DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 411 333 UD 031 864

AUTHOR Randolph, Adah Ward
TITLE Champion Avenue School: A Historical Analysis.
PUB DATE 1997-03-27
NOTE 30p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, March 24-28, 1997).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative (142) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Black Education; *Black Students; Context Effect; *Educational Environment; Educational History; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Leadership; *Political Influences; Principals; Racial Segregation; School Role; *School Segregation; Teacher Role; *Urban Schools; Urban Youth
IDENTIFIERS African Americans; *Columbus Public Schools OH

ABSTRACT

A historical and qualitative analysis of a northern urban de facto segregated school is presented that explains the unique factors of the school's history that led to the maintenance of the school today. The focus is on the school's context, its historical and present-day leadership, and its past and present teachers. In considering the school's urban context, the most important factor is the political process. The Champion Avenue School, Columbus, Ohio, was built and made into an all-black school because it was in the heart of a growing African American community, and not because it was legally defined as an all-black school. The racial segregation at Champion was de facto, but it accomplished the purposes of placing black students and black teachers together. Leadership, in the persons of the school's early principals, made it a significant force in its impoverished community. Profiles of the school's principals from its founding in 1910 through desegregation show the essential role they played. Without the support of an exemplary teaching staff, however, Champion Avenue School could never have been the community force it has been. While its founding faculty was all black, the school presently has a white majority teaching staff. The school's teaching legacy is preserved by some dedicated and caring faculty members who focus on the needs of the urban child, and who recognize the role of the school in the black community. (Contains 35 references.) (SLD)

Champion Avenue School: A Historical Analysis

Prepared by:

Adah Ward Randolph, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH

for

The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Chicago, IL
March 27, 1997.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, African American education scholars have turned their attention towards researching the ascriptive characteristics of all-Black schools. Vannessa Siddle Walker in *Their Highest Potential* (1996) addressed the educational support mechanisms of a southern rural colored school that accounted for the success of its students despite the limits imposed by the de jure segregated setting. Additionally, scholars such as Michelle Foster, Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, and others provide us with insight into the contributions, philosophical underpinnings, and pedagogical styles of African American teachers (Foster, 1995; Irvine, 1989; Perkins, 1989). Still, Ronald Butchart contends that "despite the richness and diversity of the history of black education in the past, a wide range of subjects have yet to be adequately explored" (Butchart, 1988, 360). One such area that has received little analysis, has been all-Black schools in the North. This research, unlike Walker's, analyzed the history of an all-Black northern urban de facto segregated school. Consequently, this paper explicates the ascriptive characteristics of an all-Black de facto segregated northern urban school, Champion Avenue School.

The purpose of this study was a historical and qualitative analysis of an northern urban de facto segregated school. It explains the qualities in its unique history that led to the maintenance of the school today. In this presentation, this author will focus on three primary factors: the context in which the school is situated, its historical and present day leadership, and the past and present teachers of Champion. This presentation will conclude with insights garnered from the research that inform urban teacher education.

CONTEXT

Butchart contends that "what is needed in the history of Afro-American education is an end to the segregation of its interpretive insights by placing it in the broader context in which black education was practiced" (Butchart, 364). Siddle Walker examined Casewell County Training School on North Carolina. While her historical ethnography illuminates the actual schooling practices in the school, the connection the school had with the community, and the effectiveness of the principal, Mr. Dillard, the context, however, was the rural South. Yet, "African American life in the twentieth century has become an urban life, a complete history of Afro-American education must afford more insight into urban education" (Butchart, 364). Champion Avenue School, however, was not an all-Black school of the South. It had been constructed because of the political and social climate of the turn of the century in the urban North city of Columbus, Ohio. Consequently, the context in which this school was constructed served as a variable of analysis.

In the urban context, four major factors have historically determined access to education for African Americans and other minority groups: the political process, social service organizations, demographics, and housing (Franklin, 1979; Gerber, 1978; Henson & Bolland, 1990; Judd & Swanstrom, 1994; Keating, 1994; Massey & Denton, 1993; Perlmann, 1988). The most important factor in urban settings is the political process. Urban political processes permit or "allow for the expression of nearly all the particular interest within the city" (Peterson, 1990, 21). At the turn of the century, the Progressive Era initiated reform in the political processes of cities, whereby an elite governing structure was instituted in most cities (Hofstadder, 1955; Judd & Kantor, 1992; Judd & Swanstrom, 1994; Wiebe, 1967). As

a northern urban city, Columbus was affected by several factors such as the industrial revolution, the immigration of southern and eastern Europeans, and the migration of Blacks from the South to Columbus. These factors precipitated the need for elite reformers to alter the political mechanisms of the city. In Columbus, Blacks' equitable access to educational opportunities were changed because of modifications in the most important factor in school policy, the school board.

Black population growth coupled with the passage of Plessy v Ferguson added to the sentiment in Columbus, and in other cities that they were in a state of disorder (Wiebe, 1967). Shortly after Plessy, the South instituted Jim Crow laws which resulted in not only the legal segregation of Blacks from Whites in social circumstances, but in housing, schooling, and even death (Woodard, 1974). However, in northern cities, such as Columbus, it was against the law to establish de jure laws related to schooling (Ward, 1993). In the nineteenth century, in some northern states, Black Laws existed which permitted de jure segregation in schooling. Because of access to the political process by prominent Blacks in Ohio such as the Reverend James Poindexter of Columbus, Williams S. Scarborough, president of Wilberforce University, and Benjamin W. Arnett, state representative for Greene county, segregated schooling came to an end in Ohio in 1887 due to the passage of the Arnett Bill (Ward, 1993). But, in the name of good government, Columbus' governmental structure was altered. The result was the establishment of at-large elections to public office. Consequently, a new political power structure came into being.

