

# *The Philadelphia Tribune* and the Persistence of Black Republicanism during the Great Depression

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Histories of the Great Depression of the 1930s appeared frequently in the 1970s and 1980s. More were cast in a social historical framework and centered on similar burdens shared by different groups of Americans. These studies have particularly looked at the social effectiveness of the New Deal in various cities or the impact of the Depression on excluded groups, particularly African Americans.<sup>1</sup>

This essay looks at one influential black man in the 1930s as a member of various institutions which involved a diverse black middle class. Eugene Washington Rhodes, editor and publisher of *The Philadelphia Tribune*, wielded considerable influence within Philadelphia's African American community, the Republican party, and Philadelphia's local politics. (Rhodes was elected Pennsylvania's Assistant Attorney General in 1939, but returned after his term in office to edit the paper until the early 1960s.) By observing his career and newspaper we can chart how the underlying conservatism of Philadelphia's black middle class broke down as more and more African Americans turned towards the liberal ideology encouraged by Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. Other historians, notably Vincent P. Franklin, have placed Rhodes and *The Philadelphia Tribune* squarely within the racial ideology that continued to be a strong force in the thirties. My objective here is not to undermine that work but rather to enhance it by examining different perspectives that some of those in the black middle class took during the Depression era.<sup>2</sup>

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Economic hardship arrived at black Philadelphia's doorstep long before the Depression of 1929. From World War I into the early 1920s, Philadelphia had been one of six major cities in the United States whose black population grew enormously.<sup>3</sup> African Americans had migrated from the South to find employment, relief from racism, and an atmosphere in which their dignity as human beings would be respected. In a larger sense, the black migration to Philadelphia was part of the momentous shifting of Afro-Americans at the beginning of the twentieth century, when 77 percent lived in rural areas, to urban areas. By 1930, it was becoming clear that African Americans could no longer be termed primarily a Southern rural populace.<sup>4</sup> Between 1916 and 1929, the total black American population of Philadelphia went from 134,229 to 219,599, an increase of 64 percent, of whom 70 percent were recently

arrived migrants from Southern states.<sup>5</sup> Even before the World War I years, Philadelphia's black population had grown from 40,000 in 1890 to 84,000 in 1910. This increase has been called an advance guard of the larger migration beginning in 1916.<sup>6</sup>

The influx of the newly arrived poor, mostly uneducated, rural blacks created immense pressures on the indigenous African American population, particularly the black middle class. As the new arrivals crowded into the center of the city they disrupted established community boundaries. Consequently, indigenous middle-class blacks moved into older but slightly better houses in North Philadelphia, Germantown, and West Philadelphia.

A survey conducted by Donald R. Wyatt, research secretary for the Armstrong Association, in 1933, discovered that this expansion was made possible by "the loss of close to 50,000 white persons who had vacated the area, in many cases for suburban residences." It might also be added that another significant cause for the exodus was the desire of middle-class blacks and like-minded native Philadelphian lower-class blacks to be as far apart from the uneducated rural masses as possible.<sup>7</sup> Whatever its social reasons the migration, responding to the wartime need for cheap industrial labor, gave many indigenous black Philadelphians, as well as the newcomers, hope that economic, social, and political gains would be made. Such a hope was short-lived. By 1930 the Philadelphia African American was surviving on the margins of the city's economy. As early as 1927 Philadelphia's industrial economy began to falter and slide precipitously into Depression. The effects of the Depression struck not only workers and migrants but lanced through the entire black community, particularly the middle class. At one point in the early years of the Depression estimates of up to 52 percent of employable African Americans were out of work.<sup>8</sup>

With the Depression, many in the black middle class found their income pushed closer to the lower-class level. This leveling exacerbated previous tensions with those who were recent newcomers and forced the middle class to struggle to preserve what they had attained in terms of value and culture while pushing for racial justice, equality, and better jobs. With the added burden of the Depression, black middle-class Philadelphia wavered between maintaining class distinctions and furthering racial consciousness and solidarity. Balancing these two equally forceful set of ideas became close to impossible to maintain.<sup>9</sup>

