchwell's son, Robert Churchwell Jr., his father was convinced to accept the job by Leonard Gunn, Nashville branch manager of Atlanta Life Insurance Company, and attorney Coyness Ennix. Churchwell did not want to accept the job but was convinced by his wife that he would "be opening doors for others."

Prior to Stahlman's decision, both local newspapers had hired African Americans to write columns with titles such as "Activities of the Colored People," written by Mattie Carr "M.C." Chavis (1870–1963), a schoolteacher, for the *Nashville Banner* and "Happenings With Colored People," written by W. H. Shackleford for *The Tennessean.* On February 6, 1950, the *Nashville Banner* announced, "Negro News Reporter Joins Banner." Robert Churchwell Sr., a World War II veteran and graduate of Fisk University, would become "a full time reporter of Negro activities."[136]

In July 1950, Churchwell reported on an event at the Hadley Park Community Center honoring Stahlman. Before an audience of 200 attendees, representatives from 15 African American organizations expressed appreciation to Stahlman "for his work on behalf of Nashville Negroes, both as newspaper publisher and former chairman of the Nashville Board of Park Commissioners." Juno Frankie Pierce, president of the State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, stood among the speakers. Pierce thanked Stahlman for his assistance in building a community house at Hadley Park and "for making it possible for good news about Negroes to appear in your daily paper." The program concluded with the presentation of a framed scroll to Stahlman which read "In appreciation for his untiring efforts in promoting the American way of life."[137]

Despite expressions of appreciation to Stahlman from African American leaders, Churchwell's experience as a *Nashville Banner* reporter proved difficult. He was not allowed to work in the newsroom, instead forced to work remotely from home for the first five years of his employment. Churchwell later recalled being excluded from the office and enduring racism that made him "feel terrible." Churchwell was restricted to reporting only on African American activities in the city. In his first few years as a reporter, Churchwell covered feature stories such as an "appreciation program" paying tribute to the Rev. W.R. Murray, pastor of Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Church; the annual meeting of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Tennessee Branch of the African Methodist Episcopal Church which adopted as its theme "Nashvillians' Contribution to Better Race Relations"; the departure of 30 African American Girl Scouts representing eight Nashville troops for a national summer camp in Indiana; plans by African American churches and organizations to distribute Christmas gift baskets to the needy; and Jubilee Day events at Fisk University.[138]

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[136] "Activities of Colored People," *Nashville Banner,* October 25, 1940, 16; "Happenings with Colored People," *The Tennessean,* September 1, 1940, 16; "Negro News Reporter Joins Banner," *Nashville Banner,* February 6, 1950, 6; Robert Churchwell: Nashville's Pioneering Journalist," Nashville Public Library, accessed June 12, 2023, https://www.library.nashville.org/blog/2018/12/robert-churchwell-nashvilles-pioneering-journalist; "Mrs. Chavis Rites Set Wednesday," *Nashville Banner,* October 7, 1963, 12. Chavis taught at Clark University, Alabama A&M, Kentucky State University, Bennett College, and Nashville's Walden University.

[137] "Banner Publisher Honored by Negro Leaders," *Nashville Banner,* July 11, 1950, 8.

[138] "Robert Churchwell: Nashville's Pioneering Journalist," Nashville Public Library, accessed June 12, 2023, https://www.library.nashville.org/blog/2018/12/robert-churchwell-nashvilles-pioneering-journalist; "Fifteen Avenue Baptist

In November 1950, Churchwell reported on a hard news event, a speech given by Z. Alexander Looby at a public meeting of the American Veterans Committee, which was placed on page 42 of the newspaper. Looby addressed the system of segregated schools, referencing several recent court cases, and declared, "since education itself has no color line, I don't believe a system built on segregation can be educational."[139]

In 1954, Churchwell was given a desk in the newsroom and assigned to write a column titled "Negro Citizens Activities" which he continued for the next 20 years. The columns highlighted achievements in business and organizations and featured the city's Black universities, NAACP activities, and women's civic leagues. The *Nashville Banner* received complaints from white readers who did not want to see photographs of Black people, but the newspaper continued the coverage.[140]

In the late 1940s, Ben West forged alliances with Nashville's African American community that would have a tremendous impact on civil rights in the coming years. A graduate of Cumberland Law School and Vanderbilt, West became the city's vice mayor in 1946, a state senator in 1948, and Nashville's mayor in 1951. While serving in the state senate in 1949, West, along with Tennessee state senator Clifford Allen (1912–1978), introduced nine bills targeting the poll tax, a payment required for the privilege of voting enacted in the late nineteenth century to prevent African Americans from voting. Among the poll tax bill proposals were exemptions for women and disabled veterans, a reduction of the tax to 50 cents, prohibition of tax levies by cities and counties, and removal of the poll tax as a requirement for voting in primary elections.[141]

Church Will Honor Rev. W.R. Murray," *Nashville Banner,* August 21, 1950, 6; "Missionary Society Nears End of Meet," *Nashville Banner,* August 23, 1950, 10; "30 Girl Scouts From Local Troops to Attend National Camp," *Nashville Banner,* August 2, 1950, 13; "Yule Donation Coordination Being Urged," *Nashville Banner,* December 6, 1950, 5; "Fisk Jubilee Singers Hailed At Program," *Nashville Banner,* October 7, 1950, 7.

[139] "Looby Raps Segregated Education," *Nashville Banner,* November 2, 1950, 42.

[140] "Robert Churchwell: Nashville's Pioneering Journalist," Nashville Public Library, accessed June 12, 2023, https://www.library.nashville.org/blog/2018/12/robert-churchwell-nashvilles-pioneering-journalist
Churchwell's son, Robert Churchwell Jr., noted that Churchwell wrote articles about the training workshops conducted by James Lawson in preparation for the sit-ins. According to Churchwell Jr., these articles were never published by the *Nashville Banner*; interview by Natalie Bell with Robert Churchwell Jr., September 19, 2023.

[141] Ansley T. Erickson, *Making the Unequal Metropolis: School Desegregation and Its Limits*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2016, 27; "State Weary of Paying for Voting; Browning Foes Hear Voice of People," *The Tennessean,* February 11, 1949, 1; Don H. Doyle, "Ben West," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed June 7, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/ben-west/. Davidson County ended the local poll tax in 1942. The poll tax was removed from the state's Constitution in 1953. The Twenty-Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution became law in 1966 and prohibited poll taxes on all federal elections. In 1966, the U.S. Supreme Court declared state poll taxes unconstitutional.

During his term as state senator, West guided passage of a charter reform bill which allowed citizens to elect city council representatives from districts, rather than the previous practice of elections at-large. As Nashville's African Americans primarily lived in segregated districts, this change significantly increased the impact of their votes, and in 1951, the first two African Americans were elected to Nashville's City Council since 1911—attorneys Z. Alexander Looby and Robert E. Lillard.[142]

Looby's opponent in the race was C.L. Ennix. Under the headline "Negroes Assured Council Voice," *The Tennessean* reported in April of 1951 "This year, for the first time in a quarter of a century, [actually 40 years] Nashville's 37,000 Negroes will be represented in city council by a member of their own race." The article described Looby as a "militant spokesman in the South for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People" and noted that "his success in the courts on behalf of national Negro objectives in the South has won him national recognition." Ennix was noted for his advocacy for "Negro representation in government and on regulatory boards."[143]

Robert E. Lillard, a fireman and 1935 graduate of the Kent College of Law, was also active in local politics. In 1932, Lillard formed the 15th Ward Colored Voters and Civic Club and convinced local politicians to pay the poll tax for more than 100 Black women and men in the ward. Lillard began practicing law in 1950 and the next year entered the City Council race against incumbent Charles Castleman, a white opponent who was supported by Mayor Thomas Cummings. Another African American man entered the race, splitting the vote with Lillard and forcing a runoff between Lillard and Castleman, with the former candidate prevailing. Lillard served on the City Council for the next 20 years, where he chaired committees on public safety, water and sewer, and public elections.[144]

While Lillard and Looby had political differences, they continued to work together with Ennix advocating for civil rights for Nashville's African American residents, culminating in their legal defense of students arrested in the sit-in movement of the 1960s.

Crusade for Freedom

Although a Nashville chapter of the NAACP formed in 1918 and received a charter in February of 1919, the chapter appears to have become dormant until the mid–1930s. In February 1936, NAACP's regional field secretary Daisy E. Lampkins (1883–1965) arrived from Pennsylvania to help reorganize a Nashville

[142] "Nashvillians Who Stood Behind the Sit-ins: The Attorneys," *Nashville Historical Newsletter*, accessed June 12, 2023, https://nashvillehistoricalnewsletter.com/tag/meharry-medical-college/.
[143] "Negroes Assured Council Voice," *The Tennessean,* April 22, 1951, 14.
[144] Linda Wynn, "Robert Emmitt Lillard (1907–1991)," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 165–166.

NAACP chapter. Lampkins planned a mass meeting on February 12 at Spruce Street Baptist Church. Among the issues discussed were a federal anti-lynching bill, equitable distribution of funds for public education, voting disenfranchisement, and equal pay. By February 11, more than 300 members enrolled in the chapter as more than 100 volunteers visited homes, churches, and civic organizations with a goal of recruiting 1,000 members.[145]

For more than a decade, the Nashville NAACP chapter received minimal news coverage for its activities. On March 24, 1940, Langston Hughes (1902–1967) spoke to an audience at the Public Lecture Hall of the Meharry Medical College as part of a multi-state speaking tour. Hughes was the famed African American poet, novelist, Broadway playwright, and major voice of the Harlem Renaissance, who would publish his autobiography, *The Big Sea,* in August of that year. Hughes's appearance was announced in Nashville's two white-owned newspapers, but neither outlet reported on his speech. In September 1940, the NAACP's national executive secretary Walter L. White (1893–1955) spoke at St. John's AME Church at a membership campaign kickoff meeting. White had joined the NAACP in 1918 as an investigator, reporting on lynchings across the country, advocating for a federal anti-lynching legislation, and eventually becoming the organization's chief officer in 1929. White's appearance received a one paragraph acknowledgement in *The Tennessean* following the event.[146]

As the NAACP neared the culmination of many years of work that would lead in May 1954 to the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *Brown* decision, which declared segregation of public schools to be unconstitutional, Nashville's NAACP chapter and others across the country became more outspoken about the rights denied to African Americans. In 1950, 350 new members joined the local chapter as part of a membership campaign to reach a membership of some 2,000.[147]

In June 1951, 13 members of the Nashville chapter traveled to Atlanta to join 750 delegates at the NAACP's annual convention. The meeting focused on developing a campaign "for breaking down Jim Crow laws at state and city levels." NAACP chief counsel Thurgood Marshall reported on sweeping plans to outlaw segregation in transportation, public schools, health care, housing, recreational facilities, and public gathering places. Despite Marshall's declaration of the goal of "destroying segregation," the *Nashville Banner* headlined its article on the conference "NAACP Outlines Drive to Soften 'Jim Crow' Laws."[148]

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[145] "NAACP Will Form Unit In Nashville," *The Tennessean,* February 5, 1936, 8; "Drive for Nashville Branch to End Wednesday with Mass Meeting," *The Tennessean,* February 11, 1936, 7.
[146] "NAACP Speaker," *Nashville Banner,* March 15, 1940, 12; "NAACP Executive Speaks," *The Tennessean,* September 1, 1940, 16.
[147] "NAACP Gains New Members," *Nashville Banner,* May 29, 1950, 14.
[148] "NAACP Outlines Drive to Soften 'Jim Crow' Laws," *Nashville Banner,* June 27, 1951, 32.

After earning his law degree, Avon N. Williams Jr. (1921–1994) practiced in Knoxville, filing Tennessee's first desegregation case in adjacent Anderson County in 1950 followed by a lawsuit to admit African Americans to the University of Tennessee Law School in 1951, one of seven cases he would argue before the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1953, Williams moved to Nashville and became a partner of Z. Alexander Looby's law firm where he had previously interned, focusing on civil rights cases.[149]

On October 11, 1953, the Nashville NAACP chapter held its first Freedom Rally at Mt. Olive Baptist Church as part of a nationwide "Crusade for Freedom." Organizers issued the hopeful statement that the crusade's goal was "to put itself [NAACP] out of business" in ten years after securing "complete equality for Negroes by that time." Keynote speaker Rev. Leonard L. Haynes, pastor of Clark Memorial Methodist Church, declared "The one weak spot in the armor of American democracy—racial segregation—is showing a serious defect before the world in the struggle with communism. America is telling the dark people of the world about democracy, but they know there are 15,000,000 American Negroes still living under the caste system. As long as there is one segment of [U.S.] citizens bound to second class citizenship, America itself is not free."[150]

A few weeks later, on December 6, 1953, Williams told attendees gathered for a Freedom Mass Rally at Clark Memorial Methodist Church they were "in a fight for scores of their rights denied them by laws and customs." This was one of two events hosted by the Nashville NAACP chapter that year as part of demonstrations by NAACP organizations held across the country to raise funds for school desegregation lawsuits, including one scheduled to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court the next day. Williams told those gathered at Clark, "a large group of white people in the South and other parts of the United States are determined to keep the Negro in his place and Negroes may have become too blinded by the dangerous tradition of conformity to realize we are in a fight."[151]

The December 1953 rally was preceded by a day-long freedom workshop held in Fisk University's Park-Johnson Hall, located two blocks from Clark Memorial Methodist Church. Ministers from African American churches throughout the city led workshop sessions along with representatives from city government agencies, and civic organizations. Session topics included citizenship, housing, NAACP membership, and job opportunities.[152]

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[149] Linda T. Wynn, "Avon Nyanza Williams, Jr. (1921–1994)," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 304–306; "Nashvillians Who Stood Behind the Sit-ins: The Attorneys," *Nashville Historical Newsletter,* accessed June 12, 2023, https://nashvillehistoricalnewsletter.com/tag/meharry-medical-college/

[150] "Segregation Called U.S. Weak Spot Before the World," *Nashville Banner,* October 12, 1953, 21; "NAACP Chapter 'Freedom Rally' Planned Oct. 11," *Nashville Banner,* October 2, 1953, 16.

[151] "Negroes Told They are In Fight for Rights," *Nashville Banner,* December 7, 1953, 3

[152] "Freedom Workshop Schedule Announced by NAACP Aide," *Nashville Banner,* December 3, 1953, 14.

In 1954, the Nashville chapter of the NAACP set up headquarters in the new J.W. Frierson Building, a modest two-story office building constructed by real estate developer John Wesley Frierson (1880–1965), whose offices also occupied the building. Located on Jefferson Street near Fisk University, Frierson stipulated in his will that the NAACP Nashville chapter was to have a permanent office in the building.[153]

Urban Renewal Targets Nashville's African American Community

By the onset of the 1940s, Nashville had become a segregated city, in part, due to Jim Crow laws and the housing mortgage practice known as redlining. In the late 1930s, the Homeowner's Loan Corporation created maps of cities across the country, including Nashville, to identify residential areas considered unfit for housing loans. Neighborhoods where African Americans lived, including those that were middle class, were automatically rated as "hazardous" and highlighted in red on the maps. The Federal Housing Authority adopted the maps and refused to guarantee housing loans in racially mixed or Black neighborhoods.[154]

All the predominately Black commercial district along the Jefferson Street corridor, by then the hub of African American business and entertainment activity, and its surrounding residential neighborhoods were redlined. In 1955, city and state transportation planners initiated plans for an interstate highway to run directly through the area, cutting it in half and eventually devastating the Black community's cultural center through demolition of hundreds of businesses and homes.[155]

In addition to segregation laws, redlining, and interstate construction, a fourth government plan—urban renewal—had a destructive impact on Nashville's African American community in the mid-twentieth century. The concept of urban renewal emerged after World War II as the federal government, states and cities across the country embraced plans to demolish entire sections of cities to make way for new developments. Urban renewal encompassed a complicated array of strategies to accomplish its aims including planning and capital grants, loans, and mortgage insurance. Actions included the use of eminent domain to enable the government to take and demolish private property to clear it for new public uses, such as roads, public housing, and recreational parks, as well as private developments. Many urban renewal projects focused on clearing not only slums but historic neighborhoods and commercial districts in favor of new, modern buildings. Urban renewal planners justified demolition of entire neighborhoods without

[153] Reavis L. Mitchell, "John Wesley Frierson (1880–1965)" in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 108–109. The Frierson Building continues to house offices for the Nashville NAACP Chapter.
[154] Isabella Jones, Paula Jimeno Lara, and Agustin Tornabene, "Housing Segregation in Nashville: Exploring the legacy of de jure segregation in Nashville," *StoryMaps*, November 12, 2020, accessed June 14, 2023, https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/050e09fabed0474b9687525fbc4e4c9a. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 prohibited redlining.
[155] Jones et al 2020.

acknowledging that these areas were often home to African Americans who did not have the political clout to combat the plans.

Nashville was among the first cities in the country to embrace urban renewal. With Congress's passage of the Housing Act in 1949, local governments had the power of eminent domain, which the Nashville Housing Authority (NHA) and State of Tennessee used to implement the Capitol Hill Redevelopment Project, the nation's first federally funded urban renewal project. This project leveled all buildings on the northern semi-circular swath of land surrounding the Tennessee State Capitol. A portion of the area in the northern side was once a red-light district known as "Hell's Half-Acre" (Figure 4). The Tennessee Legislature had determined in 1945 the area was a slum and blighted under state law, in anticipation of urban renewal redevelopment projects.[156]

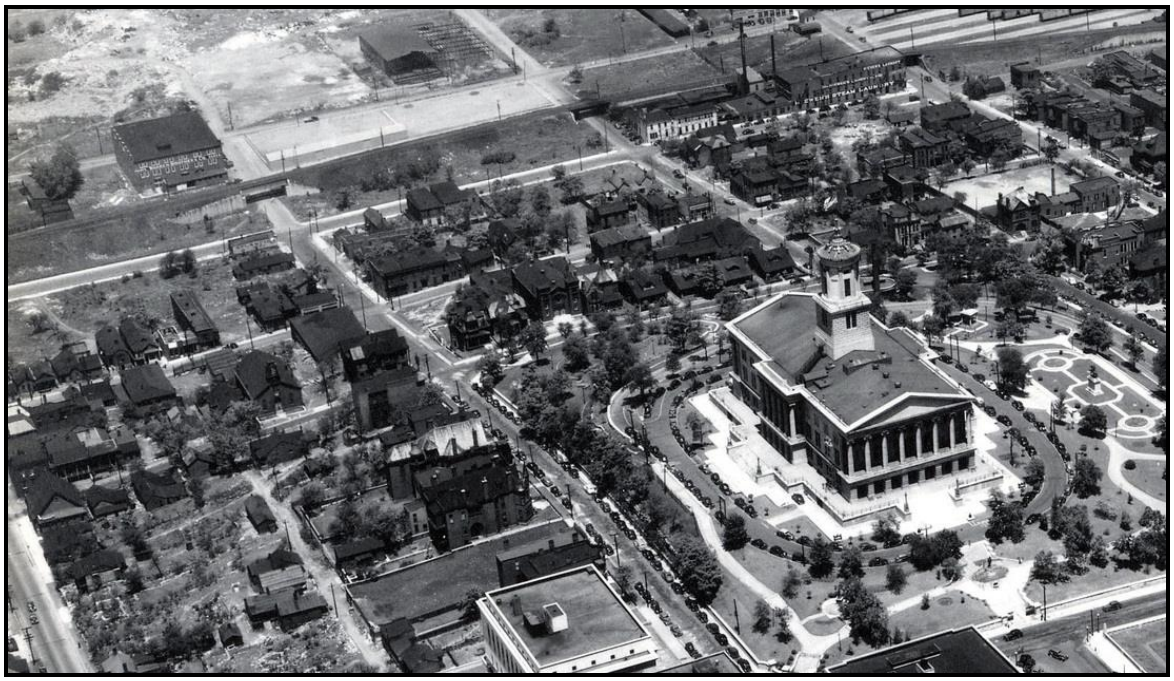

Figure 4. Aerial photograph of Hell's Half Acre surrounding the north side of the Capitol, circa 1950 (Source: Metro Nashville Archives).

[156] Kreyling, Christine. "Nashville Past and Present," Urban Design, Policy Brief, Nashville Civic Design Center, n.d.: 18; Bill Carey, "A City Swept Clean: How urban renewal, for better or worse, created the city we know today," *Nashville Scene*, September 6, 2001.

The redlined area surrounding the Tennessee State Capitol was also home to hundreds of African Americans who lived in wood-frame shacks with outdoor privies. The city had not installed plumbing or paved the streets, and a lack of drainage resulted in flooding during heavy rains. Despite the city government's neglect of the area for decades, city and state officials considered the area's slum conditions to be the fault of the residents.[157]

After learning of the availability of federal funds in 1949, Nashville planning director Charles Hawkins and representatives from Governor Gordon Browning's administration quickly developed plans to raze all buildings and structures, both residential and commercial, from a 97-acre swath of land along the northern and western sides of the State Capitol, along with all commercial buildings on the east side. The city hired Clarke & Rapuano, a planning and landscape architecture firm based in New York, to design the Capitol Hill Redevelopment Project. Clark & Rapuano was formed in 1934 by Gilmore D. Clarke (1892–1982), a professor of architecture at Cornell University, and Michael Rapuano (1904–1975), the dean of the College of Architecture at Cornell. Working closely with the prominent urban planner Robert Moses (1888–1981), the firm designed urban parks, housing projects, and expressways throughout New York City.[158]

The Clarke & Rapuano design called for state-owned green space and parking on the northern side and a four-lane boulevard (later named James Robertson Parkway) around the base of the hill with space for new office, residential, and commercial buildings. Much of the land was reserved for new office buildings and parking areas for state employees. After neglecting the area when it was home to hundreds of African Americans, the city's plans for redevelopment included storm and sanitary sewers, street paving, sidewalks, curbs, streetlights, traffic control signal, "and all city utilities in the entire development area."[159]

Left out of the Capitol Hill Redevelopment Project's plan were provisions for rehousing residents whose homes were to be demolished. Realizing the outcome of the plan, newly elected City Council members Z. Alexander Looby and Robert Lillard, joined by three other council members, voted against the project while 15 members voted in favor at an April 1952 Council meeting. During the five-hour session, Looby proposed two amendments to the resolution—to delay the final vote until May 7 and to require that the NHA give special preference to displaced property owners so they could repurchase their land. City planners responded that state and federal law forbade giving preference to prospective purchasers, but the law also required the NHA to provide for relocation to public housing projects or other housing for the area's 400

[157] Carey, 2001; Ansley T. Erickson, *Making the Unequal Metropolis: School Desegregation and Its Limits.* University of Chicago Press 2016, 39.
[158]Carey 2001; Erickson 2016, 40; "Clarke & Rapuano, 1939–1993," The Cultural Landscape Foundation, 2023, accessed December 1, 2023, https://www.tclf.org/pioneer/clarke-rapuano; Clarke & Rapuano Landscape Architecture Collection, New-York Historical Society, accessed December 15, 2023, https://findingaids.library.nyu.edu/nyhs/pr080_clarke_rapuano/.
[159] Carey 2001; Erickson 2016, 40; "City Seeks Tracts for Capitol Hill Project," *The Tennessean,* March 11, 1956, 7.

residents. As the proposal to delay the vote failed, Looby told the Council "I want to leave this thought with you: You have just sold the Negroes of Nashville down the river, and they will not forget it."[160]

The redevelopment project ultimately demolished more than 400 homes and displaced more than 1,500 people (Figure 5). Nearly 94 percent of the displaced were Black. Legal challenges in local courts mounted by St. John AME Church failed. Even as the redevelopment project's use of eminent domain was legally required to be for the "public good," a billboard announcing the project in 1949 listed as a benefit of the project "New Building Sites for Private Enterprises." By 1969, the NHA had relocated only 20 percent of the displaced families into public housing and 9 percent into private housing. Others were left to find their own housing with many relocating to new residential subdivisions in north Nashville such as Gold Coast, Haynes Heights, and College Hill.[161]

One of the first downtown Black facilities demolished through urban renewal in Nashville was the Fisk University Social Center (razed July 1950). Many of the area's roughly 150 businesses were demolished, including the Masonic Temple in 1955 and the Bijou Theater in 1957. The following historic Black churches were also demolished through urban renewal: First Baptist Church, St. Luke CME Church, and St. John's AME Church. Most of the churches built new facilities in north Nashville, and many residents moved to new subdivisions in the northwest suburban area of Bordeaux or older Black neighborhoods in east and south Nashville. Although Alfred Starr and H.G. Hill Jr., owners of the Bijou Theater and a H.G. Hill grocery store, respectively, fought the taking of their property by eminent domain all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, in 1957, the justices ruled that the NHA had the authority to take their businesses. Demolitions continued through 1957 and in 1959, the NHA began selling lots lining James Robertson Parkway for redevelopment (Figure 6).[162]

For reasons unknown, urban planners intentionally decided not to demolish the Morris Memorial Building (NRHP, 1985), an important African American landmark at the intersection of Charlotte Avenue and 4th Avenue North near the edge of the Capitol Hill redevelopment area. Completed for the National Baptist Convention in 1925, the five-story Classical Revival-style office building housed some of the city's most renowned Black businesses, including the studios of the McKissack and McKissack architectural firm that had designed the building. The city constructed the new Municipal Auditorium adjacent to the Morris

[160] "City Paves Way for Project: Capitol Hill Plan Approved," *Nashville Banner*, April 30, 1952, 1.
[161] Carey 2001; Erickson 2016, 38–41; "Capitol Hill Redevelopment Project," 1949 billboard, Tennessee State Library and Archives; Jones et al 2020; Morton-Young 2000, 99.
[162] *The Tennessean*, July 2, 1950, 12; Carey 2001.

Memorial Building. In the 1960s, the auditorium hosted public gatherings and athletic events important to Nashville's Civil Rights Movement.[163]

Figure 5. Photographs of the Capitol Hill urban renewal project along Charlotte Avenue, 1956. The right image shows the St. John's AME Church (right), demolished in 1957, and First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill (lower left). Scores of dwellings were demolished for state employee parking lots and James Robertson Parkway (Source: Tennessee State Library and Archives).

Urban renewal often led to further residential segregation as displaced Black residents relocated to other urban neighborhoods as well as suburban areas. The shifting racial dynamics deepened racial divisions, particularly in white neighborhoods that saw an influx of Blacks. In north Nashville, displaced Black residents constructed new churches, homes, and businesses or purchased older buildings from white owners who relocated to the predominantly white suburbs, a phenomenon commonly known as "white flight." Between 1952 and 1961, several Black congregations relocated from the downtown urban renewal area to north Nashville, including the Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Church, Howard United Church of Christ, St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Spruce Street Baptist Church, and St. John AME Church. Many of these Black congregations would become active in the Civil Rights Movement.

[163] West 2015, 11–13.

Figure 6. Aerial photograph showing the Capitol Hill urban renewal area looking south towards the Capitol (center). Lot No. 14 is shown in Figure 5 (Source: *The Tennessean*, August 31, 1958, 3).

The Nashville Plan: School Desegregation

In the early 1950s, several of Nashville's white universities and colleges quietly began to desegregate. In the fall of 1952, Scarritt admitted two Black students, DeLaris Johnson-Risher (b.1930) and Lelia Robinson Dabbs (1928–2002). Like white students, they were allowed to take classes at adjoining Peabody and Vanderbilt. They both graduated in 1954. In September 1953, Vanderbilt accepted Rev. Joseph A. Johnson Jr. (1914–1979), a 39-year-old Black pastor at Nashville's Capers Memorial CME Church, as a "special student" into its School of Religion. Johnson already held degrees from Texas College and Iliff School of Theology in Denver, but he wished to pursue a PhD in theology. Johnson graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity in 1954 and a PhD in 1958, becoming the first African American to graduate from Vanderbilt. In May 1955, Tommie Morton-Young (d.2022) became the first Black student to graduate from Peabody.[164]

[164] Kathy L. Gilbert, "She 'dared to stand up for women of color,'" *United Methodist News*, April 25, 2022, accessed December 15, 2023, https://www.umnews.org/en/news/she-dared-to-stand-up-for-women-of-color; Jeanan Davis, "Scarritt Bennett Honors

Nashville's public secondary schools; however, were still segregated. On Monday, May 17, 1954, newsroom wires across the country began moving the long-awaited U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education,* a case led by the NAACP and argued before the court by Thurgood Marshall. The court had combined cases from Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware which used the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause to challenge the court's "separate but equal" ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). Chief Justice Earl Warren (1891–1974) had secured unanimous agreement from the justices.[165] Although delaying the question of a timetable for desegregation, Chief Justice Earl Warren clearly articulated the decision:

> We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though physical facilities and other tangible factors may be equal, deprive children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does….To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way likely never to be undone….The impact is greater when it has the sanction of law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn.[166]

Nashville's schools were not only segregated, but they also provided inferior accommodations for Black students. Four days before the *Brown* decision, Wharton School Parent-Teacher Association representative Minnie Crouch addressed the Nashville Board of Education about substandard conditions at Wharton School, which served 400 Black students in the northern part of the city. Crouch told the board the school was "outmoded" noting the lack of an auditorium, insufficient restrooms, and poor lighting. Board member C.L. Ennix said the school "is not fit for a hog to go into." Board members responded that although a parcel had been purchased for a new school, no funds were available for construction of a building.[167]

The *Nashville Banner* was the first to report the Supreme Court's decision in its May 17, 1954, evening edition. Under a large headline declaring "Segregation Out!" the newspaper predicted "little would change"

Black Women Who Integrated the All-White College 70 Years Ago," *Tennessee Tribune*, March 24, 2022; Lovett 2005, 130, 346; "Bishop Joseph Johnson History Project," BJJHP, 2023, accessed December 15, 2023, https://bishopjosephjohnson.org/about/about-bishop-johnson/. Vanderbilt desegregated its law school in 1958 and its undergraduate classes in 1961.

[165] Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: The Press, The Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation,"* Vintage Books, Division of Random House, Inc., 2006.

[166] Ibid.

[167] "City School Budget Sent to Council," *Nashville Banner,* May 14, 1954, 8; "School Board Names Pay Publicity Group," *The Tennessean,* May 14, 1954, 18.

in Nashville. While Tennessee Governor Frank Clement (1920–1969) insisted "This is no time for snap judgment [or] quick decision…formulation of specific decrees will be delayed until further arguments have been heard," Nashville's NAACP chapter did not wait. Within hours of the *Brown* decision, Z. Alexander Looby, chair of the state NAACP's legal redress committee, introduced a non-segregation resolution to City Council. Two weeks later, the Nashville NAACP chapter formed a committee to develop a "plan of positive action to seek immediate desegregation of Nashville schools." Rev. Leonard L. Haynes of Clark Memorial Methodist Church was named chair of the committee which included several Fisk University faculty members.[168]

In June 1954, the Nashville NAACP chapter began circulating a petition among parents of schoolchildren asking, "school authorities to take immediate steps to operate schools in accordance with the recent Supreme Court ruling." The petition was prepared by the NAACP's headquarters in New York. In addition to gathering signatures, Thurgood Marshall advised local branches to identify parents "who will be willing to have their children act as plaintiffs in the event court action becomes necessary." At Father Ryan, the change was immediate as Bishop William L. Adrian (1883–1972) ordered Nashville's Catholic schools to integrate in June 1954. In September 1954, officials at the Father Ryan High School, an all-male school, announced the enrollment of 18 Black students, including King Hollands (1942–2023), and the Cathedral High School, and all-female school, admitted 12 Black girls. Another 20 Black students of both genders enrolled at Cathedral's elementary schools. Two girls' schools operated by the Dominican Sisters also desegregated.[169]

In anticipation of the Supreme Court ruling, a group of southern newspaper editors and publishers met three times in Nashville to organize the Southern Education Reporting Service (SERS). The SERS established a Nashville office in July 1954 and the board of directors included Dr. Charles S. Johnson, president of Fisk, and Henry H. Hill (1894–1987), president of Peabody. In September 1954, SERS published the first issue of *Southern School News,* a monthly newspaper that tracked the progress of desegregation in the 17 affected states and the District of Columbia. Reporters were recruited from each state. James Elliott (1924–2012), a reporter for the *Nashville Banner,* and Wallace Westfeldt (1923–2015) from *The Tennessean* covered events

[168] Erickson 2016, 70; "Clement Asks Calm Attitude By Citizens," *Nashville Banner,* May 17, 1954, 1; "NAACP to Ask School Boards for Desegregation," *The Tennessean,* May 24, 1954, 2; "Negro Leaders Agree to Seek School Rights Now," *Nashville Banner,* May 26, 1954, 2; Egerton 2009.
[169] Freedman 2015; "Catholics Enroll Negro Students," *The Tennessean,* September 5, 1954, 3; King Hollands, interview with Natalie Bell, July 11, 2023; "NAACP to Circulate Petition Asking School Desegregation," *Nashville Banner,* June 23, 1954, 32; Houston 2012, 49-50.

in Tennessee. Over the next decade, the newspaper reported on southern states fighting desegregation in state legislatures and the courts and with riots and assaults on African Americans by white people. [170]

The publication's first article on Tennessee events included a report on the June 10, 1954, Nashville school board meeting. Parents of three white children petitioned the board—the fathers were mathematics professors at Fisk University including Dr. Lee Lorch (1915–2014), head of the department and vice president of the Tennessee NAACP chapter—to admit their children to the Black elementary school. School superintendent William Arthur Bass denied the request, stating that the city school system would not change until there was a statewide change. As a result of his action, Lorch was brought before the Congressional House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1955 and accused of being a Communist, resulting in his dismissal from Fisk University over the objections of many of his colleagues.[171]

On May 31, 1955, the U.S. Supreme Court issued what became known as the "*Brown II"* decision, which determined that the original *Brown* decision, which became known as "*Brown I,"* issued the previous year shall be implemented "with all deliberate speed" but the court refused to establish a deadline. The *Brown II* decision also established rules about which schools needed to desegregate and spelled out how the federal government would ensure public schools obeyed the court order through rulings carried out by U.S. district courts.[172]

The *Brown II* decision prompted Z. Alexander Looby and Avon Williams to begin recruiting Black parents who were willing to attempt their children's enrollment in white schools. In the fall of 1955, Nashville's Board of Education rejected twenty-two students' applications to four schools. Based on rules established in the *Brown II* decision, Looby filed a lawsuit in U.S. district court at the Estes Kefauver Federal Building (NRHP, 2016) against the Nashville Board of Education, asking the three-judge panel to declare Tennessee's law requiring segregated public schools invalid. One of the children was 14-year-old Robert W. Kelley, who had been turned away at East High School (NRHP, 2002). His father, barber A.Z. Kelley, agreed to be listed as the lead plaintiff so the case was referred to as *Kelley v. Board of Education of*

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[170] "Reporting Service to Tell School Story," *Southern School News,* Southern Education Reporting Service, September 3, 1954, 1, 3.
[171] "Tennessee," *Southern School News,* Southern Education Reporting Service, September 3, 1954, 14; "An Appreciation to Lee Lorch," Mathematics Department, State University of New York at Buffalo, accessed June 15, 2023, http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/special/lorch-lee.html; Lovett 2005, 37; John Egerton, "Walking into History: The Beginning of School Desegregation in Nashville," *Southern Spaces*, 2009, accessed June 19, 2023, https://southernspaces.org/2009/walking-history-beginning-school-desegregation-nashville/.
[172] Lovett 2005, 41; Egerton 2009.

Nashville. Lawyers for the Nashville school board pled for more time. Judge William E. Miller granted the school board six months to draw up a plan that would comply with *Brown II*.[173]

In 1956, Tennessee State Education Commissioner Quill Cope (1912–1968) reported that none of the state's school systems planned to desegregate when schools reopened that fall. However, Clinton in east Tennessee defied Cope and desegregated, joining Oak Ridge as the only desegregated public schools in Tennessee. In Nashville, the school board adopted a seven-point guide for "eventual desegregation." The guide directed consideration of the timing of desegregation of schools, potential changes in school boundaries and the number of students in each classroom, the effect of desegregation on employment of principals and teachers, potential changes to curriculum and athletic policies, and preparation of an orientation program for principals to handle desegregation. During this time the Davidson County school board voted to appoint a biracial committee to draft plans for the county's public schools.[174]

After more than a year, in October 1956, the case brought by Looby and Williams became part of a Tennessee Supreme Court ruling that the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown I* in 1954 and *Brown II* in 1955 nullified Tennessee's school segregation laws. The court ordered Nashville to submit a desegregation plan by January 1957. The school board's resulting "grade-per-year" plan called for desegregating only the first grade in the fall of 1957, adopting a similar approach as other cities. The board approved the plan in an eight-to-one vote. C.L. Ennix, the sole African American serving on the school board, stated in his vote against the plan, "The group is not large enough. I don't believe there will be any trouble in Nashville. I believe all-out integration will work here."[175]

In June 1957, the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers (NCCPT) held its 31st annual convention at Fisk University. Mayme Williams, NCCPT president and a high school teacher in Miami, Florida, told reporter Robert Churchwell of the *Nashville Banner* that the city's plan was "just fine," but added that NCCPT was formed because of segregation and "is one of the rare organizations in the country working for its own dissolution."[176]

Convention keynote speaker Rev. Kelly Miller Smith Sr. (1920–1984), pastor of First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill, spoke on the theme "Building Together in Human Relations," noting the importance of organizations to the effort. Of particular importance according to Smith was the role of the NAACP. Smith

[173] "Tennessee," *Southern School News,* Southern Education Reporting Service, October 1955, 12; Lovett 2005, 42; Egerton 2009.
[174] "No Tennessee Systems are Planning to Desegregate This Fall," *Southern School News,* Southern Education Reporting Service, September 1955, 13; Lovett 2005, 59–61.
[175] "Tennessee," *Southern School News,* Southern Education Reporting Service, November 1956, 6.
[176] "Colored PTA Congress Says Desegregation Plan 'Fine,'" *Nashville Banner,* June 17, 1957, 1.

denied the "extremist tag" and declared "We of the NAACP know that the hard-core Southern states will not desegregate by tomorrow morning at sun-up. We are not unreasonable. The procedures we use are always time-consuming. We always work within the framework of our Constitution. Naturally, we want freedom as soon as possible."[177]

Nashville's first step toward desegregation took place on September 9, 1957, when 19 Black first grade students enrolled in previously all white public schools, making Nashville the third city in Tennessee to desegregate its public schools. White parents protested at each school, with some carrying signs proclaiming segregation to be the "will of God." The city's police were stationed to escort students and parents to the schools, as white protestors shouted and some threw bottles, sticks or stones at the Black parents and students. An organizer and leader of the protests was John Kasper (1929–1998), a white nationalist agitator who claimed to be president of the Tennessee Citizens Council, a group opposed to desegregation and associated with the White Citizens Council that had formed in Mississippi in July 1957. (Kasper had led desegregation protests at Clinton's high school, which was bombed in February 1956.) As Kasper and his followers traveled through the city organizing resistance, another group called the Parents School Preference Committee, met with Mayor Ben West, and asked him to endorse their plans to boycott the public schools if desegregation was allowed. West rejected the group's request, noting that his six-year-old son would attend a desegregated school that fall.[178]

At the end of the first day of school, Kasper gathered a crowd of 300 at War Memorial Auditorium where he shouted racist epithets and encouraged violence to stop school desegregation. The crowd dispersed, but mobs began roaming the city, burning outbuildings at an African American home near Fehr School, and burning crosses in the yards of homes owned by Black families. Within hours, an explosion shook the ground as dynamite severely damaged the Hattie Cotton Elementary School where one Black student and 139 white students had earlier completed the first day of school.[179]

The next morning, police officers were dispatched to the eight desegregated schools where they set up roadblocks and arrested some of the white protestors. Kasper and thirty white men were arrested, although no one was ever charged or convicted for the bombing.[180]

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[177] "Colored PTA Congress Says Desegregation Plan 'Fine,'" *Nashville Banner,* June 17, 1957, 1
[178] Egerton 2009; Lovett 2005, 38; Tara Mitchell Mielnik, "The First Day of (Desegregated) School in Nashville, September 9, 1957," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 90–92.
[179] Egerton, 2009. Ronnie Huff, a nine-year-old white child, was injured by broken window glass while sleeping in an adjacent home on West Greenwood Avenue that was damaged during the blast.
[180] Egerton 2009; Culpepper 2022; *The Tennessean*, September 12, 1957, 1.

The school bombing received national news coverage, placed side-by-side in some newspapers with events in Little Rock, Arkansas, where the state's governor was defying a federal desegregation order at the high school. A newspaper in Scranton, Pennsylvania, captured both events with a story headlined "School Blasting Termed 'Terrible Thing' by Ike," referencing remarks made by President Dwight "Ike" Eisenhower (1890–1969).[181]

Among the outraged citizens was *Nashville Banner* publisher James G. Stahlman. In the paper's September 10, 1957, edition, the following notice appeared above the masthead:

> James G. Stahlman, publisher of The Nashville Banner, offers a reward of $1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the dynamiting of Hattie Cotton School. The reward stands under the same terms in connection with any subsequent acts of lawlessness against the schools.[182]

As school resumed and African American parents continued walking their children to school under police escort, African American men and women who were volunteers from the NAACP, Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), churches, and other organizations joined them to show support for those who were bringing change to Nashville.[183]

Violence erupted again on March 16, 1958, when white supremacists bombed the Jewish Community Center on West End Avenue. The center was regularly used for meetings of African American and white residents to discuss and plan for desegregation. And the city's board of education included several Jewish members—Dan May (1898–1982), Henry Kantor (1909–1994), and Maurice Pilsk (1905–1991)—who supported desegregation. The blast smashed through the front doors, tore down the ceiling in the reception hall and broke windows throughout the building. Rabbi William B. Silverman (1913–2001) received an anonymous phone call connecting the bombing to Jewish support for school desegregation. Silverman said the caller identified himself as a member of the Confederate Union who said "We have just dynamited the Jewish community center. Next will be the temple and next will be any other n----r loving place or n----r loving person in Nashville. And we're going to shoot down Judge Miller [the federal judge ordering school desegregation] in cold blood."[184]

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[181] "School Blasting Termed 'Terrible Thing' by Ike," *The Tribune,* Scranton, Pennsylvania, September 11,1957, 1.
[182] Reward notice, *Nashville Banner,* September 10, 1957, 1.
[183] Egerton 2009.
[184] "2 Jewish Centers in South Blasted: Nashville Dynamiting Tied to Integration," *New York Times,* March 17, 1958. 26; Roseman 2010, 203, 209. Henry Kantor's son, Carl Kantor, was involved in the Nashville Student Movement.

