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PRACTICAL PATERNALISM: G. GUNBY JORDAN'S QUEST FOR A VOCATIONAL
SCHOOL SYSTEM IN COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

by

Lauren Yarnell Bradshaw

Under the Direction of Chara Haeussler Bohan

ABSTRACT

G. Gunby Jordan, a southern industrialist, banker, and philanthropist, became one of the forefathers of modern vocational educational practices in the United States. Exercising his influence in various economic endeavors as well as most educational experiments in Columbus, GA, he developed a “practical” educational system that began to resemble the stratified and paternalistic textile mill towns that dominated Columbus, GA in the early twentieth century. The purpose of this research is to document the influence that Jordan’s policies, ideals, and friends had on the development of vocational education in Columbus, GA. Racial and class conflicts impacted the success of educational reforms began by Jordan; these themes are continually explored throughout this research in order to discern how they influenced the policies and legacy

of G. Gunby Jordan. This manuscript is organized by a combination of thematic and chronological structures. When chronological order would benefit the understanding of the subject of the research it will be employed; but in order to engage the reader in a myriad of topics and ideas throughout this dissertation, the thematic approach presents itself as the more desirable alternative than simple chronology. Despite Jordan's contributions to the history of vocational education, no biography of Jordan has ever been written, thus Jordan's influence within the city gave birth to a specific kind of education that has yet to be explored. Utilizing historical research methods, I have incorporated primary sources from numerous archives, historic newspapers, the private collection of the Jordan family, and numerous secondary resources to analyze Jordan's educational influence in Columbus, GA. This research revealed that the power of Jordan's monumental contributions to educational policies was due to his political and financial status; this combination produced an industrial tycoon, an educational idealist, and a man who was an agent for change. Jordan did not act alone in his reforms for Columbus. Through his collaboration with industrial and philanthropist colleagues, he was able to make significant improvements to libraries, adult education, kindergartens, vocational education, and African American education in Columbus while continuing policies that would discriminate and subjugate those who were deemed unworthy of moral, social, and economic promotion.

INDEX WORDS: Vocational Education, Paternalism, Biography, G. Gunby Jordan, George Foster Peabody, Eagle and Phenix Mill,

PRACTICAL PATERNALISM: G. GUNBY JORDAN'S QUEST FOR A VOCATIONAL
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in

Teaching and Learning Social Studies

in

Department of Middle and Secondary Education

in

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2016

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DEDICATION

“It has long since been an axiom of mine that the little things are infinitely the most important.”

-Sherlock Holmes, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

For my Father, who taught me to love history and to appreciate the little things.

“Energy begets energy”

-Dolly Parton

For my Mother, who gave me the energy to work hard and pursue my dreams.

“How hard can it be?”

- Jeremy Clarkson

For my Husband, who has believed in me more than I ever could.

“Fairytale can come true,

You gotta make ’em happen

It all depends on you,

So I work real hard each and every day

Now things for sure are going my way

Just doing what I do,

Look out boys, I’m coming through.”

-Tianna, *The Princess and the Frog*

For Madeline, who always lets me sing songs from *The Princess and the Frog* anytime I want.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE OF G. GUNBY JORDAN

The history of Columbus, Georgia cannot be separated from that of the local textile mills. The mills defined the economic success, the social struggles, and the enduring legacy of southern industrial tycoons. Evidence of this industrial past can be seen on almost every street, school, and business located in the city along the river. Columbus, Georgia, situated on a prime hydroelectric location along the Chattahoochee River fault line, boasted the title of the “Lowell of the South” for many years, and through this industrial foundation, the people of Columbus pioneered a vocational education system that became heralded at its inception as a model for industrial education.¹

Though the monuments to this industrial history are widespread throughout the city, the group of powerful men who ran these industrial empires was actually quite small. European royalty of the nineteenth century often spread their families’ influence to the thrones of multiple countries, so too did the southern industrial aristocrats of Columbus, Georgia; serving as presidents of multiple (and sometimes competing) textile mills. Men such as G. Gunby Jordan, W.C. Bradley, and George Foster Peabody experienced so much success in each of their economic, social, and political ventures that many in Columbus began to question if it were ever possible for these men to fail.

G. Gunby Jordan (pronounced “Jerdan”) was key in this economic and social development. His influence not only spanned political and economical gambit, but also

¹ John Martin, *From its Selection as a Trading Town in 1827 to its Partial Destruction by Wilson’s Raid in 1865* (Columbus, GA: Thos. Gilbert Co., 1874), 15.

included a number of philanthropic and service contributions to the city of Columbus, and to the state of Georgia. Under his direction, Columbus found itself at both the heart of industrial development in the southeast as well as a leader in experimental educational practices.

G. Gunby Jordan was born in 1846 in Sparta, Georgia. He fought for the Confederacy beginning at age sixteen, and relocated to Columbus, Georgia after the war. He founded numerous construction companies, and worked with politicians to bring paved roads and trains to Columbus. Jordan was very involved in community and education projects; he organized the Columbus Library, managed a philanthropic organization known as the Eagle and Phenix Club, and was president of the Columbus School Board. As an active member of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, he was a leader in the creation of industrial schools for the children of mill workers.²

Jordan is remembered in Columbus for many accomplishments. He was the organizer and/or president of various businesses within the city including: Georgia Midland Construction Company, Third National Bank, Columbus Bank and Trust, Eagle and Phenix Mill, Bibb Manufacturing Company, The Jordan Company, and Perkins Hosiery Mills. Jordan's political and civic responsibilities were just as impressive; he was a

² "Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T," Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, Georgia; "G. Gunby Jordan Joined Army in Columbus," *The Sunday Ledger-Enquirer* (Columbus, Georgia), April 16, 1961; Delia Jordan Barnett, "Rachel Gunby Jordan," Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA; Nancy Telfair, "G. Gunby Jordan," *The Columbus Georgia Cemetery, 1828-1928*, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus GA; "Handwriting on the Wall," *The Watchman and Southron* (Sumter, SC), August 7, 1907; Hooper Alexander, "Poor White Folks" (Boston, MA: Child Employing Industries Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Conference, Jan. 13-16, 1910), 58-59.

member of Governor Stephens' staff, member of the Western Atlantic Commission, member of the Georgia Railroad Commission, president of the Georgia Immigration Association, member of the Commission for Industrial Peace, member of The National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, and many other civic associations. Jordan's involvement in business and politics gave him the unique opportunity to make lasting changes in Columbus, and he took advantage of every opportunity.³

Many remember Jordan to be not only a great booster for Columbus, but also a great supporter of education. Indeed, during his lifetime, Jordan donated thousands of dollars on behalf of education, particularly industrial education. As an active member of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, Jordan fulfilled the society's motto of helping to focus "public opinion in favor of an educational system that would give boys and girls who enter at an early age upon industrial pursuits, an adequate preparation for industrial efficiency."⁴ This industrial tycoon was elected president of the Columbus Board of Education for his many efforts to promote industrial education, a legacy that continued even after his death. Jordan's life was full of professional success, but was also marred by personal tragedy. Yet instead of dwelling on the hypothetical "what might have been" scenarios, Jordan chose to fill his life with achievement after achievement until he became Columbus' nineteenth century version of a Renaissance man.

³ "G. Gunby Jordan Passes Away at Country Home." *The Columbus Ledger*. May 9, 1930.

⁴ Carroll Wright, "The Work of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 33 (Jan.: 1909), 13-22.

Micro History and Educational Biography

In order to examine the impact of the life of G. Gunby Jordan in full, an introduction to the concept of micro history and theory and the field of educational biography is required. Jordan plays an essential role in the both the micro history and macro history of the vocational education movement. The significance of micro history has been debated, and is often regarded as unimportant and trivial compared to the lives of “great men” whose actions meant worldwide changes. However, for the city of Columbus, Georgia, G. Gunby Jordan was the “great man” whose connections and dealings molded the economical, social, and educational developments of the city of Columbus. But what bearing do these actions have in other cities? How did his actions influence the development of vocational educational programs throughout the country? What use do micro histories have in defining the macro history? According to Carlo Ginzberg, “micro histories cannot be transferred to a macroscopic sphere,” and should not be expected to be universal examples of the micro history, as their “heterogeneity” serves as both their greatest strength and weakness when assessing their academic merit.⁵

F.R. Ankersmit, a scholar of theory in historical research, notes that to focus in on the “scraps” of history that have not been scoured over by other historians is a postmodern approach to historical scholarship.⁶ He utilizes the analogy of a tree. While in the past historians have focused mainly on the trunk and branches of the tree, postmodern micro historians focus in on the individual leaves, each disconnected from the other, but still a

⁵ Carlo Ginzberg, “Micro History: Two or Three Things that I Know About It,” *Critical Inquiry*, (Autumn 1993):10-35, 33.

⁶ Ibid.

part of the greater tree.⁷ I am not arguing that G. Gunby Jordan is merely a leaf, disconnected from all other leaves that contributed to vocational education in Columbus as he indisputably had a profound influence on the education of children living in Columbus, but I do believe that the incorporation of theory into the study of history and educational history should be examined further with respect to G. Gunby Jordan's life. Jordan's individual accomplishments as well as his interaction and cooperation with other educators, philanthropists, and industrialists made lasting contributions to vocational education in Columbus. He took on both the role of a single leaf and that of a greater part of the tree of educational reform.

The study of G. Gunby Jordan's impact on education falls into the field of educational biography. Craig Kridel's work *Writing Educational Biography: Explorations in Qualitative Research* offers aspiring educational biographers a wealth of scholarship concerning the structure, need, and process of educational biography. Kridel notes that as "the study of biography is slowly emerging as a significant development in the field of educational research" it has the "promise" of "bridging [the] critical relationships among the balkanized research realms that characterize the study of education in the postmodern world."⁸ This educational biography of G. Gunby Jordan aspires to follow Kridel's goal for educational biography. It is a source of inquiry in the fields of critical biography, southern history, industrial history, labor history, progressive educational history, vocational educational history, African American studies, and modern vocational and career readiness education. And yet, this educational biography will not be a

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Craig Kridel, *Writing Educational Biography: Explorations in Qualitative Research* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998), 3.

comprehensive study of any of the previous stated academic fields. Barbara Finkelstein states in her work “Revealing Human Agency: The Uses of Biography in the Study of Educational History” that

Biography is to history what a telescope is to the stars. It reveals the invisible, extracts detail from myriad points of light, uncovers sources of illumination, and helps us disaggregate and reconstruct large heavenly pictures...biography reveals particular features within large views. In the case of viewing history, biography provides a unique lens through which one can assess the relative power of political, economic, cultural, social and generational processes on the life chances of individuals, and the revelatory power of historical sense-making.⁹

Educational biography and micro history allow scholars to pinpoint the implications of macro studies in historical and educational research. While acknowledging that this particular educational biography does not seek to be generalizable, I do hope that it will provide additional acumen in various fields of educational history, and that it will inspire further historical and educational studies in the future.

The Role of Subjectivity in Educational History

The exploration of one’s own subjectivities is an integral part of both education and historiography. Humans cannot separate ourselves from our own experiences, education, beliefs, and aspirations. These elements link historical thought and educational policies in the same way in which society’s values influence what is taught in schools and dictate the information placed in history books. In order to analyze and account for a historian’s

⁹ Barbara Finkelstein, “Revealing Human Agency: The Uses of Biography in the Study of Educational History” in Craig Kridel’s *Writing Educational Biography: Explorations in Qualitative Research* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 45.

subjectivities, the introduction of theory into educational historical scholarship is necessary. Eileen Tamura's 2011 article "Narrative History and Theory" examines the role that theory can play within the more traditional historical methodology of narrative. She argues that not only does the placement of theory within educational historical scholarship add new perspectives to understanding the past, but also the incorporation of theory within educational history creates bridges between the two fields and might serve as a means to engage in current educational policy issues. Although many historians argue that narratives are in fact a methodology in and of themselves, "theory provides the scholar with a base from which to inquire and analyze."¹⁰ Michael Crotty distinguishes methodology and theoretical perspective by stating that while methodologies dictate a "plan of action" the theoretical perspective provides "a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria."¹¹

What then would be the theory best suited to examine vocational educational history? In the May 2011 issue of *History of Education Quarterly*, scholars engaged in an exploration of the role that theory should and could play within educational history. Scholars such as Roland Sintos Coloma, Caroline Eick, and Eileen Tamura contend that theory should play an integral part in educational history, although they are widely disparate in their acceptance of a common theoretical framework. Wayne Urban argues that narrative history in and of itself creates its own theoretical stance in that it is both an "empirical and interpretive study" which uses evidence and footnotes to build on the

¹⁰ Eileen H. Tamura, "Narrative History and Theory," *History of Education Quarterly* 51 (May 2011), 154-157.

¹¹ Michael Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research; Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process* (Los Angeles: Sage, 1998), 3.

interpretations of others.¹² He stands as a theoretical “agnostic” who believes that the use of theory is appropriate when it does not take away from the scholar’s evidence that should be apparent within the work. The use of theory should be a lens in which to better understand the time and events of the past, not merely for the purpose of changing how historians work. Urban states that historians should not insert theory for theory’s sake, and if they chose to use a theory in educational history then they need to justify its use with evidence. I, too, believe myself to be a theoretical agnostic, agreeing to the use of theory within historical analysis, but I am not committed to just one theory.¹³

Various theoretical lenses guide this study as a means to better understand the events of the past, and also to explore how these events might be connected to educational policies in the future.¹⁴ In addition to creating a bridge between educational policy studies and history, theory can position writers of educational history to pinpoint power structures and hegemonic values imposed on historical writing. In Coloma’s 2011 article he remarks that although Michel Foucault is regarded by many to be the “anti-historian,” he provides insights into language and power distribution that historians would find beneficial in their interpretations of history. When considering vocational educational history and the educational biography of G. Gunby Jordan, language choice and power structures demand a detailed examination.

¹² Wayne Urban, “The Proper Place of Theory in Educational History?” *History of Education Quarterly* 51 (May 2011), 237.

¹³ Tamura, “Narrative History and Theory,” 150-157, Caroline Eick, “Oral Histories of Education and the Relevance of Theory: Claiming New Spaces in a Post Revisionist Era,” *History of Education Quarterly* 51 (May 2011), 150-183; Roland Sintos Coloma, “Who’s Afraid of Foucault? History, Theory, and Becoming Subjects,” *History of Education Quarterly* 51 (May 2011), 185-193; Urban, “The Proper Place of Theory in Educational History?”

¹⁴ Urban, “The Proper Place of Theory in Educational History?,” 236-237.

In the case of language, historical considerations must be made in order to understand the power that language holds in primary resources available in the South. Sources that reference teachers by their first name versus their surname reveal how African American teachers were referred to by their first names as a demonstration of power, and why being addressed by a surname was a luxury reserved for privileged white teachers.¹⁵ African American philanthropists were aware of the power of language, which is why they chose to utilize the term “industrial” instead of “high school” to describe the secondary African American education projects that they hoped to construct in the South in the early twentieth century.¹⁶ The examination of the language employed in these documents reveals a substantial amount of information regarding the power discrepancy between white and black teachers in southern towns in the early twentieth century. Historical archives provide another illustration of the dominant power structures in place in southern mill towns. The lack of sources available concerning the African American vocational schools compared to the white vocational schools that were in operation during the same time period is significant. While both white and black schools existed in southern mill towns, those in power chose to record and preserve the business of the white schools over the African American schools.¹⁷

The study of power structures affects the work and interpretations of historians as those in power often chose the resources that preserved for later generations.¹⁸ Indeed, a

¹⁵ Teacher’s Retirement Records, G. Gunby Jordan Collection, Columbus State University Archives (hereafter cited as CSU Archives), Columbus, GA.

¹⁶ F.W. Shepardson “Memorandum Regarding High Schools,” February 9, 1925, Box 129, Folder 8, Julius Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University.

¹⁷ Teacher’s Retirement Records, G. Gunby Jordan Collection.

¹⁸ Coloma, “Who’s Afraid of Foucault?,” 185-193.

Marxist lens is utilized at points within this research. Marx's philosophy that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" can be seen in the class conflicts within Columbus, and the numerous social and educational experiments that are conducted to ameliorate undesirable class divides. Novelist and Columbus native Carson McCullers explores the impact of Marxism on Columbus in the 1930s in her work *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, she highlights numerous instances of class and racial stratifications within her description of Columbus; her characters look towards Marxism as a potential solution to societal woes.¹⁹ And yet Marxism is challenged when confronted with the racial inequities prominent in American south at this time; the discrimination African Americans faced in Columbus in the early twentieth century hampered any class revolution that Georgian socialists might have hoped to achieve. These racial injustices benefited the leading industrialists, and are an essential part of Jordan's elevation to an industrial and social leader in Columbus, Georgia.²⁰

Psychologist Erik Erikson offers numerous works of scholarship that explore the development of identity and personality. His theories of psychosocial development have been very useful for my exploration of the evolution of Jordan's identity throughout his lifetime, and in particular his views on African American education. Erikson's theories of how humans manage stressful life events, and how their ideologies can alter and

¹⁹ Carson McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (New York, NY: Harcourt Publishing Company, 1940, reprint 2000), 74, 198-202.

²⁰ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: International Publishers Co., 1948, reprint 2015), 9.

reinvent themselves over time are utilized in my interpretation of Jordan's attitude toward racial inequities over time.²¹

Yet the theory that most informs my own research is intersectionality, which Caroline Eick explores in her article "Oral Histories of Education and the Relevance of Theory: Claiming New Spaces in a Post Revisionist Era." Eick notes that intersectionality (which was thoroughly examined by the theorist Patricia Hill Collins in her work *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and Politics of Empowerment*) offers researchers a means to acknowledge that their identity falls into many categories, which may help or hinder their research, especially in the instance of oral history. As oral history is an integral element in the exploration of vocational educational history, the theory of intersectionality is an important consideration for historical researchers.²²

In my own research, my identity and intersectionalities have created a means for me to gather information and data. My roles as a southern white female, a mother, a daughter, a student, a teacher, an archivist, and a former resident of the town in which my study takes place have all lent to the collection of materials for my educational study. Which leads to the question of how successful might researchers of a different race, or an outside resident (who may not have known about the family's pronunciation "Jordan" as "Jerdan") would have been in gathering records for a study in vocational educational history in a southern town? Would they have been able to produce the same analysis?

²¹ Erik Erikson, *Identity Youth in Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1968, reprint 1990), 210; Erik Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1959, reprint 1980), 122.

²² Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and Politics of Empowerment*, 2nd ed. (New York: Taylor and Francis E-Library, 2002); Eick, "Oral Histories of Education and the Relevance of theory: Claiming New Spaces in a Post Revisionist Era," 150-183.

My assertion is no, he or she would not. Intersectionalities enable researchers to find admittance to various groups, and researchers with different intersectionalities would gain admittance to different groups, and have a different interpretation based on the resources that were available to them.²³

With the understanding that the data and resources that I chose to incorporate within my research are entrenched with power (both in my choice to include them and their availability to greater academic audiences) it becomes necessary to explore not only my intersectionalities but my subjectivities as well. Recognition that history is not objective and that all historians are embedded with subjectivities is not shameful or discrediting; it is a necessary element to provide validity to the interpretation of vocational educational history that I create in this inquiry. The simple choice to enter into a doctoral program and study the field of social studies teaching and learning is the culmination of various experiences that have given me the courage to pursue this degree. In an even more telling statement concerning my own subjectivities, I have chosen a topic that is not only of interest to me, as I question the purpose of education, and what it has been throughout history, but I have chosen to examine the purpose of education in my own hometown. My upbringing in Columbus, Georgia has colored my views as to what I judge to be both quality and inferior education. In addition, my own teaching career in metro Atlanta has influenced my own subjectivities; in particular, my own personal mission to point out

²³ Eick, "Oral Histories of Education and the Relevance of theory: Claiming New Spaces in a Post Revisionist Era," 150-183; Teacher's Retirement Records, G. Gunby Jordan Collection; Urban, "Black Subject, White Biographer," *Writing Educational Biography; Explorations in Qualitative Research, Critical Education Practice*, Vol. 13 (1998), 103-111.

injustice and discrimination wherever I might find it in history, in my own classroom, and in the public school system at large.

While acknowledging these subjectivities influence my writing, I know that they will in fact be beneficial in constructing an authentic historiographical telling of vocational education in a mill town in the early twentieth century.²⁴ Outsiders come with their own set of experiences and subjectivities that could influence their interpretation of history in southern cities. In 2011, a book, titled *The Big Eddy Club; Stocking Stranglers and Southern Justice*, which concerned the history of Columbus, Georgia and a serial killer coined “The Stocking Strangler,” was released by the British citizen David Rose. The book paints a sensational picture of Columbus as a former mill town seething with crime, dirty politics, and outright racism reminiscent of Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mocking Bird*.²⁵ In my status as both an insider and an outsider (I was born and lived in Columbus for 18 years, but have lived in Atlanta for over a decade) armed with my own subjectivities and experiences, I hope to use insights of my hometown not to create sweeping generalizations and historic fallacies, but to generate an authentic historical study of southern vocational education from an insider/outsider’s perspective. I will write an examination of southern history utilizing studies in power and subjugation in the involvement of vocational educational history, which can be used by future educational policy makers.

The employment of both insider and outsider perspectives has been explored in

²⁴ Eick, “Oral Histories of Education and the Relevance of Theory,” 150-183; Urban, “Black Subject, White Biographer,” 103-111.

²⁵ David Rose, *The Big Eddy Club; Stocking Stranglers and Southern Justice* (New York: The New Press, 2007).

qualitative research. Morris, Leung, Ames, and Lickel in their 1999 article “Views from The Inside and Outside: Integrating Emic and Etic Insights about Culture and Justice Judgment,” contend that studies which incorporate both emic and etic perspectives in their research methodologies are actually stronger than those which rely on one methodology alone. The “synergy” of the two methods “stimulates the progress” of each methodology, and counterbalances the weakness of only using either emic or etic methodologies.²⁶ While the studies that the researchers examined in their article were not historical, historical research might benefit from acknowledgement that these positions can color historical research, as well. My status as a former resident permits me access to concepts and hegemonic ideals that an outsider might find difficult to navigate, and my experiences removed from Columbus contribute to my analysis of discriminatory practices that I might have otherwise overlooked. My emic/ etic perspective constructs a theoretical lens by which I can stimulate a more detailed and genuine historical inquiry of the role that Jordan played in the development of a vocational education program for the city of Columbus, GA.

Peter Novick explores the topic of objectivity in his classic work titled *That Noble Dream; The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* in which he details the various attempts in the field of inquiry that have been made toward the pursuit of the ultimate Truth. For nineteenth century historians this quest meant the desire for objectivity served as a qualification for professionalism, while later relativist historians

²⁶ M. Morris, L. Kwok, D. Ames, B. Lickel, “Views from The Inside and Outside: Integrating Emic and Etic Insights about Culture and Justice Judgment,” *Academy Of Management Review* (Oct.: 1999), 781-796.

saw objectivity as a serious means for debate, and believed the responsibility of historians was to break down the perceptions of objectivity into a series of well thought-out falsehoods. Novick states that the goal of his book is neither confirm nor deny his own objectivity stance, but to “provoke my fellow historians to greater self-consciousness about the nature of our work.”²⁷ The only way to continue to grow as a profession is to acknowledge one’s own subjectivities and the limitations that they place upon historiography, every scholar should take care to consider Novick’s guidance, and not simply pretend that their own experiences do not influence their historical scholarship. My own experiences drew me to be fascinated by the life of G. Gunby Jordan, and inspired me to investigate the legacy and the impact of his life in Columbus, GA.

Writing biography offers its own unique challenges in subjectivity. Linda Anderson Smith notes the stresses that a biographer’s empathy can have on his or her ability write biography. For her, the quest for objectivity was always absurd; she struggled to create a manuscript that did not over-identify with her subject, and acknowledges her bias in her work.²⁸ Biographers build relationships with their subjects, even if they have been deceased for many years.

As words such as intelligent, sensitive, handsome, powerful, articulate, passionate, attentive, and charming are all found in primary sources to describe my nineteenth century beau, the Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, I have found my particular fondness of

²⁷ Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 17.

²⁸ Linda Anderson Smith, “The Biographers Relationship with Her Subject” in Craig Kridel’s *Writing Educational Biography: Explorations in Qualitative Research* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 195-200.

Jordan to be particularly difficult in the construction of this biography.²⁹ The relationship of a biographer to his or her subject has a lasting impact on the quality and effectiveness of the biography. Yet, many biographers find themselves developing a relationship with their subjects that can only be described as amorous. Linda Anderson Smith states

writing biography can be exactly like falling in love. What biographer has not felt the same exhilaration, excitement, attraction and then joy of discovering that the two of you agree on many important matters, that you share beliefs, ideas, and interests. What a thrill it is when you begin to identify with your subject, when trust, commitment and even ownership begin to develop and grow! It really is almost like falling in love.³⁰

As Smith describes above, the danger that I face as Jordan's biographer is a tendency to let this relationship inhibit my ability to think critically about my subject. This challenge has become an integral part of my research into the life of G. Gunby Jordan and has reshaped the development of my dissertation. When I began my research initially I had no intention of writing a biography, but my fascination with Jordan lead to my decision to focus on the contributions that he made to the Columbus school system. I have had to remain critical and fair in my study of his life and revise the original format of my biography. While in the midst of the composition of my dissertation I found my view to be colored strongly in favor of Jordan. In the final chapter, I explore how I have had to come to terms with my own admiration for his achievements in a way as to not

²⁹ "Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T," Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, Georgia.

³⁰ Smith, "The Biographers Relationship to Her Subject," 195.

allow my esteem for Jordan overly affect my examination of his educational contributions.

I am not the first biographer to struggle with their relationship to subjects. Metaphors have long been utilized to conceptualize the craft of the biographer. While some evoke “warmth,” feeling, and empathy like that of “portraits,” others prefer the “autopsy” metaphor in its tendency to scrutinize and uncover hidden truths.³¹ Plutarch, believed by many to be the father of biography and the author of *The Lives of Noble Greeks*, used the portrait metaphor.³² Because of Plutarch’s emphasis on morality and life lessons, he is generally regarded as a “poor historian” due his obsession with moral lessons; his subjects often lose their complexity and character.³³

Other biographers, like Lytton Strachey, align more with the autopsy metaphor. Strachey sought to uncover the secret motivations of his subjects, and expose the less saintly sides to prominent figures of the time.³⁴ There are motivations that biographers are aware of, and the motivations that remain unconscious. Stanley Fish criticized modern biography as “actually” being “autobiographical.”³⁵ I have had to examine my own subjectivities and values throughout this research in order to create a more balanced and thorough interpretation of Jordan’s life. These analyses affirm my belief that

³¹ Hermione Lee, *Biography: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3.

³² Lee, *Biography: A Very Short Introduction*, 3-4; Carl Rollyson, *Biography: A User’s Guide*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2008), 216, 125.

³³ Lee, *Biography: A Very Short Introduction*, 3-4; Rollyson, *Biography: A User’s Guide*, 216, 125.

³⁴ Rollyson, *Biography a User’s Guide*, 286.

³⁵ Shirley Leckie, “Biography Matters, Why Historians Need Well Crafted Biographies More than Ever,” in Lloyd Ambrosius *Writing Biography: Historians and their Craft* (Lincoln, NE: Univeristy of Nebraska Press, 2004), 1-2.

biographical scholarship can be improved through a biographer's recognition of their bias.

Within historiography and biography there are significant barriers that restrict the integrity of the study of history. Historical study cannot always be precise and specific, and "when calculation is impossible we are obliged to employ suggestion."³⁶ Within this "suggestion," historians may encourage their most significant contribution to both scholarship and society. Throughout this biography I have had to utilize the historical and biographical tool of "suggestion" when I found no reputable source on the event in question or when documented primary sources contradicted one another. The introduction of new ideas is a result of a historian's subjectivities. Recognizing that other historians may examine Jordan's role in the vocational educational history of Columbus and reach different conclusions based on their own interpretations of the data and "suggestions" as to its meaning, I strive to use my own subjectivities and emic/ etic status as a tool for an honest and relevant understanding of purposes, practices, and aspirations of vocational education in Columbus, Georgia at the turn of the century.

A Brief History of the Vocational Education Debate and Its Relation to Columbus

The democratic ideal holds great appeal in the arena of education. In the nineteenth century, educators, businessmen and policy makers alike began to seek out industrial applications for education. David Tyack states, "convinced that there was one best system" for "education."³⁷ Educators sought out new ways to

³⁶ Marc Bloc, *The Historian's Craft* trans. By Peter Putnam (1940; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1953), 27.

³⁷ David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 28.

implement...the order and efficiency of the new technology and forms of organization that they saw around them. The division of labor in the factory, the punctuality of the railroad, the chain of command and coordination in the modern business all aroused a sense of wonder and excitement in men and women seeking to systemize schools.³⁸

Vocational education and efficiency offered America the opportunity to realize a path where all citizens could use their education for their own economic advantage. Jordan and other promoters of industrial education argued that it had the ability to democratize the educational system in the United States. Harvey Kantor notes that “only by adding practical, relevant courses...could the high school meet the diverse needs to the expanding clientele without abandoning public education’s commitment to equal opportunity for all members of American society.”³⁹ Philanthropists flocked to industrial ideology. Historian Dewey Grantham notes in *Southern Progressivism; The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*, that many believed that

education...with an almost childlike faith, would contribute directly to individual prosperity and well-being, to the economic development of the South, to a literate citizenry, to a more democratic society, and to the freeing of men and women from the bonds of prejudice and superstition.⁴⁰

Groups such as the American Federation of Labor, the National Association of Educators, the National Education Association, the Progressive and Democratic Parties, and the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education whose members included

³⁸ Ibid., 28.

³⁹ Kantor, “Work, Education, and Vocational Reform,” 402.

⁴⁰ Dewey W. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: the Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 257.

prominent businessmen, politicians, and famous social reformers and philosophers, all pledged their support towards vocational education. They took steps to ensure the enactment of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, which provided funding for industrial education in public schools.⁴¹

According to Herbert Kliebard, the distinction between manual training and vocational education was increasingly opaque. While some educational supporters have stated that manual training enabled pupils to practice the development of character, and that vocational education was meant to hone a pupil's skills for a particular type of employment, the terms have been, and continue to be, used interchangeably.⁴² Frank Mitchell Leavitt attempted to distinguish the two terms in 1912 by citing that vocational school requires an elementary vocational education, and should include a two-year vocational training program, but could be extended to four. Yet, even Leavitt conceded that there are numerous variations of these concepts in vocational high schools throughout the country. Although he professed that Columbus' Secondary Industrial High School should not be classified as vocational, the distinction between the terms appears increasingly pedantic.⁴³ To add to the confusion, the term industrial would also be utilized throughout the country. Columbus public schools used all three terms throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and desires for achievement

⁴¹ John Hillison, "The Coalition that Supported the Smith-Hughes Act or a Case of Strange Bedfellows," *Journal of Vocational and Technical Education*, (Spring 1995), 4-11.

⁴² Herbert M. KlieBard, *Schooled to Work: Vocationalism and the American Curriculum, 1876-1946* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1999). 24-25.

⁴³ Frank Mitchell Leavitt, *Examples of Industrial Education* (New York: Ginn and Company, 1912), 154.

in manual training, industrial, and vocational education venues motivated Jordan and others to invest in a more practical education.

The National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education (NSPIE) was the most diverse group of the movement as it included anyone who supported vocational education of any kind. This society united social activists like Jane Addams and educational reformers such as John Dewey as well as politicians like David Snedden and Charles Prosser under one umbrella. Yet, this coalition debated vehemently on the purpose, designs, and types of vocational education. This diversity was both their strongest ally and greatest weakness; it made their influence felt throughout American society, but it also tore the coalition apart after the Smith-Hughes Act was enacted. Their common belief in the democratic importance of the legislation held them together just long enough to see the adoption of the Act; but the lack of consensus quickly dissolved the union as the members could not form a common definition for either democracy or vocational education.

Chief amongst the internal debate within the NSPIE members were John Dewey, Jane Addams, David Snedden, and Charles Prosser, who all held very prominent and important voices within the field of education.⁴⁴ Prosser, credited by many to be the father of the Smith-Hughes Act, became the executive secretary of NSPIE in 1912; he, along with his mentor David Snedden, were responsible for the Massachusetts Commission of Industrial Education report of 1906 where they reported thousands of teenagers between the ages of fourteen to sixteen were not attending school, but could not

⁴⁴ Sol Cohen, "The Industrial Education Movement, 1906-1917," *American Quarterly* (March, 1968), 98.

find work. Those who did find employment were in low-paying jobs with no chance for promotion. This time period in the young person's life became known as the "two wasted years."⁴⁵ No decent employer would hire someone with so little experience and no practical training. According to the commission, public education's abstract instruction had little to no practical application in the real world, this perception resulted in students perceiving their secondary education to be a waste of time, and they chose to drop out in hopes of finding practical employment.⁴⁶

These motivations were not the same that compelled people like Jane Addams to join the movement. Addams, who worked for years in educating and Americanizing many immigrants at Hull House in the Chicago area, saw first-hand the ill effects of low skill factory work; she hoped that by educating the minds of the workers they would be enlightened and recognize their importance within industrial society. Addams' belief that education would offset the "dehumanizing effects of fragmented factory work" appeared "more than a bit naïve" to people like Snedden and Prosser; any critique of the factory system was mocked and ridiculed for being stuck in the past and not embracing the true and innovative future that was industrial society.⁴⁷

Although Addams' idealistic hopes for vocational education may not have been aspiring towards Snedden's view of democracy, she did hope that it would improve the lives of the workers, which would align her version of vocational education as imperative

⁴⁵ Kantor, "Work, Education, and Vocational Reform," 414.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 414.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 413-15; John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, (1916; repr., New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997); James Davison Hunter, *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

for achieving the American dream. John Dewey visualized vocational education as having the potential to democratize industrial society. He attacked the notion that vocational education should just be the mastering of a series of manual tasks. For Dewey, any “practical trade training...made no sense at all” considering the over mechanization and stratification within industries; his goal was never to “adapt” workers to industrial society, but to transform society into a truly democratic one. Dewey did not seek efficiency; he sought “meaningful labor” that could only be accomplished through a meaningful education.⁴⁸ Yet debates continued to plague the vocational education movement; the age of students, the curriculum, and the number of schools were all disputed. In addition, discussion concerning who should pay for the schools, who should manage the schools, and who should be allowed to attend the schools created more unrest within the group.⁴⁹

Columbus found its place in the vocational educational debate, when Jordan and Gibson traveled to the northeast to visit different vocational institutions that were already in place. No model could be found to fit the ideals of their vision or vocational education in a public school setting; they therefore decided to design their own vocational education program in Columbus. The ideas instigated by Addams, Dewey, Sneed, and Prosser were all influential in the development of the Columbus school system, as Jordan, being both a member of both NSPIE and Columbus School board, carried the philosophical debate into the classrooms of Columbus, GA with his vocational education plan.

⁴⁸ Kantor, “Work, Education, and Vocational Reform,” 417.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 403-422.

Considerations for Studying the Educational History of the South

The history of the South is fraught with complex and often conflicting viewpoints. Child labor, poor health and living conditions, low wages, paternalistic mill owners, discrimination, and outright racism bleed into any historical study examining the construction of the New South. In this sea of troubles, southern progressives⁵⁰ and northern philanthropists all sought to construct a New South in which their values might be realized.⁵¹ Industrialization started long before the conclusion of the Civil War in Georgia; in fact the first mill in Columbus, Georgia was constructed in the 1820s, and by the 1860s the Eagle Mill produced most of the Confederate uniforms for the Confederate Army. Yet it cannot be denied that during the period of Reconstruction, textile mill construction exploded in the South. Mill towns emerged quickly, attracting farmers from all over the countryside with promises of consistent hours and easier work.⁵²

Mill towns began to emerge as little dystopias, many complete with a benevolent dictator. Some of the mill dictators would inspire life-long loyalty among their workers; others accepted their generosity, but understood that with this kindness also came intrusiveness. Mill workers might find themselves reprimanded, kicked out of the mill village, or even fired over offenses such as not turning the lights off by a certain time, drinking, arguing, or even smoking on the front porch (for female residents). One of the main punishments for offenses was Sunday school. Workers would be sentenced to

⁵⁰ In using the term “southern progressive” I utilize C. Vann Woodward’s explanation that southern progressivism was “for whites only;” this phrase can be found in his work *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*. (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1987), 369

⁵¹ Jacqueline Dowd Hall et al., *Like a Family; The Making of the Southern Cotton Mill World*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987); C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1987).

⁵² John Lupold, “Industrial Reconstruction of Columbus, Ga., 1865-1881,” Presented to the Georgia Historical Society, 1975, John Lupold Collection, CSU Archives.

seven or ten days of Sunday school classes where offenders would be encouraged to renounce their sinful ways. Mill owners encouraged their workers to join Baptist or Methodist sects for their belief in alcoholic abstinence, and most village pastors were even on the company payroll.⁵³

Yet in addition to the intrinsic character education provided by the mills, they also generated a way of life that perpetuated generational poverty. Columbus native Carson McCullers provides an apt description of mill villages in her novel *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, when town newcomer Jake wandered into the mill village, as Jake

entered one of the mill districts bordering the river. The streets narrow and unpaved and they were empty no longer. Groups of dingy, hungry-looking children called to each other and played games. The two-room shacks, each one like the other, were rotten and unpainted. The stink of food and sewage mingled with dust in the air. The falls up the river made a faint rushing sound. People stood silently in doorways or lounged on steps. They looked at Jake with yellow, expressionless faces. He stared back at them with wide, brown eyes.⁵⁴

In evidence of this poverty, dietary diseases (such as pellagra) ravaged mill villages throughout the South, and yet trade unions, which might have improved the living conditions of the mill towns, never really made their mark in the southern textile mills. Again McCullers provides an apt description of the defeatist mentality of mill workers living in Columbus, one mill worker notes how during the last attempted strike that workers “just quit because they wanted twenty cents an hour. There was about three

⁵³ Dowd Hall et al., *Like a Family*, ” 115-125.

⁵⁴ McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, 70-71.

hundred did it [went on strike]. They just hung around the streets all day. So the mill sent out trucks and in one week the town was swarming with folks come here to get a job.”⁵⁵ The ease of which textile mills could find new cheap labor to fill the spaces of those who chose to strike would be a continued challenge for union representatives in Columbus. Strikes were repeatedly defeated and the South gained the reputation of a being safe haven for manufacturers who wished to escape the demands of unions in the North.⁵⁶

Education of poor white “folk” in 1900 was appalling.⁵⁷ Poorly trained and unmotivated teachers, lack of resources, unprepared students, inconsistent attendance and the devaluing of “book learning” all contributed to extremely low literacy amongst poor white children.⁵⁸ Yet southern progressivism was on the rise in the early twentieth century, and with it came the influx of both northern and southern philanthropists who sought to improve the education of whites and blacks in the South. Southern progressives and colleagues of Jordan, such as Hoke Smith, did much to push through political, economic, and educational reforms (including the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917), but often possessed “reactionary racial views” and were often called “demagogues” as often as they were called “progressive.”⁵⁹ In truth, much of the stimulus directed towards the education of poor whites in the South is due to the fact whites experienced a sense of rivalry with the number of black schools founded by northern philanthropists; the idea

⁵⁵ Ibid, 74-75.

⁵⁶ Woodward, *Origins of the New South*,” 420-423.

⁵⁷ I. A. Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South; Social Change and Cultural Persistence 1880-1915* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana, 1989), 418-433.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 418-433.

⁵⁹ Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 371-373.

that blacks might soon be more educated than whites compelled many to join the cause of public education for poor whites.⁶⁰

In his work *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, William Watkins explores how northern industrialists and capitalists used philanthropy in the form of education to “colonize” the South. The subjugation of whites and blacks by northerners centered on the question of “what to do about black labor;” in addition questions were posed on how to “discipline, exploit and civilize the Negro” to the best advantage of those in power.⁶¹ Robert C. Ogden, who was seen as “the symbolic leader of the educational revival,” engineered a publicity stunt in 1901 where he escorted fifty northern industrialists on a trip through the South in order to inspire their support of educational reform. Ogden’s publicity stunt worked and The Southern Education Board and General Education Board soon invested millions of dollars into the development of education for whites and blacks in the South.⁶² Yet while Ogden was one of the most “influential friends of Negro education” and was seen by many whites to be a “Negro worshipper,” neither Ogden nor his northern industrialists friends sought to change the social structure that existed within the South drastically. Rather, they hoped to reform the South in “subtle, indirect, and slow methods.”⁶³ By engaging in a system of corporate philanthropy, capitalists like Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford were able to use

⁶⁰ Eric Anderson and Alfred Moss Jr., *Dangerous Donations: Northern Philanthropy and Southern Black Education, 1902-1930* (Columbia, MO; University of Missouri Press), 16-20; C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*; William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, (New York: Teacher College Press, 2001), 15-23.

⁶¹ Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education*,” xi.

⁶² Anderson and Moss, *Dangerous Donations*,” 41-43.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 41, 48, 53.

charity as a means for policy making in the New South. Through this charity “capitalism and colonialism” was “presented as though they were natural, inevitable, rational and optimal.”⁶⁴

The naivety of some of the philanthropists as to the challenge that they were about to engage upon in the South was enormous. Many philanthropists believed that the education of whites should not be undervalued in the quest to better African Americans in the South. Through this education white southerners would learn “tolerance,” and become more accepting of their black neighbors.⁶⁵ What the philanthropists and educational enthusiasts did not take into consideration was the type of education that these southern whites would receive was designed to inspire prejudice against African Americans and the vilification of northerners through the use of Mint Julep textbooks that were written favoring the southern perspective on the Civil War and slavery.⁶⁶ David Tyack notes how the “best” system of meritocracy failed African Americans, and in many ways they were the “victims” of American education without ever committing any “crimes.” He states that

educators puzzled about what sort of vocational training to give black students. In the theory accepted by many of the many administrative progressives, the school system sorted out students by ability and probable careers related accordingly. This presupposed an economic order that would be open to talented recruits from the lower ranks of society; indeed, the notion of a school-filtered meritocracy was becoming the

⁶⁴ Ibid., 20-21

⁶⁵ Dewey W. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: the Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*, (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 259.

⁶⁶ Jonathan, Zimmerman, *Whose America: Culture Wars in Public Schools*, (Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 4.

twentieth century version of earlier self-made ideology. But for blacks such a system mostly did not work, since racism in the unions of skilled workers and in white-collar occupations tended to exclude Negroes. The job ceiling kept blacks mostly in unskilled, hard, dirty, dead-end occupations that no one else wanted.⁶⁷

Did the racism that permeated America in the early twentieth century mean that the intentions of these northern philanthropists were completely self-serving? Historians, such as James Anderson and William Watkins, argue that the aims of these capitalists were economically motivated with the intentions of using philanthropy as only a means to construct the social order that they found most desirable.⁶⁸ But were these their only motivations? Tyack notes how “the task of overcoming prejudice was enormous.”⁶⁹ This assertion is manifested in the actions of George Foster Peabody, a Columbus, GA native turned Wall Street banker, who actively and consistently donated to both African American and white education in the South. He once noted in a letter that “I am constantly in touch with my old school mates and others at the South who as a rule can be carried only so far and *we cannot afford to let the present generation of the South control negro education without definite cooperation with those of us who believe in the negro as a man and a child of God.*”⁷⁰ Although we cannot know if the “others” that Peabody refers to in the letter refers to Jordan, it is safe to say that Peabody did much to promote

⁶⁷ Tyack, *The One Best System*, 221.

⁶⁸ Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education*, 15-23; James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 220-225.

⁶⁹ David Tyack, *The One Best System*, 222.

⁷⁰ Peabody to Ida Mason, March 26, 1912 (Emphasis added), Peabody Papers, quoted in Eric Anderson and Alfred Moss Jr., *Dangerous donations: Northern Philanthropy and Southern Black Education, 1902-1930*, 53.

policies in favor of black education in Columbus, as well as other towns and cities in the South. Peabody, who grew up in the shadows of a textile mill in Columbus, understood the conditions that existed in southern textile mills, and he sought to improve those conditions for both whites and blacks.⁷¹

While philosopher Michel Foucault and historian Marc Bloc disagreed on many fronts, both urge future historians that when considering the historiographical implications in which revisionist historians challenged the established historical traditions of their time, it is imperative that the next generation of historians of education do not simply accept revisionist versions of history without posing their own challenges to the status quo. Other interpretations can be made concerning the intentions of northern philanthropists and that to generalize all of their actions as simply “imperialist” should be avoided without evidence.⁷² While it is easy today to dismiss the actions of Ogden and Peabody (or Jordan) as slow and overly conservative concerning the development of educational reform, historiographical reflection reminds educational contemporary researchers that their legacy is much more complex, and should not be oversimplified or undervalued.

While Jordan was a southerner, and was in no way thought of as a northern industrialist, his business relationships and connections meant that he too was exposed to the colonialist industrial approaches to the South. He would see the benefits in the colonial and Americanization paradigms (which sought to foster middle class values regarding work and morality in various groups that were seen as being morally deficient)

⁷¹ Louise Ware, *George Foster Peabody: Banker, Philanthropist, Publicist*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1951), 1-10.

⁷² Coloma, “Who’s Afraid of Foucault?” 185-193; Bloc, *The Historian’s Craft*, 12-13.

that were popular in the early 1900s. With the encouragement of colleagues such as George Foster Peabody, Columbus was able to make terrific strides towards African American education when compared to other southern cities of similar size (free African American kindergartens, two primary schools, and one industrial training school).⁷³ While it would not be until the year of Jordan's death that Columbus would receive its first African American high school, the role that Jordan played in the development of these educational programs is an aspect of African American education that deserves a thorough exploration.

Purpose for Research

As a national debate in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries concerning the purpose of education raged on among prominent educators such as David Snedden and John Dewey, Jordan as a member of the of southern industrial royalty exhibited his own interest in a "practical" education. By exercising his influence in various economic endeavors as well as most educational experiments that the city undertook in the early twentieth century, Columbus' educational system began to resemble the stratified and paternalistic mill towns that were responsible for the wealth of these southern industrial princes. Jordan, along with other city leaders, was able to create an "ideal" vocational educational program that would meet the needs of the ever-growing mill city of Columbus.

The purpose of this research is to document the influence that Jordan's policies, ideals, and friends had on the development of Columbus. Jordan, though incredibly successful

⁷³ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1906).

in his economic and educational achievements, did not act alone in his reforms for Columbus, and worked well with his industrial and philanthropist colleagues in order to push through improvements for Columbus. The power of Jordan's monumental contributions to educational policies was due to his political and financial status; this combination produced an industrial tycoon, an educational idealist, and a man who was an agent for change. No biography of Jordan has ever been written. Unlike his colleagues George Foster Peabody and Hoke Smith whose lives have been studied in great detail, Jordan's influence within the city gave birth to a specific kind of education that has yet to be explored.

Additionally, this research offers a self-reflection into the research process of writing an educational biography, and some of the challenges I faced as Jordan's biographer. Situating Jordan into the larger context of national events, regional conflicts, political agendas, financial phenomena, educational movements, and racial tensions proved to be quite a challenge. Jordan, as an active businessman, philanthropist, politician, and citizen maintained his own intersectionalities, and found himself influenced by the people and times that he lived. I too am influenced by my colleagues and current events; various stimuli have affected the content of my dissertation, and encouraged me to look at Jordan's life and legacy with a more critical eye. My relationship with Jordan has evolved over the course of this research, and thus, examining how a biographer's relationship with their subject influences the content and significance of the biography is a strong undercurrent within this dissertation.

Framework for Research

This manuscript is organized by a combination of thematic and chronological structures. When chronological order would benefit the understanding of the subject of

the research it will be employed; but in order to engage the reader in a myriad of topics and ideas throughout this dissertation, the thematic approach presents itself as the more desirable alternative than simple chronology. In chapter two I explore the early life of Jordan, his involvement in the Civil War, his political and business accomplishments as a means for educational support, and the unique role that his family had in the creation of the Jordan empire. In chapter three I offer a description of Jordan's influence on the history of the textile mills in Columbus in his roles of clerk, owner, and president. Jordan's position on the use of child labor in the textile mills, and his early philanthropic experiment in the formation of the Eagle and Phenix Club is also examined.

In chapter four I demonstrate how Jordan, along with his colleagues, acted in a way to construct a "better" Columbus for the changing economic and industrial times. These industrial tycoons utilized the vocational education model as a means to Americanize and civilize as well as a means to promote economic stability and democratic values for the city of Columbus. In chapter five I examine the vocational education program designed for Columbus, GA; detailed analysis will be given to both financial and political contributions of Jordan to the educational policies in Columbus. I also explore the educational achievements of two of Columbus's most celebrated superintendents, Roland B. Daniel and Carleton Gibson, who worked alongside Jordan.

The relationships and friendships developed through Jordan's magnetic personality were essential to the success of the educational experiments tested in Columbus, therefore, the detailed examination of Jordan's partnerships with educators and philanthropists regarding the development of African American education is the focus of chapter six. Particular attention is given to George Foster Peabody who was a vital force

in the funding of African American education in Columbus and the South. While a biography has been written on the accomplishments of Peabody, in this work, I will focus on how Peabody's partnership with Jordan was fundamental to his achievements.

