



RACE & RECONCILIATION INITIATIVE

# *Second Year Survey Report*



**TCU**

Race & Reconciliation  
Initiative

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# **Second Year Survey Report**

## **TCU and Race: The First Fifty Years, 1873-1923**

### **Introduction**

The Race & Reconciliation Initiative's First Year Survey Report, issued, April 21, 2021, presented a broad overview of TCU's racial history. That report, which encompassed the years from 1861 to 2020, did a particularly good job of explaining the historical context of TCU's founding era and of exploring the university's connections to slavery and the Confederacy; readers of the present document are urged to refer to that report. This year's charge was to take a deeper dive into TCU's first half-century, from its founding in Thorp Spring in 1873 to its move to Waco in 1895 to its relocation to its present location in Fort Worth in 1910, ending with the university's fiftieth anniversary in 1923.

### **The Southern Roots of TCU's Founders**

When the brothers Addison and Randolph Clark founded AddRan Male and Female College in 1873, the Civil War, in which they had both fought, lay only eight years in the past. The brothers had been reluctant Confederates. Both were devout members of the Disciples of Christ, a still-young denomination whose teachings inclined toward pacifism, and from an early age both were more interested in religion and education than the romanticized, masculine visions of martial glory that motivated so many southern boys in 1861. Neither Addison nor Randolph spent much time in the decades after the Civil War looking back on their military experiences or longing for some imagined glorious Old South past.<sup>1</sup> They had souls to save and minds to educate.

<sup>1</sup> Burriss, "Higher Calling," 74-78, 94-96, 134-36.

The influence of Addison and Randolph's father, Joseph Addison Clark, however, loomed large over their lives and their aspirations as educators. Although born in Illinois, Clark was raised in Kentucky and Tennessee and apparently accepted the South's "peculiar institution," racial slavery, without question. He moved to Texas in 1839, and by 1850 he had acquired at least one enslaved person, though we know little about that person, other than that his name was George and that Joseph leased him out for a year in the mid-1850s. The 1860 tax rolls for Collin County, where the Clarks lived at the time, indicate that Joseph still owned one slave, by then valued at \$1,000. We also know, however, that during the Civil War the number of slaves in the Clark household grew. In 1863 Joseph Clark bought 320 acres in Hill County near Grandview, where he farmed and operated a mill. The next year's tax rolls indicated that he owned five slaves, valued at \$2,000. He also acquired fifty-seven acres across the county line near Grandview in neighboring Johnson County, and it was probably from this property that he wrote a letter in March 1865 to Addison and Randolph, who were still off at the war. In relating news from home to his grown sons, he reported that "Bud" (the family nickname for Addison's and Randolph's five-year-old brother Franklin) "has his amusements sometimes with the little negroes: Today he found George in the yard, & dragging him to a tub of water, he stuck his head over it, & went to pouring water over it." When Josey, Bud's ten-year-old brother, asked Bud why he was doing this, Bud replied, "Well, he won't get out of my way." This one anecdote seemingly confirms that Joseph Clark owned multiple slaves (the "little negroes" referenced in the letter) and that from an early age, White boys in the household learned the habits of white supremacy. Whether the "George" referred to in the letter is the same "George" whose labor was

leased out a decade earlier is not known. What *is* clear is that Joseph Lynn Clark harbored few, if any, doubts about the morality or necessity of racial slavery.<sup>2</sup>

That the elder Clark partook of the racial attitudes of his race and class is evident in his political opinions. Although the Clarks were unionists before the war, they supported the Confederacy once Texas seceded, and when the Republican-controlled Congress took over the Reconstruction process in 1867 and enfranchised African American men, Joseph shared in the outrage felt by most southern Whites. A letter he wrote to Addison and Randolph in March 1868 reported the latest political news, referring to Republicans as “mongrels” and grouching that if he “knew that this county would be ruled by Mongrels & negroes” he would want to go somewhere else.<sup>3</sup>

By the end of 1869 all three of the adult Clarks and their families had moved to Fort Worth, where Joseph got appointed postmaster and his two sons started a school. Three years later the two educators had an offer to relocate to Thorp Spring, forty miles to the southwest, lured by the availability of a commodious building and attracted by the prospect of a place where students would be sheltered from the very *un*-Christian influences of the rowdy, hard-drinking Cowtown on the Trinity. Hood County, where Thorp Spring was located, had been carved out of Johnson County in 1866. The political and racial associations of the region’s people can be inferred readily from the place-names they chose: Hood County is named for a Confederate general, John Bell Hood; the county seat is named for another Confederate general, Hiram Granbury; the county seat of neighboring Johnson County, where Joseph Clark had lived after the war, was named for yet a third Confederate general, Patrick R. Cleburne. Johnson County

<sup>2</sup> Joseph A. Clark to Addison and Randolph Clark, March 20, 1865, Joseph Lynn Clark Papers.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph A. Clark to Addison and Randolph Clark, March 8, 1868, Joseph Lynn Clark Papers; Burris, “A Higher Calling,” 135-36.

itself was also named for Middleton Johnson, who after having the county named for him, raised his own Confederate regiment.

Accepting the offer to purchase the Thorp Spring property, the family moved there in 1873 and established the AddRan Male and Female College. Addison Clark took the position of president and Randolph vice president. Their father was listed in early bulletins as the college's "proprietor." Although this title was somewhat ambiguous, it is clear that for the Clarks' first six years in Thorp Spring, Joseph played an important role in the institution that became TCU. His presence surely guaranteed that the Clarks' new institution would be grounded in the ideology of white supremacy.

## The Thorp Spring Years, 1873-1895

Thorp Spring lay in what, until very recently, had been the eastern margins of *Comanchería*, the homeland of the Comanche Indians, and at other times the area had been the hunting or camping grounds of other tribes.<sup>4</sup> Nearby Comanche Peak was a sacred place for the Comanches, and the tribe's last raid had taken place in Hood County just the year before the Clarks' arrival.<sup>5</sup> The Clarks had been lured to Thorp Spring by the village's namesake and principal landowner, Pleasant Thorp. Thorp envisioned the place becoming a prosperous town, perhaps even a resort where people would come to take the waters from the naturally occurring sulphuric spring that gave the place the other half of its name. He also believed that a school would be a draw, and in 1872 a Disciples minister named Henry Day Bantau established Thorp College in the building. It only lasted for a year, though, and since Thorp now had a building with no occupants, it made sense that he would reach out to the two young educators from

<sup>4</sup> Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire*.

<sup>5</sup> Callaway, "Hood County."

Fort Worth. Addison and Randolph Clark liked the location, and they agreed to Thorp's terms for a purchase of the building and grounds.<sup>6</sup>

Add-Ran Male and Female College, of course, was to be a racially segregated institution. It never would have occurred to its founders that it would be anything other than that. In post-Civil War Texas—and well into the twentieth century—any Texas school that had ever even contemplated admitting both Blacks and Whites would have immediately lost all its White students, faculty, and financial support. Of course, the lives of Blacks and Whites in the South had always been closely interwoven, as the main story of race at Add-Ran College reveals.

That story revolves around Charley and Kate Thorp, two African Americans who worked at the college for its entire time in Thorp Spring. Born a slave in Caldwell, Texas in 1852, Charley Thorp (whose rarely used legal name was Henry W.) and his mother Jude had been purchased by Pleasant Thorp and brought to Thorp Spring in about 1855.<sup>7</sup> Emancipated when the war ended, Charley Thorp stayed on in Thorp Spring, likely helping to build the stone structure that first housed AddRan. When the Clark brothers opened their school, Charley went to work for the Clarks and soon proved indispensable to the new institution. Joseph Lynn Clark, Randolph's son, left the best account of Charley's duties:

When the Clarks opened the school in the Thorp building Charley was occasionally employed for janitorial service, as the school developed, gradually accepting wider responsibility for practically every detail, aside from academic activities, not specifically belonging to someone else. He saw that the buildings were kept in repair. He advised on improvement. He repaired frozen water pipes. He made winter fires in the classroom stoves, and filled the oil lamps, and when the duty was not assigned to a reliable student, he rang the big bell which regulated the school's daily schedule. . . . He prepared the

<sup>6</sup> Burriss, "Higher Calling," 184-87.

<sup>7</sup> Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Slave Schedule, Johnson County, Texas; Charley Thorp Death Certificate, State of New Mexico, Aug. 21, 1927; US Census, Dallas County, Texas (Lancaster), 1900, ED 137, Sheet 9. We do not know whether Pleasant Thorp purchased or fathered Charley because slave schedules were published in 1850 and 1860; Charley was born between these years.

auditorium for the Sunday services and sounded the bell which called the community to worship.

But Charley's contributions to TCU and to the Clarks went far beyond these mundane, if important, duties. Charley helped the brothers enforce their strict prohibition of alcohol on the campus. The nearest saloon was three miles away in Granbury, but as Joseph Lynn Clark related it, if there were ever any suspected "infringement" of the rules, "Charley was the F.B.I." Charley was the unofficial "fire chief" of the hamlet, and "His skill and patience in the sickroom was notable." In his memoir, Joseph Lynn Clark goes on to relate the story of an Add-Ran student, W. H. Forrester, who in 1894 fell seriously ill with typhoid fever. For thirty days Charley nursed Forrester, and when he was well enough to travel, loaded him into a wagon and drove him to his parents' house, a journey of eighty miles. Charley's extraordinary service in this case was such that the local newspaper in Granbury called on the community to take up a collection to pay Charley "for his faithful and careful nursing" of Forrester, saying that "Our citizens should not let his earnest labor go unrewarded."<sup>8</sup>

Randolph Clark related another story about Charley that indicates something of Charley's character. Clark's wife Ella had fallen "dangerously ill" while Randolph was away preaching a revival. Anticipating that Ella's illness might be so serious that Randolph would need to be sent for, Charley harnessed a buggy in anticipation that he would need to ride the twenty miles to the nearest telegraph office to summon Randolph. But when he saw the doctors "anxiously counseling," Charley made the decision to go ahead. He rode the twenty miles, sent the message to Randolph "in words that could not be mistaken," and then waited all the next day and into the

<sup>8</sup> *Granbury News*, June 7, 1894, p. 8, March 8, 1894, p. 5.

night till Randolph arrived. Recalling this story, Randolph noted that “this is only a small part of a life” spent in “like service.”<sup>9</sup>

In about 1882 Charley married Kate Lee. Listed on the census as a “mulatto,” Kate was probably the daughter of an enslaved woman owned by Moody Lee, who was the mother of Randolph Clark’s wife, Ella Lee Clark. After her mother’s death, Kate remained as a member of the Lee household. It is also possible that Kate and Ella shared the same biological father, making them half-sisters. But in any case, they grew up together and had a close lifelong relationship. Kate came to Thorp Spring with Ella and Randolph, where she met and eventually married Charley Thorp. They had several children. Kate worked as a domestic servant for the Randolph Clark family and, according to Joseph Lynn Clark, served the Thorp Spring community as a midwife and nurse.<sup>10</sup> Charley and Kate Thorp both made substantial contributions to TCU's early years in Thorp Spring.

Other African Americans likely worked at Add-Ran during the school’s years in Thorp Spring. Only the barest of clues hint at their presence. One such clue comes in the form of a photograph found in the papers of an early Add-Ran student, Mattie Cooper Harlin.

<sup>9</sup> Clark, *Thank God We Made It*, 361-63; Randolph Clark, “Charles Thorp,” clipping from *Christian Courier*, 1927, in Joseph Lynn Clark Papers, Box 22, folder titled “Charley Thorp.”

<sup>10</sup> US Census, 1870, Fannin County, Texas (Bonham), p. 12; Clark, *Thank God We Made It* 64.



The photo of the college's Girls' House shows a jovial gathering of White students and adults on the front porch and upper balcony of the structure, with an unidentified lone Black woman standing off to the side and around the corner from the others. Although the photo leaves many questions unanswered, it stands as a stark reminder that while African Americans were part of the milieu at the frontier college, they were also isolated, separated from Whites by the written and unwritten rules of white supremacy.<sup>11</sup> In his family memoir written in the 1960s, Randolph Clark's son Joseph noted that since the nearest school for Black children was three miles away at Granbury, education for the children of Kate and Charley Thorp and any other Black children connected with Add-Ran "was neglected, a lamentable situation."<sup>12</sup> The aforementioned Mattie

<sup>11</sup> Undated photo in Mattie Cooper Harlin Collection, Box 1, Folder 5, TCU Special Collections.

<sup>12</sup> Clark, *Thank God We Made It*, 264.

Cooper Harlin recorded what would not have been an atypical occurrence when she told in her diary of an outing by a group of Add-Ran girls: “As we were coming back some little n\*\*\*\*\*s came on behind us[;] we meet [sic] some of the boys and they laughed at us for being with the darkeys . . . .”<sup>13</sup> Of course, all of the White students involved in this anecdote would have been in on the joke—nobody would have actually thought that the AddRan girls had been on a social outing with Blacks; it was only the happenstance that they momentarily *appeared* to be together that created an occasion for laughter.

Although Add-Ran had no trouble attracting students, it was never a financial success, and in 1889 the Clark brothers transferred ownership of the college to the Christian Church of Texas. The name was changed to Add-Ran Christian University, and in 1893 it reached its peak enrollment for the Thorp Spring years, with 445 students. But for the Clarks, the added stability wrought by the transfer of ownership also meant that they no longer controlled the school’s destiny, and in 1895 the new board of trustees reached a monumental decision: The university would move to Waco.<sup>14</sup>

## The Waco Interregnum, 1896-1910

AddRan’s new campus opened its doors to students in January 1896. Waco was thriving in the mid-1890s, with railroads stretching in every direction. McLennan County was growing

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<sup>13</sup> Mattie Cooper Harlin Diary, p. 32, TCU Special Collections.

