



Historical Review Task Force Report

September 14, 2023

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Dear Wheaton College Community,

Forever grateful that Jesus Christ died to make us one (Ephesians 2:14), we live in hope for the day when all tribes and peoples will sing our Savior's praise together (see Revelation 7:9). This biblical hope compels us to share the findings of the Historical Review Task Force (HRTF) that the Board of Trustees commissioned to study the history and legacy of Wheaton College from 1860 to 2000 with respect to race relations.

The HRTF's constant reference point as they considered Wheaton's institutional policies, practices, and programs—as well as the people responsible for them—was the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Board of Trustees gratefully endorses their final report, which includes the process they followed; the theological guidelines and other principles they sought to honor; a summary of their historical findings; a statement of reasons for celebration, lament, and repentance; and the historical review itself, with bibliography and appendices. Today, we also share the commitments of the Board of Trustees, as recommended by the HRTF.

The Task Force—which was first requested by the President and Senior Administrative Cabinet—began its work in October 2021. In fulfilling its commission, the HRTF sought to:

- 1) clarify what we know—and to explore what more can and should be known—about the history of race relations on the campus of Wheaton College;
- 2) understand the impact of past events on present realities, including the experience of ethnic minorities;
- 3) identify ways to make Wheaton's history of race relations more readily accessible and widely known to all generations of all College constituencies; and
- 4) determine—in view of the supremacy of Jesus Christ—what aspects of this history need to be celebrated more intentionally, lamented more deeply, or repented of more specifically.

There is much to celebrate in the historical narrative, including Wheaton's abolitionist heritage, early acceptance and graduation of African American students, welcoming Japanese American students during the unhappy period of World War II internment camps, and steps to recognizing the full civil rights of African Americans in the 1960s. The report also documents growing efforts in the closing decades of the 20th century to include faculty, students, and staff of all ethnic backgrounds as fully loved and respected members of the campus community.

Sadly, there is also much to lament: the unjust way that the U.S. government first took lands we now possess from Native American communities, the deliberate exclusion of African American students during the 1930s, restrictions on interracial dating, the use of pejorative humor that denied the dignity of non-white members of the College community, missed opportunities to become more fully biblical in our approach to race relations, inadequate support that hindered well-intentioned efforts to help Wheaton become more diverse, and other forms of racial discrimination.

Based on the careful research in this historical review, tested against the perfect standard of the Word of God and the high moral calling of a Christ-centered community, we also see specific areas where we need to repent as an institution. We cannot be healed and cannot be reconciled unless and until we repent.

Therefore, as the Board of Trustees representing the College, we repent of all forms of racism and favoritism in our institutional history, whether conscious or unconscious. We are sorry for the way our institutional transgressions have harmed African American, Asian American, Latino, and indigenous groups. We also repent of the indifference and complacency that led us to miss opportunities to enact bold, courageous changes in institutional policies, programs, and practices related to community members of color. These sins constituted a failure of Christian love; denied the dignity of people made in the image of God; created deep and painful

barriers between Christian brothers and sisters; tarnished our witness to the gospel; and prevented us from displaying more fully the beautiful diversity of God’s kingdom. Regardless of how these transgressions are defined, they fall short of what the gospel demands of a Christ-centered community where all members are recognized, loved, and equally respected.

True repentance requires more than merely issuing an apology, however. It also means correcting our course. This has begun already in many ways, but there is more to be done. The commitments you read about in what follows include changes to the way we tell our school story, a review of naming policies and practices related to campus facilities, including the library, ongoing review of the resources we provide for the flourishing of every member of our community, and continued dialogue with Native American leaders from tribes that originally claimed the land that now constitutes our campuses.

In keeping with our liberal arts mission, we commit to giving faculty, staff, students, and alumni ample opportunity to engage with this historical report throughout this semester and afterward, as well as sharing it with future classes of new Wheaton students. Engagement opportunities will include separate town hall meetings tomorrow for students and for faculty and staff; a conversation next week co-hosted by Student Government; our planned faculty/staff town hall next week; the upcoming faculty forum; a question-and-answer time for alumni during Homecoming Weekend; and an on-campus symposium in October.

We want *every* member of our community—without exception—to know true belonging on the campus we share and to experience the love of Christ here in life-giving ways. We invite you to join us in praying for the fulfillment of these commitments and for the task force the administration will appoint to implement our institutional commitments going forward.

We respect differing points of view within the Wheaton College community and recognize that committed Christ-followers may agree or disagree with certain conclusions in the following report or with the responsive commitments we have made as Trustees. The best way to share your perspective is to email HRTF@wheaton.edu. Although time will not permit a detailed response, College leaders will read your message promptly and carefully.

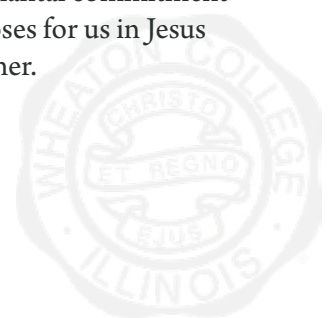
We wish to express our enduring gratitude to the members of the Historical Review Task Force, which was co-chaired by trustee Dale Wong and archivist Katherine Graber and included student, faculty, staff, alumni, and trustee representatives. We also thank Emily Banas, Chelsey Geisz, and Katrina Wheeler, who provided staff and archival support.

We urge every member of the Wheaton College community to read the full historical report, which provides necessary context for our commitments. We want you to hear voices from our past. We believe that you will find their stories enlightening, sometimes distressing, and at times inspiring. We also invite you to enter into the laments and celebrations that the HRTF has identified as causes for sadness and joy.

Receiving this report with loving hearts and open minds will help us fulfill our biblical, covenantal commitment to pursue Christian unity and embrace ethnic diversity as God’s enduring, redemptive purposes for us in Jesus Christ. We pray that our commitments reflect our obedience to Christ and love for one another.

In service to Christ and His Kingdom,

The Wheaton College Board of Trustees



HISTORICAL REVIEW TASK FORCE REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

THE CHARGE

In October of 2021, on the recommendation of President Ryken, the Wheaton College Board of Trustees commissioned a Historical Review Task Force (“HRTF”) to study the history and legacy of Wheaton College from 1860-2000 with respect to race relations.

The purposes of the review were:

- To clarify what we know—and to explore what more can and should be known—about the history of race relations on the campus of Wheaton College;
- To understand the impact of past events on present realities, including the experience of ethnic minorities;
- To identify ways to make Wheaton’s history of race relations more readily accessible and widely known to all generations of all College constituencies; and
- To determine—in view of the supremacy of Jesus Christ—what aspects of this history need to be celebrated more intentionally, lamented more deeply, or repented of more specifically.

The Board of Trustees commissioned the review to consider Wheaton’s history of race relations from the vantage point of the gospel of Jesus Christ, interpreted in the context of the times they occurred and focusing on institutional policies, practices, and programs, as well as the people responsible for them, understood through reviewing published, archival, and primary sources.

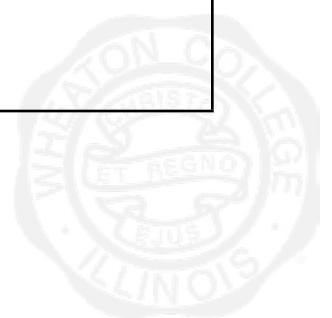
The Board of Trustees asked the HRTF to submit a report of their findings and to make recommendations as they saw fit.

THE TASK FORCE

Various campus groups, such as Faculty Council, Student Government, and the Alumni Association Board of Directors, were asked to nominate candidates from their membership to serve on the task force. The President, Board Chair, and Trustee Chair of the task force then considered those nominees for invitations. They gave particular attention to the racial and gender diversity makeup of the task force.

The members of the task force are:

<i>Trustee Representatives</i>		
Darrell L. Bock, Ph.D. Executive Director of Cultural Engagement Senior Research Professor of New Testament Studies, Dallas Theological Seminary	Andrea Scott '93, Ph.D. Special Advisor to the President and Distinguished Professor of Marketing, George Fox University	Dale Wong '85 (co-Chair) President, Missio Investment Management



<i>Faculty Representatives</i>		
Katherine J. Graber M.A. '12, M.L.I.S. (co-Chair) Assistant Professor of Library Science Group Leader for Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections	Theon Hill, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Communication Co-Director, Wheaton Institute for Faith and Innovation	David Iglesias '80 J.D. Jean and E. Floyd Kvamme Chair of Political Economy Associate Professor of Politics and Law Director, Wheaton Center for Faith, Politics, and Economics
Tracy McKenzie, Ph.D. Arthur F. Holmes Chair of Faith and Learning Professor of History	Sandra Yu Rueger M.A. '89 Ph.D. Professor of Psychology Director, Youth Risk and Resilience Lab at Wheaton College	
<i>Staff Representative</i>		
Stephen Cartwright, M.Div. Assistant Director of Residence Life and Ministry Associate	Billye Kee (joined October 2022) Associate Director, Office of Multicultural Development	
<i>Student Representatives</i>		
Grace Johnson '23 (undergraduate) Business and Economics Student Government, 2021-22 Chaplain	Donghyuk Lee '23 (undergraduate, joined October 2022) Business and Economics Student Government, 2022-23 EVP of Community Diversity	Justine Stewart Psy.D. '23 (graduate) Clinical Psychology
<i>Alumni Representatives</i>		
Esther Lee Cruz '06 Director of Community and Philanthropy, The Terra Schools	Matthew Hsieh '93 M.D. Physician, Primary Care Associates	

Katrina Wheeler M.A. '12 and Chelsey Geisz '19, M.A. '23 served as research assistants to aid archival research efforts while Public Services Archivist Emily Banas acted as staff support to the task force.

THE PROCESS

This report reviews the first 140 years of race relations at Wheaton College, particularly “institutional policies, practices, and programs, as well as the figures responsible for them,” together with the HRTF’s findings and recommendations. The first HRTF meeting was held October 28, 2021, and the work continued through March 31, 2023, when the task force submitted its final report to the Wheaton College Board of Trustees.

In its early weeks, the HRTF developed a process and project timeline to complete this review and delegate areas of responsibility. Task force members studied recent reports on institutional race relations from various U.S. colleges and universities to review best practices. Other members reviewed existing literature on the history of Wheaton College, making note of specific events, figures, and trends for further study. The HRTF engaged two research assistants and launched an extensive investigation of Wheaton’s historical records held in Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections. Interviews with former Wheaton administrators, professors, staff, and student leaders supplemented this report.

The HRTF also crafted a set of theological guidelines and a summary of historical findings before identifying events, figures, and developments in Wheaton’s history for corporate celebration, lamentation, and

repentance. Finally, the Task Force developed recommendations to address specific areas of concern identified in the celebrations, lamentations, and repentances. These final pieces were constructed between October 2022 and March 2023.

The full HRTF met consistently to share progress, feedback, and discussion on its findings. Task force meetings occurred bi-monthly in its initial stages and weekly in the final three months of work. The task force co-chairs met weekly and more frequently as needed. Throughout its process, the HRTF co-chairs provided regular progress updates to the Board of Trustees and other stakeholder groups when requested.

In an effort to engage the entire community and allow them to speak into the work of the HRTF, the task force also created a dedicated email account, hrtf@wheaton.edu, where members of the community could share comments or questions about the work of the task force including suggestions for areas for study.

THE CHALLENGES

From its first meeting in October 2021 the HRTF has recognized the significant challenges and limitations inherent in fulfilling the Board of Trustees' charge to research the College's complex history of race relations.

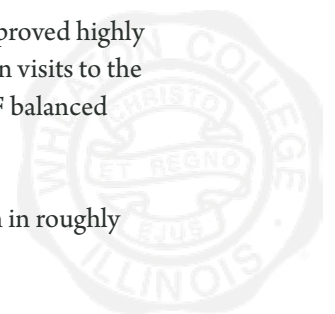
To date, several substantial studies of Wheaton College have been published, including a handful touching on race relations. These resources provided essential background for this review. For several eras of Wheaton's history, however, the HRTF also relied heavily on unpublished and previously unconsidered archival sources and publications. During this process, the Wheaton College Archives proved invaluable, especially for studying the earliest decades of the College's history.

HRTF researchers faced competing challenges within the Archives: the dearth of institutional records from Wheaton's earliest decades vs the considerable amount of material produced and preserved in the latter half of the twentieth century. Institutional record-keeping improved during the post-war era, but there are significant gaps in the historical records documenting the first 70-80 years of the College's history, roughly covering both the presidencies of Jonathan and Charles Blanchard and less so J. Oliver Buswell.

For the decades 1860-1930 official Trustee minutes are sparse and formulaic and offer little insight into programmatic developments at the College. Student files are scarce prior to 1920, and enrollment statistics are even scarcer. Presidents Jonathan and Charles Blanchard's published writings offer insight into the ethos and direction of the College under their leadership. But with regard to institutional programs, policies, or practices, the HRTF was often left to make inferences about race relations on Wheaton's campus. Considering these gaps in the historical record, the HRTF report includes select accounts of race-related incidents on campus, often from a single source, that demonstrate a specific attitude toward students of color. This evidence, however, is anecdotal and suggestive rather than definitive. Many of these limitations were resolved in the research process as the HRTF moved into the post-war era when College records were more systematically created and preserved.

Beyond the significant number of records held in the College Archives, accessing them proved highly challenging. The majority of the College Archives records remain undigitized, requiring in-person visits to the Manuscripts Reading Room to access materials. This limitation slowed the progress as the HRTF balanced thoroughness in reviewing College records and publications without being overly fastidious.

Another factor in the HRTF research process was the early decision to conduct research in roughly



chronological order, beginning with the inception of Wheaton College in 1860. This choice undoubtedly slowed the overall research process. However, the HRTF committed to this approach, believing it was imperative to research events, figures, and even administrative tenures chronologically to understand the development of ideas, actions, and their consequences in their historical context.

FINAL REMARKS

We recognize that in 2012 the Board of Trustees affirmed Deepening Ethnic Diversity as a strategic priority of the College. Furthermore, the College has also adopted *Flourishing for All: The Wheaton College Diversity Strategic Plan* which has been implemented in its inaugural phases to foster greater diversity, inclusion, justice, and unity in the Wheaton campus community. Over the course of these 18 months, the task force has prayerfully and soberly gone about its work under the conviction that its findings can provide a thorough and truthful account of the College's history of race relations that will better enable the Trustees to lead our covenant community with humility and courage into future growth.

This report is not intended to be the final word on Wheaton's history of race relations. We instead envision this report as a living document to be evaluated and expanded as each generation of Wheaton leadership strives to cultivate a Christ-centered academic community where all members feel equally at home. It contains much to inspire and celebrate. It also includes words, stories, events, and perspectives that may surprise, frustrate, or disturb its readers. We recognize the distress some readers may encounter through these pages while also holding to the conviction that acknowledging these painful chapters in our history can be a step toward healing and renewal.

Navigating the tension between our need to understand Wheaton's racial past in historical context while evaluating that past in the light of God's unchanging moral law is a challenge indeed. Some of the discriminatory practices and attitudes that we document in the historical review were prevalent in U.S. culture at the time, and in higher education broadly, including Christian institutions. In acknowledging this cultural context, our goal is not to excuse those attitudes and practices but rather to remind our readers—and ourselves—of how easily our fallen world can shape each of us into its mold. Taking this insight to heart, our hope is that, as we identify sinful practices and attitudes in the College's past, we will simultaneously gain a deeper awareness of our need for God's grace in the present.



THEOLOGICAL GUIDELINES

As the task force began its efforts, the following aspirations and core biblical principles informed the entire process including the research, the drafting of this report, and the deliberation of recommendations made to the Board.

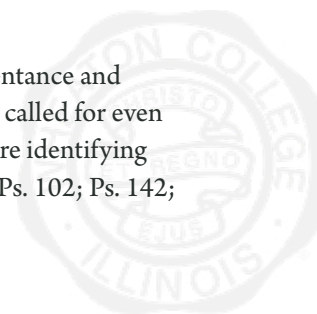
1. In order to ***clarify what we know—and to explore what more can and should be known—about the history of race relations on the campus of Wheaton College***, the HRTF sought to document and reflect on what we currently are aware of about our past, both the good and the bad. As such, our report reflects only a present-day snapshot of our own institutional history. We are not offering an expansive study of the everyday experience of students of color at Wheaton nor claiming to document all forms of racism they may have encountered at Wheaton.
2. In order to ***understand the impact of past events on present realities, including the experience of ethnic minorities***, the HRTF sought to follow these biblical principles in our assessments:
 - God cares about justice among people (Isa. 58:1-14; Amos 5:18-27; Mic. 6:1-8).
 - Sin is not only an individual act but also can be corporate in its presence and outworking (Lev. 4:13-21)
 - God rejects and despises favoritism (Jas. 2:1-13; Acts 10:34; Gal. 2:6; 1 Tim. 5:21).
 - The Bible is transparent about the failures of God’s people and calls us to corporate repentance and lamentation with a cry for justice when sin or injustice is present (Ps. 32:5; Ps. 38:18; Ps. 51; Ps. 102; Ps. 142; Jer. 14:20; Mic. 6:1-8; Jas. 5:16; 1 John 1:9).
 - We are called to bear one another’s burdens by critically examining and testing for the presence of sin in our own lives and to love our neighbors well in response. This is part of reflecting the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:13–6:10).
3. In order to ***identify ways to make Wheaton’s history of race relations more readily accessible and widely known to all generations of all College constituencies***, the HRTF reflected on the outcome of our research and on specific recommendations provided at the end of our report.
4. In order to ***determine—in view of the supremacy of Jesus Christ—what aspects of this history need to be celebrated more intentionally, lamented more deeply, or repented of more specifically***, the HRTF focused on the following scripture passages and biblical principles related to these three responses.

Celebration

- God delights when we obey him as we celebrate his grace for our recognized sins and when we give thanks for those who have modeled righteousness and truth for us (Mic. 7:18-19, Prov. 12:22, Ps. 112:1, Rom. 1:8; 1 Thess. 1:3-8).

Lamentation

- The Bible is transparent about the failures of God’s people and calls us to corporate repentance and lamentation with a cry for justice when sin or injustice is present. Community lament is called for even when some in the community are not directly responsible for the acts concerned, as all are identifying with the impact of what has taken place in their community (Ps. 32:5; Ps. 38:18; Ps. 51; Ps. 102; Ps. 142; Jer. 14:20; Mic. 6:1-8; Jas. 5:16; 1 John 1:9).



- Identifying with the failures of past generations is a biblical idea (Isa. 59:12; Jer. 14:7; Dan. 9:16). So, addressing the sinful failures of previous generations is a biblical path to deep reconciliation and further blessing.

Repentance

- We are called to bear one another's burdens by critically examining and testing for the presence of sin in our own lives and loving our neighbors well in response. This is part of reflecting the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:13–6:10).
- Repentance for wrongdoing committed is a biblical mandate and is to show itself in concrete actions including a contrite spirit, penitent words, and transformed behavior (Ps. 2:10-11; Ps. 4:4; Luke 3:8-14; 19:8-9; Rev. 3:19).
- Identifying with the failures of past generations is a biblical idea (Isa. 59:12; Jer. 14:7; Dan. 9:16), and corporate repentance is modeled in Scripture which humbly confesses communal sinful behavior against God (2 Chron. 7:14; Ezra 9:6; Dan. 9:11). So, addressing the sinful failures of previous generations is a biblical path to deep reconciliation and further blessing.

The HRTF upholds that growth is only possible when its need is made transparent and when a community remains open to what can be learned as more information is revealed. We offer this report with a prayer that learning from our past will make us a better community in the future as God continues to teach all of us how to love one another better.



SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL FINDINGS

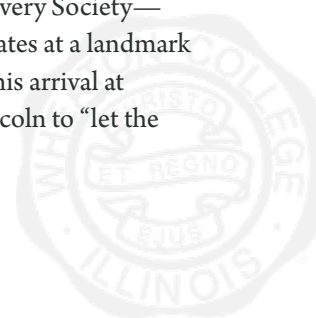
The Christian theologian Miroslav Volf exhorts Christians to “remember rightly,” bearing in mind that our goal in doing so is “unhindered love of neighbor.” Heeding this call for both love and truthfulness, the Historical Review Task Force has devoted itself for eighteen months to investigating Wheaton’s past. The story the HRTF has unearthed is complex, and the task has tried to reconstruct it as completely as the surviving historical sources will allow, carefully documenting our use of those sources as meticulously as possible. The HRTF urges all who are interested in this important question of race relations at Wheaton College to read our full report, while offering the more succinct summary below as a helpful starting point.

This history begins with describing the origins of Wheaton College’s campuses and recognizing the indigenous people groups that formerly occupied the lands. By the late eighteenth century, Native presence in the Great Lakes region around what is now Wheaton included the Potawatomi people (“Keepers of the Fire”), who controlled 18 million acres throughout the region, including what is today Northern Illinois. Amidst the rapid change of the United States from 1800-1860 and the growing U.S. population expanding westward, the Potawatomi and other Native peoples were gradually and forcibly removed from their lands despite signing 284 treaties ensuring their continued territorial rights. These treaties included the Second Treaty of Prairie du Chien between the U.S. government and the Potawatomi in 1829, which ceded the land that would become DuPage County. Following the forced removal of the Potawatomi people to areas west of the Mississippi, Erastus Gary, along with Jesse and Warren Wheaton, claimed several hundred acres of land in northern Illinois in 1837, parcels of which were later donated to become Wheaton’s current campus.

The College’s main campus in Wheaton, Illinois, is only one of three campus sites today, alongside the HoneyRock Center for Leadership Development in Wisconsin and the Black Hills Science Station in South Dakota, both acquired in the twentieth century. While the College legally acquired its property in the Northwoods of Wisconsin from private parties decades after the removal of native peoples, the campus also has a disturbing history involving the claims of the Ojibwe people to their ancestral lands. The origins of its South Dakota campus are more disquieting. The area of the Black Hills in South Dakota, including Wheaton College’s Science Station, was the subject of a lawsuit brought against the U.S. Government by the Lakota nation claiming unlawful seizure of their land. Ultimately, in 1980, the Supreme Court upheld the claim of unlawful seizure and ruled for a \$100 million payment of reparation. To this day, however, the Lakota people have refused to accept the settlement, considering it as an insufficient remedy and still lay claim to the land itself.

The story of Wheaton College begins in the mid-nineteenth century with its predecessor, the Illinois Institute. Founded in 1853 by outspoken abolitionists, the leadership of the Institute was passionately committed to the immediate eradication of slavery. And at a time when racial segregation was almost universal across the “free” states of the North, the Institute also boldly recognized “the equality of all in natural and inalienable rights” and promised to make “no distinctions . . . in the rights and privileges of students, on account of ancestry or color.”

Plagued by financial difficulties and instability, the school was reorganized and renamed in 1860, but its abolitionist commitment remained strong. The new president, Jonathan Blanchard, brought impeccable abolitionist credentials to Wheaton College. A former traveling lecturer for the American Antislavery Society—the country’s foremost abolitionist organization—Blanchard had also represented the United States at a landmark World Antislavery Convention in London and, with the outbreak of the Civil War the year after his arrival at Wheaton, he would be one of the first ministers in the North to appeal to President Abraham Lincoln to “let the oppressed go free” in 1861.



Wheaton College has long celebrated its abolitionist roots with gratitude, and with good reason. During the early years of Blanchard's presidency, Wheaton College made good its pledge to trumpet "the testimony of God's word against slaveholding." Equally important, it perpetuated the Institute's openness to students of color. Although the exact number cannot be determined, a small cohort of students of color attended and graduated from the College during Blanchard's tenure, many of them boarding in the president's home. The community has reason to remember this part of its story with gratitude.

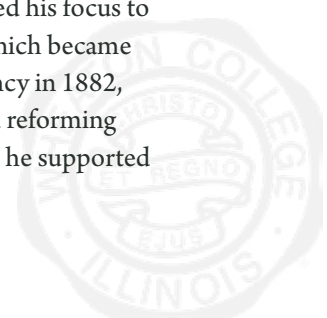
And yet history is complicated, and even this noble beginning is not as simple as it is typically recalled. To begin with, the historical marker in front of Blanchard Hall notwithstanding, the documentary evidence supporting the claim that Wheaton College was a stop on the [Underground Railroad](#) lacks corroboration. More importantly, the College's principled opposition to slavery was not synonymous with a commitment to promote racial equality in all respects. Nor did it lead to active promotion of racial integration and the full realization of the civil and political rights of African Americans after emancipation.

To note this is not to charge Jonathan Blanchard or the College with hypocrisy or inconsistency but rather to remind readers that the moral ideals seen as self-evident in the 21st century were viewed quite differently in the middle of the 19th century. Following centuries of precedent (and echoing a distinction enshrined in the Declaration of Independence), Blanchard differentiated between natural rights—which were universal and unalienable—and civil and political rights, which could be allocated or denied on a variety of grounds according to local custom. It is crucial to note, moreover, that in defining his views on policy issues, Blanchard always emphasized obligations more than rights. Slavery's greatest evil, in his eyes, was that it prevented human beings from responding as free moral agents to the commands of God—to repent and believe in the gospel and to walk according to God's precepts.

Thus, once abolition was legally realized by the Emancipation Proclamation and the subsequent ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, Jonathan Blanchard never matched his earlier zeal for the abolition of slavery with a commensurate zeal for the promotion of racial equality. Like most northern abolitionists, he viewed the battle as over. "The auction block is gone," he exulted, "and the slave pen is empty." The formerly enslaved could now respond freely to the Gospel, nourish faithful marriages, and raise their children to fear and serve the Lord. It was time to turn attention to other social ills.

This leads to the most significant complication to the celebration of Wheaton's abolitionist beginning: the very success of the abolitionist cause seems to have prompted a gradual but inexorable falling away from concern for the well-being of African Americans. If Wheaton College was born with an abolitionist zeal rarely matched at the time and an openness to racially integrated education that was almost unheard of, it is equally true that for a century after the Civil War it seemingly lost interest in matters of racial justice and slowly conformed to the prevailing views of the surrounding culture. The transformation was gradual, and it was far from premeditated, but it was widespread, so much so that efforts since the 1960s to reverse course have had to overcome not only formidable external obstacles but decades of institutional inertia within the College itself.

Viewing the problem of slavery as "solved" after the Civil War, Jonathan Blanchard shifted his focus to other social problems such as intemperance, Sabbath violation, and [secret societies](#), the last of which became a preoccupation during the last two decades of his life. When he stepped down from the presidency in 1882, his successor (and son) [Charles Blanchard](#) perpetuated his father's commitment to an "active and reforming Christianity" and largely duplicated his father's specific targets for reform. By his own reckoning, he supported



“three great movements of a reformed character” during his lengthy presidency, which spanned from 1882-1925: the movement against the lodge, the movement against the saloon, and the movement for the sanctity of the Sabbath. To these reform labors must be added his crusade against theological modernism, a struggle that became increasingly all-consuming during the latter half of his tenure.

Both Jonathan and Charles Blanchard were sincere in their opposition to slavery and their solicitude for the welfare of the formerly enslaved. Both boarded Black students in their homes, preached in Black churches, and lectured at Black colleges. But both also thought of slavery narrowly in terms of legal servitude rather than more broadly in terms of the far more intractable problem of the place of free blacks in a post-slavery America. As a result, neither had a vision for the active promotion of racial integration, either nationally or at Wheaton College.

Given that lack of vision, the subsequent trajectory of the College becomes predictable, almost inevitable. African Americans were rare in the Midwest (less than one-half of one percent of the population on the eve of the Civil War), and the College drew primarily from that portion of the country at least into the 1920s. Compounding the challenge was the fact that barely 1 percent of Black adults attended college during these years, which meant that the pool of Black prospective students was minuscule.

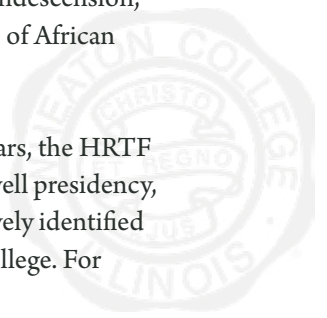
Consequently, the number of students of color at Wheaton, always small, gradually dwindled across the two Blanchard presidencies. In the late-nineteenth century, the number of Black students enrolled at any one time was rarely above two or three (out of a student body of a few hundred), and by the early-twentieth century, the number was rarely above one. Although the evidence that survives is anecdotal, it also seems that the campus environment had become unwelcoming, if not openly hostile, to students of color as there are documented instances in which white students refused to live with or eat alongside Black students.

So it was that, when J. Oliver Buswell II was named president of Wheaton College in 1926, the thirty-one-year-old minister assumed leadership of an almost all-white institution in an almost all-white town in an almost all-white county, and it had been decades since a countercultural position on race had been central to the College’s reputation. There is no indication that the Board of Trustees questioned Buswell about his racial views prior to his hiring, although they did press him, not surprisingly, about his opinion of secret societies.

Buswell’s presidency marked a critical stage in the development of Wheaton College as it is known today. During his tenure as president (1926-1940), the College’s endowment expanded substantially, both the faculty and the student body roughly tripled in size (from a few hundred to more than a thousand), and the school’s academic rigor and national (and international) reputation grew as never before. Wheaton had become what some have referred to as “the Harvard of Fundamentalism.” But these dramatic changes were not accompanied by a more expansive vision for racial equality.

One study of the College during this period has claimed that the Buswell presidency instituted a “reversal” of Wheaton’s previously more enlightened practices regarding students of color. In the transition from Charles Blanchard to Oliver Buswell, however, the HRTF has found as many elements of continuity as of change. As was the case at least throughout the latter half of Charles Blanchard’s presidency, the campus environment continued, on balance, to be unwelcoming to students of color. Occasional instances of enlightened racial sensibilities and repudiation of white supremacy were offset by too frequent instances of condescension, insensitivity, and outright ridicule (e.g., “jokes” in the *Record* centering on demeaning stereotypes of African Americans, blackface performances at literary society functions, etc.).

Although evidence on student enrollment by race and ethnicity is imperfect for these years, the HRTF can conclude with confidence that Asian and Asian American students were rare during the Buswell presidency, Hispanic students rarer still, and Black students practically non-existent. Indeed, we have definitively identified only one Black student who matriculated during the nearly fourteen years that Buswell led the College. For



purposes of comparison, during the final fourteen years of Charles Blanchard's presidency, the typical number of African Americans enrolled in any given year had been only *one*. Seen in this light, the absence of Black students during Buswell's tenure looks less like a "reversal" than the culmination of a trend that had been unfolding for at least half a century.

And yet the difference between *one* Black student in a typical year and *none* becomes more significant in light of evidence that, at some point during his administration, Buswell quietly implemented an [admissions practice](#) that systematically precluded Black applicants from matriculating at Wheaton. Exactly when he did so is impossible to determine, but it is notable that the first year that the College's standard application for admission asked applicants to indicate their race was 1930, while it appears that the last year that a Black student was admitted to the College during Buswell's tenure as president was 1927. It is important to point out that Buswell never openly made a moral (much less a scriptural) argument in favor of segregation, unlike many white evangelicals at the time, but privately he shared his opinion "that for a small Christian school where the social contacts are so close, it would be better to avoid coeducation of the races."

Private correspondence to Buswell from a contemporary critic of this view suggests that what concerned Buswell most was the possibility of interracial dating, an issue that would continue to cause College administrators unease for several more decades. By Buswell's own account, a decision to reopen the doors to Black applicants would have prompted an "argument and a strong division of opinion" among the faculty and the opposition of at least one prominent trustee and donor to the College as well. In the end, President Buswell quietly reversed course and privately instructed the school's registrar to "admit colored students hereafter." That change in policy would be implemented under his successor, [V. Raymond Edman](#), who assumed the presidency of Wheaton College in 1940

During V. Raymond Edman's twenty-five years as president (1940-1965), African American students again began to return to Wheaton College in small numbers (there were seven by 1950, for example), along with a smaller trickle of representatives of other ethnic minorities. Notably, the College received a temporary influx of [Japanese and Japanese American](#) students during World War II when it agreed to accept students who would otherwise be sent to internment camps by order of the War Relocation Authority. Prior to this, the number of Asian American students enrolled in any given year was typically one or two; by 1944 that number had jumped to twenty-two. It is notable that Wheaton agreed to accept Japanese American students who were subject to internment, as many colleges and universities invited to participate in this program declined to do so. Given anti-Japanese animus in the United States during the war, the campus environment seems to have been surprisingly tolerant, if not fully accepting, of the Japanese American presence on campus.

Although Wheaton College never formally prohibited [interracial dating or marriage](#) among students, the return of Black students to the College likely increased the administration's concern on that score. In 1955, the administration stipulated that no student marriages could occur without the approval of the Dean of Men or Dean of Women. Anecdotal evidence suggests that marriage applications from interracial couples received a more stringent review. In some undetermined number of instances, interracial applicants were rejected effectively, if not officially, on that ground alone.

Perhaps prompted by controversy regarding the College's marriage policy, in 1960, President Edman commissioned faculty members from the Anthropology and Sociology Department to undertake an institutional review of race relations on campus. In June of that year, the commission came back with a five-page report, "[Wheaton College Statement on Race Relations](#)" (1960), that strongly rejected any scientific basis for racial difference, called on white evangelicals to repent of racial discrimination, and offered a series of bold recommendations that, if implemented, would have made Wheaton College a leader among Christian institutions in its rejection of racial prejudice and pursuit of kingdom diversity. Among these was a call to recruit the College's

first Black faculty member, review its admissions policies to address the continued underrepresentation of minority students, and amend its marriage policy to provide counseling “without pre-judgment” to interracial couples desiring to marry.

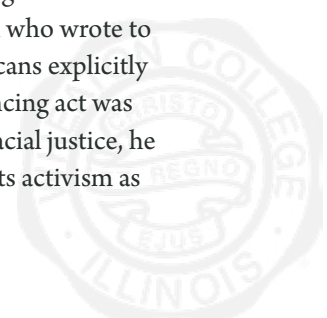
This last recommendation was the most controversial. Edman circulated the report among the College’s senior administrators and instructed them to share the contents with no one, family members included. The only documented response came from Dean of the Graduate School Merrill Tenney, who warned against releasing the report before thinking long and hard about “this important social question” and being sure that “we can pay the cost of our resolutions.” (Tenney had in mind a negative backlash from Wheaton parents who would see the “tacit approval of inter-racial marriage as a danger to their children.”) Whether persuaded primarily by Tenney, by other senior administrators, or by his own convictions and concerns, Edman evidently determined to quash the report, even in the face of repeated pleas from the Anthropology and Sociology Department. The College’s implicit decision, at this point, was to avoid forthrightly addressing the pressing questions pertaining to racial justice then growing in intensity across the country.

This would not be possible indefinitely. By the mid-1960s, the College had a new president, [Hudson T. Armerding](#) (1965-1982), and a subset of Wheaton students who were increasingly vocal in addressing questions relating to civil rights, racial equality, and the proper response of the committed Christ follower. After several years of debate on campus, in 1965 the College’s Board of Trustees approved a request from Wheaton students to establish a chapter of the [NAACP](#), the least “radical” of the major civil rights organizations of the day. The decision was nonetheless controversial. Some members of the campus community thought that the organization was too aggressive in pushing for integration, others suspected that it had been infiltrated by communists, and one member of the Board of Trustees resigned in protest. For all the furor that it caused, the College chapter never involved more than 2 percent of the student body, and the chapter disbanded three years later.

As with the NAACP, the College was also divided on the merits of the Civil Rights Movement’s nationally recognized leader, [Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.](#) Small groups of students occasionally traveled to hear King speak, and the student newspaper was largely sympathetic in its coverage of King during the 1960s, but at least one trustee objected to King’s influence on campus and questioned whether faculty who had become “emotionally involved” in the cause of Civil Rights could teach their students “properly.” It is also clear that numerous alumni viewed King as theologically liberal and under the influence (wittingly or unwittingly) of communism.

King’s assassination in the spring of 1968 put College administrators in a difficult spot when an ecumenical group of local clergy asked for permission to use the recently completed Edman Chapel for a memorial service in honor of the slain civil rights leader. President Armerding’s decision to agree to their request and to speak briefly to the gathering prompted howls of protest from College alumni and other Christian leaders as well as a threat to resign from one College trustee.

In the following weeks, Armerding worked assiduously to distance the College from the memorial service, walking a tightrope in which he condemned King’s tragic assassination without endorsing the movement that he led. The President’s Office sent copies of Armerding’s brief remarks at the memorial to all who wrote to the College to protest. These made clear that Armerding had never once referred to Black Americans explicitly and had not offered a single positive statement about King himself. The President’s delicate balancing act was clear: While trying to respond to growing demands on campus for greater attention to issues of racial justice, he was also determined to reassure suspicious College constituents who viewed aspects of civil rights activism as incompatible with Christian orthodoxy.



Although it could not have been predicted at the time, the late 1960s marked an important turning point for Wheaton College. After nearly a century of comparative apathy and acquiescence with regard to matters of racial justice, the close of the decade saw the first of a series of halting, only partially successful efforts to diversify its faculty and student body, to make the College more welcoming to minority students, to become a true leader among Christian institutions in the cause of racial justice, and to become an authentic model to the culture of kingdom diversity.

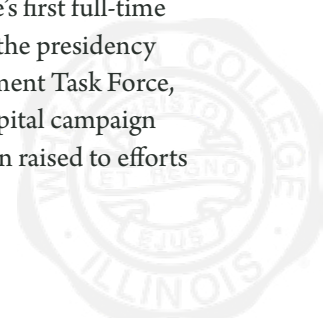
The first such attempt was inaugurated within months of Dr. King's assassination when the College implemented a [Compensatory Education Program](#) in the fall of 1968. Later revised and renamed the [Educational Opportunity Program](#), the goal of this ambitious initiative was to recruit a dozen or so economically and educationally disadvantaged minority students each year. The admitted students were to be offered substantial financial aid, assigned personal tutors, and otherwise assisted in the transition to an almost all-white and academically rigorous College environment. The EOP was abandoned after several years and widely viewed as a failure. Explanations for its lack of success varied, although insufficient financial aid and a lack of widespread institutional buy-in were undoubtedly contributing factors.

Despite this initial failure, in following decades, the College repeatedly returned to three broad objectives: to diversify the faculty and staff, enroll a more diverse student body, and provide dedicated support for minority students during their time at the College. In the latter years of Hudson Armerding's presidency, the College in 1977 hired its first full-time staff person ([Nadine Smith](#)) dedicated to work with minority students. A year later the Board of Trustees announced a set of institutional priorities for "[Wheaton by 1985](#)" that included, among other things, a commitment to actively recruit qualified minority students with the goal of raising their number to at least six percent of the student body, a proportion twice what existed then.

Both were steps in a positive direction, and both led to disappointing results. Smith resigned in less than three years, citing a belief that she was "not being taken seriously." The Associate Dean of Students at the time concurred, lamenting "a general lack of understanding and commitment to the idea of minorities having a significant part in the total life of Wheaton College." Smith's successor, [Joyce Suber](#), similarly struggled with a sense of isolation and a lack of support before resigning after four years. More positively, the "Wheaton by 1985" initiative led to a modest increase in minority enrollment but fell short of its goal, as students of color still comprised only 4.6 percent of the student body by that year.

During the presidency of [J. Richard Chase](#) (1982-1993), the College renewed its efforts to attract and support students of color. In 1988, the College established an [Office of Minority Affairs](#), under the leadership of [Rodney Sisco](#), charged with supporting and encouraging students of color and raising greater awareness in the larger campus community. The College also accommodated the emergence of a host of new [ethnicity-specific student groups](#) with much the same goals, e.g., the Asian Fellowship, Koinonia, the William Osborne Society, and the Hispanic American Student Union (later renamed *Unidad Cristiana*), among others.

At the same time, efforts to [diversify the faculty](#) were slow to materialize and slow to bear fruit. As late as 1980, Wheaton College had only two minority faculty members, both Asian immigrants to the United States. During the 1980s, the College added four more minority faculty members, including the College's first full-time African American professor. Efforts to diversify the faculty finally gained serious traction during the presidency of [A. Duane Litfin](#) (1993-2010). In 1996, aided by recommendations from a Diversity Enhancement Task Force, Litfin proposed that "Diversity" be one of the five strategic initiatives included in a major new capital campaign (the "[New Century Challenge](#)"), and the College committed more than a fifth of the \$140 million raised to efforts promoting the recruitment and retention of minority students, staff, and faculty.



Joining President Litfin in emphasizing the importance of enhanced diversity to the College's mission was new Provost Stan Jones, appointed in 1996, who identified the recruitment of women and minority faculty as one of his chief priorities and called on the faculty to lament "the horrible injustice of racism and sexism and the damage done to the lives of our brothers and sisters." The result was a level of moral leadership from senior administrators regarding racial justice rarely seen in the past century, combined with more tangible material support for diversity than had been the norm at Wheaton College. The result was that, between 1993 and 1999, the College added more faculty of color than had been added in the previous three decades combined. The number of faculty of color was still low—only seventeen out of a faculty ten times that number—but the College had reached the national average and was finally headed in a positive direction.



CELEBRATIONS, LAMENTS, REPENTANCES

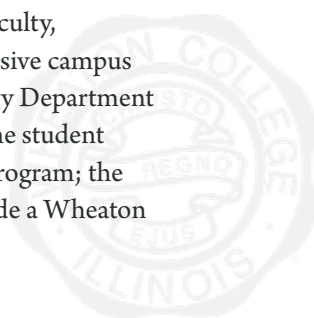
The Historical Review Task Force offers the following invitations to both Celebrate and Lament as a Community, and to Repent as an Institution, with the goal of empowering Wheaton—in view of the supremacy of Jesus Christ—to exist as a college dedicated to upholding and advancing our motto: For Christ and His Kingdom.

An Invitation to Celebrate as a *Community*

God delights when we obey him as we celebrate his grace for our recognized sins and when we give thanks for those who have modeled righteousness and truth for us (Mic. 7:18-19, Prov. 12:22, Ps. 112:1, Rom. 1:8; 1 Thess. 1:3-8).

On the basis of careful research and thoughtful reflection, the Historical Review Task Force has identified the following causes for celebration in our institutional history:

1. We celebrate the strong abolitionist convictions that defined the leadership and culture of Wheaton's early years. Wheaton's predecessor school, the Illinois Institute, was established by radical abolitionists of the Methodist Wesleyan denomination. Their unwavering commitments to the anti-slavery cause and to racially integrated education are evident from the Institute's early advertising: "No distinctions are made in the rights and privileges of students, on the account of ancestry or color."
2. We celebrate Wheaton College's first President, Jonathan Blanchard, who was a staunch abolitionist and radical social reformer for his time. His strong conviction that all are made in the image of God, with equal moral standing before him, undergirded his advocacy for the immediate emancipation of all enslaved peoples. Blanchard's stand against the sin of slavery, often at great personal expense, was notably countercultural and rare at the time, even among devout evangelical Christians in the northern free states.
3. We celebrate that in the beginning of its history, Wheaton College welcomed students of color into its campus, classes, and homes. A rarity even among progressive northern schools, the College committed to racially integrated classrooms, and Wheaton's first two Presidents, Jonathan Blanchard and Charles Blanchard, boarded students of color in their own homes well into the twentieth century.
4. We celebrate that, following the outbreak of World War II and the subsequent internment of Japanese Americans by the United States government in 1942, the College was a willing participant with the Japanese-American Student Relocation Council, which brought approximately 15-20 Japanese American students to Wheaton between 1943 and 1948. While many U.S. institutions of higher education participated in the program, not all eligible colleges and universities accepted Japanese students for a variety of reasons, including racial prejudice against second-generation immigrants from the United States' wartime enemy.
5. We celebrate the courageous efforts made by individual Wheaton administrators, staff, faculty, students, and alumni throughout the latter half of the 20th century to foster a more inclusive campus climate. Among these individuals would be members of the Anthropology and Sociology Department who drafted Wheaton's first statement on race relations in 1960; faculty champions for the student chapter of the NAACP; the visionary leadership behind the Compensatory Education Program; the tireless efforts of the staff of the Office of Minority Affairs; the generous donors who made a Wheaton



education possible for students of color through endowed scholarships, and the innovative voices behind the Visiting Minority Scholars Program. While these programs and initiatives experienced different levels of success, the individuals who championed them cast a compelling vision for advancing diversity, inclusion, justice, and unity not yet widely accepted in the white evangelical culture of their day.

6. We celebrate the efforts made from the 1970s onward to foster greater diversity within the College by actively recruiting students of color. Spurred by the institutional goals outlined in “Wheaton by 1985,” College administrators contemplated a bold and aggressive initiative to achieve a 6% minority representation among the student body by that time. While these efforts ultimately fell short of meeting the 6% goal, enrollment statistics show steady annual growth in the percentage of students of color matriculating at Wheaton.
7. We celebrate the courage, conviction, and initiative taken by groups of students beginning in the late 1960s who took it upon themselves to organize, launch, and lead race and ethnic-specific student clubs and organizations. These student communities played a vital role in the life of the campus, providing a space of solidarity, support, encouragement, and comfort for many who longed for closer relationships with fellow students with similar racial or ethnic identities and cultures. Most of these groups began at an unofficial grassroots level to offer opportunities for prayer and worship but were welcoming to all persons regardless of racial or ethnic background. These groups were later officially recognized by the Office of Multicultural Development, which provided financial support and other resources to sustain their programming.
8. We celebrate the long and distinguished service of Director of the Office of Minority Affairs (later Office of Multicultural Development) Rodney Sisco, who brought stability and renewed energy to that office in 1987 and made it a place of solidarity and solace for many students of color. Sisco worked to build bridges with College leadership, fostering greater awareness of the needs of diverse student populations and the social and spiritual challenges they faced in a predominantly white institution. His advocacy, mentorship, love, and spiritual care for students of color are often mentioned as the critical factor in retaining students of color at Wheaton. Despite many challenges, Sisco never abandoned his belief that the College could be a place of belonging for all students of color and not only a place of recollected pain for some.
9. We celebrate the efforts of the New Century Challenge campaign in 1996 that named “Diversity as a gospel-centric initiative for Wheaton College, looking forward to the year 2000.” The New Century Challenge marks the first time in Wheaton’s history that the College publicly committed to increasing diversity and deployed resources institution-wide to address the lack of diversity among both the student body and faculty ranks. Not only were significant funds raised to support multicultural scholarships and faculty resourcing, but the implementation of action steps was monitored and evaluated by the highest levels of the administration, including President Duane Litfin. The early years of the campaign also coincided with Provost Stanton Jones’ efforts to increase the number of faculty of color. His leadership in this area helped welcome eight additional minority faculty to Wheaton from 1997-99, bringing Wheaton into alignment with national benchmarks at the time.



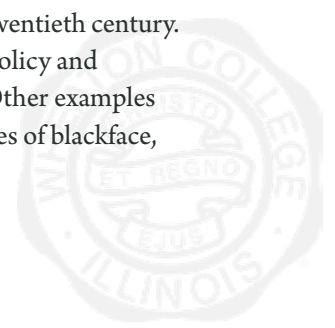
An Invitation to Lament as a *Community*

The Bible is transparent about the failures of God’s people and calls us to corporate repentance and lamentation with a cry for justice when sin or injustice is present. Corporate repentance is a natural extension of community lament even when some in the community are not directly responsible for the acts concerned, as all are identifying with the impact of what has taken place in their community (Ps. 32:5; Ps. 38:18; Ps. 51; Ps. 102; Ps. 142; Jer. 14:20; Mic. 6:1-8; Jas. 5:16; 1 John 1:9).

Identifying with the failures of past generations is a biblical idea (Isa. 59:12; Jer. 14:7; Dan. 9:16). So, addressing the sinful failures of previous generations is a biblical path to deep reconciliation and further blessing.

On the basis of careful research and thoughtful reflection, the Historical Review Task Force has identified the following causes for lament in our institutional history:

1. We lament that in its early years the College did not take a more active stance in supporting wholistic rights for all African Americans. While Jonathan Blanchard’s courageous anti-slavery convictions are unquestionable, like many northern abolitionists, his activism was a siloed approach to racial justice that fell short of articulating and advancing a higher vision for the social, civil, and political equality of Black Americans following the Civil War. After slavery was abolished, the failure to pursue an even application of citizen rights for all stands in stark contrast with the gospel message that all people are made in the image of God.
2. We lament that the College, under the leadership of Charles Blanchard, in its turn toward a narrower view of the gospel centered around personal rather than social holiness, effectively sidelined important social justice issues of the day. The unfortunate result was that the pursuit of minority students for Wheaton was not a priority making the experience of many Black individuals on campus a lonely and uncomfortable one. Thus, the typical number of Black students enrolled at Wheaton remained negligible in the early 20th century.
3. We lament the *de facto* policy of race-based discrimination against African American applicants to Wheaton under President J. Oliver Buswell. Specifically, at Buswell’s direction, Black applicants were denied admission to Wheaton College for a number of years during his presidential tenure. As a result, there were no African American students at Wheaton College during the 1930s, until Rachel Boone’s application in 1939 forced the institution to change course. While we cannot quantify the long-term effects of this discrimination, we can grieve the lost opportunities for Black students to pursue a Wheaton education in the 1930s. We further grieve that the entire campus body experienced an impoverished and false representation of Christian community that normalized the absence of Black students and thus deprived all students of studying and worshipping alongside African American fellow Christians while attending Wheaton.
4. We lament the embrace of attitudes, beliefs, and actions that created an inhospitable and sometimes hostile campus environment for persons of color, as documented from the turn of the twentieth century. These include the anti-biblical condemnation of inter-racial relationships that affected policy and decision-making surrounding admissions, housing practices, and marriage approvals. Other examples include racial humor and images in College publications like *The Record*, such as instances of blackface, that marginalized racial and ethnic minorities.