Though African American education and George Foster Peabody are not the focus of this scholarship, this biography would be incomplete without a thorough exploration as the part that Jordan played in the development of African American education in Columbus, and how his friendship with Peabody impacted his identity and actions throughout his lifetime. In conclusion, chapter seven focuses on the impact that Jordan had on the educational and economic system in Columbus, reflect on the educational work that was done in Columbus after the death of Jordan in the 1930s, and the renaming of the Columbus Industrial High School to Jordan Vocational High in 1937. In addition, I explore how my relationship as Jordan's biographer has influenced my portrayal of his life, and the steps that I took to seek out a more unbiased and fair representation of the magnitude and limitations of his accomplishments.

Jordan was a man of his times, and he created a social and education structure for his city that he believed to be ideal. He maintained most class stratifications and almost all race stratifications, and he utilized the public education system to create a workforce that would enable him and other city leaders to capitalize on public education. Because of Jordan's political and economic position, he was able to instigate educational experiments within the city and create longstanding educational institutions for Columbus, as can be seen in Jordan Vocational High School, which is currently celebrating its one-hundred and ninth anniversary.

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CHAPTER 2

FROM A PRIVATE TO AN INDUSTRIALIST: JORDAN'S TRANSFORMATION INTO A "NEW SOUTH" RENAISSANCE MAN

During the mid nineteenth century in the southern United States, abolitionists struggled to be heard in a cacophony of opposition, southern aristocrats clung to the paternal idealism used to justify slavery, and many poor whites found solace in the fact that, although their social status was not by any means ideal, their white privilege granted them rights that their enslaved African neighbors could not enjoy. This chaotic time led to the destruction of countless lives and reinvention by many others. Cries of patriotism and the preservation of the southern way of life permeated newspaper articles, letters home from soldiers, and reminiscences of the Civil War. In this era G. Gunby Jordan grew into a man: like many other men of his time, Jordan sought to make the most out of this period of reinvention.

When the war broke out in 1860, G. Gunby Jordan was a young teenager living with his mother and father in Sparta, Georgia. After the loss of two of his elder brothers, Jordan chose to enlist in the Confederate Army at the age of seventeen.¹ Jordan was not born into the aristocratic planter class of the South; the man eventually considered by many to be one of the most valuable citizens of Columbus began his life as the son of a well to do merchant and teacher.² In the years immediately after the Civil War, Jordan

¹ "G. Gunby Jordan Joined Army in Columbus," *The Sunday Ledger- Enquirer* (Columbus, Georgia), April 16, 1961.

² "Sylvester Jordan," 1860 United States Federal Census, National Archives.

worked hard to transform himself into an industrialist. He was not alone in this quest. In the aftermath of the war, many southern businessmen sought the same financial success as their northern counterparts, and worked to better develop industrial and financial opportunities for himself and his region. Southern newspapers printed editorials describing the numerous millionaires who had grown rich through their own efforts after the conclusion of the war.³ Boasting numerous rags to riches scenarios, the nouveau-riche southern elite often exaggerated their own personal struggle from the farm to the mansion in order to illustrate their “grit” and “justify wealth as the fruit of virtue.”⁴

This chapter begins with a brief history of the Jordan family, and how Jordan’s early upbringing may have influenced his life in Columbus. I will then examine how Jordan’s family influenced his career as a teenage member of Nelson’s Rangers in the Confederate Army. In the aftermath of the Civil War, Jordan transitioned into civilian life by reestablishing himself in Columbus; I highlight the steps that he took in creating the Jordan empire, which expanded from politics and textile mills, to construction and real estate companies and eventually the Board of Education. I will explore the unique role that family played in Jordan’s career, and how family was central to the many political and economic accomplishments that he would experience.

Today, education often is pivotal in the formation of a person’s character. While many “great men” enjoyed the luxury of a collegiate rite of passage, Jordan (like many nineteenth century young men) found his coming of age experience in the Civil War. Jordan’s life experiences were integral in influencing his educational policies, and they

³ Don H. Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860-1910* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC: 1990), 93-96.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

set the stage for Jordan's pursuit of particular educational policies. He never attended an institution of higher education, but college was not typical for most men during this era. Yet, his experiences in the Civil War, marriage, and business served as his training for the position of president of the Columbus School Board. These experiences molded his passions, his regrets, and his aspirations, therefore, the formation of the character and persona of G. Gunby Jordan are essential elements in the understanding of his educational contributions.

Family History

Jordan left a lasting impact on the city of Columbus and the state of Georgia. As the president of numerous businesses and civic organizations, he played a significant role in the history of Columbus. Yet, to fully appreciate the magnitude of Jordan's accomplishments, and to understand his motives for pursuing both public service and private industry simultaneously, it is necessary to explore Jordan's genealogical roots and how they impacted his economic and social pursuits later in his life.

George Gunby Jordan was born in Sparta, Georgia on June 19, 1846 to Sylvester Franklin Jordan and Rachel Gunby Jordan. The Jordan family utilized a soft pronunciation of the name, "Jerdan;" in fact, G. Gunby Jordan's grandfather used the spelling of "Jourdan" in 1798.⁵ His parents were of English and Scotch ancestry. G. Gunby's father was born in Massachusetts in 1800, but he moved to the South long

⁵ Unpublished autobiography of G. Gunby Jordan II, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA, 2; For further familiar explanation into the pronunciation of the name, G. Gunby Jordan II refers to an anecdote provided by his father R.C. Jordan (G. Gunby Jordan's son) would ask anyone who questioned the pronunciation of the name "How do you pronounce "word?" So if "word" is pronounced "werd," why not "Jordan" as "Jerdan?" Found in the "unpublished History of the Jordan Family," Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus GA.

before the onset of the Civil War. It was in Columbus that he met Rachel Gunby; they were married in 1836 and then moved to Sparta, Georgia.⁶ Sylvester Jordan was a successful merchant in Sparta, and in the 1850 Census, he reported that he owned six slaves. The slaves ranged from forty-five years old to one year old, and most were women. Based on their ages and genders, I assume that Sylvester's slaves worked mostly within the home. Jordan, who was one of six children, grew up surrounded by his brothers and sisters and the young slaves living in the household in Sparta, Georgia.⁷

Rachel Gunby Jordan's family descended from a Revolutionary War brigadier general in the American army, and she received her education in Augusta, Georgia. According to her daughter, Rachel acted in an unusual fashion for the wife of a wealthy slaveholding merchant in Sparta, Georgia. She planned to teach after she married. Being the mother of six children, "her most intense ambition for" her "children was that they receive the best education the environment afforded and their mentality warranted, thus she promised to serve as a teacher to a local school if the community would sponsor the erection of a schoolhouse."⁸ Because of her "unusual talent for imparting knowledge" and her "effective gift of maintaining discipline," she was able to "give children of the neighborhood, including her own, the best foundation for a liberal and clean education."⁹

⁶ "Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T," Katherine Waddell Private Collection , Columbus GA; Delia Jordan Barnett, "Rachel Gunby Jordan," Katherine Waddell Private Collection , Columbus, GA; Nancy Telfair, "G. Gunby Jordan," *The Columbus Georgia Cemetery, 1828-1928*, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus GA; Nancy Telfair, "Robert Mills Gunby," *The Columbus Georgia Cemetery, 1828-1928*, Katherine Waddell Private Collection , Columbus, GA.

⁷ "Sylvester Jordan," 1850 United States Federal Census-Slave Schedules, National Archives; "Sylvester Jordan," 1850 United States Federal Census, National Archives., "Sylvester Jordan," 1860 United States Federal Census, National Archives.

⁸ Barnett, "Rachel Gunby Jordan," Katherine Waddell Private Collection .

⁹ Ibid.

Jordan would often discuss that his respect for his mother's work was the motivation behind his own desire to improve educational opportunities for students and to maintain exceptional teachers.¹⁰

His mother's brother, Robert Gunby, owned a wholesale grocery business in Columbus. Jordan's connection and relationship with his "Uncle Bob" would lead to many opportunities in his early twenties.¹¹ Little is known of the life of the Jordan family in Sparta before the Civil War, but at the conclusion of the war, G. Gunby Jordan relocated to Columbus, and both of his parents would eventually come to live with him. While the most biographical sketches of the southern elite in the 1880s would "exaggerate the hardships of youth and the struggle for social advancement," this "device was typical in the self-congratulatory, often highly sentimental life stories of American men of wealth in the nineteenth century."¹² Yet, Jordan, like one-third of the social-elite of major cities in Georgia, was born into the well-to-do merchant class before the war. His position both before and after the war would dictate much of his later successes in business and education.¹³

Civil War

When the Civil War broke out in 1860, Jordan was a young teenage boy of fourteen. From this young age, he felt the pain of war while living with his mother and father in Sparta. Jordan remained at home while his two older brothers, Robert P. Jordan and

¹⁰ Telfair, "G. Gunby Jordan," Katherine Waddell Private Collection; Telfair, "Robert Mills Gunby," Katherine Waddell Private Collection; "Last Will and Testament of G. Gunby Jordan," G. Gunby Jordan Papers, CSU Archives, Columbus, GA.

¹¹ G. Gunby Jordan to Rachel Gunby Jordan, May 21, 1864, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA.

¹² Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, 1990, 93.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 93.

William F. Jordan, joined the rebel effort. They died in battle in 1862.¹⁴ At the age of seventeen, Jordan decided that he too wished to join the army and fight for the Confederacy. It is difficult for this historian to imagine what Jordan's mother must have felt when her young son decided to follow in his older brothers footsteps after they had already paid the ultimate sacrifice for "the cause." I visualize Rachel's pleas for Jordan to remain at home with his parents, while the young Jordan, besotted with ideas of glory and honor, contends that this decision is part of his duty as a southerner. Whatever the conversation might have been, Rachel Jordan allowed her seventeen year old son to travel to Columbus where he joined T. M. Nelson's Independent Company, a cavalry unit known as Nelson's Rangers.

Jordan was seventeen when he enlisted in the army, but when exactly during his seventeenth year he traveled to Columbus to join Nelson's Rangers is uncertain. While numerous secondary sources indicate that Jordan enlisted in 1863, all of these sources were written after his death, and are based on the recollections of his son. Yet, four Civil War letters written to Jordan's mother and sister have survived and give some evidence that he actually enlisted the month before his eighteenth year in May 1864, although they are not in any way conclusive.¹⁵ Jordan chose to travel to his uncle's home in Columbus in order to enlist in the cavalry unit known as Nelson's Rangers. Upon arriving in Columbus in May 1864, Jordan described the scene in Columbus as very bleak; the value of Confederate currency dropped significantly (five dollars bills were only valued at three

¹⁴ 1850 Census of Sylvester Jordan; "G. Gunby Jordan Joined Army in Columbus," *The Sunday Ledger-Enquirer* (Columbus, Georgia), April 16, 1961.

¹⁵ G. Gunby Jordan to Rachel Gunby Jordan, May 21, 1864.

dollars and twenty-five cents) and business was “duller than” he “ever saw it. Every shade and kind of business is very, very dull.”¹⁶

In Jordan’s letter, he describes the many preparations that he embarked upon with the assistance of his uncle before he left his home in Columbus to join/rejoin the Nelson’s Rangers in Union Springs, Florida. He had made arrangements to travel to Florida alone on a horse that his Uncle Bob provided. Before making his journey to unite with Nelson’s Rangers, he, like many other enlistees, sat for portrait that he sent to his mother. Jordan complained, “It looks much younger and fairer than I do. But it was the second setting and I thought that I would quit.” The seventeen-year old Jordan was looking to distance himself from childlike endeavors, and he viewed his military service as a rite of passage into manhood. Yet, even with Jordan’s proclamations of manhood, he was greatly concerned with his parents’ well-being. Jordan bought new toothbrushes for his parents, sent his father an old pair of shoes, and price-checked thread and spelling books for his mother.¹⁷ After Jordan took care of these errands, he was able to successfully join with Nelson’s Rangers. The next letter that his mother received is dated July of 1864 from Meridian, Mississippi.

By July 23, 1864 Jordan had already participated in the Battle of Tupelo, Mississippi, during which the leader of Nelson’s Rangers, T. M. Nelson, was killed in action. Nelson’s death meant that another soldier from Columbus, G. G. Ragland, would take command of the independent company. Jordan confides in his mother that his company has been ordered to escort General Stephen Lee to Atlanta within a few days, but that he

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

and many of the other members of his company wish that they could remain in Mississippi as they would “be deprived of active service with so many troops about.”¹⁸ Many in his company hoped that they would pass through Columbus, but he did not believe that they would pass so far south. It would take three weeks to reach Atlanta, and Jordan believed that their lives would be more difficult once they arrived. His presumption proved to be correct, with the evacuation of Atlanta in September 1864 and the defeat of General Hood several miles south of Atlanta in Jonesboro meant that the Confederates would be encountering several brutal defeats before the conclusion of the war.¹⁹ Jordan noted that “affairs are so uncertain and privates know little of what is going on with the ‘big boys’ that we are always finding ourselves mistaken as to some prophecy that we made.”²⁰

While Jordan may not have been excited to travel as escort to General Stephen Lee in the summer of 1864, the two would share many similar accomplishments in the upcoming years. Lee too would seek to promote an “industrial” and “eminently practical” education for the South in the years following the Civil War. Yet, while Jordan focused primarily on secondary education, Lee worked to improve industrial education at the collegiate level, becoming the first president of Mississippi A&M. Both men would look toward Northern states as models for their new industrial schools; however, each man would ultimately work to create his own institution that would cater

¹⁸ G. Gunby Jordan to Rachel Gunby Jordan, June 23, 1864, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA.

¹⁹ Robert. M. Howard, *Reminiscences* (Columbus, Ga: Gilbert Printing Company, 1912), 50.

²⁰ G. Gunby Jordan to Rachel Gunby Jordan, June 23, 1864.

to a unique southern clientele.²¹ While no correspondence between the two men could be located, it is interesting to hypothesize what experiences they shared in 1864 and 1865 that would push both men to work so tirelessly toward industrial education.²²

Since only four letters written by Jordan during the Civil War have survived, whatever might have been lost when the “Yankees cut the wires and stopped communication” has been lost to time.²³ Yet, from the recollections of others who participated in the Nelson’s Rangers, much can be learned about Jordan’s time in the service of the Confederate States of America. A fellow soldier and companion of Jordan, Robert M. Howard, recalls much of their experiences within Nelson’s Independent Company in his book *Reminiscences* that was published in 1912. The company arrived in Atlanta in August 1864, and remained until General Hood evacuated the city on September 3, 1864 after what Howard deemed to be the “disastrous” Battle of Jonesboro, Georgia. From this location, they retreated to Lovejoy, Georgia, and then moved further south into Newnan, Georgia. They stayed until October, when General Hood began his Tennessee Campaign, which would prove to be the Confederate general’s downfall. Before they departed Georgia, in September, Jordan wrote to his sister Delia voicing his frustration over the ways in which the war was being fought:

to be despondent, I always thought foolish- nor am I ever really despondent- But a few plain facts stand out very plain concerning this Army- discouraged by so many

²¹ Herman Hattaway, *General Stephen D. Lee*, (Jackson, MS.: University Press of Mississippi, 1976), 178-180; G. Gunby Jordan, (Warm Springs, GA: Presentation to Georgia Industrial Association, 1901), Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906* (Columbus, Ga: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1906), 32.

²² Hattaway, *General Stephen D. Lee*, 1976, 178-180.

²³ G. Gunby Jordan to Rachel Gunby Jordan, June 23, 1864.

retreats--it is almost impossible to get them to charge works--I speak of Lee's Corps especially- I know little of the other corps--except that they are both better than Lee's.²⁴

In route to Tennessee, Nelson's Rangers marched along with Gen. Hood's forty thousand troops along railway lines,²⁵ and met with a few "spirited engagements" along the way in Resaca, Georgia along the Western and Atlantic Railroad.²⁶

In November, Hood left northern Alabama, where his troops had resided in the short term, and entered Tennessee. Civil War historian James McPherson noted how peculiar it was to have both General William T. Sherman and General Bell Hood, who had fought so tirelessly against one another, simply turn their back toward one another and march their separate ways. Sherman began his 285-mile march to the sea, and Hood dedicated himself to the Tennessee Campaign where he hoped to plow through Tennessee and pick up twenty thousand troops in Kentucky. Hood planned to rendezvous with General Robert E. Lee in Virginia and finally defeat Grant and Sherman. Yet, as McPherson noted, these "activities...seemed to have been scripted in never-never land." Hood's forty thousand men, whose shoes were so rotten that they were walking barefoot in the snow, were up against Union General Thomas' sixty thousand union soldiers.²⁷ It is interesting to imagine how these experiences of retreat and lost battles would impact the formation of Jordan's character. Would the stress of being subject to the will and often

²⁴ G. Gunby Jordan to Delia Jordan," September 10, 1864, Jordan-Barnett Papers, Athens, Georgia, University of Georgia Archives.

²⁵ James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York; Oxford University Press, 1988), 808.

²⁶ Howard, *Reminiscences*, 1912, 50.

²⁷ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 811.

foolishness of others propel him to seek out leadership positions where he could the make the big decisions later in his life? While he met unbelievable success in his post-war life, he had plenty of opportunities to feel the pangs of failure in his military career, notably in the final months of the Tennessee Campaign in the winter of 1864.

For Jordan and the rest of the Nelson's Rangers, one of the most memorable and tragic events of the war would occur shortly after they arrived in Columbia, Tennessee. On the opposite bank of the Duck River "there was a very large Federal force commanded by General Schofield,"²⁸ Hood attempted a maneuver made famous by Stonewall Jackson.²⁹ Two infantry troops and the esteemed cavalry of Nathan Bedford Forrest embarked "on a deep flanking march to get to Schofield's rear," but they were spotted by lookouts that lead to "uncoordinated rebel attacks that failed to dislodge the Yankees."³⁰ Jordan's companion in the Nelson's Rangers, Robert M. Howard, wrote that

Schofield made a hasty and disorderly retreat from his line on the river closely pursued by Lee and about 4 o'clock in the morning passed through that gap at Spring Hill and not even one gun was fired. A volley of twenty-five muskets would have undoubtedly caused an immediate surrender. Hundreds of men cried and begged to be allowed to shoot; and who should be held responsible for this greatest blunder of criminal negligence of the war on either side will probably never be known until the secrets of all hearts are revealed in the great and final judgment.³¹

²⁸ Howard, *Reminiscences*, 1912, 50.

²⁹ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 1988, 812.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 812.

³¹ Howard, *Reminiscences*, 1912, 51.

During the night General Schofield pulled his troops back. Hood, infuriated by the belief that his troops were only prepared to be on the defensive due to General Johnston's shying away from the more offensive stance, followed Gen. Schofield to lead a head on assault at Franklin on November 30th. Assuming that these protests were merely testimonies of their own "timidness," twenty-two thousand soldiers charged into a battle that would last well into the night.³² The Confederacy lost over seven thousand soldiers, three times as many as the Union. Robert Howard, Jordan's fellow soldier in Nelson's rangers, described the battle as the "greatest human slaughter of the war," the grisly scene noted in his *Reminiscences* stated that

it was a butcher pen in which human blood and human brains crimsoned the sod of that historic ground. Night did not end the terrible slaughter. They fought hand to hand in ...and the blood ceased to flow only when hearts ceased to throb. We had five generals killed on the field... some companies had scarcely a corporal's guard left alive. After 12 o'clock I heard General Hood order his corps commanders to put every cannon they had in position, fire one hundred rounds to each piece at break of day and then move forward; that he intended to take the place if it cost his own life and that of every man in the army.³³

The Battle of Franklin "shattered" General Hood's Army of Tennessee; Nelson's Rangers would follow Hood into one final battle at Nashville.³⁴ After two days of fighting, Hood's remaining "brigades toppled like dominos."³⁵ Hood resigned his position, and

³² McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 1988, 812-813.

³³ Howard, *Reminiscences*, 1912, 52.

³⁴ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 1988, 812.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 813-815.

command of the Nelson's Rangers fell to General Joe Johnston. The reorganization of the Army of Tennessee under Johnston's command meant that Jordan, along with the rest of the Nelson's Rangers, were ordered to North Carolina, where Johnston eventually surrendered the Army of Tennessee on April 26, 1865.

For Jordan and Howard, the war did not end on April 26, 1865. In letters written home to Jordan's sister Delia in early April 1865, Jordan is in good spirits, excited over the prospect of being paid four months of back wages and receiving apple brandy.³⁶ Howard hoped to take command of his own company of "colored soldiers" and received recommendations by company commander G.G. Ragland and General Stephen Lee in his official request to the Confederate Secretary of War. However, this scheme never took place.³⁷ Recollections from Jordan's relatives and Howard's own memoirs state that immediately before the official surrender, on the 26th of April, they discovered that Johnston was going to surrender the Army of Tennessee. They ran away in hopes of joining the Trans-Mississippi Army, which was commanded by General Kirby Smith, and was stationed west of the Mississippi River. While some sources state that they discovered Lee had surrendered (which occurred on April 9th, but might have been unknown due to slow and poor communication during the war),³⁸ other sources suggest that they abandoned the scheme upon hearing that General Kirby Smith surrendered

³⁶ G. Gunby Jordan Letter to Delia Jordan, April 8, 1865.

³⁷ R. M. Howard Letter to John C. Breckinridge, April 1, 1865, Compiled Confederate Service Records, National Archives; R.M. Howard Letter to John C. Breckinridge with Recommendation of Gen. Stephen D. Lee, April 2, 1865, Compiled Confederate Service Records, National Archives.

³⁸ "G. Gunby Jordan Joined Army in Columbus," *The Sunday Ledger-Enquirer* (Columbus, Georgia), April 16, 1961.

(which did not occur until May 26, 1865).³⁹ Regardless of whose surrender finally convinced them to abandon the scheme, the end result was that both Jordan and Howard were no longer employed by the Confederacy by early May. One confederate document describes the surrender of Jordan with Johnston's Army of Tennessee on April 26, 1865.⁴⁰ While this information contradicts the recollections from the Jordan and Howard families, this document may only prove that as a member of the Nelson's Rangers, Jordan was subject to the same rules of surrender as the rest of his company.

Untangling what Jordan and Howard claimed to have occurred at the conclusion of the war with historical fact is a difficult task. Historian Richard White examines the relationship that is shared between memory and the historical "scraps" that remain in primary sources.⁴¹ The scraps "are always calling stories into doubt" and "challenging memories."⁴² The inconsistencies that exist within Jordan's Civil War record have challenged the memories held by his descendants and friends.⁴³ But as White discovered in his own exploration of his mother's memories within his work *Remembering Ahanagan: a History of Stories*, there was "nothing" that his mother told him that was "without some basis in the past."⁴⁴ I believe the same phenomenon to be true for Jordan's memories; everything that Jordan and Howard described was either based in fact or remembered fact.

³⁹ Howard, *Reminiscences*, 1912, 55.

⁴⁰ G. Gunby Jordan, Compiled Service Records, National Archives.

⁴¹ Richard White, *Remembering Ahanagan: A History of Stories* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1998), 4

⁴² *Ibid.*, 4-5

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

The conclusion of Jordan's teenage years were essential in formation of the character of the man that would in future dominate the Columbus economic and educational community at the turn of the century. His experiences provided him with the political clout that was necessary to become a progressive southern gentleman in the New South. Richard White laments that the disentangling of memory and history illustrates the "cruelty of recovering what memory seeks to bury or disguise."⁴⁵ With memories of the Civil War fresh in his mind, G. Gunby Jordan began a new chapter in Columbus; his aspirations would stretch well beyond his merchant class background. Jordan's tenure in the Confederate Army propelled him into a role befitting an industrialist and progressive democrat in the late nineteenth century. He would draw on his wartime experiences to reinvent himself as one of the "big boys" that he looked up to while in Nelson's Rangers.⁴⁶ Now he would be the one to make the decisions, and draw out battle plans. Industry, social reform, and education in Columbus would feel the impact of his education for years to come.

Starting Anew in Columbus

The conclusion of the war brought about a lot of changes for Jordan. Having endured an extensive rite of passage into manhood within the Confederate army, Jordan set out to make his way in Columbus, with help from Robert Mills Gunby (Uncle Bob). Jordan began his business career at his uncle's firm. Mr. Robert Gunby was Jordan's mother's brother. Robert moved to Columbus from Columbia County, Georgia before the outbreak of the Civil War, and he was the senior member of the wholesale grocery firm

⁴⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁶ G. Gunby Jordan to Rachel Gunby Jordan, June 23, 1864.

Gunby, Croft, and Company. As a clerk and bookkeeper for his uncle's firm, Jordan made his way into the business community of Columbus.⁴⁷

Although Jordan had not attended any trade school due to his service in the Confederate Army, he did seek the tutelage of his mother before he began his employment in the firm. Returning to Columbus in 1866, Jordan was appointed as the treasurer of the newly reorganized Eagle and Phenix Mills. This appointment too may have had a great deal owed to his "Uncle Bob" as he was Eagle Mill's first president before it was reorganized as the Eagle and Phenix Mill after the Civil War.⁴⁸

Jordan used this first step into the financial world as a stepping-stone into the banking and insurance industries in Columbus. In 1875, he was appointed as the cashier for the savings bank associated with the Eagle and Phenix Mill. The position would lead to several others in the banking industry; Jordan would eventually organize the Third National Bank as its president in 1888, and the Columbus Bank and Trust in 1889, and he would remain in the presidential capacity until 1921.⁴⁹

A local story associated with the establishment of Jordan's interest in the banking industry is that a female textile worker caught her dress in the textile machinery and several dollar bills that she had sewn into the hem of her dress were scattered along the mill floor. When asked by Jordan and the other administrators of the mill why she had

⁴⁷ Nancy Telfair, "G. Gunby Jordan," Katherine Waddell Private Collection; Nancy Telfair, "Robert Mills Gunby, Katherine Waddell Private Collection; "Last Will and Testament of G. Gunby Jordan," G. Gunby Jordan Papers, CSU Archives; "Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T," Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

⁴⁸ Nancy Telfair, "G. Gunby Jordan," Katherine Waddell Private Collection Katherine Katherine Waddell Private Collection ; Nancy Telfair, "Robert Mills Gunby, Katherine Waddell Private Collection; "Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T," Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

⁴⁹ "Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T," Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

sewn the money into her dress, she replied that she had no other safe place to keep it. This event is said to have sparked Jordan's idea to create a bank to serve the needs of the textile workers of Columbus. Outside the entrance to the Columbus Bank and Trust currently resides a bronze statue of a woman attempting to wrestle her dress out of the textile machinery that commemorates this story.⁵⁰

Although the truth behind this story cannot be verified, the purpose that it serves in the development of the banking system in Columbus and Jordan's role within this organization is nevertheless important. Jordan's desire that the banking industry appear to be caring and in touch with the needs of the textile workers is satisfied by the exploitation of this remembered past. The industrial and financial leaders attempted to convey that they cared for the working class citizens of Columbus, and that they wanted to help them improve their circumstances. Numerous advertisements sponsored by Jordan and the banks he represented in the *Columbus Enquirer* and the *Columbus Ledger* throughout the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s litter the paper with slogans such as "most any one can make money, but only the wise ones save it! If you will only save what you waste, it would be no trouble to become independent."⁵¹ These assurances guaranteed that it was the ideal time to invest money, and encouraged workers to continually manage their funds by placing their wages in the company saving accounts that would give them their desired independence. Ironically, the company in which they were investing their

⁵⁰ "William B. Turner Courtyard Dedication, Columbus Bank and Trust, <https://columbusbankandtrust.synovus.com/index.cfm?ID=1271>.

⁵¹ "Save Your Money" *Daily Enquirer-Sun* (Columbus, Georgia), Oct. 2, 1874; "Columbus Savings Bank," *Daily Enquirer-Sun* (Columbus, GA), Sept. 14, 1889.

savings in was usually the same company that placed mill workers in a constant state of reoccurring debt.⁵²

These reminders and assurances of security were very much needed in the 1890s in the banking industry. The Panic of 1893 was the greatest recession that the country had ever faced by that time. The banking industry was fraught with unease and anxiety over the lack of gold in the Federal Reserve, and the possibility of the introduction of silver coinage increased panic and distress in the country. Jordan had been appointed as the president of the Georgia State Bankers Association in 1895, and even gave the opening address at the national convention held in Atlanta that same year. The attendees of the national banking convention stressed their disapproval of the possibility of the introduction of more silver into the market, and they suggested that fifty percent of the bank's capital be invested in treasury notes. They also pushed for additional safety nets to ensure that many more banks did not continue to fail during the ongoing economic crisis.⁵³

In addition to his banking endeavors, by the 1880s Jordan had entered into the insurance business, as well. He was the director of numerous insurance companies, including the Southern Mutual Insurance Company and the General Fire Extinguisher Company.⁵⁴ Protecting against fire damage was of paramount importance to Jordan. In

⁵² Jacqueline Dowd Hall et al., *Like A Family: The Making of the Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

⁵³ "Georgia State Bankers Convention," *The Roanoke Times*, June 14, 1895; C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1987), 123, 264; "The Bankers Convention," *The Roanoke Times*, October 16, 1895.

⁵⁴ "Jordan and Blackmar, our Fire Insurance Companies," *Columbus Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), December 24, 1880, *Friday Morning*; "Jordan and Blackmar, Fire Insurance Agents," *Columbus Sunday Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), August 10, 1877; "Fireman's Fund Insurance," *Sunday Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), December 28, 1873.

his early years in Columbus, he was an active participant in the volunteer fire department. He founded the Number Four Fire Company, an “elite” group “comprised of young men 18 to 24 years of age,” that were “extremely alert.”⁵⁵ Consequently, the older companies viewed Number Four with a great deal of jealousy. Jordan would become the chief of the volunteer fire department in 1886, and was the first to convince the city to begin compensating the firefighters in 1887. He remained chief until the following year when a fully compensated fire department replaced the volunteer force.⁵⁶ The desire to protect against the fire would bleed into his other business ventures in the textile mills and construction industry, as the number one threat to a textile mill was the possibility of fire. The Jordan Company, founded and presided over by Jordan, would work to decrease the possibility of fire. Sprinklers were placed in their buildings, an addition that was in no way standard in the 1880s and 1890s in Columbus.⁵⁷

Jordan’s business ventures in Columbus ranged from the small trade industries to the core banking and textile industries. These business opportunities gave him numerous opportunities to mix and mingle with people from various class and social groups within Columbus, and these experiences almost certainly influenced his future educational philosophy. Jordan owned tire companies and worked to incorporate various newspapers.⁵⁸ He purchased his own steamship, which transported citizens as well as

⁵⁵ “History of the Columbus Fire Department,” Gunby Girard Papers, Columbus, GA.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ The inventor of the “valve sprinkler with oscillating deflector” was a fellow Columbus resident named John Hill. Gorham Dana, S.B., *Automatic Sprinkler Protection*, (New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons, 1919), 39. 384; “The Engineering Record: Building Record and Sanitary Engineer,” (January, 1904), 67; *The Industrian 1921*, (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1921), 18.

⁵⁸ “The Columbus Board of Trade,” *Daily Enquirer-Sun* (Columbus, GA), Sept. 2, 1890, Tuesday Morning; “Honorable G. Gunby Jordan appointed by Governor Northern as Railroad

cargo throughout the southeast until it struck a rock in 1881 and sunk.⁵⁹ Jordan was very interested in transportation of all sorts. Increasing the modes of transportation was not only essential for his business, but it was also a symbol of progress for the South. Jordan became significantly involved in the Western-Atlantic Commission, which sought to connect the eastern and western railways, as well as local railroads. In addition to his transportation interests, Jordan worked throughout his political career to construct better-paved roads running in and out of Columbus.⁶⁰ The development of the transportation in Columbus helped to make the Jordan as synonymous with the growth, advancement, and improvement of the South, and would establish his reputation that would follow him into his political and educational career.

By 1889, Jordan began his presidential career over numerous textile mills, beginning with the Eagle and Phenix in 1889, then Perkins Hosery Mills in 1902, and the Bibb Manufacturing Company in 1909.⁶¹ While his tenure with these industries is explored further in chapter three, it is important to note how the connections that he made within the banking, insurance, construction, and textile industries were all related to one another; Jordan's successes in his educational and political endeavors were all dependent on his business achievements. By this time, Jordan had established a reputation as a caring and protective New South gentleman. He would parley the goodwill he engendered in Columbus to experiment in the political and educational arena. Jordan understood that he

Commissioner," *The Durham Daily Globe* (Durham, NC), June 28, 1894; "Fire Insurance: Fireman's Fun Insurance," *Sunday Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), Dec. 28, 1873;"In The Hands of the Receivers," *The Roanoke Daily*, June 14, 1896; "Petition to Incorporate," *Daily Enquirer-Sun* (Columbus, GA), May 28, 1886.

⁵⁹ "The Steamer G. Gunby Jordan..." *The Public Ledger* (Columbus, GA), November 4, 1881.

⁶⁰ "Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T," Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

⁶¹ "Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T," Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

would need capital to accomplish his goals, thus, he utilized his business connections to further his educational beliefs and accomplish his educational goals.

Family

By age thirty-five, Jordan had already accomplished much to make him a desirable candidate for any young southern girl to marry; a war veteran, successful banker and insurance agent, and volunteer fire fighter were just a few of the young Jordan's economic and social accomplishments. On February 1881, Jordan began the next step in the creation of his established legacy – he married Lizzie Beecher Curtis, the twenty-two year old daughter of a Columbus merchant Norris Newton Curtis and Sarah Beecher Curtis. Lizzie was born on August 2, 1859 in Durham, Connecticut. She moved to Columbus as an infant, as it was the home of her father N. N. Curtis. One newspaper article described her at her death as being “given a brightness of mind [and] beauty of a person and a soul as pure as the snow wreath.” Her social class was very similar to that of her new husband; she had been “reared tenderly and given every advantage, she grew into womanhood the beloved of a host of friends.”⁶²

The wedding of Mr. and Mrs. G. Gunby Jordan was a citywide event. With almost a full-page spread in the *Columbus Enquirer* titled “*Well-Mated—A Brilliant Marriage Consummated*,” every detail of the event was reported to the general population of Columbus.⁶³ Particulars of the floral arrangements, “(the building was gracefully decked with evergreens and flowers” and “a massive marriage bell of rare white flowers” that “was the perfection of taste),” the bride and groom's clothing as well as each of the

⁶² “Funeral Notice Mrs. Lizzie B. Jordan,” *Columbus-Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), May 2, 1882.

⁶³ “Well-Mated—A Brilliant Marriage Consummated,” *Columbus-Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), Feb. 27, 1881.

fourteen male and female attendants and the two flower girls were all described with extremely flowery language proclaiming how no wedding had ever matched this event in sophistication and beauty. Indeed, as the bride wore a “dress of creamy white satin...Queen Elizabeth style, richly embroidered with pearls” and the veil was “fastened with natural orange blossoms and diamonds.” The author may have been quite sincere when he proclaimed, “never a maiden did seem lovelier,” or at least not as richly dressed.⁶⁴

The wedding proceeded with a reception at the bride’s family home. Numerous other parties and receptions were hosted by Jordan’s mother at her home and by the wedding attendants at the local hotel, The Rankin House. After these many celebrations, the bride and groom set off for their honeymoon to New Orleans. However, the celebration continued on into the beginning of the honeymoon, as the wedding party accompanied the newlyweds as far as Opelika, Alabama, compliments of the railroad company.⁶⁵

From the sources available for review, there is nothing to suggest that the Jordans did not have a happy marriage filled with “domestic sweets,” although their happiness was cut short by an unexpected tragedy.⁶⁶ Shortly after their wedding, Lizzie became pregnant with their first child Ralph Curtin Jordan (known primarily as R.C.), who was born April 25, 1882. Yet, less than a week later, on May 1, 1882, Lizzie died of complications during childbirth. This heartbreaking tragedy would affect Jordan for the remainder of his life. The funeral announcement noted that she was “conscious to the end, she recognized those around her and but a few moments before the hour had come to

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ “Funeral Notice Mrs. Lizzie B. Jordan,” *Columbus-Enquirer*, May 2, 1882.

[and] drew her heartbroken husband to her and gave directions about her babe.”⁶⁷ Lizzie would be buried in the wedding dress she had worn little more than a year earlier, and many of the same men who ushered her wedding the previous February served as pallbearers for her casket on May 2, 1882.⁶⁸

The consequences of this event in Jordan’s life are significant. There is a distinct possibility that this familial catastrophe propelled him even further into his work as a method of coping with the pain. Jordan kept moving, engaging in new business and political ventures along the way. He never remarried, and he kept a large portrait of his wife by his bedside for the remainder of his life.⁶⁹

That July, Jordan constructed an opulent new home for himself, one that was surely originally intended to be the residence for his wife and newborn child.⁷⁰ However, Jordan would live there primarily alone; the new baby boy would spend most of his early years with his maternal step-grandmother Martha and aunt Alice.⁷¹ R.C. Jordan would endeavor to grow into the shoes of his father. He would continue in many of the same business ventures as his father, and he expanded the Jordan family influence into the automotive industry, owning several dealerships throughout his life. When R.C. married

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Although Jordan never remarried, there is some evidence of a romantic relationship with someone who he deemed his “Annabel Lee” in 1892, as evidenced by an anonymous letter that was addressed in or to Memphis, Tennessee in 1892. Yet the letter was never to be sent, so the poem written to “Annabel Lee” might have been an allusion to his departed wife, as in Edgar Allen Poe’s poem “Annabel Lee” the love interest of the author dies, G. Gunby Jordan to unidentified person in Memphis, Tennessee, September 23, 1892, G. Gunby Jordan Collection, CSU Archives.

⁷⁰ “The work on G. Gunby’s new residence...” *Columbus Sunday Enquirer-Sun* (Columbus, GA), July 2, 1882.

⁷¹ Unpublished autobiography of G. Gunby Jordan II, Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

Louisa Mott Mulford in 1914, they would live with G. Gunby Jordan in his estate known as the Green Island Ranch, a home in which his descendants still live.⁷²

R.C. Jordan was born before Jordan had established direct influence over the Columbus Public Schools. Thus, he attended the Tenth Street School (a public school) for his primary education and a private academy for his secondary education. He then attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for his for two years pursuing his bachelor's degree. He enjoyed his time at M.I.T. and found himself quite at home as the head of his fraternity house; he even brought along his childhood servant (his race unknown) to Boston with him to serve as the fraternity house cook. Unfortunately, due to a thyroid problem, R.C. grew ill and did not finish his degree. He then spent two years as a surveyor for the Coastland Geodetic, a federal agency, mapping mountain ranges in Oregon, before once again taking up residence in Columbus in 1904.⁷³ Would R.C. have been able to finish his degree if he had lived in a warmer climate? R.C. may have felt reluctant to continue his education due to his extended absence, which could explain his unexpected sojourn to Oregon with its own extremely harsh winters. R.C. Jordan's experience may have inspired his father into furthering industrial education in the South, as he soon began to experiment with educational projects around the city.

R.C. Jordan's son George Gunby Jordan II developed a very special relationship with his grandfather. G. Gunby Jordan II grew up in his grandfather's household at the Green Island Ranch. He was a strong and healthy boy, who engaged in various sports and

⁷² Ibid., "Jordan Family Tree," Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA.

⁷³ Unpublished autobiography of G. Gunby Jordan II, Katherine Waddell Private Collection; G. Gunby Jordan II, Unpublished History of Jordan Family, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, 11.

activities. He attended public schools in Columbus, though not the Industrial High School which his grandfather had worked so hard to create. He started Columbus High School at the young age of eleven, and after two years, he went on to the Kent School, a prestigious New England preparatory school, and then attend Yale University. At the age of fifteen, G. Gunby II referred to his grandfather as his best friend; he was utterly devastated when G. Gunby died while he was away at prep school. In his grandson, Jordan had found the person to maintain and build on his legacy in Columbus. G. Gunby II was very apt to seek out new business and educational opportunities in Columbus, although, unlike his grandfather, he bolstered the private sector of education.⁷⁴ Jordan had worked hard to bring the public and private sectors closer together; however, his descendants sought to develop private education separately from public education in order to circumvent the many restrictions and regulations prevalent in the public sector.⁷⁵

Family played an essential role in Jordan's life. Not only did he look to his family to continue and further his legacy, but he also relished the time that he spent with his son and his grandchildren. Jordan's one year with Lizzie had a monumental influence on the remainder of his life, as he would carry that sense of loss into his political, social, and business transactions. For example, after World War I, Jordan sponsored numerous orphan children in France, sending money in addition to letters, sweets, and care packages. He and his son appeared to be very sensitive to the plight of children who had lost a parent in the Great War.⁷⁶ Could this have been one more item to fill the gap left

⁷⁴ Unpublished autobiography of G. Gunby Jordan II, Katherine Waddell Private Collection

⁷⁵ "Unique School to Open as Result of Child Labor Law," *The Sunday Star* (Washington, D.C.), September 30, 1906; Unpublished autobiography of G. Gunby Jordan II, Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

⁷⁶ WWI Postcards, G. Gunby Jordan Collection, CSU Archives , Columbus, GA.

behind by Lizzie's absence? When one suffers a great loss, there are numerous ways of coping. Jordan was no stranger to death, having had two brothers and many neighbors and friends die in the Civil War. But Lizzie's death would be the most acute for Jordan, and he filled the void with accomplishment after accomplishment, business deal after business deal, and with the establishment of an elite social status within the city of Columbus.

Politics, Railroads, and Race

Jordan's political and business successes enjoyed a symbiotic relationship over the course of Jordan's life. The more he extended his influence in the private sector, the more desirable he became within the public sector. Jordan was never elected to the prestigious position of mayor, senator, or even governor (although he had many people wish that he would engage in these political positions);⁷⁷ he preferred to work closer to the actual ongoing projects as the chairman of numerous committees, commissions, and boards. He worked closely with several governors, and was even appointed by the president of the United States to perform certain tasks.⁷⁸

Like most aspiring southern gentleman during this time, Jordan was an active member of the Democratic Party, and he found leadership positions within the party in the 1880s. He was appointed as a Muscogee delegate to attend the Democratic National Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1880, and he was appointed in 1883 as a member of the staff of

⁷⁷ "Politics and Politicians," *Palestine Daily Herald* (Palestine, Texas), February 9, 1909; "Petition and Letter addresses to G. Gunby Jordan to run for Mayor, Columbus, Georgia," October 13, 1897, G.Gunby Jordan Papers, CSU Archives, Columbus, GA; "Honorable G. Gunby Jordan appointed by Governor Northern as Railroad Commissioner," *The Durham Daily Globe*, June 28, 1894.

⁷⁸ "Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T," Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

Governor Alexander Stephens of Georgia, the former vice-president of the Confederacy in 1883.⁷⁹ His tenure with Governor Stephens would be brief, as Stephens died four months into office, but Jordan would continue a working relationship with many future governors over the next few decades. His private business ventures would continue to cross over into the public sphere, beginning with his railroad projects. Jordan aspired to “rescue Columbus from the railroad monopoly” that existed in Columbus in the 1870s.⁸⁰ He served as president of the Georgia Midland Construction Company and the Georgia Midland Railroad Company; the first meant to serve in the construction of the latter, a project that would connect Columbus to Atlanta via railway. His work in this venture drew the attention of politicians; Governor Henry McDaniel appointed him as the state railroad commissioner in 1894. This appointment meant that he had to sell his stock shares of the Georgia Midland Railroad Company. He would make up for this loss in his future appointments; Governor Northern appointed Jordan as a member of the Western-Atlantic Commission in 1891, and President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Jordan chairman of the same commission in 1907.⁸¹

Jordan’s political appointments and his involvement with the railroads would help shape his philosophy for education in the South. In 1904, Governor Joseph Terrell appointed Jordan as the President of the Georgia Immigration Association.⁸² Jordan

⁷⁹ “Muscogee Democrats,” *Columbus Sunday Enquirer* (Columbus, Georgia), May 16, 1880; “Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T,” Katherine Waddell Private Collection .

⁸⁰ “Honorable G. Gunby Jordan appointed by Governor Northern as Railroad Commissioner,” *The Durham Daily Globe*, June 28, 1894; “Railroad Rumbblings,” *Daily Enquirer Sun* (Columbus, GA), August 14, 1865.

⁸¹ “Honorable G. Gunby Jordan appointed by Governor Northern as Railroad Commissioner,” *The Durham Daily Globe*, June 28, 1894; “Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T,” Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

⁸² *Ibid.*

would utilize this position to promote his ideas of industrial education and racial issues. Jordan, like many of his contemporaries, believed that the black residents of the South were inherently lazy and needed to be goaded into being active participants in civilized society. He wrote several articles and spoke at numerous meetings concerning the “Southern Negro,” and he warned that if they did not become more consistent in their work habits, that able-bodied immigrants from Europe would replace them. Jordan planned to utilize his position in the railroads to facilitate the migration of these peoples from New England into the South.⁸³

In 1907, while presiding over the disbursement of diplomas for colored schools in his role as president of the school board, Jordan gave a highly publicized speech, which was later titled “Plain Words to Colored Men.”⁸⁴ In this speech, Jordan sought “to give a word of advice to his colored friends there assembled.”⁸⁵ He then went on to state how he had no “quarrel” with individual negroes, as he had himself a “black mammy” that he cared for very much and had “surrounded himself with negro employees and found them to be faithful.”⁸⁶ However, Jordan continued, “the race as a whole...lacks reliability and thrift” and it is “essentially important that the negro should cultivate habits of punctuality, reliability, and integrity if he hoped to hold his own race.”⁸⁷ Jordan and the others who approved of this philosophy of subordination could not discern the lack of consistency

⁸³ “Plans to Secure Good Immigrants,” *The Sentinel-Journal* (Pickens, SC), Feb. 23, 1907; “Why Immigrants Don’t Come South,” *Live Oak Daily Democrat* (Live Oak, FL), July 5, 1907; “Georgians go for Immigrants,” *Gainesville Daily Sun*, (Gainesville, FL), April 11, 1907; “Immigration and the Southern Negro,” *The Times Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), June 23, 1907.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

within this argument. Jordan spoke of the supposed friendship that he wished to bestow upon blacks while at the same time threatening to take their employment away. The perceptions of white residents of Columbus towards the black citizens continued to be stagnant and repressive.⁸⁸ Newspapers throughout Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, and Virginia all ran articles crediting Jordan's speech as the "Handwriting on the Wall" for blacks in the South.⁸⁹

Jordan made true on his promise to promote the immigration of "good immigrants" to the South.⁹⁰ In 1907, Jordan and Governor Hoke Smith traveled to Europe to ascertain why more European immigrants did not travel to the South when they chose to immigrate to the United States. They hoped to entice more immigrants to travel southward when they made the decision to come to the United States in search of a better life. The party planned to travel to Germany, France, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and Scotland—although most of the progress toward an immigrant plan appeared to be made in Germany.⁹¹ At the conclusion of their trip, the party reported that they had discovered the reasons behind the lack of immigrants coming to the American South. Europeans believed that the poverty in the South was pandemic, and they felt that if they immigrated to the South, they would be of a social class equal to that of black southerners.⁹² It is interesting that Europeans were able to pinpoint the unfair treatment of blacks in the South from across the ocean, yet Jordan and his colleagues failed to see that any injustice was bestowed

⁸⁸ "Eat Worsen Than a Caterpillar," *Columbus Sunday Enquirer Sun* (Columbus, GA), June 8, 1879.

⁸⁹ "Handwriting on the Wall," *The Watchman and Southron* (Sumter, SC), August, 7, 1907.

⁹⁰ "Plans to Secure Good Immigrants," *The Sentinel-Journal*, Feb. 23, 1907.

⁹¹ Dewey W. Grantham Jr., *Hoke Smith and the Politics of the New South* (Louisiana State Press; Ann Arbor Michigan, 1967), 157-158.

⁹² "Why Immigrants Don't Come South," *Live Oak Daily Democrat*, July 5, 1907.

upon the blacks that he deemed to be so unreliable. Jordan did not make this connection, and he set about to try and create new methods to entice European immigrants to come to the South. Jordan and his colleagues held meetings throughout the various countries they visited in order to “disabuse the minds of the people with whom they came into contact of the erroneous impression they had of the South,” and planned to create flyers and pamphlets in multiple languages to be disbursed throughout Europe.⁹³ Jordan believed that “continuous attention” would be needed if any progress were to come from their trip, as they had only reached a small number of people.⁹⁴

The group was able to establish a relationship with the Lloyd Steamship Company. They “would shortly institute a combination of passenger and freight service from Berlin direct to Savannah, with sailings every three weeks.”⁹⁵ The first set of workers was to arrive the following fall when workers were needed most for the cotton crop.⁹⁶ While this grand scheme may have done much to appease the Democrats’ frustration with the “negro problem,” no mass groups of immigrants ever made their way southward.⁹⁷ The political winds of Georgia shifted and the support of a mass immigration to Georgia would soon be viewed as political suicide for men like Hoke Smith and Jordan. With Hoke Smith’s political opponent, Tom Watson’s outright rejection of immigration reform, Smith began to find less support for the “importation” of European immigrants. The Southern Cotton Association, the Farmer’s Union, and the Georgia State Federation

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ “Georgians go for Immigrants,” *Gainesville Daily Sun*, Gainesville, 1907.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ “Handwriting on the Wall,” *The Watchman and Southron*, August, 7, 1907; Grantham, *Hoke Smith and the Politics of the New South*, 1967, 157-159.

of Labor all “adopted strong resolutions opposing immigration.”⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Jordan and Hoke Smith would continue to share other similar political interests in the future. Smith would promote and ultimately pass legislation that would fund vocational education, as he was the co-sponsor of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917.⁹⁹

Jordan brought all of these experiences with him as he sat on the Board of Education for the Columbus Public Schools. Plans for new immigrant populations and the disenfranchisement of African Americans in the South were just as influential on his career in education as the construction of new schools and experimental and progressive teaching strategies (which are explored in chapters four and five). The question remains: if not for his prejudices and life experiences, would Jordan have developed all of the educational reforms for which he has become so well known? I do not think so. In his haste to ensure educational opportunities for whites and to subordinate blacks, Jordan felt a sense of urgency in the need to produce these new schools and prospects for his fellow white southerners. Thus, Jordan’s experiences with politics, transportation, and immigration helped him to better advocate for his ideal industrial education in Columbus.