Prior to the amending of the state Charter in 1907, the Columbus Board of Education (BOE) had already begun to institute new policies related to Black educational access and

Black teachers. Before the turn of the century, and shortly after the Plessy decision, two events resulted in the factional split on the BOE. One was the increase of enrollment of Blacks at the Mt. Vernon (Twenty-third Street School) school, and the protest of Ms. Celia Davis's placement as teacher at the Medary Avenue School. Both events resulted in changes in district lines for student attendance, and a new placement policy which limited Black teacher's placement in schools where there was a significant Black population.

From 1899 to 1910, the BOE argued over the establishment of a "separate school" for Blacks. In 1907, William Oxley Thompson, the president of The Ohio State University, placed a motion on the floor to determine whether or not the BOE had "the power . . . to establish separate schools for the white and black races and to compel the children . . . to attend" (Ward Randolph, 141). Thompson and his cohorts feared miscegenation. Consequently, his motion to research the applicability of segregated schools was approved. Because of the Arnett law, Thompson and his cohorts could not specifically compel Blacks to attend an all-Black school. Thompson, however, became the leader of one faction of the school board that represented good government. In the end however, Thompson and his cohorts, altered BOE policy.

Thompson, and several of his cohorts on the newly constructed school board sought to limit the influence and participation of Black teachers because of the protest against the placement of Celia Davis. They feared miscegenation, and the long-term effects of children of different races in the same classroom. Moreover, they had serious misgivings about the presence and influence of eleven African American teachers with White students. Thus, in 1909, after failing to acquire de jure means by which to segregate Black student and teachers,

they built and opened the Champion Avenue School.

When Blacks learned of the proposed building of Champion, then called the Hawthorne School, the Black community was split over whether to support or protest the building of the school. A majority of the community did protest. However, three factors prevented them from being successful. First, the split in the Black community. Some favored an all-Black school because they believed it would mean more jobs. Others, particularly those who had fought to repel the Black laws were against the school because it represented a return to segregation. Second, Blacks no longer had representation on the school board. The movement for "good government" had altered access to the school board. Since 1884, Blacks had held seats on the BOE. After the city charter was changed, they no longer had access to the political process in the now at-large system of government (Ward, 1993). Lastly, their organized protest to the building of the school, and even a Mr. Smith's law suit did not alter the intent of the board to segregate Black students and teachers to an all-Black school. In essence, the African American community was powerless because of the changes in the political process, changes in the sentiments in the city towards Blacks because of the increase in southern Blacks due to migration, and the loss of their political leaders such as Reverend James Poindexter who died in 1907. In the end, Champion was built and made into an all-Black school because it was placed in the heart of the growing African American community. Consequently, by law, it was not an all-Black school. It was a matter of circumstance or de facto that it had a majority Black student population, and an all-Black teaching force. In response to an inquiry for a teaching position from a Mr. John F. Mathews of Cleveland, Ohio, who had heard about the opening of an all-Black school in Columbus,

W. O. Thompson replied,

> It is not true that the Board of Education of Columbus is establishing a school for colored youth. It is true, however, that the Champion Avenue School will have more than 90% of colored children in it. All the teachers will be colored teachers (Ward, 117).

Thus, Thompson and his cohorts had circumvented the law by placing the school in the Black community. Through the political process, gerrymandering, and the establishment of discontinuous school attendance zones, Champion became a reality.

In 1910, shortly before Champion opened, the *Columbus Dispatch* headline read, "Negroes to Have Fine New School: Champion Avenue Structure Will Be For Use of Colored Children-Expected to Provide Places for 10 Teachers and a Janitor of That Race" (Ward Randolph, 144). The BOE did not officially state that the school was for the exclusive use of Blacks. However, area residents believed it would be used solely for that purpose (Ward Randolph, 1996). The reformed BOE's new building allowed them to control the efficacy of Black education in Columbus. Still, Champion's opening accomplished several purposes: First, it finally removed African American female teachers from positions of authority and power with White children. Second, it relegated them to an all-Black school. Third, because of where it was located, in the heart of the geographically constructed Black community, it constituted as an all-Black school. Thus, Champion became the first all-Black de facto segregated urban northern school in Columbus. It became so because reformers such as Thompson revision of the BOE charter, along with the absence of Black representation on the BOE, resulted in the denial of Black access to educational policy and decision making. As Tyack notes, reformer's initiatives led to the immediate curtailment of opportunities for Black teachers and students (Tyack, 1969). Thus, within the urban northern context of Columbus,

the political process had been summarily closed to Blacks, and would remain so for more than sixty years.

Despite the intent of the BOE to relegate Black students and teachers to a homogeneous institution, good things did occur in Champion. Champion became a significant part of the impoverished Black community in which it was situated. It did so, however, because of its leadership. Champion's first leader, however, was an African American woman.

LEADERSHIP

In 1892, Maud C. Baker began her teaching career in Columbus due to the efforts of school board member, the Rev. James Poindexter. Poindexter became the first Black BOE member in 1884. He fought to attain teaching positions for qualified Black women teachers in Columbus schools (Ward, 1993). Poindexter appointed Black women who possessed certain qualities. Poindexter required African American women to possess "requisite educational qualifications; be pure in their lives; orderly in deportment; devoted to their work, successful, and capable." Moreover, they would make the schools "free from sectarian taint" (Ward, 67). Baker must have symbolized this model. Baker represented the "cult of true womanhood" (Perkins, 1983).