On March 28, 1958, Rabbi Silverman gave a sermon at The Temple on the theme "We Shall Not Yield." Silverman told congregants "*I favor integration*—not only because I am a Jew, not only because my religious faith teaches that God is our universal Father, that all men are brothers...but because I am an American [with a] moral mandate to support…the decision of the Supreme Court." The Jewish Community Center reopened two days later.[185]

The road to change would be a long one—in 1969, nine out of ten Black students in Nashville still attended all-Black schools, and in 1970 the federal courts mandated accelerated desegregation of public schools. In 1971, a federal judge ordered Nashville's board of education to begin busing students to increase desegregation, leading to years of protests and the departure of many white students to private schools.[186]

"A Future for Nashville": Consolidated Government and Race Relations

"The 1951 local elections in Nashville, Tennessee signaled a turning point in race relations in a city that prided itself on being a progressive southern city," declared Dr. Carole Bucy, the Davidson County Historian. "A new generation of leadership had emerged within the African-American community of the city during World War II and now that generation was about to step forward." Throughout the 1950s, white residents of Nashville moved to the suburbs outside the city limits. While the county judge, Beverly Briley (1914–1980), struggled to provide services to the newly built suburbs, Nashville mayor Ben West and the city council began exploring ways to increase tax revenue. The two governments formed a joint commission of 15 citizens to study the needs of local government and make proposals for improvements, including consolidation. In 1952, the city-county commission published a report called "A Future for Nashville" with recommendations that led to the creation of a charter for a unified government serving both Nashville and Davidson County. As the city experienced a post-war boom in population and suburban growth, the consolidation was seen as an efficient method of avoiding duplicated services like schools, libraries, sewer and water systems, fire protection, and garbage collection.[187]

In 1957, Mayor West appointed five residents, including Z. Alexander Looby, to a charter commission. Judge Briley appointed Dr. George S. Meadors, a well-known Black community leader and businessman to the commission. These appointees gave the Black community a 20 percent representation on the 10-member commission. The initial effort in June 1958 to consolidate the city and county governments with a 21-

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[185] "Bombing in Nashville: A Jewish Community Center and the Desegregation Struggle," *Commentary Magazine,* May 1958, accessed June 19, 2023, https://www.commentary.org/articles/jackson-toby/bombing-in-nashvillea-jewish-center-and-the-desegregation-struggle/; Roseman 2010, 210–211.
[186] Roseman 2010, 210–211.
[187] Carole Bucy. "Metro Consolidation and Nashville's Afro-American Community," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles,* 2021, 189–191.

member council failed due to resistance in the county. As a result, Mayor West and the city council began annexing suburban communities and implemented a wheel tax for county residents who drove into the city to work and shop. In two years, the city annexed 82,000 residents. In 1960, local white supremacists circulated handbills around Nashville entitled "Annexation Means Integration Your White Schools Will Be Mixed." The handbills were signed by John Kasper, then confined to the City Workhouse.[188]

City and county residents pushed for a second referendum during the racially charged efforts to integrate schools and public accommodations. The second charger included a 35-member council with 5 additional at-large members. The larger council was intended to provide more representation for the communities outside the city limits. Councilman Z. Alexander Looby fought to ensure that six of the 35 council districts would be drawn to preserve majority Black representation. On June 28, 1962, citizens of Nashville and Davidson County voted to consolidate the city and county government, forming the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, the first fully unified government in the U.S. The new unified "Metro" government was led by a mayor and 40-member metropolitan council. A handful of incorporated communities such as Belle Meade, Forest Hills, and Goodlettsville retained their status as satellite cities within Metro.[189]

The African American community, which made up around one-third of Nashville's population, was divided over the long-term benefits of consolidation since they had gained political power in city government in recent years. However, community leaders such as Z. Alexander Looby, Fisk professor Vivan Henderson, and Avon Williams supported the consolidation since it would create an expanded 40-member council, which they felt would increase opportunities for electing African Americans. Robert E. Lillard staunchly opposed the idea. (Looby and Lillard were Black city councilmen.) In the end, about 45 percent of Black voters voted in support of consolidation, enough to push the measure through. In November, voters elected Beverly Briley, the former judge of Davidson County, as mayor and five Black members of Metro Council, including Mansfield Douglas, John Driver, Harold Love Sr., Robert E. Lillard, and Z. Alexander Looby. The new form of consolidated city-county government was implemented on April 1, 1963.[190]

God Give Us Leaders!

In February 1956, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made the first of what would be many trips in the coming years to Nashville to speak to audiences about building alliances between Black and white people to end

[188] Bucy 2021, 189–191; Cassandra Stephenson, "Nashville historians: Metro is a 'bold experiment' rooted in race-related compromise," *The Tennessean,* March 1, 2023; FBI files for John Kasper.
[189] Bucy 2021, 189–191.
[190] Bucy 2021, 189–191; Stephenson, "Nashville historians," March 1, 2023.

segregation. (King had also been to Nashville in 1955 for a meeting of the National Baptist Convention's Advisory Council.) The 27-year-old minister had recently gained national attention for his leadership of a boycott of the segregated bus system in Montgomery, Alabama. The boycott began in December 1955 after civil rights activist Rosa Parks (1913–2005) followed a plan she developed with the NAACP to refuse to give up her seat to a white person when she was seated in the section designated for Blacks, resulting in her arrest. Parks had attended Septima Clark's two-week desegregation workshop at the Highlander Folk School a few months prior.[191]

On December 5, 1955, some 5,000 people gathered in Montgomery's Holt Street Baptist Church to plan a "pocketbook attack" on the Montgomery City Bus Lines. King, then pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, delivered the keynote address, urging the group to "work together and stick together." Throughout his speech, King emphasized what would be the cornerstone of the civil rights movement—work "until justice runs down like water" but "perform peacefully within the law, and as law-abiding citizens." On January 30, 1956, as the boycott continued, King returned home from a mass meeting at his church to find his home had been bombed. No one was injured, although King's wife and infant daughter were in the home. [192]

Three weeks later, King traveled to Nashville where he spoke at Fisk University, Meharry Medical College, Tennessee A&I, and Vanderbilt University. At Fisk, King participated in the school's Religious Emphasis Week and gave a sermon titled "What is a Man?" in the school's Memorial Chapel on Sunday morning, February 19. King was also scheduled to lead forum discussions during the week. On February 20, King spoke in the Public Lecture Hall at Meharry Medical College on the topic "Three Dimensions of a Complete Life," and on February 21, he spoke at Tennessee A&I on the topic "Going Forward by Going Backward." During his time in Nashville, King also spoke at Vanderbilt University's Law School symposium held in Wesley Hall. Sixty students from Vanderbilt, Scarritt, and Peabody attended. After returning to Montgomery, King told a newspaper reporter that 90 percent of the students he talked with "said they were for integration."[193]

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[191] Martin Luther King Jr., "The Role of the Church in Facing the Nation's Chief Moral Dilemma," Conference on Christian Faith and Human Relations, Tennessee Council of Churches and the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen, April 25, 1957, Nashville, The Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[192] "Leaders Hit Injustices On Montgomery City Bus Lines" *Alabama Tribune,* Montgomery, Alabama, December 16, 1955, 1; "Threat of Retaliatory Bombing Given to Commissioner Sellers," *Alabama Journal*, Montgomery, Alabama, January 31, 1956, 1.
[193] "Boycott Leader To Speak at Fisk," *The Tennessean*, February 17, 1956, 14; *The Tennessean*, February 21, 1956, 2; MLK Papers; "King Delivers 'Going Forward by Going Backward,' at Tennessee State University, February 21, 1956"; "King Delivers 'Three Dimensions of a Complete Life' at Meharry Medical College, February 20, 1956," The Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford University, Stanford, California; "Negro Pastors Say Protest Will Continue," *Birmingham Post-*

While in Nashville, King learned that the Montgomery County grand jury had indicted 115 participants, including more than 20 ministers, in the bus boycott for the charge of violating Alabama's 1921 statute against conspiracies that interfered with lawful business. King cancelled several lectures and returned to Montgomery where he reported to the county courthouse for arrest. He was released on bond after being fingerprinted and photographed.[194]

King returned to Nashville twice in 1956. In May, he attended commencement ceremonies at Fisk University's new Henderson A. Johnson Gymnasium where he was bestowed with the first annual Jerome Davis Alumni Award of $500 for "distinguished service in human relations." An accompanying citation praised King's leadership of the Montgomery bus boycott, noting the boycott "in the cradle of the Confederacy has embodied the spirit of the new Negro, seeking justice under law." The namesake of King's award, Jerome Davis (1891–1979), was a Quaker peace activist and author who taught at Fisk from 1953 to 1954 with courses such as "Social Implications of the Teachings of Jesus.[195]

On July 12, 1956, King was again at Fisk University where he addressed an audience of 800 in Memorial Chapel as part of the thirteenth annual Race Relations Institute. With the Montgomery bus boycott still underway, King said the boycott began because "they were tired of paying a dime to be mistreated." King told the audience that bus drivers "in the handsome little city known as the Cradle of the Confederacy freely referred to Negro patrons as n-----, black apes…black cows." King concluded "the story of Montgomery is the story of 50,000 Negroes [who are] tired of oppression walking to substitute tired feet for tired souls."[196]

King was joined by LeRoy Carter, field secretary for CORE, to conduct a session at the RRI on the techniques of nonviolence. Using the Montgomery bus boycott as a case study (that would be replicated in Nashville within a few years), King said "From the beginning we taught our people that we could not afford retaliatory violence. Nonviolence is not simply negative, not just a lack of violence. It is also a positive, internal thing. It is a refusal to hate. It is a faith in the future, a faith that evil cannot forever triumph over good. It is, in short, Christian love." Carter echoed King's remarks, tracing the history of CORE, and citing the success of a sit-in campaign to open lunch counters in downtown Washington D.C. drugstore to serve Blacks.[197]

Herald, February 27, 1956, 4; *The Tennessean,* February 17, 1956, 14; *The Tennessean,* February 21, 1956, 2; *The Tennessean,* February 27, 1956, 1; MLK Papers.

[194] "Indictment, *State of Alabama v. M.L. King Jr.*," February 21, 1956, The Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

[195] "Pittsburgh Judge Urges Scientific Training for Negroes, In Fisk Talk," *Nashville Banner,* May 28, 1956, 6; "Noted Professor to Join Faculty at Fisk U. Soon," *Nashville Banner,* December 9, 1953, 24.

[196] "Montgomery Bus Boycott Laid to Mistreatment," *Nashville Banner,* July 13, 1956, 3.

[197] "Little Chance Seen for Effective Boycott," *The Tennessean,* July 13, 1956, 5.

Following his visits to Fisk, Nelson Fuson and his wife Marian Fuson sent King an etching of Mahatma Gandhi and a letter noting that "several students we knew well needed just what you offered them in understanding nonviolence now and in the struggle at hand."[198]

King returned to Nashville twice in 1957. Two weeks after the successful conclusion of the Montgomery bus boycott following a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court that segregation on public buses was unconstitutional, King was welcomed by Rev. Smith at a mass meeting held at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill. While King began his speech titled "Passive Resistance in Solving Human Relations Problems" police cars surrounded the church. Shortly after King had begun to address the overflow crowd, a "dummy bomb" was discovered on the sidewalk outside of the building. Taken to police headquarters, the bomb designed to look like dynamite was determined to be a fake, but police officers were dispatched to protect the church.[199]

Inside the church, King continued his speech, asserting "the South stands between two worlds, the dying old and the new. What we are witnessing is the fact that a new world is being born and an old world of segregation is passing away." King optimistically told the audience he believed "Negroes will have won all the legal battles against segregation by 1963."[200]

In April 1957, King came to Nashville and spoke at Fisk University's Memorial Chapel as part of the university's Festival of Music and Art. At Scarritt College for Christian Workers, King was the keynote speaker for a three-day interracial conference sponsored by the Tennessee Council of Churches, the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen, Vanderbilt University, and Scarritt. Addressing an audience of 300 ministers in Scarritt's Wightman Chapel, King focused his speech on the work of the church in overcoming segregation. Observing that although astounding advances had been made in science and technology, he noted "we still suffer the plague of racial conflict." King outlined "three reasons why segregation is evil" — it "inevitably makes for inequality… it scars the soul of both the segregator and the segregated…[and] it ends up depersonalizing the segregated."[201]

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[198] Martin Luther King Jr., "To Marian and Nelson Fuson," August 21, 1956, Electronic Document, The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford University, accessed December 4, 2023, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/marian-and-nelson-fuson.

[199] "Boycott Leader to Speak Here," *Nashville Banner*, January 5, 1957, 10; "Bus Boycott Leader Speaks Here, Dummy Bomb Found," *Nashville Banner*, January 14, 1957, 3.

[200] "Bus Boycott Leader Speaks Here, Dummy Bomb Found," *Nashville Banner*, January 14, 1957, 3.

[201] Martin Luther King Jr., "The Role of the Church in Facing the Nation's Chief Moral Dilemma," Conference on Christian Faith and Human Relations, Tennessee Council of Churches and the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen, April 25, 1957, Nashville, The Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

King called upon churches to take "a forthright stand on this crucial issue," by "showing the unreasonableness" of racism and racist beliefs, by "showing that Negroes do not want to dominate the nation [but] simply want the right to live as first-class citizens," and "to keep [people's] minds and visions centered on God." He continued by encouraging churches "to take the lead in strong Christian social action," making what became one of his most well-known declarations: "It is appalling, indeed, that 11 O'clock on Sunday morning, when we stand to sing 'In Christ there is no East nor West' is the most segregated hour in Christian America."[202]

King devoted the remainder of his speech to the "dire need for sincere, dedicated and courageous leadership from individual Christians [especially] from the moderates in the white South" and the "need for strong, sincere and dedicated leadership from the Negro community." King declared, "Our motto must be 'Freedom and justice through love.' Not through violence, not through hate, not even through boycotts, but through love."[203] King concluded his remarks by declaring:

> "God grant us leaders! A time like this demands great leaders. One day, by the grace of God, we will be able to sing, 'the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!'"[204]

Historic Context 2: Nashville Student Movement, 1958–1964

A few months prior to King's April 1957 speech at Scarritt, he spoke at Oberlin College's Divinity School in Ohio, where he was first introduced to James M. Lawson, then a graduate student at Oberlin. They met during a private luncheon in the campus cafeteria. Professor Harvey Cox had arranged for King and Lawson to sit at the same table, where they engaged in a long conversation. King encouraged Lawson to move to Nashville. "We don't have anyone like you down there," he stated. "We need you right now. Please don't delay. Come as quickly as you can." The request was urgent. "Yes, I understand," replied Lawson. "I'll arrange my affairs, and I'll come as quickly as I can."[205]

James Morris "Jim" Lawson Jr. grew up in Ohio. His father was an itinerant Methodist minister and social justice activist, and his mother was a Jamaican immigrant. Lawson received his ministry license in 1947. While attending Baldwin-Wallace College, an integrated Methodist institution in Berea, Ohio, he joined both CORE and FOR, a New York-based Christian peace group committed to promoting racial integration

[202] King, "Role of the Church," 1957.
[203] King, "Role of the Church," 1957.
[204] King, "Role of the Church," 1957.
[205] Halberstam 1998, 13–14, 20–50

and nonviolent direct action. FOR director Abraham Johannes "A.J." Muste (1885–1967) stressed that pacifism originated with Christianity, which had a decisive impact on Lawson. When he turned 18, Lawson refused to report for duty in the U.S. military when drafted during the Korean conflict. Lawson was found guilty of draft evasion and sentenced to two years in federal prison. He served 13 months at Mill Point, West Virginia, and Ashland, Kentucky, before being paroled in May 1952. He then finished his degree at Baldwin-Wallace. From 1953 to 1956, Lawson studied the principles of nonviolent resistance developed by Mohandas Gandhi while working as a Methodist missionary teacher at Hislop College in Nagpur, India. As such, Lawson followed in the footsteps of other individuals who brought the Gandhian dogma to the U.S. from India in the 1940s and 1950s where they were discovered and taught firsthand.[206]

An emergency appendectomy required Lawson to stay in Ohio longer than he anticipated. Meanwhile, Rev. Glenn E. Smiley (1910–1993), a white minister and national field secretary of FOR, offered Lawson a job as a FOR field secretary in the South. Lawson accepted. After considering Atlanta, Rev. Smiley instead stationed Lawson in Nashville, which Rev. Smiley viewed as the "Protestant Vatican" since it served as the headquarters for so many Southern religious groups, their publishing arms, and their sectarian colleges. Nashville was home to four prominent Black colleges, moderate political leaders, and progressive journalists. Nashville was also home to the Race Relations Institute at Fisk University and located near the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle. The conditions were in place for Nashville to become a movement center where Lawson would "make many Montgomerys," referring to the 1955–1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott.[207]

In February 1958, Lawson moved to Nashville where he enrolled in Vanderbilt University's Divinity School and soon became special projects director for the Nashville Christian Leadership Council (NCLC). Through this role, the NCLC assigned Lawson the role of leading nonviolent training workshops. Since Lawson's classes at Vanderbilt did not begin until September, he initially rented an apartment owned by attorney and Meharry instructor Murray G. Blakemore (1912–1972) in Nashville's Edgehill neighborhood. By August 1959, he had moved to the College Hill apartments near the Tennessee A&I campus, in the same building as Rev. C.T. Vivian, pastor of First Community Church in north Nashville.[208]

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[206] Sumner, "James Lawson," 2018; Halberstam 1998, 13–14, 20–50; Wynn 1991, 44; Isacc 2012, 160, 165.
[207] Sumner 2018; Halberstam 1998, 13–14, 20–50; Wynn 1991, 44; Isaac 2012, 162–163, 166. Lawson quote from 2007 interview with Isaac.
[208] Sumner, James Lawson," 2018; Halberstam, 1998, 13–14, 20–50; Wynn 1991, 44; James M. Lawson Jr. Papers, Vanderbilt University Special Collections; King Hollands, interview with Natalie Bell, June 28, 2023. Lawson initially lived in Murray G. Blakemore's house at 1404 South Street, before moving into an apartment that Blakemore owned across the street at 1407 South Street. Blakemore was a prominent Black attorney, dentistry instructor at Meharry Medical College, and former member of the Tennessee House of Representative.

In a letter to Dr. Mel O. Williams Jr, a senior staff member for the Methodist Church Board of Missions in New York, Lawson stated:

> I came to Nashville on Feb 3rd. I took a job for three months. Along with Glenn Smiley and Ralph Abernathy, we are a special three month team to preach and teach the theology and techniques of Christian non-violence as related to racial problems, specifically to integration. Thus far, returning to Nashville has been like old home week because I had the chance to renew friendships with so many former colleagues. After the three month period, the FOR will likely want me to stay on either out of New York or Nashville.[209]

The NCLC was a local chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) that formed on January 18, 1958, at Capers Memorial CME Church, located just west of downtown Nashville. Rev. Joseph A. Johnson Jr., then finishing up his PhD at Vanderbilt's Divinity School, served as pastor of Capers. The NCLC elected Rev. Kelly Miller Smith Sr. as its president. Rev. Smith had been the pastor of First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill since 1951. Rev. Andrew N. White Jr. (1912–1992) was elected secretary. Rev. Smith and Rev. White had been exposed to the Gandhian doctrine during their religious studies at Howard University, whose religious scholars employed discourse about Gandhian strategy and civil rights. The NCLC adopted the SCLC's objective to create the "beloved community" and a city without a color line.[210]

[209] James M. Lawson to Dr. M.O. Miller, February 14, 1958. James M. Lawson Jr. Papers, Vanderbilt University.
[210] Samuel Dingkee Momodu, "In it for the Long Haul: The Nashville Sit-Ins, Pioneering Non-Violence Training and National Leadership," Thesis, Southern New Hampshire University, 2019, 12; Samuel Momodu, "Nashville Christian Leadership Council (1958-1964)," *BlackPast*, June 3, 2020, accessed April 5, 2023, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/institutions-african-american-history/nashville-christian-leadership-council-1958-1964/; NCLC "Story" 1962, 2; Lovett 2005, 120; Houston 2012; Linda T. Wynn, "Kelly Miller Smith, Sr. (1920–1984)," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 240–241; Isaac 2012, 164–165.

"Going to Lead to Something": Nonviolent Training Workshops

Rev. Smiley and Lawson convinced Rev. Smith to allow them to present the Gandhian doctrine of nonviolence to the NCLC. He agreed. Subsequently, the NCLC and FOR hosted their first nonviolent, direct-action training workshops from March 26 to March 28, 1958, at Bethel AME Church in the Edgehill neighborhood. Rev. Smiley led the workshops with assistance from Lawson, representing FOR, and Anna Holden (1929–2023), a white professor at Fisk who represented the Nashville chapter of CORE. (Holden formed a CORE chapter at Fisk in 1956.) The interracial workshops were on "Christian non-violence and love." Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy (1926–1990), the SCLC vice president and a chief lieutenant for King from Montgomery, Alabama, spoke during the two-day event, which was open to the public.[211]

Beginning in September 1958, the FOR and NCLC sponsored a protracted series of Lawson's nonviolent, direct-action workshops. The workshops were held weekly on Tuesday evenings. The small group of students who initially attended the workshops included John Lewis and Bernard Lafayette from American Baptist. In October, more students joined the workshops, including Diane Nash, Marion Barry (1936–2014), Angeline Butler, Peggy Alexander, Paul LaPrad, and James Zwerg, all from Fisk University. Butler recalled that Nelson Fuson and his wife, Marian, took her to her first workshop. Other participants included Rev. C.T. Vivian and James Bevel from American Baptist and Rodney N. Powell and Gloria Johnson (1936–2017) from Meharry Medical College. Fisk student King Hollands (1941–2023) worked at the International Student Center where he helped recruit temporary transfer students. Although Lawson initially hosted workshops at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill, the majority were held at Clark Memorial Methodist Church due to its proximity to students from Fisk University, Meharry Medical College, and Tennessee A&I. Lawson's workshops at Clark continued through December 1959 (Figure 7).[212]

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[211] Halberstam, 1998, 49; Lovett 2005, 122; Momodu 2019, 12–13; Momodu 2020; Isaac 2012, 165; Houston 2012; *The Tennessean*, "Church To Study Non-Violence," March 24, 1958, 4; Linda T. Wynn, "The Dawning of a New Day: The Nashville Sit-Ins, February 13-May 10, 1960," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Spring 1991, 44; David E. Sumner, "The Local Press and the Nashville Student Movement," Dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1989, 22; Shopler 1994, 19.

[212] Rev. Kelly Miller Smith Papers; Lovett 2005, 122; Lewis 1998, 83–93; Halberstam 1998, 56, 59–82; NHL Public Accommodations Theme Study 2009, 52; James Lawson interview with Blackside, Inc. on December 2, 1985, for *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years (1954–1964)*, Washington University Libraries, Film and Media Archive, Henry Hampton Collection; King Hollands, interview with Natalie Bell, July 11, 2023; Angeline Butler, interview with Natalie Bell, September 11, 2023; Isaac 2012, 166; David E. Sumner, "James M. Lawson Jr.," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed June 18, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/james-e-lawson-jr/; Linda T. Wynn," Diane J. Nash," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed June 18, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/diane-j-nash/; Amanda Hughett, "Always the Backbone, Rarely the Leaders: Young Black Women Activists and the Reconceptualization of Respectability during the Nashville Sit-in Movement," Thesis, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 2008, 8–12. While a student at

Figure 7. Photograph of James Lawson (left) leading a nonviolent, direct-action training workshop at Clark Memorial Methodist Church, circa 1959 (Source: Getty Images).

At American Baptist, John Lewis attempted to convince his classmate Bernard Lafayette to go with him to a workshop. "I don't have time to go to a workshop, I'm already working," responded Lafayette. "Lewis kept after me. He was a very persistent person." After a while, Lafayette relented. "I thought I'd go to a workshop to satisfy him," recalled Lafayette. "But when I went to the workshop on nonviolence, I was really impressed."[213]

While teaching the workshops, Lawson traveled throughout the South, lecturing, teaching workshops, and coordinating action plans for the sit-in movement to come. He did so as a representative of FOR, which also sent Rev. Smiley to lead workshops across the South. In the fall of 1958, Lawson took several students—

Vanderbilt, James Lawson was a licensed minister; however, since he was not a pastor for a congregation, he did not use the Reverend title at that time. Angeline Butler and Diane Nash were roommates at Fisk.
[213] Bernard Lafayette, telephone interview with Natalie Bell, August 11, 2023.

including John Lewis, James Bevel, Angeline Butler, and King Hollands—to a weekend retreat at the Highlander Folk School, where they participated in sessions with civil rights activists Myles Horton (1905–1990), Septima Clark (1898–1987), Guy Carawan (1927–2015), Ella Baker (1903–1986), and others. The workshops with Horton and Clark particularly inspired Lewis, who left Highlander deeply motivated to act. As a result of the Highlander workshops, Baker and Clark became lifelong mentors for Angeline Butler.[214]

Initially the nonviolence workshops focused on adults, primarily clergy and church-attending women, ages 27–50, and included films about the Montgomery bus boycott. Although Lawson did not recall any students at the early workshops, they quickly evolved into primarily student workshops. Lawson had an extraordinary impact on the students who participated in the workshops. At one of the initial workshops held at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill, John Lewis recalled:

> Even before he began speaking, I could see that there was something special about this man. He just had a way about him, an aura of inner peace and wisdom that you could sense immediately upon simply seeing him. He was tall, bespectacled, and about to turn thirty...Lawson gave a very general talk, an overview of the great religions of the world—Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity—and he offered the suggestion that all these religions share a fundamental tenant: the concept of justice. This, he told us, would be the theme we were going to explore in the workshops that would begin that Tuesday night—and every Tuesday night thereafter—at a little church over near the Fisk campus called Clark Memorial United Methodist.[215]

One of the most faithful participants, Lewis later described Lawson's workshops:

> It was like going to class; we would go and study the philosophy and discipline of nonviolence. There was very little discussion during the early workshops about segregation or racial discrimination or about the possibility of being involved in a sit-in or freedom ride. I did sense that it was going to lead to something…[216]

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[214] Lewis 1998, 83–93; Isaac 2012, 167, 182; Angeline Butler, telephone interview with Natalie Bell, September 11, 2023. Butler was inspired by Clark to participate in demonstrations at Albany, Georgia.
[215] Lewis 1998, 83–84; Isaac 2012, 166; Daniel B. Cornfield, Jonathan S. Coley, Larry W. Isaac, and Dennis C. Dickerson, "The Making of a Movement: An Intergenerational Mobilization Model of the Nonviolent Nashville Civil Rights Movement," *Social Science History*, No. 45, 2021, 478.
[216] Jim Sessions and Sue Thrasher. "A New Day Begun: Interview with John Lewis." *Southern Exposure*, No. 4, Fall 1976, 19, as quoted in Sumner 1989, 24.

Another regular participant, Rev. C.T. Vivian, then a student at American Baptist, described Lawson's workshops:

> When Jim Lawson came to the city, he began to organize students, right. And most to that for both the students and we who were ministers, was that we had workshops. And the workshops in nonviolence made the difference. We began to, first, understand the theory, understand the philosophy behind it. The great religious imperatives that were important in terms of understanding people. Then, finally, the tactics. Then, finally, the techniques. How to, in fact, begin to take the blows. Cigarettes put out on you. The fact that you were being spit on and still, still respond with some sense of dignity and with a loving concept to what you were about. To be hit and to be knocked down and to understand that in terms of struggle and in terms of reaching conscience. In terms of, of gaining the greater goals for which you sought. Now, we actually done that, I mean, we actually beat people to the ground. We actually poured coffee on people. We actually did the various things to people. Kicked chairs out from under them, all right. Came on them in a crowded situation so that they could begin to get used to it. How did they respond? So, they could begin to understand, respond not in terms of verbiage, but in terms of actuality. You see, it is in the action that ethics is tested and this is one of the great learnings of nonviolent movement."[217]

According to Lawson, in March 1959 the NCLC decided during a workshop at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill that making the "opening of the rest rooms and dining rooms [at Cain-Sloan Department Store] to Negroes [was] a specific goal." Black shoppers at Cain-Sloan had been denied use of all dining facilities except the lunch counter in a sub-basement reserved for use by Black employees. Black customers were also ordered out of the restrooms and instructed to use the restrooms for Black employees in the basement or to exit the building and cardboard stalls erected in an alley.[218]

Members of the NCLC felt that the white-only facilities within the departments stores illustrated the hypocrisy of the governing economic policies of allowing Black customers to purchase goods in the aisles, but not meals in the dining areas. The NCLC attempted to negotiate with downtown merchants but failed to reach their goal of desegregated lunch counters. "So, in the workshops role playing was often realistic, that is, we would set up confrontations in workshops where a person might get slapped or hit or knocked down

[217] Interview with C.T. Vivian conducted by Blackside, Inc. on January 23, 1986, for *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years (1954–1964)*. Washington University Libraries, Film and Media Archive, Henry Hampton Collection.
[218] Wallace Westfeldt, "Settling a Sit-In," Report prepared for the Nashville Community Relations Conference, 1960, 13–14; NCLC "Story" 1962, 3.

and we would experiment, you know, we would help the person walk through how do you respond to this kind of hostile situation," explained Lawson. "So, the role playing was a part of it."[219]

In 1960, Lawson told *The Tennessean* reporter Wallace Westfeldt, "I held a couple of training sessions [in the fall of 1959] on non-violence at Clark Memorial. Their purpose is to inoculate in people the idea of Christian non-violence and at the same time, I wanted to give the people a chance at role playing. Set up situations and roles they may run into within their own experience." Lawson stated, "The students started to enter the picture at this point, sometime along in November, and by the time the first sitin group went to Harveys [Department Store], there were more students in the workshop than anyone else." Westfeldt asked Lawson about his role. Lawson replied, "I was not the leader. My understanding of the Christian non-violence concept is that you don't have a single leader but group leadership. You try to pull together, be creative together, have mutual trust. I sort of look on it like a small group trying to become a church, working together in the Christian spirit."[220]

As a result of the training workshops with mock lunch counter scenes, on November 28, 1959, the NCLC staged a test sit-in with 12 students at Harvey's Department Store on Church Street. The store managers were made aware that the students were coming. Black customers were refused service. A few days later, on December 5, the NCLC staged a second test sit-in at Cain-Sloan Department Store on Church Street. Black customers were again refused service. "The purpose of these visits," said Rev. Smith, "was to establish in an action situation what the store policy was and to engage representatives of the management in conversation about the situation." Lawson headed both test sit-ins, which ceased during the students' winter holiday break.[221]

John Lewis recalled the workshops continued after the students returned from winter break. In his memoir, Lewis wrote:

> Throughout that January [1960] the numbers at our weekly workshops swelled. Dozens of students, black and white, joined us and began taking crash courses in nonviolent action. Blacks played white roles in our training sociodramas, and whites played black. It was strange—unsettling but effective, and very eye-opening as well…We had moved to a larger upstairs room at Clark now, and we sometimes met on Thursdays in addition to our standard Tuesday evening

[219] Westfeldt 1960, 13–14; NCLC "Story" 1962, 3; Wynn 1991, 45; Interview with James Lawson by Blackside, Inc. 1985.
[220] Westfeldt 1960, 14–15; Momodu, 2019, 64; Momodu 2020; NCLC, "Toward the Beloved Community: Story of the Nashville Christian Leadership Council," 1962, 3; Caridad de la Vega, "Clark Memorial United Methodist Church," Washington, D.C.: National Park Service 2003, 2–3. Unpublished draft National Historic Landmark Nomination. In an interview with Caridad de la Vega in 2003, Lawson stated that he did not lead any workshops at Clark in 1960.
[221] Westfeldt 1960, 13–14; Momodu 2019, 64; NCLC "Story" 1962, 3; Lovett 2005, 123; Wynn 1991, 45.

> gatherings. We were getting all kinds of involvement and all kinds of responses from those who came.[222]

Sometime after the workshops ended at First Baptist and Clark, Lewis and other students at American Baptist Theological Seminary would return to Griggs Hall where they would conduct follow-up training in the basement. At Griggs Hall, they would undertake additional practice on how to handle being harassed during sit-ins and demonstrations.[223]

Do Not Strike Back: Interracial Sit-in Demonstrations

On Monday, February 1, 1960, four Black students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University held a sit-in at the Woolworth Department Store's whites-only lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Black customers were refused service. The next day, more than 20 students returned to Woolworth's. By Wednesday, the number had ballooned to 85. Planned with the assistance of Black female students at the Bennett College campus, the sit-ins captured national media attention and sparked a movement. On February 10, Lawson received a phone call from Rev. Douglas E. Moore (1928–2019), a civil rights activist and friend in Durham, North Carolina, encouraging him to do something in Nashville "to show their sympathy for the North Carolina sitins." Lawson asked Paul LaPrad, a white Fisk University student, if his fellow students at Fisk and Tennessee A&I would be interested in participating. LaPrad said he thought they would.[224]

On February 11, Lawson and about 50 students from American Baptist, Fisk, and Tennessee A&I gathered in the auditorium of Fisk's Talley-Brady Hall to discuss hosting Nashville's first major sit-ins. At this meeting, the students created the Student Central Committee (SCC) with Fisk students Luther Harris and Earl Mays as the first co-chairs. However, Harris and Mays resigned about a week later and the committee elected Diane Nash as its chairperson. The SCC originally consisted of two Black members from each of the four Black universities and two white members from the white universities, Vanderbilt and Scarritt. Other members of the SCC included Angeline Butler, Eleanor Jones, and Peggy Alexander from Fisk; Lucretia Collins, Kenneth Frazier, Jerry Heard, and Curtis Murphy from Tennessee A&I; and Bernard Lafeyette and John Lewis from American Baptist. Lawson set the date of the first sit-ins for February 13, a Saturday.[225]

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[222] Lewis 1998, 98–99. According to Caridad de la Vega, a historian with the NPS who prepared a draft NHL nomination for Clark in 2003, Lawson stated in an interview that his workshops did not extend beyond December 1959.
[223] Phyllis Qualls, interview with Caroline Eller, December 6, 2023.
[224] Westfeldt 1960, 16; Lovett 2005, 124; Lewis 1998, 100. TSU was then known as Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State University or Tennessee A&I. The name was changed to Tennessee State University in 1968.
[225] Westfeldt 1960, 16; Andy Shopler, "'Shock Troops': The Story of Nashville's Nonviolent Army, 1959–1964," Thesis, Dartmouth College, 1994, 24–26; Lovett 2005, 124; Lewis 1998, 93–94, 100; Wynn, "Nash," 2018; NHL Public

On February 12, Lawson and about 75 students met at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill to plan the first sit-ins. The following day a group of 124 people—mostly Black students—staged a massive sit-in at whites-only lunch counters at department stores, five and dime stores, and bus stations in downtown Nashville. The group walked from First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill to the stores along Church Street, the Arcade (NRHP, 1973), and 5th Avenue North (now Rep. Johns Lewis Way North. White store owners and managers immediately closed the counters and stores in response.[226]

In anticipation of violence during sit-in demonstrations scheduled for February 27, John Lewis and Bernard Lafayette were tasked with developing a code of conduct to help protestors maintain their composure. The NCLC printed the 10 rules of conduct on small pocket cards so they could be carried during protest demonstrations. The rules were also practiced repeatedly during role playing at the workshops. The rules were:

1) Do not block entrances to stores outside nor the aisles inside
2) Do refer information seekers to your leader in a polite manner
3) Do not hold conversations with the floor walker
4) Do show yourself friendly & courteous at all times
5) Do not strike back nor curse if abused
6) Do sit straight; always face the counter
7) Do not laugh out loud
8) Do report all serious incidents to your leader
9) Do not leave your seat until your leader has given you permission
10) Do remember the teachings of Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King

These rules of conduct established a code of behavior for protest demonstrations throughout the South. While there were no specific texts for the workshops, Lawson emphasized a four-step process in Gandhian protest: 1) fact-finding and identify the problem or issue, assess the issue, select a target; 2) preparation for the campaign and negotiations; 3) launch the direct-action campaign; and 4) follow up, self-evaluate, and develop agreements for change (Figure 8).[227]

Accommodations Theme Study 2009, 54; Angeline Butler, interview with Natalie Bell, September 11, 2023. Shopler said it was the night of the Douglas Moore phone call, Westfeldt said it was the next day.

[226] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 1, No. 1, June 1960, 6; Westfeldt 1960, 13; Shopler 1994, 25–26; Sumner 1989, 68; Lovett 2005, 124. The Arcade was NRHP-listed as part of the 5th Avenue Historic District in 1983.

[227] Sumner 1989, 28; Linda T. Wynn, "John Robert Lewis," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed June 18, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/john-robert-lewis/; Caroline Eller, "John Robert Lewis (1940–2020)," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 163–164; Isaac 2012, 168–169; Cornfield 2021, 474. The four-step plan taken from interview with Lawson in 2012.

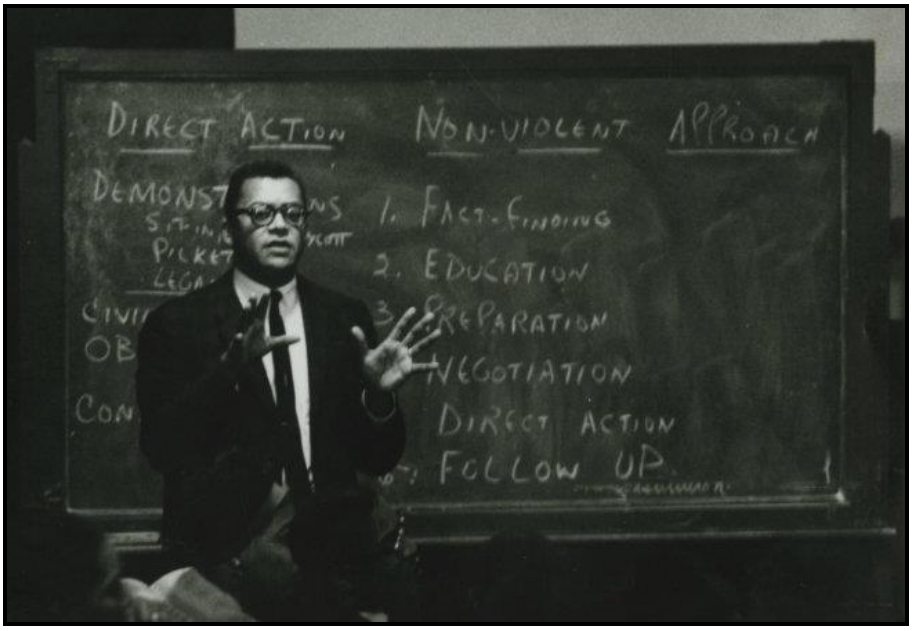

Figure 8. Photograph of James Lawson leading a workshop, most likely at the First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill (Source: Vanderbilt University Special Collections and University Archives).

The four-step structure of Lawson's workshops undoubtedly influenced the Friends Peace Committee (FPC), a Quaker organization in Philadelphia, which in 1969 published "Training for Nonviolent Responses in Social Conflict: A Manual for Trainers." Formed in 1933, the FPC was an anti-war group that was also deeply involved with the Civil Rights Movement. The "how to do it" manual provides an excellent reference for the structure of Lawson's workshops. Authored by George R. Lakey (b.1937) and other members of the FPC, the 32-page training manual contained "an outline for a fifteen hour training course intended for hypothetical peace groups." It taught "skills and techniques for trainers to transmit to adult participants." The Abstract claimed the FPC had discovered:

> …through role playing that tolerance, openness, non-retaliation policies, and preparation can effectively implement social change. Materials, prepared from trainers' experiences in other non-violent training included direct action and knowledge of philosophy of non violence, emphasize role playing and group dynamics. Five chapters include information on: 1) planning and conducting guidelines for trainers in nonviolent direct action; 2) directing and evaluating role plays; 3) [understanding and teaching functional roles of group members], and 4) understanding and teaching function roles of group

> members and strategy and tactics; and, 5) leading and participating in direct action involving street speaking and leaflets. The material in the manual is suggestive rather than prescriptive. Trainers are encouraged to adapt methods and materials to needs of the particular group.[228]

The FPC required that a candidate for trainer should complete at least one training course, participate in one semi-annual trainers' course, participate in nonviolent action, and become familiar with the philosophy of nonviolence. The trainer should be able to direct and evaluate role plays, explain functional roles of group members, understand and teach concepts of strategies and tactics, lead direct action projects such as street speaking and leafleting, and plan and conduct a nonviolent direct action training course relevant to the participants. The FPC training course consisted of five, three-hour sessions, usually held on two to three consecutive days. The FPC manual described the structure of the workshops, which included blackboards, props such as chairs, situation analysis charts, and self-evaluation checklists. The manual also contained a list of suggested reading materials associated with nonviolent action, such as writings by King and Ghandi.[229]

The infrastructure of the workshops developed by Lawson, Smith, and others linked student leaders from the universities and colleges via the SCC to the movement churches and the broader Black community via the NCLC. Lawson's workshops at First Baptist and Clark "served as 'command central' for recruiting, training, planning, organizing, and eventually launching the insurgent actions of the Nashville movement," according to Vanderbilt sociologist Larry W. Isaac. "This set of organizational linkages constituted a local movement center, with workshops embedded in and fueled by the local student and community organizations." Led by Rev. Smith, the NCLC provided revenue, legal and medical assistance, and community support. The Student Central Committee mobilized students from the four Black universities. And Lawson's workshops at First Baptist and Clark "were literally *local movement schools*."[230]

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[228] George Lakey, and others, "Training for Nonviolent Responses in Social Conflict: A Manual for Trainers," Friends Peace Committee, Philadelphia, 1957, abstract; "Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Records: Friends Peace Committee and its predecessors (1891–2015)," Quaker Meeting Records at Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections and Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, accessed December 1, 2023, https://archives.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/resources/phpympeacec. George R. Lakey was arrested in 1963 during a sit-in and was a trainer during the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer. Lakey and Martin Oppenheimer published *A Manual for Direct Action: Strategy and Tactics for Civil Rights and All Other Nonviolent Protest Movements* (Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1965); a draft of the book was used during the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer.

[229] Lakey 1957, 3–4.

[230] Larry W. Isaac, Daniel B. Cornfield, Dennis C. Dickerson, James M. Lawson Jr., and Jonathan S. Coley, "'Movement Schools' and Dialogical Diffusion of Nonviolent Praxis: Nashville Workshops in the Southern Civil Rights Movement," in *Nonviolent Conflict and Civil Resistance: Research in in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, Emerald Group Publishing, Vol. 34, 2012, 169. Emphasis in original. Other leaders of the NCLC included Rev. Alcorn, Mr. Otey, Lester McKinnie, and Rev. Alexander M. Anderson at Clark Memorial Methodist Church.