<sup>14</sup> After AddRan’s departure for Waco, the school’s former campus was home to a succession of other short-lived schools, including Jarvis Institute, Add-Ran Jarvis College, and Thorp Spring Christian College. Charley Thorp may have continued to work at the first of these schools, which hired Randolph Clark as its president. By 1900 Thorp was living in Lancaster, probably still working for Randolph, who had become president of another short-lived school there, Randolph College. See Rhonda L. Callaway, “Thorp Spring Christian College,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/thorp-spring-christian-college>; Burris, “Higher Calling,” 256-59; 1900 US Census, E.D. 134, Sheet 9, Lancaster, Dallas County, Texas.

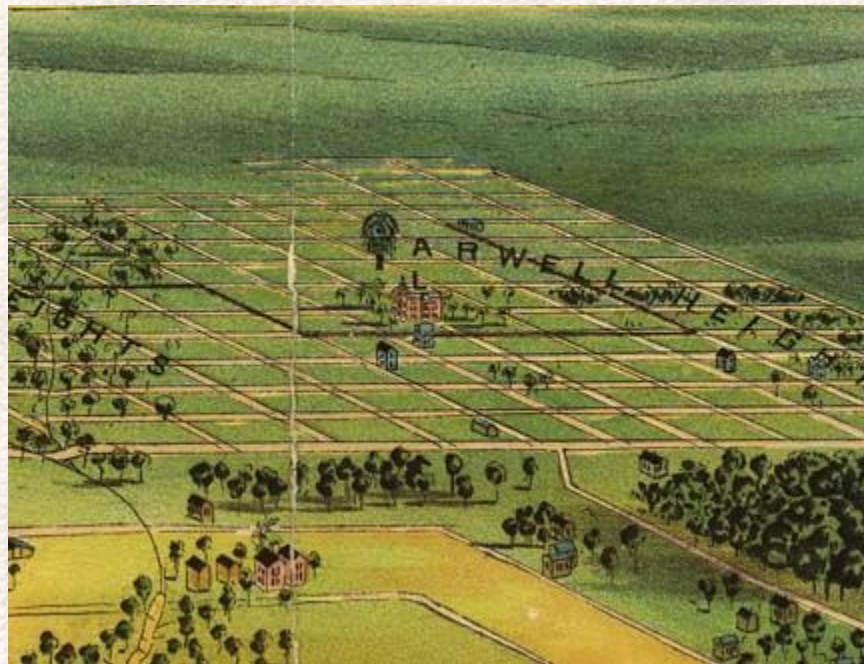
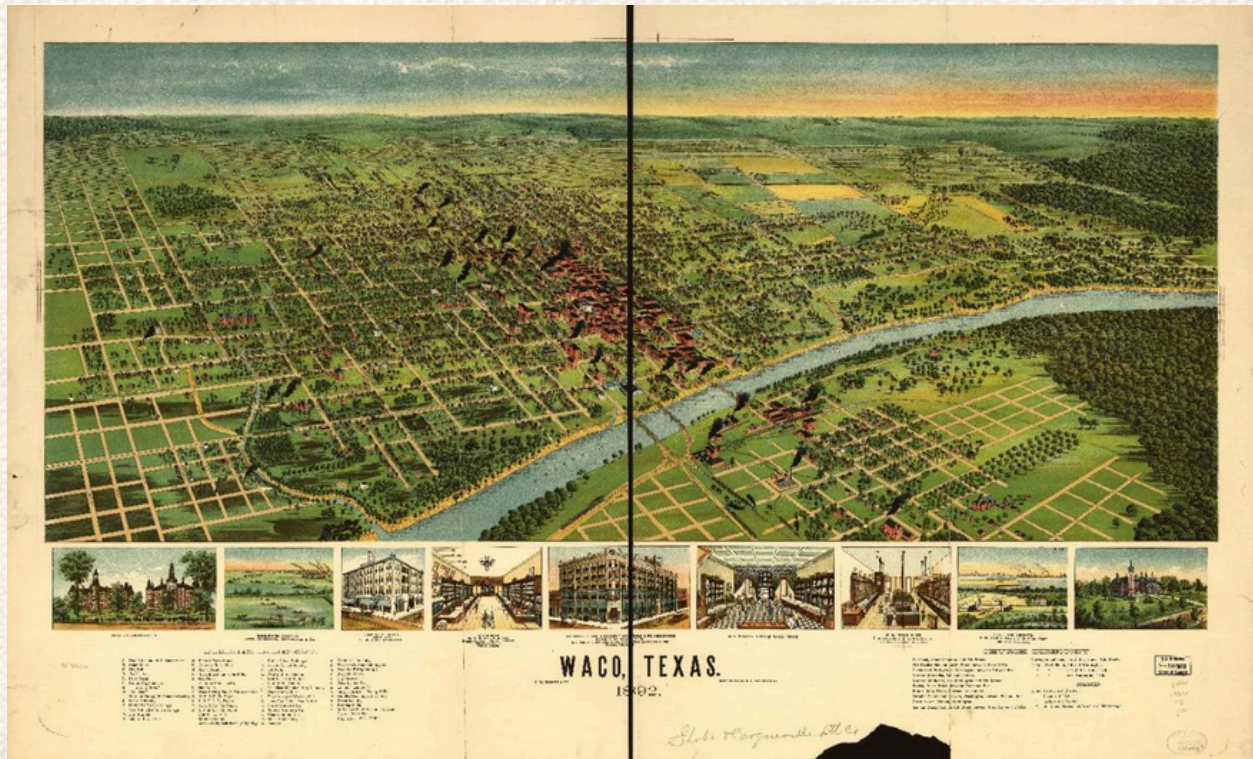
rapidly and in 1900 had a total population of 59,772. Of those, 14,405, or 24 percent, were Black. During the years that AddRan/TCU was in Waco, both the African American and White populations continued to grow. In 1910, McLennan County had reached 73,250 people, of whom 17,575 (23.9 percent) were Black. The city of Waco grew as well: a population of 14,445 in 1890; 20,686 in 1900; and 26,425 in 1910.

The new campus was at the northwest edge of the city in a development known as University Heights. About 1892, Waco Female College had built a splendid new building, designed by Waco architect Glenn Allen, and moved from its location between downtown Waco and Baylor University. Unable to sustain the cost of the construction and possibly the strain of the economic depression of 1893, the university closed, and the First National Bank of Waco took possession of the campus.<sup>15</sup>

Disciples of Christ members in Waco played an integral part in bringing the college to their city. The elders of the Central Christian Church bought the property for \$30,000. Waco attorney James Isaac Moore, chair of the elders of the Central Christian Church, made the proposition: "We will deed to the said University, the Waco Female College and fifteen (15) acres of land situated in the northwestern suburbs of the city of Waco, and we further agree to complete said building except the fourth, or dormitory story, and to build a dormitory for boys not to exceed in value the sum of five thousand dollars, (\$4,000) or such other buildings as may seem necessary for the accommodation of the University."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Ryan, "Waco Female College."

<sup>16</sup> Hall, *History of Texas Christian University*, 64-65.



1892 map of Waco showing the location of Waco Female College, future home of AddRan College, in the upper right.

The location of the university was remote: almost three miles northwest of downtown, on a hill a mile and a half southwest of the high bluffs overlooking the Brazos River. When the first trainload of students arrived from Thorp Spring on Christmas Day 1895, they marched the distance from the station to their new campus. Two streetcar lines helped lessen the miles, but it still was far afield. A 1903 article in the *Skiff* noted that the wife of “one of the city's wealthiest and most influential business men” asked, “Well, how do you get out to Add-Ran, anyway—on the Provident Heights car [street car line]?” When told that the North Fifth line ran to the college, she said, “I've never been there, you know.”<sup>17</sup> The neighborhood that built up in University Heights was almost exclusively white, and the development almost surely had racial deed restrictions. The campus grew apace, with the Girls' Hall completed in 1900, Townsend Memorial Hall opened in 1903, the main building completely finished in 1905, and the gymnasium and natatorium opened in 1907. To broaden the appeal of the growing school, the trustees in 1902 changed its name to Texas Christian University.

In moving to Waco, the university placed itself in the heart of a region whose dedication to the old Confederacy was never in doubt. Located where the Balcones Escarpment crossed the Brazos River, Waco was one of the northern ends of the Texas plantation belt. South Waco, where Baylor University located, abutted old cotton plantations. But the northwest, where TCU settled, was on the open prairie, a grassland that once stretched into Canada.

The physical remoteness of the campus, however, ensured that African Americans had little direct contact with the college. Few African Americans lived nearby, and those who worked on campus would have had to walk several miles, ride an animal, or take the segregated streetcar,

<sup>17</sup> *Skiff*, Dec. 5, 1903. All editions of the *Skiff* and cited in this essay are available in the TCU Digital Repository, TCU Special Collections, Mary Couts Burnett Library, <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/12511>.

which took precious cash. TCU was almost two miles from the nearest African American neighborhood, which had built up around the site of the Freedmen's Bureau school on North Seventh Street near Colcord, and almost four miles to the Black neighborhood around South Second Street. We have the name of only one of those early employees, Benjamin Jones. Jones, an African American man born in July 1863, was listed in the 1900 Waco city directory as “working” at Add-Ran College. According to the 1900 census, Jones lived near TCU with his wife, Fannie, and their three children, Bennett, Roy, and Alcostea, ages six, four, and two. Fannie, who was thirty years old, listed no occupation, perhaps indicating that Benjamin made enough to support his family without his wife having to work for wages. His tenure at the university was apparently brief, however. In 1902 he was working as a driver at the Methodist orphanage, also on the north side of the city.<sup>18</sup>

Despite its proximity to the open lands to the west, Waco remained resolutely southern, and that influence also continued to appear at AddRan. The direct influence of Confederate veterans, though waning, still appeared occasionally. President of the AddRan board of trustees from 1895 to 1899, Joseph Zachariah Miller (1834-1920) was a colonel in the Confederate army. He was a wealthy banker from Belton. Likewise, former Confederate major and Waco banker John T. Walton served briefly as secretary of the board. Walton donated a substantial number of books to the university library. As younger men took the places of these old soldiers, however, in the twenty-first century, the direct connections to the Confederacy faded. Experience was replaced by only memory.

As we know, however, many southerners worked actively to keep that memory alive, and TCU students and faculty openly participated in the “Lost Cause” rhetoric that was endemic

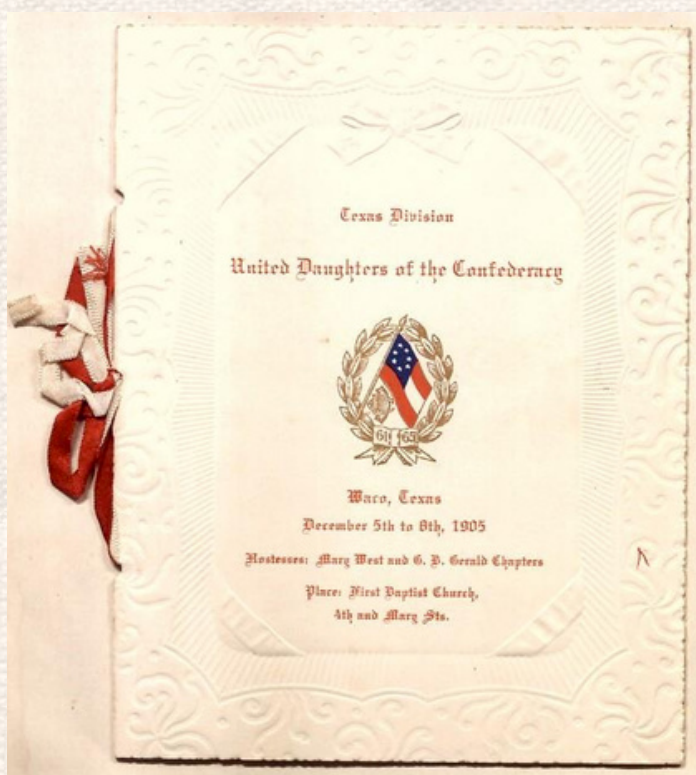
<sup>18</sup> Waco, Texas, City Directory, 1900, p. 96; Waco, Texas, City Directory, 1902-1903, p. 133, both in <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2469/>; US Census of 1900.

during this period. One of the most aggressive proponents of the “Lost Cause” was an organization named the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC). The UDC organized in Nashville in 1894 and quickly spread to Texas in 1895. The first Waco group, the Mary West chapter, was organized in that first year as well, and a second, named for Waco resident and Civil War colonel George Bruce Gerald, developed in North Waco near TCU in 1901. In November 1903, the UDC organized “a strong chapter” at TCU with the help of Waco resident Araminta Branson, UDC organizer for the Waco district. The writer for the *Skiff* observed, “Most of the girls in the hall have father, uncles, or grandfathers who championed the cause of the South from ‘61 to 65.” The chapter of twenty-two members had a full complement of officers, including president and three vice presidents.<sup>19</sup> The *Skiff* writer concluded, “It is T.C.U.’s mission to aid in all commendable work and doubtless this move which has for its purpose the remembrance of the valorous deeds of our Southern heroes will be strongly supported, as it should be.” In 1904, the *Skiff* reprinted an article from the Waco newspaper, noting the activities of the local UDC chapter.<sup>20</sup> When the Texas chapter of the UDC met in Waco in 1905, the G. B. Gerald chapter, located in College Heights, held an opening reception at their chapter house “in ‘wartime’ Confederate style, but dainty edibles, hot coffee, chocolate, etc.” While Baylor choral groups and faculty members participated much more than TCU people, TCU faculty members attended, and several took the stage. Professor Rene Dyksterhuis provided a violin solo, and Gussie Ward, professor of voice, gave “Music (selected).” Olive Leaman McClintic, alumna and instructor of oratory, provided a “Reading (selected), and “Rev.” J. B. Eskridge, professor of

<sup>19</sup> *Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Convention of the Texas Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Fort Worth: Speer Printing Co., 1904), 34, 85; *Skiff*, Nov. 28, 1903. The officers included Mary Taliaferro, president; Bess Coffman, first vice president; Cassie Holloway, second vice president; I. V. Purcell, third vice president; Ginnie Miller Ree, secretary; Alma Hood, historian; Louise Andrews, registrar; and Le Noir Dimmitt, treasurer.

