"Old Scratchhead" Reconsidered: George Raymond & Civil Rights in Chester, Pennsylvania

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On May 9, 1999, eighty-four year old George T. Raymond died quietly at Lankenau Hospital in suburban Philadelphia. The *Delaware County Daily Times* reported that, as president of the Chester branch of the NAACP for more than twenty-five years, Raymond "peacefully campaigned against segregation and discrimination." The obituary further reported that Raymond had worked at Sun Shipbuilding Company and at Scott Paper Company where he had been president of a group of black volunteers "who helped the under privileged." The report was accurate, but it fell woefully short of doing Raymond justice.[1] Old age had finally accomplished what racism, bigotry, corrupt self-interest, intimidation, and violence could not: bring an end to the career of one of the great men in the history of Delaware County.

Raymond did not simply "campaign against discrimination;" he virtually founded the modern civil rights movement in Chester. He worked for more than thirty years to insure that state laws prohibiting racial discrimination were enforced; more than one of his

1. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 13 May 1999.

experiences presaged events that would play out on the national stage. Raymond fought the city administration, the school board, the courts, and one of the most powerful political machines in the history of the state. Largely through his efforts, Chester was transformed from a totally segregated city to a city where blacks could expect fair treatment in employment, housing, and education.

Given his record of accomplishment, one may have expected to read more in the press marking Raymond's passing. Unfortunately, by the time he resigned the presidency of the Association in the mid-1960s, he had come to be viewed not as a tireless advocate for equality, but rather as a relic, a gradualist whose peaceful tactics and respect for the law were grossly out of step with the times. Even Raymond's superiors at the NAACP National offices had concluded that Chester was "not very capably led." The national leaders considered Raymond a "moribund, impotent" leader who was hurting the cause.[2] Nearly everyone in the NAACP seemed to have forgotten the central role that Raymond had played in destroying a form of de facto Jim Crow as entrenched as anything found south of the Mason-Dixon line.

Raymond was born in Chester, Pennsylvania., on 10 May 1914. His parents had just moved from a small farm to a house in the 8th Ward of a city that stood on the threshold of tremendous demographic and economic change. Early in the 20th century, Chester was considered an insignificant suburb, a "sleepy, provincial little city" by political leaders in Philadelphia who occasionally considered it ripe for annexation.[3] During the second decade of the century, however, this sleepy suburb experienced unprecedented growth–a direct result of wartime industrial expansion. Between 1910 and 1920, manufacturing jobs increased from 7,867 to nearly 21,000. Heavy industry–the Sun and Chester shipyards, Baldwin Locomotive, Chester (later Scott) Paper, Sun Oil, and Westinghouse–replaced the old textile mills as industrial output rose from $19 million to $94 million.[4] Chester was no longer a sleepy suburb of

2. Glouster Current to Roy Wilkins, et al, 29 April 1964, *NAACP Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Glouster Current to Henry R. Smith, 13 December 1963; Glouster Current to Roy Wilkins, 8 April 1964, *NAACP Papers*.

3. John Ihlder, "How the War Came to Chester," *The Survey*, 40 (1 June 1918): 243-251.

4. *Spencer's Chester City Directory*, 1908 and 1910; *13th Census of the United States; Third Industrial Directory of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, 1919); Arden Skidmore, "132 Lose Lives in Eddystone Blast," *Delaware County Daily Times*, 11 April 1964; *Philadelphia Record*, 21 January 1917; Charles Palmer, *A History of Delaware County Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: National Historical

Philadelphia. It was a "neighboring city" looking forward to a promising future.[5] "Philadelphia will never annex Chester," future governor William Cameron Sproul boasted of his native city, "but Chester may some day annex Philadelphia!"[6]

Industrial growth drew thousands of new residents. Between 1910 and 1920, the population rose from 38,537 to 58,030. Accompanying the numerical growth was a change in Chester's ethnic make-up. In 1910, the total number of foreign-born residents was 6,673. By 1920, that number had jumped to 11,370. In 1910, the city counted 4,795 black residents. During the following decade, thousands of southern blacks, lured by the promise of better-paying jobs, traveled north. At the peak of the war boom, Chester's black population was estimated to be more than 20,000. Once the war was over and production returned to peacetime levels, many left the city in search of work. The 1920 census, nevertheless, reported Chester's black population at 7,125.[7]

Overseeing the fortunes of the city in 1920 was a county Republican machine as solidly entrenched as it had ever been in its forty-five-year history. It had survived a crippling transit strike, involvement in the state capitol building scandal, dramatic revelations of corruption in the judicial system and the police force, and a destructive race riot. It had beaten back all attempts at progressive reform although corruption, vice, and the dominance of the liquor interests continued to be issues in every election.[8] At the machine's helm stood thirty–six–year old John J. McClure who had inherited the organization from his father in 1907.

The city's black voters were McClure's most reliable supporters. Ed Fry ran the predominantly black 9th Ward from his Hotel on Central Avenue. In the 8th Ward, Louis Hunt, the only black funeral director

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Association, Inc., 1932) 129- 152; *14th Census of the United States;* Ulysses S. Duffield, *Souvenir of Roach's Shipyard, The Delaware River Iron Shipbuilding and Engine Works* (Philadelphia: Franklin Printing Company, c1885); The Chester Compass, June 1921; Arden Skidmore, "Roach Shipyard Had Far-Reaching Fame," *Delaware County Daily Times Magazine,* 7 December 1963, 4A-5A; Baldwin Locomotive Works, *History of the Baldwin Locomotive Works,* 1871-1923 (Philadelphia: 1924); *Delaware County Democrat,* 15 October 1915, 3.

5. *Philadelphia Record,* 21 January 1917.

6. "Forward, March Is Chester's Watchword," *Chester Commercial,* July 1918.

7. *13th Census of the United States; 14th Census of the United States; Philadelphia North American,* 28 July 1917.

8. *Chester Times,* 21 February 1906.

in the city, was responsible for the black voters.[9] The black section of the 3rd Ward, otherwise known as Bethel Court, was the responsibility of George Williams and Edward "Daddy Bass" Walton.

By 1920, the West End–the black area of the 8th and 9th Wards - had superseded Bethel Court as the section with the largest concentration of blacks. Most West End residents were honest, hard-working citizens. Meanwhile, the Court had degenerated into the city's red light district. Its residents, many of whom had an affinity for alcohol or drugs, lived in dilapidated tenements lacking water and sanitary facilities.[10] On most nights, the Court resembled a lawless, licentious "carnival town" where everything was for sale–liquor, drugs, numbers, sex, and protection.[11] Illegal gambling parlors abounded; prostitutes sat at windows or in doorways, inviting passers-by to enter.[12] Some would "grab men off the streets on their way to work."[13] Among the Court's more notable patrons was mayor Bill Ward. According to barber Solomon Bouldin, the mayor "used to go down to Daddy Bass' whore house and stay a week at a time."[14] Since the saloon and brothel operators were politically connected, the police made few arrests. By the end of the Great War, Bethel Court, once considered a poor imitation of Philadelphia's "Hell's Half Acre," was the vice capital of the lower Delaware River region, and it "reputation for ribaldry" spread nation wide.[15]

The political kingpins in the Court, George Williams and "Daddy Bass" Walton, were known vice peddlers and gamblers. Williams, the "Monarch of the Chester Tenderloin," was the more conspicuous and newsworthy of the two. Walton was less flamboyant, but his career lasted longer. He operated "bawdy houses" and was heavily involved in the drug trade. He served time in the county jail for election fraud in 1909.

9. *Chester Times*, 19 February 1896.
10. *Chester Times*, 18 August 1900.
11. Solomon Bouldin, interview by John J. Turner, 5 May 1977, Tape #1, *Chester Black Experience Oral History Project*, MG-409, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pa.
12. Ihlder, 246.
13. George Raymond, interview by John J. Turner, 12 April 1977, Tape #19, *Chester Black Experience Oral History Project.*
14. Bouldin, interview; George Raymond, who knew both Bass and Ward personally, corroborated this story; George T. Raymond, interview by author, 25 August 1997.
15. *Philadelphia North American*, 28 July 1917; Ihlder, 246; Richard J. Beamish, "Three Vile Spots in Chester Leading Producers of Riots," *Philadelphia Press*, 8 August 1917; Robert F. O'Neill, "Legendary Pocket of Vice in Chester Is Now a Parking Lot," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 April 1993.

Later he received a five-year sentence in federal prison for drug trafficking. Despite these setbacks, Walton never lost his political clout; throughout most of his life he enjoyed a reputation as the machine's most reliable vote producer. "If the machine needed a couple hundred votes, they could call up Bass and get them," recalled Bouldin. "Sick, lame, lazy, and dead–he'd vote everybody." Bass never held public or party office, but he remained a power in ward politics until his death in 1952.[16]

The black leadership of the West End reflected the difference between the two sections. In contrast to the Court, the West End was a solid residential community and was home to nearly all of the city's black skilled tradesmen and professionals.[17] Given that fact, a gambler and a drug-dealing pimp would not have been the best choices to lead the electorate. Instead, McClure counted on upright family men - men with reputations for honesty, integrity and hard work. Will Mack and Hubert Riley served on city council. Hunt and Arthur Reed sat on the School Board. Black committeemen included Thomas Foreman and Rev. Milton N. Sparks. Their headquarters was the hotel owned by black alderman Emory Wright.

Whatever their differences, Chester's black voters, whether motivated by conviction, convenience, habit, patronage, or money, repeatedly showed overwhelming support for McClure. He kept the support of Court residents by catering to their carnal desires, allowing vice to flourish unhindered by the police. And he did so without earning the reprobation of the rest of the black community. West End blacks publicly condemned the "degraded negroes" who lived in or frequented the Court.[18] They also condemned the white men who furnished the

16. *Chester Times*, 26 September 1904, 27 September 1904, 29 September 1904, 19 January 1907; Bouldin, interview; Raymond, interview, 25 August 1997; *Commonwealth v Edward Walton, George Williams, Frank Purnsley, Charles King, Alonzo Lewis, William Pitts, Clarence Jefferson, and S. J. Colwell*, Quarter Sessions Docket Book H, September 1908–March 1910, Delaware County Common Pleas Court, Trial #162, 382-383, Delaware County Archives, Glen Mills, Pa; *Delaware County Public Press*, 1 March 1929; *Delaware County Politics*, Delaware County Historical Society, File #613, attributed to John Riley; Bouldin interview; *Chester Times*, 18 January 1952.

17. *Home Directory of the Colored People of the City of Chester* (Chester: Lawrence L. Barrett, 1906).

18. "What To Do With Worthless Negroes," Sermon delivered by John W. Thompson to the congregation of the Temple Baptist Church, 9 February 1902, reprinted in the *Chester Times*, 11 February 1902.

means to make it a "den of iniquity" and who became wealthy through the exploitation of Court tenants.[19] But they rarely enunciated the connection between the conditions in Bethel Court and the political organization that permitted those conditions to exist, and they refused to permit that connection to influence their votes. Even the 1917 race riot, a calamitous week that many blamed on the machine, did not change the opinion of blacks living outside Bethel Court.[20] Less than two months after the rioting, West End voters returned a 702-310 majority for A.R. Granger, the machine candidate for county judge.[21] "City officials," George M. Thomas, a black West End physician, reported to NAACP national headquarters, have given us "a square deal and ample protection."[22]

This was the milieu into which George Raymond was born in 1914. He lived in the West End, but he was familiar with the seamy side of Chester life. As a teenager, he worked as a shoeshine boy in Bethel Court. There he witnessed beatings, murders, police corruption, Klan parades, and the kind of brazen violation of Prohibition that characterized Pennsylvania's major cities.[23] "I seen Treasury men and the FBI raid the same place three times in one day," he recalled years later, "You heard tell of Chicago where the beer run down the streets, well I seen it run down the streets in the city of Chester. I seen people get down and some people run to get pots and pans to scoop it up!"[24]

Raymond attended segregated schools until the ninth grade, the point at which all public school children went to Chester High School. There he encountered white classmates and teachers for the first time. He performed well, despite being treated as a second-class student by an all-white faculty; he graduated in 1933. Next he attended Drexel Institute of Technology where he studied business administration. After a year at Drexel, the depression forced him to leave school and find work.