In class terms, the Depression sharply focused previously subtle changes taking place within the black middle class. Many ambitious young African American men, who had emigrated to Philadelphia earlier in the century, had through education entered professions such as law, higher education, and medicine. They gradually acquired property and status within and without the black community.<sup>10</sup> These newly arrived Southerners modeled their values not only on white bourgeois norms but also on the indigenous and well rooted

free black population whose historical roots in Philadelphia went back well into the eighteenth century.<sup>11</sup> These native African American Philadelphia families, mostly light-skinned in color, had assimilated the values of the white majority and had taken on an aristocratic upper class appearance within the black community. In reality they were the old "middle class" who had served white families, owned small businesses, and held some land. They formed the foundations for what was popularly referred to as the "OPs" (Old Philadelphians).<sup>12</sup>

The "new middle class" was composed of those southern migrants such as Eugene Washington Rhodes of South Carolina, the focus of this paper, Reverend Marshall I. Shepard (North Carolina), Major Richard R. Wright, Sr. (Georgia), and others who eventually rose to enter the circle of such notable Philadelphia-born Afro-Americans as lawyers Raymond Pace Alexander and his wife Sadie Tanner Mossell, Isodore Martin, president of Philadelphia's branch of the NAACP, and the Fausets, Arthur and Crystal Bird.<sup>13</sup> Where the old Philadelphia families had mostly blended into white society through their skin color, property holdings, and acceptance of the dominant white society's mores, the newer members of the black middle class did not give up their racial identity quite so easily. Many of them were not so far removed from the culture of black rural America. They did their best to hold on to some of those roots as they carved out a niche for themselves in the urban North. But in striving to attain basically white bourgeois norms and values in an urbanized setting, their racial roots and pride gave way in many cases to a confusion about their identity.

In 1929, Nannie Burroughs, educator and a columnist in *The Philadelphia Tribune*, expressed some of that confusion in an essay entitled "Just Being White Does Not Make A Man Superior." Reacting to a radio broadcaster's remarks stating that despite all that had been said or sung about the Negro "... the Negro is still a Negro," Burroughs replied defensively "Of course he is and so is the Anglo-Saxon, the Indian, and the Chinese."<sup>14</sup> For Burroughs, Afro-Americans were just another ethnic group in the vast melting pot. Yet the confusion set in when she addressed the black masses. An earnest desire to uplift the masses combined with her contempt for them. Many of Burroughs' columns were often overly critical of the majority of poor Afro-Americans. She chided the race for its "low self-esteem," its inability or unwillingness to uplift itself, and even credited the white race for rescuing black music and advancing the race through the financing of education. Nonetheless, Nannie Burroughs was a tireless worker on behalf of African-American women's education. She supported training schools for black women who migrated from the South to urban areas such as Washington, D.C., where she lived.<sup>15</sup>

Burroughs's statements concerning the masses, however, were not atypical in the 1930s. Many of Philadelphia's middle-class African Americans held

little regard for their lower class brothers and sisters. To be sure, Eugene Washington Rhodes, Isodore Martin, and others were dedicated to improving the race, but their race pride was imbued with an acceptance of bourgeois middle-class values. They constantly fought for race gains in education, politics, law, and cultural activities while at the same time espousing integration into white society. Undoubtedly many lower-class blacks endorsed such ideas. Yet such approval did not improve their economic misery. In April 1929, Philadelphia's black unemployment rate was approximately 45 percent higher than that of white persons. By the end of 1929, before the rest of Philadelphia had fully experienced the depth of the Depression, through 1935 almost all black Philadelphians felt the slide into economic deprivation. For example during this period only 13 percent of the black population was employed full-time while an average rate of 45 percent were unemployed. The remaining 42 percent worked part-time and were making barely enough to survive.