<sup>20</sup> *Skiff*, Mar. 19, 1904

Latin and Greek, gave a benediction. In addition to three days of reports, addresses, and prayers, attendees heard poems and musical numbers, including the poem “My Old Black Mammy” and the song “My Old Black Mammie,” sung by “the Baylor quartette.” We have no record of TCU students attending, although one might surmise that members of the student UDC would have made the trek across town for the events.<sup>21</sup> In 1906, Waco resident Mrs. William Hodges invited all students to attend an ice cream social at her home near the campus to raise funds for the UDC.<sup>22</sup>



Program from the meeting of the 1905 Texas Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, held in Waco.

<sup>21</sup> Johnson scrapbook: Scrapbook of Olive McClintic Johnson, who attended TCU 1898-1901 and taught 1901-1906. Box 32, Record Unit 8, TCU Scrapbook Collection, <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/4609> Link for online version, pg. 73; *Waco Semi Weekly Tribune*, Nov. 29, 1905.

<sup>22</sup> *Skiff*, May 19, 1906.

The Old South appeared in various other guises on campus as well. A 1905 *Skiff* reprint from the Houston Post extolled the return of captured Confederate battle flags from the US War Department.<sup>23</sup>

Student and faculty orators regularly gave speeches about the glorious southern past. A 1903 oratorical contest featured declamations on “Stonewall Jackson, the Christian Soldier” and “The Race Problem of the South.”<sup>24</sup> In 1906, Benjamin H. Hill delivered a “Plea for the South,” apparently recreating a speech to the Young Men's Union in New York City in 1865. In 1908, Grady Twyman delivered an address, “Under the Southern Flag.”<sup>25</sup> On Robert E. Lee's birthday in January 1909, Mary Clyde Reeves, principal of the School of Oratory, read before the chapel assembly “scenes relative to the Confederacy.”<sup>26</sup> Prohibition of alcohol was also a prominent topic for campus debate, and in 1906, an orator expounded on “Prohibition and the Negro Problem.” Student performers sang in dialect. In 1905, for example, the Glee Club sang “Po' Little Lamb,”<sup>27</sup> with lyrics by Paul Lawrence Dunbar and music by J. A. Parks.<sup>28</sup>

Thomas Dixon's rabidly racist novel *The Clansman* and the subsequent play of the same name stirred debate among TCU students in 1905 and 1906. In March 1905, an unnamed student reviewed the book and observed, “Not until comes the descriptions of conditions in the South under negro rule does any of the book's real power show itself.”<sup>29</sup> Apparently a small performance took place in Waco in December 1905, the *Skiff* reported that “many of the student

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<sup>23</sup> *Skiff*, March 25, 1905.

<sup>24</sup> Commencement Program 1903, <https://repository.tcu.edu/bitstream/handle/116099117/8614/Commencement%20Program%20-%201903.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

<sup>25</sup> *Skiff*, Nov. 3, 1908.

<sup>26</sup> *Skiff*, Jan. 21CK, 1909.

<sup>27</sup> *Horned Frog*, 1906, in “Oratorical Association” section.”

<sup>28</sup> *Skiff*, Dec. 16, 1905.

<sup>29</sup> *Skiff*, Mar. 11, 1905.

'body attended the production of 'The Clansman' last evening and all report having seen a splendid play."<sup>30</sup> These passing references gives no explanation of the play. The next year, however, both the book and the resulting play emerged as a topic of debate. Nationally, some cities--including Philadelphia; Montgomery, Alabama; and Macon, Georgia--barred performance of the play, fearing that it would incite violence against African Americans. At TCU, the Shirley Literary Society addressed the resolution: "Such books as The Clansman should not be written."<sup>31</sup> The citizens of Waco, however, welcomed the play. In November 1906, the downtown Waco Auditorium hosted a performance of the play. The acting troupe was traveling across the South and performed in at least eight Texas cities despite considerable controversy over its content.<sup>32</sup> Calling it "the play you have read about," Auditorium staff members advertised in the *Skiff*, with tickets going for fifty cents up to \$1.50.<sup>33</sup> The Waco newspaper reported it as "a great work."<sup>34</sup>

In terms of student journalism, *Skiff* writers commonly made racialized references. These pieces are only occasionally signed, so the authors remain anonymous. A description of "Waco today" in 1903 described Latinx people as "the sombreroed montezuma [sic]" and African Americans as "the ebon son of Ham." The writer praised the reign of King Cotton.<sup>35</sup> A month later, the newspaper detailed the arrest of "a Negro" for horse theft and also referred to the suspect as "the darkey." TCU business manager Aaron C. Easley, suspecting that the horse that the man was selling was stolen, called the sheriff. The sheriff "at once deputized Col. Easley,"

<sup>30</sup> *Skiff*, Dec. 16, 1905; *Waco Semi-Weekly Tribune*, Dec. 20, 1905.

<sup>31</sup> *Skiff*, Mar. 3, 1906; Mar. 24, 1906.

<sup>32</sup> *Palestine Daily Herald*, Oct. 29, 1906.

<sup>33</sup> *Skiff*, Nov. 20, 1906.

<sup>34</sup> *Waco Semi-Weekly Tribune*, Dec. 8, 1906.

<sup>35</sup> *Skiff*, Sep. 26, 1903.

who apparently arrested the suspect.<sup>36</sup> A writer in April 1903 praised Robert E. Lee as “that sterling old hero.”<sup>37</sup> In 1906, the *Skiff* writers observed that they were “not advocating lynching at all” but that with enough words they would show that “it is not antithetical to the great primal laws and principles of Democracy. Mob-law is not named rightly as anarchy and this is the thing we object to.”

On the evening of March 22, 1910, the TCU main building caught fire and was gutted in a matter of hours. Although the other buildings on the campus still stood, the university had insufficient insurance to rebuild its main structure. The trustees received invitations from several cities, and in the end they decided to move the campus to Fort Worth. The Waco period ended quickly and shockingly. In 1912, the university sold the remaining property to developers, and TCU in Waco was no more.

## **New Home, Old Attitudes: The Early Fort Worth Years, 1910-1923**

Fort Worth famously embraces its identity as the place “Where the West Begins”—a motto that *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* publisher Amon G. Carter institutionalized on his newspaper’s masthead in 1923. However, a quick look at the history of Fort Worth and Tarrant County lays to rest any doubts about its southern heritage. In 1860, Tarrant County, which was still very much on the frontier, was home to 740 enslaved African Americans, owned by 158 White citizens. By 1864, with an influx of southerners fleeing the ravages of the Civil War, those numbers had swollen to 1,744 people enslaved by 346 White owners. Those laborers were valued by the county at \$1.5 million, by far the largest category of capital assets in the county.

<sup>36</sup> *Skiff* Vol. 2, no. 7, 10-31-1903. Easley’s “colonel” title appears to have been honorific; we have found no evidence that he was a military veteran.

<sup>37</sup> *Skiff*, April 11, 1903.

Tarrant County's climate was not conducive to the production of cotton on large plantations, but enslaved labor was utilized on small farms and in livestock raising, milling, construction, and a variety of other industries.

By the time TCU moved to Fort Worth in 1910, the African American population of Tarrant County had increased to 15,572, out of a total population of 108,572 — a not-inconsiderable Black minority for a city that thought of itself as western.<sup>38</sup> The growing city participated fully in the South's rigid system of segregation, with separate schools, residential neighborhoods, businesses, and public accommodations for Blacks and Whites. The idea of TCU admitting African Americans as students still lay nearly a half-century into the future. Since the enactment of the statewide poll tax in 1902 and other legal and extralegal means of discouraging political participation, non-whites had been largely excluded from voting. Blacks held no offices and could not sit on juries. Apart from a small middle class of teachers, ministers, and business-owners in the Jim Crow economy, most people of color (including Fort Worth's small Mexican American community) worked as domestic servants or in other manual-labor occupations.

Like other southerners, White Fort Worthians in the early twentieth century rarely questioned the assumption that certain types of labor, especially domestic service, were expected to be done by people of color—especially Blacks. This was partly because the work was hard and demeaning but also because Blacks could be paid less than Whites. The men—and they were all men—responsible for hiring decisions at TCU certainly shared in this assumption. Official personnel records for the university do not survive from the 1910s and 1920s, but there is no

<sup>38</sup> *Thirteen Census of the United States*, Vol. 1, Population, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), 120, 244.

evidence that White workers performed the daily drudgery of keeping the school running. Instead, TCU filled positions such as housekeepers, cooks, and groundskeepers exclusively with African Americans.

The best snapshot, though incomplete, that we get of TCU's Black workforce comes from the 1920 US Census. Censuses were organized by household, which presented something of a challenge when enumerating institutions like universities. When the census-taker arrived on campus on February 10 of that year, he counted Errett W. McDiarmid, a Canadian-born professor of philosophy and psychology who apparently lived on campus with his wife and four young children, as the head of the TCU "household." Thirty-six White students were then listed as "lodgers"; apparently most TCU students' parents counted their college-age children as part of their households back home, so the Census Bureau did not count them as campus residents. Then followed the names of nine Black workers: Dan F. Hocker, Priscilla Baker, Haywood White, Joseph A. Allen, James Montgomery, William Wheeler, John Henry Greer, Lottie Montgomery, and Joella Greer. Six were listed as cooks, one as a dishwasher, one as a room maid, and one as a gardener. They ranged in age from nineteen (gardener Haywood White) to forty-nine (cook Joseph Allen). The group appears to have included two married couples, James and Lottie Montgomery and John and Joella Greer.<sup>39</sup> Other workers lived off-campus, though the number is not known.

Life for TCU's Black workers was not easy. When students moved into the first two state-of-the-art brick dormitories—Jarvis Hall for women and Clark Hall (on the site of the

<sup>39</sup> Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Tarrant County, Texas, Ward 8, E.D. 136, Sheets 15A-15B. The Montgomerys are listed as husband and wife on the 1930 census; the 1922 Fort Worth city directory shows the Greers sharing the same address on Evans Ave., but the 1940 census lists Jo Ella as divorced and John as married to someone else. See John H. Greer on 1940 census; Joe Ella [sic] Greer on 1940 census.

present-day Sadler Hall) for men—the university faced the quandary of how to keep the students fed and the buildings and grounds cleaned and maintained. In segregated Fort Worth, the nearest Black neighborhood was Terrell Heights, four miles east of campus, and the duties required by cooks and other workers required very early mornings and late evenings. Consequently, the university built a “servant house,” a low-slung, white frame barracks on the west edge of campus behind the main building (now Reed Hall), one structure in a small complex of service buildings that included a stable, tool shed, various workshops, and the university power plant.<sup>40</sup>



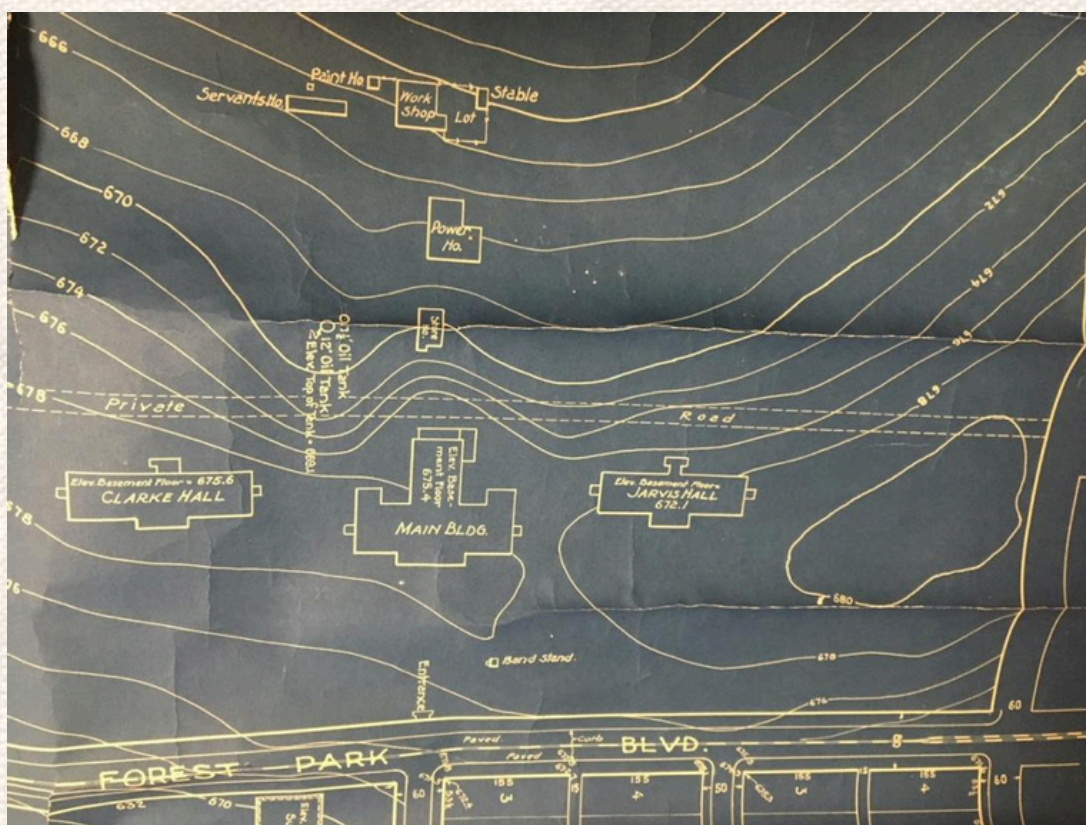
The “servant house” behind what is today Reed Hall, ca. 1930.