19. *Chester Times*, 7 February 1902.
20. "Chester's Riots," *Philadelphia North American*, 4 August 1917. For concurring editorials, see *Philadelphia Press*, 30 July 1917, 1 August 1917, 8 August 1917; *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 30 July 1917; *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, 29 July 1917, 30 July 1917; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 29 July 1917.
21. *Chester Times*, 20 September 1917.
22. George M. Thomas to Roy Nash, 25 September 1917, *NAACP Papers*, Group II, Series C, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
23. For a good description of the state of Prohibition in the mid-1920s, see the series of investigative reports by M. Jay Racusin, "How Dry Is Pennsylvania?" *New York Tribune*, 18 October 1923-22 October 1923.
24. Raymond interview, 12 April 1977.

He did odd jobs in Chester and the Main Line, then went to work for the Chester Boys Club. It was while working for the Boys Club that Raymond joined the NAACP and began his career in the civil rights movement.[25]

When Raymond joined the NAACP, it was not, in his words, a "fighting organization." The Chester chapter had been established in 1921.[26] From the start, it suffered from internal dissension and public apathy. By 1923, Ruth Bennett, the chapter's guiding spirit, was thoroughly discouraged. "The best thing to do," she wrote, "is to send our membership to the New York office."[27] Threatened with dissolution, the branch snapped out of its lethargy.[28] The members elected new officers, recruited new members, and outlined a new plan of action. With two problems, however, they had little success. The first was the school problem. Of the six black schools, four were characterized by "dinginess without, darkness within, and poor ventilation."[29] The chapter recognized the need to "effect a remedy," but it would be decades before any real progress would be made.[30]

The second problem was McClure's stranglehold on the loyalties of the black community.[31] From the Progressive era to FDR's first bid for reelection, no voting districts in the county rolled up higher electoral majorities for machine candidates than did the black wards in Chester. Those majorities were due in part to the historic loyalty of blacks to the Republican Party. They were also due to the time-tested methods employed by the machine. All patronage appointees and recipients were required to vote at every election. The same was true of their voting-age family members.[32] Policemen worked, armed and in uniform, either at the polls or on the door-to-door canvasses.[33] Liquor licensees, disorderly and gambling house operators made sure that their patrons got to the polls at least once.

25. Raymond, interview 12 April 1977; Raymond, interview, 25 August 1997; M. Jay Racusin, "How Dry Is Pennsylvania?" New York Tribune, 18 October 1923 - 22 October 1923.

26. Roy Nash to George W. Thomas, 28 September 1917; "Application for Charter of Chester Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," 23 March 1921, *NAACP Papers.*

27. Ruth L. Bennett to James Weldon Johnson, 16 November 1923, *NAACP Papers.*

28. Robert W. Bagnall to Ruth L. Bennett, 23 November 1923, *NAACP Papers.*

29. Joseph W. Barret, Report of the Chester Branch, N.A.A.C.P., 1924, *NAACP Papers.*

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Raymond interview, 12 April 1977.

Voters with no direct ties to the machine knew the advantages of registering and voting Republican. It was machine leaders to whom people turned when they needed personal assistance. Be it a loan, help with a minor legal problem, education funds for a promising child, admission into the county nursing home, or some other request, they knew that it was the ward leader or committeeman who could deliver. For those citizens with no favors to ask, there was always money. Each voter could expect to collect at least two dollars in return for his or her vote. In a close contest, the price could be considerably higher.[34]

Exacerbating the NAACP's inability to fight the machine was the membership in the association of four black machine operatives: Casper Green; Emory Wright; Lewis Hunt; and Albert Reading.[35] The most powerful of the four was Hunt who, in addition to his work as an undertaker, served on the Chester School Board, personally approving the hiring of every black teacher.[36] By 1933, Hunt was a member of the Chester NAACP's executive committee.[37] Green joined the committee five years later.[38]

33. Theodore Laws, interview by John J. Turner, 28 April 1977, *Chester Black Experience Oral History Project*; Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *Report of the Commission Appointed by the Governor to Investigate Charges of Excessive Use of force by Police in Chester, Pennsylvania, 1964.* Delaware County Historical Society, Civil Rights File.

34. Leo S. Holmes, interview by John J. Turner, 2 December 1976, Tape #12, *Chester Black Experience Oral History Project.* See also interviews with: Horace Saven and Helen Hunt; Don Tonge, interview by author, 18 April 1996; Raymond interview, 25 August 1997; John Cramp, interview by author, 15 October 1996; J. Mervyn Harris, interview by author, 18 March 1996; *Chester Times*, 16 September 1919, 17 September 1919.

35. NAACP Membership Report, Chester Chapter, January 1924; NAACP Membership Report, Chester Chapter, February 1924; NAACP Report of Election of Officers, 6 December 1933; NAACP Membership Report, 24 May 1937. *NAACP Papers*; Grasty interview; Harris interview; Bouldin interview; Holmes interview; Hunt interview; *U.S. v John McClure et al*, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, June Term, 1933, No. 5859. National Archives-Philadelphia Region, Philadelphia, Pa.; Richard E. Harris, *Politics and Prejudice* (Apache Junction, AZ: Relmo Publishers, 1991).

36. *Chester Times*, 3 August 1932.

37. Albert D. MacDade, *Memoirs of Albert Dutton MacDade*, Delaware County Historical Society; Guy G. DeFuria, interview by author, 2 May 1996; Delaware County Politics, Delaware County Historical Society, File #613, attributed to John Riley; Harris, *Politics and Prejudice*; Harris interview; Hunt interview; Raymond interview, 12 April 1977; Holmes, interview; Bouldin interview; Emmett C. Grasty, interview by John J. Turner, 5 January 1977, Tape #8, *Chester Black Experience Oral History Project.*

38. NAACP Report of Election of Officers, 7 December 1938, *NAACP Papers.*

These four men, together with Daddy Bass, set a remarkable record between 1936 and 1944. The black electorate nationwide turned to FDR but Green, Hunt, Bass, Wright, and Reading kept their districts in line. Their best effort may have been 1936 when black voters "turned Lincoln's picture to the wall" en masse. Black Chester did not follow suit. Roosevelt won the city but Bethel Court and the West End returned majorities for Landon. The sizes of the majorities were far below those of past years. Nevertheless, the ability to withstand the Democratic tide that swept over Chester was testament to the organizational skills and political savvy of McClure's black lieutenants.[39]

They repeated their accomplishment in 1940. The black districts supported every GOP candidate while the city returned a majority for the Democratic slate. Finally, in 1944, FDR won slim majorities in the black wards. The failure, however, was not Green, Walton, Reading or Wright's. At the time, McClure was locked in an internecine power struggle with industrialist Joseph N. Pew, and Hunt, having been charged with assaulting a female student, had recently resigned from the School Board. At the same time, a group of young men anxious to "rectify the evils" tolerated by the established leadership, had taken control of the Chester NAACP and worked hard to insure a Republican defeat. The leader of this group was Herman Laws. His associates included Walter Brown, Theo Newkirk and George Raymond. Laws won the presidency of the chapter in 1941. When he was drafted in 1942, Raymond took his place.[40]

A dedicated New Deal Democrat, Raymond was determined to end the branch's alliance with the machine and pursue a program to end racial discrimination. By the end of Raymond's first term in office, all the McClure people were gone from the executive board. In 1945, a new black newspaper–the *Chester Crusader*–urged its readers to support the black slate of Norman Hunt, Wilson Harper, and Raymond in the city elections. All three lost to their machine-sponsored opponents. Raymond backed independent Republican E. Wallace Chadwick in the

39. Andrew Buni, *Robert L. Vann of The Pittsburgh Courier* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974), 193-194; *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 4 November 1936.
40. *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 6 November 1940; *Chester Times*, 6 November 1940; 3 November 1944; Theodore Newkirk to Walter White, 16 January 1940, *NAACP Papers*; E. Frederic Morrow to Theodore Newkirk, 27 January 1940, *NAACP Papers*; Harris; Raymond interview, 25 August 1997.

1946 congressional contest and, again, that support had little effect on the vote in the black precincts.[41]

For 1947, Raymond again placed the NAACP behind independent Republicans.[42] McClure's hand- picked slate won every race.[43] From that point on, Raymond continued to support McClure's political opponents, but he shifted his efforts away from fruitless electoral politics. In time, a tacit understanding evolved between Raymond and McClure. Raymond stayed out of politics and McClure did not impede Raymond's campaigns in other arenas. Raymond also modified his concept of a "fighting" organization. Realizing that he could not "beat the machine, clean up the school system, tear down all the bad housing, get enough policemen, close Jim Crow theaters...all at the same time," he decided on a long-range plan. He adopted a strategy of gradualism and reasoned discourse combined with occasional confrontation and direct action in his efforts to end segregation in housing, public accommodations, and education.[44]

Much of the housing in black sections of the city was substandard; conditions of "over-crowding, insanitation, deterioration, and blight" were commonplace.[45] Public housing provided some relief but the Chester Housing Authority (CHA) adhered to a strict policy of racial segregation; only one of three projects, Lamokin Village, was open to blacks.[46] At Raymonds urging, the CHA first set income ceilings for residents and eventually opened a second all-black housing project, the Ruth Bennett Homes.[47]

41. *Philadelphia Afro-American*, 18 December 1943; *Chester Crusader*, 6 October 1945; Raymond interview, 12 April 1977; *Chester Times*, 7 November 1945, 22 May 1946; *Chester Crusader*, 24 May 1946.
42. *Chester Times*, 18 August 1947.
43. *Chester Times*, 10 September 1947.
44. *Chester Crusader*, 12 July 1946.
45. National Urban League, *Summary and Recommendations of the Review of the Economic and Cultural Problems of the Negro Population of Chester, Media, and Darby Township, Pennsylvania*, April-May 1946. Delaware County Historical Society, 4; Dr. Edwin E. Aubrey, "Introduction to the Review of the Economic and Cultural Problems of the Negro Population of Chester, Media, and Darby Township, Pennsylvania," *Chester Times*, 10 April 1947.
46. Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, *Report on Investigatory Hearings, conducted in the City of Chester on July 17, 18, 29, and 31 and continued on August 8, 9 and 21 and further continued on September 6 and 11, 1968*, 12; Chester Times, 30 December 1942, 7 September 1951; National Urban League, *Summary and Recommendations*; Richard Harris, "Among Our Colored Citizens," *Chester Times*, 9 March 1943.
47. Raymond interview, 12 April 1977; *Chester Times*, 15 May 1947; *Chester Times*, 7 September 1951.

Despite these modest gains, the problem continued into the 1950s as the white population dropped while the black population continued to increase.[48] In 1952, blacks comprised 21% of the total population but 57% of the population in the city's poorest areas.[49] As the disparity between income levels of blacks and whites continued to grow, the need to desegregate all public housing became a pressing imperative. Raymond kept constant pressure on the CHA until, in May 1955, it capitulated.[50] He hailed the commissioners for being "thoughtful and forthright" and agreed to make a "cautious approach to actual integration in order to be successful."[51]

To desegregate public services, Raymond resorted to nonviolent confrontation. In 1945, all but one movie theater in the city either excluded blacks or required them to sit in designated areas. Raymond began with two theaters owned by Matthew Margoline: the Apollo and the Strand. He took a group of well-dressed blacks into the Apollo and sat in the "white" section. When Margoline insisted that they move to the section traditionally reserved for blacks, Raymond threatened legal action. Margoline backed down; a few nights later a similar scene played itself out at the Strand.[52]

Raymond used the same tactics to end de facto segregation in restaurants, hotels, and other businesses that served the public. Knowing that he had the backing of the state's civil rights laws and the support of County Judge Harry Sweney, Raymond was confident that he would win any cases that went to trial. On those occasions, he would instruct his associates to wash, dress in their best Sunday clothes and act responsibly and respectfully in court. In time, he developed a reputation as an honest, reasonable advocate for black equality. Consequently, he rarely lost.[53]

48. Between 1950 and 1960, Chester's white population decreased by 18.8% while the black population increased by 53.4%. See Donna McGough, *The City of Chester - Its Population and Housing: A Study of Demographic, Socio-Economic, and Housing Characteristics of the City of Chester Based on the 1960 Census* (Philadelphia: Health and Welfare Council, Inc. of Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties, 1963), 7.
49. *17th Census of the United States*; McGough.
50. Madison S. Jones to Mr. Moon, 22 December 1955, *NAACP Papers*; Raymond interview, 12 April 1977; Harris, 70-71; Charles Beckett to Madison S. Jones, 21 November 1955, *NAACP Papers*; *Chester Times*, 6 May 1955, 12 May 1955; *Delaware County Daily Times*, 14 December 1955.
51. Madison S. Jones to Charles Beckett, 15 December 1955, *NAACP Papers*; Raymond interview, 12 April 1977; *Delaware County Daily Times*, 5 February 1957, 17 March 1957.
52. Raymond interview, 12 April 1977; *Chester Crusader*, 3 June 1946.
53. Raymond interview, 12 April 1977.

