

THE TEXAS COMMISSION ON INTERRACIAL COOPERATION

by

Donnal M. Timmons

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A THESIS

Approved:

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Committee

Approved:

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THE TEXAS COMMISSION ON INTERRACIAL COOPERATION

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A THESIS

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by

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## ABSTRACT

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### Purpose

The purpose of the present study was to trace the history of the Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation. Special consideration was given to the contributions of the Commission in its major areas of concern.

### Methods

The methods used to obtain information for the study were interviews with individuals who were active in the Commission, the examination of correspondence relative to the Commission and the study of the minutes and official records of the organization.

### Findings

The evidence presented in the present work indicates the following conclusions:

1. The Commission recorded achievements in the field of education. Additional appropriations were secured and improvements were made in Negro schools and colleges. Out-of-state aid was provided to pay tuition and travel for Negro graduate and professional students. Race relation courses were introduced into Texas colleges.

2. The chief contribution of the Commission in the area of health was the work to obtain a hospital for Negro tubercular patients. Negro Health Week, care for the mentally ill, aid for the Negro blind and training for Negro doctors were also promoted.

3. In the area of criminal justice, the Commission fought against the practice of lynching, worked for a home for delinquent Negro girls and urged just treatment for Negroes by the police and courts.

4. The work of the Commission resulted in the inclusion of Negroes in the Texas Centennial celebration.

5. Interracial committees were organized in many cities of Texas, resulting in much effective work.

6. The support of churches, chambers of commerce, teachers' associations and labor unions was obtained for the work of the Commission.

7. The Commission utilized the press effectively and was adroit in securing and utilizing political influence.

8. Prominent men and women of Texas were enlisted in support of the Commission. The organizations leaders included college presidents and professors, doctors, attorneys and others who had distinguished themselves as religious, civic and social leaders.

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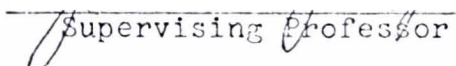
  
Supervising Professor



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation<sup>1</sup> was an outgrowth of the Southern Commission on Interracial Cooperation, which began in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1919. It was the end of World War I. Two hundred thousand Negro youth had fought in the war. Millions of Negroes at home had responded generously, in proportion to their ability, to the war-time appeal. They had been stirred, as had other citizens, by the messages of President Woodrow Wilson and by the democratic ideals of the war. It was a war "to make the world safe for democracy." Better guarantees of constitutional rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" were anticipated. Less prejudice and injustice were expected. They hoped that the future would be different.

With the ending of the war, a definite change occurred. Soon many Negroes began to feel that the war had brought to their race few of the benefits for which they had fought. Racial antagonisms, which had largely been overshadowed by devotion to a common cause, began to assert themselves again.

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<sup>1</sup>The organization was later known as the Texas Council on Race Relations and The Texas Council on Human Relations.

Distrust and fear arose. What would be the attitude of the Negro soldier after he returned from France? Incendiary rumors were circulated, and by the time soldiers began to return, suspicion and fear were gripping both races. Mob violence, which had greatly subsided during the war, burst out anew among whites and Negroes. Tension mounted and the nation awaited the outcome with dread suspense. A small group of white and Negro leaders began to meet in an attempt to avert the threatened calamity by bringing together the constructive Christian leadership of both races. Prominent in the group were John J. Eagan, manufacturer and Presbyterian churchman; W. W. Alexander, a Methodist minister and representative of the YMCA and the War Work Council, who was in close touch with the returning Negro troops, and M. Ashby Jones, pastor of a leading Atlanta Baptist church. In these men, three of the stronger Southern denominations were represented.

Headquarter offices were established in Atlanta from which was promoted the organization of interracial committees in every state in the South. Since the situation was considered desperate, the effort to cover the field with effective organizations was pushed rapidly. State committees were organized throughout the South and leaders were sent out to communities where problems were especially acute. The staggering task of organization was accomplished in record time, largely through the cooperation of the YMCA staff and the War Work Council.

The Southern Commission claimed almost immediate results. Suspicion and distrust began to give way to a spirit of understanding and confidence. Forces of law and order were encouraged and the forces of hatred were checked. The leaders of the Commission claimed credit for averting the threatened conflagration.<sup>2</sup>

President Calvin Coolidge took notice of the work of the interracial commissions: "The interracial commissions, it is generally agreed, have been of great importance in the past few years in promoting better understanding and relations between the white and colored people. This example has been an inspiration to students of the problem of race relations in all parts of the world."<sup>3</sup>

Having proved effective in the crisis which prompted its creation, the Commission undertook the task of long-range improvement of race relations throughout the South. The Commission was called "an adventure in goodwill." Its purpose was stated in the phrase, "Not amalgamation of the races, but the amicable adjustment of relationships in mutual helpfulness."<sup>4</sup> More specifically, its purpose was to correct racial injustices and improve conditions affecting Negroes and to

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<sup>2</sup>Robert B. Eleazer, "An Adventure in Good Will." 2.

<sup>3</sup>From an address delivered in Washington, D. C., October 24, 1925, quoted in Annual Program booklet for 1930.

<sup>4</sup>J. L. Clark and M. W. Dogan, "The Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation, 1920-1936," 2. (No place of publication or date given).



modify attitudes concerning race out of which unfavorable conditions grew. Commissions were set up in every Southern state and committees in 800 counties. Local interracial community committees were also organized which studied local situations for conditions which needed to be corrected. They functioned as needs arose, attempting to dispel suspicion and fear and to establish in their place confidence and goodwill. Both Negroes and whites met together to ascertain facts, to discuss problems, and to cooperate in seeking just solutions.

The work of the Commission was introduced into Texas in the spring of 1920. R. H. King of Atlanta represented the Southern Commission on Interracial Cooperation to explain the purposes of the movement. On March 27, 1920, the President of the University of Texas, R. E. Vinson, in conjunction with L. A. Coulter, State YMCA Secretary for Texas, issued a call for twenty white and Negro men to meet for a conference. The meeting was held in President Vinson's office on March 31. After an explanation of the purpose of the Commission by King, and much discussion by the group, the decision was made to organize a Commission in Texas. During the summer of 1920, two white men, J. L. Clark and H. L. Grey, and two Negro men, S. W. Houston and M. W. Dogan, travelled over the state to create the state commission and to organize local interracial committees.<sup>5</sup> Forty counties were visited.

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<sup>5</sup>"The Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation, 1920-1940" (No author, place of publication, or date given).

As a result of the work of these men, a temporary Commission and a Women's Commission of Interracial Cooperation were formed. These continued to function separately, but on March 22, 1922, a permanent Commission was formed, including the two organizations and the addition of "not more than thirty nor less than twenty white men and not more than fifteen nor less than ten Negro men."<sup>6</sup> The Women's Commission of Interracial Cooperation became the Women's Committee of the Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation.

E. M. Castleberry was employed in 1923 as field agent to lead in the organizational work. Much of the time, he was out of Texas, giving attention to conditions growing out of Tulsa, Oklahoma, race riots.<sup>7</sup> In 1924, after the Texas Commission had been enlarged to include both white and Negro women, Mrs. Jessie Daniel Ames was employed as a full-time director. She was succeeded in 1929, by R. M. Woods, professor of sociology at Sam Houston State Teachers College in Huntsville, Texas. Woods obtained a two-years' leave of absence from his teaching to serve as director.

The following men were approved as members of the white representation on the Texas Commission: S. P. Brooks, president of Baylor University; Judge N. A. Stedman; Judge Streetman; George W. Truett, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas,

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<sup>6</sup>Report of the Findings Committee of the Texas State Commission on Interracial Cooperation, Dallas, Texas, March 22, 1922.

<sup>7</sup>Jessie Daniel Ames, Brief Report of the Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation, October 1929, 1.

Texas; Bishop C. S. Quinn; L. W. Rogers, a doctor; Glenn Sneed; L. A. Coulter; W. S. Sutton; Elmer Scott; Comer Woodward; H. L. Gray; W. F. Anderes; J. L. Clark; E. R. Cockrell; G. B. Dealey; and Judge Rhodes Baker.

J. C. Hardy was made chairman of the Commission in 1922, and Mrs. Jessie Daniel Ames, chairman of the Women's Committee of the Commission, was made vice-chairman. Recording secretary was M. W. Dogan, president of Bishop College. Elected as directors were E. M. Castleberry of Oklahoma and H. T. S. Johnson. The Executive Committee of the Commission was composed of the chairman, the vice-chairman, the recording secretary of the commission, and the chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary of the Women's Committee. Committees were appointed on travel, church, education, the press, and economic conditions.<sup>8</sup>

The organizational meeting of the Women's Committee was held on March 20, 1922, at Dallas on the call of the director of the Women's Committee. Women were invited by R. E. Vinson, chairman of the Texas Committee, to accept membership on the Texas Committee on Race Relations. Those present for the meeting were Mrs. E. G. Batjer of Abilene, Mrs. L. P. Smith, Mrs. Edward Keelan, and Mrs. A. C. Bigger of Dallas, Mrs. W. B. Preston of Teague, Mrs. J. B. Ammerman of Fort Worth, Mrs. Florence C. Floore of Cleburne, Mrs. Maggie W.

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<sup>8</sup>Report of the Findings Committee, March 22, 1922, 1-2.



Barry of College Station, Mrs. Jessie Daniel Ames of Georgetown, Mrs. T. A. Brown of Austin, Mrs. Ruth Leggett of Livingston, Mrs. John M. Steele of Houston, Mrs. F. M. Burkhead of Austin, Mrs. G. B. Burton of Clarendon, and Mrs. J. H. Stewart of Waxahachie. Others who had accepted membership on the committee but were unable to attend the meeting were Mrs. S. M. N. Marrs of Austin, Mrs. Percy Pennybacker of Austin, Mrs. Clinton S. Quinn of Houston, and Miss Cleanor Breckinridge of San Antonio.

Mrs. Jessie Daniel Ames was elected chairman and Mrs. John S. Turner, secretary. Committees and chairman appointments included: "the Negro Home," Mrs. F. M. Burkhead; "the Negro School", Mrs. W. B. Preston; and "the Negro Church," Mrs. John M. Hanna.

The purpose of the Women's Committee was stated as follows:

We, the members of the women's section of the Texas State Committee on Interracial Cooperation, find ourselves overwhelmed with the opportunity and the corresponding responsibility which we this day face in sharing the task of bringing about better conditions and relations in the South between the white and Negro races. We deplore the fact that the relations for the past fifty years have been such as to separate the two races through a lack of understanding on the part of both. We know that ignorance takes its toll in crime and inefficiency, that disease and death are no respectors of persons, but that they sweep from the places of squalor and unsanitary living across the boulevards, to the best kept and most protected homes. We know also that crime is not segregated and that its results are felt alike by all classes.

We are persuaded that our native Southland can never reach its highest destiny while any part of

its people are ignorant, underdeveloped and inefficient. Therefore, together we must meet our task and seek to bring in a new day of better understanding and achievement. To this end we call attention to some of the underlying causes of present day ills:

#### PREJUDICE

Recognizing the universal existence of prejudice among people of different races, and deploring its existence and its consequent unjust results, we are therefore resolved: that the Negro should have a hearing in his own behalf, and that we should not be content simply with being kindly disposed to the race, but that our good will should reach to an effort to secure for its members justice in all things and opportunities for living the best possible life. We desire for the Negro, as for all men, personal and racial justice in private life and in the courts of the land.

#### WOMANHOOD

Recognizing the great increase of mulattoes and knowing full well that no race can rise above its womanhood, we appeal for the portection of the chastity of the Negro women and declare ourselves for the single standard of morality among this race as well as among our own.

#### CHILDHOOD

Recognizing the right of every American child to be not only well born, but to be given the opportunity for developing his life to its fullest possibility, we desire for the Negro child better homes, better schools and better Christian training.

#### LYNCHING

Lynching is the black spot on America's soul. So long as America holds the record for its illegal taking of life, so long as the headlines of foreign papers carry in large letters "America burns another Negro," just so long will her shame be world-wide. We have no security unless the law protects us. Mob violence knows no law. As women, as the mothers of men, we protest. We condemn every violation of law in the taking of life, no matter what the crime.

We declare ourselves for law and order at all costs. The public has a right to prompt and sustain justice and should demand such of officials and courts. We believe that America should not permit ignorance and prejudice to be capitalized.

In common with the great and honored Henry W. Grady of our own Southland, we say, "Not in passion, my countrymen, but in reason; not in narrowness but in breadth, may we solve this problem in calmness and in truth, and lifting its shadows, let perpetual sunshine pour down on two races walking together in peace and contentment."<sup>9</sup>

From 1925 to 1927, Mrs. Ames established contact with the forty counties that had been contacted originally. Work of the commission was found to be dormant in every place except Huntsville. Special attention was given to organizing and working with committees in Crockett, Jacksonville, Longview, Tyler, Georgetown, Temple, Waco, Waxahachie, and Houston.

During the late 1920's, general field work in promoting the commission throughout the state was done by Mrs. D. M. Mason and S. W. Houston. Mrs. Mason was selected by the Negro women. She contributed her time for one summer to present the commission to organizations in the state. The commission paid her expenses. Houston, principal of the Walker County Industrial and Training School, worked part-time as a field worker.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Minutes of Organizational Meeting, Women's Committee, Texas Race Relations Committee, Dallas, March 20, 1922, 3 (mimeographed).

<sup>10</sup>Jessie Daniel Ames, Brief Report of the Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation, October 1924-October 1929, 3-4.



From 1955 to early 1956, Thomas S. Sutherland was employed as executive director of the Commission.<sup>11</sup> Kenneth F. Holbert, a Dallas attorney, served as associate director.<sup>12</sup> Sutherland was succeeded by Ed G. Kloppe.

Most of the work of the commission was done by voluntary workers who were under the leadership of state chairmen. The first chairman was R. E. Vinson, who was succeeded by J. C. Hardy, president of Baylor College at Belton. Hardy was followed by A. S. Cleveland in 1926, who in turn was succeeded in 1928 by W. P. Meroney, professor of sociology at Baylor University (Waco). R. M. Kelley was chairman in 1932. R. M. Woods, professor of sociology at Sam Houston State Teachers College, served as chairman in 1933, and was succeeded by J. L. Clark, head of the history department at the same college. Mrs. J. L. Brock of Bryan, district president of the Federation of Women's Clubs, served as chairman from 1935 until 1944, when she was replaced, at her own request, by A. L. Porterfield, head of the sociology department at Texas Christian University. Porterfield resigned in 1946, because of pressure that was put on the president of TCU concerning Porterfield's association with the commission. Mrs. James S. Crate of Houston, who served as long as the commission functioned, was elected to replace Porterfield.

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<sup>11</sup>Mrs. James S. Crate to John Q. Adams, April 16, 1956.

<sup>12</sup>Jack Kilgore to Mrs. James S. Crate, May 17, 1956.