Baker acquired her education from the Normal School in Columbus. Prior to her ascendancy as principal, Baker had not only taught in desegregated schools, but had been educated in them. She was one of the few educated middle-class young women of color who had been educated in Columbus' desegregated schools (Ward, 1993). Even though she was originally hired as a substitute teacher, by 1893, she had acquired a full-time position at the

Stevenson School (Ward, 1993). When she became principal of Champion, she had attained junior high credentials.

As noted earlier, Baker exemplified the "educated Black women" of the era whose primary occupation was teaching. Baker's position as principal indicated that the BOE reformers believed women "were essential for reform and progress" (Giddings, 1984, 81). Moreover, the Black Women's Club Movement believed Black women's "moral standing was a steady rock upon which the race could lean" (Giddings, 81). Clearly, Baker's appointment during Poindexter's tenure on the BOE indicated that she fit the moral qualifications and fortitude to lift as she herself climbed. Her role as principal of the first all-Black de facto segregated school leads one to believe that she "understood that her fate was bound with that of the masses" (Giddings, 97). Moreover, it was her responsibility as an "educated woman" to lift her race through educational means (Williams, 1899). Thus, Baker like Fannie Jackson Coppin, Mary Church Terrell and others "found herself in the presence of responsibilities which ramify through the profoundest and most varied interest of her country and race" (Guy-Sheftall, 1990, 91).

Baker served as principal of Champion from 1910 to 1920. In her first year of service, she was commended by Thompson for "her action and fidelity to the interest of the Board" when she prevented vandalism at the school. However, in 1920, with the advent of increased migration and subsequent enrollment at Champion, the BOE decided to alter the organization of Champion. it would change from an elementary school into an intermediate school consisting of the grades K-9. Because Baker did not possess the baccalaureate qualifications to head such a school, and probably because she was a woman, in September of

1920, she retired after 34 years of service in the Columbus public schools. It is important to note that Baker resembled the contemporary educated middle-class Black women of her era. She was an educator. But, unlike so many of her contemporaries who where in the South, she had been the principal of a northern urban all-Black school. Her successor, John Arnett Mitchell, however, would leave an indelible print on Champion.

Mitchell

J. Arnett Mitchell, a Phi Beta Kappan, was a 1912 graduate of Bowdoin College (Ward Randolph, 1996). After graduating from Bowdoin, Mitchell went to Europe and studied at the University of Berlin for one year. When he returned to the U. S., he taught German at Howard University. Mitchell also taught at Tuskegee Institute and at the Summer High School in St. Louis, Missouri. After his tenure as the first Dean of Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Mitchell, who was a native of Galliopolis, Ohio, returned to live and work in his native state. In May of 1921, he became the principal of Champion Avenue School.

According to V. P. Franklin, Mitchell epitomized the era in which he lived. He became the principal of Champion when educated Blacks

> . . . demonstrated an overarching commitment to "race vindication." Given the overwhelmingly negative conceptions in the larger society, African and African American character and capacity, these intellectuals lived lives that were personal vindications of racist notions about black people. . . . thus, the personal experiences undermined racist perceptions about the "educability of the Negro" (Franklin, 1995, 15).

Mitchell believed education would quell racist notions about the intellectual abilities of Black youth. In 1924, three years after becoming principal at Champion, Mitchell wrote an article that appeared in the *Educational Research Bulletin.* It was entitled "The Problem of the

Negro Child of School Age in the Light of Mental Tests" (Ward Randolph, 196). In the article, Mitchell argued against "the general hazy impression that the Negro is intellectually inferior" (Ward Randolph, 197). In essence, Mitchell argued for the "tremendous influence of good schools in stimulating the growth of intelligence." He went on to contend that African American youth did better "in states where educational opportunity was better" (Ward Randolph, 197). Mitchell had left Southern in Louisiana to come to Ohio to "vindicate the race from the distortions and misconceptions about people of African American descent that ran rampant throughout American society" (Franklin, 1995, 15). Clearly, Mitchell intended to make Champion a good school to vindicate the race, and to that end, He instituted this motto at Champion.

> As a student of Champion, I shall strive to be: Courteous in manner, obedient to rules, a protector of our building, proud of our school! Careful with textbooks, cheap literature scorning. Correcting bad habits which serve as a warning; Soft-spoken and orderly, clean in my speech. Kind and considerate toward all whom I meet; Regular and punctual to school day by day. Cooperative and helpful in every way; Studious, persistent, attentive in class; Prompt with assignments, determined to pass! Courageous, respectful, honest, confident. Cool-tempered and calm, in no wise impudent; Neat in appearance, ashamed of my gum, without sweets or popcorn when in class I come; Absent if quarrels or fights should take place, present when students assemble with grace; Polite toward the girls; if a boy I may be commanding respect, if a girl, naturally; A truly grand sport when our team plays a game, that I may be worthy to boast her great name; An outstanding citizen, reliable and fine; That others may pattern their conduct by mine (Ward Randolph, 194).

Mitchell instilled this motto into the very fabric of Champion. As principal, but also as a scholar, Mitchell had set out to prove that Blacks could be as intelligent as Whites given the proper environment. Thus, Mitchell began his career at Champion with the intent of making the all-Black school into an exemplary school. Consequently, Mitchell continued his own educational advancement.

In 1925, Mitchell earned his Master's degree from the Ohio State University. By 1928, Mitchell's work earned him recognition in *Who's Who in Colored America* (Ward Randolph, 1996). He was well on his way towards establishing Champion as a "good school" for African American youth. In his thirty-eight years of service as principal of Champion, Mitchell left an indelible print on the school. One might say he was a rock upon which the school was built. Even after he left the school, a picture of him still rests in the Hall of Champion at the school. Mitchell, like his contemporaries, had distinguished himself within and outside of his race. Mitchell was friends with the elite policy makers in the city of both races including Dr. Novice G. Fawcett, the then president of The Ohio State University. Whereas Mitchell's contributions cannot be overlooked by any means, how he was viewed by students, teachers, and the community varied.