At first the city officials of Philadelphia were prepared to aid those in desperate need, having prided themselves on a relief system that depended little on outside financial support from the state or federal governments. The city fathers dispensed funds gathered from the generosity of the community at large to various social welfare agencies. The severe unemployment of 1929-32 quickly used up that money, however, and the city was forced to call on the Pennsylvania legislature for funds.<sup>16</sup> Campaign drives were also initiated in the black community to raise funds for those needing vital social services. But by 1933, 35 percent of African Americans were on relief in Philadelphia. Only Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and New Orleans outranked the City of Brotherly Love in having that percentage of blacks on relief.<sup>17</sup>

Yet the surviving black middle class did not succumb totally to the Depression. While economically many may have been pushed to the level of their brethren in the lower class, they managed to keep a distinct but uneasy class distance from the masses. At the same time they maintained a level of racial consciousness which they hoped all blacks would adopt and as a step towards self-improvement. Exhorting the masses to self-improvement through middle-class values such as thrift, decency, and hard work. Philadelphia's black middle class espoused faith in the democratic system, qualified hope in the New Deal, and a fervent desire for better race relations. But this same middle class was caught in a dilemma: maintaining a class consciousness that was not always in touch with the lower class. Further, asserting a militant racial consciousness might alienate them from the dominant white society. The tensions of this quandary were expressed most often in the newspaper and leadership of Eugene Washington Rhodes.

Through his paper, *The Philadelphia Tribune*, Rhodes attempted to be a voice of stability in the harrowing years of the Depression. While he espoused racial improvement and equality, Rhodes also used the paper to promote middle

class ideas to inspire and uplift all African Americans. The prescriptions in the *Tribune's* editorials, columns, and even comics provide insights into the underlying conservative thought of the Black middle class in Philadelphia.

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While Philadelphia's black newspapers, *The Philadelphia Tribune* and the *Philadelphia Independent*, maintained solid journalistic standards and inculcated racial pride, more often than not these weekly papers were primarily concerned with presenting what E. Franklin Frazier has asserted were "the interests of the black bourgeoisie."<sup>18</sup> *The Philadelphia Tribune* the city's oldest black newspaper founded in 1884, furthered this bourgeois interest even more so than the *Independent*. The *Philadelphia Independent*, a more politically-oriented paper, was begun in 1931 by J. Max Barber, a native North Carolinian who held "radical" views of democracy for the masses. On the contrary, *The Philadelphia Tribune* was, as the black *Norfolk Journal and Guide* put it, "one of our most conservative papers in editorial content and mechanical makeup." As far as can be ascertained, the *Independent* went out of existence before the Second World War, while the *Tribune* continues to be published to this day.<sup>19</sup>

The *Tribune* was first published in 1884 by Christopher J. Perry, an upper-class black Philadelphian who wished to present the respectability of black people to the white Philadelphia community. He edited and owned the paper until his death in 1921.<sup>20</sup> Perry's successor was a young and ambitious attorney, Eugene Washington Rhodes. Born in Camden, South Carolina, of ex-slave parents, Rhodes received his law degree from Temple University in 1924. In 1928, he was briefly the assistant district attorney in Philadelphia. Staunchly Republican and firmly indoctrinated in the Protestant work ethic, he ran the *Tribune* with his wife, Bertha Perry Rhodes, daughter of the late founder, who acted as secretary and treasurer.<sup>21</sup> The paper not only provided the upwardly striving Rhodes with an entree into the rather exclusive circles of the old black middle class, but it also served as a forum for his own strongly held Republican views. Perhaps more significantly, so far as the dissemination of cultural values were concerned, the *Tribune* consistently and often blatantly touted middle class values.<sup>22</sup>

Like almost all African American newspapers, *The Philadelphia Tribune* and the *Philadelphia Independent* existed as black counterparts to white Philadelphia's newspapers, the *Philadelphia Record* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Both papers shared many of the general characteristics of African American newspapers. They were weeklies; the *Tribune* appeared on Thursdays while the *Independent* came out on Saturdays. Both served to correct the city's mostly indifferent if not hostile coverage of the black community. For example, the *Tribune* ran features on black-owned businesses or debates about various

