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# “Research as Opportunity”: Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, Black Intellectualism, and the Remaking of Reconstruction Historiography, 1893–1954

STEPHEN GILROY HALL

THE FIRST HALF of the twentieth century witnessed a determined effort by black historians to legitimize African American history as a historical specialty. The scholar most widely recognized by historians in accomplishing this task is Carter G. Woodson, the second black to graduate from Harvard University with the doctorate in history. Woodson's establishment of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) in 1915 and the *Journal of Negro History* in 1916, has been widely discussed in a number of historical works ranging from August Meier and Elliott Rudwick's *Black History in the Historical Profession, 1915–1980* (1986) to Jacqueline Goggin's *Carter G. Woodson: A Life in Black History* (1993). However, despite the focus on Woodson, very little attention has been paid to ASNLH's work in the hiring and training of investigators. These investigators not only became the first generation of professionally trained historians, but they also laid the groundwork for much of what we call African American studies today. The first and one of the most significant of these was Alrutheus Ambush Taylor (1893–1954).<sup>1</sup>

Relegated to the fringes of black historiography, Alrutheus Ambush Taylor's roles as both a scholar and administrator at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee begs for greater exploration. In the first half of the twentieth century, in an attempt to combat segregation and discrimination, black intellectuals utilized different strategies. Some like W.E.B. Du Bois skillfully combined scholarship with advocacy. Taylor, relied exclusively on the power of education and research to effect change. As an educator, Taylor's philosophy involved enhancement of the academic stature of black colleges through membership in professional educational organizations. His activities on Fisk's campus as Dean were simply an extension of this philosophy. Taylor believed that education could

benefit those who demonstrated leadership qualities. Educational excellence and demonstrated leadership among students could only help in the struggle toward the amelioration of segregation and discrimination. Taylor also applied this philosophy to his personal life through his involvement in various social organizations such as the black fraternity Alpha Phi Alpha.

Taylor's extensive scholarly work on Reconstruction in South Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee which laid the groundwork for subsequent publications on Reconstruction such as W.E.B. Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction* (1935) as well as his advocacy on behalf of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History demonstrated his belief in "research as opportunity." His writing laid the foundation for many of our modern conceptualizations of this turbulent era. Most importantly, Taylor was a forerunner. His work as ASNLH's first investigator situates him as a primacy force in the establishment of the modern African American historical tradition.

Born in Washington, D.C. in Garfield, a neighborhood of Anacostia on November 22, 1893, to Lewis and Lucy Johnson Taylor. Alrutheus was the youngest of nine children. As a result of the era's severe economic depression, Taylor's early years were precarious at best.<sup>2</sup> Despite the family's poverty, however, Washington, D.C. was a thriving mecca boasting a prosperous middle class. Moreover, the most outstanding feature of Afro-American life in the District of Columbia was the high quality of the "colored" school system. Although segregated and lacking in basic equipment, these schools attracted the "best and the brightest" black teachers and administrators the District had to offer.

Taylor benefited immensely from his education in this system. He attended James A. Garfield Elementary School from 1898 to 1906. After graduating from Garfield, Taylor enrolled at Armstrong Manual Training School (1906-1910). Armstrong offered the traditional vocational curriculum—shopwork, domestic science and architectural drawing—as well as numerous academic courses such as English, mathematics, and foreign languages. Taylor demonstrated a high aptitude in mathematics, and as a result of his excellent scholastic record and the high academic standards of the District of Columbia's schools, he, in 1910, became the third student from Armstrong to obtain a scholarship to attend the University of Michigan.<sup>3</sup>

At this time, the University of Michigan had an enrollment of 5,339 students which made it the third largest university in the country behind Columbia University and the University of Chicago. Although perceived as a bastion of midwestern progressivism by white students, Michigan's social environment for black students was hostile. By 1910, the situation for black students had not

improved. As a student at Michigan, Taylor enrolled in the College of Literature, Science & Arts. Although his major was mathematics, Taylor also demonstrated aptitude and interest in history. He took almost as many hours of coursework in history (36 weeks) as in mathematics (38 weeks). Taylor's interest in history led him to apply to the history graduate program. However, his application was denied by Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, later an authority on the antebellum South and the Civil War. In rejecting his application, Phillips cited the fact that Taylor had majored in mathematics as an undergraduate.<sup>4</sup>

Outside the classroom, Taylor's greatest social outlet was his membership in the black fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha which he joined in 1912. Founded at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York in 1906, Alpha Phi Alpha was a mutual aid society designed to provide social, cultural and intellectual outlets for black student at predominantly white universities. Michigan's Epsilon's Chapter was established in 1908. It was the second black fraternity on campus. During the 1913–1914 school year, Taylor served as Scriptor (secretary) for the group.<sup>5</sup>

In 1916, Taylor's position as Scriptor led to the editorship of Epsilon's column in the *Sphinx*, official organ of Alpha Phi Alpha. Founded in 1914, the *Sphinx* contained news concerning the fraternity's activities, personal notes, and editorials. It also facilitated a broader network of communication between the various chapters of the fraternity. In a December 1916 entry, he detailed the activities of alumni members. In another entry which appeared February 1917, Taylor described the seriousness the fraternity members preparing for exams: "The humdrum of impending examinations is having its usual effect upon the brothers, thus they are burning the midnight oil with a view to meeting the enemy. Only an incidental game of whist or an argument of great social moment is allowed to creep into the sublime solitude of these embryo savants."<sup>6</sup>

His account of the study habits of his fellow fraternity members provides some insights into Taylor's own conceptualization of the importance of education to the advancement of African Americans. In the collegiate context, determination and a willingness to engage the subject matter were prerequisites for "meeting the enemy," that is, the exam. However, outside of the classroom, the enemy, was segregation and discrimination. "Meeting this enemy" required the same skills. Taylor's life work would be dedicated to the "meeting of the enemy" through the attainment of higher education and the accumulation of the facts.

After completing his degree in mathematics in 1916, Taylor accepted a "broken stipend fellowship" with the New York Urban League. The League, founded in 1911 by a coalition of white progressives and black intellectuals addressed the problems of blacks in urban areas. During Taylor's two years with the Urban

League, the organization spent the majority of its resources assisting the resettlement of Southern migrants in the Northern urban centers. Taylor received training at the national headquarters in Manhattan. Later, he was promoted to Industrial Secretary of the New York Branch. Most likely, his responsibilities included assisting new immigrants in finding jobs and providing information about lodging in New York City.<sup>7</sup>

In 1919, in addition to marrying Harriet Ethel Wilson, a languages major whom he had met during his undergraduates years at Michigan, Taylor accepted a position as Membership and Social Secretary of the Twelfth Street Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Washington, D.C. led by John W. Davis. There Taylor initiated a successful lecture series which attracted Washington's black elite to discuss issues related to racial advancement.<sup>8</sup>