The budget of the commission was provided primarily by the annual dues of the general committee members. Some Negro members were asked to pledge \$25, which could be raised from friends, organizations or personal gifts.<sup>13</sup> The Negro men's group gave \$600 in 1929, and twenty-seven pledged \$25 in 1930.<sup>14</sup> The Houston Community Chest contributed \$500 in 1926. The Alphin Club of Houston, Phithian Temple of Dallas, Pricilla Art Club of Dallas, Alphin Charity and Art Club of Fort Worth and churches were other groups which gave financial support.<sup>15</sup> During the mid-1950's, the Southern Commission in Atlanta received a grant and provided \$5,000 to \$12,000 to maintain a director, office and travel expense for the Texas Commission.<sup>16</sup> Efforts to create a trust fund of \$75,000 to \$100,000 from a foundation of philanthropic group were made unsuccessfully for at least six years.

The officers of the commission were the chairman, four vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer. The board of directors was composed of sixteen persons, including the officers, with an equal number of white and Negro members. There was an advisory committee formed of approximately thirty of the

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<sup>13</sup>W. R. Banks to prospective Negro male members of the Advisory Committee, January 10, 1929.

<sup>14</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 4, 1927, 9.

<sup>15</sup>Maxie E. Lombard to Jack Kilgore, January 13, 1956. Commission's Budget for 1955-56 fiscal year.

<sup>16</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 20-21, 1936, 10. Minutes of the Board of Directors, August 12, 1939, 2. Minutes of the Board of Directors, August 23, 1941, 2. Minutes of the Board of Directors, June 6, 1942, 3.

most influential men and women of the state who permitted their names to be linked with the organization as evidence of their confidence in its purposes and methods. The working body, which met annually as the Texas Commission, was the general or state committee. It was composed of twenty-five Negro men and twenty-five Negro women who were elected for three-year terms by the directors on the recommendation of the vice-chairmen, who were the leaders of each group. There was a student representative of each group who was a member of the commission.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>J. L. Clark to Mrs. Summerville Z. Fauntleroy, September 7, 1935.

## CHAPTER II

### CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION

The primary emphasis of the Commission<sup>1</sup> was on Negro education. Early attention was given to public schools. Assistant State Superintendent of Schools L. W. Rogers made a report to the 1925 Commission meeting on Negro high schools. His report showed that the Negro schools did not meet the standards of white schools because of the unwillingness on the part of some districts to incur the additional expense which would have been involved. He accused some Negro principals of apathy and fear of having the light turned on their schools. The Commission went on record in favor of using its influence to get the Department of Education to make surveys of Negro schools.<sup>2</sup>

As director of the Texas Commission in 1929 and 1930, R. M. Woods led in an effort to get every college in Texas of both races to introduce into its curriculum a race relations course. He stated that a number of colleges were already of-

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<sup>1</sup>From this point on, "Commission" will refer to the Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation unless otherwise designated.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 6, 1925, 1.



fering such a course and that all who had been approached had expressed a desire to offer these courses. The president of one teachers college said he would teach the course himself. Woods believed that these courses were important in building a factual basis for a proper understanding of the race question. He wrote:

It is the college student of today who will mold sentiment tomorrow, and if his attitude is right on the race question when he leaves college, his influence will be mightily felt in the building of sentiment for goodwill, cooperation and fair dealings between the races in the future.<sup>3</sup>

M. W. Dogan, president of Wiley College in Marshall, Texas, spoke to the 1931 meeting of the Commission on the subject "Higher Education for Negroes in Texas." His observations were as follows: "Curricula of these colleges greatly improved; faculties strengthened; libraries and science departments of these colleges are meeting requirements of rating agencies."<sup>4</sup> Junior colleges included in the report were Texas College of Tyler, Jarvis College of Hawkins, Butler College of Tyler, Mary Allen College of Crockett, Paul Quinn College of Waco, St. Phillips of San Antonio, Guadalupe College of Seguin and Houston College of Houston. Senior colleges were Wiley of Marshall, Bishop of Marshall, Samuel Houston of Austin, Prairie View of Prairie View, and Tillotston of Austin.

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<sup>3</sup>R. M. Woods, "Report of Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation for the Months of September, October, November, December, and January, 1929-30," 1 (mimeographed).

<sup>4</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 7-8, 1931, 12.

F. Rivers Barnwell of Fort Worth reported on "Health Education Among Negroes." He stated that no definite provisions were being made in Negro schools of Texas to teach health education. He urged that a full-time nurse be employed in as many counties as possible. He suggested that the Rosenwald Fund would be interested in assisting with the salaries of county nurses.<sup>5</sup>

The Southern Commission on Interracial Cooperation sponsored the Peabody Conference on Education and Racial Adjustment at Nashville, Tennessee. The first one was held July 20-23, 1931, with sixty educational leaders, representing thirty-five colleges and a number of state, county and city boards of education, in thirteen Southern states. The second was held July 21-23, 1932, with much the same personnel. The purpose of the conference was "to consider the opportunity and obligation of Southern educational institutions - colleges and public schools - to make a constructive contribution to the South's peculiar problems of race relations."<sup>6</sup> The conferences were financed by a grant made to the Southern Commission by the Carnegie Corporation.

Speakers for the conference in 1932 were Willis A. Sutton, superintendent of schools of Atlanta, Georgia, and

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Education and Racial Adjustment, Report of Second Peabody Conference on Education and Race Relations, July 21-23, 1932, 3-4.

former president of the National Education Association, and Robert R. Moten, president of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The delegates were assigned to subcommittees to work on a suggested college course in race relations and a bibliography of twenty-five titles best suited for the college courses and supplementary reading. Reports were made of race relations projects carried on in the colleges during the previous winter.

The Texas Commission was involved in the Peabody Conference, with J. L. Clark serving as chairman and member of the Executive Committee. Others in attendance from Texas were C. T. Neu, history professor at East Texas State Teachers College in Commerce, Texas, and Ross H. Compton, sociology professor at North Texas State Teachers College in Denton, Texas.

The Commission promoted its objectives through relationships with organizations of teachers. R. M. Woods, chairman of the Commission in 1933, succeeded in getting a Negro speaker before the white teachers' association in Fort Worth in 1932. This was a first in history.<sup>7</sup>

At the suggestion of the Commission, a joint session of the white and Negro State Teachers Associations was held at Galveston in 1934. One session was under the direction of the

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<sup>7</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 3-4, 1933, 4.



executive committee of the Commission. Music for the program was provided by the State Negro Music Association, of which Mrs. Champ Gordon of Beaumont was president. State Superintendent of Public Instruction, L. A. Woods, spoke on the subject, "The Problems of a Dual System of Education in the South." "The Negroes' Contribution to American Education" was the title of an address by Channing H. Tobias, principal of Tuskegee Institute.<sup>8</sup> It was at the suggestion of the Commission that Tobias was invited.

Following the teacher's meeting, J. L. Clark and R. M. Woods arranged an itinerary for Tobias to speak at the University of Texas (Austin), Hardin-Baylor College (Belton), Southern Methodist University (Dallas), Texas Christian University (Fort Worth), Texas State College for Women (Denton), and Sam Houston State Teachers College (Huntsville).<sup>9</sup> While in Texas, Tobias also appeared on the program of the annual meeting of the Commission. In a letter to a friend, J. L. Clark quoted an excerpt of a letter from Tobias, giving his impressions from the Texas engagement:

Now, with reference to the remarkable itinerary arranged for me by yourself and Dr. Woods, I wish to assure you that in opening up those opportunities you were unconsciously providing for me a

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<sup>8</sup>Program folder for Texas State Teachers Association, December 1, 1934.

<sup>9</sup>Statement of expense money paid by Texas colleges to Channing Tobias.

new outlook in race relationships, for, as close as I have been to the pulse-beat of the present student generation in the South, I was really unprepared for the cordiality of the receptions extended to me in all of the institutions that I visited. It is a source of great satisfaction to me to learn that the meeting of the Interracial Commission at Fort Worth was encouraging to the membership and friends of the Commission. It speaks volumes for the place that the leaders of the Commission occupy in the life of the state that the conference should prove so successful in view of the effort in some quarters to arouse sentiment against it. I was very much impressed with the fact that the conference proceeded with the prosecution of its constructive program without reference to the opposing voice that had been raised so shortly before the meeting. After all, that is the sensible way of dealing with such problems.<sup>10</sup>

In its report to the Commission meeting in 1925, the Committee on Education suggested that the Southern Commission be asked to arrange for the writing of a general history of the United States. A history was desired which would include the contributions of Negroes. It was also suggested that local interracial committees bring to the attention of their school boards that the State Department of Education was organized to provide a survey of Negro high schools without cost to the local communities involved. The report endorsed the recommendations on Negro education made by the Educational Survey Committee created by the 37th Texas Legislature, especially the emphasis on a just distribution of the per capita appropriation of the state school funds.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>J. L. Clark to Charles R. Sherer, January 12, 1935.

<sup>11</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 6, 1925, 4.

The State Board of Education was commended for its fine administration of the public school system. Increasing demand for information on Negro life by public school students was noted and the Board was urged to use Negro educators in an advisory capacity to make the information service more effective.<sup>12</sup>

The Commission believed that the understanding and fair and impartial presentation of the background and contributions of the Negro race were essential to the development of a constructive social attitude in the children of the Negro and white races. The Commission voted to request the State Board of Education to present this information through classes, classroom projects and material in textbooks. The Board was asked to safeguard the presentation to avoid making it a matter of entertainment.<sup>13</sup>

In 1935, there were no schools in Texas which offered graduate work for Negroes. A resolution adopted by the Commission in 1935, and repeated in 1936, requested the State to provide assistance, transportation and tuition for Negro students who desired to prepare to enter the professions or to take graduate courses outside the state. A number of arguments were marshalled to support the request. First, it was pointed out that the intent of the Constitution was to give

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<sup>12</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 20-21, 1936, 9.

<sup>13</sup>Minutes of the Commission, December 6-7, 1935, 10.



every person, regardless of race, creed or color, an equal educational opportunity. Courses of graduate and professional study were provided for all races except Negroes in state-supported institutions. Because of the fact that existing racial feelings and racial antagonism prevented the mixing of whites and blacks in educational institutions, Negroes were compelled to leave the state at their own expense to receive the training. In lieu of establishing separate universities for Negroes, Texas should follow the example of a number of other states, including Oklahoma, Missouri, West Virginia and Maryland, and make provisions to give aid to Negro students who were denied permission to enter state universities, by paying their tuition and transportation to recognize institutions outside the state. This resolution was originally framed by the Committee on Civics and Public Welfare of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce and presented to the Commission by R. T. Hamilton of the Commission's Education Committee.<sup>14</sup>

At its meeting of March 7, 1936, the Board of Directors of the Commission voted again to request the Legislature to appropriate money to pay the tuition and traveling expenses of Negroes who desired to do graduate and professional study in institutions out of the state until the state would make

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 8-9.



provision for a Negro university.<sup>15</sup> Thus the idea was conveyed that the out-of-state aid was only a temporary remedy and that the state should provide an institution for Negro graduate study. The Commission in its annual meeting in 1936 repeated to the Legislature the request for graduate facilities for Negroes. In view of the lack of these provisions, funds were again requested for out-of-state assistance.<sup>16</sup>

A Board of Directors meeting was held August 28, 1937, to hear a report by R. T. Hamilton, chairman of the Educational Committee, on the bill for "The Equalization of Educational Opportunities for Negroes." Hamilton's committee had formulated and presented to state officials data on graduate instruction for Negroes. Lonnie Smith of Tarrant County presented the bill to the Legislative Committee on Education. The bill died in the Committee. Hamilton stated that Governor James V. Allred was in favor of the bill and that he had promised to present the bill in a future session of the Legislature. Hamilton suggested that immediate efforts be made to sell the matter to the members of the Legislature. Newspaper publicity was considered essential in building up sentiment in favor of such legislation. The Board adopted the Education Committee's proposal that Mrs. Jessie Daniel

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<sup>15</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, March 7, 1936.

<sup>16</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 20-21, 1936, 10.

Ames be invited to come to Texas to lobby for the bill at an estimated expense of \$500 to \$750. A committee composed of R. T. Hamilton, Mrs. Olivia Fuller, J. L. Clark, F. R. Barnwell and Mrs. B. J. Covington was appointed to raise money for the promotion of sentiment for passage of the bill.<sup>17</sup>

Mrs. Ames gave priority to the bill and toured the state, creating interest and securing the support of influential persons and organizations. She was able to secure the interest of Thomas W. Currie, president of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, who accepted the chairmanship of the special committee working for the legislation. Among the organizations which Mrs. Ames led to support the bill were the Woman's Missionary Societies of several conferences of the Methodist Church of the state. The women of these missionary societies were relied upon to put political pressure on members of the legislature when needed. Two months before the Legislature adjourned in 1938, Mrs. Ames went to Austin to devote all her time to working with members of the Legislature on behalf of the appropriation. Mrs. J. L. Brock, chairman of the Commission, and other members of the Commission gave hearty support for the movement. Negroes of Texas gave over \$700 to the Commission for the project and the Negro State Teachers Association gave \$200.<sup>18</sup> Claude

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<sup>17</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, August 28, 1937, 1-3.

<sup>18</sup>Minutes of the Commission, December 8-9, 1939, 6.

D. Teer, chairman of the Texas Board of Control, was a member of the original interracial committee of Williamson County in 1921 and identified with the work of the Commission, gave advice and encouragement to the project. Previously, as a member of the Legislature and as member and chairman of the Board of Control, Teer had worked for other Commission objectives, such as a home for delinquent Negro girls, improvement of facilities at Prairie View, a Negro tuberculosis sanatorium and the Negro orphanage at Gilmer. The 46th session of the Legislature passed the bill and out-of-state aid was made available for the 1939-40 school year. One hundred and eighty applications were made; fifty-three were approved for grants totaling \$11,341.54 for the first semester, and fifty-seven for summer school, with an additional seventeen for 1940-41.<sup>19</sup>

Mrs. Ames reported that passage of the \$50,000 graduate aid appropriation was difficult in 1941 because of well-organized opposition. The leader of the opposition was Representative W. T. McDonald of Brazos County. There was also opposition to the increased Prairie View appropriation. Mrs. Ames said that the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee had remarked that, until all the white colleges in Texas had all they needed and wanted, he would oppose all increases for Prairie View.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>20</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, August 23, 1941, 2.



Currie reported that a study was prepared to attempt to show the advantages gained by the \$50,000 biennial appropriation of the Legislature, for out-of-state aid. He also reported that consideration was also being given to a branch university for Negroes.<sup>21</sup>

The matter of equal salaries for Negro teachers who held like positions and had equal training with whites was discussed. It was decided that since the Negro Teachers Association and the National Association for Advancement of Colored People had this as a project, the best procedure would be simply to endorse the movement, unless the help of the Commission was requested.<sup>22</sup>

The 46th session of the Legislature appropriated \$20,000 for the biennium for graduate work at Prairie View College. The graduate school at Prairie View had been established by the 45th session with a \$7,000 per annum appropriation. R. T. Hamilton was of the opinion that the Commission was due some of the credit for these appropriations, since no graduate work was offered at Prairie View until the Commission started its efforts to obtain out-of-state scholarship aid for Negro graduate and professional students. Hamilton proposed that since no grants would be made to applicants who planned to work for master's degrees in fields in

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<sup>21</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, June 6, 1942, 3.