The workshops functioned as schools where the "mental and moral dispositions" of the participants could be "shaped and influenced," according to Isaac. "The deliberately constructed environments, the physical places, were important. The oppositional culture and philosophical and practical conversations that were to lead insurgent actions were largely hidden in relatively safe spaces of basements and backrooms of various black churches, especially Clark Memorial United Methodist (near Fisk University) and Smith's First Baptist." The workshops were the "laboratory to experiment with and cultivate the beginning of 'many Montgomerys,' Lawson's hope for expanding and accelerating the pace of the movement into a nonviolent revolution."[231]

The workshops were transformative for the students, most of whom were uncertain at first. According to James Zwerg, the students acquired strength from one another that progressed into "an incredible, spiritual bond…what Lawson used to call a soul force." Based on interviews with many participants, Isaac concluded that "Lawson's movement workshops took angry, skeptical, shy, self-doubting young people and thoroughly resocialized them into effective leaders and an effective fighting force." [232]

Novella Page, a 19-year-old student at Tennessee A&I, attended workshops led by Lawson, Rev. C.T. Vivian, and Rev. Andrew N. White. In describing the sit-in demonstrations, Page recalled that "Some of the things they did to us was atrocious—spitting, cursing, pouring ketchup, mustard all over us, such hatred, heckling, taunting—we were traumatized. Putting lit cigarettes on our skins and putting them out there." She remembered that many people told her, "I can't believe you let them do that do you." Page said, "We didn't tell our parents, or they would have forbidden us to participate."[233]

Using nonviolent, direct-action techniques that Lawson taught in his weekly training workshops at Clark, the students continued the interracial sit-in demonstrations in downtown Nashville every Saturday through March 2. Hundreds of students, both Black and white, were arrested, fined, and sentenced to serve time in the city jail. On February 26, a small group of students went to the Public Safety Building (now the Ben West Building) and conferred with police chief Douglas Hosse about the sit-ins. Hosse shared the city ordinance concerning disorderly conduct but did not produce any laws forbidding Blacks from being served at downtown lunch counters. Like many Americans, the student protestors believed that the U.S. Constitution should recognize the right of Black Americans to nondiscriminatory service in privately-

[231] Isaac 2012, 170–173.
[232] Isaac 2012, 173–174.
[233] Novella Page, telephone interview with Natalie Bell, August 1, 2023.

operated eating establishments that catered to the public. Newspapers throughout Tennessee condemned the new tactic, claiming property rights topped human rights, and urged students to stop the demonstrations.[234]

The same day, Mayor Ben West met with the store managers, who had asked the mayor to instruct the police to stop Black people from sitting down at their lunch counters. Mayor West refused their request, explaining that after consulting with the city's attorneys that the opinion was "as long as their business was open to the public any member of the public had a right to come in and request service and I could not interfere with this right." However, Mayor West stated, "it was his opinion and that of his attorneys also that the law is broken when anyone insists on remaining seated at lunch counters after then [sic] have been closed to all members of the public." Westfeldt concluded, "To find a law to fit this crime, however, was a task."[235]

On February 27, "Big Saturday," the fourth major sit-in turned violent with attacks by a white mob, both male and female, with no police protection. Instead, police arrested 81 demonstrators—4 were white and 77 were Black. White anti-protestors attacked the demonstrators at McLellan's and Woolworth's. The assailants ranged in age between mid-teens to mid-twenties, were from both genders, and none were arrested. Two unexploded bombs were found at the Greyhound bus terminal. Some 300 demonstrators had used First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill as rally point before marching to the stores. As taught in Lawson's workshops, the demonstrators utilized a wave tactic where students would replace those arrested in waves. Students arrested included Diane Nash, John Lewis, Frankie Keeling, Matthew Walker Jr., Maxine Walker, and Candie Anderson, a white exchange student at Fisk. Nash met Keeling, a local student at Tennessee A&I, at a downtown bus stop and convinced her to join the sit-in demonstrations, although Keeling had not attended any training workshops. During the sit-ins, a white male anti-protestor burned Keeling on her forearm with a cigarette, leaving a permanent scar. Segregationists viewed Paul LaPrad, a white transfer student at Fisk, as a traitor to his race and often targeted him with violent retributions.[236]

Two days later, the arrested students were brought before Judge John I. Harris at the Public Safety Building for individual trials. The students were defended by Coyness Ennix, Z. Alexander Looby, and other Black attorneys. The City Prosecutor was Walter Leaver Jr. Between 2,000 and 2,500 people, largely both Black

[234] Westfeldt 1960, 5; Christopher W. Schmidt, "Why the 1960 Lunch Counter Sit-Ins Worked: A Case Study of Law and Social Movement Mobilization," *Indiana Journal of Law and Social Equality*, Vol. 5, Issue 2, 2017, 282; Hugh Davis Graham, *Crisis in Print: Desegregation and the Press in Tennessee*, Vanderbilt University Press, 1967, 195-199. The Public Safety Building was originally the PWA-built City Market.
[235] Westfeldt 1960, 5; Lovett 2005, 126.
[236] Westfeldt 1960, 3, 6; Halberstam 1998; Shopler 1994, 28–29; Sumner 1989, 68; NHL Public Accommodations Theme Study 2009, 54; Frankie Keeling Henry, interview with Robbie D. Jones, March 9, 2023; Angeline Butler, interview with Natalie Bell, September 11, 2023.

and white students, gathered outside the building to support the demonstrators (Figure 9). Many sang spiritual songs while waiting for the verdicts. The trials continued through March 4. Dr. Matthew Walker Sr. (1906–1978) quickly raised funds from Black businessmen to post bail for jailed students.[237]

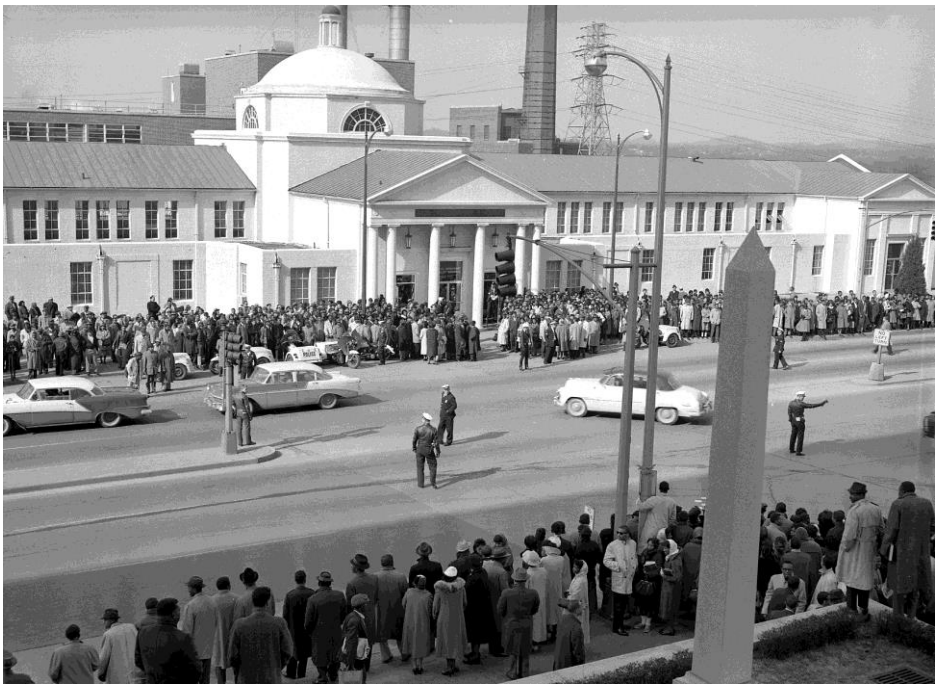

Figure 9. Photograph of protestors outside the Public Safety Building, circa 1960 (Source: Metro Nashville Archives).

The interracial sit-ins and their aftermath brought national media attention to Nashville. At a press conference held at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill on March 1, Lawson explained that the Nashville students adopted their own rules. "When the sit-ins began in North Carolina, we were not thinking at that time in terms of mixed [race] sit-ins (in Nashville)," said Lawson. "[W]henever a movement representing real progress developed among Negroes in other cities, every Negro instinctively feels it is their movement." However, in Nashville white students from Fisk, Scarritt, Vanderbilt, and Peabody had joined the Black students in the nonviolent workshops and sit-in demonstrations. When pressed on why college

[237] Westfeldt 1960, 18, Lovett 2005, 126–127; *The Tennessean*, "Nashville Then: 1960 Civil Rights Movement in Nashville," March 2, 2017; Sumner 1989, 68; Angeline Butler, interview with Natalie Bell, September 11, 2023.

students were leading the demonstrations, Lawson said it was "because students were somewhat discontented with the conduct of their elders and because they felt…adults were seemingly not going to do anything."[238]

Dr. Charles J. Walker (1912–1997), a local physician and NCLC treasurer, described the relationship between the students and adults this way: "The students were the workhorses. The Nashville Christian Leadership Conference were the ones who supported them with money, moral support, encouragement, and control."[239]

On March 2, students who had been released from jail gathered at Fisk's Memorial Chapel where university president Dr. Stephen J. Wright (1910–1996) reassured the Fisk students that they would not be expelled for participating in the sit-in demonstrations, contending that they were exercising their constitutional rights. Wright had been Fisk president since 1957. According to Lewis, Wright was the first university president to take such a stand, which boosted the spirits of the students. Later, presidents of American Baptist and Meharry also agreed not to expel their students for being arrested during the sit-in demonstrations. That same day, students staged sit-ins at the lunch counters in the two downtown bus terminals (Figure 10), resulting in the arrest of 63 students.[240]

Meanwhile, the executive board at Vanderbilt University reacted to the media attention by pressuring Vanderbilt chancellor Harvie Branscomb (1894–1998) to force Lawson to withdraw from the Divinity School or give up his leadership role with the sit-in demonstrations. Lawson refused to do either. On March 3, Branscomb expelled Lawson, claiming the action "in no way inferred an attempt to deny freedom of thought, conscience or speech or of the right to protest against social custom." According to Wallace Westfeldt, Branscomb stated, "The issue is whether or not the university can be identified (through Lawson) with a continuing campaign of mass disobedience of law as a means of protest." Eleven of sixteen members of Vanderbilt's Divinity School faculty and 111 of the 428 full-time Vanderbilt faculty members rejected Branscomb's reasoning for the expulsion and issued opposition statements.[241]

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[238] Dick Battle, "Negro Minister Denies 'Sit-In' Leadership In Nashville," *Nashville Banner*, March 2, 1960, 16; Linda T. Wynn, "Sit-ins, Nashville," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed June 18, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/sit-ins-nashville/.
[239] Sumner 1989, 23–24.
[240] Lovett 2005, 127; Westfeldt 1960, 2; Reavis L. Mitchell Jr., "Stephen J. Wright (1910–1996)," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 313–315; Paul K. Conkin, *Gone with the Ivy: A Biography of Vanderbilt University*, Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1985, 547–573.
[241] Westfeldt 1960, 8–10; Lovett 2005, 129–130; Sumner, "Lawson," 2018.

On March 4, Nashville's police chief Douglas Hosse ordered four Nashville policemen to arrest Lawson at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill on the charge of "unlawful conspiracy to commit acts injurious to public trade and commerce" (Figure 11). Additionally, 79 of the 80 students arrested during the sit-ins on February 27 were re-arrested under the same conspiracy charges. The police had given a heads-up call to the press who were on hand to record the arrests. The arrest brought Lawson's wife, Dorothy, to tears. She was driven home by Paul Bushnell, one of Lawson's classmates at Vanderbilt. Although students at Vanderbilt protested the expulsion of Lawson and picketed at Kirkland Hall, editors of the student newspaper, *Vanderbilt Hustler*, endorsed the university's decision. "Obedience to the law is in the university's best interest," read the editorial. "The Lawson case has proved at least one thing to us: that is time for every Vanderbilt student to debate, with himself and his fellows, the entire issue of segregation. As the South's future leaders, these students will likely be called upon to give an answer, and for the sake of everyone concerned, it had better be a good one."[242]

The day after Lawson's arrest, Mayor West created a Biracial Committee, which resulted in a temporary suspension of the sit-in demonstrations. Meanwhile, members of the SCC continued to meet daily. Likewise, Judge Andrew Doyle delayed the trials of students to give the Biracial Committee a chance to seek a solution to the volatile situation. Committee members included Dr. Stephen Wright; Dr. W.S. Davis, president of Tennessee A&I; F. Donald Hart, president of Temco, Inc.; Lipscomb Davis, president of Davis Cabinet Company; B.B. Gullet, president of the Nashville Bar Association; and attorney George Barrett, president of the Nashville Community Relations Conference, which encouraged liberal whites to support the civil rights movement behind the scenes. Wright and Davis were the only Black committee members. The next day, the committee secretary, Dr. Stephen Wright, anticipated the "sit-in demonstrations by Negro students would cease until the mayor's special committee reports on the situation," as reported by David Halberstam (1934–2007) with *The Tennessean*. (According to John Seigenthaler, Halberstam was the only reporter at *The Tennessean* to cover the sit-ins.)[243]

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[242] Westfeldt 1960, 4, 6; Lovett 2005, 130; "VU Paper OK's Ouster of Lawson: Obedience to Law Praised," *Nashville Banner*, March 4, 1960, 1; Paul Bushnell 2003; *Vanderbilt Hustler*, March 11, 1960, as quoted in Jeffrey A. Turner, "The Rise of Black and White Student Protest in Nashville," in *Rebellion in Black and White: Southern Student Activism in the 1960s*, edited by Robert Cohen and David J. Synder, Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press, 2013, 271–272. By April 1962, the *Vanderbilt Hustler* endorsed desegregation.

[243] Sumner 1989, 68; Westfeldt 1960, 4; Halberstam 1998, 206–207; Lewis 1998; Lovett 2005, 142. Halberstam worked at *The Tennessean* from 1956–1960 before moving to New York to work for the *New York Times*.

Figure 10. Photograph of students staging a sit-in at the Post Restaurant lunch counter in the Greyhound bus terminal, circa 1960(Source: Metro Nashville Archives).

Figure 11. Photograph of James Lawson in the basement of First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill where he had led workshops, March 1960 (Source: Metro Nashville Archives).

On March 10, several Black students ate lunch at the Post Restaurant lunch counter in the Greyhound Bus Terminal. The students included Diane Nash, Matthew Walker Jr., Peggy Alexander, and Stanley Hemphill. "The Negroes aren't to be arrested," said restaurant manager Hilda Nichols. "We had orders if they came in and demanded service we'd have to serve them because of this ICC [Interstate Commerce Commission] thing." Regardless, the Nashville police questioned the four students. This marked the first time a lunch counter was successfully desegregated in Nashville and signified a small victory in the ongoing battle.[244]

Thirty-six members of the George Peabody faculty, acting as individuals, issued a statement on March 19 urging Mayor West's Biracial Committee to find "avenues of progress toward better race relationships." The Vanderbilt Student Christian Association issued a statement which said, "The lunch counter situation is only one example of the many in-equalities which arise from racial prejudice throughout the nation. We are in sympathy with the general feelings and with the desire of the Negro students to raise protestation against these unfair practices." On March 21, NCLC members went to 11 white churches where they passed out leaflets and asked churchgoers to pray for an end to racial segregation. They were invited to take part in worships services at seven churches.[245]

On March 20, some 150 alumni of Vanderbilt's Divinity School issued a statement urging the reinstatement of Lawson, who had been offered scholarships to resume his theological studies at Yale and Boston universities. Several professors resigned in protest, such as microbiologist Sidney Harshman and Lou H. Silberman, professor of Jewish Literature and Thought. Many received offers to teach at the University of Chicago. Due to the resignations, Vanderbilt reached a compromise to allow Lawson to return to Vanderbilt, but he instead chose to finish his studies at Boston University. The conciliatory effort convinced some professors to stay at the university.[246]

When the Biracial Committee did not come to an acceptable resolution by March 25, the sit-in demonstrations resumed with some 120 students, including Marion Barry and Rodney Powell from Fisk, sitting-in at nine downtown stores such as Harvey's and Cain-Sloan. Students entered the Iris Dining Room at Cain-Sloan but were refused service by owner John Sloan who was adamantly against desegregation. Four students were arrested at the Moon-McGrath Drugstore lunch counter, including John Lewis and Jean Wynona Fleming from Fisk and O.D. Hunt and Dennis Gregory Foote, both students at Tennessee A&I.

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[244] *The Tennessean*, "Nashville Then: 1960 Civil Rights Movement in Nashville," March 2, 2017; Charlene Folsom, "Date-Line–Nashville: Strides Toward Freedom," *The Meter*, Vol. VIII, No. 7, March 1960, 1, 3. *The Meter* was the Tennessee A&I student newspaper. On November 7, 1955, the ICC announced that the separate but equal doctrine no longer applied to interstate transportation, which included bus terminals; however, it was not enforced in segregated cities and states (NHL Public Accommodations Theme Study 2009, 44).

[245] Folsom, "Date-Line–Nashville," 1960, 3. The names of the white churches are unknown.

[246] Sumner 1989, 68; Roseman 2010, 212.

They were represented by attorneys Z. Alexander Looby, A.A. Birch, Avon Williams, and Coyness Ennix at court. A few days later, around 200 Black and white community members joined in prayer beneath the office window of Mayor West at the Davidson County Courthouse, where they asked for his assistance with their integration efforts.[247]

By the end of March, United Church Women of Nashville and Davidson County, an organization representing many congregations in the city, issued resolution calling for "social justice as an outgrowth of recent lunch counter sit-ins by Negro demonstrators." Members also bought snacks for the students who were in jail and provided sandwiches for students who were waiting to be transported to sit-in sites.[248]

In March, Myles Horton traveled from the Highlander Folk School to Nashville to participate in a mass meeting. He found that student sit-in demonstrators, some of whom had taken part in Highlander workshops, were willing to work in a biracial manner. This led Horton to plan "The New Generation Fights for Equality" interracial nonviolence workshop at Highlander. Several students and professors from Nashville spent part of their spring break at Highlander's seventh annual College Workshop held from April 1–3. The interracial workshop was attended by 82 people from 19 states and four countries, including Denmark, England, and Kenya. Nashville was represented by students from Fisk, Tennessee A&I, American Baptist, Meharry, Scarritt, and Vanderbilt. Fisk students Paul LaPrad and Marion Barry served on the planning committee. Discussion leaders included Dr. Herman Long from Fisk's RRI and Rev. J. Metz Rollins, a Presbyterian field worker. The "New Generation" workshop opened with a discussion of the sit-in lunchroom demonstrations occurring in the South. Most of the participants, Black and white, were sit-in veterans.[249]

On April 5, the Biracial Committee recommended that downtown whites-only dining rooms be temporarily desegregated for a period of 90 days by dividing the eating areas into two sections—one for whites only and one for whites and Blacks to eat together. If the plan worked, the city would drop charges against the 150 student demonstrators arrested during the sit-ins. Students, however, rejected the recommendation in a statement signed by the NCLC and Student Advisory Committee. Signatories represented Fisk, Tennessee

[247] Halberstam 1998; Sumner 1989, 69.
[248] "United Church Women Call for Social Justice," *Nashville Banner*, March 11, 1960, 3; Amanda Hughett, "Always the Backbone, Rarely the Leader: Black Women Activists and the Reconceptualization of Respectability during the 1960 Nashville Sit-in Movement," *Pursuit - The Journal of Undergraduate Research at The University of Tennessee*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, Article 4, 2010.
[249] Glen 1996,174; Hale 2018, 99–119 in *Remaking Reality: US Documentary Culture after 1945* by University of North Carolina Press; SNCC: Candie Carawan website; Septima Clark's 9/131960 Highlander Report. Fisk student Candie Anderson met folk singer Guy Carawan at the workshop and later married him.

A&I, Meharry, American Baptist, and Vanderbilt as well as the pastors of First Community Church, Clark Memorial Methodist Church, and First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill.[250]

That same day, a mass rally with hundreds of participants was held on Jefferson Street at Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church, where Dr. Vivian Henderson (1923–1976), an economics professor at Fisk, called for an economic boycott of whites-only businesses. This approach had been tested in other cities. And this was not the first time a boycott had been utilized in Nashville. On March 4, 1957, Black residents boycotted a Louis Armstrong concert at Ryman Auditorium after the venue refused to integrate the audience seating. Fisk's Social Action Committee, the NAACP chapter at Fisk, and the Nashville chapter of CORE led the Ryman boycott. The students claimed that previous Ryman concerts by Black performers, such as Duke Ellington and Nat King Cole, had featured integrated audiences. Police guarded the Ryman due to the recent bombing of Armstrong's concert in Knoxville. In the end, the concert's audience was made up of 2,000 white people in the balcony seats and 300 Black people in the floor seats. Students at Fisk considered this a success and the following week, considered boycotting downtown movie theaters in a "stayaway" campaign as a method of "overcoming segregation." Newspapers across Tennessee published articles about the 1957 "stayaway" campaign. The 1960 economic boycott lasted for seven weeks with both Black and white customers refusing to shop at segregated stores. The "No Fashions for Easter" boycott campaign resulted in deserted downtown streets. After losing around 20 percent of their business, on May 10, 1960, six downtown stores, led by Cain-Sloan and Harvey's department stores, relented, and opened to Black shoppers. Reporters at *Time* magazine referred to the storeowners as "pocketbook integrationists."[251]

On April 11, demonstrators marched on the War Memorial Square with poster signs supporting and opposing integration. White anti-integrationist Virgil Glenn struck white pro-integrationist Wilson Yates from Vanderbilt's Divinity School, in full view of the police, who arrested Glenn, reportedly the first anti-integrationist arrested during the demonstrations. Shortly thereafter, the police also arrested Yates. The confrontation on the square made national news and sit-ins resumed for the first time since March 25.

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[250] Halberstam 1998; Sumner 1989, 69; *Nashville Banner*, "98 Per Cent," April 11, 1960; *The Tennessean*, "Committee's Recommendations: '…To Promote Peace,'" April 6, 1960, 1.

[251] Lovett 2005, 136; Linda T. Wynn, "Economic Withdrawal During the Nashville Sit-Ins," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, Profiles, 2021, 75–78; *Chattanooga Daily Times*, March 14, 1957, 9; *Daily News-Journal*, March 6, 1957, 6; *The Tennessean*, March 2, 1957, 6; *The Tennessean*, March 3, 1957, 55; *The Tennessean*, March 17, 1957, 2; *Nashville Banner*, March 4, 1957, 8; *Nashville Banner*, March 5, 1957, 11; *Nashville Banner*, March 13, 1957, 38; *Nashville Banner*, March 17, 1957, 38; Morgan Jackson Willis, "'Walking the Edge': Vanderbilt University and the Nashville Sit-In Crisis of 1960," Thesis, Princeton University, 1990, 120.

Notably, Tennessee Education Commissioner Joe Morgan threatened to expel any student from a state university who participated in a demonstration.[252]

At the Arcade the following day, white male anti-integrationists attacked Rufus Jamison, a 16-year-old Black student at Cameron High School. Jamison had thrown a bottle at them, which initiated a mob attack. Jamison was arrested. The white mob also attacked Clarence Thomas and Marion Barry. More demonstrations were held at Kress, Woolworth's, and McLellan's (Figure 9).[253]

Over Easter weekend, April 15 to April 17, several students from Nashville traveled to Raleigh, North Carolina, to meet with students at Shaw University for the SCLC's Youth Leadership Conference, organized by Ella Baker. On the last day of the conference, the SCLC formed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Most universities sent two or three delegates; however, the Nashville group sent three cars carrying 16 students, by far the largest contingency in attendance. SNCC, whose headquarters were in Atlanta, brought the second largest contingency. One of the Nashville drivers was Paul Bushnell, a white graduate student at Vanderbilt's Divinity School. James Lawson, who some students considered to be "the young people's Martin Luther King," served as the keynote speaker and received a standing ovation. Lawson said the point of the sit-ins was "to raise the moral question about what kind of society we are," recalled Bushnell. "This is—we are calling the injustice of segregation to the attention of the country. We want people to address this as an issue of conscience."[254]

At the event, folk singer Guy Carawan and students from throughout the region taught the SNCC group songs, they had learned during the recent workshop at Highlander. One of the songs, "We Shall Overcome," a nineteenth century gospel hymn, quickly became a protest song and anthem of the Civil Rights Movement. SNCC members elected Diane Nash head of protest activities and chair of the coordinating committee between students and adults. According to Nash, "I ran into some real problems in terms of being the only woman at the state when were just setting up SNCC as an organization. It was really rough not being just one of the guys. They did tend to look at me that way. However, they had to tolerate me because I had such

[252] Sumner 1989, 69; *The Tennessean*, "Nashville Then," March 2, 2017.
[253] Sumner 1989, 69; *The Tennessean*, "Nashville Then," March 2, 2017.
[254] Hale 2018, 99–119; SNCC, *Student Voice*, Vol. 1, No. 1, June 1960, 1; Lovett 2005, 135–136; Cornfield 2021, 478; Paul Bushnell, "Nashville Memories," Oral History, Illinois Wesleyan University, 2003. Bushnell participated in two or three sit-ins as well as movement meetings. Although pregnant at the time, his wife, Dorothy, participated as an observer, so demonstrators would have a witness to testify in court, if necessary.

a strong base in Nashville, and at that time I had gotten probably more publicity than any other student in the movement."[255]

Finding Courage: Looby Bombing Unites the City

At 5:30 a.m. on April 19, 1960, a passenger in a moving car tossed a bomb into the front window of the home of Z. Alexander Looby, lead attorney for the students and longtime civil rights leader, and his wife Grafta Looby (1905–1997). Looby's home was next to the Fisk and Meharry campuses. Although the bomb destroyed much of the house, Looby and his wife were asleep in a rear bedroom and were not injured in the blast. The neighboring house occupied by David and Josephine Ezell sustained significant damage, and 120 windows were blown out of a Meharry campus building across the street, where student Garry Hamilton Radford was sleeping (Figure 12). Thirty minutes later, the SCC, including John Lewis and Diane Nash, held a meeting at Clark Memorial Methodist Church in response to the bombing. After hearing the explosion, the previously scheduled meeting was made more urgent. During the meeting, the students decided to organize a spontaneous Silent March down Jefferson Street to the courthouse in response to the act of domestic terrorism. [256]

Nash was unsure if the "mass march, that fast, that day, was the thing to do, at that time." "The movement has a way of reaching inside you and bringing out things that even you didn't know were there…such as courage," reflected Nash during a 1985 interview. The students met with Lawson and Rev. Vivian, who later claimed the idea of a Silent March was borrowed from the powerful silent anti-lynching parades of the early twentieth century, such as the one held in downtown Nashville in 1918. "It [the bombing] was such an outrageous act that it…could be very useful to the nonviolent movement then to move," explained Rev.

[255] Hale 2018, 99–119; SNCC: Candie Carawan website; SNCC, *Student Voice*, Vol. 1, No. 1, June 1960, 1; Lovett 2005, 135–136; NHL Public Accommodations Theme Study 2009, 59; Belinda Robnett, *How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, 102; Cornfield 2021, 478. A modern version of "We Shall Overcome" was first introduced as a protest song by tobacco workers led by Lucille Simmons during the 1946–1947 Charleston Cigar Factory strike in Charleston, South Carolina. Simmons taught the song to Highlander Folk School's Zilphia Horton, and folk singer Pete Seeger; they published it in 1947.

[256] Lovett 2005, 138; Lee 2010, 214; Halberstam 1998, 228; Interview with C.T. Vivian conducted by Blackside, Inc. on January 23, 1986, for *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years (1954–1964)*. Washington University Libraries, Film and Media Archive, Henry Hampton Collection; Interview with Diane Nash conducted by Blackside, Inc. on November 12, 1985, for *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years (1954–1964)*. Washington University Libraries, Film and Media Archive, Henry Hampton Collection; Garry Hamilton Radford, Response to Nashville Civil Rights Movement Documentation Project, June 21, 2023.

Vivian during a 1986 interview. "It was a uniting of the city, but the outcome would be decided by how we, in fact, channeled that energy. And then we had the first major march of the movement."[257]

Figure 12. Photograph showing the bombed Looby House (right) and Ezell House (left), 1960 (Source: Nashville Public Library Special Collections).

On the afternoon of April 19, Bernard Lafayette and members of the Student Central Committee gathered students at the Tennessee A&I campus and initiated the Silent March, which followed Jefferson Street east to the Fisk and Meharry campuses, then turned south at 3rd Avenue North before ending at the Davidson County Courthouse on the downtown public square. Led by Diane Nash, Bernard Lafayette, Angeline Butler, Rev. Vivian, and other members of the Student Central Committee, the Silent March started with 1,500 people and grew to around 3,000 participants by the time the group reached the courthouse where they met with Mayor Ben West (Figure 13). People left their homes and students left their classrooms and dormitories to join the march. Motorists drove along at the speed of the marchers. "The last mile or so," said

[257] Lovett 2005, 138; Lee 2010, 214; Halberstam 1998, 228; Interview with C.T. Vivian conducted by Blackside, Inc., 1986; Interview with Diane Nash conducted by Blackside, Inc., 1985. Nashville's 1918 Silent Parade was organized in part by Rev. W.R. Stephens of Clark (*Nashville Globe*, February 22, 1918, 1, 8).

John Lewis, "The only sound was the sound of our footsteps, all those feet." At the public square, Guy Carawan played his guitar and led the song "We Shall Overcome."[258]

Figure 13. Photograph of the Silent March along Jefferson Street at 8th Avenue North, led by Diane Nash (center), Bernard Lafayette (right), and Rev. C.T. Vivian (left), 1960. James Lawson is behind with the handkerchief (Source: *The Tennessean*).

The effect of some 3,000 people—Black and white—marching silently and peacefully three abreast for over three miles was described by participants as awe-inspiring. John Lewis described the endless line of interracial marchers as a "stupendous scene." The confrontation with Mayor Ben West on the steps of the courthouse garnered national press. Nash described the meeting:

> Here was a situation in which two forces were meeting head on. And there had to be a showdown. He had to say something…this was the very first time I had personally ever felt the mayor's

[258] Lovett 2005, 138–139; Lee 2010, 212–214; NHL Public Accommodations Theme Study 2009, 54. Interviews with Diane Nash and James Lawson conducted by Blackside, 1985. Accounts to the total number of people who participated in the Silent march varies from 2,000 to 5,000.

> presence as a human being because up until this moment he always been a name on a sign that I'd seen. But now I felt a real concern for him. I could sympathize with his situation. He was really on a spot. Here were 5,000 people who were angry at him in a sense because we felt he should have done something he hadn't done, and we were telling him so. I'm sure he must have felt rather alone at that moment. We needed him to say 'integrate the counters' or to tell Nashville to do what Nashville what it should've done a long time ago, like about 95 years ago after the Civil War. So, I asked the mayor, first of all, Mayor West do you feel that it's wrong to discriminate against a person solely on the basis of his race or color?[259]

Mayor West later recalled:

> Here were a group of youngsters who were outraged because their leader's home had been dynamited. And I felt outraged along with them. And to that extent we had a community feeling between [us] that made me have a feeling that really we were after the same thing…And so we had this discussion down here in front of the city hall and I was glad to discuss it with them. I've been asked were you afraid…but the mere fact there were thousands of [marchers] didn't intimidate me in the least…I felt they were justifiably upset by this horrible thing that happened. And so, they asked me some pretty soul searching questions and one was addressed to me as a human being. And I tried the best I could to answer it frankly and honestly that I could not agree that it was morally right for someone to sell them merchandise and refuse them service. And I had to answer it just exactly that way.[260]

To cheers from the protesters, Mayor West declared, "I appeal to all citizens to end discrimination, to have no bigotry, no bias, no discrimination." The following day the headline of *The Tennessean* read, "Mayor Says Integrate Counters." When Mayor West agreed with Diane Nash that Nashville's lunch counters should be desegregated, the Nashville Student Movement demonstrated to the world that the nonviolent, direct-action methods taught by Lawson could indeed achieve social change. Thus, the Silent March was a decisive turning point in the American Civil Rights Movement.[261] Nash later recalled:

> "One of the things that we were able to do in the movement…that we learned also from Gandhi's movement was to turn the energy of violence that was perpetrated against us into advantage. And so,

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[259] *NBC White Paper: Sit-In*, 1960, accessed July 30, 2023, https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/multimedia/nashville-city-hall-confrontation.html.
[260] Ibid.
[261] Lovett 2005, 138–139; Lee 2010, 212–214; *The Tennessean*, "Mayor Says Integrate Counters," *The Tennessean*, April 20, 1960

> if Attorney Looby's house was bombed that was used as a catalyst to draw many thousands of the people to express their opposition to segregation."[262]

Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at Fisk University's Johnson Gymnasium on April 20, 1960, after a bomb threat delayed the speech. The audience of 4,000 people, Black and white, spilled over into the grounds outside the building. Loudspeakers were quickly installed so people outside could hear. During his address, King praised the Nashville Student Movement as "the best organized and most disciplined in the Southland" and that the students had a "better understanding of the philosophy of the [nonviolent] movement than any other group." "We will say, do what you will to us, but we will wear you down by our capacity to suffer," stated King. "I came to Nashville not to bring inspiration, but to gain inspiration from the great movement that has taken place in the community." The event included the singing of freedom songs, led by Guy Carawan (Figure 14).[263]

Figure 14. Photograph of Guy Carawan leading freedom songs at Fisk's Johnson Gymnasium with John Lewis (far right), 1960 (Source: Nashville Public Library Special Collections).

[262] Diane Nash, interview with Blackside, Inc., 1985.
[263] *Nashville Banner*, "King Urges Sit-Ins Continue," April 21, 1960, 4; Sumner, 1989, 20.

According to John Lewis, Lawson's workshops at Clark "played a major role in educating, preparing and shaping a group of young men and women who would lead the way for years to come in the nonviolent struggle for civil rights in America."[264] In his memoir, Lewis asserted that Lawson's workshops:

> …became the focus of my life, more important even than my classes. I'd finally found the setting and the subject that spoke to everything that had been stirring in my soul for so long. This was stronger than school, stronger than church. This was the word made *real*, made whole. It was something I'd been searching for my whole life.[265]

On May 10, six downtown stores desegregated their lunch counters without incident. The first two were Harvey's and Cain-Sloan. That afternoon, a small group of African American students walked up to several downtown lunch counters, sat down, and ordered food. Other stores followed suit, and some hired African American workers for the first time. Although cities in other parts of the U.S. such as Wichita, Kansas, and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (both in 1958) had previously desegregated their lunch counters, most historians agree that the desegregation of Nashville's lunch counters was the first in a major southern city. Soon, other cities in the South would follow Nashville's lead.[266]

When the stores desegregated, C.T. Vivian ran into the Mills Book Store on Church Street to share the news. Located across the street from the Wilson-Quick Drugstore, the bookstore was owned and operated by Bernard "Bernie" Schweid (1916–1990) and his wife Adele Mills Schweid (1916–2005), who had inherited the bookstore from her father Reuben M. Mills, who opened it in 1892. The Schweids were Jewish allies during the Civil Rights Movement and made the bookstore a safe space for demonstrators during the sit-ins.[267]

A few days later, SNCC held its first meetings from May 13–14 at Atlanta University where members elected Marion Barry of Fisk as chairman. Mike Penn served as a delegate for Tennessee A&I. James Lawson authored the SNCC Statement of Purpose. Three subcommittees were formed: Coordination, Communication, and Finance. SNCC established its headquarters at the SCLC office on Auburn Avenue. As chair, Barry represented SNCC at events across the U.S., such as the Democratic National Convention in

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[264] Lewis 1998, 84.
[265] Lewis 1998, 84.
[266] Lovett 2005, 140; Wills 1990, 120; Sumner 1989, 69; SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 1, No. 2, August 1960, 6; NHL Public Accommodations Theme Study 2009, 51.
[267] Roseman 2010, 215–216. Bernie Schweid resigned from the Nashville Rotary Club in protest when it refused to admit Black presidents of Fisk, Meharry, and TSU.

Los Angeles and the Republican National Convention in Chicago. Barry and Diane Nash and other SNCC delegates spoke before the Platform Committees at both conventions on behalf of the student movement.[268]

That spring, Guy Carawan created and produced *The Nashville Sit-In Story; Songs & Scenes of Nashville Lunch Counter Desegregation [by the Sit-In Participants]*, an album recorded by Willard Electronics on location in Nashville. Carawan wanted to spotlight the students' efforts. Carawan's first documentary album, the recording included music by students of the sit-in movement, including King Hollands, with speaking parts by John Lewis, Diane Nash, Marion Barry, Bernard Lafayette, and C.T. Vivian, who also served as the narrator. The tapes were edited by Mel Kaiser at Cue Recording Studio and records were pressed by Folkway Records, both located in New York City. SNCC sold and distributed documentary albums of the movement, which were played and listened to collectively at mass meetings. The cover featured photographs from Nashville and a history of the sit-in movement (Figure 15).[269]

In August, Carawan and Septima Clark held the first workshop on music in the movement at Highlander Folk School. The workshop was designed to systemically collect, teach, and distribute "freedom songs" as a continuation of the student workshop held earlier in the year and *The Nashville Sit-In Story* recording. At the end of the workshop, Carawan and Clark gave the participants a mimeographed songbook containing the protest songs. Guy then traveled to the SCLC and SNCC fall conferences in Atlanta and passed out the songbook and copies of *The Nashville Sit-In Story* record to participants.[270]

That fall, SNCC promoted *The Nashville Sit-In Story* record in a "Music of the Movement" column, in their *Student Voice* newsletter, which stated: "Guy Carawan, artist of folk music, introduced 'We Shall Overcome' to the students. This great ballad has become the theme song and Guy, the music man. Recently released by Folkways is the LP 'The Nashville Sit-In Story', conceived and directed by Guy with the Nashville students and ministers. These are the sounds that sweep the South today."[271]

In October, SNCC held its first conference with sessions and special speakers at Atlanta University. Around 300 students attended representing 46 "protest centers." Nashville was represented by students from Fisk,

[268] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 1, No. 2, August 1960, 1–3.
[269] Hale 2018, 99–119; King Hollands, interview with Natalie Bell, July 11, 2023; Angeline Butler, interview with Natalie Bell, September 11, 2023. The location of the album recording is currently unknown; however, Carawan was known to carry a tape recorder with him to record singing sessions with students. According to Butler, the sessions usually took place in buildings on the Fisk campus.
[270] Hale 2018, 99–119; King Institute Papers.
[271] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol 1., No. 3, October 1960, 5.

American Baptist, Meharry, and Tennessee A&I. Presenters at the conference included James Lawson and Martin Luther King Jr.[272]

Figure 15. Illustration of the cover of *The Nashville Sit-In Story* album showing (clockwise) students in jail, the Silent March, and students at the desegregated lunch counter in the Trailway Bus Terminal (Source: Smithsonian Institution Folkways Records Collection).

[272] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 1, No. 3, October 1960, 1.

Back in Nashville that November, students initiated a new wave of sit-ins and demonstrations at downtown businesses that had not yet desegregated, such as the Wilson-Quick Drugstore, Krystal's, Hershel's Tic Toc, Embers dinner club, and the restaurant in the Trailways Bus Terminal. The manager of Krystal's ordered two employees to set up a fumigating machine to force Black demonstrators, including John Lewis and James Bevel, out of the store. The manager also used water hoses, cleaning powder, and wet brooms to force them out. The owner of Tic Toc's chased off five Black students and their white companions with a loaded gun. Police arrested several of the demonstrators, including Malcolm R. Carnahan, a white student at Vanderbilt's Divinity School.[273]

In October, James Bevel and Kwame Lillard led SCC workshops for Tennessee A&I students at Mt. Olive Baptist Church. The workshops included films and records about the Nashville sit-ins. "SEGREGATION crushes manhood, creates fear in the segregated, and makes him cowardly," the SCC claimed. "It develops in the person segregated a feeling of inferiority to the extent that he never knows what his capabilities are. SEGREGATION and discrimination make men slaves to their minds, and God did not make men to be slaves." To the contrary, "God made men to be free and walk the earth with dignity…SEGREGATION on the basis of color or race is a wicked thing because it penalizes a person for being what God has made him."[274]

In the fall, the city dropped the legal cases against the nearly 90 students arrested on the Big Saturday sit-in demonstration because the store owners refused to prosecute. The city refunded bond money to attorney Z. Alexander Looby, who, with the help of Fisk comptroller Isaiah T. Creswell (1902–1992) was able to determine how much money was to be refunded to each person who had donated to the students' bail fund. Black business leaders, such as owners of funeral homes, were part of a network of supporters who raised money within hours to post bail for jailed students.[275]

In 1960, both NBC and CBS sent film crews and reporters to Nashville to chronicle the sit-ins, resulting in three "flagship" documentaries. On December 20, NBC aired "Sit-In," a 60-minute documentary narrated by *NBC Nightly News* co-anchor Chet Huntley with interviews with Diane Nash and Mayor Ben West about the Silent March and the confrontation at the Davidson County Courthouse. This was the second installment of the *NBC White Paper* series focused on serious topics of widespread and urgent public interest. The narrative was written by Wallace Westfeldt, a former reporter for *The Tennessean*, who left the paper

[273] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 1, No. 4, November 1960, 5; *The Tennessean*, "Nashville Then," March 2, 2017.
[274] "Student Non-Violent Workshop," October 11, 1960, Pamphlet at Tennessee State University Archives.
[275] Lovett 2005, 145; SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 1, No. 4, November 1960, 5; King Hollands, interview with Natalie Bell, July 11, 2023. For more information on Creswell, see Robbie D. Jones, "Pearl and I.T. Creswell House: International-Style at Fisk University," *Tennessee-Architecture*, January 16, 2023, accessed July 1, 2023, https://tennessee-architecture.com/pearl-and-i-t-creswell-house-international-style-at-fisk-university/.

shortly after the sit-ins to work for NBC. Huntley began the episode by stating, "In this *NBC White Paper*, we shall examine the phenomenon of the sit-in, focusing on the one city where it had its clearest and most significant expression: Nashville, Tennessee."[276]

In early 1961, CBS aired "Anatomy of a Demonstration," featuring interviews by reporter L. Douglas Edwards with Nash and Lawson. The 30-minute documentary included video images recorded on March 25, 1960, of Lawson's nonviolent workshops, a lunch counter sit-in, and movement supporters utilizing telephone trees to spread the word about upcoming demonstrations. In Tennessee, CBS affiliates in Knoxville, Chattanooga, and Nashville refused to broadcast the documentary. The pro-integration orientation of the CBS documentary enraged Gov. Ellington who charged CBS with staging a publicity stunt. In January 1961, NBC aired "The Nashville Sit-In Story," an hour-long documentary which enhanced Nashville's reputation as the model sit-in movement city by highlighting the student leaders, particularly Lewis, Bevel, Nash, Lafayette, Barry, LaPrad, and Butler.[277]

Although most of Tennessee's major cities refused to air these documentaries, millions of television viewers throughout the nation began to see Nashville in a new light, particularly among progressive Blacks. For example, Andrew Young (b.1932), a Black man who worked for the National Council of Churches in New York, the "Nashville Sit-In Story" served as a call for him and his wife, Jean, to return to the South. "We were very excited about watching the program," recalled Young in his memoir. "It was rare enough that black people were featured on television, but the story of the Nashville student action against segregation was extraordinary…I cannot overstate how impressive and inspiring these young men and women were to us." Young left New York shortly thereafter to run citizenship training and leadership development at citizenship schools in Georgia with Septima Clark, Dorothy Cotton, and Bernice Robinson. The first day of each week-long training program began with a presentation of "The Nashville Sit-In Story," which had drawn him to the South and "inspired countless others."[278]

In 1961, SNCC workers used "The Nashville Sit-In Story" to recruit people to Jackson, Mississippi, for their direct-action campaigns. From 1963 to 1965, James Bevel used the "Sit-In" film during the Birmingham and Selma campaigns. According to historian Sasha Torres, the "Sit-In" film was compelling because it "sometimes addressed Blacks directly, even at the risk of bypassing or bewildering white audiences in the process." The narrative addressed not the white opinion leaders that NBC imagined as its

[276] Sumner 1989, 69, 244; Lee 2010, 169, 219–220; Sasha Torres, *Black, White, and in Color: Television and Black Civil Rights*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018, 36–38; *NBC White Paper: Sit-In*, 1960, accessed December 1, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7zlZJYTkws.
[277] Sumner 1989, 69, 244; Lee 2010, 169, 219–220; Torres 2018, 36–42.
[278] Torres 2018, 42–43.

audience, but "precisely those potentially insurgent black subjects whom Young or Bevel hoped to involve in the movement."[279]

"We're Gonna March": Second Phase of the Student Protest Movement

On February 1, 1961, John Lewis led more than 300 students in "stand-ins" at four segregated downtown movie theaters on Church Street: the Tennessee, Paramount, Princess, and Loew's Vendome. The stand-ins were part of a SNCC-led movement to desegregate movie theaters on the one-year anniversary of the Greensboro Sit-Ins. In Nashville, movie theater managers required Black patrons to sit in the upper balconies, if they were allowed to enter the theater at all. In November 1959, the manager of the Belmont Theater, an arthouse theater near Vanderbilt, would not allow three students from Fisk to watch a movie. One of the students was Ashakant Nimbark (1932–2003), a graduate student from India. When two of the Black students, Barbara Johnson and Carolyne Jordan, returned a couple of weeks later, the manager made an exception and allowed them to watch an Ingmar Bergmann-directed film from the balcony.[280]

The Nashville stand-ins continued persistently for three months (Figure 16). The demonstrators were attacked by white males with rocks, darts, eggs, and bricks from the downtown Carnegie Library, then under demolition. The police arrested the demonstrators, including John Lewis, James Bevel, Bernard Lafayette, and James Zwerg, a white exchange student at Fisk who joined SNCC. Students in other cities in the South also led movie theater stand-ins, including Baltimore, Winston-Salem, High Point, Charlotte, Greensboro, Hampton (VA), Richmond, and Chattanooga. SNCC referred to the movie theater stand-ins as the "second phase of the student protest movement." SNCC asked that students in the northern and western parts of the U.S. to conduct picketing at theaters owned by RKO, Loew's, and Paramount.[281]

In response to the stand-in demonstrations, theater managers moved ticket booths inside the lobbies to prevent protesters from tying up the line, but students slipped under the ropes to get inside. Eventually, the managers closed the theaters in response. After months of stand-ins, on April 24 the managers of four downtown movie theaters along Church Street gave in and desegregated, reportedly the first in the South to

[279] Torres 2018, 43–44. Andrew Young joined the SCLC where he worked with Rev. King and Bernard Lafayette. In 1964, he became the executive director of the SCLC and played key roles in the Civil Rights Campaigns in Birmingham, St. Augustine, Selma, and Atlanta. Young was with King in Memphis when he was assassinated in 1968. He later served in the U.S. House of Representatives, as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and mayor of Atlanta.
[280] Carolyne Lamar Jordan, email to Natalie Bell, August 7, 2023.
[281] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 2, No. 2, February 1961, 1; SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 2, No. 3, March 1961, 5–6.

do so. The theater managers adopted an experiment that allowed Black patrons to sit intermingled with white patrons in the downstairs seating area.[282]

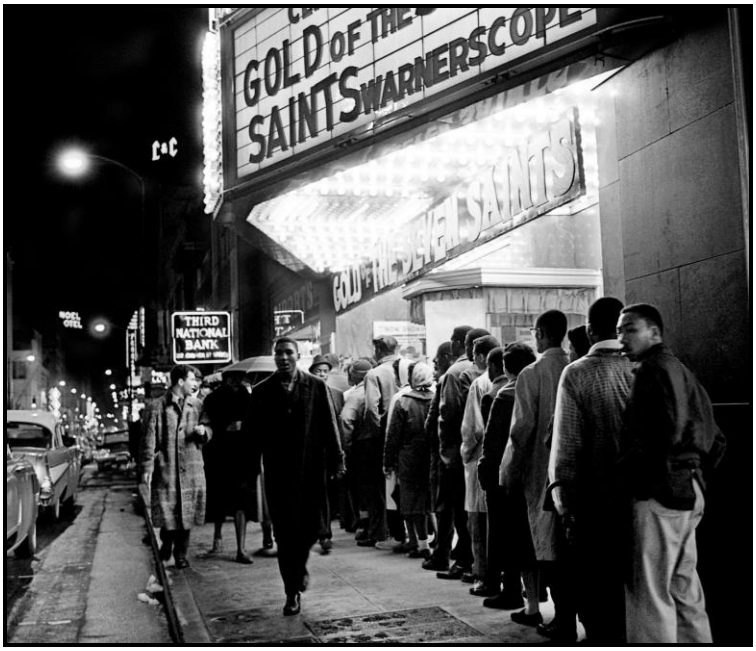

Figure 16. Photograph of a stand-in at the Paramount Theater, 1961 (Source: *The Tennessean*).