In 1919, Taylor's tenure at the YMCA ended when John W. Davis was appointed as president of West Virginia Collegiate Institute in Institute. Davis hired Taylor as an instructor in Mathematics and Economics. Harriet Wilson, Taylor's wife, was also hired as a Critic Teacher in the English Department.<sup>9</sup> While an instructor at West Virginia Collegiate Institute, Taylor participated in a number of activities. During the 1921–1922 school year he took correspondence courses through the University of Chicago. More importantly, he continued to strengthen his social investigation skills and promote enhanced educational opportunities for blacks in West Virginia by serving as a delegate to the National Conference of Social Workers, and drafting a report on the centralization of social welfare activities in the state. Taylor's report was presented at the Conference of Social Work in Parkersburg on March 8, 1922. He also worked closely with other faculty members to compile a report entitled *Early Negro Education in West Virginia*.<sup>10</sup>

Teaching at West Virginia Collegiate Institute also gave Taylor an opportunity to become better acquainted with Carter G. Woodson, Dean of the College and an instructor of history whom he had only been briefly acquainted with while at the YMCA. Woodson and Taylor established a friendship based on certain social and ideological similarities. Both were self-made men. Woodson was a product of the coal mines of West Virginia, while Taylor grew up in poverty in Washington, D.C. Moreover, both men used education to lift themselves "up from poverty" to become race men—Woodson as a graduate of Berea College (Litt B., 1903), the University of Chicago (B.A. and M.A., 1908) and Harvard University (Ph.D., 1912) and Taylor as a graduate of the University of Michigan. As founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Woodson's life was dedicated to the study, collection, and preservation of

African American history. Although not yet a historical researcher, Taylor's membership in Alpha Phi Alpha as well as his subsequent work with the Urban League also demonstrated nascent interest in issues concerning African Americans.<sup>11</sup>

In Taylor, Woodson found an intellectual counterpart whose interests closely reflected his own. Woodson rekindled Taylor's dormant interest in historical investigations, by enabling Taylor to pen several articles for the *Journal*. Taylor's first article, "Making West Virginia a Free State," appeared in 1921. This article is an historical examination of the struggle to curtail the development of slavery in West Virginia. In the article Taylor posited the question of slavery's abolition in Virginia (before 1863) as a fundamental factor in the development of West Virginia's social, political and economic future. To buttress his case, Taylor examined the slavery debates in the Virginia Assembly in 1829–30, 1831–32, and 1850–51. Furthermore, Taylor contended that the origin of the debate over slavery was rooted in economic expediency rather than abolitionist fervor. As he noted: "The responsible leaders in the movement against slavery were not concerned with any moral or religious theories on the subject but rather were acting because of their conviction that slavery was an economic evil."<sup>12</sup> This was especially true in the 1850s when the state experienced economic growth coupled with the influx of German immigrants.

"Making West Virginia a Free State" concludes with an analysis of the debate in the United States Congress to admit West Virginia as a free state. Ultimately Taylor concluded that West Virginia's successful admission to the Union was based on her antislavery posture than any other factor. Although this article has been criticized as "straightforward which showed a hesitancy to offer interpretative analysis," it does subtly accomplish its most important goal—to centralize the importance of the slavery question in determining West Virginia's admission to the Union as a free state. However, in this objective account, the facts spoke for themselves, helping to make blacks an important factor in shaping the history of West Virginia and the United States.<sup>13</sup>

Taylor's second article, "Negro Congressmen a Generation After," appeared in the *Journal* in 1922. This article was one of the earliest efforts to vindicate the legacy of the twenty-two African Americans who served in the United States Congress during and after Reconstruction making it the first of its kind. It also marked Taylor's first serious examination of a topic in Reconstruction history. Taylor's article was one of the first to challenge the "Tragic Era" portrayal of the period promoted by John Burgess and William Archibald Dunning of Columbia University. The "Tragic Era", also referred to as the Dunning School

depicted the period of Congressional or Radical Reconstruction (1867–1877) as “an era of corruption presided over by unscrupulous “carpetbaggers” from the North, unprincipled Southern white “scalawags,” and ignorant freedmen. After much needless suffering, the South’s white community banded together to overthrow these governments and restore “home rule.” Because the “Tragic Era” portrayal enjoyed its currency during a period of reconciliation between the North and the South following the end of Reconstruction and the nadir (1877–1901) of black existence in the United States, it is not surprising that African Americans were used as scapegoats for the excesses of the period. In short, blacks represented a “mass of political inexperience, of childish ignorance, and domestic barbarism.”<sup>14</sup>

At the outset of the article, Taylor constructed an evaluative criteria to assess the effectiveness of the black officeholders. These criteria included: an examination of their intellectual ability to perform the duties of a Congressman, including formal and informal educational qualifications; their records in public office prior to Congressional service; and their chief concerns regarding legislation. Taylor found that more than half of the twenty-six black Congressmen had attended college. Many had previously served their communities as teachers, lawyers, and ministers. In the legislative arena, Taylor noted that the Congressmen safeguarded the civil rights of blacks by opposing amnesty measures for former Confederates.<sup>15</sup>

In the conclusion to “Negro Congressman a Generation After,” Taylor addressed the black legislators’ failure to have their bills enacted into law. Taylor gave two reasons for this problem—the small number of black Congressmen and the suspicions of white colleagues who viewed them as an experiment of the Reconstruction period. At the end of the 1921–1922 school year, Taylor resigned his position at West Virginia Collegiate Institute and Woodson promptly arranged for Taylor to work at the Association. Utilizing a portion of the \$25,000 Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund Grant for “researches into the history of the Confederate states.” Woodson financed Taylor’s graduate study in history at Harvard University. In June 1923, Taylor completed his M.A. thesis, “The Social Conditions and Treatment of Negroes in South Carolina, 1865–1880” and received his M.A. degree. While a student at Harvard, Taylor had begun work on a social and economic study of African Americans in Virginia during Reconstruction. Upon graduation, Woodson hired him as the first full-time investigator for the Association.<sup>16</sup>

Taylor’s tenure at the ASNLH (1923–1926) coincided with the longest period of sustained economic viability the Association had experienced since its

founding in 1915. As the result of two sizable grants, one from the Carnegie Institution (1921) and another from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund (1922), Woodson was able to concentrate more fully on conducting historical investigations in African American history. It was also during this period that Woodson established Associated Publishers, the publishing arm of the Association.<sup>17</sup>

Working at the Association involved both routine as well as scholarly activities. Utilizing his mathematical skills, Taylor verified data for Woodson's *Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the United States in 1830: Together with Absentee Ownership of Slaves in the United States* and *Free Negro Heads of Families in the United States in 1830: Together with a Brief Treatment of the Free Negro*. He also read and prepared galley proofs of articles for the *Journal*.<sup>18</sup>

While at the Association, Taylor's scholarly production included an article entitled "The Movement of Negroes from the East to the Gulf States from 1830 to 1850," and book length studies of Reconstruction in South Carolina and Virginia. "The Movement of Negroes from the East to the Gulf States from 1830 to 1850," was an overview of the reasons planters and blacks migrated to the Gulf States. Although not as descriptive and riveting as "Negro Congressmen a Generation After," this article utilized a number of primary sources, including the United States Census for 1830 and 1850.<sup>19</sup>