5. We lament the College's lack of courage by declining to take a more vocal role in opposing widespread forms of racism and white supremacy that dominated American culture, including evangelical communities, throughout the 20th century. When given the opportunities to take a bold stance against racial injustice, institutional leaders sometimes chose to stay silent, equivocate, or do nothing. The "Wheaton College Statement on Race Relations" (1960) was a courageous declaration for its day, with the potential to help the College make significant strides in understanding racial equality from a biblical perspective and enacting lasting change. When President Edman chose not to disseminate the Statement, the College lost an opportunity to speak prophetically to its campus and greater community. Likewise, while President Armerding condemned violence against Civil Rights protesters, his response to the movement as a whole was marked by hesitation and suspicion. As a result, the College missed an occasion to demonstrate solidarity with the aims of the Civil Rights Movement and to advance a Christian vision for the full civil and social rights of African Americans over the course of the 1960s.
6. We lament the College's repeated failure to fully embrace, celebrate, and follow through on many diversity initiatives and efforts to create a more inclusive campus environment that were initiated over the last decades of the 20th century. The determined resistance to establishing an NAACP chapter, the lack of adequate preparation and resourcing for the Compensatory Education Program, and the lukewarm support for the multicultural student development program are examples of institutional failures that derailed or inhibited programs seeking to advance Christ-centered diversity on campus. The programs, or the persons charged with carrying them out, were not always prioritized at the highest levels of leadership resulting in shallow institutional backing and inadequate resourcing.
7. We lament that the Black Hills in South Dakota, including the property encompassing the Wheaton College Science Station, is land confirmed by the Supreme Court to have been unjustly taken from the indigenous peoples that inhabited that area prior to the 20th century. Although the 1980 Supreme Court decision has established both the U.S. Government's and other private claims, like the College's legal title to the land, we recognize that many of the Lakota people, many of whom still inhabit the area, believe the financial settlement was an insufficient gesture of justice and still claim ownership by refusing to accept the monetary remedy.



A Call to Corporate Repentance as an Institution

We are called to bear one another's burden by taking a hard, self-critical look at the presence of sin and to love our neighbor well in response. This is part of reflecting the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:13–6:10).

Repentance for wrongdoing committed is a biblical mandate and is to show itself in concrete actions including a contrite spirit, penitent words, and transformed behavior. (Ps. 2:10-11; 4:4; Luke 3:8-14; 19:8-9; Rev. 3:19).

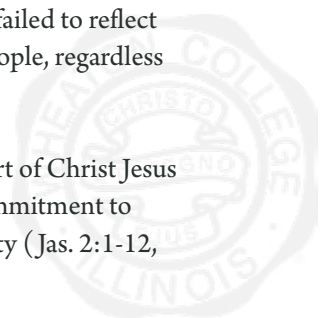
Identifying with the failures of past generations is a biblical idea (Isa. 59:12; Jer. 14:7; Dan. 9:16). And corporate repentance is modeled in Scripture which humbly confesses communal sinful behavior against God (2 Chron. 7:14; Ezra 9:6; Dan. 9: 11). So, addressing the sinful failures of previous generations is a biblical path to deep reconciliation and further blessing.

Our understanding of repentance, or the act of ceasing and turning away from sinful behavior, compels us to engage in acts of confession. While this process may begin with acknowledging our shortcomings and wrongdoings (1 John 1:8), we also feel compelled to turn away from our institutional misdeeds and towards a posture more compatible with the Gospel to which we have claimed allegiance (2 Cor. 7:10; Prov. 28:13). As members of the Wheaton College community, we invite our leadership to take responsibility for our institutional sins, just as we collectively benefit from our institutional success and legacy.

On the basis of careful research and thoughtful reflection, the Historical Review Task Force has identified the following causes for corporate repentance in our institutional history.

1. We repent of the sins of indifference and complacency in our institutional history exhibited by leadership and the campus community when confronted with opportunities to enact bold, courageous change in institutional policies, programs, and practices relating to community members of color. Such lack of action, through the years, exhibits a failure of Christian love, creates deep and painful barriers between Christian brothers and sisters, grieves the Holy Spirit, and tarnishes the witness of the Gospel (John 13:35; 1 John 4:21). An institution that ultimately overvalues convenience, security, or caution, cannot fulfill the biblical mandate to champion the marginalized in our own community (Prov. 31:8-9).
2. We repent of the sin of racism in all its forms, conscious and unconscious, that has been discovered in our past. These sins of partiality should not be lightly dismissed but taken to heart because they ignore the biblical creed that “all are made in the image of God.” (Gen. 1:27) and do not faithfully reflect the character of our God who shows no partiality in dispensing His loving grace (Rom. 2:11, Acts 10:34-35). At times, unbiblical and inhospitable assumptions and actions created and reinforced a culture of white supremacy on Wheaton's campus—not as an ideology or expressed as overt acts of physical violence by individuals or explicit institutional oppression but as an underlying mindset of white superiority. Certain non-white individuals were considered less deserving, or even ineligible, to receive the same basic opportunities as members of the majority white culture. There were also attitudes of favoritism that posited white culture and customs as normative against which the practices of other racial and ethnic cultures were measured and evaluated. As a result, our community has often failed to reflect the full diversity of God's kingdom and has fallen short of showing equal regard to all people, regardless of social status or prevailing cultural attitudes.

A posture of repentance must include a resolve to lead our community to reflect the heart of Christ Jesus for his Church, an obligation to “turn from our wicked ways” (2 Chron. 7:14), and a commitment to eradicate racism and favoritism wherever it continues to exist in our covenant community (Jas. 2:1-12, Mic. 6:8).



COMMITMENTS TO THE WHEATON COLLEGE COMMUNITY

Growth is only possible when need is made transparent and when a community remains open to what can be learned as more information comes to light. These commitments address the legacy of our history as it surfaces in the present, especially where it has violated our commitment to kingdom diversity, biblical equity, and Christian unity as put forth in the Wheaton College Christ-Centered Diversity Commitment of 2019. They are offered with the prayer that learning from our past will make us a better community in the future as God continues to teach all of us how to love one another more fully and authentically.

The following commitments—which are based on consensus recommendations of the Historical Review Task Force (HRTF)—were adopted by the Board of Trustees on June 17 and finalized on September 6, 2023. In recognition of our past history, with the desire to honor Jesus Christ and carry out our liberal arts mission, the Trustees are committed to:

Repenting: The Trustees will present (concurrently with the release of the HRTF report) a campus letter that includes a statement of institutional repentance confessing the harm committed—intentionally and unintentionally—over the course of Wheaton’s history towards people of color whenever our communal vision of the gospel failed to fully embrace God’s intent for a diverse humanity or the kingdom that we wish to embody and celebrate. We commit further to remaining alert for unjust situations from our history and to pursue relationships where a more complete reconciliation and mutual blessing through repentance may be realized.

Communicating: The Trustees will release the full historical report to the campus community and wider Wheaton constituency—including alumni—during the Fall 2023 academic term. Prior to release, the Administration will consult with appropriate stakeholder representatives regarding how best to disseminate the report to our campus and to recommend opportunities for engagement with the history and findings throughout the 2023-2024 academic year. These opportunities may include worship services, panels, forums, and listening sessions with Wheaton trustees, administrators, HRTF members, and various subject matter experts, whether internal or external to the College.

Going forward, the Administration will make the report readily accessible through a dedicated webpage that includes a timeline of race relations at Wheaton College and a resource library of pertinent items from the Archives & Special Collections. In addition, we ask the Provost to work with the faculty to determine the best ways to inform future incoming classes of this history and give them opportunities for spiritual and intellectual engagement.

Storytelling: The Trustees will instruct Admissions and Marketing Communications to frame our institutional narrative more accurately and comprehensively. At present, the way that the College recounts its racial history is incomplete, selective, and sometimes misleading. We want to tell our story truthfully, humbly, and accurately. To that end, we will review our campus narratives and make any corrections needed, including to claims regarding the Underground Railroad that have proven difficult to corroborate.

Naming: The Trustees will instruct the administration to remove President James Oliver Buswell, Jr.’s name from the Wheaton College Library. We make this judgment call—as we have made similar decisions in other instances when honorees were discovered to fall short of our institutional ideals—due to President Buswell’s institution of a *de facto* policy of denying qualified Black applicants admission to Wheaton College based solely on their race at some point in the 1930s. We recognize that support for this form of segregation was prevalent among institutions of higher education during that era in our nation’s history. We also recognize that Buswell was influenced by pressure from certain Trustees. Yet his private instructions to reject Black students were perniciously discriminatory and thus not in keeping with the biblical ideals that undergird

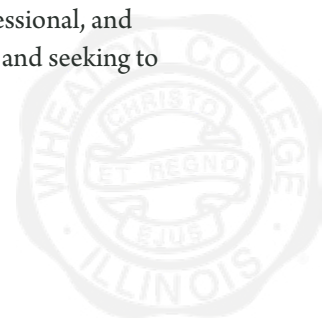
Wheaton’s historical creedal commitments, with the high moral standards we pursue in our present-day institutional values, or with the hospitality we hope to inspire in our students. The Library stands at the heart of our campus and plays a vital symbolic role in our intellectual flourishing as a Christian learning community. As a public acknowledgment of our collective grief and institutional repentance over the rejection of Black applicants, we will remove “Buswell” from signs and other public descriptions where it is used as the present name of Wheaton’s Library. The name will revert to “the Library,” as it was designated from 1975-1980.

We also ask the administration to work with Wheaton College archivists and historians to curate and install a permanent exhibit or display inside the library building, designed to recount the reasons for President Buswell’s name removal within the greater context of his 14-year tenure at Wheaton College. In keeping with our educational mission, this exhibit will explore the historical context of discriminatory practices in the 1930s, fairly document President Buswell’s contributions as well as his shortcomings, and create opportunities for College-wide dialogue and growth. This exhibit will allow the community truthfully to engage our institutional history with Christian charity and courage while ensuring that this piece of Wheaton’s history is not erased today or forgotten in future generations.

Going forward, we instruct the Advancement, Vocation, and Alumni Engagement Committee of the Board of Trustees to review and—if necessary—revise the current “Naming Policy for Facilities or Programs” in light of the findings in this historical review. At least one member of the Historical Review Task Force should be included in the review and revision process.

Collaborating: The Trustees will support faculty at the Wheaton College Science Station in the Black Hills as they pursue an ongoing dialogue with the Lakota Sioux in South Dakota regarding their history in the region and claims to the land. Notwithstanding the fact that Wheaton’s ownership of the Black Hills Science Station property was upheld by the US Supreme Court’s 1980 ruling, the entire Black Hills region is still disputed by some Lakota as having been unjustly taken from them. Inasmuch as Wheaton continues to benefit from the past misdeeds of others, it is appropriate to consider biblical approaches to this sensitive and complex issue. Ongoing discussions should seek to understand Lakota views of a just remedy and include ways to dialogue and partner with Lakota people at the Black Hills Science Station, including appropriate commemorative signage, programming, and future partnership.

Resourcing: The Trustees will continue assessing levels of resourcing and allocating needed support for departments and offices dedicated to the care of students of color. The goal of this commitment is to ensure the personal, academic, and spiritual flourishing of all students of color on Wheaton’s campus. We take note of tepid support and under-resourcing in our institutional history that hindered substantive success for programs, offices, and personnel specifically devoted to the recruitment, retention, and mentorship of students of color in the 20th century. While growing the racial diversity of the student body was a laudable goal from the 1970s onward, comparable growth in institutional support for these initiatives was slower to materialize. Further, this history frequently cites the lack of sufficient staff and faculty of color to offer guidance and mentorship for students as a shortcoming and hindrance to success. There is an ongoing need for the Board to pay close attention to the recruitment, retention, and thriving of faculty and staff of color commensurate to the effort put forth for students of color. This includes the academic, professional, and spiritual flourishing of all communities of color in becoming part of the College community and seeking to call Wheaton College home.



We consider this report as a living document that is subject to principled debate, future revision, needed correction, and possible expansion. It is not the final word but a record for reflection affirming that the careful consideration of our past informs and impacts present realities. To facilitate effective follow through, we invite the administration to chair and appoint a task force of faculty, staff, student, and alumni representatives to implement these commitments. Regular reports, at least annually, will be delivered to the Senior Administrative Cabinet and to the Commitments and Culture Committee of the Board of Trustees, including information on completed and forthcoming action steps.



HISTORICAL REVIEW, 1860-2000

Exploring and evaluating the policies, programs, and practices relating to race relations at Wheaton College must be conducted with a view of the College within its broader local, regional, and national context. These institutional policies, programs, and practices did not originate or develop in a vacuum without reference to external social, political, and religious convictions, assumptions, and biases. This report attempts to situate Wheaton College within its historical context to identify institutional trajectories that aligned with broader cultural trends and those that deviated from cultural norms.

The Potawatomi in DuPage County

This history of race relations at Wheaton College does not begin by examining the institution's initial leadership, founding families, earliest professors, or even its inaugural students. Rather, the narrative begins with the land itself—the literal ground where College buildings have stood since 1853—and its original residents.

By the late eighteenth century, Native presence in the Great Lakes region around what is now Wheaton comprised “networks of family, trade, tribe, and visions of the future.”¹ Among many different Native American people groups that laid claim to the area were the Ho-Chunks (long known as Winnebago) to the north of what is now Wheaton.² To the south of Wheaton were the Kickapoo. To the west along the Rock River were the Sauk, who had moved into the area following the decline of the Illinois Confederacy encountered by Father Jacques Marquette, who preached the gospel to the Illini with great success.³

But what would become Wheaton was primarily settled by Anishinaabe, translated “original people,” an expression that includes the Council of Three Fires, consisting of the Potawatomi, the Ojibwe, and the Odawa.⁴ More specifically, Wheaton was home to the Potawatomi, who controlled “eighteen million acres in a wide band running from Detroit across Lake Michigan to Milwaukee.”⁵ A loose community of approximately 50 bands speaking a related Algonquin language, the Potawatomi people (“Keepers of the Fire”) had not always occupied what is today DuPage County. The Potawatomi people migrated to the Great Lakes from the Saint Lawrence River

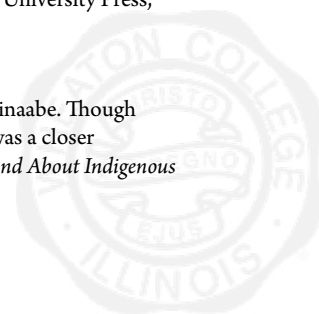
¹ Ann Durkin Keating, *Rising up from Indian Country: The Battle of Fort Dearborn and the Birth of Chicago* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 7.

² Paul Radin, *The Winnebago Tribe* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1990). For a list of other tribes with associations to the Effigy Mound culture, see “Effigy Moundbuilders,” National Park Service, accessed Mar. 12, 2021, www.nps.gov/efmo/learn/historyculture/effigy-moundbuilders.htm.

³ Keating, *Rising Up*, 15. As one recent scholar suggests, Marquette “spent the majority of his narrative describing not how he took possession of the Illinois, but rather how the Illinois ceremoniously took possession of him.” Robert Michael Morrissey, “The Terms of Encounter: Language and Contested Visions of French Colonization in the Illinois Country, 1673–1702” in Robert Englebert and Guillaume Teasdale, *French and Indians in the Heart of North America, 1630-1815*, (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 50.

⁴ *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Anishinaabe,” <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/anishinaabe>. Though spellings for this term abound, “[i]n the 1990s, this Indigenous People generally agreed that the spelling Anishinaabe was a closer approximation of a phonetic English spelling.” Gregory Younging, *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and About Indigenous Peoples*, (Edmonton, Alb.: Brush Education, 2018), 70.

⁵ Keating, *Rising Up*, 14.



area due to pressures from the Iroquois Confederacy, who partnered with the Dutch and British in the fur trade.⁶

The United States underwent significant changes from 1800 to 1860, the year Wheaton College was founded. The fledgling republic fought a second war against the British in 1812 and instigated another skirmish with Mexico following the annexation of Texas in 1845. Simultaneously, the United States continued to expand westward, igniting inevitable conflict between European settlers and the indigenous peoples they encountered.

In the first six decades of the nineteenth century over 280 treaties were signed between the federal government and various Native American groups⁷ and the U.S. military removed some 46,000 indigenous people from ancestral lands, forcing them west of the Mississippi River.⁸ In 42 separate treaties, the Potawatomi conceded nearly all of its land to the United States between 1795 and 1833,⁹ just 27 years before the founding of Wheaton College. The land that is now the town of Wheaton was ceded at the Second Treaty of Prairie du Chien in 1829 (see Tract 148 in Fig. 1)¹⁰ The Potawatomi sold the land that would become DuPage County to the United States in exchange for annual payments of \$16,000 and 60 barrels of salt. The treaty also reserved lands in western Illinois for the Prairie Potawatomi to settle.¹¹

The following year, U.S. President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act after Congress passed the intensely debated legislation by a vote of 28-19¹² in the Senate and 101-97 in the House.¹³ While the Act affected many Native American nations including the Potawatomi, the fundamental purpose of the law was to forcibly move Native American people groups from the Middle-Atlantic states, Southern States, and the Great Lakes regions to areas west of the Mississippi. In theory, this federal action created *terra nullius* (nobody's land), which under Western law allowed European settlers to claim ownership of ancestral native lands.

In 1833, the Potawatomi relinquished the remainder of their initial 28-million-acre homeland in the Great Lakes area when the Treaty of Chicago was signed, except the Paw Paw reservation, near modern-day Aurora, Illinois, which was never included in the cession treaties. That same year, the Potawatomi people were removed to southeast Iowa and then to a reservation in Kansas in 1846, and some eventually migrated to Oklahoma. Despite

⁶ Keating, *Rising Up*, 8, 12.

⁷ "American Indian Treaties: Catalog Links," National Archives and Records Administration, Accessed Mar. 23, 2023, <https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/treaties/catalog-links>

⁸ The Potawatomi Experience of Federal Removal Policy: Clarke Historical Library." <https://www.cmich.edu/research/clarke-historical-library/explore-collection/explore-online/native-american-material/native-american-treaty-rights/historical-issues/the-potawatomi-experience-of-federal-removal-policy> Accessed Mar. 28, 2023.

⁹ Suzan Shown Harjo, ed., *Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States & American Indian Nations* (Washington, DC: Published by the National Museum of the American Indian in association with Smithsonian Books, 2014). See also "American Indian Treaties: Catalog Links." National Archives and Records Administration, Accessed Mar. 28, 2023. <https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/treaties/catalog-links>.

¹⁰ "Treaty with the Chippewa, Etc., 1829," Tribal Treaties Database, Accessed Mar. 28, 2023, <https://treaties.okstate.edu/treaties/treaty-with-the-chippewa-etc-1829-0297?query=>.

¹¹ "Treaty with the Chippewa," Tribal Treaties Database.

¹² "To Pass S. 102. (p. 729). -- House Vote #149 -- May 26, 1830," GovTrack, Accessed Mar. 28, 2023, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/21-1/h149>.

¹³ "To order engrossment and a third reading of S. 102," GovTrack, Accessed Mar. 28, 2023, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/21-1/s104>.



signing treaties to allow the Potawatomi to stay on tribal land, increasing pressure ensured the Potawatomi people could not withstand the settlement of their land by the rising tide of European Americans.¹⁴ The Pokagon band of Potawatomi managed to remain by purchasing land in Michigan. But when another Potawatomi band led by Chief Menomini (also spelled Menominee) in Indiana attempted a similar purchase, they were tricked into congregating in their chapel which enabled their capture.¹⁵ A week later, the United States military guard escorted 850 Potawatomi men, women, and children west, a forced migration now known as the Trail of Death.¹⁶

Four years after the removal of the Prairie Potawatomi, in 1837 and 1838, Erastus Gary claimed several hundred acres¹⁷ in what would become DuPage County in northern Illinois, along with the Wheaton brothers, Jesse and Warren, who filed for the land that comprises the City of Wheaton today. The Village of Wheaton was incorporated in February 1859, and Warren Wheaton served as the first president of the fledgling community.¹⁸ An early benefactor to the Illinois Institute, Wheaton made donations of cash and land to the school, gifts acknowledged by President Jonathan Blanchard when the Illinois Institute was rechartered and renamed in Warren Wheaton's honor in 1860.

By 1860, virtually all the Potawatomi were gone from Wheaton, Illinois, and DuPage County. Wheaton College's first president Jonathan Blanchard expressly opposed the ill treatment of Native Americans. Writing in *The Christian Cynosure*, he protested "the theory that the only good Indian was a dead Indian" and the "frontier encroachments and the avarice of white men"¹⁹ though, in keeping with his age, he also believed in "Americanizing" and "civilizing" the Indians.²⁰ The memory of Wheaton's original inhabitants remained well into the twentieth century, however, and as late as 1921, President Charles Blanchard referred to the hill on which Blanchard Hall now stands as "the Old Indian Hill."²¹

¹⁴ See James A. Clifton, *The Prairie People: Continuity and Change in Potawatomi Indian Culture, 1665–1965* (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1998), 298. Also, Shirley Willard and Susan Campbell, *Potawatomi Trail of Death: 1838 Removal from Indiana to Kansas* (Rochester, IN: Fulton County Historical Society, 2003), 238-240.

¹⁵ James A. Clifton, *Prairie People*, 309.

¹⁶ James A. Clifton, *Prairie People*, 299-311.

¹⁷ "History of Wheaton," *City of Wheaton, IL*, Accessed Mar. 28, 2023, <https://www.wheaton.il.us/367/History-of-Wheaton>.

¹⁸ "History of Wheaton," *City of Wheaton, IL*.

¹⁹ "Indians and Educational Methods," *The Christian Cynosure*, Jan. 8, 1891. <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=christcyno> (accessed Mar. 28, 2023).

²⁰ *Christian Cynosure*, Feb. 6, 1879; July 8, 1886; Jan. 8, 1891. Cited in Gene Green, "On Native Soul," *Wheaton Alumni Magazine*, Winter 2013 <https://viewer.joomag.com/wheaton-college-alumni-magazine-winter-2013/0498017001392155166?page=17> (accessed Mar. 28, 2023). See also Wolfgang, Mieder, "'The Only Good Indian Is a Dead Indian': History and Meaning of a Proverbial Stereotype," *The Journal of American Folklore* Vol. 106, 419 (Winter 1993): 38-60 for an examination of the saying "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" attributed to U.S. General Philip Sheridan in 1869.

²¹ Charles Blanchard, "Report on a Comprehensive Plan for Development of the College," July 1921, Box 2, Folder 11, Charles Albert Blanchard Papers (RG 02 02), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College). Special thanks are due to former Wheaton College Special Collections Librarian Sarah Stanley for sharing this reference.

Today, members of the College community continue to reconnect with the Potawatomi roots of Wheaton's campus. In 2012, Wheaton hosted the NAIITS (formerly the North American Institute of Indigenous Theological Studies) conference. A relation of Simon Pokagon himself, the Rev. Casey Church has spoken several times at Wheaton, which has hosted several Christian powwows. Wheaton faculty have traversed the Trail of Death with the Potawatomi in an act of repentance. With Christ at the forefront, faculty and students continue to grow in relationship with Indigenous Americans originally connected to the area, but much more work remains to be done. See Gene Green, "On Native Soil," *Wheaton Magazine*, Winter 2013, 14-19 for more descriptions of collaboration and reconciliation between Wheaton faculty and students and indigenous peoples in DuPage County.

Fifty years after the Treaty of Chicago ceded the remaining Potawatomi lands in the Great Lakes region to the United States Government, the city of Chicago hosted the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, also known as the Chicago World's Fair. Held in recognition of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the New World, the Exposition celebrated the City of Chicago as a symbol of American exceptionalism and progress. As part of the festivities, Mayor Carter Harrison invited Simon Pokagon, Potawatomi native, as a guest of honor since his father, Chief Leopold Pokagon, had signed the 1833 Treaty of Chicago. Speaking to an estimated crowd of 75,000, Pokagon spoke favorably about the opportunities his people enjoyed through the American education system but also enjoined his audience to understand the cost to the Potawatomi peoples: "While you... say, 'Behold the wonders wrought by our children in this foreign land,' do not forget that this success has been at the sacrifice of our homes and a once happy race."²² This sober reminder, however, is contrasted with Pokagon's celebration of the Christianity he had made his own: "To be just, we must acknowledge there were some good men with these strangers, who gave their lives for ours, and in great kindness taught us the revealed will of the Great Spirit through his Son Jesus, the mediator between God and man."²³

Race-Based Slavery and Early Civil Rights in Illinois

Although admitted to the Union as a free state in 1818, Illinois continued in many ways to uphold and propagate systemic racial discrimination against African American residents within its borders. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, French settlers introduced slavery to the region. Although the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 barred the institution of race-based chattel slavery from territories north of the Ohio River, the legislation failed to eliminate slavery inside the state. From 1787 onward, the sale and transportation of enslaved people were prohibited in Illinois, but the state did not officially outlaw slavery until 1848. The free state status of Illinois was contested from its inception. In 1824, anti-slavery lawmakers repelled an attempt to reinstate the legal status of slavery in Illinois.²⁴ While the effort failed, it illustrates the ongoing reality of widespread racial discrimination in many "free" states in the North.

The year after gaining statehood, Illinois began imposing a series of "Black Codes" intended to severely restrict the civic rights and freedoms of Black Illinois residents. These codes levied fines and limited Black migration into the state. In 1853, Illinois lawmakers passed legislation entirely banning Black individuals from immigrating into the state. The most restrictive of all such legislation passed in the Northern states before the Civil War, the Illinois Black Codes stipulated that Black residents could not vote, testify in court, bring legal suits against white citizens, serve on juries, or gather in groups of three or more without risk of being beaten or jailed. Black residents were barred from bearing arms or serving in state militias. If Black residents were unable to pay fines, local sheriffs were empowered to sell Black labor to the lowest bidder, a form of indentured servitude.²⁵

In short, although technically a free state, Illinois state law overwhelmingly disempowered and oppressed Black residents, prevented new Black immigration into the state, and systemically reinforced racial discrimination against this minuscule demographic of the Illinois population. According to 1860 census records, Black residents numbered only .4% of the total Illinois population of 1,711,951. The year Wheaton College was founded, a mere 7,628 Black individuals lived in the entire state of Illinois.²⁶

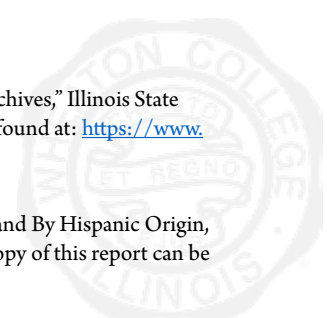
²² Simon Pokagon *The Red Man's Rebuke*, (Hartford, MI: Engle, 1893), 5. <https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/redmanquotsrebu00poka> (accessed Mar. 28, 2023).

²³ Simon Pokagon, *The Red Man's Rebuke*.

²⁴ Caroline Kiesel, "Slavery in Illinois: The Untold Battle to Keep the State Free," *Newswise*, Dec. 3, 2018, <https://www.newswise.com/articles/slavery-in-early-illinois:-the-untold-battle-to-keep-the-state-free>.

²⁵ "1853 Black Law," Feb. 12, 1853, No. 5277, Box 117, "100 Most Valuable Documents in the Illinois State Archives," Illinois State Archives, Springfield, IL: Office of the Illinois Secretary of State. A summary and digitized copy of the legislations can be found at: https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/online_exhibits/100_documents/1853-black-law.html.

²⁶ Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, "Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1900, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970-1900, for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States," Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 2002. A digital copy of this report can be found at: <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2002/demo/POP-twps0056.pdf>.



For the vast majority of Black Illinois residents, very little, if any, opportunity for social advancement existed. All Black residents of Illinois were limited to only the lowest-paying, unskilled occupations, and college education was practically unimaginable. The dearth of Black students enrolled in higher education institutions at this time must be understood in light of larger national trends. When the Department of Education began recording enrollment statistics in 1869, only 1% of 18-24-year-olds of any racial category were attending a college or university, a total of 63,000 students scattered across 563 different campuses.²⁷

The Illinois Institute, 1853-1859

Wheaton College's predecessor, the Illinois Institute, was founded in 1853 under the leadership of Rev. John Cross. The fledgling Institute's trustees and administrators were comprised of radical abolitionists who had recently separated from their Methodist Wesleyan denomination over the issue of slavery. Adrift from their denominational moorings, this handful of Wesleyan families founded the Illinois Institute primarily as a preparatory school for young adults but eventually added a college course of study. From its beginning, the Institute made its countercultural stance on racial integration plain. In advertising material circulated in 1855, the Institute boldly declared, "No distinctions are made in the rights and privileges of students, on account of ancestry or color. The equality of all in natural and inalienable rights is fully recognized."²⁸

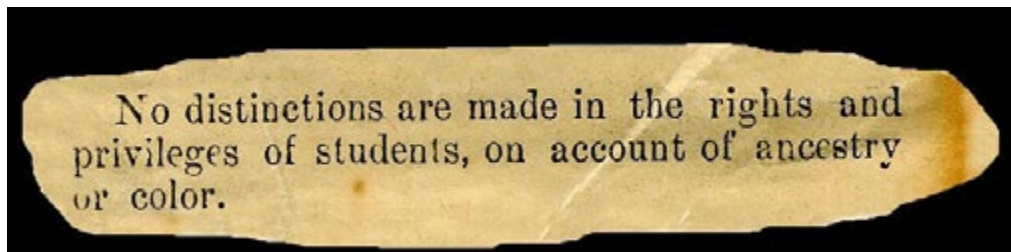


Figure 1: Excerpt from the Charter and Circular of the Illinois Institute, describing its open admissions policy, 1855. College Archives, RG 01-001, Box 1, Folder 1.

Despite this radical position, few records exist to document the diversity of the Institute's student body. Mary Barker has been identified as the Institute's first Black student. The daughter of formerly enslaved parents who purchased their freedom in southern Illinois, Barker matriculated at the Institute in 1857 but stayed only a single year.²⁹

In 1859, the Illinois Institute's reputation as a radically abolitionist enterprise earned the school an unusual request: a burial plot on the school property. Although he never attended the Institute, Bureau County resident and zealous abolitionist James Burr (1814-1859) applied to school leadership for permission to be buried on Institute grounds.³⁰

²⁷Thomas D. Snyder, "120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait," (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 1993), 64. The full report can be accessed here: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs93/93442.pdf>.

²⁸"Charter and circular," Box 1, Folder 1, Illinois Institute Records (RG 01 001), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College.

²⁹Brian J. Miller and David B. Malone, "Race, Town, and Gown: A White Christian College and a White Suburb Address Race," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 112, no. 3 (2019): 293.

³⁰James Burr's activities as a dedicated abolitionist are well documented. An immediate abolitionist and contemporary of Jonathan Blanchard, Burr was arrested in 1841 as he and two other classmates from Adelpia Theopolis Mission Institute in Quincy, Illinois, crossed the border into Missouri on a scouting trip to smuggle enslaved people across the Mississippi River and on to freedom in Canada via the Underground Railroad. He was charged with grand larceny and served 12 years hard labor in the St. Joseph, penitentiary. After his release, he returned to northern Illinois, but died not long after in 1859 from complications from tuberculosis, likely contracted in prison. See Oleta Princlloo, "Domestic Missionaries, Slaveholders, and Confronting the Morality of Slavery: Missouri v. James Burr, George Thompson, and Alanson Work, September 1841," *Social Sciences and Missions* Vol. 26 (2013): 59-92 for an account of Burr's abolitionist activities, arrest, and trial. A contemporary account by George Thompson features the letters and diaries of the "Quincy Abolitionists" from their servitude in the Missouri state penitentiary. See George Thompson, *Prison life and reflections: or, A narrative of the arrest, trial, conviction, imprisonment, treatment, observations,*

The reasons given were Burr's desire to be interred on land unsullied by the taint of slavery, and following his death in April 1859 from tuberculosis, Burr was buried within sight of the Institute's main building.³¹ In addition, Burr left three hundred dollars in his will to the school, a one-time gift to establish a scholarship. These funds, Burr stipulated, were "to be used for the educating of indigent fatherless young men who were wholly devoted to the cause of Christ wishing a preparation for such a calling and wishing to preach said gospel to all irrespective of color and who are opposed to slavery and sin of every grade and in favor of the reformers of the present day."³² Burr's conditions for these scholarship recipients—opposition to the sin of slavery and dedication to social reform—naturally aligned with the vision of the Illinois Institute and the early leadership of Wheaton College.



Figure 2: James Burr monument on the grounds of Wheaton College, undated. College Archives
Photograph: Burr, James, #A10461.

Wheaton College also made some attempts to recruit and support African American students through a scholarship fund named in honor of Owen Lovejoy, the Illinois abolitionist, Underground Railroad conductor, and former trustee. According to the June 1864 Board meeting minutes, the Lovejoy Monument Association proposed that Wheaton College endow a scholarship in Lovejoy's name to underwrite educational expenses for Black students. The Board passed a resolution to raise \$1,000 for such a fund,³³ but there is no later confirmation that the funds were successfully raised or that any Wheaton College student received a Lovejoy Scholarship.

Despite the leadership of visionary men like John Cross, who openly advertised for the Underground Railroad in Chicago newspapers,³⁴ the Illinois Institute struggled throughout its early years, plagued by financial difficulties. After a series of four presidents in six years, the Institute sought new leadership to bring stability to the institution while continuing to promote its progressive vision for moral and civic reform. In 1859, Jonathan Blanchard was recruited to be the next president of the Illinois Institute.

Founding of Wheaton College and Early Years

The selection of Jonathan Blanchard as the fifth president of the Illinois Institute underscores the institution's ongoing commitment to progressive causes of the day, particularly its vocal abolitionist stance. At the time, Blanchard was serving as President of Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, another notable abolitionist school. A skilled administrator, Blanchard lost no time stabilizing the Illinois Institute while continuing its legacy of anti-slavery radicalism. In 1860, the school was

reflections, and deliverance of Work, Burr, and Thompson, who suffered an unjust and cruel imprisonment in Missouri penitentiary, for attempting to aid some slaves to liberty (Hartford CT: A. Work, 1850). Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections also holds a collection of Burr materials in SC 102, including copies of court transcripts, newspaper clippings, letters, and Burr's last will and testament, along with research materials from Wheaton College faculty and staff from the twentieth century.

³¹ Today, James Burr's gravesite is located on the Wheaton College campus just north of Williston Hall and the Student Services Building. The gravesite is marked by a grave marker installed in the 1980s. The original grave marker is on exhibit in the first floor of Blanchard Hall, under the tower.

³² James Burr, "Last Will and Testament," May 31, 1859, Box 1, Folder 7, James Burr Papers (SC 102), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College.

³³ Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes, June 28, 1864, Box 7, Folder 1, Board of Trustees Records, Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College.

³⁴ "Liberty line. New arrangement --- night and day," *The Western Citizen*, July 13, 1844, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47dd-f68e-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

renamed Wheaton College after the local Wheaton family who donated additional land to the Institute,³⁵ and Blanchards would helm the presidency for the next sixty-five years.

The new College laid out its guiding principles and *raison d'être* in the 1860 catalog, announcing that Wheaton College provides “instruction for both sexes” and that the “intention of the Trustees is, that the instruction and influence of the Institution shall bear decidedly against all forms of error and sin. The testimony of God’s Word against Slave-holding, Secret Societies, and their spurious worships, against Intemperence [sic], human intervention in Church Government, War, and whatever else shall clearly appear to contravene the Kingdom and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, are to be kept good.”³⁶ In keeping with Blanchard’s suspicion of denominations, the catalog notes that control of the College has passed from the Wesleyan Methodists to Congregationalist administrators.³⁷ Thus, the College was founded with an eye to train students, men and women alike, to bring moral reform to both church and culture with particular concern for the following societal ills: slavery, secret societies, the sale and consumption of alcohol, extra-biblical models of church polity, and warfare. While the emphasis on pacifism disappeared with the advent of the Civil War in the College’s first academic year, the other pillars remained constant throughout Wheaton’s early years.

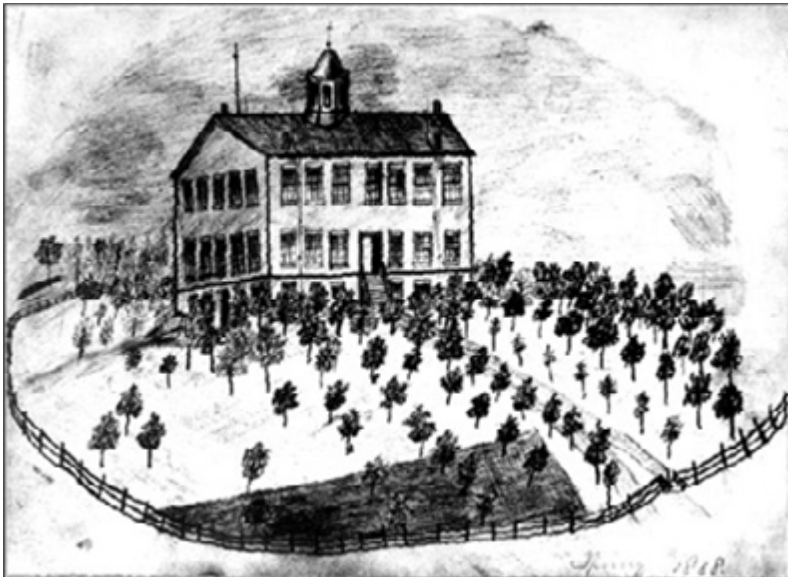


Figure 3: A sketch of the Main Building on the Wheaton College campus, later renamed Blanchard Hall, ca. 1860s. College Archives. Photo File: Blanchard Hall, College Archive Photograph #B01089.

Wheaton College has long been rumored to have been a stop on the Underground Railroad during the late antebellum period and into the Civil War. These claims stem from a variety of sources but are most frequently attributed to the abolitionist activities of Jonathan Blanchard, the first president of Wheaton College. While Blanchard’s radical anti-slavery sentiments are well documented, the role of the College in the Underground Railroad is less clear. One frequently cited source is the recollections of Julie Blanchard (1878-1959), the granddaughter of Jonathan. In an unpublished manuscript describing the history of the College and her grandfather’s life, Julia Blanchard claims that the Blanchard home in Cincinnati, Ohio was a stop on the Underground Railroad in the 1850s.³⁸ It is worth noting that Julia Blanchard made these

remarks in the 1940s, nearly a century after the events she described. This claim is frequently also made about the Blanchard home in Wheaton, Illinois, but no additional sources have been uncovered to verify that their home in Wheaton served as a stop on the Underground Railroad.

More recent claims in support of Underground Railroad activity stem from a single source: Ezra Cook, a former student who matriculated at Wheaton College in 1860. A Civil War veteran, Cook is quoted in a history of the 39th Regiment of the Illinois Volunteer Veteran Infantry as stating that fugitive enslaved people were harbored in the College

³⁵ Paul M. Bechtel, *Wheaton College: A Heritage Remembered 1860-1984* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1984), 18-20.

³⁶ *Wheaton College Catalog* (1860-1861), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College), 17.

³⁷ *Wheaton College Catalog* (1860-1861), 17.

³⁸ Julia Blanchard, “Wheaton Marches On,” Item 68, Vertical File: Wheaton History (Moule), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College), 7. Julia Blanchard (daughter of Charles Blanchard) declared in unpublished notes in the Wheaton Archives that Jonathan and Mary Blanchard protected fugitive slaves in their home in Cincinnati, Ohio. The citation reads, “My grandmother at 19 years of age had taught school in Montgomery, Alabama, where she was able to see the whole matter of slavery very clearly. The result of her experiences there made her a very strong abolitionist, and one of the first activities in Cincinnati was their endeavor to help and comfort the fugitive slaves who were continually passing through Cincinnati on their way from slave to free territory. Their home in Cincinnati was a station on the underground railroad.”

building (later Blanchard Hall). This account was discovered by Wheaton College Professor of History Emeritus David Maas and described more thoroughly in his book on Wheaton College and the abolitionist movement.³⁹

While Cook's claim is a significant finding, it has never been corroborated by another eyewitness account, a lack of documentation that Dr. Maas found puzzling.⁴⁰ It remains a distinct possibility that Wheaton College was a stop on the Underground Railroad, but such a claim should be treated with appropriate caution, as the sole documentation for it was published 28 years after the events it describes. Whether or not the College was a stop on the Underground Railroad, the College's counter-cultural anti-slavery stance is thoroughly established apart from any U.G.R.R. claim.

In its earliest decades, Wheaton's institutional records provide scant information relating to race relations through official policies, programs, and practices, and any anecdotal evidence remains suggestive rather than definitive. It would be natural to assume that the College inherited a commitment to co-education of the races from the Illinois Institute, but a robust, public commitment to that position is difficult to establish. One student newspaper issue in 1869 recycled inclusive language from the Institute's 1855 circular and charter to promote a College-sponsored rhetorical exhibition with the announcement: "Admittance FREE to everybody—no distinction on account of color, race, sex, or 'previous condition.'"⁴¹ Advertisements of this kind, however, were scarce and disappeared from use after the 1860s when Wheaton began to emphasize its commitment as a co-educational institution for both men and women.⁴² It remains notable that no Wheaton College catalog mentions openness to students regardless of race or color, as was emphasized in the Illinois Institute.

Whatever the cause, Wheaton College intentionally branded itself as a co-educational institution for men and women while remaining silent about the recruitment of students of color. Despite severe gaps, College records document several minority students in its early days. Mary Barker returned to Wheaton College in 1863 and later became a teacher in Quincy, Illinois, after completing her coursework in the College's Academic program.⁴³

A celebrated member of the Beltonian Literary Society, Edward B. Sellars holds the distinction of being the first African American graduate of Wheaton College and among the first in the state of Illinois in 1866.⁴⁴ Three years later, William Osborne enrolled in the preparatory school at the age of 14. Born into slavery, Osborne worked his way into the College's upper-level program and graduated in 1876 with a bachelor's degree after

³⁹ The most complete study of Wheaton College's abolitionist heritage is David Maas's *Marching to the Drumbeat of Abolitionism: Wheaton College During the Civil War* (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College, 2010). Published in conjunction with the College's 150th anniversary.

⁴⁰ See David Maas, quoted in "Wheaton College Was Underground Railroad Stop," *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, Oct. 6, 2009. Accessed at <https://www.diverseeducation.com/demographics/african-american/article/15089051/wheaton-college-was-underground-railroad-stop>. Maas states, "Why, if there were hundreds of people who observed this, doesn't anybody else, as far as we know at this point in time, make a reference to it?"

⁴¹ "To the Friends of the Voice," *Voice of Our Young Folks*, Apr. 1869, Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College, 1868), 5.

⁴² Wheaton College Catalog reflects this shift. Jonathan Blanchard penned the first justification for co-education of the sexes in the 1862-63 catalog, citing his sixteen years' experience in higher education. The 1870-72 catalog provided further rationale, arguing that "a quarter century's experience has convinced us that the mixed Institution, conducted in the spirit of Christ, is purest, safest and best. It makes young ladies better judges of human nature, especially the human nature of young men and 'vice versa.' It produces better order with less government than can be had where the sexes are separated. It gives pupils the freedom of open society without the license of promiscuous gatherings; and seclusion of the Nunnery without its espionage." The 1892-92 catalog inserted the tagline "A College for Men and Women" following the institution's title on the cover page. This tagline was repeated in the College catalog until 1900.

⁴³ Brian Miller and David Malone, *Race, Town, and Gown*, 293.

⁴⁴ Brian Miller and David Malone, *Race, Town, and Gown*, 296.

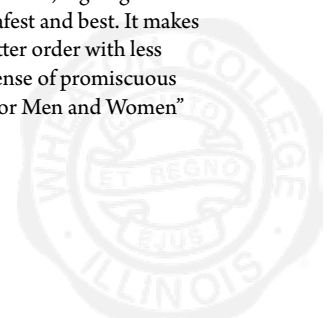




Figure 4: Edward B. Sellars, 1874. College Archives. Photo File: Sellars, Edward B.

earning the distinction as the first Black president of the Beltonian Literary Society at Wheaton.⁴⁵ Wheaton's first identified international student, A.D. Zaraphonides from Greece, matriculated in 1869. These students and a handful of others in Wheaton's early decades demonstrate that students of color did enroll, study, and graduate from the College, but official attempts to recruit, retain, or fully integrate them remain unknown.

The paucity of administrative records from Wheaton's early decades makes it impossible to effectively evaluate race relations through institutional policies, programs, and practices. The College's Board of Trustees meeting minutes, which are formulaic and vague, and the College publications, such as the catalog and student newspapers, provide little insight into pertinent questions relating to recruitment, admission, and retention practices, let alone the daily experience of students of color on campus. These most basic details cannot be established from the College's extant historical records.

College administrative records were retained more systematically in later decades, particularly following World War II, but the documentary gaps in Wheaton's early history disallow a systematic approach to understanding race relations and can, at best, provide only anecdotal evidence. By necessity, this report has focused on Wheaton's first two presidents, Jonathan (1860-1882) and Charles Blanchard (1882-1925), with a view to making plausible inferences about official policies, programs, and practices at Wheaton College from their documented religious beliefs, cultural convictions, and reforming activities.

President Jonathan Blanchard (1860-1882)

Even a cursory scan of Jonathan Blanchard's biography undeniably establishes his credentials as a radical social reformer in the context of the day.⁴⁶ Born in Vermont in 1811, Blanchard adopted an abolitionist stance during his studies at Andover Theological Seminary from 1834-36 when he joined the American Anti-Slavery Society as an agent and began preaching against slavery.⁴⁷ Blanchard left Andover on principle after the seminary rejected agents from the American Anti-Slavery Society, and he enrolled at Lane Seminary in Cincinnati in 1837, where he continued his lecture tours speaking on behalf of abolition. Located across the Ohio River from Kentucky, a slave state, Cincinnati was bitterly divided over the abolitionist cause, and Blanchard quickly became known

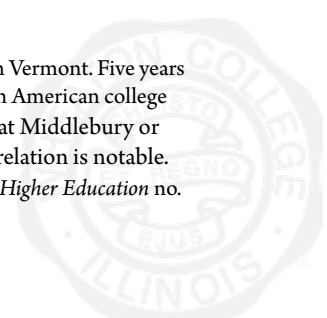


Figure 5: William Osborne, 1876. College Archives. Photo File: Osborne, William, Photograph #A12595.

⁴⁵ Brian Miller and David Malone, *Race, Town, and Gown*, 296.

⁴⁶ An overview of Blanchard's education and reforming activities can be found in Clyde Kilby's biography *Minority of One: The Biography of Jonathan Blanchard* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982).

⁴⁷ Prior to attending Andover Theological Seminary, Blanchard took a degree from Middlebury College in Vermont. Five years before Blanchard matriculated there, Alexander Lucius Twilight graduated from Middlebury in 1823, the first African American college graduate in the United States. It is unknown whether Blanchard encountered other African American students at Middlebury or what impact the institution's countercultural admissions stance had on young Jonathan Blanchard, but the correlation is notable. See Robert Bruce Slater, "The First Black Graduates of the Nation's Flagship State Universities," *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* no. 13 (Autumn 1996): 72-85.



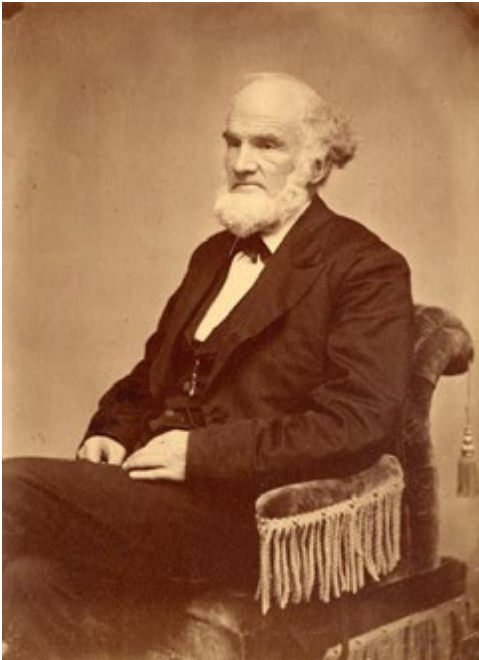


Figure 6: Jonathan Blanchard, ca. 1880s. College Archives. Photo File: Blanchard, Jonathan, Photograph #A00318.

for anti-slavery sentiments.⁴⁸ When serving as pastor of the Cincinnati Sixth Presbyterian Church in 1845, Blanchard participated in a public debate with Nathan L. Rice, pastor of Central Presbyterian Church of Cincinnati, on the question: “Is slave- holding in itself sinful, and the relation between master and slave, a sinful relation?” This debate offers an instructive glimpse into Blanchard’s radical stance as an *immediate* abolitionist, one who supported the instant and total abolition of slavery, as opposed to the more prevalent *gradual* abolitionist position, as outlined by Rice.⁴⁹

The next year, Blanchard accepted the presidency of Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, where he would remain until transferring to Wheaton College in 1860. While serving at Knox College, he represented the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society as a delegate at the World Anti- Slavery Convention in London, England and was afterward elected vice president of the American branch. In the first year of the Civil War, members of the Church Anti-Slavery Society wrote a petition addressed to Abraham Lincoln and forwarded it to the State Department, protesting rumors that Union soldiers were returning escaped enslaved people to the South. Some two dozen Congregational pastors submitted a copy of their five resolutions, concluding with the statement: “[T]he guiding star, through the war into which we have been forced, is the purpose of God in regard to slavery, as made known by His word, His spirit, and His providence; and if our

Government be still dreaming that this struggle can be successful, while the laws of Jehovah are ignored, and his command, ‘Let the oppressed go free,’ is disregarded, then there is preparing for us a terrible awakening.”⁵² The second signature on the petition reads, “J. Blanchard, Prest. Wheaton College Ill [sic].”⁵⁰

While Blanchard predominately focused his crusading energies on the anti-slavery cause in the years leading up to the Civil War, slavery was by no means the only societal disease he believed Christianity had the power to cure. Blanchard’s life work was social reform, whether addressing slavery, education, secret societies, the evils of alcohol, or general moral laxity. When he perceived victory gained on the battleground of one social evil, he merely turned his efforts to assault another. Blanchard most clearly outlined his reforming zeal and vision in his 1839 Commencement Address at Oberlin College titled “A Perfect State of Society.”⁵¹ Blanchard contends, “Society is perfect where what is right in theory exists in fact; where practice coincides with principle, and the law of God is the law of the land. It is where the Gospel has done for all men what it is capable of doing for one.”⁵² For Blanchard, slavery was undeniably a hideous moral evil, but its primary transgression lay in the inhibition of human moral agency, rendering enslaved people incapable of exercising their God-given freedom to pursue virtue. He writes, “[T]he most striking feature of our social depravity is the general odium which our public opinion inflicts on the colored race. . . . It blames the negro for what he cannot help. It despises him for what he cannot repent of. In God’s government, free agency rightly used can escape evil; but our public opinion makes the

⁴⁸ W. Wyeth Willard, *Fire on the Prairie: The Story of Wheaton College* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1950), 29.