In late February, Nash returned to Nashville from Rock Hill, South Carolina, where she had been arrested during sit-in demonstrations and spent several days in jail. She promptly dropped out of Fisk and went to work full-time for the NCLC and as a field director for SNCC. She set up a small office in a residence housing the Baptist Student Center on Jefferson Street and rented a room at the Black YWCA. During this time, white allies organized groups, such as the Temple Social Justice Committee, formed in April 1961 by members of the Jewish community. Chaired by Dr. Fred Goldner Jr. (1925–2021), the committee educated members of Jewish congregations about social justice issues. Dr. Goldner desegregated his medical practice in the downtown Doctor's Building and his wife Martha Goldner (1933–2022) participated in sit-ins at Harvey's Department Store.[283]

[282] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 2, Nos. 4–5, April-May 1961, 4. It is unclear if the balcony areas were still available to Black patrons during the stand-ins.
[283] Lovett 2005, 145; Roseman 2010, 211.

"Violence Usually Serves to Strengthen Us": The Freedom Rides

In March 1961, SNCC announced that CORE would lead the 1961 Freedom Rides and would subsidize the costs of any students that wished to participate. The rides were scheduled to begin on May 1 in Washington, D.C. In April, Lewis traveled from Nashville to the nation's capital to train with CORE for the Freedom Rides to the South. The objective was to challenge the non-enforcement of the U.S. Supreme Court decisions *Morgan v. Virginia* (1946) and *Boynton v. Virginia* (1960), which ruled that segregated public buses were unconstitutional. The southern states had ignored the rulings and the federal government had not enforced them. Led by CORE director James Farmer, a Trailways bus and a Greyhound bus left Washington, D.C. on May 4 bound for a scheduled arrival in New Orleans on May 17. The Freedom Ride buses contained 13 young riders, seven Black and six white, determined to test local laws and customs that enforced segregated seating. The Freedom Rides brought national attention to the disregard of federal law and local violence used to enforce segregation in the South. Police arrested riders for trumped up charges of trespassing, unlawful assembly, violating local and state Jim Crow laws, and other alleged offenses. At many bus stations, police allowed white mobs to attack the riders without intervention.[284]

The plan was to ride through Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana where a civil rights rally was planned in New Orleans. One rider on each bus would abide by the segregation rules to avoid arrest and contact CORE and arrange for bail for those that were arrested. The rest disobeyed segregation rules. The riders encountered only minor trouble in Virginia and North Carolina, although a white mob beat John Lewis and Albert Bigelow at a bus station in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Lewis then left the group and flew to Philadelphia with plans to rejoin the ride at Montgomery.[285]

After successfully completing their trip through Georgia, the Freedom Rides encountered violence in Alabama. On Sunday, May 14 (Mother's Day), a white mob including many members of the KKK, attacked the Greyhound bus at the bus station in Anniston, Alabama. The bus driver left the station for Birmingham but had to pull over due to slashed tires five miles outside town; there the mob firebombed the crippled bus on the side of the road. The mob held the doors shut to burn the riders to the death; however, they escaped through the emergency door. The mob beat the riders as they got off, sending several to the hospital. Later in the day, the Trailways bus was also attacked at the Anniston bus station. The group made it to Birmingham, but the bus drivers would take them no further. United States attorney general Robert F. Kennedy (1925–1968) sent his administrative assistant John Seigenthaler (1927–2014) of Nashville to Birmingham to try to calm the situation. Kennedy arranged for an escort to Montgomery, but Greyhound

[284] SNCC, *Student Voice*, Vol. 2, No. 3, March 1961, 7; Halberstam 1998; Arsenault 1991; NHL Public Accommodations Theme Study 2009, 48–49.
[285] SNCC, *Student Voice*, Vol. 2, No. 3, March 1961, 7; Halberstam 1998; Arsenault 1991.

drivers refused to take the Freedom Riders anywhere. The riders then decided to abandon the Freedom Ride at Birmingham and fly to New Orleans to attend the rally.[286]

While in Philadelphia, John Lewis called Diane Nash in her new role as SNCC field director and discussed the situation. They decided Nashville students would help resurrect the Freedom Rides and ensure they continued from Birmingham. Lewis then flew to Nashville. After being informed of the plan, Kennedy asked Seigenthaler to call Nash and convince her to not continue the Freedom Rides. He made the request, but she refused. Diane Nash and Rodney Powell drove to Atlanta to try to convince King to join the Freedom Rides in Birmingham.[287]

On May 17, John Lewis, and a biracial group of nine other Nashville students boarded a bus in downtown Nashville for Birmingham. Upon arrival in Birmingham, police commissioner Theophilus Eugene "Bull" Connor (1897–1973) pulled the bus over and arrested two students, James Zwerg (white) and Paul Brooks (Black), for sitting together, then ordered the bus to the downtown bus station, where he arrested the remaining students, including Catherine Burks-Brooks (1939-2023) of Tennessee A&I. Seigenthaler traveled to Birmingham to try to talk Bull Connor into releasing the students, who kept their spirits up by singing freedom songs in the Birmingham City Jail.[288]

In the early hours of May 18, Bull Connor took the students back to Nashville in a three-car caravan. The policemen dropped the students off at Ardmore, a small town on the Tennessee/Alabama state line. Lewis called Nash from a Black family's home in Ardmore. Nash sent Kwame "Leo" Lillard from Nashville to Ardmore to pick them up and take them back to Birmingham. Nash sent Bernard Lafayette and nine more students to Birmingham via a train. Lewis's group went to Rev. Fred Shuttleworth's house and later linked up with Lafayette's group at the downtown bus station. John Seigenthaler traveled to Birmingham and met with Alabama Governor John Patterson. They worked out a deal to get the students out of Alabama.[289]

On May 20, the entire Nashville group traveled from Birmingham to Montgomery. Traveling at maximum speed, to avoid snipers, the Greyhound bus was surrounded by 32 Alabama state troopers and a plane overhead. At Montgomery an additional 75 Montgomery policemen met the convoy and escorted them to the downtown bus station. Although Gov. Patterson had promised their safe passage, the state trooper abandoned the Greyhound bus at the city limits, where the local police allowed a white mob of 200 to 300

[286] Halberstam 1998. During Robert F. Kenney's term as U.S. attorney general, John Seigenthaler served as assistant to John Doar, Kennedy's assistant attorney general for Civil Rights. Seigenthaler had previously worked as a reporter for *The Tennessean* alongside David Halberstam, who covered the Civil Rights Movement.
[287] Halberstam 1998; NHL Public Accommodations Theme Study, 2009, 62.
[288] Halberstam 1998; Lovett 2005, 160–161.
[289] Halberstam 1998; Lovett 2005, 160–161.

people including many KKK members to attack the Freedom Riders as well as Seigenthaler and the media. The attack was swift and violent. The mob used baseball bats and iron pipes to beat the riders, while the police did nothing. Fortunately, Floyd Mann with the Alabama state troopers intervened and saved the Freedom Riders from being killed. Ambulances refused to take the injured to hospitals, leaving them to be rescued by Black residents. Several riders were certain they would die in Montgomery. Seigenthaler arrived at the scene soon after the attack began. He was knocked unconscious with a lead pipe by two members of the KKK and suffered a cracked skull and broken ribs. Lewis and Zwerg were injured badly in the attack. Zwerg was unconscious for two days and hospitalized for five days; his hospital photos and quotes about the riot and movement were published in newspapers across the country.[290]

Acting as a spokesperson for the group, Nash stated "It would be a mistake to believe an incident of violence would end our efforts. Violence usually serves to strengthen us." Nash described the mob violence at Montgomery as "unbelievable. Here are citizens of the United States attacked for traveling through a part of the country."[291]

The following night, more than 1,500 people packed Montgomery's First Baptist Church to honor the Freedom Riders. Among the speakers were Ralph Abernathy Sr., Fred Shuttlesworth of Birmingham, James Farmer (CORE), and King. Despite protection from a handful of U.S. marshals, a mob of 3,000 white people attacked the church with tear gas. With city police making no effort to protect the church, civil rights leaders appealed to President Kennedy to send in the U.S. National Guard, prompting Gov. Patterson to reluctantly send in the Alabama National Guard early the next morning to disperse the mob, which had held the church captive throughout the night.[292]

On May 22, more Freedom Riders from Nashville arrived in Montgomery to replace those injured during the attack. Attorney General Robert Kennedy struck a deal with the governors of Alabama and Mississippi to arrange for the riders to be protected by state troopers and National Guard members along their route to Jackson. In return, the federal government would not intervene if local police decided to arrest the riders for violating local segregation laws. As anticipated, local police in Jackson, Mississippi, arrested the Freedom Riders as soon as they arrived at the whites only Trailways bus station in Jackson. The civil rights leaders decided to keep sending buses to Jackson to fill the jails with Freedom Riders. Once the city and county jails were filled, the state transferred the riders to the infamous Parchman State Penitentiary, where they were placed in maximum security units and subjected to physical violence. At one point, Parchman contained

[290] Halberstam 1998; Civil Rights Digital Library, "Eyes on the Prize."
[291] Lovett 2005, 164.
[292] Arsenault 1991; NHL Public Accommodations Theme Study, 2009, 63.

more than 300 Freedom Riders. While jailed, John Lewis missed his graduation ceremony at American Baptist.[293]

President Kennedy and Attorney General Kennedy called for a cooling off period over the summer; however, CORE, SNCC, and the SCLC rejected the idea and kept the Freedom Rides rolling through September. As a result, between May and August, Nashville became a crucial hub and rally point for sending hundreds of Freedom Riders, Black and white, to Alabama and Mississippi. Supporters traveled to Nashville from around the country, where they took buses from the two downtown bus terminals destined for Birmingham, Montgomery, and Jackson. Initially the participants in the Freedom Rides were primarily students from Tennessee A&I, American Baptist, Fisk, and George Peabody. On May 21, Tennessee's state education commissioner, Joe Morgan, announced that the state would decide that week whether to punish students from Tennessee A&I who had participated in a Freedom Ride and been arrested in Jackson. Presidents of Fisk, American Baptist, and George Peabody, all private schools, announced that their students would not be expelled. On June 26, Morgan decided to expel 14 students at Tennessee A&I for participating in the Freedom Rides to Jackson. The announcement of the expulsions made national news.[294]

On May 24, students and clergymen from Nashville participated in a Freedom Ride from Montgomery, Alabama, to Jackson, Mississippi. Students from American Baptist College included James Bevel, Joseph Carter, Bernard Lafayette Jr., John Lewis, Clarence Lloyd Thomas. Students from Fisk included Matthew Walker Jr. and Leroy Glenn Wright. Students from Tennessee A&I included Lucretia Collins and Earnest "Rip" Patton Jr. (Figure 17). Other Nashvillians that participated included Rev. Alexander M. Anderson of Clark Memorial Methodist Church, Rev. John Lee Copeland of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Rev. Grady Donald of Kayne Avenue Baptist Church, and Rev. James Lawson, then serving as pastor of Scott Chapel Methodist Church in Shelbyville, Tennessee. Rev. C.T. Vivian, who then lived in Chattanooga, also participated. Prior to departure, Rev. Lawson led a nonviolent workshop at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill. The two buses arrived in Jackson without incident; however, the Freedom Riders were arrested as soon as they arrived at the bus station. The following day, May 25, a Jackson city judge found them guilty and sentenced them to 60 days confinement in Parchman State Prison along with a $250 fine.[295]

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[293] Arsenault 1991.
[294] *Commercial Appeal*, May 22, 1961, 13; Lovett 2005, 164, 171. Tennessee A&I expelled the following students: Charles Butler, Catherine Burks-Brooks, William Habour, Larry Hunter, Allen Cason, Pauline C. Knight, Lester McKinnie, William Mitchell, Frederick Leonard, Ernest Patton, Etta Simpson, Mary Jean Smith, Francis Wilson, and Clarence Wright. The hometowns of the students included Birmingham, Charleston (SC), Cleveland (OH), Atlanta, Orlando, Memphis, Chattanooga, Bolivar (TN), and Nashville.
[295] Arsenault 2011, 539–541; Lovett 2005, 166–167.

Figure 17. Photograph of Nashville Freedom Riders Ernest Rip Patton (left) and Bernard Lafayette (aisle) with James Lawson (back left) on a bus headed from Montgomery to Jackson with National Guard troops standing guard (Source: crmvets.org).

Participants in the Freedom Rides left Nashville almost daily from the end of May through August. On May 29, Tennessee A&I's commencement ceremony at Kean Hall was delayed by two hours when students stood outside the building and refused to march into the arena unless all graduating seniors, including the Freedom Riders, were allowed to receive their degrees. After tense negotiations, the students were cleared to graduate amidst loud cheers. Student Lucretia Williams had posted bail in Jackson and flown to Memphis where she then took a bus to Nashville just in time for exams and graduation.[296]

Over the summer, primarily white participants traveled to Nashville from universities around the country, including Yale, Columbia, Cornell, Virginia Union, Central State College in Ohio, Middlebury College (Vermont), University of Minnesota, University of Chicago, University of Wisconsin, Hills Business College (Oklahoma), University of Bridgeport (Connecticut), Loyola College (Maryland), Long Beach State, City College of New York, University of Pennsylvania, San Jose State, San Francisco State, New York University, Michigan State, and the University of Washington. Other participants came from Chicago, Pal Alto, Minneapolis, Brooklyn, Ithaca, Cleveland, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia. Other participants included Carol Ruth Silver, a clerk for the United Nations, and David Kerr Morton, a folk singer from

[296] Arsenault 2011, 543–544; Lovett 2005, 168–169.

Wyoming. Reporters traveled from Staten Island, Chicago, and Munich, Germany, to ride along. One blind activist traveled to Nashville from Rochester, New York, to serve as a Freedom Rider. [297]

On May 29, President Kennedy announced that he would request that the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) declare segregation on interstate facilities to be null and void. However, it was expected to take until September 22, before the ICC issued an order to desegregate interstate travel, including bus stations and train terminals. The order took effect November 1. Nashville's central role in perpetuating the Freedom Rides from May through August had a profound impact on their success in desegregating bus terminals throughout the South.[298]

We Shall Overcome: Nashville Quartet

Prior to the Freedom Rides, on February 10, 1961, Guy Carawan organized a Highlander-sponsored benefit concert at Carnegie Hall in New York City to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the student movement. Students from Nashville and Montgomery sang freedom songs and Pete Seeger performed. Carawan had met the students at his music workshops at Highlander and sung with some of them in Nashville. Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth of Birmingham described the movement growing in the South to the Carnegie audience. The concert was recorded and took the form of an audio documentary performed live. The "Nashville Quartet" consisted of students at American Baptist, including James Bevel, Bernard Lafayette, Joseph Carter, and Samuel Collier. The "Montgomery Trio" consisted of three high school students: Minnie Hendrick, Mary Ethel Dozier, and Gladys Burnette Carter.[299]

Before leaving New York, Carawan took the students to the Folkway recording studio and held an impromptu recording session for a second civil rights movement documentary album, *We Shall Overcome: Songs of the "Freedom Riders" and the "Sit-Ins" Spirituals, Gospels and new songs of the Freedom Rider and Sit-In Movement*. The record was produced by Moe Asch. The album's liner notes featured photographs of Nashville, including the Nashville Quartet in front of a brick Bungalow, the downtown lunch counter sit-ins, an interracial nonviolent workshop on the Fisk lawn (Figure 18), the confrontation between Mayor West and Diane Nash at the courthouse, and King's speech at the Fisk's Johnson Gymnasium. The liner notes also contained a section entitled, "About the Movement." Attributed to Guy Carawan, this comprehensive overview of the student movement reads:[300]

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[297] Arsenault 2011: 548–549, 551–552, 556, 569–574.
[298] Lovett 2005, 168.
[299] Hale 2018, 99–119; Folkway Records, "We Shall Overcome," Liner Notes 1961.
[300] Hale 2018, 99–119; Folkway Records, "We Shall Overcome," Liner Notes 1961.

Since Feb. 1st, 1960, hundreds of thousands of Negro students have demonstrated their desire and determination to struggle for "first class citizenship" in America. In over three hundred Southern communities they have "sat-in" at public dime store lunch counters, "stood in" at public movie theaters, "knelt-in" at churches, "waded-in" at public beaches, visited segregated public parks, and disobeyed the segregated seating signs in busses, trains, depots and stations where waiting rooms, rest rooms, drinking fountains and eating places are segregated. They have come together to express this new surge towards freedom at mass meetings, prayer vigils and poster walks. They have participated in voter registration drives and stimulated economic withdrawal campaigns against the businesses that practice Jim Crow customs. They have very effectively dramatized to their communities, the country and the world that they will no longer accept "second class citizenship" in this "land of the free and the home of the brave." They have once and for all broken the Southern stereotype and disproven the idea that Negroes are happy with segregation. Over three thousand students have had to go to jail because they participated in these demonstrations. Many have suffered violence at the hands of hoodlums and policemen who in many cases are committed to enforce the customs of segregation. But this hasn't dampened the spirits of the students or the effectiveness of the movement. On the contrary it has continued to spontaneously mushroom all over the South where Negro student communities exist and their courageous action has caused the older generation of adult Negroes (who are generally very cautious when it comes to such radical social action) to act in support of them. Shocked and indignant over the treatment given the students by the hoodlum elements, police and courts, the adults have rallied to their aid and raised great quantities of money for their legal defense, participated in economic boycotts, gone to the polls in greater numbers, demonstrated with the students in increasing numbers and expressed a great pride in these bold new steps by the younger generation.

The result so far of all this protest has been the desegregation of dime store eating facilities in over a hundred and fifty Southern communities. Many gains on other fronts have been made also but most of the emphasis has been put on the lunch counters and the forms of demonstration that has come to be known as the "sit-in." News of the "sit-in movement" and its accomplishments has gone around the world and the "sit-ins" will surely take their place in our history books as a milestone in the Negro's struggle for equality in the United States.

And it appears that this is only the first chapter to be written in this new ground swell of student protest. Already in Nashville, Tennessee, the students have written chapter two. After being the first major Southern city to achieve lunch counter desegregation last year, they have gone ahead this year to again become the first to achieve desegregation of the movie theaters, February 1st,

1961, the first anniversary of the "sit-ins", was celebrated by South wide "stand-ins" at movie theaters denied to the Negro students. In Nashville it took less than three months to again be successful. This was about the same amount of time it took them to gain access to the lunch counter stools last year. Now they are already discussing what their goal should be for next year.

The key to all this success has been the students use of the philosophy and the techniques of "non-violence" which they have adhered to with great dedication…The students faith in the power of non-violence has given them the courage to go back day after day and face the crowds of hoodlums, the assaults and abuse without striking back and attempt to stand tall and peaceful in the face of danger and try and feel brotherly feelings towards their opponents. And it is this courageous, disciplined and loving behavior that has won them the respect and concern of so many people to their cause.

As I write this, news of the latest and most dramatic of all the student, non-violent protests in the South, the Freedom Ride, is being broadcast on the radio. The mob violence in Birmingham, Anniston and Montgomery, Alabama has been the worst yet. Many freedom riders have been beaten senseless…Just what the outcome will be of all this is not yet clear. Student and adult integration leaders are calling for a Southwide assault on segregated travel facilities (including train & airplane stations) in response to these beatings and jailings. All of this has been headline news both in the U.S. and abroad for the last week. The Freedom Ride, if it accomplishes nothing else, has surely achieved its goal of dramatizing these evil practices to the America people and the determination of the students to overcome these un-American practices.[301]

[301] Folkway Records, "We Shall Overcome," Liner Notes, 1961, 2–3. The typed text is unauthored but attributed to Guy Carawan. Robbie D. Jones personal collection.

Figure 18. Photograph of the Student Advisory Council, including John Lewis (far left) and Diane Nash (far right), discussing nonviolence in front of the Carnegie library at Fisk University, 1960
(Source: Folkways Records, "We Shall Overcome," Liner Notes).

We Can't Afford to Slow Up: Students Persist

Once the Freedom Rides wound down in August, Lewis and Nashville students turned their attention to the chain of Nashville-based H.G. Hill grocery stores. Owner H.G. Hill Jr. refused to hire Black clerks, cashiers, or managers, although the stores were in Black neighborhoods. On August 5, police arrested 13 demonstrators, six white and seven Black, for disorderly conduct during a confrontation at a picket of the H.G. Hill grocery store at 16th Avenue South and Grand Avenue. For years, 16th Avenue South had served as the racial dividing line between the Black community of Edgehill and the white community near the campuses of Vanderbilt, Peabody, and Scarritt (an area that later became Music Row). Five demonstrators were hospitalized. Those arrested include Lewis and Nash. Everyone bonded out of jail, except for Nash, who was described in The *Tennessean* as a "top lieutenant in Dr. Martin Luther King's antisegregation team in the South."[302]

In response to the arrest and Nash being jailed, the following day, 20 Black and 3 white demonstrators staged a sit-down strike in the lobby of the Public Safety Building. All were arrested for loitering. Those

[302] Joel Dark, "Edgehill Neighborhood," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 78–80; *The Tennessean*, August 8, 1961, 1–2; Lovett 2005, 173; *The Tennessean*, "Nashville Then," February 5, 2022; King Hollands, interview with Natalie Bell, June 28, 2023; Robbie D. Jones and Carolyn Brackett, "Historic Music Industry Resources, Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2016, E-82.

arrested included Lewis and Stokely Carmichael, then associated with SNCC. The sit-down strike followed a mass meeting led by Rev. Smith at the First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill, and a protest march from the church to the Public Safety Building, which housed the jail. On August 7, the demonstrators arrested at H.G. Hill had their day in court. Outside the jail, demonstrators protested the arrests and alleged police brutality by staging a sit-down strike on the street. The demonstrators, including Nash, held hands in a circle and sang "We Shall Overcome."[303]

The next day, a car owned by Kwame "Leo" Lillard, one of the Black demonstrators, was set on fire at the H.G. Hill store. Although a witness saw two white youths go inside the car, no one was arrested. In response, the pickets continued. During a confrontation, a white teenager allegedly burned demonstrator James Forman's arm with a cigarette. The white youth was arrested. On August 14, the NCLC published a large advertisement in the *Nashville Banner* with a letter to H.G. Hill Jr. The letter was signed by Rev. Kelly Miller Smith Sr., president, and Rev. Andrew N. White, secretary. The protest letter claimed that Hill had ignored the NCLC since they first reached out in early December 1960.[304]

Prior to the fall semester of 1961, John Lewis transferred from American Baptist, which was unaccredited at that time, to Fisk University to pursue a degree in philosophy. He took a light load of classes so he would have time to participate in the student protest movement. After Diane Nash married James Bevel and moved to Mississippi over the summer, Lewis became the leader of the student movement. Throughout September, Lewis led protest demonstrations against Governor Buford Ellington to convince him to reinstate the 14 students at Tennessee A&I who had been expelled for participating in the Freedom Rides.[305]

In September 1961, Rev. Smith and the NCLC hosted the annual conference of the SCLC in Nashville, with Clark Memorial Methodist Church serving as the general headquarters. More than 200 delegates from throughout the U.S. attended the conference. With the theme of "The Deep South and Social Revolution," the three-day conference featured events at the church such as nonviolence training workshops led by Rev. James Lawson, SCLC staff workshop director; an address by Rev. Joseph E. Lowery, SCLC second vice president; a plenary session by Spottswood W. Robinson III (1916–1998) with the U.S. Commission on

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[303] *The Tennessean*, August 7, 1961, 1–2; *Tennessean*, August 8, 1961, 2; Lovett 2005, 173; *The Tennessean*, "Nashville Then," February 5, 2022; *The Tennessean*, August 7, 1961, 1–2; *Tennessean*, August 8, 1961, 1–2; *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, August 8, 1961, 11; *The Tennessean*, August 10, 1961, 68

[304] *Nashville Banner*, August 14, 1961;19; King Hollands, interview with Natalie Bell, July 11, 2023.

[305] Lovett 2005, 173–174; Lewis and D'Orso 1998, 183–184; *The Tennessean*, "Nashville Then," February 5, 2022.

Civil Rights (USCCR); and an address by James Farmer, national director of CORE.[306] The welcome address was presented by SCLC president King who stated in the program:

> I am convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that the philosophy of nonviolence will redeem the soul of America. There is a great temptation to accept nonviolence solely as a strategy, a device; this we must guard against. This is one of the chief aims of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference: to broadly disseminate through intensive training the heart of nonviolence, that our commitment to nonviolence will not only be a technique, but shall become for us a way of life with love and redemption at its center.[307]

The conference also included an attorneys' seminar at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill with workshops and addresses by Robinson (USCCR) and William Kuntsler (1919–1995) with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a city-wide Freedom Rally with a keynote address by Martin Luther King Jr. at the War Memorial Auditorium, and a tribute concert for the Freedom Riders at the Ryman Auditorium. The Freedom Rally included music by Guy Carawan and messages from Z. Alexander Looby, J. Metz Rollins (NCLC), and Fred Lee Shuttlesworth from Birmingham, Alabama. Rev. C.T. Vivian, then a pastor in Chattanooga, introduced King. "We can't afford to slow up," said King. "We have our self-respect to maintain. But even more than that we have the welfare of America to maintain. The state of the world will not allow an anemic democracy." He also praised the Nashville students who participated in the sit-in demonstrations and Freedom Rides. "When the movement started early in 1960 most Southern cities, including Nashville, practiced segregation at lunch counters," declared King. "Now 165 cities have integrated their lunch counters—most recently Atlanta, which integrated theirs at 2 p.m. this afternoon…Not only have we come a long way, but we have a long, long way to go. Segregation is evil because it is only a new form of slavery covered up with the niceties of complexity." King's speech was interrupted around 20 times with applause from roughly 2,000 people in attendance. [308]

During an intermission at the Ryman tribute concert, performed by the Chad Mitchell Trio and Miriam Makeba (1932–2008), King delivered $500 Freedom Award scholarships to 10 student Freedom Riders from Nashville universities, including several who had been expelled from Tennessee A&I by Governor Ellington for their participation in the Freedom Rides. The recipients included Fisk students John Lewis and

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[306] SCLC, *Annual Meeting Program*, Nashville, Tennessee, September 1961, n.p.; SCLC, *Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 3, September 1961, 1; SCLC, *Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 4, January 1962, 2; *Nashville Banner*, "Negroes Plan South Vote Drive: King," September 29, 1961, 8; *Nashville Banner*, "SCLC Sets Theme of Parley Here," September 15, 1961, 27.
[307] SCLC, *Program*, 1961, n.p.
[308] SCLC, *Program*, 1961, n.p.; Lewis and D'Orso 1998, 184; *Nashville Banner*, "Director of CORE Parley Speaker Here," September 28, 1961, 18; *The Tennessean*, "King Says Negroes 'Cannot Slow Up,'" September 29, 1961, 15.

James Zwerg; George Peabody student Salynn McCollum, American Baptist student Paul E. Brooks; and Tennessee A&I students, Charles Butler, Catherine Brooks, Rudolph Graham, William Harbour, Lucretia Collins, and Carl Bush. The SCLC and the American Baptist Convention funded the scholarships.[309]

During Lawson's keynote address at Clark, he called for the creation of a "trained and disciplined army for nonviolent social action." As part of the initiative, Lawson planned to lead nonviolent training workshops monthly in communities across the South. The SCLC supported the call and encouraged "immediate and full consideration as a possible project of SCLC and sister organizations." The SCLC affirmed its "pledge of full support to Student Non-Violent Direct Action" and called "upon both adults and youth to counsel together on plans and projects, on the raising and distribution of funds, and on strategy and tactics, in order that there shall be a high degree of understanding, cooperation and effectiveness." Additionally, the SCLC reaffirmed their "full endorsement and support of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a peerless leader in the struggle for a good society. He is, we know, completely committed to non-violence in practice as well as in his public acts. We, therefore call upon all men of good will to join in the cause which King represents, and we call upon all of our responsible leaders to work together toward common goals." The SCLC also hired Rev. Andrew W. Young and Septima Clark, formerly with the Highlander Folk School, as paid staff members to lead the Citizenship School program in Georgia.[310]

In response to the ongoing student sit-ins, in the spring of 1961 the NCLC resumed the nonviolent, direct-action workshops at Clark. The workshops continued through 1962. At the time, John Lewis was chair of the NCLC's Student Central Committee, which met regularly at Clark. In April 1962, Lewis was elected to the SNCC executive committee.[311]

Throughout the early 1960s, the NCLC hosted mass meetings at other Black churches of various denominations throughout Nashville, such as Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, First Baptist Church East Nashville (NRHP, 2005), First Community Church, Gay-Lea Christian Church, Howard United Church of Christ, Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church, Progressive Baptist Church, and Seay-Hubbard United Methodist Church (Figure 19). The

[309] SCLC, *Program*, 1961, n.p.; Lewis and D'Orso 1998, 184; *The Tennessean*, "10 'Riders' Get Scholarships," September 28, 1961, 24; *Nashville Banner*, "Belafonte Ill; Won't Sing Here," September 27, 1961, 12. Harry Belafonte & the Belafonte Folk Singers were scheduled to perform, but Belafonte was forced to cancel due to illness.
[310] SCLC, *Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 4, January 1962, 2; *The Tennessean*, "SCLC To Recruit Non-Violent 'Army'," September 30, 1961, 7.
[311] "Workshops Resume," *Voices of the Movement*, NCLC Newsletter, Vol. 1, May 8, 1961, 2; "Workshops Continue," *Voices of the Movement*, NCLC Newsletter, November 1962, 2; SNCC, *Student Voice*, No. 3, No. 1, April 1962, 1; No. 3, No. 2, June 1962, 2–3. James Lawson was pastor of Scott Chapel Methodist Church in Shelbyville from 1960–1962; however, records do not indicate that he continued to be involved with the nonviolent workshops at Clark.

NCLC also continued its boycott of segregationist businesses. These churches also hosted mass meetings for the NAACP, SCLC, and other civil rights groups. In March 1962, famed actor Sidney Poitier (1927–2022) spoke at an NCLC fundraising kickoff meeting at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill.[312]

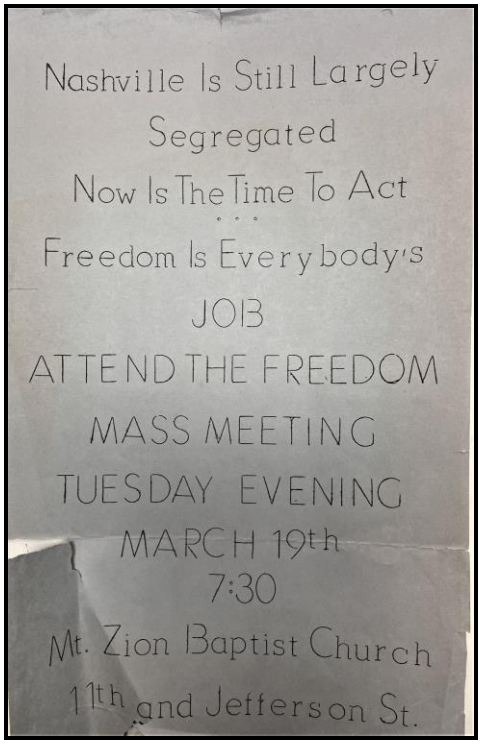

Figure 19. Flyer advertising a mass meeting at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 1963
(Source: Rev. Kelly Miller Smith Papers, Vanderbilt University).

Inspired by progress made in Nashville, student demonstrations—such as sit-ins, stand-ins, boycotts, and protest marches—spread to larger Tennessee cities with engaged African American populations like Knoxville, Jackson, and Chattanooga. In Knoxville and Jackson, the protests were led by students and staff at Knoxville College (NRHP, 1980) and Lane College (NRHP, 1987), historically Black universities. In

[312] Bobby L. Lovett, "First Baptist Church East Nashville (1866–)," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 87–89; Leslie Sharp, Gwyneth Anne Thayer, and Katherine Haskel. "First Baptist Church East Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee." National Register of Historic Places Nomination. Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2005; "Lost Nashville," *The Tennessean*, June 5, 2020.

Chattanooga, protests led by Black students at Howard High School and local Black church pastors were met with the bombing of two homes, injuring two African American children. Chattanooga experienced five racially motivated bombings during the protests, which triggered an FBI investigation. In January 1961, King addressed a packed audience at Chattanooga's Municipal Auditorium (NRHP, 1980) where he referred to the newly elected U.S. president, "We must remind Mr. Kennedy we helped him get into the White House and that we expect him to use the full weight of his office to remove the burden of segregation from our shoulders." While many lunch counters and other businesses in these cities quickly desegregated, many refused until the mid-1960s.[313]

The demonstrations in Nashville had previously inspired students in cities such as Atlanta. For example, on May 17, 1960, around 2,500 Atlanta students staged a peaceful march from Atlanta University to the Georgia State Capitol to recognize the sixth anniversary of the *Brown* decision. They were met by 100 Georgia State Troopers armed with cudgels, tear gas bombs, and fire hoses. The Atlanta police chief rerouted the march.[314]

The Nashville students also had a direct impact to desegregation in small towns such as Lebanon, about 25 miles east of Nashville. In March 1962, 150 students held sit-ins and demonstrations at the movie theaters and other public accommodations in the downtown commercial district (NRHP, 1999). The Pickett Chapel Church (NRHP, 1977) served as headquarters for gatherings of CORE and nonviolent workshops led by members of the movement, until white supremacists threatened to blow it up. Meetings then shifted to the home of Cathy and Paul White and an office building owned by John Glover, a Black physician. Police arrested many demonstrators, including Fred Brooks of Tennessee A&I. When students attempted to desegregate the water fountains at the Rogers Brothers Grocery Store, shots were fired at the Glover office. Governor Ellington sent the National Guard to Lebanon to keep the peace. The protests continued into September 1963.[315]

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[313] Lovett 2005, 136, 144–153; Cynthia Griggs Fleming, "White Lunch Counters and Black Consciousness: The Story of the Knoxville Sit-ins," in *Trial and Triumph: Essays in Tennessee's African American History*, edited by Carroll Van West, Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 2002, 366–389; NHL Public Accommodations Theme Study 2009, 55. In November 1961, the State of Tennessee revoked the charter of the Highlander Folk School and began confiscating campus property to be auctioned off. Highlander relocated from Monteagle to downtown Knoxville under the name Highlander Research and Educational Center. During this period, civil rights demonstrations in Memphis were led by the NAACP, not student involved groups such as the SCLC, CORE, or SNCC.

[314] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 1, No. 2, August 1960, 3, 5.

[315] Lovett 2005, 157–159; THC Historical Marker; *Nashville Banner*, September 1961, 6; *The Tennessean*, September 13, 1961, 17.

Like Chattanooga, the Nashville Student Movement included support from local high student students, primarily from Pearl High School. One such student was Cordell Hull Reagon (1943–1996). In 1961, James Foreman, executive secretary of SNCC, hired Reagon as a field director. Reagon grew up near Hadley Park adjacent to Tennessee A&I and as a 16-year-old student at Pearl High School had participated in a demonstration in downtown Nashville, simply because "it looked exciting." Reagon attended Lawson's workshops, joined in local protest marches, and participated in the Freedom Rides to Jackson, where he was arrested. After the ride, he joined SNCC. Forman assigned Reagon to work with Bob Moses on voter registration in McComb, Mississippi, before sending him to join Charles Sherrod in organizing the Albany Movement in Terrell County, Georgia. Reagon led nonviolent workshops at Albany State College and led a 600-person protest march to city hall. SNCC workers referred to Reagon as the "baby of the Movement" when he became SNCC's youngest staff member in 1961. He was arrested at least 30 times. Reagon's experience as a field worker prepared him to write Freedom Songs that expressed the joys, determination, and brutalities faced by civil rights activists. Growing up in Nashville, Reagon was a talented tenor in his church choir. In December 1962, at the encouragement of Pete Seeger, he founded the Freedom Singers in Albany. The group included his wife Bernice Johnson Reagon. The group traveled to mass meetings in churches, fundraising events, concerts, and recording studios across the country. Reagon and the Freedom Singers inspired other groups to make singing a part of their nonviolent resistance and the building of solidarity. In Nashville, his mother, Viola Reagon, rented a room to Frederick Leonard, a leader in the Nashville Student Movement.[316]

Frederick Leonard recruited Gloria Haugabook McKissack, a student at Tennessee A&I, to join the "second wave" of sit-in demonstrations at downtown restaurants and hotels. McKissack and a small group of students met at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill where she participated in a short sit-in orientation led by Rev. Smith, Marion Barry, and John Lewis. "They showed us how to act," she recalled. "After requesting service, they were to remain seated, read or do homework. If they were attacked, they were not to hit anyone; if pushed, allow their bodies to go limp." They walked down 5th Avenue, through the Arcade, and returned up Church Street where they attempted to be served at the Wilson-Quick Drugstore. The sit-in turned violent when a bus boy knocked her off her stool, picked her up, and drug her out the front door. On the street, a policeman called her a troublemaker (Figure 20). McKissack and others also participated in sit-

[316] Lawrence Van Gelder, "Cordell Hull Reagon ,Civil Rights Singer, Dies at 53," *New York Times*, November 19 1996; SNCC Legacy Project, "Cordell Reagon," *SNCC Digital Gateway*, 2023 accessed July 4, 2023, https://snccdigital.org/people/cordell-reagon/; Digital Library of Georgia, "Cordell Hull Reagon, 1943–1996, *Civil Rights Digital Library*, 2023, accessed July 4, 2023, https://crdl.usg.edu/people/reagon_cordell_hull_1943_1996; Casey Hayden, "Cordell Reagon (1943–1996)," crmvet, June 2, 2015, accessed July 4, 2023, https://www.crmvet.org/mem/reagonc.htm; Amy Goodwin and Bernice Johnson Reagon, "The Organizing Role of Music in the Civil Rights Movement," *Democracy Now*, February 14 1997, accessed July 4, 2023, https://www.democracynow.org/1997/2/14/the_organizing_role_of_music_in.; Lewis and D'Orso 1998, 182, 186.

ins at hotel lobby restaurants; the males attempted to be served at the Andrew Jackson Hotel and the females at the Hermitage Hotel, located across the street. They were detained by police, but not arrested.[317]

Figure 20. Photograph of demonstrators outside the Wilson-Quick Drugstore, including John Lewis (center) and Gloria McKissack (right in white jacket), 1961. Owned by Jewish allies, the Mills Book Store was a safe space during the sit-in demonstrations (Source: Gloria McKissack).