ideological currents that the white newspapers would hardly find interesting. In one instance, the *Tribune* reported that Eleanor Roosevelt did not object to having her picture taken with Afro-Americans and distributed. As far as can be seen, the white newspapers never ran such a picture. *The Philadelphia Independent* ran several stories that addressed the poor living conditions of the city's black population; something that was rarely if ever done by the white newspapers.<sup>23</sup> This was one of the more positive services that black newspapers performed. If it is understood that most people at the time obtained their information about the world from a newspaper which reinforced their perceptions, then it becomes rather easy to understand the necessity for the existence of a *Tribune* or an *Independent*. The white dailies seldom mentioned African Americans. What they did present was more destructive than constructive in their perceptions of black life. While black Philadelphia newspapers adhered pretty much to presenting black news from a racial perspective, their editorial stances and approaches to gathering readers were different. The *Tribune* ran a series of articles that outlined the various ideological stances that were present in Philadelphia's black community. In one article the writer, Frank Marshall Davis, wrote about the terminology that Afro-Americans used to signify their race. The article clearly showed the tension that the black middle class had with identity. In every case, whether the designation was "colored" or "Negro" or even "Afro-American," he found reasons for why black people objected to its use. The *Tribune* used the appellation "Negro" for the most part. The *Independent*, more liberal and less race-conscious, tried to reach all of the city's African Americans. It did not get caught up in thrashing out problems of identity or ideological debates. It defined itself as a paper whose "present political leanings are definitely pro-Democratic [party]" and further asserted that "the basic principle of freedom of speech in the espousing of the weaker cause" would always be advanced.<sup>24</sup>

The *Tribune* was no less interested in enunciating journalistic principles in its struggle for civil rights. For example, in a series on various ideologies, the *Tribune* refused to take a stance claiming that "The *Tribune* appreciates that it is impossible for all minds to unite on any single program." Rather it placed more emphasis on reaching its readers by running a newspaper like a well managed pragmatic business. In answering a request for more publicity concerning youth activities at the Christian Street YMCA, Rhodes pointed out that "newspapers, despite apparent belief to the contrary, are materially minded as well as idealistically minded organs. Without money newspapers could not long exist to serve the good purpose they are serving."<sup>25</sup>

Rhodes's tight-fisted fiscal concern for the *Tribune* was motivated not only by his belief in the American ethos of hard work, profit making, and success but also by an alarming drop in his paper's circulation. Until the appearance of the *Independent* and the effects of the Depression, the *Tribune* was the only

black newspaper in Philadelphia with any substantial circulation. One other local black paper had existed until 1929, the *Philadelphia Public Journal*, an activist paper with a low circulation that went under during the Depression. Another tiny paper was the *Brown American*, which lasted only from 1934-1937. *The Pittsburgh Courier* had a branch office in Philadelphia but did not do well there.<sup>26</sup> Even with limited competition, the *Tribune's* circulation was rather small in proportion to Philadelphia's total black population of over 78,000: only 12,000 subscribers lived in the city and a total circulation including readers outside the area was 18,000 in 1933.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, the *Independent* began in 1931 with a circulation of 10,000 and jumped by 1935 to 30,000. It became the leading voice of African Americans in the city.<sup>28</sup> With its active stand for the Democratic party and reassuring voice, the *Independent* may have fulfilled the needs of the black masses who, bent low under the Depression, sought some ray of hope. In 1934, the paper ran a series on lynching and in its editorial called for President Roosevelt to push through anti-lynching legislation. The *Independent* reached more rank-and-file African-Americans than the *Tribune* ever did.<sup>29</sup> However the *Tribune*, as keenly competitive as it was with the *Independent*, never deviated from its elitist middle-class format.

To attract more readers, Rhodes added more features to the paper. One, highly indicative of the paper's elitist orientation, was penned by Rhodes himself. Begun in 1930 and entitled "Under the Microscope," this front-page column often touted the achievements of outstanding black Philadelphians.<sup>30</sup> The column was gossipy, tutorial, and reflected all the middle-class values that Rhodes thought African Americans should achieve. One column on Major R. R. Wright, President of Citizens' Southern Bank and Trust Company, drove the message home bluntly: "Description: small, erect, almost white, likes to be called major. Background: born on a farm in Georgia, became president of Colored State College, came to Philadelphia and established a bank." Rhodes then noted that "major" Wright was "tight, close fisted and conservative, he has a keen and active mind, he values thrift; is a family man [and] doesn't drink or smoke." Although Wright gave Philadelphia its only surviving black banking institution "his family comes first."<sup>31</sup>