The publication of *The Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction* (1924) was a major accomplishment for Taylor and in light of the Tragic Era portrayal of Reconstruction which had dominated the historical profession for more than fifty years, Taylor's South Carolina study was a seminal contribution to the historiography of Reconstruction. Taylor's decision to conduct a study of South Carolina was inspired by a need to refute biased claims about the governance of the state which permeated the work of the Dunning school. South Carolina's demographics during Reconstruction were used to bolster claims that black domination of the state had led to numerous instances of fraud. In many instances, South Carolina was viewed as emblematic of what Reconstruction was like in other states. Recognizing that state studies played an important role in how Reconstruction was perceived, Taylor provided the first state study which examined the political, social, educational and religious situation of blacks during these years. This study also preceded W.E.B. Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction* (1935) by eleven years.<sup>20</sup>

Taylor's examination of Reconstruction in South Carolina differed markedly from those offered by the Dunning School. Not only in terms of centralizing the role of African Americans as active participants in the Reconstruction



experiment, but also his emphasis on utilizing objective historical sources, thematic approach and the conclusions reached. Taylor's selective and critical use of sources is vital in understanding his philosophy of history. From the outset of *The Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction*, Taylor addressed the problem of which sources could provide an accurate portrayal of Reconstruction in South Carolina. He also lamented the uncritical use of sources by white historians. Taylor also pointed out that many of these works "were written from newspaper material, speeches and records made by the very men who constituted the party of opposition and resorted to all sorts of methods to overthrow the governments against which they were arrayed." Moreover, Taylor suggested that in order to ascertain the truth of a particular situation the historian must balance "one side of the controversy with the other and by hearing the testimony of those who as indifferent observers left a record as to what was going on in the South."<sup>21</sup> Taylor also advocated a critical examination of the information provided by indifferent observers such as newspaper correspondents and travelers.

Taylor's thematic approach was also fundamentally different from earlier historians. Trained at Harvard in the early 1920s, Taylor was a student of the "New History" which emphasized a more expansive historical agenda. In short, this was an enlargement of the scope of history to include not only the political and constitutional but also the social, economic and intellectual aspects. This is clearly demonstrated by Taylor's emphasis on social, economic and intellectual aspects of the black experience in Reconstruction history. Another approach which influenced Taylor's thematic approach was the idea of contributionism. The idea that historical works should reflect the notion that African Americans were important participants in and contributors to American history. By combining these approaches, Taylor was able to consider additional data that strengthened his case and weakened that of the Dunning School.<sup>22</sup>

In the social arena, Taylor noted that numerous black denominations such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the black Baptists were instrumental in establishing schools to train ministers. Moreover, according to Taylor these denominations assisted in the moral improvement of the freedmen. In other spheres of human interaction, namely, the economic and intellectual, Taylor also documented black advancement. This was particularly important in the economic sphere because the Dunning School had largely portrayed blacks as lazy and inefficient workers. Relying on traveler's accounts, Taylor showed that blacks worked on various plantations throughout the state and in some instances, produced enough food to feed the entire community. Using the Census of 1890, less than twelve years after the official end of Reconstruction, Taylor demon-

strated that blacks had laid the foundation for economic success during Reconstruction. He noted that 223,496 blacks were involved in agriculture, fisheries and the mining industry; 44,755 in domestic and personal service; 12,198 in manufacturing and mechanical industries; and 7,043 in trade and transportation.<sup>23</sup>

In the intellectual sphere, Taylor documented the founding of numerous elementary, secondary and collegiate institutions for the freedmen. His sources included the personal diaries of Northern schoolteachers who went South to aid in the educational efforts of the freedmen and the records of the Freedmen's Bureau. The progressive nature of educational efforts was demonstrated by the fact that a number of black students enrolled in school rose in from 18,000 in 1870 to 72,853 in 1880.<sup>24</sup>

In contradistinction to the Dunning school, Taylor concluded that Reconstruction in South Carolina was a time when "Negroes and their friends were working for their uplift by laying a foundation for the acquisition of knowledge, the accumulation of wealth, the establishment of homes and the extension of Christian religion." He further maintained that: "Until all these affairs have been adequately treated in the study of the South during the Reconstruction period the public can never have the proper view as to what was going on there at the time."<sup>25</sup>

Taylor's scholarly refutation of the "Tragic Era" portrayal of Reconstruction as well as his expansive thematic assessment of the black role in Reconstruction drew praise from black reviewers. Writing in the *Crisis*, Augustus Granville Dill, business manager for the magazine, typified the black response to Taylor's work. Dill praised Taylor's objectivity and noted that his work was "a welcome and valuable addition to the literature dealing with the American Negro." Another reviewer, Ulysses S. Poston echoed Dill's sentiments when he stated that Taylor's study has added to the limited supply of literature dealing with the Negro and Reconstruction of the South a volume pregnant with fundamentals which is, and will be of significance to the American Negro."<sup>26</sup>

However, the most prominent white historian to review the work, Carl Russell Fish, a professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and member of the Association's Executive Council, was decidedly mixed on the question of whether Taylor's work was objective "Mr. Taylor's comments and adjectives fully indicate his sympathies, and that he has a case to present." Although Fish was critical of Taylor's lack of objectivity, he concurred with Dill that Taylor's "material is of the greatest value and his results will prove of interest to all students of the period."<sup>27</sup> Robert Park, former President of the Association and Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago penned a re-

view of Taylor's book that was consistent with those penned which appeared in the black press. Park praised Taylor's writing style and his presentation of the facts, calling the book, "a sober account of events during that critical period. Park also noted that "Mr Taylor's investigations have added much that is new to our knowledge of reconstruction in South Carolina.<sup>28</sup>

Taylor's viewed his second state study, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia*, as a companion piece to his South Carolina study. Like the South Carolina study, the Virginia study sought to shed light on the conditions of blacks during Reconstruction in a state perceived to be the least affected by Reconstruction. Taylor employed the same organizational and thematic approach utilized in the South Carolina study. He also pointed out the biases present in newspaper and traveler accounts. Because of the severe conditions which existed after the Civil War, numerous efforts were made by whites to curtail the political, social, and economic freedom of the ex-slaves. Because, according to Taylor, "freedom was in struggle with slavery," governmental intervention was necessary on the part of the Freedmen's Bureau and Union Leagues to protect newly freed slaves.<sup>29</sup>

Despite political and economic repression, Taylor found that blacks continued to progress. Newspapers and travelers accounts reported that blacks were industrious and thrifty. Blacks were employed as carpenters and bricklayers as well as working in tobacco and cotton warehouses. They also acquired land in rural and urban areas. In addition, many owned restaurants, stores and barber-shops. As with South Carolina, in Virginia, Taylor viewed the establishment of educational institutions as one of the most important elements in the progress of the freedmen. In the religious sphere, the African Methodist Episcopal and the Baptist churches took a prominent role in elevating the religious life of the freedman and training ministers. The church also began the primary site for political meetings.<sup>30</sup>