Other high school students who participated in the sit-ins include Troy Merritt, Vencen Horsley, and Bobby Richey. In 1961, Merritt was a 13-year-old student at Washington Junior High School who attended St. Paul AME Church off Charlotte Avenue. "The word came out through the church about nonviolent training workshops where we were encouraged to go to get trained to march into downtown Nashville to support sit-in demonstrations at lunch counters," recalled Merritt who explained that people heard about the workshops through word-of-mouth. [318]

> The word was also out in the community. Some people had single phone lines, but a lot of people had party lines. Somebody would say, we're supposed to be at this church, or that one. Caper's CME Church, some of the AME churches, Clark Memorial, Gordon Memorial,

[317] Gloria McKissack, interview with Natalie Bell, July 1, 2023.
[318] Rev. Troy Merritt, interview with Natalie Bell, August 1, 2023. Merritt is the brother of Mary Frances Berry (b.1938) who chaired the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights from 1993–2004.

> these were Methodist churches that were in walking distance of us…We joined up with students from Pearl High, Washington Junior High, and Meigs when we went over to First Baptist Capitol Hill. When the college kids were sitting in at the lunch counters, the younger students would be lined up outside on the sidewalk. When there would be 12 to 14 college students inside the restaurant, there were 100 of us junior high and high school students who had responded to the call from the church to line up and march in support of the sit-ins. We'd march from First Baptist to 5th Avenue and back to First Baptist.[319]

Bobby Richey, a student at the private high school operated by the Nashville Christian Institute, was recruited in 1960 by college students to join the movement and trained by local leaders such as John Lewis. After marching from First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill, Richey, and other demonstrators, were dragged from the Woolworth's lunch counter to the street. He was attacked during demonstrations along Church Street. "We found out we weren't going to be received and accepted as human beings at any of the downtown locations, especially the smaller businesses," he explained. "The only places that would halfway accept us were the large department stores." While trying to escape from a melee on 5th Avenue, he was falsely arrested for allegedly assaulting a white female. After being detained for two hours in the juvenile detention area, attorney Z. Alexander Looby successfully negotiated his release. Afterwards, Richey's high school put him on a strict probation after deciding not to expel him.[320]

Vencen Horsley first heard about the sit-ins on the television news when he was a junior at Pearl High School. Through word of mouth, he heard about a mass meeting at Gordon Memorial United Methodist Church. "I knew that I wanted to be part of it," said Horsley, who started attending workshops at First Baptist and Clark. "It was a major thing, to agree to get beat up, and you couldn't hit your attacker back." During one attack, Horsley was knocked unconscious and taken to Riverside Hospital where he was treated for a concussion. "After a while you didn't hear what they were saying," he explained. "You were concerned about what you came to accomplish."[321]

Sit-ins and other demonstrations continued throughout 1962, albeit on a much less frequent basis. On February 10, five students were arrested during a demonstration at Cross Keys Restaurant. Charges were later dropped, and the students released from jail. On April 5, some 12 students held sit-ins at Krystal's restaurant, Wilson-Quick Drugstore, and Simple Simon restaurant. In May, NCLC efforts led to the desegregation of two drive-in movie theaters: Colonial Drive-In on Gallatin Pike and Lebanon Road Drive-

[319] Rev. Troy Merritt, interview with Natalie Bell, August 1, 2023.
[320] Bobby Richey, interview with Samantha Fisher, February 15, 2022, "Making the Case: A Podcast from the Tennessee Attorney General's Office," accessed December 1, 2023, https://www.tn.gov/attorneygeneral/about-the-office/podcast.html.
[321] Vencen Horsley, telephone interview with Natalie Bell, September 15, 2023.

In. In the fall, Lewis led a series of "sleep-ins" in the lobbies of upscale segregated hotels, such as the Hermitage Hotel and the Andrew Jackson Hotel. In December, Lewis along with Frederick Leonard and Lester McKinnie, both students at Tennessee A&I, attempted to sit-in at Herschel's Tic Toc restaurant and were arrested. [322]

David Kotelchuck, a 26-year-old visiting professor at Vanderbilt, was also arrested for demonstrating at Herschel's Tic Toc. Kotelchuck's arrest brought renewed attention to the role of white demonstrators in the Nashville campaign after his photograph was published in a local newspaper. While some students and faculty members praised Kotelchuck's actions, the student senate censured him, and most letters to the *Vanderbilt Hustler* condemned him. Despite the negative pushback, more whites, especially students, became involved in the Nashville Student Movement in the following months.[323]

On the night of August 7, 1962, Black residents of Nashville were shaken when the home of Rev. Cephus C. Coleman Jr. (1926–2004), a Black pastor was destroyed by a fire. Located in the predominantly white Tusculum neighborhood in south Nashville, Rev. Coleman, his wife, and a young child had moved into the home the day before. "They're trying to do a little 'block busting,'" claimed a white neighbor. Although a white neighbor suspected the fire was set by Rev. Coleman, the Nashville chapter of the NAACP pressed the state fire marshal to investigate, leading to the arrest of six white teenagers at Antioch High School for arson; five of the teenagers worked for the Tusculum fire department. Another fire in February 1962 had prevented a previous Black family from moving into the house; however, that fire was never investigated.[324]

A Racial Powder Keg: Students Persevere

From November 23 to November 25, 1962, SNCC held a leadership training institute in Nashville. More than 200 students from throughout the U.S. attended. The institute "held workshops on the student movement, discussed some action plans for the future, and demonstrated at 12 of Nashville's segregated restaurants." Workshops also included "discussions on nonviolence, the economy of the South, politics and

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[322] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 3, No. 2, June 1962, 2; NCLC Newsletter, *Voice of the Movement*, Vol 2., April 7, 1962, 2; NCLC Newsletter *Voice of the Movement*, Vol. 2, No. 13, May 25, 1962, 3; Lewis and D'Orso 1998, 192; *The Tennessean*, December 8, 1962, 6; Lovett 2005, 177.

[323] Gregg L. Michel, *Struggle for a Better South: The Southern Student Organizing Committee, 1964–1969*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 26–27.

[324] Jerry Thompson, "Negro Charges Home Fire Set," *The Tennessean*, August 7, 1962, 1, 3; Jerry Thompson, "Negro Minister's Home Fire Probed," *The Tennessean*, August 8, 1962, 4; Joseph Dunn, "Arson Blamed in House Fire," T*he Tennessean*, August 9, 1962, 1, 14; "Teens' Trial For Arson Postponed," *Nashville Banner*, November 16, 1962, 12; Larry Brinton, "Six Jailed in Fire Probe," *Nashville Banner*, November 13, 1962, 1, 3; Margaret Renkl, "Looking Our Racist History in the Eye," *New York Times*, September 10, 2018. Rev. Coleman was a graduate of American Baptist and Tennessee A&I.

voter registration, civil liberties and communications." The three-day meeting, held over Thanksgiving, "featured a direct action attack in Nashville's downtown area, coordinated by the institute's host, the Nashville Student Nonviolent Movement." SNCC's coordinating committee adopted a "Free Clyde Kennard" campaign; Kennard had been arrested in Mississippi for allegedly stealing five sacks of chicken feed and sentenced to seven years at Parchman State Penitentiary. Kennard had tried to integrate Mississippi Southern College in 1958. Slater King, executive vice president of the Albany Movement, gave the keynote address during a Friday evening "Mass Freedom Rally" held at Fisk's Memorial Chapel.[325]

On Saturday, November 24, at 1:30 p.m., a group of 150 SNCC protestors staged two-hour mass demonstrations on Church Street (Figure 21). Police arrested Bobby Talbert, a Black student from Mississippi and a white bystander who had struck Talbert on the head; they also arrested the white manager of the Wilson-Quick Drugstore, who had sprayed demonstrators with a fire extinguisher. After the demonstrations, the protestors marched to First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill while singing "We Shall Overcome." Later, the group marched silently to the jail where they prayed and sang in the street to Talbert, who had been expelled from his high school for participating in an anti-segregation demonstration in August 1961. Charges against Talbert were dropped two days later, and he was released from jail. While the Vanderbilt senate voted to denounce the demonstrations, the *Vanderbilt Hustler* endorsed the sit-ins, a reversal from its support of segregation in 1960.[326]

Other demonstrations that took place in 1962 included "kneel-ins" led by Rev. C.T. Vivian at local white churches. If white congregations turned Black visitors away, they were instructed to go outside the church and kneel in prayer. Additionally, Rev. Smith worked closely with L.C. Langford to desegregate Langford's Restaurant in the L&C Tower. Langford informed Rev. Smith that the Restaurant Association had voted against integration and that the head of the association would not budge, especially against the management of Cross Keys and the B&W Cafeteria, whose owners were radically opposed to desegregation. Nevertheless, Rev. Smith sent student protestors and Langford quietly desegregated his restaurant in 1963.[327]

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[325] SNCC, *Student Voice*, Vol. 3, No. 4, December 1962, 1–2; SNCC press release in Angeline Butler Papers; James Lawson Memo in Kelly Miller Smith Papers at Vanderbilt University.
[326] *The Tennessean*, "Lost Nashville: First Baptist Church that had major role in the Civil Rights Movement" June 5, 2020; SNCC, "Student Voice," Vol. 3, No. 4, December 1962, 1–2; James Lawson "Fellow Students" memo in Kelly Miller Smith Papers at Vanderbilt University; Turner 2013, 277.
[327] Lovett 2005, 176–177; Linda T. Wynn, "Reverend C.T. Vivian (1924–2020)," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 291–294.

The year closed out with an address given by King to students at Vanderbilt University's Law School. On December 27, he spoke at the Underwood Auditorium for a "The Ethics of Integration" conference. In his address, entitled "The Ethical Demands to Integration," to the white law students, King stated:

> Law can help. Morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless. The law cannot make an employer love an employee, but it can prevent him from refusing to hire me because of the color of my skin. The habits, if not the hearts of people, have been and are being altered every day by legislative acts, judicial decisions and executive orders. Let us not be misled by those who argue that segregation cannot be ended by the force of law.
>
> But acknowledging this, we must admit that the ultimate solution to the race problem lies in the willingness of men to obey the unenforceable. Court orders and federal enforcement agencies are of inestimable value in achieving desegregation, but desegregation is only a partial, though necessary step toward the final goal which we seek to realize, genuine intergroup and interpersonal living. Desegregation will break down the legal barriers and bring men together physically, but something must touch the hearts and souls of men that they will come together spiritually because it is natural and right. A vigorous enforcement of civil rights laws will bring an end to segregated public facilities which are barriers to a truly desegregated society, but it cannot bring an end to fears, prejudice, pride, and irrationality, which are barriers to a truly integrated society. Those dark and demonic responses will be removed only as men are possessed by the invisible, inner law which etches on their hearts the conviction that all men are brothers and that love is mankind's most potent weapon for personal and social transformation. True integration will be achieved by true neighbors who are willingly obedient to unenforceable obligations.[328]

The new year brought continued sit-ins and demonstrations against segregated public accommodations whose owners stubbornly refused to desegregate their businesses. On February 19, 1963, four students were arrested while trying to reserve sleeping rooms at the downtown YMCA, which had refused to provide rooms to the SNCC students the previous fall. Those arrested included John Lewis, Lester McKinnie, Frederick Leonard, and Vencen Horsley. A few days later, the NCLC and Rev. J. Metz Rollins led about 60 protestors during another demonstration at the YWCA. In February, NAACP attorney Avon N. Williams Jr. filed a lawsuit against Holiday Inn to desegregate its new motel on James Robertson Parkway in the Capitol

[328] Syverud 2004, 195–198; *The Tennessean*, December 27, 1962, 23; *The Tennessean*, December 29, 1962, 3; MLK Papers, Stanford University.

Hill Redevelopment area. Williams argued that the Holiday Inn Motel was built in the federally funded urban renewal area and thus should not be segregated.[329]

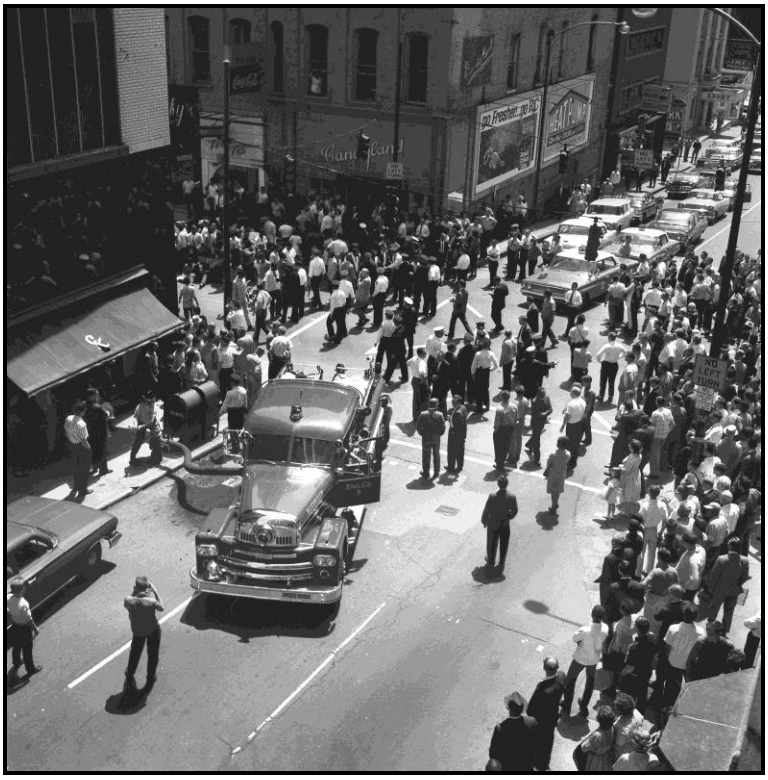

Figure 21. Photograph of SNCC-led demonstration at Candyland on Church Street with a city fireman preparing to disperse the crowd, November 1962 (Source: Metro Nashville Archives).

Meanwhile, students at Vanderbilt, Peabody, and Scarritt continued their two-year effort to desegregate the Campus Grill, a restaurant shared by students at the three adjoining universities. They were joined by Black students at Fisk and David Kotelchuck, a white assistant professor at Vanderbilt, who coauthored a pro-desegregation petition signed by nearly 200 faculty members. The *Vanderbilt Hustler* had editorialized against the group's picketing. Their efforts paid off when owners of the Campus Grill desegregated on

[329] SNCC press release and NCLC memo in Angeline Butler Papers; *The Tennessean*, "Lost Nashville," June 5, 2020; NAACP Newsletter, April 2, 1963, 3; Vencen Horsley, interview with Natalie Bell, September 15, 2023. Horsley was arrested several times and incurred two concussions during violent attacks.

January 1, 1964. Enthused by their success, over Easter weekend in 1964 the students formed the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) when 45 student leaders from 15 predominantly white, southern universities gathered in Nashville. The gathering was also attended by Marion Barry, John Lewis, and James Foreman. In Nashville, the students met at the Presbyterian Student Center across the street from Scarritt and at the home of Sue Thrasher, a recent Scarritt graduate. A few weeks prior, the group coordinated a meeting in Atlanta where they strategized with Myles Horton, Ella Baker, and other civil rights leaders.[330]

Ron K. Parker, a graduate student at Vanderbilt, was elected treasurer of SSOC and Gene Guerrero of Emory University in Atlanta as the chairman. Sue Thrasher was appointed the executive secretary, a paid position. Parker and Thrasher had been attending meetings of NCLC and SNCC, which inspired them to act, and worked with Archie Allen, a student at Scarritt, to promote the new organization. The group had been spurred to action following the bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham the year before. "After learning of the deadly attack, Trasher later wrote, "I made a silent vow to make my own voice heard." The group's founding statement, "We'll Take Our Stand," written in a student's garage apartment, was a direct reference to the "I'll Take May Stand" manifesto created by Southern Agrarians in 1930 at Vanderbilt. The group promised, "We as young Southerners, hereby pledge to take *our* stand to work for a new order, a New South, a place which embodies our ideals for all the world to emulate, not ridicule."[331]

Based in Nashville, the SSOC promoted racial equality and other progressive causes. Maintaining close ties to SNCC and the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the group was described as the "white students' SNCC" and the "Southern New Left." The SSOC published a newsletter called *The New Rebel* and adopted a SNCC-inspired logo consisting of Black and white hands embracing with a Confederate flag in the background; however, the controversial logo and *New Rebel* reference threatened the divide the group and were quickly dropped. During the 1964 Freedom Summer, SSOC members traveled to Mississippi as part of the "White Folks Project." Later that year, they worked in Mississippi to rebuild and paint COFO staff houses and burned-out Black churches and community centers. In October 1964, the SSOC opened an office on the second floor of a house at 915 18th Avenue South near the Scarritt campus. With funding from the SDS, Archie Allen was hired as the group's first "campus traveler." In 1965, the group held workshops over five days at the Highlander Center in Knoxville. Speakers at conferences included civil rights leaders such

[330] "Please Do Not Patronize the Campus Grill," Pamphlet, 1963; Gregg L. Michel, *Struggle for a Better South: The Southern Student Organizing Committee, 1964–1969*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 27–33, 92; "The Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC): About," Pamphlet, 1964, accessed December 11, 2023, https://www.crmvet.org/docs/64_ssoc_about.pdf.
[331] Michel 2004, 27–33, 39–43, 58.

as Don West, Rev. C.T. Vivian, Rev. J. Metz Rollins, and James Foreman. The SSOC quickly became the leading organization of progressive white students in the South in the 1960s.[332]

On March 23, Curlie McGruder (1927–1993), president of the Nashville chapter of the NAACP, organized a "Freedom March" from Tennessee A&I to the downtown business district via Jefferson Street and 8th Avenue North, passing in front of the First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill. Led by John Lewis and Archie E. Allen of SSOC, the march was reportedly the largest demonstration in Nashville since the 1960 sit-ins and Silent March. Participants carried signs, sang hymns, and passed out leaflets with information on a mass meeting at Gay-Lea Christian Church. One of the signs read: "Father Forgive Judge Draper," who had sentenced eight sit-in demonstrators to serve time at the City Workhouse. The protestors had been arrested in October 1962 for demonstrations at Cross Keys Restaurant and B&W Cafeteria. The Freedom March started with 18 students before winding through the Fisk campus, picking up a few hundred students (Figure 22).[333]

In early April, the NCLC launched an economic boycott of segregated businesses throughout downtown and the suburban shopping centers. While in town for a convention, several ministers held demonstrations in front of segregated businesses. Students held all day pickets and passed out leaflets. On April 26, representing NCLC, John Lewis led an interracial group of over 200 students from Fisk's Memorial Chapel to the downtown Federal Courthouse, where they staged a peaceful demonstration in protest of the murder of William L. Moore, a Baltimore postman, during a march that occurred in Gadsden, Alabama. The march wound its way through downtown before ending at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill. Captains were placed at intersections along the march route.[334]

On April 21, 1964, some 60 students from Vanderbilt, Peabody, and Scarritt founded the Joint University Council on Human Relations, known as the JUC, a local civil rights organization that immediately affiliated

[332] Gardner 2023; SSOC 1964; Michel 2004, 70–74, 84–86; Kate Ballantyne, "The Southern Student Organizing Committee and the White New Left," U.S. Studies Online, 2023, accessed December 11, 2023, https://usso.uk/2018/03/the-southern-student-organizing-committee-and-the-white-new-left/; "Statement of Goals and Programming: SSOC-Spring Conference 1965," Pamphlet, accessed December 11, 2023, https://www.crmvet.org/docs/ssoc_misc.pdf; *The New Rebel: Newsletter of The Southern Student Organizing Committee*, Vol. 1, No. II, October 1964, accessed December 11, 2023, https://www.crmvet.org/docs/ssocnews/6410_ssoc.pdf; *Highlander Workshop News*, Vol. 2, No. 1, November 1965, 4, accessed December 11, 2023, https://www.crmvet.org/docs/6511_highlander_news.pdf.

[333] Kelly Miller Smith Sr. Papers; Nashville Banner, March 23, 1963; Jones, US Courthouse exhibit, 2020; Pamela Lane-Bobo, "Mrs. Curlie McGruder (1927–1993)," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 182–185.

[334] Kelly Miller Smith Sr. Papers; *The Tennessean*, April 10, 1963; Lovett 2005, 180; *Nashville Banner*, April 26, 1963; *The Tennessean*, April 27, 1963.

with the SSOC. The JUC worked with NCLC and SNCC in a new push to desegregate Nashville's restaurants.[335]

Figure 22. Photograph of the Freedom March along Jefferson Street, led by James Lewis (front), Archie Allen, and Curlie McGruder, 1963 (Source: Metro Nashville Archives).

About 200 protestors led a Prayer Vigil on April 28 in the rain at the Davidson County Courthouse. The vigil was led by Rev. Smith and Rev. Lawson who marched from the First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill to the courthouse. However, the students remained locked up at the City Workhouse, so the protests ramped up. On May 8 and May 9, Rev. Rollins led 700 demonstrators to stage downtown protest marches and

[335] Michel, 2004, 92.

pickets of segregated businesses. A few protestors were injured in fistfights. There were around 1,000 spectators. Police arrested a few people, both white and Black.[336]

After Judge Draper denied a motion for a new trial, protestors gathered in front of the B&W Cafeteria and Cross Keys Restaurant with 50 people locking arms in front to barricade the entrances. Upwards of 2,000 people gathered to witness the demonstration, which included heckling and minor melees. Three Black protesters were injured, including Rev. Rollins who was treated at Hubbard Hospital. Frederick Leonard and William Penn Boulden of Fisk were arrested as well as three juveniles from Pearl High School. Many of the juveniles and students at local colleges had not completed nonviolent training and were more prone to confrontation with white demonstrators. One newspaper claimed that 750 students had skipped classes at Black high schools and Tennessee A&I to participate in the demonstrations.[337]

As the demonstrations continued, the confrontations became more heated. After a brick was thrown through the windshield of a car, police arrested two young Black males. A window at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill was broken when a rock was thrown at the building. Rollins noted that Nashville was a "racial powder keg" and Mayor Briley pleaded that "Nashville must not become a Birmingham." On May 13, Lewis and Rollins attended the NCLC's mass meeting at Lee Chapel AME Church to call for an end to the heated protests while the NCLC, NAACP, and SNCC worked together with the mayor's Biracial Committee. The following day, Lewis and Rollins called for a temporary refrain from Rev. Smith hosting student meetings at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill, which Rev. Rollins feared "was rapidly becoming a symbol of the integration movement" and that "someone might want to destroy it." Instead, the students met at Fisk's Jubilee Hall and marched to nearby Watkins Park where Rollins conducted an afternoon mass meeting. Rev. Smith informed the NCLC that the First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill could no longer be used as a launching site for downtown demonstrations due to the increasing violence.[338]

On May 15, after a two-and-a-half hour meeting with an interim biracial committee, Mayor Briley announced he would appoint a permanent Nashville Committee on Human Relations (NCHR) because of the recent demonstrations and negotiations with the NCLC and NAACP. It would replace the biracial committee and include both white and Black community leaders. Downtown businesses announced they would "relax racial barriers if they can do it in an atmosphere of calm." Lewis stated that the negotiations were being carried out "in good faith" and that "there [were] signs of real progress." Fisk University

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[336] *The Tennessean*, "Lost Nashville: First Baptist Church that had major role in the Civil Rights Movement" June 5, 2020; Rev. Kelly Miller Smith Sr. Papers; *Nashville Banner*, May 9, 1963; *The Tennessean*, May 11, 1963:
[337] Lovett 2005, 179; *The Tennessean*, "Lost Nashville," June 5, 2020; *The Tennessean*, May 11, 1963.
[338] Lovett 2005, 179; *The Tennessean*, "Lost Nashville," June 5, 2020; *The Tennessean*, May 11, 1963; *The Tennessean*, May 15, 1963.

president Dr. Stephen Wright posted flyers on campus deploring the violence at the demonstrations, including carrying weapons downtown and engaging in fights. News of the violence had spread to Knoxville and other cities.[339]

The following day, Mayor Briley announced that members of the NCHR would include Greenfield Pitts, manager of Harvey's; Dr. Felix Robb, president of George Peabody; Amon C. Evans, publisher of *The Tennessean*; Tom B. Baker Jr., television executive; P.R. Curry with Western Electric; James P. Bass, airlines official; Rev. Kelly Miller Smith Sr.; Dr. Herman Long director of Fisk's' RRI; Alice Walker (wife of Dr. Matthew Walker Sr.); and Dr. Will Campbell, field secretary for the National Council of Churches of Christ. Other members were added later.[340]

On May 18, President Kennedy gave the convocation address at Vanderbilt University to commemorate its 90th anniversary as well as the 30th anniversary of the Tennessee Valley Authority. The NAACP had challenged President Kennedy to "speak with the South on race relations" and meet with the NAACP's executive committee while in Nashville. Kennedy stated:

> "This State, this city, this campus, have stood long for both human rights and human enlightenment–and let that forever be true. This Nation is now engaged in a continuing debate about the rights of a portion of its citizens. That will go on, and those rights will expand until the standard first forged by the Nation's founders has been reached, and all Americans enjoy equal opportunity and liberty under law." [341]

Kennedy went on to encourage equal responsibility and the rule of law. Apparently in reference to Birmingham, he stated: "In these moments of tragic disorder, a special burden rests on the educated men and women of our country to reject the temptations of prejudice and violence, and to reaffirm the values of freedom and law on which our free society depends."[342]

Two days later, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Peterson v. City of Greenville* that the arrest and conviction of peaceful sit-in demonstrators was unconstitutional. Argued in November 1962, the case involved 10 Black high school student protestors who were arrested and convicted in Greenville, South Carolina, for attempting to purchase food at the downtown S.H. Kress lunch counter in August 1960, which violated a local city ordinance. In a unanimous decision, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the South Carolina

[339] *The Tennessean*, May 16, 1963.
[340] *The Tennessean*, May 17, 1963
[341] NAACP Newsletter, April 2, 1963, 1; JFK Library – speech online.
[342] NAACP Newsletter, April 2, 1963, 1; JFK Library – speech online.

Supreme Court's ruling of guilty on the grounds that the arrests violated the students' 14th Amendment rights of equal protection under the law. The case for the students was argued by Matthew Perry Jr., a Black attorney in Columbia.[343]

On May 24, the 25-member Nashville Committee on Humans Relations held its first meeting. Student leaders John Lewis of Fisk and Lester McKinnie of Tennessee A&I along with Rev. Rollins agreed to not lead downtown demonstrations to maintain a peaceful atmosphere for negotiations as the business community considered desegregation.[344]

After Lewis graduated from Fisk in June, SNCC elected him as its new chair. Then only 23 years old, Lewis had been arrested 24 times, including 17 times in Nashville. After accepting the chair position, Lewis toured SNCC projects in Alabama, Maryland, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Lewis soon resigned from the NCLC board of directors. He was replaced by Paul Brooks, a student at Tennessee A&I. The NCLC hired Lester McKinney to replace Lewis as the coordinator of student activities. [345]

In June, the NCLC lifted the boycott of downtown businesses; however, Rev. Smith noted that Black shoppers should continue to avoid doing business where they made no gains in employment, including the YMCA, YWCA, Baptist Hospital, St. Thomas Hospital, and most of the city's hotels. That summer, the city permanently shut down all 23 of its municipal swimming pools, rather than desegregate them, including the pool at Hadley Park, a segregated park in north Nashville. The pools had been temporarily closed since a "swim-in" held at the Centennial Park swimming pool in July 1961. The swim-in protest was led by Matthew Walker Jr. and Kwame "Leo" Lillard, who claimed the pool closings were, "just to perpetuate an outmoded system of segregation." In response, the Women's Affairs Committee of the Jewish Federation of Nashville started an integrated Learn-to-Swim program at the Jewish Community Center's indoor swimming pool. Black and white children were bussed daily from the city's parks with no swimming pools to the JCC where volunteers from the Jewish synagogue provided swimming lessons.[346]

On August 27, an interracial group of students took Trailways buses from First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill to Washington, D.C. to attend the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, organized by Bayard Rustin

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[343] *Peterson v. City of Greenville* (1963), United States Supreme Court, No. 71, May 20, 1963, accessed December 11, 2023, https://caselaw.findlaw.com/court/us-supreme-court/373/244.html.
[344] *The Tennessean*, May 25, 1963.
[345] SNCC, *Student Voice*, Vol. 4, No. 2, August 1963, 1; Lovett 2005, 179–180.
[346] Lovett 2005, 181; Roseman 2010, 217; William Keel, "City's Bathing Pools Closed," *The Tennessean*, July 22, 1961, 1–2; Julia Ritchey, "Hidden history of Nashville's segregated pools gets permanent reminder with new Centennial Park marker, WPLN News, March 23, 2022, accessed December 1, 2023, https://wpln.org/post/hidden-history-of-nashvilles-segregated-pools-gets-permanent-reminder-with-new-centennial-park-marker/.

and Philip Randolph. The following day, John Lewis spoke at the Lincoln Memorial with Martin Luther King Jr. Around 250,000 people attended the march where King gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. The Freedom Singers, led by Nashville's Cordell Reagon, performed Freedom Songs. During Lewis's address, he referenced Nashville when he closed with, "We will march through the South—through the streets of Jackson, Danville, Cambridge, Nashville, and Birmingham—with dignity and spirit we have shown here today. By the force of our demands, our determination, and our numbers, we shall splinter the segregated south into a thousand pieces and put them together in the image of God and democracy. Wake up America!"[347]

In November, SNCC declared, "Both Knoxville and Nashville, Tennessee are now considered 'open cities' after continued protests there." SNCC argued that southern cities such as Nashville, Knoxville, Houston, and Greensboro "had moved far ahead of Atlanta in offering jobs and public and private facilities to all their citizens." Since July 12, 1960, sit-ins, boycotts, and protest marches led by students and staff at Knoxville College had led to the desegregation of downtown lunch counters and other businesses.[348]

In 1964, the NCLC, SNCC, and JUC pushed for a few of Nashville's hold-out restaurants to desegregate. In April the organizations led a month-long series of protests and demonstrations downtown and at locations in other parts of the city such as West End Avenue. SNCC was led by John Lewis and Bernard Lafayette. On April 27, the demonstrators tied up traffic on Church Street with a "lie-in" at Krystal's and Herschel's Tic Toc. On the second day of the lie-in, around 50 police officers used billy clubs to break up the "riotous" crowd of around 200 Black high school students who had skipped school to attend a mass meeting at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill (Figure 23). The group marched down West End Avenue to Morrison's Cafeteria, which had refused to desegregate. The police arrived to break up the protest, which included Rev. Joseph Echols Lowery, a vice president of the SCLC. During the melee at Morrison's, 16 demonstrators and 7 officers were reportedly injured, none seriously. Police arrested 14 demonstrators, including Lewis and McKinnie, both of whom were roughed up. Afterwards, around 300 protestors returned downtown where they marched, chanted, and sang. Due to the ongoing police aggression, Church Street was nicknamed "Bloody Street" by some of the demonstrators.[349]

The protests continued through early May. The owner of Morrison's Cafeteria petitioned the court for an injunction against the NCLC, Lester McKinnie, Freddie Greene, and John Lewis to stop their protests at the

[347] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 4, No. 3, October 1963, 1–4.
[348] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 4, No. 4, November 21, 1963, 2; Lovett 2005, 146–147.
[349] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 5, No. 11, May 19, 1964, 1, 4; *New York Times*, "Nashville Halts Second Protest," April 29, 1964; SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 5, No. 10, May 5, 1964, 1, 4; Michel, 2004, 92–93; Vencen Horsley, telephone interview with Natalie Bell, September 15, 2023.

segregated facility. This led to a "new anti-segregation tactic" used by 200 white students from Vanderbilt, Scarritt, and Peabody, most affiliated with the JUC. On May 3, the white students held a "sip-in" at Morrison's. They ordered soft drinks and coffee and sipped it for two hours to tie up the business and refused to leave. Black waiters continued to refill their drinks. The students were joined by white ministers and rabbis, including Rabbi Randall Falk of The Temple. Members of a local coffee group who were wives of pro-integration professors at Vanderbilt and Meharry operated a telephone tree to inform others of the protest marches and demonstrations.[350]

On May 3, Martin Luther King Jr. gave an address at Fisk's Johnson Gymnasium. He urged the 2,000 people in the audience to "make Nashville an open city," but implored them to continue using nonviolent methods, which were "the most powerful weapon available to oppressed people." The rally was attended by several white students and professors from Vanderbilt, Scarritt, and Peabody. The civil rights struggle in Nashville is "an epic known all over the world," declared King. "You have moved in a uniquely moving orbit of creative protest. Nashville, the Athens of the South, must make a stride into freedom." [351]

Figure 23. Photograph of police using billy clubs on a demonstrator on Church Street, 1964 (Source: Metro Nashville Archives).

[350] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 5, No. 11, May 19, 1964, 4; Roseman 2010, 212, 217; Michel, 2004, 92–93.
[351] Gerald Henry and John Hemphill, "200 Whites Stage Sip-In at Morrison's: King Asks More Protests But 'Non-Violent' Only," *The Tennessean*, May 4, 1964, 1, 4.

In early May, an interracial group of clergy and community leaders led a final push for a local public accommodations ordinance that would ban segregated facilities. On May 4, Curlie McGruder, president of the Nashville chapter of the NAACP, led a Prayer March with about 50 demonstrators from Fisk's Memorial Chapel to the Metro Courthouse. Rev. Sam Dodson read a "prayer of pilgrimage" in his capacity as chairman of Governor Frank Clement's Commission on Human Relations (CHR). Rev. Dodson stated, "The commission deplores the noncompliance on the part of the people of our state with the ideal that all citizens are entitled to equal rights and opportunities under law. We are convinced that we can no longer satisfy the demands of our democratic society with tokenism." He also told the demonstrators that Gov. Clement's CHR favored the civil rights bill before the U.S. Senate. Lester McKinnie, head of Nashville chapter of SNCC, read a joint statement issued by SNCC, NCLC, NAACP, and SCLC urging a public accommodations ordinance and fair employment act. McKinnie stated, "In the event we get no relief…we shall be forced to place our very bodies in the streets in the form of mass demonstrations, protest marches, sit-ins, and stand-ins."[352]

That same day, a picket demonstration with about 100 marchers in groups of 20 people was held at segregated sandwich shops along Church Street. Because of the picket, Candyland voluntarily opened its doors to Black customers and desegregated. Krystals closed its doors and the police arrested one of its employees who brandished a blackjack weapon. The next day, May 5, Rabbi Randall Falk and Rev. Sam Dodson led a group of 130 clergymen on a protest march along West End Avenue to the Metro Courthouse to be a "witness" for civil rights. After marching for 25 blocks, they held a prayer vigil on the courthouse steps and met with Mayor Briley inside where they presented a four-point program for civil rights: desegregation of all 12 grades in public schools, a public accommodations bill, desegregated recreational facilities, and more employment opportunities for Black residents in city government (Figure 24).[353]

Mayor Briley responded that school desegregation was up to the school board, desegregation of public accommodations was up to the city councilmen, desegregation of recreational facilities was underway, and that the city already employed some Black residents. Mayor Briley further declared that while the clergymen reflected the "community conscience," his job was to uphold local and state laws.[354]

[352] *The Tennessean,* May 5, 1964, 1–2; Gerald Henry and John Hemphill, "200 Whites Stage Sip-In at Morrison's: King Asks More Protests But 'Non-Violent' Only," *The Tennessean,* May 4, 1964, 1, 4.
[353] *The Tennessean,* May 5, 1964, 1–2; Roseman 2010, 215.
[354] *The Tennessean,* May 5, 1964, 1–2; Roseman 2010, 215.

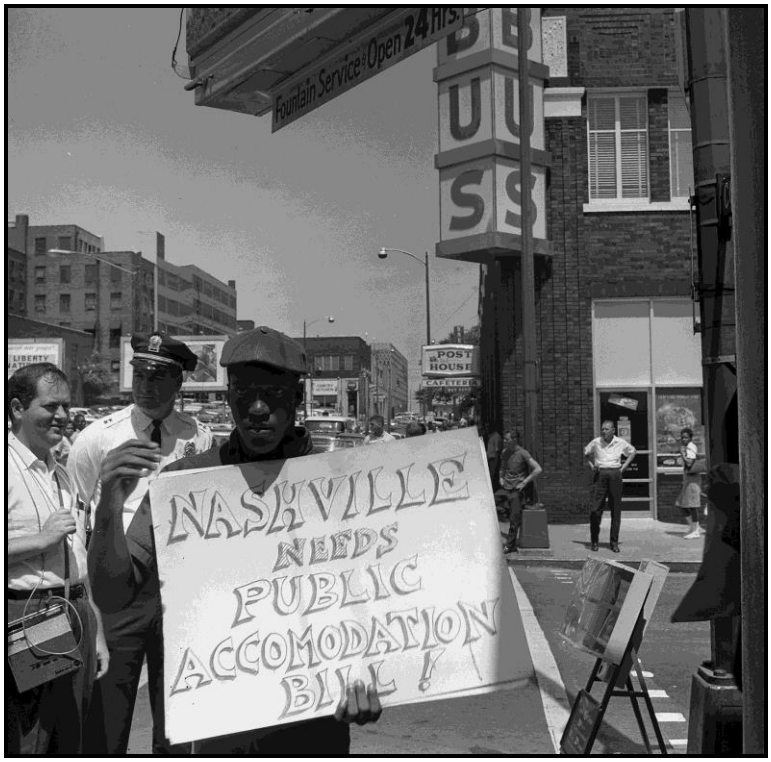

Figure 24. Photograph of a demonstrator at the Greyhound bus station on Commerce Street, 1964 (Source: Metro Nashville Archives).

The SCLC had been advocating for a public accommodations law since April 1963 when its "Project C" demonstrations were ramping up as part of the Birmingham Campaign. After the deadly bombing of the Sixth Street Baptist Church on September 15, 1963, which horrified the nation, President Kennedy gave assurances that he would push for the passage of the U.S. Civil Rights Act, filibustered by conservative southern Senators in Congress. Two months later, on November 22, President Kennedy was assassinated while riding in a motorcade in Dallas. The violence associated with the Civil Rights Movement and Kennedy's assassination shook the nation to its core. Soon after assuming the presidency, Lyndon B. Johnson pushed for Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act.[355]

[355] "Civil Rights Act of 1964," National Archives, accessed December 11, 2023, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/civil-rights-act.

During the spring of 1963, Nashville's elected officials moved forward with drafting a local public accommodations ordinance. On May 19, the newly elected 40-member Metro Council gave preliminary approval to a proposed public accommodations ordinance, drafted by Councilman Robert E. Lillard. The council approved the ordinance on first reading, then referred it to a special committee for further study. Lillard said he modeled the ordinance on one that had been passed in 1962 in St. Louis, Missouri. Chaired by Vice Mayor George Cate Jr., the council instructed the special committee "to take the time necessary for a thorough study." The bill provided a $50 fine as a penalty for any violations. "This won't be a graveyard committee?" asked councilman Z. Alexander Looby. The council did not set a deadline for the preparation of a report. A local editorial predicted a "long, hot summer of discontent."[356]

A group of 36 professors and faculty members at George Peabody issued a statement in support of the ordinance. They asked Mayor Briley and the Metro Council to take a "position of leadership in this unfinished business of social justice" in response to their "deep concern about the racial problems in Nashville. We are convinced that new steps need to be taken now." "It is time responsible leaders took steps to remove all elements of segregation from Nashville," wrote Archie E. Allen, a student at Scarritt, in a letter to the editor of *The Tennessean*. "It is time that all citizens face realistically the enormity of legitimate discontent which has been voiced by Negro citizens with the last six years in our city. Some gains have been made, largely as a result of public protest, but mainly compromises were made. We cannot afford to compromise human rights again."[357]

Due to the unrelenting pressure from student protestors, SNCC reported in May 1964 that all but two or three of the city's restaurants had desegregated. However, in a letter to the editor, Ron K. Parker, treasurer of the SSOC and a Vanderbilt graduate student, reminded the city's residents and leaders that the desegregated public accommodations were limited to the downtown business district. "The 'Athens of the South' is schizophrenically segregated," wrote Parker, "the majority of the downtown eating facilities are open to all persons; however exactly the opposite picture prevails in the suburban areas." Parker appealed "for the white community to voice its belief that segregation should be abolished…At the most basic level, one can protest segregation by refusing to support those facilities which do not treat all persons equally."[358]

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[356] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 5, No. 12, May 26, 1964, 4; *The Tennessean*, "Discrimination Ban Bill Held for Study," May 20, 1964, 1, 3; Wayne Whitt, "No Help With Human Rights," *The Tennessean*, May 17, 1964, 177.
[357] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 5, No. 12, May 26, 1964, 4; *The Tennessean*, "Discrimination Ban Bill Held for Study," May 20, 1964, 1, 3; *The Tennessean*, "Peabody Group Asks Racial Bill," May 20, 1964, 3; Archie E. Allen, "No Responsible Leadership," *The Tennessean*, May 15, 1964, 28.
[358] SNCC *Student Voice*, Vol. 5, No. 12, May 26, 1964, 4; Ron K. Parker, "Make Nashville an 'Open City'," *The Tennessean*, May 17, 1964, 20.

Less than eight months after Kennedy's death, on July 2, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Only seven Congressmen from the South voted in favor of the bill. One of those elected officials was Richard Fulton (1927–2018), the U.S. Representative from Nashville. President Johnson signed the bill the same day. Governor Clement and Mayor Briley urged compliance with the law. (Lillard's public accommodations ordinance never left the special committee.) CORE and SNCC began tests of the segregated businesses the next day. The law conferred jurisdiction upon federal district courts to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations (Title II), extended the Commission on Civil Rights, established a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity (Title IV), and provided specific guarantees of nondiscrimination in education (Title VII). As specified in the law, public accommodations include restaurants, hotels, and places of exhibition or entertainment (e.g., a bar with live music, a sports stadium, or a movie theater). The day the Civil Rights Act was signed into law, Mayor Briley stated:

> This is a law-abiding community and I anticipate all of our citizens, white and Negro, will assume their full responsibility of continuing constructive understanding of this day and age, and not only will abide by the law of the land, but will continue to voluntarily cooperate in solving the complex problems that are of this generation. All of our citizens must recognize their personal responsibility. So long as all people assume their responsibility, this community will work out its problems in the future.[359]

The managers of downtown restaurants that had refused to desegregate declined to comment. While the manager of Morrison's Cafeteria in Nashville also declined comment, John H. Gibbons, president of the Mobile-based restaurant chain, stated, "We can't buck the federal government. All managers have been instructed to that effect already."[360]

The South in the late 1950s and early 1960s provided an unhospitable environment for student activism with conservative leaders and university donors who often stifled dissent. "Nevertheless, a southern student movement developed around a number of movement centers that offered a mixture of characteristics that made activism possible," according to historian Jeffrey A. Turner. "Nashville was one of those centers." The sit-in movement evolved in many southern cities, but the "Nashville movement provided some of its most striking images and compelling leaders and much of its guiding philosophy." Nashville was home to several colleges and universities, which, collectively "offer a good indication of the range of institutional types evident in southern higher education at the outset of the 1960s." Additionally, the "Nashville student movement was avowedly interracial," with students at Fisk and Vanderbilt supplying leading roles. Serving as centers of intellectual and cultural life, Nashville's conservative universities often discouraged political

[359] "Briley Sees Easy Change," *The Tennessean*, July 3, 1964, 1.
[360] "Briley Sees Easy Change," *The Tennessean*, July 3, 1964, 2.

activism. Despite the challenges, fierce resistance, and violence, between 1958 and 1964, Nashville's students—Black and white—rose to prominence and galvanized a movement that inspired the nation and changed the course of the Civil Rights Movement.[361]

Indeed, the impact of the Nashville Student Movement extended far beyond the city limits. "Trained by Lawson, learning Gandhian repertoire and earning their 'movement credentials' in Nashville, much of the core cadre went on to carry knowledge and action of nonviolent oppositional culture across the South, a key path of diffusion," concluded sociologist Larry W. Isaac. "Without the Nashville cadre, it is uncertain whether there would have ever been a SNCC, the organization that played a dynamic role as daring shock troops through the southern struggle." The Nashville regiment were present in every civil rights flashpoint from the campaigns in Albany in 1961, Birmingham in 1963, and Selma in 1965 to the March on Washington in 1963 and Freedom Summer in 1964. During the Freedom Rides of 1961, Nashville intervened when CORE staggered and provided a calvary of reinforcements. According to SNCC veteran Bob Moses, "only the Nashville student movement had the fire to match that of the burning bus" in Alabama.[362]

The fire of the Nashville Student Movement was set aflame during James Lawson's movement school—the workshops—held in the basement and backrooms of Nashville's Black churches. Between 1958 and 1964, it was an unimagined federation of courageous students that transformed Nashville into the cradle of the Civil Rights Movement.