It was a classic expression of the southern tradition of housing domestic workers in servants’ quarters behind the “big house,” where they would be close-at-hand for duty but

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<sup>40</sup> Richard Selcer, “Fort Worth, Texas, Where the West and the South Meet: A Brief History of the City’s African American Community, 1849-2012, in BlackPast, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/fort-worth-texas-where-west-and-south-meet-brief-history-citys-african-american-communi/>; President’s Annual Report of the Texas Christian University, 1930, TCU Digital Repository, Mary Couts Burnett Library, <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/7075>; Detail from “Aerial view includes Clark Field behind Library,” 1930, TCU Digital Repository, Mary Couts Burnett Library, <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/2798>. The servant house sat approximately where the southwestern corner of Scharbauer Hall sits today.

otherwise hidden away. Even the architecture of TCU's original buildings—in the neoclassical style with stately Ionic columns—hearkened back to the great plantation houses of the antebellum South. The quarters in the servant house were no doubt cramped and lacking in privacy. For most of those workers who did live off campus, getting to work undoubtedly involved a lengthy walk or a ride in the back seat of the city's segregated streetcars, which would have been expensive and time-consuming to do on a daily basis.



TCU Contour Map, 1927," 1927. Asset Management and Technical Services,  
Texas Christian University

A cursory investigation into the lives of TCU's Black workers reveals how limited the options were for the Black working class in Jim Crow Fort Worth. Some, like janitor John Henry "Johnny" Greer, worked for TCU for many years; as late as 1945 the Fort Worth city directory

has Greer, who had lived on campus in 1920, living on Kilpatrick Avenue in the all-Black Como neighborhood and still working as a TCU janitor. But the allure of employment at TCU did not prove strong enough to prevent considerable turnover among the workers. Greer's wife Joella, for example, who despite being a high school graduate could only find work as a housekeeper, by 1922 had moved on to work as a room maid at the Texas Hotel and by 1929 at the Worth Hotel. As late as 1956, she was still working as a hotel maid.<sup>41</sup>

The case of another married couple, James and Lottie Montgomery, reveals a similar pattern. James, a World War I veteran who could read and write, came home from his wartime service at age twenty-two only to find that his best career prospects were as a dishwasher at TCU. He later became a cook, working at the university for many years. His wife Lottie, also a cook, worked for TCU for several years before finding work in a beauty parlor. The last extant historical record of James and Lottie Montgomery dates to 1938, when the city directory has Lottie, now a widow, still working as a beautician. As with so many poor Black people in that era, there are no records of the exact dates or circumstances of either James's or Lottie's deaths.<sup>42</sup> TCU's penchant for hiring married couples extended to janitors Roland B. and Emma Briscoe and cooks Joseph A. and Annie Allen, all of whom worked together at TCU in the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Tarrant County, Texas, Ward 8, E.D. 136, Sheet 15B; Fort Worth, Texas, City Directories, 1920, 1922, 1924, 1929, 1932, 1956, all in Ancestry.com, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2469/>; US., World War II Draft Registration Cards, 194 for John Henry Greer, Ancestry.com, [https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/12674696:1002?tid=&pid=&queryId=f646b8631268704bf9334c95df38b80e&\\_phsrc=ePy95&\\_phstart=successSource](https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/12674696:1002?tid=&pid=&queryId=f646b8631268704bf9334c95df38b80e&_phsrc=ePy95&_phstart=successSource).

<sup>42</sup> Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Tarrant County, Texas, Ward 8, E.D. 136, Sheet 15B; Fort Worth City Directories, 1920, 1923, 1938, Ancestry.com, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2469>.

<sup>43</sup> Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Tarrant County, Texas, Ward 8, E.D. 136, Sheet 15B; Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Tarrant County, Texas, Ward 8, [get rest of cit.]; Fort Worth City Directories, 1918, 1920, 1922, 1925, 1930, Ancestry.com, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2469/>; *Skiff*, Sep. 28, 1917.

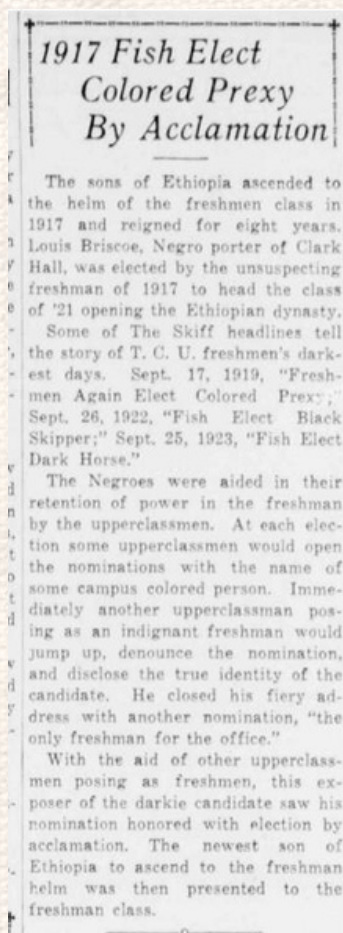
It is not quite true to say Blacks like the Greers, Montgomerys, Briscoes, and Allens were invisible on the TCU campus; students encountered them every day and knew their names, or at least some portion of their names—often only a first name or a last name or some nickname, a longstanding practice of denying African Americans family names. Joe Allen, a longtime cook at TCU, was referred to in one *Skiff* article as “Old Negro Joe” and in the *Horned Frog* as “Ol’ Black Joe.” In another article, Joe and his wife Annie, along with another cook identified only as “Dan,” were all referred to exclusively by the first names, except for one extra- descriptive sentence which referred to Joe as “Our big, fat, funny, shiny, Black Joe.” Roland B. Briscoe, a longtime janitor, was almost always referred to simply as “Briscoe.” In Briscoe’s case, it seems that few students knew his first name, and on one occasion when he *was* mentioned by his full name, the student newspaper got the name wrong, referring to him as “Louis” rather than “Roland.” Arthur L. Hunter, a janitor in the men’s dorm, also doubled as an athletic trainer, charged with the task of rubbing down student athletes from his “office” in the basement of Clark Hall, where, according to the *Skiff*, he was “known by all the boys as ‘Blackie’,” a name which “tells us of his facial color.” Perhaps the only African American worker whose full name got invoked on campus was janitor Julius Caesar Jackson, whose name, not surprisingly, was a source of amusement to the editors of the *Skiff*.<sup>44</sup>

But while White students knew, and often even spoke fondly (if condescendingly), of the school’s Black laborers, the very familiarity between the two groups meant that the students felt little hesitation in involving the Black “help” in what the students viewed as harmless campus hijinks. The most notorious of these pranks, in which students used Black workers

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<sup>44</sup> *Skiff*, Sep. 28, 1917; *Skiff*, Jan. 11, 1919; *Horned Frog*, 1919 in the “College Year” section]; Fort Worth City Directories, 1918, 1920, 1926, 1927, 1930, 1936; “Briscoe’s a Granddad Now!,” *Skiff*, Oct. 2, 1929; *Horned Frog*, 1928, p. 325; U.S., City Directories, Fort Worth, Texas, City Directory, 1926, Ancestry.com, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2469/>; *Skiff*, Nov. 14, 1913.

essentially as “props” for a racist practical joke, involved the annual election of a freshman class president. In all but two years between 1912 and 1923, the students followed this script: The first week of the fall semester, a meeting of the freshman class would be called for the purposes of electing a class president. Since the freshmen were virtually all strangers to one another, a helpful upperclassman would stand up and make an impassioned speech in favor of a certain named candidate, upon which the gullible freshmen would elect the recommended candidate by acclamation. The upperclassman would then escort the new class “president”—a Black janitor, cook, or gardener—into the room, with the predictable “hilarious” response from the gathered crowd. To say that such episodes were demeaning to the African Americans who were being used in this manner goes without saying. But it is also notable that they apparently never refused to participate; Abe Green, S. H. Thompson, Joe Allen, Roland Briscoe, Hattie Cole, Haywood White, Arthur Hunter, Jeremiah Lindsay, S. H. Thompson, and Roosevelt Bailey all understood that if they valued their jobs and hoped to avoid whatever repercussions might come with being branded “uppity” or “insolent,” they had better play along with the White students’ jokes.



A 1936 article in the *Skiff* recalls the tradition of the freshman class "electing" Black presidents in the 1910s and 1920s.

These jokes, however, also appear to have taken their toll on the pride of some of the Black participants. In 1913, less than two weeks after his second "election" in two consecutive years, janitor Abe Green had apparently had enough; the *Skiff* reported that Green "has left the university. He complained of too strenuous work—that the floors were too hard to sweep." Still invoking the joke of the sham election, the *Skiff's* writer condescendingly noted that "It's a shame the negligence of the students in keeping the halls clean has caused the 'Fish' to lose their leader." The resignation of Green did nothing to discourage the yearly ritual of the sham election, as the next year the students simply found another Black janitor, S. H. Thompson, to

take Green's place in the farce. One can only guess at how the Black workers felt in 1915, when instead of making a new Black class "president" the butt of their joke, the upperclassmen one-upped the pranksters of the previous year and instead unveiled an actual goat.<sup>45</sup>

TCU's Black employees were themselves occasionally the main subject of reporting in the pages of the student newspaper, the *Skiff*, and the yearbook, the *Horned Frog*. These mentions were almost always crude attempts to make humor at the expense of the hardworking kitchen, janitorial, and groundskeeping staff. This practice of "reporting" on the university's Black employees was already well established even before TCU arrived in Fort Worth; in 1910 the *Skiff* published an article supposedly detailing the visit of Rufus, the campus shoe-shine man, to the North, where Rufus's supposedly prodigious talents as a baseball player were discovered by pro teams. The story tells how Rufus made \$3,500 and then "caught the fastest train to Texas," whereupon he reported that "I got to gambling on the races and lost all my money. So I had to shine shoes in T.C.U." The story about Rufus's baseball exploits is probably apocryphal, but its themes of Black prodigality and lack of ambition typified Whites' condescending attitudes toward African Americans.<sup>46</sup>

Even Black achievement could not be acknowledged at face value. Popular campus cooks Joe and Annie Allen attracted attention in 1917 when they acquired a new "fine looking little chummy roadster." For Black domestic workers to own a car was unusual, and the *Skiff* article made a point of noting that Joe Allen was "no cheap sport" who had to borrow the money for the car; instead, he "paid for the car partially with some Liberty Bonds that he had bought and paid the rest in cash." Despite the seemingly admiring tone of the article, the student reporter could not resist using Allen's race to ridicule him. Employing Negro dialect, the story reported

<sup>45</sup> *Skiff*, Sep. 25, Oct. 17, 1913; *Skiff*, Oct. 2, 1914; *Skiff*, Sep. 24, 1915.

<sup>46</sup> *Skiff*, Mar. 11, 1910.

Allen saying, “I sho do like to go to church in dat automobile.” But the story also inadvertently revealed a serious truth about life for African Americans in Jim Crow Fort Worth when Allen added, “I know dat I will neber go to Church on de street car again. When I goes to town in my automobile de white folks cain’t cuss de n\*\*\*\*\*s befo my wimmin’ folks.”<sup>47</sup>

If the ownership of an automobile gave Joe and Annie Allen some dignity and relief from the insults that African Americans faced in such daily activities as riding on a streetcar, they could not maintain that dignity all the time on TCU’s campus. The annual yearbook often featured photos of the Black workers, sometimes in reporting on the fake freshman class elections and sometimes in other contexts. The captions, and sometimes the photos themselves, were, not surprisingly, demeaning. The 1917 *Horned Frog* featured Joe Allen, prop for the previous fall’s sham election, in his White cook’s uniform but also sporting something akin to a Roman toga. The caption identified him as “Joe Woodrow Allen,” the made-up middle name being a reference to a real president, Woodrow Wilson.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> *Skiff*, Mar. 15, 1917.

<sup>48</sup> *Horned Frog* 1917, first page of “College Year” section.

ADD-KAN AM...  
GIVE JOINT PROGRAM

Miss New Girl weds Mr. Old Girl, Miss Christine Kendrick, bride.

Carl Rupp Doering heads Piano Department.

T. C. U. romance ends in marriage, Young and Ramsey.

Tudor elected football manager.


Seniors order rings.

Joe Woodrow Allen, temporary Freshmen class president, elected by the Juniors.

Seniors decide to wear dress collars, and carry bamboo cane on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Senior girls demand that the canes be carried every day.

A familiar scene at 11 p. m. Stogie.