⁴⁹ Jonathan Blanchard and Nathan Lewis Rice, *A debate on slavery: held on the first, second, third and sixth days of October, 1845, in the city of Cincinnati* (Cincinnati: William H. Moore & Co., 1846), 65.

⁵⁰ Lincoln, Abraham. *Abraham Lincoln Papers: Series 1. General Correspondence. 1833 to 1916: Henry T. Cheever to Department of State, Thursday, Sends petition from meeting of Congregational ministers.* June 6, 1861. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/ma11019700/> (accessed Mar. 28, 2023).

⁵¹ Jonathan Blanchard, “A Perfect State of Society: Address Before the ‘Society of Inquiry,’” in *A Perfect State of Society* (Oberlin, OH: James Steele, 1839), 35-56. Delivered to an assembly of aspiring ministers, Blanchard presented his vision of the Christian calling: “You have just been most properly told, that every true minister of Christ is a universal reformer, whose business it is, so far as possible, to reform all the evils which press on human concerns” (37).

⁵² Jonathan Blanchard, “A Perfect State,” 45.

colored man's free agency of no use to him, condemning him for what he did not originate and cannot remove."⁵³ Here, the assessment of historian Richard Taylor is helpful: What unifies all Jonathan Blanchard's various reform efforts—abolition, anti-secretism, Sabbatarianism, temperance—was his unwavering determination to topple all institutions and practices that inhibited free moral agency, and in so doing to eliminate all obstacles to individual conversion, collective revival, and societal renewal. In Blanchard's view, "Intelligent Christians, of course, are interested in the redemption of man's body, mainly as removing a mighty obstruction to the salvation of his soul."⁵⁴ Slavery being now abolished, Black Americans no longer suffered from constrained ability to accept the gospel message, freely worship God, and pursue personal virtue. In Taylor's view, Blanchard, like many immediate abolitionists, shifted his reforming efforts to other perceived social ills after the close of the Civil War.⁵⁵ Blanchard had been an outspoken critic of secret societies and the consumption of alcohol over the course of his career, but the cause of abolition had dominated his crusading efforts until 1865 when the perceived menace of secret societies consumed his reforming energies.

Here it is imperative to illuminate the foundations of Jonathan Blanchard's opposition to slavery, which stemmed from two main grounds: "Onebloodism"—the conviction that all people were made in the image of God and have equal moral standing before him—and the Bible's command against oppression from Exodus 22:21. These two themes are elucidated in Blanchard's 1841 "Sermon on Slave-Holding."⁵⁶ The topic of Onebloodism appears under the heading *Slaveholding necessarily subverts all true religion*: "For the reason why a man loves his neighbor as himself, is, that he sees that neighbor to be in every way his equal:—made in the same image, and heir to the same hopes. But it is a natural impossibility that a man should have one class of men as his equals, while he treats another class as on a level with his dogs."⁵⁷ Later in the same sermon, Blanchard addresses how forced ignorance and oppression prevent enslaved people from exercising moral freedom and personal piety:

Now all who know the meaning of the word, know that the slave is divested, not only of this, but of every other right, even the right to his own person. Having no legal existence, he can claim nothing by law, belonging to no society, he is in the condition of an exile at his own hearth stone. The woman and infants, which by mere necessity of speech, are called his wife and children, are yet *not* his; they are the property of others. Of the millions of Bibles in our land not one is opened to him, and the pure waters of salvation must flow to his soul, if at all, only through channels opened by slave holding hands (emphasis of the text).⁵⁸

This sermon, set alongside the published debate with Rice, illustrates several points distinctive to Jonathan Blanchard's anti-slavery position, though hardly unique among the most radical of abolitionists. First, slavery is an affront to religious piety because men and women cannot fulfill the Great Commandment to love God and love neighbor if they do not believe their neighbors are their moral equals before God. Second, slavery denies unalienable and God-given natural human rights. Blanchard distinguishes between natural, social, and political rights. For Blanchard, only natural rights—those "drawn from the New Testament and announced in the Declaration of Independence, declaring that all men have natural and unalien-

⁵³ Jonathan Blanchard, "A Perfect State," 51.

⁵⁴ Jonathan Blanchard, letter printed in an unidentified newspaper, July 12, 1842, Box 15, Folder 42, Jonathan Blanchard Papers (RG 2 001), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College.

⁵⁵ Richard S. Taylor, "Beyond Immediate Emancipation: Jonathan Blanchard, Abolitionism, and the Emergence of American Fundamentalism," *Civil War History*, Vol. 27, No. 3, (Sept. 1981), 260-274.

⁵⁶ "Oppression" is directly addressed by Jonathan Blanchard in his "Sermon on slave-holding" before the synod of Cincinnati from Oct. 20, 1841 and published in Cincinnati in 1842. At the beginning of that sermon Blanchard defines oppression as follows: "to oppress a man, is, to *deprive him of his rights*" (emphasis in the text). Onebloodism also is addressed: "Abolitionists take their stand upon the New Testament doctrine of the natural equality of man. The onebloodism of humankind:--and upon those great principles of human rights, drawn from the New Testament, and announced in the Declaration of Independence, declaring all men have natural and inalienable to person, property, and the pursuit of happiness. They only carry out the admitted truth that all are equal" (emphasis of the text). See Jonathan Blanchard, "Sermon on Slave-Holding," 1841, Box 15, Folder 43, Jonathan Blanchard Papers (RG 2 001).

⁵⁷ Jonathan Blanchard, *Sermon on slave-holding: preached by appointment, before the Synod of Cincinnati, at their late stated meeting at Mount Pleasant, Ohio, October 20th, 1841*. (Cincinnati, 1842), 3.

⁵⁸ Jonathan Blanchard, *Sermon on slave-holding*, 4.

able rights to person, property, and the pursuit of happiness” apply to Black citizens. When pressed, Blanchard conceded that his reforming activities did not extend to social and political rights for Black citizens, like suffrage or interracial marriage. “Voting and marrying, then, are not of this discussion.”⁵⁹

Here, Blanchard stands in alignment with many other abolitionist voices. As late as the 1850s, politicians like Abraham Lincoln still routinely distinguished between different kinds of rights, differentiating between “natural” rights, which were divinely given and inalienable, and culturally constructed political, civil, or social rights that were protected privileges. In the North at the time of the Civil War, free Black citizens enjoyed only physical equality (natural rights) and none other. By distinguishing between natural, social, and political rights in this debate with Rice, Blanchard adopted prevailing views of his day while still arguing for a radically counter-cultural position: the abolition of slavery and recognition of every individual’s natural rights. Although far ahead of his time in this respect, Blanchard’s concession that some other forms of inequality—social and political—might be morally permissible falls significantly short of our convictions today.

Significant attention has been given here to Jonathan Blanchard’s reforming efforts, particularly his support of immediate abolitionism. While his labors on behalf of abolition, often at great personal sacrifice, merit celebration, it should be noted that Blanchard, like the preponderance of northern abolitionists of his generation, thought narrowly about the morality of slavery as an institution and rarely about slavery as a subset of the broader, more all-encompassing issue of the place of African Americans in the life of the nation. There simply is no evidence of a robust vision for social, civil, and political equality for Black citizens as part of Blanchard’s abolitionist framework. For Jonathan Blanchard and many other abolitionists, the end of the Civil War “solved” the problem of slavery, enabling them to focus their attentions on other social and moral ills. While Blanchard was not dismissive of the needs of formerly enslaved people, it seems he did not accord the question of their social and political flourishing with the same time, attention, and zeal that he formerly dedicated to his agitation for abolition.

After 1865, Blanchard redoubled his efforts to oppose secret societies, a lifelong antagonism that amounted almost to obsession and was reflected in the College’s strict prohibition against student involvement in secret societies. For Blanchard, secret societies, much like the institution of slavery, strove to bind human consciences and constrain free moral agency. Secret societies demanded absolute loyalty and set individuals against each other in absurd and dangerous hierarchies. Blanchard’s vehement opposition to secret societies set the College at odds for decades with the Wheaton Masonic Temple, located less than a mile from campus. In 1866, the College asserted its right to stand in loco parentis and suspended a student for violating institutional policy and joining the lodge. When the Masons sued in retaliation, the case wound its way to the Illinois Supreme Court, which ruled in

⁵⁹ Jonathan Blanchard and Nathan Rice, *A Debate on Slavery*, 44.

The Blanchards on Secret Societies

The Blanchards, father and son, together waged a quarter-century battle against fraternal societies in the United States. A continental import to the British colonies in the mid-eighteenth century, fraternal societies were often viewed with suspicion for their exclusivity, elaborate ritualistic exercises, and claims to esoteric knowledge. Secret societies multiplied rapidly in the United States after the Revolutionary War as new waves of immigrants to the fledgling republic initiated chapters or versions of secret societies from their homelands. By far one of the oldest and most influential societies was the Order of the Freemasons. Others included the Knights of Pythias, the Ancient Order of United Workmen, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and the Knights of the Golden Eagle.

For Jonathan Blanchard, secret societies were an outright danger to social reform and progress, wielding immense cultural influence behind the scenes of local and national government. In particular, Blanchard held secret societies in the South responsible for instigating the Civil War. In his view, these societies leveraged their powerful networks to protect their economic and cultural interests, namely the institution of slavery.

Jonathan Blanchard’s struggle to expose and eradicate secret societies was reinvigorated following the Civil War. Aided by his son, Charles Blanchard, Jonathan founded the National Christian Association to formally agitate against secretism. In 1884, he launched an unsuccessful bid for the presidential candidacy on an Anti-Masonic Party platform. While the scope of Jonathan Blanchard’s anti-secretism campaign was national, he reserved special energy to attacking the Masonic Lodge in downtown Wheaton that resulted in an Illinois Supreme Court case in 1866.

While advocacy against “The Lodge” became a Blanchard family affair, Charles Blanchard recalls being less committed as a teenager, once inquiring at the dinner table, “Father, can we not speak about something in this house besides Free Masonry? I am extremely weary of the whole subject.”



favor of the College.⁶⁰ Three years after the end of the Civil War, Blanchard founded the National Christian Association to oppose secret societies and publicly attacked them in its official publication, *The Christian Cynosure*, which he edited until his death in 1892. In short, Blanchard afforded the anti-secret society cause with the same reforming vigor he asserted against the institution of slavery.

Perhaps the most illuminating historical example of Jonathan Blanchard's myopic view of racial flourishing is his 1886 speaking tour through the American South, a custom Charles Blanchard would later adopt. For several months, Blanchard toured Mississippi, Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Louisiana, speaking at Black colleges and churches, extensively reported in *The Christian Cynosure*. While it would have been impossible to overlook frequent systemic discrimination against the Black community across the South, there is little to no mention of racial discrimination, segregation, Jim Crow, or the plight of Black communities. Rather, time and again, Jonathan Blanchard warned audiences of Black southerners that involvement in secret societies would be the greatest impediment to their social and spiritual flourishing. In fact, *The Cynosure* frequently reported on the activities of the Ku Klux Klan but identifies the KKK as just a particularly violent and evil secret society, akin to the Masons. For Blanchard, the greatest threat facing the newly emancipated Black community in the South was not systemic discrimination, poverty, or political oppression but the allure of secretism. The vote, for the Black community, could be levied to destroy the twin evils of alcohol and secret societies and subsequently raise Black men and women out of moral blindness. Speaking to a Black audience in Washington, D.C., Blanchard called his listeners to defeat the Lodge: "You have seven million people and more than a million votes. Cast those votes for God and goodness, against the lodge and liquor, and the key of yonder White House will soon be in colored hands."⁶¹ In the same address, Blanchard identified secret societies as the incubator of the Civil War: "Slavery, it is true, was a chief bone of contention, but slavery alone never would have carried out eleven States who loved the Union and the flag if their leaders had not been drilled and sworn and drunken in long, late night lodge meetings."⁶²

Summary of Jonathan Blanchard Administration

Jonathan Blanchard's reforming vision and emphases were infused into the ethos of Wheaton College, if not its policies, programs, and practices. College literature, like its president, celebrated Wheaton's role in the demise of slavery while intensifying reforming efforts against secretism. The year following the end of the Civil War, the Wheaton College catalog dropped any mention of anti-slavery and included new injunctions against potential student activity in secret societies. Whereas previous catalogs contained stern warnings against joining a secret society, the 1866 catalog outright prohibited even attending a meeting.⁶³ This prohibition remained in place for decades.

The College continued to exhibit considerable institutional pride in its counter-cultural abolitionist past for years to come while simultaneously championing new moral and cultural causes. The 1873-74 catalog captures this shift in Wheaton's institutional identity:

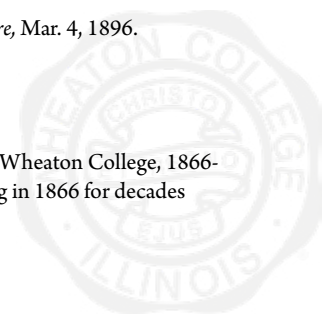
It [Wheaton] is devoted to Christian Education as distinguished from mere secular training, and to an active

⁶⁰ See Philip Lee, "The Curious Life of *in Loco Parentis* at American Universities" *Higher Education in Review* 8, (2011), 65-90 for a historical review of higher education institutions claiming rights to discipline students and form their character due to their unique position of standing *in loco parentis*.

⁶¹ Jonathan Blanchard, "The Influence of the Lodge on the Destiny of the Colored Race," *The Christian Cynosure*, Mar. 4, 1896.

⁶² Jonathan Blanchard, "The Influence."

⁶³ *Inform Bulletin College Catalogue* (1866-67), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College, 1866-67), 19. From 1860-1865, the annual catalog stated a general prohibition against students joining secret societies. Starting in 1866 for decades onward, Wheaton banned students from even attending a society meeting.



and reforming Christianity as opposed to one which is purely theoretic. When most of our Christian Colleges were controlled by men who were silent or neutral regarding Slavery, Wheaton College pleaded for the oppressed. When, as at present, infidelity, organized and individual, is seeking the exclusion of the Bible from the public schools, and the entire abrogation of our national Christian customs, Wheaton College is endeavoring to educate young men and women who shall sustain the Christian institutions, from which alone our prosperity and safety spring.⁶⁴

Wheaton's emphasis on inculcating an "active and reforming Christianity" into its student body and campus culture remained a consistent feature of its institutional identity over its early history. This vision for Christian education, however, seems to contain little or no place for a robust vision of racial equality and flourishing for students of color, a trend that continued into the following administration.

President Charles Blanchard (1882-1925) and the New Century



Figure 7: Charles Blanchard, 1892. College Archives. Photo File: Blanchard, Charles, Photograph #A00241.

Charles Blanchard holds the distinction of being Wheaton's longest-serving president, spanning forty-three years, a period of transition both for the College and the American evangelical landscape. The national context for this period includes seismic shifts as well: rapid industrialization, significant changes in immigration patterns, World War I, and growing tensions in American Protestantism between those who identified as Fundamentalist versus Modernist.

College records from Charles Blanchard's administration, much like his father's, were not systematically collected, if created at all. These significant gaps obscure much of the institution's approach to race relations through its policies, programs, and practices. One consistent source of information is the Wheaton College catalog, which, among other academic program information, documented enrollment statistics from year to year. While the student body population under Jonathan Blanchard remained relatively stable, hovering around 215 students between the various programs, College enrollment did increase during the younger Blanchard's administration, up to 337 students in 1925.⁶⁵ Particularly in the new century, Wheaton's geographic and global reach increased. Whereas in its first decades, Wheaton students overwhelmingly came from Illinois and a handful of neighboring Midwestern states, enrollment increased from northern and eastern states under Charles Blanchard. Recruitment from Southern states remained consistently low.⁶⁶ In the 1925-26 academic year, the top seven states were Illinois (177 students), Pennsylvania (28), New York (25), Ohio (19), Michigan (12), Massachusetts (10), and Missouri (9). Southern States lagged behind with only nine students.

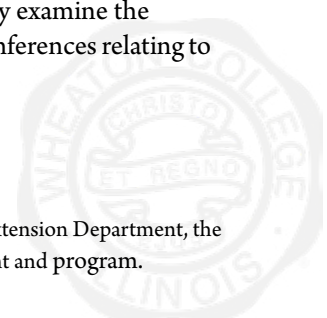
These enrollment statistics include a breakdown by sex but not race or ethnic background, as would be expected today, though it does track country of origin with 336 students from the USA, 10 from China, and one each from Spain and India. It is also worth noting that these numbers do not reflect nationality, and many of these "international" students were likely the children of Western missionaries.

In light of the scant College administrative records during this period, this section will briefly examine the personal convictions and leadership emphases of Charles Blanchard with a view to making possible inferences relating to institutional policies, programs, and practices over this forty-three-year period.

⁶⁴ *Inform Bulletin Wheaton Catalogue* (1873-74), 23.

⁶⁵ This seemingly modest growth does not include the significant student population in the Conservatory, the Extension Department, the Academy, Summer School, and the Practice School. See the 1925-26 *Catalog* for a full breakdown of students by department and program.

⁶⁶ *Inform Bulletin College Catalogue* (1925-26), 64.



Born in 1848, Charles Blanchard was eleven years old when his father took the helm at the struggling Illinois Institute. The town of Wheaton became Charles's residence for the rest of his life and Wheaton College his life's work, as a student, professor, and president.⁶⁷ Charles inherited his father's zealous reforming temperament and strict moral compass. As the abolitionist cause dissipated after the end of the Civil War, he followed in Jonathan's footsteps as an agitator against secret societies. By the time he graduated from Wheaton College in 1870, Charles had already presented 65 addresses on the evils of secretism. After completing his education, he became a lecturer for the National Christian Association and published often in *The Cynosure*, making agitation against the Masonic lodge a Blanchard family business.

Charles assumed the leadership of Wheaton College in 1882, at the age of thirty-six, and much of his adult life was preoccupied with the decline of perceived Christian orthodoxy and praxis in American Protestantism. In his 1915 autobiography, Blanchard summarizes his life's calling in this way: "These have been the three great movements of a reformed character with which I have identified throughout my life. The movement of the church against the lodge, and the movement for the home and church against the saloon and the protest against the Sabbath profanation which brings upon any country where it is permitted the curse of God."⁶⁸ Keenly attuned to the college or seminary campus as a cultural and theological bellwether, Blanchard lamented worrying trends in the early twentieth century:

In the former days colleges were planted by poor men, generally ministers. Funds came very slowly, salaries were very small, equipments [sic] were scanty, but ideals were high. . . . Colleges in general did not tolerate dances and theatricals while the use of tobacco was usually frowned upon and the use of intoxicants, except in a secret way was unknown. These days of class dances, fraternity dances, sorority dances, dramatic clubs, smokers and round-ups are a far cry from the college life of those days.⁶⁹

Even more troubling for Blanchard were the perceived attacks on the veracity of the Bible from Modernist theologians. He claimed: "I have been always an earnest believer in and advocate of the truth that the Bible is the revealed will of God. This is perhaps the most fundamental issue of our own time for our theological seminaries and schools are largely occupying ground which a short time since would have been considered infidel. I consider it infidel now."⁷⁰ For Blanchard, the preservation of Christian orthodoxy in an increasingly hostile cultural context became as consuming a topic for Wheaton College as abolition had been in 1860. To a twenty-first-century reader of Charles Blanchard's writing, the absence of a robust vision for racial equality or acknowledgment of increasing systemic injustice against Black Americans may be surprising. This lacuna, however, would have been sadly unexceptional at the time.

Charles, like his father, could not plead ignorance to the plight of African Americans, chiefly due to his own speaking tours through the American South. A report written by Charles Blanchard and published in *The Record* details the president's 1896 trip, lasting three weeks and stopping at fourteen different institutions in Nashville, Memphis, Tougaloo [sic], Jackson, New Orleans, Talladega, and Atlanta.⁷¹ Blanchard's report summarizes the connection to the Black community this way: "In all they had opportunity of addressing some two thousand five hundred of the young people of the colored race, who are by their education set apart to leadership among their people."⁷²

⁶⁷ Much of this story is told in President Blanchard's *Autobiography; the Dealings of God with Charles Albert Blanchard, for Many Years a Teacher in Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois*. (Boone, IA: The Western Alliance Publishing Co., 1915).

⁶⁸ Charles Blanchard, *President Blanchard's Autobiography*, 96-98.

⁶⁹ Charles Blanchard, *President Blanchard's Autobiography*, 59.

⁷⁰ Charles Blanchard, *President Blanchard's Autobiography*, 99.

⁷¹ The report on this trip is contained in *The Record*: "Editorial Notes," *The Record*, Mar. 1896.

⁷² "Editorial Notes," *The Record*.



Two themes are embedded in Blanchard's summary. First, education is understood as the means of advancing the Black community. This echoes beliefs previously identified in Jonathan Blanchard's approach to the issue of politics and society, namely, that education was necessary for Black Americans to be able to fully participate in and contribute to society. Second, there is a sense of separation in the report as these young people were being equipped for "leadership among their people." This may reflect the separate but equal perspective so prevalent at that time. These are the leaders who will represent the Black community, or they will lead in the community to which they belong. Concluding his report, Blanchard claims, "The great need of the South for both white and colored people is undoubtedly education and Christianity. Of course, the latter includes industry, economy and honesty."⁷³

In another report from his 1896 tour, Blanchard recounts a conversation with a Black pastor while traveling by train. Their discussion of Southern life and culture included a discussion of race relations and lynching. In Blanchard's telling, the two men concluded that the "best class" of people are rarely lynched, "seldom house-servants, coachmen or business men [sic]. Usually men who are loaf and drink. . . . Men who are busy about some honest occupation usually keep away from trouble." As for the "race problem" in the South, "it must be solved by time. There is no way to hasten it." For Blanchard, racial prejudice would eventually be solved as both white and Black populations become more "prosperous and self respectful [sic]."⁷⁴ While Blanchard's comments from his various reports implicitly refute the idea of intrinsic Black inferiority, they also reveal a naïve optimism about the obstacles facing the African American community in the South.

Minority Student Enrollment under the Blanchards

Although the College is rightfully proud that one of the very first African Americans to graduate from college in the state of Illinois was its own Edward B. Sellers (who graduated in 1866), it would be easy to exaggerate the presence of Black students over the next two generations. The HRTF would be hard pressed to prove that the number of Black students attending the College was ever more than two or three at a time for the remainder of the century, and by the early 1900s that number may have dwindled further. There is no evidence that the College, at some point, had decided to reverse its course or had consciously decided to grow its student body by eschewing a culturally controversial commitment to racial integration. The HRTF has discovered no obvious pandering, no publicized commitments to segregation.

As noted earlier, both Jonathan and Charles Blanchard were wont to speak of the problem of slavery as having been solved by the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment. Like most pre-Civil War abolitionists, they thought of slavery narrowly in terms of legal bondage, not more broadly in terms of the far more intractable problem of racial prejudice and the controversial issue of the place of free Black people in a post-slavery United States. After the war's conclusion, both Blanchards made the campaign against secret societies their highest priority, followed closely by their commitment to temperance (or more accurately, to prohibition). Then, as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, Charles Blanchard gave himself wholeheartedly to the struggle against modernism, so that long before his death the College had emerged as an unshakable bulwark against modernism, indeed, arguably the best of its class—the "fundamentalist Harvard," in the words of one careful study.⁷⁵

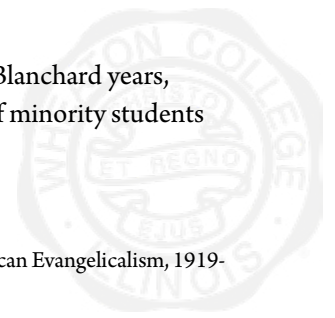
Acknowledging imperfections in the available evidence, it appears that between 1909 and 1926 there were at most only two academic years when more than one Black student was enrolled in the College. Apart from M. Delgratia Scott, who graduated in 1925, these students were all male, even though the student body was roughly evenly divided between men and women.

While records of institutional policies, programs, and practices are scarce throughout the Blanchard years, the extant historical records—College and student publications—do record that a small number of minority students

⁷³ "Editorial Notes," *The Record*.

⁷⁴ Charles Blanchard, "From President C.A. Blanchard," *The Christian Cynosure*, Feb. 27, 1896.

⁷⁵ Michael S. Hamilton, "The Fundamentalist Harvard: Wheaton College and the Continuing Vitality of American Evangelicalism, 1919-1965," Ph.D. diss. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1994.



enrolled and graduated from Wheaton, participating in all areas of campus life from literary societies to student clubs to athletics programs.⁷⁶ Sadly, most of these students' voices remain unrecorded—why they chose Wheaton College, how they integrated into the student body, and what their perspective was on Wheaton following graduation. However, a smattering of archival sources offers suggestive glimpses into race relations on campus during Charles Blanchard's administration.

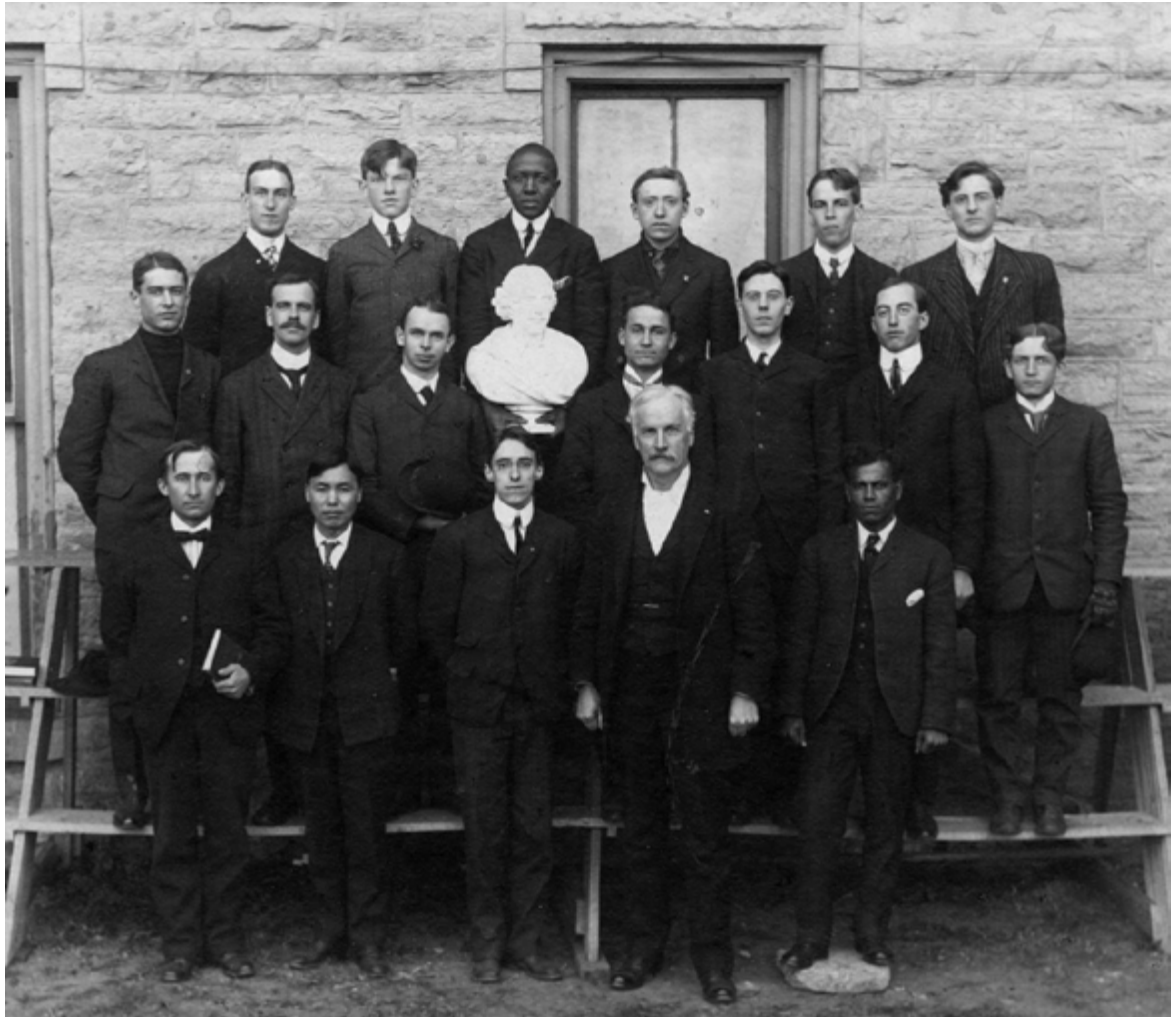


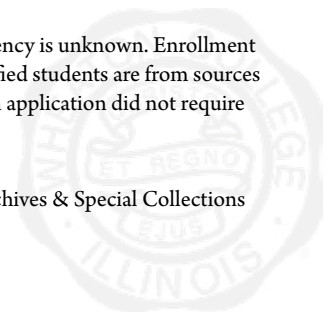
Figure 8: Charles Blanchard with the Beltonian Literary Society, 1905. Students T. E. Hanada (second from left), and Enrique Marqué (far right) stand in the bottom row. Charles Raysor stands third from left in top row. College Archives. Photo File: Beltonian Literary Society, Photograph #B00873.

One such anecdote stems from Julia Blanchard, daughter of Charles, who served for nearly 40 years as the College Librarian. According to Julia, several students of color boarded with Jonathan and Mary Blanchard over the years. During the seven years she lived with her grandparents (1885-92), she recalls “several Negroes and at least one Indian” who lived in the Blanchard home.⁷⁷ Charles Blanchard continued the tradition of boarding students, including an African American student named Charles Raysor.⁷⁸ A 1905 photograph depicts Blanchard standing with a group of seventeen students, including Raysor and two other students of color, T. E. Hanada, and Enrique Marqué.

⁷⁶The exact number of students of color who matriculated at Wheaton College during Charles Blanchard's presidency is unknown. Enrollment data is particularly limited until 1921, when the *Tower* yearbook was first published. Prior to that point, the handful of identified students are from sources like Julia Blanchard's reminiscences. Student files were sporadically maintained, if at all, and the College's standard admission application did not require students to disclose race, color, nationality, or ethnicity.

⁷⁷Julia Blanchard, “Wheaton Marches On,” Item 68, Vertical File: Wheaton History (Moule), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College), 7.

⁷⁸Julia Blanchard, “Wheaton Marches On,” 7.



For Julia Blanchard, the practice of boarding minority students in the family home left a distinct and positive impression, though some community members were not supportive. Decades later she recalled:

[S]ome of our neighbors protested vehemently and said that it was not safe to have him [Charles Raysor] there when Father and Mother were away so much and we girls were left alone. The idea was so perfectly absurd that we simply laughed at it as we did in the case of Einema, a Japanese student who lived with us for three years. Truly God has made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and one of the causes of the terrible suffering which is going on today is the non-recognition of this basic fact by the great nations of the earth. Had the subject peoples of Asia, Africa, and America been treated as brothers and equals of the white people, the millennium would be far nearer than it is at present.⁷⁹

Whatever on-campus housing practices at Wheaton College were for minority students during this era, both Blanchard presidents opened their homes to students of color, despite some resistance from community members.

Another rare example of a Wheaton student of color from the early twentieth century is Dr. James Henry Lewis '14. A transplant from the South, Lewis arrived at Wheaton in 1908 and enrolled in the Academy. By his own description, "a ragged half-starved Negro boy, 4th grader," transferring "from a one-room, two-months-a-year country school in North Carolina,"⁸⁰ Lewis graduated from the Academy in 1911 before earning a chemistry degree from the College in 1914. Four decades later, Lewis established a scholarship at Wheaton College in recognition of the "patient tutelage" of his Wheaton professors and the financial support he received through Charles Blanchard's intervention. During Lewis's first semester, Charles Blanchard waived the student's tuition requirements before the faculty granted him the Schofield Scholarship.⁸¹ In Lewis' words, his Wheaton education "gave me the opportunity to do forty years of intensive work in the teaching and medical professions, for Christ and His Kingdom."⁸²

Not all students of color could claim such positive experiences at Wheaton as Dr. Lewis. Two other accounts from the Charles Blanchard era demonstrate the significant challenges facing minority students at Wheaton and the difference between providing access to education and an institutional commitment to full integration.

Dr. James Henry Lewis '14

A double graduate of Wheaton (Academy '11, College '14), James Henry Lewis attended medical school at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, before moving to Harrisburg, outside of East St. Louis, in southern Illinois in 1923.

After witnessing the lack of medical services available to the African American population in segregated Harrisburg, he opened the Lewis Sanatorium in 1927. Unique in segregated Harrisburg, the Sanatorium served patients of all races. Dr. Lewis practiced medicine for nearly four decades before his death in 1963.

Today, a plaque erected by the Illinois State Historical Society marks the former location of the Sanatorium in honor of Dr. Lewis' remarkable service to the Harrisburg community.

In 1955, he endowed the Dr. James H. Lewis Scholarship at Wheaton College, which continues to support Wheaton undergraduate students today.

During Wheaton's centennial celebrations in 1960, the program committee unanimously selected Dr. Lewis as an outstanding alumnus to represent the College in honor of his pioneering medical work.

⁷⁹ Julia Blanchard, "Wheaton Marches On," 7.

⁸⁰ "A new Scholarship is Established," *Alumni Magazine* 22 no. 1 (January 1955): 3.

⁸¹ "A new Scholarship," *Alumni Magazine*.

⁸² "A new Scholarship," *Alumni Magazine*.



The first incident gained widespread attention in the press, reported in newspapers from coast to coast.⁸³ In 1909, an African American student named Nellie Bryant matriculated at Wheaton College. Originally from Kentucky, Bryant had enrolled at Berea College, only to be forced out of the school due to Kentucky's segregation laws, passed in 1904. Bryant applied to Wheaton after hearing Charles Blanchard promote the school and highlight its abolitionist founding during one of his speaking tours across the South. However, when she arrived on campus, Bryant found the Wheaton campus far from welcoming. The *Belvidere Republican* reported that Nellie Bryant had enrolled from a distance but neglected to mention her race. When she arrived on campus, "White girls, more than a hundred of whom live at the college, have refused to eat at the same table with the new student. They have refused to occupy rooms in the vicinity of her room. She was completely ostracized."⁸⁴ The College deliberated whether or not it could legally expel her, and the *Republican* reported, "It is declared to be evident that Miss Bryant won't stay if the school don't have to keep her."⁸⁵ Bryant herself wondered at the discrepancy between the vision of Wheaton she received from Charles Blanchard and the disorienting experience of living on campus, "I was in error in my advance impression of Wheaton," she told the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, "I thought it was a college where many of my race attended."⁸⁶ According to the College catalog, Nellie Bryant did not return to Wheaton the following academic year.

Another incident of racial discrimination involves Charles Satchell Morris, who matriculated at Wheaton in 1919 and excelled in the Excelsior literary society before going on to a distinguished career as an orator and preacher. In 1946, Morris contacted his alma mater for a list of Wheaton graduates in his local Los Angeles area, hoping to connect with other alumni. Registrar Enock Dyrness described the request to a colleague: "Mr. Morris is one of our few colored former students, and was quite a silver tongued orator when he was in school." He wrote, "He is quite an aristocratic negro, and I am afraid he has some rather radical leanings. . . . I hope he has reformed, but my guess is that he is still something of a rascal."⁸⁷ Dyrness does not offer more information about Morris' supposed "radical leanings."

Decades later, in the 1980s, Morris responded to a Wheaton fundraising appeal with the following note explaining why he declined to give:

While I do not wish to discourage your monetary efforts, my contributions to Wheaton are over as long as I maintain my sanity. I would not give 10 cents to complete Blanchard Hall. This man [Charles Blanchard] was responsible for a life-time insult. Please never, never, never ask me to make any further contributions to the College. As a soldier being asked out of the dining room (on the part of a so-called Christian college) which action was sustained by Blanchard, haunts my memory after 69 years. Nor do I wish any more pleas for funds. [The University of] Chicago does not even have to ask, nor does

⁸³ Newspapers.com includes digital copies of newspaper articles reporting on this incident from cities around the country, including Belvedere, IL; Memphis, TN; Meadville, PA; Lexington, KY; Detroit MI; Oakland, CA; Joliet, IL; Granada, MS; Mendenhall, MS; Scottsboro, AL; Hernando, MS; Hopkinsville, KY; Owensboro, KY; New Bern, NC; Bamberg, SC; Lima, OH; and Charleston, WV.

⁸⁴ "Race Question at Wheaton College," *Belvidere Daily Republican*, Feb. 3, 1909, 3. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/69746030/?terms=%22Wheaton%20College%22%20and%20%22%20Colored%20student%22&match=1>.

⁸⁵ "Race Question at Wheaton College," *Belvidere Daily Republican*, 3.

⁸⁶ "Race Issue at Wheaton College," *The Commercial Appeal*, Feb. 2, 1909, 13. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/767401190/?terms=%22Wheaton%20College&match=1>. The report from the Memphis-based *Commercial Appeal* on Feb. 2 records that Bryant mentioned the girls were kind to her in classes but she was socially isolated (put in a single room, seated at a separate table with no students): "The girls are very good to me and so is the dean. But I know I am a little out of place in Women's hall. I will continue to attend the school, but I will find lodgings in the town with a good family."

⁸⁷ Enock Dyrness quoted in Brian Miller and David Malone, "Race, Town, and Gown," 299.

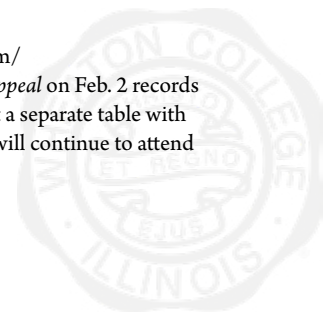




Figure 9: Charles Satchell Morris as a student, 1922. *The Tower*, p. 21.

Columbia, both secular schools.⁸⁸

The incident Morris describes, and the Registrar's response, are instructive in several ways. First, although the "life-time insult" Morris describes is from a single source with no corroborating or clarifying details, it suggests an incident of race-based discrimination supported by the College's President. Further, Enock Dyrness acknowledges that, over 25 years later, the College had noticeably few Black alumni.

Charles Satchell Morris, Nellie Bryant, and those who boarded at the Blanchard home were not the only students of color at Wheaton College during the Charles Blanchard administration, and it is impossible to confirm how representative their experiences were. While not tied to official policies or programs, it is notable that two generations of Blanchards made a practice of boarding minority students in their homes. Whether this practice stemmed from sheer generosity or because the students were unwelcome in College or community housing is undocumented. Moreover, the experiences of Bryant and Morris may suggest that while Wheaton's official position permitted students of color, the social environment of the campus was not consistently welcoming.

Summary of the Charles Blanchard Administration

Two features dominate the Charles Blanchard administration. First, the rise of the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy drew much of the school's attention, and the College voiced growing concerns about the personal piety of the student body and broader Christian culture. Second, with slavery abolished after the Civil War, the Blanchards turned their reforming efforts to other causes—anti-secretism, Sabbatarianism, and temperance—while neglecting to pursue a robust vision for racial equality when it came to the recruitment and retention of minority students. The Blanchards did notably assume some level of social liability by boarding students of color in the family home. Also, education was seen as being important for the development of leadership in the minority community. However, the difference between access and a receptive environment remained a major challenge beyond the Blanchards and into the administration of J. Oliver Buswell.



Figure 10: J. Oliver Buswell, 1930. College Archives. Photo File: Buswell, J. Oliver, Photograph #A07615.

The Buswell Administration, 1926-1940

The death of Charles Blanchard in December 1925 marked the end of an era for Wheaton College. Since its formal incorporation nearly sixty-six years earlier, the institution had not known a day without a Blanchard as its president. Determined that the College would continue to stand firm in its commitment to fundamentalist orthodoxy, the Board of Trustees moved quickly to name a reliable successor. Less than two months later, they invited James Oliver Buswell Jr. to leave his pastorate in Brooklyn, New York, to become the College's third president.

A graduate of the University of Minnesota and recipient of a master's degree from the University of Chicago, the thirty-one-year-old Buswell was a conservative Presbyterian and a confirmed and outspoken fundamentalist. Buswell had been invited to lead chapel services for a week in mid-January 1926, and during his short stay on campus he had deeply impressed both the student body and the Board of Trustees. *The Record* praised his chapel talks as doctrinally informed but simultaneously "warm and vibrant with the practicality of a

⁸⁸ Brian Miller and David Malone, "Race, Town, and Gown," 299.

young man who knows what youth need.”⁸⁹ The Trustees similarly saw in Buswell a “young man of rare ability and promise.” They were convinced that he possessed the experience, training, and quality of spirit to “carry you through to success in every way in this great work, looking always to Him for guidance.”⁹⁰

During his nearly fourteen-year tenure as president, Buswell vindicated the Trustees’ confidence in several notable respects. Although the country was in the grips of the Great Depression for two-thirds of his presidency, the College’s minuscule endowment grew substantially, bucking national trends. The same was true of the College’s academic reputation. Early in his presidency, Buswell led the College through reforms necessary to qualify for the highest accreditation rating from the North Central Association. Even more impressive, the College’s enrollment nearly tripled during his tenure, from 377 students in 1926 to 1,085 during his last full semester in Autumn 1939. The faculty more than tripled during his presidency— from 21 to 69 full-time instructors—and became more highly educated in the process. By 1939 the proportion of the faculty holding the Ph.D. stood at 49 percent, up from 24 percent a decade and a half earlier.⁹¹

That the College could grow stronger both financially and academically in the depths of the Depression also likely reflected Buswell’s dogged determination to uphold Wheaton’s reputation as a staunchly fundamentalist institution resistant to the tides of secularization and theological modernism. Under Buswell’s leadership, Wheaton for the first time acquired a *national* (even international) reputation, known widely for its simultaneous commitments to theological orthodoxy, Christian piety, and rigorous academic excellence. During Buswell’s final year as president, the College could boast students from forty-five states and fifteen countries.⁹²

While these aspects of the College’s trajectory are easy to document, it is far more difficult to speak with confidence about change and continuity regarding race relations at Wheaton College during these years. Although the sheer volume of College records exploded during the Buswell presidency, the task force faced the same challenge for these years as it did for the Blanchard administrations: a dearth of surviving evidence specifically delineating policies, programs, and practices relating to race relations. Although it is possible that such documentation may have existed at one time, it is more likely that the College simply lacked any formal, explicit policies pertaining to the matter. When assessing the administration of Jonathan Blanchard—and, to a lesser degree, that of Charles Blanchard as well—the thin institutional record was supplemented by drawing from the personal values and practices of the College’s first two presidents. This is less of an option with J. Oliver Buswell, whose published writings and public persona bore minimally on matters pertaining to race and race relations.

Despite scanty institutional record-keeping, it is possible to share what little is known and to sketch in broad strokes a tentative overview of Buswell’s administration, while stressing the distinct possibility that subsequent research may nuance some of the following findings. Thus far, two broad generalizations can be made:

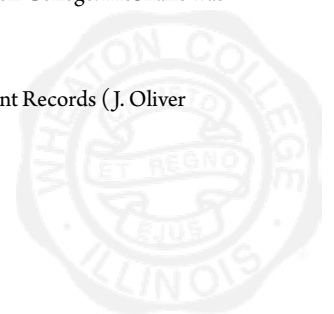
First, it is evident that, throughout the Buswell years, the student body was comprised overwhelmingly—if not quite exclusively—of young men and women of European descent. The College did not systematically document the racial and ethnic composition of its undergraduates, but evidence laboriously gleaned from *The Tower* (the College yearbook)

⁸⁹ Paul Bechtel, *Wheaton College*, 110.

⁹⁰ L. L. McShane to W. Irving Campbell, Mar. 5, 1926; L. L. McSherran to J. O. Buswell, Mar. 5, 1926, both in Box 26, Folder 5, Office of the President Records (J. Oliver Buswell Jr.) (RG 2 003), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College. McShane was the vice-president of the Wheaton College Board of Trustees.

⁹¹ Paul Bechtel, *Wheaton College*, 113, 116, 124.

⁹² See “Correspondence and Reports of Enock C. Dyrness,” (1933-1960), Box 16, Folder 7, Office of the President Records (J. Oliver Buswell) (RG 02-003), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL.



and cross-referenced with student academic records makes clear that the student body was almost entirely white.⁹³ In short, Asian and Asian American students were rare, Hispanic students rarer still, and African American students practically nonexistent.

It seems probable that students hailing from outside the United States were disproportionately the children of U.S.-born missionaries then ministering abroad, so the figures on international students overstate the diversity of the student body.⁹⁴ It is unlikely that undergraduates of non-European descent ever comprised as much as 2 percent of undergraduates. In most years, the proportion was less than 1 percent, often considerably so. The yearbooks typically testify to the presence of a handful of Asian students along with an occasional student from Mexico, Guatemala, or Cuba. The HRTF has conclusively documented only one African American student who matriculated during the nearly fourteen years of the Buswell presidency.⁹⁵

Second, the surviving evidence suggests that, on balance, the campus environment would have been less than welcoming to students of color. This observation is framed carefully, in part because there is insufficient evidence to reconstruct thoroughly and systematically the racial climate on campus, in part because the evidence that survives does not all point in one direction.

On the one hand, the records document occasional evidence of enlightened racial sensibilities and expressions of respect for persons of color as equal bearers of the image of God. In the fall of 1929, members of a student missionary society listened as a guest from India lamented that “the racial line has not been eliminated even among Christians” and exhorted the students to “meet other races as brothers in Christ.” In the fall of 1932, Dean of Students Wallace Emerson used the pages of the *Wheaton College Bulletin* to mock the concept of “Nordic superiority.” In 1937, the College hosted a public lecture by an anthropologist who pointed to “clear evidence of the futility of so-called ‘Racial Superiority.’” The following year the College’s *Faculty Bulletin* promoted as a “suggested reading” a just-released book by a noted historian that denounced racism as a “modern superstition” and “vulgar error.”⁹⁶

⁹³ The HRTF emphasizes that the methods leading to these conclusions are frustratingly (if necessarily) unscientific, and our findings correspondingly imprecise. The first step involved a careful, systematic scrutiny of yearbook photographs to identify—by appearance and name—likely students of color. The individuals were then cross-referenced with their student records (if they exist) in search of further identifying information. In particular, beginning in 1930, the standard application form that the College used asked applicants to disclose their race. When this racial self-identification was not available, HRTF research assistants consulted U.S. census reports and WWII draft cards to determine the race of the student. Thus, the HRTF can be quite confident about the racial backgrounds of the students of color who have been identified but cannot confirm if every student of color who ever enrolled has yet been identified.

⁹⁴ *The Record* indicates that a club for “foreign students” was established in 1924, but further explained that membership was limited to those who had lived abroad for at least five years. See “Scouten Heads Society of Students Born in Foreign Lands,” *The Record*, Oct. 3, 1928.

⁹⁵ The student in question, interestingly, was Clarence B. Morris, younger brother of Charles S. Morris, who bitterly recalled an insulting incident at the dining hall during his time at the College. Clarence Morris attended for two academic years, 1927-1929, but did not graduate. HRTF research suggests that M. Delgratia Scott ('25) was Wheaton’s last Black graduate before C. Herbert Oliver ('47).

Our findings generally corroborate the conclusion of Brian Miller and David Malone, who cite a brief comment in a 1947 alumni magazine to surmise that there were no Black *graduates* of the College from the 1920s to the late 1940s. They also indicate that Judith B. Hull was technically incorrect when she asserted categorically that “no blacks were enrolled” in the College during the Buswell years. See Miller and Malone, “Race, Town, and Gown,” 299; Judith B. Hull, “A History of Race Relations in Wheaton, Illinois,” M.A. Thesis, Northeastern Illinois University, 1973, 43. Hull was not a trained historian—her graduate degree was in “Inner City Studies”—and she cited no definitive evidence for her assertion. While it is true that there were no Black *graduates* between the years of 1925-47, several Black students did enroll without graduating between those years.