Historic Context 3: Nashville After the Civil Rights Act, 1965–1969

A New Time of Stress

On March 4, 1968, *The Tennessean*, long known for its pro-civil rights stance, opined that "Nashville is once again facing a time of stress in human relations." With John Seigenthaler serving as editor, the newspaper identified the cause as a "complete breakdown in communications" between Black and white citizens over plans for urban renewal and the construction of Interstate 40 among other issues. The newspaper charged that "Each separate incident seems to break support and opposition along racial lines," and lectured "Every citizen needs to think about what his community has been and where it is going."[363]

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[361] Turner 2013, 258–260.
[362] Isaac 2012, 175–178.
[363] "City's Human Relations Face New Time of Stress," *The Tennessean,* March 4, 1968, 8. A staunch civil rights ally, John Seigenthaler served as editor of *The Tennessean* from 1962 to 1973, when he was promoted to publisher. Seigenthaler took a temporary leave as editor in 1968 to assist with Robert Kennedy's presidential campaign.

Without intending to, the newspaper's editorial encapsulated the divide in Nashville's Black and white communities by ignoring the city's entrenched inequities in every area of business, education, and civic life. While criticizing "each side," the editorial failed to acknowledge that the city's actions in urban renewal and interstate construction would devastate Black neighborhoods and businesses, whose leaders were powerless to stop the plans, but would have little to no effect on white residents.

Supporting the city's plans was a substantial infusion of federal funds as well as massively conflicting laws, plans, and policies that impacted Nashville and cities across the country. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the most comprehensive civil rights legislation since the Civil Rights Acts of 1875, mandated equality in access to public accommodations, provided for desegregation of schools and other public facilities, and made employment discrimination illegal. This was followed in 1965 with the Voting Rights Act which outlawed discriminatory voting practices adopted in southern states after the Civil War.[364]

During the 1960s while Congress focused on civil rights legislation, the federal government enacted new programs to construct interstates and implement urban renewal programs that eventually obliterated many African American neighborhoods and business districts. All this federal legislation, along with numerous court cases, would directly impact Nashville's Black community. The effects were experienced in decades-long battles over school desegregation and busing, urban renewal projects—beginning with the Capitol Hill redevelopment plan in the early 1950s and continuing into the neighborhoods of Edgehill and east Nashville in the 1960s—and the construction of Interstate 40 in the late 1960s, which decimated the community in and around Jefferson Street.

As in the rest of the country, Nashville's Black community responded to the changing Civil Rights Movement in the mid-1960s as the Black Power Movement emerged and the city experienced rioting following the assassination of King in 1968. In response to the assassination, Patricia Perryman, a freshman at Fisk University, recalls that she was summoned back to Crosswaithe Hall where students were instructed to shelter in place during the riots.[365]

While facing these daunting challenges, Nashville's Black community also experienced successes, including the beginnings of full school desegregation, the election of the first African American woman to the Tennessee General Assembly's House of Representatives, the election of the first African American man to the state Senate since 1887, and the voluntary integration of private institutions.

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[364] Civil Rights Act, accessed June 27, 2023, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/civil-rights-act; Voting Rights Act, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/voting-rights-act.

[365] Patricia Perryman, response to Nashville Civil Rights Movement Documentation Project Online Survey, July 13, 2023. Perryman attended Fisk from 1967–1970 and worked as Z. Alexander Looby's part-time secretary in 1969.

In 1966, Rev. Bill Barnes (1931–2017) founded the Edgehill United Methodist Church near the campuses of Scarritt and Vanderbilt. A white civil rights advocate and Nashville native, Barnes graduated from the divinity schools at Vanderbilt in 1953 and Yale in 1959. Barnes worked part-time at Scarritt, which leased a facility to the Edgehill congregation for worship services. The first racially integrated Methodist congregation in Nashville, the church was "designed to serve the two neighborhoods in its area where Negro and white residents live." Likewise, civil rights organizations led by white students such as the SSOC and JUC continued to work closely with the NCLC, SNCC, and other Black-led organizations to effect change. In the fall of 1965 and winter of 1966, the SSOC initiated the North Nashville Project, an interracial experimental urban organizing project, involving students at Fisk, Meharry, and Tennessee A&I. By the time the Nashville-based SSOC disbanded in 1969, it consisted of more than 500 members and nearly 50 chapters across the South.[366]

Lady of Victory, Pray for Us

On the night of January 4, 1965—as 8,300 spectators, both Black and white, filled the downtown Municipal Auditorium—Bill Derrick (1930–2018), basketball coach for Father Ryan High School, a private Catholic school, repeated his prayer "Lady of Victory, Pray for Us." Although Derrick hoped for a victory for his school's players, Derrick even more emphatically hoped for a peaceful evening as the school played against Pearl High School, a historically Black school, for the first time. Coached by Cornelius Ridley (1932–2003), Pearl's team included Perry E. Wallace Jr. (1948–2017), one of the most talented athletes in the region. The basketball game was the first in the South between an integrated white high school and an all-Black high school.[367]

A decade after the U.S. Supreme Court issued its landmark *Brown* decision ruling in May 1954 that "separate but equal" schools were unconstitutional, Nashville had yet to fully integrate its public schools. Although Father Ryan Cathedral High School had desegregated in 1954, it did not desegregate its athletic teams until December 1963, when it started its first Black basketball player, Willie Brown (1947–1975), making Father Ryan the first school in the South to integrate a high school athletics team. "We had

[366] Reed, W.A. Jr. "Church Must Help World: Pastor," *The Tennessean*, July 18, 1966, 5; Michel 2004, 114–120.
[367] Samuel G. Freedman, "Tense Scene on Basketball Court 50 Years Ago Recalls Catholic Role in Civil Rights," *New York Times*, January 9, 2015; Jimmy Davy, "Pearl, Ryan in Auditorium Duel Establishing Precedent in City," *The Tennessean*, January 4, 1965, 19; Jimmy Davy, "Ryan Tips Pearl 52-51," *The Tennessean*, January 5, 1965, 18–19; Wynn, "Pearl," 2021, 214. According to Davy, most of the spectators in the 9,000-seat auditorium were Black. Father Ryan had played integrated football teams prior to this basketball game.

integrated our school, but it took a while before we received permission for our black students to be able to play on our team," said Derrick. "It was just the right thing to do."[368]

On June 14, 1964, the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) voted to accept Black segregated schools as affiliate members, allowing them to schedule athletic matches in any sport with TSSAA member schools. With this decision, Tennessee became the first and only southern state to desegregate its high school athletic organizations without court intervention. During the 1965–1966 season, Nashville public school athletic teams were formally integrated.[369]

In 1965, the Father Ryan "Irish" basketball team had two African American players, Willie Brown and Jesse Porter, and Derrick refused to allow his team to play against any school that would not accept his integrated team. The Father Ryan matchup with the Pearl "Tigers" team pitted Willie Brown, a 6'3" guard against Perry Wallace, a 6'5" forward—two exceptional Black players from north Nashville. Prior to the game, a reporter noted "It is an interesting fact that Ryan's top star is Willie Brown, a senior who is the first Negro standout in the history of the Nashville Interscholastic League." Considered a heavy underdog against the Tigers, touted as one of the best in the region at the time, the Irish fell eight points behind but rallied to win the game, 52-51, when Lyn Dempsey, a 5'9" reserve guard, "bested Pearl on a basket that swished the net at the final buzzer." With 21 points, Brown was the leading scorer in the game. The game made news across the state.[370]

The following year, Pearl High School won the integrated State Boys' Basketball Championship after going undefeated during the regular season, becoming the first historically Black high school to win a state championship in basketball. Wallace, who had perfected a thunderous "dunk shot," became the first Black athlete to play under an athletic scholarship at a Southeastern Conference (SEC) school when he enrolled at Vanderbilt in the fall of 1966. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) soon banned the dunk shot, which was seen as unnecessary showboating. (The ban was repealed in 1976.) When Vanderbilt played at SEC schools, students taunted and threatened Wallace and led racist chants, even threatening to lynch him. Officials ignored openly rough play by opposing players. Wallace never retaliated and became the

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[368] Freedman 2015; "Catholics Enroll Negro Students," *The Tennessean*, September 5, 1954, 3; King Hollands, interview with Natalie Bell, July 11, 2023; David Climer, "Nashville's Willie Brown changed the face of sports," *USA Today*, December 3, 2013.

[369] Linda T. Wynn, "Pearl High School Basketball," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 213–215.

[370] Freedman 2015; Davy, January 4, 1965, 18; Davy, January 5, 1965, 19; "Crowds, Action Reach Peak in '65s 1st Week," *The Tennessean*, January 10, 1965, 52; Wynn, "Pearl," 2021, 214; Climer 2013; Mike Organ, "Game's impact on race relations resonates 50 years later," *The Tennessean*, January 5, 2015. Willie Brown was one of the first two Black players at Middle Tennessee State University and helped integrate the Ohio Valley Conference in 1966. He played at the professional level in Connecticut.

Vanderbilt varsity team captain. Other SEC schools did not integrate their varsity basketball teams until 1970.[371]

Although Pearl and Father Ryan had bridged the gap of integration, in 1965, Nashville's public schools were still struggling to desegregate. After adopting the "Nashville Plan," school and elected officials won approval from the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in 1959 to desegregate schools by one grade each year, starting with the lower grades. By 1961, four grades were desegregated, but only about 3,400 of the district's almost 19,000 Black students were attending integrated classes in the first eight grades at 42 schools.[372]

After the Nashville Student Movement helped to successfully desegregate public accommodations, the focus of civil rights activism in Nashville turned to desegregation of schools. The Nashville chapter of the NAACP continued to press for full integration of public schools, and on December 10, 1964, the Metro Nashville Board of Education voted unanimously to drop the grade-per-year plan and desegregate all grades in all public schools in the fall of 1966.[373]

In February of 1965, following passage of the federal Civil Rights Act, colleges and universities in Nashville joined others across the state in signing pledges of compliance, a requirement for eligibility to receive federal funds. Nashville institutions signing the pledge included George Peabody, Vanderbilt, Scarritt, Meharry, Fisk, Belmont College, David Lipscomb College, and Trevecca Nazarene College.[374]

As Nashville's public schools, colleges, and universities moved toward desegregation, the Tennessee School Boards Association announced that Alabama governor George Wallace (1919–1998) was scheduled as keynote speaker at the statewide convention to be held at Nashville's Municipal Auditorium on January 7, 1965—just three days after the Father Ryan and Pearl basketball game. Wallace, an ardent segregationist, had gained national attention from his 1963 inaugural address when he declared "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." Wallace's opposition to school desegregation had been

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[371] Wynn, "Pearl," 2021, 214; Linda T. Wynn, "Southeastern Conference," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 242–245; Linda T. Wynn, "Perry E. Wallace Jr.," *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, 2018, accessed December 10, 2023, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/perry-e-wallace-jr/. Wallace was drafted by the Philadelphia 76ers, but never played and was cut after his rookie season. He earned a law degree from Columbia and became a trial attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice and law professor at American University in Washington, D.C.

[372] "Nashville To Drop Grade-A-Year Plan in Fall of 1966," *Southern School News*, January 1965, 5.

[373] *Southern School News*, January 1965, 5.

[374] "Higher Education Institutions Sign Compliance Pledges," *Southern Schools News*, February 1965, 11, 18; *Southern Schools News*, June 1965, 13.

demonstrated when he stood in the doorway of a University of Alabama auditorium to prevent two Black students from enrolling.[375]

Mayor Briley, who had been scheduled to welcome delegates to the city prior to Wallace's address, canceled. Strenuous objection to Wallace's appearance came from the Nashville NAACP and the Tennessee Federation of Democratic Leagues. As Wallace addressed the convention, about 40 picketers organized by the Nashville NAACP chapter stood outside the Municipal Auditorium carrying poster signs reading "Go Home Racist" (Figure 25). Attacking the federal courts, the United Nations, *The Tennessean*, and the federal government as "left wingers," Wallace encouraged the school boards association to support his proposal for an amendment to the Constitution to place school systems under local control to subvert federal desegregation requirements.[376]

In an irony of scheduling, the annual policy-setting meeting of the Tennessee Education Association, a statewide teachers' group, was also underway at Municipal Auditorium. The two-day convention concluded on January 9, 1965, with an overwhelmingly affirmative vote to end the association's segregation, opening the door for 2,500 African American teachers in communities where local teachers' associations were desegregated to become members.[377]

In May 1966, as Nashville continued efforts to meet its pledge to desegregate all public schools in the fall, 250 educators from four states gathered at the Hermitage Hotel for a two-day conference to discuss desegregation plans. One of four meetings in locations around the country organized by the National Education Association, the meeting in Nashville drew attendance from Alabama, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee. Although the Metro Nashville Education Association had desegregated in 1965, the focus of the conference was on the integration of faculties in states affected by the *Brown* decision.[378]

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[375] "Plan for Address by Gov. Wallace Stirs Controversy," *Southern School News,* January 1965, 5; Inaugural address of Governor George Wallace, January 14, 1963, Alabama Department of Archives and History; "Stand in the Schoolhouse Door," *Encyclopedia of Alabama*.
[376] "Plan for Address by Gov. Wallace Stirs Controversy," *Southern School News,* January 1965, 5; "Wallace Urges Local Controls," *Kingsport News,* Kingsport, Tennessee, January 8, 1965, 2; "Wallace Is No Conant," *The Tennessean,* January 10, 1965, 16.
[377] "White Association Opens Membership to Negro Teachers," *Southern School News,* February 1965, 10.
[378] "Educators Start Desegregation Talk," *The Tennessean,* May 1, 1966, 8.

Figure 25. Photograph of anti-George Wallace demonstrators at the Municipal Auditorium, January 7, 1965. The first integrated high school basketball game in the South had been played in the auditorium on January 4, 1965 (Source: Metro Nashville Archives).

Despite the commitment to desegregate schools in 1966, two years later most of the city's schools were still segregated. Leading the legal charge to accelerate school desegregation, long-time civil rights attorney Avon N. Williams Jr. and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund argued for the use of busing. Williams pointed out that the decisions of local, state, and federal officials in urban renewal and the development of cities and suburbs in recent decades created segregated neighborhoods centered by segregated schools.[379]

[379] Ansley T. Erickson, *Making the Unequal Metropolis: School Desegregation and Its Limits*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2016, 152–162. In 1972, Williams represented several TSU professors and more than 100 Black Tennesseans as plaintiffs in the lawsuit known as Geier v. Tennessee (among other names). The lawsuit began in 1968 when Rita Sanders Geier, an instructor at TSU and Vanderbilt law student, filed a suit alleging that the state of Tennessee maintained dual education systems, citing plans to build a new facility for the Nashville-based campus of the University of Tennessee while neglecting TSU. The case proceeded with the addition of more plaintiffs. In 1977, following a judge's ruling, the University of Tennessee at Nashville and TSU merged. Carlos Gonzalez, "A Long Journey to Justice," Tennessee Bar Association, accessed December 8, 2023, https://www.tba.org/index.cfm?pg=LawBlog&blAction=showEntry&blogEntry=29526.

In 1970, a lawsuit came before U.S. District Judge William E. Miller, the same judge who, in 1956, had ordered the school board to submit a desegregation plan by January 1957. In July 1970, Judge Miller gave the school board thirty days to develop a new plan resulting in more desegregation. Although Miller did not require the use of busing, he ordered the school board to develop policies for school site selection that would support desegregation and required integration of faculties.[380]

Attorney Jack Kershaw (1913–2010), a segregationist who later defended James Earl Ray (1928–1998) to overturn his conviction for the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., fought back against Judge Miller's ruling. Kershaw charged that the judge's decision was "legalistic double talk" that would result in more busing, insisting "Radical rezoning to maximize integration means more busing than you presently have [and opposing] any busing that destroys the neighborhood concept."[381]

Metro Board of Education chairman C.R. Dorrier responded "If people are concerned about busing in terms of distance, they should have no concern about long distance busing. Some children will attend different schools as a result of rezoning. The schools may be closer or farther away than their present schools. But we are not talking about a great discrepancy in distance."[382]

As the school board and community leaders proceeded to develop a plan, busing emerged as a necessity to meet the court's requirements for school desegregation. By the fall of 1971, following another legal decision in federal court, the city's busing plan resulted in Black students traveling further to schools while white suburban students remained closer to home where the city had previously made the greatest financial investment in schools. In the 1970s, lawsuits would continue with some seeking further desegregation and others opposing the inequities of busing.[383]

Black Power, Economic Opportunity, and War

On April 8, 1967, Vanderbilt University's IMPACT Symposium brought speakers with widely different perspectives on civil rights and the growing concern of the Vietnam War, to address 5,000 people filling Memorial Gymnasium. The annual symposium hosted prominent speakers on contemporary issues. Speakers in 1967 included well-known segregationist South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond (1902–

[380] Ibid.
[381] "Jack Kershaw, Stalwart White Nationalist, Dies," accessed June 28, 2023, https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2010/09/24/jack-kershaw-stalwart-white-nationalism-dies; "Busing Worry Downplayed by Chairman," *The Tennessean,* August 12, 1970, 1; The League of the South was founded in 1994; Kershaw represented Ray in the trial which unsuccessfully attempted to overturn Ray's murder conviction in 1977.
[382] "Busing Worry Downplayed by Chairman," *The Tennessean,* August 12, 1970, 1.
[383] Erickson 2016, 162–182.

2003) and poet and anti-war activist Allen Ginsburg (1926–1997) who took opposing sides on the Vietnam War with Thurmond calling for elevating the war to achieve "peace in victory" and Ginsburg calling the war "reality turned inside out."[384]

Although Martin Luther King Jr. was a featured speaker, most of the media coverage before and after the symposium focused on 25-year-old Stokely Carmichael (1941–1998), chairman of SNCC and a leader of the newly emerged militant Black Power Movement. Coined by Carmichael at a Mississippi rally in 1966, the phrase "Black Power" countered decades of nonviolent protests, legal actions for desegregation, and calls for an integrated society. The invitation of Carmichael angered Jimmy Stalhman, a powerful Vanderbilt trustee. The Tennessee state senate issued a resolution condemning Carmichael and his "racist poison." However, Vanderbilt chancellor Alexander Heard (1917–2009) upheld the students' right to invite whomever they wanted. Prior to the symposium, Carmichael addressed students at Fisk University on April 6 and Tennessee A&I on April 7.[385]

At Vanderbilt, Carmichael told the audience, "What we want is not to abolish the black community but to abolish the colonial dependency on the white community." Warning those riots "are the final result of a people who are frustrated and desperate," Carmichael said that while "I am nonviolent right now…I am not now and never have been a pacifist…I will not bow down my head and let them beat me until they become civilized."[386]

Prior to Carmichael's appearance, *The Tennessean* printed an editorial defending his inclusion at the symposium following a condemnation by the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, with one local member saying, "We are ready to fight any person who attempts to destroy our ideals; if we are ready, we shall neither be dead or Red!" Though it characterized Carmichael as speaking "a mean and ugly language," the newspaper said, "he speaks to and for the desperate," maintaining that "he is just a voice. The problem is that more than a few people listen to him. Society needs to find out why." "It was, by all accounts, one of the tamer speeches in Carmichael's repertoire," according to historian Benjamin Houston. "But the atmosphere had been altered by the collective paranoia."[387]

Taking the stage, the previous evening, King—with Carmichael seated in the second row—said he was "convinced that the best route to true integration was nonviolence. Nonviolence is still my way of life. I will

[384] "Thurmond Sees Peace in Victory," *The Tennessean,* April 9, 1967, 6; "Black Power Need Told," *The Tennessean,* April 9, 1967, 2; Houston 2012, 168–171.
[385] "Impact Slates Carmichael," *The Tennessean,* March 18, 1967, 14; Houston 2012, 168–169.
[386] "Black Power Need Told," *The Tennessean,* April 9, 1967, 1.
[387] "Carmichael Just a Voice," *The Tennessean,* April 8, 1967, 4; Houston 2012, 169–170.

continue to condemn riots because they cause more problems than they solve. We have not made a single gain in civil rights without legal and nonviolent action."[388]

After more than a decade of focusing on desegregation, King expanded his civil rights advocacy to focus on economic justice. While calling for a guaranteed income and complete elimination of poverty, King said a "massive action program" was required to "give the Negro the same economic opportunity as the white man." Condemning the nation's expenditure of $35 billion "in an ill-considered war in Vietnam," and $20 billion to "put a man on the moon," King said, "Surely we can spend billions of dollars to put God's children on their feet right here on earth."[389]

Carmichael's speech ended at 6:00 p.m. Later that evening, a riot began on Jefferson Street across from Fisk University. Events started at the University Inn, a beer parlor at 1728 Jefferson Street, when police were called to remove Joe Brooks, a disorderly Fisk student, and alleged SNCC members. Two white police officers arrived. A crowd soon gathered to protest. SNCC members staying in a rental house at 1720 Jefferson Street joined in with hastily made protest signs. As the crowd grew and began throwing rocks and bricks at a city bus and passing cars, more police arrived. Father James E. Woodruff, chaplain at the nearby St. Anselm's Episcopal Chapel and civil rights activist, tried to calm the crowd and convince Nashville police captain John Sorace to pull back the policemen. But Sorace refused and the tension escalated. Rocks were taken from historic stone walls lining the Fisk campus and thrown through the windows of nearby buildings. The Big T restaurant at 1613 Jefferson Street, adjacent to Fisk, was significantly damaged (Figure 26). The crowd, estimated at 350 to 500 people, shouted "black power," and was met by dozens of riot-equipped police officers as violence continued until 2:00 a.m., resulting in arrests and hospitalizations for injuries. Members of Fisk's football team put on their jerseys and proceeded to drive students who were members of SNCC out of the dormitories.[390]

[388] "King Warns of Cost To U.S. in Rights Fight," *The Tennessean,* April 8, 1967, 1.
[389] "King Warns of Cost To U.S. in Rights Fight," *The Tennessean,* April 8, 1967, 1.
[390] "Riot Flares in Fisk Area," *The Tennessean,* April 9, 1967, 1; "Troubled City in Need of Reason—Not Hysteria," *The Tennessean,* April 11, 1967, 12; Houston 2012, 171–172; U.S. Senate Committee on Government Operations. *Riots, Civil and Criminal Disorders*: Hearings Before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Ninetieth Congress, 1967, Volumes 1–2, 443–447.

Figure 26. Photograph of the Big T restaurant on Jefferson Street after the riots, 1967 (Source: Metro Nashville Archives).

The riots continued the evenings of April 9–10, spreading throughout north Nashville and to the Tennessee A&I campus. Protestors damaged police motorcycles, broke windows and doors in commercial businesses, caused serious personal injuries, and burned or damaged 29 buildings with Molotov cocktails. Police fired gunshots and teargas into the air to disperse crowds. Police claimed they were shot at by pellet guns fired from the female dormitory at Fisk and in response reportedly conducted a full-scale raid. During one confrontation, Fisk student Adrienne Jenkins was grazed by a bullet in the Scribner Hall dormitory. Ms. Jenkins alleged the bullet was fired from a policemen's gun. During nightfall, students from Tennessee A&I attacked white students at Vanderbilt. Students from both schools formed posses to maintain order. Mayor Briley ordered roadblocks and negotiated a withdrawal of policemen. Eventually tensions alleviated. During the three days of rioting, police made 94 arrests, including 73 students. Fourteen arrested were charged with carrying guns and five guns were confiscated. Forty police cars were damaged, and 12 police officers were injured. Police raided a house at 1720 Jefferson Street, the residence of several SNCC members, where they allegedly discovered Molotov cocktails with SNCC member Andrea Felder's fingerprints. Unsubstantiated and inflammatory reports later surfaced charging that SNCC had implemented "Operation Nashville" to make the city a target for disorder.[391]

[391] U.S. Senate Committee, 1967, 443–447, 674; Houston 2012, 172–174.

On April 21 SNCC filed a lawsuit against Mayor Briley, Nashville police chief H.O. Kemp, Nashville police officer Bobby Hill, Nashville director of law Neill Brown, and Nashville District Attorney Thomas Shriver. The plaintiffs included Nashville SNCC chairman Frederick Brooks; SNCC field secretaries Ernest Stephens and George Ware, SNCC chairman Stokely Carmichael; Tennessee A&I and Fisk students Oscar Graham, Calvin Connor, and Adrienne Jenkins; Father James Woodruff at St. Anselm's Episcopal Church; and Larry Rabinowitz. SNCC accused the Nashville police of undertaking illegal searches and seizures and a conspiracy to deprive its members from freedom of speech and assembly. The case, *Brooks v. Briley*, was heard from May 22 to June 1 in U.S. District Court at the Estes Kefauver Federal Building (Figure 27). The 25 witnesses for the plaintiffs included Stokely Carmichael. On October 9, a three-judge panel issued a 35-page ruling in favor of the defendants and claimed, "The conclusion on the record is inescapable that the police department and its members exercised, with a few minor exceptions, extraordinary restraint and good judgment in undertaking to control the tumultuous situation."[392]

From November 7-22, the U.S. Senate Government Operations Subcommittee on Permanent Investigations held hearings on the Nashville riots in Washington, DC. Led by U.S. Senator John L. McClellan of Arkansas, the hearings were a result of a series of summer riots held in cities across the U.S., which members of Congress blamed on subversive influences of military Black Power groups and Communists. In November, the committee held hearings for Houston, Nashville, and Plainfield, New Jersey. Riots during the "Long, hot summer of 1967" also occurred in Atlanta, Boston, Birmingham, Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, Cambridge (Maryland), and Tampa. Nashville residents called to testify included Mayor Briley, Fisk University president Dr. James R. Lawson (1915–1996), attorney James F. Neal, Tennessee A&I president Walter S. Davis, Police Captain John Sorace, and Nashville SNCC chair and Tennessee A&I student Frederick H. Brooks. Sorace linked SNCC with the SSOC and the SCEF, which allegedly held a "black power" conference at Fisk in March 1967 as part of an "Operation Nashville" campaign. Sorace had been closely monitoring SSOC activists, spying on meetings, and reporting their activities to federal officials.[393]

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[392] Adrienne Jenkins Patel, email response to Nashville Civil Rights Movement Documentation Project, June 13, 2023; U.S. Senate Committee, 1967, 443–447; Houston 2012, 174–179.

[393] NHL Public Accommodations Theme Study, 2009: 72; Houston 2012, 180–182; Gregg L. Michel, "Government Repression of the Southern New Left," in Cohen and Synder, *Rebellion*, 2013, 457; "Senate and House Committees Investigate Riots." In *CQ Almanac 1967*, 23rd ed., 14-1122-14-1126. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1968. http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal67-1311343. Sorace claimed that SNCC, SSOC, and SCEF tried to host the conference at Clark Memorial Methodist Church; however, the congregation refused. Instead, the conference was held on Fisk campus and at the St. Anselm's Episcopal Church. TSU suspended Brooks after he was arrested during the riots. On November 24, the FBI arrested Brooks for evading the draft to serve in the Vietnam War.

Figure 27. Photograph of SNCC leaders H. Rap Brown, Stokely Carmichael, and George Ware leaving the Estes Kefauver Federal Building, May 23, 1967 (Source: Nashville Public Library).

Civil rights attorney Avon N. Williams Jr. blamed the riots on the "design of Stokely Carmichael" adding that blame should also be placed on "the blindness of white people who have refused for months to see trouble coming." While stating his "conviction that Stokely Carmichael should stay out of here," Williams said, "riot situations" would continue to occur "until the white people of this community open their eyes and begin to recognize what justice really means…as long as they keep their eyes shut they are going to make it possible for people like Carmichael to create disturbances among decent young boys and girls."[394]

A Giant Among Men

The Vanderbilt IMPACT Symposium in the spring of 1968, featured the theme of "Destiny of Dissent." Keynote speakers on March 21 included astronaut John Glenn (1921–2016) and presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy. Nearly 11,000 spectators jammed into Vanderbilt's Memorial Gymnasium to hear Kennedy. "Now anarchists threaten to burn our country down and some have begun to try—while tanks

[394] "Williams Blames Stokely, Whites," *The Tennessean,* April 9, 1967, 1.

have patrolled American streets and machine guns fired at American children," said Kennedy. "Here in Nashville, as all across the nation, we have seen tragic and intolerable consequences."[395]

On April 5–6, immediately following King's assassination, the symposium staged debates between Julian Bond (1940–2015), a Black cofounder of SNCC and Georgia state representative, and William F. Buckley Jr. (1925–2008), a white conservative newspaper columnist, as well as Tom Hayden (1939–2016), a white New Leftist student activist, and Dr. Max Lerner (1902–1992), a liberal Jewish columnist for the *New York Post.* The symposium also featured 260 students from 73 other universities in 10 countries, student-speaker lunches, and classroom addresses by the speakers, including politicians, media leaders, and futurist architect Buckminster Fuller (1895–1983).[396]

In front of an audience of 6,000, Bond said mistakes were made, "such as thinking integration of lunch counters carried the import that we thought it did," in assessing civil rights progress. "Nonviolence as a weapon for Negroes died in Memphis with the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King," predicted Bond. "That single act will unleash a tidal wave of destruction…and bring days and nights of fear. The cause of those willing to die in the belief that from destruction will come a brighter day…was given strength in Memphis." Bond concluded, "I'm hopeful that nonviolence could be a useful tool, but I'm of the regrettable opinion that because of what happened in Memphis, the likelihood of its effectiveness and success is very dim."[397]

On April 5, 1968, the day after King's assassination in Memphis, nineteen Nashville faith leaders from different denominations and religions, and mostly white congregations, announced plans for a memorial service at the St. Mary's Catholic Church (NRHP, 1970) "as an act of penitence and sorrow." The group issued a statement calling King "a giant among men." Noting "the callousness with which so many white Americans have received the news, we stand penitent before God, and before America's Negro community for our neglect, timidity and exploitation." Hundreds of students marched to the downtown church from Vanderbilt's campus. After the service, over 1,000 people gathered in front of the courthouse demanding to

[395] Ricky Rogers, "5 Highlights of Nashville Then: April 1968," *The Tennessean*, April 11, 2018; Larry Daughtry, "Kennedy Charges LBJ Policy Dividing Nation," *The Tennessean*, March 22, 1968, 1.
[396] "Impact Is Big Hit at Vanderbilt University," *The Tennessean*, April 7, 1968, 74; Rogers, "5 Highlights," 2018; Rhodes Johnston, "Bond, Buckley To Lead Off 5th Impact," The *Tennessean*, March 24, 1968, 15; Larry Daughtry, "Kennedy Charges LBJ Policy Dividing Nation," *The Tennessean*, March 22, 1968, 1; Tom Ingram, "Impact Speakers Debate Justice," *The Tennessean*, April 7, 1968, 1, 6. The scheduling of the symposium was pre-planned.
[397] Ingram, "Impact," 1968, 1, 6; John Hemphill, "Bond, Buckley Debate Fate of Nonviolence," *The Tennessean*, April 6, 1968, 1, 7.

hear from Mayor Briley, but he refused to address the crowd. Dr. Edwin Mitchell, chair of the Metro Human Relations Commission, responded by telling Briley that local racial tension is "in your hands."[398]

As the faith leaders planned a memorial service, Nashville erupted in riots, as Julian Bond had prophetically predicted that very day at Vanderbilt. Reports told of store windows broken, fires set, abandoned houses burned, Molotov cocktails thrown, cars overturned, looting, sniper fire, and a skull injury to Nashville's assistant police chief John Sorace after being struck by a rock. Two Black males were wounded during a gun battle with police on Pecan Street. On the Tennessee A&I campus, the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) building adjacent to the football stadium was destroyed by fire (Figure 28). Mayor Briley instructed police officers to "use whatever force is necessary to maintain law and order," enacted a 7:00 p.m. curfew, and banned the sale of alcoholic beverages, gasoline other than for vehicles, firearms, and ammunition "until further notice." The Tennessee National Guard brought in a convoy of armored tanks and an army of 4,000 soldiers to reclaim law and order. The guard created militarized checkpoints throughout north Nashville and set up camp at the Parthenon (NRHP, 1972). The guard threatened to use teargas to disperse unruly crowds at Tennessee A&I and formed battlelines to protect businesses and political targets such as the state capitol. Unrest spread to Edgehill and other parts of the city. The guard also ordered that airplanes do not fly below 2,000 feet within five miles of downtown to avoid interfering with military helicopters patrolling the city. The Grand Ole Opry was cancelled for the first time.[399]

A mass memorial service with 1,500 people and six ministers, Black and white, was held at Gordon Memorial Methodist Church on April 7. The following day a memorial service was held in the Public Lecture Hall at Meharry. As business leaders announced plans to close on April 9, 1968, for King's funeral, Fisk president James R. Lawson decided to follow the school's schedule but to excuse students who wished to attend a memorial service. Vanderbilt planned a memorial service and along with Tennessee A&I and Meharry announced suspension of morning classes. The Nashville NAACP office also served as coordinator for more than 100 people who planned to travel to Atlanta for King's funeral. On April 10, 1968, Mayor Briley lifted the city's curfew and the ban on alcohol and gasoline sales and asked for a reduction of Tennessee National Guardsmen. By April 12, most of the guardsmen had been demobilized as calm returned to the city.[400]

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[398] "Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination: How Nashville faith leaders reacted," *The Tennessean,* April 4, 2018.
[399] "City Calmer; Guard, Police Still Patrol," *The Tennessean,* April 9, 1968, 1; Rogers, "5 Highlights," 2018; "Nashville Then: 1968 Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, *The Tennessean*, March 2, 2017; Jerry Thompson, "Guard, Police Disperse Crowd After Advance," *The Tennessean,* April 7, 1968, 1, 10.
[400] "City Calmer; Guard, Police Still Patrol," *The Tennessean,* April 9, 1968, 1; "Curfew Cut, Guard Force Reduced," *The Tennessean,* April 10, 1968, 1; W.A. Reed Jr., "Memorial To Honor Dr. King," *The Tennessean*, April 7, 1968, 1.

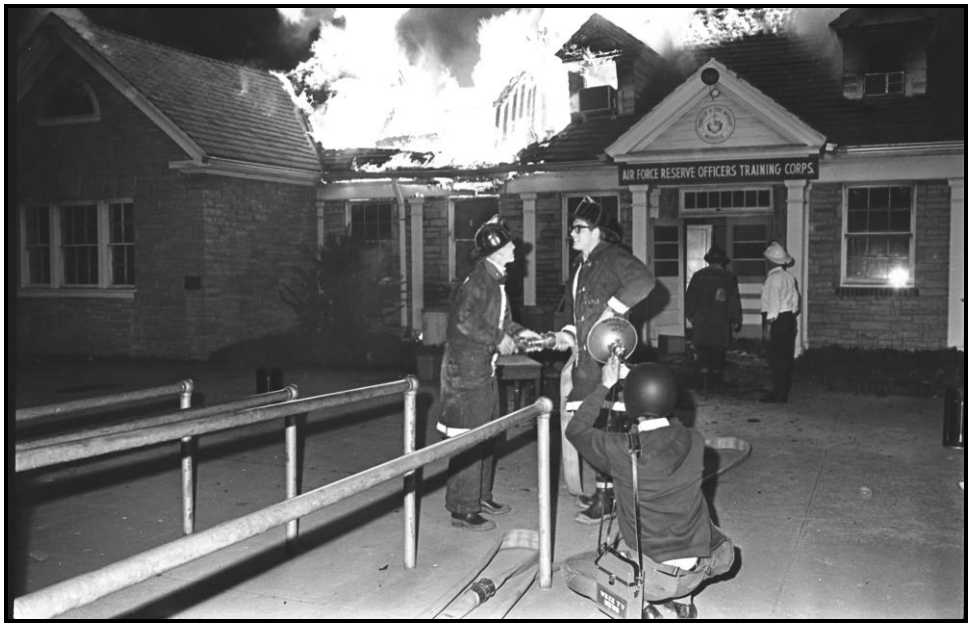

Figure 28. Photograph of Tennessee A&I's ROTC Building destroyed during the riot, 1968. (Source: Metro Nashville Archives).

Making History: Nashville's First African American State Senator

Within hours of convening in January 1969, the Tennessee General Assembly adopted a resolution introduced by newly elected Senators Avon N. Williams Jr. of Nashville and James Oglethorpe Patterson Jr. (1935–2011) of Memphis. Williams and Patterson were the first African Americans elected to the Tennessee Senate since 1887. An editorial in *The Tennessean* praised passage of the resolution by a "Southern legislature, made up mostly of white men" expressing "deep and sincere regret" for the assassination of King. The following day, the House of Representatives passed the same resolution, introduced by Harold Love Sr. (1919–1996), who had been elected to the Tennessee house of representatives in 1968.[401]

After almost two decades of providing legal counsel for civil rights cases including desegregation of Nashville's schools, Williams announced his candidacy for the city's Nineteenth District nomination in the

[401] "Legislature's Men of Good Will Should Rise Above Racism," *The Tennessean,* January 12, 1969, 20. Love was one of the first African Americans elected to Nashville's city council in 1962.

Democratic primary in June 1968. The newly created district centered in the predominantly African American area of north Nashville. Williams told voters: "the keywords of my campaign will be 'vision, courage, unity, consultation truth and loyalty."[402]

Williams' opponent in the primary election was Dr. Dorothy Brown (1914–2004), the first Black woman surgeon in the South and the first African American woman elected to the Tennessee General Assembly in 1966. Dr. Brown, who was completing her first term in the House of Representatives, was chief of surgery at the city's Riverside Hospital and educational director for the Riverside Meharry Clinical Rotation Program. While serving in the House, Brown helped pass the Negro History Act, which required Tennessee's public schools to conduct programs during Negro History Week in recognition of the accomplishments of Black Americans.[403]

The candidates clashed in campaign styles as Dr. Brown said that Williams was "making too much of race." Williams responded, "How can a man who has fought to integrate the schools be called a racist?" A reporter described the differing styles: "Dr. Brown symbolized one choice: talk softly, get along with the powers-that-be, work with the establishment. Williams offered another choice: he challenged the administrations, insisting, as he told the Metro Board of Education recently, 'that the whites in power had better start seeing black.'"[404]

Williams prevailed in the primary election, winning by more than 800 votes. In the general election in November 1968, Williams again prevailed against another African American opponent, civil rights activist Kwame "Leo" Lillard who ran as an Independent, winning by almost 9,000 votes. Williams served in the Tennessee General Assembly for more than 20 years.[405]

Wisdom vs. Legality: Construction of Interstate 40

On November 2, 1967, in the U.S. District Court of Middle Tennessee, Judge Frank Gray (1908–1978) stated that the planned construction of Interstate 40 (I-40) would adversely impact the African American community in north Nashville. Nevertheless, Gray ruled against the I-40 Steering Committee's request to

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[402] "Avon Williams Announces," *The Tennessean,* June 16, 1968, 1.
[403] "Trailblazing Women Minority Surgeons: Dr. Dorothy L. Brown: Surgeon, Legislator, Teacher," American College of Surgeons, accessed June 26, 2023, https://bulletin.facs.org/2022/04/trailblazing-women-minority-surgeons-dr-dorothy-l-brown-surgeon-legislator-and-teacher/.
[404] "Williams Win Makes History," *The Tennessean,* August 2, 1968, 12.
[405] "Williams Wins Uphill Battle," *The Tennessean,* August 2, 1969, 1; "Nixon Got 38% of Vote to Carry State," *The Tennessean,* November 22, 1968, 4.

stop the project, finding that "most of the evidence presented by the plaintiffs goes to the wisdom and not the legality of the highway department's decision."[406]

Formed in 1915, the Tennessee Highway Department (THD) was charged with building interstates in cooperation with local governments. In June 1956, Congress passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act, which called for a nationwide interstate and defense highway system. Championed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the high-speed, limited-access interstate highway system was intended to cut down on traffic fatalities, propel the national economy, and assist with national defense if the country were attacked during the Cold War. The federal highway department proposed to fund I-40, a 2,554-mile east-west interstate stretching from Barstow, California, to Wilmington, North Carolina, with 455 miles in Tennessee, the longest section of any state. Once completed, a cross country automobile trip was cut down from two weeks to five days.[407]

In Tennessee, I-40 follows U.S. 70 across the state. Local planning for limited-access highways, also known as parkways or expressways, in Nashville began in the 1940s through the office of the city planning director and Davidson County planning commission. In 1945, the city and county partnered with the THD and hired two Chicago-based engineering and planning firms—H.W. Lochner & Company and De Leuw, Cather & Company—to develop a comprehensive highway and transportation plan to relieve Nashville's congested streets and parking issues. (The city replaced its electric streetcars with buses in 1941.) In January 1946, Harry W. Lochner (1906–2000) shared the preliminary 20-year, $24 million plan with the Nashville chamber of commerce. Lochner's plan called for a four-lane depressed downtown loop, realigned and widened arterial roadways, and four-lane depressed expressways, including a west expressway located along U.S. 70S (West End Avenue) through predominantly affluent, white areas, including Belle Meade, Vanderbilt University, and Centennial Park. Three other expressways were proposed to parallel Gallatin Road, Granny White Pike, and connect Murfreesboro Road with Lebanon Road. City planners never implemented the proposed expressways; instead, they focused on downtown parking issues.[408]

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[406] Linda Wynn, "Interstate 40 and the Decimation of Jefferson Street," Nashville Conference on African American History and Culture, 2019.

[407] "Brief History of TDOT," TDOT Centennial, accessed June 27, 2023, https://www.tn.gov/tdot/100years-home.html. The Tennessee Highway Department was renamed the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) in 1972.

[408] Sabre J. Rucker, "The Highway to Segregation," Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 2016, 17–18; "Harry W. Lochner To Outline Local Traffic Program," *Nashville Banner*, January 7, 1946, 8; Tom Flake, "$24,000,000 Road Program Needed Here, C. of C. Is Told," *Nashville Banner*, January 16, 1946, 3; Bill Holder, "No Instant Relief," *The Tennessean*, February 9, 1947, 14–15, 22–23. Lochner was the chief transportation planner for Chicago until 1944, when he opened his own consulting firm and designed expressways for Atlanta, Louisville, and Nashville.

