

PROFESSIONALISM THROUGH TEACHER TRAINING: A CASE STUDY OF
TENNESSEE A. & I., 1930-1940

By

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To my wife, Jessica, always encouraging and caring,
To my sisters, Erin and Claire, patient and compassionate,
and
To my parents, Tom and Geri, wisest of all my supports

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Introduction

The struggle for professionalism in American teaching has existed since before this country reached nationhood. For some teachers, this struggle has centered on teaching content and the measure of control that teachers had in running their classrooms. For teachers of other eras or locales, professionalism has been fought through pay and the lobbying for better materials. For Southern African-American teachers in the beginning of the twentieth century, this struggle was fought not only on these fronts, but also on how the job of “teacher of Negro students” would be defined. The decade of the 1930s saw dramatic changes made to this definition. The most profound effect of this change would be found at the roots of the career: in teacher training and teacher education at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The institutions of higher learning which were responsible for training these teachers had much control in how these people thought about teaching and how they would practice it in the future.

These institutions were not free from outside influences, however. At the start of the twentieth century, nearly all states had at least partial control over the certification process, including setting the requirements for becoming a teacher in their respective state. By 1937, this control was completely in the hands of state governments in all but six states (Frazier, 1938). Many policy leaders in Southern states took advantage of this power and the “separate but equal” decision of *Plessy v. Ferguson* and created different certification requirements for White and Black teachers. In this paper, I will argue that these requirements had a profound effect on the curriculum of Black teacher training institutions, the types of students they were able to attract, and the type of teachers that

they were able to produce. To accomplish this, I will employ a case study of one such institution, Tennessee State University (then Tennessee Agricultural & Industrial State College). Looking specifically at the decade of the 1930s, the author was able to observe the mediation of the state's local standards by the increased rigor of Tennessee State's internal standards and requirements, as well as an emergence of Black education leaders in the struggle to increase professionalization of Black teachers and obtain the knowledge, status, and passion that emerge from that professionalism.

Professionalism

The role of professionalism in education has been discussed, debated, and otherwise fought over for decades. Even before the creation of the National Education Association in 1857 and before early educational pioneers like Horace Mann and Henry Bernard tried to persuade the nation that teachers should have the same respect and level of prestige as “professionals” in engineering, medicine, law, etc., the status of teachers in America has been in conflict. While the concept or term “professionalism” is primarily a construct of the social sciences during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the qualifications, knowledge requirements, and occupational control/autonomy of teachers have been issues for communities from the time colonists settled and wanted an individual outside of a single household to educate their children. Understanding the criteria for being a professional is necessary in order to retroactively apply this concept to the roots of educational history. While a full review of the history surrounding professionalism is outside the scope of this investigation, the reader is referred to a sampling of a large, general literature base around the subject (Etzioni, 1969; Lortie,

1975; Volmer & Mills, 1966; Weber, 1947; Wilensky, 1964) Many modern educational theorists, in the context of modern educational issues, have tried to understand what “professionalism” means, how it applies (or does not apply) to teaching, and what barriers have historically kept the field from reaching that goal. It is this literature that will inform the subsequent analysis of teacher certification and teacher training practices.

While these theorists (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Sykes, 1999; Travers & Rebore, 1987) have different terminologies for the characteristics of a profession, they all arrive at similar core principles: a specialized, expert knowledge base that is at the core of decision-making, a concern for the welfare of those they serve above any other considerations, and collective responsibility for the definition, transmittal, and enforcement of standards and ethics. To ensure that these principles are learned and that high standards are maintained, occupations with professional aspirations embed several barriers in the training and education of aspiring members. They restrict entry into professional schools through selective admissions, require rigorous and prolonged training, and demand testing for licensure (Sykes, 1999).

In regards to teaching, the relevance of these principles has yet to be completely understood. While teaching is generally agreed upon as being an altruistic occupation, the other principles connected to professionalism have questionable transfer to teaching. Experts have yet to come to a consensus on whether the specialized knowledge base that teachers should be measured upon should be pedagogical content knowledge or knowledge in the subject matter (Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994). Some even debate whether that knowledge is truly “specialized” considering how much “teaching” goes on naturally without training (Sykes, 1999). Education in the United States has traditionally

been structured in a way that prevents teachers from enforcing standards with their peers; the isolated classroom has been the norm (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994). With such an unclear picture of what teacher practice should be (in knowledge) and in actuality is (in practice), the opportunity for the maintenance of ethics and standards has fallen upon “superiors” of teachers, preventing teachers from reaching any sort of self-regulation, which comes as a result of professionalization.