As a Phi Beta Kappan, and a member of Sigma Pi Phi, the oldest Black Greek fraternity who only inducted men into the fraternity who had "demonstrated outstanding ability to compete successfully with whites" (Gatewood, 1990, 234), Mitchell stressed educational excellence, served as a role model, and always wore his Phi Beta Kappa key for all of the children of Champion to see. However, he did not believe in dealing with the "race problem" in the school. In an interview in 1959, he stated his emphasis was

> on preparing students to accept the challenge of a fast changing world. Equip them with the necessary tools to solve the many problems they will encounter in life, not as Negroes, but as citizens (Ward Randolph, 195).

Consequently, Mitchell "always eliminated the stress of race and the obstacles of color" (Ward Randolph, 195). He further declared that,

> We have not stressed the race problem here in any way. We know freedom will not come to any people including our own, until it is earned. Any attempts to thwart that

progress debates the thing nearest to our hearts (Ward Randolph, 196).

It was Mitchell's position on the race question which placed him in a precarious position with some members of the Black community. However, the majority understood that because of his position, particularly in the urban North de facto system, he could not take a stand on the issue. Mr. Wright who became the principal of the all-Black Felton Avenue elementary school in 1943 stated, "Mitchell had to walk a fine line. Otherwise, they would have thrown him out of there" (Ward Randolph, 198). Still, Mr. Wright contended,

> Mitchell could have done more in the community. He couldn't. He was more active in the Boule'. It was rare for a Black man to have run both an elementary and a junior high. Not many had that (Ward Randolph, 199-99).

In addition to membership in Sigma Pi Phi, Mitchell also belonged to the Urban League, Frontiers of America and other service organization which developed leadership among youth in the city. Whereas Mitchell's position required him to walk a tight-rope, and straddle the fence in the Black and White community, his students viewed him in another way.

Some members of the Black community were of the conviction that he was an Uncle Tom. However, Eugene Walker, former student of Champion, author and adjunct professor of music at Ohio State, contends the students did not view him as an Uncle Tom. He stated,

> Some people did. But, we didn't. We just tried to walk straight when we walked by him. He used diplomacy. He had a mild opinion, but firm stand. There is a difference in being an Uncle Tom and a diplomat. Yet, he was a visionary. He saw the long range goal. Thus, he was not a rebel. Otherwise, he would have been out of there (Ward Randolph, 198).

He added further that,

> Because of his qualifications, the whole community, I mean the white community looked to him for insight. They would come see Mitchell and find out his views like Martin Luther King. He was like the Superintendent of the Black schools. He had this Black school and he said what was what (Ward Randolph, 198).

Walker, like other students and administrators remembered the one physical characteristic that made students pay attention to Mitchell, his voice. Again, Walker recalled,

> Mitchell had a voice. I can still remember that voice . . . . He commanded respect. He was not a real tall man, but you got the idea that you did not want to go up against him. So, you towed the line (Ward Randolph, 204).

Mr. William Hayes, a former student of Champion and its present principal, also attested to Mitchell's voice and power in the school. He remembered.

> Mr. Mitchell was good. When I was at the school, he had such a sense of power even though he walked with a limp and a cane. You still felt fearful of the man. . . . He was even intimidating to my mother who was on the PTA. His voice was distinctive (Ward Randolph, 222).

Moreover, former students of Champion remember Mitchell as stern, and approachable. He was determined to make the best out of the students at Champion despite the de facto segregated setting (Brooks, 1996; Hayes, 1993; Ransom, 1996; Stewart, 1996; Walker 1996). As noted earlier in this presentation, the context of the urban North, circumscribed Mitchell's behavior. Mr. George Johnson, the principal of Howard High in Wilmington, Delaware, could actively fight against segregated schools. Mitchell, however, could not or chose not to. Instead, Mitchell believed education could be used as a means to solve the race problem for his students. In principle, education was the panacea he held near and dear to his heart. However, Champion's teachers held another view of Mitchell.

By all accounts, Mitchell hand-picked the exemplary teaching staff at Champion. However, their views of Mitchell were mixed. Some teachers such as Mrs. Irene Willis viewed Mitchell "as a tyrant." Other teachers in the system, such as Mrs. Saunders, viewed him as a "gatekeeper." Mitchell believed in discipline of students, and teachers. In fact, Champion's teachers had a saying when they knew Mitchell was coming down the hall. They

would say to each other, "the bear is on the move." However, it was clear from the interviews that if you were an integrationist, you did not attain a position at Champion, or in the all-Black elementary schools (Stone, 1997; Wright, 1996). Mr. Willis, however, who began teaching in Champion in 1953, noted that "under Mitchell, Champion was a good school" (Ward Randolph, 203).

In essence, Mitchell's philosophical underpinnings rested upon several variables: educational excellence, discipline, community service and citizenship, athletic excellence, and lastly, the establishment of an exemplary school through the work of an excellent all-Black teaching force. Regardless of how Mitchell was viewed, and by whom, one cannot argue that he succeeded in creating a "good" Black school. Even though Champion had been nominated as a "good school" by the community, this researcher contends it is a good school because it possessed these characteristics.

1) a strong and committed leader or principal
2) a climate of high expectations in which no students were allowed to fall below minimal levels in an atmosphere that is orderly, without being rigid or oppressive.
3) strong competent, and highly educated teachers who emphasize the teaching of basic skills in a well prepared classroom where students spend most of their time on clearly defined task.
4) community support and participation
5) the existence of a positive sociocultural system in which uniquely stylized characteristics exist that are reflective of the student population developed independently of White control (Ward Randolph, 332).