In 1955, it became evident that funding would soon be available through the Federal-Aid Highway Act, which would provide 90 percent of interstate construction funds. Therefore, the city and county planners hired Clarke & Rapuano, a planning and landscape architecture firm based in New York, to develop a formal interstate routing plan that could be submitted to the state and federal highway department for funding. The city had previously hired Clarke & Rapuano to develop plans for the Capitol Hill Redevelopment Project. Working with eminent urban planner Robert Moses, the firm designed high-profile highway projects such as the Henry Hudson Parkway (1934–1937) in New York and the Garden State Parkway (1956) in New Jersey, as well as urban parks, housing projects, and expressways throughout New York City.[409]

Local and state highway planners considered the 1946 Lochner expressway plan flawed since it did not satisfy federal highway guidelines regarding interchange configurations and routing around downtown business districts to avoid congestion. As a result, in 1955 Clarke & Rapuano rerouted the proposed west expressway (I-40) along U.S. 70N (Charlotte Pike) and Jefferson Street where it would intersect with a proposed a north-south expressway (I-65) connecting Nashville with Birmingham and Louisville. The revised interstate plans routed the I-40 and I-65 corridors around the downtown business district, forming an urban loop. The 1955 Clarke & Rapuano plan called for I-40 to bend sharply north from U.S. 70N (Charlotte Avenue) to cross 28th Avenue North near Tennessee A&I and then span Jefferson Street near Fisk and Meharry.[410]

According to research by urban planner James Hubert Ford, an urban planner at the University of Tennessee, Clarke & Rapuano routed expressways through “soft spots” as part of redevelopment projects to revitalize blighted neighborhoods. Alexander Koltowich (1925–1985), an engineer with the Nashville branch office of Clarke & Rapuano, stated that no scientific cost-benefit analysis was completed for routing I-40 in north Nashville, “since the routing through the black community was the only feasible alternative.” Koltowich claimed that land acquisition was more expensive along the Charlotte Avenue corridor due to the number of commercial and railroad properties. By endorsing this plan, city and state planners seemingly agreed with Clarke & Rapuano that Jefferson Street was a suitable “soft spot” for redevelopment as part of the I-40 corridor.[411]

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[409] Hubert James Ford, “Interstate 40 Through North Nashville, Tennessee: A Case Study in Highway Location Decision Making,” Thesis, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1970, 28–29; Rucker 2016, 17–18; Houston 2012, 205; “Clarke & Rapuano, 1939–1993,” The Cultural Landscape Foundation, 2023, accessed December 1, 2023, https://www.tclf.org/pioneer/clarke-rapuano; Clarke & Rapuano Landscape Architecture Collection, New-York Historical Society, accessed December 15, 2023, https://findingaids.library.nyu.edu/nyhs/pr080_clarke_rapuano/.

[410] Ford 1970, 31–33, 99; Rucker 2016, 18–20; Houston 2012, 205.

[411] Ford 1970, 31–33, 99; Rucker 2016, 18–20; Houston 2012, 205. A native of New Jersey, Koltowich held a master’s in civil engineering from Columbia (1950) and became a vice president of Clarke & Rapauno, where he managed its Nashville branch

The city and state highway planners submitted Clarke & Rapuano's proposed I-40 routing plan to the federal highway department in 1957 and held a single public hearing on May 15, 1957, as mandated in the 1956 Federal-Aid Highway Act. The public hearing in the city council chambers at the downtown courthouse was advertised with single-page notices posted in six post offices in primarily white neighborhoods. The hearing was not advertised in local newspapers. Nonetheless, a predominance of Black residents attended, based in part on an article in *The Tennessean* about I-40 published two weeks prior. In the article, the city and county planning director, William A. Pitts (d.1964), warned developers "not to build in areas that will be taken up as right-of-ways [sic] for the new federal highway program" and provided a description of the route along the Jefferson Street corridor along with a route map. A hearing transcript reveals that planners did not mention that I-40 would demolish hundreds of buildings along in north Nashville, nor were any right-of-way plans on hand to review. Instead, Michael Rapuano, who traveled from New York to attend the hearing, claimed land values increased along interstate corridors, as evidenced in New York by a report prepared by Robert Moses, and that expressways were good for the local economy.[412]

The federal highway department approved the I-40 routing plan in 1958. However, the THD waited seven years to initiate the purchase of right-of-way in north Nashville. (Construction of I-40 in east and west Nashville occurred first.) In the early 1960s, reporters published a handful of articles about the proposed routing of I-40 along Jefferson Street; however, the details of the plans were not clear, and records indicate local and state officials held no additional public hearings. At the time Nashville residents were focused on planning and construction of I-40 in east Nashville and I-65, which were occurring simultaneously. In 1964, developers began offering to buy property in north Nashville based on rumors of the looming construction of I-40 near Tennessee A&I.[413]

After I-40 was completed from Memphis to west Nashville in 1966, federal funding was sought for completing the unfinished six-mile-long segment through north Nashville. In August 1967, elected officials announced that construction of the unfinished segment of I-40 would soon commence. Although the THD had already spent $10 million on right-of-way acquisition and construction contracts were to be let on October 31, professors from Fisk and Tennessee A&I quickly formed the I-40 Steering Committee, chaired by Dr. Flournoy Coles (1915–1982), which soon counted many African American community leaders as

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office. He was involved in designing the Capitol Hill Redevelopment Plan, I-40, I-65, Briley Parkway, Central Loop urban renewal area on Music Row, and University Center urban renewal area at Vanderbilt.

[412] Ford 1970, 27, 41–43, 135, 137–154; Linda Wynn, "Interstate 40 and the Decimation of Jefferson Street," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 133–136; Houston 2012, 205; Rucker 2016, 17–24; Charles Fontenay, "Highway Push Shifts to City," *The Tennessean*, August 31, 1961, 1, 10; "Builders Warned Highway Coming: Advised to Avoid Areas on U.S. Roads in Planning Stages," *The Tennessean*, April 28, 1957, 58. The hearing date on the flyers was incorrectly listed as May 14, 1957.

[413] Ford 1970, 41–43; Rucker 2016, 17–24.

members. Dr. Coles was chair of the economics department at Fisk (Figure 29). In October 1967, Dr. Edwin Mitchell of Meharry represented the group at a meeting of the Nashville Chamber of Commerce. Characterizing Nashville as a place where "super highways form concrete moats between Negro and white communities," Mitchell declared, "you of the chamber, the city, and state administrations endorsed this program. You did not speak for us!"[414]

Figure 29. Photograph showing Harold Love Sr. (left), Z. Alexander Looby (center), and Dr. Flournoy Coles reviewing I-40 plans at Fisk University, 1968 (Source: *The Tennessean*).

On behalf of the I-40 Steering Committee, attorney Avon N. Williams Jr. filed a legal suit in U.S. District Court in Middle Tennessee, located in the Estes Kefauver Federal Building. The committee noted the opposition of the area's residents on the grounds that "it will segment the area, increase ghettoization and cause irreparable damage to Negro-owned businesses, Negro colleges, universities, churches and residential areas." In addition to the I-40 Steering Committee, others urging delay of construction included Alexander Heard (1917–2009), chancellor of Vanderbilt, John M. Claunch, president of Peabody, D. Dillon Holt (1899–1983), president of Scarritt, more than 100 university faculty members and representatives from the

[414] Wynn, "Interstate 40," 2021; Houston 2012, 205; Rucker 2016, 23–26; Ford 1970, 45–47. From 1951–1963, Dr. Cole served as an economist with the U.S. Department of State. In 1969, he became the first tenured Black faculty member at Vanderbilt.

three colleges as well as Fisk and Tennessee A&I. The I-40 Steering Committee commissioned Yale Rabin (1928–2016), an African American urban planner at the University of Pennsylvania, to create an alternative I-40 route that hugged the Cumberland River; however, this route was rejected since it was in the floodplain and went through a municipal park (Figure 30).[415]

Following Judge Gray's decision, the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund joined the fight as Williams filed an appeal with the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. In a telegram, NAACP fund attorney Jack Greenburg asked Alan Boyd, secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation, to "bar letting of contracts pending full disposition of the issues." Noting "80 percent of all Negro-owned businesses in Davidson County are located on or adjacent to the proposed route," and these businesses would either be "taken by the route [or] cut off from the residential area which they serve and effectively destroyed.[416]

Curlie McGruder, president of the Nashville chapter of the NAACP, mobilized I-40 protest marches along Jefferson Street. Kenneth Peters, a student at Fisk, participated in four or five marches opposing I-40 "because it was displacing people and places along the main thoroughfare through the business district of historic Black Nashville." Peters recalled that they continued to march even after contracts had been let and construction fences were installed.[417]

The Sixth Circuit Court upheld the lower court's decision, and the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review the case, sealing the area's fate. In February 1968, Federal Highway Administrator Lowell Birdwell (1924–1986) approved plans with the requirement of modifications including three additional underpasses to allow access to businesses, a pedestrian overpass at 27th Avenue North, to reroute traffic away from Fisk and Meharry, and to allow some businesses to remain. Concessions included future development of "air rights" for capping the area above the depressed interstate. Completion of the interstate was "a bitter thing which tore the community apart," noted Rev. Smith. In addition to bifurcating the Jefferson Street corridor, construction of I-40 demolished 100 square city blocks, including 128 businesses, 626 dwellings, 27 apartment houses, and 6 churches, including the St. Luke CME Church, which had hosted NCLC mass meetings. Virtually all the affected properties were owned and/or occupied by Black people (Figure 31). The five-mile section of I-40 through north Nashville opened on March 15, 1971.[418]

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[415] "NAACP Fund Joins Fight to Stall I-40," *The Tennessean,* November 5, 1967, 19; Ford 1970, 36–37.
[416] "NAACP Fund Joins Fight to Stall I-40," *The Tennessean,* November 5, 1967, 19.
[417] Kenneth Peters, telephone interview with Natalie Bell, August 3, 2023.
[418] "I-40 Approval Stipulates 5 Modifications," *The Tennessean,* February 27, 1968, 1; Wynn, "Interstate 40," 2021, 136; Ford 1970, 39–69; "Interstate Sections To Open Monday," *The Tennessean,* March 12, 1971, 1, 12.

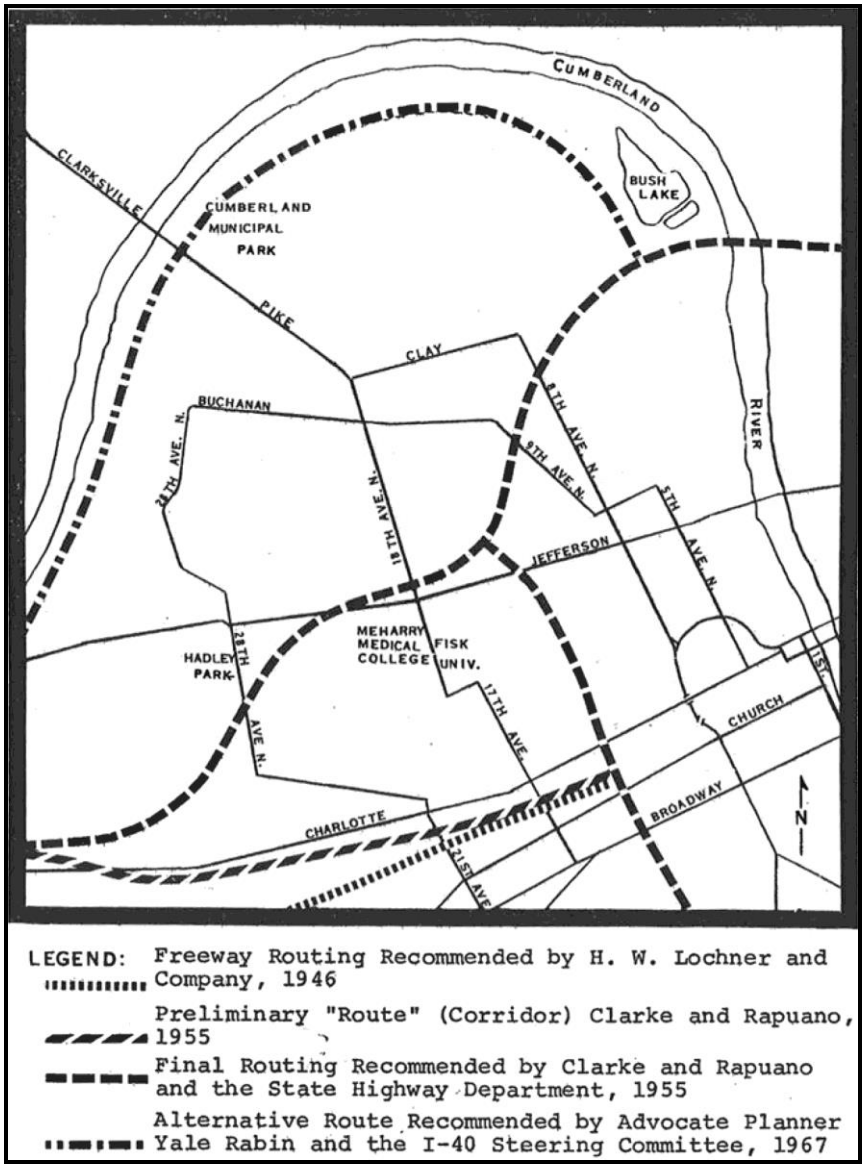

Figure 30. Illustration showing the various routes of the limited-access expressway that became I-40 in north Nashville (Source: Ford 1970, 30).

Figure 31. Aerial photograph of the I-40 overpass and interchange with Jefferson Street under construction, circa 1969 (Source: Nashville Public Library Special Collections).

The Last Word: Fisk's Race Relations Institute Ends

On July 5, 1969, renowned civil rights activist Anna Arnold Hedgeman (1899–1990)—the only woman to serve on the committee which planned the March on Washington—told attendees at Fisk University's twenty-sixth annual Race Relations Institute (RRI) that the news media have been "naïve" to take the word of any one spokesman from the Black community as "the last word." Titling her speech "Black and White Relations," Hedgeman maintained that people engaged in the civil rights movement "are so hung up on words these days we are not thinking about ideas."[419]

[419] "Talk Twists Civil Rights Aims: Long," *The Tennessean*, July 6, 1969, 38.

In the last few years, the words that captured nationwide attention and transformed the Civil Rights Movement were "Black Power" and a call for Black separatism. Stokely Carmichael's address at Vanderbilt University two years prior had been blamed for rioting by students who responded to his call for Black Power. In 1968, the RRI respond to fears of further rioting in the city following King's assassination and for the first time in its history included a session on human relations in Nashville with discussion of the city's employment, housing, health, mass media, police-community relations, education, urban renewal, highway planning, and the effects of policies on the city's Black population. During the session a student from TSU, described by *The Tennessean* as an "angry Black power advocate," charged the assistant police chief who was in the audience with police brutality.[420]

In 1969, as what would be the final RRI was underway, the schedule of speakers clearly reflected the widely divergent perspectives on the future direction of the Civil Rights Movement. Rev. James M. Lawson, a lifelong devotee of nonviolence and the leader who trained students for Nashville's sit-ins earlier in the decade, was the keynote speaker at Fisk's Memorial Chapel. In 1968, Lawson had served as strategy committee chairman for the Memphis "I Am a Man" sanitation workers' strike. Lawson invited King to Memphis to support the sanitation workers.[421]

Repudiating calls for violence, Lawson declared "We must change the climate, the will, without the bloodbath so many people predict." Reflecting on the recently successful sanitation workers' strike, Lawson joined the issues of racism and poverty, telling the audience "It is time to move to a more radical stage of nonviolent warfare, such as strikes, in our cities [and] to correct the ravages of poverty and racism and move toward a fairer, more just society."[422]

Also addressing the Institute was NAACP Executive Director Roy Wilkins (1901–1981) who warned against the growing "cult" of black separatism. Wilkins told the audience "Although the Negro citizens of the United States have a long list of legitimate grievances, there is a grave danger that the present enthusiasm for things black, with its thinly-veiled drive toward racial separatism, will produce a havoc, worse by far, than the evils sought to be eliminated. The vast majority of Negroes believe in integration. They want 'in' not 'out.'"[423]

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[420] Sanders 2005, 108–109; "Stokely Carmichael, Rights Leader Who Coined 'Black Power,' Dies at 57," *New York Times*, November 16, 1998, 10.
[421] "Civil Rights Leader to Speak at Fisk," *The Tennessean*, June 30, 1969, 1. Rev. Lawson had moved to Memphis in 1962 where he was pastor of Centenary United Methodist Church. King was assassinated while in Memphis for the sanitation workers' strike.
[422] "New Rights Tactics Urged," *The Tennessean*, July 1, 1969, 1.
[423] "Wilkins Warns on Separatism," *The Tennessean*, July 10, 1969, 1.

Countering the positions of Lawson and Wilkins was Black Power advocate Rev. Dr. Nathan Wright Jr. (1923–2005). An Episcopal minister, Wright had been a Freedom Rider in 1961 but had come to embrace the ideology of the Black Power Movement. In 1967, Wright chaired the National Black Power Conference in Newark, New Jersey and published *Black Power and Urban Unrest*.[424]

Declaring that the culture "is infected with an insidious disease in the minds of white America," Wright declared "If you're white in America you have a corrupt, screwed up mind—absolute power corrupts. Those folks have integrated us out of existence. All black folks need is segregation, a clearing of the slate." Wright's declarations were refuted the following day by Herman H. Long (1912–1976), president of Talladega College in Alabama and former chairman of the RRI. Long told the audience "There are many negative overtones in the new black mythology including a lessening of the Negro role in history…the issues today are uniformly unclear, partially because the new rhetoric has turned integration into a negative term." The RRI itself was the focus of criticism as one attendee declared "Black people need more action instead of rhetoric after rhetoric," and another attendee characterized the Institute as a "tea-sipping session."[425]

Faced with declining funds, and perhaps responding to the changing Civil Rights Movement, the American Missionary Association which had funded the RRI since 1944 decided that the 1969 session would be the last. In December 1969, the association announced it would move the Race Relations Department from Fisk University to Washington D.C. and would terminate the RRI.[426]

Epilogue: "Black America is Alienated"

In the late 1960s, nonviolent student demonstrations for civil rights evolved into violent protests opposing the expansion of the Vietnam War into Cambodia. In May 1970, student antiwar strikes took place at over 880 campuses across the country. Most were peaceful; however, dozens turned heated, violent, and deadly. On May 4, National Guardsmen killed four students and injured nine at Kent State University in Ohio. Eleven days later, city and state police killed two students and injured 12 others at Jackson State College, a historically Black college in Jackson, Mississippi. Along with other violent clashes, the two deadly protests horrified the nation. In response, students firebombed campus ROTC buildings, smashed windows, slashed tires, vandalized artwork, and dragged parked cars into intersections. It was the third year in a row that racial unrest unsettled the nation. In Nashville, *The Tennessean* reported that a "building takeover by black

[424] "The Reverend Dr. Nathan Wright Jr., 1923–2005," accessed June 26, 2023, https://episcopalarchives.org/church-awakens/exhibits/show/leadership/clergy/wright
[425] "Talk Twists Civil Rights Aims: Long," *The Tennessean,* July 6, 1969, 38; "White Power Corrupts Culture: Fisk Speaker," *The Tennessean,* July 5, 1969, 8.
[426] Sanders 2005, 112; "Race Relations Unit Moving From Fisk," *The Tennessean,* December 12, 1969, 39.

students" had forced the shutdown of a Chicago community college and at Fresno, California, "classes were brought to a virtual standstill as angry Negroes armed with pipes smashed windows, rampaged through a library and overturned tables in a cafeteria." Over 100 campuses suspended classes, some for the remainder of the semester. The administration of President Richard Nixon (1913–1994) feared the nation was on the verge of an insurrection. Nixon's speechwriter, Ray Price, recalled thinking, "That's not a student protest, that's civil war."[427]

On May 18, 1970, around 150 students at Fisk held a student antiwar strike to urge suspension of final exams in protest of the deadly protest at Jackson State. When Fisk leaders refused, a handful of rebellious students started a fire that destroyed Livingstone Hall, an 88-year-old campus landmark. Police immediately arrested Aaron Taylor, a 19-year-old freshman from Brownsville, Tennessee, for arson. A judge set his bail at $5,000. (Five other suspects were not arrested.)[428]

The next day, Fisk president Dr. James R. Lawson and Meharry president Dr. Lloyd C. Elam were among presidents of 15 historically Black universities that flew to Washington, D.C., to meet with President Nixon at the White House. Dr. Andrew P. Torrence, president of Tennessee A&I was also in Washington to support Lawson and Elam. The urgent meeting was called to address student frustration and violence that had broken out at Black universities across the country, as well as the deaths of six Black protestors during a riot in Augusta, Georgia. Lawson stated that the Black presidents urged President Nixon to make a televised national address "reaffirming the federal government's resolve to protect the lives of black citizens" as well as inclusion of more Black advisors to the president, appointment of a Black deputy attorney general to investigate "those responsible for the killing of unarmed citizens," a presidential conference with Black students, a prohibition of guns on campuses, and increased funding for "black educational institutions."[429]

"They told Mr. Nixon that his hesitancy to support strong measures to assure rights to black Americans…[was] contributing to an alienation of Negroes," opined *The Tennessean*. "Unless the nation

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[427] Amanda Miller, "May 1970 Student Antiwar Strikes," Mapping American Social Movements Project, 2006, accessed December 28, 2023, https://depts.washington.edu/moves/antiwar_may1970.shtml; Director: Joe Angio (Feb. 15, 2007), *Nixon: A Presidency Revealed* (television), History Channel; "Blacks Rove Fresno State College Area," *The Tennessean*, May 21, 1970, 11. The Kent State Shooting Site was NRHP-listed in 2010 and designated an NHL in 2016. In Tennessee, student antiwar strikes occurred at Memphis State, Vanderbilt, and the University of Tennessee at Knoxville; however, none cancelled classes.
[428] Bill Preston Jr., "Freshman at Fisk Charged in Blaze," *The Tennessean*, May 19, 1970, 1-6; "Bulletin," *The Tennessean*, May 18, 1970, 1; Craven Crowell and Bill Preston Jr., "Fisk Student Bound to Jury in Arson Case," *The Tennessean*, May 20, 1970, 12. Taylor was indicted for arson on July 17.
[429] "Fisk, Meharry Presidents to Meet With Nixon," *The Tennessean*, May 20, 1970, 1, 15.

understands that racial barriers are meaningless and that every American is entitled to the same rights as every other citizen, without regard to the color of his skin, the nation will remain divided and in danger."[430]

Instead of acting upon the university presidents' recommendations, on June 13, Nixon created the President's Commission on Campus Unrest to study the dissent, disorder, and violence occurring on campuses across the U.S. Three months later, the commission concluded that the deaths of four students at Kent State were "unjustified." No other topics were addressed. When students returned to campuses for the fall semester, fierce antiwar activism did not resume. Although fleeting, the wave of student antiwar strikes and protests had been unprecedented in its scale.[431]

In Nashville, the student antiwar strike of May 1970 resulted in the destruction of Livingstone Hall, a historic landmark that housed generations of Black students at Fisk University. Costing $60,000, "Livingstone Missionary Hall" had been completed from 1878–1882, in part, with funds raised by the Jubilee Singers during a two-year tour of Europe (Figure 32). The second major campus building completed after Jubilee Hall, the four-story-and-basement building contained a chapel, library, museum, scientific lecture room, offices for the president and treasurer, 13 classrooms, and 66 dormitory rooms. It primarily served as a dormitory until 1966 when it was converted into classrooms and studios for the fine arts and music departments after the "new" Livingstone Hall was completed. The fire destroyed not only the building, but also music equipment, research materials, the music library, and precious musical recordings of the Jubilee Singers. [432]

During the 1960 sit-ins, students held strategy meetings in the basement. Members of the Nashville Student Movement such as Angeline Butler and Diane Nash lived here during Lawson's workshops and the sit-ins. The building house the International Student Center, where King Hollands worked and recruited students to join the movement. The building served as a safehouse for students out of jail on bond until their court cases were heard. Athletes living on the first two floors provided protection for students from Fisk and Tennessee A&I who were stowed away on the upper floors. As the Livingstone Hall burned in 1970, Lillian Lawson

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[430] "Black America Is Alienated," *The Tennessean*, May 23, 1970, 4.
[431] Miller 2006.
[432] "Livingstone Hall: Its Corner-stone Laid with Imposing Ceremonies, Yesterday," *The Daily American*, May 26, 1881, 3; "Livingstone Hall: Yesterday's Dedication Exercises of the Beautiful New Building of Fisk University," *The Daily American*, October 31, 1882, 6; "Livingstone Hall," *The American Missionary*, Vol. 36, No. 11, November 1882, 328–329; The supervising architect for Livingstone Hall was John R. Lewis of Nashville. It was named for the first donor, Agnes Livingstone Bruce, the daughter of Dr. David Livingstone (1813–1873), a famous Scottish physician, Christian missionary, African explorer, and slave abolitionist. Among the scores of landmarks named for Livingstone around the world is Livingstone College, a historically Black Christian college in North Carolina.

(1923–2013), the wife of Fisk president James R. Lawson, wept bitterly, "appalled and grief-stricken, watching the conflagration, a silly waste."[433]

Figure 32. Illustration of Livingstone Missionary Hall at Fisk University, 1882
(Source: *The American Missionary* 1882, 329).

Conclusion

During the five-year timespan after passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Nashville underwent a striking metamorphosis. City and state transportation planners implemented a web-like interstate highway system that ensnared the heart of Black Nashville. The Black community rallied furiously but lost a hard-fought legal battle to stop I-40 from laying waste to Jefferson Street, which a local planner deemed a "soft spot" primed for urban renewal, like Capitol Hill before it. The calamitous consequences left the community disillusioned and resentful. Promises of equality made by city leaders were not promises kept. Simmering bitterness and anger detonated during violent and destructive riots in 1967 and again in 1968. During this tumultuous period, north Nashville became a militarized battleground, permanently scarred by bulldozers,

[433] Magena J. Kabugi, "The Soul of Black Colleges: Cultural Production, Ideology, and Identity at Historically Black Colleges and Universities," Dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 2020, 45–46; Cynthia "Cebo" Ball Robinson, response to online survey, June 14, 2023; Angeline Butler, telephone interview with Natalie Bell, September 10, 2023; King Hollands, interview with Natalie Bell, July 11, 2023.

armored tanks, violent alterations with police, and empty lots where buildings once stood. Assurances of "urban renewal" and rejuvenation were never realized.

Nevertheless, desegregation efforts struggled onward as the city finally fully integrated its public schools in 1966, at least on paper. Operationally, schools remained segregated for years to come. Secondary schools and universities gradually allowed Black athletes to play sports alongside white athletes, albeit sometimes begrudgingly. Nashville led the way with the first basketball game in the South between an integrated white high school and an all-Black high school, when Father Ryan and Pearl squared off in a legendary 1965 game at Municipal Auditorium. The following year, Nashville introduced the first Black basketball player in the SEC when Perry Wallace of Pearl took the court at Vanderbilt's Memorial Gymnasium. But the number of Black student athletes at Nashville's integrated white secondary schools, colleges, and universities could be counted on one hand.

Nashville continued to nurture strong Black leaders when Dr. Dorothy Brown was elected to the state house of representatives in 1966 followed by Harold Love Sr. in 1968, the same year Avon N. Williams Jr. was elected to the state senate. However, the political power structure in the city continued to be controlled by an overwhelming white supermajority.

The long list of "firsts" in the South—desegregated lunch counters, movie theaters, private schools, athletic teams—supported Nashville's image as a politically moderate and progressive city. But the sheen of liberalism and tolerance could not completely mask the city's conservative roots and simmering aversion to full equal rights in Nashville. As the turbulent decade ended, Nashville's Civil Rights Movement evolved in a profound manner. The nonviolent, Gandhian leaders of the Nashville Student Movement of the early 1960s were replaced in the late 1960s by confrontational spearheads of the Black Power Movement. Peaceful protest marches and sit-ins were substituted with intense demonstrations that frequently steered towards violence. Passive acts of defiance were replaced by rebellions, smashed windows, and burned-out buildings. Academic discourses and interracial training workshops were swapped with militant speeches and clenched fists held high in the air. The venerable Race Relations Institute ceased to exist. The Nashville of 1964 did not resemble the Nashville of 1969.

Even so, the city's stature as a "beloved community" had been formed on an everlasting foundation by brave foot soldiers of the Nashville Student Movement. The spirit of veterans such as James Lawson, John Lewis, Diane Nash, Kelly Miller Smith, C.T. Vivian, James Bevel, Bernard Lafayette, Angeline Butler, Paul LaPrad, Marion Barry, Guy Carawan, King Hollands, Gloria McKissack, Frankie Henry, Rodney Powell, Novella Page, Vencen Horsley, Troy Merritt, and so many others live on.

F. Associated Property Types

Introduction

The Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) for "The Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, Tennessee, 1942–1969" includes associated property types based on documentation and research completed during preparation of the historic context. The development of property types was also adapted from previous MPDFs associated with Civil Rights Movement resources. These NRHP-listed multiple property nominations were prepared for Orangeburg County, South Carolina (1996); Birmingham, Alabama (2004); Selma, Alabama (2013); the State of Ohio (2019); Detroit, Michigan (2020); and the State of Idaho (2021). The MPDFs prepared for Selma and Birmingham featured similar resources as Nashville, so those property types were studied closely for precedents.

The development of property types and themes utilized previous studies undertaken by the National Park Service (NPS) through the National Historic Landmarks (NHL) Program, including *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites* (2002, revised 2008), *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations* (2004, revised 2009), and a draft NHL nomination prepared in 2003 for Clark Memorial United Methodist Church. The document follows the NPS's *National Register Bulletin: How to Complete a Multiple Property Documentation Form* (1991, revised 1999).

The development of property types for this MPDF also utilized documentation from the Georgia State University (GSU) World Heritage Initiative, developed under guidance by the NPS's Office of International Affairs, "Identifying U.S. Civil Rights Movement Sites." The GSU World Heritage Initiative identified over 300 sites associated with the Modern Civil Rights Movement in the U.S., including six sites—consisting of three buildings and three university campuses—in Nashville, for consideration for possible inclusion in the potential serial nomination.

As documented in Section E of this MPDF, three distinct periods of significance in Nashville's Civil Rights Movement have been identified:

1) Nashville's Early Civil Rights Movement, 1942–1957
2) Nashville Student Movement, 1958–1964
3) Nashville After the Civil Rights Act, 1965–1969

Properties may meet registration requirements if they possess sufficient character and integrity to retain their sense of time and place from their period of significance. In the case of properties associated with the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, consideration of the effect of racial and ethnic discrimination in local, state,

and federal policies, in mortgage and lending programs and housing practices; in employment; in education; and other forms of racial and ethnic discrimination must be considered when determining integrity. African Americans in Nashville often found it financially unfeasible to construct new buildings and instead enlarged existing buildings or adapted older buildings for new uses.

As explained in a recent NPS best practices guidance document, "Historic places evolve, and these changes may be determined to be historic following National Register guidelines." The document further states that the "historic context developed in the nomination is essential in evaluating historic changes." This guidance conveys that traditional tests of architectural integrity, such as retention of historic exteriors, from the period of significance may be unsuitable. As documented in this MPDF, the desegregation process in Nashville oftentimes led to the transformation of the landscape of segregation and caused properties to experience change as they became part of an integrated landscape in the city. The activities and associations of the Civil Rights Movement will generally be more important than a building's architectural or design integrity.[1]

As noted in the MPDF for the Civil Rights Movement resources in Selma, Alabama:

> To search out merely the properties that remained exactly as they were in 1965, for example, would deny the agency of African Americans as they gained political and economic power, and assumed a new legitimacy and visibility in southern culture, as they translated the immediate success of the Civil Rights Movement into new social, cultural, and political arrangements and environments in the mid–1960s to mid–1970s. However, if the property lacks the significant distinguishing features from its period of significance, no matter how just and well intentioned those renovations may be, the property no longer possesses integrity from that period of significance.[2]

Any alterations to the exterior or interior of these properties must be evaluated within the context of the building's overall ability to convey the association and feeling related to its significance within the historic contexts established in Section E. This evaluation must occur before determining whether the building is eligible or ineligible for listing in the NRHP due to material or design changes outside the period of significance. As provided in the Criteria Bulletin, at page 44, determining which of the aspects of integrity are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where, and when the property is significant. Historic properties either retain integrity—that is, convey their significance—or they do not. As

[1] National Park Service, "Evaluating Non-Historic Exteriors," *Best Practices Review: A quarterly publication on National Register Bulletin guidance*, Issue 1, September 22, 2022, 1.
[2] Carroll Van West, Amber Clawson, Jessica French, and Abigail Gautreau. "The Selma Civil Rights Movement: Multiple Property Nomination," National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2013, 57. This MPDF was prepared by the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University.

the NPS notes, "The evaluation of integrity is sometimes a subjective judgment, but it must always be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance."[3]

Places associated with the struggle for civil rights in Nashville represent a particularly fragile class of property. Since the 1950s, numerous important buildings and landmarks have been lost because of large-scale urban renewal projects funded by the federal government, commercial redevelopment, economic hardship, neglect, and gentrification. The resource inventory for this MPDF documented 93 properties associated with Nashville's Civil Rights Movement that have been destroyed over time. Two inventoried resources were demolished during the preparation of this MPDF. As Nashville's inventory of historic Civil Rights Movement resources is diminished, the cultural legacy and story that the remaining historic resources portray rise in importance. The rarity of a place associated with Nashville's Civil Rights Movement is one aspect of evaluating registration requirements.

Although residents of places like Selma, Birmingham, and Nashville struggling for equal rights were practicing nonviolent tactics, their direct-action campaigns were structured like protracted military campaigns, with fundamental components such as strategy centers, march routes, conflict targets, supply facilities, transportation depots, and negotiation sites. Historians and movement participants have likened the southern civil rights campaigns to military battlefields, particularly in cities where vehement opposition resulted in bombings, mob violence, terror tactics, injuries, and deaths. And like military campaigns, the direct-action campaigns were comprised of a hierarchy of leaders, instructors, and foot soldiers.

Based on this documentation, previous studies, and the comprehensive resource inventory for Nashville, the three property types are: Strategy Centers, Conflict Centers, and Properties Associated with Prominent Persons. The three property types are described in depth below. Property types not listed may be considered if it can be demonstrated that they have a significant connection to the established contexts and themes in Section E and retain sufficient integrity from the period of significance.

I. Strategy Centers

Property Type Description

A Strategy Center is a property where leaders, instructors, and foot soldiers representing local, state, or national organizations and institutions held mass meetings, training workshops, public addresses, or strategy sessions in support of, or in opposition to, the Civil Rights Movement. Strategy centers were likened to command centers where operational tactics, strategies, maneuvers, and conflict targets were discussed, and

[3] National Park Service, "Evaluating Non-Historic Exteriors," 2022, 1.

plans of action were formulated. In Nashville, strategy centers include sites where training workshops, mass meetings, public speeches, media events, fundraisers, and legal strategies took place. Like Selma and Birmingham, in Nashville activist churches are of particular importance since they served as safe havens for community discussions, negotiations, and mass meetings. The church pastors and congregation leaders often played important roles as civil rights activists. Numerous churches in Nashville held strategy meetings for their congregation members and residents on civil rights topics. Likewise, Nashville's multiple universities and colleges hosted strategy meetings, public speeches, classes, workshops, and large-scale public gatherings. It is important to note that strategy centers were associated with institutions and organizations that were historically Black, segregated white, and interracial.

The survey of Nashville's Civil Rights Movement resources documented 56 extant Strategy Centers from the 1942 to 1969 period of significance (see Appendix B). Strategy centers include religious facilities and churches, university and college buildings, government facilities, and commercial/office facilities. Listed below are 31 inventoried resources currently listed in the NRHP or recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A as Strategy Centers under this MPDF. Resources currently NRHP listed under different criteria are included. Earlier NRHP nominations may be amended to document and recognize their significance under the theme of the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, Tennessee, 1942–1969, and the requirements of this MPDF. Amended nominations can also revise the status of noncontributing resources to contributing if they meet registration requirements. In 2016, the MHC recommended that the Fisk University Historic District be amended, and 11 noncontributing buildings be reclassified as contributing, in part, due to their association with the Civil Rights Movement.[4] Churches nominated under the Strategy Centers property type will need to meet Criteria Consideration A for Religious Properties, which ensures that a religious property's significance is judged in purely secular terms. Resources can be eligible for listing in the NRHP under more than one property type (denoted by an asterisk * below).

Religious Facilities/Churches

Baptist Student Union Center, 2023 Jefferson Street
Capers Memorial CME Church, 319 15th Avenue North (NRHP, 1985)
*Clark Memorial United Methodist Church, 1014 14th Avenue North (Nominated under this MPDF)
First Baptist Church East Nashville, 605 Main Street (NRHP, 2005; for Civil Rights Movement)
*First Community Church, 1815 Knowles Street (Nominated under this MPDF)
Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, 1703 Jo Johnston Avenue

[4] Tara Mitchell Mielnik, "Fisk University Historic District," in Lovett, Wynn, and Eller, *Profiles*, 2021, 96–99. The 11 buildings recommended to be reclassified as contributing included Burrus Hall, Henderson A. Johnson Gymnasium, Park-Johnson Hall, DuBois Hall, Spence Hall, Crosthwaite Hall, President's House (1962), Creswell Residence, New Livingstone Hall, Fisk University Library (1968–1970), and Shane Hall.

Gay-Lea Christian Church, 2201 Osage Street
Howard United Church of Christ, 2802 Buchanan Street
Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, 3411 Albion Street
Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 1112 Jefferson Street (NRHP, 1980; part of Buena Vista HD)
Progressive Baptist Church, 1419 12th Avenue North
St. Andrews Presbyterian Church and Parsonage, 949 T.S. Jackson Avenue
Seay-Hubbard United Methodist Church, 1116 1st Avenue South
Spruce Street Baptist Church, 504 Spruce Street

Universities/Colleges

American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District (NRHP, 2013)
- Griggs Hall, 1800 World Baptist Center Drive (contributing)
- J.B. Lawrence Administrative Building, 1800 World Baptist Center Drive (contributing)
- T.L. Holcomb Library, 1800 World Baptist Center Drive (contributing)

Fisk University Historic District (NRHP, 1978)
- *Henderson A. Johnson Gymnasium, 910 18th Avenue North (noncontributing; MHC recommended contributing 2016)
- Memorial Chapel, 1016 17th Avenue North (contributing)
- Park-Johnson Hall, 1601 Phillips Street (noncontributing; MHC recommended contributing 2016)
- Talley-Brady Hall, 1016 18th Avenue North (contributing)
- Adam K. Spence Hall/Student Union, 1020 17th Avenue North (noncontributing; MHC recommended contributing 2016)
- Jubilee Hall, 1711 Meharry Boulevard (contributing; NRHP, 1971; NHL, 1976)

Scarritt College Historic District (NRHP, 1982)
- Wightman Chapel, 1110 19th Avenue South (contributing)

Tennessee State University Historic District (NRHP, 1996)
- Janie D. Elliott Women's Building, 1108 37th Avenue North (contributing)
- A-Auditorium/Davis Hall, 3600 John A. Merritt Boulevard (contributing)

Government Facilities

Hadley Park Branch Library, 1039 28th Avenue North
War Memorial Auditorium, 301 6th Avenue North (NRHP, 2017)

Commercial Facilities

Frierson Building/NAACP Offices, 1310 Jefferson Street
*Robert E. Lillard Law Office, 1062 2nd Avenue South
Ryman Auditorium, 116 Rep. John Lewis Way (NRHP, 1971; NHL, 2001)

Significance

Strategy Centers may be eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A in the areas of Black Ethnic Heritage and/or Social History associated with the Civil Rights Movement within the 1942 to 1969 period of significance. Strategy Centers may have significance at the local, state, or national levels.

In addition to Criterion A, Strategy Centers may also be individually eligible for listing under Criterion B for their association with historically significant people or under Criterion C for architectural significance. However, the individual NRHP nomination must contain sufficient research and documentation to support the justification for additional significance under Criterion B and/or Criterion C.

Registration Requirements

To meet Criterion A eligibility, the Strategy Center property must be directly associated with significant historical events and/or a pattern of events in the history of the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, as associated with public accommodations, and the property must have been in existence at the time that the historical event took place. Properties must demonstrate significance in relation to the historic contexts, time periods, and themes outlined in Section E of this MPDF. They must retain sufficient integrity of location, setting, materials, design, workmanship, feeling, and association as defined by the National Park Service in *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

The extant Strategy Centers must also meet registration requirements where they possess a high integrity of design, workmanship, and materials that evoke their period of significance. Although buildings evolve over time with advances in technology and uses, the buildings should retain sufficient character defining features to maintain integrity from the 1942 to 1969 period of significance. When discussing the significance of a particular property under Criterion A and B, consider important dates, events, activities, persons, associations, and developmental forces, trends, and patterns relating the property type to its relevant context as well as any direct relationship of the property type to major stages of growth, pivotal events or activities, or personal associations characterizing the historic context.

Although buildings will likely have been updated and modernized over time, as the introduction to this section states, the Strategy Centers should look and feel as they did during the period of significance. Exterior materials should be original or replaced in kind. Modern asbestos shingles, aluminum, and vinyl finishes may be acceptable provided most of the other character-defining features remain intact. Usually, fenestration should be intact and contain original windows or windows from the period of significance. A loss of original fenestration might be mitigated by a remarkable degree of integrity of other aspects of the building, particularly the interior spaces where the significant events associated with the property occurred. Like the exterior, significant interior spaces should retain character defining features such as structural materials, finishes, room layouts, and circulation patterns. Interior materials and finishes should be original or replaced in kind. The interior spaces should look and feel as they did during the period of significance.

The integrity of the Strategy Centers' association and feeling is greatly enhanced by the integrity of their setting. Strategy Centers nominated solely under Criterion A for historical significance in the Ethnic Heritage and Social History do not have to possess as high a degree of integrity of design and workmanship as Strategy Centers which are nominated under Criterion C for architecture.

II. Conflict Centers

Property Type Description

A Conflict Center is a property associated with conflict or confrontation and may include commercial buildings, office buildings, public buildings, churches, and private dwellings where actual physical conflict and/or demonstrations took place, either in support of, or opposition to, the Civil Rights Movement. Demonstrations took many forms, including sit-ins, stand-ins, lie-ins, sip ins, kneel ins, picket lines/boycotts, and march routes. A Conflict Center could also be a property that was damaged by a bombing, vandalization, the target of a bombing, or other types of violent intimidation. These properties also include local, state, and federal buildings where legal courtroom challenges and political conflict took place.