Some barriers outside of the practice of teaching have made professionalization a more difficult process to achieve. First, the sheer number of people required for this occupation in the United States has made the ability to set high standards extremely difficult; in essence, the supply of teachers, while it has been large, has not been large enough for the possibility of rejecting potential teachers (through either a lengthy training or high requirements for entrance) (Sykes, 1999). Another barrier has been the negative connotations to the historically feminine nature of the occupation. Public regard, while not “required”, makes the legitimization of an occupation and its knowledge base much easier to obtain; traditionally feminine occupations such as teaching, nursing, and social work have found public regard a hard commodity to obtain (Sykes, 1999). A final barrier comes from the position of teachers in a community. They are financially and legally bound to their schools’ communities and are, as such, unable to set their own policy directly, including negotiating their own salaries (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Travers & Rebores, 1987). This dependence upon local tax dollars usually precludes professional-level salaries, preventing members who might otherwise raise standards from joining the profession in the first place (Sykes, 1999). These issues surrounding control and autonomy, knowledge and service, which are still under debate today, have long roots

and have traveled a circuitous route of change while the nation has expanded in size, population, and diversity.

Early certification practices

Throughout American history, control over teachers has been held by several types of groups or institutions. During the colonial period, when it was common for towns to require that anyone wishing to teach be approved by one of the local clergyman and proven to display “good moral character” and, often, similar religious beliefs as that religious leader (Angus, 2001). The American Revolution and the formation of the Constitution (especially the separation of church and state) shifted this role to the local communities outside the purview of a church. When the impetus for providing education moved to secular, civil authorities, communities began to change their focus in how they understood teachers. When the Northwest Ordinances put the charge for education onto the territories and states that were being created in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, political power surrounding the hiring and certifying of teachers was given to them as well (Morgan, 1938). In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, teacher academies and seminaries were created at the state level for most of the states in what is now the Northeast and Midwestern United States. While these institutions caught hold for those teachers wishing to teach at the early secondary- and college-levels, the towns and villages did not feel it necessary to send their elementary teachers there, as they were thought to “furnish an education unsuited” for country life (Morgan, 1938). For most of the nineteenth century, certification and training were separate entities. Even those states who embraced the rise of the normal school still certified at the township or

county level and normal students would often stay for only a few months before taking a teaching position (Von Schlichten, 1958).

However, professionalism did start to grow. Teachers started to seek more permanent certificates and more stable positions. Universities and colleges across the country started sprouting one-man “chairs of pedagogy” and state teachers colleges started forming during the middle of the nineteenth century (Angus, 2001; Morgan, 1938). While most of these programs were not at a collegiate level of academics until the later part of that century, they would later become vitally important in the expansion of certification. Normal schools became a rising power during this time when states began directly issuing state certificates of teaching which could be used in any public school, but only after graduating from a state normal school program (Angus, 2001). New York was the first state to do this (in 1843) and Indiana progressed to that policy in 1852. These public normal schools (as well as high schools with normal courses or tracks of courses) often had higher entry requirements than private normal schools and held greater access to professionalism with their opportunities to observe master teachers in public schools as well as the capability to practice pedagogical strategies in the field (Caliver, 1935; Ogden, 2006).

Professionalism also grew through the de-legitimization of certain kinds of training. In both the Midwestern and Southern United States, teacher institutes were popular organizations which were both organized and controlled at the local level (Caliver, 1933; Morgan, 1938). School districts not located near a teachers college would hire their experienced teachers during the summer to provide pedagogical lectures and offer review in academic subjects to less experienced teachers for sessions ranging in

duration from a few weeks to the entire summer (Angus, 2001; Caliver, 1933). When states began to require a certain amount of education or training from certain institutions, teacher institutes were rarely on the list of possible locations and so became rare as a mode of organized teacher preparation (Angus, 2001).

The “Educational Trust”

During the first third of the twentieth century, the American political scene was changing drastically because of mass urbanization and the working class’s lack of confidence in and identification with political leaders due to the increased role that private businesses were having on public policy (Angus, 2001). These leaders were managers who were reshaping their institutions through the growing canons of business efficiency and scientific expertise. Because the general public believed scientific knowledge to be unbiased, these leaders promoted their changes by what was perceived as a well-defined and stable social order, not the political whims and nepotism that ran rampant in most of the major American cities of this time. The administrative progressives in positions of political leadership took advantage of these misgivings and presented scientifically-based solutions that appeared to be nonpolitical and could be made without radical change; education policy was one such realm in which these kinds of changes took place.