FRESHMEN CLASS PRESIDENT

1917

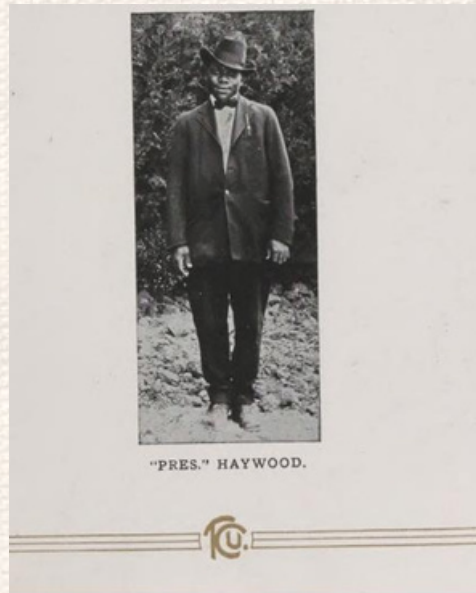
The following year's *Horned Frog* featured a more dignified image of "President" Roland Briscoe, but of course the editor had to mock him by referring to him as "Judge Briscoe."<sup>49</sup>

After various hot-air prelims the Freshmen insist—in spite of much advice from Boultinghouse and upper classmen—in electing Judge Briscoe President for 1917-18. We present full size portrait below.



<sup>49</sup> *Horned Frog*, 1918, third page of "College Year" section.

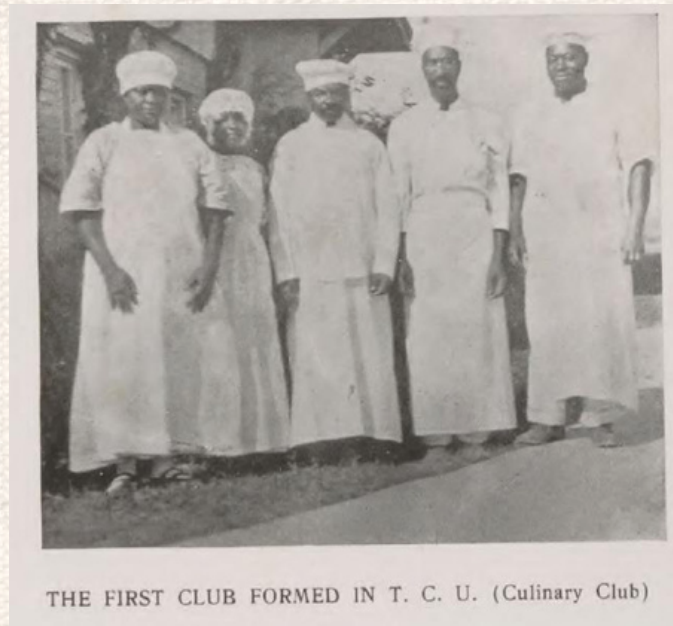
The butt of the joke in the 1920 yearbook, Haywood White, somehow managed to salvage some dignity by having his photo taken in a coat and tie with a jaunty felt hat, despite his occupation as a campus gardener.<sup>50</sup>



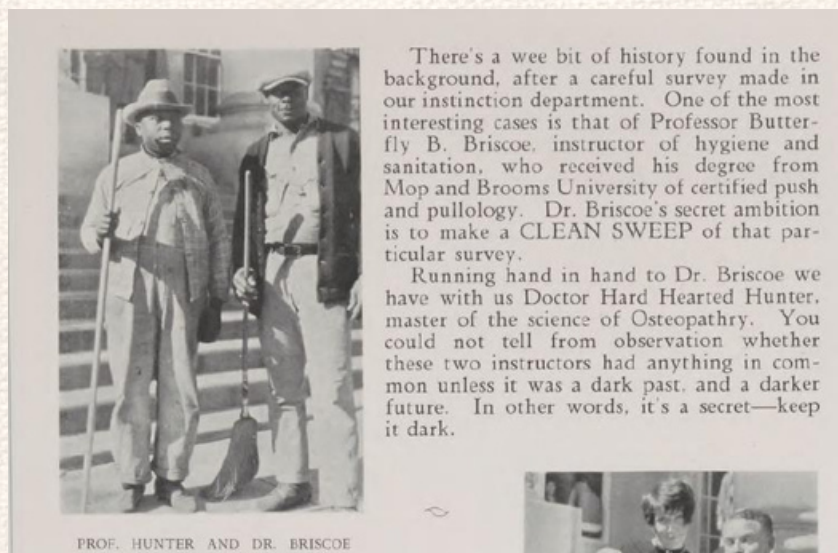
In 1917 the *Horned Frog's* editors found it amusing to include a photo of the aforementioned Joe Allen (far right) and four other members of the kitchen staff in the student-organization section of the yearbook, facetiously denominating them the “Culinary Club.”<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> *Horned Frog* 1920, p. 105.

<sup>51</sup> *Horned Frog* 1917, second page of “College Year” section.



Over and over in the 1910s and 1920s, TCU's African Americans made for convenient objects of ridicule, as in this yearbook photo of janitors Roland Briscoe and Arthur Hunter, given comical names here and lampooned as "professors" of "hygiene and sanitation" with degrees from "Mop and Brooms University."<sup>52</sup>



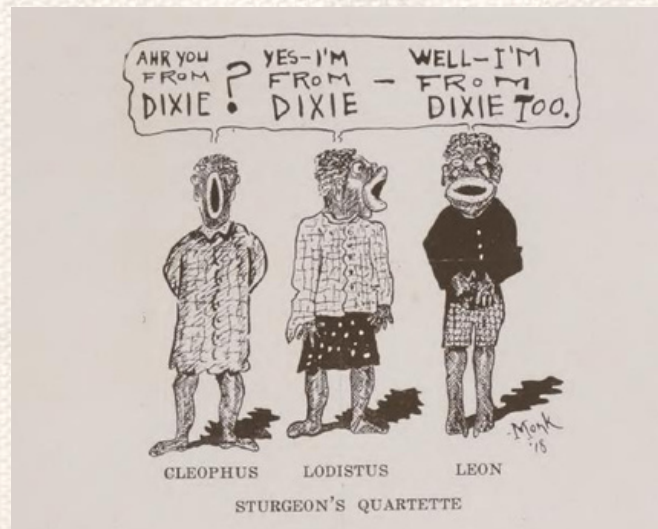
<sup>52</sup> *Horned Frog* 1927, twelfth page of "Frog Pond" section.

Racist jokes and the use of racial epithets were pervasive on campus—so pervasive that they never elicited any commentary that we know of. So common was such fare in the pages of the *Skiff* that a brief list of representative items will suffice to illustrate the point: a 1911 report on a program of the Shirley Literary Society that referred to a sophomore “who had more announcements than a n\*\*\*\*\*’s dog had fleas”; a 1913 letter from a former TCU student living in New York City, complaining about “‘thick-lip’ Africans sitting ‘jam-up’ side by side with whites, in every street car”; a 1915 story complaining professors who fail to keep their classrooms properly ventilated, causing the rooms to smell “like a negro hut where about five negroes had slept with everything closed tight all night”; a 1918 story about students obtaining chickens for a picnic “‘n\*\*\*\*\*r’ fashion” (that is, by stealing them); a 1919 story about a Halloween party in a women’s dorm told in Negro dialect and using the n-word four times; a 1921 poem about a woodpecker which included the lines, “He works like a n\*\*\*\*\*r / To make the hole bigger”; an account in the 1923 *Horned Frog* telling of a devastating flood in April of that year near the university, among whose refugees were “frightened little n\*\*\*\*\*rs”; a 1923 poem titled “African Golf” about Black men shooting dice, which begins with the lines, “Five coal black n\*\*\*\*\*rs with heavy scowls / All sat together, cheek and jowl.”<sup>53</sup>

Nor was campus racism confined to the written word. Minstrel shows were at their peak of popularity in the America of the 1910s, and both performances and graphic depictions of blackface were common. In 1914, prior to a big football game against Austin College, students held a “pep carnival” in which one of the main features was a booth with “Negro Minstrels,” whom the *Skiff* described as “heavy-weights, spade-footed, kinky headed, pug-nosed, and as

<sup>53</sup> *Skiff*, May 25, 1911; *Skiff*, Oct. 31, 1913; *Skiff*, Jan. 15, 1915; *Skiff*, Oct. 12, 1918; *Skiff*, Oct. 5, 1919; *Skiff*, Feb. 21, 1921; *Horned Frog*, 1923, p. 218; *Skiff*, Oct. 16, 1923.

black as the ace of spades.” The *Horned Frog* depicted the TCU men’s quartet, led by student John Spurgeon, as stereotypical blackface children in a racist 1916 cartoon.<sup>54</sup>



<sup>54</sup> *Sk iff*, Oct. 30, 1914; *Horned Frog*, 1919, tenth page of “College Year” section.

In a similar vein, the *Skiff* carried an occasional installment from the McClure Newspaper Syndicate's "Hambone's Meditations," a one-panel cartoon series featuring a stereotypical big lipped African American character who dispensed folksy wisdom—of course in Negro dialect.<sup>55</sup> In May 1920, the *Horned Frog* told the story of the past school year in the form of a fifty-page, three-act "pageant," a sort of graphic novel in which—not surprisingly—the only African American character is in the piece is another blackface caricature, this time of a "negro bell-hop" unloading students' baggage. Again, such images were notable at the time mainly

(As Sophomores and Humor are concluding above conversation, enter negro bell-hop with two suitcases which he deposits at extreme right. He reappears a moment later laden with hat boxes, suitcases, handbags, etc., followed by Juniors and Seniors. The latter stop by suitcases at right, and in a dignified manner proceed to unpack and don caps and gowns. Bell-hop stacks Juniors' baggage near center, to which Juniors have followed in a lordly manner.)



BELL-HOP:

Whew! You Juniors must have a lot o' glad rags!

JUNIOR:

(Boy—handing bell-hop a quarter.)

Here! But don't waste it buying oil stock.

(Exit bell-hop. As he passes Seniors he hesitates and holds out hand; Seniors so engrossed in putting on caps and gowns they do not see him. Bell-hop thrusts out lower lip and struts disdainfully off.)

<sup>55</sup> *Skiff*, Oct. 2, 1923.

for how common they were and how they passed without notice; it is doubtful that anyone who would have taken offense—that is, people of color—would ever have had occasion to read a TCU yearbook.<sup>56</sup>

TCU's African American workers, however, *would* have had the opportunity to witness one particularly egregious piece of campus racism. In the 1914 “pep carnival” mentioned above, another featured attraction, apart from the minstrel show, was a game called “Hit the Negro Baby.” A common feature of fairs and carnivals in the Jim Crow South *and* nationwide, “Hit the Negro Baby” (usually with the other n-word in the title, and sometimes also called “Hit the Coon” or “African Dodger”) involved paying an African American man or boy to stand behind a canvas sheet with a head-sized hole cut in it. Fairgoers then would pay to get three tries at hitting the “dodger” in the head with baseballs or eggs. The game was so dangerous that in 1917 New York became the first state to ban it, but it remained popular in Texas into the 1940s. (Modern dunking booths were invented as a tamer alternative.) We do not know whether the booth at the TCU student fair actually used a live person as a target—sometimes the “Negro baby” was just a graphic representation of a Black person. One can hope that one of the university's Black workers was spared the danger and humiliation of being called on to serve as the live target in this instance, but even the less-dramatic version of the attraction was demeaning enough.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *Horned Frog*, 1920, p. 96.

<sup>57</sup> *Skiff*, Oct. 30, 1914. Newspaper database searches reveal many dozens of accounts of the game being played at Texas fairs and carnivals, including two in Fort Worth: a 1926 Rotary Club picnic and a 1926 “Boys Day in Industry” banquet, both of which used eggs and a live target; see *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, July 15, 1922; and *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 5, 1926. For other Texas examples, see *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, July 12, 1914; *San Angelo Evening Standard*, Nov. 13, 1915; *Hamlin Herald*, Oct. 3, 1930; *Austin American-Statesman*, Oct. 23, 1932; *El Paso Times*, May 10, 1933; *San Angelo Morning Times*, Nov. 15, 1935; *Canyon News*, Oct. 27, 1938; *El Paso Herald*, April 2, 1941; *Pampa Daily News*, Dec. 3, 1944. Several of these explicitly note the use of human targets. A 1918 classified ad in *El Paso* actually advertised for workers to be targets in the game, promising “Good salary or percentage to good worker”; see *El Paso Times*, July 8, 1918. For New York's ban, see *New York Age*, May 17, 1917.

Clearly the privileged White students who attended TCU in the so-called Progressive Era had been socialized to accept anti-Black racism as a normal part of life. One might expect that the university's professors or administrators might have occasionally raised an objection to the open displays of ugly racism on the campus, if not in the name of justice then at least for the sake of decorum; after all, the n-word was generally considered crude even in 1914. But it was used with impunity on the TCU campus, along with the grotesque images in the student publications and displays such as the "Hit the Negro Baby" booth. Those who could have done something about it remained silent.

Of course, those silent professors and administrators themselves stood to benefit from the institutionalized white supremacy that pervaded the South, Texas, Fort Worth, and TCU. Not only did TCU enjoy a ready pool of low-paid, apparently compliant labor to do the school's dirty work, but those workers were even available for exploitation off-campus. A *Star-Telegram* story in the 1920s told of a deer-hunting trip to Terrell County, in the remote border region near Big Bend, taken by Butler S. Smiser, TCU's business manager, and L. C. "Pete" Wright, the athletic director. The newspaper reported that two of TCU's longtime Black employees, James Montgomery and Johnny Greer, "were taken along to look after the grub." The men left on the ten-day expedition about December 7, two weeks before the end of the fall term, so Montgomery and Greer missed at least a full week of work. When they returned, the newspaper story about the trip included an interview with James Montgomery, who revealed that business manager Smiser had missed two shots and come up empty-handed on the trip, prompting a bold headline in the *Star-Telegram* to announce, "Prowess of T.C.U. Hunters Belittled by Negro Cooks."