⁹⁶ “Race Prejudice Theme of Address Given at C.E. [Christian Endeavorers] Sunday,” *The Record*, Feb. 6, 1929; Wallace Emerson, “The Meaning of Christian Education,” [*Inform*] *Wheaton College Bulletin*, Nov. 1932, Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College), 4; “Are You a Monkey’s Cousin? Science Prof Will Inquire,” *The Record*, April 6, 1937; “Suggested Reading,” *Faculty Bulletin of Wheaton College*, Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College, 1938), 5. The suggested book was Jacques Barzun, *Race: A Study in Modern Superstition*, (London: Methuen, 1938).

Beyond this, the College often referred proudly to its abolitionist beginnings. At least three times during the 1930s, *The Record* educated a new cohort of undergraduates about the significance of the obelisk on campus marking the grave of abolitionist James Burr.⁹⁷ *The Record* also took time to marvel at the work of Black inventor George Washington Carver, to lavish praise on the Fisk Jubilee Singers when they performed at Wheaton's Homecoming in 1936, and to follow the congressional debate the following year concerning a federal anti-lynching bill, even though the newspaper typically paid little attention to national politics.⁹⁸

These glimpses of more positive racial views are overshadowed by evidence of more problematic attitudes. Although the records have uncovered no instances of outright hostility toward Black people or other persons of color, they have revealed a distressing number of instances of condescension, insensitivity, and outright ridicule.

For example, in its regular humor section, *The Record* would occasionally include “jokes” centered on demeaning stereotypes of Blacks.⁹⁹ White Wheaton students were also not averse to performing in blackface at campus gatherings. In 1927, as *The Record* observed approvingly, the members of the Aristonian literary society were entertained by two students presenting their own version of “Two Black Crows,” a popular blackface comedy act popular at the time on Vaudeville. Two years later, the Excelsior literary society countered with its own duo “in negro make-up.” Three years after this, in 1932, *The Tower* included a picture of four students in blackface, and in 1935 another student in blackface was similarly featured.¹⁰⁰

On other occasions, the College's literary societies could treat African American culture as a subject for serious intellectual engagement, albeit still with considerable condescension. In the Fall of 1930, the Aristonian Literary Society listened as a paper was read on the topic of “Negro Superstitions” and then held a debate on the question, “Resolved, that the whites and negroes should have equal social rights in the United States.” The outcome was not reported. That same semester, members of the Boethallian Literary Society listened to an essay on “Religion among Negroes,” heard a review of a recently published novel that treated African American culture sympathetically, and then conducted a debate on the question, “Resolved, that negroes and whites would be mutually benefited if educated separately.” According to the *Record*, “the affirmative won by unanimous vote of the judges.”¹⁰¹

There is no way to confirm exactly what proportion of Wheaton students would have concurred with the Boethallians in the fall of 1930, but the percentage was surely high. Almost none of the students at the time would have attended substantially integrated schools prior to college, and they had not come to Wheaton with the expectation of rectifying that. For all practical purposes, Wheaton College in 1930 was an all-white institution in an almost all-white town in an almost all-white county, and it had been generations since a countercultural position

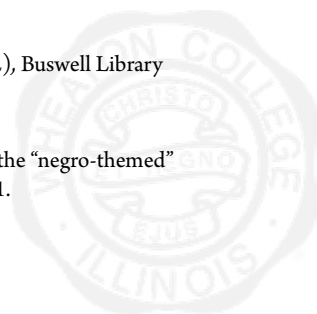
⁹⁷ Priscella Stroh, “Tombstone Marks Burial Place of Slave Liberator,” *The Record*, Oct. 22, 1930; “Campus Marker Recalls Position on Slavery Issue,” *The Record*, Oct. 11, 1933; Bruce Linton, “Campus Tombstone... John Burr's Grave is Reminder of Underground Railway,” *The Record*, Feb. 15, 1938. This latter article changed James Burr to *John* Burr and incorrectly identified Burr, who died before the Civil War, as a Union veteran. See also “Scribe Gives Biography of Dr. Blanchard,” *The Record*, Nov. 12, 1930.

⁹⁸ “Black Man Makes Black Magic from Southern Products,” *The Record*, Jan. 29, 1936; Roger McShane, “Fisk Jubilee Group to Sing Negro Spirituals at Concert,” *The Record*, Oct. 21, 1936; “Lynching,” *The Record*, Apr. 20, 1937.

⁹⁹ See “Jokes” in *The Record*, Mar. 24, 1926; Oct. 17, 1928; Jan. 24, 1934.

¹⁰⁰ “Aristonian Informal,” *The Record*, Sept. 30, 1927; “Excelsior,” *The Record*, Oct. 23, 1929; *The Tower* (1932), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College, 1932), 270; *The Tower* (1935), 83.

¹⁰¹ “Aristonian,” *The Record*, Nov. 19, 1930; “Boethallian,” *The Record*, Dec. 10, 1930. See also the account of the “negro-themed” meeting of the Boethallian Society the following year: “‘Dusk to Darkness’ to be Bow theme,” *The Record*, Oct. 28, 1931.



on race had been integral to the College's reputation.¹⁰²

Whether the declining matriculation of Black students prior to the Buswell presidency trend was the result of intent or circumstance is difficult to say, but it is most probably the latter. For one thing, it was 1930 before the College's standard application for admission asked applicants to indicate their race, so it is not at all clear how the College could have preemptively excluded Black applicants, even had it wished to do so. Beyond this, as historian Michael Hamilton points out in his superb study of the College during this era, it is highly unlikely that the College could have ever had a much larger number of Black students during the early 1920s without some sort of monumental recruitment drive which it had neither the personnel nor the financial resources to undertake. According to Hamilton, even though the College was drawing students from more and more states, as late as 1920 it was still the case that more than nine-tenths of its student body came from the Northeast and Midwest. In sum, on the eve of the Buswell presidency, the College's applicant pool consisted predominantly of northern fundamentalists, and the number of northern African American fundamentalists with the educational background and financial resources to attend college was a slender demographic, indeed.¹⁰³

In sum, when placed in a broader context, it is misleading to characterize the absence of Black students at Wheaton College during the presidency of J. Oliver Buswell as a dramatic "reversal," as one study insists.¹⁰⁴ Granted, during the nearly fourteen years of Buswell's presidency, the typical number of Black students enrolled in any given year had been zero, but during the final fourteen years of Charles Blanchard's presidency, the typical number of Black students enrolled in any given year had been only one. In this light, the dearth of Black students under President Buswell seems less a "reversal" than the culmination of a trend that had been well under way for years before he arrived.

This is not to say that there were no significant changes during the Buswell years, for at some point during his administration, President Buswell began to implement an institutional practice that prohibited Black applicants from matriculating.¹⁰⁵

In a rare instance, a handful of surviving records document private conversations among College officials about a relevant "policy" or "practice." The episode in question began to unfold sometime in early 1939 when an African American from Rhode Island named Rachel Boone applied for admission to the College for the 1939–40 academic year. After Boone was denied admission, a young New Jersey minister named Wyeth Willard wrote to Buswell to request that he reconsider the decision. Neither Willard's letter to Buswell nor the president's response survived, but the question of Boone's admission was brought to the attention of the Executive Council in mid-March. The minutes record Buswell's concern that "the social problems were such that we could not provide for colored students on the

¹⁰² African Americans comprised 1.3 percent of the town's population in 1910 and were still only 1.6 percent of the town's population as late as 1970. Outside of Wheaton, the Black population of DuPage County throughout these years was essentially zero. Naperville was widely known as a "sundown town" that allowed non-whites to work in the community but not to live there. Almost all of Wheaton's Black population lived in an enclave near the railroad tracks. See Hull, "A History of Race Relations," 6-7; Miller and Malone, "Race, Town, and Gown," 301.

¹⁰³ Hamilton, "The Fundamentalist Harvard," 213. The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that in 1920 1.2 percent of Blacks in the United States aged 25 to 29 had graduated from college. See "Digest of Education Statistics," table 104.20, Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, 2021. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_104.20.asp.

¹⁰⁴ Hull, "History of Race Relations in Wheaton," 41.

¹⁰⁵ This de facto policy of discriminatory admissions practices is referenced in Hull, "A History of Race Relations," based on her interview with Rev. W. H. Jaynes, the pastor of Second Baptist Church in Wheaton. Established as a church for Wheaton's Black residents in 1907, Second Baptist occupied a lot on Crescent Street, just south of the railroad tracks and in view of the College. According to Hull, Jaynes "attempted to do something about race relations" in the Wheaton community and had a conversation with President Buswell "about his policy of excluding Blacks as Wheaton College students" (40). No information is included about Buswell's response, the date of the conversation, or how Jaynes became aware of the practice. The interview between Hull and Jaynes occurred over 30 years after the event Jaynes recalls, and when contacted by the HRTF in January 2023, Hull, whose graduate work was in the field of "Inner City Studies," confirmed that the interview was not recorded, and no notes from the interview are extant.

Wheaton campus.”¹⁰⁶ He added that it was unnecessary “to definitively go on record saying that we do not accept them.”¹⁰⁷

Willard was undeterred. He raised the matter in person two months later while Buswell was visiting Willard’s home after preaching at his church, which led to a considerable correspondence between the two after Buswell returned home.¹⁰⁸

Within two days of Buswell’s departure each man had written the other to follow up on the topic. Willard thanked Buswell for his “sympathetic understanding of the problem we discussed” and then addressed what had apparently been the keystone of Buswell’s position during their earlier conversation. Willard assured Buswell that if he checked with administrators at the Moody Bible Institute and the National Bible Institute—both of which admitted Black students—he would find that “there are no mixed marriages among the students.

Just as we have black and white keys upon the piano which can be played harmoniously,” Willard went on, “I believe that the two races can live harmoniously together.”¹⁰⁹

For his part, Buswell wrote to Willard to thank him for his hospitality and to assure him that he was continuing to think and pray about the matter. He had also consulted “one of our trustees who I know is

¹⁰⁶The members of the Executive Council at this time were Dr. Enock Dyrness, Vice President in Academic Administration, George Kirk, Vice President in Business Administration, and Wallace Emerson, Dean of Students. Minutes of the Executive Council, March 14, 1939. Box 1, Folder 29, Office of the Registrar Records (RG 07 07), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL.

¹⁰⁷Minutes of the Executive Council, March 14, 1939.

¹⁰⁸How the matter came up is not known. It is possible that Willard had a personal connection with Boone, but a more likely scenario is that Willard—who also directed a racially-integrated summer boys’ camp—shared some of his experiences with Buswell while Wheaton’s president was a guest in his home, prompting Buswell to explain his own views about the pros and cons of integration at a residential college like Wheaton. See Wyeth W. Willard Correspondence, 1930-1939, Box 27, Folder 13, Office of the President Records (J. Oliver Buswell) (RG 02 003).

¹⁰⁹W. Wyeth Willard to J. Oliver Buswell, May 18, 1939, Box 27, Folder 13, Office of the President Records (J. Oliver Buswell) (RG 02 003).

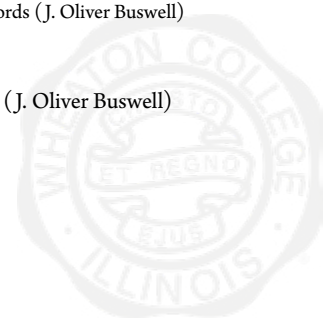
Rev. W. Wyeth Willard

Navy chaplain, minister, administrator, and lawyer, Wyeth Willard (1905-2000) had already accumulated an impressive array of life experiences before coming to Wheaton in 1956. After graduating from Brown University in 1927, he earned a Master of Divinity degree at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1931, studying under J. Gresham Machen. In 1935, Willard and his wife Grace founded Camp Good News in Forestdale, Massachusetts, a Christian youth camp. His work in youth ministry was interrupted by World War II, and Willard volunteered as a chaplain in the U.S. Navy, earning the Legion of Merit for his service in the South Pacific in 1944.

Willard’s first documented interaction with Wheaton College is his 1939 correspondence with President J. Oliver Buswell, when he doggedly advocated on behalf of African American applicant Rachel Boone, citing his own experiences administrating a racially integrated youth camp. Following Willard’s intervention, President Buswell overturned his de facto policy excluding African Americans from matriculating at Wheaton College.

In 1946, Willard was invited to give the mid-winter evangelistic services at Wheaton. His messages so impressed the campus that President Edman recruited him to serve as Assistant to the President. For the next five years, Willard preached in chapel, fundraised for the College, and mentored students. Besides these duties, President Edman tasked his assistant with writing the first institutional history of Wheaton College, *Fire on the Prairie: The Story of Wheaton College*, published in 1950.

Willard left Wheaton College in 1951 to pursue a law degree from Northwestern University but found his way back to full-time ministry, eventually settling in Waltham, Massachusetts, where he pastored the First Presbyterian Church until his retirement in 1982.



interested in the problem.”¹¹⁰ The trustee, to whom Buswell wrote the same day as Willard, was Hugo Wurdack, a prominent St. Louis businessman and a member of the Board of Trustees since 1927. By “interested in the problem,” Buswell meant that Wurdack was opposed to the admission of Black students to the College. In his letter to Wurdack, Buswell recalled that the trustee had evidently expressed concern some years earlier when he mistakenly thought “our Filipino students were colored,” whereas “at that time we had no colored students in the College.”

Assuring Wurdack that “I have no race prejudice in my heart,” Buswell shared his opinion “that for a small Christian school where the social contacts are so close, it would be better to avoid coeducation of the races.” Holding to that view, he had made it a practice to advise Black applicants to attend an all-Black institution in Kentucky called the Lincoln Institute. His reason for writing now, he explained, was that he was under “a considerable amount of pressure . . . from certain quarters” to alter his admissions stance. Were he to raise the question openly—whether with the trustees or the faculty—Buswell was convinced that “the result would be an argument and a strong division of opinion,” which is why his strategy heretofore had been to try to “avoid the issue while quietly advising colored applicants to go elsewhere.”¹¹¹

-W. Wyeth Willard to J. Oliver Buswell, June 24, 1939



Figure 11: Rachel Boone, 1943. *Houghton College yearbook, The Boulder*, p. 22.

Eight days later, Buswell again pressed Wurdack to reply, noting, “I am trying to perform a difficult task.” Another eight days later, Wurdack finally responded. “While I have absolutely no prejudice against colored students,” Wurdack began, “and for my part would be willing that they should be admitted, I do not think it would be wise to bring this matter up at this time. There are already a number of controversial matters before the Board, with more to come. It would be my counsel to keep out of all controversies, so far as possible, even at the sacrifice of strong convictions.”¹¹²

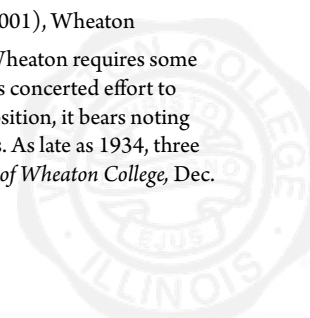
It may be doubted whether Wurdack was genuinely open to admitting Black students, as he claimed in his letter, but he was not being disingenuous in referring to other “controversial matters” that might warrant postponement. By the time of his reply—June 2, 1939—President Buswell’s job was seriously in jeopardy. By the beginning of the year, there were rumblings of dissatisfaction among both the trustees and prominent alumni, many of whom worried that Buswell’s constant embroilment in denominational conflicts—he had broken first with the

Presbyterian Church and then subsequently from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church—were reflecting poorly on the College.

¹¹⁰ J. Oliver Buswell to W. Wyeth Willard, May 17, 1939, Box 27, Folder 13, Office of the President Records (J. Oliver Buswell) (RG 02 003).

¹¹¹ J. Oliver Buswell to Hugo Wurdack, May 17, 1939, Box 55, Folder 26, Board of Trustees Records (RG 01 001), Wheaton College Archives, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College. The reference that Buswell makes to “social contacts” being close at Wheaton requires some context. Surely part of his concern was the possibility of interracial dating and/or sexual attraction, hence Wyeth Willard’s concerted effort to persuade Buswell that an integrated campus need not result in interracial marriage. Without trying to justify Buswell’s position, it bears noting that whatever happened *on* campus, a huge portion of the student body would spend a great deal of their time *off* campus. As late as 1934, three quarters of the student body boarded in private homes off campus. See Wallace Emerson, “As Seen by the Dean,” *Bulletin of Wheaton College*, Dec. 1934, (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College, 1934), 5.

¹¹² H. Wurdack to J. Oliver Buswell, June 8, 1939, Box 55, Folder 26, Board of Trustees Records (RG 01 001).



There was also an ugly dispute over whether to retain the College's current athletics director that pitted Buswell against numerous faculty, staff, and alumni. Both the dean of students and the College registrar found it increasingly difficult to work amicably with the president, and in May 1939 (even as Buswell was considering the application of Rachel Boone), the president of the Alumni Association was circulating a petition calling for an investigation into the leadership of the institution. To cap it off, by this time, the College was dealing with a projected deficit of \$200,000 (out of an annual budget of approximately \$750,000), a financial hole that Buswell proposed to get out of by laying off a sizable number of the faculty. The Board of Trustees dismissed Buswell from his post the following January.¹¹³

Buswell's final action with regard to Rachel Boone was a compromise of sorts: he decided to support her admission but to do so under the radar, if possible. In a letter to registrar Enock Dyrness, Buswell seized on Wurdack's statement that he "would be willing" for Black students to be admitted and so instructed Dyrness to admit Rachel Boone, cautioning him at the same time "to keep the matter as quiet as possible and say nothing about it in any way which will be likely to provoke discussion." Noting "the great amount of pressure which has been brought to bear upon us in this case," Buswell concluded his memo to Registrar Dyrness by suggesting that "we admit colored students hereafter."¹¹⁴

Had he stayed in the president's office longer, Buswell might well have made good on this recommendation. A year after his pledge to Willard, the College (now under the leadership of acting president Raymond Edman) admitted its first Black applicant in over a decade, a young man named Lewis McGee from nearby St. Charles.¹¹⁵ Whether Edman felt bound by Buswell's decision, or was even aware of it, is not known.

Buswell's justification for his decision is significant. He stressed both to Wurdack and to Dyrness that he was under "pressure from certain quarters." In their extended correspondence, Wyeth Willard had done his best to convince Buswell that the Scripture called for racial integration (though not for interracial marriage). Citing the declaration in Acts 17:26 that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men," Willard reasoned that "the colored people are human beings, separated from God as are the whites, by the Fall of Adam, are our blood brothers. How can we assign them to their place?"¹¹⁶

Buswell could not agree. After suggesting to Dyrness that Wheaton College "admit colored students hereafter," the president added this final word: "As you know, I have been trying to dodge this issue. I cannot see that any moral principle is involved. I am inclined to think that it would be better in a practical way if colored people would go to their own colored schools . . ."¹¹⁷

¹¹³ For a brief overview of the circumstances leading to Buswell's dismissal, see Bechtel, *Wheaton College*, 144-50.

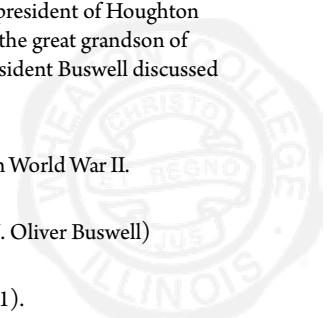
¹¹⁴ J. Oliver Buswell to Enock Dyrness, June 5, 1939, Box 55, Folder 26, Board of Trustees Records (RG 01 001). Buswell then wrote to Wyeth Willard to inform him that "a rather difficult correspondence recently issued in the successful removing of the obstacles to the admission of Miss Rachel Boone." Buswell explained, however, that he had learned from the registrar that Boone now intended to enroll at Houghton College, and that "her aunt is very well satisfied with the prospects." In light of that fact, Buswell had concluded that "it would be unwise for us to re-open the case." He closed the letter by assuring Willard that the decision to open the College to Black applicants going forward would nonetheless hold. See J. Oliver Buswell to W. Wyeth Willard, June 15, 1939, Box 27, Folder 13, Office of the President Records (J. Oliver Buswell) (RG 02 003).

Sharp-eyed readers of *Inform*, the College's monthly campus newsletter, have noted that Stephen W. Paine, the president of Houghton College in New York, delivered Wheaton's commencement address in mid-June 1939. A 1930 graduate of Wheaton and the great grandson of Jonathan Blanchard, Paine became president of Houghton in 1937 at the age of 29. It is unknown whether Paine and President Buswell discussed Rachel Boone while Paine's visit to campus. See *Inform College Bulletin* 16, no. 7 (July 1939): 8.

¹¹⁵ Lewis McGee's student file indicates he left the College after one year to enlist in the U.S. Army and serve in World War II.

¹¹⁶ W. Wyeth Willard to J. Oliver Buswell, June 24, 1939, Box 27, Folder 13, Office of the President Records (J. Oliver Buswell) (RG 02 003).

¹¹⁷ J. Oliver Buswell to Enock Dyrness, June 5, 1939, Box 55, Folder 26, Board of Trustees Records (RG 01 001).



Summary of the 1930s

In sum, the evidence suggests that no Black students were enrolled at Wheaton College between the departure of Clarence Morris in 1929 and the matriculation of Lewis McGee in 1940. This was not a dramatic “reversal” in any statistical sense. There had never been more than a trickle of Black students attending the College, and in the final years of Charles Blanchard’s administration, there had almost never been more than one at a time. And yet the difference between one and none was and is significant, for the evidence is compelling that President Buswell, at some point in his tenure, had imposed an unwritten rule that ensured that no Blacks could matriculate. This was a far cry from the willingness of Jonathan Blanchard not only to admit Black students to the College but to invite them to live under his roof. And yet it would be an oversimplification to portray the trajectory from Jonathan Blanchard to J. Oliver Buswell as the linear decline from an abolitionist to a segregationist. Jonathan Blanchard did not lobby for total political and social equality for formerly enslaved people. Oliver Buswell did not make a moral (much less a Scriptural) argument for segregation. There is much to lament in the College’s admissions practices under President Buswell. It is important to recognize, however, that there are foreshadowings of that policy that predate Buswell and that in the transition from Charles Blanchard to Buswell, there are as many elements of continuity as of change.

President V. Raymond Edman, 1940-1965



Figure 11: V. Raymond Edman, undated. College Archives. Photo File: Edman, V. Raymond, Photograph #A00846.

When J. Oliver Buswell was unexpectedly dismissed by the Board of Trustees in January 1940, the next Wheaton College president was already serving on the faculty as chair of the history and political science department. Born in 1900 to Swedish immigrant parents, V. Raymond Edman had intended to dedicate his life to global missions. After his education at Columbia University was cut short by service in World War I, Edman completed his B.A. at Boston University before setting sail for the mission fields of Ecuador, where he served among the Quichua people from 1923-1927. An attack of tropical disease ended Edman’s lifelong missionary aspirations, and he returned to the United States to complete his education at Clark University, earning an M.A. and Ph.D. in International Relations. Edman joined the faculty at Wheaton College in 1936 as a professor of history until four years later, the Board of Trustees requested that he serve as acting president of the College while they initiated a search for Wheaton’s fourth president. The search appears to have been a mere formality, and the Board voted to instate Edman as President of Wheaton College in 1941.¹¹⁸

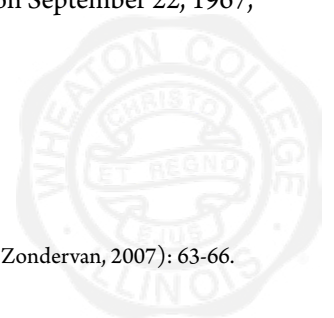
Affectionately known as “Prexy,” Edman reportedly knew the name of every student on campus during his 24 years as president. He never lost his commitment to global missionary efforts, and Wheaton’s reputation as a mission-sending school grew under his leadership, especially after the 1950 revival when many students committed themselves to lifelong missionary service around the world.¹¹⁹ A relational leader, Edman is also credited for mentoring a fledgling Southern preacher who enrolled as an anthropology major at Wheaton College in the fall of 1940.¹²⁰ Billy Graham went on to worldwide evangelistic ministry but returned to preach the funeral sermon after V. Raymond Edman died on the College chapel stage on September 22, 1967, delivering what would become an institutionally famous sermon, “In the Presence of the King.”¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Paul Bechtel, *Wheaton College*, 159-160.

¹¹⁹ Paul Bechtel, *Wheaton College*, 192-194.

¹²⁰ See Billy Graham, *Just as I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (New York: HarperOne; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007): 63-66.

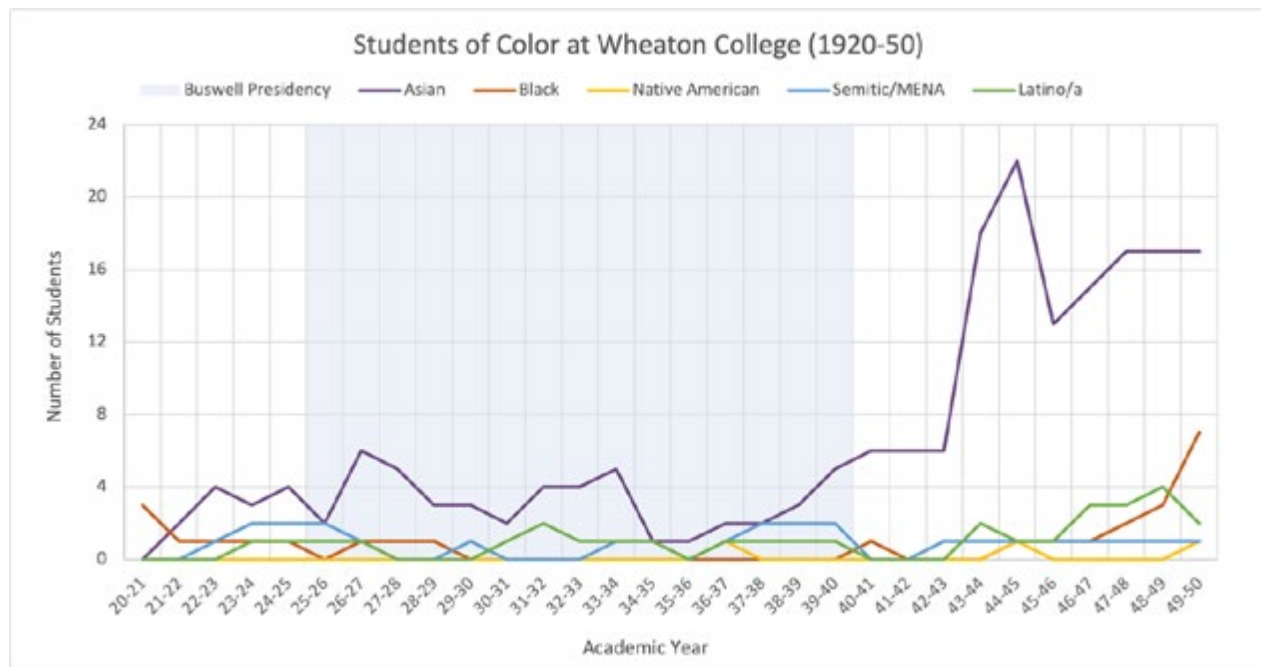
¹²¹ Paul Bechtel, *Wheaton College*, 274-275.



President Edman's twenty-five-year tenure as President of Wheaton College coincided with a period of immense cultural and political upheaval with significant implications for race relations on Wheaton's campus. Edman's presidency spanned World War II, the Korean War, desegregation in the American South following *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, the Civil Rights Movement, and the beginning of the war in Vietnam.

Unlike previous years, when *The Record* deliberately focused on campus-wide concerns rather than national or international trends and events, the student body became increasingly vocal about social and political issues, including race relations. While official programming aimed at racial issues did not appear until Edman's final years, College publications from this time include lively and sometimes heated campus discussions over the scientific basis for theories of racial superiority, segregation, interracial marriage, and the complex nature of global missions, among others.

Student Enrollment Over the 1940s



In the first decade of President Edman's tenure as president, minority student enrollment remained overwhelmingly low with a few notable developments when compared with the trends of the 1930s. Whereas no African American students had attended Wheaton College since Clarence Morris (1927-29), the fall of 1940 proved a milestone with the arrival of Lewis McGee. Hailing from nearby St. Charles, Illinois, McGee received a fifty-dollar scholarship his second semester to support his studies but left Wheaton in 1941 to join the Army. Following his military service, he went into evangelism ministry and did not return to complete his degree.¹²² McGee maintained some level of contact with the Alumni Association, and in 1949 wrote to Alumni Secretary, Ted Benson, to contribute to fundraising efforts for the Memorial Student Center, completed in 1951 in honor of Wheaton's World War II veterans.¹²³ After McGee's departure in 1941, Wheaton did not attract another African American student until Winifred Borroughs in 1944, a transfer student from Moody Bible Institute who studied at Wheaton for three semesters before leaving for missionary

¹²² According to his biographical file, McGee left Wheaton College in 1941 to join the Army and lists his rank as Private First Class. McGee, Lewis, Box 31, Folder 18, Biographical Files (RG 11 002), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College.

¹²³ Lewis A. McGee to Ted M. Benson, Mar. 1, 1949, McGee, Lewis, Box 31, Folder 18, Biographical Files (RG 11-002). In his letter, Lewis apologizes for donating only a single dollar to the MSC fundraising efforts, stating that the bulk of his income goes into his ministry work. He also mentions being financially unable to subscribe to the *Alumni Magazine*, a reality that may have prevented low-income students from staying connected with the Alumni Association.

service in Liberia.¹²⁴ African American student enrollment in the 1940s saw a notable rise with the arrival of three Oliver brothers in the second half of the decade. After studying at the Missionary Training Institute in South Nyack College, New York, C. Herbert Oliver matriculated at Wheaton College in the fall of 1945 and graduated with a B.A. in history in 1947, the first African American to receive a degree from Wheaton College since Delgratia Scott in 1925. Two more Oliver brothers, H. Douglas and F. Logwood, followed in 1947 and 1948.¹²⁵ By the 1949-50 academic year, the total number of African American students enrolled at the College had risen to seven, a small but notable increase after the complete absence of Black students in the 1930s.¹²⁶

Another notable shift in minority student enrollment coincided with the entry of the United States into World War II. While Asian and Asian-American student numbers increased during the 1930s, wartime saw a spike in this student population, specifically from 1943-1945, when Wheaton's Asian student enrollment quadrupled from five to twenty students. Other student minority populations were far less represented. Over the course of the 1940s, Latino student enrollment hovered between one and four students per year. Native American and Middle Eastern/North African students were even more scarce. Between 1940 and 1950, only one Middle Eastern student a year enrolled at Wheaton College. A single Native American student studied at the College between 1943 and 1946 and again in 1948-49.

World War II and Japanese American Students at Wheaton College

The United States' entry into World War II after the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 brought a wave of Asian and Asian-American students to Wheaton College and with them questions about the place of Japanese and Japanese American students both on Wheaton's campus and in American society.

When the United States entered World War II in December 1941, approximately 2,500 Japanese American students were enrolled in colleges and universities on the West Coast. In the spring of 1942, the War Relocation Authority launched a targeted program evacuating Americans of Japanese heritage away from military areas on the West Coast and into internment camps in seven western states. To assist Japanese heritage students whose educations were interrupted, the National Japanese-American Student Relocation Council (NJASRC) was formed in May of 1942 to place select interned college-aged students into institutions of higher education east of the military areas. Candidates for placement were screened for "doubtful loyalty." If cleared by the Council, students were relocated to participating institutions and enrolled. Due to prejudice, some colleges and universities chose not to accept Japanese American students through this program. The first wave of relocations occurred in the summer of 1942, and by December 1944, over 3,500 Japanese American students, most of them first-generation citizens (Nisei), had enrolled at colleges and universities around the United States.¹²⁷

While Wheaton's student enrollment records from the War years are scanty, the College did witness a

¹²⁴ Borroughs maintained a friendly relationship with Wheaton College, supporting the College financially and subscribing to the *Wheaton Alumni* magazine. In the 1950s, Borroughs also continued her Wheaton College education, earning additional credit through correspondence courses while serving in at the Suehn Industrial Mission in Liberia. See Holmes, Mrs. Herbert L. (Borroughs, Winifred Hazel), 1948, Box 21, Folder 45, Biographical Files (RG 11-002).

¹²⁵ There is significant confusion in the Wheaton College Catalog regarding the Oliver brothers. Student files confirm that H. Douglas, like his brother C. Herbert, was also a history major and graduated in 1950. F. Logwood (sometimes called "Fred") would have graduated in spring 1952, though in an oral history interview with David Malone in 2015, C. Herbert recalls that Fred left Wheaton College after experiencing institutional resistance to his marriage to a white woman. See Oral History Interview with C. Herbert Oliver by David Malone, Apr. 28-29, 2015 (not processed), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College.

¹²⁶ It should be noted that Priscilla Jones, an African American woman, enrolled at Wheaton in 1949 and graduated in 1952 with an M.A. in Christian Education, making her the first Black graduate student. She remained well connected to the College after commencement.

¹²⁷ The most useful summary of the work of the National Japanese-American Student Relocation Council was published by John H. Provinse, "Relocation of Japanese-American College Students: Acceptance of a Challenge," Higher Education: Semimonthly Publication of the Higher Education Division United States Office of Education, Federal Security Agency 1, No. 8 (Apr. 16, 1945), 104.

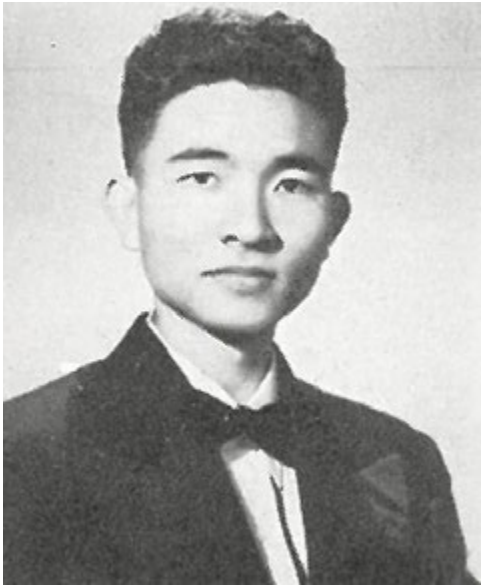


Figure 13: John Nagayama as a student, 1947.
The Tower.

notable increase in Asian American enrollment in the fall of 1943.¹²⁸ Over the 1930s, Wheaton's Asian American student population had hovered around one to two students per year, but in 1943, the number of Asian Americans enrolled at the College jumped from four to twenty, reaching a decade high of twenty-two students in the 1944-45 academic year, before declining slowly to single digits in the post-war years.

While it is difficult to verify if every student in this group was routed to Wheaton through the NJASRC internment camps, admission records confirm that Wheaton College did participate in the program and welcomed Japanese American students to campus beginning in 1943. While student files can be frustratingly sparse on details, they do provide a brief demographic snapshot of Wheaton's wartime Nisei. Between 1943 and 1945, the College enrolled a handful of Japanese American students, both men and women, from Hawaii and internment camps in the continental U.S., including Manzanar Relocation Center in California and Granada Relocation Center (Camp Amache) in Colorado.

Several of these students may have selected Wheaton specifically because of its reputation as a Christian liberal arts college. When asked about his interest in the College, incoming student Akira Kikuchi, wrote, "Ever since we were evacuated from the West Coast, I am very concerned about our moral deterioration. So recently I decided to obtain some sort of religious training so that I might be able to uplift my people."¹²⁹ Another student, John Nagayama, left a thriving ministry with the Children's Village inside the Manzanar Relocation Center, which the Relocation Council commended as "the only orphanage for young Japanese American orphans in any of the relocation projects."¹³⁰ Other Wheaton Nisei pursued vocations in Christian ministry after studying at Wheaton. After his senior year at Pasadena College was interrupted by the War Relocation Authority, Kuroda Akira made his way to Wheaton from Camp Amache, where he majored in philosophy and went on to establish the Japanese Missionary Society.¹³¹

While no explicit details survive to document the experience of Japanese American students at Wheaton during World War II, College publications occasionally offer a glimpse into campus conversations about American citizens of Japanese heritage. One subject was the perceived loyalty of Japanese immigrants or first-generation citizens. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, *The Record* interviewed student Esther Hong from Honolulu, who reassured readers that her Japanese childhood friends on the island would "stand true to the American government."¹³² In the war's final months, alumna Grace DeCamp '34 penned a stirring article for *Wheaton Alumni*, in which she described her work as a missionary inside the Granada Relocation Center in Amache, Colorado. "Please don't consider Japanese-Americans as different," DeCamp pleaded, "They are as American as you or I, the difference being that they have to take a lot because of their ancestry."¹³³ In fact, the interned Japanese Americans had "no love for Japan," DeCamp insisted, and over 600 Nisei from

¹²⁸ While the NJASRC launched in the spring of 1942, Wheaton did not see a rise in Japanese American student enrollment until the following year.

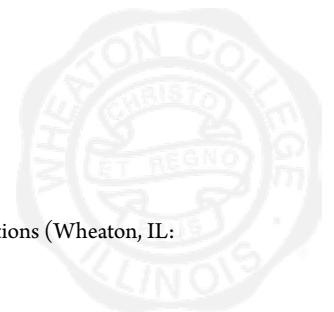
¹²⁹ Kikuchi, Akira, 1947, Box 25, Folder 40, Biographical Files (RG 11 002).

¹³⁰ Trudy King to Enock Dyrness, June 14, 1953, Nagayama, John, 1947, Box 33, Folder 89, Biographical Files (11 002).

¹³¹ Kuroda, Akira James, 1945, Box 26, Folder 77, Biographical Files, (RG 11 002).

¹³² Esther Hong, quoted in "President's Talk Broadcast in Chapel," *The Record*, Dec. 9, 1941.

¹³³ Grace DeCamp, "American-Japanese," *Wheaton Alumni*, Jan. 1945, Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College), 5.



Amache had demonstrated their patriotism by joining the U.S. Army to fight in Europe.¹³⁴

Over the course of the war, rare instances of racial stereotypes and pejorative labels, such as “yellow hordes”¹³⁵ and “slant eyes”¹³⁶ appeared in student publications to describe the Japanese military. The most overt instance of racial hostility toward the Japanese appeared in *The Record* in October 1945. Following Japan’s surrender to the United States, the newspaper featured a debate on the question, “If you were in complete authority what would you do with Japan?” The article was published under the title, “Do We Hang ‘Em or Help ‘Em?” Alongside several calls from Wheaton students to provide spiritual and material aid to post-war Japan, a freshman contributed the following response: “Japan is a sly race and cannot be trusted. They have done much evil and because of their evil have forfeited their right to live. They should be exterminated just like the Canaanites were as recorded in the Old Testament.”¹³⁷ In the following issue, Alumni Secretary Ted Benson wrote to the editor, chastising the freshman writer: “His formula is neither Christian nor is it in the Wheaton tradition. We are proud of our graduates who are of the Japanese race and for those here on campus we say a hearty, ‘We’re glad you are here!’”¹³⁸ Benson’s comment is a rare nod to both Wheaton’s Japanese and Japanese American graduates and the handful of students enrolled through the War Relocation Council, who would have witnessed the heated debate in their campus newspaper. These kinds of campus-wide conversations related to Japan or Japanese heritage Americans paled, however, in comparison to the number of lectures, debates, and student service activities all addressing “the race question” in the 1960s.

Wheaton College HoneyRock Camp, Oneida County, Wisconsin

In 1951, Wheaton College, through the enterprising leadership of Harvey Chrouser, made the strategic decision to lease Camp Welcodac, an available youth camp property in the Northwoods of Wisconsin to host a leadership program for physical education majors. Wheaton eventually purchased the sprawling 900-acre property,¹³⁹ and HoneyRock has since become a cherished site for many of the College’s enterprising programs, including the current Passage college transition program and the HoneyRock Leadership Development Center today. Similar to the Wheaton campus in DuPage County, the College legally acquired the land where Honey Rock currently sits in the 1950s. However, the original transmission from native Ojibwe to white ownership bears closer inspection.

Wisconsin became a territory in 1836 following the forced Indian removal policy of the American government. After a series of sessions, in 1842, at the Treaty of La Pointe, the Ojibwe people ceded the land where HoneyRock resides while explicitly reserving the right to hunt and fish on those lands.¹⁴⁰

The circumstances of sale in 1842 were less than ideal:

¹³⁴ Grace DeCamp, “American-Japanese.” DeCamp also urged the Wheaton community to look ahead to their social and spiritual responsibilities toward the nation of Japan in the post-war years, specifically the work of evangelism.

¹³⁵ “Christians Face Patriotic Duty in Witnessing,” *The Record*, Jan. 9, 1942.

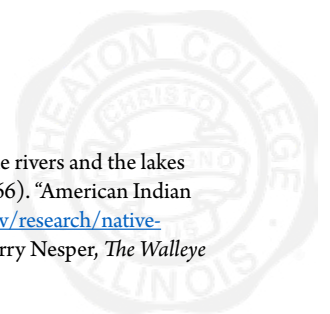
¹³⁶ James R. Graham, quoted in “Doc Graham Gives Personal Story of Japanese Attack on Hawaii,” *The Record*, Jan. 20, 1942.

¹³⁷ Anonymous Freshman, quoted in “Do We Hang ‘Em or Help ‘Em?” *The Record*, Oct. 5, 1945.

¹³⁸ Ted M. Benson, “‘Out With It!’ They say...” (Letters to the Editor), *The Record*, Oct. 11, 1945.

¹³⁹ Paul Bechtel, *Wheaton College*, 261.

¹⁴⁰ Article 2 of the 1842 treaty states: “The privilege of hunting, fishing and gathering wild rice, upon the lands, the rivers and the lakes included in the territory ceded, is guaranteed [*sic*] to the Indians, during the pleasure of the President of the United States” (66). “American Indian Treaties: Catalog Links,” National Archives & Records Administration, Accessed on Mar. 23, 2023, <https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/treaties/catalog-links>. The exercise of these rights has been a contentious issue in recent Wisconsin history. See Larry Nesper, *The Walleye War: The Struggle for Ojibwe Spearfishing and Treaty Rights* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).



It is revealing... that the lion's share of payment in the two treaties [1837 and 1842], including \$75,000 in the 1842 treaty, went to claimants associated with John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company. Treaty commissioner Robert Stuart, a former employee of the company, "used heavy-handed tactics to secure the treaty" and award funds to Astor, his former employer and close friend.¹⁴¹

Whether or not profit was accrued by interested settler parties, the immediate aftermath of the treaties was native removal. "The Ojibwe had been promised they would not be removed as long as they did not 'misbehave.'"¹⁴² But within six years (Feb. 6, 1850), President Zachary Taylor signed the removal order. Ostensibly, this was to protect Ojibwe from "injurious contact" with the whites. It is equally the case, however, that "Western expansionists believed the peaceful Ojibwe could be used as a buffer between white settlers and the more unpredictable Sioux."¹⁴³

To facilitate removal, federal officers insisted the 1850 annuity payments be delivered not in La Pointe, Wisconsin on Madeline Island, which is the "Ojibwe Jerusalem" and the heart of the nation. Instead, the Ojibwe were forced to travel to Sandy Lake, Minnesota. Of the 5,500 that made the trip, nearly 500 died as a result of the hardships of the journey.¹⁴⁴ Kechewaishe (Chief Buffalo, d. 1855), wrote in an 1851 letter, "Our women and children do indeed cry, our Father, on account of their suffering from cold and hunger... We wish to... be permitted to remain here where we were promised we might live, as long as we were not in the way of the Whites."¹⁴⁵

At the age of ninety-three, Chief Buffalo himself traveled to Washington to defend his people. There he explained to President Millard Fillmore his assumption that the 1842 treaty was for pine and minerals, not a cession of the land itself.¹⁴⁶ "It is unclear whether Fillmore himself rescinded the removal order or told the delegation that Minnesota governor Alexander Ramsey would rescind it."¹⁴⁷ President Franklin Pierce resumed annuity payments at La Pointe.¹⁴⁸ But the more enduring result of this shift was the creation of four reservations in Wisconsin: Bad River, Lac Courte Oreilles, Lac du Flambeau and Red Cliff. Of these four reservations, 40 percent were in turn reduced by the allotment program. The General Allotment Act was passed by Congress in 1887 where reservation land was divided and allotted to tribal members in 80-acre parcels. Remaining land after the allotments were made were sold to white settlers, or to Indians deemed "competent" enough to sell their land.

The allotment policy officially ended in 1934,¹⁴⁹ and seventeen years later, Honey Rock Camp, under the leadership of Harvey and Dorothy Chrouser, welcomed 161 campers to Wheaton College's new campus in the

¹⁴¹Patty Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2013), 65. "There is evidence the Ojibwe believed they were merely leasing the land, not selling it. In 1864, an Ojibwe delegation to Washington delivered its written version of the 1837 treaty minutes, Chief Ma-ghe-ga-bo declared: 'Of all the country that we grant you we wish to hold on to a tree [maple] where we get our living, & to reserve the streams where we drink that waters that give us life'" (66). However, this is the 1837 treaty, not the 1842 treaty that ceded Honey Rock.

¹⁴² Patty Loew, *Indian Nations*, 66.

¹⁴³ Patty Loew, *Indian Nations*, 66.

¹⁴⁴ Patty Loew, *Indian Nations*, 67.

¹⁴⁵ Patty Loew, *Indian Nations*, 67.

¹⁴⁶ Patty Loew, *Indian Nations*, 67.

¹⁴⁷ Patty Loew, *Indian Nations*, 68.

¹⁴⁸ Patty Loew, *Indian Nations*, 68.

¹⁴⁹ Patty Loew, *Indian Nations*, 70



Northwoods of Wisconsin.¹⁵⁰ Renamed “HoneyRock” [Deut. 32:13], the camp has since 1951 expanded to include a variety of programs focusing on outdoor education, wilderness learning experiences, and leadership development, including Passage, the current college transition program for first-year students, formerly known as Vanguard and High Road. The official history of HoneyRock Camp references “the rich Indian heritage” of the property, but no mention is made of the circumstances surrounding the forced removal of the Ojibwe people to reservations outside of Wisconsin.¹⁵¹ Mid-century promotional literature for the camp and photographs documenting HoneyRock activities, however, reveal some level of awareness of the indigenous roots of the property, though Native American culture appears to have been appropriated for cosplay or comedy. Camp skits and activities in the early decades of HoneyRock Camp featured staff members in native headdresses, made deprecating references to “witch doctors,” and depicted children dressed as “Apache Indian maidens.”¹⁵² While these types of depictions disappear from later literature, they reveal, in keeping with the cultural mores of the 1950s and ‘60s, a level of ignorance at best and downright cultural insensitivity at worst.

Campus Debates on Segregation

In the years following the landmark Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in the spring of 1954, the Wheaton campus debated the merits and methods of integration in Southern schools. These discussions, sometimes strident, played out in the pages of *The Record*, the *Faculty Bulletin*, classrooms across campus, and even the College chaplain’s home.

The first documented Wheaton College debate over the issue of segregation appeared in the June 1955 issue of the *Faculty Bulletin*.¹⁵³ In an article titled “That Race Question Again,” seven faculty members representing a range of disciplines responded to a hypothetical question over the racial integration of Southern schools.¹⁵⁴ Posed as “presenting some suggested approaches to Christian Ethics,” the article queried faculty how they would approach the thorny issue of Black students applying to a historically all-white Christian high school.

Although faculty offered a range of responses, overwhelmingly they voiced their support of racial integration, especially for any school claiming to be Christian. Sociology professor Lamberta Voget hoped that any school administrator facing such a crisis would “act with boldness and decisiveness” because “discrimination is indefensible.”¹⁵⁵ Frank Bellinger in the Geography department claimed that “Christian ethics and scriptural principles demand that the Christian, especially the educator, do all that he can to right some of the wrong that has so long been done to the Negro, and, most sad to say, so often in the name of God’s word.”¹⁵⁶ Anthropology professor, James

¹⁵⁰ Paul Bechtel, *Wheaton College*, 262.

¹⁵¹ See Chrouser, Harvey and Dorothy, *“A Place Apart”: HoneyRock Camp* (Tallahassee, FL: Roylund International, 1990), pp. 7-8.

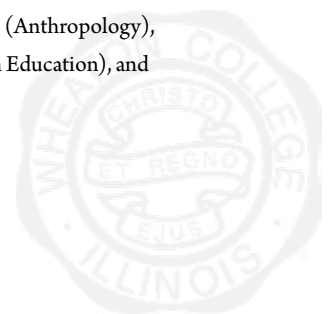
¹⁵² Examples of such images can be found in Chrouser, Harvey and Dorothy, *“A Place Apart.”* See page 3-1 for a photograph of a camp leader dressed as a “Witch Doctor in Training,” page 13-3 for photograph of girl campers in procession as Apache Indians, page 13-5 for a photograph of another staff member in a native headdress.

¹⁵³ Published tri-annually from 1937 to 1969, the *Faculty Bulletin* featured news and opinion articles by and for members of the Wheaton College faculty.

¹⁵⁴ The seven respondents were: Frank Bellinger (Geography and Political Science), James Oliver Buswell, III (Anthropology), J. Howard Goddard (Bible), Ronald D. Jones (Education), Clyde S. Kilby (English), William Shunk (Bible and Christian Education), and Lamberta Voget (Sociology).

¹⁵⁵ Lamberta Voget in “That Race Question Again,” *Faculty Bulletin*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (June 1955): 12.

¹⁵⁶ Frank Bellinger, in “That Race Question Again,” *Faculty Bulletin*, 14.