Although questions of interpretation resurfaced among white reviewers, in black intellectual and lay circles, interpretation was less important than providing a reassessment of the black role in Reconstruction. Letters received by the Association concerning *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* lauded the study as "admirable." Most of the letters provided details which they felt Taylor had left out. Historian James Hugo Johnston provided information about the Readjuster Movement in Virginia. Reverend George E. Bragg, Rector of the St. James Episcopal Church in Baltimore, wrote a series of letters which provided useful information about the black school system in Richmond. In sum, Taylor's years at the Association were extremely productive. One article and

two revisionist studies of Reconstruction in South Carolina and Virginia as well as his other duties at the Association firmly established him as a solid student of history.<sup>31</sup>

Although Taylor's tenure at the Association ended in 1925 due to the expiration of the Rockefeller grant, his formal academic career was about to begin. In 1926, Taylor accepted a position as professor of history at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Imbued with a pedantic devotion to scientific history as well as a belief in the soundness of the contributionist model of black history as a weapon to fight segregation and discrimination, Taylor embarked on a journey into the New South.<sup>32</sup>

When Taylor arrived at Fisk in the Fall of 1926, he found the college in the midst of reorganization after the student strike of 1924–1925. This season of student activism called into question the continued viability of a missionary based white control of black higher education. Fisk students and alumni had risen up against an oppressive and dictatorial president, Fayette Avery McKenzie. The white administrator had sought to placate Northern industrialists and Nashville's white community by rigidly controlling students through the imposition of restrictions on all facets of their behavior, both on and off campus. In addition, he limited the number of black department heads and ignored alumni concerns regarding the governance of the university. As a result of the strike, Thomas Elsa Jones, a Quaker and doctoral student at Columbia University with extensive experience as an educator, was installed as president. Jones' appointment began a new era for Fisk. He favored the strengthening of the college's academic and physical structure through the hiring of notable black academics and through an aggressive endowment campaign.<sup>33</sup>

Taylor's skills and interests were well suited to this program. He cultivated a close friendship with academics such as Zephaniah Alexander Looby, a Columbia University trained lawyer and later an active participant in the civil rights movement. During his first year at Fisk, Taylor taught courses in European, colonial American and English history. As Fisk's premiere historian, Taylor used his position to augment the resources of his department. On numerous occasions, he requested appropriations for the purchase of maps and history books for the university library. Taylor and his wife supported all endowment drives at the school in the late twenties. Jones appreciated Taylor's disciplined approach to managing the history department and indicated his desire to assist him in the production of scholarship.<sup>34</sup>

In 1926, Taylor presented a comprehensive overview of his educational and historical interests in an address at the Fisk Chapel. "Research as Opportunity"

elucidated his thinking on the relationship of scientific research to racial advancement. He sought to encourage students to further their education and declared his faith in research as a means whereby segregation and discrimination could be combated. In Taylor's view, advanced education would allow students to join the ranks of African American scientific investigators such as academic and social activist W.E.B. Du Bois, economist George Edmund Haynes; bibliographer Monroe N. Work, and most importantly historian Carter G. Woodson. Throughout the latter portion of the speech, Taylor noted that racial biases were prevalent in various historical treatments of African American history penned by white historians. "Some prominent historians have produced work based upon unsupported evidence to prove that slavery is the normal condition of the Negro," he noted "These investigators have also asserted that comparatively, the labor of the Negro is inefficient as a result of his inherent inferiority to other peoples." Taylor also suggested that black scholars could make valuable contributions to knowledge by correcting unscientific biases in several fields, including history, psychology and ethnology. He also stated that the work of black scholars should encompass the sciences and must "transcend the bounds of race and nation and embrace world interests."<sup>35</sup>

Taylor's belief in the power of research to change white perceptions of African Americans account for much of Taylor's scholarly insularity. Unlike other prominent black historians such as Du Bois—an ardent "race man" who skillfully combined scholarship and advocacy or Luther Porter Jackson, a professor of history at Virginia State University who also wrote a column for one of the Southeast's pre-eminent black newspapers, *The Norfolk Journal and Guide*—Taylor made few public pronouncements on race relations and confined his activities to Fisk and the Association. His separation of scholarship from race leadership was an affirmation of his faith in the power of "research as opportunity."<sup>36</sup>

Meanwhile, despite Fisk's hiring of prominent black academics such as Alain Locke, philosopher and father of the "New Negro" Movement (1927), sociologist Charles S. Johnson (1928), Gullah specialist Lorenzo Dow Turner (1929), poet and NAACP activist James Weldon Johnson, Taylor rose rapidly through the administrative ranks. In 1927, he was appointed Dean of Men. During the 1928–1929 school year, he was awarded a Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund Fellowship to begin doctoral work in history at Harvard. After completing a year's study at Harvard, he returned to Fisk to assume the position of acting Dean of College. In 1930, Taylor was appointed Dean of the College.<sup>37</sup>

The 1930s and 1940s found Taylor firmly situated at the helm of a strong research-oriented faculty. Eager to continue promulgating his message

of uplift through education, he immersed himself in activities on the educational status of black colleges. Taylor's memberships included the National Association of Collegiate Deans and Registrars in Negro Schools a forum for administrators to share information about entrance requirements and to devise ways of improving the academic quality of black schools. He also belonged to the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes, an organization designed to promote the accreditation of black schools by white accrediting agencies. Taylor delivered papers before the National Association of Collegiate Deans and Registrars entitled "Some Effective Methods for Improving Scholarship Among Collegiate Students (1931) and "Discipline and Self-Government in Colleges and Universities," (1938). As a member of the Association of colleges and Secondary Schools, Taylor attended numerous meetings and served on its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education from 1934–1935 and 1936–1941. Taylor also penned a collaborative study for the Commission entitled "Community Life of Negro Youth with Reference to Social and Civic Organizations" in 1941.<sup>38</sup>

Alpha Phi Alpha's Graduate Chapter, Tau Lambda allowed Taylor another forum for articulating his philosophy of social uplift through education. As President of Tau Lambda (1930–1938), Taylor participated in the annual "Go-To-High School, Go-To-College" campaign. He also presented an address at one of Tau Lambda's meeting's entitled "Why Go to College." Here, Taylor stressed the necessity of sending only persons with leadership qualities to college. This was in tune with Taylor's goal of increasing the efficiency of black institutions. In Taylor's mind, the responsibility of educators was to hone the leadership abilities of students, enabling them to serve the greater good of society. He felt that a college education could benefit qualified students by making them more proficient in their chosen professions, helping them to become better citizens and better people. Although Taylor's remarks were couched in the rhetoric of moralism and spiritualism, his goal was similar to that expressed in "Research as Opportunity"—to prepare young minds to combat segregation and discrimination through efficient and moral leadership of the black community.<sup>39</sup>