In premise, Mitchell was a man driven by the possibilities of the future, and constrained by the boundaries of the period, place and time. The new leadership that entered Champion was of another epoch. They would meet different challenges. In 1959, the U. S. was about to experience the full rage of a once calm river. Thus, the context of the time altered the

leadership at Champion.

Footsteps

When Mitchell retired in 1959, it was an end of a life-time commitment to the education of Black children. After Mitchell, two more Black men who had served under Mitchell became principal of the school: Mr. James Wade. and Mr. Edward J. Willis. However, in the early 70s, desegregation occurred in Columbus. For the first time in the school's history, the principalship of Champion belonged to a White man, Mr. Frank Foreman. However, because of the pressures of desegregation, and as Orfield notes, the recent move toward resegregation, Mr. William F. Hayes, Jr. would return as the first-Black principal since 1971 in 1995. As noted earlier, Hayes was a former student of Champion, and remembers the staff, and Mr. Mitchell with a sense of pride and admiration. Moreover, his presence as principal in addition to Mrs. Helms, one of the few Black teachers, and Mrs. Brooks the librarian, support the legacy of Champion. Yet, like Mitchell, Hayes was, and is a product of his times.

Hayes was in the first group of students who desegregated Franklin Junior High in Columbus. Moreover, when he attended Ohio University in the late 60s, Hayes participated in the desegregation of the dorms. Lastly, when Hayes became a teacher, he was also in the first line of teachers, and later administrators who desegregated Columbus Public Schools due to the Penick decision in 1979. Thus, Hayes wanted to return Champion to its "glory days". However, as he found out, it was going to be an uphill battle. However, Hayes like Mitchell has a plan. Whether or not he will be able to implement it, will be determined by whether or not the school remains open in the future, his ability to garner parental support, the

establishment of a stronger cadre of exemplary teachers who believe in the students' potential, and strong leadership. Whereas Mitchell provided the leadership, he could not have established the legacy of Champion without the support of an exemplary teaching staff. Hayes would have antecedents of the old legacy of Champion still present in the school, some of the exemplary Black teachers.

TEACHERS

Johnetta Cole contends, "In those "colored schools" more often than not there were African American teachers who believed in our children and their capacity to learn" (Cole, 1993, 165). Champion was one such school.

Historically, Black teachers and principals were the leaders in the Black community (Franklin, 1990; Parsons, 1993). The teachers of Champion were viewed as leaders. They lived in the community, attended church in the community, and often times, visited the homes of students in the community. Historically, Champions' all-Black teachers had to be excellent. Moreover, they had to believe that in the all-Black setting excellence could be achieved. Lastly, they were willing to go the extra mile for their students, their parents, and the race. Champion, according to Mrs. Brooks, a former student, and the present librarian,

> . . . was just like family. There was no difference between what they expected from you and what your parents expected from you. Our parents respected the teachers. When we had activities, it would be full because not your parents went. Your aunts, uncles, and even neighbors went to see how you were doing at school. There was no need for a difference in curriculum. Culture was embedded in the context. It was always there (Ward Randolph, 247).

Thus, a significant component of Champion's legacy besides its leadership, was its teachers and their shared vision of expectations with the parents of the community.

The early teachers of Champion were graduates of the Normal School in Columbus,

Cheyney Institute, and Columbia's Teachers College. One of those early teachers, Ms. Nell Moffitt, went on to become the principal of the all-Black Mt. Vernon elementary school in 1932. Prior to her position as principal, she had served as interim principal after Baker retired from Champion. Moreover, she was also the principal of the Evening School which taught adults. Because it was the only school in which Blacks could teach, regardless of qualifications, Champion became the institution for seeking qualified and experienced Black teachers to fill leadership positions in the growing dual-system. This pattern of drawing teachers from Champion and placing them in key positions in the developing dual-system of education continued until the 1970s.

After Mitchell assumed the principalship of the school, he recruited Black teachers who not only met the qualifications of employment of the time, but surpassed them. Unlike principals of today, Mitchell had "all power." He decided who would teach at Champion, and in the developing de facto segregated system of all-Black elementary schools as well. His first recruit for Champion was a Mr. C. E. Pieters, who graduated Cum Laude from Lincoln University, a historic Black institution in Chester, Pennsylvania. Mitchell knew Pieters from Southern University where he served as head of the Math department. Additionally, Pieters held a law degree, and after joining the staff of Champion, he earned a Masters degree from the Ohio State University in 1926. Both men had also taught at Tuskegee. Finally, Pieters was also recognized in *Who's Who In Colored America* in 1930 (Ward Randolph, 1996). A 1938 graduate of Champion, Mrs. Barbara Dosey-Sanford said this about Pieters. "Mr. Pieters was a brilliant man. He should have been a professor at Ohio State. The only thing that stopped him, was the color of his skin" (Ward Randolph, 241). Mrs. Evelyn Harris, a

1923, graduate of the school, agreed with Dorsey-Sanford's assessment. She recollected that,

> Mr. & Mrs. Pieters were excellent teachers. He taught Math. She taught Art. Mrs. Arnold was the music teacher. She was exceptional. The Champion Glee Club even toured. Also, she taught math. She was a strict disciplinarian. In all, the teachers were pretty good (Ward Randolph, 242).

Mitchell held extremely high standards for his teachers. Within one year, the Superintendent, J. G. Roudebush, noted in his report that Mitchell had transformed the teaching staff of the school who were primarily college graduates or normal school graduates taking additional classes toward the baccalaureate degree. Prior to the change in teacher qualifications in Columbus, and in society in general, Mitchell demanded that his teachers possess more than the required credentials for teaching. Thus, by 1959, when he retired, the majority of Champion's teachers had more Masters degrees than any other school including high schools in the city (Ward Randolph, 1996). Mitchell, however, was hard on his staff.