Buswell, III, son of the former president, took the opportunity to underscore Wheaton's own double standard on interracial relationships, to wit, "admitting racially mixed- married students while discouraging inter-racial dating among students already admitted."¹⁵⁷

While many of the faculty polled for "That Race Question" offered full-throated support for racial integration,¹⁵⁸ only Buswell III raised the point that schools in the North, like Wheaton, were not immune from their own, less obvious, forms of racial discrimination. He named college admissions requirements, interracial dating, and even the "privilege" of attending college altogether as barriers still barring many African Americans from higher education.¹⁵⁹

While Wheaton faculty debated segregation in the South, Wheaton students protested racial discrimination close to home. Unlike the hypothetical situation posed by *The Faculty Bulletin*, these instances were all too real and occurring in their own Wheaton backyard. In October 1962, *The Record* published a letter to the Editor from student David Reid, who recounted witnessing an instance of racial discrimination in a downtown Wheaton barbershop against a fellow student. Describing his "hurt and surprise," Reid cited a recent chapel message from Rev. Melvin Banks '55, M.A. '59, LITT.D. '93 and inquired, "can't we as a student body take some kind of appropriate 'positive evangelical action' in this regard to remove this injustice and come to the defense of our fellow student?"¹⁶⁰ The answer from *The Record* was "yes." In response, two newspaper staff were appointed to investigate the barbershop incident and a student committee was formed to study civil rights issues. Between October 1962 and February 1963, *The Record* printed a flurry of articles documenting the progress of the Civil Rights Council and the student body's growing awareness of racial injustice in their own community. After the Civil Rights Council uncovered widespread discrimination among barbershops across the city, they appealed to the Wheaton Chamber of Commerce and City Council, the College administration, the local Ministerial Association, the *DuPage Press*, and *Daily Herald*.¹⁶¹

However, the issue of racial discrimination in municipal Wheaton businesses may have been addressed by local authorities, Reid's letter to the editor and following reactions illuminate how some Wheaton students were shocked to find racial discrimination so close to home. One guest writer claimed in the pages of *The Record* that discriminatory practices had infiltrated all levels of Wheaton society, from barbershops to churches, to housing and employment opportunities.¹⁶²

While some students demanded direct action to address the discrimination they were uncovering, others argued for self-examination. One editorial from November 1962 urged students to reconsider their assumption that racial injustice only occurred in the segregated South: "Basic human freedoms are being violated—not only in Oxford, Mississippi, but here in Wheaton. . . To combat this discrimination both against Negroes and against barbers who would cut their hair, we must first begin with ourselves, to purge our own feelings of Caucasian superiority. . . We call for action. But first we call for the purging of our hearts."¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷ James O. Buswell, III, in "That Race Question Again," *Faculty Bulletin*, 13.

¹⁵⁸ "That Race Question Again," *Faculty Bulletin*. All faculty respondents acknowledged the difficulty of the situation. None of the faculty members outright oppose integration of schools, though the responses vary in tone and content. Several advocate proceeding but only with extreme caution and gradually (one response argues for setting quotas on Black enrollment to prevent the school from becoming minority white). Several mentioned practical concerns, like alienating constituencies, housing issues, etc. One response indicated that the decision whether to integrate should be fully in the hands of the school board. Nearly half the articles argue for courageous leadership in integrating the school.

¹⁵⁹ "That Race Question Again," *Faculty Bulletin*. Buswell raises this double standard again to the Registrar following the indefinite suspension of student Raymond Alcide Joseph for violating the Wheaton marriage policy, after his fiancé's parents objected to this marriage on race-based grounds.

¹⁶⁰ Dave Reid, "Reid Reveals Discrimination," *The Record*, Oct. 25, 1962.

¹⁶¹ See "SC Civil Rights Committee Views Local Discrimination," *The Record*, Nov. 1962.

¹⁶² N.H. "Guest Column . . . Silence Is No Answer," *The Record*, Nov. 1962.

¹⁶³ Ronald G. Watson "Little Rock, Oxford, and Us," *The Record*, Nov. 1962.



The “Social Problem”: Interracial Relationships at Wheaton College

Inextricably embedded in institutional conversations about segregation was the issue of interracial relationships both on Wheaton’s campus and in American society more broadly. Unlike some evangelical colleges and universities,¹⁶⁴ Wheaton never instituted a formal policy prohibiting interracial dating or marriage. At the beginning of President Edman’s tenure in 1940, the marriage policy consisted of a single line in the student handbook prohibiting marriage for any Wheaton student during the academic year without “faculty and parental approval.”¹⁶⁵ Over the course of the next twenty-five years, however, the administration added slight changes to the marriage policy, introducing levels of approval and required counseling for marriage-seeking students. In 1945, the updated policy placed an outright ban on marriage during freshman year and for any students on probation. Students wishing to marry during the school year were required to submit an application 30 days in advance and secure parental permission.¹⁶⁶ The 1955 student handbook introduced another layer: approval from the Dean of Men or Dean of Women.¹⁶⁷ Four years after this revision, Arthur Volle, the Dean of Students, clarified the approval process existed, in part, to prevent the College from being “placed in the tricky position of sanctioning a marriage that is unsatisfactory to the families of the parties involved.”¹⁶⁸

In 1958, members of the Sociology and Anthropology Departments submitted a memo to the Executive Council requesting a meeting to discuss “racial differences as they relate to approved and disapproved social conduct on the campus.”¹⁶⁹ Of foremost concern for these faculty was the inconsistency between what professors taught in the classroom about interracial relationships and the practical counseling that interracial couples received from the administration.

They raised two points. First, they underscored Wheaton’s contradictory practice of admitting students in interracial marriages while discouraging currently enrolled students from interracial dating, an inconsistency they had already underscored in the *Faculty Bulletin* three years earlier.¹⁷⁰ Second, the faculty pointed out the biased counseling services provided to certain student populations when it came to interracial relationships, citing the “rather obvious discrimination against negroid students as compared with orientals and other racial minorities.”¹⁷¹ Whether a meeting with the Executive Council took place is unknown, but pressure continued to mount against College administration, from both faculty and students, to clarify institutional policies on interracial relationships and to enforce them consistently.

The policy and process of granting permission to marry is consistent with controversies and disagreements

¹⁶⁴For a discussion of interracial dating policies and practices at evangelical colleges and universities in the twentieth century, see Adam Laats, *Fundamentalist U: Keeping the Faith in Higher Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). Laats notes that only miles from Wheaton, Moody Bible Institute explicitly prohibited interracial relationships until 1965 but continued to discourage interracial relationships for years after the formal policy was abandoned (229). On the far end of the spectrum, Bob Jones University did not eliminate its interracial dating ban until 2000.

¹⁶⁵ See *Wheaton College Student Handbook* (1940-41), Book 52, Folder 3, Wheaton College Affiliated Publications (RG 09 005), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College), 18.

¹⁶⁶ *Wheaton College Student Handbook* (1945-46), 25-26.

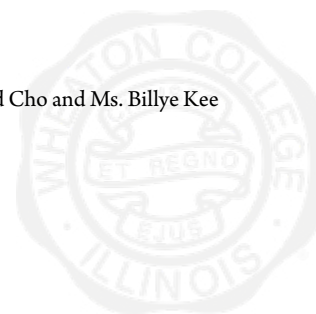
¹⁶⁷ *Wheaton College Student Handbook* (1955-56), 25.

¹⁶⁸ Arthur Volle, “Just for the Record,” *The Record*, May 7, 1959.

¹⁶⁹ “Memo to the Executive Council,” Sept. 16, 1958, HRTF Research Files. Special thanks are due to Dr. David Cho and Ms. Billye Kee for bringing this memo to the attention of the HRTF.

¹⁷⁰ “That Race Question Again,” *Faculty Bulletin*, 11-14.

¹⁷¹ “Memo to the Executive Council,” Sept. 16, 1958.



about interracial marriage at the time. It was within the next decade, that the United States Supreme Court ruled on the legality of interracial marriage in *Loving vs. Virginia* in 1967.

It would be impossible to determine how many, if any, marriage-seeking students were denied permission based on prejudice against interracial relationships alone. While definitive numbers do not exist, the College Archives contains compelling evidence from oral history interviews and College publications that discriminatory practices did occur and were an ongoing subject of conversation for the campus community.

One of the earliest known anecdotes about institutional opposition to interracial dating stems from interviews with the previously mentioned C. Herbert Oliver '47. The first African American graduate since 1925, Oliver recounted that his brother Logwood became engaged to a white woman while a student in the early 1950s. According to Oliver, his brother left Wheaton and refused to graduate because of the College's response to his engagement: "Wheaton was so upset over that that they almost wrote them out of the Book of Life. So, they left Wheaton, and he didn't want to graduate from Wheaton. He went and studied elsewhere."¹⁷² F. Logwood Oliver relocated to Minneapolis, where he completed a degree in chemistry from the University of Minnesota and taught in the Minneapolis public school system for 28 years.¹⁷³ In a later interview, Ruth Lewis Bentley '55, M.A. '58, a personal friend of the Oliver family, recalls that Logwood was "invited out" of Wheaton College because of his interracial relationship but does not provide any details about the expulsion process.¹⁷⁴

Dr. Ruth Lewis Bentley, '55, M.A. '58

An exceptional and groundbreaking student, celebrated alumna, and honored Board of Trustee member, Ruth Lewis Bentley was born in 1934 and raised in Birmingham, Alabama. An outstanding student, Bentley completed high school at the age of 16. Looking to attend an accredited Christian college outside of the segregated South, Bentley chose to attend Wheaton College at the recommendation of family friend and Wheaton alumnus, Douglas Oliver '50.

Over the next seven years, Bentley excelled academically at Wheaton, graduating with highest honors in 1955, before earning an M.A. in Christian education and ministry in 1958. Her social experiences, however, confirmed that racial prejudice could exist even on the campus of a Christian college in the north. Besides the loneliness of being one of only a handful of African American students on an overwhelmingly white campus, Bentley recalls multiple instances of racial discrimination from students and administrators. The Dean of Women barred Bentley from living off campus with white friends and lectured her on the sins of interracial dating. Another time, Bentley was prevented from publicly performing with her choral group, the only African American in a sea of white faces.

These experiences, among others, spurred Bentley to dedicate herself to supporting Black students in majority white educational settings. After graduating from Wheaton, she served with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and later published *A Handbook for Black Christian Students: How to Remain Sane and Grow in a White College Setting* in 1974.

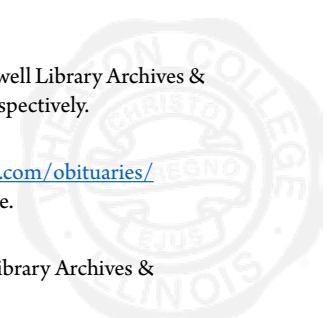
Bentley returned to her home state to earn a Ph.D. from the University of Alabama in 1966. During her studies, she won a Fulbright Fellowship to support her research in Australia. In 1988, Dr. Bentley returned to Wheaton to serve on the Board of Trustees, an appointment she held for fourteen years. During her tenure, Bentley founded the William Hiram Bentley Award for Ministry. Named in honor of her husband, the former president of the National Black Evangelical Association, the scholarship supports African American graduate students preparing for ministry service in the African American community.

Today, Dr. Bentley's legacy of championing the invisible and marginalized members of campus communities continues to impact Wheaton students, faculty, and administrators. In honor of her service on the Board of Trustees from 1988–2002, with faithful efforts to establish a hospitable place for minority students on campus, Dr. Ruth Lewis Bentley '55, M.A. '58 is the 2022 Alumna of the Year for Distinguished Service to Alma Mater.

¹⁷² Oral History Interview with C. Herbert Oliver by David B. Malone, Apr. 28-29, 2015, (unprocessed), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College. C. Herbert Oliver and F. Logwood Oliver died in 2022 and 2020 respectively.

¹⁷³ "Frederick Logwood Oliver" (Obituary), *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, Oct. 4, 2020. <https://www.startribune.com/obituaries/detail/0000370021/>. Accessed Aug. 28, 2022. Logwood's obituary makes no mention of his studying at Wheaton College.

¹⁷⁴ Oral History Interview with Ruth Lewis Bentley by Sarah Stanley, July 11, 2019, (unprocessed), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College.



Logwood Oliver's student file sheds further light on the situation. In August 1951, the beginning of Logwood's senior year, Arthur Volle, the College's Vocational Counselor, wrote to Dean of Students Charles Brooks, asking for assistance in the thorny case of Logwood's intentions "to get a white wife here at Wheaton."¹⁷⁵ In Volle's account, tensions between the administration and Logwood had been escalating for some time, and plans



Figure 14: Ruth Lewis as a student, 1955.
The Tower, p. 206.

for "dropping him" were being discussed.¹⁷⁶ "I did get a definite impression, myself, in talking with Fred [Logwood], that he didn't want to limit himself in any way as to whom he married or would go with," Volle reported. "I was quite disappointed in him in this regard, especially in view of all the counseling you have given him on this point."¹⁷⁷ Whether F. Logwood Oliver left the College voluntarily or was forced to leave quietly remains unknown, but the opposition he and his fiancé received proved painful enough to leave the College without following in the footsteps of his two brothers and graduating from Wheaton College.

Another example of administrative opposition to interracial dating is recorded in multiple interviews with Ruth Lewis Bentley '55, M.A. '58 who served on the Wheaton College Board of Trustees from 1988 to 2002. In the early 1950s, Bentley, an African American student, approached the Dean of Women to request permission to find off-campus accommodations for her junior year, a process that was customary for upperclassmen given the inadequate supply of dormitory

housing for the student body. When the Dean informed Bentley that she could not find a placement for her in the Wheaton community, Bentley divulged her plans to live off-campus with two white friends who had already agreed to find a house together. As Bentley recalls, the Dean became agitated and informed her that "God was the author of peace not confusion and did not approve of interracial marriage." If Bentley was unhappy with her time at Wheaton, she "should try somewhere else."¹⁷⁸ While Bentley described this experience as an instance of discriminatory housing practices, it seems likely that the Dean's concern about white and Black students living together unchaperoned off campus was motivated by prejudice against interracial relationships.

In Bentley's view, this interaction with the Dean represented personal rather than institutional discrimination,¹⁷⁹ but the dean served as a high-level administrator representing the College in decisions about student marriage and housing.

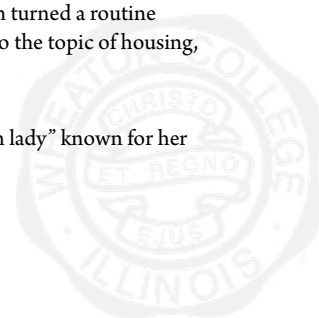
¹⁷⁵ Letter from Arthur Volle to Charles Brooks, Aug. 11, 1951, Raymond Joseph Biographical File, HRTF Research Files.

¹⁷⁶ Arthur Volle to Charles Brooks, Aug. 11, 1951. Volle's letter reports that the concerns about Logwood's interracial relationship were brought to President Edman's attention by none other than Board of Trustees Chairman Herman Fischer who claimed he could produce witnesses to corroborate Logwood's intentions.

¹⁷⁷ Arthur Volle to Charles Brooks, Aug. 11, 1951.

¹⁷⁸ Oral History Interview with Ruth Lewis Bentley by Sarah Stanley, July 11, 2019. Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections. Bentley described this interaction in three separate oral history interviews over the years and underscored each time that she left the room when told she should "try somewhere else" to avoid escalating into a verbal conflict. In her mind, the dean turned a routine conversation about student housing into a discriminatory tirade against interracial relationships, which was irrelevant to the topic of housing, followed by an invitation to leave the College if the status quo was not acceptable.

¹⁷⁹ Oral History Interview with Ruth Lewis Bentley, July 11, 2019. Bentley described the dean as "a Southern lady" known for her attention to standards of conduct and propriety.



Surprisingly, the first known Black student to be suspended from Wheaton for violating the marriage policy recalls a more positive experience at the College than either Oliver or Bentley. An Afro-Caribbean student from Haiti, Raymond Alcide Joseph '60 transferred to Wheaton from Moody Bible Institute in 1957 and enrolled as an anthropology major. In an oral history interview, Joseph described falling in love with a white woman named Beth and cites Moody's policy against interracial dating as one reason he chose to transition to Wheaton. According to Joseph, his fellow students at Wheaton and the Barker household where he boarded supported his relationship with Beth, and he felt comfortable bringing her to campus events. A popular and accomplished student, Joseph was active in the Anthropology and French Clubs as well as president of the International Students Fellowship and member of the Student Foreign Missions Fellowship.¹⁸⁰



Figure 15: Raymond Joseph as a student, 1959. *The Tower*, p. 259.

While the general Wheaton community may have been supportive of Raymond and Beth's relationship, their matrimonial plans hit a snag in Raymond's final semester when the couple submitted the required application to marry during the academic year. When Beth's parents refused to sanction the marriage, the application was automatically denied in line with the College's policy.¹⁸¹ The determined couple, however, secretly eloped mid-semester, which resulted in Joseph being suspended for violating the College's marriage policy.¹⁸² While Joseph was invited to re-enroll and graduate with the summer class, he instead returned to Haiti to work with the American Bible Society on a Creole translation of the Bible.¹⁸³

Although Raymond Joseph's suspension from Wheaton College could technically be viewed as the straightforward result of violating a College policy, it is evident that at least some members of the student body viewed the Committee's actions as both overly punitive and enforcing a discriminatory policy that catered to the racial prejudices of parents. Raymond Joseph recalls that his suspension caused considerable outrage among the student body. Students circulated a petition, demanding that Joseph be allowed to graduate and planned to march to President Edman's house to protest before Joseph stepped in and asked them to refrain.¹⁸⁴ In a response to student inquiries, Arthur Volle, the Dean of Students, published a defense of the marriage policy in *The Record*, explaining that the College's circuitous marriage approval process existed to protect the College from indignant parents. Volle also noted that "other problems, such as racial ones, may contribute further complications" to the marriage approval process.¹⁸⁵

While some students protested Joseph's suspension publicly, at least one faculty member objected privately. Responding to Dyrness's announcement, Professor of Anthropology James Oliver Buswell III wrote that he supported

¹⁸⁰ Oral History Interview with Raymond Joseph by David B. Malone, Sept. 30, 2015. Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL.

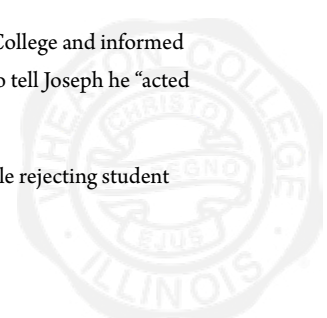
¹⁸¹ Oral History Interview with Raymond Joseph. The significant detail that the marriage application was denied on account of Beth's parents comes solely from Raymond Joseph's interviews..

¹⁸² Oral History Interview with Raymond Joseph.

¹⁸³ See Raymond Joseph's Biographical File for descriptions of his translation work in Haiti. HRTF Research Files.

¹⁸⁴ Oral History Interview with Raymond Joseph. Joseph stated that he had no desire to cause trouble for the College and informed Dean Volle that he would not go to the newspapers with the details of his suspension, actions that prompted Dean Volle to tell Joseph he "acted more Christian than we."

¹⁸⁵ Arthur Volle, "Just for the Record," *The Record*, May 7, 1959. Volle as much as admitted that race played a role rejecting student marriage applications when he wrote that that "marriage has not been forbidden only on these grounds."



the administration's actions to enforce College policy but also questioned the soundness of the policy altogether¹⁸⁶ The issue at stake which grieves many of us is that he was denied permission to get married in the first place," Buswell wrote. "The inconsistency in the thinking regarding the inter-racial matter. . . seems apparent to some of us who are stressing principles of racial equality and non-prejudice in the classroom."¹⁸⁷

Buswell's efforts did not end with the Registrar. Joseph recalls that his professor wrote to him in Haiti, encouraging him to complete his degree, which he did by correspondence, graduating in 1960.¹⁸⁸

It is unclear what impact the Raymond Joseph controversy had on the College's marriage policy, but five years later the administration updated the policy for the final time, stripping out the required approval process.¹⁸⁹ While official barriers to interracial marriage no longer existed after 1965, some interracial couples at Wheaton College continued to face challenges for decades to come.¹⁹⁰

Wheaton College Statement on Race Relations

Wheaton reached a milestone in 1960 when President Edman commissioned the College's first institutional review of race relations on campus.¹⁹¹ Conducted by six representatives from the Anthropology and Sociology Department, the five-page report provides a broad overview of race relations on campus since Wheaton's founding; a rejection of any scientific basis for racial difference; a challenge to mainstream Evangelicalism to repent of discrimination against minority Christians; and a list of

¹⁸⁶ Oral History Interview with Joseph. According to Joseph, his suspension and the ensuing controversy had a profound effect on Buswell, who took a leave of absence from Wheaton from 1959-1962 to pursue his Ph.D. at Columbia University in New York, though *The Faculty Bulletin* illustrates that Buswell had a burgeoning interest in these topics as early as 1955. See "The Race Question Again," *Faculty Bulletin*, June 1955, 13. In the early 1960s, Buswell began publicly writing on the topics of racial equality, segregation debates, and interracial marriage, attacking both faulty scientific claims for racial superiority and readings of scripture that supported racial discrimination. In 1962, he published a piece in *Eternity* magazine, debunking the scriptural arguments used by segregationists. (See James O. Buswell III, "Segregation: Is it Biblical?" *Eternity*, Oct. 1962, 14-16, cont. 36, 38). Buswell expanded his exploration in a short but significant book, *Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture* published in 1964, in which he explores the misunderstanding of scripture and ignorance of anthropology evidenced by both the nineteenth century, pro-slavery crowd and twentieth-century segregationists.

¹⁸⁷ Memo from James O. Buswell III to Enock Dyrness, May 7, 1959. Biographical Files (RG 11 002), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College. HRTF Research Files.

¹⁸⁸ Oral History Interview with Raymond Joseph.

¹⁸⁹ See *Wheaton College Student Handbook* (1965-1966), 25-26. According to the updated policy, engaged students should submit "written notification" of their marriage to the Student Personnel Office thirty days before the wedding along with a statement from parents acknowledging their awareness of the impending marriage.

¹⁹⁰ Since the changes to the Wheaton College marriage policy in 1965, there is some evidence that a continued belief in the sinfulness of interracial marriage remained for some time in some corners of the Wheaton College community, though mainly stemming from the student body rather than the administration. For example, another interracial couple, Chris and Carlene Ellerman met their freshman year and started dating one year later in Jan 1974. Most students accepted and encouraged their interracial dating relationship, but some accused them of "living in sin." They dated for over two years while students and were married in the fall of 1976. See "Once Upon a Wedding," *The Record*, Feb. 25, 2016 for more details as well as Jessica Allen, "A Picture of Unity," *Wheaton Magazine*, Winter 2008, 28. A decade later, Rodney Sisco '84, was told by a fellow student that "dating other races is wrong" when dating a white student during his sophomore year. The topic of interracial dating later was addressed in a forum sponsored by the student organization B.R.I.D.G.E. to challenge the belief among students that interracial dating was scripturally wrong and an example of being unequally yoked. See Oral History Interview with Rodney Sisco by Logan, HRTF Research Files for more. Issues of cultural identity loss and parental concerns were also addressed in the Office of Minority Affairs' publication, *Mosaic*. See "Race, Dating, Parents, & Marriage: Can We Talk About This?" and "Does Wheaton have jungle fever?" in *Mosaic*, Mar. 1999, Unprocessed Accession (2016-0072), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College.

¹⁹¹ "Wheaton College Statement on Race Relations," Box 7, Folder 17, Office of the President Records (V. Raymond Edman) (RG 02 004), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College. After eight rounds of revisions, the report was completed in June 1960. It remains unknown when President Edman formally commissioned the report, but the fact that it followed so closely after the controversy surrounding Raymond Joseph's expulsion suggests that the event prompted Edman to initiate further review of Wheaton's history of race relations before making any changes to the marriage policy.

propositions for the administration to consider as the College moved into the new decade.¹⁹²

Unsurprisingly, the report celebrates the College's abolitionist founding, underscoring Jonathan Blanchard's vision for the College as "an institution that would be open to all races alike" and commends the inaugural president's countercultural commitment to housing minority students in his home.¹⁹³ This vision, however, was gradually abandoned in the early twentieth century as the College, under Charles Blanchard, aligned itself with Fundamentalist battles over biblical orthodoxy while sidelining social concerns and advocacy.

This cultural shift, the report concluded, eventually led to instances of racial discrimination. The writers summarized the historical overview thusly: "Although the College never formally adopted a policy of discrimination as relates to race, in practice members of minority groups, particularly Negroes, were for a time excluded from admission to the College; and then after admission was reopened to them, they were restricted in regards to housing and certain social activities."¹⁹⁴

This brief historical review is followed by a stout rejection of race-based discrimination stemming from either faulty scientific theories of race or misguided readings of Scripture. For the faculty writers, "the meaningful differentiations between people are based on how they are related to His Son. . . . Distinctions based on social categories of are this world's system."¹⁹⁵

While the report outlines various ways that minority populations had been systemically oppressed and marginalized in secular American society, it also underscores the Christian church's complicity in these discriminatory practices: "Whether missionaries or in other callings, whether on the home front or in other lands, evangelical white people have tended to regard colored people as inferior and have treated them so."¹⁹⁶ As a corrective, the writers call for the church to elevate and empower minority leaders, both domestically and internationally, who can provide the "constructive action" that white evangelicals were ill-equipped to deliver. The report concludes with a sobering reminder to the Wheaton College community of the "heavy responsibility" it bears as Christians and educators to understand and address the pressing issues of race relations in the work of forming students for personal spiritual growth and future global service.¹⁹⁷

While much of the report describes the state of race relations in American evangelical contexts broadly, the final propositions specifically address practical next steps for Wheaton College. Of the six recommendations laid out by the Anthropology and Sociology Departments, four are particularly noteworthy. The second proposition recommends that the College recruit "a colored person qualified for appointment to the faculty," indicating that Wheaton did not currently

¹⁹² The six members included Lamberta Voget, James O. Buswell III, Alvin Moser, David Winter, James Murk, and Gordan Jaeck. Several of these individuals had already waded into debates on racial issues on campus, such as the 1955 *Faculty Bulletin* debate on segregation. See Gordan Jaeck to V. Raymond Edman, July 11, 1960, Box 7, Folder 17, Office of the President Records (V. Raymond Edman) (RG 02 004).

¹⁹³ "Wheaton College Statement on Race Relations," 1.

¹⁹⁴ "Wheaton College Statement on Race Relations," 2. While this statement may corroborate previous claims about discriminatory admissions, housing, and interracial dating practices at Wheaton, the report is frustratingly scant on further details or evidence. The report does not identify dates when these practices occurred, the responsible administrators or faculty, when the practices ceased, or the number of students affected. Nor does the report refer to external sources or include citations of any kind other than biblical references.

¹⁹⁵ "Wheaton College Statement on Race Relations," 2.

¹⁹⁶ "Wheaton College Statement on Race Relations," 3-4.

¹⁹⁷ "Wheaton College Statement on Race Relations," 4.



have any minority faculty members.¹⁹⁸ Next, the report vaguely proposes that the College explore “discriminatory practices” occurring in the City of Wheaton, a statement that could refer to unfair housing practices among community members. The fifth proposition recommends reviewing Wheaton’s admissions practices to address minority underrepresentation in the student body. Finally, the sixth proposition calls the administration to clearly communicate and fairly uphold the College dating policy, providing consistent support and counseling to interracial couples “without pre-judgment.”¹⁹⁹

Although the report identifies itself as “the first step in a consideration of a Wheaton College view of race relations,” it appears that further steps were abandoned. After receiving the report in July 1960, President Edman circulated the Statement to the Executive Council, soliciting feedback and requesting the contents be “kept with the utmost confidence.”²⁰⁰ The only documented response to the Statement came from Merrill Tenney, then Dean of the Graduate School. In his reaction to the Statement, Tenney wrote that he would welcome the addition of a qualified minority scholar to the faculty (Proposition Two) but questioned the report’s findings on discriminatory admissions practices. “To the best of my knowledge,” he asserted “this has not happened since 1925, and I had never heard that such was the case.”²⁰¹ Dean Tenney reserved his most strident response for Proposition Six on student interracial relationships, recommending that the Statement should not be presented to the faculty or wider community until “this important social question” had been meticulously reviewed by the College administration.²⁰² Ultimately, he cautioned, “we should not rush into print until we know precisely what we are going to do and whether we can pay the cost of our resolutions.”²⁰³

Merrill Tenney’s memo remains the only documented response from the Executive Council, and the “Statement on Race” was never released. The following year, Gordon Jaeck wrote to Edman requesting a meeting between his department and the President’s Office to discuss Edman’s reservations about the Statement, reminding the President that the report had the unanimous support of the Anthropology and Sociology faculty and had incorporated feedback from the entire Social Sciences Division.²⁰⁴ Whether the meeting occurred is unknown, but tensions between the College administration and the Anthropology and Sociology Department reached new heights in the summer of 1962, following the publication of Professor of Anthropology James Murk’s controversial article “The Race Question” in the student publication, *Brave Son*.²⁰⁵ When Jaeck wrote yet again to Edman to

¹⁹⁸ The first identified minority instructor at Wheaton College is Chinese 1947 graduate Mildred Young of Philadelphia, who taught Greek in the Foreign Languages Department in the early 1950s. See “Foreign Languages,” *The Tower* (1951), 35.

¹⁹⁹ “Wheaton College Statement on Race Relations,” 5.

²⁰⁰ Memo from V. Raymond Edman to Executive Council Members, July 22, 1960, Box 7, Folder 17, Office of the President Records (V. Raymond Edman) (RG 02 004).

²⁰¹ Merrill C. Tenney to V. Raymond Edman, July 29, 1960, Box 7, Folder 17, Office of the President Records (V. Raymond Edman) (RG 02 004). Merrill Tenney’s assertion regarding discriminatory admissions bears further review. Tenney was not a Wheaton alumnus and did not arrive at the College as a professor in the Bible and Theology department until 1943, although his wife Helen Jaderquist Tenney graduated from Wheaton in 1925. It remains unknown why Tenney identifies 1925 as the year when any discriminatory admissions practices ceased.

²⁰² Merrill C. Tenney to V. Raymond Edman, July 29, 1960.

²⁰³ Merrill C. Tenney to V. Raymond Edman, July 29, 1960.

²⁰⁴ Gordon S. Jaeck to V. Raymond Edman, Sept. 27, 1961, Box 7, Folder 17, Office of the President Records (V. Raymond Edman) (RG 02 004).

²⁰⁵ See James M. Murk, “The Race Question,” *Brave Son*, Apr. 1962, Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College), 12. A short lived and deliberately provocative enterprise, *Brave Son* launched in the spring of 1962 and featured student writing on a variety of controversial topics. Its title referenced President Edman’s favorite appellation for the student body (“brave sons and daughters true”), and the periodical was especially critical of the College administration, policies, student culture, and Evangelicalism more broadly. Murk’s article was specially solicited by the student editors after receiving permission from the Dean of Students to feature faculty writing in a student publication.

defend Murk's article against critique from the Board of Trustees, he raised the issue of the still-unpublished "Wheaton College Statement on Race Relations" as an ongoing source of frustration for his department. "The statement submitted in June 1960, was prepared for the college 'official family' and was hoped to be the first step in critical self-evaluation looking toward a later broad statement expressing the Wheaton College view of race relations."²⁰⁶

Although it was restricted from wider circulation in the campus community, the "Wheaton College Statement on Race Relations" marked a significant turning point in the College's history, representing the institution's fledgling attempts to evaluate its racial history and chart a new course into the 1960s. For the faculty of the Anthropology and Sociology Department, however, the administration's refusal to circulate the report remained a significant disappointment and undercut the institution's responsibility to address the pressing questions of racial justice as Christian leaders, scholars, and educators. For the purposes of this report, the Statement remains a significant resource for identifying the pressing racial concerns the College faced at the beginning of a tumultuous decade.

President Hudson T. Armerding, 1965-1982



Figure 16: Hudson T. Armerding, undated. College Archives. Photo File: Armerding, Hudson T., Photograph #A11059.

(1959-1960) until Dr. Edman recruited his former student teaching assistant to return to Wheaton as a history faculty member in 1961.

Wheaton's first provost had barely settled into his new position before Dr. Edman began planning his transition out of the presidential role he had held for twenty-five years. In August 1964, the Board of Trustees approved Edman's request to be named Chancellor of the College and to transfer his administrative duties to a new president. At the same meeting, the Board unanimously nominated Provost Armerding to become the fifth president of Wheaton College.

Inaugurated on January 8, 1965, the 105th anniversary of the College's founding, Hudson Armerding assumed the presidency in the middle of a tumultuous decade for Wheaton's campus and the broader culture. Almost instantly, the new president faced the growing challenges of the countercultural movement on campus, combined with rising

²⁰⁶ Letter from Gordon Jaeck to V. Raymond Edman, June 7, 1962, Box 7, Folder 17, Office of the President Records (V. Raymond Edman) (RG 02 004).

²⁰⁷ For further description of the changes in administrative structure, see Bechtel, *Wheaton College*, 270-272.

racial tensions and division over the ongoing war in Vietnam.

Wheaton College in the Heyday of Civil Rights

As the College moved further into the 1960s, the campus conversations around racial issues became increasingly inflamed as students took to *The Record* and other campus publications to voice their dissatisfaction with or defense of the status quo. Wheaton Faculty were no less vocal on these issues, and the presidential correspondence files illustrate the Board of Trustees' bewilderment and alarm at growing signs of discontent in the campus community. At the beginning of the decade, Wheaton faculty bemoaned their students' lack of social engagement and general apathy. The results of a May 1960 campus survey found that "Wheaton students are not deeply concerned with political questions."²⁰⁸ Only months later, Professor of Communication Edwin Hollatz fretted that the student body lacked vision and energy in their Christian values and political engagement.²⁰⁹ President Edman himself attempted to describe the current ethos on campus: "This generation is described by many as 'lost'... I find this generation to be able but largely leaderless, ambitious and yet apathetic, earnest and yet not enthusiastic."²¹⁰ By the mid-60s, faculty and administrators noted a sharp turn toward political and social activism with alarm. In the *Faculty Bulletin*, the Dean of Students, Richard Gross, waxed nostalgic about the 1950s, when students were self-absorbed and blasé about cultural issues: "We were highly critical of the college student for assuming this posture and now in the mid-sixties it appears the student has taken our criticisms seriously."²¹¹ He went on: "We are now alarmed at the students' unrest, activism, rebellious manifestations and criticism, and either verbally or in an implied fashion say to them, 'Wait a minute—we've changed our minds! We liked you better back in the docile days of the fifties.'"²¹²

A peek into the *Faculty Bulletin* today might give the impression that Wheaton students rarely, if ever, engaged in discussions surrounding race relations before the 1960s. However, the trend Richard Gross observed had been growing steadily over the 1950s, when small but vocal pockets of campus, like the Anthropology and Sociology Department or various ministries of the Christian Service Council, raised questions about racial inequality, both on the Wheaton campus and within American Evangelicalism.²¹³ By the mid-60s, one particularly contentious topic was the growing visibility of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

The NAACP Comes to Campus

Although Wheaton established its own student chapter of the NAACP in 1965, the campus community witnessed heated debates over the civil rights organization for years prior. In a 1960 *Record* editorial, Wheaton junior Jerry Van Sant voiced concern that the NAACP's desegregation efforts were ultimately counterproductive and unfair. "We should avoid the extreme of penalizing the white population by granting Negroes special privileges, as the NAACP tirelessly advocates," he wrote. "Only carefully planned solutions, tailor-made and pragmatically adopted to meet

²⁰⁸ Frank Bellinger, "Political Attitudes of Wheaton Students," *Faculty Bulletin*, May 1960, 26.

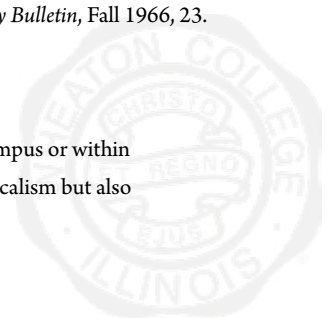
²⁰⁹ Edwin A. Hollatz, "Reinforcing Values at Wheaton," *Faculty Bulletin*, Nov. 1960, 17.

²¹⁰ V. Raymond Edman, "The Challenge," *Faculty Bulletin*, Fall 1962, 10.

²¹¹ Richard F. Gross, "The dimensions, dynamics, and dilemmas of the contemporary college student," *Faculty Bulletin*, Fall 1966, 23.

²¹² Richard F. Gross, "The dimensions," 24.

²¹³ Wheaton's campus conversations in the 1950s were overwhelmingly confined to racial issues either on campus or within American Evangelicalism. A decade later, students still debated how racial inequality affected their campus and Evangelicalism but also broadened the scope of their critiques to include national policies and trends.



local situations, will solve the problem of socially beneficial integration.”²¹⁴ Van Sant’s article solicited a strident response in defense of the NAACP in the following issue: “If Jerry will take the time to examine the facts he may discover that most of the 10 percent of Americans who are Negroes heartily support the NAACP program together with a sizeable proportion of Caucasian Americans, and that the best interests of all Americans will be served when the Negro is able to take his place in the economic, the educational, the social, and the religious life of our great country.”²¹⁵ Bowman continued, “If it appears that the NAACP is extreme in its manner or narrow in its program in the desegregation issue, it is because the NAACP realizes that the educational and economic areas are strategic points for the future of the Negro and all Americans.”²¹⁶

Debate over the NAACP broke out again in 1963, though with a distinctly different flavor. Rather than anxieties over too-swift integration strategies, campus discussion now featured alarm over the spread of communism. Protest erupted when *The Record* printed a small advertisement for the civil rights organization on the final page of its September 19 issue. Two Wheaton seniors wrote to defend the NAACP advertisement, noting that the organization was diligent to root out communists from its ranks.²¹⁷

The alarm over communist infiltration into the NAACP continued through the fall, and alumni began to weigh in. One particularly concerned alumnus, Wilhelm Schmitt '54, published in *The Record* decrying various well-known NAACP figures with communist connections and arguing that the organization was “consciously promoting the Communist objectives while maintaining an outward pretense of not being an ideological Communist.”²¹⁸ Multiple letters to the editor from students were published in the following issue, defending the NAACP against Schmitt’s criticism, including senior David Reid, who argued, “I feel that Wheaton College student participation in the NAACP is a healthy sign that we are finally awakening to our social obligations in this area.”²¹⁹ When *The Record*’s editor refused to publish any further screeds from Schmitt,²²⁰ he penned a lengthy open letter to the campus community denouncing the NAACP’s “Kremlin strategists” and declaring, “The NAACP has become a ‘sacred cow’ in the minds of many citizens who feel for the plight of the Negro people.”²²¹ While *The Record* was unable to alleviate Schmitt’s fears, other alumni wrote to the newspaper in support of the NAACP. In particular, two alumni voiced their support of the civil rights organization but also warned the campus community that the work toward racial equality was more complicated than mere support for civil rights: “We must analyze our motives carefully to see that we don’t soothe our guilty consciences by supporting Sunday school work while harboring deep-seated racial prejudice.”²²²

²¹⁴ Jerry Van Sant, “Van Sant Gives Views on Civil Rights Issues,” *The Record*, Mar. 24, 1960.

²¹⁵ Charles Bowman, “Bowman Refutes Van Sant on Civil Rights,” *The Record*, Mar. 31, 1960.

²¹⁶ Charles Bowman, “Bowman Refutes.”

²¹⁷ Roger Winter and Ken Schuit, “Two Seniors Give Defense of NAACP,” *The Record*, Sept. 26, 1963. The writers describe the response to the advertisement thusly: “It was undoubtedly the most talked- about ad in the paper. Casual conversation in the Stupe line revealed even such a comment as ‘[n-word] lovers’ and the cry ‘Communists’ was sounded by numerous patriots.”

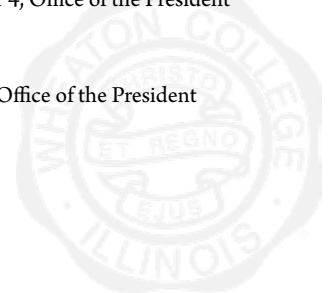
²¹⁸ W.E. Schmitt, “Schmitt Says NAACP is Full of Red Influence,” *The Record*, Nov. 7, 1963.

²¹⁹ David Reid, “NAACP Organized to Alleviate Injustice’ States Reid in Reply to Schmitt’s Charges,” *The Record*, Nov. 14, 1963.

²²⁰ In a terse letter to Editor Louise Proper, Schmitt inquires why *The Record* will not publish his follow-up article and describes the NAACP as “the gathering point for pinks, punks, and perverts who are intent on stimulating a Negro class revolution in the United States for the benefit of the Communists, who will be the only winners.” Wilhelm Schmitt to Louise Proper, Mar. 1, 1964, Box 9, Folder 4, Office of the President Records (V. Raymond Edman) (RG 02 004).

²²¹ W.E. Schmitt, “Open Letter to the Faculty and Students of Wheaton College,” c. Feb. 1964, Box 9, Folder 4, Office of the President Records (V. Raymond Edman) (RG 02 004).

²²² Joseph Nystrom and Koral Molander Nystrom, “Alumni Praise Winters NAACP Stand,” *The Record*, Dec. 5, 1963.



Despite opposition from students, alumni, and members of the Board of Trustees, Wheaton students submitted a proposal to create a campus chapter of the NAACP in the spring of 1965. Although the Board authorized the request, and the chapter launched that March, the road to approval was rocky. In an attempt to alleviate Board anxieties over the NAACP's alleged communist connections, President Armerding contacted the Department of Justice and the House Un-American Activities Committee to inquire if the NAACP was listed as a "subversive" group.²²³ Only after the DOJ and HUAC cleared the civil rights organization did Armerding return the student proposal to faculty committee for discussion and approval.²²⁴ For added insurance against external influences, Wheaton's chapter agreed to be supervised by the Student Affairs Committee instead of the NAACP directly. However, none of these checks and balances appeased the concerns of Maurice C. Smith, the Board of Trustees' most unrelenting opponent of the student organization. After the NAACP chapter was approved in the spring of 1965, he confided to his son, "I am very much disappointed in Wheaton because of the stand they have taken, and I will go down the line debating the issue; and if I am not successful, I do not know what the outcome will be. I have not made a definite decision, but I know that Wheaton is wrong and their approach to the solution of this problem is superficial."²²⁵ Despite Armerding's assurances that the NAACP chapter posed no threat to the College's social fabric, Smith continued to agitate against the student organization for several months. When it became clear that the administration would not force the chapter off campus, he submitted his resignation to the Board of Trustees in October 1965.²²⁶

Campus chairman, student Howard Hess, stated that the chapter hoped to "seek an end to the racial discrimination in areas of public life, to increase student understanding of racial relations through active participation in such projects as surveys and tutorial programs, and to foster student involvement in such community projects as 'Tag Day' in downtown Wheaton."²²⁷ Led by Hess, Mickey Palmer, and faculty advisor Dr. Lamberta Voget, the chapter initially attracted about 30 students, staff, and faculty. After three brief years, Wheaton's NAACP chapter officially disbanded in 1968.²²⁸

Wheaton College and the Selma Marches

The same month Wheaton faculty voted to instate a local chapter of the NAACP, the campus was gripped by the outbreak of violence in Selma in March 1965, when Alabama State troopers clashed with civil rights workers,

²²³ Trustee David Fuller expressed his concern to President Armerding that the NAACP "has been infiltrated through the years by Communists" in a letter from David O. to H.T. Armerding, March 12, 1965, Box 35, Folder 4, Board of Trustees Records (RG 01 001). His concerns apparently remained unalleviated, and he wrote again to Armerding two years later to inquire about the status of the campus chapter, confiding that he hoped "it might die on the vine." See David O. Fuller to H.T. Armerding, Mar. 16, 1967, Box 35, Folder 5, Board of Trustees Records (RG 01 001).

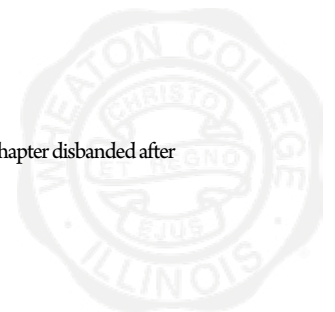
²²⁴ Letter from H.T. Armerding to Maurice C. Smith, May 7, 1965, Box 55, Folder 7, Board of Trustees Records (RG 01 001).

²²⁵ Letter from Maurice C. Smith to Paul Smith, May 19, 1965, Box 55, Folder 7, Board of Trustees Records (RG 01 001). In the same letter, Smith outlined his opposition to the methods of the Civil Rights Movement, specifically the marches and boycotts led by Martin Luther King Jr., for disturbing the peace and spreading social unrest. Most significantly, Smith confided his opposition to interracial relationships: "I will admit that there are limits beyond which I do not think the Negro should go, and that concerns intermarriage. I can find nothing in the Bible that says a Negro should not marry a member of the Anglo-Saxon race, but we should have complete compatibility between a husband and a wife, and I do not believe that can be secured when a black marries a white."

²²⁶ See Smith's letter to V. Raymond Edman on Oct. 22, 1965, in which he describes the reasons for his resignation. Found in Box 55, Folder 7, Board of Trustees Records (RG 01 001).

²²⁷ Howard Hess, quoted in "Campus NAACP Wins Charter Approval," *The Record*, Mar. 18, 1968.

²²⁸ The reasons behind the chapter's demise are not sufficiently clear. According to Paul Bechtel, the NAACP chapter disbanded after failing to recruit new members. See *Wheaton College*, 285.



killing seventeen protesters and injuring dozens more. Since the Selma marches were televised, live depictions of police brutality were broadcast around the country, igniting a firestorm of protest. Horrified at the assaults on marchers, President Armerding sent a telegram to Alabama Governor George Wallace with the message:

URGE RECONSIDERATION OF USE OF FORCE IN DEALING WITH ORDERLY AND PEACEFUL NEGRO MARCHERS.²²⁹

Armerding's telegram was read to the student body in chapel on March 8, and that same day Wheaton seniors Randy Baker and Bob Vischer boarded a train for Alabama to join the second Selma march. As Vischer later described to *The Record*, "I could think of no better way to express my concern than through action."²³⁰ For Baker and Vischer, this "action" was eye-opening. As Vischer recalled, "I felt I could empathize with the Alabama Negro, for here I was being pursued—and with no place to turn to. . . . I have never been so frightened in all my life."²³¹

Although the Selma marches took place far from Wheaton, Illinois, Vischer ultimately reflected that the brutality and injustice he witnessed in Alabama were a systemic issue and one that demanded a solution from the Christian church. In response to the news of Minister James Reeb's death, killed by police, Vischer declared, "The scum who carry out these activities are supported by the system which presently exists—and this system must be smashed by a bold show of Christian love."²³² In the same *Record* issue, Editor Fred Smith also condemned the police brutality on show in Selma, but cautioned readers that the color bias existed outside the boundaries of the American South. "Although the North does not have so rigid a caste system as that of Alabama, all white Americans in a sense share the guilt for the Negroes' lack of progress in the past century."²³³ Smith went on to challenge the campus body to abandon their unacknowledged "color bias" and to engage directly with the African American community on Wheaton's doorstep and work for practical change: "Too often we are handicapped by our academic isolation in an almost all-white suburb."²³⁴

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Remembered

As with the NAACP, Wheaton's campus community also debated the ideological merits of the Civil Rights Movement's most prominent leader, Martin Luther King Jr. Four days after the conclusion of the Selma Marches, Trustee David Ferguson wrote to President Armerding, questioning the scriptural basis for King's use of civil disobedience and its influence on campus. "If certain members of the Wheaton faculty have become emotionally involved with this matter and in the NAACP, how can they continue to teach the students at Wheaton College properly?"²³⁵ After the violence in Selma, multiple Wheaton students traveled to hear Dr. King speak at the Chicago Sunday Evening Club. *The Record* recorded a mixture of student responses: "A few commented that such a message would have been perfectly appropriate in any evening service among the churches here in Wheaton. . . . Others felt that his concept of civil disobedience was outside the American tradition and is an immoral method, although he made no direct reference to it in his message."²³⁶ Overwhelmingly, though, *The Record's* writers appear to have had favorable impressions of Dr. King. In October 1965, the student newspaper ran a lengthy article comparing Dr. King's comments on the Watts riots in Los

²²⁹ See Brian Miller and David Malone, "Race Town and Gown" and Hudson Armerding, "President Hudson T. Armerding Talks to Wheaton students about the race issue," *Bulletin of Wheaton College* (May 1965), 2.

²³⁰ Bob Vischer, quoted in "Seniors Travel to Alabama, Engage in Peaceful Protest," *The Record*, Mar. 18, 1965.

²³¹ Bob Vischer, "Seniors Travel."

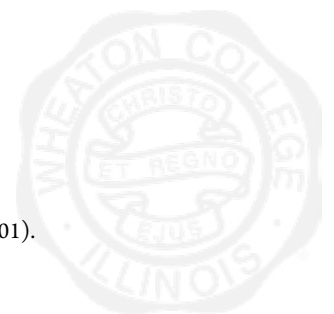
²³² Bob Vischer, "Seniors Travel."

²³³ Fred Smith, "Civil Rights and the Color Bias," *The Record*, Mar. 18, 1965.

²³⁴ Fred Smith, "Civil Rights."

²³⁵ David T. Ferguson to H.T. Armerding, Mar. 29, 1965, Box 34, Folder 7, Board of Trustees Records (RG 01 001).

²³⁶ Leif Torjesen, "King Preaches Balanced Human Fulfillment," *The Record*, Mar. 18, 1965.