Conclusion

Jordan’s social status and family background placed him in the position to become a member of a well-respected cavalry unit within the Confederacy. During his time in this independent company, Jordan encountered various retreats and defeats, and he witnessed numerous neighbors and comrades perish. Jordan articulated on several occasions his frustration in being left out of the important decisions that the “big boys” continually

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 157-159.

⁹⁹ John Hillison, “The Coalition that Supported the Smith-Hughes Act or a Case of Strange Bedfellows,” *Journal of Vocational and Technical Education* (Spring 1995): 4-11.

made; this frustration would inspire him to seek out leadership positions in business and politics almost immediately after his return to civilian life.¹⁰⁰ His time in Nelson's Rangers gave him the political clout he needed to pursue top leadership positions in the public and private sectors in Columbus and the state of Georgia. Through his many accomplishments, both during and after the war, Jordan found himself in an ideal position to court and marry Lizzie B. Curtis, a young girl of equal social status. A marriage cut short by the death of his beloved young wife drove Jordan to dedicate himself to a prolific career in Columbus' public and private sectors.

Lizzie's death would also inspire Jordan to keep his remaining family near, and increase his desire to create excellent educational opportunities for the children and citizens of Columbus. Jordan positioned himself on various commissions, committees, and boards with the intention to improve the life of southerners. Whether this improvement came by way of better transportation options such as his steamer, the *G. Gunby Jordan*, or the opening of the Georgia Midland Railway Company, the goal was always the same. Jordan continually sought to expand his influence and power so that he would have more opportunities to create the ideal "southland," which was both connected to the rest of the country, and also not too dependent on any one region or industry. The South would need an educated and skillful workforce to be successful. Jordan believed that blacks would not meet this need of their own accord, thus Jordan, seeing a continued lack immigrant labor, believed that the solution of producing good workers to meet the

¹⁰⁰ G. Gunby Jordan to Rachel Gunby Jordan, May 21, 1864; "Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T," Katherine Waddell Private Collection; "Politics and Politicians," *Palestine Daily Herald*, February 9, 1909; "Petition and Letter addresses to G. Gunby Jordan to run for Mayor, Columbus, Georgia, October 13, 1897," G. Gunby Jordan Papers, CSU Archives.

needs of the New South was to develop authentic and innovative industrial schools in the towns and cities across Georgia. The care and attention he spent on generating this “New South Southern Gentleman” persona would help to propel his interests in education and industrialization. In the next chapter, I illustrate how Jordan used philanthropy in his public and private life as a stepping-stone to construct his ideal school system.

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CHAPTER 3

PATERNALISM VERSUS FRATERNALISM; TEXTILE MILLS, PHILANTHROPY, AND THE CREATION OF THE SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN

Textile mills were essential in the development of both G. Gunby Jordan and the city of Columbus. Jordan's work in the textile mills would inspire, mold, and justify his policies toward social welfare and education. In this chapter I examine how Jordan's involvement in the textile mill industry was the impetus for his decision to become an active industrial and educational philanthropist. Jordan, like many other nineteenth century industrialists, embraced the emerging social engineering movement and encouraged the moral development of his mill operatives through incentive programs, education, planned communities, and clubs.

Jordan's family connections, his confederate loyalties, his rebel valor, and his post-war business experiences all factored in development of his New South southern gentleman persona. Noted historian C. Vann Woodward questions the use of the term "New South" by historians, as it is a weighted term created by the slogans and artificial optimism about the economic and patriotic future of the southern United States.¹ It was a "rallying cry" that set the South apart from the "old order" southern aristocrats who were not focused on industrial proliferation, but in maintaining their current landed status through agricultural means.² Taking these historical themes into consideration, I will use

¹ C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1987), ix-x.

² *Ibid.*, ix.

the term New South to describe the southern philosophy promoted by Henry Grady who popularized the term.³ Grady, like Jordan, believed “that Georgia was governed by the new industrialists.”⁴ Jordan embodied elements of both the “old order” and “new order,” which allowed him to gain numerous advantages and opportunities in the city of Columbus by being able to navigate the social customs of the “old order” while instituting progressive policies of the “new.”⁵ I explore how Jordan’s dual identity – belonging both to the Old Order and the New South - was not only integral to his success, but it was also a characteristic that set him apart from the common man, who he claimed so desperately to want to help. His fluidity between worlds manifested itself in his unprecedented successes; Jordan executed his traditional and modern agendas through the use of the paternalistic mill model. Paternalism enabled him to embody characteristics of both the old and new economic philosophies. Paternalism which had long been utilized to restrict the freedom and opportunities of poor whites and blacks in the South (while the ruling class maintained that their desires were in best interest of their subordinates), offered mill owners the structure and security necessary to “uplift” their mill operatives while maintaining economic, social, and moral control of their workforce.⁶ While many believed in the paternalistic philosophy, others adhered to a fraternalistic economic model which maintained that charity and regulations on behavior would not be needed if society and laws were truly equitable. I. A. Newby argues in *Plain Folk in the New South* that

³ James C. Cobb, "Segregating the New South: The Origins and Legacy of *Plessy v. Ferguson*," (Atlanta, GA: Georgia State University Law Review Vol. 12: Iss. 4, 1995): 1017-1036.

⁴ Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 147.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 113

⁶ I. A. Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South; Social Change and Cultural Persistence 1880-1915*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 271.

“the essence of mill paternalism derived not from the exploitation it facilitated but the reciprocal relationship it defined. That relationship, between owners and folk, was unequal but mutually dependent.”⁷ In order for this relationship to work, the paternalist mill owners must accept the customs and traditions of the mill workers. To be “benevolent” one “must understand the ways of the folk” from making courteous “greetings” to tolerating the use of “snuff and tobacco.”⁸ While it is difficult to discern how “benevolent” Jordan was perceived to be by his mill workers with the limited primary sources available, his struggle between paternalism and fraternalism is apparent in Jordan’s actions and policies in Columbus and the textile mills.

Beginning with a brief history of the textile mills in Columbus, I explore how the mills helped both to further stratify class and race in Columbus and also to serve as a platform for Jordan to base his future educational reform policies. I then examine the role that child labor played in the development of Columbus, and how Jordan sought to use resources such as the Eagle and Phenix Club as a means to “save” the young mill “operatives” from a “vagrant’s life.”⁹ Jordan’s experiences with philanthropy in the textile mills would propel him to become one of the leading citizens in the city of Columbus, and would encourage him to enter into local politics. In conclusion, I examine how his New South southern gentleman persona had the potential to both support and hinder his educational and industrial legacy. Ultimately, Jordan’s experiences in politics and city leadership illustrate how his actions and policies remained intact.

⁷ Ibid., 262.

⁸ Ibid., 270.

⁹ F. B. Gordon, “President Mill, Columbus, GA. Answer ‘The Last Stronghold of Infant Mill Slavery,’” *Social Service: A Review of Social and Industrial Betterment*, (May 1902):148-149.

History of the Mills in Columbus, Georgia

Jordan first became involved with the textile industry in Columbus at the end of the Civil War. However, contrary to the proclamations of many revisionist historians, industrialization existed in the southern United States long before the Civil War; Columbus, Georgia is the proof of this pre-war industrialization.¹⁰ The Chattahoochee River was the true force behind Columbus' industrial success; the "water level drops over one hundred and twenty-five feet in two and a half miles," and this drop in elevation enabled Columbus to generate over one hundred thousand horsepower of energy.¹¹ The city of Columbus was officially established in 1828; nine years later, in 1837, the first textile mill was established. By 1860, Columbus was the second largest textile center in the southern United States.¹²

Of the many mills in Columbus, "no star would shine brighter than the Eagle and Phenix Mill." Built in 1850, the Eagle Mill, which was named by New York native William H. Young and incorporated by Robert Mills Gunby, thrived during the Civil War.¹³ The Eagle Mill was not alone in its economic success during the Civil War. Many businesses in the city adapted their skills to fit the wartime needs: jewelers made swords, tinsmiths made pistols, grocers made shoes, and among other items, the Eagle Mill manufactured Confederate uniforms. Union forces, not realizing that Robert E. Lee

¹⁰ Michael Gagnon, *Transition to an Industrial South: Athens Georgia 1830-1870* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012), 1-12; John Lupold, "Industrial Reconstruction of Columbus, Ga., 1865-1881." (Presentation, Georgia Historical Society, 1975). John Lupold Collection. CSU Archives, 2.

¹¹ "The Eagle and Phenix: New York Native Started it all in 1850," *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* (Columbus, Ga), June 23, 2010.

¹² Lupold, "Industrial Reconstruction of Columbus, Ga.," 2.

¹³ "The Eagle and Phenix: New York Native Started it all in 1850," *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, June 23, 2010; "Robert Mills Gunby," *The Columbus Georgia Cemetery, 1828-1928* Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus Georgia.

had surrendered a few days earlier, arrived in Columbus April 16, 1865 and began burning the textile mills. The smoke had barely cleared before the people of Columbus began to rebuild. They christened the new mill “The Eagle and Phenix” as it had risen up out of the flames of Union destruction.¹⁴

Many Confederate veterans became presidents or owners of various industrial experiments in the Columbus metro area after the conclusion of the war. Among these veterans was G. Gunby Jordan, who became president of the Eagle and Phenix Mill in 1898.¹⁵ In 1868, the mill was operating ten thousand spindles, and one hundred and thirty-five looms. Surprisingly, only four months after the Eagle and Phenix had been fully operational, the mill’s directors decided to build a second mill. The two mills doubled their capacity and production.¹⁶

By the 1880s, the Eagle and Phenix Mill was the largest mill in operation in the South, producing 1.5 million dollars’ worth of textiles every year, which was more than eighty percent of the city’s industrial output.¹⁷ The Eagle and Phenix dominated the economy of Columbus, and it even became a quasi-tourist attraction. Visitors came to view the mill, postcards with photographs and paintings of the mill were sent throughout the United States, and even poems were written to pay homage to the mill’s thousands of workers. Matt O’Brien’s 1878 poem “The Bells of Columbus” paints a vivid picture of what life in the city of Columbus entailed in the late nineteenth century

...When a very loud bell sounded,

¹⁴ Lupold, “Industrial Reconstruction of Columbus, Ga,” 2.

¹⁵ John Flournoy, R. E. Dismukes, Jas. A. Lewis, J.P. Illges, “Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan by CB&T,” 1930, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA.

¹⁶ Lupold, “Industrial Reconstruction of Columbus, GA,” 4-10.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2-22.

And a friends who was sitting nigh,
Said, "There's a many a one who will hear that,
And waken with a sigh."
...Nearly 3,000 men and women,
Yes, and little children, too,
Are roused by its sounding
Saying "Wake, ye've work to do!"
...Then everything is quiet,
The street resumes its gloom.
The bell sounds out again
With a reverberating boom!
Then such a noise, and such a rattle!
Such as a din as if in battle
The cavalry of the world were charging a run,
Such a hurly, burly clatter
Till you, in asking 'What's the matter?'"
Learn the Eagle and Phenix work's begun
...Whene'r that bell you hear,
As its tone strikes your ear,
Think! It wakens these
Who make this city's wealth! ¹⁸

¹⁸ "The Bells of Columbus," 1878, Eagle and Phenix Collection, Columbus Georgia, CSU Archives.

The poem exalts the toils of mill workers who produced great wealth for the city of Columbus. However, textile owners, like Jordan, funneled this capital to produce even more wealth and bring more industry into Columbus.

The mills continued to prosper, as did many other smaller industries located in the city. Rural migrants provided a never-ending supply of cheap and renewable labor. Advertisements such as “Factory Hands Wanted” for the Eagle and Phenix Mill offered “steady work and good wages” and stated “many families now living in the country would find it greatly to their advantage to engage with them.”¹⁹ Certainly, for many of these families, this offer was very desirable, and this endless supply of tractable southern labor soon became one of Columbus’s greatest strengths.²⁰

The textile mills were the defining feature of Columbus. When Jordan took over ownership of Eagle and Phenix Mill, it was his first step in redefining the legacy of Columbus. Previously, the number of textile mills was the only distinguishing feature of the Columbus textile industry; however, Jordan would use the mills as his platform for social engineering, moral improvements, and educational experiments.²¹

Jordan’s maternal uncle, Robert Mills Gunby, served as the first president and incorporator of the Eagle Manufacturing Company, and he oversaw charitable initiatives before and during the war (including a free school for the poor).²² Jordan was close to his

¹⁹ “Factory Hands Wanted,” 17 Jan., 1880, Eagle and Phenix Collection, Columbus Georgia, CSU Archives.

²⁰ Lupold, “Industrial Reconstruction of Columbus, GA,” 22.

²¹ “Arp on Abbott, Georgia Philosopher on the Higher Criticism,” *The Caucasian*, Clinton, N.C., February 15, 1906; “Unique School to Open Due to Child Labor Laws,” *The Sunday Star*, Washington, D.C., September 30, 1906

²² Robert Mills Gunby,” *The Columbus Georgia Cemetery, 1828-1928*, Katherine Waddell Private Collection , Columbus, GA.

uncle who gave him his first position as a clerk in Columbus at the end of the Civil War. Jordan owed much to his uncle, and he took many of his ideas and expanded upon them in new ways, especially when it came to education. Jordan would serve as president of the Eagle and Phenix Mills from 1898-1916 and as president of the Bibb Manufacturing Company from 1909 to 1913. He was also an organizer and president of Perkins Hosery Mills starting in 1902. Under his presidency, the mills blossomed and continued to expand in Columbus.²³ Yet, the mills, however full of economic opportunities, also created and maintained social and economic inequities in Columbus. Child labor, racial subordination, and classism were prevalent in the mills of Columbus, including those owned by Jordan.²⁴

Inequality and the Mills

While this bustling mill town began to fill the purses of Columbus' New South industrialists, prosperity for some did not mean prosperity for all. The industrial hub created by Jordan and fellow mill owners was a breeding ground for classist and racist policies, which took advantage of both the poor whites and blacks living in the city. The use of child labor was prevalent throughout the South, and Columbus was no exception to this epidemic.²⁵ Columbus also embraced the racist Jim Crow policies that were

²³ "Robert Mills Gunby," Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA; Nancy Telfair, "G. Gunby Jordan," *The Columbus Georgia Cemetery, 1828-1928*, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus GA.

²⁴ Lewis Hine, 1913. Image Numbers 3432, 3436, 3435, 3431. Lewis Hine Photography Collection. JPEG. <http://contentdm.ad.umbc.edu/hine.php>; Ophelia Perry, Interviewed by Harry Phelps 1988, Mill Workers Oral History Project, CSU Archives ; Isma Dooley, Georgia Mill Owners Aiding the Education of Children, *The Atlanta Constitution*, April 7, 1907.

²⁵ "Industries of Columbus," *Columbus Enquirer-Sun* (Columbus, GA), Feb. 8, 1880, Sunday Morning; Lewis Hine, 1913. Image Numbers 3432, 3436, 3435, 3431. Lewis Hine Photography Collection.

widespread during this time period known as the “nadir” for blacks in the South.²⁶ Both blacks and whites experienced discrimination in the textile mills of Columbus. While poor whites were encouraged to pull themselves up from their bootstraps and make the most of their lives through a proper and moral education, African Americans more often became the scapegoat for societal and industrial woes.²⁷

The mill owners advertised in rural communities throughout the southeast, and they enticed thousands of poor whites to come to the city to work in the textile mills. Mrs. J. Bordan Harriman, Chairman of the Welfare Committee of the National Civic Federation, describes the scene of this rural to urban migration:

it is safe to say that of the 110,000 operatives now employed in the manufacture of cotton goods in the South fully three-quarters, or 80,000, came from families twenty years ago who were poverty-stricken agriculturalists. I have seen these people arrive at the mill door with all their worldly goods stowed away in one farm wagon drawn by dilapidated mules borrowed from a not too distant neighbor, having driven perhaps 40 miles, and sometimes having to ask immediately for money in advance from the superintendent of the mill in order to buy food.²⁸

The migration of this massive number of poor rural workers into Columbus consequently brought large numbers of poor white children into the city. This phenomenon created a dilemma – what would these children do to occupy themselves

²⁶ Rayford Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901* (New York, NY: Dial Press, 1954).

²⁷ “Handwriting on the Wall,” *The Watchman and Southron* (Sumter, SC), August 7, 1907; Hooper Alexander, “Poor White Folks,” (Boston, MA: Child Employing Industries Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Conference, Jan.13-16, 1910), 58-59.

²⁸ Mrs. J. Bordan Harriman, (Boston, MA: Child Employing Industries Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Conference, Jan.13-16, 1910), 48-49.

during the day? In the country, poor white children worked on farms, but in the city, poor white children found employment in the mills. Many mills took advantage of the cheap labor and employed children directly in the mills; families often felt compelled to have their children work as a means for their own survival. Lewis Hine, a famous child labor photographer, documented child labor in Columbus in 1913. The Massey Hosiery Mill, the Muscogee Mill, the Eagle and Phenix Mill, and the Perkins Hosiery Mill were just a few of the many mills in the city that utilized child labor, all of which would, at one point or another, be owned and controlled by G. Gunby Jordan.²⁹

The textile industry in the South was of “gigantic importance” in the 1880s,³⁰ and the issue of child labor quickly raised concerns for activists seeking to eliminate what they saw as an inhumane practice.³¹ Some child labor activists contended that there could have been a need for the textile mills to employ children early on, considering that “the first generation of operatives...brought fingers so stiffened [and] hands so hardened as to be totally unfit for handling the soft unspun cotton; it followed that the children, with still supple fingers, were pressed into service as spinners.”³² Yet, other child labor activists debunked this theory as ignoring “the whole history of the cotton-mill industry.” These activists contended that mill owners sought to employ children because it was profitable for children to work.³³ Southern manufacturers followed the example set by the

²⁹ Hine, Image Numbers 3432, 3436, 3435, 3431. Lewis Hine Photography Collection; Flournoy, Dismukes, Lewis, Illges, “Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan,” 1930; “Industries of Columbus,” *Columbus Enquirer-Sun* (Columbus, Georgia), Feb. 8, 1880, Sunday Morning.

³⁰ Mrs. J. Bordan Harriman, *Child Employing Industries Proceedings*, 48-49.

³¹ Dr. Adler, (Atlanta, GA: *Child Labor and Social Progress Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Meeting*, April 2-5, 1908), 160.

³² *Ibid.*, 160.

³³ *Child Employing Industries Proceedings*, 1910, 55.

northeastern mills, which had followed the example of the textile mills in England.³⁴

Thus, the attitude of “progressive manufacturers” changed at the turn of the century, and activists began to regard child labor as “one phase in the evolution of the Southern cotton industry. And it surely is passing.”³⁵

Medical concerns for both the employees and customers of the textile mills also encouraged manufacturers to take action against child labor. The National Child Labor Committee heard complaints about “flat footedness,” which could cause permanent deformities in children who stood on their feet all day in the textile mills.³⁶ In addition, activists spread rumors that contagious diseases, common in tenant-housed children, could spread via manufactured garments; campaigners used these rumors as a scare tactic against the perpetuation of child labor.³⁷

Numerous politicians, including Theodore Roosevelt and Georgia Governor Hoke Smith, spoke out against child labor. Roosevelt advocated for an age minimum, for limiting the hours worked per week, and an outright prohibition of children working at night.³⁸ Smith argued against the unethical treatment children in the textile mills, and he proposed proper training for children. He stated

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 55

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

³⁶ “National Child Labor Committee, *Child Labor and the Republic*,” *American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. XXIX, No. 1, January 1907, originally published as the *Proceedings of the Third Annual Meeting of the National Child Labor Committee*, 23.

³⁷ “What the United States Government Has to Say About Child Labor,” (New York, NY: New York Child Labor Committee, 1911), 10.

³⁸ “Uniform Child Labor Laws,” (Philadelphia, PA: *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Conference of the National Child Labor Committee, The Annual Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1911), 1.

for if we are to serve our God, our country and our fellowman, if that is our highest duty, how can we find anywhere in the union of all three of these services so completely blended as when we seek to train our children and the children of our country mentally, physically, morally and spiritually...[and] when we contemplate the work in the protection of children, we must realize that for work to reach its proper place, public sentiment must be applied and people must understand what is necessary for the mental development; what is necessary for the physical protection; what is necessary for the moral growth, as well as what should be taught for the spiritual future of the child.”³⁹

Both Smith and Jordan promoted the end of child labor as the first step of many social experiments envisioned through industrial education. While Smith affirmed that his actions were for the protection of the child, what he actually was protecting was an ideology and a class stratification system based on inequality. The moral growth of children would go hand in hand with their work ethic.⁴⁰ This phenomenon is discussed more thoroughly in chapter four.

Hoke Smith was just one voice among many in the National Child Labor Committee; the committee ruminated on the policies and strategies to ameliorate the prevalence of child labor in the South. In 1911, Georgia had the distinction of being the only state in

³⁹ Child Labor and Social Progress (Atlanta, GA: Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Meeting, April 2-5, 1908), 97-98.

⁴⁰ Victoria MacDonald Huntzinger, “The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904.” PhD diss., Harvard University, 1992; Roland B. Daniel, *Industrial Education in Columbus, GA* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), 8-11; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1899* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1902), 20-22; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1901* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1902), 5

the country to allow children under the age of twelve to work in the mills. Children were allowed to work an exhausting sixty-hour workweek.⁴¹ In 1900, an estimated twenty percent of the textile mill's workforce in South were children under the age of sixteen, and these children were four times as likely to be illiterate than their peers in the other parts of the state.⁴² Yet, even with these damning statistics, sixty-four percent of the Georgia mills investigated in 1911 disregarded child labor regulations and they employed children under the legal age minimum of twelve years old.⁴³

While the 1911 report by the National Child Labor Committee does not specify the names of the particular offenders, it would be a fair assumption that Columbus mills were guilty of child labor wrongdoing. In 1880, the Eagle and Phenix Mill employed 213 children, and Lewis Hine's photographs reveal that child labor was still prevalent at the time this 1911 study was conducted.⁴⁴ The support for child labor continuously blocked the way of educational progress in Columbus. In the 1890s, Fredrick B. Gordon, president of the Muscogee Manufacturing Company, stated that he hired children in his mill "as a matter of charity," and that by working, children would hopefully be free from "learning the first lessons of a vagrant's life."⁴⁵ The belief that child labor was a matter of charity was widespread at the turn of the century. A.S. Matheson, who was then superintendent of the Eagle and Phenix Mill, alleged that he employed children for the

⁴¹ "Uniform Child Labor Laws," Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Conference, 1911, 140.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 43-45.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁴ "Industries of Columbus," *Columbus Enquirer-Sun* (Columbus, GA), Feb. 8, 1880 Sunday Morning; Hine, Image Numbers 3432, 3436, 3435, 3431. Lewis Hine Photography Collection.

⁴⁵ Gordon, "President Mill, Columbus, GA," 148-149 cited in Victoria MacDonald Huntzinger, "The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1992).

financial benefit of their families.⁴⁶ Similar views existed in Atlanta. Asa Candler, the president of the Chamber of Commerce in Atlanta and co-founder of Coca-Cola famously stated “Child labor, properly conducted, properly surrounded, properly conditioned, is calculated to bring the highest measure of success to any country on the face of the earth. The most beautiful sight that we see is the child at labor; as early as he may get the labor, the more beautiful, the more useful does his life get to be.”⁴⁷

Advocates for the abolishment of child labor countered these arguments by maintaining that child labor in the textile mills as a breeding ground for poor morals. Teenagers would get married too early and would start families before they had the means to support them, which in turn encouraged more child labor as the income provided by the child was necessary for the family to survive.⁴⁸ Activists also argued that when children outgrew their child-designed jobs in the mills, their employers let them go as they were unskilled. Thus, adolescents without any education would be forced to earn a living by performing some “street trade;” with too much freedom, the children would eventually form street gangs.⁴⁹

Many children in Columbus were free to roam the streets in the name of work. Children worked directly in the mills, but there were also a great number of other children who worked as “dinner-toters.” These children would carry baskets of food, sometimes several miles one way, to workers in the mills and they would wait for the

⁴⁶ Huntzinger, “The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904,” 175-176.

⁴⁷ Asa Candler, *Child Labor and Social* (Atlanta, GA: Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Meeting, April 2-5, 1908), 159.

⁴⁸ *Pamphlet No. 68*, (New York, NY: Child Labor and its Consequences, National Child Labor Committee, 1908), 13.

⁴⁹ “Uniform Child Labor Laws,” Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Conference, 1911, 40.

food to be eaten before returning home with the empty baskets. In 1901, the superintendent of Columbus schools, Carleton Gibson, conducted an investigation and found that in the three major mills of the city, there were over one thousand white children working as dinner-toters; these dinner-toters would eventually help to establish the first solid connection between the mills and education.⁵⁰

Once the study by Superintendent Gibson was published, local interest grew in trying to find a permanent solution to the problem of educating poor white children of the mills. Nationally, some politicians argued that these poor white children would have been illiterate regardless of if they lived on the farm or the mill village. A.J. McKelway (Secretary for the Southern States in the National Child Labor Committee) commented “it is not whether the children are better off than they were, but whether they are as well off as we have a right to expect and demand now.”⁵¹ Jordan, along with other industrialists in Columbus, were of this same mind; there were a number of poor white children working in the streets and in the mills, and new strategies were devised for them to achieve an appropriate industrial education. Industrial, moral, and productive ideals could be realized in the formation of this type of education.⁵² The betterment of these children would align with the class stratifications already in place in Columbus, and these divisions would persist regardless of the democratic rhetoric prevalent at the time.

⁵⁰ Nancy Telfair, “History of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia,” (Columbus, Georgia: Enquirer-Sun Co., 1927), 40-41.

⁵¹ A.J. McKelway, “The Mill of the Farm,” (Boston, MA: Child Employing Industries Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Conference, Jan.13-16, 1910), 52-53.

⁵² Dooley, “Georgia Mill Owners Aiding the Education,” 1907; “Eagle and Phenix Kindergarten,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, Sept. 7, 1903.

The rights of white poor children, though stratified, were inherently different from that of their African American peers. In fact, many activists against child labor at the time contended that the immoral perceptions of the “poor white folks” class could be attributed to the former slaves living in the South. These activists argued that slaves regarded their masters (and the slave holding class) with love and admiration, but slaves looked at the non-slave holding whites as beneath them due to their animosity toward their non-slave holding overseers.⁵³ Regardless of the fallacy of this statement, African Americans living in the South were blamed for the depraved perceptions of poor whites living in the South, which only increased the animosity between poor whites and African Americans.

Racism fueled child labor reform. The members of The National Child Labor Committee believed it was their duty to help these poor white children, many of whom had been cast off as immoral and corrupt. McKelway stated “there is no reason in the world...why Georgia should not care for protecting her own flesh and blood as Illinois.”⁵⁴ In fact, he asserted that Georgians should care more about the welfare of their children. The mid-western states passed more favorable child labor laws were doing a great deal more to protect the children of immigrants; Georgia did not have the issue of foreign immigrants, yet still they were lacking in the education of children. McKelway affirmed, in the southern states, it was “our native white children that we are mainly concerned with.”⁵⁵ The National Child Labor Committee gave little thought to the

⁵³ Hooper Alexander, “Poor White Folks,” 58-59.

⁵⁴ A. J. McKelway, (Birmingham, AL: Uniform Child Labor Laws Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Conference, 1911), 218.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 218.

African American children: in fact, the mere presence of African American children was often viewed as the reason for the bad reputation that poor whites were receiving. Much of the urgency felt by child labor advocates in the South came from the need to preserve the white race against the growing number of African American pupils who were being educated.⁵⁶ At the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Child Labor and Social Progress Committee, John Law detailed this southern ideology in his plea for compulsory education, regardless of the child's employment status. Law stated that he was irrevocably opposed...to "class legislation" — to the passage of any laws designed either to exercise restraint over, or to accord special privileges to, any one class of our citizens alone — we have been unable to give our support to measures heretofore introduced intended to require school attendance on the part of cotton mill operatives only...it must be remembered that it is from the farms that the bulk of our textile workers have come, and are still coming, and that the statistics as to lack of education — so easily obtained from the compact mill village — still reflect to a greater extent the educational deficiencies of the remote rural districts. There are already more negro children than whites enrolled in the public schools of our State — the percentage of attendance of the negro children is larger. How much longer will the senseless fear of forcing the negroes into school deter us from requiring an acceptance by the children of illiterate whites of the opportunities of learning which our public school system offers...We earnestly urge, hence, the passage of a law compelling school attendance

⁵⁶ William Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education; Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001), 9-23.

by all children between the ages of eight and twelve, regardless of residence or avocation of parents.⁵⁷

Law articulated the fears of many compulsory education skeptics, noting that there were already such a great number of African Americans in public schools. He argued that the lack of compulsory education laws did nothing but hurt the poor white children, which ran counter to the only true concern of the National Committee for Child Labor – to protect the poor white children.⁵⁸

Jordan characterized “labor agitators” like Law as having the “purest motives” but being “misguided as to the facts,” which regulated the lives of mill operatives and textiles mills.⁵⁹ Jordan contended that most of the bills placed before the state legislatures were “aimed at cotton and woolen mills alone;” he felt that the textile mills were not being giving the proper respect that they deserved.⁶⁰ Addressing the Georgia Industrial Association in 1901, Jordan appealed to his audience of textile owners to address the injustice of the laws stating

you who have spent millions in the development of this state; you who have brought to the eye of the tax assessor in the tangible shape of productive industries much heretofore foreign and hence untaxed wealth, you, who have been most potent in relieving the friction in the race problem, you who have given that blessing to the poor which constant employment and regular pay ever showers upon them; it is against you

⁵⁷ John Law, (Atlanta, GA: Child Labor and Social Progress Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Meeting, April 2-5, 1908), 45.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵⁹ G. Gunby Jordan, (Warm Springs, GA: Presentation to Georgia Industrial Association, 1901). Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 1-6.

especially the proposed legislation is specifically aimed. Little it matters that every other avocation there is the same offending—it is the textile interest which is held up to the world as the sole oppressor of labor, and the deserving target of the shafts of the sentimentalists.⁶¹

Regarded as one of Columbus' great orators, Jordan knew how to cater his speeches to his audiences. Yet, this statement cannot be discarded as Jordan simply trying to win the approval of his audience.⁶² Jordan, a fellow textile mill owner, did not want outsiders to interfere in his domain, and he believed that the textile mill owners of Georgia should be rewarded for their efforts to revive the good name of Georgia after the war.⁶³ And while I do assert that Jordan thought that he was improving the lives of poor whites and blacks through work in his mills, the actual financial improvements for African Americans were minimal. Socially, mill employees were controlled through numerous rules and regulations that strove to keep them within acceptable moral and class stratifications.

Class and race defined the lives of the citizens of Columbus by limiting the opportunities of its citizens; yet, the disparity between class and race was infinite. While child labor was widespread in Columbus, Jordan and other mill owners took measures to “uplift” these mill operatives to help them become moral and productive members of society.⁶⁴ The same cannot be said for African American employees of the Eagle and Phenix. One of the best examples of this disenfranchisement of African Americans can be seen at the Bibb Manufacturing Company, of which Jordan was president between

⁶¹ Ibid., 3.

⁶² Flournoy, Dismukes, Lewis, Illges, “Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan,” 1930.

⁶³ Jordan, Presentation to Georgia Industrial Association, 1901; Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 51.

⁶⁴ Jordan, Presentation to Georgia Industrial Association, 1901.

1909 and 1913. The regulation of employee morality was clearly outlined in Bibb City, a pristine mill village of the Bibb Manufacturing Company, which opened in Columbus in 1901.

The *Bibb City Recorder* documented the cheerleading that the company did to inspire good Christian values and loyalty to the company. A 1932 article titled “Wiener Roast is Given to Class” published in the *Bibb City Recorder*, honors a Sunday school class that was granted a wiener roast for perfect attendance at Sunday school.⁶⁵ An edition of the same paper from the following year advertises that eighteen prayer meetings were to be held in Bibb City the upcoming week.⁶⁶ In a section labeled “Ten Years Ago” from a 1933 edition, the paper announces a goal of two hundred had been set for Sunday school attendance, and the superintendent of the mill, H.W. Pittman, offered “three cash prizes” to children who wrote essays on the history of Bibb Manufacturing Company.⁶⁷ Loyalty to God and loyalty to the mill were the two virtues that the mill owners of Bibb Manufacturing Company desired, and, for the most part, they received what they wanted. The mill owners had become dictators in their little dystopia.

Mill owners coveted an educational system that would instill the “proper” moral virtues in their workforce, a system that would encourage its workers to place their personal desires below those of the company.⁶⁸ Harry Harden embodied these principles in many ways; as an employee of Bibb Manufacturing Company for most of his life, he recounted in a 1988 oral interview a story familiar to many white mill workers in

⁶⁵ “Wiener Roast is Given to Class,” *Bibb City Recorder* (Bibb City, GA), 1932

⁶⁶ “Bibb City Club Is Holding Many Prayer Services,” *Bibb City Recorder* (Bibb City, GA), 1933.

⁶⁷ “Ten Years Ago,” *Bibb City Recorder* (Bibb City, Georgia), February 10, 1933.

⁶⁸ Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 271-278.

Columbus, Georgia. His father, born in rural Alabama, came to Columbus because of advertisements that Bibb was hiring. Harden's father helped to place the first machinery into the mill, and eventually retired from the mill. When Harden began working there himself in 1930, Bibb was already an established company, and Harden felt welcomed into the Bibb community. Harden recalls:

when I went to Bibb, they gave me a little blue book. It said "you are now a member of the Bibb family" and they weren't joking...we looked after our own... we didn't need any outsiders—we had our own post office, drugstore, grocery store, it's just an ideal place to work for.⁶⁹

Even though Harden speaks of his experience in Bibb City as a utopia, to an outsider it might not have appeared so. Harden worked sixty hours a week, from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm for a total of six dollars a week, yet he did not complain about these conditions, as it was "just the way of life back then."⁷⁰ Even when his pay was doubled four years later to twelve dollars and fifty cents a week and his hours reduced to eight a day, as a result of the National Recovery Act and a nationwide strike in 1934, Harden still found more fault with the federal government than he ever could with the company. When "outsiders" shut down Bibb, the National Guard came in with machine guns and surrounded the mill.⁷¹ "What they were striking for, I'll never know," states Harden; he had no desire to strike against his company. He says that striking would be comparable to hitting one's

⁶⁹ Harry Harden, Interviewed by Tamara S. Jones 1988, Mill Workers Oral History Project. CSU Archives .

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

parents, as the company treated them all so well, and they were all a part of the Bibb family.⁷²

Ophelia Perry, an African American who also participated in an oral interview in 1988, offered a different perspective on life in the mill. Perry, who began working at Bibb in 1940, described a segregated workplace with poor working conditions and very low pay. The heat of the mill was sweltering, and the areas where African Americans worked were the last to receive air conditioners. Breaks were non-existent, and the work was dangerous; once she even had her dress caught in a machine and had to use all her strength to rip it out. Perry explained that African Americans were given harder jobs and were never really promoted. Although she did recall one African American boss at the mill, she noted that he had a reputation of being cruel and mean “cause he wanted his job.”⁷³ Stratification within the mill community was not only reflected within race relations, but also in gender discrimination and child labor practices; equality was neither expected nor earned within the mill “family.” When devising an educational system to meet the moral and economic needs of the mill owners, the maintenance of this stratified society remained paramount to all endeavors.

As with schools and public facilities in the Jim Crow Era, the work environment for most African Americans was completely segregated from whites. African Americans were not allowed in the mill village at all; the one cafeteria in Bibb City, which was open to workers, was not open to African Americans; if blacks wanted food from the cafeteria, they would have to enter through the back door. When the African American workers

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ophelia Perry, Interviewed 1988, Mill Workers Oral History Project.

arrived at the mill, they were not allowed to use the front door; they would “have to go in the side under the shed.”⁷⁴ There were separate restrooms as well. In regard to the white restrooms, Perry states that “you could go in there to clean them up, but you weren’t allowed to use them...it was kind of rough, but you just got to keep on fighting.”⁷⁵ Bibb Manufacturing Company was not the only mill in Columbus to segregate its workforce in this manner. The Eagle and Phenix Mill mirrored this practice a few miles down the river, where distinct areas of the mill were segregated as “colored areas,” and blacks worked the lowest jobs in the textile mill hierarchy.⁷⁶ Historian I. A. Newby notes that segregation within textile mills occurred after the end of the Civil War, as many viewed “mill employment should be reserved for poor whites as a philanthropic and paternalistic endeavor.”⁷⁷ It therefore was seen as necessary that blacks worked in “only menial or service capacities” to maintain the perception that they were at all times subordinate to whites.⁷⁸

The lasting effects that the mills had on the history of Columbus, Georgia, have long outlived their creators. The legacies of men like G. Gunby Jordan are felt in Columbus today in the businesses, schools, and social organizations he and his peers created. While Jordan did not know every employee personally, he kept very close tabs on his higher-ranking staff members, and he was able to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each one. In his correspondence with E.T. Comer, the incoming president of Bibb

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ “Building Plans of Eagle and Phenix,” Eagle and Phenix Collection, n.d., Columbus, GA, CSU Archives.

⁷⁷ Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 463-465.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 465.

Manufacturing Company, Jordan spoke of each of his employees individually, outlining the responsibility that he felt toward each one upon his retirement as president. The moral responsibility that he felt towards his employees appears to be real and poignant, and often contrary to the capitalistic ideology to which he ascribed.⁷⁹

The mills gave Columbus a purpose and a reason to exist. While they inspired pride in those who believed in the paternalistic mill model, they also discriminated against those who did not qualify to be a member of the mill family. The mills presented Columbus with a unique opportunity to shine, an opportunity that some people in Columbus were quick to exploit in the name of education. Paternalism was of a “dual nature,” mill workers often traded “inequities” for “promised security.”⁸⁰ Jordan’s actions aligned with the paternalistic mill model, but how and his policies were perceived by employees is more difficult to discern. Jordan would blend philanthropy and education, and business with progress as evidence of the sensibility and logic for his actions. In order to distinguish the motives behind Jordan’s goals and actions, I will further explore the difference between paternalism and fraternalism.

Paternalism versus Fraternalism

Jordan was known for his philanthropy, donating to numerous causes in multiple ways. He donated to libraries, schools, land, roads, committees, and social organizations of various sorts throughout his lifetime. Philanthropy came to be known as part of the many policies and agendas of mill villages. But what was the purpose behind this charity? While many people esteem that philanthropy is a credit to the generous nature

⁷⁹ G. Gunby Jordan to E.T. Comer, Columbus, Georgia, 9 January, 1913, G. Gunby Jordan Collection, CSU Archives .

⁸⁰ Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 270.

of people within the community, scholars such as James Anderson and William Watkins contend that philanthropy is simply another means to maintain control of the populous.⁸¹ In Columbus, and other cities throughout the South, industrialists used philanthropy to “give life to their ideas” about social engineering when the “utilization of the conventional electoral, legislative, and administrative avenues” could not.⁸² While Anderson and Watkins detail how great industrialists sought to dominate the South through “race philanthropy,” I would like to explore how industrialists like Jordan applied the same ideology toward poor whites.⁸³

Jordan noted in an article to the *Atlanta Constitution*, that he was greatly inspired by his travels to Europe in the summer of 1900 where he had the opportunity to attend the Exposition Universelle in Paris. This exposition became a worldwide sensation in later years for “human zoos” in which imperial nations displayed natives from their conquered nations in mock “savage” clothing while western voyeurs looked at them in awe. While it is easy to imagine Jordan strolling through the maze of indigenous natives, contemplating his own station within the supposed hierarchy of races, Jordan noted that the exhibit that impacted him most were the ones concerned with “social economy.” The exposition catalog noted that this category demonstrated “philanthropy directing the works of the intellect, in social economy, hygiene, and public assistance, the important question of sanitation and the public health, individual and international, being

⁸¹ Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 415-425; Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education*, 19-23

⁸² *Ibid.*, 19.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 19.

represented in ... asylums, refuges, schools, and the regulation of pawnshops.”⁸⁴ Jordan related that the exhibits showed “methods relating to the amelioration of that class of people who furnish the muscle and a great deal of the brain of the world and who often receive many of its hardships” and was “much gratified” by how America and the England appeared to be the leading innovators in social engineering projects to “improve and help the working people.”⁸⁵ Jordan sought solutions to issues of poverty and industrialization that he found in his native Columbus, the only question was if the philosophy of paternalism or fraternalism would suit his needs best?

The question of which was most suitable and effective, paternalism or fraternalism, became a popular topic for debate in the South in the early twentieth century. The issue divided those who claimed to be working in the best interests of the children. The paternalistic philosophy avowed that the textile mill should play the central role in the moral, social, economic, and educational development of the mill operatives. The fraternalistic ideology argued that democracy could not be realized until compulsory educational and labor laws were uniform throughout the country, for when that was the case, philanthropy would no longer be needed. Hooper Alexander delineated between the two ideologies at the 1908 National Child Labor Committee in Atlanta. He argued that there was “a clear distinction between a social order, in which improved conditions are super-imposed, and a true democracy, in which each citizen participates in the general

⁸⁴ Victor Champier, Andre Saglio, William Walton, *The Chefs-D'Oeuvre: Applied Art Exposition Universelle 1900* (Philadelphia, PA: George Barrie & Son, Publishers, 1902), 23.

⁸⁵ “He Saw the World: Talk with G. Gunby Jordan About His Trip to Europe,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, Sept. 25, 1900.

advance.”⁸⁶ Alexander described the actions of the industrialists as “anemic morality” that was counter to the “friendly and fraternal co-operation...that... tenders sympathy and a helping hand when asked.”⁸⁷

While there were some mill schools in Georgia, which were run by owners who had agreed to not employ children under a certain age, the reality is that these mills were rare “and the very fact that these few mills are always mentioned in the apologies for the child labor is proof that they are exceptional.”⁸⁸ In a later bulletin from 1910, the National Child Labor Committee mentioned the Columbus Public Industrial Schools as a positive outcome of stricter child labor laws. Jordan, however, never used stricter child labor laws as the rationale for a primary or secondary industrial school, though it was publicized elsewhere.⁸⁹ Could Jordan be both paternalistic and fraternalistic? The National Child Labor Committee argued that the answer to this query was of no consequence, as

just as under the regime of slavery, the kind slave-owner was the greatest obstacle in the way of emancipation, so the kind mill man is the greatest enemy of the children. By reason of that kindness, necessary legislation is prevented, and under the benevolent flag of those men, greedy and avaricious mill men are allowed to exploit children to their hearts' content.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Hooper Alexander, “Child Labor and Social Progress,” (Atlanta, GA: Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Meeting April 2-5, 1908), 160.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 160

⁸⁸ *Pamphlet No. 68*, 1908, 11-12.

⁸⁹ “Uniform Child Labor Laws,” Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Conference, 1911, 88; “Unique School to Open as Result of Child Labor Law,” *The Sunday Star*, Washington, D.C., September 30, 1906.

⁹⁰ “National Child Labor Committee, Child Labor and the Republic,” *American Academy of Political and Social Science*, No. 1, Vol. XXIX, (January 1907), 20.

I argue that G. Gunby Jordan was of the “kind mill owner” breed, that he did much to improve the lives of those operatives, and that he felt morally inclined to better society. Newby reminds historians that while “mill paternalists sought to...“improve” the folk---make them better citizens, consumers, and workers---while incidentally, enhancing their own profits and doers of good. These purposes were not in their view selfish. On the contrary, each was essential to larger ends of economic development and social progress.”⁹¹ Yet, Jordan’s benevolence did not extend to African American employees and children, and his version of social philanthropy was entirely paternalistic and adhered to the “Jim Crow” politics of the New South. Advocates of the fraternalistic ideology for social improvements did not credit men like Jordan a success. A. J. McKelway of the National Child Labor Committee contended that “the paternalism of the mill, its ‘benevolent feudalism,’ as some one have called it, the...providing of schools and churches and in rare instances, of reading rooms and gymnasiums and lyceums, all the gift of the mill, are not conducive to self-help. The spirit of democracy demands justice, not charity.”⁹²

The tragic “flaw” in the “vision” of the paternal mill owners came in the fact that if they were successful in “uplifting” their mill operatives, and acclimating them to middle class morality, cultural tastes, and education they would not have remained mill employees. Yet mill workers could resist the efforts of the owners in numerous ways, the most common being not participating in mill-designed welfare activities. Because of this “tendency,” mill villages primarily remained in “social stasis...work had to be done in

⁹¹ Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 263.

⁹² *Pamphlet No. 68*, 1908, 11-12.

order to live but not in order to accumulate or try to rise above one's 'raising'...the concept of social mobility, and those who sought such things were looked on as pretentious social climbers. Experience and tradition were the proper guides to the present."⁹³

Welfare work slowly spread across the South and was entwined with progressivism and paternalism in the mill villages. Under Jordan's reign as president of the Eagle and Phenix Mill, he would employ a number of welfare and educational programs to "uplift" his operatives. While the Eagle and Phenix Free Kindergarten and the Primary Industrial School were his best examples of a welfare programs (which I discuss in chapters four and five), a telling example of Jordan's practice of "benevolent feudalism" can be seen in one of his most celebrated social experiments, the Eagle and Phenix Club.⁹⁴

Eagle and Phenix Club

A favorite bragging point G. Gunby Jordan came in the form of the Eagle and Phenix Club. When the Club opened in September 1899, it was greeted with a great deal of media hyperbole and celebratory comments.⁹⁵ One newspaper article published in the *Atlanta Constitution* stated "it was an enterprise wholly without selfish motives" in which Jordan created "for the enjoyment and self-improvement of the help."⁹⁶ The club offered an arena for Jordan to showcase his numerous interests and social experiments. Starting in 1899 (during Jordan's presidency of the Eagle and Phenix Mill), it incorporated

⁹³ Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 272.

⁹⁴ *Pamphlet No.68*, 1908, 11-12.

⁹⁵ "The Eagle and Phenix Club," *The Atlanta Constitution*, Sept. 2, 1899.

⁹⁶ "Columbus Club Composed Entirely of Workers of Eagle and Phenix Mill," *The Atlanta Constitution*, December 30, 1900.

elements of a settlement house, social club, and night school in one facility.⁹⁷ The *Atlanta Constitution* claimed that, "...while such philanthropic enterprises have been inaugurated in other parts of the country, it is doubtful if the equal to this Georgia innovation could be found in the South."⁹⁸ The club had a governing committee that consulted with Jordan regularly, and Jordan's younger brother O. S. Jordan served as the club's vice-president. The club was the creation of G. Gunby Jordan, and he wished to appear as a benevolent benefactor. However, Jordan maintained total control of the club as every appointment or major decision had to be approved (and was often times suggested) by him.⁹⁹

The publicized purpose of the club was simple. The club provided a safe and wholesome place for young mill operatives to spend their free time and to gain skills that could give them an economic advantage in the industrial world.¹⁰⁰ The governing committee proclaimed that their efforts were done with the "ardent desire that knowledge might be increased and that every member might have the opportunity to rise to the heights in the manufacturing world that none but himself can keep him out of if knowledge is power."¹⁰¹ Yet many mill workers remained skeptical of the club in its first year of operations. Theories that the club would be a means for the mill to make additional money from its operatives, and that it was an attempt to dispel labor unions by

⁹⁷ "Arp on Abbott, Georgia Philosopher on the Higher Criticism," *The Caucasian*, 1906.

⁹⁸ "Columbus Club Composed," *The Atlanta Constitution*, December 30, 1900.

⁹⁹ Jordan, Presentation to Georgia Industrial Association, 1901; The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, CSU Archives, Eagle and Phenix Collection, Columbus, GA (hereafter cited as *Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes*, CSU Archives).

¹⁰⁰ Jordan, Presentation to Georgia Industrial Association, 1901; "Arp on Abbott, Georgia Philosopher on the Higher Criticism," *The Caucasian*, 1906.