Rhodes's column was clearly slanted in favor of morality and conservative values. When someone lacked them, he tended to be cutting and cruel. He characterized Philadelphia black Republican state representative John C. Asbury as a "very clever politician" who "constitutes a contribution of himself."<sup>32</sup> B. G. Collier, head of the Pennsylvania Knights of Pythias, "lacks finesse; takes little pain with his appearance; is outspoken; smokes continuously (cigars) and is crude."<sup>33</sup> Rhodes did feature one woman, Lena Trent Gordon, Special Investigator for the Department of Public Welfare, Displaying a dominant male attitude towards this professional woman, Rhodes wrote that "harmony

is the keystone of her philosophy. While she has women friends she is at her best with men and they respect Lena Gordon. She dresses well and is never overdone, long strings of beads and bracelets give the feminine touch.<sup>34</sup> "Under the Microscope" was one of the more extreme examples of features that suggested the kinds of middle-class values that African Americans should embrace.

Another area in the two newspapers that helped to inculcate particular values were comic strips. For almost all Americans in the thirties newspaper comics provided entertainment, an escape from the nation's problems, and a means through which cherished socio-cultural values of the society were reinforced. Like many ethnic groups, Afro-Americans appeared in the daily newspaper comics. All too often the representation was negatively stereotypical. "Sparkey" of "Barney Google" and "Smokey" in "Joe Palooka" were saucer-eyed, thick-lipped buffoons whose outrageous dialect and time-worn jokes were supposed to make readers laugh. They no doubt did, but their images were grossly distorted. Equally inaccurate were the images of blacks as savages running amuck through the jungles of the "Tarzan" and "Jungle Jim" strips. Even the pornographic "Eight-page Bibles" which enjoyed immense popularity in the 1930s acted out the sexual stereotypes of white fantasies about black sexuality.<sup>35</sup>

If the white press's comics engaged in presenting blacks negatively, the black press, in particular the *Tribune*, seemed to over-compensate. The *Tribune* presented humorous strips that had middle to upper class settings with well-mannered characters impeccably dressed and proper in speech. The *Tribune's* first strip began in March 1933. Called "The Dupes" and drawn by Bob Pious, the comic light-heartedly portrayed a black family caught up in various situations, many of which reflected topical or more mundane concerns. In one strip the son, speeding in his father's car, is pulled over by the police. When asked his name, the "Young Dupe" gives the officer an outlandish but impressive sounding title. The officer, shaken by the seeming importance of the name, curses himself and tears up the ticket as the laughing young Dupe drives away. The prevalent idea of status and its use in getting out of trouble is stated here, albeit in an exaggerated (and from our vantage point today unrealistic) fashion. It may have certainly tickled the funny bone of those individuals who may have used their standing to go up the ladder. Indeed, the whole question of social standing is jokingly looked at but also reinforced. An impressive social standing (or title), the strip seemed to say, will take you far.<sup>36</sup>

Some comic strips attempted to show the difficulties of being middle class in a hostile urban environment. One excellent example was the *Philadelphia Independent's* comic "The Jones Family." Appearing in the mid-thirties, it was highly conscious of the various elements that made up the urban African-American community. Drawn by an editorial cartoonist named



Branford, the strip was a radical departure from the normal black comic strip. As a serial it ran continuously from week to week and had much that held one's attention: character depth, an intricately unfolding plot, fine art work, and close attention to urban black social types. The strip ended abruptly with no explanation given. But it nonetheless stands out for its attempt to provide a more complex depiction of black middle-class life in an urban setting.<sup>37</sup> Thus comics like personality features served both the *Tribune* and the *Independent* with means of entertaining black audiences and advancing particularly positive values.