Angeles to those of Wheaton's favorite son, Rev. Billy Graham. While the writer approved both men's statements on the riots, he questioned the value of Graham's message for a Wheaton audience: "Do white middle class evangelicals need to be told about the dangers of civil disobedience run wild? No!!! They need to be told how they have failed the negro as Christians. If Martin Luther King had used Billy Graham's statement and Billy Graham had used Mr. King's statement, I would almost have believed that we had reached the millennium."²³⁷ On the whole, King received supportive, if not admiring, press from *The Record*, a stance that starkly contrasts from the College's constituents in April 1968.

In the twenty-four hours following Dr. King's assassination on April 4, 1968, President Hudson Armerding and the College's Student Body president sent condolences to the King family by telegram. Armerding released a statement lamenting the "senseless and tragic act" while also urging the campus to support "the process of orderly change through constitutional procedures and to oppose by every legal means possible those who would resort to force and bloodshed and thus erode our western as well as Christian heritage."²³⁸ The president's carefully chosen words illustrate the delicate balance Armerding tried to maintain: condemning the violent act that took King's life while questioning the Civil Rights Movement he led.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination developed into a public relations crisis for Wheaton College the next week, after a local association of clergy requested permission to use Edman Chapel to hold an ecumenical memorial service for the Civil Rights leader. The College granted the request, and the event took place on Sunday, April 7, the day President Lyndon B. Johnson had called for a National Day of Mourning. President Armerding had a seat on the stage in Edman Chapel during the service and shared brief remarks to the audience, which included campus members. The event was covered in the *Wheaton Journal*, which quoted Armerding's statement and reported that the College President "officiated" the event alongside the president of the Wheaton Ministerial Association.²³⁹ This brief notice made its way to other news sources, and accounts of the Wheaton College-sponsored memorial service for Martin Luther King Jr. eventually appeared in religious newspapers, like the *Christian News*, *Baptist Bulletin*, and other media sources. Public response was swift. Trustee David Fuller was so alarmed over Wheaton's participation in the ecumenical service he informed Board Chair Hermann Fischer that he nearly resigned at the May Board meetings.²⁴⁰ The College's post office was flooded with letters from alumni, pastors, college presidents, and laypeople, overwhelmingly expressing alarm, indignation, or outright grief at Wheaton's alleged support of Dr. King.²⁴¹ The criticism includes several themes. Some critics decried King's assassination but objected to the College's part in honoring a pastor who they believed rejected many core tenets of orthodox Christianity. The fact that the service was broadly ecumenical, and its most prominent clergy were Roman Catholic likely contributed to this view. Others attacked King more personally, suggesting that he was a traitor to the United States because of his opposition to the Vietnam War, that he was personally responsible for much of the social upheaval of the era because of his purportedly unbiblical support of civil disobedience, and very commonly, because he was either an unwitting tool of communists or, worse yet, an open supporter and aggressive agent of communism. Most letters expressed shock that Wheaton College, a conservative evangelical institution, would

²³⁷ Mike Adeney, "Criticism Involves Candid Dialogue," *The Record*, Oct. 21, 1965.

²³⁸ "Statement by Hudson T. Armerding, Wheaton College President," Apr. 5, 1968, Box 1, Folder 30, Office of Development Records (RG 07 001), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, College: Wheaton, IL.

²³⁹ "Ecumenical Service for King Tonight," *Wheaton Journal*, Apr. 7, 1968, Box 1, Folder 30, Records of the Office of Development (RG 07 001).

²⁴⁰ Letter from David O. Fuller to Herman Fischer, June 24, 1968, Box 35, Folder 5, Board of Trustees Records (RG 01 001). See also the correspondence between Fuller and Armerding in the same folder regarding Fuller's concerns about the ecumenical service.

²⁴¹ The folders of letters contain only two letters of support, one from the Barnes family in Elmhurst, IL, who attended the memorial service, and the other from Bill Leslie, a Wheaton alumnus and pastor of LaSalle Street Church in Chicago, a church founded to serve immigrant populations in the nineteenth century and known for its commitment to pursuing racial equality. Both letters are found in Box 1, Folder 30, Office of Development Records (RG 07 001).

participate in a memorial service for such a man and questioned Wheaton's commitment to biblical orthodoxy.²⁴²

While the Development Office began tracking constituent responses in their donor cards, President Armerding regularly replied to the flurry of letters and soon generated a standard response. First, he clarified that the College had not officially sponsored the event in any sense, and only acceded to a request from local clergy to open Edman Chapel because it was the largest auditorium in the City of Wheaton. Second, he stressed that he had nothing to do with designing the program, which included a "liturgy" that was highly laudatory of King, unsparing in its denunciation of racial injustice, and pointedly critical of the white Christian church.²⁴³ Third, Armerding frequently included a copy of his remarks at the service in his replies to the letters. The remarks opened with the exhortation of 1 John 3 to love one another. Armerding condemned King's assassination as "dreadful and senseless," and then linked it vaguely to a larger context in which some unidentified citizens of the United States are denied their rights under the Constitution. He never referred to Black Americans or spoke of racial injustice explicitly. In fact, Armerding avoided offering a single positive statement about King himself.

Indeed, he alluded to King only once and that obliquely, noting that, although they had gathered to honor Dr. King, it would be wrong to forget his grieving family. He concluded by decrying the nation's moral decline, lamenting increasing secularization, and calling for prayer and revival.²⁴⁴ Many correspondents replied to Armerding's response, and their letters largely expressed relief and gratitude for the President's clarification and his affirmation of Wheaton's stance against many of the convictions and activities of the Civil Rights Movement.

As a contrast to the flurry of anxious letters to the College administration, *The Record* initially published a warm commendation of the College for its part in the memorial service²⁴⁵ but in the same issue ran a blistering critique of the entire College, from administration, to faculty, to students, to the buildings and grounds staff, for their indifference to King's assassination and their lack of interest in building closer ties with the cities of Wheaton and Chicago. Shocked that only five percent of the campus community turned out for the memorial service in Edman Chapel, the article commends North Park College and Maryknoll Seminary for their efforts to aid Chicago riot victims after King's death but expresses outrage at the responses from the campus community on King's death: "[W]here can excuses be found for the sickness that allows a faculty member to say, 'He did break the law; he had it coming'? or the B&G [Buildings and Grounds] employee: 'After all, he was a lying Communist'? or students: 'He was a Communist agitator,' 'He deserved it,' 'Why should I give a stitch of clothing to people who burn their own houses down?'"²⁴⁶ Ultimately, the article questions the place of Wheaton College in God's kingdom, if its members exhibit such "gross ignorance and insensitivity—a perjury of the Gospel of Christ's Kingdom."²⁴⁷

²⁴² The letters are held in two separate locations; see Box 28, Folder 25, Office of the President Records (Hudson T. Armerding) (RG 02 005), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College and Box 1, Folder 30, Office of Development Records (RG 07 001). The fact that the overwhelming majority of letters are critical might suggest that Wheaton's constituents at this time held negative views of King and the Civil Rights Movement, but it remains unknown how many, if any, letters of support the College received.

²⁴³ In one more personalized letter to a Wheaton alumnus and personal friend, Dr. Larry Poland of Miami Bible College, Armerding went so far as to confess that he had refused to recite portions of the liturgy, even as he was seated onstage. H.T. Armerding to Larry Poland, July 11, 1968, Box 28, Folder 25, Office of the President Records (Hudson T. Armerding) (RG 02 005).

²⁴⁴ See a copy of President Armerding's remarks in Box 1, Folder 30, Office of Development Records (RG 07 001).

²⁴⁵ Rich Bard, "King Service Aids College-Community Ties," *The Record*, Apr. 11, 1968.

²⁴⁶ David Jongewaard, "In Retrospect—We Cannot Be Excused," *The Record*, Apr. 11, 1968.

²⁴⁷ David Jongewaard, "In Retrospect."



Summary of the 1960s

From the “Wheaton College Statement on Race Relations” at the beginning of the decade to the tumult of 1968, the campus experienced a notable change in the quantity and tone of its public discussions on race relations, particularly in the student-led newspaper. In general, Wheaton administrators walked a fine line, reassuring constituents that the College maintained its commitment to conservative evangelical orthodoxy while also attending to the growing demands of faculty and students for greater attention to issues of racial injustice. While multiple practices touching on race relations have been identified during the Edman and early Armerding years, only the Wheaton College policy on marriage and the student-led chapter of the NAACP qualify as official institutional policies or programs touching on race relations. This dearth of institutional activity shifted with the approach of the 1970s and Wheaton’s launch of the Education Compensatory Program in 1968.

The Compensatory Education Program (CEP)

In the fall semester of 1968, Wheaton College launched its first institutional initiative to address minority student enrollment, the Compensatory Education Program, a concerted effort to recruit economically and educationally disadvantaged students of color who demonstrated a clear Christian commitment.²⁴⁸ A significant turning point in Wheaton’s history of race relations, the short-lived Compensatory Education Program set the stage for future positive developments, like the Office of Minority Affairs, but ultimately foundered under the weight of its lofty ambitions and hasty implementation.

Wheaton’s Compensatory Education Program (CEP) was conceived in 1967 by William Lindberg ’62 then serving as the Director of the Christian Service Council and later Associate Dean of Students. After years of observing scanty minority student enrollment year after year, Lindberg was inspired by other higher education institutions’ efforts toward minority student recruitment and support. He recalled, “Compensatory education programs were becoming apparent all over the country in higher education, and it seemed only appropriate that Wheaton College should join in providing a viable experience for Christian young people of minority backgrounds.”²⁴⁹ The Compensatory Education Program was approved in spring 1968, and created the Compensatory Education Committee to supervise the initiative, which included Lindberg, Dr. Robert De Vette (Chair), Dr. Arthur Volle, Dr. Ralph Alexander, Dr. David DeVries, and Mr. Peter Wilson.

The aims of the CEP were ambitious. The program sought to recruit academically capable and economically disadvantaged students of color from urban centers with a view toward Christian leadership development.²⁵⁰ Up to twelve CEP students would be admitted each year, offered substantial financial aid, both grants and loans, and introduced to college life through a special orientation program in the weeks before the fall semester.²⁵¹ All CEP candidates were interviewed and recommended for admission by the CEP Committee, which also oversaw student academic progress and retention.²⁵² Since the College’s usual admissions standards were relaxed for CEP applicants, it was understood that the first year of the program would be a period of adjustment, both academically and socially. As part of the program, recruited

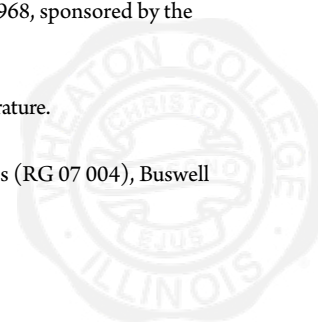
²⁴⁸ Paul Bechtel, *Wheaton College*, 286. Bechtel does not identify William Lindberg as the originator of the CEP at Wheaton but instead credits the Dean of Students, Philip Hook, and Dean of the College, Dr. Peter Veltman.

²⁴⁹ Oral History Interview with William Lindberg by Richard Parks, ca. 1975, Item 7303b, Oral history interviews (RG 11 001), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College. Lindberg records that he was convinced to start the CEP at Wheaton after reading a book on the subject published in 1966. He is likely referring to Edmund W. Gordon and Doxey A. Wilkerson’s book, *Compensatory Education for the Disadvantaged: Programs and Practices, Preschool through College* (New York, College Entrance Examination Board, 1966). As another major influence, Lindberg also cites the published conference proceedings, *Higher Education for the Disadvantaged: A Commentary by Staff and Students of Experiment in Higher Education* (Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville East Saint Louis Center, 1968, sponsored by the O.E.O.—C.A.P).

²⁵⁰ The students of color recruited for the CEP are sometimes referred to as “leadership students” in early CEP literature.

²⁵¹ Nadine Smith, “Minority Program Report,” Mar. 21, 1971, Box 1, Folder 61, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07 004), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College.

²⁵² “Proposed Brochure for EOP,” Box 1, Folder 11, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07004).



students would also receive tutoring and counseling services to support scholastic and social success. The Committee was tasked with ensuring that CEP students demonstrated academic progress in their second year.²⁵³

In the fall of 1968, nine African American and Puerto Rican students from New York City and Chicago matriculated at Wheaton College through the Compensatory Education Program.²⁵⁴ Over the next three years, 27 CEP students were admitted to the College.



Figure 17: William Lindberg, undated. College Archives. Photo File: Lindberg, Bill, Photograph #A7806.

The Committee identified multiple program shortcomings and made annual adjustments, but CEP students continued to experience significant roadblocks to success at Wheaton, the most obvious being lack of academic support. According to the Committee's progress report in January 1971, seven students had left the College, five of whom had been on academic probation. Of the remaining twenty students, one was on "last chance probation," five were on "other probation," one was on a "trial," three had requested an incomplete status for courses, and only thirteen had a "C" average or above.²⁵⁵

While the Program's founders had anticipated that many of these students would be academically unprepared for the rigors of a Wheaton education, the Program's academic support services were an ongoing point of contention.

²⁵³ J. Richard Arndt to EOP Committee and administrators, "Status of Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)," Jan. 25, 1971, Box 1, Folder 8, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07 004), 4.

²⁵⁴ J. Richard Arndt to EOP Committee and administrators, 1.

²⁵⁵ J. Richard Arndt to EOP Committee and administrators, 6. "Other probation" may also include chapel probation.

Rev. Ronald C. Potter

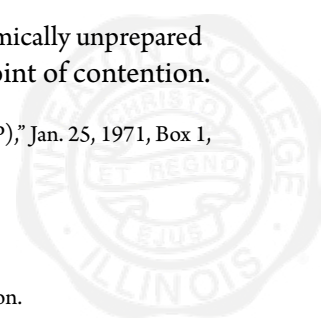
Raised in Chicago, Ronald Potter was one of nine inaugural students who enrolled at Wheaton College in the fall of 1968 through the Compensatory Education Program. Despite the good intentions of its founders, the Program failed to provide adequate academic and financial support for the first wave of CEP students recruited from urban centers in Chicago and New York. Even more critically, many of these Black and Puerto Rican CEP students struggled with the loneliness and isolation of being minority students on a majority white campus. Potter recalls the one place he felt welcomed and included as a student was the home of College Chaplain, Evan Welsh, where he could escape the constant "white noise" of mainstream evangelical culture (HRTF Interview with Ronald Potter, June 14, 2022).

Potter credits rising African American theologians and evangelists, like Tom Skinner and Bill Pannell with illuminating the "angst" he felt as a Black Christian on a predominately white evangelical campus. After reading Pannell's book *My Friend, the Enemy* (1968), Potter became an outspoken critic of the mainstream evangelical culture he experienced at Wheaton in the late 1960s. His activism outraged College administrators when he declared "Wheaton College is the antithesis of Christ and His Kingdom" while preaching at a spring chapel service. Months later, at a national conference for minority college students, Potter described mainstream white evangelicalism as "neo-colonialistic, oppressive, and racist" unaware that a Wheaton College dean was sitting in the audience. When he returned to campus to start his junior year, Potter was asked to publicly recant his remarks about Wheaton College and evangelical Christianity. When he refused to do so, he was expelled in September 1970.

Ronald Potter went on to earn a Master of Divinity degree from the Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta and pursued doctoral studies at Drew University. An ordained minister today, Rev. Potter is a resident scholar at the Perkins Institute at the John and Vera Mae Perkins Foundation and serves on the board of the National Black Evangelical Association. After more than fifty years since his experiences at Wheaton, Potter reflects:

"I don't believe in the randomness of history. I believe in the sovereignty and providence of God. So, it was God who was directing that history. And so, in the spirit of the abolitionist, Jonathan Blanchard, Wheaton College can still be 'For Christ and His Kingdom.'"

- **Ronald Potter, HRTF Interview, June 14, 2022.**



Some CEP students “felt singled out” and humiliated by the Program’s required first-year class in study methods and mandatory tutoring. After receiving negative feedback about these program components, the CEP Committee dropped the required tutoring and study methods class in 1969.²⁵⁶

The Program name was also a source of dispute, and CEP participants argued that the title marked them as educationally deficient from their first day on campus. As CEP student Ronald Potter recalls, “They called the program the ‘Compensatory Education Program’ to compensate for the inferior education that you Negroes and Puerto Ricans might have gotten in your jacked up educational system in Chicago and in New York.”²⁵⁷

The financial aspects of the initiative were also a challenge for CEP students. At the time of recruitment, those who demonstrated financial need were informed that their Wheaton education would be supported through a financial aid package composed of the federal Educational Opportunity Grant, grants from the College, the National Defense Student Loan program, and available aid from the State of Illinois.

However, as Program Committee Chair Richard Arndt reported in 1971, “in the communication process, a misunderstanding occurred regarding what ‘needs’ and ‘meeting’ those needs actually meant.”²⁵⁸ As a result, several CEP students accrued significant debt during the program. Arndt also described a registration crisis in the fall of 1970 when several CEP students were dropped from preregistered classes due to outstanding bills and “some of the students involved were very upset and further antagonized.”²⁵⁹

“STUDENTS WERE ATTRACTED TO THIS SCHOOL BECAUSE OF HOPES OF FINDING A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, WHICH THEY DID IN SOME CASES EXPERIENCE, BUT THEY FOUND THEMSELVES RUNNING PELL-MELL INTO A VERY WHITE-ORIENTED INSTITUTION WHICH HAD VERY LIMITED FLEXIBILITY IN ADJUSTING TO THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF STUDENTS OF MINORITY BACKGROUNDS.”

-INTERVIEW WITH BILL LINDBERG, c. 1974

student” whose “parents are separated and, therefore, received no financial help from home” in Harlem, New York.²⁶¹ These sensitive details were taken from the student’s admissions file and “then used to communicate to the alumni the great strides the institution was making in minority student education.”²⁶² CEP students also reported feeling “dehumanized” by having to apply to the Financial Officer for funds to purchase textbooks each semester and presenting the campus bookstore with a financial aid voucher. Arndt acknowledged this “tension,” and recommended that CEP students instead

In addition to miscommunication around expected financial aid, CEP students also struggled with the perceived stigma of being charity cases. Lindberg recalls “an inadvertent, demonstrated lack of sensitivity” in handling confidential student information, like financial need, when it came to the CEP students. One such example is illustrated in the February 1969 issue of *Wheaton Alumni* magazine, in which a number of students were interviewed after receiving financial aid from the College.²⁶⁰ One CEP participant was horrified to discover she had been identified as a “compensatory

²⁵⁶ Arthur Volle to Peter Veltman, May 9, 1969, Box 1, Folder 11, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07 004).

²⁵⁷ Ronald Potter, “Looking Forward, Looking Back: Reflections of an Older New Black Evangelical” *YouTube* video, 1:49:38, Sept. 29, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKFExFdnSns&t=112s>.

²⁵⁸ J. Richard Arndt to EOP Committee and administrators, 1.

²⁵⁹ J. Richard Arndt to EOP Committee and administrators, 2.

²⁶⁰ Oral History Interview with Lindberg by Parks.

²⁶¹ “Students Receive Alumni Aid,” *Wheaton Alumni*, Feb. 1969, Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, (Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College), 8.

²⁶² Oral History Interview with Lindberg by Parks.



be given an additional fifty-dollar stipend every academic year to purchase books.²⁶³

“THE PAST IS NEVER ERADICATED. BUT IT CAN SERVE AS A MODE OF TRANSFORMATION. ALTHOUGH THE PAST IS SOMETIMES GRIEVOUS, THE PAST IS A SPRINGBOARD TO THE FUTURE AND, UNDERSTOOD THEOLOGICALLY, CAN BE REDEMPTIVE.”

-HRTF INTERVIEW WITH RONALD POTTER, JUNE 22, 2022

welcome an influx of minority students in 1968.”²⁶⁴ In Lindberg’s observation of the CEP students, “The social life on campus was disastrous, and the psychological atmosphere was less than desirable.”²⁶⁵

One unanticipated hurdle was the Wheaton code of conduct, particularly the prohibitions against social dancing, drinking, and smoking.²⁶⁶ For some CEP students, these restrictions merely reflected white, middle-class, suburban values that were foreign to their own Christian experience in ethnically diverse urban areas. These restrictions, combined with what history professor Howard Killian described as “a certain way of speaking, a certain way of dressing, certain modes of conduct,” created an environment where the CEP students “were to a large extent like fish out of water” and “the atmosphere just didn’t have the oxygen that they breathe.”²⁶⁷

In addition to the stark transition of entering a predominantly white student body, those in the CEP felt labeled as “special” by some white students who were not sufficiently prepared to understand and befriend students of color.²⁶⁸ Potter recalled white students trafficking in stereotypes about African Americans, asking ignorant and painful questions, and making assumptions about Black culture. As described by Potter, this kind of racial essentialism was pervasive. “Nothing overt. Nobody called me a [n-word]’ or any of that. But, you see, oftentimes that which is implicit is oftentimes much more cancerous than that which is explicit.”²⁶⁹ For Potter and others, navigating the campus life at Wheaton was a bewildering experience: “We knew that something was radically wrong. We just could not articulate it.”²⁷⁰

CEP Students also faced challenges when it came to dating on Wheaton’s predominately white campus. Howard Killian worried that students of color faced extra scrutiny in their on-campus relationships. While there were no institutional policies prohibiting interracial dating, interracial relationships were scarce and perhaps discouraged. Killian recounted that CEP students “really had to watch their step as to how they conducted themselves towards white kids of the opposite sex. They had to be very careful.”²⁷¹

Ultimately, the Compensatory Education Program ground to a halt after two academic years after it became evident that the College was not adequately prepared—administratively or culturally—for an ambitious minority

²⁶³ J. Richard Arndt to EOP Committee and administrators, 4.

²⁶⁴ Nadine Smith, “Minority Program Report.”

²⁶⁵ Oral History Interview with Lindberg by Parks.

²⁶⁶ Oral History Interview with Howard Killian, ca. 1975, Box 1, Item 7669, Oral history interviews (RG 11 001).

²⁶⁷ Oral History Interview with Howard Killian.

²⁶⁸ HRTF Interview with Rev. Ronald Potter by Katherine Graber and Stephen Cartwright, June 14, 2022, HRTF Research Files.

²⁶⁹ Ronald Potter, “Looking Forward.”

²⁷⁰ Ronald Potter, “Looking Forward.”

²⁷¹ Oral History Interview with Howard Killian.



student initiative. In large part, the program's failure can be traced to its origins: Launched as a passion project by a small handful of administrators, the CEP lacked widespread institutional buy-in across campus.²⁷² As he looked back over the program he had envisioned and championed, Lindberg reflected:

If I were to recommend a total revision of the procedure which was initiated in 1967, it would be this: I feel that it would be essential that the trustees of Wheaton College and the president of Wheaton College and his main administrative officers would jointly agree that they desired to make significant progress in the area of minority education, and then come up with the staff—minority staff, minority support personnel—so that the institution would make a commitment *from the top down* to come up with a viable institutional objective of minority education *rather than struggling and pushing and scrambling from the bottom up* and trying to push through some minority program [emphasis added].²⁷³

While Lindberg admitted that his vision for the CEP was “naïve” and his effort to “almost force” the institution to launch the program “was probably a mistake,”²⁷⁴ the Compensatory Education Program signaled a definitive shift in the College's history of race relations, marking the first halting steps toward institutional efforts to increase the racial diversity of the student body.

The Educational Opportunity Program

As Wheaton moved into a new decade, the College attempted to build from the failure of the Compensatory Education Program and continue institutional efforts to grow Wheaton's minority student population. In 1970, the program was renamed the Educational Opportunity Program to avoid the negative connotations associated with the former name and better reflect the aims of the EOP.²⁷⁵ Tasked with re-envisioning the program and providing benchmarks for future success, the EOP Committee's new chair, Richard Arndt, outlined six recommendations for successfully moving forward with the Program. The first of these recommendations addressed the glaring lack of minority representation among the Wheaton faculty

²⁷² In his oral history interviews, Lindberg describes how the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968 served as the catalyst for launching the CEP. While he had proposed the program in the fall of 1967, King's murder only redoubled Lindberg's conviction that the College must prioritize providing quality Christian education to students of color who exhibited potential for leadership. The program was hastily assembled over the next several months without adequate support, and Lindberg personally traveled to Chicago and New York to recruit students. One factor in the CEP's termination in 1970 was Lindberg's departure to serve as Dean of Students at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, CA. See Oral History Interviews with William Lindberg by Katherine Graber, Jan. 26, 2023 and Mar. 6, 2023 Unprocessed Accessions 2023-0001 and 2023-0006 (RG 11 001).

²⁷³ Oral History Interview with William Lindberg by Richard Parks.

²⁷⁴ Oral History Interview with William Lindberg by Richard Parks.

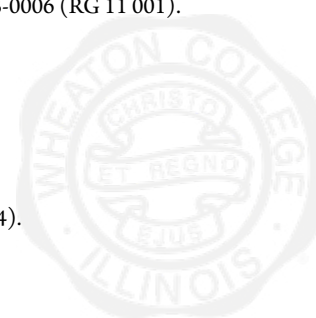
²⁷⁵ Arthur Volle to Peter Veltman, May 9, 1969, Box 1, Folder 11, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07 004).

Student Organization for Urban Leadership (S.O.U.L.)

The first identified organization for students of color at Wheaton College, S.O.U.L. was founded by African American and Latino students to support and encourage the students recruited from urban areas as part of the Compensatory Education Program in the late 1960s. Officially certified as a recognized student organization in 1970, S.O.U.L. worked to raise awareness about Black and Latino history, styles of worship, and artistic expressions through special events, exhibits, campus guests, and other programming. Ozzie Edwards, Special Instructor in the Sociology Department, served as S.O.U.L.'s first advisor, and early leadership included CEP student Ronald Potter and Nadine Smith, later hired as the first full-time staff member to support students of color.

A stated goal for S.O.U.L. leaders was championing diversity on campus to help the College reflect the full body of Christ. Highlights from these efforts include the Black Arts Festival and S.O.U.L. Week. While S.O.U.L. members expressed frustration over scant attendance at special events and even occasional resistance from the study body, the organization continued after the Compensatory Education Program was recast in 1970. More than a decade later, S.O.U.L. disbanded to become Building Relationships and Discipleship, Grace, and Experience (B.R.I.D.G.E.), and opened its doors to all students regardless of racial identity. This transition reflected the larger campus move toward emphasizing and celebrating diverse cultures at Wheaton.

(See Appendix B for a list of student clubs and organizations founded by and for students of color.)



and administration and suggested an intentional recruiting initiative.²⁷⁶ The second and third recommendations requested additional financial support for EOP students, including raising funds for minority scholarships. Fourth, Arndt argued that true progress in minority student recruitment and retention would not be achieved until the College added Black members to the Board of Trustees. Fifth, the College should hire a minority staff member to act as a counselor and mentor to minority students and as a consultant on minority affairs to the president. Finally, Arndt recommended that the College ensure that chapel services regularly feature minority speakers for the benefit of the entire campus community.²⁷⁷ The Committee's six recommendations remained a benchmark to work toward over the 1970s with varying degrees of success.

As part of the re-imagined EOP launch in 1970, the College addressed several of the critiques levied against the CEP. First, EOP recruitment efforts expanded beyond urban centers like Chicago and New York and focused on rural and suburban minority students who demonstrated high academic achievement. By shifting its recruiting efforts away from urban centers, the EOP hoped to draw students who were better academically prepared for Wheaton and felt less displaced in a middle-class suburban environment. Second, the financial aid packages offered to EOP students were reworked to reduce the heavy reliance on loans in an attempt to prevent minority students from accumulating significant student debt over the course of the program. Finally, the College hired two minority staff members to act as program advisors and mentors to the minority student population, Ka Tong Gaw, a special instructor in the Sociology Department, and George Guitierrez, a full-time faculty member at Northern Illinois University.²⁷⁸ The addition of Gaw and Gutierrez, in particular, signaled a step forward in the College's efforts to attract and retain minority students after multiple years of complaints about the lack of minority representation in Wheaton's administration and faculty.



Figure 18: Matthew Parker, *The Record*, Oct. 12, 1973.

Institutional Support Through the 1970s

Despite attempts to revitalize it, the Educational Opportunity Program fizzled in the mid-1970s. In fall 1975, the EOP admitted 13 students, its last incoming class.²⁷⁹ The program had widened its focus since 1970, expanding to include international students and even white students who demonstrated high financial need. While references to “the EOP” disappear from records in the mid-1970s, minority student recruitment and retention efforts during these years continued, though with an obvious struggle to establish institutional backing, particularly due to the dearth of full-time staff to create and implement long-term admissions strategies and support systems. From 1970 to 1977, these efforts were spearheaded by part-time staff members, whose progress was hampered by frequent turnover. In 1973, the two part-time minority student advisor roles held by Gaw and Gutierrez were refashioned, responding to the different needs of student demographics. Gaw was invited to serve as the part-time Advisor to International Students and Matthew Parker, an undergraduate sociology major,²⁸⁰ was invited to act as the part-time

²⁷⁶ Richard Crow to Arthur Volle, Dec. 3 1969, Box 1, Folder 2, Office of Minority Affairs Records (07 004), 2, in which Crow cites the lack of minority faculty as a major source of tension and alienation for the CEP students.

²⁷⁷ J. Richard Arndt to EOP Committee and administrators, 4-5.

²⁷⁸ For these details and others documenting the relaunch of the EOP, see Nadine Smith, “Minority Program Report,” Mar. 21, 1971, Box 1, Folder 61, (RG 07 004).

²⁷⁹ “Annual Report from George Cramer, the Director of Admissions and Records,” 1975, Box 2, Folder 15, Vice President for Advancement Records (RG 03 003), Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College.

²⁸⁰ Although he was an undergraduate student, Parker was in his 30s, had earned a Bible degree, and worked in youth sports ministry with Campus Crusade for Christ. See Oral History Interviews with Matthew Parker, April 1989, CN 413, Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections for his recollections of the racial climate of the campus in the 1970s and serving on the Minority Student Affairs Committee.

Advisor to Minority Students.²⁸¹ When Gaw joined the Sociology Department as a full-time faculty member in 1974, Parker remained the sole advisor to minority students on Wheaton's campus until 1976.²⁸²

After Parker's departure, the position remained vacant for a year until the College hired its first full-time staff member dedicated to minority student concerns. Nadine Smith '74 was named to the newly established position of Assistant to the Dean of Students for Minority Affairs.²⁸³ A Wheaton alumna, Smith was no stranger to the challenges the College faced recruiting and retaining minority students. During her undergraduate studies, she worked as a resident assistant, was an active member of S.O.U.L., and served as a student representative on the Educational Opportunity Committee. With her wealth of experience, the administration enthusiastically accepted Smith's application.²⁸⁴ As the first full-time staff member dedicated to minority student support, Smith's responsibilities included conceptualizing and creating the building blocks for minority student recruitment and retention as well as continuing to serve as a residence hall director.



Figure 19: Nadine Smith, 1975. *The Tower*, p. 68.

In her 1979 "Minority Program Report," Smith outlined three areas of progress to celebrate. First, within the campus community, Smith had strengthened support systems for existing minority students with a view to empowering them "academically, emotionally, and spiritually."²⁸⁵ This support, she hoped, would be transferred to incoming minority students. Second, Smith highlighted minority student recruitment efforts over the past two years, which included connecting with local Black pastors, churches, and conventions, as well as targeting advertising with the National Black Evangelical Association and Urban Ministries, Inc. In addition, a new partnership was expected to bring a fresh wave of minority students transferring to Wheaton from Manna Bible Institute in Philadelphia. By collaborating with the Admissions Department, Smith and the Minority Student Affairs Committee were able to identify and pursue prospective applicants via targeted mailings and personal contact. Finally, the Minority Program worked in conjunction with Academic Affairs to identify

high achieving minority students, offering them financial assistance to support graduate level education if students committed to return to Wheaton as faculty members.²⁸⁶

Despite these positive developments, Nadine Smith resigned in the spring of 1980, citing various frustrations

²⁸¹ While minority student advisor roles were cobbled together with part-time positions over the early years of the 1970s, the administration was aware of the need for full-time leadership, as confirmed by then Vice-President of Student Affairs Henry Nelson. George Gutierrez was offered an expanded role as a minority student counselor when Gaw joined the Sociology Department at Wheaton in 1974. Due to the constraints of his teaching schedule at NIU and the commute to Wheaton, Gutierrez declined, though he expressed interest to Nelson in a minority student advisor position if it were ever to become a full-time role. In response, Nelson expressed little doubt that the position would eventually become full-time. See Henry Nelson to George Gutierrez, May 17, 1973, Box 1, Folder 19, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07 004).

²⁸² See "Appendix A: Directors of Minority Affairs" in Rodney Sisco, "Office of Minority Affairs," Report, ca. 1993, Box 27, Folder 30, Office of Student Development Records (RG 07 008), for a full list of staff and administrators who served in the Office of Minority Affairs and its predecessors from 1970 to 1993.

²⁸³ Nadine Smith Nadine, "Minority Program Report."

²⁸⁴ Henry Nelson to H.T. Armerding, "Minority Student Counselor," Feb. 11, 1977, Box 1, Folder 44, Office of Minority Affairs Records (07 004).

²⁸⁵ Nadine Smith, "Minority Program Report," 2.

²⁸⁶ Nadine Smith, "Minority Program Report," 2.



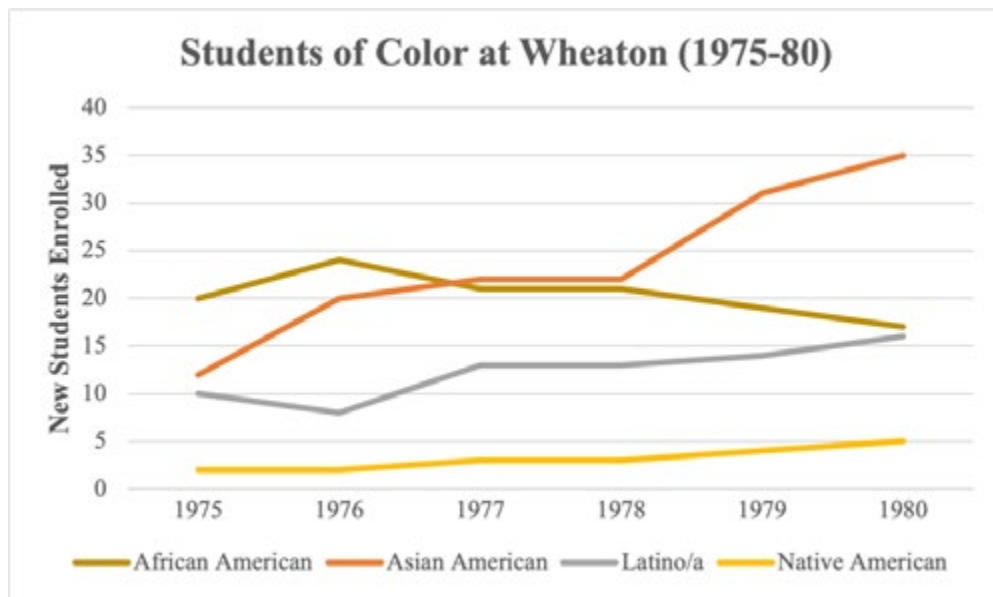


Figure 20: S.O.U.L. Black Arts Festival performance at Edman Chapel, 1977. College Archives. Photo File: Musical Groups, Photograph #B8140.

with her role, chief among them the lack of overall institutional support, including funding, administrative backing, and campus-wide indifference to minority student concerns.²⁸⁷ As Smith described in her resignation letter to Vice President of Student Development Henry Nelson, during her four years as Assistant to the Dean of Students for Minority Affairs she had been “excluded from meetings when departmental planning was conducted” and never asked for input on budgetary decisions directly affecting her area.²⁸⁸ Ultimately, for Smith, the work of the Minority Program was simply not prioritized and her efforts were “not being taken seriously as few of the recommendations I have made have been implemented and integrated by the department.”²⁸⁹

Nadine Smith’s brief, four-year tenure as Assistant to the Dean of Students for Minority Affairs is illustrative of the recurring challenges the Minority Program faced over the 1970s since the setbacks of the Compensatory Education Program. First, while the College purported to prioritize minority student recruitment and retention, few resources, especially staff, were dedicated to these efforts. Instead, the work fell on the shoulders of a few committed but overworked employees whose enthusiasm inevitably turned to disillusionment and burnout. Second, the Minority Program continued to be siloed as a sub-area within Student Development, with little visibility to the greater campus community. Smith’s concerns were echoed by Associate Dean of Students Ruth Bamford in a follow-up memo written about a week after Smith’s resignation: “There continues to be general lack of understanding and commitment to the idea of minorities having a significant part in the total life of Wheaton College.”²⁹⁰

Summary of the 1970s

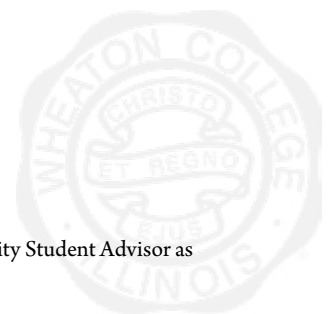


²⁸⁷ Nadine Smith to Henry Nelson, “Resignation from Wheaton College as Asst. Dean of Students for Minority Affairs,” Jan. 21, 1980, Box 1, Folder 24, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07 004).

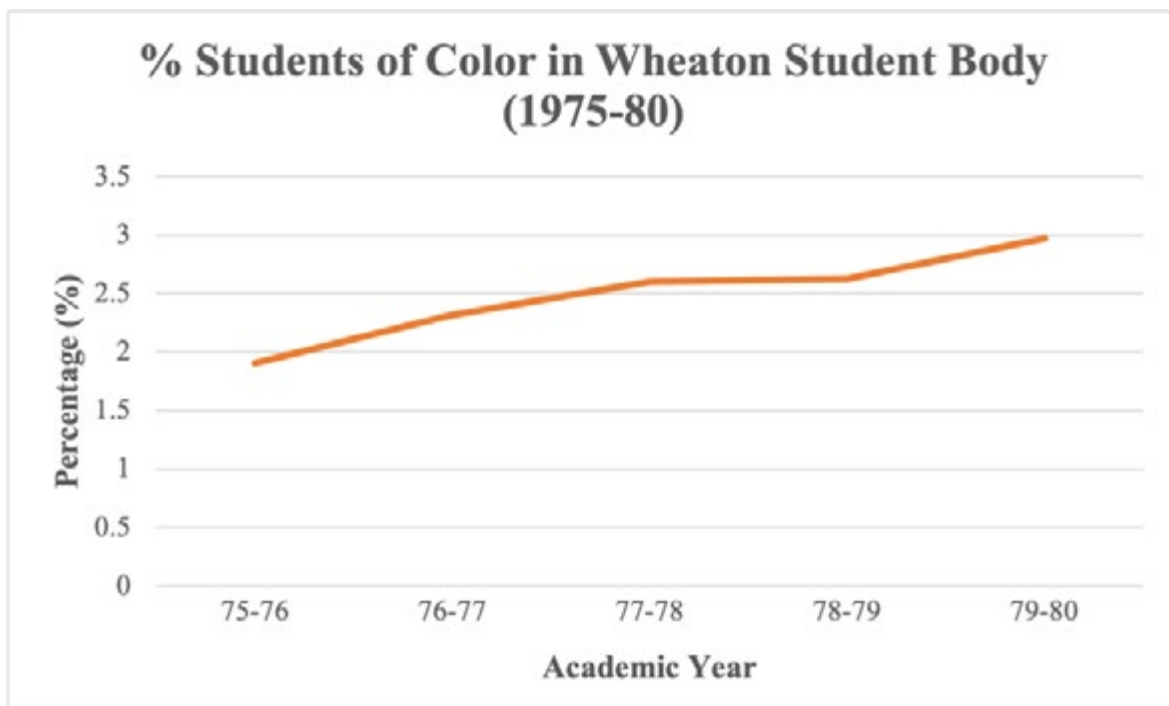
²⁸⁸ Nadine Smith to Nelson, Jan. 21, 1980.

²⁸⁹ Nadine Smith to Nelson, Jan. 21, 1980.

²⁹⁰ Ruth Bamford, “Recommendations and observations regarding the position and job description of the Minority Student Advisor as suggested by Nadine Smith,” Jan. 20, 1980, Box 1, Folder 24, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07 004).



At the end of the 1970s, the Minority Program administrators could look back over a series of notable steps forward. Through the efforts of administrators like Richard Arndt and others, the serious shortfalls of the Compensatory Education Program had been identified and addressed in the re-imagined Education Opportunity Program. The Program also witnessed progress in hiring staff members of color to support EOP students, starting with part-timers Ka Tong Gaw, George Guitierrez, and Matthew Parker before Nadine Smith's full-time appointment. Despite these breakthroughs, recruitment was sluggish. In 1975, when the College began to track racial categories as part of institutional data for student enrollment, students of color hovered at just under 2% of the entire study body.²⁹¹ Five years later, that number had risen by a single percent, with Asian students making most of the increase.



New Strides into the 1980s

In 1980, Joyce Suber was hired to replace Nadine Smith as the Director of Minority Student Development (later Director of Multicultural Student Development) who did much to advocate for change.²⁹² Among other objectives, her focus included improving multicultural student recruitment, enhancing support for current multicultural students, and increasing ethnic awareness and appreciation on campus.²⁹³

As one of her first tasks, Suber undertook a four-month internal assessment of minority student affairs at the College and submitted a sixteen-page report to V.P. Nelson in January 1981. Titled "Recruitment, Admission, Retention and Success of Minority Students," Suber's report acknowledged "the great magnitude and scope of the task" before exploring 11 questions relating to current minority student concerns. The report concluded by identifying eight pressing needs, each with its own set of recommendations, to further Wheaton's commitment to a racially diverse student body.

²⁹¹ Wheaton's institutional data for student enrollment began tracking the five racial categories in 1975: Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, Native American, or White. The National Center for Education Statistics further standardized racial categories in 1997. See "Definitions for New Race and Ethnicity Categories," National Center for Education Statistics, <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/report-your-data/race-ethnicity-definitions>. Wheaton's institutional data did not include a category to indicate "Two or More Races" until 2010.

²⁹² Suber requested this change of title from "Minority" to "Multicultural" to more accurately reflect differences in how different people groups were raised in their own contexts. HRTF Interview with Joyce Suber by Dale Wong and Justine Stewart, May 11, 2022, HRTF Research Files.

²⁹³ Joyce Suber, "Multicultural Student Development Status Report," Fall 1983, Box 1, Folder 6, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07 004).



Figure 21: Joyce Suber, undated. College Archives. Photo File: Suber, Joyce, Photograph #A12171.

To that date, Suber's report was the most comprehensive review of minority affairs in the College's history. While many of Suber's recommendations echo the findings and concerns of previous reports about recruitment, personal mentoring, and academic support for minority students, she also identified new areas for growth. One recommended initiative was a review of the financial aid packages offered to minority students. For instance, the College should renew the Minority Leadership Scholarship Fund and explore new options for funding with the support of alumni and community donors.

Another recommendation highlighted Wheaton's alumni

of color as "an untapped resource." Cultivating relationships with these alumni graduates was a priority, Suber argued, and required better institutional record-keeping to maintain these connections post-graduation.²⁹⁴

Most significantly, however, Suber's report addressed the spiritual and cultural climate of the campus community and its effect on the personal flourishing and academic success of minority students. For Suber, a significant cause for concern was the simple ignorance she witnessed across campus about challenges facing students of color. "The larger College community," she wrote, "is, for the most part, unaware of and uninvolved in the concern for improving minority student affairs."²⁹⁵ For those who were aware, many viewed such efforts with cynicism, skeptical that institutional commitments to grow and support the minority student population were little more than lip service. To address these concerns, Suber recommended that the College prioritize sponsoring private and public prayer gatherings to uplift diversity efforts and the personnel working to support them. Moreover, College administrators should visibly participate in these prayer services as a show of solidarity and support. Although not explicitly stated, Suber's report evinces her conviction that large swathes of the campus community should repent of apathy, indifference, and skepticism toward the challenges facing students of color.

In addition to the spiritual environment, Suber also addressed the "mono-cultural" climate of Wheaton's campus that stymied the "cultural identity and expression" of minority students. To offset the dominant white evangelical culture, Suber asked administrators to redouble efforts to diversify the lineups for chapel speakers, lectures, and performances and to include students of color in program planning and execution. The College should also offer workshops and seminars for

Building Relationships in Discipleship, Grace, and Experience (B.R.I.D.G.E.)

Formally established in 1981, B.R.I.D.G.E. in many ways carried on the work of S.O.U.L., creating campus programming to highlight and celebrate multiculturalism and advocating for greater awareness and sensitivity for the unique concerns of minority students at Wheaton. Unlike its predecessor, however, B.R.I.D.G.E. also turned its sights on the pursuit of racial reconciliation. One initiative focused on connecting with local multiethnic churches and arranging group visits to broaden student understanding of inclusion and belonging within the church.

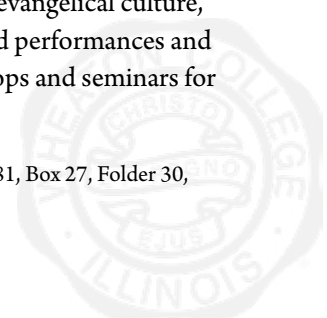
While B.R.I.D.G.E. leaders could still lament low attendance at special events, the group did see steady growth, eventually becoming the third largest student organization on campus.

By the late 1980s, other student groups dedicated to specific racial or ethnic student populations began springing up. B.R.I.D.G.E. disbanded after the 1987-1988 academic year, just as the launch of the Office of Minority Affairs under Rodney Sisco took over programming and outreach initiatives to advance multiculturalism on campus.

(See Appendix B for a list of student clubs and organizations.)

²⁹⁴ Joyce Suber to Henry Nelson, "Recruitment, Admission, Retention and Success of Minority Students," Feb. 1981, Box 27, Folder 30, Office of Student Development Records (RG 07 008), 14.

²⁹⁵ Joyce Suber to Henry Nelson, "Recruitment" 14.



faculty, staff, and students to raise awareness of and appreciation for different cultural identities and expressions.²⁹⁶

While the report did not specifically include a recommendation to establish a stand-alone institutional office, her findings underscored the need for a dedicated office, staff, and resources to implement her bold and long ranging plans.²⁹⁷

Joyce Suber left her role as Director of Multicultural Student Development in 1984, after little more than four years in the position. While she had made considerable strides in identifying current shortfalls and long-range action steps to increase the student body diversity, she largely found herself alone in her efforts, and, despite assurances and verbal support from College administration, her work was sparsely resourced.²⁹⁸ In a revealing *Record* article near the end of her Wheaton days, Suber described the difficulties she faced at the outset of her new position. These included longstanding obstacles, such as scanty financial aid packages for students of color and the College's poor reputation among alumni of color in Chicagoland which forced Suber to recruit in urban centers outside of Illinois—New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, Cleveland, and Atlanta.²⁹⁹ Even more challenging than financial aid and disgruntled alumni was the lack of representation on the faculty and in the administration. In Suber's view, inviting potential students of color for campus visits actually proved detrimental for recruitment efforts. In sum, the solution would have to be a coordinated effort. "Unless financial aid, Admissions, and Personnel work together, there is not going to be much fruit. I can wear out my shoes recruiting, but if they don't see any black professors or administrators, they aren't going to come."³⁰⁰

The Black Hills Science Station, Pennington County, South Dakota

The turn of the decade held further significance for Wheaton's campus following the conclusion of the Supreme Court case *United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians* in 1980, a ruling that pertained to the College's cherished Science Station, an approximately 50-acre site located in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Since the first purchase of Black Hills land in 1949, the Wheaton College Science Station has proven to be a geological wonder, providing hands-on educational opportunities for thousands of students in a wide range of disciplines, including coursework in geology, astronomy, ecology, botany, environmental science, and more.³⁰¹ In 1974, *Wheaton* magazine celebrated 40 years of the College's longest-running off-campus program, expressing gratitude for the unique geological features and immense biodiversity surrounding the Science Station: In "nearby Rapid Canyon, expose[d] sections of 15 formations which have been dated from pre-Cambrian to Cretaceous. Almost every known mineral, including uranium, have been found in the Black Hills."³⁰² Six years later, however, the Black Hills of South Dakota, including the site of the Science Station, came under national scrutiny in the U.S. Supreme Court case, *United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians*, specifically relating to the Lakota people's ongoing claim to their ancestral homeland.³⁰³

²⁹⁶ Joyce Suber to Henry Nelson, "Recruitment" 14.

²⁹⁷ Joyce Suber to Henry Nelson, "Recruitment" 14.

²⁹⁸ According to Suber, during most of her time as Director of Multicultural Student Development at Wheaton she was the only full time, minority staff member besides custodial staff. HRTF Interview.

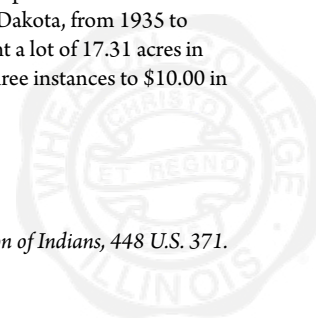
²⁹⁹ Deb Doak, "Whites Dominate Wheaton" *The Record*, Feb. 24, 1984.

³⁰⁰ Deb Doak, "Whites Dominate."

³⁰¹ "40th Birthday at the Black Hills," *Wheaton Alumni*, Dec. 1974. In 1934, Wheaton College searched for a campsite suitable for geological research. The College initially rented the YMCA's Camp Tamaha, located nine miles west of Rapid City, South Dakota, from 1935 to 1947. Then in 1949, it bought the Triangle 1 ranch from a private party in the Black Hills. Wheaton College trustees bought a lot of 17.31 acres in 1949 from a private party. More lots were added in 1961, 1963 and 1969. The cost of the purchases ranged from \$1.00 in three instances to \$10.00 in one instance. In other words, these were essentially free. The total acreage is approximately 50 acres.