Of all Raymond's fights, the one to desegregate the schools was the most difficult. In May 1946, the Watts Home-School Association announced plans for a student strike of the all-black Watts School. Its physical condition and its proximity to a busy railroad made it unhealthy and unsafe.[54] By June, Gartside School parents were considering a similar action.[55] The parents and the NAACP presented a plan calling for full student desegregation through a compulsory neighborhood school policy and full faculty integration.[56] The Board adopted the student portion of the plan only.[57] The decision while "by no means complete nor entirely satisfactory," was a historic change.[58] "The Chester branch," an overly- optimistic Raymond reported to the national, "has won the fight for integration of the schools."[59]

Events of the next several years demonstrated that the Board's commitment to desegregation was, at best, suspect. Board policy allowed students to request transfers to schools outside their neighborhoods. The Board approved most transfers for white students but few for blacks. As a result, by the 1953-1954 academic year, five elementary schools were almost completely black. Yet each one had white students living within its boundaries–students that the district bussed to all-white schools. When, in late 1953, the Board announced a $3.5 million bond issue, black frustration boiled to the surface.[60]

The Board planned an extensive improvement program that would include the redrawing of school boundaries. The new boundaries concentrated most blacks in a handful of schools. The bond issue was, in fact, a $3.5 million re-segregation project. When Raymond complained, the Board insisted that desegregation was an administrative issue and thus the domain of the Superintendent Addison Showalter. "And I've been thinking for the last fifty years that it's the Board's pre-

54. *Chester Times*, 28 May 1946, 29 May 1946, 1 June 1946, 17 June 1946.
55. *Chester Times*, 13 June 1946, 17 June 1946.
56. Executive Committee of the Chester Citizens' Committee to the Chester Board of School Directors, 22 July 1946, *NAACP Papers.*
57. Board of School Directors to Frinjella Bond, 30 July 1946, *NAACP Papers*; *Chester Times*, 1 August 1946.
58. John Francis Williams to Frank G. Andrews, 5 September 1946, *NAACP Papers.* (Williams was legal council for the Citizens' Committee; Andrews was president of the school board).
59. George Raymond to Gloster B. Current, 24 August 1946, *NAACP Papers.*
60. *Chester Times*, 25 May 1954; The five were the Starr, Watts, Douglas, Gartside, and Washington schools. [*Chester Times*, 18 May 1954, 25 May 1954]; John W. Flamer to Gloster B. Current, 3 June 1954, *NAACP Papers.*

rogative," Raymond responded in frustration. "Are you in favor of integration?" he demanded. "I don't think the Board can come out now and say yes," Board president Edward A. Parry replied. Less than a week later, the U.S. Supreme Court rendered its decision in *Brown v the Topeka Board of Education.* The decision, Showalter observed, "has no legal implication for Delaware County where segregation is admittedly a fact but not a policy." The NAACP issued a blunt ultimatum: "If Chester wants to take the responsibility of defending segregation, we'll take you on." After further consideration, the Board voted for "complete integration."[61]

Shortly after the 1954-55 school year began, the Board met in secret and reclassified the previously all-black Starr School as a special school for "orthogenic backward children." White children who had been transferred to Starr would return to the Larkin School and sixty black students from Starr would be forced to transfer to Larkin. Black parents were furious. The plan kept sixteen whites from having to attend a majority black school while requiring black students to travel outside their neighborhood.[62] Raymond notified the national of the incident. "You cannot do business with this group of bigots," he wrote. "They have hoodwinked and fooled the people long enough. They intend to maintain segregation as long as they can."[63] Faced with the threat of legal action, the Board abandoned the plan.

By the end of the 1950s, Raymond could boast a solid record of accomplishment. Chester's public housing had been largely desegregated and the official policy of racial segregation in the school system had been replaced by a neighborhood school system. Due to historic patterns of residential segregation, de facto segregation was still the rule; nevertheless, the district was in compliance with *Brown.* He had also ended discrimination in most of the city's restaurants, theaters, and places of public amusement. In the coming years, he promised similar success in gaining a stronger voice for blacks in government affairs. The focus of his efforts in the 1960s, however, would be jobs. With blacks

61. *Chester Times,* 24 November 1953; John W. Flamer to Gloster B. Current, 3 June 1954, *NAACP Papers; Chester Times,* 20 April 1954; Raymond interview, 25 August 1997; *Chester Times,* 20 April 1954, 18 May 1954, 25 May 1954; *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin,* 24 August 1954; Addison H. Showalter to the Chester School Board, 13 September 1954, *NAACP Papers.*

62. *Chester Times,* 28 September 1954.

63. George T. Raymond to Henry R. Smith Jr., 29 September 1954, *NAACP Papers.*

now 33% of Chester's population, he saw employment discrimination as the most pressing problem facing Chester's black community.[64]

While Chester moved haltingly toward racial equality, most of the rest of Delaware County resisted all attempts at integration. Four municipalities–Chester, Chester Township, Darby Township, and Yeadon–contained 74% of the county's black population. The rest of the county was 98% white. It seemed that an invisible wall surrounded the county's, white, blue-collar towns. The wall was manned by the residents–many of them the "low class Italians from South Philly and pig-shit Irish from West Philly who came to get away from the niggers."[65] The gates were guarded around the clock by the machine.

Raymond was one of the first blacks to experience the welcoming warmth of a white Delaware County. In 1958, he purchased a home in the tiny working-class borough of Rutledge. The day before he was due to move in, a fire gutted the house. Arson investigations by county and state agencies produced no results. After the fire, the town attempted to exercise eminent domain and claim Raymond's property as the site for a new town hall. Raymond threatened legal action and the town fathers backed down. The house was rebuilt and Raymond moved in the following year.[66]

Not all such attempts were as sensational. The head of Chester's Human Renewal Department was "refused the privilege" of viewing a house in the white part of Yeadon. The state Human Relations Commission (HRC) had to order realtors to sell to blacks in Wallingford, Rosemont, and Bryn Mawr.[67] When an Aldan family agreed to sell to blacks, the home was vandalized and when a Newtown man discovered that Irv Cross, a black professional football player, had used a third party to purchase his property, he went to court to void the sale.[68] The most

64. "The N.A.A.C.P. Will NEVER Fail Chester," Membership Drive handbill of the Chester Chapter of the NAACP, 1958, *NAACP Papers*; *18th Census of the United States*; Calvin D. Banks to Gloster B. Current, 26 January 1961, *NAACP Papers*, Raymond interview, 25 August 1997.

65. *18th Census of the United States*; Mary Claire Lennox, quoted in Mike Mallow, "The Elephant's Graveyard," *Philadelphia Magazine*, [July 1974]: 80-83, 132-146.

66. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 31 August 1963; *Chester Times*, 26 May 1958, 27 May 1958; *Delaware County Daily Times*, 24 June 1965; Raymond interview, 12 April 1977, 25 August 1997.

67. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 11 November 1964, 14 November 1964, 23 February 1966.

68. *News of Delaware County*, 30 May 1963; *Delaware County Daily Times*, 28 June 1966, 1 October 1966.

dramatic confrontation took place in Folcroft when a mob numbering over 1,500 tried to prevent the Baker family–a black family from Philadelphia–from moving into its neighborhood. For more than a week, whites blocked streets, shouted racial epithets, threw rocks, battled local and state police, and attempted to firebomb the building. When all their efforts failed, they formed the Delmar Civic Association which organized a boycott of stores doing business with the Bakers. It also purchased the house next to the Bakers for use as its headquarters.[69]

Overall, however, Delaware County experienced little of the racial violence that plagued much of the urban north during the 1960s. The machine worked quietly but effectively to prevent confrontation by preventing attempts at integration. Some local organization men won office by promising to keep blacks out but such openly racist positions were not encouraged. Far more effective and preferable was the pressure that could be brought to bear on realtors and bankers. Mortgage bankers had two reasons for what was termed "racial steering." First, bankers believed that an influx of blacks to white neighborhoods could depress property values–property on which the banks held mortgages. Hence, integration could mean a dramatic drop in the amount of secured money on loan. Secondly, state banking laws fostered a climate favorable to small, locally-owned banks and S&Ls.[70] The laws created a symbiotic relationship. The vitality of the local banks was insured by forcing the residents to patronize them. On the other hand, the vitality of the bank depended on the patronage of the locals. With many locals being segregationist whites, few bankers dared risk losing depositors by granting mortgages to blacks in white neighborhoods. McClure could usually rely on the good business sense of the bankers. Many banks had machine loyalists on their boards of directors. He retained, nevertheless, the power to compel compliance with his wishes. Word that a bank was considering an "unfortunate" decision might result in intense scrutiny from the local building inspector or the state bank examiner–both patronage appointees chosen by McClure.[71]

69. *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin,* 4 September 1963; *News of Delaware County,* 26 September 1963; *Delaware County Daily Times,* 4 September 1963, 20 September 1963, 26 September 1963.

70. At the time, Pennsylvania banking laws restricted each bank to operating in its home county and contiguous counties. That meant that every bank operating in Delaware county was headquartered in either Delaware, Philadelphia, Montgomery, or Chester Counties.

71. Ibid; In 1968, the HRC found that Delaware County real estate and mortgage banking industries had "effectively deterred and often blocked the economically able

Realtors and builders were less subject to the vagaries of public sentiment but they were more exposed to pressure from the machine. Like bankers, real estate agents and agencies were subject to state regulation. More importantly, they were often vulnerable to the whims of local taxing authorities. Larger realtors often owned or managed blocks of apartments or other rental properties. Resistance to the dictates of the machine could result in costly tax reassessments. Recalcitrant builders might find it impossible to procure permits. And, in both cases, the bigger the operation, the greater the potential for troublesome building code violations.[72] Hence, the combination of self interest and intimidation kept the realtors and bankers in line. They, in turn, kept blacks out of white Delaware County - a situation Raymond also planned to address when Stanley Branche burst on the scene in Chester.

Branche, a charming man with a gift for demagoguery and an engaging wit, came to Chester in the spring of 1962 determined to make a name for himself and make some money in the process. He was committed to the cause of racial equality. He was even more committed to the cause of Stanley Branche. He firmly believed in "doing well before doing good."[73] In Chester, he found the opportunity to do both.

By 1962, the once-mighty industrial center was a shadow of its former self. Ford Motor Company had closed the doors of its obsolete Chester assembly plant. American Viscous, citing a lack of business "for the existing capacity of the rayon industry" had ceased production. The nationwide decline of the railroads had forced the Baldwin Locomotive Works to the brink of receivership; it would shut down within a year. Sun Shipyard, once the largest privately-owned shipbuilding concern in the world, had shrunk from a war-time high of 35,000 to a mere 4,000 employees. Overall, manufacturing jobs had dropped to a postwar low

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black family from acquiring housing of their choice in neighborhoods of their choice." Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, *Report on Investigatory Hearings, conducted in the City of Chester on July 17, 18, 29, and 31 and continued on August 8, 9 and 21 and further continued on September 6 and 11, 1968*, 11; *Chester Times*, 26 May 1958; In 1960, Delaware County was home to two large commercial banks, seven savings and loans, and twenty-five building and loan associations. [*1960 Delaware County Yearbook* (Newtown Square: Gerald S. Fuller, 1960)]; John K. Brown, interview by author, 29 November 1995; Amos Hess, interview by author, 16 October 1993

72. Tonge interview; Raymond interview, 25 August 1997; Mark Fazlollah, "Integration Uneven in the Suburbs," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3 October 1993.