In the area of politics, Rhodes and his paper were no less blatant or forthright. The presidential election of 1932 provided Philadelphia black citizens with a chance to make themselves heard at the national level. Despite their growing disillusion with the Hoover administration, however, many African Americans, particularly the middle class, remained loyal to the party of Lincoln. Their emotional and political investment was too high to do otherwise. For those African Americans newly arrived from the South, the Republican party seemed to be the opposite of the race-baiting Democrats under whose domination the migrants had been denied any chance of equality or justice. For indigenous black Philadelphians, being a Republican meant more than just belonging to a political party; it was a gauge of status. Most black middle-class professionals belonged to the party—lawyers such as Raymond Pace Alexander, his wife Sadie T. Mossell-Alexander, Asbury, Rhodes, and businessmen such as R. R. Wright. Likewise the city's black clergymen were more often than not solid Republicans.<sup>38</sup> Burdened as it was with the crush of the Depression, the Philadelphia black community found it very hard to justify voting for Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He made promises to aid the little man but never really seemed to address African Americans directly.<sup>39</sup> In campaign editorials during the pre-election period of 1932, *The Philadelphia Tribune* echoed the reluctance of many African Americans to vote Democratic. One editorial stated bluntly: "the *Tribune* knows and every intelligent Negro understands that the Republican party has not given the Negro a square deal and yet to the questions of what Roosevelt or [John Nance] Garner has done for Black people the answer is certain . . . nothing."<sup>40</sup>

While African Americans in the rest of Pennsylvania, particularly Pittsburgh, were changing their minds and following *Pittsburgh Courier* editor Robert L. Vann's dictum to "turn Lincoln's picture to the wall" and cast their vote for the Democrats, the majority of Philadelphia's black remained within the Republican column. Only 30.2 percent of black Philadelphia voted for Roosevelt; the predominately black 30th Ward went overwhelmingly for incumbent Herbert Hoover. Yet the *Philadelphia Tribune* noted that even with a vote of thirty percent Democrat "rock-ribbed Republican Philadelphians showed a distinct streak of Democratic color." It reluctantly conceded the

national victory for Roosevelt, stating it would “wait patiently with the sincere hope that those who predicted that Negroes would receive a square deal and equality were correct.”<sup>41</sup>

Between 1933 and 1934, the Republican party would lose control of Philadelphia, the governorship of Pennsylvania, and the state’s two United States senators despite carrying Pennsylvania for Hoover in 1932. The Democrats managed to mount a strong party organization, secure the dispensation of patronage, and convince respectable numbers of African Americans (with Robert L. Vann’s help) and immigrants to shift their votes. Overall, the Democrats during these years managed to displace the Republicans as the commander of the machine in Pennsylvania, although not Philadelphia, politics.<sup>42</sup>

A study of divisions in other black communities may reveal what this study shows for Philadelphia: that the underlying current of thinking and action in the black middle class was essentially conservative despite the effects of the Depression and the dominant ideology of the nation which, from the beginning of the twentieth century at the very least, saw African Americans as invisible people. By examining Rhodes and his paper, *The Philadelphia Tribune*, it can be argued that he strove for a sense of stability: exhorting African Americans onward to improvement while earnestly although cautiously prodding the white political Republican machine to help the African American community rise.

## Notes

1. Major works that have seen publication are Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as A National Issue: The Depression Decade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); John B. Kirby, *Blacks in the Roosevelt Era: Race and Liberalism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980).

2. See Vincent P. Franklin, "Voice of the Black Community: *The Philadelphia Tribune*, 1912-41," *Pennsylvania History*, 51, 4, (October 1984), 261-84. On the ideology of racial uplift in general see Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

3. Dewey H. Palmer, "Moving North: Migration of Negroes During World War I," *Phylon*, 1 (1967) 9, 52; John Bauman, "Black Slums/Black Projects: The New Deal and Negro Housing in Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania Magazine*, 41, July 13, (1974), 311-318.

4. Florette Henri, *Black Migration Movement North, 1900-1920: The Road From Myth to Man* (New York: Anchor Press, 1976), *passim*. Henri's book remains the best introduction and a standard reference for The Great Migration. Two other works on the Migration have appeared that add greatly to our understanding of that movement; Carole Marks, *Farewell—We're Good and Gone: The Great Black Migration* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989) raises some interesting theoretical issues regarding the ways that historians have looked at the Migration and offers a more structuralist approach. James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989) is an exceptionally well done work that supports many of the statements that I make here about Philadelphia's Black middle class. See especially Chapter 5. See also: Alferdteen Harrison, ed., *Black Exodus: The Great Migration From The American South* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1991) and Joe William Trotter, Jr., ed., *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, & Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