Mitchell was a stern task master. In fact, Mr. Jim Lanier, Mr. Albert Stone, and Mr. Charles Byrd, and others who served under Mitchell in his later years contend that "he was harder on the teachers than he was on the students" (Byrd, 1997; Lanier, 1997; Stone, 1997). Mr. Lanier recalled that "sometimes he just rode some of the teachers. . . . Often times, he reminded them that he hired them, and that he could fire them if they didn't tow the line (Lanier, 1997). Mr. Lanier, however, was not hired by Mitchell. Consequently, Mitchell's rapport with him was different. Lanier's hiring by the assistant superintendent signaled the beginning of the end of Mitchell's control over the hiring policy at the school. In time, as principals changed and policy changed, Champion's all-Black teaching staff would be dismantled.

As noted earlier, one of Champion's primary purposes was to segregate not just all-

Black students, but Black teachers as well. From its inception until 1964, Champion had an all-Black faculty who stood for and demanded excellence from their students. Moreover, Mitchell demanded it from them as well. Champions's teaching staff often worked past 3:00 p.m., and could be found at the school on Saturdays, and even Sundays. Mitchell, and subsequent Black principals such as Mr. James Wade, and Mr. Edward Willis, demanded excellence from the teachers. They had the power to decide who was hired, and monitor their performance. The advent of desegregation, however, changed principal's power. Black principals no longer had control over who would be hired at the school. In other words, teachers were no longer hand-picked by principals. As Mr. Lanier, a former teacher of the school notes,

> With desegregation we were supposed to get teachers who had the same qualifications as the teachers who were going to the White schools. We didn't. We got a lot of inexperienced teachers who could not control the kids. (Lanier, 1997).

Mrs. Irene Willis, another retired teacher, corroborated Mr. Lanier's statement. She noted that some of the teachers "didn't even know their subject matter" (Ward Randolph, 249). Although, this author is not attempting to glorify de facto segregation, however, it is important to note that when schools were desegregated, often times, Black schools such as Champion suffered because they were given unprepared, and inadequate novice White teachers. Moreover, because the principals could no longer decide who was hired, and because the school was no longer all-Black, standards changed. Parents became alienated. Teachers became individuals rather than a collective group determined to help students. As Mr. Lanier remembered, "Anything for the students," was no longer the case. Mr. Willis who became principal in 1966 notes, "Comparing Champion to other schools in the system was

like comparing a Cadillac to a Volkswagen." Mr. Willis, who went on to become the principal of East High School, was only able to make this observation because he had been a principal with a predominately Black teaching staff, and a predominately White teaching staff. Whereas Champion, had been an all-Black school, it was in that context that parents, teachers and administrators were able to ensure that the lack of equipment, proper facilities, and inadequate books did not hinder the success of the students.

Needless to say, the present teachers of Champion are not all Black. In fact, during the 1995-1996 school year, Champion had a majority White teaching staff. Still, some antecedents of its past legacy still exist among some of its current teaching staff.

Present Teachers

During the 1995-96 school year, Champion had 24 teachers. Only seven were African Americans. But, Mrs. Mae Welch, an African American woman educated in the segregated schools of the South, and Mr. Lehman, an European American man educated in the northern schools of Ohio, both exemplify the commitment and dedication to students of the former all-Black teaching staff. Welch was hired in 1969 when the school was still predominately all-Black, whereas Mr. Lehman was hired in 1979, ten years after her. Yet, their teaching philosophies, styles and attitudes towards student achievement were the same. One would assume that two teachers from different educational and life experiences would be vastly different. However, Welch, a graduate of Allen University in South Carolina, and Lehman, a graduate of Youngstown State University in Ohio, were more similar than different. Both demonstrated effective teaching. Their students were engaged in learning; their rooms were in order; they taught life skills; they both altered the curriculum to meet the students needs,

and they had learning relationships with their students. In essence, both educators facilitated effective learning in the classroom.

Both teachers challenge their students to learn, and stress that without academics they cannot do anything. In each classroom, expectations were clearly spelled out. Both teachers, believed, and demonstrated their belief in the children's ability to learn. Lehman attested to their shared vision. He stated,

> We have the same goals, and we both are committed to them [the children]. I am committed to them and it is my responsibility like I am committed to my own children. Still, you cannot do this well without understanding your own process in the process (Ward Randolph, 264).

Mr Lehman further commented that,

> Often times, teachers say, "I'm not a social worker. I'm not this or that, but if you care about your children, yes you are. You're everything to them. You are a teacher, mentor, counselor, listener, and a reflective person. If you don't think you are, children are going to get these needs meet in other places. Who's going to meet their needs? (Ward Randolph, 260).

In response to student learning, he declared,

> For children, the light has to go on. If you fail and let them do nothing, that is not teaching either. You force them to see that they are capable and they are going to be monitored for a while. They will eventually take on the responsibility, and a light goes on. But, you have to do something to show them they have an investment and they are capable of doing it (Ward Randolph, 264).

Lehman has on his door, "Knowledge is the best defense," while Welch has above her blackboard "Believing in yourself is the first step to success." Even though they teach different subjects, and different grade levels, they both are mirrors of each other. Ultimately, both served their students well.