As Dean at Fisk, Taylor's skillful management of the college's affairs, earned Fisk an "A" rating from the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Southern States in 1932. In addition to his activities as Dean, Taylor also taught one of Fisk's first black history courses, "The Negro in American History." The course description was consistent with the philosophy of the growing black history of which Taylor was a part. "The Negro in American History"

interpreted black history as an integral part of American history. Moreover, Taylor used every opportunity to promote black history. In the early 1930s, Taylor delivered a lecture entitled "The Significance of the Negro in American History," at Pearl High School in Nashville and "The Responsibility of Youth as It Faces a New World" before the Indianapolis Intercollegiate Club. During the 1932–1933 school year, he also took a year's leave of absence to complete requirements for his doctorate in history from Harvard. *The Negro in the Reconstruction in Virginia* was accepted in lieu of a dissertation, enabling Taylor to receive his Ph.D., in 1936.<sup>40</sup>

After completing his doctorate, Taylor penned a review of Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction in America*. Writing in the *New England Quarterly*, Taylor praised Du Bois's work as "a significant and substantial contribution to the historical literature of the period of reconstruction in American history."<sup>41</sup> "Historians of Reconstruction," Taylor's last article on the Reconstruction period, offered an historiographical overview of the literature on Reconstruction. He condemned the work of the Dunning school and praised Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction* as "the best of the meritorious studies of this period."<sup>42</sup> At the Association, in addition to being elected to serve on the Executive Council in 1937, Taylor was active as Chairman of the State of Tennessee Sustaining Membership Drive in 1935, to keep the Association operable during the Depression and afterwards. In 1938, Taylor recruited Merl Eppse, a Professor of History at Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial College (now Tennessee State University), as Assistant Chairman of the Membership Drive. For advice on how to conduct a successful drive in Tennessee, Taylor turned to Luther Porter Jackson who conducted the Association's most successful membership drive in Virginia. Both Taylor and Eppse worked diligently in Tennessee to promote the Association's work through the organizing Negro History Week, recruiting members and soliciting funds.<sup>43</sup>

Although hampered by his administrative duties, Taylor continued to be a productive scholar. In 1941, he published a state study of Reconstruction entitled *The Negro in Tennessee, 1865–1880*. Taylor's work on Tennessee differed little from his earlier studies. Still wedded to his belief in scientific history and contributionism, Taylor presented a dramatic portrait of blacks in Tennessee during Reconstruction. His topical discussion was also similar to those earlier studies. Taylor examined the educational, religious, economic, and political progress of blacks during Reconstruction. Aply written and well documented, *The Negro in Tennessee, 1865–1880* is still the only full-length study of blacks in Reconstruction Tennessee.<sup>44</sup>

Most reviewers found that Taylor's Tennessee study "evidenced sound and

painstaking scholarship.” However, two black reviewers, in contradistinction to positive reviews of his earlier studies of South Carolina and Virginia, William Brewer, head of Department of History in the Colored High Schools in Washington, D.C., and Ulysses Lee, an Assistant Professor of English at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania severely criticized the work for its lack of interpretative content. Lee’s review was the most vitriolic. He called *The Negro in Tennessee* a “compendium of facts arranged neatly in a filing cabinet with little indication of interrelationships or interdependence among them.” Lee also criticized Taylor’s pedantic adherence to objectivity. “It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the logical result of rigid objectivity produces an anemic picture of the past in which the historian abandoning his right and duty of interpretation does little more than create a calendar of events.”<sup>45</sup>

In 1942, Taylor read a paper, “Trends in Federal Policy Toward the Negro” before the American Historical Association’s session devoted to “US Minority Problems.” This was an exhaustive review of federal policies concerning blacks from 1865 to 1940. Intended as an overview, the paper did offer some tentative conclusions. Taylor felt that recent trends in federal policy, including Executive Order 8802 and the creation of the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC), could “improve the status of the Negro.”<sup>46</sup>

The 1940s also witnessed drastic changes at Fisk. In 1946, Thomas Elsa Jones resigned as president, Taylor and two other administrative officers ran the school until Charles S. Johnson was inaugurated as the new president in October 1946. Taylor remained as Dean until 1950. He resigned this position and became Fred L. Brownlee Research Professor of American History. During the early 1950s, Taylor penned favorable reviews of Herbert Aptheker’s *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States* and Williard Range’s *The Rise and Progress of Negro Colleges in Georgia, 1865–1949*. In addition, the death of Carter G. Woodson in 1950 brought a number of tributes to his life which were published in the May, 1950 issue of the *Negro History Bulletin* including one by Taylor. Taylor’s tribute was entitled “Dr. Carter G. Woodson: Inspirer and Benefactor of Young Scholars.” He characterized Woodson as a “man of integrity and character; serious and methodical and practical in his approach to men and things.”<sup>47</sup>

However, the majority of Taylor’s time was dedicated to researching and writing an officially commissioned history of Fisk which he had begun in the mid-1940s. During the 1949–1950 school year, Taylor received a leave of absence to begin writing the manuscript. In 1952, Taylor presented the completed manuscript to Johnson. The title was “Fisk University 1866–1951: A Construc-



tive Influence in American Life." It consisted of five sections and approximately eight hundred and sixty-eight pages with notes and bibliography suggesting extensive research in the university's archives as well as an intimate knowledge of the events which shaped the school's history between 1926 and 1950. Due to Johnson's extensive administrative duties, Taylor's study was never published, but a portion of it was presented at the thirty-eighth meeting of the Association in Nashville.<sup>48</sup>

Taylor continued to teach at Fisk throughout the 1953-1954 school year. On June 4, 1954, Taylor walked from the University library to the Registrar's office. While in the presence of Mary D. Shane, the Registrar, Taylor vomited. He promptly took off his hat and tried to vomit into it. Shane called for emergency help. Taylor was rushed to Hubbard Memorial Hospital where he died two hours later of a stroke and cerebral hemorrhage.<sup>49</sup>

In conclusion, Taylor's commitment to "research as opportunity" was evident in all aspects of his life. As an educator and historian, Taylor used Fisk University as a creative laboratory in which he could promulgate his philosophy of Christian values combined with liberal democracy which entailed a commitment to American values of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness free from segregation and discrimination based solely on race. From his statement of purpose for black intellectuals in "Research as Opportunity" in 1926 to his unpublished "History of Fisk University," in the late 1940s, Taylor sought to champion research and by extension a commitment to education as a viable tool in overcoming social discrimination. His work as Dean at Fisk as well as his involvement in various educational organizations such as the National Association of Collegiate Deans and Registrars was simply an extension of this philosophy. For Taylor, the concept of "research as opportunity" found its greatest expression in his pioneering revisionist studies of Reconstruction in South Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee. Each of these studies demonstrated a determined effort to overturn historically inaccurate portrayals of Reconstruction, by firmly situating African American as important contributors to and participants in American history. The promotion of African American history through his work with the Association helped to advance the contributionist theory of black history as a necessary ingredient in United States history making it more inclusive and thus, more democratic in its construction. The sum total of Taylor's life and work in a variety of fields serves as a necessary addition to the growing literature on black historians as well as the literature on black intellectuals whose scholarship has been neglected. Finally, Taylor found his creative voice and made his mark not as strident race man or as racial propagandist, but as one who believed in the infinite possibilities of "research as opportunity."