73. Thatcher Longstreth, interview by author, 27 January 1997.

of 9,500. Unemployment stood at 9.3%. Black unemployment in the city was even worse: 14.2%. As the economy sank, middle-class flight accelerated. In its place came low-income black families, "stifled by a lack of employment opportunities and adding to the burden of services the city had to provide." Average family income dropped; the number of families on public assistance increased. Nearly 25% of the families in Delaware County with incomes under $4,000 resided in the city, as did 60% of the county's public assistance recipients. As the middle-class abandoned the city, retailers did the same. They were replaced by "economic scavengers - high-volume, low-profit junk shops taking advantage of cheap rent to pick the bones of a declining consumer market." Chester was "a city fast losing its economic guts."[74]

Chester in 1962 held two added attractions for an ambitious black activist. First, it had a history of sporadic racial tension. Second, its black leaders seemed to be out of step with the times. Led by Raymond, they had waged a gradualist fight for twenty years. They used confrontation, civil disobedience, and legal action only as a last resort. They viewed the attitudes and tactics of the new generation of militant activists as, at best, ill-advised. At worst they were said to be the work of communist subversives.[75] Raymond's approach to civil rights was typical of his generation; for Branche, it was the strategy of a man who

74. While the de-industrialization of urban America was a nation-wide trend, students of the phenomenon in Chester have cited several reasons why it hit the city especially hard. They include: failure to complete the interstate highways planned for the area (I-95 and I-476); the corruption of the ruling political machine; organized crime; deteriorating port facilities; middle-class out-migration; union activism; exorbitantly high electric rates; and the declining quality of the local public school system. By 1986, the Department of Housing and Urban Development had identified Chester as "the most economically depressed city of its size in the entire United States." McGough; *Chester Times*, 26 May 1954; *New York Times*, 11 February 1961; John Meli, *Barriers to Employment Growth in a Distressed Area: A Case Study of Chester Pa.* (Chester: Widener College, 1972); Elizabeth McLean Petras, *From Paternalism to Patronage to Pillage: Chester, Pa., A Chronicle of the Embedded Consciousness of Place in the Second Most Economically Depressed City in the U.S.* Unpublished paper presented at the North Central Sociological Association Annual Meetings, Dearborn, Michigan, 25-28 April, 1991. Delaware County Historical Society; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 25 February 1996; Chester City Planning Commission, *Economic Characteristics, City of Chester* (Philadelphia: Fels Institute for Local and State Government, University of Pennsylvania, 1964); Gaeton Fonzi, "A Dirge For Dying Chester," *Greater Philadelphia Magazine*, (April 1961), reprinted as a campaign handbill by the Independent Republican Committee of Chester, 1961; Ron Calhoun, "Assistance Board Philosophy: Help Those Who Need It," *Delaware County Daily Times*, 10 December 1962.

75. Raymond interview, 6 July 1977.

had outlived his usefulness, someone who had become part of the establishment he claimed to oppose. The national office shared, up to a point, Branche's opinion. Membership had dwindled from 742 in 1958 to 314 in 1962.[76] "Whenever a local branch," National Director Gloster Current believed, "has leadership which has been overly-long in the administration, there comes a time when the people feel that more aggressive measures are necessary."[77] Current viewed the senior membership of the Chester local as "inert." "On the whole," he wrote in 1963, there was a "lethargic...attitude prevailing."[78]

One last factor augured well for Branche. At the time of his arrival in Chester, the machine was in the throws of the worst mutiny in its history.[79] By the end of 1962, the organization known throughout the state for its brutally efficient unanimity seemed to be in complete disarray. Its leader was incommunicado; its lieutenants were issuing public statements of dissent. A renegade county commission boasted an open Republican-Democratic alliance and was raising havoc with the patronage system. Three lawsuits pitting senior organization members against each other had turned the squabble into a public spectacle. The wheels seemed to be falling off the machine's ninety-year-old bandwagon.[80] By the time McClure was able to purge the organization of the rebels, Branche was front page news.

Branche's wife Anna introduced him to Raymond when the couple moved to Chester. Raymond assigned him to the campaign to desegregate the Great Leopard Skating Rink. Branche immediately took charge. "It was the goddamndest thing I ever saw," he recounted "It was like Amos and Andy...I told my wife I was taking over in Chester."[81]

76. Gloster B. Current to Henry R. Smith Jr., 13 December 1963, *NAACP Papers.*
77. Gloster B. Current to George T. Raymond, 8 November 1963, *NAACP Papers.*
78. Gloster B. Current to Henry R. Smith Jr., 13 December 1963, *NAACP Papers.*
79. Gaeton Fonzi, "Delaware County: The Everlasting Hurrah," *Philadelphia Magazine,* (June 1963): 24-27, 58-73; *News of Delaware County,* 15 September 1960; *News of Delaware County,* 15 September 1960; *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin,* 15 March 1965; Cramp interview; Don Murdaugh, "Here's 'Behind-Scenes' in GOP Upheaval," *Delaware County Daily Times,* 19 December 1963.
80. Fonzi, "Delaware County: The Everlasting Hurrah;" *News of Delaware County,* 15 September 1960; *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin,* 15 March 1965; Cramp interview; Murdaugh; Harris interview; *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania ex rel. Fox v Swing,* 409 Pa., 241 (1962); *Delaware County Daily Times,* 23 January 1962, 11 April 1962, 30 June 1962, 21 September 1962, 2 October 1962, 8 October 1962, 15 October 1962.
81. Bernard McCormick, "The Insurrectionist," *Greater Philadelphia Magazine,* 6 (June 1964): 22- 27, 76-86.

The dispute went to court in June 1962. Branche invited college students from Swarthmore to demonstrate in the court room. For the first time in memory, the NAACP lost a case and Judge Thomas Curran, annoyed with the demonstrators, charged the costs to Raymond.[82]

The following September, Branche, now calling himself the personnel officer for the Chester chapter, organized a two-day student strike of the Thaddeus Stevens School to protest de facto segregation.[83] Then he blocked a police van sent to evict a woman from the Ruth Bennett Homes for having a second illegitimate child. Those accounts referred to Branche as the executive director of the Chester chapter.[84] Next, he threatened a boycott of Chester businesses that refused to make "commitments to hiring Negro employees." By that time he was simply the "Director of the Chester Branch of the NAACP."[85] "Please advise me of Branche's status," a confused Raymond wired Executive Director Roy Wilkins.[86] As the 1963-64 school year began, Branche, fresh from demonstrations in Cambridge, Maryland, was leading a second boycott of the Stevens School, promising to continue until it had been "fully desegregated."[87] Then he was in Folcroft, spending the evenings with the Baker family.[88] The ubiquitous Branche seemed to be following Naisbitt's formula for leadership: "You find a parade and get in front of it."[89]

On September 10, NAACP spokesman Lee Hollis announced an "amicable" settlement of the Stevens dispute. The boycott would end and the School Board would send the fifth graders to a mostly white school.[90] Branche had no comment. By that time, reports of discontent with his "headline grabbing" were beginning to reach the public.[91] Raymond set up a press information committee to "make accurate

82. Raymond interview, 6 July 1977; Stanley E. Branche to Gloster B. Current, 1 August 1962, *NAACP Papers*; *Chester Times*, 20 June 1962.
83. *Chester Times*, 7 September 1962.
84. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2 March 1963.
85. *Chester Times*, 19 April 1963.
86. George Raymond to Roy Wilkins, 23 September 1963, *NAACP Papers*.
87. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 9 April 1963; *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 21 May 1963.; McCormick, "This County Needs A Quota System," *Delaware County Daily Times*, 4 September 1963, 16 September 1963.
88. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 5 September 1963.
89. John Naisbitt, *Megatrends* (New York: Warner Books, 1982), 101.
90. *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 10 September 1963.
91. George T. Raymond to Gloster B. Current, 20 November 1963, *NAACP Papers*.

information readily available to the media."[92] Branche countered with the formation of the Chester Committee For Freedom Now (CFFN). Raymond contacted Current to ascertain the "ethics and legality" of the new group.[93] Current's response was a carefully worded letter recommending that Raymond either control Branche or distance the chapter from him. "Perhaps," Current chided, Stanley has "found that the local branch is too slow for his militant spirit."[94]

Before Raymond could delineate his position, Branche struck, staging a demonstration at the Franklin School. When superintendent Charles Long ordered the school closed, Branche's demonstrators made an impromptu march into the Chester business district. Some set up a "freedom school" at the Temple Baptist Church; others descended on city hall.[95] The next day, the police arrested 158 marchers, including Branche.[96] On the third day, the school reopened and 100 picketers were arrested. Another 500 marched on the police station to protest the arrests. Branche posted bond, returning to Chester as the state police arrived. "Chester is at the crossroads," opined the *Chester Times*. "If a mob comes back and disrupts order, the city has capitulated to lawlessness."[97]

The situation ended as abruptly as it had begun. Superintendent Long, Branche, and NAACP Field Secretary Philip Savage announced a settlement on the fourth day. Long agreed to transfer 165 students to relieve overcrowding and to make necessary repairs at Franklin. The city agreed to drop all charges against those who had been arrested. "This is a victory," Branche told his followers, "that will be broadcast around the world."[98] While Branche celebrated, Judge Sweney ordered prison officials to increase the capacity of Broadmeadows Prison by two hundred.

Raymond remained singularly quiet during the three-day affair. On

92. Don Murdaugh, "Will Schism Shatter Chester NAACP?" *Delaware County Daily Times*, 20 September 1963.

93. George T. Raymond to Gloster B. Current, 5 November 1963, *NAACP Papers*.

94. Gloster Current to George T. Raymond, 8 November 1963, *NAACP Papers*.

95. Branche claimed that the school, originally built to accommodate 500 students, now held 1,300. Another 100 had to go to class in the boiler room of the William Penn Homes. Plaster was falling off the walls, the playground was in shambles and students had to take turns using the toilet facilities. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 12 November 1963.

96. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 13 November 1963.

97. "Law And Order Must Prevail In Chester," *Delaware County Daily Times*, 14 November 1963.

98. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 15 November 1963, 16 November 1963.

the first day of trouble, he fired a letter to Current, protesting Savage's apparent cooperation with the CFFN.[99] Current, in turn, wrote to Branche, requesting that Branche make clear that the CFFN activities were not sanctioned by the NAACP.[100] With the settlement, Raymond was forced to modify his position and issue a statement of support for Branche's "goals and objectives," if not for his tactics.[101] At the next meeting of the Chester NAACP, several younger members attacked Raymond's "ties" to the McClure machine and demanded that he back the efforts of the CFFN. "Half the members are in a militant mood," Raymond reported to Current. "Chances are you'll see me at the head of the next demonstration."[102] Current encouraged Raymond's change of heart and promised to meet with Raymond and Branche to help "strengthen operations."[103] His comments to state leader Henry Smith were far less positive. The "moribund" leadership in Chester, he wrote, had "failed to grasp its role in a volcanic community situation." Raymond had missed his chance and let a demagogue like Branche put his infant organization at the forefront of the civil rights movement. Now CORE was rumored to be interested in joining the CFFN efforts in Chester. "Methinks," Current concluded, "that Raymond created a Frankenstein in Branche."[104]

At his January 1964 inaugural, incoming mayor James Gorbey announced that "Chester has no Negro problem...and demonstrations will no longer be tolerated."[105] Branche was unimpressed. In February, CFFN pickets surrounded eight schools.[106] Fifty-five percent of the students stayed home. The same day, CFFN followers burned Chester Human Relations Commission (CHRC) Chairman Donald G. Ming in effigy for being an "Uncle Tom" and a "Part-time Negro." Within hours, Branche and CFFN vice-chairman Felder Rouse were under arrest, charged with criminal libel.[107]

99. George T. Raymond to Gloster B. Current, 12 November 1963, *NAACP Papers.*
100. Gloster B. Current to Stanley Branche, 14 November 1963, *NAACP Papers.*
101. Raymond interview, 6 July 1977; *Delaware County Daily Times,* 15 November 1963.
102. George T. Raymond to Gloster Current, 24 November 1963, *NAACP Papers.*
103. Gloster B. Current to George T. Raymond, 13 December 1963, *NAACP Papers.*
104. Gloster B. Current to Henry R. Smith, Jr., 13 December 1963, *NAACP Papers.*
105. Fonzi, "A Dirge For Dying Chester."
106. *Delaware County Daily Times,* 11 February 1964.
107. *New York Times,* 14 February 1964; *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin,* 14 February 1964.