Federal Bureau of Education officials, state education officials, city superintendents, and education school faculty members had, as the so-called “Educational Trust”, a dynamic position in American education politics (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Collectively, they held many important resources: large amounts of money, the creation

of reputations, and influence over professional associations (like the NEA) and governmental bodies (both legislative and administrative/executive). Instead of formal political parties, labor unions, or voting blocs, informal networks of trust members were formed to solve social and economic problems through new scientific methods. At one point during the 1920s, sixteen of the eighteen superintendents in the largest American cities were former students of one professor from Teachers' College: George Strayer (Tyack, Lowe, & Hansot, 1984). The Education Trust had both the legitimacy to make decisions through their scientific expertise in the teacher colleges as well as the ability to make their expertise seem legitimate through the promotion and expansion of teacher colleges and universities over normal schools (Angus, 2001; Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

African-American education

The education of African-American students was both underrepresented in the new scientific research of this time and also prejudicially mislabeled. One of the "Educational Trust" elite, Ellwood Cubberley, a professor at Stanford University's School of Education, was highly visible through his textbook series on pedagogy, school administration and the history of American education. In his textbooks, the education of African American students was rarely addressed; when it was discussed, their education was grouped with students having mental disabilities (Tyack and Hansot, 1982). During this time, American education was, of course, still subject to racial segregation in both students as well as teachers. The unequal treatment of black and white students has been well-documented, thanks to the scholastic documentation of such high-profile and seminal court cases as the aforementioned *Brown* decision. This is not to say that the

unequal treatment of black and white students (or teachers, for that matter) ended with *Brown*. However, the institutional settings, legal statutes, and quasi-legal expectations shaping the preparation of African-American teachers during this time provide an important piece of the picture surrounding the progression of federal, state, and local control of American teacher certification.

Before beginning to understand teacher training at a single institution like Tennessee A. & I., it is necessary to see how much and what kind of education teachers receive before they reenter the classroom. Before World War II, the more common educational scenarios for African-American students across the country were quite grim. While their White counterparts were expanding toward the norm of nine-month school years, Black students were much more commonly given three- to six month annual school terms, with overcrowded class sizes in small, under-furnished buildings and with “blackboards” made of stretched oilskins or painted beaverboard, a semi-rigid wood-pulp based material (Fultz, 1995). For those who were fortunate enough to finish elementary school, finding a place to continue their education was often difficult. A 1917 U.S. Office of Education report revealed that in the District of Columbia and the 16 southern states that had racially segregated schools, only 64 public high schools were available for African-American youth and only 45 could provide a full four-year curriculum for its students (Fultz, 1995). While this number rose astronomically during the 1920s and high school enrollment for African-American students rose by over 500 percent from 1920 to 1933, the *supply* of highly educated African-American teachers had not yet risen to its required numbers simply because not enough time had elapsed for enough young African-American teachers to enter the workforce (Caliver, 1933).

In 1933, Ambrose Caliver, the first African American research specialist hired by the United States Office of Education, studied the levels of previous schooling and classroom training among African-American teachers, specifically in those states that mandated *de jure* segregation (Caliver, 1933; Fultz, 1995). His work uncovered quite telling details about the state of Southern teachers. In Appendix A are two tables that come from data he gathered. While the African-American teachers in the larger cities receive similar levels of education as White teachers, the African-American teachers in villages and what Caliver terms “open country” still have large deficiencies in terms of educated teachers. Since these two demographics represent more than half of African-American teachers at that time, it seems reasonable to state that gross inequities still exist.

Fultz (1995) searched in the data uncovered by Caliver and his contemporaries as well as the official policies of the time to try to discover how these inequalities existed, despite the remarkable increase in high school attendance mentioned above. The first clue comes in terms of inequities in salaries. During the 1920s, more and more states were certifying teachers instead of local districts inside of the state and districts were paying for teachers based on the type of certification the teachers received, which was often based on level of education. When African-American education leaders cried out that their teachers were not getting fairly paid, state leaders showed them the statistics showing that their teachers had less education and therefore *deserved* to be paid less (Fultz, 1995). While it was found out later that African-American teachers were paid, on average, 41% of what the average White teacher was paid even though African-American teachers had 70% of the training/education of White teachers, the generalization grew

into a stereotype: since African-American teachers were lower-skilled than average, it must be easier to teach their students.

With this barely logical reason in mind, states began to institutionalize this expectation by offering lower certificates to African-American teachers. Several southern states accomplished this by certifying and hiring as many poorly-educated African-American teachers over higher-certified and better-educated African-American teachers (Fultz, 1995). As one conference Fultz (1995) quotes states concernedly, these laws “give the legalized approval of the state to poor preparation on the part of colored teachers” by offering certificates specifically for African-American teachers with qualifications lower than any certificate offered to White teachers. The supply of rural “home-girls” with, at best, a high school education, was abundant, causing an oversupply of poorly-certified teachers and an unfortunate dearth of higher-qualified candidates left out of teaching. Fultz (1995), and to a lesser extent Caliver (1933), point out the hostilities that many White southerners held toward the education of African-Americans and the cultural attitude toward the suppression of academic achievement in African-Americans.