¹⁰¹ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, April 9, 1900, CSU Archives.

the company made many “hesitate before ‘going into it.’” One year after the club opened, however, numerous union members enjoyed a club membership as well as their union membership.¹⁰²

So how did the club give its members the “opportunity to rise to the heights of the manufacturing world?”¹⁰³ How did the club impress union members to the point where they endorsed the institution in their own weekly labor magazine?¹⁰⁴ The Eagle and Phenix Club offered its members numerous amenities for recreational, moral, and intellectual advancement. Although strictly prohibiting the consumption of liquor on the premises, the club instituted numerous leisure activities from its inception. The club boasted a fully functional gymnasium with a “lifting machine,”¹⁰⁵ parallel bars, as well as a pool for the use of its members.¹⁰⁶ Members were also encouraged to play friendly games with the use of “ten pin alley,” a billiard table, and a pool table (though these activities were not free at all times).¹⁰⁷ The club was also equipped with a gramophone and a piano (and a piano player on certain nights) for the entertainment of its members.¹⁰⁸

For the intellectual and moral development of its members, the club offered a library with over two thousand books for member use. In addition to the books, the club members had access to numerous periodicals on various topics, though they were

¹⁰² “Columbus Club Composed,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, December 30, 1900.

¹⁰³ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, April 9, 1900, CSU Archives.

¹⁰⁴ “Columbus Club Composed,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, December 30, 1900.

¹⁰⁵ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, January, 26, 1900, CSU Archives

¹⁰⁶ Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 277; Dooley, “Georgia Mill Owners Aiding the Education,” 1907.

¹⁰⁷ At various points in the club’s history there were small charges for the use of the pool and billiards table, and a fee to pay young boy club members to set up the bowling pins. The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, Jan. 7, 1902, CSU Archives.

¹⁰⁸ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, Sept 18, 1899; October 9, 1901; Jan. 23, 1903, CSU Archives.

primarily directed to the promotion of industrial advancement. The club also subscribed to numerous newspapers that the members could read while in the library. According to the *Atlanta Constitution*, “cases are on record where members of the club are giving themselves a good general education through a well selected reading course,” and while there is no record of the selected literature for this reading course, the library hosted “textile and technical books” as well as “books on travel and adventure.”¹⁰⁹ The library was one of the most regulated aspects of the club; numerous rules including the number of allotted books that members could check out at one time, the maintenance of the bookshelves by the club superintendent, the enforcement of noise control while in the library, and the constant book inventories and reports demanded by the governing committee illustrates how central the library was to principles and goals of the club in its efforts to “uplift mill operatives, and provide them with opportunities to better themselves and foster loyalty to the company.”¹¹⁰

In addition to the library, the club offered courses for the industrial and moral development of its members. The club sponsored classes for “character lessons” twice a week, and it offered other “authentic learning” classes.¹¹¹ The club director’s wife, Mrs. Weems, formed a night class to teach reading to boys employed at the mill (who were also club members), and eventually the club employed a part-time teacher to work for

¹⁰⁹ “Columbus Club Composed,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, December 30, 1900.

¹¹⁰ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, August 13, 1899, *Eagle and Phenix Collection*, CSU Archives.

¹¹¹ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, Sept. 18, 1899; Oct. 13, 1900, *Eagle and Phenix Collection*, CSU Archives.

seven dollars a month.¹¹² To ensure that their bodies were as clean as their minds, a bath/shower house was a part of the club from its inception. In the beginning, the baths were free to all members, but over the years, fees were added for the use of the showers and baths. The spread of pestilence in factory villages was of concern to mill owners throughout the South.¹¹³ Jordan engaged in the improvement of public utilities within the mill villages and the Eagle and Phenix Mill, creating “sanitary work places—systems for providing pure drinking water” and “ventilation.”¹¹⁴ He also constructed “wash rooms with hot and cold water, towels and soap, shower baths, emergency hospitals, locker rooms, seating for women, laundries for men’s overalls or women’s uniforms, and rest rooms.”¹¹⁵ Thus, Jordan’s creation of the club bathhouse with a “splendid set of bathrooms” illustrates his continued desire to control the often-grittier side of industrial life.¹¹⁶

The Eagle and Phenix Club sponsored scores of “entertainments” to lure and attract new members from the textile mill. Dances, musical performances, boxing matches, ice cream and cake on the fourth of July, and turkey dinners on Christmas day were all part of the annual “entertainments.”¹¹⁷ The club would often combine this entertainment with an event of an intellectual nature that would help to bring in the crowds. For instance, the Eagle and Phenix Club subscribed to the Lyceum public lecture circuit that was very

¹¹² “Will Enlarge Building: Club Feature at Eagle and Phenix is Growing,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, March 26, 1901; The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, May 19, 1902, CSU Archives.

¹¹³ Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 278.

¹¹⁴ Dooley, “Georgia Mill Owners Aiding the Education,” 1907.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ “Columbus Club Composed,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, December 30, 1900.

¹¹⁷ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, June 9, 1900, Jan. 1901, June 15, 1901, CSU Archives.

popular at the turn of the century. In order to encourage members to attend, club owners would pair lectures with “smokers” during which they would offer cigars to the Club members in hopes that they would discuss the lecture while enjoying a nice “smoke.”¹¹⁸ Evening entertainments also included plays, musical groups, strong men entertainment, and travel lectures.¹¹⁹

The club hosted a number of sports and music clubs as well. Baseball and basketball were both encouraged, as was the mandolin club. Often times the sport clubs would be used to provide entertainment for other club members, and would serve as publicity for the Eagle and Phenix Club in Columbus. In one instance, the baseball club was sent to the train depot to surprise G. Gunby Jordan on his homecoming from trans-Atlantic trip to the Paris Exposition.¹²⁰ Dressed in their bright and shiny uniforms, the baseball club acted as public relations ambassadors for the club and mill, which soon became the envy of other mill owners in the city.¹²¹ Other operatives and guest speakers awaited Jordan at the club “to show the appreciation of the mill people for his efforts to improve their condition, and especially for the spirit of philanthropy displayed in the establishment of the Eagle and Phenix Club.” Yet, as I. A. Newby reminds readers, it is important to not be wooed by the formal presentations of admiration towards mill owners by operatives, and to distinguish between “appearance and reality” of the paternalistic mill model.¹²²

¹¹⁸ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, March 2, 1901, March 11, 1901, CSU Archives.

¹¹⁹ Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 278.

¹²⁰ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, Sept. 8, 1900, CSU Archives.

¹²¹ Mr. Hardaway of the Hardaway Mills attempted to borrow the baseball club’s uniforms at one point, and the governing committee turned him down, The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, May 1901, CSU Archives.

¹²² Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 262.

Thus, it is important to question what truly motivated these club members to honor Jordan.

The Eagle and Phenix Club, like most venues like it in the South, was for whites only; and for much of its existence, only men were allowed to join.¹²³ From its inception, the governing committee recognized that men would want to bring their “lady friends” to the club from time to time.¹²⁴ So, in order to encourage membership, the committee occasionally sponsored dances as entertainments, and they would host “open houses” during which members could bring their families to the club.¹²⁵ As time went on, a weekly ladies night was added to the club calendar, and then it became bi-weekly in 1902. Female employees members were expected to pay dues (as were their male counterparts, but at reduced rates) for their use of the club, but it appears through my research that they did not have free rein of the club, as did the male members. Female use of the club was restricted to only two nights a week.¹²⁶

The issue of membership was ongoing throughout the life of the club, not only for women, but also for African Americans and children who worked at the Eagle and Phenix. The minutes from the Eagle and Phenix Club governing board note specific rules about restricting membership for African American employees. At a time when racial segregation was the rule and not the exception, it is interesting to ask what event occurred to prompt the committee to draft such a restriction.¹²⁷ In the Eagle and Phenix Club

¹²³ Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 369-375.

¹²⁴ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, October 23, 1899, CSU Archives.

¹²⁵ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, August 15, 1900, CSU Archives.

¹²⁶ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, March 10, 1902, Jan 12, 1903, June 8, 1902, CSU Archives.

¹²⁷ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, May 10, 1902, CSU Archives; Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South*, 464-470.

minutes, the most common reasons for rejecting applicants were due to age minimums; children who were employed at the mill often applied for membership at the club, but many were not admitted because they were too young. Age minimums throughout the history of the club varied; they were as low as twelve and as high as sixteen in the first four years that the club was open. Young men employed by the mill but lacking in education were targeted by the club owners, which accounts for the low age minimums. Concern for the proper use of extracurricular time did not extend to part-time workers, and in some cases, boys who attended school found their membership revoked due to the fact that they were not considered “bona fide” mill employees.¹²⁸ This evidence calls into question Jordan’s real motives for the Eagle and Phenix Club: why would Jordan not want to let in outsiders into the club who chose to attend school? Did Jordan believe that the incentives the club offered would be wasted on those motivated enough to go to school? If so, this gives further evidence that the sole purpose of the club was not for the greater good, but rather as a means to facilitate loyalty towards the company.

G. Gunby Jordan did not attend every meeting of the club’s governing committee, but his younger brother and his committee members kept him abreast of all of the club’s day-to-day operations concerning operation costs, membership dues, library materials purchased, and employees hired. Jordan had the final word on all club decisions. For instance, when the superintendent of the Columbus Public Schools Carleton Gibson wished to have the boys who attended the city’s night school attend the Lyceum lecture sponsored by the club, the request was sent straight to Jordan.¹²⁹ Jordan relinquished

¹²⁸ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, October 1901, CSU Archives.

¹²⁹ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, Nov. 15 1899, CSU Archives.

some of his control over the club to the governing committee in 1902, but he still maintained a strong governing presence in club business.¹³⁰ To honor their founder and patron, the governing committee requested a copy of the portrait that Jordan sat for in Atlanta in 1901 to hang in the clubhouse.¹³¹

Jordan described the club as a place where mill owners could work to improve the lives of their operatives, and he chastised those mill owners who disapproved of his work at the Georgia Industrial Association. Jordan asserted:

that such an institution should be criticized by the fastidiously conservative we naturally expected. But its operations have been entirely satisfactory to those who had the interest of the operatives nearest at heart and who have not seen the good effect which each succeeding years has mad the more manifest. And while each mill may not be able or willing to go to such an extent in its generosity to its operatives I believe that the sentiment is growing, and has already reached hundreds of thousands of establishments, that what can be reasonably done shall be done for those who work for its best interests.¹³²

The “best interests” of mills in the South, according to Jordan, meant the cultivation of more young white men into the industrial fields.¹³³ He hoped to utilize the attractiveness of his clubhouse as means to garner more interest in his mill and in industrial education.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, January 7, 1902, CSU Archives.

¹³¹ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, December 7, 1901, CSU Archives.

¹³² Jordan, Presentation to Georgia Industrial Association, 1901.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

The club was Jordan's stepping-stone in creating his industrial-minded educational system for Columbus. The club valued "self-reliance" and the "dignity of work" that Jordan so admired, and he would use this social experiment as a rallying force for his future educational ventures.¹³⁵ Jordan's goal was to decrease the likelihood that young male operatives would slip into idleness; this goal motivated him to continue in his political and educational pursuits for Columbus and the South.

The First Citizen of Columbus

Jordan parlayed his experience in the Confederacy, the banking industry, and the textile mills to create his New South persona: an industrialist, a philanthropist, and an educator. Through his work within the community, Jordan strove to be Columbus' first citizen, finding leadership roles on numerous committees and donating his time and money for the betterment of the community. Having developed a reputation as a master orator, Jordan found himself an active participant at civic and community events throughout Columbus.¹³⁶

As a "gifted and magnetic speaker," Jordan was in high demand; the Columbus newspapers frequently announced his speeches and leadership roles within numerous organizations around the city and the state of Georgia.¹³⁷ Jordan oversaw small and large gatherings, and continually appeared at meetings dealing with the subject of education. Jordan's speeches "were never thoughtless. When aroused, his thoughts poured forth in vigorous English, strikingly and wonderfully expressed...by gesture and flashing eye,

¹³⁵ "Last Will and Testament of G. Gunby Jordan," 1930, G. Gunby Jordan Collection, CSU Archives, Columbus, GA.

¹³⁶ Flournoy, Dismukes, Lewis, Illges, "Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan," 1930.

¹³⁷ Ibid.; "For the Teachers' Association that is to meet here in May, *Daily Enquirer-Sun* (Columbus, GA), March 21, 1890.

acting as well as speaking to produce the desired impression upon the audience.”¹³⁸ He ran the city spelling bee in connection with his work with the Columbus Library in 1890, he provided the welcome address to the Georgia Teachers’ Association’s annual meeting, and he delivered diplomas to the Columbus Public Schools graduates.¹³⁹ As the “prince of Southern business men,” he dedicated himself to civic as well as financial pursuits, and even spoke on at one of Columbus’ first Labor Day celebrations in 1905.¹⁴⁰ Although it may seem surprising that a textile mill owner would be the keynote speaker at a Labor Day celebration, Jordan met with other activists and industrialists on the matter of “industrial peace” and sought to bridge the gap caused by “agitators.”¹⁴¹ These exercises within the community gave Jordan the means to influence education indirectly before he took on the role of president of the Columbus School Board.

One of Jordan’s most significant contributions to public education in Columbus came in his role as one of the founding members of the Columbus Public Library Association. Jordan worked to find a temporary and eventually a permanent location for the library, he made numerous donations of books over the years, and he served as a director and vice-

¹³⁸ Flournoy, Dismukes, Lewis, Illges, “Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan,” 1930.

¹³⁹ “Untitles Article,” *Daily Enquirer-Sun*, Columbus, Georgia, June 10, 1890; “For the Teachers’ Association that is to meet here in May,” *Daily Enquirer-Sun*, March 21, 1890; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1906), 53.

¹⁴⁰ “Columbus Board of Trade,” *Daily Enquirer-Sun* (Columbus, GA), Sept 2, 1890, Tuesday Morning; “Labor Day in Georgia,” *The Times Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), September 5, 1905.

¹⁴¹ “Want a Million for Industrial Peace Promotion,” *Daily East Oregonian* (Pendleton, OR), November, 9, 1907; G. Gunby Jordan, Presentation to Georgia Industrial Association, 1901.

president from the association's inception.¹⁴² The library had 4,454 volumes in its care in 1882, and it included

books [from] the most famous works the pen of master minds have ever inscribed. In the purchase of books the board, while not intending to encourage promiscuous novel reading, have felt that it was not their province to prescribe a course of reading for the members, but have from time to time, in response to the demand, purchased a reasonable proportion of books of this class, whilst attempting to supply those with suitable works whose reading lead them into other than the field of fiction.¹⁴³

Supplying the books for the public library, Jordan and his fellow directors could not pass up the opportunity to give the public further moral instruction. While assuring the public that they had not prescribed a “course of reading” for library members, it is obvious that they published the availability of novels in the library, but judged them to be of a lower “class” of literature. In accordance with this philosophy, Jordan himself donated “three elegant volumes of the famous and popular author John Fiske,” who was a prominent philosopher at the time.¹⁴⁴ While it is not possible to discern the reasons behind Jordan's choice of literature, Jordan's possible appreciation of Fiske would not be surprising. Fiske was greatly influenced by Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer; his works included

¹⁴² Minutes for the Second Annual Meeting of the Columbus Public Library Association, *Digital Library of Georgia*, January, 13, 1881 (hereafter cited as Library Minutes, Digital Library of GA).

¹⁴³ Library Minutes, January, 11, 1882., Digital Library of GA.

¹⁴⁴ “Elegant Books,” *Daily Enquirer-Sun* (Columbus, GA), September 5, 1888.

proclamations on the superiority of the “Anglo-Saxon race,”¹⁴⁵ which aligned with Jordan’s own perceptions of morality, race, and class.¹⁴⁶

As a library director, Jordan continued his efforts to improve and better the populous of Columbus. The library might not “make great men of all who participate, but will, nevertheless, be productive of much good in awakening the sleepy and brightening rusty intellects.”¹⁴⁷ Jordan worked on numerous committees during his tenure as vice-president of the library association, budgeting, entertainment, and as a liaison between the Columbus Public Schools and the library.¹⁴⁸ Jordan encouraged and facilitated the merging of the public school’s and the library association’s volumes into one massive collection that would eventually be stored on the top floor of Columbus High School.¹⁴⁹

Jordan’s experiences with the board gave him ample opportunity to mix and mingle with other men of Columbus who were interested in education and the uplifting of the populous. One fellow member, Joseph Harris Chappell, would go on to be the first president of the teacher training institution the Georgia Normal and Industrial College in Milledgeville a decade after they worked together organizing the library.¹⁵⁰ Chappell was a man of similar aspirations; he sought “to train girls into a useful and noble

¹⁴⁵ John Fiske, *The Destiny of Man Viewed in the Light of His Origin*, (Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1885).

¹⁴⁶ “Immigration and the Southern Negro,” *The Times Dispatch*, Richmond, Virginia, June 23, 1907; “Plans to Secure Good Immigrants,” *The Sentinel-Journal*, Pickens, South Carolina, Feb. 23, 1907; “Handwriting on the Wall,” *The Watchman and Southron* (Sumter, SC), August 7, 1907; G. Gunby Jordan, Presentation to Georgia Industrial Association, 1901.

¹⁴⁷ Library Minutes, January, 11, 1882., Digital Library of GA.

¹⁴⁸ Library Minutes, January, 26, 1881, January, 26, 1881, January, 16, 1882, February 4, 1881 Digital Library of GA.

¹⁴⁹ *Annual Report for the Columbus Public Schools 1911*, (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Printing Company, 1911), 9.

¹⁵⁰ Library Minutes, January, 11, 1882, Digital Library of GA.

womanhood.”¹⁵¹ He praised the work of his female students, and understood his work at the college to be “an aggressive experiment in female education.”¹⁵² These associations would do a lot to inspire and mold the man who sought to bring about the first publically-funded industrial high school.

Jordan’s reputation played a pivotal role in furthering his accomplishments. And while most publications concerning Jordan were overwhelmingly positive during his lifetime, there is at least one instance in his career when events publicized in the newspapers demonstrated that Jordan was not universally loved. In 1889, Jordan’s commercial exploits were scattered through the Columbus newspapers when a “prominent citizen” of Macon, Georgia, B. T. Hatcher, accused Jordan of unethical business practices.¹⁵³ Hatcher, who had lived intermittently in Columbus and was thoroughly involved with the cotton industry and ruling class, publically claimed that Jordan had robbed “him by manipulating the stock” in his role as the president for the Georgia Midland Construction Company.¹⁵⁴ Jordan demanded a retraction by Hatcher, and when Hatcher refused, Jordan suggested that they continue the “correspondence” across the Chattahoochee River in Alabama to avoid police involvement. Both men commissioned “seconds” to act on their behalf in order to negotiate the terms of the duel, a Mr. Jefferson for Jordan, and a Mr. Rollins for Hatcher.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Joseph Harris Chappell, *Baccalaureate Address of J. Harris Chappell, A.M., PhD., Delivered before the Graduating Classes of the Georgia Normal and Industrial College, Milledgeville, GA, For the years 1891-1904, Inclusive* (Atlanta, GA: The Franklin Printing and Publishing Company, 1905), 10-11.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 10-11.

¹⁵³ “Bowie Knives at Ten Paces; Hot-Blooded Georgians to Fight if They Can Agree on Weapons,” *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), July 8, 1889.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

The two “seconds” met and began to work out the terms of the duel, but negotiations came to a standstill when Rollins proposed “a fight to the finish” in a ten-foot ring with Bowie knives.¹⁵⁶ Bowie knives had grown in popularity in the nineteenth century due to a popular story of Jim Bowie, who had used the style of knife to fight in a duel in Louisiana. This story became known as the Vidalia Sandbar fight, where Bowie was said to have been stabbed, beaten, and shot—but still managed to survive the duel.¹⁵⁷ When Rollins proposed the use of 10-inch Bowie knives for the duel, Jefferson refused on Jordan’s behalf claiming that the use of “knives as unprecedented and barbarous and unjust” and would only “allow” the use of “shotguns, rifles, or pistols.”¹⁵⁸ It is unclear if Jefferson believed the forty-two year old Jordan might not be able to match the athletic ability of Hatcher with a Bowie knife, but as Hatcher was just a few months younger than Jordan and came from a similar upper-middle-class background; it can be assumed that Jefferson might have actually thought that a duel of this nature was indeed “barbaric.”¹⁵⁹

When *The Atlanta Constitution* reported the entirety of the incident, it stated that the cause of the disagreement was born out of Jordan’s desire to have a road connect the two cities of Columbus and Atlanta. Hatcher and Jordan had been business acquaintances as well as friends, but the capital ran out before the road was to be completed, and Jordan compelled Hatcher to invest \$15,000 into the Georgia Midland Construction Company by offering Hatcher

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ William Manns, "The Bowie Knife," *American Cowboy* 11, May–Jun 2004: 40–43; J. C. Robertson, ed., “The Bowie Knife and its Inventor,” *The Mechanic's Magazine, Museum, Register, and Gazette*, No. 1231, vol. 46, 13 March 1847: 262.

¹⁵⁸ “Bowie Knives at Ten Paces” *Evening Star*, 1889.

¹⁵⁹ “Benjamin Thomas Hatcher, Muscogee County Sketches,” *Memoirs of Georgia*, Volume 2, 1895: 615-616.

an inducement in the way of a promise in another railroad deal. That promise is now the cause of the late unpleasanties. Mr. Hatcher claims, ...that Jordan made him an absolute promise, which he refused, failed and neglected to keep. Mr. Jordan on the other hand, claimed...that the promise was conditional.¹⁶⁰

When Jordan learned of Hatcher's accusation, Jordan immediately set out to discover the reason for the accusation, maintaining that he had done nothing wrong. Jordan wrote to Hatcher stating that

the last time that I had the honor of meeting you was a few day before I left for New York, when you came to my office and in the most cordial manner, requested me to do you a favor, in getting a surveyed line of railroad to thrown off some land that your company desired. I as cheerfully saw the engineer and since that time have had no transaction of any kind with you...As the language quoted as coming from you is derogatory to my standing as a gentleman and injurious to my career as a businessman, and is without foundation in fact, I can but hope that you have been misunderstood.¹⁶¹

When Hatcher did not retract his statement, Jordan took the accusation very seriously, and he proceeded to write to Hatcher demanding a retraction, which eventually led to Jordan's call for a duel. Jordan had consulted his friend Hoke Smith, then working as a lawyer in Atlanta, as to what he believed would be the right course of action. Smith did

¹⁶⁰ "They are Friends. G. Gunby Jordan and B. T. Hatcher Join Hands. The Board of Honor Brings Them Together on Honorable Terms--The History of the Misunderstanding," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 11, 1889.

¹⁶¹ G. Gunby Jordan, "Hatcher and Jordan," *Columbus-Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), July 6, 1889.

not assist Jordan with the incident, as Hatcher and Jordan's mutual friends intervened before Smith could take any action.¹⁶²

After Mr. Rollins, Hatcher's "second," had his proposal rejected by Jordan's representative, he published the complete correspondence in the *Columbus Enquirer*. The drama quickly caught the attention of the people of Columbus and other regional and national newspapers.¹⁶³ Mutual friends and fellow textile and cotton mill owners set out to bring about a peaceful end to the disagreement. Mistery John F. Flournoy, D. P. Dozier, C. E. Hochstrasser, William. A. Little, and T. E. Blanchard composed a "Board," which proposed to settle the dispute between the two men, a dispute which the board believed was due to "a mutual misunderstanding."¹⁶⁴ The board reviewed Jordan's financial papers and decided that he was not at fault. Both Jordan and Hatcher made public statements on July 10th saying that they would withdraw their accusations. Hatcher stated, "...having temporarily withdrawn all charges against Mr. G. Gunby Jordan, pending an investigation of these charges by mutual friends; I desire to make permanent that withdrawal, and being entirely satisfied of my error, express regret at the misunderstanding which occasioned the charges."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² John F. Flournoy, D. P. Dozier, C. E. Hochstrasser, Wm. A. Little, and T. E. Blanchard to G. Gunby Jordan, July 6, 1889, G. Gunby Jordan Collection, CSU Archives, Columbus, GA; Hoke Smith to G. Gunby Jordan, July 11, 1889, G. Gunby Jordan Collection, CSU Archives, Columbus, GA.

¹⁶³ "Bowie Knives at Ten Paces" *Evening Star*, 1889; "They are Friends," *Atlanta Constitution*, 1889.

¹⁶⁴ "They are Friends," *Atlanta Constitution*, 1889; Flournoy, Dozier, Hochstrasser, Little, and Blanchard, to Jordan, July 6, 1889, CSU Archives.

¹⁶⁵ "They are Friends," *Atlanta Constitution*, 1889

The heated situation was finally put to rest, yet animosity remained quite strong between the two men in their later business pursuits.¹⁶⁶ This encounter with Hatcher revealed that Jordan hoped to become an influential public figure in his financial and civic pursuits, and this required the cultivation of a proud and ethical reputation. As Jordan formed his empire, he realized that slander could destroy all that he had hoped to accomplish; a man known for uplifting his mill operatives could not at the same time be accused of robbing his fellow businessman. This incident also illustrates how central Jordan's social status was to his identity. He saw himself as a "gentleman" and a "businessman;" for Jordan, these two titles were dependent upon the essence of the other.¹⁶⁷ Hard work and integrity were the very definition of morality for Jordan, as well as his own loyalty to southern traditions and culture. Within chapter four I examine further Jordan's appreciation for the relationship between morality and industry.

The "old" and "new" South dichotomy embodied by Jordan was complex. Did he want to identify more with the antebellum Old South aristocrats who had once controlled the South, or did he prefer to associate himself more with New South industrialists who claimed an affinity for hard work and the common man?¹⁶⁸ While Jordan was no stranger to hard work, aside from his time spent in the Confederate Army and his very early work as a clerk and a volunteer firefighter, Jordan had always lived among the merchant and higher classes of the South. How well did he really know the class of workers that he employed in his mills and businesses? And what were their views toward

¹⁶⁶ "Boycotted for Using Jute," *The Anderson Intelligencer* (Anderson Court House, SC), Sept 19, 1889.

¹⁶⁷ "Hatcher and Jordan," *Columbus Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), July 6, 1889.

¹⁶⁸ Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 147, 175.

their employer? Jordan's struggle with his identity became public when, in 1926 he ran in his first public election for county commissioner; Jordan's opponents accused him of being too lofty and aristocratic to identify with the needs of the lower classes.¹⁶⁹

Jordan's 1928 re-election as county commissioner raised accusations that he and his friends conspired to use taxpayer's money for their own mutual benefit. Jordan was running against a local attorney named Mr. Ed Wohlwender, and Jordan's campaign committee contested that "the only really awful thing alleged against G. Gunby Jordan as a candidate for County Commissioner...is that he resides about one-third of a mile from a paved road." The committee maintained that in six months it would be of no consequence where Jordan lived, because as long as he was reelected, all county roads would be paved. G. Gunby Jordan's grandson G. Gunby Jordan II, recalls the political debates in 1928, and how in his youth, he could not have ever imagined someone speaking so ill of his grandfather. He remembers his grandfather and Wohlwender debating in "Bibb City on a Little Buck Ice & Coal Co. ice stand" when Wohlwender accused Jordan of conspiring to have the road near his home built first in the county. Essentially, Wohlwender characterized Jordan as belonging to the elite social class that ran the city. However, the voters sided with Jordan, and Jordan made good on his promise to ensure that all county roads were paved by 1929.¹⁷⁰ Did Wohlwender have a point? Was Jordan beginning to lose touch with his constituents?

¹⁶⁹ Unpublished autobiography of G. Gunby Jordan II, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA, 3-10.

¹⁷⁰ "Muscookee County is Investing Over \$2,000,000.00 on Paved Highway," Columbus Centennial Edition, *The Columbus Ledger* (Columbus, GA), Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

By 1928, Jordan had constructed the Green Island Ranch twice (it had burned down once in 1920). The Ranch had all of the command of a large English country estate, and even had the dotage of a British gardener who supervised the Ranch's exposure in gardening books, magazines, and postcards of the time. Jordan originally designed Green Island Ranch to be a weekend home, but the family moved there permanently long before the road was first paved. A 1933 account of the home is found in *A Garden History of Georgia*, which describes the home and grounds as an Eden located along the Chattahoochee River:

the house faces northward to the view and is surrounded by extensive and well-planned gardens. The obstinate hillside has been converted into terraces for the numerous garden plots and the stiff red Georgia clay has been "tamed" by hundreds of design, are located on three terraces parallel with oak trees, separates the house from the terrace porch along the ivy-covered wall to the central walk and a small fountain. Other walks lead from this center through the three terraces to circular plots in which tall urns holding clinging vines are placed. Each of the terraces is divided by clipped privet hedges into three parts, the western and middle portions devoted to annuals, and the eastern section to roses. The lower terrace, given over to native and other kinds of shrubbery, blends naturally into the hillside.¹⁷¹

The Ranch was home to its own dairy and water collecting system. For recreation, the ranch housed playgrounds, a tennis court, and horses. Jordan employed numerous servants (both black and white) as governesses, chauffeurs, cooks, dairy workers, as well

¹⁷¹ Florence Marye, "Green Island Ranch," *The Garden History of Georgia*, ed. by Hatties C. Rainwater, "Green Island Ranch," *The Garden History of Georgia*, (Atlanta. GA: The Peachtree Garden Club).

as maintenance and cleaning staff.¹⁷² Jordan's grandson explained his pleasure in "the opportunity to live in the country on a lovely large property in a beautiful home, and I think honestly we children took as much advantage of a given situation as anyone could...although we probably were spoiled, we did enjoy all the advantages and the opportunities that we had."¹⁷³

The Jordans enjoyed a privileged life, both in Columbus and at the Green Island Ranch. This life was even more enjoyable after the road leading to the house, River Road, was paved, regardless of the accuracy of Wohlwender's allegations raised during the political campaign for county commissioner. Jordan was a member of the elite. He benefited from paved roads both personally and financially. The construction of the road not only helped provide better access for Jordan to drive home to the ranch, but it also provided better access for business clientele seeking to create additional industrial opportunities in Columbus.

Did Jordan's wealth and status hurt his reputation with the working classes living and working in the mill villages, with the people whom he professed to serve? While Jordan's moral and paternal ideology certainly influenced his social and business endeavors, I assert that regardless of his paternalistic philosophy toward poor whites, Jordan's status and wealth provided for many of the programs, initiatives, and educational opportunities that helped poor whites living in the mill village. Without his dual identity as a New South industrialist and southern gentleman, Jordan would have encountered many barriers to his educational and social engineering pursuits that

¹⁷² Unpublished autobiography of G. Gunby Jordan II, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, 3-10.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 9.

northern progressives often experienced.¹⁷⁴ Instead of appearing to be an interfering outsider, Jordan embodied the role of a progressive and industrially-minded business and civic leader, a position that may not have been afforded to a regional and political outsider. As a result of Jordan's wartime experiences, family and community ties, and business and financial prowess, Jordan would not be labeled an interfering progressive, but rather, he would be the First citizen of Columbus.

Conclusion

In order to understand Jordan's legacy, it is imperative to examine the way in which he coped with the changing and developing world in which he lived. While it can be said that every lifetime endures tumultuous changes, Jordan lived during a time that could be characterized by both Old and New South identities. Jordan was a man of industry and a man of change, but he was also guided by conflicting traditions of respectability and discrimination and subordination. Jordan's complex character guided him through changing politics and new and experimental forms of philanthropy.

Jordan knew his reputation was integral in the formation of the Jordan empire, and he worked tirelessly to prove himself as a gentleman, industrialist, and social activist. Jordan's status would enable him to travel down progressive avenues that might not have been afforded to a political and social outsider. Jordan understood how to utilize the social and economic opportunities that his status afforded him. He would fully flex his political and economic muscles at the turn of the twentieth century in the arena of

¹⁷⁴ Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 415-425; Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education*, 19-23.

education. In chapters four and five I examine Jordan's work with the Columbus school system as he sought to create a moral and industrial workforce.

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CHAPTER 4

EDUCATION FOR A BETTER AND MORAL COLUMBUS, GEORGIA: THE PURPOSE, MEANS, AND CONSEQUENCES OF MORAL EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

For Jordan, there existed a strong desire to transform Columbus, GA into a better place. He was not alone his quest to use education for the establishment of a *better* Columbus; members of the school board believed that the institution of a public school system was essential in the development of a moral and useful citizenry. Yet, the definition of a *better* Columbus, quite like the definition of progress, is dependent on the perspective of the person using the term. For Jordan, and the other engineers of Columbus, *better* became synonymous with efficient, moral, industrial, stable, and prosperous. From their perspectives, these items were essential for a more democratic Columbus; it was both desirable and noble to contribute to the wealth of Columbus.

The development of character and moral education are key elements in the history of education in the United States. Moral education was paramount to the spread of vocational and manual training programs in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this chapter I explore the role that moral education played in the foundation of the American public education and its relationship to vocational education. This relationship was vital in the history of education in Columbus, and both informed and dictated Jordan's educational values. Jordan's views shaped the public education system of Columbus, and transformed the system into one that utilized manual training and

vocational education as an instrument for Americanization, a means of correction, and as tool for industrialization.

Moral Education as the Foundation for Public Education in the United States

The history of education in Columbus has always been tied to the moral and character development of its pupils. In the preamble of the “Laws and Resolutions” of Columbus schools written in 1866, superintendent Alderman John McIlhenny stated

to allow a large portion of the rising population to grow up in ignorance, spending the time in idleness — often in vice — that ought to be devoted to the mental and moral culture, and discipline, must produce the most disastrous results. Ignorance is a fruitful source of both public and private misfortune; and hundreds of children in this city, if the advantages of a common English education were afforded them, would grow up into useful men and women, respecting themselves and respected by others; also, giving tone and character to the body politic. The child now is the future man for good or evil. If it be desirable to maintain public virtue and morality, educate the child. If it be wisdom to promote private virtue and integrity, educate the child. If skillful, enterprising mechanics and business men are essential requisites of a prosperous country, educate the child.¹

For McIlhenny and other educational boosters of Columbus, education was the means to prosperity and morality. More than two thousand years ago, Aristotle stated that “poverty is the instrument of revolution and crime;” this idea still held value in Columbus in the early nineteenth century.² Yet, political leaders in Columbus and across the United

¹ John McIlhenny, “Laws and Resolutions,” *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1906), 46.

² Aristotle, *Aristotle's Politics*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), 70.

States believed an additional element was needed in order to preserve democracy and dispel crime: a moral public education. Carleton Gibson, Superintendent of Columbus schools, noted that people have finally been “aroused to the realization of the fact that our schools need no longer seek an excuse for existence, but we are face to face with the stern duty of preparing the youth of the land for social efficiency.”³ In addition to this need for efficiency, Jordan saw the misbehavior and immoral acts the youth performed in Columbus as being a result of boredom, and thus, an active education was essential to the intellectual and moral progress of children.⁴

In order to position the expansion of moral education in Columbus, by Jordan and other educational boosters, it is essential to investigate the growth of moral and character education within the United States. The development of a moral education curriculum dates back to the beginning of public education in the America. Founding fathers Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Rush both envisioned education as a means to create the ideal and moral citizen. Education was key to moral development. Rush saw education as a means for social control. For this reason, he believed that the education of women was just as important as that of men. If their education was lacking, then they might not be of service to the new republic.⁵

³ Carleton Gibson, “Introductory Remarks, *The National Society of Industrial Education Bulletin No 9, Proceedings Second Annual Meeting Atlanta, Georgia* (New York: National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, 1909), 134.

⁴ G. Gunby Jordan, “The Material and Moral Benefits of Industrial Education,” *The National Society of Industrial Education Bulletin No 9, Proceedings Second Annual Meeting Atlanta, Georgia* (New York: National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, 1909), 129.

⁵ Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner, *American Education: A History*, 4th Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 80-96.

As public education grew, so too did ideas of morality. Horace Mann, credited with being the father of the common school movement, envisioned education as a means to establish a common culture with common social mores. The use of McGuffey readers in many common school classrooms perpetuated this culture. Mann hoped that common education might heal some of the social problems that existed within the lower classes.⁶ In his book *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil*, James Hunter argues that as Mann concentrated on creating a universal culture, Sunday schools began to develop alongside common schools for the purpose of occupying and educating poor working class children on their day off from work. Sunday schools took on the task specifically to develop good character traits in children, and common schools concentrated on more secular pursuits.⁷ Yet it can be inferred from Hunter's definition of a common culture that the creation of this culture was an acceptance of middle class morality. American culture was electing that men and women who did not exhibit middle class characteristics for living were at fault; deciding the best manner of dress, speech, cleanliness, and manners that the American people should conform to was an acceptance of middle class America's version of morality. Therefore the creation of a common culture was and is a moral statement, even if it was secular in nature.

In the progressive era of educational history, character education and moral training dominated educational philosophy. The Protestant work ethic waned due to rapid industrialization and the displacement of the artisan in American culture. Fears began to arise that children in the United States would not develop a proper appreciation of the

⁶ Ibid., 112-124.

⁷ James Davison Hunter, *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 38-42.

value of work. Manufacturers printed countless volumes concerning the necessity of a good work ethic for the general public, and schools. Samuel Smiles, author of *Character*, believed “work is the best educator of practical character.”⁸ To illustrate this point, Smiles quotes numerous stories from ancient philosophers with the intention of indoctrinating and glorifying school children’s love a work. The belief that “idleness was the curse of mankind” would propel educators to seek and refine new educational practices to cultivate the students’ love of labor as the “duty of industry applies to all classes of society.”⁹

Educational philosophers such as John Runkle and Calvin Woodward presented manual training as the solution to a growing disregard of a Protestant work ethic brought about by the rapid industrialization of the United States. Runkle saw manual training as bridging the gap left by industrialization and believed it would help to placate the devaluing of labor in the public schools. In a similar vein, Woodward promoted manual training courses because he believed they could instill proper moral development in young men and women engaged in these courses. He popularized the “young Vulcan” forger as a hero pitted against the evil schoolmaster; manual training would reinstitute morality in the ever-growing morally deficient youth. John Runkle and Calvin Woodward promoted manual training, but they attempted to disconnect it from capital gains. They expressed that their purpose in the promotion of manual training was to improve the morality and values of the children. The popular belief was that poverty was

⁸ Samuel Smiles, *Character* (Chicago: Belford, Clarke, and Co., 1883), 102.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 103-108.

a direct consequence of poor values; if education could correct the values of the poor, then a moral and prosperous society would soon follow.¹⁰

In England, similar manual training movements were popular. Robert Owen began the Character Institute in the early 1800s in the hope of easing some of the class differences between the working poor and middle classes. Character was a weighted term, a person's class determined how they perceived its meaning. For the working poor, character had a different meaning than it did for Britain's middle-class, who found the working poor morally deficient. Owen's followers found support in the United States as well, some engaged in excessive efforts to inform students of their daily moral achievements. For example, Robert Craig developed a charactograph that could be hung around children's necks as a constant reminder that the development of character was the primary goal of the educational institution.¹¹ The moral benefit of manual training was the key to the success of the movement in both Columbus and throughout the country.

William C. Redfield, a proponent of "practical education," stated in 1914 that

busy hands and active brains settled down to constructive labor, and out of self-controlled effort grew moral elements that had hitherto been unseen. The boy who could do something well and took pride in doing it showed an unselfishness that had

¹⁰ Herbert M. Kliebard, *Schooled to Work: Vocationalism and the American Curriculum, 1876-1946* (New York: Teacher College Press, 1999), 1-12.

¹¹ James Arthur, *Traditional Approaches to Character Education in Britain and America*, in *Handbook of Moral Education*, ed. Larry P. Nucci and Darcia Narvaez, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 83-88.

been unsuspected, and was found willing to help the less fortunate little chap at his side.¹²

Jordan and other educational supporters in Columbus shared this perspective. Well-read in educational philosophy, Jordan cited numerous educational philosophers in his commentary about the moral benefits of industrial education at the Annual Convention for the Promotion of Industrial Education held in Atlanta in 1909. In his commentary, Jordan references philosophers such as Herbert Spencer and Friedrich Froebel — these selections indicate his clear preference for manual training. Quoting Spencer, Jordan argued, “where men alternate work, play and study in the right proportion, both the physical and mental organs are best developed.” Also citing Froebel, he stated that “all manual training is mental training” for if one desires to “develop the brain, you must use your hand[s].”¹³ And yet within the same text, Jordan declared that “our theories are obsolete” and “our practices are wasteful,” believing that “theory that stops at theory is the grave of all progress.”¹⁴ Being a man of action, Jordan cried “for men and women who can do things,” and it was time for “America to supply them!”¹⁵

Jordan was not alone in his reverence for action and experience. Friedrich Froebel equated work and efficiency as being godly. Societies must be trained to work; training a child to love and appreciate work was both a spiritual and moral asset. Froebel judged activity, through play and modeling, to be the root of productivity; this educational

¹² William C. Redfield, “A Plea for Practical Education: Excerpts From Recent Addresses,” *Vocational Education*, ed. Charles A. Bennett and William T. Bawden, (Peoria, IL: The Manual Arts Press, 1914), 2.

¹³ Jordan, “The Material and Moral Benefits of Industrial Education,” 125.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 125.

philosophy, he believed, could make the world a better place. Froebel argued for the cultivation of self-expression through manual training, stating that too many schools neglect learning done with hands. He suggested the use of clay as a means to correct this inattention. Like many other educational philosophers, Froebel believed that the products of industrial training are not what is generated externally, but what is created internally. Froebel was given an opportunity to create a Volkserziehungsanstalt, or a public school, in Germany in the nineteenth century based on his educational philosophy. Although his school was not successful, many of his ideas did find success in the Columbus public schools through the support of Jordan and other manual training advocates.¹⁶

The key to understanding the meaning of manual training for educational philosophers like Froebel and educational supporters like Jordan lies in the root of the word – an act that requires the use of one’s hands. The manual training movement embraced the pedagogical benefits of learning through the use of one’s hands. Molding, sculpting, and creating were all an essential elements, not only in the development of an affection for production and invention, but also in inspiring students to feel a connection to the learning process and become engaged in learning. To do, to work, and to create were all considered manual.

When examining the manual training curriculum employed in Columbus in grades one through eight, the activities were designed to correlate with the curriculum, in the same way as kinesthetic teaching methods are utilized in modern day classrooms. In the first grade, students complete raffia activities by “plaiting Indian mats and belts” to

¹⁶ Frederick Froebel, *The Education of Man*, trans. and annotated by W. N. Hailmann, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1907), 30-34.

correspond with geography lessons. Second graders connect with their reading and storytelling lessons by using clay to produce models of igloos, and dogsleds. Explorations concerning the invention of the spinning wheel and fieldtrips to local textile mills supplemented lessons so that pupils could observe modern day textile spinning. All of this background knowledge is done alongside studies of “Palace, Athene, Penelope, and Arachne.” In addition, students completed exhibitions in weaving in order to add the manual training aspect to the learning process.¹⁷ In later grades, boys and girls began to be segregated; girls were given instruction in sewing and cooking, and boys were given instruction in woodworking. The direct connections to core content areas began to decrease in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade classes, yet the school system continued to proclaim that “our aim has been not to make good cooks and seamstresses, mere machines, of those who have entered the manual training classes but rather to teach, through the activities of every day life, the principles of right living and how to apply them.”¹⁸ The belief that students learn from performing manual work was pervasive in the Columbus Public Schools.

The Columbus School Board showed admiration toward John Dewey’s Laboratory School in Chicago, and many similarities can be seen in how The Dewey School and the Columbus Schools integrated manual training within the curriculum. At the Dewey School, students conducted similar investigations with regard to historical civilizations and inventions. Here too, students studied the progress of inventions that lead to “comfort and convenience in living” for the ancient Phoenician civilization, and they

¹⁷ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1906), 79-83.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 40

determined the style and materials that would best suit the needs of the Phoenicians. Students then “turned into masons, made mortar boxes, trowels, and a sand sieve in the shop. Lime was procured, and experiments were carried on to demonstrate the effect of water upon it. Mortar was made and used to build the walls of a typical house of that time and region.”¹⁹ Comparable to the Columbus schools, the goal of this manual education in the Dewey School was not for children to learn the skill of masonry, but to “stimulate the children’s minds to study, and so far as they were able, to seek solutions.”²⁰ While this goal was not completely mirrored in the manual training course of Columbus schools, many elements of the pedagogical strategies used in Dewey’s manual training expectations could be found in this southern mill town.

For Jordan, manual training was essential, not only for moral development, but also as a means to find contentment and happiness in one’s life. Jordan argued that manual training would give “young people a delight in life which I do not think any other kind of training will give” as it was both “admirable” and full of “untold benefit[s].”²¹ Yet, manual training was not only popular in educational circles, but was also seen as a means to raise a child. In 1892, Kate Wiggins remarked in her how-to book on child rearing, *Children’s Rights: A Book of Nursery Logic* that manual training could be of great use to society, but that children must understand the profits of completing tasks, or the benefits of manual training would not solve any of the problems created by industrialization. Kate Wiggins believed that in order for children to obtain the benefits of manual training,

¹⁹ Katherine Camp Mayhew and Anna Camp Edwards, *The Dewey School: The Laboratory School of the University of Chicago 1896-1903* (New Jersey: Atheron Press, (1965) 2007), 123

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 123.

²¹ Jordan, “The Material and Moral Benefits of Industrial Education,” 128.

they must be allowed “creativity and invention.”²² Thus, her views on manual training align with John Dewey and his emphasis on individual students’ experiences guiding the learning process.

Jordan’s admiration for manual training is evident in his annual award given to one boy and one girl in their eighth grade year for excellence in their manual training classes. Several years before Jordan had even served on the school board in Columbus, he was awarding ten dollars to one boy to purchase woodworking tools, and to one girl to purchase cooking utensils. These gender stereotyped awards continued for several years until they were abruptly stopped when all monetary awards in the system were banned. The school board believed that instead of inspiring students to have a healthy appreciation for competition, that they were in fact encouraging unrest and discontent among the students. This suspension of competition in the primary and secondary level for students is significant in a system that prided itself on its admiration for industry and capitalism; this policy change appears to go against the goal of the manual training programs.²³

As stated in chapter one, the terms manual training, industrial education, and vocational education would be used interchangeably in the early twentieth century. In Columbus, the term manual training was generally used in the lower grade levels, while industrial was reserved for the higher grade levels. As time marched on, the term “industrial” fell out of popularity and became more readily replaced with the term

²² Kate Wiggins, *Children’s Rights a Book of Nursery Logic* (Boston: Houghton Press, 1892), 126-128.

²³ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1899-1900* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1900), 31; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1907* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1907), 16.

“vocational,” as can be seen when the Columbus Industrial High School was renamed Jordan Vocational High School in 1937, but it is important to remember that there is no clear distinction in the use of these terms.²⁴

An Instrument for Americanization and American Exceptionalism

In an essay “The Material and Moral Benefits of Industrial Education,” Jordan recognizes he lives in a time of “great awakening” for an efficient and happy America.²⁵ His confidence in American exceptionalism is not only based on the accomplishments of the past, but also on what he believes to be America’s new-found dedication to industrial education. For Jordan, industrial education was the instrument necessary for this steady progress of American supremacy. Workers’ commitment to their vocations and their increased skills and knowledge would propel the United States to dominate the world market and lead to new and profitable products in the uncultivated waste of modern industry. Laborers’ wages would increase alongside mill owners’ happiness as the development of higher quality products would raise their capital. With this enhanced skill, foreigners would no longer dominate the industrial field. Work could be found for everyone, which would, in turn, decrease the number of criminals skulking in the streets, restless and waiting for the next opportunity to engage in criminal activities. Manual and industrial training was Jordan’s key to American exceptionalism.²⁶ For him, there was “no longer any question as to its value, but merely as to the best means and method” to implement industrial education.²⁷

²⁴ KlieBard, *Schooled to Work*, 24-25.

²⁵ Jordan, “The Material and Moral Benefits of Industrial Education,” 123.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 122-132.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 128-129.

With the economic success spawned through industrial education, “America has reached its epoch making-period... a perfect system is coming-an American system—to suit our needs, our purposes, our environment, our ambitions, our quick perceptions.”²⁸ For Jordan, industrial education was “only the beginning of the creation of a great people,” a beginning that he believed to be better and more advanced through the implementation of the industrial mentality. The economic successes of the United States were soon to be the evidence of its own moral accomplishments.²⁹

Many middle class people in the United States believed that the increase in poverty in the growing industrial society was a direct consequence of character deficiency. However, these views were not limited to the United States. In 1854, Elizabeth Gaskell published the socially conscious novel *North and South* that explored the disparities that existed between the upwardly mobile textile mill owners in England, and the despondent and impoverished mill workers. The hero of the story, a wealthy textile owner John Thornton, stated that the way of life of the mill workers “is but a natural punishment of dishonestly-enjoyed pleasure, at some former period in their lives. I do not look on self indulgent, sensual people as worthy of my hatred; I simply look upon them with contempt for their poorness of character.”³⁰ Similar attitudes were prevalent throughout the United States, and propelled men like Jordan to encourage pedagogical techniques to improve the character of Columbus’s pupils.

The perceived moral aspect of capitalism was that people could improve both their ethical and economic status by reaffirming their dedication to honest labor, and by

²⁸ Ibid., 125-133.

²⁹ Ibid., 125.