The CHRC investigated the CFFN complaints and determined that de facto segregation was still the status quo in Chester's schools. Five schools were 100% black; two others were nearly 85% black.[108] The School Board refused to waver from its commitment to neighborhood schools. Busing, it estimated, would cost $180,000 each year and would drive more people out of Chester.[109] Current criticized both the decision and the Board's two black members who had voted with the majority. He was far more critical, however, of "irresponsible civil rights leaders" like Branche who would rather demonstrate than negotiate. "These extreme neurotics," he wrote, "are not to be classified with those groups which...seek justice at the conference table [or]...after all else fails, resort to the courts."[110]

The difference between Current's idea of "responsible" and "irresponsible" became obvious in the next few days. While Raymond tried to reason with Board president Frances Donahoo, Branche invited Dick Gregory and Malcolm X to Chester for a "Freedom Now Conference." Malcolm was only four months removed from his much-publicized remarks about the JFK assassination and Raymond was quick to voice his opposition.[111] When Branche refused to cancel the rally, the break with the NAACP was complete. Raymond claimed Branche resigned by his actions. "They threw my ass out," Branche retorted.[112] For the moment, there were three distinctly generational factions in Chester's activist black community.

At the rally on March 14, Malcolm spoke for one extreme, advocating complete separation of the races. The highlight of the day was his condemnation of nonviolence. "It is criminal," he declared, "to teach a man not to defend himself when he is constantly the victim of brutal attacks."[113] At the other end of the spectrum was a collection of conservative ministers, the traditional leaders of Chester's black community, who advocated continued gradualism. They supported the black School Board members and thought busing to achieve integration was "nonsense." The only rational policy was the one presently being pursued by

108. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 3 March 1964.
109. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 10 March 1964.
110. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 11 March 1964.
111. George T. Raymond to Frances P. Donahoo, 12 March 1964, *NAACP Papers*; Malcolm X, *Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1964), 301; *Delaware County Daily Times*, 14 March 1964.
112. Fonzi, "A Dirge For Dying Chester;" McCormick.
113. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 15 March 1964.

the Board. "We're on the right track," Rev. Pius Barbour urged, "let's not look back."[114]

Between the extremes were Raymond and Current and the NAACP. Raymond recognized that Branche could make a difference. But he also could turn the city into a battlefield.[115] Current was worried about prestige. Branche was a direct threat to NAACP hegemony. Current wanted the local chapter to appear progressive but not threatening to the white community–to "conduct its activities in a less flamboyant manner than Branche." But it could not appear "derelict" or out of touch; it had to "move and move rapidly in the right direction or younger and more agile persons will take the play away."[116]

Raymond, attempting to navigate such a "middle course," sent a list of proposals to the Board that included full integration of the junior high schools and further steps toward integration of the elementary schools. "We want to solve problems," he assured, "with maximum goodwill." Rejection of his request, he warned "would result in further unnecessary tension and conflicts."[117] The Board refused to meet with Raymond and reaffirmed its neighborhood school policy. Donahoo suggested that the NAACP take the matter to court so that the Board "could be guided by the law of the commonwealth."[118]

With Raymond and the Board at an impasse, Current engineered a truce between the NAACP and the CFFN.[119] Branche denied any "endorsement of Malcolm X's principles" and Raymond and Branche called for a candlelight vigil to protest the School Board's "sinister" policy.[120] The Barbour faction reacted swiftly, confronting Raymond about his reversal regarding Branche. Raymond claimed that the alliance was not his idea, but rather orders from the national office. Barbour then wired Current, advising that he and his fellow ministers could not accept "the kind of leadership which has taken over the direc-

114. J. Pius Barbour, "Open letter to Citizens of Chester," *Delaware County Daily Times,* 14 March 1964; Harris, *Politics and Prejudice.* See N35, p 704

115. Raymond interview, 6 July 1977.

116. Gloster B. Current to George T. Raymond, 2 December 1964, *NAACP Papers.*

117. The Chester Branch, N.A.A.C.P. to The Chester School Board, 23 March 1964, *NAACP Papers.*

118. George T. Raymond to Gloster B. Current, 23 March 1964, *NAACP Papers; Delaware County Daily Times,* 24 March 1964.

119. Stanley E. Branche to George T. Raymond, March 1964, *NAACP Papers.*

120. NACP/CFFN Press Release, 24 March 1964, *NAACP Papers.*

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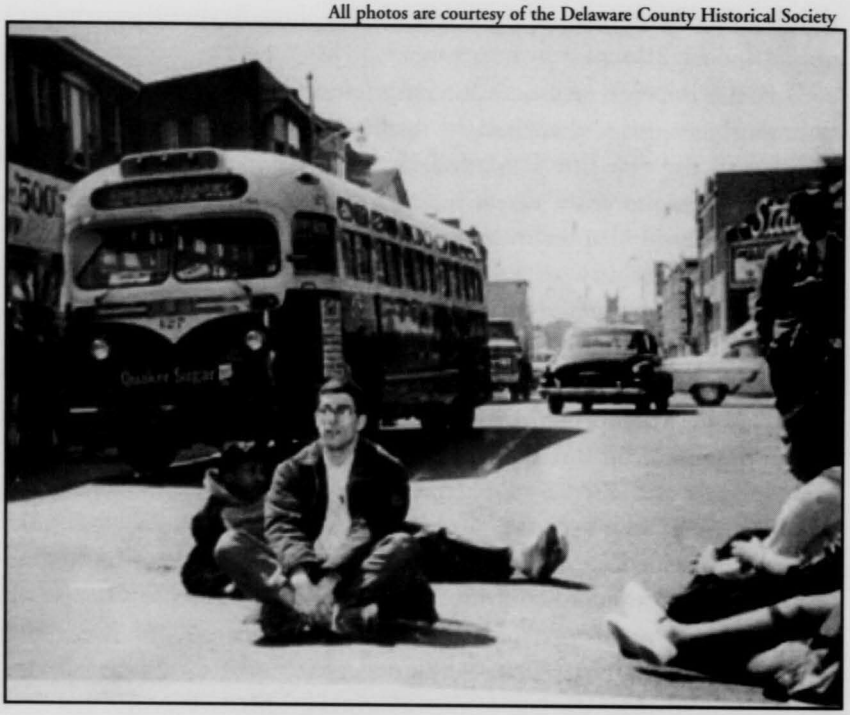

Street sit-in, Good Friday, March 1964

All photos are courtesy of the Delaware County Historical Society

Street sit-in, Good Friday, March 1964

All photos are courtesy of the Delaware County Historical Society

Police break up street sit-in, March 1964

tion of this campaign."[121] His complaint fell on deaf ears. For the next month, with Raymond doing his best to temper Branche's militant activism, Chester would be the "Birmingham of the North."[122]

On Good Friday, 1964, three hundred demonstrators marched through Chester's downtown area carrying torches and singing freedom songs.[123] The next day, they staged sit-ins at busy downtown intersections. Their actions brought traffic in the heart of the business district to a snarling halt. When the police arrived, the protesters resorted to passive resistance techniques. Insufficient training, suspicion, and short tempers on both sides led to a number of scuffles as police arrested eighty teenagers and adults. "The city has reached a crossroad," Mayor Gorbey announced. "We must either redouble our resolve to live by law and order or degenerate into another Jacksonville."[124] Branche responded that his followers were ready to "fill the jails" rather than accept hollow promises of surveys and feasibility studies.[125] "It is impossible to rationally discuss any problems with these leaders," Board solicitor Guy DeFuria announced, "there will be no more meetings."[126] On April 6, the School Board went to court.

The situation now began to spin out of control.[127] Branche had forced the Board to turn to the courts–an option the NAACP had hoped to avoid.[128] The alliance between the CFFN and the NAACP was threatening to unravel. Branche claimed that Savage had conspired with Cecil Moore of the Philadelphia chapter to get out of jail while leaving Branche and his CFFN followers behind bars.[129] Moreover,

121. J. Pius Barbour, et al, to Gloster B. Current, 24 March 1964, *NAACP Papers.*
122. McCormick.
123. This description of the 1964 Chester riots is based on reports from the following sources: Governor's Office, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *Report of the Commission Appointed by the Governor to Investigate Charges of Excessive Use of Force by Police in Chester, Pennsylvania;* Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, *Report on Investigatory Hearings, conducted in the City of Chester on July 17, 18, 29, and 31 and continued on August 8, 9 and 21 and further continued on September 6 and 11, 1968;* City of Chester Police Reports, Delaware County Historical Society; George T. Raymond interviews; *Delaware County Daily Times; Philadelphia Evening Bulletin; Philadelphia Inquirer;* McCormick; Spencer Klaw, "Old Scratchhead Wakes Up In Chester, Pennsylvania," *The Reporter,* (18 June 1964): 31-34.
124. *Philadelphia Sunday Bulletin,* 29 March 1964.
125. *Delaware County Daily Times,* 2 April 1964, 4 April 1964.
126. *Delaware County Daily Times,* 6 April 1964.
127. Henry R. Smith Jr. to Gloster B. Current, 7 December 1963, *NAACP Papers.*
128. *Delaware County Daily Times,* 31 March 1964.
129. Stanley E. Branche to Gloster B. Current, 1 April 1964, *NAACP Papers.*

Branche's tactic of blocking traffic had engendered far more hostility than support. It had also intensified the polarization within Chester's black community.[130] Current blamed the crisis on the flaws of the people involved: Raymond was an "impotent" leader; Branche an "irresponsible young militant;" and the Chester authorities a collection of "vile and pretty slick operators." Under the circumstances, he rationalized, the national was "doing the best that could be done."[131]

Branche turned his attention to the business community. He picketed white-owned stores in order to force Chester businessmen to intervene in the school dispute.[132] While the picketers marched, the Chester Parents Association (CPA) - a group of white residents opposed to busing - began a telephone campaign, urging people to shop in the downtown area.[133] The Board finally agreed to another meeting, but it insisted that the CPA and the press be in attendance. Branche refused. "We are not going to any circus, carnival, or side show," he declared.[134] Then he threatened a "massive combination boycott, sit-in and lie- in at all city schools, buildings, and businesses."[135]

State Attorney General Walter Alessandroni arrived in Chester on April 22 to defuse what he called an "extremely dangerous situation." Protest leaders refused to meet with him. The next day Branche's massive demonstration began. Two hundred seventeen protesters were jailed as "a day of hit and run demonstrations turned into a night of violence." Picketers surrounded the homes of Board president Donahoo, solicitor DeFuria, and John McClure. Gorbey closed the schools and canceled all police leaves. Vandals smashed store windows and damaged buses. Among those arrested were several black ministers, reporters from two newspapers and eighty-two teenagers.[136]

On April 23, the marchers targeted police headquarters. The next night the demonstration turned into an ugly rock-throwing melee. Six policemen and eight demonstrators required hospitalization as violence spread through the West End. Police made twenty-nine arrests, bring-

130. "Confidential Minutes of Meeting, Re: Chester, Pennsylvania Situation, 8 April 1964, *NAACP Papers*; *Report of the Commission Appointed by the Governor to Investigate Charges of Excessive Use of Force by Police in Chester, Pennsylvania*; "Lawlessness Is No Answer," *Delaware County Daily Times*, 31 March 1964.
131. Gloster B. Current to Roy Wilkins, 8 April 1964, *NAACP Papers*.
132. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 10 April 1964.
133. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 11 April 1964, 12 April 1964
134. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 16 April 1964.
135. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 17 April 1964, 18 April 1964.
136. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 23 April 1964.