## NOTES

1. For information on Carter G. Woodson and the seminal importance of both the ASNLH, see Patricia Romero, "Carter G. Woodson: A Biography," (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1971); Jacqueline Goggin, *Carter G. Woodson: A Life in Black History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993). Also see August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915–1980* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).
2. Some of Taylor's older siblings, included Amanda Forrest, who worked as an elocutionist and teacher in the Washington, D.C. schools; William Taylor, who worked for the U.S. government in a statistical capacity; and Lewis Taylor, a professional candy maker. He worked for the Velatic Carmel Company in Washington, D.C. in the 1930s and 1940s. Ms Edna Browne, niece of Alruthus Ambush Taylor, interview by author, Washington, D.C. 16 October 1992. There are only two complete studies of the life of Alruthus Ambush Taylor. They are James Pleasant Woods's "Alruthus Ambush Taylor, 1893–1954: Segregated Historian of the Reconstruction," (M.A. thesis, Louisiana State University, 1969); and Stephen G. Hall's "Alruthus Ambush Taylor: Pioneering Revisionist Historian of Reconstruction, 1893–1954," (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1993).
3. For information on blacks in Washington, D.C., see Letita W. Brown and Elsie Lewis, *Washington in the New Era, 1870–1970* (Washington, D.C.: A Publication of the Education Department National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1972); Constance McLaughlin Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967); and James Borchert, *Alley Life in Washington: Family, Community Religion, and Folklife in the City, 1850–1970* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980). Edna Browne recalled that Taylor was an outstanding student at both James Garfield Elementary and Armstrong Manual Training School. Browne interview. For information on Armstrong Manual Training High School from 1906–1910, see the *Report of the Board of Education Vol IV in the Annual Report of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, Year Ended June 30, 1907* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1908), 221–226; *Report of the Board of Education Vol IV in the Annual Report of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia Year Ended June 30, 1910* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911), 247–251.
4. For information on the University of Michigan during this period, see Howard H. Peckham, *The Making of the University of Michigan, 1877–1967* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967). Information on Taylor's enrollment at the University of Michigan is contained in the admissions register for the College of Letters, Science and the Arts within the University of Michigan Registrar Collection. Taylor's years of enrollment at Michigan were: 1910–1911, 1911, 1912, 1913–1914, 1914–1915 and the summer of 1916. Cited in Karen Jania, Reference Assistant, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan to Stephen G. Hall, 29 October 1992 in possession of author. For information on the conflict between U.B. Phillips and Taylor, see Woods, "Alruthus Ambush Taylor," 10–11.
5. For details on the founding of Epsilon chapter at the University of Michigan, see Charles Harris Wesley, *History of Alpha Phi Alpha: A Development in College Life* (Washington, D.C.: The Foundation Publishers, 1953), 80–82. Details on Taylor's membership in Alpha Phi Alpha at Michigan are contained in the *Palladium*, the senior annual of the secret societies of the University of Michigan and "The Fraternity Guide for Freshmen." Cited in Jania to Hall, 29 October 1992, in possession of author.
6. For details on the publication of the *Sphinx*, see Wesley, *History of Alpha Phi Alpha*, 130. For Taylor's entries in the *Sphinx*, see A.A. Taylor, Associate Editor, Epsilon Chapter—Ann Arbor, Michigan, "Sphinx 2 (December 1916): 13–14; A.A. Taylor, "Epsilon Chapter—University of Michigan," *Sphinx 3* (February 1917): 12.
7. For information on Taylor's tenure with the Urban League, see Yenser, *Who's Who in Colored*

- America, 1930-1931-1932*, 410; Franklin, "Personal," 240; and Woods, "Alruthus Ambush Taylor," 18-19. For excellent treatments of the Urban League, see L. Hollingsworth Wood, "The Urban League Movement," *Journal of Negro History* 9 (April 1924): 117-124; Nancy J. Weiss, *The National Urban League, 1910-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); Guichard Parris and Lester Brooks, *Blacks in the City: A History of the National Urban League, 1910-1940* (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1971) and Avrah Strickland, *History of the Chicago Urban League* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966).
8. For more detailed biographical information on Harriet Ethel Wilson, see Woods, "Alruthus Ambush Taylor," 15-17. For information on Taylor's appointment with the YMCA, see the "YMCA Notes," *Washington Bee*, 12 (March 1919): 5.
  9. For information on the history and course offerings at West Virginia Collegiate Institute, see the Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics of the State of West Virginia, *The Negro in West Virginia, 1921-1922*, by T. Edward Hill in the *Public Documents, West Virginia 1921-1922* 4 vols. (Charleston: Tribune Printing Company, 1924), 28-29. For information on the hiring and salaries of Taylor and his wife, Harriet Wilson, see the State Board of Control, State of West Virginia, *Seventh Biennial Report in the Public Documents, West Virginia, 1921-1922*, 618-619. Also see "GEB Fellowship Application Blank," 27 March 1928, LSRM Papers; box 98, folder 994.
  10. For information on Taylor's correspondence courses through the University of Chicago, see the "GEB Fellowship Application Blank," 1928-1929, LSRM Papers; box 98, folder 994. For information on Taylor's appointment as a delegate to the National Conference of Social Work, see "Receives Valuable Year's Scholarship/A.A. Taylor to Continue Research at Harvard/News of Colored Folk," *The Indianapolis News*, 8 September 1928, newspaper clipping in the Thomas Elsa Jones Papers; Box 41, Folder 6, Fisk University Archives, Nashville, Tennessee (hereafter Jones Papers). For information on Taylor's selection to conduct the social welfare agency's study, see Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics of the State of West Virginia, in *The Negro in West Virginia (1921-1922)*, 93.
  11. For biographical information on Woodson, see Patricia Romero, "Carter G. Woodson: A Biography," 1-29 and Jacqueline Goggin, *Carter G. Woodson: A Life in Black History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993).
  12. See Alruthus Ambush Taylor, "Making West Virginia a Free State," *Journal of Negro History* 6 (April 1921): 131-173.
  13. See Taylor, "Making West Virginia a Free State," 153-173. 14. See Alruthus Ambush Taylor, "Negro Congressmen a Generation After," *Journal of Negro History* 7 (April 1922): 127-171. For an overview of the work on Reconstruction which adhered to the "Tragic Era" legend, see Kenneth Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1965), 3-23; John Hope Franklin, "Mirror for All Americans: A Century of Reconstruction History," *American Historical Review* 85 (February 1980): rpt in John Hope Franklin's *Race and History: Selected Essays, 1938-1988* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 384-398. Also see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1867* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), xix-xxvii.
  15. See Taylor, "Negro Congressman," 129-135, 135-139, 142-150, 158-165.
  16. *Ibid.*, 168-171. For information on Taylor's resignation from West Virginia Collegiate Institute, see Romero, "Woodson: A Biography," 139. For an announcement of Taylor's duties at the Association, see *Journal of Negro History* 7 (October 1922): 454. For information on Taylor's graduation from Harvard, see "Notes," *Journal of Negro History* 8 (October 1923): 465. For information on Taylor's promotion to a full-time investigator for the ASNLIH, see the *Annual Report of the Director of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History Incorporated, July 1, 1922 to June 30, 1923: Together With the Financial Statement of the Secretary-Treasurer, the Official Staff and Life Members* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1923), 4-5.