## PROWESS OF T.C.U. HUNTERS BELITTLED BY NEGRO COOKS

Stirring tales are told by Butler S. Smiser and L. C. (Pete) Wright, business manager and athletic director respectively of Texas Christian University, who have just returned from a 10 days' deer hunt down on the Rio Grande and on the Cunningham Ranch in Terrill County.

The party, which included also Otho and Homer Adams and Will and Bill DeLong, all of Christoval, Texas, succeeded in bagging four deer. Wright and Homer Adams each killed one deer, while Will DeLong, who is a Government agent, killed two.

The ones who got the biggest thrill

kept braggin' 'bout feedin' the camp, and rubbin' it in on Mr. Smiser."

According to Jim, Johnny thought he heard a panther once, and was hard to handle. It finally turned out to be a house cat, however, much to Johnny's chagrin. The hardest ordeal for Jim was when they camped at a place where three 600-pound bears had been killed.

"Me and Johnny flipped a coin to see who'd stay guard that night, and he won," Jim relates feelingly. "I sure didn't get no sleep that night, and I'm kind-a glad to get back to where things is safer!"

The reactions of Smiser and Wright to that headline are not recorded, but the entire episode reveals how confounding life could be for TCU's Black workers. Greer and Montgomery likely would have not felt that they could refuse the request to accompany their White bosses on the grueling eight-hundred-mile, ten-day round-trip, even if they had wanted to. And then, after their return, they may have well found themselves in trouble because of a headline written by a White journalist claiming that the men had "belittled" their employers. As was so often the case, Black people simply could not win.<sup>58</sup>

One way that White Fort Worthians reinforced white supremacy in the early twentieth century was by constantly reminding themselves and their African American neighbors about how they had all arrived at this moment in history. Amon Carter's slogan about the West beginning at Fort Worth notwithstanding, the White people of Fort Worth and TCU, young and old, continued to join with other southerners in glorifying, venerating, and mythologizing the Old

<sup>58</sup> *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Dec. 18, 1927. The ten-day trip ended on about December 17. TCU's Christmas break began Dec. 21; see Calendar for 1927-1928 academic year, *Texas Christian University Catalog*, April 1927, p. 5, <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/48385>.

South and the Confederacy long into the twentieth century. While still operating out of temporary quarters in downtown Fort Worth in early 1911, the *Skiff*'s editor devoted the bulk of an entire issue to stories venerating Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and the South in general. Among these stories was an account of a talk given by an aptly named TCU student, Braxton Bragg Wade, to the members of Fort Worth's Robert E. Lee Camp of the United Confederate Veterans. (Wade's namesake Braxton Bragg was a Confederate general, and a notoriously incompetent one at that.) Wade's lengthy oration sounded all the notes of Lost-Cause rhetoric. Of course, he identified "State rights" as "the main cause of the war." Noting that "some men of distinction, as well as some magazines," had lately sought "to teach the children of the South, that the cause for which our fathers fought is wrong," he declared that "as time goes by and as men read with less sectional feeling and with clearer visions, more are they convinced that the South was right." This assertion was followed with the obligatory "tribute to Southern womanhood" and a closing avowal that "you will not find men whose manhood stood for more than the Southern manhood."<sup>59</sup>

Over the next decade and a half, articles glorifying Confederate generals continued to appear in the *Skiff*.<sup>60</sup> A TCU English professor, H. F. Page, received plaudits for his contribution of a sentimental poem, "The Last Night at Appomattox," published in an anthology, *Masterpieces of the Southern Poets*.<sup>61</sup> Student oratorical recitals featured students reading stories like "The Littlest Rebel," "one of Edwin People's pathetic stories of the Civil War."<sup>62</sup> The 1914 issue of the school yearbook featured an essay romanticizing "the devotion [of] blue and gray alike . . . for what they believed to be their country. It was a heroic vision, and gladly

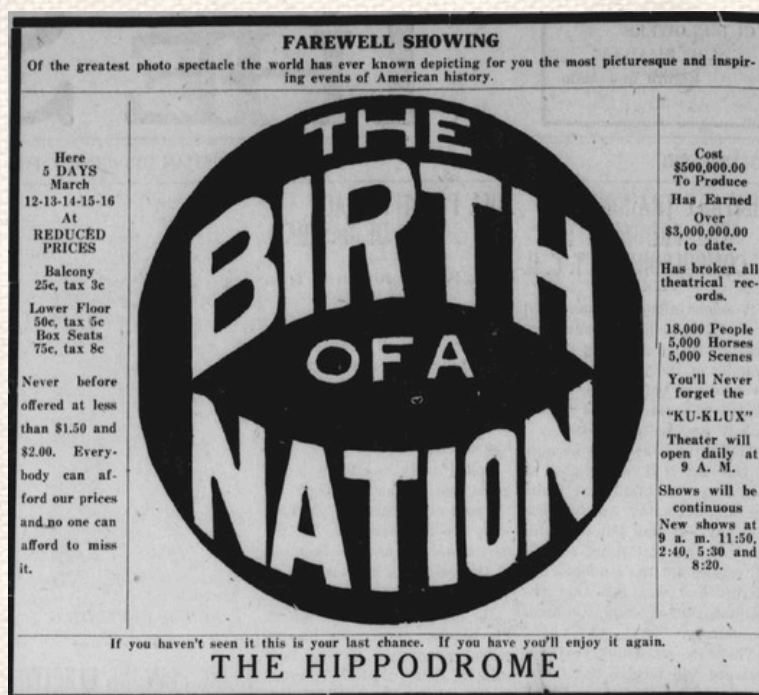
<sup>59</sup> *Skiff*, Jan. 26, 1911.

<sup>60</sup> *Skiff* Mar. 2, 1911.

<sup>61</sup> *Skiff* Jan. 9, 1913.

<sup>62</sup> *Skiff* Apr. 24, 1913.

did they give their lives for it.”<sup>63</sup> When *Birth of a Nation* made an encore tour of the county in 1918, it played in a local theatre and was prominently advertised in the *Skiff*, promising, “You’ll Never forget the ‘Ku-Klux’.”<sup>64</sup>



Real Confederates also continued to make their presence felt on campus. Apart from Addison and Randolph Clark, both of them former Confederate soldiers (if relatively reluctant ones), perhaps the two most venerated figures among the Horned Frog faithful were two ex-Confederate officers: Khleber Miller Van Zandt, Fort Worth businessman and commander of the local United Confederate Veterans organization, and James Jones Jarvis, Fort Worth state senator and charter member of TCU’s board.<sup>65</sup> Both were members of the board when TCU

<sup>63</sup> *Horned Frog*, 1916, pp. 165-66.

<sup>64</sup> *Skiff*, Mar. 1, 1918.

<sup>65</sup> Patricia P. Kinkade, “Van Zandt, Khleber Miller,” Handbook of Texas Online, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/van-zandt-khleber-miller>; David W. Gilbreath, “Jarvis, James Jones,” Handbook of Texas Online, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/jarvis-james-jones>.

moved to Fort Worth, and the 1915 *Horned Frog* was dedicated to Van Zandt.<sup>66</sup> Only slightly less revered was John T. Walton, a former Confederate officer and Waco banker whose donation of his personal library in TCU's early years formed the nucleus of the original TCU library. One of TCU's four literary societies, which were the main student organizations on campus in the 1910s and 1920s and functioned largely like modern fraternities and sororities, was named for him, and an issue of the *Skiff* was dedicated to him in 1912.<sup>67</sup>

As reminders of white supremacy, Lost-Cause rhetoric was probably less troubling to TCU's African American workers than the real-life, daily antagonisms of the Jim Crow system. The *Skiff* carried ads for the "T.C.U. Electric Laundry," which assured customers that not only was "clean water and pure soap used" but that "no negro" business was accepted.<sup>68</sup> People advertising lots for sale near campus placed classified ads that specified "no negroes."<sup>69</sup> A local photography studio that regularly advertised in the *Skiff* made a point to tell readers that they "don't make pictures of negroes."<sup>70</sup> On Fort Worth's streetcars, where Blacks and Whites were forced to share a car, Whites insisted on the full application of the rules that dictated that African Americans let Whites board the cars first and then required that Blacks sit in the designated seats in the rear. As mentioned above, Black Fort Worthians like Joe and Annie Allen knew that the often-crowded cars posed genuine risks for racial friction; the enterprising TCU cook loved his roadster in part because "white folks cain't cuss de n\*\*\*\*\*s befo my wimmin' folks" in the

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<sup>66</sup> *Horned Frog*, 1911, p. 2; *Horned Frog*, 1915, dedicatory page.

<sup>67</sup> *Shirley-Walton Year Book*, 1922-1923, pp. 2-4, Mary Coutts Burnett Library, TCU Digital Repository, <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/24684>; *Skiff*, Feb. 22, 1912.

<sup>68</sup> "T.C.C. Electric Laundry," *Skiff*, Oct. 31, 1922.

<sup>69</sup> Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Feb. 17, 1913.

<sup>70</sup> *Skiff*, Oct. 17, 1912.

automobile, as they did on the streetcar. In her fictional column in the *Skiff* about life at TCU, student Lallah de Stivers wrote about a trip on the streetcar—known as “the Green Bug”—that connected TCU with downtown. In her anecdote, which abounded with racist language and stereotypes, she had two male TCU students board the car and “drop exhausted upon the ‘n\*\*\*\*r seat’,” only to have an imperious African American woman, “Miss Apple Blossom ‘Lasses Brown,” who was “going to the city to see her true love Moses Revelation Pope (private first class in the colored infantry),” board the car and demand that the White boys relinquish the seat. As de Stivers narrates the scene, the ensuing “suspense is awful” as the passengers wait to see what the White boys will do. The author defuses the scene by having the boys sheepishly vacate the seat, and “Lasses seats herself majestically.”<sup>71</sup>

De Stivers’s imagined anecdote could end pleasantly because it involved two White *men* voluntarily accommodating a Black *woman*—and also because it was fiction. Therefore the participants were not subject to the rigid rules that governed relations between Black men and White women. But an episode involving real TCU students in late 1923 illustrates what happened when the roles were reversed, and a Black *man* ran afoul of segregation’s taboos. One Sunday night in downtown Fort Worth, a group of TCU students including Chester “Boob” Fowler, a star TCU athlete, Cort Reeder, president of TCU’s junior class, and Reeder’s unnamed girlfriend were preparing to board a streetcar when an African American man, Luke Scott, committed the offense of “trying to board the car ahead of some white ladies.” Fowler, a captain and star quarterback of the Horned Frog football team and an accomplished shortstop on the baseball team, took exception to this breach of racial etiquette and was “forced to give the negro

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<sup>71</sup> *Skiff*, April 7, 1919. For three years de Stivers wrote the popular column, in which a fictional TCU coed, “Annibel,” corresponded with her friend “Ethyle,” who lived in another city. De Stivers’s columns were clever and attracted quite a following. The author’s identity was revealed in the 1919 *Horned Frog*; see *Horned Frog*, 1919, [no page number, but see notation under de Stivers’s senior picture].

a shove to keep him from boarding the car before his time.” Reeder, escorting his girlfriend, then got in on the action and “was also forced to shove the negro to keep him from pushing ahead of the girl.” Scott protested this treatment, only to be “staggered by Reeder’s fist,” whereupon Scott pulled a knife and stabbed Reeder in the shoulder. Making his escape from the car, Scott was pursued “by an increasing mob of students, bystanders, and even a few girls.” A Fort Worth police detective “who happened to be in the vicinity” finally arrested Scott. Reeder’s injury proved not to be serious, but Scott was charged with attempted murder. Reeder recovered, Boob Fowler went on to play four seasons for the Cincinnati Reds and Boston Red Sox, and Luke Scott eventually pled guilty to the reduced charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and received a relatively light sentence: thirty days on the county road gang, plus a \$25 fine and court costs.<sup>72</sup>

The violent incident on the Green Bug streetcar took place at what may have been the all-time peak of racial tensions in Fort Worth. The end of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia ignited not only a Red Scare and a wave of anti-immigrant hysteria in America but also the worst crisis in Black-White race relations since Reconstruction. The race riots and repression that broke out in Texas and throughout the nation in 1919 spurred the growth of the resurrected Ku Klux Klan. By 1920 the “new” Klan had spread throughout Texas. Klansmen constituted a majority in the state legislature by 1923, and Texas sent a known Klansman, Earle Mayfield, to the U.S. Senate. Fort Worth became one of the Klan’s strongholds; over the next few years more than six thousand White Fort Worthians joined Klavern No. 101,

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<sup>72</sup> *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Dec. 11, Dec. 19, 1923; *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*; *Horned Frog*, 1921, [no page number, but see “Boob Fowler” in the Football section]; *Horned Frog*, 1924, [no page number, but see “A History of the Junior Class”]; “Boob Fowler,” Society for American Baseball Research, <https://sabr.org/bioproj/person/boob-fowler/>.

the city's local chapter. Pro-Klan candidates captured all local offices. Businessmen found that they couldn't get city contracts unless they joined the order. The 1920s Klan tried to maintain a veneer of respectability; it claimed to be a citadel of Protestant religious values and public morality, punishing bootleggers, adulterers, and anyone else who ran afoul of its fundamentalist Christian moral code. But like the Klan of the Reconstruction era, it also engaged in much covert violence, the victims of which were often immigrants, Catholics, Jews, and African Americans.<sup>73</sup>