³⁰² "40th Birthday," *Wheaton Alumni*.

³⁰³ See Blackmun, Harry A, and Supreme Court Of The United States. U.S. Reports: *United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians*, 448 U.S. 371. 1979. Periodical. <https://www.loc.gov/item/usrep448371/> (accessed Mar. 2, 2023).



The Lakota claim a “spiritual and historical connection” to the Black Hills (*Paha Sapa* in Lakota), but they have not always lived there.³⁰⁴

The earliest written evidence of the Lakotas comes from the mid-and late 1600s, when French explorers, traders, and missionaries arrived in the woodlands of the western Great Lakes and the upper Mississippi River. There the French met tribes that included the Ottawas, Foxes, Pottawatomis [*sic*], Hurons, Ojibwas, and a group they called the Sioux. . . The westernmost of these was the *Titonwan*, or Tetons, commonly known today as Lakotas after the dialect they speak.³⁰⁵

These Lakota people were pressured west in the 1700s. “With guns they received from Europeans in exchange for beaver pelts, the Lakota displaced other indigenous peoples—Omahas, Otoes, Iowas, Missouris, and Poncas.”³⁰⁶ At the time of President Jackson’s Indian Removal Act of 1830, “the Lakota nation, numbering about eleven thousand people, inhabited an area that included the present-day states of North Dakota and South Dakota west of the Missouri, a good portion of western Nebraska, northwestern Wyoming, and a chunk of southeastern Montana. At the center of this territory stood the Black Hills.”³⁰⁷ For the Christian catechist and Lakota holy man Black Elk, the Lakota migration into the Black Hills was a fulfillment of prophecy, the arrival to a “promised land.”³⁰⁸ So it was that the Black Hills became a key component of Lakota culture, which was in part a Christian culture.³⁰⁹

The history of the Black Hills is fraught with warfare, both between neighboring Native American nations and between the Lakota people and the U.S. Government. Long before Wheaton College discovered the natural wonders of the Black Hills for educational purposes in the twentieth century, the Lakota faced encroachment on their homelands. In 1868, the Lakota signed the Fort Laramie Treaty, which established the Great Sioux Reservation, including land that is now The Black Hills Science Station. Article 2 of the Fort Laramie treaty set aside the Black Hills for “absolute and undisturbed use and occupation” for the Lakota.³¹⁰ Among the terms of the treaty was that the Black Hills would be permanent tribal land.

However, the treaty’s stipulations were quickly abandoned when the U.S. Army discovered gold during an expedition led by Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer in 1874. A national gold rush ensued, and thousands of Americans of European descent flocked to South Dakota in hopes of striking it rich. Increasingly overrun by outsiders, the Lakota defended their land in what became known as the Black Hills War of 1876 or the Great Sioux War.³¹¹ These skirmishes culminated in the bloody Battle of Little Big Horn, the high-water mark in the Lakota’s defense of tribal lands. In answer, the federal government deployed more military forces to South Dakota to put down the uprising, ultimately forcing

³⁰⁴ “40th Birthday,” *Wheaton Alumni*. 7. Still, Jenkins’ summary is accurate: “Though Lakota tradition firmly associates that people with the Black Hills, all evidence suggests that that people originated much farther east, until they were driven by tribes armed with new European firearms.” Philip Jenkins, *Dream Catchers: How Mainstream America Discovered Native Spirituality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 252.

³⁰⁵ Jeffrey Ostler, *The Lakotas and the Black Hills: The Struggle for Sacred Ground* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2011), 7.

³⁰⁶ Jeffrey Ostler, *The Lakotas*, 7.

³⁰⁷ Jeffrey Ostler, *The Lakotas*, 12.

³⁰⁸ Jeffrey Ostler, *The Lakotas*, 12.

³⁰⁹ Jeffrey Ostler, *The Lakotas*, 174. As Frank Fools Crow said, speaking for the Traditional Lakota Treaty Council in a congressional subcommittee: “The Black Hills is our church, the place where we worship.” As a young man, Black Elk had a vision on what has now been renamed Black Elk Peak, the highest point in the Black Hills. In it he saw Christ with “wounds in the palms of his hands.” Black Elk, who ultimately converted to Catholicism, regarded the Black Hills “as the center of a universe charged with spiritual power,” as many Lakota still do today.

³¹⁰ “Treaty of Fort Laramie (1868),” National Archives and Records Administration, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/fort-laramie-treaty> (accessed Mar. 28, 2023).

³¹¹ Jeffrey Ostler, *The Lakotas*, 98.

the Lakota to relinquish their ownership of the Black Hills.³¹²

In 1980, a U.S. Supreme Court ruling held that the United States Government had illegally seized the Black Hills land from the Lakota people through the Agreement of 1877. *United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians* found the Lakota people had never been properly compensated for their loss. Eight out of nine members of the Supreme Court determined that it would be hard to find a more “ripe and rank case of dishonorable dealing” than the American seizure of the Black Hills.³¹³

In the end, the Supreme Court ordered compensation and not the return of land. As Justice Blackmun wrote at the end of the opinion:

The 1877 Act effected a taking of tribal property, property which had been set aside for the exclusive occupation of the Sioux by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. That taking implied an obligation on the part of the Government to make just compensation to the Sioux Nation, and that obligation, including an award of interest, must now, at last, be paid.³¹⁴

The federal government awarded the Lakota people one hundred million dollars in reparations. Since their Supreme Court victory in 1980, the Lakota have refused to accept the reparations and instead seek the return of the land. Due to the compounding interest accrued, the amount has grown to approximately \$1.3 billion dollars.³¹⁵

While Wheaton College purchased its Black Hills property from private parties more than seventy years after the Agreement of 1877,³¹⁶ the Supreme Court of the United States ruling in 1980 underscored the indigenous origins of the Science Station land and the still-contested ownership of the land it occupies. Since 1980, the College has been aware of the fraught history of its Black Hills campus, knowing that it benefits from unjust actions against indigenous peoples on the part of the United States Government that remain unreconciled.³¹⁷

Minority Student Recruitment

Wheaton by 1985

In the Spring of 1978, the Board of Trustees adopted a long-range set of institutional goals entitled “Wheaton by 1985.” Among other initiatives, the Board identified campus diversity as an ongoing priority with the following statement:

The College emphasizes the education of servant/leaders from varied cultural and socio- economic segments of society and varied geographic regions. In addition to welcoming qualified students from other nations, the College will actively recruit qualified American black and other minority students, faculty, and staff. In doing so, the College broadens its ministry, improves the educational climate of the campus, fosters creative diversity, and moves beyond

³¹² Jeffrey Ostler, *The Lakotas*, 98.

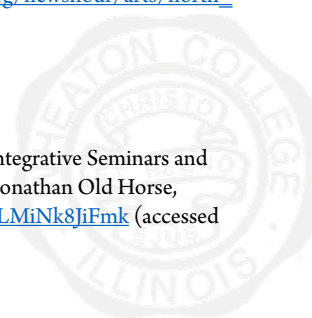
³¹³ Jeffrey Ostler, *The Lakotas*, 164.

³¹⁴ Blackmun, Harry A, *United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians*.

³¹⁵ See Tom LeGro, “Why the Sioux are Refusing \$1.3 Billion,” *PBS Newshour*, Aug. 24, 2011. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/north-america-july-dec11-blackhills_08-23 (accessed Mar. 28, 2023).

³¹⁶ See the warranty deeds kept by Wheaton College Facilities Department.

³¹⁷ Wheaton has been exploring Indigenous issues in the Black Hills in the last decade through on site Advanced Integrative Seminars and by developing relationships with area Lakota, who have come to Wheaton’s main campus to speak on several occasions. See Jonathan Old Horse, “Entertaining Strangers,” Wheaton chapel service, *YouTube* video, 24:21, Nov. 9, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMiNk8JiFmk> (accessed Mar. 28, 2022).



artificial quotas to the creation of a heterogenous community of believers whose members all regard each other with mutual and non-prejudicial esteem in Christ.³¹⁸

While not explicitly stated in the “Wheaton by 1985” institutional goals, College administrators set an ambitious internal benchmark of recruiting 30 minority students per year, with a view to increasing minority student enrollment to 6% by 1985.³¹⁹ Many Wheaton faculty echoed strong support for aggressive recruiting efforts,³²⁰ and new strategies were rolled out by the Admissions Office and Nadine Smith as Assistant Dean of Students for Minority Affairs.

One strategy involved hiring a marketing consultant, Henry Soles, to “market Wheaton College to those individuals who are most influential in advising and counseling black students on college choice.”³²¹ Director of Admissions Joseph Bean and Smith initiated other tactics, collaborating with local Black churches, minority pastors, and school administrators to identify potential candidates for recruitment, as well as networking with minority group conferences like the National Association of Black Evangelicals. Further, in a bid to smooth the application process, the 1978 admissions policy continued to waive SAT/ACT scores for minority applicants.³²² Current minority students also spoke into the efforts during strategy meetings and provided insight on attracting minority students to Wheaton.³²³

These efforts produced slow but noticeable results. The freshmen class of 1979 enrolled 24 domestic non-white students out of an incoming class of 540.³²⁴ While amounting to only 4.5% of the entire class, this increase marked a rise from the historical less-than 3% minority representation of the entire student body. This number held steady over the next several years. By 1985 the student body counted approximately 110 minority undergraduates representing about 4.6% of the class, falling short of the ambitious 6% target stemming from the “Wheaton by 1985” institutional goals.³²⁵

³¹⁸ “Wheaton By 1985,” Box 1, Folder 3, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07 004), 11.

³¹⁹ Ward Kriegbaum to Joe Bean, “Minority Student Recruitment,” June 14, 1978, Box 1, Folder 45, Office of Minority Affairs (RG 07 004).

³²⁰ Howard Claassen to Ward Kriegbaum, May 23, 1978, Box 1, Folder 42, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07 004).

³²¹ Ward Kriegbaum to Joe Bean, Nadine Smith, and Henry Soles, “Guidelines for involving a marketing consultant . . .” Aug. 29, 1978, Box 1, Folder 29, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07 004).

³²² “Admissions Policy 1978,” Minority Student Affairs Accession 77-76, Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College. One criticism of the CEP/EOP was that it waived the historical academic achievement standards for minority students. While the 1978 admissions policy did not require the usual SAT/ACT scores from minority applicants, it did reverse the previous practice of waiving other academic standards.

³²³ “Minority Student Meeting with Dr. Donald Mitchell, V.P. Academic Affairs and Dr. Ward Kriegbaum, Dean of Academic Affairs,” Minutes, Oct. 3, 1978, Box 1, Folder 1, Office of Minority Affairs (RG 07 004). Students reported that the lack of minority faculty representation continued to be a barrier to successfully recruiting minority students. In 1978, the Wheaton faculty included only two minority members, Narl Hung and Pattle Pun, both naturalized American citizens originally from China. This statistic did not change until 1983, when Professor Alvaro Nieves joined the Sociology Department.

³²⁴ “Students of Color UG Enrollment, 1975-2019,” Wheaton College Institutional Assessment, 2019, HRTF Research Files, 54.

³²⁵ “Students of Color UG Enrollment, 1975-2019.”

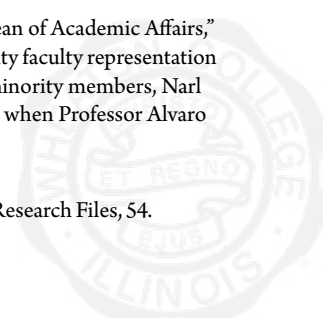




Figure 22: Richard J. Chase, undated. College Archives. Photo File: Chase, Richard J., Photograph #A13500.

President J. Richard Chase, 1982-1993

After sixteen years of leadership through some of the College's most tumultuous years, Hudson Armerding announced his retirement from Wheaton's presidency at the January 1981 Board of Trustees meeting. The following January, the Board voted unanimously to elect J. Richard Chase (1930-2010) as the College's sixth president. Formerly serving as the president of Biola University, Chase was the first of Wheaton's presidents not ordained to the ministry. Trained in rhetoric and public speaking, Chase earned his Ph.D. from Cornell University in 1961 and returned to teach at his alma mater, Biola. He eventually served as its president from 1970 until called to Wheaton twelve years later.

Although Dr. Chase's tenure is the shortest of any Wheaton president to date, his administration witnessed several significant advances in the College's history, including the renovation of Blanchard Hall the College's flagship building, the launch of Wheaton's first

doctoral program in 1992, and the establishment of the Center for Applied Christian Ethics. More significantly for this report, a plethora of minority student groups emerged over the 1980s, scholarships to support minority students were established, and the Office of Minority Affairs gained traction under the leadership of Rodney Sisco.

The 1983 External Review

Nearly three years after Joyce Suber completed her milestone report on retention and recruitment of minority students at Wheaton, the College commissioned another study to assess comprehensive progress of the minority program. This time, however, the administration decided to go beyond an internal evaluation. Vice President for Student Development Henry Nelson enlisted the help of an external consultant, Henry Allen '77, Instructor in Sociology at Bethel College in Minnesota.³²⁶ A Wheaton alumnus, Allen enthusiastically agreed to conduct the assessment, and after months of review submitted his findings in December 1983.

Titled "An Evaluation of Wheaton College's Multicultural Student Program," Allen's study echoed many of the findings Smith, Suber, and others had underscored. The challenges minority students faced at Wheaton College were considerable, Allen reported, specifically the institution's ethnocentric history, white evangelicalism's tendency toward racial insensitivity, and the consistent record of inadequate funding for campus programming and financial aid packages. The report acknowledged that some progress had been made in minority student recruitment since 1980, principally among the Asian American community, and credited both Nelson and Suber for their efforts.³²⁷ While calling the achievements "substantial," Allen focused the bulk of the report on essential steps for growth in the Multicultural Student Program, two of which are particularly noteworthy.³²⁸

First, Allen noted that the multicultural program was hosted within the Student Development Division where it had a smaller profile and was siloed from the center of the institution.³²⁵ Second, Allen explicitly echoed the concern others had repeated for years: The multicultural program must expand its aspirations beyond minority student affairs to include minority

³²⁶ Henry Nelson to Henry Allen, Sept. 26, 1983, Box 1, Folder 35, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07 004). Allen later joined the Wheaton College Sociology Department in 1998, where he taught until his retirement in 2020.

³²⁷ Henry Allen, "An Evaluation of Wheaton College's Multicultural Student Program," Dec. 29, 1983, Box 1, Folder 35, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07 004), 1.

³²⁸ Many more findings, recommendations, and rationale are not included here; however, they can be found in the report itself.



staff and faculty representation on campus.³²⁹ Minority student recruitment and retention efforts must work in tandem with efforts focused on staff and faculty. Solving this last shortcoming was critical if minority faculty and staff were to be “in visible and crucial positions ...to serve as effective role models for potential minority students.”³³⁰ In fact, the report noted that in spite of a stated desire for adding minority representation on campus, a strategic process for systematically identifying and recruiting promising minority faculty candidates did not exist.³³¹

Ultimately, Allen addressed the urgency of the work of the Multicultural Student Program. Not only was change necessary for the sake of Wheaton’s handful of minority students, but the lack of minority representation was also a severe limitation to the education of the white student population: “[U]nless [white] students understand the concerns of racial and cultural minorities, it is highly unlikely that they will be prepared to empathize with and serve the needs of a more racially diverse evangelical church that is becoming increasingly populated by nonwhite Christians.”³³²

While Allen’s recommendation about shifting the Multicultural Student Program out of Student Development was realized within a few years, it would be another decade before Wheaton launched its first institutional initiative geared toward recruiting and retaining minority faculty members.



Figure 23: Rodney Sisco in front of Edman Chapel, undated.

The Office of Minority Affairs

Joyce Suber’s departure as Director of Minority Affairs in 1984 left a significant gap in the institution’s efforts for minority student recruitment and retention. Rodney Sisco, who had been hired by the Admissions Office as the Multicultural Recruitment Counselor, assumed Suber’s role as staff advisor to B.R.I.D.G.E. But the overall work of minority affairs suffered a loss in momentum. For Sisco, the loss of the directorship was a setback for the minority program just as it was beginning to gain traction on campus.³³³ Others expressed concern that there were no immediate plans for Suber’s full-time replacement and that “limping along with part-time help” would indicate less institutional commitment when actually more was needed.³³⁴

Wheaton College often did not feel like a home for students of color accustomed to more racially diverse environments. Adding to their confusion was an incoming expectation of a Christian community welcoming of students from “every nation, tribe, people, and language” [Rev. 7:9] only to find a majority culture ignorant of the value of cultural diversity and indifferent, sometimes cruelly, to their needs. That, plus the already rigorous level of academic study that faced every student, demanded an extra level of institutional support for this group of students to enable their academic and spiritual flourishing. With Sisco’s strong advocacy it soon became evident to Nelson that the recruitment of minority students and the retention and care of current students necessitated two full time positions.

³²⁹ Henry Allen, “An Evaluation,” 10.

³³⁰ Henry Allen, “An Evaluation,” 5.

³³¹ Henry Allen, “An Evaluation,” 16.

³³² Henry Allen, “An Evaluation,” 21.

³³³ Oral History with Rodney Sisco by Logan, Part 2, HRTF Research Files.

³³⁴ Tom Kay to Henry Nelson, “Resignation of Joyce Suber,” July 23, 1984, Box 1, Folder 41, Office of Minority Affairs Records (RG 07 004).



In 1988, Sisco became exclusively the Director of Multicultural Development,³³⁵ and changed the name to the Office of Minority Affairs (OMA)³³⁶ in order to “focus on the specific concerns of the American minority (Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Native American) students at Wheaton College.”³³⁷ The announcement of the name change included an outline of the goals of the OMA: retention, awareness, and public affairs to foster a “truly multicultural body committed to rejecting misinformation regarding differing races.”³³⁸ Sisco and the office aimed to support students of color, encourage greater awareness in the larger campus community, and enlist the support of alumni and churches in their student retention and campus awareness efforts.

Regular communication via various publications included news of upcoming events; financial information (e.g., “Tuition Busters”: information about scholarships); interviews with students, staff, and faculty of color³³⁹; and highlights of various programs or updates on multicultural-related issues on campus.³⁴⁰ The OMA also distributed creative publications, including those from the Asian American student community (e.g., “Enter the Heart: Celebrating Asian Pacific Heritage Month” in 1997, and “Not Everything is Black and White” in 1999). While these were intended for students and alumni of color, some issues were developed as special issues for the entire campus community (e.g., *Mosaic*, October 1998).

While the level of student involvement with OMA programming varied greatly—some students of color participated not at all in their four years—there is little doubt that many minority students during this time found solace and encouragement through OMA, which proved critical to making it through Wheaton at all. Even so, it is also true that many minority students still left or graduated from Wheaton with painful recollections. Although advocacy from alumni of color was seen as a key recruitment tool for potential minority students, many alumni departed their time at Wheaton not wishing their pain to be experienced by the next generation and, thus, were unable to recommend the College in their own circles.³⁴¹

Multicultural Scholarships

Besides the need for more multicultural faculty and staff and increasing resources for multicultural programming, another consistent obstacle to Wheaton’s efforts to recruit multicultural students was the relative lack of dedicated financial support in the form of grants and scholarships. One contributing factor was the restrictions placed on such funding opportunities as stipulated by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 1986, College administrators

³³⁵Rodney Sisco, “Office of Minority Affairs,” Report, ca. 1993, Box 27, Folder 30, Office of Student Development Records (RG 07 008). While Sisco’s appointment was a step in the right direction, the position was still under-resourced. Sisco had no administrative assistant or an assistant director until later into the 90’s. HRTF Interview with Hasana Pennant Sisco by Dale Wong, June 1, 2022, HRTF Research Files.

³³⁶Rodney, Sisco, Office of Minority Affairs.”

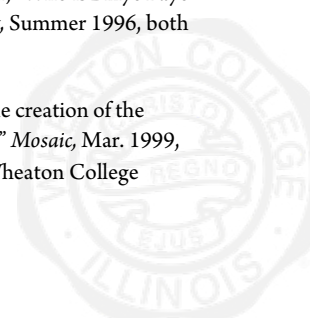
³³⁷“Minority or Multicultural?” *Rainbow Digest*, Jan. 1990, Box 48, Folder 10, Wheaton College Affiliated Publications (RG 05 009), 1.

³³⁸“Minority or Multicultural?” *Rainbow Digest*.

³³⁹The Wheaton College Archives possesses newsletters that were published as early as 1992. *Rainbow Ramblings*, which later became *Mosaic*, was distributed to students of color. Another publication, *Rainbow Digest*, was sent to alumni. It included much of the same information that was shared with students, in addition to other details that would be of particular interest to alumni. Examples include a focus on several biracial students as well as staff and faculty members Billye Kee and Al Nieves. See respectively: Sharece Miller, “Who is Billye Faye Scott Kee,” *Rainbow Digest*, Spring 1998, and Tim Pachirat, “A Call to Justice—In the Life of Dr. Nieves,” *Rainbow Digest*, Summer 1996, both found in Box 48, Folder 10, Wheaton College Affiliated Publications (RG 05 009).

³⁴⁰Examples include a focus on interracial dating and highlights of President Litfin’s diversity initiative and the creation of the Diversity Task Force in the Winter 1995. See, respectively, “Race, Dating, Parents, & Marriage: Can we Talk about This?” *Mosaic*, Mar. 1999, Unprocessed Accession 2016-0072; and “The Diversity Task Force,” *Rainbow Digest*, Winter 1995, Box 48, Folder 10, Wheaton College Affiliated Publications (RG 05 009).

³⁴¹Deb Doak, “Blacks debate social lives,” *The Record*, Feb. 24, 1984.



corresponded with the Office of Civil Rights to determine if the institution could establish scholarships for racial minority students and remain in compliance with Title VI.³⁴² After receiving assurances from the Office of Civil Rights,³⁴³ the College created the James E. Burr Scholarship in 1987.³⁴⁴ Named in honor of abolitionist James Burr, who was buried on the grounds of the Illinois Institute in 1859, the scholarship awarded financial support to undergraduate students.³⁴⁵ Although initial award amounts and number of applicants remained modest, the College launched efforts to increase the scholarship endowment. The efforts included a multi-year program led by a Student Government committee, the James E. Burr Scholarship committee, tasked with raising \$500,000 by 1991³⁴⁶ for the fund as well as more gifts to be added from the New Century Challenge in the late 1990s.³⁴⁷ The College also supplemented the Burr annual awards out of operating budget surpluses until the endowment grew to a level that could sustain more significant annual support. By 1993, at least 22 students had received financial support through the Burr Scholarship.³⁴⁸

In 1997, the College took more

³⁴² James T. Hakes to Mary Frances O'Shea, "Department of Education Correspondence," January 15, 1986, HRTF Research Files

³⁴³ Mary Frances O'Shea to James T. Hakes, "Department of Education Correspondence," February 12, 1986, HRTF Research Files.

³⁴⁴ See David E. Johnston to Senior Administrative Cabinet and other administrators, "Minority Student Scholarships," Dec. 14, 1990, HRTF Research Files. This memo stated that "1990 publicity that race specific (minority) scholarships are illegal under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964" gave the administration further pause about such scholarships.

³⁴⁵ David E. Johnston to Charles Rodriguez, "James E. Burr Minority Scholarship Fund," Sept. 29, 1987, HRTF Research Files. See also the "The James E Burr Minority Scholarship Application Form," Box 1, Folder 2, Unprocessed Accession 2016-0072.

³⁴⁶ Dawn Kotapish, "Burr: A Campaign for Diversity", Fall 1989, Student Government Publication, HRTF Research Files.

³⁴⁷ Rodney Sisco to Donna Peltz, "Proposal Question," Mar. 30, 2001, HRTF Research Files.

³⁴⁸ Rodney Sisco to Dave Johnston, "James E. Burr Scholarship," May 5, 1992, Box 1, Folder 2, Accession 2016-0072.

Rodney Sisco '84 (1984 – 2018))

A cherished friend, mentor, and colleague, Rodney Sisco (1962-2018) left an indelible mark on the Wheaton community, serving the College's growing minority student population for over three decades as the first Director of the Office of Multicultural Development.

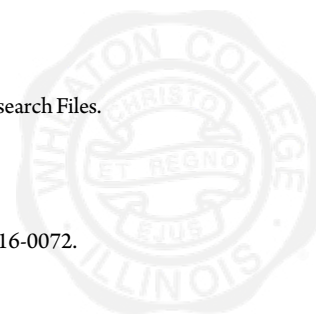
Born and raised in Philadelphia, Sisco arrived at Wheaton as an undergraduate student in 1980. During his education at Delaware County Christian School, a Christian school with strong academic standards, Sisco had already experienced many of the hurdles facing students of color in a majority-white, evangelical, educational setting. Matriculating at Wheaton, however, presented new levels of challenge. Besides the disorienting effect of being only one of a handful of minority students, Sisco recalls racially insensitive remarks and questions from fellow students and the frustration of frequently being mistaken for other Black students. These experiences left Sisco and other students of color feeling marginalized and unwanted by the institution. Still, Sisco describes his Wheaton years as largely positive, mainly because he "was very intentional with the fact that no one is going to keep me out."

Sisco noted the ways that God used the white evangelical environment and a significant mentor, Joyce Suber, in his process of racial identity formation. He described his junior year as one of "great angst... when I came to the realization that I was a Black man" and the fact that "people needed to deal with the fact that I was African American."

After graduation, Sisco joined the Admissions Department at Wheaton, focusing his efforts on minority student recruitment. In July 1988, he transitioned into the Office of Minority Affairs as the new Director, a position he held for the next thirty years. Rebranded as the Office of Multicultural Development, the department reflected Sisco's dedication to building Christ-centered diversity and inclusion on Wheaton's campus. As Director, Sisco, with the support of his wife Hasana Pennant Sisco '87, worked tirelessly to support and advocate for students of color whose struggles at Wheaton he understood, making the OMD a genuine hub for personal and spiritual mentorship. Through programming and outreach efforts, Sisco and the OMD also steered the larger campus community toward greater awareness of the implicit attitudes and behaviors that can threaten Christian unity.

While Sisco loved being at Wheaton and his role at the College, his efforts were not without frustration and setbacks, including a lack of adequate resourcing for the work of the OMD and the slow rate of institutional change. Despite these hurdles, Rodney Sisco's impact on the Wheaton community is indisputable. Numerous students, staff, faculty, and administrators cite Sisco's wise leadership, compassion, and commitment to truth-telling as life-changing. Today, many alumni of color credit their survival at Wheaton to the welcoming environment cultivated in the OMD and to Rodney and Hasana Sisco's unwavering advocacy for minority student concerns.

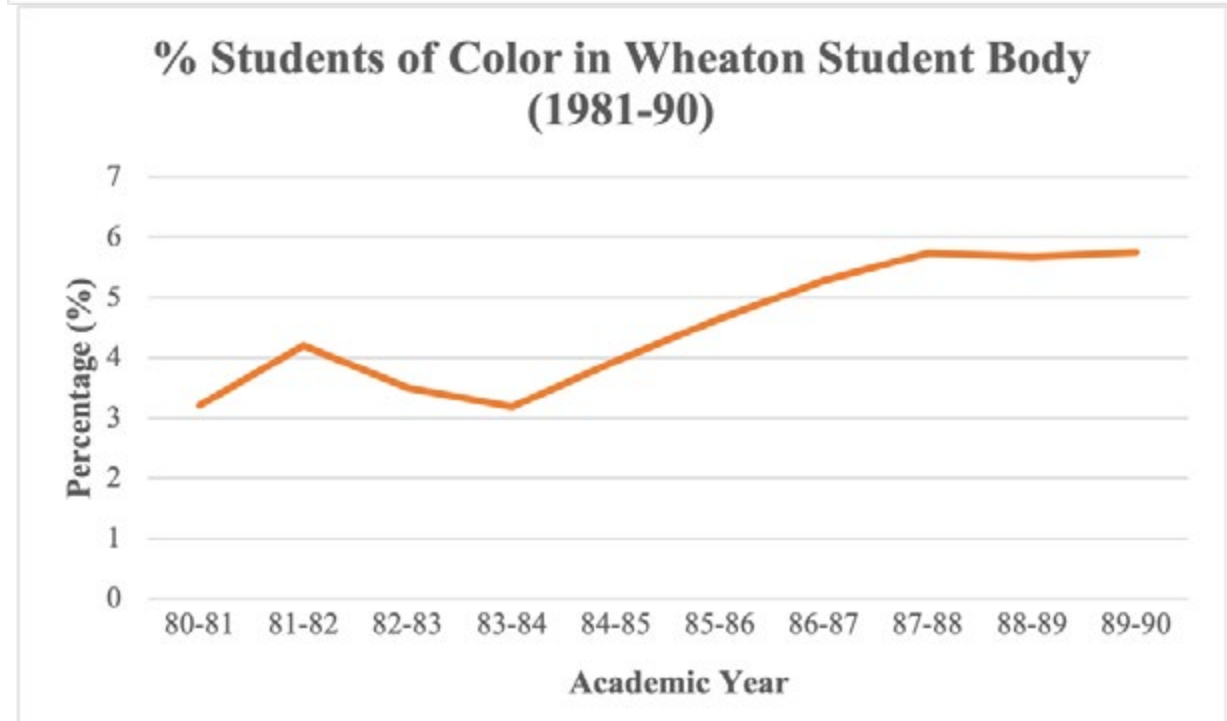
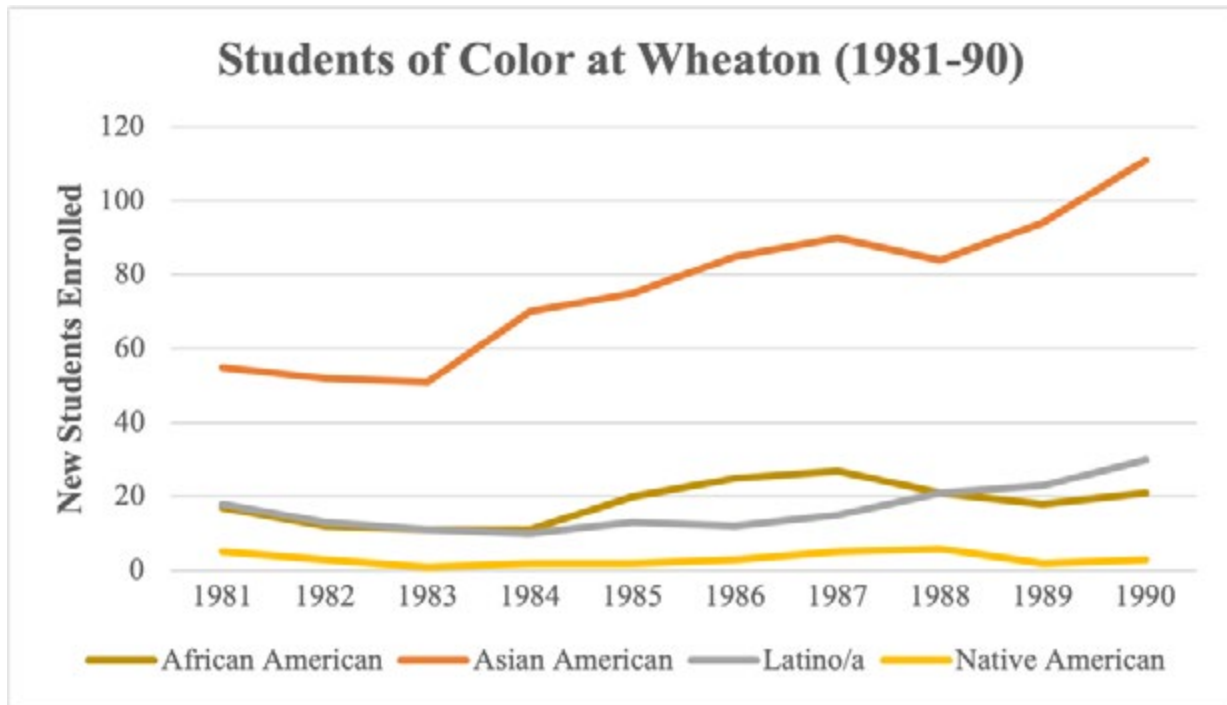
"Wheaton is a place I have struggled with but still believe in." (The Record, Sept 17, 1988)



substantial steps to “increase the presence and influence of our African-American sisters and brothers in Christ on this campus and in the Church world- wide”³⁴⁹ by establishing the Don and Ann Church Scholarship. Named for Wheaton alumnus, professor, and coach and Don Church ’57 and his wife Ann ’56 in recognition of their lifelong dedication to urban ministry, the gift was designed in partnership with College faculty and administration to support applicants who exhibited deep personal commitment to Christ and potential for leadership as Christians in the world at large.³⁵⁰

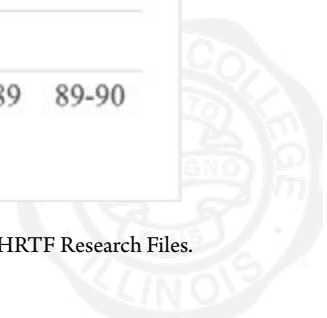
Connections to Churches

Building relationships with ethnic and racial minority churches and pastors and becoming known in these communities were important, if elusive, recruitment strategies over the years. As stated before, in the late 1970s, both Director of



³⁴⁹ Stan Jones to several administrators, “Brief Description of the Don and Ann Church Scholarship,” Aug. 25, 1997, HRTF Research Files.

³⁵⁰ Stan Jones to administrators, Aug. 15, 1997.



Admissions Bean and Dean of Students for Minority Affairs Smith made overtures to churches and Christian minority organizations to introduce them to Wheaton and promote dialogue.

Perhaps the best example of this came about in the late 1980s when Wheaton began hosting a large missions conference for Korean pastors and ministry leaders: the Korean World Missions Conference (KWMC). This conference, first held at Wheaton in 1988, with 1500 participants, provided the opportunity for leaders of Korean churches in North America and Korea to work together for world missions. Held every four years, KWMC exposed Wheaton to hundreds of Korean pastors and church leaders impressed with the prestigious Christian college, its beautiful campus, and its deep ties to Billy Graham, who was highly regarded in the Korean church. This familiarity provided an impetus for Korean leaders to encourage their church members to consider Wheaton for their children.

Around that same time, KOSTA, a large Christian Korean student conference also began meeting annually on Wheaton's campus. This informal connection with Korean churches, both nationally and internationally, is thought to have greatly contributed to an increase in Korean and Korean American students applying to Wheaton that began in the 1990s.³⁵¹



Figure 24: A. Duane Litfin, undated. College Archives.
Photo File: Litfin, A Duane, Photograph #A12766.

President A. Duane Litfin, 1993-2010

In the 1990s, campus focus on issues of diversity and inclusion would take on new directions under the leadership of Wheaton's seventh president, Dr. Duane Litfin. The second of Wheaton's presidents called from the pulpit to the president's office, Dr. Litfin earned doctorates in both communication (Purdue University) and New Testament (Oxford University). After serving on the faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary for a decade, Litfin transitioned to the pastorate of First Evangelical Church in Memphis, Tennessee, where he remained until invited to Wheaton nine years later.

When Dr. Litfin accepted the call to become Wheaton's seventh president in 1993, the aftershocks of the Los Angeles riots were still simmering in the national consciousness. Between 1993 and 2000, the campus launched multiple developments and programs relating to the issues of diversity and inclusion. Perhaps the most controversial initiative of the early Litfin administration occurred in 2000, when the College renamed its mascot, replacing the culturally and religiously insensitive "Crusader" moniker with "Thunder." Other significant changes grew out of the ambitious New Century Challenge capital campaign.

The New Century Challenge, 1996-2000

In 1994, a Diversity Enhancement Task Force was formed to study and make recommendations to President Litfin in advance of a major capital campaign being proposed. The group membership had wide staff and administration representation and met regularly to receive feedback from multiple stakeholders on campus and develop a set of priorities. In April 1995, the Task Force offered a set of recommendations to the President,³⁵² which was further reviewed with input from faculty and staff. In May of 1996, Litfin proposed, and the Trustees accepted "Diversity" as one of five initiatives to be included in the \$140M New Century Challenge (NCC) capital campaign. The Board committed more than twenty percent

³⁵¹HRTF Interview with Shawn Leftwich Wynne by Esther Lee Cruz, July 1, 2022, HRTF Research Files. The last KWMC was held at Wheaton in 2016 after the conference grew over 5,000 attendees, surpassing the capacity that the College could accommodate.

³⁵²Duane Litfin to department heads, "The Initiatives," Mar. 12, 1996, Box 1, Folder 28, Unprocessed Accession 2014-0008, Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton, IL: Wheaton College. The final set of recommendations to enhance diversity included: (1) clear articulation by the President of the importance of improving diversity; (2) recruitment and retention of minority and women faculty and administrator, (3) increased recruitment of minority and international students; (4) recruitment, retention, and development of non-academic personnel; (5) campus-wide education; (6) ongoing institutional coordination and collaboration; and (7) improvement of relations with the off-campus communities of color.

of the \$140 million raised in the NCC campaign to the Diversity Initiative, the NCC's largest monetary goal.³⁵³ Plans for launching the Diversity Initiative included two phases, with Phase I planned for 1996 to 2000, and Phase II to begin in 2001.³⁵⁴ Recognizing that Wheaton “has not always been a comfortable place for people of color,”³⁵⁵ a primary goal for the Diversity Initiative was to see the Wheaton community of students, faculty, and staff become a better and welcoming reflection of the diversity found within the body of Christ. According to Litfin, “Our goal for Wheaton is to display in every way possible what delights our Heavenly Father.”³⁵⁶ But there was also a practical rationale—that of the effective learning that takes place in preparation for an increasingly globalized world. Provost Stanton Jones further reflected, “At the broadest level, what Wheaton College is about is the education of the whole person. Our goal is to provide an environment in which students can learn to be world Christians—and to do that we need faculty and students and staff who come from all walks of life.”³⁵⁷

The Diversity Initiative included efforts to increase financial aid to minority students as well as those with high financial need. Funds were added to support existing funding sources, such as the Burr Scholarship, at a higher level and establish new funding sources for students of color, such as the Church Scholarship.³⁵⁸ The NCC also helped to identify other institutional goals, such as developing plans for faculty education to enhance the experience of minorities at Wheaton and addressing issues of inclusiveness in the Wheaton College curriculum,³⁵⁹ as well as evaluating the possibilities of developing a pre-college urban outreach program and enhancing teamwork between the College and alumni working in the Chicago urban setting. Expanding campus employment opportunities for both women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups was also a part of the Initiative.³⁶⁰

The commitment to expand diversity at the College in Phase I involved concerted efforts on the part of all members of the Wheaton community, from the Board of Trustees to faculty and staff, and students.³⁶¹ In 1998, the College sponsored voluntary small discussion groups of faculty and staff around the topic of diversity so as to “better understand the impact of racism and discrimination on the body of Christ.” The groups read and discussed the recently published book *Breaking Down Walls: A Model of Reconciliation in an Age of Racial Strife* by Rev. Raleigh Washington and Glen Kehrein '73.³⁶²

While there was some concern on campus about pursuing diversity initiatives solely to be “politically correct,” the administration paid attention to emphasizing the scriptural framework for diversity initiatives. There did not appear to be open resistance from the campus or external community over diversity during this time, possibly because of the widespread understanding that Wheaton was doing what was “biblical.”³⁶³

³⁵³ R. Mark Dillon, “The Measure of Stewardship,” *Wheaton Magazine*, Summer 2000, 2.

³⁵⁴ Duane Litfin to department heads, “The Initiatives.”

³⁵⁵ Dawn Kotapish, “Reflections of the Kingdom: Diversity Initiative,” *Wheaton Magazine*, Summer 1998, 5.

³⁵⁶ Duane Litfin, “Dear Friends,” *Wheaton Magazine*, Summer 1998, inside front cover.

³⁵⁷ Stan Jones, quoted in “Reflections of the Kingdom: Diversity Initiative,” *Wheaton Magazine*, Summer 1998, 3.

³⁵⁸ “A Jump Start for a New Century: The Five Initiatives,” *Wheaton Magazine*, Summer 2000, 10.

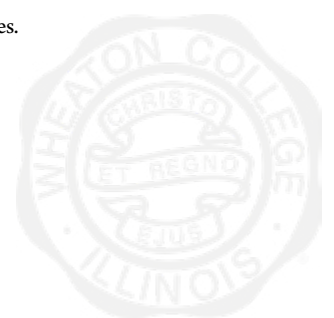
³⁵⁹ HRTF Interview with A. Duane Litfin by Dale Wong and Katherine Graber, Apr. 22, 2022, HRTF Research Files.

³⁶⁰ “A Jump Start for a New Century: The Five Initiatives,” *Wheaton Magazine*, Summer 2000, 10.

³⁶¹ R. Mark Dillon, “The Measure of Stewardship,” *Wheaton Magazine*, Summer 2000, 2-5.

³⁶² HRTF Interview with Duane Litfin.

³⁶³ HRTF Interview with Duane Litfin.



Coordination Council

Knowing that the goals of the Diversity Initiative would touch multiple areas of the College, the NCC created the Coordination Council charged with coordinating all aspects of the efforts to achieve the aims of diversity. The membership was comprised of every member of the Senior Administrative Cabinet (SAC), all of whom occupied positions of implementation regarding programs and policies.³⁶⁴ Also included were the Director of Admissions, the College chaplain, and other campus administrators. Chaired by Director of Multicultural Affairs Sisco, the Coordination Council began meeting monthly in 1997.³⁶⁵

Meeting minutes amply show that all issues pertinent to advancing diversity fell under the purview of the Coordination Council for monitoring and assessment. This included admissions; retention; financial aid; recruiting, hiring, and retaining minority faculty, staff, and academic programming. At the conclusion of each academic year, the group produced an annual report for President Litfin, with further recommendations for action. This allowed Council members the greatest freedom to speak openly and honestly about obstacles, failures, and successes without threat of outside reactions. Any public dissemination of the annual report was up to Litfin himself, which he sometimes did with the Board and other advisory groups. In fact, the name Coordination Council was chosen to somewhat downplay the word “diversity,” which was not yet mainstream and came with suspicion from some constituents, including trustees.³⁶⁶

An Incident of Racial Profiling on Wheaton’s Campus

Unfortunately, Wheaton’s campus has not always been devoid of harmful acts of discrimination. In 1998, Lincoln Douglas, a Trinidadian of African descent, and a 1987 Wheaton alumnus, was reported to campus Public Safety while browsing in the College bookstore. A bookstore employee initially approached Douglas and asked him to provide identification after noticing that he fit the description of a shoplifter recently released by the City of Wheaton Police Department. A tense conversation ensued when Public Safety officers arrived and confronted Douglas on suspicion of shoplifting. Douglas eventually confirmed his identity and left the bookstore without further incident.

Douglas’s wife Dianne, also a 1987 graduate and a current student in Wheaton’s Doctor of Psychology program, wrote a letter of to President Litfin and the Trustees complaining that her husband had received differential treatment based on his race. Litfin immediately launched an investigation, and news of the incident spread to faculty, staff, and students, spurred on by *The Record’s* coverage of the situation.¹ After the investigation concluded several weeks later, Litfin distributed a campus-wide letter detailing the incident and lamenting how the episode sent the message that “our Wheaton Campus was not a safe and welcoming environment.” The letter absolved Douglas from any wrongful or inappropriate behavior and included an institutional apology for the pain caused the Douglas family. Litfin concluded:

This event has illustrated how easily we can harm one another, even when we have the best of intentions. [It] underscores how intentional we must become to make our community hospitable to persons of all races and cultures. It is also clear how much we all need each other’s patience and understanding, and at times forgiveness, if we are to become ever more ‘one in Christ.’²

The Douglases gratefully acknowledged Wheaton’s effort to reconcile through subsequent meetings with the couple and the individuals involved in the incident to discuss what happened in a spirit of healing and honest discussion. Without downplaying the hurt they experienced, the Douglases stated they did not harbor ill will toward the bookstore employees or Public Safety officers. They hoped that the College would learn from the incident and move in a positive direction toward a diverse community.³

¹ “Incident prompts inquiry,” *The Record*, February 6, 1998.

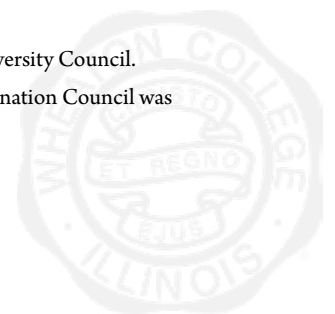
² Memo from Duane Litfin to the Wheaton College Campus Community, “The Bookstore Incident,” February 23, 1998.

³ “Douglas meets with Public Safety,” *The Record*, March 27, 1998.

³⁶⁴ “Coordination Council 2005-2006 Annual Report,” Box 1, Folder 11, Unprocessed Accession 2014-0008.

³⁶⁵ Coordination Council has met continuously since its inception in 1997. In 2012 the name was changed to Diversity Council.

³⁶⁶ “Minutes: Diversity Council,” May 10, 2012, Box 1, Folder 3, Unprocessed Accession 2014- 0008. The Coordination Council was renamed the Diversity Council in 2012.



Student Orientation Messages from the President

Recognizing the common gaps of cultural understanding that existed between white and minority students, Litfin began an annual practice during freshman orientation to speak to all students and parents about Wheaton and the goals of diversity. In 1995 the Wheaton student body was about 89% white.³⁶⁷ Thus, the President's orientation welcome speech included a section directed toward the white majority students that pointed out the challenges faced by their new multicultural classmates. In Litfin's mind, white students needed reminding that their experience of Wheaton is different, sometimes radically so, from that of minority students, and that the onus is on the white students, the overwhelming majority, to shift the culture of Wheaton.³⁶⁸ This message was reportedly appreciated by many of the minority students and parents. Less evident is how the student body as a whole, and their parents, took the message to heart.

Project SOAR (Summer Opportunities for Advancement in Research)

In 1992, Wheaton submitted a grant proposal to the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Undergraduate Biological Sciences Education Program. The grant sought funding for an initiative aiming to attract and retain highly motivated high school students from minority groups that were under-represented in the sciences, specifically medicine.³⁶⁹ The four primary objectives of the program were:

- To increase the students' knowledge in mathematics and the sciences
- To encourage students to pursue careers in science, math, or medicine
- To recruit students to enroll at Wheaton into the biological and health science programs
- To give opportunity for current Wheaton College minority science majors to gain leadership skills by acting as mentors to the high school participants.³⁷⁰

The grant was approved for \$550,000 in five-year funding for The Summer Opportunities for Advancement in Research, otherwise called Project SOAR. The program targeted under-resourced African and Latino American students in the Chicago Public School (CPS) system and other areas who expressed interest in pursuing science. Several cohorts of 12 accepted students spent two intensive summers on Wheaton's campus, for four weeks each, taking Biology, Chemistry, Math, and English courses taught by both Wheaton faculty and high school teachers from the participant schools.³⁷¹ The idea was to enhance their interest in the sciences while simultaneously exposing them to college life in its entirety including staying in dorms and taking meals in the dining hall. The funding included an \$800 stipend per student.³⁷² Current Wheaton minority undergraduate science majors acted as mentors and assisted in studying in the classroom, spent time with the participants, and planned social events. The mentors and representatives from the Admissions Office also kept in touch with the students throughout the academic year.³⁷³

Project SOAR was directed by Wheaton Professor of Chemistry Dr. Derek Chignell. He was assisted by Dr. Larry

³⁶⁷"Students of Color UG Enrollment, 1975-2019," Wheaton College Institutional Assessment, 2019, HRTF Research Files, 54.

³⁶⁸HRTF Interview with Duane Litfin.

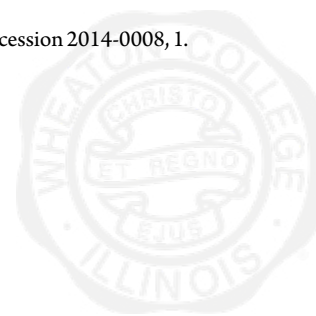
³⁶⁹"Wheaton College Science Leadership Training Program," grant proposal to Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Nov. 30 1992, Box 3, Folder 28, Unprocessed Accession 2014-0008, 7.

³⁷⁰Joan Fitzgerald and Edwin Oliver, "Project SOAR Evaluation" Jan. 26, 1997, Box 3, Folder 28, Unprocessed Accession 2014-0008, 1.

³⁷¹At least one faculty member from each public high school participating would be included.

³⁷²Project SOAR pamphlet, Box 3, Folder 28, Unprocessed Accession 2014-0008.

³⁷³Project SOAR pamphlet.