At the start of the twentieth century, four kinds of institutions had the possibility of providing rigorous teacher education for African-Americans. One group, the public high schools and city normal schools, were, as pointed out above, rare and inadequate. Another group, land-grants, would not have the capabilities to train large groups of teachers until 1920. This left the task to private colleges and the private secondary and normal schools. These schools received no federal or state aid and were not under control of religious authorities. They were instead funded through donations, mostly from northern elites (Bullock, 1967). At this time, black educational leaders were split into two

factions (Anderson, 1988). Those leaders who presided over most of the schools wished to have a classic, liberal curriculum for their schools and to prepare their teachers to instruct in the same way. Leaders of the Hampton-Tuskegee movement, including Booker T. Washington, on the other hand, desired their industrial education model be taught to teachers and spread to students in the south. These leaders were disappointed that their movement was not spreading as quickly as they wished. But this pattern would soon change with the introduction of a powerful group of allies that would change the shape of African-American education for decades.

Northern industrial philanthropists saw the Southern United States as lacking a fundamental structure that kept the region from joining the North in the Industrial Revolution. Few people had the manual training to do the skilled labor that was needed in industrial production. During the early twentieth century, many philanthropists believed that industrial education would provide the answer to this issue and invested heavily in Southern schools. These men were very demanding and proactive in their support. When they saw that a college or normal school they supported providing too much in the way of liberal arts, they would start actively shaping the institution (Anderson, 1988). They would first require that a representative of theirs be on the board of trustees. If their wishes were still not followed, they would threaten to remove their money if those leaders who pushed such actions were not removed from office. For the first two decades of the century, the combination of the philanthropists and Hampton-Tuskegee leaders (who were put in charge of schools when classical education leaders were removed) attempted to provide teacher training. This teaching would consist primarily of obtaining skills that would lead to blue-collar jobs. This alliance was supported by many leaders in

Southern state governments who saw industrial education as a way to provide economic support for industries providing so many jobs in the Northern states. While many discussed their beliefs in terms of benefits for African Americans (“to make the Negro a more economical, industrious, and profitable citizen”), others illustrated their opinions by harkening back to the pre- Civil War era. A state supervisor of education in Louisiana during the 1920s stated in Anderson (1988):

“Under the industrial system that prevailed in slavery times the Negroes were not left in ignorance, but were carefully trained along industrial lines. In those days the industrial slaveholder assumed a responsibility which in our day and time the state can ill-afford to shun. In those days it was to the interest of the slaveholder to train the slave Negro to become more efficient. It is no less to the interest of the South today to train the Negro in industrial efficiency”.

However, African-American teachers and communities were not attracted to this style of education. According to Anderson (1988), teachers felt that too much valuable classroom time was spent doing simple manual labor and that the academic curriculum was too watered down. The education was so poor that rural communities would not hire teachers who came out of some of the industrial education-focused schools and colleges, even if they suffered from outrageously large student-teacher ratios. This stand should not be seen as a stand for progressivism in these rural schools. Anderson (1988) and Harris & Worthen (2004) describe how, in rural communities, travelling educators provided training schools for teachers that, in a few weeks, would provide teachers with enough new strategies to help them fulfill their natural talents. Caliver (1933) spent much of his time praising the work done in country training schools in helping advance the knowledge of teachers, especially during the summertime. However, as Angus (2001) points out, these programs were seen as unprofessional and were systematically weeded out across the country by the start of the Second World War. These rural schools were

instead holding a long-standing view that a traditional, liberal-arts curriculum would provide the most democratic freedom and opportunities for knowledge, equality, and employment for the new generations (Bulluck, 1967; Florence, 1938; Johnson, 1936).

To say that the failure of industrial education for African Americans in the South came out solely because of supply and demand in African-Americans would be a gross misinterpretation. Because of the Great Depression, White southerners during the 1930s were looking for jobs in whatever sectors were offering employment. Through civic and political pressure, White industrial workers replaced African-American industrial workers in cities throughout the South (Anderson, 1988; Werum, 2001). Manual occupations that had been 95% Black only a decade earlier were now entirely White. This made the demand for African-Americans with industrial education quite small. While it would seem like the limited number of jobs would push even more African-Americans toward secondary school (as it did for whites), this did not turn out to be the case. The combination of a slowly growing population of African-Americans with higher education that were willing to teach, a lack of facilities and deep economic despair and disparity kept secondary school attendance low; less than 23% of Southern Black students ages 15-19 were in secondary school in 1940, compared to 18% in 1934 (Werum, 2001).