Fort Worth Klan No. 101

This new phenomenon affected TCU, of course. Even before the arrival of the new Klan in Texas, White Fort Worthians were inclined to view the Klan positively. In 1916 the city held its “first annual Halloween Mardi Gras,” which was attended by the “Entire Student Body” and

<sup>73</sup> Rich, *Fort Worth Between the World Wars*, 61-70.

featured a “Parade led by the T.C.U. Band.” Following in the procession immediately after the float from the TCU Art Department was “a troupe [sic] of Klu [sic] Klux Klansmen”—whose presence suggested, correctly, that when the new Klan was actually organized in the city, it would find a warm reception.<sup>74</sup> Three years later, in 1919, readers of the *Skiff* were greeted by the bold-faced headline on page 1: “Ku Klux Klan Revived.” It turned out that the story was not about the KKK at all; rather, it was about a late-night raid by pajama-wearing male students on the women’s dorm which led to a battle of buckets of water flung between the warring groups of students—a sort of combination panty-raid and wet-teeshirt contest. What was revealing about the story was that it made no mention, oblique or overt, to the Klan. In the South, White readers all would have gotten the joke: the Klan was known for midnight assaults on unsuspecting victims.<sup>75</sup>

By 1922 the organization was so omnipresent that it had become a sort of cultural touchstone. Another reference that year to the Klan in the *Skiff* reinforced how familiar with—and how non-judgmental—TCU students were about the hooded order. TCU had recently adopted an academic honor code, in which students were required to report any incidents of cheating. The *Skiff*’s story carried the headline: “The Invisible Empire of T.C.U.,” a reference to a name that the Klan gave itself. The story explained the analogy: “It has often been said in speaking of the invisible empire of the Ku Klux Klan that you never can tell when you are talking to a member of that invisible empire. Just so, when you are cheating, some one may have his eye on you.”<sup>76</sup>

The first issue of the *Skiff* that year included a story with the headline, “Another K.K.K.” Once again, the story was not about hooded night-riders. Instead, it was about a kazoo club

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<sup>74</sup> *Skiff*, Nov. 3, 1916.

<sup>75</sup> *Skiff*, May 5, 1919.

<sup>76</sup> *Skiff*, Mar. 20, 1922.

founded by the coeds of Jarvis Hall, the “Keeble Komb Klub,” with student Millicent Keeble, president of the Clark Literary Society, as its president. The “Klub’s” sixteen members no doubt thought the name clever; whether it attracted a large audience for its 10:15 p.m. nightly performances is not recorded.<sup>77</sup>

To TCU’s credit, there is no record of an actual chapter of the Ku Klux Klan ever being established on campus or of TCU students joining the Fort Worth “klavern.” Doctrinally, the Disciples of Christ denomination generally steered clear of the Protestant fundamentalism with which the Klan was so closely associated. Still, individual students were attracted to the order. In 1922 TCU history major William J. “Jack” Hammond, who had been vice president of the campus’s Christian Endeavor chapter and president of the TCU Ministerial Association, “preached a sermon in the interest of the Ku Klux Klan” at the Ross Avenue Christian Church in Dallas. The *Skiff* gave no details on the sermon, only speculating, tongue-in-cheek, that Hammond might have been “looking for a free membership into this great organization.”<sup>78</sup>

Given the Klan’s reach in Fort Worth in the early twenties, onnections between it and TCU were virtually unavoidable. Because the Klan was a secret, oath-bound society—it prided itself on that “invisible” part of its moniker—it is usually impossible to definitively identify who was a member. One of those members, however, with a strong TCU connection was William Abel Hanger. A high-profile Fort Worth lawyer, Hanger chaired TCU’s first major Fort Worth capital campaign in 1916. The Klan was not yet established in the city at the time, but in 1923, when the first backlash against the Klan’s power began to be felt, Hanger was called as a witness in a trial, and under oath he admitted to being the cyclops, or head, of the local chapter.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> *Skiff*, Jan. 16, 1923.

<sup>78</sup> *Skiff*, Mar. 27, 1922; *Horned Frog*, 1923, p. 264.

<sup>79</sup> *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Oct. 10, 1916; *Skiff*, Nov. 10, 1919; *Skiff*, Nov. 17, Dec. 1, 1916; *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Dec. 20, 1923.

TCU's connection with the Klan became even more problematic with the election of Egbert R. Cockrell as Fort Worth mayor. Cockrell, a TCU graduate, Disciples of Christ minister, and professor of political and social sciences, was a much-beloved faculty member. Indeed, so popular was he that when there was a vacancy in the TCU presidency in 1915, more than two hundred students signed a petition to the trustees asking that he be named president. (Local Disciples of Christ minister Edwin McShane Waits got the job instead.)<sup>80</sup> So when Cockrell announced his candidacy for mayor in 1920, he had the strong backing of the TCU community, which credited him with leading the successful movement to incorporate TCU into the city limits of Fort Worth, an achievement which extended much-needed public services to the campus.<sup>81</sup> Choosing Cockrell as its class professor, the students of the Class of 1918 included a line under his photograph in the *Horned Frog* stating, "He stands for that which is good."<sup>82</sup>



<sup>80</sup> *Skiff*, Nov. 5, 1915.

<sup>81</sup> *Skiff*, Jan. 21, 1921, p. 1; Hall, *History of Texas Christian University*, 175.

<sup>82</sup> *Horned Frog*, 1918, photo of E. R. Cockrell, "Our Class Professor."

But entering the fray of Fort Worth politics in the early 1920s meant navigating the growing power of the Ku Klux Klan, and Cockrell did that with aplomb. Cockrell was, by many measures, progressive in his politics and policies. An academic expert on municipal government, he ran advocating such measures as free garbage disposal, improved sewage treatment, the construction of more streetcar lines, a modern library system, and a better public health system. He also strongly emphasized law and order, which, depending on one's perspective, could mean combatting vice—a major talking point of the Klan—or cracking down on the sort of lawlessness so often perpetrated *by* the Klan.<sup>83</sup> There is no direct evidence to prove that Cockrell was himself a Klansman, although a number of modern scholars have asserted that he was. What is indisputably true is that by the time he ran for reelection in 1923, the Klan controlled all city offices and was a force—really *the* force—to be reckoned with in Fort Worth politics. No candidate—certainly not a mayoral candidate—could dodge the Klan issue in 1923, but Cockrell did something unexpected while campaigning for his second term: The bespectacled professor addressed a group of African American voters. Speaking at the St. James Baptist Church, a prominent Black congregation, Cockrell touted the light and street improvements that he had brought to the Black sections of town during his tenure, and he pledged “to get the negroes a real park if he is reelected.” He reminded his listeners that he had promised to “stop certain practices of dirty, low down white men preying on your girlhood and womanhood,” a promise he claimed to have kept. When the subject of the Klan arose, he told the audience that he hoped the Klan would “get those white men and take them behind the barn and spank them.” But he declared that “If the Klansmen touch any unoffending negro,” they would “have to get me, too,” and he

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<sup>83</sup> Cockrell campaign ad, *Skiff*, Feb. 25, 1921, p. 4; Ad for Democratic nominees, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Mar. 18, 1923, p. 13.

promised to use the police department to protect Black lives.<sup>84</sup> It was a curious speech for a Klan-endorsed candidate to make, but it apparently made for good politics, for Cockrell won reelection. Of course, he had not openly condemned the Klan's extralegal methods—indeed, in calling for Klansmen to “spank” White men who preyed on Black women, he had seemed to endorse those methods. The Klan's own avowed opposition to sexual immorality meant that even Klansmen could not endorse White men assaulting Black women, so Cockrell must have believed he was on safe political ground. Nevertheless, in making an open appeal for Black support, he had at least paid lip service to recognition of Black citizenship and avoided the sort of blatant racism that was heard from the stump so frequently in that era. Whether Cockrell's identification with the Klan would have hurt his future political prospects was never tested, since, shortly after his reelection, he resigned to accept the presidency of William Woods College in Kansas City, a position he held until his death in 1934.

Klansmen were equal-opportunity bigots; they disliked any group that they deemed less than “100 percent American,” including people of color, immigrants, and non-Protestants. TCU likewise was no stranger to ethnocentrism. Fort Worth had relatively few non-White minorities in the early twentieth century. There were only about 121 Mexican or Mexican American households in Tarrant County when TCU moved there in 1910. Seven times that many had arrived by 1920, due to the dislocations wrought by the Mexican Revolution and the lure of jobs in the meat-packing industry, but as a percentage of the population, the overall numbers remained very low.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> “Negro Voters Addressed by Cityhalls,” *Fort Worth Press*, Mar. 29, 1923, p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> Kenneth N. Hopkins, “The Early Development of the Hispanic Community in Fort Worth and Tarrant County, Texas, 1849-1949,” *East Texas Historical Journal* 38 (2000), 57-58.

Not surprisingly, “Mexicans” (distinctions were rarely drawn between Mexican nationals immigrants, and Mexican Americans) came in for their share of stereotyping at the hands of TCU students. A common trope of the era was to refer to athletes and athletics “of the Mexican variety.” This was a reference to an athlete who was lazy or unmotivated, tapping into a longstanding stereotype of Mexicans. (The *Oxford English Dictionary* identifies use of the adjective “Mexican” in the early-twentieth-century US to designate “anything of inferior, fraudulent, or makeshift quality,” and the first example it gives is a 1912 *New York Evening Journal* referring to “a Mexican athlete.”) So, the 1916 TCU yearbook could refer to an intramural football game between the university’s medical and law students, complimenting the law students for not confining “their athletic activities to the Mexican variety,” or note that “varsity athletes show[ed] their versatility by engaging in Mexican athletics” at a sports banquet.<sup>86</sup>

TCU’s fiftieth anniversary in 1923 coincided with the high point of the second Ku Klux Klan in Texas. In Fort Worth and statewide, the Klan went into a steep decline after the press exposed some of its more extreme acts of violence, and by the second half of the 1920s its heyday was over. But whether the Klan’s brief reign was a cause or a symptom of the extreme racism of that era—and it was probably a bit of both—TCU had clearly participated in the bigotry of the period. Yet there were always occasions when the better angels of the university’s nature emerged, even if briefly.

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<sup>86</sup> *Horned Frog* 1916, seventh page of “College Year” section.

## Better Angels

In May 1903, an unnamed writer in the *Skiff* made a somewhat surprising declaration: He or she proclaimed Black leader Booker Washington “one of the greatest living men, because his work is unique, the modern Moses, who leads his race and lifts it through education, to even better and higher things than a land overflowing with milk and honey. . . . I am satisfied that the serious race problem of the south is to be solved wisely only through Booker Washington's policy of education, which he seems to have been specially born—a slave among slaves—to establish and in his own day greatly advance.”<sup>87</sup> The TCU writer, of course, extolled the more conservative Booker T. Washington rather than the more progressive W. E. B. DuBois. Washington advocated for vocational education for African Americans, while DuBois wanted a talented elite to receive education equivalent to that of elite White people. But the TCU writer did acknowledge the race problem of the South and advocated for education rather than other alternatives as a solution.

Black education received a boost closer to home in 1913. That year, readers of the *Skiff* learned about the recent opening of the Jarvis Christian Institute (later Jarvis Christian College), a segregated Black Disciples-affiliated college in Wood County named for Maj. James Jones Jarvis and his wife Ida Van Zandt Jarvis, who donated land for the college. The Jarvises were also major benefactors of TCU, and the *Skiff* noted approvingly that “Texas is making a step toward educating the negro.”<sup>88</sup> Eight years later, none other than Randolph Clark wrote a glowing account of his visit to Jarvis Institute. The elderly co-founder of TCU had gone to Jarvis with Charley Thorp, whom he described as “our old college janitor, watchman, and general caretaker of the old Add-Ran,” to help Thorp enroll his youngest daughter in the school. Clark,

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<sup>87</sup> *Skiff*, May 2, 1903.

<sup>88</sup> *Skiff*, Jan. 16, 1913.

ever the disciplinarian, was particularly impressed with the strict moral code that the institution enforced, but he praised the Black school for the “marked results” that it was producing “in the lives of these young Negroes.”<sup>89</sup> Jarvis Christian Institute was, of course, part of the structure of Jim Crow in Texas, but in an era of such virulent racism, its very existence and the cordial ties between it and TCU were nonetheless noteworthy.<sup>90</sup>

After TCU’s move to Fort Worth, progressive lecturers frequently spoke on campus, sometimes on racial topics, and they seem to have received respectful hearings. For example, in December 1911 TCU hosted a visit from Dr. Willis Duke Weatherford. Weatherford was international secretary of the YMCA and enjoyed a long and illustrious career as a liberal educator and reformer. In the first of several lectures given on campus, he spoke on “The Negro Problem in the South,” and the *Skiff* reported that “Not only were many new thoughts presented to the audience, but a new feeling was created toward the negro. Those who heard this lecture now realize how little we have done for the Black man and what a meagre change we are giving him.”<sup>91</sup> TCU student Louise Dura Cockrell saved in her college scrapbook a flyer for a “Mammoth Pageant” titled “Up From Slavery,” which featured a performance by Florence Cole Talbert, a renowned African American coloratura soprano and “a cast and chorus of two hundred.” We may assume that Cockrell and perhaps other TCU students attended the event, the proceeds from which benefited the local “Colored Branch” of the YMCA. Notably, Cockrell’s father, former TCU professor and current Fort Worth mayor E. R. Cockrell, delivered “Bits o’ Thought” prior to the performance.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> *Skiff*, Oct. 21, 1921, The *Skiff* republished Clark’s article from the *Christian Courier*.