Funck, also in the Department of Chemistry. Dr. Dorothy Chappell gave original vision to the effort in its formative stage.³⁷⁴ A committee of these plus several administrators gave additional oversight.³⁷⁵

Three years into the program, an evaluation demonstrated success in helping the participants deepen their knowledge and appreciation of the sciences. Surveys also showed that, as a result of SOAR, many of the participants reaffirmed their plans to pursue fields in science as they furthered their education. Participants also benefitted by experiencing first-hand the additional rigor of college-level instruction which differed, sometimes dramatically, from the instruction they were receiving in their own high schools, many of which were under-resourced for top science teaching. It was not unusual for CPS students to have only observed lab experiments—having never conducted experiments themselves prior to SOAR. The development of independent living skills, improved social skills, better study habits, and an overall better understanding of college life were all added benefits of the four weeks on Wheaton’s campus.³⁷⁶

The Wheaton student mentors also drew valuable leadership experience from their close connection with the high schoolers as well as rewarding experiences of serving as role models. The teachers, both from the College and the high schools, drew benefits from their interactions with students and teaching environments outside their normal sphere.³⁷⁷

Unfortunately, Project SOAR did not successfully recruit anyone in the first three classes to enroll at Wheaton College. Surveys showed that participants came to appreciate the benefits of a small liberal arts college education that Wheaton provided. While the program did not require students to sign the Community Covenant or even hold Christian faith of any tradition, there was some evidence that the Christian emphasis on the educational experience proved a deterrent for some high schoolers, which may have diminished their motivation to matriculate to Wheaton.³⁷⁸

Dr. Alvaro Nieves (1983-2013)

When Alvaro Nieves joined the Wheaton College faculty in 1983, he was only one of two Latino professors in a faculty of 160. Acutely aware of the racial disparities in both the Wheaton College faculty and student body, Nieves spent the next thirty years working to increase minority representation through advocacy and networking inside and outside the College.

Over the years, Nieves bolstered efforts to recruit students of color by fighting to increase minority student scholarships, making a Wheaton education viable for many first generation and students of color. Another tactic Nieves leveraged was building long-term relationships with minority-focused churches. Nieves also advocated for revisions in the curriculum to highlight diverse voices and was responsible for expanding course offerings on race and ethnic studies from 2-credit hour to 4-credit hour classes.

Nieves also worked to recruit and welcome new faculty colleagues of color at Wheaton, most notably through his work with the Visiting Minority Scholars Program. He recalls hosting prospective minority faculty candidates for meals in his home during campus visits, a gesture that proved decisive for several candidates who chose to join Wheaton’s faculty.

While Dr. Nieves’s efforts bore fruit over three decades, coinciding with an increase in minority student enrollment and enhanced appreciation for racial issues among his faculty colleagues, his advocacy was not without significant obstacles, including pushback from administrators and faculty. When Nieves recruited Dr. Henry Allen, a Black sociology professor, a faculty colleague told him, “Wheaton isn’t big enough for the both of you,” implying that they were too activist, plain spoken, and angry to both be at the College at the same time.

Looking back on three decades of service to the College, Dr. Nieves recalls his reasons for continuing to advocate for improved race relations at Wheaton:

“We keep trying, we keep hoping, thinking that somewhere along the line maybe a piece of it will be heard and maybe folks can learn. . . I think we should be a school that exemplifies God’s justice.”

- HRTF interview with Alvaro Nieves, June 23, 2022

³⁷⁴While responsible for much of the original vision of SOAR, Chappell took a position with Gordon College in 1994. Although she returned to Wheaton in 2000, she missed the years SOAR was implemented.

³⁷⁵ “Wheaton College Science Leadership Training Program,” grant proposal.

³⁷⁶F Joan Fitzgerald and Edwin Oliver, “Project SOAR Evaluation,” 4.

³⁷⁷ Joan Fitzgerald and Edwin Oliver, “Project SOAR Evaluation,” 10.

³⁷⁸ Joan Fitzgerald and Edwin Oliver, “Project SOAR Evaluation,” 12.



Despite some of the positive aspects of Project SOAR, there is no evidence that the program lasted beyond the five-year funding grant. By the time Dorothy Chappell, the original visionary, returned to Wheaton in 2000, after serving as Academic Dean at Gordon College since 1996, SOAR had already concluded.³⁷⁹

Minority Faculty Recruitment Efforts

Despite consistent overtures from various corners of the College for more faculty of color, the hiring of minority faculty was initially anything but swift. In 1968, the year Wheaton launched the Compensatory Education Program, the College could boast only one faculty member of color, Ozzie Edwards '58, an African American alumnus who served as a Special Instructor in the Department of Sociology from 1968 to 1971. The next year, Narl Hung joined the Chemistry Department. In 1973, a second Asian faculty member, Pattle Pun, was added to the Department of Biology.

The 1980s saw four more additions: two Latino, one Black, one Asian. The 1990s saw substantive progress by comparison with the appointment of six African American, three Asian, and two Latino. In fact, the College added almost twice as many faculty members of color in the six years of Liftin's tenure as President (11 from 1993 to 1999) as were added in the previous three decades. Eight of these Wheaton faculty members were added from 1997-99, coinciding with the efforts of the New Century Challenge.³⁸⁰

A share of this progress could be attributed to Professor of Psychology Stanton L. Jones, who became Provost in 1996. He cited "Women and Minorities" to the entire Faculty as one (among seven) of his own personal priorities as he took the position. In this manifesto, he clarified that it was "vital" for Wheaton to hire more minority (and women) faculty members.³⁸¹ "What do we need to do to recruit a more ethnically and gender diverse faculty?" Jones asked. "My answer would be that the first fundamental requirement is personal—we need to have our hearts broken about the horrible injustice of racism and sexism and the damage done to the lives of our sisters and brothers."³⁸²

At the close of the decade, the number of minority faculty remained meager relative to the overall size of the faculty ranks. The HRTF has identified 17 minority faculty members in 1999, comprising just about 10% of the making the entire Wheaton College faculty.³⁸³ However, to Jones and others, the substantive progress made was evidence laying to rest the common myth that qualified minority scholars of Wheaton's ilk were "just not out there." Jones was also quick to recognize the extra diligence and intentionality required of department chairs and committees to find diverse candidates.³⁸⁴ Furthermore, a comparison of Wheaton College to national averages for faculty of color showed that Wheaton was at the national benchmark, and possibly above, for percentages of minority faculty.³⁸⁵

The Visiting Minority Scholars Program

Of the various ideas generated to attract minority faculty candidates coming out of the NCC, the Visiting Minority Scholars Program (VMS) showed promise. This was an effort to identify diverse scholars as candidates for soon-to-be open tenure-track positions. This program was developed by Jones with input from select minority faculty: Professor of Sociology, Alvaro Nieves and Professor of Psychology Derek McNeil. In 1998, Dr. Henry Allen became the first faculty member hired

³⁷⁹ Email from Dorothy Chappell to Dale Wong, Sept. 15, 2022. HRTF Research Files.

³⁸⁰ Stan Jones to Trygve Larsen, "Report on Expanded Employment Opportunities for Minorities," Dec. 3, 1999, HRTF Research Files.

³⁸¹ Stan Jones, "Initial Comments to the Faculty of Wheaton College," Presented at the Faculty Workshop, Aug. 31, 1996, HRTF Research Files.

³⁸² Stan Jones, "Initial Comments."

³⁸³ *Wheaton College Catalog*, 6. The 1999-2000 Catalog claims the total number of Wheaton College faculty hovered at "approximately 170" at the end of the century.

³⁸⁴ Stan Jones to Larsen, "Report on Expanded."

³⁸⁵ Stan Jones to Larsen, "Report on Expanded."

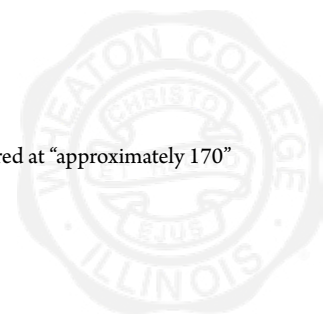




Figure 25: Alvaro Nieves, 1986. *The Tower*, p. 86.

under this program in anticipation of Dr. Ivan Fah's retirement. Five to six more faculty over the next 12 years were recruited and hired in this same manner.

The successful recruitment of faculty of color required the collaborative efforts of administration and faculty beyond establishing a program. The provost, in his commitment to increasing faculty of color, was intentional in hiring faculty of color, advocating for them, and supporting them in tangible ways to try to retain them. Nieves strongly encouraged other minority faculty to be actively involved in the hiring process as well, believing that this connection with other faculty of color during the interview process offered a level of trust and comfort that made a difference to minority faculty recruits.³⁸⁶

Nieves also advocated for the College to have "evidence of recruiting among underrepresented populations" before hiring faculty.³⁸⁷ There was never any explicit resistance to the VMS, but there was some lack of enthusiasm in academic departments with a small percentage of minority applicants.³⁸⁸

Although there were some empirical facts supporting low percentage of minority candidates in some disciplines, nonetheless, there was consistent emphasis to

staff, faculty, and department chairs, motivating them to find underrepresented Christian scholars who would find Wheaton College to be a good fit for them.

"WHAT KEPT ME AT WHEATON WAS MINORITY STUDENTS AND MINORITY FACULTY. THEY HAD FEW OTHERS TO TALK TO, TO TRUST, OR WHOM THEY FELT WOULD UNDERSTAND WHERE THEY WERE COMING FROM. MY MINISTRY WAS TO STUDENTS OF COLOR WHO WERE STRUGGLING AND WHO WERE OFTEN THE FIRST IN THEIR FAMILY TO GO TO COLLEGE. THAT STRENGTHENED MY RESOLVE TO HANG ON AND KEEP GOING. AT ONE POINT, I WAS THINKING SERIOUSLY ABOUT LEAVING WHEATON AFTER SOME TOUGH TENURE AND PROMOTION DISCUSSIONS. BUT I THOUGHT ABOUT WHO STUDENTS OF COLOR MIGHT TURN TO IF I LEFT. I FELT THAT MAY HAVE BEEN ONE PART OF WHY GOD CALLED ME TO WHEATON, AND THAT WAS WHY I STAYED FOR NEARLY 30 YEARS."

- HRTF INTERVIEW, DR. ALVARO NIEVES, JUNE 23, 2022

The African American Church History Lecture Series

In the early 90s, the Billy Graham Center Archives partnered with the Office of Minority Affairs to co-sponsor an annual lecture series to "introduce interesting themes from Black American religious history" to the Wheaton College community.³⁸⁹ The lectures would coincide with Black History Month³⁹⁰ and would also serve to highlight the evangelism and church history resources of the BGC Archives and BGC Library.

The guest lecturers were all African American evangelical leaders, with the Rev. Dr. Larry Murphy, Associate Professor of the History of Christianity at Garrett-Evangelical Seminary in Evanston, IL, serving as the inaugural speaker in February of 1994. His lecture was titled: "I'm in Charge Here (I Think): The Unfolding of an Oral Historian." Approximately 50 people attended each of the first two years, which was less than anticipated. As an attempt to boost attendance for the 1996 lecture, a dinner with an invited guest list was planned, featuring that year's speaker, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, the pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago. With grant assistance from AT&T, the lecture grew to an attendance of 260.

³⁸⁶ Nieves's close and personal relationship with Allen likely played a large part in Allen's choice to accept the position at Wheaton.

³⁸⁷ HRTF Interview with Alvaro Nieves by Esther Cruz, June 23, 2022, HRTF Research Files.

³⁸⁸ The VMS was a high priority program and the most successful effort to build up minority faculty to date.

³⁸⁹ "African American Lecture Series Notes," Box 3, Folder 2, Unprocessed Accession 2014-0008.

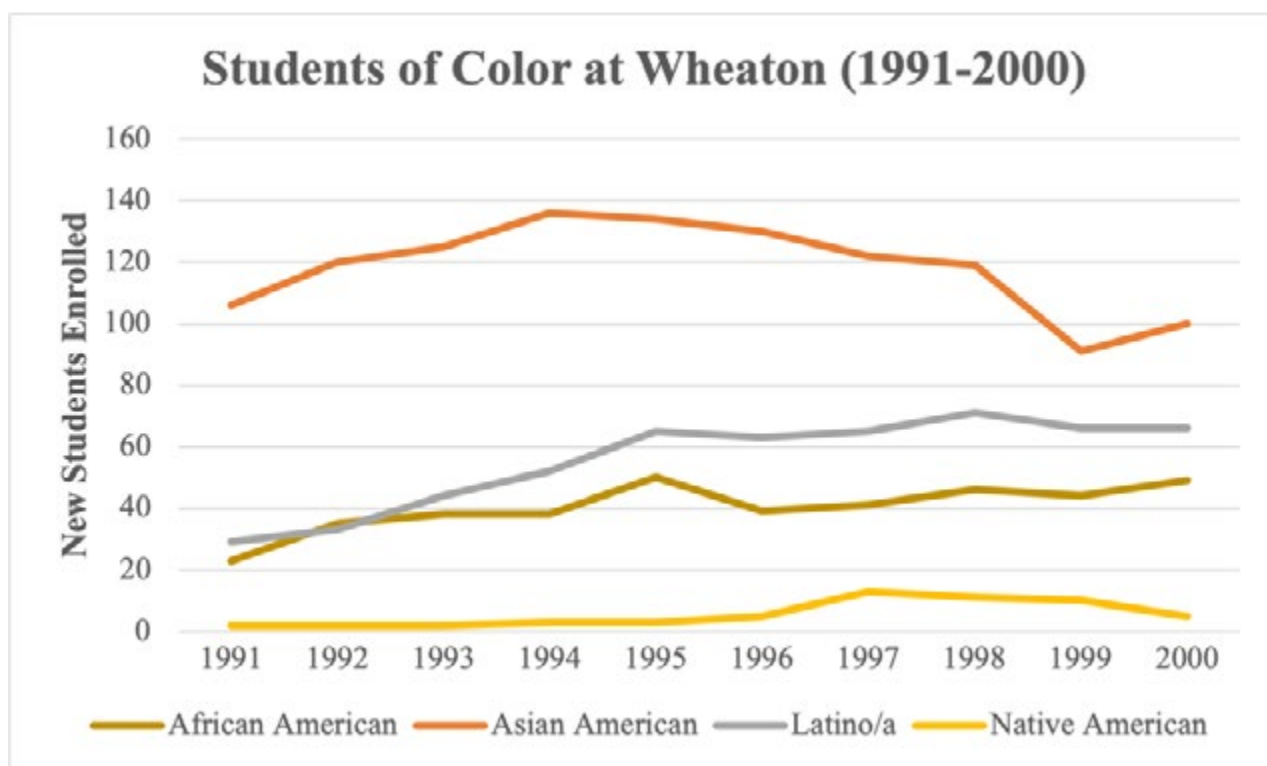
³⁹⁰ Matthew Gill, "Lecture Features Black History in the Church," *The Record*, Feb. 18, 1994.



In 1999 the BGC Archive organizers determined that the series was not fulfilling their original vision for the series. They began to transition oversight of the series to the OMA,³⁹¹ which they did following the 2000 lecture featuring Dr. William Pannell of Fuller Theological Seminary. Pannell spoke on “A Tale of Two Preachers: The Ministries of 2 Southern Preachers and their impact on the African American Church.” By then, the attendance had dropped to below a hundred.

Summary of the 1980s and 1990s

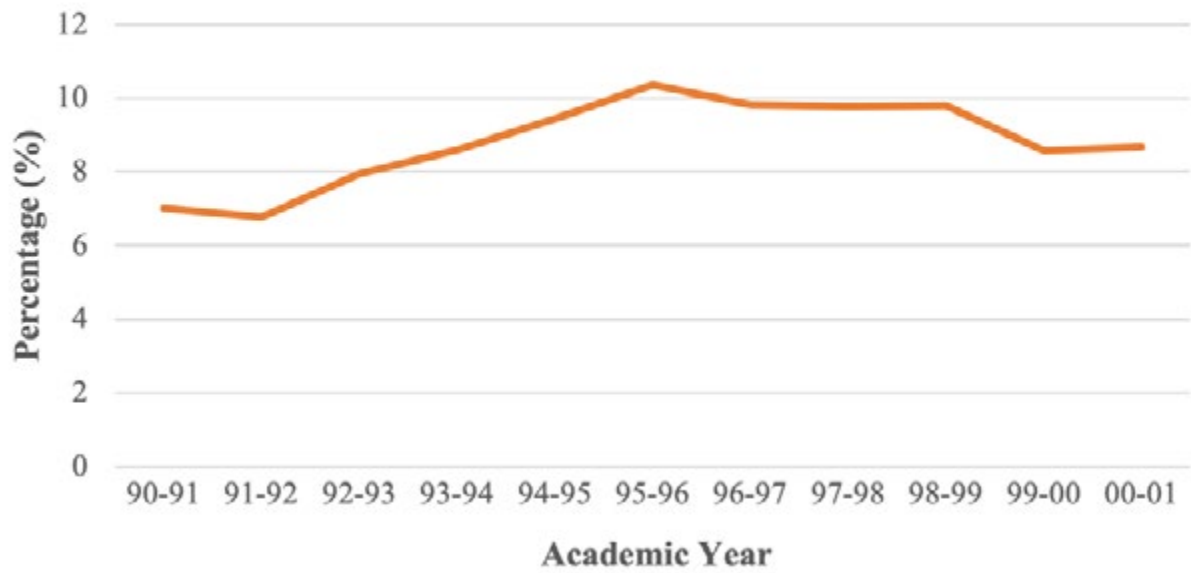
When Joyce Suber was hired in 1980 to replace Nadine Smith, the Minority program at Wheaton was still finding its way. The Wheaton by 1985 goal for 6% student of color representation in the student body was a laudable aspiration. And there are other examples that the College administration was growing in its awareness of the unique needs of communities of color on campus. Precisely how to meet these needs was a question searching for an answer. Suber’s 16-page internal assessment and Henry Allen’s 1983 external review offered strategic and credible solutions for progress in the long term. The hiring of Rodney Sisco, first in Admissions and later as the Director of Multicultural Development, was an important and necessary step to set the College on a better trajectory to meet the social and spiritual needs of students of color. Particularly significant is the founding of the Office of Minority Affairs in 1988 to provide new energy, support, and avenues for growth under Sisco’s leadership. The establishment of the Church and Burr Scholarships were a tangible expression of the College’s commitment to making a Wheaton education a reality for students of color. Finally, in the 1995-96 academic year, Wheaton’s student body reached a milestone, with students of color representing 10% of the student body.³⁹² These steps forward, sometimes halting, are laudable. By no means was the work close to reaching Wheaton’s aspirations to be a multiethnic and multiracial reflection of God’s kingdom. However, by time the Board of Trustees introduced “Diversity” as the largest initiative of the New Century Challenge, and attention to faculty of color recruitment resulted in significant progress in the faculty ranks, the efforts to make Wheaton College more ethnically inclusive and welcoming for all had, at that time, some positive momentum.



³⁹¹ Kenneth Gill to Duane Litfin, Jan. 25, 1999, Box 3, Folder 4, Unprocessed Accession 2014-008.

³⁹² “Students of Color UG Enrollment, 1975-2019,” 54.

% Students of Color in Wheaton Student Body (1991-2000)



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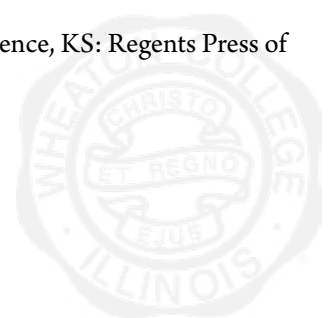
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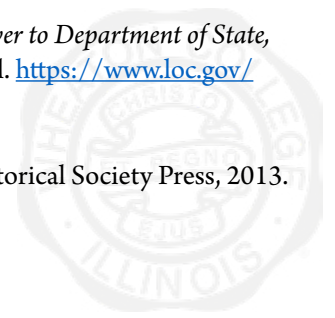
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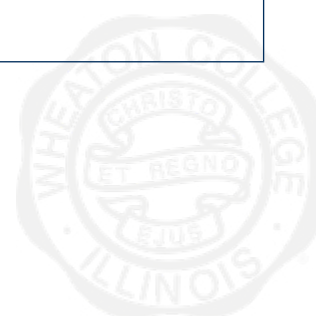
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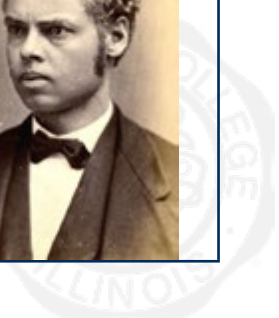
Appendix A


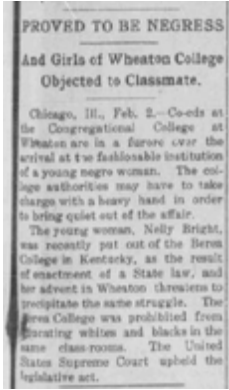

Timeline of Race Relations at Wheaton College in Historical Context

Date	Event	Image
1700s-1830s	The Potawatomi indigenous people occupy the lands surrounding Lake Michigan. As European Americans migrate westward, following the Revolutionary War, they encounter these indigenous nations. In a report from 1821, what is now known as Blanchard Lawn on the Wheaton College campus is referred to as “Old Indian Hill.”	
1830	President Andrew Jackson signs the Indian Removal Act, forcing Native American peoples to leave their lands and migrate west of the Mississippi River.	
1833	The Second Treaty of Chicago creates an agreement between the United States government and the Potawatomi, Chippewa, and Odawa nations ceding five million acres of indigenous land in Michigan, Wisconsin, and northern Illinois to the United States in return for cash payment, annual annuities, and promises of reservation lands west of the Mississippi River. The Illinois Potawatomi migrates to reservation lands in what is now Nebraska.	
1830's	European settlers and their descendants begin to establish communities in what would become DuPage County in 1831. Brothers Warren and Jesse Wheaton arrive in the late 1830s. The Wheaton brothers purchased land that the United States government acquired from the Potawatomi.	
1853	The Illinois Institute is founded in DuPage County to educate the children of Wesleyan Methodists, radical abolitionists who have recently split from their denomination over the issue of slavery. The Institute's first president John Cross openly advertises his role as a conductor on the Underground Railroad.	
1855	In defiance of the cultural strictures of the day, the Illinois Institute welcomes Black students. The 1855 Charter and Circular advertises: “No distinctions are made in the rights and privileges of students, on account of ancestry or color.”	





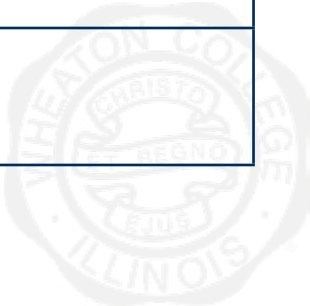
1857	The first identified student of color, Mary Barker, enrolls in the Illinois Institute. Although she departs after a year of study, Barker returns in 1863 to complete a teaching program at what is then Wheaton College.	
1859	Abolitionist James E. Burr is buried on the campus of the Illinois Institute, honoring his request to be buried on land unsullied by slavery. Today, his grave remains on the north end of Williston Hall, and his grave marker is on display in Blanchard Hall.	
1860	Jonathan Blanchard, social reformer and abolitionist leader, is invited to become the President of the Illinois Institute. The school is renamed Wheaton College, after a generous land donation from the Wheaton brothers, and launches its inaugural semester in January.	
1861	The Civil War begins in April after the surrender of Fort Sumpter. Over the course of the war, 67 of the 127 male Wheaton College students serve in the United States Union Army.	
1862	President Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all people held in enslavement.	
1865	In April, the Civil War ends with the surrender of General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Court House in Virginia. Less than a week later, President Lincoln is assassinated by John Wilkes Booth in Washington, D.C. In December, Congress ratifies the Thirteenth Amendment, formally abolishing the institution of slavery. On Christmas Eve, the Ku Klux Klan is founded in Pulaski, Tennessee, by six former officers of the Confederate Army.	
1866	Edward B. Sellars graduates from Wheaton College in 1866, becoming the identified first Black graduate of Wheaton and among the first in the State of Illinois.	


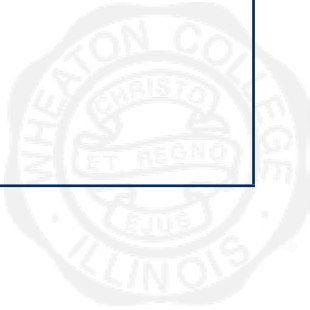


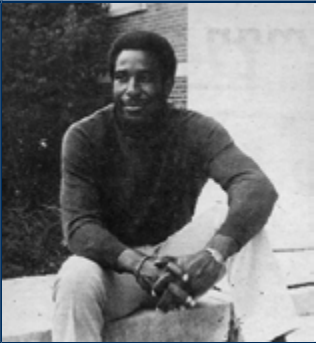
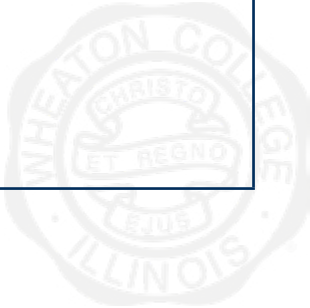
1882	<p>Charles Blanchard succeeds his father and becomes the second president of Wheaton College at the age of 36. He holds the distinction of becoming Wheaton's longest-serving president, leading the College for a remarkable 43 years until his death in 1925.</p>	
1896	<p>The Supreme Court legalizes racial segregation in “equal but separate accommodations” in <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i>.</p>	
1890	<p>The United States Army massacres between 150 and 300 Lakota people near Wounded Knee Creek on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Many of the United States Army's 7th Cavalry officers are awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for their role in the massacre.</p>	
1909	<p>After hearing about Wheaton's abolitionist origins, African American student Nellie Bryant applies to attend Wheaton College after segregation in the South forces her to leave Berea College in Kentucky. Bryant receives a chilly reception from fellow students upon her arrival at Wheaton, and no students will eat or room with her. The College deliberates whether it can legally expel her, and while their decision is unclear, Bryant does not return to Wheaton the following year.</p>	
1919	<p>The Chicago Race Riots begin, the most violent of the 25 race riots occurring over the “Red Summer” of 1919. Spurred on by the Great Migration of African Americans to the North, along with overcrowded urban housing, labor competition, and the return of Black veterans following World War I, the Chicago Race Riots blazed for 13 days, leaving over 1,000 Black families homeless, injuring around 500 Black Americans, and killing 38 (15 white and 23 Black individuals).</p>	
1919	<p>Charles Satchell Morris Jr. begins his studies at Wheaton. The son of a renowned Harlem pastor, Morris is known nationally during his early career as the “boy orator.” Morris receives a “life-time insult” when he is asked to leave the dining hall, presumably due to racial discrimination, an action upheld by President Charles Blanchard.</p>	

1921	The Tulsa Race Riots destroy more than 1,400 homes and businesses in the prosperous Black neighborhood of Greenwood, Oklahoma, killing as many as 300 African Americans.	
1924	President Calvin Coolidge signs the Indian Citizenship Act, granting U.S. citizenship to Native Americans.	
1926	After the death of Charles Blanchard in December 1925, James Oliver Buswell is selected as the third president of Wheaton College at the age of 31.	
1930	As Wheaton pursues accreditation, the admissions application is revised to include a question about race. The introduction of this question coincides with the 10- year period of 1930-1940, when no Black students matriculate at Wheaton College.	
1939	Wheaton College denies Rachel Boone’s admission on the basis of race. Wyeth Willard, a New Jersey pastor who encouraged Boone to apply to Wheaton, urges President Buswell to overturn this decision. Boone’s application triggers a correspondence between Buswell and Trustee Hugo Wurdack to determine Wheaton’s future policy regarding the admission of Black students. Ultimately, Buswell agrees to admit Boone, though by that time she has already enrolled at Houghton College in New York.	
1940	President Buswell is dismissed by the Board of Trustees due to his participation in Presbyterian denominational conflict and a dispute about the College’s athletics director. Dr. V. Raymond Edman, a member of the faculty, is appointed as the fourth president of Wheaton College.	





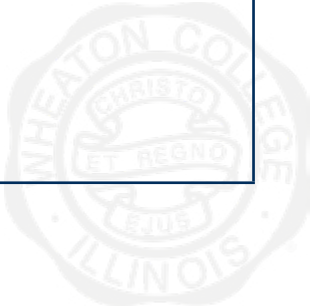
1940	Lewis McGee enrolls at Wheaton College, the first Black student to matriculate since Clarence B. Morris, who graduated in 1929. McGee completes only one year at Wheaton before enlisting in the army at the start of World War II.	
1942	President Franklin D. Roosevelt issues Executive Order 9066, launching the forced removal of Japanese American individuals from the West Coast into relocation centers for the duration of World War II.	
1943	By participating in the National Japanese-American Student Relocation Council program, Wheaton College agrees to accept Japanese American students who had previously been relocated to internment camps. From 1943-45, Wheaton's Asian student enrollment quadruples from five to twenty students, though not all are Japanese American.	
1947	C. Herbert Oliver becomes the first African American student to graduate from Wheaton College since 1929. Oliver goes on to become a significant leader in the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham, Alabama.	
1948	President Harry S. Truman signs Executive Order 9981, banning racial segregation in the United States military.	
1949	Wheaton College purchases at nominal cost a 17-acre tract of land in the Black Hills of South Dakota, establishing the Black Hills Science Station for geological study programs on Lakota ancestral lands.	
1951	Mildred Young, a Chinese American alumna, is hired in the Foreign Languages Department to teach Greek, the first identified instructor of color at Wheaton College.	
1954	The U.S. Supreme Court declares school segregation unconstitutional in <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> .	



1955	Two white men, Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam, abduct, torture, and murder Emmett Till, a Black fourteen-year-old visiting Drew, Mississippi from Chicago. His death and public funeral serve as a catalyst for the nascent Civil Rights Movement.	
1960	Wheaton celebrates its Centennial with banquets, ceremonies, other special events, and symposia throughout the year. The new chapel (later Edman Chapel) is dedicated, as is the new Centennial Gymnasium.	
1960	President Edman commissions the College's first institutional review of race relations on campus, conducted by faculty in the Anthropology and Sociology Department. The resulting report is never disseminated beyond senior administrators.	
1963	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivers his "I Have a Dream" speech during the March on Washington D.C. in August. The next month, the Ku Klux Klan bombs 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, killing four African American girls and injuring over a dozen others.	
1964	President Lyndon Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibiting discrimination in hiring, promoting, and firing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.	
1965	Appointed Wheaton's fifth president earlier in the year, Hudson T Armerding is shocked by televised reports of police beatings and tear gas used on Civil Rights marchers in Selma, Alabama. He sends a telegram to Governor George Wallace: "URGE RECONSIDERATION OF USE OF FORCE IN DEALING WITH ORDERLY AND PEACEFUL NEGRO MARCHERS."	
1965	Wheaton College establishes a campus chapter of the NAACP, which continues until 1968.	
1967	The U.S. Supreme Court abolishes restrictions on interracial marriage in Loving v. Virginia.	
1967	The Student Organization for Urban Leadership (S.O.U.L.) is founded to support Black and Latino students at Wheaton College.	
1968	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, and Wheaton College hosts an ecumenical memorial service in Edman Chapel. The service is met with public outcry as alumni, pastors, and college presidents from across the nation express alarm at Wheaton's alleged support of Dr. King.	

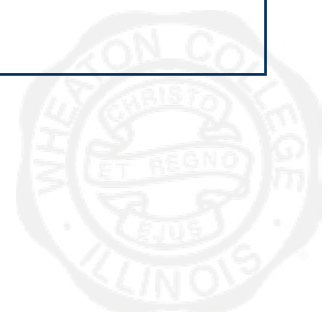
1968	Wheaton launches the Compensatory Education Program (CEP), which marks the College's first concerted attempt to recruit students of color. Targeting economically and educationally disadvantaged Black and Puerto Rican students from urban areas, the College enrolls 12 students in the fall of 1968. This early effort was largely considered a failure, as the students were forced to overcome significant cultural, academic, and financial challenges with inadequate support.	
1968	The first Black history course is taught at Wheaton as part of the Free University program.	
1968	Wheaton hires alumnus Ozzie Edwards as a special instructor in sociology to teach courses in Black Studies, making him Wheaton's first identified Black faculty member.	
1970	The CEP is rebranded as the Educational Opportunities Program (EOP). Though only marginally more successful than the CEP, the EOP helps the College identify one of its most glaring weaknesses: the lack of persons of color in the faculty, administration, and Board of Trustees.	
1971	Wheaton establishes the Office of Minority Student Development.	
1973	Matthew Parker, a Black undergraduate student, is hired as the advisor for S.O.U.L., making him the College's first (part-time) paid staff member dedicated to supporting students of color.	
1974	Wheaton College's Standards of Conduct ("The Pledge") are revised to outline the biblical condemnation of racial discrimination and prejudice.	
1977	Nadine Smith, a Wheaton alumna, is named assistant to the Dean of Students for Minority Affairs, making her the first full-time employee hired to support and recruit students of color.	
1979	Richard Linyard is appointed to the Wheaton College Board of Trustees, making him the first Black trustee.	
1980	The U.S. Supreme Court rules that the U.S. Government had illegally seized the Black Hills land from the Lakota people and awards them \$100 million in reparations. To date, the Lakota people have refused the reparations and seek the return of their land, which includes the Wheaton College Black Hills Science Station property.	

<p>1980</p>	<p>Following the resignation of Nadine Smith, Joyce Suber is named Director of Minority Student Development. Suber completes the College's first comprehensive review of past practices and makes recommendations for future goals in recruiting and supporting students of color.</p>	
<p>1981</p>	<p>Students found B.R.I.D.G.E., a group designed to facilitate multicultural awareness across campus. In contrast to S.O.U.L., students of all races participate in B.R.I.D.G.E.</p>	
<p>1982</p>	<p>Hudson T. Armerding retires, and J. Richard Chase succeeds him as the sixth president of Wheaton College.</p>	
<p>1983</p>	<p>Henry Allen '77, an Instructor of Sociology at Bethel College (MN), conducts an external review of Wheaton's minority program. One of Allen's findings highlights the need to include the hiring and retention of minority faculty, staff, and students.</p>	
<p>1984</p>	<p>Rodney Sisco is appointed as the first full-time Admissions Counselor for multicultural student recruitment.</p>	



1985	Marcus McDaniel is elected as Wheaton College's first Black student body president.	
1986	Wheaton College Gospel Choir is formed to celebrate the heritage of Black Gospel music.	
1987	Wheaton establishes the James E. Burr Scholarship to offer financial support to African American students.	
1987	William Osborne Society and Asian Fellowship are formed to foster community among Black and Asian students, respectively.	
1988	Rodney Sisco creates the Office of Minority Affairs (OMA) with the goals of retention, awareness, and public affairs.	
1988	Shawn Leftwich is hired as Wheaton's first full-time Multicultural Recruitment Counselor.	
1991	Hispanic American Student Union (HASU) is founded out of a desire for increased political advocacy and individual support for Latino students on campus. HASU is later rebranded as Unidad Cristiana in 1994-95.	
1991	Launched with a talk delivered by Black theologian Dr. James Cone, the McManis Lectureship offers eight lectures on the Black church and Black history over the course of this academic year.	
1992	The Los Angeles Riots begin in April, following the acquittal of four LAPD police officers charged with excessive force in the arrest and beating of Rodney King; the riots kill 63 people and injure 2,383.	
1992	Wheaton approves a 20-hour Gender/Ethnic Studies minor to give students a greater understanding of the issues around race and gender discrimination.	
1992	In an effort to be more inclusive of diverse Asian identities and heritages, several Asian and Asian American student groups are combined into one larger student group called Koinonia.	

1993	Following the retirement of Richard Chase, A. Duane Litfin is appointed to become the seventh president of Wheaton College.	
1994	“Diversity” is named one of the five initiatives of President Litfin’s New Century Challenge, a \$140 million capital campaign. The Diversity Enhancement Task Force is created to study and make recommendations to the senior administrative staff regarding campus diversity.	
1994	The Billy Graham Center Archives partners with the Office of Minority Affairs to co-sponsor the African American Church History Lecture Series, which continues through the turn of the century.	
1994	Wheaton College launches Project SOAR (Summer Opportunities for Advancement in Research), a summer program for highly motivated high school students of color.	
1994	Wheaton College develops an official racial harassment policy.	
1996	New Provost Stanton Jones announces the recruitment of women and minority faculty members as one of his seven chief priorities. Under his guidance, eight new faculty members of color are hired in 1997-99.	
1997	The Don and Ann Church Scholarship is established, providing generous financial support for six Black students per entering class.	
2000	Wheaton College changes its institutional mascot from the culturally and religiously insensitive “Crusader” to the “Thunder.”	



Appendix B

Index of Student Organizations and Clubs

Over the last three decades of the twentieth century, Wheaton College students launched a number of organizations and clubs, officially recognized by the administration, to celebrate multiculturalism on campus and to support minority students, particularly students of color. Galvanized by shared experiences of discrimination and isolation on a predominately white campus, these student-led organizations sought to create spaces where they could build friendships, find support, and worship and pray in styles that resonated with their cultural traditions.³⁹³ They also provided safe environments for students of color to address issues of racial discrimination, including pervasive microaggressions, that occurred in campus spaces.³⁹⁴ Over the years, these groups became vital sources of respite and encouragement for students of color on Wheaton's campus. Recognizing their value, the Office of Minority Affairs, and later the Office of Multicultural Development, officially recognized many of these student organizations to provide funding, resources, and support while bringing them together periodically for special programming.

Student Organization for Urban Leadership (S.O.U.L.)

When the first group of Compensatory Education Program (CEP) students arrived at Wheaton, both the administration and the students realized the absence of culturally sensitive support systems almost immediately.³⁹⁵ These Black and Puerto Rican students also became keenly aware of the lack of appreciation and knowledge that the Wheaton community had for their cultures. Thus, under the guidance of sociology instructor Ozzie Edwards, they formed the Student Organization for Urban Leadership (S.O.U.L.) in 1969, seeking “to make the education at Wheaton College more relevant to non-white students.”³⁹⁶

From its inception, S.O.U.L. was an outward-facing organization, planning campus-wide events like the Black Arts Festival and Black Emphasis Week, which were designed to show the Wheaton community that African Americans “are in fact energetic, determined, intelligent, beautiful, and peace-loving.”³⁹⁷ Unfortunately, the campus response to S.O.U.L.'s programming was often mixed, and events rarely garnered the level of attention the students desired.

Sometimes disrespectful and hostile responses were more overt, as in 1973, when some of the Black Emphasis Week posters on campus were “anonymously removed . . . and others [were] defaced by negative comments.”³⁹⁸ Within several years, S.O.U.L. was also given an annual chapel slot, giving S.O.U.L. students a platform to express their hopes and frustrations to the entire Wheaton community. These annual S.O.U.L. chapels were almost always controversial, and one Black student described the most common response from her majority peers as “Why do they have to say this again?”³⁹⁹

³⁹³ HRTF interview with Vanessa Wilson by Esther Lee Cruz, June 30, 2022.

³⁹⁴ HRTF interview with Adonya Little by Esther Cruz and Justine Stewart, June 30, 2022, HRTF Research Files and HRTF interview with Vanessa Wilson by Esther Cruz, June 30, 2022, HRTF Research Files. Little and Wilson were co-founders of the Wheaton College Gospel Choir.

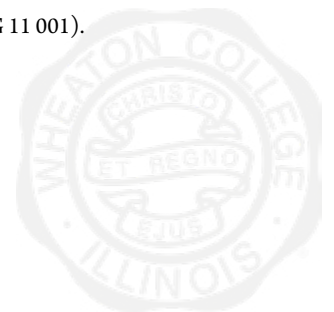
³⁹⁵ Oral History Interview with William Lindberg by Richard Parks, ca. 1975, Item 7303b, Oral history interviews (RG 11 001). Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton College, Wheaton: IL.

³⁹⁶ “Beth Bennett, “Vox Populi: Black Problem Comes to Light,” *The Record*, May 4, 1973.

³⁹⁷ “Black Emphasis Week Sponsored by S.O.U.L.,” *The Record*, Apr. 20, 1973.

³⁹⁸ Beth Bennett, “Vox Populi.”

³⁹⁹ Rochelle Houston, “Vox Populi,” *The Record*, Feb. 1, 1974.



Building Relationships in Discipleship, Grace and Experience (B.R.I.D.G.E.)

As time wore on, S.O.U.L. increasingly drew criticism from the student body for its messaging and membership, which were almost exclusively oriented toward Black students and their experiences on campus. In 1975, under the leadership of Matthew Parker, S.O.U.L. voted to launch an intentionally multi-ethnic sister organization, B.R.I.D.G.E. (Building Relationships in Discipleship, Grace, and Experience), designed to “show, in an active way, the personal enrichment resulting from cross-cultural interaction and that, in God’s eyes, our differences are tools for edification, not separation.”⁴⁰⁰ Open to “non-minority students who sincerely wish to interact with minorities,” B.R.I.D.G.E. programming included cross-cultural events such as films, field trips, dinners, and discussion groups.⁴⁰¹

At first, B.R.I.D.G.E. was led by a committee of S.O.U.L. students, though the two organizations gradually grew apart. S.O.U.L.’s activist ethos ultimately estranged some of the students it sought to support; one Black staff member noted that “even Black American students had problems identifying with SOUL’s image.”⁴⁰² Thus, under the leadership of Joyce Suber, S.O.U.L. was officially enfolded within B.R.I.D.G.E. in 1981. Noting the growth in membership after this change, Black student Reginald Bass stated, “S.O.U.L. met needs then, but BRIDGE is a hundred times better.” Rodney Sisco, who was a senior at the time, described the difference between B.R.I.D.G.E. and S.O.U.L. as saying, “Relate with me,” rather than “You’re against me.”⁴⁰³ In time, B.R.I.D.G.E. became the third largest organization on campus, with participation of up to 120 members.⁴⁰⁴

Unfortunately, conflict arose in 1988 between the group’s assigned advisor and student leaders, resulting in several cabinet resignations.⁴⁰⁵ Some students of color also felt that B.R.I.D.G.E.’s multiethnic focus obligated them to shoulder the burden of educating their majority peers; as a former cabinet member put it, “B.R.I.D.G.E.’s main concern should be the welfare of minority students. . . if no minority students are participating in or learning from B.R.I.D.G.E, we’re just expending unnecessary energy.”⁴⁰⁶ B.R.I.D.G.E. ultimately disbanded after the rocky ’88 year, and other ethnic specific groups emerged to meet minority student needs.

Asian Fellowship

Unofficially founded in 1987, Asian Friday Night Fellowship (AFNF) hosted informal meetings every Friday night for worship, small groups, and games. Following the dissolution of B.R.I.D.G.E., the Office of Minority Affairs helped this informal coalition of students form an official student organization in 1989. Two of the founders of Asian Fellowship, brothers Jonathan and David Ro, desired to create a spiritually and socially enriching community that supported students with similar backgrounds in finding spiritual nourishment and navigating shared challenges. In particular, Asian students faced struggles with interracial dating, fewer leadership positions in majority-white student clubs, and instances of racial insensitivity or hostility. In creating a social

⁴⁰⁰ Alicia Bird, “S.O.U.L. Forms BRIDGE to Build Relationships,” *The Record*, Apr. 25, 1975.

⁴⁰¹ Alicia Bird, “S.O.U.L. Forms BRIDGE.”

⁴⁰² Deb Doak, “Whites Need Black Awareness,” *The Record*, Feb. 24, 1984.

⁴⁰³ Deb Doak, “Whites Need Black Awareness.”

⁴⁰⁴ Oral History with Rodney Sisco, HRTF Research Files.

⁴⁰⁵ Heidi Rolland, “Bridge and Advisor Conflict,” *The Record*, Apr. 22, 1988.

⁴⁰⁶ Adonya Seldon, quoted in “Bridge and Advisor Conflict,” *The Record*, Apr. 1988.



network among these students, Asian Fellowship provided many Asian students a real sense of belonging on Wheaton's campus.

Koinonia

As the number of Asian students on campus continued to rise throughout the early 1990's, various groups ministering to specific Asian student populations formed, such as the Korean American Christian Fellowship, the Motley Fellowship, and Asian Fellowship, which had evolved into a largely Chinese American group.⁴⁰⁷ During the 1992-93 school year, a group of students decided to merge these three groups into one large organization that included all Asian and Asian-American students. The first generation of Koinonia leaders were "not working towards creating another sub-culture on campus, but they [wanted] the Asian-American community to take an active role in the life of the college."⁴⁰⁸ Koinonia met regularly on Friday nights for spiritual and social community, and the group is still active to this day.⁴⁰⁹

William Osborne Society

Named after the formerly enslaved 1876 alumnus, the William Osborne Society (Willie-O) was founded in 1987 as a gathering place for Black students. Feeling as though B.R.I.D.G.E. had failed to offer them sufficient support, the founders of the William Osborne Society hoped "to promote self-identity and self-awareness among Black students as well [as] increase campus awareness of Black culture."⁴¹⁰ In particular, Willie-O offered programming designed to reduce the isolation and culture shock that new Black students and first-year students often experienced on Wheaton's predominately white campus.⁴¹¹ Some members believed that the campus was less open to Willie-O than other multicultural groups because of their willingness to engage in discussions around race and politics, which made some students uncomfortable.⁴¹² However, according to one member, "Confrontation is sometimes the only way to make students aware that their behavior is offensive."⁴¹³ While outward-facing advocacy always remained central to the heart of Willie-O, the group also helped facilitate campus discussions, offer student mentoring, and assist the Admissions Office with minority student recruitment.⁴¹⁴ The William Osborne Society is still active today.

Hispanic Student Union

As Wheaton College's Latino population began to slowly rise in the 1990s, a group of students led by Julia Nieves, daughter of sociology professor Alvaro Nieves, founded the Hispanic Student Union (HSU). Emphasizing political advocacy, HSU sought to raise campus awareness of broader social issues and events, like the murder of Rodney King. They also identified key challenges on campus, such as unaffordable tuition for first generation or under resourced students, the lack of faculty members of color who were equipped to mentor students, and

⁴⁰⁷ Marguerite Beckley, "Koinonia Strives to Activate the Asian-American Community on Campus by Building Foundations," *The Record*, Dec. 3, 1993.

⁴⁰⁸ Marguerite Beckley, "Koinonia Strives."

⁴⁰⁹ HRTF interview with Hubert Kim by Esther Lee Cruz and Justine Stewart, June 7, 2022, HRTF Research Files.

⁴¹⁰ Holly Hanson and Candee McIntosh, "Society Focuses on Black Students," *The Record*, Sept. 11, 1987.

⁴¹¹ Holly Hanson and Candee McIntosh, "Society Focuses."

⁴¹² HRTF interview with Adonya Little.

⁴¹³ Heidi Rolland, "Three Minority Groups Bridge Gap," *The Record*, Sept. 23, 1988.

⁴¹⁴ Rolland, "Three Minority Groups."



microaggressions experienced at the College and in the city of Wheaton.⁴¹⁵ HSU also encouraged the campus community to rethink some of its more entrenched cultural standards, such as the prohibition against social dancing, which disfavored Latino students whose worship styles included various forms of dance. In 1994-95, HSU was rebranded as Unidad Cristiana, and its focus shifted from political action and social advocacy campus to creating ministry opportunities in partnership with local and international organizations. Unidad Cristiana is still active today.

Gospel Choir

Founded by students,⁴¹⁶ the Gospel Choir launched in 1987- 88 out of a desire to share Black Gospel music with the Wheaton community. As one member put it, “the repertoire and sound of the choir have been the only representatives of the African- American church on Wheaton’s campus.”⁴¹⁷ The only College-sponsored musical group that was unaffiliated with the Conservatory, Gospel Choir was open to all students regardless of racial identity or musical proficiency, which allowed Gospel Choir to recruit students who enjoyed singing but lacked prior training.⁴¹⁸ Tanya Egler assumed the directorship in 1990, and the Gospel Choir completed tours at churches, schools, and prisons around the country while also contributing to discussions about diversity on campus.

While the Gospel Choir remained popular among students of all racial and cultural backgrounds, it maintained an uneasy relationship with some faculty members in the Conservatory of Music.⁴¹⁹ In the minds of its critics, the emergence of an additional choral ensemble on campus sponsored by Student Development, with little consultation with Conservatory faculty, and whose musical style did not conform with some of the standards and practices of classical Western choral music, was not necessarily something to celebrate. Specifically, the wide vocal ranges characteristic of gospel music drew occasional criticism for “ruining student voices,” which was believed to be exacerbated by some of Gospel Choir’s untrained leaders.⁴²⁰

Despite these contentions, Gospel Choir remained a vibrant student organization on campus, and it played a vital role in recruiting students of color to Wheaton College. Starting in 1991, the Admissions Office assisted the Gospel Choir in planning its tours, and an admissions representative began traveling to concerts with the students. In their 2002 report on minority student recruitment, Stan Jones and Shawn Leftwich describe exposure to the Gospel Choir as “one of the most effective methods of encouraging students of color to learn more about Wheaton.” They share further: “Often, the churches of color have been very impressed with the spiritual quality of our students and have been humbled by the fact that there are white students who have grown to love Black Gospel music and have been impacted by it.”⁴²¹ The Gospel Choir continues to draw the Wheaton community into joyous worship to this day.

⁴¹⁵ HRTF Interview with Julia Nieves by Esther Lee Cruz and Justine Stewart, June 2, 2022, HRTF Research Files.

⁴¹⁶ Founding members of Gospel Choir included Vanessa Wilson, Ernestine Julye, Fred Dade, Jenai Jenkins, Sheila Davis and Adonya Seldon Little

⁴¹⁷ Emily Calvert, quoted in “Gospel Choir Stresses Diversity,” *The Record*, Apr. 28, 1989.

⁴¹⁸ HRTF Interview with Adonya Little and HRTF interview with Vanessa Wilson.

⁴¹⁹ HRTF interview with Tony Payne by Dale Wong, Sept. 6, 2022, HRTF Research Files.

⁴²⁰ HRTF interview with Tony Payne.

⁴²¹ Stan Jones and Shawn Leftwich, “A Comprehensive Review and Proposed Reconceptualization of Minority Student Recruitment at Wheaton College,” Sept. 2002, Unprocessed Accession 2010-0006. Buswell Library Archives & Special Collections, Wheaton College, Wheaton: IL.