5. Palmer, "Moving North," 53.

6. Joseph H. Willits, "Some Impacts of the Depression upon the Negro in Philadelphia," *Opportunity*, 11, (July 1933), 200. A word of

caution must be stated here concerning all figures that follow above: First, the complete census for the 1930s is, at this time, not available; thus the historian must rely on those studies conducted at the time by social welfare agencies and academic institutions. Second, any figures gathered from these sources are prone to discrepancies especially in their estimation. I have tried to use those particular statistical analyses that, in general, are consistent in their findings with each other. These include, along with Willits Lynn T. Smith, "The Redistribution of The Negro Population of the United States, 1910-1960," *Journal of Negro History*, 51, 3, (1966), 155-73; *The Negro in the United States, 1910-1930* (Department of Census, 1940); Blanche J. Paget, "The Plight of the Pennsylvania Negro," *Opportunity* (February 1934), 13-14; and Philadelphia's Armstrong Association Annual Report for 1932, Box 1 Folder 15, Urban Archives, Temple University (hereafter known as TUA).

7. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Philadelphia Tribune*, 16 March 1933, 2 for the Wyatt quote. See also Clara Alberta Hardin, "A Study of the Negroes of Philadelphia" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, 1943), Chapters I and II.

8. Willits, "Some Impacts of the Depression on the Negro," 200-204; Bauman, "Black Slums/Black Projects," 317; H. Viscount Nelson, "The Philadelphia NAACP: Race Consciousness vs. Class Consciousness During the Thirties," *Journal of Black Studies*, 5, 3, (March 1975), 255-257.

9. Horatio Viscount Nelson, Jr., "Race and Class Consciousness of Philadelphia Negroes with special emphasis on the years between 1927 and 1940," (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1969), Chapter IV; see Nelson's specialized "The Philadelphia NAACP: Epitome of Middle-Class Consciousness," (Professional Paper 2, Los Angeles: University of California, 1972).

10. Henri, *Black Migration*, 90; Nelson, "Race and Class Consciousness," 25-27.

11. Theodore Hershberg, "Free Blacks in Antebellum Philadelphia," in Allan Davies and Mark Haller, ed., *The Peoples of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973), 111-135.

12. Judy Jolley Mohraz, *The Separate Problem: Case Studies in Black Education in the North*,

1900-1930 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 5-7. But also see Willard Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) who examines this aspect of the black middle class in depth in various cities.

13. *Ibid.*, 115-135. Biographical information was culled from a variety of sources; the most useful being *Who's Who in Colored America* (1952) which provided data on the persons mentioned. See also Nelson, "Race and Class consciousness . . .," *passim* but especially 28-29 and 56.

14. *The Philadelphia Tribune*, "Looking at the World from a Woman's Point of View," October 3, 1929. Other dates for Burroughs' columns that were looked at are October 31, 1929; January 16, 1930; and October 9, 1931.

15. Nannie Burroughs, it should be noted, was not born in Philadelphia but did speak there on occasion. Her biographical sketch can be found in *Who's Who in Colored America*, 79.

16. Nelson "Race and Class Consciousness," 59-62; see also "Report of Negro Population and Industries in Philadelphia," Armstrong Association Papers, TUA; Willets, "Some Impact," 203-204. In the industrial sector as of January 1931, the unemployment figures for 13 American cities showed Philadelphia having unemployed males at 31.7 percent white native born, 29.9 percent foreign born, and 52 percent black. For females it was 17.7 percent native born whites, 12.4 percent foreign born, and 30.7 percent black. For African American women it should be added that this percentage was greater than their share in the total population of women or among those in gainful employment. Nelson, "Race and Class Consciousness," 227.

17. Armstrong Association Reports, 1930-35, TUA. The Armstrong Association estimated the above mentioned figures over a five year period. See also J. Frederick Dewhurst and Robert H. Nathan, "Social and Economic Character of Unemployment in Philadelphia, April 1930," (Report of the Industrial Research Department, University of Pennsylvania, March 1932), 22; Bauman, "The City, Depression, and Relief," 110-120, Bonnie R. Fox, "Unemployment Relief in Philadelphia, 1930-32: A Study of the Depression's Impact on Voluntarism," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 13 (January, 1969), 91.