17. For information on the ASNLH's grant from the Carnegie Institution, and the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund, see "The Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History," *Journal of Negro History* 8 (January 1923): 116–121. For information on the founding of the Associated Publishers, see "Notes," *Journal of Negro History* 6 (July 1921): 380.
18. For a description of Taylor's role in verifying data for the studies, see Carter G. Woodson, *Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the United States in 1830: Together with Absentee Owners of Slaves in 1830* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1924), viii, and *Free Negro Heads of Families in the United States in 1830: Together with a Brief Treatment of the Free Negro* (The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1925), foreword.
19. See Alruthus Ambush Taylor, "The Movement of Negroes from the East to the Gulf States from 1830 to 1850," *Journal of Negro History* 8 (October 1923): 367–383. Taylor presented his findings at the Spring Conference of the Association in 1924. See the "Proceedings of the Spring Conference of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History Held in Philadelphia, April 3 and 4, 1924," *Journal of Negro History* 9 (July 1924): 376.
20. See W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Towards a History of the Part Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1935; rpt New York: Atheneum, 1985). Also see James A. Pike, *The Prostrate State: South Carolina under Negro Government* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1874; rpt New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 12, 18, 50, 83, 88.
21. See Alruthus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1924), 2–3. Initially Taylor's study of Reconstruction in South Carolina was published in two portions in the *Journal*, see A.A. Taylor, "The Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction," *Journal of Negro History* 9 (July 1924): 241–364 and "The Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction (concluded)," *Journal of Negro History* 9 (October 1924): 578.
22. See Pike, *The Prostrate State*, 12. For information on the emergence of scientific history within the American historical profession, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1–111; John Higham, *History: The Development of Historical Studies in the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc, 1965), 92–103. . For a discussion of the contributionist model of black history, see Robert Harris, "Coming of Age: The Transformation of Afro-American Historiography," *Journal of Negro History* 67 (Summer 1982): 107–121.
23. See Taylor, *The Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction*, 54–69.
24. *Ibid.*, 122–124.
25. *Ibid.*, 2.
26. See Augustus Granville Dill, "Negro History, Harvard Style," review of *The Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction* by Alruthus Ambush Taylor, in the *Crisis* 30 (April 1925): 225–226, and Ulysses S. Poston, review of the *Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction* by Alruthus Ambush Taylor, in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, 20 February 1926, p. 16.
27. See Carl Russell Fish, review of *The Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction* by Alruthus Ambush Taylor, in the *American Historical Review* 30 (April 1925): 653
28. See Robert E. Park, review of *The Negro in South Carolina During the Reconstruction* by Alruthus Ambush Taylor, in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 33 (January 1925): 427–428.
29. See Alruthus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), 3, 227–242, 153–173, 121–136. Reviews of Taylor's *The Negro in the Reconstruction Virginia* by Alruthus Ambush Tay-

- lor, in the *American Historical Review* 33 (October not show the dull style of 1927): 202; Robert E. Park, review of *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* by Alruthus Ambush Taylor, in the *American Journal of Sociology* 33 (March 1928): 832-833; and "Books in Brief," review of *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* by Alruthus Ambush Taylor, in *The Nation* 125 (November 2, 1927): 484.
30. See Taylor, *The Negro in Virginia*, 105-207.
  31. For a reprint of the letters pertaining to Taylor's study of Reconstruction in Virginia, see "Communications," *Journal of Negro History* 11 (October 1926): 669-682. Lorenzo J. Greene an investigator for the Association after Taylor's departure also felt that Taylor's study gave, "much information about Reconstruction otherwise omitted from the average book on the subject." See Avrah E. Strickland, ed., *Working With Carter G. Woodson: A Diary of Lorenzo J. Greene* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 178.
  32. For information on Taylor's job offer at Fisk, see Woods, "Alruthus Ambush Taylor," 68-70. For an announcement of Taylor's appointment at Fisk, see "Notes," *Journal of Negro History* 12 (April 1927): 357.
  33. For an excellent discussion of the philosophy of black education in the South, see James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 238-278. For an overview of the McKenzie administration, see Joe E. Richardson, *A History of Fisk University, 1865-1946* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1980), 71-90. Also see Lester Lamon, "The Black Community in Nashville and the Fisk University Strike of 1924-1925," *Journal of Southern History* 60 (May 1974): 225-244.
  34. For a listing of Taylor's position at Fisk during the 1926-1927 school year, see "Officers of the Administration, 1926-1927," *The Greater Fisk Herald* 2 (November 1926): 17-18. For biographical information on Zephaniah Alexander Looby, see Yenser, *Who's Who in Colored America, 1930-1931-1932*, 276. Ms. Graftah Looby, Looby's wife, noted that Looby and Taylor were very good friends. Looby always referred to Taylor as the best friend that I have here." Graftah Looby, wife of Z. Alexander Looby, interview by author, Nashville, Tennessee, 26 August 1992. For information on Taylor's request for appropriations for the history department, see Taylor to Jones, 7 July 1927; Jones to Taylor, 9 November 1927; Jones to Taylor, 16 November 1927, Jones Papers; box 41, folder 4 and Taylor to Jones, 18 August 1929, Jones Papers; box 41, folder 6. For Jones's offer of scholarly assistance to Taylor, see Jones to Taylor, 9 November 1927, Jones Papers: box 41, folder 8.
  35. See Alruthus Ambush Taylor, "Research as Opportunity," *The Greater Fisk Herald* 2 (October 1926): 8, 18-19.
  36. For information on Du Bois's varied careers, see his two autobiographies, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1940); and *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing Race from the Last Decade of its First Century*, 2 vols. (New York: Vintage Books, 1971). For information on Luther Porter Jackson's historical career, see Meier and Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession*, 85-92. For information on Jackson's activities in Virginia's black community, see Raymond Gavins, "Hancock, Jackson and Young: Virginia's Black Triumvirate, 1930-1945." *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 85 (October 1977): 470-486. Taylor and Jackson presented papers at the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Association, see "Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Meeting," *Journal of Negro History* 10 (January 1925): 108-109.
  37. For a listing of appointments at Fisk in the late twenties and early thirties, see Richardson, *A History of Fisk*, 110-121. For information on Taylor's appointment as Dean of Men, see Jones to Taylor, 20 July 1927, Jones Papers; box 41, folder 4. For a listing of Taylor's general fields and courses taken while in residence at Harvard, see Taylor to Outhwaite, 25 September 1928, LSRM Papers; box 99, folder 994. Taylor's appointment as Dean is listed in the *Report of the President of Fisk University, 1929-30* (Nashville: Fisk University, 1930), 12.