Historically Black land-grant institutions

The key impetuses for growth in teacher education were planted decades earlier: the Morrill land grant acts. The Morrill-Wade Act of 1862 may be the Morrill land grant act more remembered in history books, but for African-Americans living in the southern

United States, the Morrill-McComas Act of 1890 was the piece of legislature that extended resources for post-primary education from the federal government to their communities (Harris & Worthen, 2004). Primarily created for agricultural research, black land-grants became training grounds for teachers for two main reasons. One is the occupational demand for teachers that sprung from the increased numbers of Black students. The other reason was that despite the fact that the Morrill-McComas Act established Black land-grants with the same mission of research, teaching, and extension that was established for White land-grants, Black land-grants were, until the late 1960s, denied funds for research on agricultural and scientific advances and only given federal funding for teacher training and resident education within their own campus (Harris & Worthen, 2004). While most of their curricula reached the post-secondary level only around the late 1920s and early 1930s, they began to grow in reputation and size (Anderson, 1988; Harris & Worthen, 2004). Slowly and without much funding, they evolved into institutions similar at least in shape to those of their white counterparts. While Hampton and Tuskegee, the paragons of vocational training grew, due to the demand of teachers, communities and academic leaders (and the decreased demand for Black industrial workers) into colleges that had liberal arts, not agriculture or industry, as its core. Private universities such as North Carolina A. & M., Talladega, Fisk, and Atlanta University joined land-grants such as Prairie View, Alabama A. & M., and Arkansas A. & M. as leaders in providing a steady stream of teachers (Bullock, 1967). While funding continued to be a problem, the institutions found that tuition from a rising number of graduating secondary students was providing enough revenue to keep from relying heavily on benefactors who might significantly alter their curricular goals.

While leaders in African-American education knew the loci of control in the “Education Trust”, very few could enter into any of these networks. At one basic level, African-Americans living in the South were still being disenfranchised, thus preventing them from choosing political representatives who would work to remedy their injustices. The segregation of higher education obviously kept networks from being formed at that level. Even regarding academic or political conferences surrounding education, African-Americans were still left uninvited and unconnected until the 1950s (Tyack, et al, 1984). Knowing all too well these kinds of barriers, leaders of HCBUs set aside institutional rivalries and used their collective power to influence policy and inform the public and lawmakers. For example, Felton Clark, on behalf of a panel of sixty-one experts in Negro Education, implored the Office of Education through the popular academic journal *Teachers College Record* to consider, even with “the tendency toward the centralization of control”, that “schemes for the control of publicly-supported teacher training institutions for Negroes should directly provide representation of the Negro race” (Clark, 1935). This type of action may not have been as central and direct as those state constitution amendments and laws requiring certification to go through the state office of education, but they were still effective in altering the shape of the teachers instructing in their jurisdictions.

At about this time, a young but growing group of educational scholars started criticizing black land grant colleges for not providing adequate teacher training (Fultz, 1995). In 1932, the *Journal of Negro Education* was founded at Howard University; it provided an avenue for issues and inequities to be voiced in an academic setting, supplementing the increasingly furtive efforts of Black newspapers and dailies in the

South. Later, during the integration of schools through the *Brown* case, the *Journal* would be vital in providing data for those important court cases (Bullock, 1967). But even during the 1930s, this increased activism through communication was one way that Black education leaders were able to effect change in the education policy. Highly respected national leaders, including W. E. B. Dubois and Eleanor Roosevelt, would publish in the *Journal* in the first five years of its conception. In his opening editorial, Charles Thompson (1932) decreed that one of the key purposes of the *Journal* would be to investigate problems central to the education of Blacks, to collect facts about that education, and to disseminate these facts. Included in many of the early issues were discussions surrounding Black teachers and their training, purposefully calling for universities and colleges to set higher standards than those the states were requiring and to move toward longer degrees and more rigorous and applicable coursework (Colson, 1933; Jackson, 1936).

A question may reasonably be asked as to why education would be such a focal point for employment among Blacks in the South, especially during the Great Depression. The answer was simply because that was the only sector that a college-educated African-American could reliably find employment (Bullock, 1967). Any leadership opportunities in agriculture and industry were shut out from them as they were being shut out by those trying to receive entry level positions. As Black law schools were still rare, those not interested in medicine were hard-pressed to find more visible opportunities than a career in education.

Tennessee State University

Tennessee State University was created in 1909 by an act of the state General Assembly as the Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State Normal School and officially opened its doors in 1912. It was the last of the seventeen Black land-grant institutions to be opened as a result of the Morrill-McCormas Act of 1890; until 1912, the money that the state of Tennessee received from this law was given, by the state legislature, to a private institution, Knoxville College (Davis, 1933). In ten years, Tennessee A. & I. State Normal became empowered to grant the bachelor's degree, granting its first degrees in 1924. In 1927, the institution became known as Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State Teachers' College. While it has since merged with the University of Tennessee-Nashville to form what is now the several colleges of Tennessee State University, the institution, during the decade of the 1930s was primarily dedicated to the education and training of teachers; as their charge states, the goal of this college was: "Enter to learn, go forth to serve".