<sup>22</sup>Minutes of the Commission, December 8-9, 1939, 12.

which such work is provided at Prairie View, the Legislature should increase appropriations so that the physical plant and the faculty would be good enough to enable Prairie View to render service and meet the needs of Negro students on a standard comparable to that of accredited graduate schools out of the state.<sup>23</sup>

J. C. Kellam, state director of the National Youth Administration, spoke on "NYA Activities for Negroes in Texas," at the 1939 meeting of the Commission. The report indicated that approximately 2,827 Negro boys and girls were receiving aid totaling over \$100,000 in 1938-39 to enable them to continue their educations. The aid was pay for the work the youths did in building youth community centers and vocational agriculture buildings, in working as assistants in hospitals and cafeterias and in maintaining and beautifying public parks and recreational areas. The work gave Negro young people experience in assuming responsibility for completion of projects.<sup>24</sup>

The directors realized that the problem of higher education for Negroes in Texas was too large to be solved by the Commission. They believed that the difficulties and complications called for the united effort of the best minds. It was suggested that a conference of outstanding educators,

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<sup>23</sup>R. T. Hamilton, "Full Report of Dr. R. T. Hamilton at the Annual Meeting, Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation, December 9, 1939," 3, (mimeographed).

<sup>24</sup>Minutes of the Commission, December 8-9, 1939, 11-12.

lawyers, statesmen, ministers, and public-spirited citizens be held to agree upon a wise program and course of action. The officers and Executive Committee of the Commission were asked to explore the possibilities of such a conference and, if it seemed practical, to proceed to set it up.

Requests were made to the presidents of Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College and the University of Texas and to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. In response, these men called a conference in the summer of 1942 to discuss problems of education of Negro youth. Seventy people, representing both races, participated in the discussions. The group organized itself into a permanent Bi-racial Conference on Negro Education in Texas for the purposes of studying the needs in the field and of making recommendations to the people, the Legislature, the educational authorities and other responsible persons and groups. The state superintendent and college presidents mentioned above constituted the Sponsoring Committee which appointed a seven-member Steering Committee to gather information, prepare recommendations and implement the work of the Conference. The original members of the Committee were B. F. Pittenger, dean, school of education, the University of Texas; chairman, T. D. Brooks, dean, graduate school, Texas A & M College; W. R. Banks, principal, Prairie View College; J. J. Rhoads, president, Bishop College; Mrs. Joe A. Wessendorf, past president, Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers;



Thomas W. Currie, president, Austin Presbyterian Seminary; R. P. Hamilton, physician and surgeon of Dallas, and Gordon Worley, secretary, director, Division of Special Problems in Negro Education, State Department of Education. Because of ill health, Hamilton was replaced by H. E. Lee, physician and surgeon of Houston. Upon the death of Currie, he was succeeded by T. S. Montgomery, head, department of education, Sam Houston State Teachers College.

The Steering Committee directed surveys of Negro education in Texas, first at the elementary and secondary levels, and then at the college level. Bi-racial committees were appointed to conduct these studies. T. S. Montgomery was chairman of the Committee for Study of Senior Colleges for Negroes. His report showed that:

The ratio of white students to Negro students in state-supported colleges per thousand of youth of each age fifteen to twenty is 5 to 1. On this basis the state is providing five times as much opportunity for higher education in state-supported senior colleges for its white youth as for its Negro youth.<sup>25</sup>

The report also revealed that seven percent of the 205 Negro college faculty members held no degree; thirty-five percent held bachelor's degrees; fifty-two percent held the master's degree and six percent held the degree of doctor of philosophy. Three out of four earned the bachelor's degree in Southern colleges. The majority of those holding the master's

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<sup>25</sup>T. S. Montgomery (ed.), The Senior Colleges for Negroes in Texas, 91-92.



degree earned it in institutions outside the Southern region. All of the thirteen holding the doctor of philosophy degree earned it in institutions of the North. The median tenure of the faculty members was five years, probably because of low salaries. On a nine-months basis, twenty-five percent were paid \$956 or less; fifty percent received \$1219 or less and seventy-five percent received \$1566 or less. Salaries at Prairie View were lower than those paid in state-supported colleges in Texas and lower than salaries paid in the land-grant colleges in seventeen states in both white and Negro colleges.<sup>26</sup>

The Education Committee was instructed to continue efforts to obtain funds for out-of-state aid for Negro graduate and professional students and at the same time to work for adequate provisions for higher education for Negroes within the state. The following resolution was adopted by the Board of Directors of the Commission:

WHEREAS the attitudes about Negroes held by whites react directly in the life of Negroes and WHEREAS when such attitudes are unjustly formed the outlook of the white group is stultified and WHEREAS the Commission on Interracial Cooperation repeatedly attempts to introduce helpful courses in colleges

WHEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas Interracial Commission renew its efforts to introduce into the public schools and colleges such information as will destroy prejudice and injustice and build understanding and cooperation between the Negro and white groups.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 92.

<sup>27</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, June 6, 1942, 9-10.

Currie, chairman of the Education Committee, reported to the August, 1942, meeting of the Board of Directors that he had talked with Judge Weaver H. Baker, chairman of the Board of Control, and General Harry Knox, member of the board of Control about the out-of-state scholarship aid fund. General Knox assured him that he would make every effort to have the \$50,000 for out-of-state aid included in the budget for the new biennium.<sup>28</sup>

The Committee on Education of the Commission printed a pamphlet presenting the need for out-of-state aid for Negro graduate and professional students. There was no professional training in Texas for Negroes. The more than 600 Negro teachers with bachelor's or higher degrees were required to earn advanced credits every four years. There was a continuous demand for replacements and additions of trained people in other professions, business and industry. Benefits from the appropriation were argued, one being a better leadership for the Negro people. Improved educational opportunity would come from better trained leaders and teachers. Fewer Negroes with ambition would leave the state. Other areas in which there would be improvement were health and sanitation, employment and crime prevention.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Minutes of the Commission, December 5, 1942, 15.

<sup>29</sup>T. W. Currie and R. T. Hamilton, What Texas Needs.

Other pamphlets printed by the Commission in its effort to get help for Negro students doing advanced work were "Proposed Bill for Negro Student Aid," "Graduate Aid for Negro Texans," "Negro Education Aid," "Texas Law," and "Provisions of Texas Law." The last pamphlet stated the constitutional and legal requirements that impartial provisions be made for the education of both races.

The Commission prepared a mimeographed bulletin entitled "The Texas Observer" to replace the Texas edition of "The Southern Frontier," which was published by the Southern Regional Council. Significant articles on Negro education by educators and a journalist were included in the pamphlet. In 1942, E. C. McLeod, president of Wiley College, noted the progress in Negro education during the previous twenty-five years, but stated it was still far from the ideal standard that was needed for the welfare of the State. He acknowledged that social sanctions which supported the system could not be changed overnight, but stressed that they must be changed if Texas and the United States were to exert a wholesome influence upon the world. It was his belief that World War II was largely a result of defective educational systems and that inequalities were partly the outgrowth of faulty education. In order to eradicate inequalities, as the country was committed to do, there must be a revision of an obviously unjust and discriminatory educational system. He



challenged Texas and the United States to give impetus to the democratic way of life by correcting the inequalities in the educational system.<sup>30</sup>

Acknowledging the deficiencies of higher education for Negroes in Texas, Homer P. Rainey, president of the University of Texas, stated in 1942 that Texas citizens had a moral obligation to provide facilities for training in the professions of medicine, law, journalism, business administration and social service. As virtually no provisions were made for such training, Negroes were sent to other states for graduate study. This method was no longer constitutional, as shown by the Supreme Court decision in the Gaines case in Missouri. A group of white and Negro leaders in education and other representative citizens of both races met in August during late summer of 1942, to study the problems and make plans to meet them. At the meeting it was decided that a long-range study would be made out of which an adequate program would be proposed.<sup>31</sup>

Carter Wesley, editor of a Houston Negro newspaper, in an article written for "The Texas Observer," remarked concerning the relation of white and Negro education:

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<sup>30</sup>E. C. McLeod, "Education and the Negro Texan," The Texas Observer, October, 1942, 3-4, (mimeographed).

<sup>31</sup>Homer P. Rainey, "Higher Education for Negro Texans," The Texas Observer, October, 1942, 4-5, (mimeographed).



. . . There are actually two levels of education in Texas: one for the whites and one for the blacks.

While we must ever fight for destruction of the bars and distinctions, for the immediate improvement we must recognize the fact that the bars and distinctions are anchored in traditions which we cannot destroy overnight. A realistic approach, therefore, requires that we take the problem as it is and seek to improve it as much as we may with the tools at hand and despite barriers.

In that view, we will not here concern ourselves with the elimination of segregation in Texas schools. Accepting the separation of the schools, liberal white and black people, interested in the improvement of the educational pattern, can get together to lift the lower level until it is on the same plane with that of whites, even though it may be in separate schools and institutions.<sup>32</sup>

A student representative was a member of each of the Commission's four divisions - white men, white women, Negro men and Negro women. The students were usually from Sam Houston State Teachers College, Wiley College, the University of Texas and Prairie View State College. In 1937, it had been decided to provide money to bring students to the Commission's meeting. This money had formerly been used to bring an out-of-state speaker. J. L. Clark and Mrs. B. A. Hodges, commission chairman, were asked by the program committee to work out plans for securing the attendance of students. They charged W. R. Banks with the responsibility of inviting Negro students and R. M. Woods to

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<sup>32</sup>Carter Wesley, "The Pattern of Education," The Texas Observer, October, 1942, 2, (mimeographed).

invite white students. This first effort to include larger numbers of students resulted in the attendance of Negro students from seven colleges.

At the April 28, 1945, meeting of the Board of Directors, A. L. Porterfield introduced the question of the GI Bill and its application to Negroes. A committee was appointed to make an effort to have a Negro appointed in Washington to help give Negroes information about the provisions of the bill. The committee was composed of Charles Sherer, Mrs. C. T. Shaedel, Mrs. J. L. Brock, W. R. Banks, and F. Rivers Barnwell. They were instructed to report to the annual meeting in December, 1945, in Fort Worth.<sup>33</sup>

The proposed budget increase for Prairie View State College was discussed and approved by the Board of Directors at their meeting April 28, 1945. Plans for immediate action to reach key people in the Legislature were discussed. A legislative committee to lobby for the appropriation was appointed. It was composed of F. E. Brooks as chairman, L. R. Reynolds as secretary, and T. H. Shelby, Mrs. Will Decherd, Mrs. C. A. Barr, H. Y. Price, and E. H. Heinsohn. A telegram and a letter signed by the board members was sent to the Free Conference Committee on the Prairie View appropriation.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Minutes of Board of Directors, April 28, 1945, 1.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 2.

L. R. Reynolds began working in a voluntary capacity in the Commission's legislative program. He worked particularly in support of the budget appropriation bill with the Forty-ninth Legislature in 1945. R. B. Milton, member of the Board of Directors of the Commission and professor of sociology at Sam Houston State Teachers College, and J. L. Clark suggested that Reynolds be enrolled as a member of the Commission and assigned to the Committee on Legislation. In that way, any expense incurred by Reynolds could be legitimately charged against the Committee's budget.<sup>35</sup> A. L. Porterfield approved the idea<sup>36</sup> and W. R. Banks designated \$150 to be given the Commission for that purpose, from the Prairie View Faculty Community Chest.

A special meeting of the standing committees of the Commission was held on June 29, 1946. A committee was appointed to confer with the presidents of Texas A & M College and the University of Texas and to request that the joint committee of the boards of the two schools, which had been appointed to study the problem of Negro higher education in Texas, recommend to the Governor that he appoint a bi-racial commission. This commission was to study the problems of Negro education in Texas, with special emphasis on higher education and submit to the next session of the Texas Legislature proposed legislation designed to solve the problems.

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<sup>35</sup>J. L. Clark to A. L. Porterfield, May 3, 1945.

<sup>36</sup>W. R. Banks to Mrs. J. S. Crate, May 12, 1945.



Wide representation to include the best thinking on the subject was recommended by the membership of the commission.<sup>37</sup>

The Supreme Court's ruling on desegregation of schools in 1954, revising the "separate, but equal" doctrine of 1896, and Lloyd Gaines versus State of Missouri, December 12, 1938, was followed by activity of the Texas Commission in that area. Since the chief opposition to desegregation of Texas schools came from the Citizens Councils, the Commission took positive steps against the councils. The Executive Director, Thomas S. Sutherland, was sent to observe the operations of the councils in Kilgore, Fort Worth, and La-Grange. Articles exposing the dangers of the councils were circulated to all Texas newspapers. Copies of the August 3, 1955, issue of The Texas Observer,<sup>38</sup> exposing the meeting of the Kilgore Citizens Council were mailed to all the voters in the Kilgore area. A number of newspapers responded with editorials condemning the councils. The Commission wrote a letter to the Attorney General asking him to give attention to the threat offered by the councils. The exchange of correspondence between the Attorney General and the Commission was published in the newspapers and much favorable comment was heard on the Commission's position on

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<sup>37</sup> Minutes of Special Meeting of Standing Committees of the Commission, June 29, 1946, (mimeographed).

<sup>38</sup> The reference here is to a newspaper and not to the mimeographed bulletin by the same name mentioned earlier.



race relations. Another move to counteract the influence of the councils was a meeting of Dallas pastors sponsored jointly by the Texas Commission and the Dallas Interracial Association. Speakers for this meeting, which had full coverage by newspapers, radio, and television, were John F. Anderson of Dallas First Presbyterian Church; Edwin L. Rippy, president of the Dallas School Board; Fred Routh and C. H. Parrish of the Southern Regional Council.

The opposition to the Citizens Councils by the Commission drew the attention of union leaders in Texas. Jerry Holleman, executive secretary of the AFL in Austin, and Fred Schmidt, the secretary of the CIO Council in Austin, expressed interest and their desire to give assistance in the struggle. Sutherland served as a consultant on the Human Rights Committee at the CIO Convention in Galveston. He was successful in getting resolutions adopted commending the Texas Commission and the NAACP, favoring voluntary help from the local unions to combat the Citizens Councils, and a resolution requiring the next convention be held in a hotel that was totally desegregated with rooms and food services available for all delegates.<sup>39</sup>

Ed G. Kloppe, executive director of the Texas Commission, issued a press release July 24, 1956, on the progress in school desegregation. He reported that more than

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<sup>39</sup>"News Letter, The Texas Commission on Race Relations," September 27, 1965, (mimeographed).