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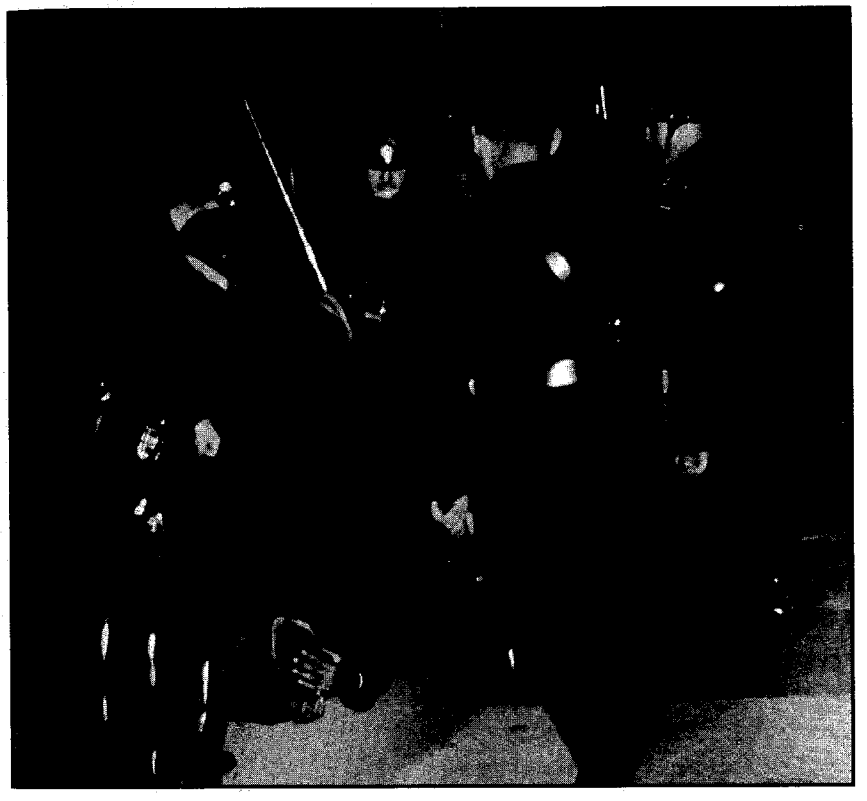

State Police subdue rioter at 3rd & Pennell Sts., April 1964

ing the total since March to nearly 600 and prompting numerous charges of police brutality.[137] "Troopers marched into the Negro slums," reported the *New Republic*, "and blackjacked every Negro in sight...They even clubbed a pregnant woman in the stomach."[138] Savage fled the chaos in the trunk of a car to avoid arrest. Branche labeled him a coward.[139] Following a 1:00 A.M. visit from a delegation of Chester ministers, Governor William Scranton rushed to Philadelphia and convinced Branche to obey a court-ordered moratorium on demon-

137. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 25 April 1964, 26 April 1964.
138. Owen Moritz, "The Militants," *New Republic*, (9 May 1964): 5-6.
139. Raymond interview, 25 August 1997.

All photos are courtesy of the Delaware County Historical Society

Police removing demonstrators blocking traffic in downtown Chester, March 1964

All photos are courtesy of the Delaware County Historical Society

Rioters and police at 3rd & Pennell Sts., April 1964

All photos are courtesy of the Delaware County Historical Society

State Police subdue rioter at 3rd & Pennell Sts., April 1964

ing the total since March to nearly 600 and prompting numerous charges of police brutality.[137] "Troopers marched into the Negro slums," reported the *New Republic*, "and blackjacked every Negro in sight...They even clubbed a pregnant woman in the stomach."[138] Savage fled the chaos in the trunk of a car to avoid arrest. Branche labeled him a coward.[139] Following a 1:00 A.M. visit from a delegation of Chester ministers, Governor William Scranton rushed to Philadelphia and convinced Branche to obey a court-ordered moratorium on demon-

137. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 25 April 1964, 26 April 1964.
138. Owen Moritz, "The Militants," *New Republic*, (9 May 1964): 5-6.
139. Raymond interview, 25 August 1997.

strations.[140] Once again, the NAACP began to distance itself from Branche and his followers. "There is considerable confusion in Chester," Current reported to Wilkins, and "the NAACP is not going to get much out of the situation except a big headache and expenses we can ill afford...There is no point in further treating with Branche."[141]

For Scranton, the Chester situation represented not only a threat to his presidential aspirations and an escalation of racial tension in the state, it also presented him with a personal and political dilemma. Early in 1962, Pennsylvania's Republican power brokers had faced a difficult situation. At stake were GOP nominations for governor and U.S. Senator. Democrats held both offices, as well as a statewide registration advantage. David Lawrence had kept Republicans out of the governor's mansion for eight years–the longest GOP drought in state history - and factional fighting within the state GOP organization threatened to keep the opposition in power. Superior Court Judge Robert E. Woodside headed one Republican faction, Senator Hugh Scott the other. Scott opposed Woodside's gubernatorial candidacy and threatened to declare for the office himself if a compromise candidate could not be found. As the primary season approached, it appeared that a bitter internecine battle would split the party and allow Philadelphia's Richardson Dilworth and Joseph Clark to take their program of liberal reform statewide.[142]

On 26 February 1962, a cortege of black Cadillacs purred up the driveway of McClure's Chester mansion. Inside was the GOP's Old Guard: State Chairman George I. Bloom; State Senator and Dauphin County boss M. Harvey Taylor; Lancaster County boss G. Greybill Diehm; Cambria County boss Andrew J. Gleason; Philadelphia Chairman Wilbur H. Hamilton; Philadelphia boss William Meehan; Bucks County boss Fred E. Ziegler; Chester County Chairman C. Gilbert Hazlett; Montgomery County Chairman James E. Staudinger; Superior Court Judge and Schuylkill County boss G. Harold "Mickey" Watkins; P.M.A. President James F. Malone; and Sun Oil lobbyist Harry P. Davis.[143]

140. *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 26 April 1964, 27 April 1964; Harris, 120; *New York Times*, 27 April 1964; *Delaware County Daily Times*, 29 April 1964.

141. Gloster B. Current to Roy Wilkins, John Morsell, et al, 29 April 1964, *NAACP Papers.*

142. Paul B. Beers, *Pennsylvania Politics Today and Yesterday* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980) 193.

143. Arthur Mayhew, "Does Weathervane Predict Election?" *Delaware County Daily Times*, 27 February 1962; Dan Murdaugh, "Inside Story Is Smoke-Filled, Boring,"

Deliberations continued in absolute secrecy for days while the press camped out in McClure's kitchen. On March 2, the bosses announced that Bill Scranton was their choice for governor. None of the party chieftains would elaborate further. At least one, however, credited McClure with being the "catalyst that got both sides together." "Every Republican leader in Pennsylvania," Andy Gleason declared, "ought to thank John J. McClure...It was through Senator McClure's great leadership that we are going to elect a Republican administration next fall." Hence the governor owed McClure a great political debt and he was loath to inject himself into a local problem in the city the old boss had ruled for nearly ninety years.[144]

Respect for, and deference to an old political benefactor, however, had to be balanced against the realities of the day. Southern Jim Crow was no longer the only system of segregation under attack. Civil Rights leaders in New York City, Chicago, Cincinnati, and elsewhere had organized school boycotts to protest de facto segregation. Members of CORE had staged "shop-ins" to end job discrimination in San Francisco. In Cleveland, rioting had erupted after a bulldozer crushed and killed one of the picketers attempting to halt construction of a "de facto segregation school." The Urban League had targeted sixty-five cities, many in the north, where it planned to "attack the climate of despair, hopelessness, and poverty" in the black community.[145]

Closer to home, civil rights opponents had bombed the Bethlehem Baptist Church in Pennlyn, Pennsylvania. The NAACP was promising "direct action" against the Hershey Chocolate Company's discriminatory hiring practices and the issue of interracial dating threatened to shatter the racial calm in Pittsburgh. Erie was on the Urban League's target list. Activists in Coatesville had forced its school board to adopt the "Princeton Plan" for the integration of students and faculty. Washington Township finally agreed to desegregate its elementary schools.[146]

Delaware County Daily Times, 2 March 1962; Beers, 292; Stephen Solarz, "Harrisburg's Third House," *Greater Philadelphia Magazine*, 7 (July 1963): 27-29, 76-83; Dan Rottenberg, "The Sun Gods," *Philadelphia Magazine*, 9 (September 1975): 111-119, 180-197.

144. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 23 February 1962; *Delaware County Daily Times*, 2 March 1962.

145. *Pittsburgh Courier*, 15 February 1964, 22 February 1964 17 March 1964, 11 April 1964, 18 April 1964.

146. *Pittsburgh Courier*, 18 April 1963, 8 February 1964, 7 March 1964; June Shagaloff, "Public School Desegregation–North and West," *The Crisis*, 2 (February 1963): 92-95, 103

Thirteen miles north of Chester, Philadelphia's Cecil Moore had become a symbol of black militancy in Pennsylvania. Moore exploded onto the scene in early 1960s, directly challenging the long-standing relationship between the white power structure and a "group of responsible, high placed Negroes who had traditionally been considered the pillars of the community." Many of those black leaders were clergymen who had organized a "selective patronage" program to protest job discrimination against General Baking Company, Breyer Ice Cream, the A&P Supermarkets, and Sun Oil Company. They had also initiated a suit to end racial discrimination in the Philadelphia public schools. In Moore's eyes, however, they were the same kind of obsequious gradualists that Branche had found in Chester.[147]

In 1962, Moore won the presidency of the NAACP's Philadelphia chapter. The following spring he was leading demonstrations against discrimination at municipal and school district construction sites. One effort turned into three days of bloodshed as newspapers reported the affair "in banner headlines and gory photographs of bleeding Negroes and pain-writhing police." While the older generation of black leaders labeled him a "jackass," a "man bereft of reason," and a "damn fool," Moore charged ahead, promising that "No longer will the plantation system of white men appointing our leaders exist in Philadelphia."[148]

As Branche's efforts in Chester reached a head in 1964, Moore rushed to assist his brother in arms. Branche returned the favor the following year when Moore renewed the campaign to desegregate Girard College. The college–actually a primary/secondary school administered by the City of Philadelphia–had been established by the estate of Stephen Girard whose will stipulated that admittance be restricted to "white male orphans." In May 1965, Branche and seven others were arrested as they attempted to scale the walls of the school. That act was the first skirmish in a historic battle that would finally end in 1968 when the U.S. Supreme Court ordered Girard's will be broken and the school admit black students.[149]

147. Gaeton Fonzi, "Cecil Storms In," *Greater Philadelphia Magazine*, (July 1963): 21-23, 45-57; *Pittsburgh Courier*, 5 January 1963, 12 January 1963, 9 February 1963; *Sun Refinery News*, April 1961; John K. McKee to Motor Products Salesmen (Sun Oil Inter-Office Correspondence Sheet), 20 March 1961, Joseph N. Pew Jr. Papers, Accession #1862, Hagley Museum, Wilmington De; *New York Times*, 27 September 1963.

148. Fonzi, "Cecil Storms In;" *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 23 May 1963 - 1 June 1963.

149. *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 4 May 1965; *Pennsylvania v. Board of Directors of City Trusts of the City of Philadelphia* (353 U.S. 230 No. 769); *New York Times*, 8 March 1968, 18 April 1968.

Given Moore's activities in Philadelphia and the potential for problems elsewhere in the state, Scranton, who had campaigned as a champion of racial equality, simply could not ignore the situation in Chester in 1964. To leave matters in the hands of local authorities would risk serious violence and would give lie to his avowed commitment to civil rights. Moreover, the Scranton for President movement was beginning to gain momentum. The governor had not yet announced his candidacy, but he was willing to accede to the will of the party faithful should they prefer him to Barry Goldwater or Henry Cabot Lodge. With the Pennsylvania primary, an early test of Scranton's electability, scheduled for April 28, the governor could ill afford to let the Chester situation get further out of control. Presidential politics and a commitment to civil rights had to take priority over his personal affection for John McClure.[150]

Scranton ordered two investigations: one by the HRC into charges of de facto segregation; the other by a special commission into charges of police brutality. The special commission, chaired by former Pennsylvania Bar Association president Thomas W. Pomeroy, issued its findings after six months of testimony and deliberation.[151] It found fault with all parties involved: the state; the city; the police; and the demonstrators, but it was especially critical of Branche and his followers. The marches had been poorly organized and poorly led. In some instances, "children and irresponsible adults" had been involved–a practice Branche defended by claiming that "children want freedom just as much as adults." The demonstrations "seemed in part to have been designed to harass the police and exploit heightening emotional tension;" moreover, the leaders of the demonstrations "did not discourage the development of the image of the police as hostile to their efforts." Those facts, coupled with the sheer length of the confrontation and the subsequent frustration and exhaustion felt on both sides created a "sense of hysteria...among both police and demonstrators." Few of the participants were "thoroughly disciplined in passive resistance techniques."

150. *Pittsburgh Courier*, 18 January 1964; *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 25 April 1964, 29 April 1964.

151. The other members of the Special Commission were: William W. Bodine, Jr., President of Jefferson Medical College; James E. Gallagher, Jr., Member, Archdiocesan Commission on Human Relations; Dr. Ira A. Reid, Chairman, Sociology Department, Haverford College; Ernest Scott, former Chancellor, Philadelphia Bar Association; and David Stahl, former State Attorney General. *Report of the Commission Appointed by the Governor to Investigate Charges of Excessive Use of Force by Police in Chester, Pennsylvania.*

On at least three occasions, "violence against the police occurred. Whether such violence originated with the demonstrators or bystanders is...immaterial, since it was precipitated by the demonstrations and required responsive police action."