Data

The data compiled for this case study came primarily from a set of four Tennessee A. & I.'s bulletins, which contain contact information for faculty and staff, course catalogues, curricula for each academic major, requirements for gaining licensure, as well as administrative minutia and information of extracurricular activities. These bulletins came from the 1930-31, 1935-36, 1939-1940, and 1940-41 academic years.

Purpose and “Professionalism”

Prominently displayed in each of the bulletins is the purpose of the school. The statement purposefully states that the law which created the teacher training institutions “clearly defined the purpose for which they were established”, including the “nature and scope of the education and professional training” of those teachers wishing to teach at Tennessee public schools. The aim is so specific that it goes beyond just preparing teachers for high school and elementary school positions. It states firmly that the school must “carry out the agricultural and industrial program laid down for the land grant colleges”. This, combined with the names of workers of the a philanthropic foundation linked to industrial education (The Anna T. Jeanes Foundation) in the state listed after the members of the faculty strongly suggests that the Hampton-Tuskegee movement had at least a small enclave of loyal supporters in this college (Anderson, 1988; Bullock, 1967).

In the last pages of the 1930-31 Bulletin, the college provides a list of the certificates available for both elementary and secondary education teachers and the requirements for each. A one-year county certificate could be issued to a graduate of an “approved” public or private four-year high school. This teacher could then teach elementary school in the county in which they graduated from high school, and could renewed their certification yearly with the completion of a quarter’s work of at least twelve credit hours. The university had a “summer school” designed to “meet the needs” of a teacher with such a certificate. As of the 1930-1931 school year, Tennessee A. & I. was still transitioning from its brief history as a normal school. 425 of the 1770 students were a part of the “training school”, which provided a secondary school education. The author could not gather from the bulletin how many students in the college level were

graduates of the training school, but it was clear from the layout of the bulletin that most students of the college were not expected to actually graduate with a degree.

One separate curriculum was set aside for those elementary school teachers who were only planning for a year's worth of teacher training. This corresponded perfectly with the state certification. A four-year state certificate was given to an elementary school teacher who had completed three quarters of work with nine hours of courses in "methods and management of elementary schools". 536 of the students were freshmen, making me believe that the students were treating their teacher training as less "learning" and more "preparing to serve". This coincides with an idea about teaching that is still common today, but was even more prevalent at this time: that teaching was a natural given talent that could not be taught, but only required periodic review and reflection (Angus, 2001). At this time, Tennessee A. & I. appears to be following that kind of non-professional mode of thinking, with teachers not required to take any assessment to teacher and with education being mostly taken advantage of on a course-by-course, quarter-by-quarter basis. Less than one-fifth of those enrolled at Tennessee A. & I. at this time were either juniors or seniors. And why would teacher wish to be in school longer? They could receive a permanent elementary certificate or four-year high school certificate with two years of work (with 18 hours in education) and even though the Great Depression would cause salary cuts, hiring freezes, and building stoppages for school systems as early as 1932, Tennessee school systems were faring better than most Southern states (Newbold, 1933). The college had yet to set the norm that graduating with a diploma was a high priority.

To compare, Teachers College, the highly esteemed school of education at Columbia University, started a four-year course of study two years after becoming a teachers college and discontinued their two-year collegiate course of study in 1905 (O’Leary, 1941). The purpose of this change was, according to the college President Nicholas Murray Butler, to devote all of the college’s resources to being “a *professional* school for the training of teachers and a university department of study and research in the field of education” (O’Leary, 1941, p. 115, italics added). Education schools like those at Columbia, Stanford, and Michigan were spending the first third of the twentieth century reconfiguring graduate-level degrees, making Master’s degrees in the area of education more rigorous and more comprehensive.

Early Curriculum

The curriculum at Tennessee A. & I. during the 1930-1931 reflected this tendency for less professional certification. The popular two-year course of study for elementary teachers consisted of a liberal arts-type core (mathematics, history, music, biology, literature) and seemingly tacked on courses for education. In their first year, teachers-in-training would take courses in “Introduction to teaching”, “classroom management” and “elementary school methods”, while the second year consisted of four courses in child and educational psychology, a course in rural education, and a course in “primary methods”. Only the two methods courses approached any kind of study of student learning in specific subjects. No student teaching, practice teaching, or even classroom observations were offered for these teachers outside a course providing five hours a week of observation and supervised teaching for those in four-year programs (thus not

accessible to many students). Robinson (1936), in a longitudinal study of the National Survey of the Education of Teachers from 1926 to 1935 noticed that from the beginning of his range to 1931, the number of White institutions offering pre-service teaching in their training programs increased consistently, even among institutions in rural areas with less resources. While it can be argued (in most cases accurately) that Black colleges in urban areas still had fewer resources than White colleges in rural areas, no requirements at this time were made necessary by the southern states or local school districts and no one was, as of yet, calling for this change.