³⁰ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, (London: Penguin Books, 1855, reprint 1955), 85.

finding value and purpose in their work. An efficient society was a moral society, as citizens cannot have success in business without a commitment to labor. Jordan notes:

the moral uplifting is just as marked and just as certain upon pupils, and hence upon society, as are the material benefits that accrue. For such an education awakens the highest qualities in our nature. It teaches patience and respect for the rights of others. Honest work makes rest a solace and a joy. Contact with things that one can touch gives an idea of property, and this begets law and order, which at least is only a synonym for civilization.³¹

Explicit efforts were employed in Columbus to direct students towards capitalistic morality. Alexander Murdock Gow's textbook for the development of moral character titled *Good Morals and Gentle Manners: For Schools and Families* was used to direct the ethical development of students when not engaged in manual training. The book reinforced many of the concepts already being taught within the school system including the need for obedience and proper manners, the importance of cleanliness, and the veneration of work. Gow did much to isolate those who did not comply with the strict values of this booming industrial town noting, "not a day passes in the company of others, in which we are not called on to practice the lessons of morality and exhibit our knowledge of good manners. These lessons in goodness and politeness are necessary, if we enter good society; for they are only practiced in its circles."³² To fulfill the

³¹ Jordan, "The Material and Moral Benefits of Industrial Education," 132.

³² Alexander M. Gow, *Good Morals and Gentle Manners: For Schools and Families*, (New York: Wilson, Hinkle, and Co., 1873), 8.

requirements of polite society requires strict obedience, even if those in power are tyrannical in their execution of power, for “he that spareth his rod, hateth his son.”³³

In addition to behavioral objectives, Gow provided direct instruction in regards to cleanliness and dress, as “dress is one of the prominent indications of character.”³⁴ Instructions as to the proper way to wash one’s face and hands, as well as the necessity of frequent bathing were dictated to students. Guidelines for the proper length of hair and specifications for how to care for clothes in order to keep oneself clean and neat are thoroughly explained.³⁵ Yet, the most significant instruction came in the glorification of the work ethic. Gow’s focus on promoting a love of labor reflects the conceived crisis that educators believed had fallen upon the United States—an improper appreciation of labor. Allusions to idle thinkers (those unwilling to work to produce something of value) are made throughout the work. Gow states that “idleness is the source of infinite mischief, because idlers must live, and if they will not live honestly by their work, they must contrive to secure, by dishonest means, a livelihood by their wits.”³⁶ Reaffirming the rags to riches ideal that men such as Jordan aspired and inspired, Gow’s guidelines for moral behavior commanded that all people, regardless of status, devote themselves to their work as “the law of love requires perfect justice in respect to labor and its rewards.”³⁷

The Columbus schools cultivated citizens who would aspire to take their place as moral and efficient members of industrial society. These moral graduates of the public

³³ *Ibid.*, 102.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 181.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 177-181.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 97.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 85.

schools of Columbus, would not only contribute to the economic stability of the city, but their engagement in honest labor would help to decrease crime, and ensure that Columbus was not only a moral but a prosperous place to live. Jordan, and many other educational philosophers believed that this dedication to practical and moral education would help to elevate the United States to the station of both the economic and cultural leader of the world.

Means of Correction

As valuing work was the essence of morality, the cultivation of a workforce that found solace and fulfillment in its work became a priority in Columbus and other cities throughout the United States. Yet manual training also served another purpose, it provided a means for the correction and Americanization of social delinquents, minorities, or those with mental or physical disabilities.³⁸ Many, including the educator William Bagley, saw education as an instrument to civilize the “little savage;” the goal was to produce people who might be of use to society and find pride in obedience in labor.³⁹ Therefore various moral education experiments were carried out throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to improve the character of African Americans. In order to comprehend how these philosophies influenced Jordan, it is necessary to briefly explore the history of manual training and vocational education as a means of correction for African Americans and other groups deemed undesirable by the dominant white Protestant middle class citizenry. General Samuel Armstrong in his creation of the

³⁸ KlieBard, *Schooled to Work*, 13-21.

³⁹ Marilyn Watson, “Developmental Discipline and Moral Education,” in *The Handbook of Moral and Character Education*, ed. L. P. Nucci, & D. Narvaez, 175-203, (New York: Routledge, 2012), 175-176.

Hampton Institute and Booker T. Washington in his founding of the Tuskegee Institute were among the most celebrated for their work in Americanization, manual training, and vocational experiments in the nineteenth century.

Booker T. Washington acknowledged in his autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, that his admittance to the Hampton Institute was one of the most important moments of his life. After years working as a miner and house servant, living on the streets in order to pay for his travel expenses, Washington completed his lifelong odyssey when he entered the reception room at the Hampton Institute. Dirty, malnourished, and exhausted, Washington does not make a favorable impression on the school registrar; she admits countless students into the school in the several hours that Washington waits patiently to be seen. Finally, the registrar gives Washington the task of sweeping the reception room floor. Without questioning the task, Washington picks up a broom and does a thorough job of sweeping the floor. This act gains him admittance to the Hampton Institute. The registrar does not care to hear the trials of his sojourn to Hampton, she is impressed that he is able to perform a simple task of manual labor, and perform it well. Washington would become very successful at the Hampton Institute, and would continue to create his own educational institute that also placed an intrinsic value to the dignity of work.⁴⁰ The value that the registrar placed on Washington's sweeping the floor demonstrated that manual labor was often equated with morality. Parallels between Washington are found with Jordan's own life experience at the conclusion of the Civil War. He rose from a private in the Confederate Army to a politician, philanthropist, and industrialist in

⁴⁰ Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery*, Dover Thrift Ed. (New York: Dover Publications Inc, (1901) 1995), 20-30.

Columbus, GA. Jordan too equated his own success as being the result of his diligent work ethic, although his own economic transformation was not connected to the racist ideology that African Americans like Booker T. Washington were subjected to at the Hampton Institute.

The Hampton Institute, and its founder General Samuel Armstrong, saw manual training as a means to correct the moral and character deficiencies of its black pupils. Armstrong acquired a reputation for the “discovery” of the benefits of manual training for the development of character, “which gives to the Founder of Hampton a permanent place among the greatest names in the history of education was the discovery that a judicious training of the hand is at the same time a discipline of the mind and will; that industrial efficiency has moral consequences.”⁴¹ The goal of Hampton was to improve the moral character of its students through isolation from the greater black community and manual labor. Armstrong characterized African Americans as lazy and lethargic; however, with proper moral training, they could be taught the value of work, which would improve their moral character. Booker T. Washington, arguably Hampton’s most famous graduate, also included manual training in his educational institute in Tuskegee, Alabama. However, while Armstrong sought to improve his pupils’ moral character, Washington’s goal for Tuskegee was to create a skilled black workforce and improve the status of blacks through economic training rather than moral training. Washington did include manual training in his courses, but this appreciation of work was not a means to

⁴¹ Francis G. Peabody, *Education for Life; The Story of Hampton Institute* (New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company, 1918), xv.

civilize the black pupils, but to reenergize their appreciation for many of the skills that they had already developed under the institution of slavery.⁴²

Washington's understanding and appreciation of manual training was not shared by all black educators of the time. W.E.B. DuBois argued that if African Americans continued in this manner, the northern industrialists who donated money to Washington's endeavors would again reduce them to "semi-slavery."⁴³ William Watkins notes that northern philanthropists like Robert Ogden and John Rockefeller Jr. saw their charitable pursuits as a means to colonize the South for their own economic benefits. Their promotion of manual training and vocational education would be a means to solve the "Negro question" and find a place for them in the new industrial society, a place fitting their moral and character attributes, as long as they did not try to disrupt the social structure.⁴⁴ This ideal would conform to the values of Jordan, who believed in the subjugation of African Americans for the preservation of white supremacy in the South⁴⁵

According to I. A. Newby in his work *Plain Folk in the New South: Social Change and Cultural Persistence, 1865-1915*, this colonization of the South by northern industrialists was not limited to African Americans. The working poor in the white communities also found themselves subject to these northern colonial powers. Newby refers to the white working poor as "folk," arguing that the "folk" of the New South were

⁴² Herbert M. Kliebard, *Schooled to Work: Vocationalism and the American Curriculum, 1876-1946*, 13-21; Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery*, Dover Thrift Ed. (New York: Dover Publications Inc, (1901) 1995), 13-25.

⁴³ W.E.B. DuBois. *The Souls of Black Folk*, Dover Thrift Ed. (New York: Dover Publications Inc.,(1903) 1994), 34.

⁴⁴ William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, (New York: Teacher College Press, 2001), 15-23.

⁴⁵ G. Gunby Jordan, Speech given at "Georgia Industrial Association in Warm Springs, Georgia, 1901," Jordan Papers, Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

anti-intellectuals, who found little value in “book learning” and did not see education as a means for social mobility. Because of the multiple barriers that stood in their way of social mobility, the white working poor were more receptive to vocational education as it was a means to support their current way of life. In fact, Newby states that “book learning” was a means of isolating “folk” from the rest of the community, in the same way that Carter G. Woodson argued that educating blacks in the progressive education system would render them useless to the black community because they had been tainted by white middle class values.⁴⁶ The colonization of morality and education was not merely a case of white values versus black values, but also a case of middle-class values versus “folk” values. Yet, as James Anderson notes in *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* the colonization of the South and the creation of a skilled black labor force was in many ways a pointless endeavor. Racism severely limited the job opportunities that blacks could hope to obtain; this racial barrier was not be shared by their white colonized counterparts.⁴⁷

The Columbus School Board became interested in the possibility of using manual training as a means of correction for the black boys and girls of Columbus. In 1898, a school board committee traveled to Tuskegee to see first-hand the moral and industrial benefits of instituting a manual training program for black students; Jordan was a part of the committee that formed with the goal of implementing manual training programs in

⁴⁶ I. A. Newby, *Plain Folk in the New South: Social Change and Cultural Persistence, 1880-1915*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 415-433; Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, (Washington, D.C., Tribeca Books, 1933), 7-11.

⁴⁷ James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 221-225.

order to attract students to attend school and “make them of service to mankind.”⁴⁸ Every manual training course emphasized African American students’ service to whites. With the apparent success of these manual training programs and a growing number of black pupils over the next few years, the system chose to incorporate manual training in all schools grades one through eight for both white and black students. Yet, the segregation of African American manual and vocational training programs would always be seen as a different type of education; the school board did not attempt to gloss over the economic benefits of education for black pupils. The *Annual Reports for the Columbus Public Schools* state in that 1906, “it is of prime importance that a sane, wholesome attitude toward work be developed in these children, and that they have some earning power when they leave school.”⁴⁹

Like the mills, the founders of the education system in Columbus sought to benefit the “deserving poor;” and while African American children were most certainly poor, the racism that existed did not allow them to be classified as “deserving.”⁵⁰ Superintendent Gibson and Jordan strove to maintain the class and race stratifications that existed within both the city and the mills. They did not seek to integrate poor children with middle class children, and African American children remained segregated from all other children.

Creating a public school system that would be clearly segregated by race and class helped

⁴⁸ “Manual Training,” *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1899* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1899), 20.

⁴⁹ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*, 38.

⁵⁰ John Lupold, “Industrial Reconstruction of Columbus, Ga., 1865-1881.” Presented to the Georgia Historical Society. John Lupold Collection. CSU Archives, 1975, 7.

to encourage support for public education among Columbus elites who sought to expand public schools within the city.⁵¹

In 1930, the city of Columbus built its first high school for African Americans. The construction of the school was a combination of efforts by city leaders (G. Gunby Jordan and Roland B. Daniel), former residents (George Foster Peabody), and the philanthropic contributions of Julius Rosenwald. The school was an industrial high school that gained support from Columbus residents, as the African American pupils would be allowed to receive what white leaders deemed an appropriate education that would not disrupt the social structure of Columbus.⁵² The vocational training in Columbus was seen as means to instruct poor white children and black children as to their proper character roles in society: obedient and socially limited.

With the influx of poor white children entering the city from the neighboring counties as their parents entered the mill workforce, city leaders sought ways to meet the growing need for discipline and Americanization. Americanization has various meanings; the cultivation of “American” values (which often times were middle class Protestant values), the civilizing of delinquents or other “savage” peoples, and the acceptance and promotion of industrial values. For Columbus, most attention was given to the last meaning, although aspects of all three definitions were found in Columbus. Yet, for men like Jordan, industrial was synonymous with moral, and it was a means for providing he and other city leaders with unbelievable wealth. Jordan saw industrialization as the means for mill workers to improve their circumstances. Again, similarities between the

⁵¹ Victoria MacDonald Huntzinger, “The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904,” PhD diss., Harvard University, 1992, 163.

⁵² James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, 221-225.

philosophies of Gaskell's John Thornton of *North and South* and G. Gunby Jordan of Columbus are evident in Gaskell's writing:

it is one of the great beauties of our system that a working-man may raise himself into the power and position of a master by his own exertions and behavior; that, in fact everyone that rules himself with decency and sobriety of conduct, and attention to his duties, comes over to our ranks; it may not be as a master, but as an overlooker, a cashier, a book-keeper, a clerk, one on the side of authority and order.⁵³

Jordan, who was born a son of a merchant, and rose through the ranks industry to reach his incredible level of prosperity, believed that good character and hard work could improve the economic and moral circumstances of mill workers and their children. He noted that because of the riches afforded to Americans from the "blessings" of nature, "the prodigality of nature is as liable to be a drawback as it is to be a blessing. Poverty is inspiring. It demands constant effort. It begets invention."⁵⁴ Although Jordan, was never poor, this philosophy led him to fund and encourage moral and character education through manual training for the children of the mill workers. The city of Columbus established the Primary Industrial School to teach the poor white children the proper means of cleaning themselves, making their bed, cooking, and saying their prayers. They were pruned to meet the needs of middle class morality.⁵⁵ All Columbus schools implemented manual training courses to promote the development of good moral

⁵³ Gaskell, *North and South*, 84.

⁵⁴ Jordan. "The Material and Moral Benefits of Industrial Education," 123.

⁵⁵ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*, 38; Victoria MacDonald Huntzinger. "The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904."

character, a character that would not only serve as a means for correction, but as a means for prosperity.

Morality, Industrialization, and the Development of Social Studies

Social studies, as a content area, offers a multitude of opportunities for the development of a better citizenry. For Jordan, this ideal citizenry adhered to the industrial values that he wished to impart on Columbus' youth, and the social sciences presented an additional opportunity to instruct children in his capitalistic ideology. In regard to social studies, the educational practices in Columbus were the culmination of two hundred years of educational history in the United States. The development of social studies education has been at the forefront of the American educational system since the inception of the country. In the eighteenth century, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Rush saw an intrinsic connection between morality and the creation of the ideal citizen. History education was a means to develop morality and citizenship. Catherine Beecher, who helped to expand education for females in the early nineteenth century, also believed that the purpose of education was the development of the ideal citizen, although she was more concerned with the development of the ideal female citizen. She saw education as a means to cultivate domesticity in her female pupils and as a process for transferring cultural traditions. Beecher's educational goals have their roots in citizenship and morality; she passed on what she believed to be the proper cultural attributes to her pupils, a concept that was also found to be relevant in the development of the social studies curriculum in Columbus, GA seventy years later.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner, *American Education: A History*, 80-97, 133-135.

When the concept of social studies was discussed at the 1916 Committee on Social Studies, David Sneed continued this moral dialogue by arguing that social studies offered a means for social control and a way to train people for their proper place in society.⁵⁷ Thomas Jesse Jones, a sociologist who adhered to the “racial paradigm” that dominated educational thought at the time, developed a curriculum designed to “civilize” pupils of the Hampton Institute and Americanize the large number of new immigrants entering the country during this time period.⁵⁸

Columbus conformed to the philosophies of Jefferson, Beecher, and in many ways Sneed by creating a pro-industrial, pro-middle class, and Columbus-centric social studies curriculum. These moral citizen rationales informed Jordan in the creation of his own educational philosophy in regards to social studies, which he fought to implement in Columbus public schools. Children began their instruction in geography in the first grade with textbooks that glorified industrialization and imperialism. Alexander Everett Frye’s *Elements of Geography* was used in the primary grades for geography instruction. Frye’s geography textbook stressed the division of races “scientifically” through color, and the superiority of whites through stories and descriptions of foreign lands.⁵⁹ When the book failed to mention Columbus’ economic contributions to the cotton industry, supplemental

⁵⁷ Ronald Evans, *The Social Studies Wars: What Should We Teach Children?* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2004), 21-45.

⁵⁸ Thomas D. Fallace, *Dewey and the Dilemma of Race: An Intellectual History, 1895-1922*, (New York, Teachers College Press, 2011), 1-7; Thomas Fallace, “Racial and Cultural Assumptions of the Early Social Studies Educators, 1901-1922,” in *Histories of Social Studies and Race: 1865-2000*, ed. Christine Woysner and Chara Haeussler Bohan (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 37-56.

⁵⁹ Mindy Spearman, “Race in Elementary Geography Textbooks,” in *Histories of Social Studies and Race: 1865-2000*, ed. Christine Woysner and Chara Haeussler Bohan (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 120-121.

standards were added to the course work to ensure that each student understood the benefits that industry had bestowed on Columbus.⁶⁰ At the secondary level, students learned about history and economics from Henry Winfred Thruston's *Economic and Industrial History*, which tells the story of one economic and industrial triumph after another in both Georgia and the United States.⁶¹ The reader is left with the impression that history is composed of a simple progression of economic successes. When it opened in 1906, Columbus Industrial High School provided specialty geography books to its students. George Goudie Chisholm's *Handbook of Commercial Geography* did as much as possible to criticize the "unproductiveness" of peoples in Africa and Asia and portray their "contribution to external commerce" as providing little or no value.⁶²

The social sciences were used as a means to cultivate proper industrial values; but they also served to connect manual training, vocational education, and the production of good citizens. Numerous educational philosophers alluded to the relationship between public education and democracy. John Dewey, an early proponent of vocational education, saw vocational education as intrinsically part of the development of citizenship and democracy; education was connected to experiences and these experiences helped to create democratic citizens, and thus moral citizens.⁶³ One outspoken advocate for vocational education, William Redfield, believed that vocational training was an essential investment; the country's commitment to a financially stable

⁶⁰ Alex Everett Fry, *Elements of Geography*, (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1900), 124.

⁶¹ Henry Winfred Thruston, *Economic and Industrial History* (Chicago, Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1908), 130-132

⁶² George Goudie Chisholm, *Handbook of Commercial Geography* (New York: London, Green and Company, 1892), 347.

⁶³ John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, Touchtone ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, (1938) 1997).

workforce would ultimately result in greater productivity, usefulness, and better citizenship.⁶⁴

Attitudes in Columbus echoed the national commitment to vocational training. Carleton Gibson, superintendent of the Columbus school system, stated at the Annual meeting for the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education that the most democratic institution in democratic America is the public school. Here are trained for the duties of life, for their contribution to the social ideals, the children of rich and poor, lettered and unlettered, leisure class and workers, wage earners and salary earners, —all alike. No institution in America can possibly compare with the public school in its opportunity to contribute toward the realization of our social ideals.⁶⁵

Jordan also agreed that it was both moral and democratic to have an education system that emulated the workforce. He critiqued the United States educational system as being relevant to only the four percent of the population that found itself in professional career or public service; the other ninety-six percent were subjected to an education that was neither engaging nor relevant to their lives. His argument that vocational education was the only democratic means to educate the children of the United States found a welcome audience in Columbus.⁶⁶ Vocational opportunities in schools could create a stratified meritocracy that benefited the deserving and moral students of Columbus.

Not only was vocational education seen as means to promote a moral and competent citizen, but it was also believed to have numerous benefits to the overall community.

⁶⁴ William C. Redfield, "A Plea for Practical Education: Excerpts From Recent Addresses," 8.

⁶⁵ Gibson, "Introductory Remarks," 134.

⁶⁶ Jordan, "The Material and Moral Benefits of Industrial Education," 124.

Moral education promoted cleanliness, which in turn discouraged the spread of diseases in the mill towns. The moral education would also provide encouragement to parents who worried about their children's financial stability, and it could promote productiveness from both workers and masters. These effects would not only be of an economic advantage to the laborers and industrialists of the city, but would also contribute to quality of life of all citizens in the community. The social sciences grew in popularity in the early twentieth century along-side manual training and vocational education. This ideological trinity of ideas was regarded as the savior to the moral and civic challenges facing the citizens in this newly industrial society. A combination of indoctrination, social control, hegemonic American values, economic productivity, and moral self-reliance could serve not only the city of Columbus, but also the country as a whole.⁶⁷

Conclusion

In the nineteenth century the progressive era signaled the downfall of character education. John Dewey argued that character education was detrimental to the moral development of children. He believed that children were able to make moral decisions without direct instruction, and that schools should be models of democracy; since democracy itself was moral, so too should schools.⁶⁸ Although Dewey was not a relativist, James Hunter credits him with initiating the end of character education. In addition, a survey by Hartshorne and May determined that there was no correlation

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Hunter, *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil*, 59-64; John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, The Free Press Edition (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1916, reprint 1997).

between character education and the behavior of children. Psychology also gained more acceptance among educators in determining pedagogical practices. Hunter argues that the introduction of psychology into education shifted the focus from children's "good" and "bad" character to the developmental stages of children's learning. This shift eventually undermined character education programs.⁶⁹

In Columbus, manual and moral education programs evolved as both the system and its students matured. When manual training was first introduced into the school system, school officials touted its moral benefits. Yet, the school system soon realized the full economic and social potential of manual training, and more direct industrial and vocational courses were made available to students. This evolution can best be seen in the transition from the project of the Primary Industrial School to the creation of the Columbus Industrial High School that will be explored further in the next chapter. Even when this transition occurred, vocational and industrial training still had its foundation and its justification in the construction of a moral and productive workforce. The instillation of these values would create the ideal society, one where laborers and mill owners knew and understood their place and their value in the industrial world—a world where efficiency was the very definition of morality.

The legacy of moral and vocational education in the United States can still be found in every classroom in America. Public school teachers continue to encourage their students to try hard and they will succeed. The focus on hard work, indoctrinated through manual training and vocational education, remains a key value of American society. While sweeping the floor might not be able to secure admittance into Hampton University

⁶⁹ Hunter, *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil*, 67-73.

today, the legacy of the American dream encourages students that if they work hard enough, they might be able to accomplish whatever their goal might be.

For Columbus, Jordan and other educational supporters believed that they were in the business of creating a better Columbus. Jordan's opinion concerning the nature of character and its relationship to prosperity meant that he must include moral education in any educational reform that he envisioned. The inclusion of this moral education manifested itself in school curriculum in the form of manual training, vocational education, ethical studies, and the inception of a separate branch of education for Columbus' African American pupils. Jordan's recipe for education would lead to Columbus attracting national attention with the development of a publically funded manual and vocational education program. Did the creation of these educational programs mean that Jordan was successful in his creation of a better Columbus? It is my assertion that Jordan did find Columbus in a much stronger position to sustain its industries than it was in before his time on the Columbus School Board, but he believed that continued efforts would be needed for Columbus to maintain its industrial momentum in the future.

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CHAPTER 5

A “PRACTICAL EDUCATION”¹

Striving for a better Columbus meant that work needed to be done. Jordan rallied support in Columbus for what he deemed a “practical education” for the youth of the city. Educational philosophy, school efficiency movements, urgent economic needs, and a love of productivity inspired Jordan to run for school board president and utilize this position as a means to further both his economic and educational desires.

The creation of the Primary Industrial School and the Columbus Industrial High School brought national attention to the city of Columbus. Jordan, the business community, and the school board and trustees embraced the development of experimental educational policies and practices, as they believed that it would benefit the social and economic community in Columbus. The acceptance of these educational policies meant that Jordan, a man who had never attended any higher education institution himself, was instrumental in the development of educational guidelines for the entire city of Columbus.

In this chapter, I examine the philosophical and economic factors that motivated the leaders of Columbus to develop a vocational education program. I will also explore the rapid transformation of popular movements such as manual training and settlement houses into vocational training. Finally, I will examine how Jordan and his fellow board members facilitated Columbus’ rise to prominence in the field of vocational education.

¹ “Practical Education,” *The Columbus Ledger*, May 9, 1930.

Motivation for a Practical Education

As Columbus grew into an industrial city, the number of poor and uneducated children began to increase at an enormous rate. Concerns over the children's appropriate behavior and good moral character began to rival the laissez-faire policy which had led to such a massive number of uneducated children living in Columbus at the turn of the twentieth century. Yet, what exactly did education entail for the poor white children of textile workers? It certainly did not mean the same education that was intended for the middle and upper class residents of the city, who attended schools such as Columbus Seminary for Young Girls, which offered "elementary, academic, and collegiate" courses in "music, piano, violin, and voice,"² or LaGrange College, a fifty miles up the road, which offered "literary, music, art," and "expression" courses while boasting "a new dormitory, gymnasium, and swimming pool."³ This kind of genteel southern education was not at all what was intended for the poor white children of the textile workers; rather, it was an education that promoted a good moral character among children, and instilled values of hard work and determination that would ensure that the pupils could find employment in one of the many industrial centers in the city.

A few attempts were made to educate the children of the textile mills in the nineteenth century, but most schools lasted only a few years before having to close. One of the first schools began during the Civil War at the Eagle Mill (which would later become the Eagle and Phenix Mill when it was rebuilt after the Civil War),⁴ when the influx of new

² "Columbus Seminary for Young Girls," *Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, August 7, 1912.

³ "Lagrange College: A Good School for Girls," *Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, August 7, 1912.

⁴ Tony Adams, "The Eagle and Phenix; New York Native Started it All in 1850," *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, June 23, 2002.

wartime industries allowed for many different employment opportunities around the city. The Eagle Mill's school was free and was located in a building owned by the company; however, the school burned down with the rest of the mill when Union troops destroyed the mill at the close of the war. When the factory reopened in 1868, newly named the Eagle and Phenix, another school for millworker's children was established by Mrs. E. J. Harlen and Mrs. A. E. Marble in 1867. The school served both young girls and boys, but it closed by 1872 because of weak financial support and small enrollment.⁵ What constituted low enrollment? When the school opened in 1867-1868, there were one hundred and twenty-five pupils, from 1869-1870 there were eighty-six, and the following year there were eighty-three. While eighty-three students were enrolled at the school, truancy was a huge problem; average daily attendance was twenty-seven. When attendance dropped to twelve in November 1872, school officials decided to close the school.⁶ These short-lived institutions were not only a problem for the children of the poor, but also for the children of the wealthy. Schools for profit often closed when their proprietors died, or when enrollment numbers could not justify keeping the school open. Long-lasting educational institutions were difficult to find in the South during the nineteenth century.⁷

⁵ Nancy Telfair, "History of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia," (Columbus, Georgia: *Enquirer-Sun Co.*, 1927), 38-39.

⁶ Katherine Mahan, William Woodall, and Lenora Woodall Nilan, "A History of the Public Schools in Columbus, Muscogee County, Georgia; A Social History of Education in Muscogee County, 1828-1976," Commissioned and Published by Muscogee County Board of Education, CSU Archives, 1977, 116.

⁷ Christie Ann Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 112-116.

As a leader in the textile industry, Jordan used both his financial and political resources to educate these poor mill children.⁸ Informed by educational philosophers such as Frederick Froebel, John Dewey, and David Sneed, and sociologists such as Herbert Spencer, Jordan used his wealth as a means to promote his views on education and social order.⁹ Jordan believed that mill owners had the responsibility to uplift their mill operatives both economically and morally, and thus Jordan implemented free kindergartens at the Eagle and Phenix Mill. Therefore, Jordan proposed, children who lived in the mill village across the river in Alabama could have the same benefits of education as did other children in the city. Since the mill village workers were not residents of Columbus, their children could not attend the Primary Industrial School, as it was a part of the public school system.¹⁰ City residency was required to attend Columbus public schools.

Educational efficiency movements grew in popularity in the early twentieth century, helping to guide schools in the management all things: from interior design school and funds management, to health and safety expectations; pedagogical methods efficiency was the primary focus.¹¹ These ideals guided the structural and operational guidelines for the Columbus Public Schools, and in particular, the Columbus Industrial High School.

⁸ G. Gunby Jordan to Dr. S. A. Green, 27 February 1905, *Peabody Education Fund*, Vanderbilt University Archive.

⁹ G. Gunby Jordan, "The Material and Moral Benefits of Industrial Education," *The National Society of Industrial Education Bulletin No 9, Proceedings Second Annual Meeting Atlanta, Georgia* (New York: National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, 1909), 125-128.

¹⁰ G. Gunby Jordan to Dr. S.A. Green, 27 February 1905, *Peabody Education Fund*; G. Gunby Jordan, Speech of G. Gunby Jordan at Committee of Georgia Industrial Association in Warm Springs, Georgia, 1901, Jordan Papers, Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

¹¹ Henry Eastman Bennett, *School Efficiency: A Manual for Modern School Management* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1917).

Jordan commented on the beauty of the school at its opening while highlighting its efficiency and practical use of space. Whereas he had toured other technical schools like Massachusetts Institute of Technology and critiqued its lack of space, he guaranteed that Columbus Industrial High School would have no such problem. Jordan donated two acres of land for the school and had his own Jordan Company develop the surrounding neighborhood, providing space for the construction of additional buildings and dormitories.¹²

At the turn of the twentieth century, numerous books concerning efficiency in education buildings were written. Three popular texts that embodied the efficiency model were *An Ideal School, or, Looking Forward* by Preston Willis Search, *School Efficiency; A Manual for Modern School Management* by Henry Eastman Bennett, and *Modern School Buildings, A Treatise Upon, and Designs for, the Construction of School Buildings* by Warren Richard Briggs. Whereas traditional school buildings had been based on ecclesiastical designs where pupils were simply expected to sit and listen to lectures, these authors recognized that new designs would be needed for classrooms designed for students to actively participate in their learning.¹³ All of these writers stress the importance of beautiful and sensible school buildings. They include similar guidelines regarding the amount of acreage needed for a school's property, the importance of ventilation, the accessibility of modern toilets, the need for proper lighting, broad hallways and corridors, adequately sized rooms, and numerous gardens, and the

¹² G. Gunby Jordan, Speech of G. Gunby Jordan at Committee of Georgia Industrial Association in Warm Springs, Georgia, 1901, Jordan Papers; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1906), 32.

¹³ Henry Eastman Bennett, *School Efficiency: A Manual for Modern School Management*, 19.

appropriate placement of staircases containing at least one landing for every story climbed.¹⁴ These principles were modeled by the architects of the Columbus Industrial High School; each classroom was generously sized and had a minimum of two windows. Wide corridors separated each classroom, landings were located on each stair case, six toilets were located on the second floor of the building and fourteen on the basement level, a rooftop garden was located on the third floor of the school, and over 2.46 acres of land were allotted to the development of the school property. The classrooms did not house the traditional stationary desks, but instead contained modern laboratory tables, hygienic sinks, and cook tops.¹⁵

Social efficiency movements were widespread throughout the United States. Irving King's work *Education for Social Efficiency, A Study for the Social Relations of Education* proclaimed that efficiency is essential in all facets of life, as

in all earlier times, when the stress of life was less intense, the evil of wasted energy and of wasted natural resources was less apparent. But it is not so to-day. Waste of every sort is more and more open to condemnation. It is, in fact, a social menace...the pressing problem of to-day is how to avoid waste of every description.¹⁶

In addition to his abhorrence for waste, King maintained that "cooperation" was the basis of an economy and that

¹⁴ Ibid, 19.; Warren Richard Briggs, *Modern School Buildings, A Treatise Upon, and Designs for, the Construction of School Buildings* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1906); Preston Willis Search, *An Ideal School, or, Looking Forward* (New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1903).

¹⁵ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*, 32-33.

¹⁶ Irving King, *Education for Social Efficiency, A Study for the Social Relations of Education* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1913), 90.

the school is the instrument of society for carrying on a needful function. But, like all social institutions or agencies, it is capable of doing its allotted work only as it continues in close relation with the society which it serves... There is no such thing as complete and absolute separation of functions... [and]... lack of cooperation means wasted energy on both sides and a consequent product in the way of child-training that is unsatisfactory to school and community alike.¹⁷

Supporters of social efficiency movements advocated collaboration between the community and the school system in order to provide students with educational opportunities that would serve, not only the children when they graduated, but also the community as a whole.

Social efficiency's economic and educational philosophy suited both Jordan and the city of Columbus. Jordan was the perfect campaigner for the importance of industrial education, and he used his experiences in business and education to promote the benefits of vocational education. At the same time, he attracted national attention to the businesses of Columbus. Through this support, what was once considered a rapidly growing mill town overrun with poor white children was now celebrated nationwide as a model school system. The Columbus school system became known for meeting the needs of the growing urban poor, and transforming these needs into economic successes for the community and its businesses.

Uplifting of Mill Operatives and Their Children

Social work and the education of mill children often went hand-in-hand. Middle class and elites' desire to transform these cotton-fluff covered children into little

¹⁷ Ibid., 90-93.

“missionaries” in their individual households inspired the birth of many social and educational organizations. The Free Kindergarten Association, as well as the Head, Hand, and Heart Society, worked to establish kindergartens for the mill children. However, association administrators argued that the ideals of “neatness” and “good living” taught in kindergarten would not take hold if the mill children continued to remain in overcrowded boarding houses.¹⁸

With the assistance of industrial benefactors, including George Foster Peabody and G. Gunby Jordan, the city looked to open a primary industrial school. The belief that better education of poor whites would help the southern industrialists earn more financial support from the north industrialists greatly influenced many of these philanthropic decisions. Jordan himself stated that uneducated mill workers continually prevented the mills from reaping greater profits, and, therefore, it was necessary to educate these children better. With the backing of Columbus’ financial giants, who sought industrial greatness for their city, manual training classes were implemented in all of Columbus’ primary schools by 1899, and the Primary Industrial School opened its doors in 1901.¹⁹

The Primary Industrial School was modeled more on the idea of a settlement house than an elementary school. Students were given the option of attending three separate sessions throughout the day, which allowed them to work and still attend school.

¹⁸ “Minutes.” n.d. Free Kindergarten Association Goodwill Community Center Collection. CSU Archives ; Victoria Macdonald Huntzinger, “The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904.” PhD diss., Harvard University, 1992, 174.

¹⁹ Victoria Macdonald Huntzinger, “The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904,” 174-182; Roland B. Daniel, *Industrial Education in Columbus, GA* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), 8-11; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1899* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1902), 20-22; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1901* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1902), 5.

Traditional academic classes were replaced by those that taught the “mind, heart, and hand;” specifically, these classes included “basket weaving, nature study, cooking, gardening, and pottery [which] taught the children the basic branches of reading, writing, and arithmetic.”²⁰ The school was similar to the Dewey Laboratory School but with a more direct capitalist and industrial connection; lessons were linked to practical applications and real life scenarios in that

if they must use raw materials they should know their origin, habitat, best way of securing, and adaptability to man’s needs... when dishes are made, the history of pottery is reviewed, clays are found in near-by beds and taken to the school—experiments made in new mixtures—articles made, glazed and fired. All natural resources of economic value are similarly treated.²¹

Children were trained and expected to draw scientific, practical, and economical connections to the education that they received in the Primary Industrial School. School officials believed that the benefits of student’s time at the Primary Industrial School should be seen immediately.

Special attention was also given to cleanliness; the school included a “model bedroom” where children were instructed on how to maintain a clean household. The school never closed, which added to its popularity, as mothers could drop their children off at school in the very early hours of the morning on their way to the mills. Parents

²⁰ Victoria Macdonald Huntzinger, “The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904,” 182-186.

²¹ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1899-1900*, 24.

praised the school; in fact, it had over a ninety-seven percent approval rating, and truancy barely existed.²²

Yet, the Primary Industrial School was implemented five years earlier than Columbus Industrial High School, and had access to fewer financial resources and less involvement from Jordan. Whereas the Columbus Industrial High School was commissioned to be modern and efficient, the Primary Industrial School occupied a large eight-room building that was a one-time factory boarding house.²³ The director of the school complained that the sanitary conditions of the building were “the worst that could be imagined” and teachers spent much wasted time renovating and repairing “leaky roofs, broken steps, fallen drains, and worn out plumbing.”²⁴ In addition to these issues, the school was overcrowded with equipment and students, with every room serving multiple purposes and every nook and corner occupied with teaching materials and supplies. As a result, the director requested that a new building be constructed for the Primary Industrial School; eventually, the school was relocated to another refurbished building off of Second Avenue.²⁵ Despite these challenges, the school grew in popularity and attracted national attention due to its experimental qualities.

The school fulfilled its goal of training children to be future mill hands. Yet, by 1913, enthusiasm for the school began to dwindle; students did not continue their education past the primary school. They would attend school for a few years and then go on to work

²² *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1902* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1902), 23-32; Roland B. Daniel, *Industrial Education in Columbus, GA*, 8-11.

²³ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1907*.

²⁴ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1902*, 26-27.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 8; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1907*, 9.

in the mills.²⁶ The Primary Industrial School began to look like most other schools in the city. As attention was increasingly devoted to more traditional academic subjects, attendance began to fall.²⁷

In addition to these changes to the school, the birth of new educational institutions also led to a decrease in the population of students needing educational services. While the Primary Industrial School operated as part of the Columbus school system, many of the children who worked in the mills or brought dinners to the mill workers at midday lived in the Eagle and Phenix mill village, which was located on the other side of the Chattahoochee River in Alabama. While these students could not attend the Primary Industrial School, they could attend the Eagle and Phenix Free Kindergarten and St. Patrick School in Phenix City (known at that time as Girard).²⁸ The Eagle and Phenix Free Kindergarten was another of Jordan's educational endeavors. Housed with many of the same resources as the Primary Industrial School, the school was intended to meet the needs of the poor white children who lived in Alabama and worked for the mills. The school opened its Phenix City branch in 1903 for a cost of just under six hundred dollars; the Girard Branch cost just two thousand and five hundred dollars to build and equip. The kindergartens housed a large hall, a cloakroom, a bathroom, a piano alcove, and a separate gymnasium with swings, rings, and six inches of sand coating the floor to reduce the likelihood of student injury. The schools proved to be fine examples of Jordan's campaign to uplift the mill operatives into his interpretation of better economic and moral

²⁶ Roland B. Daniel, *Industrial Education in Columbus, GA*, 11; Victoria Macdonald Huntzinger, "The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904," 187-189.

²⁷ Nancy Telfair, "History of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia," 44.

²⁸ G. Gunby Jordan, Speech of G. Gunby Jordan at Committee of Georgia Industrial Association in Warm Springs, Georgia, 1901, Jordan Papers.

circumstances. In numerous speeches, Jordan extols the industrial schools, and he calls on mill owners to continue to work to improve the lives of the people (including children) who worked for them. Yet, despite Jordan's support, the Eagle and Phenix Free Kindergartens closed in 1912.²⁹ Lewis Hine, the famed child labor photographer, criticized Jordan and other mill owners when he visited the Free Kindergarten in 1913 and noted that it had "been closed over a year. The mill owners get a deal of free newspaper advertising about their wonderful Welfare Work, but it petered out this way."³⁰

St. Patrick's School, a Catholic missionary school, opened its doors in 1916 with three students and based its class schedule on dinner-toters as well; it would break at 11:30 am and the students would return in the late afternoon. School attendance increased over time as parents became more open to allowing their children to attend a Catholic school, and by 1925, the school was home to over three hundred students. St. Patrick's continued to operate until it was destroyed in a fire in 2010.³¹

The desire to educate the poor white children of the mills spawned educational experiments in both Columbus and Phenix City. The Primary Industrial School, the

²⁹ G. Gunby Jordan, Speech of G. Gunby Jordan at Committee of Georgia Industrial Association in Warm Springs, Georgia, 1901, Jordan Papers; John Lyles, *Images of America, Phenix City*, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2010), 70-73; Lewis Hine, "Free Kindergarten (in Girard, Ala.) run by the Eagle and Phoenix Mills, Columbus, Ga.," The Photography Collections, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, 1913, <http://contentdm.ad.umbc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/hinecoll/id/2823/rec/1>.

³⁰ Lewis Hine, "Free Kindergarten (in Girard, Ala.) run by the Eagle and Phoenix Mills, Columbus, Ga."

³¹ John Lyles, *Images of America, Phenix City*, 76-79; John Lyles, *Images of America, Phenix City* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2010), 70-73; Lewis Hine, "Free Kindergarten (in Girard, Ala.) run by the Eagle and Phoenix Mills, Columbus, Ga.," The Photography Collections, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, 1913; St. Patrick's Academy Annex School 1925, St. Patrick's School Collection, Private Collection of Freda Joan Page.

Eagle and Phenix Free Kindergartens, and St. Patrick's School all sought to improve the lives of children working the mills. The institutions evolved and changed over time, and Jordan began to shift his focus from the moral uplifting of mill operatives to the training of the next generation of industrial specialists.

Evolution to Vocational Education

The Electrician's Life

Some folks think that an electrician's life
Is merely toting screwdrivers, pliers, and a knife;
But if they were in the shop for a day
They would think some other way
Armatures to wind, many parts to file,
Frequent recourse to the scrap pile,
Then there are houses to be wired
And you can bet we sure get tired.
And also the periods for text
Only electricians know what's next;
It's some job you can bet,
But we good fellows do not fret.
But some day I hope to be known far and near
As a technical, Electrical Engineer.
-J.F.S., Columbus Industrial High School³²

³² *The Industrian 1920*, Vol. 3, (Columbus, GA: Published by the Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1920).

Embracing the efficiency movement's push toward industrial progress and economic and environmental sustainability, Jordan and others like him sought to expand the industrial opportunities of students in Columbus to the secondary level.³³ Students attending the Primary Industrial School did not continue their education past the primary grades; Jordan believed that part of this disregard for secondary education was due to a lack of practical educational opportunities offered to students by Columbus High School. He believed that the number of uneducated youth was a wasted opportunity, not only for the children, but also for the businesses of Columbus. Having a strong distaste for the misuse of any resource, Jordan set out to make an argument for the erection of a secondary industrial school.³⁴ Jordan believed that the city's greatest asset was not the Chattahoochee River with its cheap electricity, or the limitless amounts of cotton available only a short distance from the city. For Jordan, the greatest asset was the youth of the city, and the cultivation of these children through industrial education would be the key to Columbus' sustained economic success.³⁵

Thus, Jordan began his tireless campaign for the creation of a secondary industrial school. Key to his strategy for the promotion of industrial education was his argument that secondary schools were imperative for the financial maintenance of the city. Jordan believed that in order to stay ahead of the growing international textile market, Georgia would need to produce more high quality products, and the production of the better quality products depended on the education of children on how to create them. In this

³³ G. Gunby Jordan, Speech of G. Gunby Jordan at Committee of Georgia Industrial Association in Warm Springs, Georgia, 1901, Jordan Papers.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ "G. Gunby Jordan's Masterly Address at the Laying of School Building Cornerstone," *Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, June 23, 1906.

way, the children of Columbus would benefit the economic community, and would preserve the economic prosperity experienced by the community in the late 1800s.³⁶ In a letter to the Peabody Education Fund in 1905, Jordan outlined the necessity of a secondary industrial school, remarking that the “South has experienced a marvelous awakening...educationally...commercially, and industrially.” Jordan noted that between the years of 1900-1905, manufacturing was increasing in the South more than in any other area of the country, but that there were still only a limited number of “agricultural...mechanical and polytechnic institutes” designed for the “training” of those wishing to go into “industrial occupations.”³⁷ And, as “there is a wide-spread demand for more trained young workers...the opportunity is ripe for the establishment of a Secondary Industrial School.”³⁸

Jordan further justified the need for industrial education by explaining the popularity of the movement in various European countries; he noted that if Columbus was not to fall behind, it was vital that the industrial high school be built. Acknowledging the dominance of graduates of German industrial schools in the job market in the United States, Jordan wanted Columbus to produce more practically trained native men, which meant that Columbus needed its own industrial high school.³⁹ The vocational education movement continued to grow in the United States as well. The movement had the

³⁶ G. Gunby Jordan, Speech of G. Gunby Jordan at Committee of Georgia Industrial Association in Warm Springs, Georgia, 1901, Jordan Papers; “G. Gunby Jordan’s Masterly Address at the Laying of School Building Cornerstone.”

³⁷ G. Gunby Jordan to Dr. S.A. Green, 27 February 1905, *Peabody Education Fund*.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ G. Gunby Jordan, Speech of G. Gunby Jordan at Committee of Georgia Industrial Association in Warm Springs, Georgia, 1901, Jordan Papers; “G. Gunby Jordan’s Masterly Address at the Laying of School Building Cornerstone.”

support of educational philosophers who were connected with the social efficiency movement. Irving King, an educational philosopher and proponent of the educational efficiency, noted in 1913

The pupil should feel that his school work is real, because it satisfies his impulse to understand the world of which he is now a part...Not that the child shall be encouraged to fix himself irrevocably to a certain vocation, and as early as possible begin to prepare for it, but rather that he shall at first, in a general way, begin to look forward into the future, and, as he grows older, more and more definitely. He must feel increasingly that his present work may actually count in preparing him for his life work. This interest is usually so keen that it furnishes the strongest of motives for efficient work in the upper elementary grades and in the high school.⁴⁰

Jordan had similar motives in his advocacy for the Columbus Industrial High School, and he worked with the school superintendent Carleton Gibson in the design, construction, and implementation of these ideals for the development of the school.

The Columbus Industrial High School was the shining jewel of Columbus' industrial education program. Jordan stated at the opening ceremony of the school that it "met the practical needs of Columbus."⁴¹ The construction of the high school would prove to be an integral step toward Columbus' evolution from providing a manual training program that sought to benefit the hands and heart, to one that saw the economic benefits in having well trained young workers. While it would benefit the character of children to

⁴⁰ Irving King, *Education for Social Efficiency, A Study for the Social Relations of Education*, 199-200.

⁴¹ "G. Gunby Jordan's Masterly Address at the Laying of School Building Cornerstone," *Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, June 23, 1906

value work and products made by their own hands, Jordan noted that the Columbus Industrial High School sought to “prepare its students for thorough and efficient service as honorable breadwinners of good earning power.”⁴² The Columbus School Board trustees now unabashedly endorsed education for the purpose of economic stability; the moral justification that had been used for the inclusion of manual training courses shifted to an economic justification that promoted the financial advantages that vocational education would bring for Columbus.

Carleton Gibson, Columbus’ school system superintendent, claimed the Columbus Industrial High School to be the first publicly funded industrial high school in the nation,⁴³ although this statement is contrary to Jordan’s own account of the history of publically funded vocational high schools. He noted in his speech at the placement of the cornerstone for the Columbus Industrial High School in June of 1906 that one other school of this nature exists in the United States in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Therefore, Gibson was either unaware or exaggerating the status of the Columbus Industrial High School being the first publically funded vocational high school in the country.⁴⁴ However, I argue that much unnecessary attention is often focused on the status of being the first, second, or third of any one thing. When only one year the first and second public vocational high school, the more pertinent achievement is not who is first, but that

⁴² G. Gunby Jordan to Dr. S.A. Green, 27 February 1905, *Peabody Education Fund*.

⁴³ Carleton Gibson, “Secondary Industrial School of Columbus, Georgia.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (January, 1909): 43-44.

⁴⁴ Northeast Manual High School was opened as part of the Philadelphia public school system in 1905. A history of the Northeast Manual Training High School can be found in Christopher Mote’s “Final Curtain for Former Edison High,” *Hidden Philadelphia*, February 28, 2013, <http://hiddencityphila.org/2013/02/final-curtain-for-the-former-edison-high/>.

they were both actively involved in a highly experimental educational philosophy and practice.

The “public” status of the Columbus Industrial High School could even be disputed; the school may never have been built without Columbus’ industrial benefactors. Peabody and Jordan were great contributors to the school; yet the social efficiency-minded Gibson accompanied the two industrialists in their enthusiasm for the high school.⁴⁵ Gibson noted of Jordan’s donation to the school that “the land and several thousand dollars were given by a public spirited citizen who had an especial interest in this type of education,” that “the entire city looks upon it as its property” and is focused on adapting the schools to the needs “of certain classes of people.”⁴⁶ For Jordan, this school was the opportunity to create better citizens for the city of Columbus; it would be the final piece necessary for the continued prosperity of Columbus. Just as labor and the Chattahoochee River had produced the wealth of Columbus in the past, the practical higher education of youth in the city now would ensure the success of Columbus in the future.⁴⁷

Jordan, along with Superintendent Gibson, traveled over much of the northeastern United States to various industrial schools (including Massachusetts Institute of Technology) to try and find a school to model theirs after, although none could be found. Jordan and Gibson, therefore, created their own model for industrial education that would be embodied in the Columbus Industrial High School. Jordan made an investment of five

⁴⁵ Carleton Gibson, “Secondary Industrial School of Columbus, Georgia,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (January, 1909): 43-44; Roland B. Daniel, *Industrial Education in Columbus, GA*, 12.

⁴⁶ Carleton Gibson, “Secondary Industrial School of Columbus, Georgia,” 43-44.