18. This overview of similar characteristics of Philadelphia's Black weeklies to other

newspapers has relied on the findings of E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie*, Chapter VIII. I have read the *Tribune* for the years 1927-1941 (microfilm located at the Philadelphia Free Library), the *Independent*, and the *Brown American* (*op. cit.*).

19. *Norfolk Journal and Guide* article reprinted in *The Philadelphia Tribune*, August 6, 1931. For a brief biographical sketch of J. Max Barber, see Andrew Buni, *Robert L. Vann of The Pittsburgh Courier* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1974), 220-225.

20. John A. Saunders, *100 Years After Emancipation: History of the Philadelphia Negro, 1787-1963* (Philadelphia: *The Philadelphia Tribune*, 1963), 187.

21. Rhodes' biographical sketch can be found in *Who's Who in Colored America*, 436. For other descriptive references see Nelson, "Race and Class Consciousness," 269, *Robert I. Vann*, 185.

22. At the top of every editorial page throughout the Thirties, the *Tribune* carried a saying or quote that was some variation on the Puritan work ethic or some cherished value such as marriage, money, or success. For example, "Necessity Knows No Law Except to Conquer—Publius Syrus" October 29, 1930.

23. This overview of similar characteristics has relied on Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie*, Chapter VIII; Arnold Rose's useful summation of Gunnar Myrdal's study, *The Negro in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948) Chapter 17 esp. 275-292; Buni, *Robert L. Vann, passim*. *Philadelphia Tribune*, April 23, 1936; *Philadelphia Independent*, December 27, 1936 and January 3, 1937.

24. *Philadelphia Independent*, December 22, 1935; *Philadelphia Tribune*, May 14, 1936. On various ideologies outlined, see *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 21, July 28, August 4, and August 11, 1938.

25. Letter from Willie Mae Henderson, Secretary of Youth Council, Christian Street YMCA to E. Washington Rhodes along with reply printed in the *Tribune*, February 20, 1933. *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 21, 1938.

26. Buni, *Robert L. Vann*, 185-187; Saunders, *100 Years After Emancipation*, 97-99.

27. George E. Simpson, *The Negro in the Philadelphia Press* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1936), 25.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Comparisons of the two newspapers

editorial contents were made ranging over a given year period from 1933-1938 and with the help of Simpson's *The Negro in the Philadelphia Press* (p. 15), the above conclusion was drawn. On the lynching series and editorial see the *Philadelphia Independent*, November 1 and 8, 1934.

30. *Tribune*, August 4, 1930.

31. *Tribune*, August 21, 1930.

32. *Tribune*, August 28, 1930.

33. *Tribune*, September 4, 1930.

34. *Tribune*, January 31, 1931.

35. Jules Feiffer, *Great Comic Book Heroes: A History of the Comics* (New York: Dial Press, 1965), *passim*; John D. Stephens, "Reflections in a Dark Mirror: Comic Strips in Black Newspapers," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 10, 1, (Summer 1976), 742; Phylli

36. *Philadelphia Tribune*, March 9, 1933 for the start of "The Dupes." See *Philadelphia Tribune*, March 23, 1933 for the episode under discussion.

37. *Philadelphia Independent*, May 17, 1936.

The "Jones Family" was one of the early "action strips" which came into vogue during the thirties and forties. As for the ending of the "Jones Family," the only explanation I could secure was from the Urban Archivist at Temple University who stated that space limitations and the high cost of paper production caused by the Depression were hindrances. For an example of such problems, see Buni, *Robert L. Vann*, Chapter VII.

38. A Viscount Nelson, "the Philadelphia NAACP," 256; Nelson, "Race and Class Consciousness Among Negroes of Philadelphia," Chapters II and III.

39. Samuel J. Astorino, "The Decline of Republican Dynasty in Pennsylvania, 1920-1934" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1962), 176-178.

40. *The Philadelphia Tribune*, October 20, 1932.

42. Astorino, "Decline of Republican Dynasty," 194-198; Buni, *Robert L. Vann*, 92-94.