Welch altered the curriculum if it did not meet the best interest of the children. It was clear that she too, like Lehman, loved teaching. As a teacher from the segregated schools of

the South, Mrs. Welch believed in the "old school." She had different advice for future urban teachers. Welch contended that the key to teaching and learning, regardless of the context for students and teachers, is discipline. She proclaimed,

> You have to have discipline, dedication, hard work and determination to succeed. These things determine the degree of education you get. Without the first, nothing can occur. Dedication allows you to do hard work. Discipline allows you to complete the goal. But, that comes from hard work (Ward Randolph, 269).

Moreover, she contends, "Teachers have to be born. No, I don't mean they don't need an education. But, it is the inner part, the personal part that is important. It's an innate thing" (Ward Randolph, 268). Welch was absolutely called to teach, and for her the drive to push her students beyond their own expectation came from within. She experienced joy when they learned. She declared,

> What "I feel about a child learning something. My thrill is just as great as when Michael Jordan puts that basketball in that goal in a game. When I have a child to come around in a period of time, there is no greater joy (Ward Randolph, 268).

As W. E. B. DuBois would note, as teachers of teachers, we must instill in our pre-service teachers the hope of one day having that kind of joy. Moreover, as we attempt to alter the teacher preparation of urban teachers, we must assess historical, and current models of exemplary urban teachers. Teacher education institutions could learn a lot from the historic teachers of Champion who succeeded in effectively teaching their students, and the present day exemplary teachers who still teach in the majority Black urban context. It is not an easy job by any means. However, Champion's history alludes to the idea that it can be done, and it can be done with joy.

CONCLUSION

This research has provided insight into the African American educational experience in

an urban northern de facto segregated school beyond the usual quantitative measures (Sowell, 1976). Moreover, it has provided us with insight into the role and contributions of African American teachers and principals. Lastly, it has provided hope that effective teaching can continue to occur in urban schools despite the changing context of urban settings. The legacy of Champion is that African American children learned there, and continue to learn within the urban context. No excuses were acceptable for the all-Black teachers of those students for not learning. Neither the principal, teachers or parents expected or accepted failure as the norm. In essence, they provided the children with tools to transcend their reality. As Mitchell would say, they educated them to be worthwhile and productive citizens.

Even though the school was created because of the fears of miscegenation, and the desire for racial isolation, it was accomplished through the political process in the urban setting of Columbus, Ohio. While the context and the elite power structure circumscribed the circumstances of learning for Black teachers and students, they were unable to circumvent learning in the all-Black school. Champion has a legacy because of its principals, and teachers. Leadership in urban schools, particularly predominately minority schools, must understand that

> It is the responsibility of strong leadership to represent the common good-not only because it is right, but because the despair of the weak in the end threatens the stability of the whole (Clark, 1965, 152).

Mitchell, and subsequent principals of Champion, particularly those who taught under him, understood that through their leadership, the economically poor students they taught could succeed. With the support and contributions of the staff and the community, they were able to create something good at Champion.

Teachers who enter the urban context must understand as the former teachers of Champion did and some who still do that the present situation as well as the history of a people is important. Thus, they must learn to teach poor, minority students with the support of their parents that education, a core value of the Black community, can help them transcend institutional racism. Teachers must have a political understanding of the institutional barriers these students will undoubtedly face, and of the urban context in which they teach. Without it, they will only teach them to fail, and they will forever remain victims of what Haberman calls the pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 1995). Yet, we must have hope, knowledge, tenacity and faith. Moreover, as Cole speaks of White teachers, she notes

> With the so-called integrated schools, because of neighborhood segregation, we often find African American students with White teachers, and many of our children are quickly and summarily labeled uneducable and left to fully *underdevelop* (Cole, 165).

Historically, as the work of James D. Anderson, V. P. Franklin, and Vanessa Siddle Walker attests, education is a core value of the Black community. Champion as an all-Black school transmitted this to its students. Thus, we must learn from Champion, and teach teachers that it has been done, and with a belief system armed with knowledge, and founded on hard work, it can be done again. All or majority Black student populations can no longer serve as an excuse not to fully develop the children of the school. It was not an excuse for Mitchell. It can no longer be an acceptable excuse for us as we strive to educate *all* children. In a closing note, Janice Hale, a graduate of the school argues,

> It is critical that the schools become more sensitive to ethnic and cultural groups that do not conform to the white middle-income model that schools [and teachers] are prepared to serve. Only when members of the helping profession demystify African American culture will solutions be found to the dilemma of achieving equal educational outcomes for African American children (Hale, 1994, 168).

Historically, Champion may provide answers to achieve this aim.

REFERENCES

Anderson. J. D. (1988). *Education of the Blacks in the South 1860-1955.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Butchart, R. (1988). Outthinking and outflanking the owners of the world: A historiography of the African American struggle for education. *History of Education Quarterly*, 28(3), 333-366.

Clark, K. (1965). *Dark Ghetto Dilemmas of Social Power.* New York: Harper Torch Books.

Cole. J. (1993). *Conversations Straight Talk with America's Sister President.* New York: Doubleday.

Foster, M. (1995). African American teachers and culturally relevant pedagogy. In J. A. Banks, and C. A. McGee Banks, (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education.* (pp. 570-593). New York: Macmillian Publishing.

Foster, M. (1991). Constancy, connectedness and constraints in the lives of African American teachers. *NWSA Journal*, 3 (2), 233-261.

Foster, M. (1990). "Just got to fin' a way." Case studies of the lives and practices of exemplary black high school teachers. In M. Foster (Ed.), *Reading in Equal Education olume II Qualitative Investigations into School and Schooling.* (pp. 273-309).

Franklin, V. P. (1995). *Living Our Stories Telling Our Truths Autobiography and the Making of the African American Intellectual Tradition.* New York: Scribner.

Franklin, V. P. (1990). "They rose and fell together," African American educators and community leadership, 1795-1954. *Journal of Education.* 172 (3), 39-64.