⁴⁷ “G. Gunby Jordan’s Masterly Address at the Laying of School Building Cornerstone.” *Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, June 23, 1906.

thousand dollars, 2.46 acres of property, and the promise to develop the surrounding neighborhood toward the establishment of the school.⁴⁸ Other contributors to the school included George Foster Peabody, G. Gunby Jordan's son Ralph Curtis Jordan, former Columbus school superintendent John McIlhenny, and Frederick A. Vietor of New York.⁴⁹ The business community as a whole worked vigorously to support the birth of the Columbus Industrial High School. Local industries donated much of the machinery for the school, and the power company even promised to send free electricity to the various school workshops.⁵⁰

The school officially opened in 1906 and included a multitude of classes; the curriculum included regular academic courses such as history and English for part of the day (although many of the academic course had an industrial perspective), and for the rest of the day the school offered specialized classes in “forging, blacksmithing, machine work, carpentry, pattern making, a complete textile department, various laboratories, commercial course, typewriting, dressmaking, domestic science, and millinery.”⁵¹ The school continued to expand, adopting additional courses to meet technical college requirements, and adding more teachers and buildings. The popularity and success of the school continued to grow as local businesses often sought graduates of the school even before they had completed their coursework. Many students were allowed to attend school for half days, and then work for the remainder of the day in whatever area of specialization they had chosen at the Columbus Industrial High School. One other

⁴⁸ G. Gunby Jordan to Dr. S.A. Green, 27 February 1905, *Peabody Education Fund*.

⁴⁹ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*, 30.

⁵⁰ Nancy Telfair, “History of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia,” 48.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

distinguishing feature set the Columbus Industrial High School apart from traditional high schools: the amount of time students spent in school. The classes ran from the first Monday in September through the Friday closest to July 15th. In addition, each day's classes were longer than those at a regular high school; this extended schedule allowed for students of the Columbus Industrial High School to graduate in three years rather than four—the years required at the only other high school in Columbus. The accelerated curriculum would allow the school's graduates to enter the workforce earlier.⁵²

For Jordan, the creation of the Columbus Industrial High School was the final piece in the “perfect school system.”⁵³ Students would have the opportunity to attend the Primary Industrial School, or grammar schools with the incorporation of manual training in grades one through eight. At this point in a student's education, he or she could choose to continue on to a more traditional high school, or enter into the Columbus Industrial High School where they might receive academic as well as industrial training.⁵⁴ Gibson boasted about the success of the Columbus Industrial High School in a 1909 edition of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. In his opinion, the school was the epitome of a perfect balance between academic and technical education. Gibson stated that it is “an academic trade school of the highest rank;” English, history, science, and mathematics were taught in addition to a technical trade that the student chose upon entering the school. Gibson believed that this thorough academic education of the child was essential for the student's success. He stated that

⁵² Ibid., 49-52; Daniel, *Industrial Education in Columbus, GA*, 14-30.

⁵³ “G. Gunby Jordan's Masterly Address at the Laying of School Building Cornerstone.” *Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, June 23, 1906.

⁵⁴ Ibid.; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*, 28.

there has never been any intention of teaching young people a trade without giving them good academic training, for this starts a young person in life with immediate earning power, but with an earning power that is very limited. The aim is to give that culture, intelligence and mental acumen which carry the skilled mechanic or trained accountant on to unlimited earning power.⁵⁵

To prove his point, Gibson noted that any boy who entered the school might have trouble adjusting to the strenuous nature of the classes at first, but once he graduated, he would have no problem adjusting to a work schedule or life at a technical college if he so chose to attend one. He also confirmed the skills that the first graduating class acquired in the three-year accelerated industrial high school experience (students attended school for longer hours and on Saturdays) by describing the itinerary of the graduation program. Girls from the dressmaking trade drew out a pattern and constructed a dress on stage during the ceremony, a few boys from the business education department displayed rapid calculation figures, and others demonstrated how to write a perfect business letter by taking dictation from teachers and members of the audience. For Gibson, the lack of pomp and circumstance found in regular high school graduations was an affirmation of his school's appreciation useful skills through their practical demonstrations.⁵⁶

The Columbus school system and city developed a relationship with technical institutions of higher education. The descendants of G. Gunby Jordan claim that Jordan was an integral part in the establishment of the Georgia Institute of Technology. While no evidence has been found that indicates he worked to create the school (which was

⁵⁵ Gibson, "Secondary Industrial School of Columbus, Georgia," 45.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 48;. Daniel, *Industrial Education in Columbus, GA*, 14-30.

founded in 1885),⁵⁷ there are several documents found in the Georgia Tech University archives that suggest that Jordan could have made a monetary contribution in the establishment of the A. French Textile School at the Georgia Institute of Technology. In addition, many students from Georgia Tech found internships in Columbus textile mills (owned by Jordan and his son R.C. Jordan) as part of their coursework. Yet, in some instances, Georgia Tech found itself without a home for their interns in Columbus due to the fact that students of the Columbus Industrial High School in Columbus already filled many of the internships.⁵⁸

The establishment of the Columbus Industrial High School in Columbus impacted the entire city. Jordan's contributions and encouragement along with other members of the business community supported the development of a school that was designed to meet the needs of the community, embrace educational and social philosophies which cultivated efficiency for all levels of society, and conform to the social and economic ideals of G. Gunby Jordan.

A Practical Education For Females

I— is for Industrial, the ideal school,
N—is for now—the time to learn every rule.
D—for the Duties that call us each day,
U—for the universal love of fair play

⁵⁷ M. L. Brittain, *The Story of Georgia Tech*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), 11.

⁵⁸ French Textile Engineering Building Folder, *Buildings and Grounds Collection*, Georgia Tech University Archives; G. Gunby Jordan II, "Unpublished history of Jordan Family," Katherine Waddell Private Collection Columbus, GA; Unpublished autobiography of G. Gunby Jordan II, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA.

S—is for Study, Sewing, and Song.

T—for the “Time” we get, when we do wrong.

R—is for the Right, and the Golden Rule,

I—for the interest we feel in our school.

A—is for “All of us,”—May the tribe increase!

L—four our Loyalty which will never cease.

-Ruth Stewart, Columbus Industrial High School.⁵⁹

If the purpose of the Columbus Industrial High School was to prepare students to be successful and productive members of Columbus society, what expectations did the school impose upon the female pupils in attendance? Female students were granted access to the school from its inception, but they were segregated from their male counterparts by their curriculum choices, and they were all required to take three years of domestic science.

While it is not clear how fluid the curriculum was for female students wishing to join in a more “masculine” course of study, a study of available yearbooks from the first thirty years of the school illustrates the lack of females photographed in any of the courses deemed unfeminine. Several photographs of metal working, wood shop, and mechanical concentrations within the high school yearbooks exemplify the “young Vulcan” ideal idolized by Calvin Woodward.⁶⁰ To counter these odes to masculinity, Domestic

⁵⁹ *The Industrian 1921*, Vol. 4, (Columbus, GA: Published by the Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1921), 27.

⁶⁰ Herbert M. Kliebard, *Schooled to Work: Vocationalism and the American Curriculum, 1876-1946*, (New York: Teacher College Press, 1999), 1-12; *The Industrian 1921*, Vol. 4, (Columbus, GA: Published by the Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1921); *The Red Jacket 1935*, (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1935), 3.

Science/Home Economics course descriptions and photos suggest that Catherine Beecher's ideas of an ideal female education that cultivated domesticity and cultural traditions rang true in the Columbus Industrial High School.⁶¹

Inequality within the school followed the social stratifications of the early twentieth century, with fewer opportunities for women in the workforce; courses available to girls at the Columbus Industrial High School reflected this inequity. While the boys enjoyed a large athletic field in the rear of the school, the female pupils performed their exercise on the front lawn of the school. While the school itself was coeducational, the classes that each student took were mostly gender segregated. In core subject areas such as math, science and English, boys and girls sat side-by-side in their classes; but while boys were learning textiles, electrics, woodworking, and machinery, girls were learning dressmaking, millinery, and cooking. Throughout the history of the school, the one department that both boys and girls could focus on in their course of study was the commercial concentration.⁶²

The 1921 yearbook for the school offers a thorough description of the purpose and goals behind the commercial department, "the Industrial High School offers a complete course of commercial training to all boys and girls. It is the aim of the course to afford as sound a knowledge of fundamental business facts and principles as it possible for any high school to give."⁶³ One commercial department student recounts the progression of

⁶¹ Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner, *American Education: A History*, 80-97, 133-135; *The Red Jacket 1938* (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1938), 7.

⁶² *The Industrian 1921*, Vol. 4 (Columbus, GA: Published by the Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1921) 6.

⁶³ *The Industrian 1921*, Vol. 4 (Columbus, GA: Published by the Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1921), 4-5.

the coursework in their first, second, and third years in the 1921 yearbook, and laments on the difficulty in keeping up with their difficult to please teacher, as their

greatest desire is to dictate shorthand. When she begins it seems as if she will never want to stop. She says we cannot get our “Dip” until we write shorthand at the rate of one hundred words per minute, so we all have been, and some are still striving to reach that point. However, we all have such “FINE” typewriters, it is certain we’ll soon succeed.⁶⁴

Each student was taught to “clean, oil, and adjust” their typewriters as they would need these skills in their prospective future jobs.⁶⁵ Next they moved onto bookkeeping that was “very interesting” as

in the first year we studied the theory of debts and credits, practice in journalizing simple entries and other forms of entries. The books that we used were the journal-daybook and the ledger. At the end of each month’s work we would post the books and make a trial balance. The second term’s work is a continuation of the first year’s work, only a little further advanced. We took up the term in the wholesale grocery business, in which each pupil was allowed to have a partner and this was much better—for we found each other’s mistakes.⁶⁶

As Jordan was thoroughly involved in the Columbus banking industry, it comes as no surprise that the Commercial department students took courses on banking to “familiarize the pupil with all forms and practices in a modern bank.”⁶⁷ Students were given access to

⁶⁴ Ibid., 4-5.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 4-5.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 4-5.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 4-5.

“a fine bookkeeping machine,” but were often frustrated at having to wait their turn.⁶⁸ Students were required to understand “thoroughly the operation of the machine” before they were ever allowed to use it for their calculations.⁶⁹ In addition to mechanical tools, students were required to take both spelling and penmanship classes that “the leading penmen and business men” consider “to be the best system.”⁷⁰ Additional subjects such as “commercial arithmetic, geography, and law” were also taught as required courses in order to ensure that both boys and girls “learning to be a business man or woman” were given all the proper methods, tools, and theory needed for successful job security.⁷¹

To counter the inclusivity of the commercial department, the domestic science department in 1921 also offered a detailed course description that demonstrated the limited social and economic opportunities afforded to women in Columbus. And although the mandatory courses were exclusively for girls, the course description offered in the 1921 yearbook can serve both as evidence of discrimination as well as a legitimizing force for the duties performed by women in the home as both difficult and of value. The description of the coursework required for all girls begins with an explanation as to the creation of a domestic science department, noting that

today everyone understands the meaning of “Domestic Science” and the value also, but not very many years ago these words would have looked very strange together; no one seeing or hearing them would have understood what they meant. The word science was to most people a word reserved for technical subjects. There was a

⁶⁸ Ibid., 4-5.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 4-5.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 4-5.

⁷¹ Ibid., 4-5.

science of botany, a science of astronomy; but about domestic life, with its almost infinite number of big and little duties, there was little or nothing that was recognized as scientific. That “domestic” science came late is due to the fact that it concerns itself with affairs which as so universal, so constantly and unobtrusively before our eyes as to seem commonplace. But little by little people come to see that there was, in the running of the usual household, an enormous waste of time, of energy, of money. Nothing like an adequate return was being received for the outlay that was made. The result, gradual and still incomplete, was the systematizing of the domestic science.⁷²

By emphasizing the efficiency and scientific approach to household duties, the advocates for domestic science aligned themselves with the mission of Columbus’ goals for industrial education, and connected their efforts to those of the city in creating a prosperous and moral Columbus. The yearbook also noted how astute the founders of the Columbus Industrial High School were in their establishing a domestic science department from the onset of secondary industrial education in Columbus, noting when the Industrial High School was built the people of Columbus realized that the girls of the City needed domestic training. Of course many people claim that a girl should learn such duties at home, but that is not always practicable. The education of a girl consists largely, if not exclusively, of training in household duties. The young girl is not trained in domestic affairs in the home; she has no time and little inclination for such things, and, in many instances, her mother has no more. With this view the

⁷² *Ibid.*, 6.

Industrial School offers a three-year course in domestic science, which includes Millinery, Sewing, and Cooking.⁷³

Part of the legitimizing process of the place of domestic science in the public school curriculum came in the very technical, and efficiency centered, curriculum. For instance, the cooking course began with “a study of carbohydrates, including vegetables, cereals and flour mixtures, with theory and practical lessons under each.”⁷⁴ As the year progressed, the girls studied “protein, fats, and mineral matter, and water uses.”⁷⁵ In the second year, girls conducted a “special study in experiments with flour, cereals, vegetables, and meats” and began “cooking in groups and preparing meals for stated members” studying “menus as to desirability, suitability and use.”⁷⁶ These “experiments” were managed alongside lessons designed to create hygienic and aesthetically pleasing households; students were taught how to launder “dish cloths and towels” and ensure that the aspiring young girls practiced proper care of systems of “ventilation, sanitation and daily care of pantries and refrigerators.”⁷⁷ Tutorials were offered in “home decoration, household economy, and practical work in the care of the kitchen and dining room.”⁷⁸ Girls were taught how to serve meals, to care for the “silver linen and china” and “table decorations.”⁷⁹ In addition, these young white females were given specific instruction on the “training of servants.”⁸⁰

⁷³ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 6.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 6.

Domestic science students were also given a thorough instruction in millinery; girls worked to “remodel old hats and take up the use of wire...cutting bias folds, making of bows” and “styles of trimming and lining.”⁸¹ In addition to “reshaping old hats,” girls began “making straw hats” during their second year, and by their third year, they make their own “wire frames” for their own hat designs.⁸² Their dressmaking lessons were even more impressive; beginning in their first year with “cutting, fitting and making of an apron and cap,” they moved on to create an “complete set of baby clothes” and “under clothes” by the end their second year.⁸³ This pragmatic approach to domestic science aligned with the cult of efficiency that was prominent during the early nineteenth century. The school also provided girls with very limited social mobility as the course work aligned with the moral ideals of cleanliness, frugality, and hard work for women, which was popular amongst the middle class of the time.

As the years passed, the curriculum and goals of the mandatory coursework for females changed; young ladies were given instruction in “home economics” rather than “domestic science,” and the focus of the coursework evolved as well.⁸⁴ By 1931, the home economics courses focused less on “experiments with flour” and more on “selecting foods for the family, balanced meals” and “the importance of food values.”⁸⁵ An “everyday manners” course was added to “help each girl to the realization of the

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 6.

⁸² *Ibid*, 6.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 6.

⁸⁴ *The Industrian 1921*, Vol. 4 (Columbus, GA: Published by the Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1921), 6; *The Red Jacket 1931* (Columbus, GA: Published by the Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1931), 7.

⁸⁵ *The Red Jacket 1931* (Columbus, GA: Published by the Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1931), 7.

necessity of trying to control her temper” and “brings to her attention the fact that politeness should begin at home, and by constant practice, be made a part of her everyday life.”⁸⁶ Girls still had instruction in the construction of the various types of clothing, but more attention was given to the appropriate choice in clothing. Girls were required to take a course called “what clothes to buy and when to wear them,” which was expected to “improve the outside appearance of the girls...especially the business girl.”⁸⁷ Yet, even though the focus of the coursework appeared to have shifted from the creation of an efficient household to the cultivation of a moral and tasteful female, girls were only required to take two years of home economics rather than three.

By 1938, the home economics courses had evolved even more; girls were only required to take home economics coursework during their freshmen year, and they could elect to take three additional years of home economics (as the school was by this time a four year high school) if they chose their vocational concentration to be homemaking. During the required first year course, nicknamed “the business girl’s course,” young women were taught ideals of “self control, integrity, ...personal cleanliness” as well as learning “to make a pleasing appearance in her dress and actions.”⁸⁸ The elected coursework in years two through four covered subjects such as “first aid, childcare and training,” as well as dressmaking, in which she is allowed to be paid for the clothes that she is commissioned to make for others.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸⁸ *The Red Jacket 1938* (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1938), 7.

⁸⁹ *The Red Jacket 1938*, 7.

Examining the photos of the domestic science courses in 1909 and the home economic courses in 1938, the students and classrooms underwent a complete transformation. The pupils in 1909 look like aspiring scientists, wearing long white aprons situated around one large laboratory table with burners, women in 1938 home economics class stand in front of individual stoves with double boilers, or sit at white dining room tables with floral centerpieces and place settings for four. They transform from models of efficiency and cleanliness to the ideal archetype of late 1930s femininity and virtuous living.⁹⁰

One interesting development in the home economics department occurred in 1938 when the school hosted both a female and male home economics club. No boys were instructed in the curriculum, but the extracurricular club offered males an opportunity to work with the community in outreach projects and become a “champion citizen.”⁹¹ While no evidence for gender integrated classes in woodworking, electrical, textile, or mechanical courses could be found, fictional literature from the time period indicates that by the mid-1930s it may not have been out of the question to find females in such traditionally male classes at Columbus Industrial High School. Carson McCullers’ most famous work, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* is set in Columbus, Georgia in the early 1930s. The story’s protagonist, Mick Kelly, is a sharp-tongued tomboy who is in her first year at “Vocational.”⁹² Mick is able to convince school officials to let her take shop

⁹⁰ *Annual Report of Columbus Public Schools of 1909*, (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1909), 94; *The Red Jacket 1938* (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1938), 7; Sarah Berry, *Screen Style: Fashion and Femininity in 1930s Hollywood* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

⁹¹ *The Red Jacket 1938* (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1938), 7.

⁹² Carson McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (New York, NY: Harcourt Publishing Company, 1940, reprint 2000), 113.

classes with boys, and she adores the freedom that the vocational high school offers her, noting

high school was swell. Everything about it was different from grammar school. She wouldn't have liked it so much if she had to take a stenographic course like Hazel and Etta had done—but she got special permission and took mechanical shop like a boy. Shop and Algebra and Spanish were grand.⁹³

Carson McCullers attended Columbus High School, so did not have firsthand knowledge of the curriculum. But through her fictional creation of Mick Kelly readers can discern the dissatisfaction that females living in Columbus might have had with the traditional high school experience. Though it is unclear whether or not this “special permission” took place in real life, what is apparent is the fact that young girls in Columbus searched for new means to expand their influence in the educational and economic opportunities in the 1930s. Industrial High School yearbooks hint to this phenomenon, noting the favorite hobbies of some girls of the 1920 senior class as “working algebra,” “economizing,” and “being fond of the lab.” Math was the “most popular” course at the school at the school in 1920 judging “by the number of girls who are taking interest in it lately.”⁹⁴

Jordan supported some women's rights, and believed that women should have the opportunity for education in order to be valuable members of society. He supported women's right to vote in 1914, and he believed that women were responsible for the betterment of society in the care of the household, promoting healthy living and sanitation, and cultivating efficiency in the next generation. Jordan stated that “fairness,

⁹³ McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, 113.

⁹⁴ *The Industrian 1920*, Vol. 4 (Columbus, GA: Published by the Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1920).

progress, and chivalry alike demand that equal suffrage shall be vouchsafed. The South, especially, needs the counsel and help of its educated progressive women.”⁹⁵ The Columbus Industrial High School reflected this, encouraging young girls to become productive citizens, working with communities to serve the poor, and in the creation of the virtuous and moral home. Jordan believed that

if women are capable of owning property and managing business affairs, they should, by their votes, say who shall tax that property and how it shall be taxed. If they are to be the “mothers of men,” it is exceptionally important that they should be on sanitary commissions, on school boards, and have a potent voice in regulating those things, which mar or make the destiny of their children.⁹⁶

While relying on familiar arguments from Benjamin Rush and Catherine Beecher for the education of women in preparation to become better mothers, it is clear that Jordan would not be recognized as a feminist by twenty-first century standards, instead Jordan spins these ideals in a way to support a (nineteenth century) progressive and industrial Columbus.⁹⁷ These ideals manifest themselves in the Columbus Industrial High School. The young girls would be the foot soldiers in the creation his moral and productive ideal society; keeping clean and sanitary houses, efficient use of time and resources for less wasteful households, as well as providing socially acceptable economic opportunities for advancement through trade.

⁹⁵ G. Gunby Jordan, “Women Should Have a Say,” *Columbus Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), Aug 22, 1983 reprint of article from 1914, n.d.

⁹⁶ G. Gunby Jordan, “Women Should Have a Say,” *Columbus Enquirer*, 1914

⁹⁷ Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner, *American Education: A History*, 4th Ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 80-96, 133-135.

Fame

Industrial High School

There is a school of wondrous fame,
Industrial High School is the name.
Where the English tongue is heard,
Upon the diamond our boys can stand,
Against the best in all the land.
In the kitchen our girls can cook,
By all the receipts in the book;
And all the dresses that they make
All first honors would surely take.
Then when it comes to typing words
That is where we are the birds.
At keeping books, we are just fine.
And now we could not close this line,
Without a word for our teachers great
They are the best in our Georgia State.

-Janice Green, Columbus Industrial High School.⁹⁸

When the Columbus Industrial High School held its cornerstone placement ceremony in 1905, Georgia's Governor Joseph M. Terrell and the Columbia University's Teachers

⁹⁸ *The Red Jacket 1927, Vol. 1* (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1927), 8.

College Dean James Earl Russell were both in attendance.⁹⁹ Jordan was the key speaker at the ceremony, and he affirmed again how this school was established to promote practical educational ideals, industrial efficiency, and economic sustainability. A time capsule including photographs of all the ceremony's presenters, and a program referencing all of the day's festivities was then placed in the cornerstone.¹⁰⁰ Columbus City Schools found itself at the forefront of the efficiency and industrial education movement a full seven years before John Franklin Bobbitt's article "The Elimination of Waste in Education" had even been published.¹⁰¹

Jordan was not the only promoter of industrial education in Columbus; he shared the spotlight with other educational supporters in Columbus. Roland B. Daniel, future superintendent of Columbus Public Schools, published a monograph on the contributions of Columbus to the field of industrial education. This monograph was republished multiple times throughout the early twentieth century in various journals and books concerning the topic of industrial and vocational education. Carleton Gibson wrote and spoke about the industrial educational practices at conferences and journals including the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education Conference in Atlanta and the *Annals of Social Science*. These men worked together to promote the economic prowess

⁹⁹ Nancy Telfair, "History of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia," 48; Roland B. Daniel, *Industrial Education in Columbus, GA*, 13

¹⁰⁰ Time Capsule Documents, Jordan Papers, Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

¹⁰¹ John Franklin Bobbitt, "The Elimination of Waste In Education." *The Elementary School Teacher* 12 (1912): 259-271; Herbert Kliebard, *Schooled to Work: Vocationalism and the American Curriculum, 1876-1946* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999), 51-54; Herbert Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum 1893-1958* (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2004), 83.

of Columbus in hopes of attracting further industrial development as well as to sing the praises of industrial education.

The Columbus Industrial High School acquired a significant amount of fame for its success; Arthur Page wrote in *A World's Work* in 1907 “the city of Columbus, Georgia is the first municipality to meet the situation” of public vocational education “fairly.”¹⁰² Yet, the lines between public and private education within Columbus were often blurred. Although the maintenance of the school was administered by public money, influential mill and factory owners within the city donated all the land, building, machinery, and equipment.¹⁰³ The school created a partnership with many of these businesses in order to provide students with “practical” unpaid work experience in their senior year for which they were graded based on their “punctuality in attendance, persistence throughout the day, promptness in executing tasks, readiness in interpreting drawings and orders, relationship to fellow workers, and the nature and amount of the work done

One of the many goals of the school was to create a kind of reciprocity between the school system and local industries. In addition to academic course work, students specialized in a field of industry that was predominant in Columbus. The school not only benefitted the business community, it also benefitted the larger Columbus school system. Jordan’s obsession with efficiency meant that nothing would go to waste. Anything created in the workshops and laboratories of the school was used within the school itself,

¹⁰² Arthur Page, “Training for the Trades; The next step in Public School Work.” *The Worlds Work* 13 (1907): 8552-8557.

¹⁰³ Nancy Telfair, “History of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia,” 45-50.

or was sold to the public for the benefit of the school. School leaders attempted to make the school as self-sustaining as possible.¹⁰⁴

Education in Connection with Bibb Manufacturing Company

As time marched on, and other mills were created in Columbus in the early twentieth century, opportunities for vocational education expanded. The Bibb Manufacturing Company, located a few miles upriver from the Eagle and Phenix mills, also found itself under the ownership of G. Gunby Jordan. The mill village that grew up around the textile mill evolved into a self-sustaining town with schools, restaurants, stores, banks, and its own municipal services. The tradition of vocational education continued in Bibb City, as did Jordan's interest in schools.

The *Bibb City Recorder*, the local newspaper for the mill village, records many examples of educational pride. Front-page news stories included educational honors given to former Bibb City residents at the University of Georgia and overwhelming pride in perfect attendance displayed on the first day of school at Bibb City Elementary. The *Bibb City Recorder* even advertised industrial adult education classes including: "Practical loom fixing, Theory of Weaving and Cloth Calculations, and Cotton Mill Mathematics."¹⁰⁵

Pride in the vocational schools extended to employees of the mills as well as to the local newspapers. A former employee of Bibb Manufacturing Company, Harry Harden, boasted that Bibb City Elementary was the best school in Muscogee County. The mill

¹⁰⁴ "G. Gunby Jordan's Masterly Address at the Laying of School Building Cornerstone." *Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, June 23, 1906.

¹⁰⁵ "Night School is On at Bibb City," *Bibb City Recorder*, September 23, 1929; "Ten Years Ago," *Bibb City Recorder*, February 10, 1933; "School Resumes Monday Morning," *Bibb City Recorder*, September 23, 1929.

schools accounted for this excellence. According to Harden, although the county hired the teachers, Bibb supplemented their pay, making them the highest paid teachers in the county.¹⁰⁶ This practice was not entirely uncommon; the Boylston Crown Mill in northwest Georgia also supplemented the pay that the county gave the mill schoolteachers, who were the highest paid in Whitfield County.¹⁰⁷ Harden proclaimed that Bibb City Elementary had “some of the best teachers in the county and state” and that any teacher receiving a Bibb City Elementary student was “glad to have them.”¹⁰⁸ After graduating from Bibb City Elementary, students would continue on to the Columbus Industrial High School (later called Jordan Vocational High School). Harden recounted how his own son would work at the mill on the night shift and attend the Jordan Vocational High School during the day; his daughter finished the Industrial High School at age fifteen, but had to wait until she was sixteen years old to be hired by the mill.¹⁰⁹

Bibb City flourished in the first half of the twentieth century, and the school continued to be regarded as one of the best in the city. When the mill closed in 1998, the population of Bibb City dramatically decreased; the decision to close Bibb City Elementary came in 2001 with a reapportionment of public school funds. To this day, the school continues to rally devotion from teachers and alumni.

¹⁰⁶ Harry Harden, Interviewed by Tamara S. Jones, Mill Workers Oral History Project CSU Archives, 16 February 1988.

¹⁰⁷ Ellen Keith Thompson, “The Demise of the One-Room School: School Improvement and consolidation in the Whitfield County, Georgia Schools, 1916-1939,” PhD diss., Georgia State University, 1996, 52.

¹⁰⁸ He was not alone in his opinion of Bibb City Elementary; the school currently has a Facebook page proclaiming how it was the greatest school that ever existed in Columbus with over one hundred and thirty members (Bibb City Elementary 2012).

¹⁰⁹ Harry Harden, Mill Workers Oral History Project.

Vocational and Racial Legacy

A national debate raged in the early twentieth century regarding the implementation of vocational education within schools, a concept and educational model that had been in practice in Columbus since 1906. While the purposes of vocational/industrial education ranged from social control to a more democratic educational practice, a broad assortment of people and organizations formed a coalition in support of vocational education.

Alliances were made between unlikely partners: the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Federation of Labor, the National Education Association, the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, as well as individuals such as John Dewey, David Snedden, Charles Prosser, and even Jane Addams all rallied in support of Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 (although they disagreed as to its function and purpose). The Smith-Hughes Act enabled federal dollars to be spent on vocational education training in public schools; this act was fully supported within the city of Columbus. It would allow the mill owners and the board of education (which was populated by mill owners) to further expand the vocational training that the city already had in existence.¹¹⁰

At first glance, the Columbus Industrial High School appears to have accomplished what so many supporters of vocational education claimed to have wanted: a school for a better society, a more democratic society where everyone has the chance to succeed. Yet,

¹¹⁰ Harvey Kantor, "Work, Education, and Vocational Reform: The Ideological Origins of Vocational Education, 1890-1920." *American Journal of Education*, (August, 1986): 402; Carroll Wright, "The Work of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 33 (January 1909): 13; Herbert Kliebard, *Schooled to Work: Vocationalism and the American Curriculum, 1876-1946*, 132-135; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*; "Jordan Vocational High School a Pioneer in Vocational Education," n. d., History of Jordan High School Papers, Jordan Vocational High School Library.

Jordan and Gibson, like most white upper class men of their time, valued a stratified society in which people could fit into their proper stations in life. The Columbus Industrial High School, like most progressive ventures in the South, was “for whites only.”¹¹¹ Students were given instruction in their own superiority from the textbooks adopted by the school (ones that espoused the inferiority of the African continent), the lessons given (on how to train their African American servants in domestic science classes), and in the school extra-curricular activities available to students (the annual minstrel show).¹¹²

Herbert Kliebard argues in *The Struggle for the American Curriculum* that a central part of the movement toward social efficiency was social control, which is clearly illustrated in the curriculum of the Columbus Industrial High School.¹¹³ At the Columbus Industrial High School, girls were not permitted to choose the same trades as boys, and they were initially required to study domestic science all three years, as their management of the home would contribute to the overall industrial efficiency of the city. Blacks were not allowed to attend the same industrial schools as whites, and they were provided with an industrial education fitting of what Gibson and many southern whites saw as their proper place in society. “Every negro girl is given a thorough training in home economics, cookery, sewing, and laundering...every boy is given instruction in carpentry and blacksmithing.”¹¹⁴ Plans to extend the curriculum to “bricklaying” and “shoe and

¹¹¹ C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1987), 369.

¹¹² George Goudie Chisholm, *Handbook of Commercial Geography* (New York: London, Green and Company, 1892), 347; *The Industrian 1921*, 6; *The Needlepoint 1929* (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1929), 27-28.

¹¹³ Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum 1893-1958*, 89.

¹¹⁴ Gibson, “Secondary Industrial School of Columbus, Georgia,” 44.

harness repairing” were also in development as “these areas of employment are open almost exclusively to the negro youth of the city.”¹¹⁵

Jordan espoused these attitudes toward African American education; in fact, many of his educational ventures were founded on his fears of what might happen to white southerners if they were not educated, and if the South was not an attractive destination to new immigrants coming to the United States. Jordan spoke of his apprehensions in a speech that he gave to the Industrial Society of Georgia, where he addressed Georgia’s lack of effort in attracting white European immigrants to migrate to Georgia. He noted that if there was not a more consolidated effort to attract the respectable whites to Georgia, then the whites living in Georgia might be over-powered by the growing African American population.¹¹⁶ As a member of the Georgia Immigration board, Jordan continued his efforts to draw white immigrants to the South by attempting to establish contracts and agreements between railroad companies, who would transport the immigrants, and the industries that would employ them.¹¹⁷ Jordan made similar statements when petitioning the Peabody Education Board; he hoped to improve the condition of “worthy whites” in the city of Columbus by the construction of the Columbus Industrial High School. Although Jordan embodied modernity and progress in many aspects of his life, it is important to note that he did not escape the racism and subjugation toward African Americans that was pervasive throughout the culture of the Deep South.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 44-48; Daniel, *Industrial Education in Columbus, GA*, 7.

¹¹⁶ Jordan, Speech of G. Gunby Jordan at Committee of Georgia Industrial Association in Warm Springs, Georgia, 1901, Jordan Papers.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.; “G. Gunby Jordan Passes Away at Country Home,” *The Columbus Ledger*, May 9, 1930.

Educational opportunities abounded in Columbus for whites in the early twentieth century. These opportunities took on a uniquely industrial shape that distinguished them from the traditional high schools of the time. I wonder what education would have been like in Columbus without the assistance and encouragement of the industrial giants of the city who controlled much of its wealth. Whatever form it might have taken, it is difficult to imagine Columbus without the mills. Industrial education in Columbus served the needs of many, but not all, residents of Columbus. African Americans were continually displaced from the educational process and were not allowed to attend Jordan Vocational High School (the name later given to the Columbus Industrial High School) until its desegregation in 1971.¹¹⁸

Conclusion

Columbus offered itself as a model for the school efficiency movement. Working to incorporate its ideals of sustainability, waste management, and cooperation with local industries, Columbus embodied the philosophy of the social efficiency movement supported in the early twentieth century. The Columbus schools provided numerous educational opportunities that sought to lighten the burden of poor white children in Columbus and Phenix City. The Primary Industrial School, The Eagle and Phenix Free Kindergartens, St. Patrick School, Bibb City Elementary, and the Columbus Industrial High School were all developed to improve the lives of poor white children as well as sustain the economic status of Columbus industries.

¹¹⁸ Tim Chitwood and Mark Rice, "Muscogee school board puts old industrial high school up for sale," *The Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, March 25, 2013.

In the early twentieth century, the Columbus school system was thrust into the national spotlight for its experimental educational activities. G. Gunby Jordan and his desire to provide a practical education for the children of Columbus factored significantly in the system's distinction and success. The system developed in Columbus would reap economic benefits for the city and it would allow for the development of more quality textile products in order to ensure the continued prosperity of the city of Columbus. The Columbus Industrial High School provided an influx of highly trained white workers, which resulted in economic prosperity for Columbus. As Columbus prospered, so too did Jordan. And yet Jordan is not remembered for his commercial, political, or economic accomplishments, his work in the development of industrial education for Columbus Public Schools would be his legacy.

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CHAPTER 6

THE INFLUENCE OF FRIENDSHIPS, PARTNERSHIPS, AND ALLIANCES ON AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION IN COLUMBUS, GA

G. Gunby Jordan did not act alone to reform education in Columbus. Particularly in the area of African American education, Jordan was just one of a cast of characters who provided experimental and innovative educational policies for African American children in Columbus. Despite their push for reforms, however, these men also promoted and furthered detrimental and racist practices, which would influence the education of children in Columbus for several decades to come.¹

Jordan's colleagues were men of varied educational and financial means. Their combined efforts led to the development of numerous educational institutions in Columbus. Carleton Gibson, the superintendent of Columbus Public Schools from 1893 to 1910; Roland B. Daniel, superintendent of Columbus Public Schools from 1910 to 1937; Julian Rosenwald, noted philanthropist for African American Education; and Jordan's friend, George Foster Peabody, all played a vital role in the development of African American education in Columbus, Georgia.² A native of Columbus, Peabody

¹ Alfred Stern to George Foster Peabody, 12 February, 1930, Julius Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1898* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1898); 10-15; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1900* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1900), 10-16; G. Gunby Jordan to Dr. S.A. Green, 27 February 1905, Peabody Education Fund, Vanderbilt University Archives; G. Gunby Jordan, Speech of G. Gunby Jordan at Committee of Georgia Industrial Association in Warm Springs, Georgia, 1901, Jordan Papers, Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

² Eric Anderson and Alfred A. Moss Jr., *Dangerous Donations; Northern Philanthropy and Southern Black Education, 1902-1930* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 39-59.

became a successful New York banker and philanthropist; he would eventually return to his native state to organize numerous education projects.³ In addition, William Henry Spencer, an African American educator in Columbus, worked tirelessly for decades with white leaders in the quest for an African American high school in the Columbus area.⁴ Collectively, these men influenced Jordan's ideas about education reform, and Jordan influenced theirs. However, it was Jordan's friendship with George Foster Peabody that would have the greatest influence on African American education reform in Columbus.

Throughout this chapter, I continue to examine the role Jordan's racial policies had on African American education in Columbus. Yet, I advise my reader that the heart of the African American education movement in Columbus was not Jordan, but George Foster Peabody. Peabody worked alongside local black leaders and educators as well as national and local philanthropists to conceive a more balanced approach to education for African Americans. Thus, this chapter devotes much time to George Foster Peabody and how his relationship with Columbus and national leaders propelled the development of numerous educational reforms for whites and blacks living in Columbus.

While a reader may ask why a biography of G. Gunby Jordan would devote so much attention to another person, the answer is clear. Jordan, although a phenomenal businessman, philanthropist, reformist, industrialist, did not act alone. His success was dependent on the relationships that he developed with other Columbus leaders; African

³ Louise Ware, *George Foster Peabody; Banker, Philanthropist, Publicist* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1951), 1-9; Victoria MacDonald Huntzinger, "The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904." PhD diss., Harvard University, 1992, 165.

⁴ Nancy Telfair, *History Of Columbus Public Schools* (Columbus, GA: Columbus-Enquirer-Sun, 1927), 57-58; "William Henry Spencer, based on notes by Ethel Spencer," William Henry Spencer File, CSU Archives; "Professor W. H. Spencer Dies Saturday," *Columbus Enquirer*, May 31, 1925.

American education is the perfect example of this synergy. Jordan was a part of a multi-faceted community, and he was extremely successful at navigating this environment to his own benefit. In addition, in this chapter I illustrate how the environment that Jordan was so often the master of was able to shape and alter his racial policies at the end of his life.

Essentially, there were three phases of educational reforms for blacks and whites living in Columbus. Gibson, Jordan, and Peabody's inauguration of industrial schools would constitute the first phase of educational reform in Columbus. Phase two saw the development of philanthropic, though still segregated, programs, including adult education, free kindergartens, and development of new schools and programs. The third phase followed Gibson's resignation as superintendent of Columbus schools in 1909. Gibson's replacement, Roland B. Daniel, with the support of Spencer, Jordan, Peabody, and Rosenwald, initiated the expansion of African American education to include an industrial high school for black students. These men were instrumental in the development of African American education in Columbus. While this is a biography of G. Gunby Jordan, and not a history of African American education in Columbus, an exploration of the development of African American education in Columbus is essential to understanding Jordan's legacy. Although Jordan's role in African American education in Columbus was limited to his interactions and relationships with other educators and philanthropists, to neglect this aspect of Jordan's career would render his story incomplete.

Phase One: Establishing a Foundation of Innovation and Discrimination

In 1898, Columbus maintained six white schools (four primary, one night school, and one high school) and four black schools (all primary-though one did extend to grade

nine). The quality of the schools weighed heavily in favor of the white schools, with a total value of school properties being \$71, 000 for the white schools, and \$17,000 for the black schools.⁵ Additionally, the disparity between the salaries of the white and black teachers was staggering; in 1900, the total amount of money allotted to the thirty-eight white teachers was \$26,104 dollars, while the salary allotment for the twenty-two black teachers was only \$5,922. This budget would allocate an average annual salary of \$2,612 dollars for white teachers, and \$269 dollars for African American teachers.⁶ Despite this disparity in resources allocated to the education of whites and blacks in Columbus, the enrolled student population of the white and black students was almost evenly matched, with 1,440 white students and 1,097 black students in 1898; with a student to teacher ratio of one teacher per every thirty-eight white students, and one teacher for every forty-nine black students. Those numbers began to drastically change, however, beginning in 1899; the white population increased to 1526, and the black population dropped to 944. The following year the disparity grew even more; 1723 white pupils enrolled in the public schools, and the black pupil population reduced to 867. There was a small increase in black students in 1901 with 924 enrolled, but with a white enrolled population of 1805, there were still twice as many white children taking advantage of public education in Columbus as black children.⁷ Census data did not indicate a stark reduction

⁵ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1898*, 10-15.

⁶ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia*, 10-16.

⁷ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1898*, 20-22; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1899* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1899), 9-15; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1900*, 10-16; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1901* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1901), 16-21.

in African American students, thus some other cause generated this disparity, which is further explored in the following section.

Carleton Gibson and African American Education

The superintendent at the turn of the century, Carleton Gibson, blamed the African Americans themselves for their poor attendance in school and credited them with bringing down the attendance averages for the entire city.⁸ When analyzing reasons for poor attendance among black students in school, the three most common reasons listed by African American students in 1898 were “sickness,” the need to enter the workforce, and the inability to pay for book fees (which ranged from one to three dollars in the grades that were offered to black students).⁹ For their white counterparts, the most common reasons for leaving also included sickness and entering the workforce, but many white students also left to attend other schools, an option not available to African American children in Columbus. The price of book fees was not listed as an issue for white students.¹⁰

While Gibson blamed African Americans for their low attendance rates, he also acknowledged the poor quality of African American schools in Columbus.¹¹ By 1900, several African American students noted “indifference” as their reason for discontinuing their education, which no child had listed as a reason in 1898.¹² The exact cause of this

⁸ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1904* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1904), 21.

⁹ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1899*, 21.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹¹ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1902* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1902), 21.

¹² *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1898*, 20-22; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1900*, 29-30.

supposed indifference to education is not known, but considering the enormous disparities between the facilities and teacher salaries at white and black schools, it is clear that African American students and teachers were not given the tools and resources that they needed to keep pace with their white counterparts.

In 1901, Gibson remarked that the “graduating” class of the “colored school contained three boys;” what Gibson considered to be an impressively high graduation rate had not been seen in many years.¹³ Gibson attributed the graduation increase to industrial programs available to African American students. “They and their parents see that in the industrial department the boys may get a better education and learn to do some work, which may be the means to employment in the future.”¹⁴ And yet the following year, Gibson stated that the “colored schools are not altogether what I should like to have them...the literary subjects of the common school course is not thorough” and “we are making now...and effort to improve this.”¹⁵ To account for the inequities, Gibson blamed the African American community, noting that the “civilized negro is in its infancy,” and regarded the “progress” that was being made in African American education as suitable for the time.¹⁶

Gibson’s solution to the academic and economic woes of the African American community was to develop more manual training within the black schools. However, he did not want to spend any public tax dollars to make these improvements. Throughout the annual reports of Columbus Public Schools, Gibson points out repeatedly that any

¹³ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1901*, 20.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁵ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1902*, 21.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 21

improvements in African American education did not come from tax revenues; rather, money for improvements came from the African American community, out of district tuition fees, or through charitable donations.¹⁷ In 1903, Gibson used the book fees from black students to pay for school improvements, and in 1904, he increased the tuition of non-resident pupils to pay for improvements to the Claflin School for African American students. Gibson's determination not to burden Columbus taxpayers with the education of African Americans created a growing disparity between the amounts of money spent on the education of black versus white students.¹⁸ In 1903, the value of school properties for white students had increased from \$40,000 in 1898 to \$111,000, while the value of black school properties had decreased by \$1,000 to \$16,000.¹⁹ While Gibson was certainly aware of the disproportionate allocation of educational funds, he was unwilling to widen the pool of resources available to African American students. He would continue to rely on charitable donations to reform African American education.

The desperate need for charitable donations and a piquant for educational reform attracted G. Gunby Jordan and George Foster Peabody to the Columbus Public Schools. Both Jordan and Peabody were compelled to donate money to support industrial, adult, and African American education. Though their passion for all three of these causes was not identical, and in some cases was distinctly different, both men found a way to partner for what they believed to be the betterment of Columbus.²⁰ This partnership would

¹⁷ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1904*, 21.

¹⁸ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1904*, 21.

¹⁹ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1903* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1903), 18.

²⁰ *The Red Jacket 1938* (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1938); "Jordan Vocational High School a Pioneer in Vocational Education," n. d., History of Jordan High School Papers, Jordan Vocational High School Library; G. Gunby Jordan, "Speech

manifest itself in numerous ways, all of which benefitted the ambitions of Carleton Gibson. Thus, these three men represent the first phase of educational reform in Columbus. Gibson nurtured the charitable partnership between Jordan and Peabody; this partnership would continue to influence Columbus' educational reforms over the next several decades.

Peabody and Jordan - A Symbiotic Relationship

Partnerships manifest themselves in numerous ways. While some partnerships satisfy the need for political alliances and capital resources, others are based on friendship and shared interests. G. Gunby Jordan's partnership with George Foster Peabody embodied all of these qualities. While Peabody spent the majority of his life living and working in New York, he felt a strong connection to his native Georgia. Through this connection, he and Jordan would seek to improve the lives of poor Georgians – both white and black.²¹

Throughout his lifetime, Jordan worked to improve the education of poor whites living in the South.²² Peabody, in contrast, sought to expand his philanthropic reach to develop the moral character and economic conditions of African Americans living in Georgia.²³

Heavy criticism is often levied at the educational endeavors whites made toward African

of G. Gunby Jordan at Committee of Georgia Industrial Association in Warm Springs, Georgia, 1901," Katherine Waddell Private Collection; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*, 32.

²¹ Ware, *George Foster Peabody*, 1-9, 86-95, 196-217; Nina Mjagkij, *Light in the Darkness; African Americans and the YMCA, 1852-1946*, (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1994), 68-69.

²² The Eagle and Phenix Club," *The Atlanta Constitution*, Sept. 2, 1899; "Columbus Club Composed Entirely of Workers of Eagle and Phenix Mill," *The Atlanta Constitution*, December 30, 1900; "Free Kindergarten (in Girard, Ala.) run by the Eagle and Phoenix Mills, Columbus, Ga.," The Photography Collections, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, 1913, <http://contentdm.ad.umbc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/hinecoll/id/2823/rec/1>.

²³ Mjagkij, *Light in the Darkness*, 68-69; Peabody to Ida Mason, March 26, 1912 (Emphasis added), Peabody Papers, quoted in Eric Anderson and Alfred Moss Jr., *Dangerous Donations: Northern Philanthropy and Southern Black Education, 1902-1930*, 53.

American children in the early nineteenth century, and Peabody's actions are not without critique.²⁴ Yet, his role in furthering African American education should not be undervalued. Through his friendship and business relationship with Jordan, Peabody secured funding for many schools and programs in Columbus.²⁵

The lives of both Jordan and Peabody bear striking similarities. For both native Georgians, the Civil War marked the end of their childhood (although Peabody was eight years younger than Jordan). After the Civil War, Jordan began to make a name for himself in Columbus after relocating from Sparta, GA. Peabody and his family moved to New York after war decimated the family business (a general store) in Columbus. Peabody found his childhood stripped from him when he was pulled out of school in order to contribute to the family income, much in the same way that Jordan did when Jordan enlisted into the Confederate Army at the age of seventeen.²⁶ Like Jordan, Peabody was successful in business. Banking and railroads generated most of Peabody's wealth, though it would be misleading to compare G. Gunby Jordan's wealth in Columbus, Georgia to that of George Foster Peabody in New York City, New York. Although both men earned a reputation as successful businessmen, Peabody's wealth far surpassed what Jordan could have hoped to amass in Columbus.²⁷

²⁴ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); 88-91, 220-223.

²⁵ Mjagkij, *Light in the Darkness*, 68-69; Huntzinger, "The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904," 165.

²⁶ Ware, *George Foster Peabody*, 1-9; "G. Gunby Jordan Joined Army in Columbus," *The Sunday Ledger-Enquirer* (Columbus, Georgia), April 16, 1961; "Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T," Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus GA;

²⁷ "G. Gunby Jordan Tax Documents," G. Gunby Jordan Collection, CSU Archives; Ware, *George Foster Peabody*, 70-85.

Neither man enjoyed the luxury of higher education, though both educated themselves through the use of libraries.²⁸ Their political activities also shared many similarities, though Peabody, a self-proclaimed “radical” often differed from his fellow southern Democrats when it came to the enfranchisement of African Americans.²⁹ Both men enjoyed prominence and favor in their respective state Democratic parties, serving state representatives for party conventions and maintained friendships with local and national politicians.³⁰ In addition, friends and colleagues continually approached both men to start their own political campaigns, which both continually declined (saving Jordan’s brief tenure as county commissioner at the end of his life). At one point in their careers, both Peabody and Jordan were urged by their peers to run for mayors of their respective cities. Both men refused to run for office; however, Jordan and Peabody enjoyed political status as consultants and members of numerous public and private committees.³¹

Interestingly, both men lived the majority of their lives as bachelors, pining away for women that they could not have. Jordan married young, and enjoyed one year of

²⁸ Ware, *George Foster Peabody*, 10-16; Mkagkij, *Light in the Darkness*, 68; “Unpublished History of Jordan Family,” Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA, 9; “G. Gunby Jordan Joined Army in Columbus,” *The Sunday Ledger-Enquirer*, April 16, 1961.

²⁹ George Foster Peabody to Edgar Murphy, October 10, 1911, George Foster Peabody Papers, Library of Congress;

³⁰ “Muscogee Democrats,” *Columbus Sunday Enquirer* (Columbus, Georgia), May 16, 1880; “Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T,” Katherine Waddell Private Collection; Ware, *George Foster Peabody*, 121-130.