Comparing Tennessee A. & I. to Columbia's Teachers College highlights the newer school's deficit in curricular attainment in even starker terms. Teachers College had access to an experimental school as early as 1899 (O'Leary, 1941). While the presence of facilities for practice teaching is often as much due to benefactors willing to pay for such resources as is its wisdom and foresight of its usefulness to budding teachers, Teachers College had a wealth of opportunities for its teachers in training to gain knowledge and understanding of the field. In 1900, the College has multiple courses in the history of education, educational psychology, and the philosophy of education, as well as a course in educational research; by 1915, courses in research, administration, and research were common, and courses in testing and measurement were becoming available (O'Leary, 1941).

Shifts in priorities

By the middle of the 1930s, changes could be seen in the curriculum of Tennessee A. & I. that can be safely attributed to calls for action by Black education leaders. Caliver

(1933) and Jackson (1936) are two of many who called for Black colleges to not just provide a generic (or White student-based) teacher preparation, but preparation specifically designed to meet the specific sociological and psychological needs of Black students. Jackson (1936) speaks in a rhetoric that will remind modern readers of calls for shifts in thinking regarding students with special needs:

“*Negro Education*, to the writer, is an apocryphal term. A more valid concept...is that of the *Education of Negroes*. To subscribe to the thesis of a *Negro* education is to submit to a subordinate brand of education—inferior largely because of inadequate finance, equipment, material, and the like. The Negro separate school is sufficient testimony to the truth of this assertion. But on the other hand, the *Education of Negroes* connotes an adequate education for a specific group of people, suited to their own peculiar needs, and offered under the most propitious circumstances”.

Besides calling for greater emphasis on content courses and student-teaching, Jackson calls for courses that look at methods specific to Black teachers and on the education of Blacks in the United States. So when, for the first time, a course in “Negro History” is not only offered at Tennessee A. & I., but is also required for those students receiving a Bachelor’s degree, the progressiveness of the writers of the *Journal of Negro Education* was starting to reach the halls of at least this institution of higher learning. Tennessee A. & I. was starting to understand an important cultural lesson that those in the *Journal* were trying to impart upon possible readers: gaining knowledge about the social and economic needs of their students and the history behind those needs should be a part of the learning process for becoming a teacher of those students (Caliver, 1936; Johnson, 1936). O’Leary (1941) found this to be a reason behind some of the curricular choices made at Teachers College during the first two decades of the twentieth century, though for a completely different demographic and (arguably) for a different purpose. Caliver (1936) was especially adamant about the attainment of a “professional spirit” in teachers, which

could be best accomplished if teachers were contributing to the accumulation, discussion, and legitimization of knowledge about students' learning. He added that only after understanding the history of their people could this be accomplished. So while the addition of one course is a small step, it is both an important step for the college and a possible sign of knowledge-based service being a reality in the teaching occupation for this population.

Other changes can be glimpsed when viewing the 1935-1936 bulletin. In addition, some of the course descriptions in Education specifically mention working in a "laboratory". An assumption can be made that some form of student teaching has been created in the curriculum and is available for students at an earlier part of the curriculum. It is unclear whether this is a response to a requirement for student teaching at the state level or an innovation made by the college, but the term "laboratory" is not new to the education setting. John Dewey and his progressive education movement started thriving at the University of Chicago and its Laboratory School in the last decade of the nineteenth century (Durst, 2005; Lagemann, 1996). Dewey's curricular emphasis of demonstration and fieldwork extended from teaching elementary students to the teaching of teachers and the centering of a curriculum around lectures like Tennessee A. & I. was out of vogue in most non-historically black colleges and universities. Only three years earlier, and despite the economic depression, Teachers College at Columbia University began a teacher training program completely without grades, focused primarily around social development, and united around a yearlong laboratory school experience with full supervision from trained faculty (Announcement..., 1931). John Dewey, while not as central here as at Chicago, was establishing new norms for teacher training (Durst, 2005).

Columbia's program, the first of its kind, had a master's degree as its crowning jewel. This was a far cry from Tennessee A& I, where the training school still existed, albeit under the new title of "practice school". The two-year curriculum is still prominent in the catalog and methods courses are still very general in their description, not focusing on a specific subject area.