300,000 school children in 71 school districts scattered over an area of three-fourths of Texas attended school in integrated situations during the 1955-56 school year, according to a survey by the Texas Commission. The release quoted Mrs. James S. Crate as saying, "Racial integration in the public schools is a growing fact. More than 1,500 Negroes attended classes with white children in the 71 public school districts in the past year, and reports received up to this time have been overwhelmingly favorable. That the transition has been harmonious is indicated by reports that all of these communities plan to continue, extend or complete the process of school integration this fall."<sup>40</sup>

Positive aspects were emphasized in the release. Most of the 71 school boards made their decision to integrate in the absence of any formal pressures such as law suits and petitions. In about one-third of the districts the children were given the option of continuing in the school previously attended. There were more than 16,000 Negro and 285,000 white pupils in the 71 districts. Negro children transferring from schools comparable in quality to the white schools had scholastic achievements essentially equal to that of white children.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Ed G. Kloppe, Press Release, July 24, 1956, (type-written).

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

The general theme of the February 10-11, 1956, annual meeting of the Commission was "Implementing Desegregation in Texas Schools." The invitation to the meeting said, "You will hear a panel of outstanding educators, churchmen, psychologists, and legal talent discuss 'Progress of Desegregation in Texas Schools'." <sup>42</sup>

Interest in improving education and in desegregation and work toward these objectives was reflected in the program for the 1958 annual meeting. Mrs. Nanie B. Aycox of Texas Southern University (Houston) spoke on "New Horizons in Education." A panel discussion on "Next Steps in Integration" was conducted by the Robert Rowe of the Ebenezer Baptist Church of Austin, Jerry Holleman, president AFL-CIO of Texas, and Frederick Eby, professor emeritus, School of Education, University of Texas. <sup>43</sup>

The Commission recorded many achievements in the field of education. Additional appropriations were secured and improvements were made in Negro public schools and colleges. Out-of-state aid for Negro graduate and professional students was obtained. Race relations courses were introduced into Texas colleges. The State Board of Education was requested to present to white classes the history and contribution of

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<sup>42</sup>Invitation and Program Outline for Annual Commission Meeting, February 10-11, 1956.

<sup>43</sup>Program Folder, February 14-15, 1958.

the Negro race, to develop a constructive social attitude toward race. Members of the Commission attended the Peabody Conference on Education and Racial Adjustment. Joint sessions of the white and Negro State Teachers Associations were held and Negro speakers were provided for teachers conventions and college student groups. Finally, the Commission worked to achieve a smooth transition toward desegregation of schools.



### CHAPTER III

#### CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEGRO HEALTH

The area of health was a strong interest of the Commission throughout its history. As early as 1919, F. Rivers Barnwell, who later became a member of the board of directors of the Commission, started promoting a Negro tubercular hospital. Barnwell, lecturer to Negroes and director of Negro health services for the Texas Tuberculosis Association, circulated a petition for the hospital and presented it to Governor Hobby.<sup>1</sup> The need was great. In 1929, there were 836 Negroes reported to the State Board of Health as dying of tuberculosis. The death rate among Negroes was three times as high as for whites, but there was not one bed for a Negro tubercular, except in the state penitentiary.<sup>2</sup>

The Commission's emphasis on health was expressed in 1927 as leaflets on public health education were prepared by the Commission's Committee on Education. The Southern Commission in Atlanta printed the leaflets and returned them

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<sup>1</sup>F. Rivers Barnwell to J. I. Clark, January 27, 1934.

<sup>2</sup>"Why a Negro Sanatorium in Texas?" mimeographed flyer.

to Texas for distribution, Under the leadership of the Committee on Education, students at Prairie View A&M prepared posters on Negro Health Week.<sup>3</sup>

The Committee on Health was instructed by the Commission to develop a major program which would include physical health and factors contributing to health such as housing, sanitation, recreation and other activities.<sup>4</sup> The Committee suggested that each member of the Commission work to create public sentiment for securing more Negro county health nurses. The Walker County hospital plan was suggested as a pattern for other counties. In that plan, there were white and Negro units built alike and in the same building. Negro patients could have Negro doctors and nurses if they desired.

County medical associations were encouraged to observe Negro Health Week. In places where there were both Negro and white county medical associations, the advantages of establishing contact between the two were emphasized. Negro doctors could benefit from lectures and discussions conducted by white medical associations on such topics as tuberculosis, social disease, prevention as well as treatment of diseases or other phases of public and individual health problems. Such a plan would help control the spread of disease and was

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<sup>3</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 4, 1927, 11.

<sup>4</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 4, 1927, 2.

based on the assumption that disease is economically wasteful and all methods of improving health should be shared with all who are responsible for the health of the people.<sup>5</sup>

R. M. Woods, director of the Commission, wrote a resolution requesting the Legislature to make provision for the treatment of Negroes suffering from tuberculosis. He was successful in getting the resolution adopted by the Texas Democratic Convention in 1930. The resolution gave statistics indicating that in proportion to the number of Negroes as compared to whites, there were twice as many deaths of Negroes by tuberculosis during the year 1929. At that time, there was no state-supported hospital where Negroes could go for treatment for tuberculosis.<sup>6</sup>

Woods provided each member of the Commission with the names of the Senate Finance Committee and the House Eleemosynary Committee. Bills creating a tubercular hospital for Negroes in Texas had been referred to these committees. Woods suggested that letters be written to members of the two committees and to each Commission member's own senator and representative, urging them to support these bills.<sup>7</sup> The legislation died in the Senate Finance Committee.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>R. M. Woods to Mrs. B. A. Hodges, September 13, 1930, with copy of resolution enclosed.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>R. M. Woods to members of the Commission, February 20, 1931.

<sup>8</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, April 24, 1931, 1.

The Commission joined forces with the State Negro Medical Association in 1933 in an effort to get the Legislature to appropriate funds for a tuberculosis hospital for Negroes. Because of the financial situation of the state at that time, it was thought best not to push the movement. L. B. Pinkston of Dallas, president of the State Negro Medical Association and member of the Commission's board of directors, was requested to assemble specific data on tuberculosis among Negroes in preparation for a public educational campaign for the hospital.<sup>9</sup> The board of directors re-committed the Commission to the work for the establishment of the tuberculosis hospital at its December 16, 1933, meeting. Daniel Russell, F. Rivers Barnwell, and Gordon Worley were appointed to a legislative committee to work with other agencies in pushing for the hospital.<sup>10</sup>

Health education, observance of Negro Health Week and the employment of county health nurses were integral parts of the Commission's program to preserve and improve Negro health. L. G. Pinkston reported:

There is an increase of tuberculosis cases among Negroes today because of poor housing, drainage, sanitation, improper diets. We need to improve living conditions and increase information as to preventive measures.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Minutes of the Executive Committee, March 11, 1933, 1.

<sup>10</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, December 16, 1933, 2.

<sup>11</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 3-4, 1933, 6.



In his address on "Local Health Problems," which was delivered to the annual meeting of the Commission in 1933, Alvis E. Greer, of the Greer-Park Clinic in Houston, stated that overcrowded conditions in Negro sections were responsible for poor health conditions. He also stressed the fact that health problems did not confine themselves to any one group, but were a community concern.<sup>12</sup>

Gordon Worley argued in a similar vein. He stated that the tuberculosis bacillus, malaria plasmodium and diphtheria germs are no respecter of race and pass easily from one to the other without discrimination. Enlightened self-interest should inspire white people to see the importance of promoting Negro health. For the protection of the health of white people, Worley said, it is necessary to improve the health of Negro people.<sup>13</sup>

The Commission worked with the Texas Tuberculosis Association in promoting National Negro Health Week. As a part of this observance, awards were given to communities with outstanding contributions to Negro health. Winners were chosen by a panel of judges selected by the Commission and approved by the Association. Three plaques were pur-

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>13</sup>Gordon Worley to C. H. Calloway and R. W. Knight, May 25, 1934.

chased by the Commission to be awarded to the three communities which contributed the most to Negro health.<sup>14</sup> These awards were first made in 1933; they inspired the Negro volunteer health leagues to greater effort.<sup>15</sup> The winners for 1934 were Port Arthur for a city above 25,000 population, Brownwood for a city under 25,000 population and Brazos County for a countrywide rural community.

Since the state had not made provisions for Negro tubercular patients, J. L. Clark suggested to A. P. Hancock, the manager of the Kerrville Chamber of Commerce, that one or more of the private sanitariums in the vicinity of Kerrville be used for Negro tubercular patients.<sup>16</sup> Apathy was found in this sector as well. Hancock reported that there was no interest in doing this on the part of the owners and operators of the tubercular hospitals.<sup>17</sup>

A bill was passed by the Legislature in 1934 which provided for a Negro tubercular hospital, but funds were not appropriated. J. L. Clark wrote Representative Gordon Burns and Senator Nat Patton, while Daniel Russell wrote Senator George Butler, requesting that any appropriation for

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<sup>14</sup>"National Negro Health Week," pamphlet printed by Texas Tuberculosis Association, 8-9.

<sup>15</sup>Pansy Nichols to J. L. Clark, February 28, 1934.

<sup>16</sup>J. L. Clark to A. P. Hancock, February 21, 1934.

<sup>17</sup>A. P. Hancock to J. L. Clark, March 16, 1934.

hospitalization in the state be made to care for patients without regard to race, creed or color.<sup>18</sup> Congressmen Burns and Butler entered an amendment to care for the matter as requested.<sup>19</sup> The importance of cure and prevention of disease among Negroes as a means of protecting the health and general welfare of white people as well as Negroes was argued.<sup>20</sup>

The Commission joined with other groups to promote the hospital. C. T. Coleman, president of the Lone Star Medical Association, asked the Commission to join with the Association in a campaign to get an appropriation for the erection of the Negro tuberculosis facility.<sup>21</sup> The Texas Federation of Women's Clubs worked to support the Negro hospital bill,<sup>22</sup> as did the Texas Tubercular Association, Texas Medical Association, East Texas Chamber of Commerce, Texas Social Welfare Workers and the Parent Teachers Association.<sup>23</sup>

Members of the Commission appeared before the State Board of Control in the interest of hospitalization for Negro tubercular patients. They then convinced the Free Con-

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<sup>18</sup>Daniel Russell to George Butler, August 27, 1934.

<sup>19</sup>Gordon Burns to J. L. Clark, September 7, 1934.

<sup>20</sup>J. L. Clark to Gordon Burns, August 30, 1934.

<sup>21</sup>J. L. Clark to W. R. Banks, November 13, 1934.

<sup>22</sup>J. L. Clark to Mrs. J. L. Brock, March 6, 1935.

<sup>23</sup>R. M. Woods, "Report for January, 1931," (mimeographed).

ference Committee of the Senate of the need for hospitals so that House Bill Number 13 was amended, making available part of the money from the sale of relief bonds to provide care for indigent Negro tuberculars. Negroes were included in the provisions of the bill chiefly at the insistence of the Commission's Legislative Committee.<sup>24</sup> An ally in the campaign was the Lone Star State Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical Association, which appointed a permanent committee with G. T. Coleman as chairman to work on the matter. Information on the disease was circulated. Letters were sent to members of the Legislature, to one hundred prominent citizens and to members of the Texas Interracial Commission to create interest in the treatment of Negro tuberculars.<sup>25</sup> The Governor signed the bill into law and, for the first time, the state of Texas took responsibility for that important phase of public health.

At this point, the Commission ran into difficulty. One of the arguments used in getting passage of the bill was that matching federal funds would be available.<sup>26</sup> Clark wrote Senators Morris Shepherd and Tom Connally, requesting matching federal funds for the treatment of indigent Negro

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<sup>24</sup>J. L. Clark to members of the Commission, April 10, 1934.

<sup>25</sup>G. T. Coleman to J. L. Clark, November 7, 1934.

<sup>26</sup>Daniel Russell to J. L. Clark, April 6, 1934.



tubercular patients.<sup>27</sup> Senator Connally replied that Harry Hopkins, administrator of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, had informed him that such assistance could not be given.<sup>28</sup> This news was a severe disappointment and created fear that the Commission might be penalized in future requests to the Legislature. The Texas Relief Commission did, however, make available part of the proceeds of the bond sale for hospitalization and J. B. McKnight, superintendent of the state tuberculosis sanatorium, announced that he would start receiving applications of Negro patients to the sanatorium.<sup>29</sup> This information was shared with Negro doctors. Widespread publicity was given through newspapers. The patients who were accepted were placed in private hospitals. The response of patients was prompt. By July 31, 1934, there were twenty-one Negro patients who had been admitted to the Von Ormy Sanatorium near San Antonio and one had been discharged.<sup>30</sup> There were fifteen patients at the San Angelo sanatorium, with four more notified to report.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>J. L. Clark to Senator Morris Shepherd, April 9, 1934.

<sup>28</sup>Senator Tom Connally to J. L. Clark, April 26, 1934.

<sup>29</sup>J. B. McKnight to J. L. Clark, April 4, 1934.

<sup>30</sup>F. Rivers Barnwell to J. L. Clark, August 6, 1934.

<sup>31</sup>F. Rivers Barnwell to J. L. Clark, September 3, 1934

In 1935, the Legislature made an appropriation of \$200,000 for a tubercular hospital for Negroes. This was a victory for the Commission, but it did not rest upon its laurels. Members of the Commission began immediately to write letters to members of the State Board of Control in an attempt to get the board to staff the hospital with Negro doctors and nurses.<sup>32</sup>

As of March 16, 1936, the construction of a Negro tubercular sanitarium had not been started. The Executive Committee of the Commission appointed a committee to investigate what could be done. It was feared that the funds appropriated would not be used and would go back into the state treasury at the end of the biennial and that it would be difficult to get an appropriation again.<sup>33</sup>

There was a strong movement to locate the Negro tubercular hospital in West Texas away from the center of Negro population and to staff it with white doctors and nurses. The Commission worked against this move, since it was thought to be against the best interests of Negroes for whom the hospital was created. Members of the Houston Commission were directed to write Claude Teer, chairman of the Board of Control; John T. Wallis and Henry C. Meyer of Austin; J. B.

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<sup>32</sup>R. M. Woods and J. L. Clark to Commission Members, not dated. Mrs. Maggie W. Barry to Claude Teer, August 14, 1935.

<sup>33</sup>Daniel Russell to J. L. Clark, March 16, 1936.

McKnight, superintendent of the State Hospital, Carlsbad, Texas; and Brown, State Health Officer, urging them to place the hospital somewhere in East Texas. The city of Crockett in Houston County was suggested as a convenient location.<sup>34</sup> The board of directors of the Commission approved this location.<sup>35</sup>

At the request of Mrs. J. L. Brock, chairman of the Commission, J. L. Clark secured the endorsement of the Houston County application for the Negro tuberculosis hospital by the Huntsville-Walker County Chamber of Commerce. That organization sent telegrams to Governor James V. Allred and Claude Teer, chairman of the State Board of Control.<sup>36</sup>

As it finally worked out, the State purchased the Thompson Sanatorium at Kerrville for the Negro tuberculosis hospital. Although the decision was not the one desired by the Commission, Clark said that all interested in the welfare of tubercular victims should give it their support. He expressed the hope that sufficient appropriations would be made and that the hospital would be staffed with Negro doctors and nurses.<sup>37</sup> The Commission voted to continue its

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<sup>34</sup>J. L. Clark to Mrs. Van Gandy, August 15, 1935.