The commission concluded that "it should come as no surprise that force was required in effecting some arrests." And, while there were seven specific instances where excessive force was used, overall both the city and state police "exercised force within the permitted limits of discretion allowed to them by law."[152]

The HRC issued its findings the day after the special commission report was made public. It found that the Chester School Board was guilty of six discriminatory practices against blacks which constituted a system of de facto segregation and it ordered the complete desegregation of the district by the beginning of the fall 1964 semester. Never before in its nine-year history had the HRC issued such a directive. It did not prescribe a specific method to comply with the order; the "School Board alone," it determined, "should decide that important matter." But nearly everyone involved in the dispute recognized what the complete school desegregation would mean: "cross busing" to achieve racial proportionality.[153]

Branche was not happy with the special commission. He charged that its report "tended to discredit the civil rights movement in Chester" while "straddling the fence" on the subject of police brutality. "We did a marvelous job of self restraint," he claimed, "in light of the excessive force used by the police." The HRC report was a different story. For years, Raymond commented, Chester had been "cheating and robbing blacks out of a decent education. This order is a great step for all of us." Branche concurred, calling the order a "gigantic step in the right direction." Scranton found both reports in line with his views. He urged

152. *Report of the Commission Appointed by the Governor to Investigate Charges of Excessive Use of Force by Police in Chester, Pennsylvania,* 89-102; *Delaware County Daily Times,* 20 November 1964.

153. The discriminatory practices were: maintaining segregated all-Negro public schools; establishing school zones which confine Negroes to all-Negro schools; fFailing to make kindergartens available to all Negro children; assigning only Negro teachers and clerks to all-Negro schools; failing to maintain Negro schools on the same level as other schools; failing to provide plans for effective desegregation of its schools. [*Delaware County Daily Times,* 21 November 1964, 24 November 1964, *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin,* 20 November 1964; *Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission v Chester School* District (427 Pa. 157, 1967)].

"every interested person" to read the special commission report carefully. "It is clear," he said, "we can all learn from it." In keeping with the special committee's recommendations, Scranton later urged passage of legislation that would give the HRC subpoena and injunction power.[154]

Few machine functionaries commented publicly on either report. Members of the county delegation to the General Assembly maintained a strict silence as did McClure's man in Washington, Congressman William Milliken. Mayor Gorbey, soon to be named to the federal bench, labeled the report on police brutality a perfect example of "Monday morning quarterbacking" and refused to use the report as a basis for any punitive action against his police officers. The police, he insisted, "formed a thin line that separated respect for the law from those who advocated the rule of the jungle." The School Board initially had no comment on the HRC ruling. The CPA, however, charged that the HRC had "exceeded the mandate of existing law and expressly violated the 1964 Civil Rights Act" by requiring assignment of students according to race. Ten days later, School Board solicitor Guy DeFuria announced that he planned to appeal the HRC ruling on the grounds that the HRC had overstepped its authority and jurisdiction. Branche was not surprised. "Chester," he observed, "has adopted a slogan that 'Chester is on the move.' The stubborn and weak-minded school board has really implemented this slogan by moving backwards."[155]

In February 1966, Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court issued its decision. First, the court made a distinction between segregation and racial imbalance. Racial imbalance as it existed in Chester School District did not, the court argued, imply a system of segregation. While the HRC had the power to issue orders to correct segregation, racial imbalance was far more problematic:

> When does a public school become racially imbalanced? Is racial imbalance to be determined by the commission on an ad hoc basis and, if so, is the commission to declare methods by which it is to be corrected, or does such prerogative still remain with the local school board?[156]

154. *Delaware County Daily Times,* 20 November 1964, 21 November 1964, *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin,* 19 November 1964; Beers, 310; George D. Wolf, *William Warren Scranton* (University Park: Keystone Books, 1981), 72-73.

155. *Delaware County Daily Times,* 5 December 1964; 24 November 1964, 1 December 1964.

156. *Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission v Chester School District* (40 D.&C. 2d 493 1966).

Second, the court distinguished between de jure and de facto segregation. "De facto segregation," the court opined, "is a meaningful term and yet one that remains undefined in its full concept." Given that the act creating the HRC did not include any attempt to define de facto segregation, the court concluded that it did not fall within the purview of the HRC:

> While racial imbalance in the public schools can be said to be the result of discriminatory practices, it cannot be said to be discrimination in and of itself, within the intendment of the legislature's declaration of policy...We therefore conclude that [the Human Relations Act] shows not intent on the part of the legislature to confer jurisdiction upon the commission to deal with de facto segregation in the public schools.[157]

Given this conclusion, the court revoked the HRC's desegregation order.

The HRC appealed the ruling first to Superior Court which sustained the ruling and then to the State Supreme Court which rejected the lower court's technical distinctions between de jure and de facto segregation and racial imbalance. The high court agreed that de facto segregation may be difficult to define, but, there were clear instances where the School Board had the "power to take corrective measures" to compensate for patterns of residential segregation. It was not enough, the court opined, to "refrain from affirmative discriminatory conduct." The *Brown* decision required that, given the "harmful consequences of segregation" school boards had to "take steps to alleviate racial imbalance in schools regardless of its cause." The failure of the Chester School Board to take such steps amounted to the "continued withholding from most Negro children the advantages of an integrated education."[158]

The high court further found that the HRC did have jurisdiction over such cases. To rule otherwise would ignore the "legislative conclusion that racial segregation in the public schools whatever its source, threatens the peace, safety and welfare of the Commonwealth." Thus the high court overturned the ruling of the lower courts and directed the

157. Ibid.

15.8 *Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission v Chester School District* (209 Pa. Superior Ct., 37, 1966); *Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission v Chester School* District (427 Pa. 157, 1967).

members of the Chester School Board to comply with the HRC order.[159]

The State Supreme Court's decision anticipated the position the U.S. Supreme Court would take the following year. In an area of marked residential segregation such as Chester, the state court found, it was not enough that the School Board create a system of race-neutral neighborhood schools. Such a system would still be segregated, even if the Board did not intend it to be so. The Board, the court ruled, was constitutionally required to take steps to insure that each school was racially balanced, regardless of the degree of residential segregation in the district. What, in effect, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court decided was that the *Brown* decision mandated integrated, not merely desegregated public schools, even if compliance resulted in "forcing them to adopt a system of busing and in the destruction of the neighborhood school system."[160]

Eight months after the State Supreme Court decided the Chester case, the U.S. Supreme Court decided the case of *Green v New Kent County.* At issue in *Green* was whether or not, in a previously segregated school system, a "freedom of choice plan" which allowed each student to decide which school he or she would attend, met the requirements of *Brown.* The Court decided that the correct interpretation of *Brown,* and of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, could be found in the HEW guidelines issued in 1966. Those guidelines stated that "the single most substantial indication as to whether a free-choice plan is actually working is the extent to which Negro and other minority group students have in fact transferred from segregated schools." "Racial progress was to be judged not by paper plans and proclaimed intentions of school boards but by the numbers of whites and blacks together in schools." Like the Pennsylvania court in 1967, the Supreme Court in 1968 ruled that not merely desegregation but rather integration was the mandate of *Brown.*[161]

The Chester School Board and the CPA initially promised to continue the fight on two counts. First, believing that neither *Brown* nor

159. *Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission v Chester School* District (427 Pa. 157, 1967).

160. Ibid.

161. *Green v County School Board of New Kent County* (391 US 430); US Office of Education Revised Statement of Policies for School Desegregation Plans Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (1966); Raymond Wolters, *The Burden of Brown* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 152-153; J. Harvie Wilkinson III, *From Brown to Bakke* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 104.

the 1964 Civil Rights Act required racial balance in public schools, the Board charged that busing students to achieve racial balance was illegal. It was, they claimed, the assignment of children to schools on the basis of race. Second, it claimed, as did Pennsylvania Chief Justice John C. Bell in a dissenting opinion, that the majority opinion illegally usurped control of public schools from local school boards. The HRC, it charged, was setting itself up "as a statewide super-school board." After further consideration, however, the Board decided to drop the lawsuit and negotiate a course of action with the HRC.[162]

The Board was not alone in its determination that the state's highest court had overstepped its authority. Less than a month after the court had issued its finding, the General Assembly amended the Human Relations Act and stripped the HRC of the power to issue binding orders in cases of de facto segregation. When the HRC returned to Chester in the spring of 1968 to investigate allegations of racial discrimination in the city's urban renewal program, Chairman Boyer was almost apologetic for the HRC's newly-legislated impotence. "I understand your emotions," he told black community activists, "but I don't want the people to assume the HRC will correct all the ills; we cannot issue an order, only make a recommendation." Meanwhile, negotiations over the school issue continued until the summer of 1968 when the Board finally agreed to a redistricting plan for the elementary schools that would require the busing of approximately 2,500 students. By that time, Branche had departed Chester, McClure was dead, and Raymond, disgusted with Branche, Current, and the politics of race in Chester, had long since resigned as president of the Chester NAACP.[163]

In June 1964, a group of city leaders created the Greater Chester Movement (GCM), an umbrella organization intended to "coordinate all of the groups working for the betterment of Chester."[164] At the GMC's first public meeting, Governor Scranton promised a partnership that would bring the "full weight of governmental resources to the service of the people [of Chester] without abandoning them to the power of the central government: The real need in Chester and the keynote of all American society is interdependence. We're going to create an example

162. *Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission v Chester School* District (427 Pa. 157, 1967); *Delaware County Daily Times*, 27 September 1967, 28 September 1967.
163. *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 27 September 1967; *Pennsylvania Human Relations Act* (PL 744, Amended 11 October 1967); *Delaware County Daily Times*, 9 August 1968, 30 July 1968; Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, *Investigatory Hearing Report, City of Chester, 1968*, 163; Raymond interview, 25 August 1997.
164. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 20 June 1964.

for all America to applaud."[165] When Lyndon Johnson initiated his War on Poverty, the GCM applied to be the conduit through which federal money would be distributed in Chester. Branche set up a competing agency, the Committee on Economic Opportunity (CEO). Eventually, the two agreed on a compromise: the GCM absorbed the CEO and Branche was put on the GCM steering committee.[166] Other members of the steering committee included machine operatives Clarence Moll, Mayor Gorbey, and J. Newton Pew Jr.[167]

Branche's CFFN associates complained that he had "sold out." Leaders from the NAACP, CORE, and the CPA all refused similar appointments. Raymond's successor Frederick Douglas called the invitation to join an "insult" because the GCM was politically controlled.[168] By the end of its first year, the GCM was under attack from the county's social services community and was under investigation by the federal government.[169] During its twelve-year existence, it would prove to be more a source of patronage than a source of economic aid. The machine, one study found, exploited the GCM "like a cash cow."[170] Whatever else it may have been, it was a source of income and status for Branche. In December 1965, he accepted a paying job as the GCM's Director of Project Operations. His old CFFN friend Felder Rouse called the appointment a political payoff and an "insult to the Negro community."[171]

Overall, Branche did more for the machine and for himself than he did for Chester's black populace. He caused a three-way split in the black community at a time when unity may have translated into real political power. Eleven influential black ministers condemned his tactics.[172] The NAACP dissociated itself from Branche's brand of activism as Current concluded that he seemed "mostly interested in demonstra-

165. *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, 7 August 1964.
166. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 2 December 1964.
167. Ibid.
168. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 28 June 1965.
169. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 17 November 1965.
170. Petras. For more information on the GCM and the machine, see: the series of investigative articles published by the *Delaware County Daily Times*, 1-10 May 1972; John Guinther, "The Persistence of Devils in Delaware County, *Philadelphia Magazine*, (June 1973): 90-98, 196-205.
171. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 15 December 1965.
172. Revs. L. M. Watts, J. P. Barbour, J. L. Freeman, Donald Ming, R. B. Hardin, David MacQueen, Robert Seman, Donald F. Jones, James A. Crawford, Asbury Tanley, and D. W. White to Gloster Curran [Current], 30 March 1964, *NAACP Papers*.

tions...for demonstrations' sake." The result was polarization of the black community and growing opposition in the white community.[173]