Franklin, V. P. (1979). *Black Self-Determination A Cultural History of African-American Resistance.* Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books.

Gatewood, W. B. (1990). *Aristocrats of Color The Black Elite 1880-1920.* Bloomington Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Gerber, D. A. (1978) *Black Ohio and the Color Line 1860-1915.* Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Giddings, P. (1984). *When and Where I Enter The Impact of Black Women on Race*

and Sex in America. New York: Bantham Books.

Guy-Sheftall, B. (1990). *Daughters of Sorrow: Attitudes Towards Black Women, 1880-1920.* New York: Carlson Publishing.

Haberman, M. (1994). The pedagogy of poverty versus good teaching. In, J. Kretovics, and E. J. Nussel, (Eds.), *Transforming Urban Education.* Needhman Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, (pp. 305-314).

Hale, J. (1994). *Unbank the Fire: Visions for the Education of African American Children.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Henson, L. J. R., & Bolland, J. M. (1990). *The Urban Web: Politics, Policy and Theory.* Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

Hofstadder, (1955). *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* New York: Vintage Books.

Irvine, J. J. (1989). Beyond role models: An examination of cultural influences on the pedagogical perspectives of Black teachers. *Peabody Journal of Education,* 66 (4), 51-63.

Judd, D., & Kantor, P. (1992). *Enduring Tensions in Urban Politics.* New York: Macmillian.

Judd, D., & Swanstrom, T. (1994). *City Politics: Private Power and Public Policy.* New York: Harper Collins College Publishers.

Keating, W. D. (1994). *The Suburban Racial Dilemma: Housing and Neighborhoods.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Massey, D. S., & Denton, N. A. (1993). *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Parsons, G. (1993). *Dilemmas of Black Politics: Issues of Leadership and Strategy.* New York: Harber Collins College Publishers.

Perkins, L. M. (1989). The history of Blacks in teaching. Growth and decline within a profession. In D. Warren, (Ed.), *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work,* (pp. 344-369). New York: Macmillian.

Perkins, L. M. (1983). The impact of the "cult of true womanhood" on the education of Black women. *Journal of Social Issues.* 39 (3), 17-28.

Perlmann, J. (1988). *Ethnic Differences: Schooling and Social Structure Among the*

Irish, Italians, Jews and Blacks in an American City, 1880-1935. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Peterson, P. (1992). The interests of the limited city. In D. Judd and P. Kantor, *Enduring Tensions in Urban Politics*, (pp. 21-32). New York: Macmillian.

Siddle Walker, V. (1996). *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Tyack. D. (1969). Growing up Black: Perspectives in the history of education in northern ghettos. *History of Education Quarterly*, 9 (3), 287-297.

Ward. A. L. (1993). The African American Struggle for Education in Columbus, Ohio: 1803-1913. Unpublished master's thesis, The Ohio State University, Columbus.

Ward Randolph, A. L. (1996). A Historical Analysis of an Urban School; A Case Study of a Northern DE FACTO Segregated School, Champion Avenue School: 1910-1996. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. The Ohio State University, Columbus.

Wiebe, R. H. (1967). *The Search for Order, 1877-1920.* New York: Hill & Wong.

Woodard, C. V. (1974). *The Strange Career of Jim Crow.* New York: Oxford University Press.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

UD031864

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Champion Avenue School: A Historical Analysis

Author(s): Adah Ward Randolph, PhD

Corporate Source: The Ohio State University

Publication Date: March 27, 1997

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic/optical media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) or other ERIC vendors. Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following two options and sign at the bottom of the page.

	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2 documents	
☒ Check here **For Level 1 Release:** Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical) *and* paper copy.	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Sample TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	☐ Check here **For Level 2 Release:** Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical), but *not* in paper copy.
	Level 1	**Level 2**	

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at **Level 1.**

"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."

Sign here→ please	Signature: Adah Ward Randolph	Printed Name/Position/Title: Adah Ward Randolph, Assistant Prof. Syracuse U.	
	Organization/Address:	Telephone: 614-577-0597	FAX:
		E-Mail Address:	Date: June 23, 1997

CUA

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
Department of Education, O'Boyle Hall
Washington, DC 20064

800 464-3742 (Go4-ERIC)

April 25, 1997

Dear AERA Presenter,

Hopefully, the convention was a productive and rewarding event. We feel you have a responsibility to make your paper readily available. If you haven't done so already, please submit copies of your papers for consideration for inclusion in the ERIC database. If you have submitted your paper, you can track its progress at http://ericae2.educ.cua.edu.

Abstracts of papers accepted by ERIC appear in *Resources in Education (RIE)* and are announced to over 5,000 organizations. The inclusion of your work makes it readily available to other researchers, provides a permanent archive, and enhances the quality of *RIE*. Abstracts of your contribution will be accessible through the printed and electronic versions of *RIE*. The paper will be available through the microfiche collections that are housed at libraries around the world and through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service.

We are soliciting all the AERA Conference papers and will route your paper to the appropriate clearinghouse. You will be notified if your paper meets ERIC's criteria for inclusion in *RIE*: contribution to education, timeliness, relevance, methodology, effectiveness of presentation, and reproduction quality.

Please sign the Reproduction Release Form on the back of this letter and stet **two** copies of your paper. The Release Form gives ERIC permission to make and distribute copies of your paper. It does not preclude you from publishing your work. You can mail your paper to our attention at the address below. Please feel free to copy the form for future or additional submissions.

Mail to: AERA 1997/ERIC Acquisitions
The Catholic University of America
O'Boyle Hall, Room 210
Washington, DC 20064

Sincerely,

Lawrence M. Rudner, Ph.D.
Director, ERIC/E