Accreditation and multiple leaps in progress

According to George Dewey Wilson, as cited in Jackson (1938), only four Negro colleges were accredited as teachers' colleges by the American Association of Teachers Colleges in 1935. Tennessee A. & I. was one of those four (with Miner, Stowe, and Wilberforce). This small percentage of accreditation (110 Black colleges provided teacher training) was cited by Jackson as an illustration of the lack of an academic (non-industrial) teacher training above and beyond a standard liberal arts training for elementary and secondary school teachers. For Tennessee A. & I., this acknowledges excellence in at least the format of their curriculum for teacher education.

Because not all of the course catalogs were available, it could not be determined exactly when these changes occur. But in the 1939-1940 and 1940-41 catalogs, several major shifts from previous catalogs are evident. First, and most obviously, is the absence of a two-year curriculum for elementary teachers for this college. While the catalog lists the requirements for receiving professional certification with only two years, the college does not explicitly cater to that level of education. More substantive courses could be offered because the college was setting the expectation for a four-year, degree-granting collegiate experience. Courses for future elementary school teachers now exist in

methods for teaching mathematics, teaching language arts, and teaching social studies. These separate courses are required and are taken during the second year of study. A course in children's literature (with an emphasis on world literature applicable to those of different cultural backgrounds) is not only available, but required. They also provide and require more courses in health, the arts, and physical education. Even though the state only requires three credit hours of directed observation at this time, Tennessee A. & I. requires twelve credit hours of directed teaching for its elementary education students at both urban and rural settings. Finally, no evidence of the training school could be found. While this meant fewer students were enrolled in the university (less than 1500), students appeared to be staying longer, as about two-fifths of the students enrolled in the 1939-1940 school year were juniors and seniors. While these statuses may pale compared to what the University of Chicago and Teachers College were doing years previous, the shortening of the gap between the two was remarkable, especially through the decreases in funding that occurred in all Black land-grant colleges during the Great Depression (Anderson, 1988; Bullock, 1967).

Concluding remarks

By the end of the 1930s, Tennessee A. & I. had gone well beyond what the state of Tennessee placed as benchmarks for Black teachers. While the college did not explicitly state its expectation for their students to exceed the expectations of the state, they made it difficult to ignore. On opposite pages of the 1939-1940 catalog were listed the two-year curriculum for elementary schools of Tennessee, as set by the state, and the four-year curriculum set by the college. The college still listed all the emergency

certifications still available, but in smaller print in the back of the book, instead of near the front with corresponding curricula necessary from the college. While they began offering a course in industrial education, they did not prominently display the names of those working for various industrial education-based organizations (like Jeanes). While no faculty member wrote articles in the *Journal of Negro Education* proclaiming the university's new stance on the level of rigor they place on their student teachers, the university does respond to Jackson, Caliver, DuBois, and Thompson. They responded to the call for professionalism and to these leaders' beliefs in the necessity of creating a core group of teachers that can prepare their children for professional careers and more enlightened lives. They worked beyond difficult financial burdens toward excellence as modeled by Deweyan progressive education. Through rigorous demonstration being made available at their institution and significant analyses being performed at the *Journal* on their behalf, Tennessee State A. & I. quietly made their mark on the field of education.

Appendix A

The first table consists of the raw totals reproduced from data in his 1933 report of White and African-American teachers during the 1930-1931 school year; the second contains the percentages that Caliver records in his report.

Education level	Open country		Village		City (pop. 2500-9999)		City (pop. 10000-99999)		City (pop. ≥ 100000)	
	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White
4 years of HS or less	1315	610	52	8385	22	2910	44	3079	57	1513
6 weeks-2 years of college	1884	9607	894	30369	451	15224	780	26986	1018	26839
2-4 years of college	448	3198	304	12168	217	8299	411	14263	740	19524
≥ 1 year of graduate work	26	136	6	460	10	512	21	951	98	2573
Totals	3672	13550	1261	51126	701	26946	1256	45278	1913	50449
Education level	Open country		Village		City (pop. 2500-9999)		City (pop. 10000-99999)		City (pop. ≥ 100000)	
	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White
4 years of HS or less	35.8%	4.5%	22.5%	4.1%	16.4%	3.2%	10.8%	3.5%	6.8%	3.0%
6 weeks-2 years of college	51.3%	70.9%	59.6%	70.9%	59.4%	64.4%	56.5%	62.1%	59.6%	53.2%
2-4 years of college	12.2%	23.6%	17.4%	24.1%	23.8%	31.0%	30.8%	32.7%	31.5%	38.7%
≥ 1 year of graduate work	0.7%	1.0%	0.5%	0.5%	0.9%	1.4%	1.9%	1.7%	2.1%	5.1%

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