³¹ “Petition for the Election of G. Gunby Jordan to Mayor of Columbus, Georgia,” G. Gunby Jordan Collection, CSU Archives, Columbus, Georgia; Louise Ware, *George Foster Peabody*, 91-95; “The Columbus Board of Trade,” *Daily Enquirer-Sun* (Columbus, GA), Sept. 2, 1890, Tuesday Morning; “Honorable G. Gunby Jordan appointed by Governor Northern as Railroad Commissioner,” *The Durham Daily Globe* (Durham, NC), June 28, 1894; “Fire Insurance: Fireman’s Fun Insurance,” *Sunday Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), Dec. 28, 1873; “In The Hands of the Recievers,” *The Roanoke Daily*, June 14, 1896; “Petition to Incorporate” *Daily Enquirer-Sun* (Columbus, GA), May 28, 1886.

marriage before his wife died in childbirth; he would never marry again.³² At a young age, Peabody had the misfortune to fall in love with his best friend's wife, Katrina Trask. He did not act on his feelings until several years after the death of his friend Spencer Trask; Peabody and Katrina were married when he was sixty-nine and she was sixty-five. Like Jordan, he would only spend little over a year with his new wife before she succumbed to numerous health issues and died in 1922.³³

Chronicling the parallels between the lives of Jordan and Peabody demonstrates that, aside from their shared interest in Columbus, they shared many experiences that would further bind them together. Their greatest shared experience would be their philanthropic contributions to education.³⁴ Peabody's work with the Southern Education Board and the General Education Board allowed him contact with numerous educators, politicians, and businessman who also shared his interest in education. Within these circles of power, Peabody was introduced to various ideas and ideals relating to the purpose and goals of education. Jordan recognized that Peabody's connections would render him a useful ally in his pursuit of educational reforms for Columbus.

Both Peabody and Jordan utilized their economic and political connections to launch numerous clubs, educational institutions, libraries, and social organizations. However, in many ways, their individual successes were dependent on their partnership with one another. Each depended on the financial, political and social connections of the other in order to achieve his overarching goals of economic progress in the South. Not only did

³² "Well-Mated—A Brilliant Marriage Consumated," *Columbus-Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), Feb. 27, 1881; Funeral Notice Mrs. Lizzie B. Jordan," *Columbus-Enquirer* (Columbus, GA), May 2, 1882.

³³ Ware, *George Foster Peabody*, 202-203; *The Red Jacket 1938*, Columbus, GA.

³⁴ Mkagkij, *Light in the Darkness*, 68-72.

this symbiotic relationship facilitate the advancement of industrial education for poor whites living in Columbus, Georgia, but it also made possible many educational opportunities (although discriminatory and segregated) for African Americans living in Columbus, Georgia. In addition, Jordan and Peabody's partnership resulted in the creation of many social and religious institutions for whites and blacks living within Columbus.³⁵ Though the two men did not share identical political, financial, and racial ideologies, their partnership and friendship built bridges between northerners and southerners, whites and blacks, and educational reformers of all kinds in the economic and educational reconstruction of the South.

Peabody's Connections to African American Education and Georgia

Peabody imparted a monumental amount of influence on Jordan's views and policies in regards to race. However, in order to better understand how he would have influenced Jordan, it is important to situate Peabody's connections to African American education. Early in Peabody's philanthropic career, General Samuel Armstrong, founder of the Hampton Institute, invited him to become a trustee of the institution on June 4, 1884. Considering himself to be somewhat of a radical, Peabody embraced the opportunity and quickly accepted.³⁶ His connection to Hampton would instill a longtime commitment to African American education. In 1900, Peabody joined the board of directors for

³⁵ George Foster Peabody to Henry Goetchius, 30 January 1912, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library Of Congress; Nina Mkagkij, *Light in the Darkness*, 68; "Columbus Club Composed Entirely of Workers of Eagle and Phenix Mill," *The Atlanta Constitution*, December 30, 1900.

³⁶ Ware, *George Foster Peabody*, 33-36; George Foster Peabody to Edgar Murphy, 10 October 1911, George Foster Peabody Papers.

Tuskegee Normal and Industrial School where he worked tirelessly to solicit money from other northern philanthropists to sustain the school.³⁷

Peabody was also an active participant in the W.E.B. Du Bois debate with Booker T. Washington as to the goals of African American Education. Although Peabody's financial support favored Washington's approach to African American education, he did find merit in DuBois philosophy, and conversed with him often.³⁸ Washington officially supported the position that he celebrated at the Atlanta Cotton Symposium in front of an all-white audience. In Washington's speech, he urged African Americans to "cast down your bucket where you are" and be thankful for the current position of disenfranchisement allotted to them by the white hegemonic majority.³⁹ Like Peabody, Washington was a brilliant politician for his cause, and he knew how to appease those in power for the sake of his grand scheme.⁴⁰ Washington noted in the famed "Atlanta Compromise" speech that African Americans should partake

in agriculture, in mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions. And in this connection it is well to bear in mind that whatever other sins the South may be called to bear, when it comes to business, pure and simple, it is in the South that the Negro is given a man's chance in the commercial world, and in nothing is this Exposition more eloquent than in emphasizing this chance. Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that masses of us

³⁷ Ware, *George Foster Peabody*, 116.

³⁸ George Foster Peabody to Edgar Murphy, 14 October 1911, George Foster Peabody Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁹ Booker T. Washington, *The Atlanta Compromise* speech given at Cotton States and International Exposition, Atlanta, Georgia, Sept 18, 1895 (Lexington, KY: Rise of Douai, 2014 reprint), 11.

⁴⁰ Washington, *The Atlanta Compromise*, 11.

are to live by the production of our hands...no race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities.”⁴¹

Washington and Peabody worked well together in their efforts to create progress in a hostile environment, though it is apparent that both were not satisfied with the current state of African American education. Both believed that limited opportunities were better than no opportunities at all, which led to much criticism by people like DuBois. DuBois sought out Peabody, who, unlike many of his fellow white Democratic counterparts, showed great interest in higher education for African American students.⁴²

As a major contributor to the University of Georgia, Peabody worked to expand the state normal school, the forestry department, and the university library. Like Jordan, Peabody used his philanthropic contributions to steamroll his own agenda. Whereas Jordan’s philanthropic contributions were based mostly on the promotion of educational policies that would improve the economy of Columbus, Peabody’s donations and strong connection with the University of Georgia enabled him to work more broadly to improve the state of education in all of Georgia. Under his advisement, the University of Georgia eventually adopted a laboratory school attached to the State Normal School. Peabody hoped that improving teacher education would improve the education experience of

⁴¹ Washington, *The Atlanta Compromise*, 12.

⁴² George Foster Peabody to Henry Goetchius, 30 January 1912, George Foster Peabody Collection; Dewey W. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 11, 51.

Georgia's students. The University of Georgia awarded Peabody with an honorary doctorate in 1906 for all of his contributions to the school.⁴³

Through his associations with the University of Georgia, Peabody developed and maintained his friendship with Jordan and his ties to his native city. This devotion to Columbus was essential in the development of educational reforms for the city. The university provided him constant access to the circle of educational promoters and politicians involved in the development of educational projects throughout the state. He also made use of his board meetings and annual commencement visits by pairing them with visits to Columbus and Tuskegee, Alabama. Columbus would capitalize on Peabody's association with the city.⁴⁴

Peabody's attitudes towards African Americans living in the South are best revealed by examining his connections to institutions of higher learning. In many ways, his work in higher education illustrates his "radical" tendencies much more than his work in primary and secondary education.⁴⁵ In his primary and secondary educational pursuits, Peabody appeared to acquiesce to his fellow Georgians through his endorsement of segregated public education.⁴⁶ However, in his correspondence with Hampton, Tuskegee, and the University of Georgia, Peabody frequently utilized his sharp tongue to

⁴³ Harry Hodgson to L.G. Myers, 24 August 1904, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress; George Foster Peabody to Hoke Smith, 15 July 1905, Library of Congress, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress; E.C. Branson to George Foster Peabody, 1 May 1908, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress; Louise Ware, *George Foster Peabody*, 117-118.

⁴⁴ George Foster Peabody to Carleton Gibson, 18 July 1905, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress; George Foster Peabody to Carleton Gibson, 9 April 1906, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress; Louise Ware, *George Foster Peabody*, 96-106.

⁴⁵ George Foster Peabody to Edgar Murphy, 10 October 1911, George Foster Peabody Papers.

⁴⁶ George Foster Peabody to Henry Goetchius, 30 January 1912, George Foster Peabody Collection; Nina Mkagkij, *Light in the Darkness*, 68-72.

inform and reprimand those whom he felt were “unchristian” and “retroactive” in their views towards African American education.⁴⁷

Peabody also attempted play savior to some of the “unchristian” racial bigots living and working in Georgia at the turn of the century. One of his more desperate attempts to convert and develop “Christian” and moral treatment of African Americans living in the South can be seen in his correspondence with Colonel James Monroe Smith of Smithonia, Georgia.⁴⁸ Smith, a millionaire plantation owner, exploited convict laborers for his monetary benefit.⁴⁹ He attempted to make use of his colorful personality in a bid for the governorship in 1906. Smith and the other gubernatorial candidates did as much as they could to fan the flames of racial fears and prejudices in hopes of gaining white votes. Race was the hot topic of the day; fears of assaults on white women by black men and the enfranchisement of blacks had led to the Atlanta Race Riot in 1906.⁵⁰ Colonel Smith criticized other candidates for sometimes supporting black higher education, and he noted “the best way” to fix the “negro problem” was to divide the school fund by law and let the whites educate their children, and the negroes educate their children. Smith noted that if Georgia did this “there will be very few Negroes educated, and the present labor troubles will be adjusted.”⁵¹ The election had culminated in the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot where dozens of African Americans were murdered, and Colonel Smith lost the

⁴⁷ George Foster Peabody to Colonel James Monroe Smith, n.d., George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress: George Foster Peabody to Edgar Murphy, 14 October 1911, George Foster Peabody Papers.

⁴⁸ George Foster Peabody to Colonel James Monroe Smith, n.d., George Foster Peabody Collection.

⁴⁹ “Thanks Jim Smith Honored,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 26, 1906.

⁵⁰ “Estill Says Smith Misrepresented Him,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 16, 1906.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

election by a landslide. One article in the *Atlanta Constitution* noted, “Colonel James Monroe Smith must be running just for fun, pure and simple.”⁵²

Peabody wrote Smith an eight-page letter imploring him to rethink his election strategy of not only the disenfranchisement of black voters, but of all black education as well. In this letter, Peabody reveals many of his “radical” and “Christian” ideals, whereas in his letters to Jordan and Gibson, he is often more conservative in his egalitarian ideals.⁵³ Peabody strikes at Colonel Smith as knowing nothing concerning the education of blacks stating

in the science and practice of education of every grade, I have a particularity for twenty-five years to study and observe the results of Negro education and therefore I feel bound in conscience to call your attention to some facts that you are not familiar with and certainly have not studied in the thorough way with which you have studied the science of the farm.⁵⁴

While Peabody is quick to criticize Colonel Smith’s lack of knowledge regarding black education, school tax revenues, and “humane” behavior toward African Americans, he does so in a very lyrical southern prose to appease the old confederate. Peabody repeats opening phrases throughout the letter such as “I write to you” and “May I.” He continually addresses himself as a “native” and as a “Georgian” throughout the letter

⁵² Reverend Same Jones, “Judas Carried His Fees Back to His Purchasers; Has Hoke Returned His?,” *The Constitution*, Atlanta, GA March n.d., 1906.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ George Foster Peabody to Edgar Murphy, 10 October 1911, George Foster Peabody Papers; George Foster Peabody to Colonel James Monroe Smith, n.d., George Foster Peabody Collection.

⁵⁴ George Foster Peabody to Colonel James Monroe Smith, n.d., George Foster Peabody Collection.

proclaiming pride in his southern heritage.⁵⁵ Yet, at the same time, Peabody accuses Colonel Smith of taking actions against African Americans as a means to hurt the southern principles that Peabody values. Again, in the letter Peabody notes:

I venture to hope because of my belief in humanity and its response to the appeal of the highest...because my belief in the true idealism of the Southern man, that you Colonel Smith will now study this question as you did that of farming and take the leadership in pointing out the true path of services to the white man of Georgia which should give to every boy and girl, black and white, the education of the mind and the body and of the heart, which should fit them to be useful and respected and respecting.⁵⁶

Due to Peabody's position as a political and economic leader, as well as his northern address, he needed to constantly reassure those whom he wished to sway politically and economically to join his side. This need for acceptance in the South made his relationship with Jordan and other men an essential element to his success. Though success for Peabody did not necessarily mean success for African Americans. His acquiescence to the status quo meant that he would only create limited prospects for African Americans living in Georgia. Choosing this path meant that friendships such as Jordan's would be maintained, and opportunities for blacks in Columbus would be limited.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Phase Two; Jordan and Peabody Partners in Segregated Philanthropy

While Peabody's actions created a myriad of educational opportunities for African Americans living in Columbus (alongside prominent members of the Columbus African American Community), it was through his friendship with Jordan that he secured his effectiveness in the creation of programs for African Americans. By creating adult education programs, free kindergartens, manual training programs, and the Negro Industrial High School, Jordan and Peabody would form a symbiotic partnership that allowed for reforms and new programs to be started, and allowed each an opportunity to shape the educational portrait of Columbus.⁵⁷

Just as many new southern reforms for whites were motivated by the possibility of enfranchising African Americans, educational reforms in Columbus developed in a segregated fashion. The fear of opportunities for blacks motivated whites to supersede any advantages that universal suffrage might offer for the black citizens of Columbus.⁵⁸ Jordan nurtured and utilized these fears in order to gain support of his own educational ventures; Jordan and Peabody created a highly segregated and intricate system of educational prospects during the early twentieth century.⁵⁹ These programs did not run

⁵⁷ "Last Will and Testament of G. Gunby Jordan," 1930, G. Gunby Jordan Collection, CSU Archives, Columbus, GA; Nina Mjagkij, *Light in the Darkness*, 68-69; Nina Mjagkij, "True Manhood; the YMCA and Racial Advancement, 1890-1930," *Men and Women Adrift; The YMCA and the YMCA in the City*, edited by Nina Mjagkij and Margaret Spratt, (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 144; "The Eagle and Phenix Club," *The Atlanta Constitution*, Sept. 2, 1899; "Columbus Club Composed Entirely of Workers of Eagle and Phenix Mill," *The Atlanta Constitution*, December 30, 1900; "Free Kindergarten (in Girard, Ala.) run by the Eagle and Phoenix Mills, Columbus, Ga.," University of Maryland, 1913.

⁵⁸ Huntzinger, "The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904," 163; Roland B. Daniel, *Industrial Education in Columbus, GA* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), 7-8.

⁵⁹ "Immigration and the Southern Negro," *The Times Dispatch*, Richmond, VA, June 23, 1907; "Plans to Secure Good Immigrants," *The Sentinel-Journal*, Pickens, SC, Feb. 23, 1907; "Handwriting on the Wall," *The Watchman and Southron*, Sumter, SC, August 7, 1907; G.

parallel, nor did they offer the same opportunities (for white and black students), but their coexistence often depended on each other, much in the same way as Jordan and Peabody's successes in many ways depended on one another.

Adult Education

The late nineteenth century saw a growth in religious character building clubs, lyceum lecture series, and privately owned social clubs in the United States. Philanthropic institutions aimed at the improvement in the lives of the poor were nothing new. Yet, the "Christian Gentlemen" and "Self-Made Men" of the early-to-mid nineteenth century evolved into a new "noblesse oblige" at the turn of the century that manifested itself in new and industrial ways.⁶⁰ Columbus was no stranger to these institutions, and both Jordan and Peabody helped to fund numerous projects and clubs that aimed to provide an alternative to traditional public education. While not classified as "adult education" in the modern sense of the word, these programs offered educational opportunities for Columbus residents who were no longer eligible to enter into the public primary and secondary schools available in Columbus in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These organizations sought both white and black young men (and later some women) who could benefit from various course offerings: character building, reading, physical education, musical education, and industrial training.⁶¹

Gunby Jordan, Presentation to Georgia Industrial Association, 1901; George Foster Peabody to G. Gunby Jordan, 19 December 1907, George Foster Peabody Collection.

⁶⁰ Kathleen McCarthy, *Noblesse Oblige: Charity and Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 59-62.

⁶¹ G. Gunby Jordan, "Speech of G. Gunby Jordan at Committee of Georgia Industrial Association in Warm Springs, Georgia, 1901," Katherine Waddell Private Collection; George Foster Peabody to G. Gunby Jordan, 19 December 1907, George Foster Peabody Collection; "The Eagle and Phenix Club," *The Atlanta Constitution*, Sept. 2, 1899; "Columbus Club Composed Entirely of Workers of Eagle and Phenix Mill," *The Atlanta Constitution*, December 30, 1900; "Free

In the first few decades of twentieth century, Columbus would offer numerous opportunities for adult education. The Eagle and Phenix Club was available to employees of the Eagle and Phenix Mill. In addition, a white YMCA offered membership to any young man inclined to pay the dues, and numerous Lyceum lecture series were offered to white patrons. There were also adult education classes paid for by Columbus Public Schools offered nightly.⁶² Initially, African American citizens did not enjoy these privileges, and without the intervention of George Foster Peabody and the new supervisor and secretary of the black branch of the national YMCA, William Hunton and Jesse Mooreland, the creation of such institution for African Americans would not have been possible.⁶³

Jordan's involvement in the organization and management of the Eagle and Phenix Club and the creation of the Columbus Public Library was thoroughly explored in chapter three. Yet, his philanthropic contribution to public and private education for whites did not end there. Jordan encouraged white citizens to participate in the Lyceum lecture series, maintained the adult education programs at the newly created Columbus Industrial

Kindergarten (in Girard, Ala.) run by the Eagle and Phoenix Mills, Columbus, Ga.," University of Maryland, 1913; Nina Mjagkij, "True Manhood," 144; Mayor Chappell to George Foster Peabody, December 1903, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress; George Stradtman to Peabody, 6 December 1906, George Foster Peabody Papers Collection.

⁶² The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, CSU Archives, Eagle and Phenix Collection, Columbus, GA; Mayor Chappell to George Foster Peabody, December 1903, George Foster Peabody Collection; George Stradtman to Peabody, 6 December 1906, George Foster Peabody Collection; "The Eagle and Phenix Club," *The Atlanta Constitution*, Sept. 2, 1899; "Columbus Club Composed Entirely of Workers of Eagle and Phenix Mill," *The Atlanta Constitution*, December 30, 1900

⁶³ Mjagkij, *Light in the Darkness*, 68-69; Mjagkij, "True Manhood," 144.

High School, and was a significant donor and board member of Columbus' white YMCA.⁶⁴

The lyceum movement had existed in the United States since the early 1800s and did not seek to actively include blacks. The movement attracted prominent educators throughout the country as a means to cope with many of the evils of industrialization. National conferences and circuits were formed to facilitate the spread of the movement. An excerpt from the 1831 American Lyceum National Convention in New York outlines the purpose of the lyceums in the United States:

the whole system...founded in the sublime fact, that the human intellect is a self-moving, self-acting, and self-controlling principle—capable...of achieving its own advancement and elevation...the essence of a moral being is freedom of choice; that a right to choose is his privilege—that the power to choose is his dignity and glory... every rational being, whether an enlightened citizen of America, a vassal of Russia, or a vagrant of Africa, has both the power and the right to intellectual and moral culture; that whenever man is created, he is endowed with capacities for improvement— wherever he is placed he is surrounded with materials designed for his improvement; that intellectual, moral, and social faculties are confined to no favored few of our race.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ “YMCA Mass Meeting Held, Columbus Will Raise \$20,000 For Proposed Building,” *Atlanta Constitution*, May 4, 1901; YMCA Donation Ledger, George Foster Peabody Collection.

⁶⁵ *American Lyceum with the Proceedings of the National Convention held in New York May 4, 1931* (Boston, MA; Hiram Tupper Printing, 1931), 4.

The lyceum movement held quite an appeal for Jordan, he himself a master orator, who understood the power and influence that an accomplished lecturer could have on the general public. David Josiah Brewer wrote about this phenomenon in 1899:

ORATORY is the masterful art. Poetry, painting, music, sculpture, architecture please, thrill, inspire; but oratory rules. The orator dominates those who hear him, convinces their reason, controls their judgment, compels their action. For the time being he is master. Through the clearness of his logic, the keenness of his wit, the power of his appeal, or that magnetic something which is felt and yet cannot be defined, or through all together, he sways his audience as the storm bends the branches of the forest.⁶⁶

A passionate supporter of self-starters, Jordan seized the opportunity to captivate the citizens of Columbus with moral and character development proposed by the lyceum movement. For Jordan, morality and hard work were synonyms.⁶⁷ Jordan saw lyceums as another means for him to exercise his position as Columbus' booster and advocate for the city's economic superiority. He sponsored numerous lectures through the Eagle and Phenix Club, and he worked often in collaboration with the Springer Opera House to house lecture series for Columbus.

In Columbus during this time, all opportunities for self-improvement were available for whites only. While Jordan actively sought to improve educational and economic opportunities for whites living in the city, he was less likely to do so for African Americans. The inclusion of African Americans in his improvement plans for Columbus

⁶⁶ David Josiah Brewer, *The World's Best Orations, From the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Akron, Ohio: The Werner Company, 1899), ix.

⁶⁷ G. Gunby Jordan, "The Material and Moral Benefits of Industrial Education," Annual Convention for the Promotion of Industrial Education, Atlanta, Ga, 1909, 125-132.

needed outside encouragement from his longtime friend, Mr. George Foster Peabody. Peabody, who had long been involved in the organization of the YMCA, initiated not only the construction of the YMCA for whites in Columbus, but also the YMCA for blacks.⁶⁸

The goals of the YMCAs, to support the development of the “body, mind, and spirit,” were apparent at the inception of the white Columbus branch.⁶⁹ The city’s mayor Lucius Henry Chappell noted in 1903 that due to the “liberality” of the contributions of Peabody and his brothers, the creation of the YMCA building “marks an epoch in the social, moral, and religious advancement” for “the city of Columbus.”⁷⁰ YMCAs in the United States, like the lyceum movement, share a long and well-established history dating back to 1851. The YMCA followed a “fourfold plan of mental, physical, social, and religious development,” and used “recreational programs to nurture and discipline capacities which they summed up as character.”⁷¹ Although Jordan focused on the poor white textile workers, YMCAs “sought out a social niche, left vacant by home and workplace, church and school...they defined their clientele quite narrowly, favoring white, middle-class Protestants, like themselves, and leaving the urban lower class to boys’ clubs, whose function was more to preoccupy street boys and prevent crime than to build character.”⁷² Jordan’s goal in building the Eagle and Phenix Mill Club was indeed not character development; rather, he focused primarily on the uplifting of mill operatives. However,

⁶⁸ Mjagkij, *Light in the Darkness*, 68-69.

⁶⁹ David Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy; The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and the Forerunners, 1870-1920*, (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 3-4.

⁷⁰ L. H. Chappell to George Foster Peabody, December 1903, George Foster Peabody Papers, Library of Congress.

⁷¹ Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy*, 3.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 3.

the Eagle and Phenix Club shared many of the same facilities and opportunities as the Columbus YMCA.⁷³

Peabody's connections to the YMCA date back to his teenage years in New York City. After his family's business was destroyed in the Civil War, Peabody and his family moved to New York City where he would work to help support his family. Working during the day, Peabody continued his studies the best way that he knew how, "availing himself of the facilities of the YMCA (libraries, lectures, etc.) with eagerness."⁷⁴

Peabody would often refer to the YMCA as his alma mater, and when he dedicated his life to philanthropy, he worked to create new branches for white and black members throughout the country. He gave particular attention to the creation of facilities in his native city of Columbus.⁷⁵

Beginning in 1901, Peabody and his brothers initiated the construction of the white YMCA in Columbus. Columbus residents were inspired by Jordan and fellow citizens to donate 30,000 dollars to the construction of the building, and Peabody promised to secure the remainder of the funds needed for its completion.⁷⁶ Donations rolled in from hundreds of Columbus residents. Mill owners W.C. Bradley, Ed Swift, F. B. Gordon, and Jordan all gave substantial donations. Other prominent Columbus citizens such as superintendents Carleton Gibson and John F. Flournoy (banker and businessman) of

⁷³ The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, April 9, 1900, CSU Archives; The Eagle and Phenix Club," *The Atlanta Constitution*, Sept. 2, 1899; "Columbus Club Composed Entirely of Workers of Eagle and Phenix Mill," *The Atlanta Constitution*, December 30, 1900

⁷⁴ "Brief Biography of George Foster Peabody," Box 1, Folder 4, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress.

⁷⁵ Mjagkij, *Light in the Darkness*, 68-69.

⁷⁶ "YMCA Mass Meeting Held, Columbus Will Raise \$20,000 For Proposed Building," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 4, 1901.

Columbus Public Schools donated funds, as did Jordan's brother O.S. Jordan, and his former father in law N.N. Curtis.⁷⁷ The numerous donations demonstrated the massive support that the white YMCA amassed in the years preceding its construction. The building would be grand, boasting multiple lecture halls, a "gospel hall," a gymnasium, library, bathrooms, swimming pool, and a professional mural throughout the grand rotunda.⁷⁸ Peabody's reach extended beyond financial decisions; he also planned the intricate details of the association, including the building dedication, which hosted speeches from his friends Chancellor Walter B. Hill of the University of Georgia and G. Gunby Jordan. The white YMCA was well supported, and by 1907, it would be self-sustaining through membership fees. Peabody and other prominent Georgians visited the Columbus YMCA regularly.⁷⁹

Peabody wanted African Americans to be afforded the same opportunity as the white citizens of Columbus. He began work on a YMCA for black residents in 1903. Historian Nina Mjagki contends that the goals and purposes of black YMCAs were different from their white counterparts. Mjagki argues that the "black middle class and elite welcomed the YMCA as a means to affirm their masculinity, particularly at a time when white society refused to recognize black men fully as men."⁸⁰ This purpose melded well with Jim Crow policies that segregated Columbus in the early twentieth century. White

⁷⁷ "YMCA Mass Meeting Held, Columbus Will Raise \$20,000 For Proposed Building," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 4, 1901; YMCA Donation Ledger, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress, George Foster Peabody Papers, Library of Congress.

⁷⁸ "Columbus Georgia YMCA, Sketch Showing the Halls of First Floor," George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress; George Foster Peabody to Lockwood Brothers, January, 1902, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress.

⁷⁹ George Stradtman to Peabody, 6 December 1906, George Foster Peabody Collection.

⁸⁰ Mjagkij, "True Manhood," 140.

leaders were more inclined to support black YMCAs knowing that they would be completely independent from white facilities. Mjagki affirms that this policy pleased black leaders as well, as it would allow black members to develop their own masculinity that had been consistently “challenged” by “white Southerners” who “used the rules of racial etiquette in an attempt to restore the social order and racial hierarchy of the Old South.”⁸¹

Like many other white philanthropists, Peabody often engaged in conditional donations to his philanthropic work. He pledged to build a black YMCA in Columbus on the condition that the Board of Trustees of the white YMCA would raise five thousand dollars, and the black population would raise one thousand dollars. Accepting this agreement, both groups began to raise funds. While the black citizens quickly met their financial goals, the white citizens of Columbus did not fulfill their agreement. Plans were made for a gymnasium, educational classes, reading rooms, and dormitories that were greatly needed for men who lived in less than desirable conditions throughout the city. With only two-thirds of the promised financial support provided by the white population, Peabody, impressed by the efforts of the black population, agreed to go ahead with the plans for the construction of the black YMCA. This decision meant that the institution would begin with a rocky financial footing. Clyde Randall became the secretary of the black YMCA as a result of Peabody’s special recommendation. However, Randall would be without his salary for several months due to the mismanagement of funds by the white Board of Trustees (that looked after both the white and black YMCAs). Several prominent leaders of the national black YMCA appealed to Peabody to help Randall

⁸¹ Ibid., 140.

obtain his salary. However, due to medical issues and a growing dissatisfaction with the Randall's leadership, the young secretary of the black YMCA would be forced to end his tenure early in Columbus.⁸²

Despite his early departure, Randall oversaw the creation of many programs and classes at the black YMCA in Columbus that fit nicely into the ideals of the association in the early twentieth century. Unlike their white counterparts, black YMCAs were in the business of uplifting their members. In hopes that the "YMCA's program could provide young men with the means for personal and racial advancements by allowing them to build true manhood," the association looked to foster masculine pride and accomplishment in order to achieve racial and social equality. While the black YMCAs "were less interested in building manhood among the lower classes than they were in preserving members of their own rank," their goals of self-improvement and practical education placed them much more in line with Jordan's Eagle and Phenix Club than with the fortress of middle class morality that white YMCAs provided.⁸³

Free Kindergartens

The Columbus Free Kindergarten Association began as a result of the patronage of affluent women living in Columbus who sought to provide the poor children of mill

⁸² George Foster Peabody to L. H. Chappell, 7 February 1907, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress; Clyde Randall to L.S. Myers, 2 May 1908, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress; J.E. Mooreland to L.S. Myers, 9 May 1908, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress; George Stradtman to George Foster Peabody, 10 June 1908, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress; J.E. Mooreland to L.S. Myers, 10 June 1908, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress; J.E. Mooreland to L.S. Myers, 13 July 1908, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress

⁸³ Mjagkij, "True Manhood," 144; The Eagle and Phenix Club Minutes, April 9, 1900, CSU Archives; The Eagle and Phenix Club," *The Atlanta Constitution*, Sept. 2, 1899; "Columbus Club Composed Entirely of Workers of Eagle and Phenix Mill," *The Atlanta Constitution*, December 30, 1900.

workers a means for early education. Gibson was very fond of the association, and he hoped to incorporate free kindergartens as a regular feature of all Columbus Public Schools. The inclusion of free kindergartens did not occur until 1909, but the kindergarten movement had already caught the attention of Jordan and Peabody long before that time.⁸⁴

Both Jordan and Peabody sought to organize their own kindergarten programs in Columbus. Jordan founded the Eagle and Phenix Free Kindergartens to cater to those mill workers who lived across the Chattahoochee River in Alabama, and who could not attend the Columbus Public Schools.⁸⁵ These schools were discussed in chapter five. Jordan was very forthcoming in his efforts to uplift whites, but he did not share a similar desire to help his African American employees and their children. Peabody provided the financial means to include African American children in the Free Kindergarten movement.⁸⁶

Beginning in 1906, Peabody sought out the exact funds needed to create a Free Kindergarten for African American children living in Columbus. Unlike the African American Schools, Peabody appeared to try and match the amount afforded for the creation and maintenance of the African American school with the same financial backing as the white schools. Writing to Gibson in 1906, Peabody inquired about the student to teacher ratio in the white kindergartens, and the cost of its operations. Peabody

⁸⁴ George Foster Peabody to Carleton Gibson, 19 April 1906, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library of Congress; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*, 25.

⁸⁵ "Eagle and Phenix Kindergarten," *The Atlanta Constitution*, Sept. 7, 1903.

⁸⁶ George Foster Peabody to Carleton Gibson, 19 April 1906, George Foster Peabody Collection.

wanted to know if Gibson had “looked into it and how much it would cost the Board to add one Negro Kindergarten,” as he was interested in funding the endeavor.⁸⁷

White kindergartens were introduced in the schoolhouses in 1905, but the salaries of all the kindergarten teachers were still dependent on the donations of the Free Kindergarten Association. Gibson noted in 1906 that “several years ago some of our best citizens who were interested in the kindergarten training of little children, particularly those of the mill operative class, organized a Free Kindergarten Association and successfully maintained three Free Kindergartens in the city.”⁸⁸ As the newly elected President of the Board of Trustees, G. Gunby Jordan reported that by the following year, all of the kindergartens would be fully funded by the school board, and every black elementary school would also house a kindergarten, which would be “maintained entirely through the generosity of Mr. George Foster Peabody, and the voluntary contributions of many of the colored patrons of the school.”⁸⁹

Jordan, Peabody, Gibson, and Roland B. Daniel (when he took over the superintendent position from Gibson in 1909) expanded the reach of public and private education with their enthusiasm for kindergartens. The number of kindergartens continued to grow in Columbus. The Bibb City kindergarten, which catered to Jordan’s other major textile mill (The Bibb Manufacturing Company), opened in 1910.⁹⁰ Columbus’ kindergarten movement, both white and black, focused on securing the “natural bond between home and school,” giving mothers and children opportunities to breach the gap between the

⁸⁷ George Foster Peabody to Carleton Gibson, 19 April 1906, George Foster Peabody Collection.

⁸⁸ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*, 25.

⁸⁹ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*, 15.

⁹⁰ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1910* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1910), 41, 37.

home and school.⁹¹ The Director of Kindergartens noted in 1910 “splendid work was done with Mothers’ Meetings. In several of the clubs, regular study was carried on which helped the mothers to a more intelligent understanding of their children. The homes and the schools were linked by a closer bond of sympathy through these meetings.”⁹²

As a result of all of these assertions concerning the “bonds” of school and home, skeptical parents raised doubts about the intelligence of training young minds in rooms filled with forty other children; they wondered if the crowded classrooms presented a health hazard. Annual reports from the schools outlined numerous programs that were enacted to ensure healthier and more hygienic children. Daniel noted in 1910 that “Espacial attention” had been “given to improved hygienic conditions, rooms well ventilated, individual drinking cups, proper lunches, in fact everything pertaining to the welfare of the child.”⁹³ These efforts carried over into later years, when the director of kindergartens requested that rooms be fumigated during the summer months to ensure that the classrooms would not contribute the spreading of diseases. Efforts were also made to ensure the physical health of kindergartners by providing milk to each student each day, and soup was provided to students who could not bring their own lunches to school (Peabody was instrumental in contributing to the funds that would make this offer possible).⁹⁴

⁹¹ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1910*, 41, 37.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 42, 33, 40; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1912* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1912), 31; “Society in Columbus,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, May 4, 1902.

Fears of pestilence and disease were widespread due to the increasing urbanization of Columbus. Public education often brought children from very different backgrounds together under one roof, and, as a result, the potential for spreading epidemics became a very real and present danger. The school system had a very detailed set of rules to indicate when a child might be readmitted after being subjected to an illness.⁹⁵ Middle class residents feared that their children were associating with poor whites, and they could not fathom the idea of middle class white children sharing their kindergartens with black kindergartners. Thus, no efforts were made to combine the black and white kindergartners into one schoolhouse—kindergartens would be incorporated into existing schools in order to meet the Jim Crow segregation and discriminatory policies of the time. Peabody did not attempt to change the segregationist practices of Columbus.

The acceptance of southern-segregationist-policies by northern philanthropists would guide the effectiveness of the institutions created by Peabody and Jordan in Columbus. Fears of moral degradation and African American enfranchisement directed the actions of white-middle-class southerners to continually isolate poor whites and poor blacks from the more affluent members of society.⁹⁶ And while Jordan sought to uplift the poor whites of Columbus, African Americans of Columbus were not given the same opportunity. Peabody sought to ameliorate this situation through segregated

⁹⁵ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*, 69-71.

⁹⁶ George Foster Peabody to Colonel James Monroe Smith, n.d., George Foster Peabody Collection; George Foster Peabody to Edgar Murphy, 14 October 1911, George Foster Peabody Papers; “Thanks Jim Smith Honored,” *Atlanta Constitution*, February 26, 1906; “Estill Says Smith Misrepresented Him,” *Atlanta Constitution*, Ga, July 16, 1906; Reverend Same Jones, “Judas Carried His Fees Back to His Purchasers;

philanthropic donations, a policy that he would continue in the construction of the first African American high school in Columbus.⁹⁷

Phase Three; Secondary Education for Black Students

Spencer High School for African Americans opened in 1930 after years of lobbying for its creation by William Henry Spencer. Spencer, an African American educator in Columbus, eventually received the support of numerous city leaders and philanthropists for the construction of an African American High School, but it would not be completed until five years after his death. George Foster Peabody had guided much of the development of African American education in Columbus throughout his lifetime; this project would be one of his last as he died in 1938.⁹⁸

By 1930, Peabody was tittering on the brink of retirement due to failing health. He utilized his relationships with other civic leaders and philanthropists that he had spent a lifetime cultivating in order to execute the construction of an African American High School in Columbus.⁹⁹ In this section, I outline the various roles that Gibson, Daniel, Spencer, Rosenwald, and Jordan played in the construction of Spencer High School, and how the development of only industrial high schools for blacks has led to much criticism by modern scholars and historians of education.

⁹⁷ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*, 69-71; Henry Goetchius to George Foster Peabody, 20 December 1911, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library Of Congress; George Foster Peabody to Henry Goetchius, 30 January 1912, George Foster Peabody Collection.

⁹⁸ Telfair, *History of Columbus Public Schools*, 57-58; “William Henry Spencer, based on notes by Ethel Spencer,” William Henry Spencer File.

⁹⁹ Ware, *George Foster Peabody*, 96-120; George Foster Peabody to G. Gunby Jordan, 19 December 1907, George Foster Peabody Collection; George Foster Peabody to Alfred Stern, 15 February 1930, Julius Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University.

These collaborators did not all play an equal role in the development of the school; they did not necessarily desire the same outcomes for African American education, and they did not always work well together. Yet, each of these influential men played a vital role in the evolution of African American educational policies in Columbus, which culminated in the development of Spencer High School. When Gibson left Columbus, Georgia in 1910, Roland B. Daniel served as superintendent of Columbus for a total of 28 years, returning to his position multiple times. He served as superintendent during the construction of Spencer High School.¹⁰⁰ Jordan too would retire from his post as the president of the Board of Trustees for the Columbus Public Schools in 1910, but he continued to play a very active role in the school system. He maintained his philanthropic gifts to the school system even after his death.¹⁰¹

Development of Spencer High School

In 1906, the Columbus Industrial High School opened its doors in Columbus with the promise to bolster the city's economic prowess. The school's supporters hoped to provide additional opportunities for its white students so they could uplift themselves into specialized labor fields and careers. As superintendent, Carleton Gibson initially argued for additional industrial education opportunities for whites based on the "success" of the industrial education programs offered in the black public schools in Columbus. Thus,

¹⁰⁰ William Henry Shaw, "Dedication Address for the Roland B. Daniel School, November 12, 1959," Roland B. Daniel Papers, CSU Archives, Columbus Georgia.

¹⁰¹ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1911* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1911), 10; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1912*, 31; George Foster Peabody to Alfred Stern, 15 February 1930, Julius Rosenwald Collection; "Last Will and Testament of G. Gunby Jordan," G. Gunby Jordan Papers, CSU Archives.

Gibson, with the support of Jordan and Peabody, developed and organized the Primary Industrial School and the Columbus Industrial High School.¹⁰²

Gibson often boasted of the educational opportunities allotted to African Americans living in Columbus; he claimed they had several avenues for economic stability. Laundry, carpentry, and blacksmithing were all careers reserved for the African American caste.¹⁰³ Complaints concerning reliable labor were prominent in the New South. Jordan, as well as many southerners, blamed these labor concerns on the unreliability of African American workers.¹⁰⁴ Thus, while educational opportunities for poor and middle class whites in Columbus extended through grade twelve, education for blacks ended at year nine.¹⁰⁵

It would take an additional twenty-four years before any secondary education was offered to African Americans living in Columbus. The creation of William H. Spencer Industrial High School occurred in 1930; the school was the culmination of many years of work by African American educator William Henry Spencer. Spencer needed support from numerous patrons and educational collaborators in order to establish the high school, thus a group of men formed an association that led to the development of Spencer

¹⁰² Huntzinger, "The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904," 186-189; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*, 30, 43-48; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1901*, 20; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1902*, 21.

¹⁰³ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1901* (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1901), 20; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1902*, 21.

¹⁰⁴ "Plans to Secure Good Immigrants," *The Sentinel-Journal* (Pickens, SC), Feb. 23, 1907; "Why Immigrants Don't Come South," *Live Oak Daily Democrat* (Live Oak, FL), July 5, 1907; "Georgians go for Immigrants," *Gainesville Daily Sun*, (Gainesville, FL), April 11, 1907; "Immigration and the Southern Negro," *The Times Dispatch*, Richmond, VA, June 23, 1907.

¹⁰⁵ "William Henry Spencer, based on notes by Ethel Spencer," William Henry Spencer File.

High School emerged in the early decades of the twentieth century. Julius Rosenwald, William Henry Spencer, Roland B. Daniel, and G. Gunby Jordan all cooperated with one another under the tutorage of George Foster Peabody in the development of the first African American High School constructed in Columbus.¹⁰⁶

William Henry Spencer

William Henry Spencer was born in Columbus, Georgia on September 21, 1857. Spencer attended the limited schooling available to African Americans in Columbus at that time; he went on to become a teacher in Harris County Schools (a neighboring school district). In 1879, he began a new teaching position at the Claflin School in Columbus and was appointed as principal when the previous principal passed away. Maintaining a reputation for “honesty and integrity” with the school board, he was appointed as supervisor for all black schools in Columbus. He eventually attended Clark University, one hundred miles north of Columbus in Atlanta, Georgia.¹⁰⁷

Education for African Americans began in Columbus after the Civil War through the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands in 1868 to form the Claflin Academy. The Claflin Academy quickly became overcrowded. In 1880, with the help of Jordan’s Father in Law, N. N. Curtis, and George Foster Peabody’s cousin Francis Peabody, the Claflin School became a part of the Columbus Public Schools, with the

¹⁰⁶ “William Henry Spencer, based on notes by Ethel Spencer,” William Henry Spencer File; George Foster Peabody to Alfred Stern, February 15, 1930, Julius Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University; “Professor W. H. Spencer Dies Saturday,” *Columbus Enquirer*, (Columbus, GA), May 31, 1925; William Henry Shaw, “Dedication Address for the Roland B. Daniel School, November 12, 1959,” Roland B. Daniel Papers.

¹⁰⁷ Telfair, *History Of Columbus Public Schools*, 57-58; “William Henry Spencer, based on notes by Ethel Spencer,” William Henry Spencer File.

promise that the school property would always be used to educate African Americans.¹⁰⁸ In 1882 the school board raised the maximum grade to nine in response to a petition from African American residents. The residents claimed that Claflin would be a “self-sustaining” school, maintaining that the students would pay tuition to cover the school operation costs.¹⁰⁹ The black schools would maintain a nine-grade maximum for the next forty-eight years. This lack of higher grades was partly due to Spencer’s refusal to simply add one more grade to the current school. He believed that if African Americans simply demanded additional grades, it would be pointless because the school board would never build an actual high school for African Americans in Columbus.¹¹⁰

While Spencer may have appeared inflexible in his stance, his work, persistence, and faith eventually manifested itself in the erection of an African American high school; unfortunately, Spencer would not live to see his efforts become a reality. Spencer died in 1925 of appendicitis, five years before the completion of the school that would be named in his honor.¹¹¹ The leaders of the Columbus Public Schools mourned Spencer’s death publically, and made statements in newspapers illustrating their remorse at his passing. President of the Columbus School Board in 1925, T. Hicks Fort, noted

in the death of W. H. Spencer the city has lost a valued citizen, the colored race a wise and safe leader, and humanity a true friend. He was one of those rare characters seldom found, in who was happily combined many of the better traits and qualities, which go to make a real man. His work as a teacher and principal in our colored

¹⁰⁸ Telfair, *History Of Columbus Public Schools*, 57-58; “Well-Mated—A Brilliant Marriage Consumated,” *Columbus –Enquirer*, Feb. 27, 1881.

¹⁰⁹ Huntzinger, “The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904,” 148.

¹¹⁰ “William Henry Spencer, based on notes by Ethel Spencer,” William Henry Spencer File.

¹¹¹ “Professor W. H. Spencer Dies Saturday,” *Columbus Enquirer*, May 31, 1925.

schools for so many years past has been of the highest order and I do not hesitate to say that by it he has made a distinct contribution to the betterment and upbuilding of our city. The mutual understanding, the cordial relations, and the spirit of co-operation here between the two races is due largely to his attitude and influence with his own people who loved and trusted him and the white people who respected and believed in him. The School Board feels very keenly his loss and his place will be difficult to fill.¹¹²

Despite the language of being a “safe leader,” the above memorial shows a level of appreciation toward an African American educator that one might not expect in the South during this time. Spencer had made allies within the school board, and so the movement for an African American high school continued in Columbus. But without Spencer, it was easier for the white school leaders to simply embrace an industrial school model, rather than challenge the status quo and offering a college preparatory curriculum.

Julius Rosenwald

Julius Rosenwald epitomized the northern philanthropists whom southerners feared the most.¹¹³ He was Jewish, a Yankee, and was incredibly wealthy due to his management of the Sears, Roebuck Company. Rosenwald entered into the world of philanthropy with a goal to establish “other Tuskegees.”¹¹⁴ He eventually shifted his focus to what he considered to be the modern approach to the construction of African American Schools in the South, following model of the General Education Board. Established in 1917, the Rosenwald Fund did what it could to appease the local

¹¹² “Professor W. H. Spencer Dies Saturday,” *Columbus Enquirer*, May 31, 1925.

¹¹³ Eric Anderson and Alfred A. Moss Jr., *Dangerous Donations*, 8.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

opponents of African American education by supporting only the construction of schools in locations where they had the support of the white community.¹¹⁵ Columbus would be one of these communities. Capitalizing on the good will that earlier northern philanthropists had already established in the city, the Rosenwald Fund supported the construction of Spencer High School with the support and enthusiasm of George Foster Peabody, Roland B. Daniel, G. Gunby Jordan, and the local black community.¹¹⁶

Even with the support of whites in Columbus, the Rosenwald Fund proceeded very cautiously when it came to the construction of new schools. The Fund utilized euphemisms such as “county training school” in place of “high school,” and favored support of new “Negro High Schools” in locations that already supported a white high school.¹¹⁷ The Fund also understood the power of language and was skeptical of the word “high school” in reference to black schools, F.W. Shephardson noted in 1925 that in considering statistics relating to high schools for Negroes in the Southern States, it must be borne in mind that the expression high school does not convey the same idea as when considered in connection with Northern education. A high school may mean a place where one year of high school work is given to a handful of students, this instruction being given in a grade school...therefore it is necessary to be on guard.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 39-62.

¹¹⁶ “William Henry Spencer, based on notes by Ethel Spencer,” William Henry Spencer File; George Foster Peabody to Alfred Stern, February 15, 1930, Julius Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University; William Henry Shaw, “Dedication Address for the Roland B. Daniel School, November 12, 1959,” Roland B. Daniel Papers.

¹¹⁷ Eric Anderson and Alfred A. Moss Jr., *Dangerous Donations*, 9; F.W. Shephardson to S.L. Smith, 28 February 1925, Box 129, Folder 8, Julius Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University.

¹¹⁸ F.W. Shephardson “Memorandum Regarding High Schools,” February 9, 1925, Box 129, Folder 8, Julius Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University; Roland Sintos Coloma, “Who’s Afraid of Foucault? History, Theory, and Becoming Subjects,” *History of Education Quarterly* 51 (May 2011), 185-193.

Supporters of African American education in Columbus shared this “on guard” mentality, which justified William Spencer’s apprehension of the school board’s suggestion to simply add one more grade to the existing African American school.¹¹⁹ Henry Goetchius, who assumed the post of school board president immediately after Jordan left in 1911, appealed to George Foster Peabody in a letter expressing his desire to simultaneously expand the Claflin School and remove fifty percent of the African Americans living in the southern United States to the North. This duplicity makes it difficult to view the school board’s intentions as entirely honorable.¹²⁰ Thus, when Spencer refused to accept the symbolic “thirty pieces of silver” to add one single grade to the existing school, he laid the foundation for the eventual construction of Spencer High School in 1930. But his refusal to simply add one addition grade would limit the opportunities of African Americans in Columbus for further education past the ninth grade until Spencer High School’s construction after his death.¹²¹

G. Gunby Jordan and Race

G. Gunby Jordan believed himself to be a progressive educational reformer; however, how much of these reforms did Jordan believe should be “for whites only?”¹²²

W.E.B. DuBois notes in his work *Darkwater: Voices From Beneath the Veil* how there is both beauty and ugliness in the world, and that we must all “face” such a “tantalizing

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 185-193.

¹²⁰ Henry Goetchius to George Foster Peabody, 20 December 1911, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library Of Congress.

¹²¹ William Henry Spencer, based on notes by Ethel Spencer,” William Henry Spencer File, CSU Archives.

¹²² C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*, (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1987), 369.

contradiction.”¹²³ Jordan faced this contradiction time and time again. He promoted democratic education and the uplifting of textile workers, but “for whites only.”¹²⁴ I outlined Jordan’s racist policies in previous chapters. I noted his philosophy concerning the work ethic and disposition of African Americans in Columbus and his efforts to import “good” European immigrants from Germany to counter the number of African Americans living in the South.¹²⁵ Yet, Jordan worked alongside Peabody for numerous years, and he supported Peabody’s charitable donations toward African American education. Peabody wrote to Jordan in 1907 stating that his “fine work in Negro education” had “won him a place in the galaxy of public servants whose work is of the first order.”¹²⁶ Though Peabody may have overstated the contributions of Jordan in 1907 toward African American education, Jordan does distinguish himself amongst his fellow southerners as not opposing all education for African Americans. In fact, Peabody confides in him his irritation at those southerners who refused to accept any education for blacks in the South.¹²⁷ And at the end of his life, Jordan actively worked with Peabody and Roland B. Daniel to campaign for and build an Industrial High School for African

¹²³ W.E.B. DuBois, *Darkwater: Voices From Within the Veil* (Mineola, NY: Dover Thrift Edition, 1920, reprint 1999), 132.

¹²⁴ C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New*, 369.