The survey of Nashville's Civil Rights Movement resources documented 34 extant Conflict Centers from the 1942 to 1969 period of significance (see Appendix B). Conflict centers include religious facilities and churches, university and college buildings, government facilities, and commercial facilities. Listed below are 21 inventoried resources currently listed in the NRHP or recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A as Conflict Centers under this MPDF. Resources currently NRHP listed under different criteria are included. Earlier NRHP nominations may be amended to document and recognize their significance under the theme of the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, Tennessee, 1942–1969, and the requirements of this MPDF. In 2016, the MHC recommended that the Fisk University Historic District be

amended, and 11 noncontributing buildings be reclassified as contributing, in part, due to their association with the Civil Rights Movement.[5] Religious institutions will need to meet Criteria Consideration A for Religious Properties. Resources can be eligible for listing in the NRHP under more than one property type.

Commercial Facilities

5th Avenue Historic District (NRHP, 1983)
Harvey's Department Store, 530 Church Street (contributing)
Cain-Sloan Department Store, 500 Church Street (contributing)
Woolworth's, 221–225 5th Avenue North (contributing)
S.H. Kress, 237 5th Avenue North (contributing)
McLellan's, 229 5th Avenue North (contributing)
W.T. Grant's Variety Store, 215–217 5th Avenue North (contributing)
Walgreen's, 224–226 5th Avenue North (contributing)

Wilson-Quick Drugstore (Doctor's Building), 708-710 Church Street (NRHP, 1985)
Nashville Arcade, 228 5th Avenue North (NRHP, 1973)
Hermitage Hotel, 231 6th Avenue North (NRHP, 1975; NHL, 2020)
YWCA, 211 7th Avenue North (NRHP, 1982)

Government Facilities

Davidson County Public Building and Courthouse, 101 James Robertson Parkway (NRHP, 1987)
Tennessee Supreme Court Building, 407 7th Avenue North (NRHP, 2014)
U.S. Courthouse/Estes Kefauver Federal Building, 801 Broadway (NRHP, 2016)

Private Residences

*Z. Alexander Looby House, 2012 Meharry Boulevard
*Dr. Charles J. and Mary Walker House, 1218 Phillips Street (Nominated under this MPDF as part of the Clark Memorial United Methodist Church Complex)

Religious Facilities/Churches
*Clark Memorial United Methodist Church, 1014 14th Avenue North (Nominated under this MPDF as part of the Clark Memorial Methodist Church Complex)

[5] Mielnik, "Fisk University," 2021, 96–99. The 11 buildings recommended to be reclassified as contributing included Burrus Hall, Henderson A. Johnson Gymnasium, Park-Johnson Hall, DuBois Hall, Spence Hall, Crosthwaite Hall, President's House (1962), Creswell Residence, New Livingstone Hall, Fisk University Library (1968–1970), and Shane Hall.

Universities/Colleges

Fisk University Historic District (NRHP, 1978)
*Henderson A. Johnson Gymnasium, 910 18th Avenue North (noncontributing; MHC recommended contributing in 2016)
*President's House, 1803 Morena Street (contributing)

March Routes

Silent March (1960), from north Nashville to Downtown along Jefferson Street & 3rd Avenue North
Freedom March (1963), from north Nashville to Downtown along Jefferson Street & 8th Avenue North

Significance

Conflict Centers may be eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A in the areas of Black Ethnic Heritage and/or Social History associated with the Civil Rights Movement within the 1942 to 1969 period of significance. Conflict Centers may have significance at the local, state, or national levels.

In addition to Criterion A, Conflict Centers may also be individually eligible for listing under Criterion B for their association with historically significant people or under Criterion C for architectural significance. However, the individual NRHP nomination must contain sufficient research and documentation to support the justification for additional significance under Criterion B and/or Criterion C.

Registration Requirements

To meet Criterion A eligibility, the Conflict Center property must be directly associated with significant historical events and/or a pattern of events in the history of the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, as associated with public accommodations, and the property must have been in existence at the time that the historical event took place. Properties must demonstrate significance in relation to the historic contexts, time periods, and themes outlined in Section E of this MPDF. They must retain sufficient integrity of location, setting, materials, design, workmanship, feeling, and association as defined by the National Park Service in *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

The extant Conflict Centers must also meet registration requirements where they possess a high integrity of design, workmanship, and materials that evoke their period of significance. Although buildings evolve over time with advances in technology and uses, the buildings should retain sufficient character defining features to maintain integrity from the 1942 to 1969 period of significance. When discussing the significance of a

particular property under Criterion A and B, consider important dates, events, activities, persons, associations, and developmental forces, trends, and patterns relating the property type to its relevant context as well as any direct relationship of the property type to major stages of growth, pivotal events or activities, or personal associations characterizing the historic context.

Although buildings will likely have been updated and modernized over time, as the introduction to this section states, the Conflict Centers should look and feel as they did during the period of significance. Exterior materials should be original or replaced in kind. Modern asbestos shingles, aluminum, and vinyl finishes may be acceptable provided most of the other character-defining features remain intact. Usually, fenestration should be intact and contain original windows or windows from the period of significance. A loss of original fenestration might be mitigated by a remarkable degree of integrity of other aspects of the building, particularly the interior spaces where significant events associated with the property occurred. Like the exterior, significant interior spaces should retain character defining features such as structural materials, finishes, room layouts, and circulation patterns. Interior materials and finishes should be original or replaced in kind. The interior spaces should look and feel as they did during the period of significance.

The integrity of the Conflict Centers' association and feeling is greatly enhanced by the integrity of their setting. Conflict Centers nominated solely under Criterion A for historical significance in the Ethnic Heritage and Social History do not have to possess as high a degree of integrity of design and workmanship as Conflict Centers which are nominated under Criterion C for architecture.

Subtype: March Routes

March routes are the sites of protest demonstrations and rallies that took place on the streets and public spaces of Nashville. March routes may be significant as the location of important events in the history of the Civil Rights Movement, particularly in challenging racial segregation in public accommodations. Examples include marches to advocate for change in social or legal policies or marches in response to racial violence and brutality. March routes may also be, like traditional cultural properties, locations that contain resources defined by African Americans as important to their civil rights heritage and maintaining their continued cultural identity. March routes are sometimes referred to as sacred ground, which under NRHP regulations can be defined as physical places with intangible historical significance that continues to current day.

The site of a march route must be directly associated with a historical event and/or a pattern of events related to Nashville's Civil Rights Movement during the 1942 to 1969 period of significance. The site of the march route must be the original, physical location where the event occurred. March routes should retain sufficient integrity in terms of their spatial relation to the urban fabric of the city, neighborhood, or area setting. The individual route should retain sufficient integrity from the context period and/or period of

significance. It should, in general, be recognizable in terms of the spatial organization of the site and major features present during the period, such as boundaries, circulation patterns, building clusters, topography, and views. Common alterations such as sidewalk or street resurfacing and individual building demolition/replacement will not generally diminish the historic integrity of a route, while significant alterations to the setting and spatial organization as well as the intrusion of large-scale features may negatively impact integrity if they occurred after the period of significance of 1942 to 1969.

Special consideration should be given to understanding the ongoing impacts of segregation and discrimination when evaluating the integrity of march routes as Conflict Centers. March routes took place along public streets and sidewalks that are considered common property. As with all public infrastructure, the city's transportation corridors are subject to constant evolution and change. As in other cities around the U.S., march routes connected to civil rights history have often been undervalued by those responsible for maintaining them. This is part of the story and legacy of segregation in the city of Nashville.

A march route should include physical features such as the paved roadbeds, flanking pedestrian sidewalks, curbing, crosswalks, streetlights, signage, and landscaping, as well as focal areas like a destination point and significant buildings flanking the route. Some segments of a march route may retain more integrity than others. Although transportation corridors will likely have been updated and modernized over time, as the introduction to this section states, the March Routes should look and feel as they did during the period of significance. Materials should be original or replaced in kind. Like historic districts, an entire march route, including its rally point and destination point, may be evaluated as a single linear transportation corridor/site with specific segments delineated as contributing and noncontributing. Contributing segments should have enough intact buildings and structures from the period of significance to provide a sense of place and setting. March routes should have clearly defined beginning points, where demonstrators rallied, and ending points, where demonstrators targeted their protest. March routes can also have secondary rally points, such as universities and activist churches, along the route where additional demonstrators joined the protest march.

III. Properties Associated with Prominent Persons

Property Type Description

Prominent persons are people who were involved on a substantial level as important or key leaders of significant organizations, institutions, or agencies in Nashville's Civil Rights Movement. This includes organizations such as the Nashville Christian Leadership Council (NCLC), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Southern Conference on Human Welfare (SCHW), Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Student Non-Violent Coordination Committee (SNCC),

Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC), and Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), as well as institutions such as the Fisk University Race Relations Institute (RRI), Resources within this property type are, as the NPS guidelines state, "most closely associated with a person's productive life." These properties include private residences, churches, businesses, universities/colleges, and public buildings.

Properties Associated with Prominent Persons will qualify under Criterion B due to their direct ties to a leader or a person instrumental to the movement. To qualify for Criterion B, properties should be the primary property associated with the person during the time of involvement with Nashville's Civil Rights Movement. For example, the location of James Lawson's numerous nonviolent training workshops from 1958 to 1959 at Clark Memorial Methodist Church is considered the primary property associated with him, even though he led workshops at other locations in Nashville, because of the national importance of the workshops held at Clark and it is the site where most of the workshops were held. The importance of the site must be considered in the wider context of Nashville's civil rights history. Prominent persons could be anyone associated with Nashville's Civil Rights Movement—pastors, attorneys, political leaders, activists, physicians, educators, students—at the local, state, or national level, provided they made significant contributions to an organization and/or events that were part of the movement.

The survey of Nashville's Civil Rights Movement resources documented 39 extant Properties Associated with Prominent Persons from the 1942 to 1969 period of significance (see Appendix B). These properties include private residences, religious facilities and churches, and university and college buildings. Listed below are 24 inventoried resources currently listed in the NRHP or recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion B as Properties Associated with Prominent Persons under this MPDF. Resources currently NRHP listed under different criteria are included. Earlier NRHP nominations may be amended to document and recognize their significance under the theme of the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, Tennessee, 1942–1969, and the requirements of this MPDF. In 2016, the MHC recommended that the Fisk University Historic District be amended, and 11 noncontributing buildings be reclassified as contributing, in part, due to their association with the Civil Rights Movement.[6] Religious institutions will need to meet Criteria Consideration A for Religious Properties. This list includes information for two extant religious facilities located outside Nashville that are associated with founders of the Nashville Student Movement. Resources can be eligible for listing in the NRHP under more than one property type.

[6] Mielnik, "Fisk University," 2021, 96–99. The 11 buildings recommended to be reclassified as contributing included Burrus Hall, Henderson A. Johnson Gymnasium, Park-Johnson Hall, DuBois Hall, Spence Hall, Crosthwaite Hall, President's House (1962), Creswell Residence, New Livingstone Hall, Fisk University Library (1968–1970), and Shane Hall.

Private Residences

*Dr. Charles J. and Mary Walker House, 1218 Phillips Street (nominated under this MPDF as part of the Clark Memorial Methodist Church Complex)
*Z. Alexander Looby House, 2012 Meharry Boulevard
Coyness L. Ennix House, 3407 Bativa Street
*Robert E. Lillard House & Law Office, 1062 2nd Avenue South
Matthew Walker Jr. House, 1709 Windover Avenue
Lillie Bowman/Rev. Joseph Echols Lowery House, 1722 Windover Avenue
Rev. Joseph Metz Rollins Jr. House, 1710 Villa Place
Rev. Andrew N. White Jr. House, 1621 Haynes Meade Circle
Rev. McCoy Ransom House, 1806 15th Avenue South
Hellyn B. Johns House, 917 15th Avenue South
Theodore & Phoebe Green House, 1615 18th Avenue South
John L. Seigenthaler Jr. House, 525 Arrowwood Drive
Rev. Will D. Campbell House, 815 Colfax Drive
Judge Andrew J. Doyle House, 1800 Natchez Trace (NRHP, 1993, as part of Hillsboro-West End District)
Murray J. Blakemore House, 1404 South Street

Religious Facilities/Churches

*Clark Memorial United Methodist Church, 1014 14th Avenue North (nominated under this MPDF as part of the Clark Memorial Methodist Church Complex)
*Clark Memorial United Methodist Church Parsonage, 1220 Phillips Street (nominated under this MPDF as part of the Clark Memorial Methodist Church Complex)
*First Community Church, 1815 Knowles Street (nominated under this MPDF)

Universities/Colleges

American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District (NRHP, 2013)
Griggs Hall (contributing)

Fisk University Historic District (NRHP, 1978)
Dubois Hall, 1721 Jackson Street (noncontributing; MHC recommended contributing in 2016)
Crosthwaite Hall, 1030 18th Avenue North (noncontributing; MHC recommended contributing in 2016)

Richardson House/Dr. Herman H. Long House/Political Science Building, 1017–1019 16th Avenue North (contributing)
*President's House, 1803 Morena Avenue (contributing)

Tennessee State University Historic District (NRHP, 1996)
Janie D. Elliott Women's Building, 1108 37th Avenue North (contributing)

Significance

Properties Associated with Prominent Persons may be eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion B in the areas of Black Ethnic Heritage and/or Social History associated with the Civil Rights Movement within the 1942 to 1969 period of significance. These properties may have significance at the local, state, or national levels. Individual nominations for properties nominated under Criterion B must establish the significance for the associated person as it relates to the requirements established in this MPDF. The properties identified in this MPDF as potentially NRHP-eligible are a starting point, based on the research documented in the three historic contexts. Individual nominations must also include bibliographies, contexts, documentation, and comparative analysis for the associated person that qualifies under Criterion B.

Registration Requirements

To meet Criterion B eligibility, the Property Associated with a Prominent Person must be directly associated with significant historical events and/or a pattern of events in the history of the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville, as associated with public accommodations, and the property must have been in existence at the time that the historical event took place. Properties must demonstrate significance in relation to the historic contexts, time periods, and themes outlined in Section E of this MPDF. They must retain sufficient integrity of location, setting, materials, design, workmanship, feeling, and association as defined by the National Park Service in *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. More information on Criterion B can be found in *National Register Bulletin 32: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons*.

Properties Associated with a Prominent Person are individually eligible for listing under Criterion B for their association with historically significant people, under Criterion A for association with a historical event, or under Criterion C for architectural significance. However, the NRHP nomination must contain sufficient research and documentation to support the justification for additional significance under Criterion C or under Criterion A for significance not covered under this MPDF.

The extant Properties Associated with Prominent Persons must also meet registration requirements where they possess a sufficient integrity of design, workmanship, and materials that evoke their period of significance. Although buildings evolve over time with advances in technology and uses, the buildings should retain sufficient character defining features to maintain integrity from the 1942 to 1969 period of significance. When discussing the significance of a particular property under Criterion A and B, consider important dates, events, activities, persons, associations, and developmental forces, trends, and patterns relating the property type to its relevant context as well as any direct relationship of the property type to major stages of growth, pivotal events or activities, or personal associations characterizing the historic context.

Although buildings will likely have been updated and modernized over time, as stated in the introduction to this section, the properties should look and feel as they did during the period of significance. Exterior materials should be original or replaced in kind. Modern asbestos shingles, aluminum, and vinyl finishes may be acceptable provided most of the other character-defining features remain intact. Usually, fenestration should be intact and contain original windows or windows from the period of significance. A loss of original fenestration might be mitigated by a remarkable degree of integrity of other aspects of the building, particularly interior spaces where significant events associated with the property occurred. Like the exterior, significant interior spaces should retain character defining features such as structural materials, finishes, room layouts, and circulation patterns. Interior materials and finishes should be original or replaced in kind. The interior spaces should look and feel as they did during the period of significance.

The integrity of the Properties Associated with Prominent Persons' association and feeling is greatly enhanced by the integrity of their setting. Properties nominated solely under Criterion B for association with a significant person do not have to possess as sufficient a degree of integrity of design and workmanship as properties which are nominated under Criterion C for architecture.

As noted in *National Register Bulletin: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons* (No. 32), each property associated with someone important should be compared with other properties associated with that individual to identify those resources that are good representatives of the person's historic contributions.

G. Geographical Data

The geographical limits of this MPDF are the municipal boundaries of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County (Metro). As established in 1963, the Metro municipal boundaries include the incorporated satellite communities of Belle Meade, Berry Hill, Forest Hills, Oak Hill, and Goodlettsville. The 1963 Metro municipal boundaries are justified as the appropriate boundary for the MPDF since the boundaries were legally established during the 1942–1969 period of significance.

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

The creation of this MPDF was funded in part by an African American Civil Rights (AACR) grant funded by the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the NPS and the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. The grant and matching local funds were administered by the Metropolitan Historical Commission (MHC), which commissioned cultural resources consulting firm Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc. (RGA) with the preparation of the MPDF and one accompanying NRHP nomination for the Clark Memorial United Methodist Church Complex. MHC staff prepared one additional NRHP nomination for the First Community Church. Primary members of the project team included:

- Caroline Eller, Historic Preservation Specialist and project manager, MHC
- Claudette Stager, Historic Preservation Specialist, MHC; retired deputy Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer
- Robbie D. Jones, Principal Senior Architectural Historian and project manager, RGA
- Carolyn Brackett, project specific Principal Senior Historian, RGA

Other project team members at RGA's Tennessee branch office in Nashville included Natalie Bell, a project specific public engagement specialist, architectural historians Sydney Schoof and Drew Mahan, copyeditor Emma Durham, and GIS specialist Wes Cobb.

MHC determined that an advisory committee of local historians with expert knowledge of Nashville's African American history would provide a useful additional level of review and guidance. Members of the advisory committee included:

- Linda Wynn, Assistant Director for State Programs at the Tennessee Historical Commission and retired instructor at Fisk University
- Dr. Learotha Williams Jr., History Professor at Tennessee State University and chair of the North Nashville Heritage Project
- Dr. Jennifer Adebanjo, Chair of the History and Political Science Department at Fisk University
- Dr. Carole Bucy, Davidson County Historian and retired history professor at Cumberland University

The historic context researched and written by Carolyn Brackett and Robbie D. Jones was based on extensive primary research available online and at local repositories as well as numerous secondary resources. The context was based on exhaustive research completed by Caroline Eller and Claudette Stager at local archives and repositories, including Metro Nashville Archives, Nashville Public Library, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Vanderbilt University, Fisk University, and Tennessee State University. Cumulatively, this research took more than three years. The archives at American Baptist College were inaccessible during the project. Archivist Sandra Parham provided information about documents housed at

Meharry Medical College. Section I contains a comprehensive list of the archival repositories. Appendix A includes a master list of acronyms used and Appendix B contains the resource inventory data.

The historic contexts, themes, and inventory utilized previous studies undertaken by the National Park Service (NPS) through the National Historic Landmarks (NHL) Program, including *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites* (2002, revised 2008), *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations* (2004, revised 2009), and a draft NHL nomination prepared in 2003 for the Clark Memorial United Methodist Church. The document format follows the NPS's *National Register Bulletin: How to Complete a Multiple Property Documentation Form* (1991, revised 1999). The NPS has developed studies for other Civil Rights in American contexts, including Racial Desegregation and Public Education (2000, supplement 2004), Racial Voting Rights (2007, revised 2009), and Racial Discrimination in Housing (2021).

This MPDF also utilized the framework established in the *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites Special Resource Study*, a 330-page report which the NPS delivered to the U.S. Congress in December 2022. The study identified nine nationally significant sites in Mississippi associated with the 1955 murder of Emmett Till and the 1964 Mississippi Freedom project as meeting criteria specifically established by Congress for potential inclusion in the National Park System. The year 1964 was also marked by the murders of Mississippi Freedom Summer volunteers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner. During the decade between the murders, the campaign for civil rights in Mississippi was shaped by people who risked their lives seeking to realize the promise of American democracy. In 2020, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home (NRHP, 2000; NHL, 2017) became a part of the National Park Service. The study evaluated more than 220 resources across the state.

The development of this MPDF also utilized documentation amassed for the Georgia State University (GSU) World Heritage Initiative, developed under guidance by the NPS's Office of International Affairs, for "Identifying U.S. Civil Rights Movement Sites." The GSU World Heritage Initiative identified over 300 sites associated with the Modern Civil Rights Movement in the U.S., including six sites in Nashville, consisting of three buildings and three university campuses, considered for inclusion in the potential serial nomination.

This document follows current best practices in terminology and capitalization for documenting African American history, race, and ethnicity. The document follows journalism style guides, primarily the Associated Press and the National Association of Black Journalists, when addressing race and ethnicity by using lowercase for the term *white* and uppercase for the term *Black*. The terms *African American* and *Black* are used interchangeably. The terms *Colored* and *Negro* are used only if they appear in a historical quote or are part of the name of an organization or building. The use or nonuse of honorary titles such as *Rev*. or *Dr*.

are utilized based on usage during the associated historic context. The authors utilized human-focused and inclusive language when addressing racially sensitive topics. Additionally, the document utilizes the names of institutions and agencies based on the usage during the associated historic context.

The commonly held names for primary resources were used for consistency. For example, *The Tennessean* was known as *The Tennessean* from 1907 to 1990, the *Nashville Tennessean* from 1909 to 1972, and *The Tennessean* from 1972 to the current day; however, it is most known as *The Tennessean*.

As part of the project's public engagement process, the project team created an online digital survey containing questions associated with Nashville's Civil Rights Movement. Between April and June 2023, the project team promoted the project and distributed an online survey via social media, emails to over 220 stakeholders, through local media coverage (print, online, and video), and to alumni of local universities that participated in the Nashville Student Movement. Additionally, team members attended in-person community events focused on African American history held at the Nashville Public Library, National Museum of African American Music, and Fort Negley Park. The project team also hosted a public meeting at Clark Memorial United Methodist Church, which is being nominated to the NRHP as part of this project, and a public meeting at First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill. The online survey received nearly 90 responses, mostly from veterans of the Nashville Student Movement now living across the U.S. Respondents also included historians, professors, community leaders, and members of organizations associated with the movement. The project team interviewed several veterans of the movement and sent follow-up questions to the survey respondents. A list of interviewees and veteran respondents is included in Section I.

Based on responses to the survey and other forms of public engagement, Natalie Bell, Carolyn Brackett, and Robbie D. Jones completed 13 non-recorded interviews with veterans of the Nashville Student Movement. Although efforts were made to contact additional movement veterans, many chose to communicate via email, or they preferred to not be interviewed.

Brackett, Jones, and Eller shared the preliminary results of the survey at public meetings in Nashville, with the media, and with local government agencies. Additionally, Jones shared the study's findings regarding march routes with professional colleagues at the Transportation Research Board's AME60 Committee's mid-year meeting held in July 2023 at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

This MPDF was prepared by evaluating previous surveys and undertaking extensive original research, interviews, documentation, and a comprehensive survey of 112 extant resources with a focus on resources associated with desegregation of public accommodations, movement leaders, and locations of significant events. Many of the resources had been previously surveyed by the MHC and TN-SHPO since the early

1980s. Historic Nashville, Inc. (HNI) also provided documentation of churches completed from 2000 to 2001 as part of their Sacred Sites preservation advocacy program.

The intensive survey of 112 extant resources was completed primarily by Caroline Eller and Claudette Stager from the fall of 2022 to the summer of 2023. Robbie D. Jones created a master resource inventory spreadsheet for these 112 extant resources as well as 93 resources that have been demolished. The spreadsheet database cross referenced deed and property records, real estate records, previous surveys, NRHP nominations, current photographs, and archival data. The analysis of the surveyed properties in conjunction with the historic context research resulted in the creation of the three property types Identified in this document and the study list of 67 resources that were recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP.

Many of the inventoried resources had been previously listed in the NRHP either individually or as part of historic districts. Over the years, Dr. Carroll Van West at the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) and his students have documented several of Nashville's Civil Rights Movement landmarks, including a preliminary survey completed in 2003. The MHC and the University of Tennessee Press published a citywide architectural survey, authored by Dr. West, in 2015 that included several buildings associated with the Civil Rights Movement.

The period of significance for Nashville's Civil Rights Movement resources is 1942 to 1969, which reflects two pivotal events that bookended the movement. In 1942, the headquarters for the Southern Conference Human Welfare, an interracial group that advocated for civil rights, relocated to Nashville, and brought national attention to systemic segregation in the South. The following year, Fisk University established a Race Relations Department and in 1944 launched the Race Relations Institute, the first of its type in the South. Fisk put Nashville in the national spotlight during its annual interracial summer Race Relations Institute, which attracted the nation's top civil rights leaders. In 1942, civil rights advocate Bayard Rustin was arrested and beaten by sheriffs in Davidson County for refusing to give up his seat in the segregated white section of a commercial bus; an event that foreshadowed the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955. The period of significance ends in 1969, when Fisk University ceased to operate the Race Relations Institute. If warranted, future historic contexts for other themes associated with Nashville's Civil Rights Movement may establish different periods of significance.

This MPDF justifies listing of historic resources under the following criteria: Criterion A for historical significance in the areas of Ethnic History as associated with Black history and/or Social History as associated with the Civil Rights Movement. Properties may be significant at the local, state, or national levels. Individual properties may qualify for listing under Criterion B for their association with historically significant people or Criterion C for architectural significance.

Approximately 14 resources in Nashville are listed in the NRHP under Criterion A for Ethnic History as associated with Black history. Of those, two are listed for significance in Social History as associated with the Civil Rights Movement: First Baptist Church East Nashville, listed in 2005, and the American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District, listed in 2013. This MPDF offers recommendations for previously listed resources that could benefit from updated or amended NRHP nominations that demonstrate their significance in Social History and the Civil Rights Movement. The application of Criterion A for Social History and the Civil Rights Movement is not contingent upon the dual application of Ethnic History associated with Black History. This MPDF identified several resources associated with historically white or interracial resources that played central roles in Nashville's Civil Rights Movement.

This MPDF recommends 67 properties that should be evaluated for listing in the NRHP. As part of this MPDF submission, the First Community Church at 1815 Knowles Street and the Clark Memorial United Methodist Church Complex (DV-7030 and DV-7229) at 1014 14th Avenue North and 1218–1220 Phillips Street were nominated for listing in the NRHP. Claudette Stager with MHC prepared the NRHP nomination for First Community Church. Robbie D. Jones and Sydney Schoof, both with RGA, prepared the NRHP nomination for the Clark Memorial United Methodist Church Complex, which contains three buildings associated with Nashville's Civil Rights Movement.

This MPDF was reviewed by Caroline Eller and Claudette Stager at the MHC, Rebecca Schmitt and J. Ethan Holden at the TN-SHPO, the MHC advisory committee, and the 13-member Tennessee State Review Board, which includes prominent historians, architects, preservationists, and architectural historians. Claudette Stager and one of the members of the advisory committee, Dr. Learotha Williams, serve on the Tennessee State Review Board.

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The following is a list of major archival research repositories and interviews that were utilized in the creation of this MPDF.

Archival Research Repositories

American Baptist College, Nashville, Tennessee (archival materials currently being inventoried)
SCLC and NCLC Ledgers
Lights and Shadows: The Story of American Baptist Theological Seminary, 1924-1964 by Ruth Marie Powell

Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee
Z. Alexander Looby Collection
Franklin Library, Special Collections
Charles S. Johnson Papers
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Tuck-Hinton Architects, "Fisk University Master Plan," Nashville, Tennessee, 2008

Nashville Public Library: Special Collections
Civil Rights Collection
DeLois J. Wilkinson Collection
Avon N. Williams Jr. Diary and Scrapbook
Angeline Butler Dairy and Scrapbook
Archie E. Allen Collection
The Voices of the Movement, newsletter for NCLC, 1962
Wallace Westfeldt, "Settling a Sit-In," report for Nashville Community Relations Conference, 1960
Nashville Banner newspaper clippings, 1958–1964
Nashville Banner Newspaper Photograph Collection
Civil Rights Oral History Project

Anatomy of a Demonstration, CBS documentary

Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee
Southern Patriot, newsletter for SCHW, 1942–1946

Tennessee State University, Nashville, Tennessee
Brown-Daniel Library, Special Collections
Digital Collections
Collective History of the TSU Building Programs
The Meter, student newspaper

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee
Heard Library, Special Collections
Kelly Miller Smith Sr. Papers
James E. Lawson Jr. Papers
Alice Cobb Collection

Interviews

Frankie Henry, telephone interview with Robbie D. Jones on March 9, 2023
Frankie Henry, interview with Carolyn Brackett on March 16, 2023
King Hollands, interview with Natalie Bell on June 28, 2023, and July 11, 2023
Gloria McKissack, interview with Natalie Bell on July 1, 2023
Rev. Troy Merritt, interview with Natalie Bell on August 1, 2023
Novella Page, telephone interview with Natalie Bell on August 1, 2023
Kenneth Peters, telephone interview with Natalie Bell on August 3, 2023
Carolyne Lamar Jordan, telephone interview with Natalie Bell on August 7, 2023
Bernard Lafayette, telephone interview with Natalie Bell on August 11, 2023
Angeline Butler, telephone interview with Natalie Bell on September 11, 2023
Vencen Horsley, telephone interview with Natalie Bell on September 15, 2023
Robert Churchwell Jr., telephone interview with Natalie Bell on September 19, 2023
Phyllis Qualls, interview with Caroline Eller on December 6, 2023

Online Survey Responses from Nashville Student Movement Veterans

Novella McCline Page, March 3, 2023
Larry Woods, March 5, 2023
Dr. Jesse Carney Smith, March 23, 2023
Donald Johnson, April 5, 2023
Melvin Gill, April 11, 2023
Adrienne Jenkins Patel, June 13, 2013
Andrew Cooper, June 12 and Nov. 20, 2023
Angeline Butler, June 14 and June 27, 2023
Cynthia Ball Robinson, June 14, 2023
Cynthia Perrine Wilcox, June 19, 2023
Daphne Muse, June 12, 2023
DeWitt Dykes, June 13, 2023
Dorris J. Hadley, June 16, 2023
Dr. Betty Taylor Thompson, June 21, 2023
Dr. Carolyne Lamar Jordan, June 22, 2023
Florence Goff, June 12, 2023
Gail L. Hoffman, June 12, 2023
Garry Hamilton Radford, June 21, 2023
James Hovell, June 12, 2023
Jean LaVerne Ashe, June 12, 2023
John W. Hardy, June 16, 2023
Kenneth D. Peters, June 14, 2023
Larry Turnley, June 19, 2023
Lois Harris, June 21, 2023
Lorenzo Morris, June 13, 2023
Melba James McCarty, June 12, 2023
Pat Berget, June 13, 2023
Patricia A. Murray (Wright), June 12, 2023
Paulette Jones Delk, June 12, 2023
Portia Poindexter, June 16, 2023
Quentin Ted Smith, June 13, 2023
Rev. Troy Merritt Jr., June 13 and Nov. 5, 2023
Roderick H. Adams, June 13, 2023
Roderick I. Bahner, June 13, 2023
Samuel Merrill, June 14, 2023
Sandra G. Harris, June 13, 2023
King Hollands, July 5, 2023
Patricia Perryman, July 13, 2023
Vencen Horsley, September 22, 2023
Sandy Ewing, November 8, 2023
Daphne Muse, November 20, 2023
Elios Freeman, November 24, 2023
William Bowen, December 6, 2023

Appendix A – Document Acronyms

ABC	American Baptist College
ABT	American Baptist Theological Seminary
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
AME	American Methodist Episcopal
A&I	Agricultural & Industrial
BSU	Black Student Union
CME	Colored Methodist Episcopal
CORE	Congress on Racial Equality
FOR	Fellowship of Reconciliation
FPC	Friends Peace Committee
ICC	Interstate Commerce Commission
JUC	Joint University Council on Human Relations
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
MHC	Metropolitan Historical Commission
NCLC	Nashville Christian Leadership Council
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
RRI	Race Relations Institute
SCEF	Southern Conference Educational Fund
SCHW	Southern Council on Human Welfare
SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SNCC	Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee
SSOC	Southern Student Organizing Committee
SCC	Student Central Committee
THC	Tennessee Historical Commission
TN-SHPO	Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office
TSU	Tennessee State University
USCCR	U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
YMCA	Young Men’s Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women’s Christian Association
YMHA	Young Men’s Hebrew Association

Appendix B - Resource Inventory Data

This section provides an inventory of all 112 extant resources that were surveyed as part of the creation of this MPDF. The 67 resources that were recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under the Property Types established in this MPDF are included in Section F. This inventory notes if a resource is listed in the NRHP.

Strategy Centers

Religious Facilities/Churches

Baptist Student Union Center, 2023 Jefferson Street
Belmont United Methodist Church, 2007 Acklen Avenue
Blakemore Methodist Church, 3601 West End Avenue
Braden Memorial United Methodist Church, 803 Main Street
Capers Memorial CME Church, 319 15th Avenue North (NRHP, 1985)
Christ Episcopal Church, 900 Broadway (NRHP, 1978)
Clark Memorial United Methodist Church and Parsonage, 1014 14th Avenue North (Nominated as part of this MPDF)
Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, 2624 Morena Street
Edgehill United Methodist Church, 1502 Edgehill Avenue
Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Church, 1203 9th Avenue North
First Baptist Church East Nashville, 601 Main Street (NRHP, 2005)
First Community Church, 1815 Knowles Street (Nominated as part of this MPDF)
Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, 1703 Jo Johnston Avenue
Gay-Lea Christian Church, 2201 Osage Street
Gordon Memorial United Methodist Church, 2334 Herman Street
Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, 615 6th Avenue South (NRHP, 1971)
Howard United Church of Christ, 2802 Buchanan Street
Jackson Street Baptist Church, 1101 Jackson Street
Little Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 37 Trimble Street
Macedonia Baptist Church, 1749 22nd Avenue North
Mt. Gilead Baptist Church, 19 Hart Street
Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, 3411 Albion Street
Mt. Sinai Primitive Baptist Church, 1210 Tremont Street
Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 1112 Jefferson Street (NRHP, 1980)
Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church, 1412 Jefferson Street

Progressive Baptist Church, 1419 12th Avenue North
Roger Heights Baptist Church, 2200 Whites Creek Pike
St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, 949 TS Jackson Avenue/37th Avenue North
St. Anselm's Episcopal Church/Student Center, 2008 Meharry Boulevard
St. Mark's Missionary Baptist Church, 1226 6th Avenue North (NRHP, 1979; as noncontributing property within Germantown Historic District)
Seay-Hubbard United Methodist Church, 1116 1st Avenue South
Spruce Street Baptist Church, 504 Spruce Street
The Temple Congregation Ohabai Sholom, 5105 Harding Pike
The Upper Room, 1908 Grand Avenue

Universities/Colleges

American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District (NRHP, 2013)
- Griggs Hall, 1800 World Baptist Center Drive (contributing)
- J.B. Lawrence Administrative Building, 1800 World Baptist Center Drive (contributing)
- T.L. Holcomb Library, 1800 World Baptist Center Drive (contributing)

Fisk University Historic District (NRHP, 1978)
- Henderson A. Johnson Gymnasium, 910 18th Avenue North (noncontributing)
- Memorial Chapel, 1016 17th Avenue North (contributing)
- Park-Johnson Hall, 1610 Phillips Street (noncontributing)
- Talley-Brady Hall, 1016 18th Avenue North (contributing)
- Adam K. Spence Hall/Student Union, 1020 17th Avenue North (noncontributing)
- Jubilee Hall, 1711 Meharry Boulevard (contributing; NRHP, 1971; NHL, 1976)

Scarritt College Historic District (NRHP, 1982)
- Wightman Chapel, 1110 19th Avenue South (contributing)

Tennessee State University Historic District (NRHP, 1996)
- Janie D. Elliott Women's Building, 1108 37th Avenue North (contributing)
- Thomas Edward Poag Auditorium/Davis Hall, 3600 John A. Merritt Boulevard (contributing)
- Kean Hall, 1111–1113 33rd Avenue North (outside NRHP boundary)

Vanderbilt University
- Memorial Gymnasium, 210 25th Avenue North

Government Facilities

Hadley Park Branch Library, 1039 28th Avenue North
War Memorial Auditorium, 301 6th Avenue North (NRHP, 2017)

Watkins Park, 616 17th Avenue North

Commercial Facilities

Club Baron, 2614 Jefferson Street
Frierson Building/NAACP Offices, 1310 Jefferson Street
Rider's Garage, 2101 18th Avenue North/1700 McDaniel Street
Ryman Auditorium, 116 Rep. John Lewis Way North/5th Avenue North (NRHP, 1971; NHL, 2001)
Robert E. Lillard House & Law Office, 1062 2nd Avenue South

Conflict Centers

Commercial Facilities

5th Avenue Historic District, Rep. John Lewis Way North and Church Street (NRHP, 1983)
- Harvey's Department Store, 530 Church Street (contributing)
- Cain-Sloan Department Store, 201 Rep. John Lewis Way North (contributing)
- Woolworth's, 221–225 Rep. John Lewis Way North (contributing)
- S.H. Kress, 237 Rep. John Lewis Way North (contributing)
- McLellan's, 229 Rep. John Lewis Way North (contributing)
- W.T. Grant's Variety Store, 215–217 Rep. John Lewis Way North (contributing)
- Walgreen's, 224–226 Rep. John Lewis Way North (contributing)

Note: 5th Avenue North was renamed Rep. John Lewis Way in 2021

Wilson-Quick Drugstore (Doctor's Building), 708-710 Church Street (NRHP, 1985)
Nashville Arcade, 228 Rep. John Lewis Way/5th Avenue North (NRHP, 1973)
Hermitage Hotel, 231 6th Avenue North (NRHP, 1975; NHL, 2020)
YWCA, 211 7th Avenue North (NRHP, 1982)
Cross Keys Restaurant, 221 6th Avenue North
Langford's Restaurant (L&C Tower), 401 Church Street
Belcourt Theater, 2102 Belcourt Avenue
H.G. Hill Store, 2000 Charlotte Avenue
Big T Restaurant, 1613 Jefferson Street
Belcourt Theater, 2202 Belcourt Avenue

Government Facilities

Davidson County Public Building and Courthouse, 101 James Robertson Pkwy (NRHP, 1987)
Tennessee Supreme Court Building, 407 7th Avenue North (NRHP, 2014)
U.S. Courthouse/Estes Kefauver Federal Building, 801 Broadway (NRHP, 2016)
Police Headquarters/Safety Building (Ben West Municipal Building), 100 James Robertson Parkway and 408 2nd Avenue North

Private Residences

Z. Alexander Looby House, 2012 Meharry Boulevard
Dr. Charles J. and Mary Walker House, 1218 Phillips Street (Nominated under this MPDF as part of the Clark Memorial Methodist Church Complex)

Religious Facilities/Churches

Clark Memorial United Methodist Church, 1014 14th Avenue North (Nominated under this MPDF as part of the Clark Memorial Methodist Church Complex)

Universities/Colleges

Fisk University Historic District (NRHP, 1978)
Henderson A. Johnson Gym, 910 18th Avenue North (noncontributing)
President's House, 1803 Morena Street (contributing)

March Routes

Silent March (1960), Jefferson Street and 3rd Avenue North
Freedom March (1963), Jefferson Street and 8th Avenue North
Stand-In March (1961), Church Street
Silent March (1963), Charlotte Avenue, 8th Avenue North, Broadway, and 6th Avenue North
Prayer March (1964), West End Avenue to Davidson County Courthouse
Protest Marches (1960–1964), Church Street
I-40 Protest Marches (1968), Jefferson Street at Dr. DB Todd Boulevard Jr. North/8th Ave. North

Properties Associated with Prominent Persons

Private Residences

Dr. Charles J. and Mary Walker House, 1218 Phillips Street (nominated under this MPDF as part of the Clark Memorial Methodist Church Complex)
Z. Alexander Looby House, 2012 Meharry Boulevard
Coyness L. Ennix House, 3407 Batavia Street
Johnetta Hays House, 2519 West Heiman Street
Robert E. Lillard House & Law Office, 1062 2nd Avenue South
Matthew Walker Jr. House, 1709 Windover Avenue
Lillie Bowman/Rev. Joseph Echols Lowery House, 1722 Windover Avenue
Rev. Joseph Metz Rollins Jr. House, 1710 Villa Place
Rev. Andrew N. White Jr. House, 1621 Haynes Meade Circle
Rev. John L. Copeland House, 2715 Torbett Street
Rev. McCoy Ransom House, 1806 15th Avenue South
Hellyn B. Johns House, 917 15th Avenue South
Theodore & Phoebe Green House, 1615 18th Avenue South
James G. Stahlman House, 801 Tyne Boulevard
Douglas Hosse House, 904 Halcyon Avenue
Robert Churchwell House, 1002 15th Avenue South
Robert Churchwell House, 709 North 9th Street
Wallace Westfeldt House, 3710 Woodmont Lane
Frankie Henry House, 93 Maury Street
Harvie Branscomb House, 105 Lynwood Boulevard
John L. Seigenthaler Jr. House, 525 Arrowwood Drive
J. Frankie Pierce House, 2702 Meharry Boulevard
Rev. Will D. Campbell House, 815 Colfax Drive
Richardson House/Dr. Herman H. Long House, 1017–1019 16th Avenue North
Dorcas Clopton House, 2402 Buchanan Avenue
Judge Andrew J. Doyle House, 1800 Natchez Trace (NRHP, 1993)
Murray J. Blakemore House, 1404 South Street
Pearl and I.T. Creswell House, 910 17th Avenue North (NRHP, 1978; noncontributing property within the Fisk University Historic District; MHC recommended contributing in 2016)
Cordell Hull Reagon House / Frederick Leonard House, 716 26th Avenue North
Noel Hotel, 200–204 4th Avenue North (NRHP, 1984)

Richard F. Dickinson Apartment, 1016 17th Avenue South
Paul and Dorothy Bushnell House, 116 Bellevue Drive South

Religious Facilities/Churches

Clark Memorial United Methodist Church Parsonage, 1220 Phillips Street (nominated under this MPDF as part of the Clark Memorial Methodist Church Complex)
First Community Church, 1815 Knowles Street (nominated under the MPDF)
St. Andrews Presbyterian Church Parsonage, 901 TS Jackson Avenue/37th Avenue North
*Chestnut Grove Free Will Baptist Church, 500 Old Metal Road, Charlotte, Dickson County (Rev. James Bevel, a student at American Baptist College, was pastor from 1959–1961)
*Scott Chapel United Methodist Church, 940 Morton Street Shelbyville, Bedford County (Rev. James Lawson, staff member of SCLC, was pastor from 1960–1962)
*Pickett Chapel Church, 633 Glover Street, Lebanon, Wilson County (NRHP, 1977)
(Headquarters for Nashville students and CORE during 1962 demonstrations at Lebanon)

**Located outside Nashville/Davidson County but included in this inventory due to its direct association with the Nashville Student Movement*

Universities/Colleges

American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District (NRHP, 2013)
Griggs Hall, 1800 World Baptist Center Drive (contributing)

Fisk University Historic District (NRHP, 1978)
Dubois Hall, 1721 Jackson Street (noncontributing)
Crosthwaite Hall, 1030 18th Avenue North (noncontributing)
Richardson House/Dr. Herman H. Long House/Political Science Building, 1017–1019 16th Avenue North (contributing)
President's House, 1803 Morena Avenue (contributing)

Tennessee State University Historic District (NRHP, 1996)
Janie D. Elliott Women's Building, 1108 37th Avenue North (contributing)

Commercial Offices

Dr. Fred Goldner Medical Office, 1816 Hayes Street
Robert E. Lillard House & Law Office, 1062 2nd Avenue South