<sup>35</sup>J. L. Clark to Mrs. Van Gandy, August 15, 1935.

<sup>36</sup>Mrs. J. L. Brock to J. L. Clark, February, 1936.

<sup>37</sup>J. L. Clark to Claude D. Teer, November 17, 1936.

efforts and to work for adequate appropriations for both maintenance and staffing. Employment of a Negro staff, as far as possible, was urged.<sup>38</sup>

In 1937, Barnwell reported that the facilities for the Negro tuberculosis hospital was inadequate. All the beds were full and there was a long waiting list. He suggested that the Commission send letters to Governor Allred and Teer, chairman of the Board of Control, commending them for their part in establishing the Negro hospital and urging them to use their influence to speed up the construction of another unit of the hospital.<sup>39</sup>

Two years later, the conditions had improved with the opening of a new hospital. Barnwell headed a committee from the Commission which visited the hospital and reported to the 1939 meeting of the Commission. He reported a good reception by the staff. Patients were contented and optimistic. There were one hundred and seventy-four patients in the two dormitories and thirty-four cottages. An urgent need existed for a dormitory for children. Since the opening of the institution in 1937, there had been eight hundred patients. Over a hundred were on the waiting list at the time of the visit.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 20-21, 1936, 9.

<sup>39</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, August 28, 1937.

<sup>40</sup>Minutes of the Commission, December 8-9, 1939, 12-13.



The Commission did not limit its interest in health to the Negro tubercular patient. It worked for better services for the mentally ill and the vocationally handicapped Negro blind. The Commission also expressed its interest in the providing of opportunities for training for Negro doctors and nurses.

State mental institutions were so overcrowded that patients were kept in county jails. A Negro in the Dallas County Jail was killed by an insane inmate. At the 1935 Commission meeting, the officers of the Commission were asked by the Resolutions Committee to form an effective lobby and to use other measures to relieve the overcrowded conditions and to provide for the safety and treatment of Negro citizens.<sup>41</sup>

The Commission decided to investigate the attention being given vocational training for the Negro blind. The object was to determine if the services of the State Commission for the Blind and the State Department of Vocational Education were adequate for the needs.<sup>42</sup>

Mrs. John M. Hanna called attention to the services of the Southwest Medical Foundation. She suggested that the Commission's chairman write E. H. Gary, dean of the

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<sup>41</sup>Minutes of the Commission, December 6-7, 1935, 8.

<sup>42</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, June 6, 1942, 2.

Foundation, urging that efforts be made for the training of Negro doctors and nurses, and a full sharing by Negroes of every facility included in the organization.<sup>43</sup>

The work in obtaining a Negro tubercular hospital was the Commission's most significant contribution in the area of health. The prevention of all diseases, good housing, sanitation, and recreation were other concerns of the Commission. The Commission also promoted Negro Health Week, care for the mentally ill, aid for the Negro blind, and training for Negro doctors.

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<sup>43</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, January 30, 1943, 2.

## CHAPTER IV

### WORK RELATING TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The Commission showed a considerable interest in criminal justice, which involved the problem of lynching and work with the police, courts, and correctional institutions.

Lynching was an aspect of criminal justice in which the Commission had an early concern. The year 1925 was the first year without a lynching in Texas since the Civil War.<sup>1</sup> Letters were written to three hundred and twenty-five newspaper editors and ninety-six sheriffs, commending them for their part in the good record.<sup>2</sup> In 1926, there was one lynching in Texas, so the Commission sought to influence public opinion against the practice and encouraged the press and officers of the law to remove the blot on the State. It was suggested that the conviction of a lyncher for murder would bring an end to mobs and lynchings in Texas.<sup>3</sup>

Mrs. Jessie Daniel Ames, director of women's work of the Southern Commission, led the women of the South in a campaign against lynching. Through her influence, the Texas

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, January 27, 1926.

<sup>2</sup>Jessie Daniel Ames to Members of Executive Committee, March 8, 1926.

<sup>3</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 4, 1927, 15.

Commission became involved. She held a meeting of women from seven Southern states in Atlanta in early November of 1930, and presided at a meeting in Dallas on November 6, 1930, attended by women from Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. The meeting was called by Mrs. J. L. Brock of Bryan, vice-chairman of the Texas Commission.<sup>4</sup> Those in attendance were Mrs. F. P. Culver of Fort Worth, Mrs. F. M. Burkhead of Houston, Mrs. B. A. Hodges of Waxahachie, Mrs. John Hanna, Mrs. George Sprague, and Mrs. L. P. Smith of Dallas, and Mrs. R. M. Woods of Huntsville, who was director of the Texas Commission. The purpose of the meeting was to decide what the women of Texas and other states could do to join hands with the women of the South to eradicate lynching. The subject of lynching was studied as to its effects on youth, on mission work and Christian influence abroad and whether there was justification to the claim that lynching was to protect womanhood.

Resolutions condemning lynching were drafted and telegrams were sent to Governors Moody of Texas and Holloway of Oklahoma and to Governors-elect Ross Sterling of Texas and William Murray of Oklahoma. Suggested steps toward the eradication of lynching were to create public opinion against lynching and to cause women to be articulate against it.

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<sup>4</sup>Mrs. J. L. Brock to unidentified friends, February 9, 1931, (mimeographed).



Women's organizations were to be encouraged to pass resolutions repudiating candidates who used racial fear or hatred as political campaign issues. Introduction of the study of lynching and mob violence into college courses was suggested. It was decided that twelve women of each state would compose a state committee whose names could be used in emergency for appeals, petitions or public pronouncements whenever a lynching took place. These women were also called upon to ask responsible citizens for help in a community where there was the danger of a lynching.<sup>5</sup>

The Texas Committee of Women for the Prevention of Lynching held its organizational meeting at the Baker Hotel in Dallas on February 23, 1931, with fourteen persons present. Texas was the tenth Southern state in which a committee was organized. Mrs. Ames released the following statement to the press:

Recourse to crime to prevent crime is destructive of law and is anarchistic in effect. Lynching is a crime itself, and as such we condemn and abhor it. We reaffirm that it is not a protection to women nor do we look to mobs for safety.

If citizens are unable to protect society and womanhood through legal means, then they must confess that they are incapable of civilization. A community which resorts to mob law proclaims to the world a citizenship too irresponsible and unstable emotionally to be intrusted with democratic principles of self-government.

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<sup>5</sup>Minutes of the Women's Anti-lynching Conference, November 6, 1930.

The women of Texas are grateful to Governor Ross Sterling for his support of a program of no lynchings in Texas this year. Lynchings can be prevented. When the Government declares that lynchers are murderers and will be and are punished as such, lynchings will pass.<sup>6</sup>

During 1932, there were eight people killed by lynching in the United States. There was one each for the states of Arkansas, Florida, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Ohio, Texas, and Virginia. This total was fewer than the number for any year since records had been kept. The numbers for the years 1927 to 1931 were 16, 11, 60, 21, and 13, respectively. An encouraging part of the report for 1932 was that there were 31 instances in which officers of the law prevented lynchings.<sup>7</sup> Woods wrote letters to the sheriffs of Texas, commending them for the "fearless performance of their duties in enforcing the laws and the protection of their prisoners."<sup>8</sup>

As the newly elected chairman of the Commission, J. L. Clark gave support to the anti-lynching movement. He wrote a letter to Governor Albert C. Ritchie of Maryland, commending him for his courage in having accused lynchers arrested.<sup>9</sup> Letters of commendation were also written to the editors of The Houston Post and The Dallas Morning News for their edito-

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<sup>6</sup>Jessie Daniel Ames, Press Release, February 24, 1931.

<sup>7</sup>R. M. Woods "Lynchings in 1932" (mimeographed).

<sup>8</sup>R. M. Woods to Sheriffs, February 2, 1933.

<sup>9</sup>J. L. Clark to Governor Albert C. Ritchie, November 29, 1933.

rials and news policies regarding race relations and law enforcement. He referred to a recent editorial which had condemned mob atrocities and to the fair and impartial handling of news concerning Negroes and Mexicans. He stated it was gratifying to fair-minded citizens and indicated a commendable courage.<sup>10</sup>

In a letter to Governor Miriam A. Ferguson of Texas, Clark deplored the recent wave of lawlessness that had swept Texas and the nation, resulting in mob violence and lynchings. As chairman of the Texas Commission, he called on the governor to use the official powers of her office to apprehend such law violators and to require the peace officers of the state to preserve peace and dignity and prevent mob violence. He noted that during the recent atrocities no official approbation of courageous officials or a statement condemning lawlessness had been issued from the governor's office.<sup>11</sup>

Clark was just as quick to express condemnation for officials who supported lynching. He wrote a strong letter to Governor James Rolph, Jr., of California, condemning his actions and official statements condoning the mob which lynched a Negro names Thurmond Holmes. He accused the Governor of nullifying achievement toward constitutional government and

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<sup>10</sup>J. L. Clark to Editor, Houston Post, December 21, 1933.

<sup>11</sup>J. L. Clark to Editor, Dallas Morning News, December 21, 1933.



progress in the eradication of lynching through education and enlightenment. He said:

You violated the spirit of your oath, and in doing so you encourage the lawbreaker, the lyncher, the racketeer. You thereby disgrace the high office to which you have been elected and bring into disrepute the good name of your state and nation. Your action is deeply deplored by all patriotic and law abiding citizens.<sup>12</sup>

M. W. Dogan reported that Sheriff John Sanders protected a Negro from a mob at Marshall. The prisoner was given a fair trial and exonerated from charges of assault on a white woman. The directors of the Commission instructed the secretary to write a letter to the sheriff, commending him for his bravery in the discharge of his duty in protecting the Negro prisoner.<sup>13</sup>

Whenever there was a lynching or the danger of a lynching, the Commission was organized to act quickly. Responsible citizens in the area were called on to investigate and help.<sup>14</sup> A representative of the Commission usually went to the area also. An effort was made to determine the attitudes of the citizens in the town affected and to encourage the law-abiding and fair-minded citizens to exert their influence.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>J. L. Clark to Governor James Rolph, Jr., November 29, 1933.

<sup>13</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, April 23, 1931.

<sup>14</sup>Mrs. J. L. Brock to J. L. Clark, April 7, 1926.

<sup>15</sup>Mrs. J. L. Brock to J. L. Clark, June 20, 1936.



Negroes who were convicted of crimes against whites were usually awarded stiff penalties, while whites convicted of crimes against Negroes were usually given light sentences which were frequently suspended.<sup>16</sup> Letters were written to judges and district attorneys urging them to prosecute in cases where white men killed Negroes. In April of 1934, Frank Brisby, a Negro, was accused of killing, J. M. Ellis, a prominent white man of Crockett, Texas. He was indicted by the grand jury and brought to trial, but during the trial he was shot to death by Ben Ellis, a nephew of J. M. Ellis. Informed people of the area were of the opinion that because of the prominence of the Ellis family, and because they were white and Brisby was a Negro, that the case against Ben Ellis would probably not be pushed. Commission members were asked to write letters to the judge and district attorney requesting that they prosecute the case against Ellis with no less vigor that was being used in the case against Brisby.<sup>17</sup> In her letter to the district attorney, Mrs. L. P. Smith, honorary chairman of the Commission, lamented the death of Frank Brisby. She said that the Negro's murder:

. . . defeated the ends of justice of a fair trial to determine his guilt or innocence and usurped by violence the supreme law of a fair and impartial trial . . . . It is the purpose of the Texas

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<sup>16</sup>J. L. Clark to Mrs. J. L. Brock, April 12, 1937.

<sup>17</sup>J. L. Clark to Mrs. L. P. Smith, May 1, 1934.

Commission to lend its aid in promoting justice, law and order, regardless of race, color or condition of servitude.<sup>18</sup>

There were other similar instances. Mott Flournoy, a Negro, was killed by a white man named Roy Morehouse while on trial in court at Lufkin, Texas, on November 24, 1941. Bob White, a Negro, was shot while in the courtroom at Conroe in June, 1941. The directors of the Commission voted to bring these matters to the attention of the attorney general and governor, stressing that the Negro prisoners who were murdered were deprived of their constitutional rights to fair trial and thereby the legal processes of democracy were undermined. The conviction was expressed that the men who killed the Negro men should be brought to trial.<sup>19</sup>

The Commission also showed an early interest in penology. A talk on "Interracial Commission and Negro Convicts" was given by Henry Cohen of Galveston at the November, 1928, annual meeting of the Commission.<sup>20</sup> A home for delinquent Negro girls was an objective of the Commission for many years. The minutes of the Commission meeting on May 18, 1923, contained the following statement: "Attention is called to the regrettable omission of our state government to take cognizance of the dire need of provision for delinquent Negro girls."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Mrs. L. P. Smith to Ben Greenwood, May 7, 1934.

<sup>19</sup>Minutes of Board of Directors, June 6, 1942, pp. 13-14.

<sup>20</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 9-10, 1928, 8.

<sup>21</sup>Minutes of the Commission, May 18, 1923, 3.

A report of the work of the organization from 1925 to 1928 made a similar reference.<sup>22</sup>

Legislation creating the Negro girls' training school was passed by the Legislature in 1929, but it was not until 1942 that an appropriation was approved. During the intervening years, the members of the Commission were busy working through appointed committees and writing letters to the governor and members of the Legislature on behalf of the project.<sup>23</sup> The appropriation of \$60,000 was to provide a ward building for delinquent Negro girls in connection with the Gainesville school. This amount was thought to be inadequate, but the money could not be utilized during the stipulated period of July 1, 1942, to June 30, 1943, because of war-time priority restrictions.<sup>24</sup>

When a home for delinquent Negro girls was finally provided, the board of directors of the Commission instructed the secretary to write letters to the governor, the chairmen

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<sup>22</sup>Jessie Daniel Ames, Condensed Report of Conditions in Texas, 17, (Austin, Texas: Morgan Printing Company, 1928).

<sup>23</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 4, 1927, 2. Minutes of the Board Director, April 24, 1931, 1. Minutes of the Commission, December 6-7, 1935, 13. Minutes of the Board Directors, August 23, 1941, 2. Minutes of the Commission, December 5, 1942, 1.