What neither the NAACP nor the ministers knew was that polarization was exactly what Branche had intended. In 1955, he had come to Chester and established an acquaintance with McClure lieutenant Vincent Sanbe. He worked for the machine in the 1955 mayoral campaign and then left town. When he returned in 1962, he was married to the niece of McClure's formerly most reliable black lieutenant, "Daddy Bass" Walton. Anna Layton Branche came home to care for her widowed aunt; Stanley's motivation was different. He had been recruited by McClure to combat the threat posed by John F. Kennedy. Kennedy had failed to carry the city in 1960, but with the myth of "Camelot" now taking hold of the American imagination, Democratic victories in upcoming municipal elections were a distinct possibility. The best way to destroy such a threat was to discredit the Democratic party–the party identified with the Civil Rights Movement. That was Branche's job–to discredit the Democrats by turning Chester's gradualist civil rights campaign into a militant revolution. Who better to lead the revolution than the ambitious nephew-in-law of the machine's most famous black leader? Branche's true purpose in returning to Chester was to "whip up a white backlash" against the Democrats and their liberal agenda. The fact that he also succeeded in dividing the black community was an added benefit.[174]

Raymond always suspected Branche's motives were less than altruistic. Not only did Raymond disagree with Branche's tactics, he was convinced that Branche was working clandestinely for McClure. "Stanley attended our planning sessions," Raymond claimed, "then ran to tell McClure everything we were doing." He also knew that the duplicity would continue only as long as Branche saw some personal advantage. "He wanted to get something for nothing," Raymond believed. "He wanted to start trouble and capitalize on it for his own good. Stanley was a rogue."[175]

But Stanley was a remarkably "engaging rogue." Raymond, like many who had direct dealings with Branche, found it impossible to dislike him personally. "He was the most likable guy you could ever

173. Gloster B. Current to Roy Wilkins, John Morsell, et al, 29 April 1964, *NAACP Papers.*
174. Louis A. Campbell to John Morsell, 24 November 1964, *NAACP Papers.*
175. Raymond interview, 25 August 1997, 1 October 1997.

meet," Mayor Gorbey recalled. "You could never hate him for personal reasons."[176] The militancy and the outrageous behavior were, by Branche's own admission, all part of the game - an act for the sake of the public that simultaneously frustrated, angered, and bemused his opponents. "I can sit down with somebody," Branche boasted, "and we can call each other sons of bitches but that don't mean we can't sit down and have a beer afterward."[177] In the final analysis, Raymond supported Branche as far as he did because Branche was the lesser of two evils. "Stanley was bad but he wasn't as bad as the school board." And despite his personal ambitions and his treachery, Branche did accelerate the course of integration in Chester and thus the city's black population was better off because of him.[178]

Raymond, however, was not better off. He knew that Branche owed much of his success to him. He had devoted his life to the cause Branche seemed to adopt so cavalierly. Moreover, without Raymond, Branche may not have survived. During the course of the riots, former McClure henchman Aggie Campbell, whom Branche failed to charm, confronted Raymond. "Listen George," Campbell said, "we did everything we could to you yet you always fought us by the law, but we hate Branche. If you pull away from him, we'll fix him." Raymond knew it was not a hollow threat. He had grown up with Campbell and knew Aggie would do anything to win. In the late 1930s, Campbell had been in charge of collection of criminals and thugs that had kept the Sun Shipyard free of CIO labor activity.[179] In 1962, he had been arrested for assaulting with intent to kill Democratic Chairman William J. Coopersmith.[180]

Branche also knew the threat was real. During one CFFN demonstration, Raymond had arrived to find Branche "scared that they were going to beat him to death." Phil Savage felt similarly threatened. "He couldn't come into town unless he was with me," Raymond knew, "because they would have beat him to death." This was the problem, Raymond contended, with the new generation of activists. Their lack

176. Ibid.
177. McCormick.
178. Raymond interview, 25 August 1997.
179. "The Matter of Sun Shipbuilding and Drydock Co. and Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America, National Labor Relations Board, Case No. C-1899," National Archives-Philadelphia Region, Philadelphia, Pa., 12-808.
180. J. Mervyn Harris, interview by author, 18 March 1996; *Delaware County Daily Times*, 25 June 1962.

of respect did as much harm as good. "The CFFN, the Panthers, all those groups said the NAACP wasn't 'bad' enough. But when they went in jail, they turned to the NAACP to get them out."[181]

Yet, when the rioting was over, it was Branche who got most of the credit. Raymond's seminal role in the movement was largely ignored. The integration of the schools was "Branche's triumph." He was the "beribboned veteran of Korea," the "ex-paratrooper" without whose "strong leadership, nothing much would have happened in Chester." Raymond, on the other hand, was a man behind the times, a man whose tactics had outlived their usefulness. The new generation viewed him as a "Stephan Fetchit"-type character–a dupe, a machine lackey, gratefully accepting whatever crumbs it offered. "Old Scratchhead and Yassuh Boss, that's what they're used to," Branche told a cheering audience. "They've never fought people with freedom on their minds." George Raymond had become "Old Scratchhead."[182]

Just as the Chester School Board case had done in the area of school desegregation, Raymond's inability to retain the leadership of the Chester Civil Rights movement in the face of Branche and his CFFN militancy presaged the experiences of several leaders of national prominence. By 1966, John Lewis, Roy Wilkins and, Martin Luther King Jr., among others, were under attack from younger activists dedicated to the cause of Black Power through political and/or racial separatism. Lewis had been associated with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) since its inception in 1960; he was elected its chairman in 1963. A committed disciple of King's strategy for integration through nonviolent civil disobedience, he led SNCCs efforts to secure a voice for blacks in the councils of the Democratic Party. By 1966, however, he was having serious difficulty "reconciling his soft-spoken commitment to nonviolent militancy with the increasingly abrasive radicalism of other [SNCC] staff members."[183] At the 1966 SNCC convention, the militants voted him out in favor of Stokely Carmichael.

As founder of the Lowndes County Black Panther Party, Carmichael was a leading advocate of black political separatism. "To ask negroes to get in the Democratic Party," he contended, "is like asking Jews to join the Nazi Party."[184] He labeled integration a "subterfuge for the main-

181. Ibid.
182. Moritz; Klaw.
183. Clyborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 200.
184. *New York Times*, 17 May 1966.

tenance of white supremacy," and utterly rejected Lewis' philosophy of nonviolence. "This country," Carmichael announced, "does not function by morality, love, or nonviolence, but by power."[185] Lewis was given a seat on SNCC's newly- formed Central Committee, but his role as SNCC's chief spokesman was ended. Less than two months after being voted out of office, he left SNCC to do "some study and writing."[186]

Both King and Wilkins also opposed the Black Power philosophy. King issued a measured statement expressing his views within weeks of Carmichael's election. "As a slogan, [he] thought Black Power divisive and ill-considered; as a program, he considered it confused, illogical, and vacuous–a nihilistic philosophy born of the conviction that the Negro can't win."[187] Wilkins charged that Black Power would be interpreted as meaning "anti-white power," and, as King put it, would give racist whites a "ready excuse for self justification."[188] When Wilkins criticized the separatist rhetoric of some participants in the 1966 Meredith March, Black Power advocates labeled him and Uncle Tom for whom the time had come "to retire, teach in a college and write a book about his earlier days."[189] And when the marchers finally reached Jackson, the militants made sure that no one from the NAACP addressed the crowd.[190] The following month, Wilkins issued a ringing condemnation of Black Power. "We will have none of this," Wilkins told the 1966 NAACP convention; Black Power "can mean in the end only black death."[191]

Due, perhaps, to King's stature not only in the movement, but in greater American society, he did not suffer the same vehement rejection as did Wilkins. Nevertheless, in the wake of events in Mississippi and Chicago in 1966, his position as the conscience of a unified civil rights

185. Stokely Carmichael, "What We Want," *New York Times*, 22 September 1966.
186. *New York Times*, 1 July 1966.
187. *New York Times*, 28 May 1966; Adam Fairclough, *Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 116; Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 44.
188. Roy Wilkins, "Steady As She Goes," reprinted in A. C. Littleton and M. W. Burger, *Black Viewpoints*, (New York: Mentor Books, 1971), 295-296; King, 44.
189. Carson, 207.
190. James A. Colaiaco, *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Apostle of Militant Nonviolence* (NewYork: MacMillan Press, 1988), 166.
191. Roy Wilkins, "Whither Black Power," Excerpts from keynote address delivered at NAACP 57th Annual Convention, 5 July 1966, reprinted in August Meier, Elliott Rudwick, and Francis L. Broderick, eds., *Black Protest Thought in the Twentieth Century* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1971), 596-598.

effort was lost. By the end of the Meredith March, Carmichael, not King, had emerged as the spokesman for the marchers.[192] In Chicago, despite King's exhortations to nonviolence, a three-day riot in July killed two and injured fifty-six. Weeks later, the militants publicly repudiated an agreement between King with Mayor Richard Daley. The mayor pledged to end the discriminatory practices of the Chicago Real Estate Board and the Chicago Housing Authority. In return, King called off a planned march through Cicero, Illinois. Leaders of SNCC and CORE in Chicago called the agreement a sellout and went ahead with the Cicero march. "We reject the terms of the agreement that Martin Luther King made," SNCC's Monroe Sharp declared. "The rank and file Negro is a new breed of cat who rejects this."[193] Nobody dared call King "Old Scratchhead," but the message, not only to white America, but to King, Lewis, Wilkins and their adherents was clear:

> The days of singing freedom songs, of combating bullets and billy clubs with love are over...This is a new day. We don't sing those words anymore...Not We Shall Overcome, but We Shall Overrun.[194]

Branche's application of the Scratchhead label to Raymond was most ironic. It played well with the younger, more militant activists. It labeled Raymond as a black flunky obsequiously doing the bidding of his white masters in the hope of some small gain for his people. In fact, it was Branche, not Raymond, who was controlled by the white power structure. Branche was the true Scratchhead. But the irony did not stop there. Raymond readily admitted that Branche made an important contribution. Indeed it was Branche–Old Scratchhead–who made the critical difference by stirring, particularly in Chester's black youth, a new spirit of resolve, by accelerating the pace of change, and by forcing a final, decisive confrontation. "Sometimes," Raymond admitted, "you need a flash or a spark or something like that to get people interested and involved. Stanley provided that spark."[195]

Branche would not stay long in Chester. After little more than a year with the GCM, he departed for greener pastures in Philadelphia. His

192. Allen J. Matusow, "From Civil Rights to Black Power: The Case of SNCC, 1960-1966," Barton Bernstein and Allen Matusow, eds., *Twentieth Century America: Recent Interpretations* (New York: Harcort Brace, 1969), 531-536.
193. Colaiaco, 175.
194. Julius Lester, "The Angry Children of Malcolm X," Meier, Rudwick, and Broderick, 469-484; King, 26.
195. Raymond interview, 25 August 1997.

star would continue to ascend for a while as he befriended politicians, community activists, church leaders, and known criminals with equal ease. He formed a new group, the Black Coalition Movement and joined Moore's battle to integrate Girard College. In 1976, he announced his candidacy for Congress, then withdrew, claiming ill health. In 1979, he and Gus "Mr. Silk" Lacey were arrested for swindling a medical student out of $5000; the charges were dropped after a key prosecution witness died. Ten years later he and Mafioso "Johnny Chang" Cian Caglini were convicted in federal court for conspiring to extort protection money from North Philadelphia drug dealers. Shortly after his release from prison, he suddenly and prematurely died. At the memorial service, the President of the Chester County Chapter of the National Political Congress of Black Women eulogized Branche as the "father of the civil rights movement in Chester" and urged that Seventh Street be renamed Stanley Branche Boulevard.[196]

Raymond remained in Delaware County and continued to work quietly for the cause to which he had devoted his life. In time, his reputation would be somewhat rehabilitated and he would come to be seen as the "grand old man" of the Chester NAACP. He would be invited to banquets; he would be given medals and testimonials; one, the Freedom Award, was presented by Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. But as the memories of the 1940s, 1950s, and even the tumultuous 1960s faded, the memory of the magnitude of Raymond's contribution faded even further. When he died, the *Times*, which had chronicled Raymond's work for all those decades, could print only one line to describe a lifetime of tireless, selfless, single-minded dedication to the cause of civil rights in Chester, Pennsylvania.[197]

196. Tony Green, "The Hustler," *Philadelphia Magazine*, (March 1976): 91-93; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 4 January 1979, 9 June 1979, 4 January 1980; Longstreth interview: *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 January 1989, 20 March 1989, 25 December 1992.
197. *Delaware County Daily Times*, 13 May 1999.