¹²⁵ “Plans to Secure Good Immigrants,” *The Sentinel-Journal* (Pickens, SC), Feb. 23, 1907; “Why Immigrants Don’t Come South,” *Live Oak Daily Democrat* (Live Oak, FL), July 5, 1907; “Georgians go for Immigrants,” *Gainesville Daily Sun*, (Gainesville, FL), April 11, 1907; “Immigration and the Southern Negro,” *The Times Dispatch*, (Richmond, VA), June 23, 1907.

¹²⁶ George Foster Peabody to G. Gunby Jordan, 19 December 1907, George Foster Peabody Collection.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

Americans, he donated “substantially” from the Jordan Company’s holdings to the purchase of land for Spencer High School.¹²⁸

How did Jordan’s evolution in support African American education occur? What prompted his compliance with the construction of an African American high school in Columbus in 1930, when, at the same time, his own brainchild, the Columbus Industrial High School, was already greatly in need of additional classrooms and refurbishments?¹²⁹ Prominent educator John Dewey underwent his own ideological transformation toward race in the second decade of the twentieth century. Dewey who had wrote much about “primitive” peoples and “savages” earlier in his career, shifted in his philosophy of education to look more at the “internal” versus “external factors of growth” when examining the intelligence and opportunities which should be afforded to African Americans.¹³⁰ By 1922, Dewey claimed that “inferior races” talents may lie in “different directions” from “our own.”¹³¹ Would Jordan have agreed with this statement? In order to examine Jordan’s actions, and his possible ideological evolution, I turned to Erik Erikson’s theories on human development in hope of coming to an understanding of Jordan’s actions later in life.

While numerous psychologists have developed learning theories (Piaget, Bruner, Skinner, and Vygotsky), I believe that Erikson’s exploration of human development and the cultivation of identity cover an expanse of time from birth to death best explains the

¹²⁸ William Henry Shaw, “Dedication Address for the Roland B. Daniel School, November 12, 1959,” Roland B. Daniel Papers.

¹²⁹ *The Red Jacket 1937* (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus High School, 1937), 2.

¹³⁰ Thomas D. Fallace, *Dewey and the Dilemma of Race: An Intellectual History, 1895-1922* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2011), 146.

¹³¹ Fallace, *Dewey and the Dilemma of Race*, 144.

subtle but significant life changes adopted by Jordan. In his studies, Erikson notes how a person's "identity formation neither begins nor ends with adolescence: it is a lifelong development largely unconscious to the individual and to his society."¹³² All humans develop their "ego ideals," which are "consciously bound to the ideals of a particular historical era" but are also flexible and can change.¹³³ Erikson characterizes the "ego identity" as the "actually attained but forever to-be-revised sense of reality of the self within social reality."¹³⁴ Jordan was greatly influenced by his relationships and partnerships with numerous educators, industrialists, and politicians with whom he came into contact over the course of his lifetime. His sense of self and his set of values were flexible enough to evolve into the social reality that was influenced by northern philanthropists and the Southern Education Board.

Erikson notes how identity is based on a "mutual contract between the individual and society."¹³⁵ As Jordan grew in age and experience, he found that his contract changed along with changes in society. With growing pressure to fund African American education, and the years of influence from northern industrialists and philanthropists on his business and education concerns, Jordan began to promote the construction of an industrial high school for African American students. Peabody and Daniel, who were the primary proponents of the construction of Spencer High School, sought out Jordan's cooperation and endorsement to propel the project forward. Jordan, who by this time was

¹³² Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1959, reprint 1980), 122.

¹³³ Erik Erikson, *Identity Youth in Crisis*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1968, reprint 1990), 210.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹³⁵ Erik Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 127.

eighty-three years old, represented the community approval required to receive funds from Julius Rosenwald Fund.¹³⁶

The 1906 Race Riot in Atlanta “shattered” the “optimism” of the northern philanthropists and their attitudes about education reform Georgia.¹³⁷ Philanthropists would alter their approach to be more conservative, and would no longer favor the outspoken support of African American education in the South. Instead, they would seek out conservative alliances with the “paternal” leaders of the South. Jordan would qualify as one of these leaders, and his support for the construction of an African American high school was highly sought after in the years following the Atlanta 1906 Race Riot and the disenfranchisement of blacks in the South.¹³⁸

In pursuit of funding for Spencer High School, Jordan served as a Columbus booster as he had in the past. In that role, he hosted a luncheon for the representatives of the Rosenwald Fund in the Columbus Industrial High School. His goal was to court the attentions of the Fund’s leaders and to encourage its main representative to donate money to the African American High School. The meeting was a success; in fact, it was Peabody’s cultivation of Jordan’s friendship that would eventually secure the Rosenwald funding. Alfred Stern wrote to Peabody after the meeting that he “attended a luncheon at the old industrial high school where the members of the Board of Trustees, the Mayor and Local Commissioners, as well as Mr. Jordan, entertained” the Rosenwald Fund

¹³⁶ George Foster Peabody to Alfred Stern, February 15, 1930, Julius Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University; William Henry Shaw, “Dedication Address for the Roland B. Daniel School, November 12, 1959,” Roland B. Daniel Papers; Alfred Stern to George Foster Peabody, 12 February, 1930, Julius Rosenwald Collection.

¹³⁷ Louis R. Harlan, *Separate and Unequal; Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States 1901-1905*, (New York: Atheneum, reprint 1969), 221.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 221-223.

representatives, and goes on to state “how successfully the project for this Negro High School is progressing” and the Fund “considers it a privilege to be associated with this group.”¹³⁹ Peabody’s friendship with Jordan, whom Peabody called “a fine old Roman” and “long-time friend,” ensured the Fund’s leaders that African American high school in Columbus had the support of the city’s educational and business leaders.¹⁴⁰

Jordan continued his support of Spencer High School until his death. When William Henry Shaw chronicled the history of the Columbus Public Schools in 1959, he noted Jordan’s significant contribution to the construction of Spencer High School, stating that the “Hon. G. Gunby Jordan substantially contributed to [the] site for the school.”¹⁴¹ As to what “substantially contributed” actually meant is unclear. Following the financial records for the construction of the school, I have not been able to find solid evidence of a monetary contribution to the purchase of the land. What is clear is that his real estate firm, The Jordan Company, facilitated the sale of land for the school, and Jordan authorized the gift of the “deed of conveyance” for Spencer High School without any cost to the city.¹⁴² But the greatest contribution that he made for African American secondary education came in the support he gave to the program. By hosting agents of the Rosenwald Fund at the Columbus Industrial High School, Jordan performed his role as a member of the Columbus elite. He demonstrated that the African American secondary

¹³⁹ Alfred Stern to George Foster Peabody, 12 February, 1930, Julius Rosenwald Collection.

¹⁴⁰ George Foster Peabody to Alfred Stern, February 15, 1930, Julius Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University.

¹⁴¹ William Henry Shaw, “Dedication Address for the Roland B. Daniel School, November 12, 1959,” Roland B. Daniel Papers.

¹⁴² Henry Crawford, “A Resolution, February 25, 1930,” Box 185, folder 8, Julius Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University Archives.

school would have public support in Columbus, which encouraged the members of the Rosenwald Fund that Columbus would prove to be an ideal investment.¹⁴³

Unlike with Columbus Industrial High School, Jordan did not play the leading role in the construction of Spencer High School. And yet, his social, political, and economic status contributed to its construction. While examining the possibilities for his limited involvement, the most pressing reason would be his failing health. After eighty-three years of life and work, Jordan became ill in the fall of 1929, and he never fully recovered. At this point in his career, Jordan had retired from public life and had resigned his presidency of numerous industries; he was content to let the current leadership manage the acquisition of the new school.¹⁴⁴

Criticisms of Philanthropic Support of White Northerners

While the majority of Columbus' white community and their northern philanthropic counterparts congratulated themselves on their contributions to the education of African Americans in Columbus, numerous scholars have questioned the motives behind these charitable contributions. Critics note that the intentions of the white elite, both in the North and the South, who have always sought to control and exploit the southern black population through the use of vocational and industrial education. Chief among these critics is James Anderson, whose foundational work, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, set the stage for other historians to expand upon his original research. Without these critiques, it would be easy to focus on one version of this story. However, the

¹⁴³ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 88-91, 220-223; Anderson and Moss Jr., *Dangerous Donations*, 54-59; Alfred Stern to George Foster Peabody, 12 February, 1930, Julius Rosenwald Collection.

¹⁴⁴ Unpublished History of Jordan Family, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, 9.

education of African Americans in Columbus, Georgia, as in the rest of the South, is far more complex and varied in its intentions, policies, and benefactors.¹⁴⁵

Though Columbus, Georgia was included in Anderson's critique of the philanthropic work to help African Americans in the South, in this chapter, I explore specifically the nuances and details surrounding the motivations for development of Spencer High School. How much did subordination and discrimination come into play in the development of this school? The difficulty in answering this question is that the group of men that was greatly responsible for the construction of the school all had their reasons for becoming involved in the project. While they publically addressed themselves as friends and colleagues, it is important to remember that these associations were as much political as they were social. Their communications with one another reflect underlying tensions among the men.¹⁴⁶

Peabody's colleagues often considered him to be an extreme radical with respect to his egalitarian views towards African Americans.¹⁴⁷ However, through a steady stream of donations, meetings, and correspondence with members of the Columbus elite, Peabody was still able to successfully lobby for African American educational opportunities in communities. For example, in his correspondence with Henry

¹⁴⁵ Henry Crawford, "A Resolution, February 25, 1930," Box 185, folder 8, Julius Rosenwald Collection; Anderson and Moss Jr., *Dangerous Donations*, 9-12; Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 88-91, 220-223; William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001), xi.

¹⁴⁶ George Foster Peabody to Henry Goetchius, 30 January 1912, George Foster Peabody Collection; George Foster Peabody to Colonel James Monroe Smith, n.d., George Foster Peabody Collection; George Foster Peabody to Alfred Stern, February 15, 1930, Julius Rosenwald Collection, Fisk University.

¹⁴⁷ George Foster Peabody to Edgar Murphy, 10 October 1911, George Foster Peabody Papers.

Goetchius, a childhood friend and president of the Columbus Public Schools after Jordan's tenure ended in 1910, Peabody critiques Goetchius's racial views, while at the same time encouraging him to take steps to better education Columbus' African American population. Goetchius complains to Peabody that

the trouble is that we have about eighty-five percent of the black population of the Union, and as a consequence the "awful" problem of how to live in a white man's country with such tremendous population of negroes, a large proportion of whom are but children in mental capacity and who are vested with all the rights of citizenship without capacity to understand and exercise this right...I repeat what I have before said and written to you that if the intelligent right-thinking white men of the South who are leaders in education could be entrusted with the enormous sums which are given for the education of the negro race in the South there would be much more rapid progress with the negro in our section of the country.¹⁴⁸

Peabody's response to Goetchius illustrates his desire to both appease the president of the Columbus School Board, while simultaneously encouraging him to broaden his perspective on the proper education of African Americans. Peabody begins by reminding him "that the 'awful' problem" in which he refers to African Americans as "children in mental capacity" may be true, "but so are a great many others..."¹⁴⁹ Peabody continues to critique Goetchius stating that

¹⁴⁸ Henry Goetchius to George Foster Peabody, 20 December 1911, George Foster Peabody Collection, Library Of Congress.

¹⁴⁹ George Foster Peabody to Henry Goetchius, 30 January 1912, George Foster Peabody Collection.

With reference to your remark about “entrusting the intelligent right-thinking white men of the South with the enormous sums which are given for the education of the negro race in the South.” I do not believe you have stopped to realize that where there is given from the north directly and indirectly for the education of the negro one million dollars, there is raised in the south by taxes probably three to five times that amount, to be extended constitutionally for the education of the negro, and all of this money, is under the control of the white men of the South.¹⁵⁰

Peabody then places fault on the white men of the South stating that

Whose fault is it that they are not the “intelligent right thinking white man?” ...Probably not 5% of this Southern expenditure for negro education goes to industrial education to help the negro fit in his environment. The remaining 95% is a much too large proportion wanted in so-called academic education. That is the true weakness of the negro educational situation.¹⁵¹

While Peabody fell victim to the racial hierarchy perspective that was prominent in educational philosophy at the time, he worked tirelessly to encourage his southern colleagues, including Jordan, to take responsibility for the state of African American education in the South, and to promote new educational venues and opportunities for African Americans in Columbus.¹⁵²

Peabody was not the only educational supporter to undergo a paradigm shift in the early twentieth century in regards to race. John Dewey, who at one time accepted a

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Harlan, *Separate and Unequal*, xvi-xvii.

“linear” and “ethnocentric view of culture,” had reformed his earlier views to be one of a “transactional” and “pluralistic one.” Thomas Fallace notes that

Dewey pointed out that most educators tended to approach the topic from an inherently contradictory position. On one hand, they espoused a religious faith in the power of education to transform individuals and society ... yet they simultaneously blamed the failure of students on “some intrinsic defect”... Instructors would never find a perfect method...because education...was an evolving endeavor that constantly reconstructed its methods to meet the emerging needs of a transforming society.¹⁵³

Goetchius maintained this very “contradictory” position in his attitude for African American education, while Peabody had shifted his philosophy to align more with Dewey, who favored a more pluralistic and multi-environmental approach to education.¹⁵⁴

Analyzing Peabody’s letter to Goetchius, historian James Anderson contends that Peabody only wanted to improve African American education through vocational and industrial education. I disagree with Anderson’s assessment of Peabody’s intentions. Peabody sought to expand economic and educational opportunities for African Americans. However, he realized that the southerners passed around the issue like it was a political hot potato, with no one individual or group willing to develop and nurture the prospect of adequate African American education with vigor and dedication. For Peabody, there was no one size fits all stratagem for education; he believed that he understood the challenges that African Americans would encounter living in what

¹⁵³ Fallace, *Dewey and the Dilemma of Race*, 144-145.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 145-147.

Goetchius called “white man’s country” with only a “so-called academic” resume. Again, Peabody’s views align greatly with John Dewey’s, which addressed the necessity for multiple approaches to education. No single solution that would solve the racial inequity for African Americans, and Peabody recognized “the importance of environment on the development of racial attitudes.”¹⁵⁵ In this letter, Peabody criticized the “academic” education that was offered to blacks living in Columbus.¹⁵⁶ He knew that it was not sufficient to fit into any “environment,” in the North or the South.¹⁵⁷ For Peabody, any opportunity for education for blacks was better than no opportunity at all.

Historian Louis Harlan notes “the racist mindset was not uniquely Southern” as “Northern philanthropists...were...willing to educate the races separately and concentrate on funds for white schools.”¹⁵⁸ It may be “unfair” for modern readers to judge the actions of the philanthropists too harshly. The “psychological damage to segregated Negro youth” would have never “crossed these gentlemen’s minds” as scientific racism was supported by the “accepted social science of their day.”¹⁵⁹

Furthermore, Harlan states

men from both regions [the North and South] who wanted to do good fell short because they told each other that bad men would not let them do the altogether right thing. These men were caught in a very American dilemma, where to attain both

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹⁵⁶ George Foster Peabody to Henry Goetchius, 30 January 1912, George Foster Peabody Collection.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Harlan, *Separate and Unequal*, viii.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, viii.

fuller racial justice and increased public support for education seemed impossible. They salved their consciences with talk of the long run.”¹⁶⁰

Peabody spoke with Jordan concerning his plans for African American higher education in 1907. Peabody had hoped to solicit Jordan’s approval and assistance in expanding higher education for blacks in Georgia through the creation of a Savannah College for African Americans. Peabody states in a letter to Jordan

I am sure that the effective development of such a state institution as the Savannah Branch of the University of Georgia, giving genuine college education to such Negroes that pass an examination to prove that their capacity will be a good investment. I think that it will turn out Negro doctors, lawyers, dentists, teachers—so essential to the building up of the self-respecting and more efficient laboring class, to which, of course the vast majority of the Negro, as in fact all races must belong.¹⁶¹

Peabody had big dreams for African American education in Georgia, but he also understood that he needed the support of Georgians like Jordan in order to accomplish his short-term and long-term goals. In the same letter to Jordan, Peabody states that he hopes “to sometime...have a talk with you about Savannah College, and I venture to say to you that you will at the first opportunity bring the matter up with Chancellor Barrow.”¹⁶² Peabody used his colleagues to expand his influence among prominent Georgians. Jordan gladly fulfilled this role, and he utilized its power to influence Peabody as well.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., viii-ix.

¹⁶¹ George Foster Peabody to G. Gunby Jordan, 19 December 1907, George Foster Peabody Collection.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Huntzinger, “The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904,” 165.

The struggle for historians examining the life of Peabody comes in attempting to discern what was in his heart, and consequently how he attempted to sway and influence Jordan's own racial and educational policies. It is clear what Peabody was thinking in his mind; African Americans lacked economic, social, and educational opportunities in the Columbus schools as well as in school systems throughout the South. Thus, Peabody wanted to increase African American opportunities by expanding schools and social clubs through his philanthropic donations. What Peabody felt in his heart is more difficult to deduce. What can be said with confidence based on archival evidence and Peabody's actions is that he desired change and was deeply concerned about the living conditions and opportunities afforded to African Americans. He appeared to do what he thought would be the best way to improve these conditions. Peabody was concerned on how his actions might impact the South in the long term; his cultivation of relationships with leaders in Columbus illustrates his desire to have African American education continue to grow and expand long after he was gone.

The question then becomes how successful was Peabody's plan for African American education in Columbus? According to various historians, including James Anderson, Eric Anderson, Alfred Moss, and James Harlan, unfortunately, Peabody was not very successful.¹⁶⁴ Peabody, like Jordan, orchestrated pieces of a complex and sometimes contradictory web of educational reforms, and while it is difficult to discern all of their motivations and aspirations for African American education, it is certain that their

¹⁶⁴ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 88-91, 220-223; Anderson and Moss Jr., *Dangerous Donations*, 9; Louis R. Harlan, *Separate and Unequal; Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States 1901-1905*, (New York: Atheneum, reprint 1969, viii).

relationship and partnership shaped the formation of education for white and black students in Columbus, Georgia.

Conclusion

Spencer High School, like the Columbus Industrial High School (renamed Jordan Vocational High School) still exists today in Columbus, Georgia. Although the original building was destroyed in a fire, and the school is no longer exclusively African American, Spencer High School has continued into the twenty-first century. Spencer High School would take on an industrial curriculum at its inception that would guide a continued discrimination toward African Americans in Columbus.¹⁶⁵ In order to appease their consciences, northern philanthropists argued that this was the first step toward a more democratic South, and that as time went on, more opportunities would follow for African Americans.¹⁶⁶ This justification perpetuates the Jim Crow policies towards African Americans for decades to come, and sours the legacy of men such as George Foster Peabody.

As friends and colleagues, Jordan and Peabody influenced each other's outlooks and views on education. While they were both born in Georgia, Peabody had the benefit of living in New York and interacting with more liberal-minded philanthropists. If Peabody had never left Georgia, he might never have championed African American education, and Jordan's involvement in African American education might have been drastically different. Jordan's involvement with Peabody and with African American education places Jordan's legacy in a broader context—to edit out Peabody's story is to neglect the

¹⁶⁵ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 88-91, 220-223.

¹⁶⁶ Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: the Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*, 257.

many forces that influenced Jordan's work and legacy in Columbus. While this dissertation remains Jordan's story, it is only by learning about Peabody and other influential philanthropists that we come to see a more complete Jordan—limitations and all.

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CHAPTER 7

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Although every single mill that placed Columbus, Georgia, on the map is now closed, a person wandering the streets of Columbus today cannot help but feel the continued presence of these industrial giants. Jordan and other textile mill owners had the perfect geographical conditions to turn this sleepy town into a dominant and prosperous metropolis in the late nineteenth century. While many other southern cities were slowly building their industrial factories, Columbus's industries were immediately rebuilt after the devastation of the Civil War. Unto this city came G. Gunby Jordan, fresh from the battlefields of the Civil War, to begin a new his new life and make his mark in this Chattahoochee Valley town.

Quickly rising in both influence and income, Jordan soon found himself the president of multiple mills, banks, and businesses throughout the city. Utilizing his economic and social position, Jordan would leave a lasting philanthropic legacy in Columbus. Volunteering as a fire chief, speaking at numerous social and political events, organizing community centers and libraries for textile mill workers and community members, donating time, money, and land to the education of children in Columbus, Georgia and Phenix City, Alabama all distinguish Jordan as one of the most influential and powerful men in Columbus. Jordan served as a booster for Columbus, and the industrial/vocational education that would put Columbus on the map. A champion of textile mills as well as social and industrial efficiency, the mills grew in size and power during Jordan's lifetime.

The rapid growth of mills required large numbers of workers. The influx of poor whites who came to Columbus to fill those jobs overwhelmed many of the middle class whites living in the city; problems quickly surfaced such as the enormous number of poor white children of the mill workers. The solution first came in employing the children in the mills to keep them off the streets, and then in creating a unique form of education that would suit what the mill owners perceived to be the poor children's needs and prepare them for their stations in life; for most of these children, their station was to work alongside their parents in the mills.

With this unique population of poor white children also came the opportunity to try new educational experiments: kindergartens, manual labor training, and secondary schools. Columbus applied all three experiments and created primary and secondary industrial schools. Although the primary industrial school was met with short-lived success, the legacy of the school would be felt for years to come as manual training courses were introduced to all primary schools in the county. The Columbus Industrial High School became a source of pride for the people of Columbus, reflecting both the values of their benefactors and the reality of the job opportunities available to students upon graduation.

While public vocational education was not his first philanthropic project, Jordan's passion for industry and his cherished city would guide his future endeavors and create his lasting legacy in Columbus. With the combined efforts of a superintendent who embraced efficiency in education, and self-interested benefactors blurred the lines between public and private education in Columbus. Yet, in a city where a few prominent families literally owned every major business, and participated in almost every level of

government, it is difficult to imagine a way that these lines would not be blurred. This collaboration and exploitation is certainly the case in Columbus, Georgia; G. Gunby Jordan is among the self-interested benefactors of the city, whom many young businessmen aspired to become, and to whom the proponents of industrial education were indebted for many years.

Vocational educational history is rooted in the history of racism and colonialism in this country, but also was born from the aspirations of philanthropic educators and philosophers alike who desired to create a better and more democratic United States. Significant considerations need to be made when studying education in the Southern United States. Elements ranging from the Civil War to northern philanthropy contribute to the development of vocational education within the South; these factors deserve reflection in order to develop valid historiographical studies. With the inclusion of the methods of analysis and reflection, historians may continue to ascertain the purpose and impact that vocational education had in the southern United States in the early twentieth century. G. Gunby Jordan was a man of his times, and he adhered to the belief that progressivism was “for whites only.”¹ His desire to maintain some class and almost all race stratifications in his quest to promote Columbus is reflected in his creation of segregated libraries, schools, the Eagle and Phenix Club, and businesses. Because of Jordan’s social, political, and economical position, he was able to initiate educational experiments and create long standing educational institutions. Jordan used the public education system in order to create a labor force that would enable him and other city

¹ C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1987), 369.

leaders to capitalize on the education of Columbus' citizens, while simultaneously working to improve their moral and human capital. Throughout his endeavors, Jordan made and maintained friendships and working relationships with numerous influential people at the local, state, and national levels. These relationships would guide his career and influence in Columbus, and introduce him to new ideas of efficiency; in later years, his relationships with the elite in Columbus steered his attention to the inequities of African American education. Jordan would incorporate these ideas of efficiency into his business and educational models, and they would become the basis for vocational education in Columbus.

While it is not acceptable to generalize vocational education in the South based upon the Columbus program. It is also important to place Columbus' vocational education program in its proper historical context as one of the most popular examples of social efficiency during the early twentieth century.

The Final Days of G. Gunby Jordan

By the 1920s, Jordan started to resign from his numerous presidencies and began life in a semi-retired capacity. Living at the Green Island Ranch House with his son and daughter-in-law and their children, Jordan enjoyed a picturesque retirement surrounded by gardens, books, and doting grandchildren. His daily activities included "voracious reading," listening to boxing matches on his Zenith Hetrodyne radio, and sitting with his grandson G. Gunby Jordan II.² When G. Gunby Jordan II left home for the Kent School in September 1929, Jordan did not approve of his grandson's move to Connecticut. But

² G. Gunby Jordan II, "Unpublished history of Jordan Family," Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA, 6; Unpublished autobiography of G. Gunby Jordan II, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA, 9-11.

by November, upon visiting his grandson, Jordan was resolved that it was the right decision. Attending school in Connecticut would provide his grandson with many opportunities not afforded to him in Columbus. When Jordan II returned from Connecticut for Christmas holidays the following month, Jordan had fallen ill. The entire family (which included three additional grandchildren) piled into R. C. Jordan's car and drove to Miami, Florida where they hoped that the warmer climate might improve Jordan's health. Jordan's grandson returned to school that January and would never see his grandfather again. Back at the Kent School, G. Gunby Jordan II recollected how the school Chaplain broke the news to him,

on Friday, May 9, 1930, Father Sill had me go to the Chapel with him after lunch where he told me the sad news that "Pa" had died that morning. A sadder moment I had not known. The new Chapel at Kent was under construction and I was able to have a little stained glass window dedicated to G. Gunby Jordan, and it rests in place there today with a small Confederate Flag pictured.³

G. Gunby Jordan II noted how it was like a "parent" passing. Being only fourteen years, he "could not understand the fact that my grandfather would no longer be an earthly friend, and to this day I still feel the closeness that I felt towards him when I was such a young person."⁴

Perhaps holding onto the death of a loved one's memory that had long since passed was a family trait. Jordan, even in his eighties, still showed a devotion to his wife that he

³ G. Gunby Jordan II, "Unpublished History of Jordan Family, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA, 10.

⁴ Unpublished autobiography of G. Gunby Jordan II," Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA, 27.

had lost over forty-eight years earlier. In Jordan's bedroom, which was situated on the ground floor of the Ranch House overlooking his bed hung a large and ethereal portrait of his child-bride. Lizzie's presence in his life had never faded.

Jordan was buried in Linwood cemetery in May 1930. There he lay amongst many of his friends, colleagues, and rivals; each with his own enormous memorial commemorating his industrial triumphs and social status in Columbus. But in this respect, Jordan was quite different from his fellow social elites. A very modest tombstone, placed next to his wife in the Curtis family plot, marks Jordan's grave. No colossal obelisks, ferocious lions, or divine angels are found at his grave. Simply a granite tombstone, identical to Lizzie's, reads G. Gunby Jordan, June 19, 1846-May 19, 1930.⁵

When I first visited Jordan's grave, I was not able to find his tombstone. I visited all of the imposing mausoleums and large tombs, but I did not see his name. When I did find his tombstone, I was shocked at what I saw. I could not understand why someone of his consequence would not have had a more dominating presence in the cemetery. His only thought seemed to have been to be near Lizzie, a woman to whom he had been married for little over a year forty-eight years earlier. Sitting next to the couple's graveside, I began to contemplate the drive and motivation that had dominated Jordan's life. Lizzie. While no love letter exists to describe his feelings toward her, it is clear that Jordan's love for Lizzie remained a powerful part of his identity throughout his long life. Never remarrying, a constant and never ending workload, a dedication to his family and

⁵ G. Gunby Jordan II, "Unpublished History of Jordan Family, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA, 10-11.

grandchildren, were they all done for Lizzie? If so, the loss of Jordan's wife contributed greatly to the accomplishments of Jordan, and thus the tremendous impact he had on Columbus. This event would place Jordan on a path that would compel or motivate him to dictate and mold the shape of education in Columbus, Georgia, and the model a program of vocational education for the country.

The Fate of Columbus Industrial High School

Alma Mater of Columbus Industrial High School

With the carmine and the Gray afloat

On high C. I. H. S.

Your name and fame we're shouting

As we cheer you to success,

As you march unfaltering forward,

Your future great we hail

May your glory never lessen,

And your courage never fail.

Chorus

C. I. H. S.

C. I. H. S.

C. I. H. S.

C. I. H. S.⁶

After opening in 1906 with sixty students, the Industrial High School continued to grow each year; small additions were added over the next three decades to accommodate

⁶ *The Red Jacket 1927* (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus High School, 1938),

rising student numbers and the inclusion of new subject areas. The first addition in 1915 allowed for a new course in electricity. By 1926, an annexation was required in order to provide space for “a textile shop, a mechanical and blacksmith shop, and a dressing room” for male athletes. And in 1930, “a gymnasium, auditorium, and additional classrooms were added” in order to accommodate the growing enrollment. By 1937, the enrollment had increased to one thousand students, and the building that Jordan had worked so hard to construct during his lifetime was no longer adequate to fulfill the needs of the increased number of Industrial High pupils.

A new building of an estimated worth of \$300,000 dollars was constructed in the spring and summer of 1937. The President of the Board of Trustees, T. Hicks Fort, performed the dedication address for the new school that September. Fort noted how thirty-one years ago, a far sighted man of deep learning and board vision dreamed the Industrial High School into being. As high as his hopes and plans were then, and as fondly as he dreamed of its future success and usefulness, I doubt if her dared hope that in this comparatively brief period of time it would occupy the place that it does in our city’s life, and would achieve the far-reaching results which it today enjoys...It has turned into the life-stream of our beloved city and...it is the largest and fastest growing unit in the entire city system. Its course and training are more and more appealing to the youth of our town and it has long since outgrown its physical bounds. Realizing its cramped and hampered condition and also its usefulness and unlimited possibilities, a proud and sympathetic school board envisioned a larger home and great facilities, that this institution might continue to grow in its work and usefulness.⁷

⁷ *The Red Jacket 1937* (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1937),

Columbus taxpayers approved a “bond issue” to allow for the building of a new campus for the Columbus Industrial High School a few blocks away from its current location. Fort’s speech about the need and philosophy for the school very much resembles Jordan’s original argument for the construction of the first Industrial High School. Echoes of Jordan can be heard throughout Fort’s dedication... how the “city being an industrial city” could not “give the results so greatly desired” without the erection of a “complete plant.” Finally, Fort’s dedication alludes to the necessity of renaming and rebirth of the school in order to accurately reflect its importance to the pupils and businesses of Columbus. Fort stated,

when the school was founded, it was given a name which then seemed fitting of its worth and future, but as it has grown and broadened its sphere, we feel that it has earned the right to have that name changed to one more comprehensive and which will be suggestive and descriptive of a larger field and usefulness. The Columbus School Board, therefore, which is always alert and in line with progress, and also feels a lasting debt of gratitude to the great man who was the genius and spirit of the original institution has determined to recognize that debt and also to recognize the larger possibilities for the new school, and to do it as Jehovah did for his chosen people before life allowed them to enter into a new land. Through his prophet Isaiah, He spake unto them as follows: “I will not rest until the righteous thereof go forth and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth and thou shall be called by a new name.” So, I today, as spokesman for the board of education of Columbus, and in humble but proud imitation of the words of the prophet of old, say the Columbus Industrial High School,

“Thou shalt be called by a new name and that new name is and shall ever be ‘Jordan Vocational High School.’”⁸

And thus the new school was erected in honor of G. Gunby Jordan. The students who transitioned into the new school declared themselves to be “loyal sons and daughters whose lives within its walls were fashioned into habits of structural usefulness.”⁹ The following school year, the first Jordan Vocational High School yearbook boasted of its expanded curriculum that included even more programs of study with student concentrations in electrical, woodwork, mechanical, textile, commercial, and home economics.¹⁰

Jordan Vocational High School continued to grow and evolve over the next few decades. In 1965, Jordan Vocational High School was designated by the State Board of Education as an area pilot comprehensive high school and received \$140,000 dollars in upgrades. By 1965, the courses of study for students had evolved as well; students could choose from programs in “carpentry, machine shop, mechanical and architectural drafting, electrical construction, automotive mechanics, electronics, sheet metal and welding, vocational office training, diversified cooperative training, distributive education, cooperative foods service, and business education.”¹¹ But students might also choose “a full academic program of instruction” and choose not enroll in any vocational

⁸ T. Hicks, Fort, *The Red Jacket 1937* (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1937),

⁹ *The Red Jacket 1937*, (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1937), 2.

¹⁰ *The Red Jacket 1938*, (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1938).

¹¹ “Jordan Vocational High School a Pioneer in Vocational Education,” History of Jordan High School Papers, Jordan Vocational High School Library, no date.

courses at all. This model is still practiced at Jordan Vocational High School today. Jordan Vocational High School boasted in 1972 that it was not “a school that works on a student, but rather Jordan is a school that works with the student to find himself.”¹²

The school continues to be the most obvious and noticeable legacy of G. Gunby Jordan in Columbus. While Jordan was not alive for its rebirth, and while the organization of the school had evolved over the decades, the connection to the original Columbus Industrial High School is clear, as can be seen in the current Jordan Vocational High School Alma Mater. The letters C.I.H.S. were simply replaced by J.V.H.S. in 1938, and remains unchanged up into the present day.

Alma Mater of Jordan Vocational High School

With the carmine and the Gray afloat

On high J. V. H. S.

Your name and fame we're shouting

As we cheer you to success,

As you march unfaltering forward,

Your future great we hail

May your glory never lessen,

And your courage never fail.

Chorus

J. V. H. S.

J. V. H. S.

J. V. H. S.

¹² Ibid.

J. V. H. S.¹³

Limitations of Research and Opportunities for Additional Scholarship

Access to credible sources regarding the roles of women and African Americans in Columbus have limited this research. While I was able to access very detailed archival materials relating to Jordan, disenfranchised groups were not given the same consideration by those gathering materials for deposit in an archive. Although yearbooks did provide some understanding as to the opinions and treatment of women in the Columbus Industrial High School, these records are extremely limited; regrettably, I was not able to fully explore the thoughts and actions of women in regards to Jordan and the Columbus Industrial High School. In addition, sources written by African Americans were very limited. While there were many sources depicting whites writing about the lives of African Americans living in Columbus, African American voices remain chillingly silent.

My research into the life and legacy of G. Gunby Jordan has also revealed several opportunities for further research. William Henry Spencer, who led the charge in the development of an African American High School in Columbus, has had not one article or biography written of his contributions to education and the African American community in Columbus. Although sources are limited, Spencer's life remains an integral part of the development of education in Columbus, and scholars have neglected him. In addition to Spencer, this biography of Jordan has revealed another opportunity for additional biographical scholarship. George Foster Peabody's biography by Louise

¹³ *The Red Jacket 1938* (Columbus, GA: Senior Class of Columbus Industrial High School, 1938), 3.

Ware written in 1951 is extremely dated and somewhat hagiographical; there is a desperate need for a modern interpretation of the life of George Foster Peabody. Unlike Spencer, Peabody's papers are extensive and readily available at the United States Library of Congress.

Finally, while this biography was concerned with the accomplishments and consequences of the life of G. Gunby Jordan, I came across several topics and questions during the course of my research that could be expanded further by future scholars. For instance, how important was service in the Civil War in carving out the future lives of southern leaders in Georgia? When writing about Jordan's time in the Confederacy, I continually ran into this question while attempting to resolve conflicting accounts of Jordan and his fellow soldiers in battle.

Other topics, which could be further explored by future scholars, would be the development and evolution of domestic science in the Columbus Industrial High School into home economics in Jordan Vocational High School. The goals and purpose of these courses changed over time, but a detailed account of how and why the transformation took place would add to the historical understanding of the role of women in industrial schools. And again, African American education in Columbus would provide scholars with a range of topics to explore further. I barely scratched the surface of the history of African American education in Columbus since Jordan was the main focus of this dissertation, but this topic requires a thoughtful investigation by future researchers.

My Association with Jordan, The Love Affair to the Break-Up

At this moment, the following trends are occurring in my life. I spend more time alone with G. Gunby Jordan than my husband. I get defensive when he is attacked. I am emotionally connected to his losses, and impressed by his strength, passion, and work

ethic. Pictures of Jordan line my work desk, and I see him everywhere when I travel to my hometown in Columbus, Georgia. Indeed, I have visited his grave more often in the past year than I have the grave of my own grandmother. Blanche Wiesen Cook comments on this phenomenon noting that her subjects “enter my conversations, intrude on the privacy of my bath, join me in the ocean and the garden...frequently a great flirtation emerges.”¹⁴ When I discovered how my infatuation with Jordan had begun to impact the quality of the dissertation, it took several weeks to come to terms with what I needed to do to create a balanced and honest reflection of G. Gunby Jordan’s contributions to education.

This research raises the question that all biographer’s face—how close can an author be to a subject? What happens when the researcher becomes so enthralled with her subject, that it begins to cloud the research—and then the researcher and subject take on many qualities of people in love? Linda Anderson Smith states that

the danger lies in over identification. A natural consequence of intimate contact between researcher and subject is empathy, the ability to understand and share another’s feelings. But empathy can easily become sympathy, a patronizing feeling of approval, as the biographer becomes more and more involved in the relationship and begins to “root for” the subject. The biographer begins to feel that she can actually predict the subject’s feelings and emotions. She begins to believe that the two of them are alike. She takes criticism of her subject personally, ardently defends his behavior against any question, and begins to deny facts that do not fit into the image she has

¹⁴ Blanch Wiesen Cook, “The Issue of Subject: A Critical Connection,” *Writing Educational Biography* (New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1998), 80.

created. The result is as much a distortion of the subject's life and the biographer's intentions as too little involvement and too much objectivity would produce.¹⁵

In order to explain the emotional process that began when I discovered the how overtly pro-Jordan my dissertation had become mid-way through the writing process, I will utilize the five stages of grief to explain how I came to terms with the overly sentimental state of my scholarship. The first stage, *denial*, hit me quickly and the hardest. I could not understand why the members of my dissertation committee were using words like "hagiography" to describe what I had written at my prospectus defense. I thought that I had included many negative aspects of Jordan, and did not understand how this was not apparent in my research. Stage two, *anger*, quickly followed stage one. Anger directed at myself, as well as my committee, had me questioning my writing and research abilities, as well as the motivations behind the committee's criticisms. Stage three, *bargaining*, came with my attempt to understand the role that I played in my prospectus debacle; I knew that I had to find more varied sources to find definitive proof of Jordan's potential flaws.¹⁶

The forth stage, *depression*, came when I began to discover that many of my assumptions about Jordan had been wrong. He began to topple from the ivory tower that I had built for him. I had known that he had utilized child labor, but his outright racist policies were not as hidden as I had first thought. I realized that I had been so impressed by his many accomplishments that I did not place enough emphasis on critiquing him. I

¹⁵ Linda Anderson Smith, "The Biographers Relationship to Her Subject," in Craig Kridel's *Writing Educational Biography* (New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1998), 195.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying: What the Dying have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy and Their Own Families*, (New York: Scribner, 1969).

also had grown so attached to him that I found myself disappointed when some of his accomplishments were not as grandiose as I originally thought. Jordan had not achieved the formidable “rags to riches” American Dream. Instead, he boasted a much less admirable, “merchant-class-slave-holding family to riches” story. When I reached the final stage, *acceptance*, I had come to discover how easy it is to be hypnotized by the flowery language of the nineteenth century, when my southern gentleman could do no wrong.¹⁷ I knew his policies could be viewed as racist, I knew that he was a mill owner, a capitalist, an employer of children, but my admiration for him was so obvious that some of my committee members deemed it a hagiography.

In reflecting on the writing process, I identified a few of the decisions early in the project that created issues in the later stages of the dissertation. The first is my appreciation for nineteenth century prose. Sitting in dusty archives, I imagined myself to be Indiana Jones on a great archeological quest, savoring every minute of my research. I found myself entranced and began to adapt this prose within my own writing style.¹⁸ Yet for me, it was all too much to overcome; having read so many articles and letters praising Jordan, the words began to alter my perception of my subject.

While Linda C. Wagner-Martin claims that biographers whose subjects have living relatives and friends are exceptionally “lucky,” I found the opposite to be true.¹⁹ Linda Anderson Smith commented that she felt compelled to not only receive the approval of the dissertation committee in her scholarship, but greatly desired the approval of her

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ “Memorial of Honorable G. Gunby Jordan, by CB&T,” Katherine Waddell Private Collection.

¹⁹ Linda C. Wagner Martin, “The Issue of Gender: Continuing Problems in Biography,” in Craig Kridel’s *Writing Educational Biography* (New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1998), 89.

living subject, as well.²⁰ As I formed friendships with Jordan's descendants early in the research process, I often felt treacherous writing anything critical of their beloved ancestor.

My final mistake came in the fact that I limited myself to the study of his contributions to education. Like John Milton Cooper, I thought it "foolish" to "try and tackle" the "whole life" of Jordan.²¹ Yet, by limiting my research in this way, I did not critically review important facets of his life. Jordan's educational practices were highly praised, but there existed numerous other sources that highlighted his flaws.²²

Hermione Lee states that one of rules for biography is that "nothing should be omitted or concealed" and that modern readers possess a "belief in openness."²³ I felt the truth of this statement when reading Elizabeth Gaskell's biography of Charlotte Bronte. Gaskell, who portrayed her friend as a model of Victorian values, completely omitted Bronte's amorous obsession with her married tutor.²⁴ As a reader, I was disappointed. I wanted to know how much of Charlotte's obsession with her tutor was converted into Jane Eyre's love for the aloof and brooding Mr. Rochester. Feminist scholar, Carol Hanisch, explains

²⁰ Smith, "The Biographers Relationship to Her Subject," 199.

²¹ John Milton Cooper, "Conceptual Conversation and Compassion," in Lloyd Ambrosius' *Writing Biography: Historians and Their Craft* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 79.

²² "Plans to Secure Good Immigrants," *The Sentinel-Journal* (Pickens, SC), Feb. 23, 1907; "Why Immigrants Don't Come South," *Live Oak Daily Democrat* (Live Oak, FL), July 5, 1907; "Georgians go for Immigrants," *Gainesville Daily Sun*, (Gainesville, FL), April 11, 1907; "Immigration and the Southern Negro," *The Times Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), June 23, 1907; "Handwriting on the Wall," *The Watchman and Southron*, (Sumter, SC), August, 7, 1907.

²³ Hermione Lee, *Biography: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 9.

²⁴ Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Bronte*, ed. Elisabeth Jay, (London, Penguin Group, 1857, 1997), 9-11.

this disappointment best with the “personal is political” concept.²⁵ Charlotte Bronte’s own life experiences bled into her literary life just as Jordan’s life experiences flowed into his educational policies. By omitting these experiences, my biography lacked the same textural “complexity” for which Plutarch is criticized by only portraying the subject’s positive moral characteristics.²⁶

Therefore, to summarize how I resolved my hagiography of Jordan, I utilize an extremely reputable source—*Glamour Magazine*—to consider how writing biography might compare to the five stages of falling in love. The first stage of falling in love is known as *butterflies*.²⁷ When I “met” Jordan, I was enamored by his accomplishments. When I entered the second stage, *building*, my perception began to change.²⁸ In this stage couples fill out their “life CV” and introduce each other to the various aspects of their lives.²⁹ As I discovered more about Jordan, the more impressed I became. His educational programs and “manual training” programs had a lot more in common with John Dewey’s experimental educational practices than I first thought.³⁰ When he hurt, I hurt. The story of his wife dying in childbirth brought tears to my eyes both when I read and wrote about it.³¹ At this point I started calling him “my dead boyfriend.”³²

²⁵ Carol Hanish, “Personal is Political,” *Notes From the Second Year: Women’s Liberation* (New York: Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt, 1970), 76.

²⁶ Lee, *Biography: A Very Short Introduction*, 3-4.

²⁷ Zahra Barnes, “The Five Stages of Falling in Love,” November 10, 2014, <http://www.glamour.com/sex-love-life/blogs/smitten/2014/11/the-5-different-stages-of-fall>.

²⁸ Barnes, “The Five Stages of Falling in Love,”

²⁹ Barnes, “The Five Stages of Falling in Love,”

³⁰ Victoria Macdonald Huntzinger, “The Birth of Southern Public Education: Columbus, Georgia 1864-1904.” PhD diss., Harvard University, 1992, 174; *Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus, Georgia, 1906*, (Columbus, GA: Gilbert Publishing Company, 1906), 79-83.

³¹ “Funeral Notice Mrs. Lizzie B. Jordan,” *Columbus-Enquirer*, May 2, 1882.

³² Lauren Yarnell Bradshaw, www.laurenyarnellbradshaw.edublogs.org.

Stage three, *assimilation*, came after my prospectus defense. At this point in a relationship the couple begins to blend their lives.³³ I needed to discover if Jordan and I had “clashing ideologies.”³⁴ I had to dig deeper —newspapers provided great editorials that I had not found in the archives, which helped to illustrate how much of my perception of Jordan had been formed based on the deliberate archiving of only the positive materials that people who knew him sought to preserve. Remembering Foucault’s scholarship on the power of language, I acknowledged the duty that I had to find alternative resources to chronicle the lives of the disenfranchised about whom primary sources were not so readily available.³⁵

The fourth stage, *honesty*, came with disappointment. I had to now situate Jordan’s racist and classist policies within the framework that I created.³⁶ Not only did I have to come to terms with Jordan’s personal prejudices, I had to come to terms with my own. I greatly admired his work ethic and ability to manage various responsibilities simultaneously, as I strive to live this way in my own life. And yet, in his rise to power, he had the assistance of his uncle, who gave him his first job as a clerk for his wholesale company.³⁷ So, Jordan’s fulfillment of the American Dream proved to be a gross exaggeration. Jordan was helped along the way due to his status, gender, family connections, and class—but did that make him less admirable? Within this stage I had to revise my original work, and make room in my dissertation of Saint G. Gunby Jordan for

³³ Zahra Barnes, “The Five Stages of Falling in Love.”

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Roland Sintos Coloma, “Who’s Afraid of Foucault? History, Theory, and Becoming Subjects,” *History of Education Quarterly* 51 (May 2011), 185-193

³⁶ Zahra Barnes, “The Five Stages of Falling in Love.”

³⁷ Nancy Telfair, “Robert Mills Gunby,” *The Columbus Georgia Cemetery, 1828-1928*, Katherine Waddell Private Collection, Columbus, GA.

the more worldly banker/textile mill

owner/husband/father/philanthropist/paternalist/politician, George Gunby Jordan. The final stage is *stability*.³⁸ I reached this stage in my G. Gunby Jordan love affair when I had to “break up” with my “dead boyfriend.” Although I will never feel comfortable with all his actions, I feel more at ease with my more honest portrayal of him. My new portrayal of Jordan was dependent on severing my amorous relationship with him. When I was able to remove the rose-colored glasses from my research, I was able to find the human under the halo, and situate him better with his historical context.

To complicate matters even more in my relationship to Jordan was the discovery mid-way through the research process that he was completely opposed to any biographer writing his life story. Local historian Louise Jones DuBose, who wrote several published histories on Columbus under the penname Nancy Telfair, wrote to Jordan in 1929 asking to chronicle his life. Jordan responded humbly and decisively stating that

I have in the few score years of my ephemeral existence been wearied with the memoirs of mediocrity. So bored the biographies of ---- heroes that hesitancy will block any attempt to add my name to the too long list of those who over-estimate their self-importance. I earnestly thank you for all your kind words.³⁹

Upon discovering that Jordan had never wished to have his life chronicled, only increased my admiration for him, his humility was yet another piece of evidence of his worth. It was not until I was challenged to have a more critical eye in my examination of Jordan that I began to question if my first reaction had been the correct one. While I cannot

³⁸ Zahra Barnes, “The Five Stages of Falling in Love.”

³⁹ G. Gunby Jordan to Louise Jones DuBose, August 27, 1929, Nancy Telfair Collection, CSU Archives).

agree with Jordan that his life was mediocre, this letter was written when he was eighty-three years old and in the final summer of his life. I imagine that his own self-reflection of his life was well underway.

Retired from private and public life, Jordan spent his final year of life with his family fighting against pneumonia that would not loosen its grip on his lungs. During this period of illness, perhaps Jordan was not satisfied with some aspects of his life. Did he still mourn the failure of Nelson's Rangers in the Civil War? Did he regret the wages of his mill workers or the number of children that had been employed in his mills over his lifetime? Perhaps he scorned the attitude that he had taken towards African American education in the early twentieth century and his tardiness in embracing an African American high school in Columbus? Maybe he regretted his own work ethic that had demanded so much of his time away from his infant son after the loss of his son's mother? Or maybe he felt that he could have done more during his presidency of the Columbus Public Schools? While I have felt that his actions were exceptional, Jordan himself did not attribute his life to anything extraordinary. Yet, it is difficult for anyone to understand the impact of his or her own life, and Jordan's legacy, for better or worse, changed the history of Columbus, Georgia.

Jordan's life tells us so much about the opportunities and limitations of southern society. His passion for Columbus and accomplishments in the social, political and business worlds were significant. Yet, the most compelling part of Jordan's story comes from a thorough examination of how he interacted with society to achieve his goals. These goals included vocational education and the long-term economic success of Columbus. Jordan's focus was not to erase class lines, eliminate racial discrimination, or

bring about gender equality for women. Yet, in his sphere of influence, working with and being worked on by his contemporaries, Jordan labored towards advances in all of those areas. His legacy can be found in every public vocational high school, not only in Columbus or the state of Georgia, but in the entire country. The model that he worked toward in 1906, has be redesigned, evolved, redesigned again, and still looks strikingly similar to the curriculum originated in 1906 by G. Gunby Jordan and his colleagues. Though shockingly absent from many volumes concerning the history of vocational education in the United States, in Columbus, Georgia the name of G. Gunby Jordan has never been forgotten.

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