<sup>24</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, June 6, 1942, 3.



of the House and Senate committees, and the president of the Texas Welfare Association, expressing the appreciation of the Commission for the support given in obtaining the legislative appropriation for the home.<sup>25</sup> The Commission continued to show an interest in the operation of the home.<sup>26</sup>

R. M. Woods gave a report of an investigation of conditions at the State Training School for Boys at Gatesville. He reported that the average age of the boys was thirteen and one-half years. Of the total eight hundred and twenty boys in the institution, three hundred and sixty-four were white, one hundred and thirty-five were Mexicans, and three hundred and twenty-one were Negroes, including two hundred and three offenders admitted during the year 1938-39. One hundred and forty-six of these were from homes broken either by separation, divorce, or by the death of one or both parents. There were three teachers, all white, for the Negro boys. Upon admission to the institution, ten percent could not read. Grades one through seven were taught with emphasis on reading, writing, and arithmetic. There were three classrooms and the equipment was poor. Other observations were made: the meals were satisfactory, many boys came with

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<sup>25</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, April 28, 1945, 4.

<sup>26</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, June 8, 1946, 4.



veneral disease and a white doctor from Gatesville provided medical care. Fire proof buildings, vocational education and Negro teachers instead of white were recommended.<sup>27</sup>

Efforts were made to secure fair treatment of Negroes by police. R. M. Woods requested John Henry, state secretary, to talk with the Dallas city manager about alleged brutality by certain members of the Dallas police force.<sup>28</sup>

The directors said that arrests of Negroes traveling in cars had occurred with such frequency and under such circumstances as to indicate a serious injustice. They resolved to protest to the proper state authorities and to ask that they correct the evil.<sup>29</sup>

The Commission used another means of supporting law and order. It invited J. B. Carlisle, a sergeant in the Texas Department of Public Safety, to speak at an annual meeting of the Commission. J. L. Clark wrote Carlisle a letter of thanks for his contribution to the meeting and said, "The Commission wished to work in close cooperation with the State Department of Public Safety and will be glad if you will call on us at any time that we can be of service."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Minutes of the Commission, December 8-9, 1939, 8-9.

<sup>28</sup>J. L. Clark to W. R. Banks, March 30, 1933.

<sup>29</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, June 6, 1942, 13.

<sup>30</sup>J. L. Clark to J. B. Carlisle, February 11, 1948.

The Commission worked consistently to suppress lawless acts such as lynching and police brutality. A goal of the Commission was to achieve equality in the courts for Negroes. Efforts were also made to improve conditions for Negroes in penal institutions.

## CHAPTER V

### EFFORTS TO REDUCE DISCRIMINATION

The Commission concerned itself with discrimination against Negroes in other areas such as wages, job opportunities, use of facilities in service stations, and hotels, and participation in old age and widow pension funds. A resolution of the Commission in 1933 recognized the below subsistence wages paid domestic workers in Texas and stressed the importance of an awakened public conscience on the matter. Title I, Section 7a of the National Recovery Act had prescribed maximum hours and minimum wages.<sup>1</sup> The members of the Commission pledged themselves to work in their local communities and through all available channels to secure satisfactory wages and working conditions for domestic workers, both men and women, of every race. They resolved to take appropriate steps under the National Recovery Act to prevent and correct all instances of racial discrimination that would come to their attention.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., The Coming of the New Deal (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958) 99.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 3-4, 1933, 8.

Solicitude was expressed in the problems of farm tenancy and sharecroppers in the nation, especially in the South and in Texas. Through the Commission's Legislative Committee and by the efforts of individual members, Texas senators and congressmen were urged to enact legislation to bring relief to these problems.<sup>3</sup>

The Commission's board of directors instructed the local interracial committees to study local employment needs and availability of Negro labor in order to get a fair ratio of Negroes employed on defense projects. Attention was to be given to the type of defense training that was offered so that Negroes could participate adequately in defense service. It was suggested that protests be made to proper authorities regarding discrimination against Negroes in defense contracts and by defense contractors.<sup>4</sup>

Instances were related in which there was discrimination against Negroes who went to take federal examinations for jobs. They were required to "wait their turn" which meant waiting until all white applicants had been served. Negroes waited all day with no provision for meals, drinking water, or rest room facilities.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 20-21, 1936, 9.

<sup>4</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, June 6, 1942, 12-13.

<sup>5</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 19-20, 1937, 2.



A resolution by the Commission in 1937 dealt further with the problem:

Certainly definite plans for combatting discriminations in hotels should be formulated. Negroes who have been called to hotels to take examinations under the federal program have been required to use freight elevators with scrub brooms, mops and waste paper baskets.<sup>6</sup>

M. W. Dogan, the president of Wiley College, recounted an experience in Huntsville in which his daughter was forbidden the use of a service station rest room.<sup>7</sup> The problem continued to plague Negroes, as evidenced by the following directive:

Work on the problem of discriminations against Negro tourists in regard to rest room accommodations at gasoline service stations should be continued.

While much has been achieved in the attempt to eliminate discriminations on trains and buses, further definite effort on the part of the Commission could be manifested.<sup>8</sup>

The Commission worked for changes and, when they came, recognition and praise were given to the proper people. In 1939, the secretary of the Commission was asked to write the Southern Pacific Lines commending the splendid accommodations provided for Negro people.<sup>9</sup> In order to encourage proper treatment for Negroes, the Commission passed the following

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>M. W. Dogan to J. L. Clark, August 15, 1935.

<sup>8</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 19-20, 1937. 2.

<sup>9</sup>Minutes of the Board of Directors, August 12, 1939, 3.

resolution:

That we commend new evidences of fair and impartial consideration, as evidenced in the report of Negro participation in the Texas Centennial Exposition and related facilities for travel and physical conveniences, and urge the continued effort of the Commission in furthering all such fair practices.<sup>10</sup>

The Findings Committee heard complaints against the old-age pension administration. There were no Negro workers. Aged Negroes stated that they were unable to get their cases considered. The employment of Negroes on the pension staff was suggested as a solution. A resolution declared that, "all agencies set up through federal aid, such as child welfare, agricultural aid, education for domestic service, etc. allow too many discriminations against the Negro."<sup>11</sup>

The Texas Legislature of 1917 passed an act providing for a widow's pension fund. The act was amended in 1931. An investigation of the prosecution of the act revealed that the officials of Dallas County would not provide for Negro widows. When asked for an explanation, the officials said that the appropriation was intended for whites and that the appropriation was too small to include Negroes. The resolutions committee suggested that the Legislature be influenced to make an adequate appropriation so that deserving Negro widows might

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<sup>10</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 20-21, 1936, 9.

<sup>11</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 19-20, 1937, 2.

be cared for in the true spirit of the original bill.<sup>12</sup>

In the following resolution the Commission attempted to reinforce an official's stand against discrimination and to bring tactful pressure on the governor:

WHEREAS, Mr. Orville Carpenter in his official capacity related to the operation of the Old Age Pension Law in Texas has very recently, in the columns of the press, stated that there will be no discrimination due to color or race in the administration of this law

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation in meeting assembled, December 6, 1935, express sincere appreciation of the constructive declaration that this principle will be enforced. Further, that a copy of this resolution be sent to Governor James V. Allred, requesting his cooperation in this matter.<sup>13</sup>

The Commission provided a good forum for Negroes to ventilate their grievances. Protests and requests were made to the proper authorities. On the other hand, when progress in solving the problems was made, recognition and praise were given.

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<sup>12</sup>Minutes of the Commission, December 6-7, 1935, 9-10.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 12-13.

## CHAPTER VI

### NEGRO PARTICIPATION IN THE TEXAS CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

As a member of the Historical and Cultural Planning Committee of the Texas Centennial Commission, J. L. Clark discovered that nothing was being done to provide for Negro participation in the Centennial celebration. He quickly sent telegrams to a number of Negroes to meet the Committee on Friday afternoon of that week, October 12, 1934. Several Negroes came and developed a plan for Negro participation and a sum of \$498,750 was included in the Centennial bill, Senate Bill Number 4. The Bill was referred by the Senate to a subcommittee which began to rewrite the entire Bill.<sup>1</sup> Since it was feared that the Negro section would be eliminated, Clark quickly began to marshal the forces of the Commission in support of the project. He telegraphed twenty key people in the Commission, requesting that they send telegrams to Senator George Purl, chairman of the Senate Subcommittee which was considering the Bill. Clark himself sent a telegram which read:

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<sup>1</sup>J. L. Clark to R. T. Hamilton, October 22, 1934.



Before final action Negro Centennial participation urge committee hear leading Negroes stop suggest invite Dr. C. T. Pinkston, Dallas, W. R. Banks, Prairie View, M. W. Dogan, Marshall, John W. Rice, Houston, Sam W. Houston, Huntsville.<sup>2</sup>

Clark followed the telegram with a letter to Purl which pointed out that the State had a population of nearly one million Negroes, whose part in the development of Texas should not be ignored in the Centennial celebration.<sup>3</sup> One of the objectives was a Negro building for the Centennial which would become a permanent Negro museum commemorating the Negroes' part in the development of Texas.<sup>4</sup>

A group of Dallas Negroes and the Negro and white Chambers of Commerce in Dallas began to support the Negro museum item in a revised Centennial Bill.<sup>5</sup> Two Negroes, A. Maceo Smith, a high school teacher of Dallas, and John L. Blunt, an architect of Houston, presented plans for the Negro participation to the Senate committee.<sup>6</sup> They were courteously received and Senator Purl told them that he had received more than a hundred telegrams endorsing the project.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>J. L. Clark to George Purl, copy of telegram dated October 19, 1934.

<sup>3</sup>J. L. Clark to George Purl, October 21, 1934.

<sup>4</sup>J. L. Clark to George W. Briggs, October 21, 1934.

<sup>5</sup>J. L. Clark to W. R. Banks, October 22, 1934.

<sup>6</sup>John L. Blount to J. L. Clark, December 10, 1934.

<sup>7</sup>J. L. Clark to Mrs. B. A. Hodges, October 29, 1934.

At its annual meeting in 1934, the Interracial Commission expressed to the Texas Centennial Commission its view as to the appropriateness and justice of including the participation of Negroes in the Centennial celebration with a worthy representation of their contributions to the development of Texas.<sup>8</sup> A special Centennial Committee of the Commission was appointed to promote the project. The committee composed of W. R. Banks, D. B. Taylor, H. D. Winn, and J. L. Clark petitioned the Centennial Commission for an inclusion of Negroes in the celebration and recommended a state-wide meeting of a representative group of Negroes to formulate plans for Negro participation to be presented to the Centennial Commission.

J. L. Clark urged Negroes who were interested in the Negro Centennial project to have leading Negro educators and professional men to write letters to Will H. Mayes, secretary of the Centennial Commission, urging Negro participation.<sup>9</sup> Clark also wrote the presidents of the Negro colleges of Texas and other Negro leaders with the same suggestion.<sup>10</sup> He

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<sup>8</sup>Minutes of the Commission, December 7-8, 1934, 7.

<sup>9</sup>J. L. Clark to Mrs. J. L. Brock, January 9, 1935.

<sup>10</sup>J. L. Clark to W. R. Banks, J. J. Rhodes, John W. Brice, L. G. Pinkston, J. N. Irvin, F. Rivers Barnwell, and J. H. Hamilton, January 31, 1935. J. L. Clark to Mary E. Branch, Stanley Grannum, S. H. Fowler, R. R. Smith, and R. L. Smith, February 1, 1935.

cautioned the Negro leaders not to permit petty jealousies, institutional rivalries or other demoralizing influences which would prevent a united stand and doom the project to failure. It was his opinion that the adequate presentation of Negro life in the Centennial would advance the cause of Negro education more rapidly than any other means.<sup>11</sup>

The Historical and Cultural Planning Committee of the Centennial recommended to the Centennial Commission that a committee of Negroes be appointed to serve as a consulting authority, that two Negroes be added to the Historical and Cultural Planning Committee, that the statement of purpose have added the statement, "Including an adequate treatment of Texas Negro history and biography," and that one expert Negro research assistant be added to the Centennial personnel.<sup>12</sup>

Negroes were included in the Centennial celebration. A Hall of Negro Life was erected by the federal government at a cost of \$50,000, with an additional \$50,000 for exhibits and administration costs. There were displays of Negro art and handwork, including a \$75,000 collection of Negro paintings. The Negro's rise from slavery was portrayed in three

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<sup>11</sup>J. L. Clark to W. R. Banks, February 21, 1935.

<sup>12</sup>Memoranda and Recommendations to the Historical and Cultural Planning Committee of the Texas Centennial Commission, October 10, 1934.

murals. In the building were exhibits on education with books by and about Negroes, a music collection with charts and photographs of Negro musicians and composers and a Hall of Health with information on disease and health and representation of Negroes who had made contributions to the medical field. There were also displays of Negro agriculture, research, mechanical inventions, business and industry.<sup>13</sup> The Commission prepared a booklet, "The Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation 1920 - 1936," for distribution at the Centennial.<sup>14</sup>

Following the Centennial, efforts were made by Commission members to leave the Hall of Negro Life as a permanent building, but without success.<sup>15</sup> The Federal Centennial Commission did not have funds for maintaining the building and offered it to Greater Texas and Pan-American Exposition Commission and in turn, to the city of Dallas, but neither wanted the building. Consequently, it was wrecked to make room for other buildings.<sup>16</sup>

The cause of the Commission was promoted and Negro achievements were recognized, but not all of the results of the Negro participation in the Centennial were positive.

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<sup>13</sup>Jesse O. Thomas to J. L. Clark, September 8, 1936.

<sup>14</sup>J. L. Clark to Mrs. J. L. Brock, November 3, 1936.

<sup>15</sup>R. L. Thornton to J. L. Clark, February 23, 1937.

<sup>16</sup>Frank L. McNeny to Gordon Worley, no date. R. L. Thornton to J. L. Clark, February, 1937.



Negroes complained that the management of the Centennial seemed unfriendly to Negroes and the officials felt that Negro participation in the Centennial was less than expected.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Frank L. McNeny to Gordon Worley, no date.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE WORK OF LOCAL INTERRACIAL COMMITTEES

Much of the work of the Commission was through local committees. They undertook large and small tasks, with each local committee choosing its own areas of emphasis. In Dallas, for example, the first step was the effort to win the trust and confidence of the "best Negro citizens." It was found that much of the work of the committee was done in cooperation with the Homemaker's Industrial School. A kindergarten, a class for training kindergarten teachers and a Mothers' Club were established. Milk and crackers were served the children, with most of the expense paid by the Mothers' Club. Kindergarten helpers were provided by students from Southern Methodist University and from the Dallas Free Kindergarten School. The Committee provided a room for a clinic and enlisted mothers to help. A nurse was paid by the Infant Welfare Association. Expectant mothers were given special attention. A boys club was operated and the secretary of the YMCA gave one hour each week to the work.

An appeal was made to the Camp Fire Girls Organization for an organization for Negro girls. The local group Camp Fire Council did not want it, and the request was denied.

However, Mrs. W. C. Barrickman, who was in charge of the Dallas Camp Fire Girls, came twice each month to help with the girls. Mrs. Delton and Miss A. McLarty helped in handicraft work.

The Dallas Committee wanted a library for Negro people. Help was requested from the Public Library Board, but none was given. Books were contributed by missionary societies, Sunday schools, clubs and individuals. Some 900 volumes were collected.