<sup>90</sup> On Jarvis Christian College, see Rachel Jenkins, “Jarvis Christian College,” Handbook of Texas Online, accessed May 31, 2022, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/jarvis-christian-college>.

<sup>91</sup> *Skiff*, Dec. 14, 1911.

<sup>92</sup> Clipping from Dura Louise Cockrell Scrapbook, 1923, TCU Special Collections. According to the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* (November 22, 1921), it was a mixed-race audience at the North Side Coliseum.

TCU students often did seem eager to learn about other cultures. In 1921, the Nobel Prize-winning poet from India, Rabindranath Tagore, spoke in Fort Worth, as part of a tour of Texas universities, with the *Skiff* remarking on the “large crowd” that had gone to hear the “noted” Hindu poet, despite very disagreeable weather.<sup>93</sup> The following year TCU welcomed Dr. Yu Yui Tsu, a Chinese scholar and diplomat. Tsu was in the United States as delegate to the Washington Naval Conference, and the *Skiff* described him as “one of the foremost statesmen of China.” Sponsored by the YMCA, Tsu’s visit to TCU was, according to the *Skiff*, intended to produce “a more sympathetic feeling between the countries which are so far apart in both manners and miles,” and the newspaper declared that students who attended one of his several speeches at TCU “were treated to an unusual privilege.”<sup>94</sup> The year after that, US Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells spoke on campus “on the subject of the American Indian.” Sells sought to enlighten his student audience on the current state of Indian affairs, noting, among other things, that “a larger percentage of the Indians attend school without compulsion than white students with compulsion.”<sup>95</sup> So, although the TCU campus remained a bastion of whiteness, that bastion was never hermetically sealed off from the broader, more diverse world. Students who wanted to expand their minds were given opportunities.

One of TCU’s most significant efforts at minority outreach came at the hands of Modern Languages professor Mateo Alvarez de Molina, a native of Valencia, Spain, who joined the TCU faculty in 1909. Molina, an ordained minister, had studied in France, Argentina, and California before coming to Texas and was fluent in Spanish, French, and English. Though he had a degree from a Spanish university and was on the TCU faculty, he also enrolled in TCU and earned his

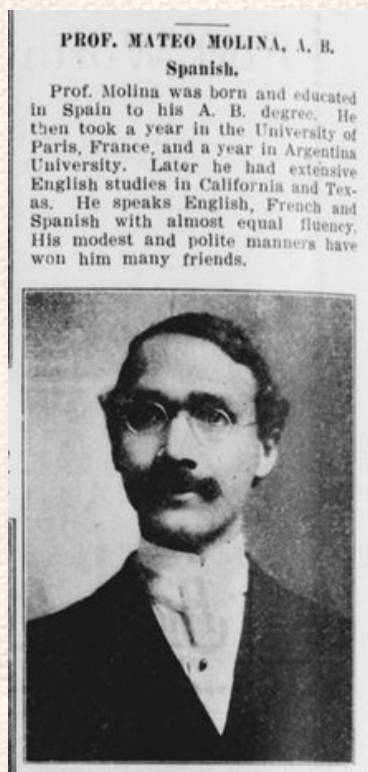
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<sup>93</sup> *Skiff*, Feb. 25, 1921.

<sup>94</sup> *Skiff*, Jan. 23, Feb. 6, 1922.

<sup>95</sup> *Skiff*, Oct. 30, 1923.

bachelor's degree in 1915. In the meantime, he founded a mission to Fort Worth's small Mexican community, which he ran for many years.



The mission operated a night school and a church, and it furnished clothing and meals to the impoverished residents of the city's north side. TCU students often helped with the enterprise, both with their labor and financial contributions.<sup>96</sup> In the 1910s TCU had a college-preparatory academy in addition to its collegiate departments, and it admitted at least one Mexican student, Jesus Rivera of Laredo, who had been baptized by Molina. Rivera, however, soon dropped out of TCU, for reasons that were never reported.<sup>97</sup> Still, despite the occasional ethnic slur or stereotype directed at those of Mexican heritage, the *Skiff* in 1914 could publish a written version of a talk given in the campus chapel with the headline, "Mexicans Are

<sup>96</sup> *Skiff*, Feb. 19, 1915; *Skiff*, Feb. 4, April 16, 1916.

<sup>97</sup> *Skiff*, Oct. 8, 1915, p. 3, Oct. 22, 1914, p. 3; *Horned Frog* 1916; *Texas Christian University Bulletin*, 1916, p. 167.

Much Like Americans.” Noting that that Americans “do not have a monopoly on industry, honesty and integrity,” the essay argued that “people of all nations are very much the same in true character.”<sup>98</sup> In a similar vein, a writer in the *Skiff* two years later declared that “the calamity howler who speaks all-wisely and in vulgar epithetic terms of the Mexicans, is, as a general rule, an ignoramus who knows as little about the Mexican people as a hog does the side-saddle.”<sup>99</sup> When a former TCU student, Riley Ailen, wrote back to the *Skiff* to tell of his experiences teaching in a Mexican American school in Marfa, he informed his former classmates that the Mexican children “were good students in spite of so many disadvantages, and the idea that these Mexican children are stubborn and hard to teach is a great mistake.”<sup>100</sup>

TCU’s efforts to be open-minded about Mexicans carried over into its attitudes toward Jews, a group which, in that era of rampant nativism and xenophobia, was often considered a separate “race.” A 1912 entry in a campus oratorical contest by TCU student J. Lindley Wood was titled, “The Jew and Civilization,” and it argued that Jews had been unjustly persecuted.<sup>101</sup> Several Jewish students attended the university, and the *Skiff* periodically commented favorably on their activities. For example, in 1916 the newspaper commented positively on TCU student David Bronstein, who was serving as interim editor-in-chief of a local publication, the *Jewish Monitor*, in the absence of its regular editor, Rabbi George Fox. In that same issue of the *Skiff*, this editorial item appeared:

Although Texas Christian University is denominational, it is a university most broad and tolerant in its management and supervision. Some people have the mistaken idea that, because a college or university is supported and managed by one of the Christian churches, it is necessarily narrow and bigoted in its method of advancing education. This is [by] no means so. The purpose of the church in establishing colleges is not to teach

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<sup>98</sup> *Skiff*, May 29, 1914.

<sup>99</sup> *Skiff*, July 21, 1916.

<sup>100</sup> *Skiff*, July 24, 1913.

<sup>101</sup> *Skiff*, Apr. 4, 1912.

religion, but to promote education in the proper environment. . . . The student of T.C.U. . . . is not required to accept or stand upon any narrow creed.”<sup>102</sup>

In 1920, as the Ku Klux Klan was being revived in Texas, Rabbi Fox spoke on campus, where he was introduced by TCU President Edward M. Waits. Fox’s talk was overtly political, noting the “disconcerting amount of insincerity and dishonesty eating at the heart of the nation today” and calling for the election of “capable officials.” According to the *Skiff*, “The student audience showed its appreciation of the splendid talk of Dr. Fox by vigorous applause.”<sup>103</sup>

Positive influences on the racial attitudes of TCU students could be found in former students who became foreign missionaries and then reported on their experiences through either letters or visits back to campus. These missionaries often told of how their experiences in Africa, Asia, or Latin America had opened their eyes to the brotherhood of man, or, as one missionary returning from his posting in India put it, “the essential unity” of the human race.<sup>104</sup> Another reported on her work in Mexico, declaring “that there is much good in these people.”<sup>105</sup>

As TCU concluded its fiftieth year, the campus seemed prepared to face something of a racial reckoning. Several TCU students had attended a national Student Volunteer Conference, part of a group dedicated to international Christian missions, in Indianapolis, and when they returned to campus, one of the attendees, Kenneth Bonham, submitted a “student comment” to the *Skiff* in which he declared that “we don’t have to go to a foreign country to get a glimpse of racial hatred and prejudice. Right in our own America we have our Jewish, the Asiatic, the Russian, the Italian, and the negro problem. But what have these people done that they deserve to be so scorned, mistrusted, and ignored as at present. Every race has made some contribution to

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<sup>102</sup> *Skiff*, July 21, 1916.

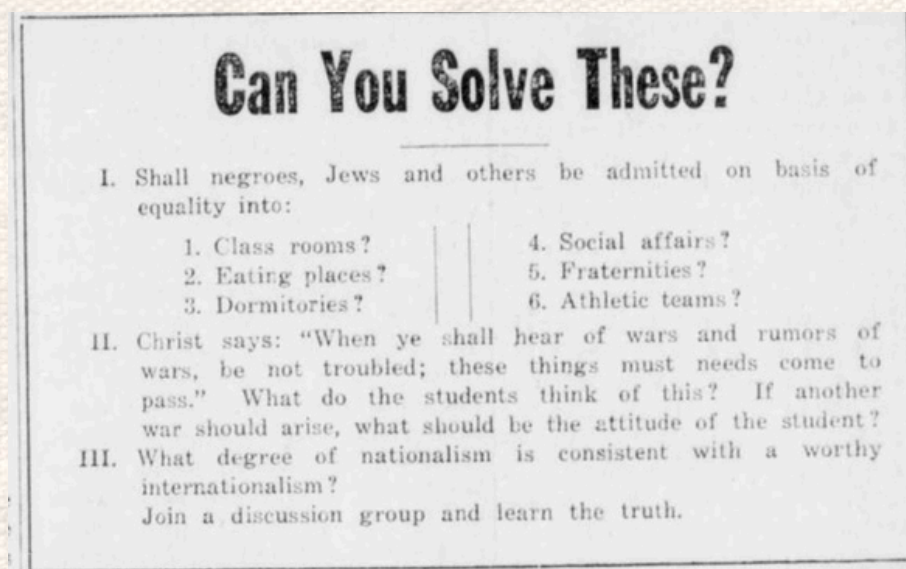
<sup>103</sup> *Skiff*, October 29, 1920.

<sup>104</sup> *Skiff*, October 5, 1919.

<sup>105</sup> *Skiff*, May 22, 1914.

our general welfare.”<sup>106</sup> Bonham went on to argue that “Race prejudice is based upon a fallacy— a mistaken theory of race superiority. The difference in accomplishments of the races was due to the difference in opportunities and not in capacities!” Another TCU student, Vida Elliott, returned from the conference and reported her belief that “the call of the world is to unite nations, races and classes in Christ.”<sup>107</sup>

The reports of Bonham, Elliott, and others inspired TCU to conduct an extraordinary “student forum” to discuss “international questions, racial questions, and others of vital interest.” As announced in the *Skiff*, the list of questions to be debated included: “Shall negroes, Jews and others be admitted on basis of equality into classrooms, eating places, dormitories, social affairs, fraternities, athletic teams?”<sup>108</sup>



After several weeks, however, Bonham and others were growing disillusioned with the Forum, and a headline in the *Skiff* aired the question of whether the Forum was “Serving It’s [sic]

<sup>106</sup> *Skiff*, Jan. 15, Jan. 20, 1924. The Students Volunteer Movement was founded in Cleveland in 1891 and spread throughout the United States.

<sup>107</sup> *Skiff*, Jan. 22, 1924.

<sup>108</sup> *Skiff*, Jan. 20, 1924.

Intended Purpose.” Rather than debate the racial issues that Bonham had hoped, the Forum had become preoccupied with more mundane campus issues, including whether the student body should have the right to elect the editor of the *Skiff*.<sup>109</sup> The anticipated debate on race apparently never took place. Kenneth Bonham and Vida Elliott, however, both practiced what they preached: Bonham went on to earn a medical degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch and spent his career as a medical missionary in India. Elliott earned a master’s degree from the University of Minnesota and then also spend many years as a missionary in India, eventually returning to TCU in the 1950s as an instructor in Religion.<sup>110</sup>

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In 1927, fifty-four years after the founding of Add-Ran Male and Female College, Charley Thorp, the African American man who did so much to support the college during its early days at Thorp Spring, died in New Mexico. When eighty-three-year-old Randolph Clark heard the news, he wrote a tribute to Thorp that was published in the denominational newspaper, the *Christian Courier*. Recounting Thorp’s many services to the Clarks and their educational enterprise, the co-founder of TCU closed with a telling confession:

Charles Thorp was born in slavery, and his 78 years was a life of slavery. After emancipation he was told that he was free, but he never realized the freedom. If any difference it was harder work. He was not allowed to get an education; the associations formed did not inspire him to high aims. Charlie was endowed with far more than ordinary intellect. He could have made the equal of Booker Washington,

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<sup>109</sup> *Skiff*, Mar. 11, April 1, 1924.

<sup>110</sup> Yocum, *They Went To India*, 97, 98; *Horned Frog*, 1954, p. 26.

or the successful business men of his race, yet he was not allowed to have a vision of that life. . . . Who is responsible for this waste? <sup>111</sup>

Clark did not answer his own question, perhaps because he knew the answer. For half a century, TCU's founders, administrators, faculty, and students had been part of a society that systematically denied people like Charley Thorp the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the treatment ostensibly required by their Christian faith. Randolph Clark bore his share of the responsibility for that injustice. Real change would eventually come to TCU, but it still lay in the distant future.

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<sup>111</sup> Randolph Clark, "Charles Thorp," clipping from *Christian Courier*, 1927, in Joseph Lynn Clark Papers, Box 22, folder titled "Charley Thorp."

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