A place was provided for the meetings of the Federated Clubs. Members of the clubs helped with the work of the Commission. A registry was started which provided information on safe and desirable places for Negro girls to stay. An employment bureau was also established for Negro girls. Members of the Commission took part in the work of the classes of the Civic Federation.

The women were organized into a Federation of Church Women through which a school of missions was conducted. Mrs. Silverthern of New York and Miss Esther of Nashville, Tennessee, were the teachers. This was the first school of missions for Negroes in the United States. Vacation Bible Schools for Negro children were conducted, with an enrollment of 350 in the five schools in 1925.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 6, 1925. 6.

The main emphasis for the Dallas Interracial Commission for 1926 was housing conditions. The situation in Dallas was acute and tense for both whites and Negroes. The Commission worked with a committee of white and Negro members from white churches and Southern Methodist University to conduct a housing survey. The results of the survey were tabulated by professors at the university and the Commission devised a program of adjustment which was presented to the City Commissioner, Chamber of Commerce, civic organizations, realtors and other interested citizens. Through this work, the Dallas Commission was recognized as an agency for adjustments, and tolerance was exhibited by both sides.<sup>2</sup>

The Waxahachie Committee reported to the State Commission concerning its activities in 1926. Representatives of the Board of Education were asked to meet with the Committee to discuss sewerage, crowded living conditions, janitor service and other ways to improve the Negro schools. The Red Cross public nurse gave part of her time to the Negro schools and she had spoken to the Committee meeting. The local social service worker spoke to the Committee on "Social Service Work Among the Negroes." Two members of the Waxahachie Committee were on the local park board that was in charge of the Negro park. A special committee of the Committee on Interracial Cooperation of Waxahachie visited the two dentists of the city to discuss dental care for Negroes. There was

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 5.



no full-time dentist of the Negro race in the city. They found that there was provision for the needs for dental care, as one dentist had a well equipped separate room for Negro patients.<sup>3</sup>

S. L. Hornbeak, professor in the social science department of Trinity University, San Antonio, met with the Committee to discuss the problem of unemployment and other labor problems among Negroes. He suggested that the Chamber of Commerce and other civic agencies work out a plan for keeping Negroes in that area of the state.

There were other projects of the Waxahachie Committee. Magazines and better reading material were secured for the Negro school. Ministers addressed the group on the relation of churches to the problems of Negroes. S. H. Watson, city health officer, met the Committee and talked about contagious and infectious diseases among the Negroes. F. Rivers Barnwell, a Negro health worker, visited the Negro churches of Waxahachie on Easter Sunday. Missionary societies of the city contributed to the finances of the local commission. Mrs. J. S. Herring, local chairman, attended the triennial meeting of the Episcopal church in New Orleans, and gave a report of that meeting to the Waxahachie Commission.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 7.

In her report to the Commission meeting in 1926, Mrs. P. E. Goldwaite cited the fine work done by a white nurse in the Negro school and called attention to playgrounds recently secured for Negro children. There was also a movement to secure lights and sewer systems in the Negro community of the city.<sup>5</sup>

W. P. Meroney of Waco reported an unsuccessful attempt during 1926 to reorganize an interracial committee, but some new people had shown an interest and the situation was more encouraging. Courses in race relations were being taught at Baylor University. Playgrounds for Negro children were included in a recent bond election.<sup>6</sup>

The Waco committee functioned during the 1950's and 1960's as the Waco Council on Human Relations. The Waco Council cooperated with ten other denominational, inter-denominational and Christian educational groups which included Jews and Christians of all races to form the Council of Waco Brotherhood which sponsored the observance of Human Rights Day and Brotherhood Week.<sup>7</sup> Mrs. C. G. Eidson and William J. Kilgore, professor of philosophy at Baylor University, who were both active in the Commission, served as chairmen of the Council of Waco Brotherhood.

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<sup>5</sup>Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, January 27, 1926.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>7</sup>Mrs. Margaret L. Eidson to W. R. White, January 18, 1958.

At the 1937 meeting of the Commission, the need for more local commissions was expressed. It was anticipated that through these local organizations the influence of the Commission could be felt more adequately throughout the state and situations involving discrimination could be dealt with more effectively. Local organizations were suggested especially for communities where members of the Commission lived. An activity suggested for these local organizations was the sponsoring of a Race Relations Week. The Race Relations Week sponsored by the Dallas group was discussed as an example. A nationally known leader was secured and a youth conference between members of the two races was held. Free literature on interracial organizations was made available for the conference by the Federal Council of Churches.<sup>8</sup>

J. L. Clark of Huntsville spoke of the improvement of rural schools for Negroes, of the need for a new Negro high school building and of the interest of the Chamber of Commerce and other civic bodies in the improvement of educational facilities for Negroes, as well as whites. S. W. Houston spoke of the re-routing of a highway through Huntsville to accommodate a Negro high school. R. M. Wood said that the white and Negro members of the interracial committee maintained communications so that if either group sensed trouble of any kind, they could advise the other and prompt steps

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<sup>8</sup>Minutes of Commission, November 19-20, 1937, 1.

could be taken to avert trouble. All three men spoke of good relationships between the two races in Huntsville. According to them, there were "splendid relations," "fine feelings," and "no friction."

Woods reported that through the efforts of the Interracial Committee two lynchings were stopped in Walker County and Sam Houston State Teachers College was offering a course in race relations at their extension school in Houston.<sup>9</sup>

Other communities failed to see the needs or minimized the problems. For example, A. N. Prince of Sherman reported that there were no race troubles or misunderstandings in that city and that the interracial committee was working to exterminate mosquitos.<sup>10</sup>

During August, 1930, R. M. Woods, director of the Commission, visited the communities of Beaumont, Bryan, Hearne, Marlin, Orange, and Port Arthur. The Chamber of Commerce in each of these cities promised to cooperate in the forming of an interracial committee. The Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce, under the leadership of Col. Harry Hines, secretary and manager, was especially enthusiastic. At Marlin, on August 17, 1930, Woods spoke to the combined congregations of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches of the city on the subject of "Our Race Problem."

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<sup>9</sup>Minutes of Commission, November 6, 1926, 2.

<sup>10</sup>Minutes of the Commission, May 18, 1923, 2.



A group of leading Negroes, both men and women, was assembled at Beaumont to hear Woods. The meeting was arranged by Mrs. Effie Killingsworth, county health nurse of Jefferson County. Mrs. Killingsworth had worked at that position for five years and was helping the Negroes of the county by training Negro mid-wives.<sup>11</sup>

The Austin Interracial Committee was organized in March, 1940. In its report to the State Commission concerning its work for 1940, progress was indicated in the following fields: an increase of ten dollars per month in Negro teachers' salaries, progress toward a NYA Center for Negro youth, a proposal to the City Council that playground equipment be provided at two Negro schools, a sixty-bed annex for Negroes included in the \$450,000 provided by a recent election for enlargement of Breckenridge County-City Hospital, a study of means of getting Negro doctors and nurses on the staff of the hospital and efforts to have the Olive Street School building condemned as a fire hazard, abandoned as a school and remodeled as a community center for Negroes.<sup>12</sup>

The Houston Interracial Committee was most active during 1940. Its program was organized into three areas: interracial education, research and action. Education was

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<sup>11</sup>R. M. Woods, "Report of the Work of the Texas Interracial Commission," August, 1930, (mimeographed).

<sup>12</sup>Minutes of Commission, December 6-7, 1940, D-1 and D-2.

conducted by publicizing the contributions of Negroes in the various fields, informing the youth on the race question and disseminating the findings of research projects. These purposes were accomplished by lectures, forums, discussion groups and by arrangements for trained and competent speakers to appear on programs of medical groups, literary clubs and Chambers of Commerce.

The program of research was preliminary to action. Studies were made of Negro school facilities and pay for Negro teachers. Information was gathered on murder among Negroes and presented to judges and law enforcement officers. An investigation was made into the plight of delinquent Negro boys and girls in Houston. A study of employment practices was made to determine what the Interracial Committee could do regarding discrimination. The need for vocational education for Negro children was examined. Studies were made of housing and living conditions and of the trend in schools and colleges toward the development of favorable racial attitudes.

The program for immediate action was specific and practical. There was work for the establishment of a park for Houston's Fifth Ward. Efforts were made to improve living environment for Negro citizens, involving such facilities as streets, sidewalks, lights, drainage, sewerage, parks and playgrounds. The attainment of full rights of citizenship was sought. A cooperative effort was made to establish a

Legal Service Bureau. Other action projects for the Houston Committee included employment for Negroes, safety measures for Negro school children, 4-H clubs for rural Negro youth, a plan to provide Christmas gifts for Negroes in cooperation with other agencies, a church preaching mission and representation at the Conference on Human Welfare. The Houston Committee cooperated with the State Commission to secure a child labor legislation and to obtain fireproof buildings at Gatesville and Gilmer, and to provide a school for delinquent Negro girls.

Each committee in the Houston program was headed by a chairman and co-chairman. The chairmen in 1940 were Mrs. W. H. Hogue, Rabbi Sanders Tofield and Thelma Patten-Law. Those serving as co-chairmen were John Codwell, Ira Bryant and Rabbi Robert I. Kahn.

The impact of the Houston Interracial Committee was increased by the contacts its members made with influential officials and leaders in Houston. Conferences were held concerning specific problems or areas of concern, with a member of the State Highway Commission, the chairman of Committee on Armistice Parade, the president of the Engineers' Union of the AF of L, park officials, Red Cross officials, and newspaper editors. Important to the influence of the Houston Committee were the speakers invited to the monthly meetings. Ray K. Daily, president of the Houston Board of Education; Miss Stone of the American Red Cross; E. L. Turner, president

of Meharry Medical College of Nashville, Tennessee, and Walter Hoy, representative of the local Works Progress Administration Office, were among those invited to speak.<sup>13</sup>

On February 9, 1947, a Race Relations Sunday service was held at Houston's First Christian Church. The observance was jointly sponsored by The Ministers' Alliance, The Houston Council of Church Women, The Jewish Community Council, The Christian Association and The Houston Commission on Interracial Cooperation. The speaker for the service was John E. Hines, bishop coadjutor, Episcopal Diocese of Texas and former chairman of the Georgia Interracial Commission.<sup>14</sup>

The Fort Worth Committee on Interracial Cooperation sponsored a general mass meeting at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in observance of Race Relations Sunday, February 10, 1946. Forrest C. Feezor, pastor of Broadway Baptist Church and J. H. Carruthers, pastor of St. Andrews Methodist Church, were speakers. Ministers were encouraged to preach sermons in keeping with the spirit and purpose of the day, to invite guests of other races, creeds or color as speakers in worship services and for young peoples' groups and to make exchanges of pulpits. The theme for the day was "A Day of Decision." Problems of labor unrest, housing shortage, economic insecurity, and

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., G-1 to G-5.

<sup>14</sup>Invitation to Race Relations Sunday service, January 30, 1947.



veterans' readjustment were related to race relations. Churches were called upon to take the opportunity of leading in the finding of solutions.<sup>15</sup>

As important as the work of the Commission was on a state level, the work of the local committees was probably of equal importance. These committees concentrated on the specific problems of their communities. Members of the committees attempted to apply the philosophy of the Commission and provide a base of support for the State Commission.

In general it can be stated that the work of the local committees was to organize the people who were sympathetic and aware of the need for better race relations and who would work ably and hard to keep the organization going. Surveys were made and information was gathered on the local situation. Proper action was then requested. Instructions were summarized as follows:

Place the most acute needs first. With your facts in hand and your friends lined up, and your poll taxes paid, ask the responsible private or government agency for action. Make sure your requests are reasonable and founded on factual information. Follow through your requests to the point of final specific performance, no matter how long it takes.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Fort Worth Committee on Interracial Cooperation to Ministers of Churches, Announcement of Race Relations Sunday, February 10, 1946.

<sup>16</sup>Invitation to Join the Commission, 1955.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The Commission recognized the importance of the press in molding public opinion regarding the Commission and race relations. The press was cultivated so that the Commission would be given favorable coverage and commendable accomplishments of Negroes would be included in the news, while crimes committed by them would not be given undue notice. Will C. Grant was asked to send feature stories on the accomplishments of Negroes to the newspapers of the state and to send news stories to the Negro press concerning recognition given Negroes by white people.<sup>1</sup>

Dallas and Houston papers were tolerant and helpful when the Commission met in their cities. George Dealy of The Dallas Morning News was an officer in the Commission. The commission was invited to hold its 1934 meeting in Fort Worth, but the decision was postponed until it was determined what the attitude of the Fort Worth press would be toward the meeting.<sup>2</sup> The convention representative for the Fort Worth

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 4, 1927, 11.

<sup>2</sup>J. L. Clark to Judge W. Erskine Williams, March 23, 1934.

Chamber of Commerce was asked to confer with the newspaper people. He reported that the two dailies gave assurance that they would give the same treatment to the work of the Commission that they would to any other convention.<sup>3</sup> The Commission was cautious about the way the newspapers would handle interracial news because unfair publicity would cause unfavorable reaction toward the city in which it occurred and might result in reverses in the work of the Commission in building goodwill in race relations.<sup>4</sup>

Newspapers which established more liberal policies were applauded. Letters were sent to newspaper editors of the state commending them for their part in reducing the incidence of lynching.<sup>5</sup> J. L. Clark wrote the editor of a Dallas paper, as follows:

As teacher of American history and also as chairman of the Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation, I wish to express my gratification in the recently adopted policy of the "The Dallas News" (Sic) to use the capital "N" in spelling the word "Negro."<sup>6</sup>

Clark also wrote the editor of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, complimenting that paper for giving such splendid cooperation and publicity to the Texas Commission. The paper

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<sup>3</sup>W. Erskine Williams to J. L. Clark, May 21, 1934

<sup>4</sup>J. L. Clark to W. Erskin Williams, May 30, 1934.

<sup>5</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 4, 1927, 14.

<sup>6</sup>J. L. Clark to Editor of the Dallas Evening Journal, July 19, 1934.

was furnished with a statement of the Commission's purpose, which was to work for amicable race relations and mutual understanding. It was an experiment in goodwill and an expression of "the Southern intelligent white and Negro man's effort at the solution of our difficult problems in racial adjustment," Clark added.<sup>7</sup> Clark then listed the names of prominent people who were related to the Commission.

Phil R. Register, editor-publisher of The White Man and the Negro Magazine, sent Mrs. L. Coates as representative of the magazine to the 1934 meeting of the Commission.<sup>8</sup> Register expressed a desire to publicize the Commission through his magazine. Mrs. Coates was evidently received courteously by the Commission.<sup>9</sup>

The Commission's press relations did not always go smoothly. In June, 1956, the U. S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans ruled that Mansfield High School would be required to admit Negro students on the same basis as whites, instead of expecting them to travel to a Fort Worth high school. As the decision could have affected 600 Texas school districts, Sam M. Gibbs, who was making a study of school integration for the Commission, issued a

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<sup>7</sup>J. L. Clark to Editor, The Fort Worth Star-Telegram, November 8, 1934.

<sup>8</sup>Phil R. Register to Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation, December 7, 1934.

<sup>9</sup>Phil R. Register to J. L. Clark, December 17, 1934.



press release in the name of Mrs. James S. Crates, Commission chairman.<sup>10</sup> The Associated Press did not release the story. When Gibbs visited Dave Cheavens, chief for Associated Press in Austin, he was told that releases by a former Commission director had prompted the Associated Press to discard Commission stories as "half-baked." This was a reflection on Thomas Sutherland's work.<sup>11</sup> Gibbs wrote Cheavens in an attempt to justify the newsworthiness and reliability of the release.<sup>12</sup> The tone of the letter was argumentative and not in the best interest of good press relations for the Commission.<sup>13</sup> Jack Kilgore worked to repair the relationship with Cheavens, so that releases by the Commission would be respected.

The Commission functioned in a quiet and efficient way; however, there was some opposition. In 1934, opposition came from three Confederate organizations: United Confederate Veterans, the Sons of the Confederate Veterans, and United Daughters of the Confederacy. Visitors from these organizations attended a meeting of the Fort Worth Commission

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<sup>10</sup>Sam M. Gibbs, Texas Commission on Race Relations, Press Release, Austin, Texas, August 2, 1956.

<sup>11</sup>Ed G. Kloppe to W. J. Kilgore, August 8, 1956.

<sup>12</sup>Sam M. Gibbs to Dave Cheavens, August 7, 1956.

<sup>13</sup>Jack Kilgore to Mrs. Crate, August 10, 1956.

as it was completing plans for the State Commission to meet shortly in Fort Worth. They handed to W. Erskin Williams, an attorney and chairman of the Fort Worth Commission, a note headed, "Confederates Oppose Racial Commission."<sup>14</sup> The note was a resolution which read, "It has come to our knowledge, that an attempt is being made to establish an Interracial Commission in Texas and other states of the South."<sup>15</sup> Williams remarked that the signers of the resolution were a little late because the Texas Commission was founded in 1920.

The resolution's contention that interracial commissions would be "dangerous and calculated to result in agitation, trouble and bad feeling between the races," was scoffed at by Fort Worth Commission members who argued that greater harmony and understanding had been developed through the work of the Commission in Texas.<sup>16</sup>

The Commission members did not comment directly on the charge of the resolution that the Commission meeting in Fort Worth "would be construed as an effort to inaugurate social equality between white people and Negroes."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>W. Erskine Williams to J. L. Clark, December 4, 1934.

<sup>15</sup>"Seat Question to Fix Itself," The Fort Worth Press, December 4, 1934.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

In commenting on the entire document, Williams said, "They misunderstand entirely our purposes and aims."<sup>18</sup> "The undertaking is not sponsored by either race," the resolution continued, "but by persons either wholly ignorant of the real relations between the whites and the colored people or having some ulterior motive prompting them to such activity."<sup>19</sup>

The resolution described the relation between the white and Negro races as harmonious. It added that the white people are at peace with the Negro, guard his rights and protect his interests, and that the Negro should be left alone so that he would continue to realize that Southern people are his best friends.<sup>20</sup>

Opposition to the Commission took other forms. There were attempts to intimidate and threaten leaders of the Commission. An example of this is the case of A. L. Porterfield, head of the sociology department of Texas Christian University, and pastor of the First Presbyterian Church at Ennis, who served as chairman of the Commission in 1945 and 1946. Intolerant and reactionary individuals exerted pressure on McGruder E. Sadler, the president of the university, because of Porterfield's connection with the Commission.<sup>21</sup> Some of

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>J. L. Clark to A. L. Porterfield, March 11, 1946.

the opposition was reported to have come from a member of the university board of trustees.<sup>22</sup> The position of the president was endangered by the situation. As a result, Porterfield decided that it was necessary to resign from his office with the Commission and to sever all relations with the Commission.<sup>23</sup>

The Commission was adroit in the use of political influence and pressure to achieve its purposes. Two prime examples are the method used by J. L. Clark in massing support for Negro participation in the Centennial and the legislative lobbying of T. W. Currie, Mrs. Jessie Daniel Ames, and R. T. Hamilton for the out-of-state aid for Negro graduate students.

Prominent men and women of Texas were enlisted in support of the Commission. R. E. Vinson, president of the University of Texas, was largely responsible for the initial organization. A later president of the University of Texas, Homer P. Rainey, was an active leader. The presidents of Negro colleges and many Negro and white college professors were active in the Commission's program. Women such as Mrs. J. L. Brock, Mrs. J. S. Crate, Mrs. B. A. Hodges, Mrs. W. H. Hogue and Mrs. John M. Hanna, who had distinguished themselves as religious, civic and social leaders, participated in the

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<sup>22</sup>J. L. Clark to Harry G. Knowles, May 13, 1946.

<sup>23</sup>A. L. Porterfield to J. L. Clark, March 8, 1946.



movement. Others giving leadership to the Commission were L. A. Woods, state superintendent of public schools; L. G. Pinkston, president of the State Negro Medical Association; F. Rivers Barnwell, an official with the Texas Tuberculosis Association and Gordon Worley, state supervisor of Negro education in Texas. Harmon Lowman, president of Sam Houston State Teachers College, was a member of the Commission. As a legislator and chairman of the Texas Board of Control, Claude D. Teer identified himself with the Commission's program.

The impact of the Commission was augmented by the caliber of the program personalities for the annual meetings. Mrs. Violet S. Greenhill, chief, Division of Child Welfare, Austin, Texas, addressed the 1932 session on the subject of "Objectives of the Division of the State Board of Welfare as It Affected Negroes." Eugene Jones, advisor on Negro affairs, Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C., spoke at the 1935 Commission meeting. "The Status of Negro Texans in National Defense" was the topic of W. G. Carnahan, representative of minority groups, Office of Production Management, at the 1941 meeting. A speaker for the February 18-19, 1944, meeting was the editor of the Methodist Christian Advocate, Robert N. Brooks of New Orleans. Jesse Thomas, southern field director, National Urban League, Atlanta, Georgia, addressed the annual meeting of the Commission in 1930.

Some of the most fruitful results came as the Commission presented its program to other organizations and secured their support. For example, during 1930, members of the Commission spoke to such groups as teacher's associations, women's clubs, luncheon clubs, church conferences and local congregations, chambers of commerce, schools and colleges. R. M. Woods, Interracial Commission director, presented the cause of race relations and the work of the Commission to the annual meeting of the Social Welfare Workers Convention at Galveston, to the meeting of the County Judges Association at Fort Worth, to the Southwestern Political and Social Science Association at Dallas, and secured the unanimous adoption of a resolution by the Democratic State Convention at Galveston, endorsing the establishment of a tuberculosis hospital for Negroes of Texas.<sup>24</sup>

The Committee on Church recommended to the Commission meeting in 1925 that a movement be initiated to form a state board composed of the heads of denominational departments which lead in social service activities, with the purpose of working out a uniform program of cooperation between church women of all denominations at the local level. Other recommendations of the Committee on Church were that increased encouragement be given to churches to observe Race Relations

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<sup>24</sup>R. M. Woods, "A Brief Summary of the Work of the Texas Interracial Commission for the Year 1930," 3-4, (mimeographed).

Sunday, that efforts be made to secure places on the program of all state and district denominational meetings of women for the presentation of the race relations cause, that the Commission endorse the Christian Conference for Negro Women conducted by the Southern Presbyterian Church, and that the Commission express its approval of the recommendation by the Council of Women of the Southern Methodist Church that a Negro woman speak at the annual conference of the missionary societies.<sup>25</sup>

In January of 1926, letters were sent by the Committee on Church to thirty-eight denominational leaders, requesting the privilege of presenting the work of the Commission to state and district meetings. Twenty-two responded with invitations. Those speaking for the Commission were A. S. Cleveland of Houston, chairman of the Commission; Mrs. Clinton S. Quinn of Houston, Mrs. B. A. Hodge of Waxahachie, Commission treasurer and Miss Annie Maie Mathis, a Negro nurse of the State Department of Health. The Bureau of Child Hygiene gave Miss Mathis time off with pay to speak to three Methodist conferences. Through these meetings, over three thousand women, representing all the protestant denominations of Texas and New Mexico, were informed about the Commission and inter-racial work. Many of these women requested speakers for their

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<sup>25</sup>Minutes of the Commission, November 6, 1925, 4.



home churches and help in organizing interracial committees in their communities.<sup>26</sup>

During the month of January, 1930, the program of the Commission was presented in the ten missionary district conferences of the Texas Methodist Conference. R. M. Woods reported:

Many of the ministers of the conference have preached one or more sermons during the year of 1930 on the subject of "Race Relations" and others have opened their pulpit to your director in lieu of their regular Sunday services.<sup>27</sup>

From its inception, the Commission had a strong religious orientation. The meetings were held in churches or YMCA buildings. Each session began with a prayer and ended with a benediction. Ministers and denominational leaders were active in the movement. For example, Thomas W. Currie, president of Austin Presbyterian Seminary, was chairman of the Commission's Education Committee. Ed Kloppe, executive director of the Commission in 1958, was a minister.

Scripture quotations were printed on the front of some programs. The quotation used for 1941 was a New Testament verse: "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his

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<sup>26</sup>Minutes of the Executive Committee, January 27, 1926, 1-2.

<sup>27</sup>R. M. Woods, "A Brief Summary of the Work of the Texas Interracial Commission for the Year 1930," 1-2, (mimeographed).



hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."<sup>28</sup> An Old Testament scripture used in 1942 was as follows: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"<sup>29</sup>

Much of the work of the Commission was implemented as the support of missionary societies, churches and their leaders was secured. Charles T. Alexander, leader of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, who was in charge of cooperation with Negro Baptists, was a member of the Commission's Advisory Committee in 1938. He showed his support of the Commission by the following statement:

I appreciate fully the work of the Texas Commission on Interracial Cooperation. The work of my particular employment ought to and will be in harmony and cooperation with the Texas Commission.<sup>30</sup>

Concerning the issue of race relations, Alexander added:

It is not a small matter, but one of the most serious and far-reaching problems today before our state and nation. It enters, far more than many of our leaders seem to realize, into the very depths of our civilization.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Luke 9:62.

<sup>29</sup>Micah 6:8.

<sup>30</sup>Charles T. Alexander to J. L. Clark, December 8, 1937.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

Alexander expressed another thought which emphasized the uniqueness of the Commission's contributions. He stated that the Commission was able to work in areas such as citizenship and economic life of Negro people in a way in which no other groups, including churches, were able to do.

George W. Truett, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, endorsed the Commission:

It is my deep conviction that the work of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation calls for the fullest sympathy of every citizen. Such work is too important to be ignored by anybody, and proper emphasis upon the Commission's objectives will make for better conditions in every community.<sup>32</sup>

Denominational leaders spoke to meetings of the Commission. Merrimon Cuninggim, dean of the Perkins School of Theology of SMU, addressed the 1958 annual meeting on the religious theme of "In Him, No South or North." Das Kelley Barnett, professor in the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest and past-president of the Austin Commission on Human Relations, spoke to the same meeting. George E. Haynes, executive secretary for race relations of the Federal Council of Churches, spoke to the 1936 meeting of the Commission on "What Price American Progress?"

The primary method used by the Commission was educational. Efforts were made to inform white and Negro people

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<sup>32</sup>Quotation from program folder of the annual meeting of the Commission, November 4-5, 1932.

of the facts concerning race relations. The purpose was to change attitudes and make relationships more harmonious. Justice and equality under the law were goals. Improved educational opportunities for Negroes was a constant emphasis in the program of the Commission.

The Commission was idealistic and realistic. Its members were not extremists. There was the realization that the ideal could not be accomplished immediately and that compromises would be necessary. The ideal goal was still kept in mind and a tension was maintained as progress was achieved. When one step toward the goal was made, a new goal was adopted. For example, the ideal was for Negro graduate students to have equal opportunity to study in any university in the state. Since the goal could not be realized at once, a compromise of out-of-state aid was selected. The Commission worked for this goal. When out-of-state aid was approved, the Commission started working toward a new goal - a Negro university in the state. All the while, the ideal goal was kept in mind and tension was maintained to bring progress toward the goal. The same pattern of idealism and realism can be observed in the work of the Commission in the area of health care and provision for treatment of Negro tubercular patients.

Many of the members of the Commission were highly educated and well-trained in medicine, theology, sociology

or other disciplines. The Commission appealed to some of the outstanding leaders of both races and worked through existing structures to improve race relations.

The cause for justice and equal opportunities for Negroes was not a popular cause. Sometimes it was not even popular with Negroes. The Commission was accused of lacking courage to face the issue of segregation and to move rapidly in confronting other problems which the Negro faced. However, the Commission attempted to solve the problem of race relations which constituted one of the most serious and perplexing problems in the United States. Howard W. Odum stated:

. . . every phase of southern economy and culture is inseparably related to the total life and culture of the Negro and that there is scarcely any aspect of Negro life that in turn is not closely related to the total life and culture of the South.<sup>33</sup>

The Commission continued to function until 1963. Its last official meeting was held February 8-9, 1963, at the University Baptist Church in Austin. No decision was made to discontinue the meetings, but the Commission became inactive for a combination of reasons. There was difficulty in financing the program.<sup>34</sup> Many of the aims of the Commission had been achieved,<sup>35</sup> so there was not the urgent and

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<sup>33</sup>Howard W. Odum, "President Odum's Address," The Southern Frontier, Volume 5, Number 12, December, 1944, 1, 3-4.

<sup>34</sup>William J. Kilgore to Donnal Timmons, July 22, 1970.

<sup>35</sup>Statement by Scott E. Johnson, personal interview, July 28, 1970.



compelling purpose of earlier years. Individuals who had given leadership to the Commission were either deceased or were no longer able to assume leadership responsibility because of age and poor health. Some of the younger leaders directed their energies toward other areas of interest.<sup>36</sup>

Other groups which were younger and more impatient were claiming recognition in the area of civil rights.<sup>37</sup> J. D. McLeod, professor of sociology at Sam Houston State Teachers College, who served as historian for the Commission, said:

There was the failure to cultivate young people. The organization died because time caught up with it. It did not change with the time. The Commission's method of operations was to work through established structures. The results were slower than the activists were willing to accept. Action people took over. The Commission ended up as a small group of people doing public relations work which was not related to the young Negroes who were holding the sit-in at the Walgreen Drug Store.<sup>38</sup>

The Commission provided forty-three years of leadership in the area of race relations. Improved opportunities were afforded Negro people, and there was a modification of attitudes of each race toward the other. A foundation was laid for additional progress that has been made and, hopefully, will be made as the ideals of the Commission continue to bear fruit.

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<sup>36</sup>William J. Kilgore to Donnal Timmons, July 22, 1970.

<sup>37</sup>Statement by J. D. McLeod, personal interview, June 23, 1970.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

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