38. For information on the founding of the National Association of Collegiate Deans and Registrars in Negro Schools, see "Deans and Registrars Organize," *The Greater Fisk Herald* 1 (April–May 1926): 10. For details on Taylor's 1931 presentation at the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Deans and Registrars in Negro Schools, see Bowles to F.D. Wilkinson, 23 February 1931, Jones Papers; box 41, folder 8; and the "Program of the Sixth Annual Meeting of the National Association of Collegiate Deans and Registrars in Negro Schools, Arkansas State College, Pine Bluff, Arkansas, March 4, 5, 6, 1931 in Jones Papers; box 41, folder 8. For information on Taylor's involvement with the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes, see "Report on the Meeting for the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes Held in Atlanta, Georgia, December 5–6, 1934," *Quarterly Review of Higher Education Among Negroes* 5 (January 1937): 93. Taylor's report for the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, "Community Life of Negro Youth with Reference to Social and Civic Organizations," was written jointly with Mark Hanna Watkins, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Fisk. The study appeared in Charles S. Johnson, A.A. Taylor, H. Liston and John Whittaker, *A Study of the Community Life of the Negro Youth* (Concord: North Carolina: The Commission on Institutions of Colleges and Secondary Schools for Negroes, 1941), 11–71.
39. Taylor's address was presented at the March 11, 1930 meeting of Tau Lambda. For a complete copy of the address, see A.A. Taylor, "Why Go to College," *Sphinx* 16 (October 1930): 6–7, 36.
40. For information on Fisk's "A," rating, see "Report of the Executive Agent for the Committee on Approval of Negro Schools," *Quarterly Review of Higher Education Among Negroes* 16 (January 1933): 30–32. For information on Taylor's work in strengthening the graduate program at Fisk, see A.A. Taylor, "Graduate Work at Fisk University," *Fisk News* 12 (March–April 1939): 6–12. For an overview of Taylor's historical activities in the early 1930s, see Taylor to Bowles, 29 November 1932, Jones Papers; box 41, folder 8. the Jones Papers; box 41, folder 12. For a listing of Taylor's doctoral degree and dissertation, see Harry W. Greene, *Holders of Doctorates Among American Negroes* (Boston: Meador Press, 1946), 72.
41. See A.A. Taylor, review of *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* by W.E.B. Du Bois, in the *New England Quarterly* 8 (December 1935): 608–612.
42. See Alruthus Ambush Taylor, "Historians of the Reconstruction," *Journal of Negro History* 23 (January 1938): 16–34. Taylor first presented "Historians of the Reconstruction," at the Annual Meeting of the Association in 1937. See the "Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in Washington, D.C., October 31–November 3, 1937," *Journal of Negro History* 20 (January 1938): 1–9.
43. For information on Taylor's election to the Executive Council of the ASNLH, see "Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History," *Journal of Negro History* 22 (January 1937): 1–16. For praise of Taylor's work in the Nationwide Drive, see the *Annual Report of the Director of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History Incorporated July 1, 1937 to June 30, 1938: Together with the Financial Statement of the Secretary-Treasurer, the Official Staff and Life Members* (Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1938), 4–5. For information on Taylor's work with the Association in the 1940s, see "A New Worker in Ohio," *Negro History Bulletin* 4 (June 1941): 211, and the "Annual Report of the Director," *Journal of Negro History* 27 (October 1942): 371–376.
44. See Alruthus Ambush Taylor, *The Negro in Tennessee, 1865–1880* (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1941), 168–187, 205–255, 148–167, 244–266. Taylor also directed several M.A. theses at Fisk related to the study of Reconstruction in Tennessee. See Preston Robert Merton, "The Freedmen's Bureau in Tennessee, 1865–1869" (M.A. thesis, Fisk Uni-

- versity, 1941); John Reuben Sheeler, "The Development of Unionism in Tennessee During the Reconstruction" (M.A. thesis, Fisk University, 1943); and Joseph A. Walker, "The Negro in Tennessee Politics, 1865-1880," (M.A. thesis, Fisk University, 1941).
45. See Ulysses Lee, "Exercise in History," review of *The Negro in Tennessee, 1865-1880* by Alruthus Ambush Taylor, in the *Journal of Negro Education* 10 (October 1941): 680-683; William M. Brewer, review of *The Negro in Tennessee, 1865-1880* by Alruthus Ambush Taylor, in the *Journal of Negro History* 26 (April 1941): 251-253.
  46. Taylor's paper, "Trends in Federal Policy Toward the Negro," Stanley Pargelis, ed., *The Quest for Political Unity in World History, The American Historical Profession Annual Report, 1942* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1944), 319-341.
  47. For information on Taylor's administrative responsibilities after Jones's resignation and Charles S Johnson's election as the president of Fisk, see Richardson, *A History of Fisk*, 134-136. For information on Taylor's resignation as Dean of Fisk, see Sam Cameroon, "Dean A.A. Taylor: The Fisk Years as Dean and Scholar," Paper Presented at a Meeting of the Association of Social and Behavioral Scientists, Inc., Metro Ramada Inn, Jackson, Mississippi, 25 March 1982. Also see Jacques Catell, ed., *Dictionary of American Scholars: A Biographical Dictionary* (Lancaster: The Science Press, 1951), 1928. Taylor's reviews include A.A. Taylor, review of *The Rise and Progress of Negro Colleges in Georgia* by Willard Range, in the *North Carolina Historical Review* 30 (January 1953): 119-120. For Taylor's tribute to Woodson, see Alruthus Ambush Taylor, "Dr Carter G. Woodson: Inspirer and Benefactor of Young Scholars," *Negro History Bulletin* 13 (May 1950): 186, 189.
  48. See A.A. Taylor, "Fisk University, 1866-1951: A Constructive Influence in American Life," Unpublished manuscript, completed in 1952, in the Alruthus Ambush Taylor Papers, the Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana (hereafter Taylor Papers). For information on the status of the study and possibilities for publication between 1951 and 1954, see Charles S. Johnson to A.A. Taylor, 21 August 1951; Johnson to Taylor, 15 December 1951; Bisace Cravath Miller to Johnson, 5 June 1952; Taylor to Johnson, 10 June 1952; Taylor to Johnson, 20 November 1952; Johnson to Taylor, 5 January 1952; and Catherine P. Taylor to Johnson, 15 November 1954 in A.A. Taylor Biographical File, Fisk University Archives, Nashville, Tennessee (hereafter Taylor bio file). For information on Taylor's presentation of the first part of his history of Fisk, see "The Thirty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History," *Journal of Negro History* 34 (January 1954): 1-7. Taylor address was also reprinted as an article in the *Journal*, see Alruthus Ambush Taylor, "Fisk University and the Nashville Community, 1865-1900," *Journal of Negro History* 34 (April 1954): 111-126.
  49. For information on Taylor's death, see "Dr. A.A. Taylor Noted Educator Dies from Stroke: Long-time Teacher and Dean at Fisk University Victim of Cerebral Hemorrhage: Had Been on Faculty for over 30 years; Remains Carried to Fowler, Ind., for Burial," *The Globe*, 11 June 1954, p.1. in Taylor Biographical File. Shortly after Taylor's death, Charles A. Johnson prepared a Tribute which was reprinted in the *Fisk News* 28 (November 1954): 11-12. Also see "Personal" *American Historical Review* 60 (October 1954): 255-256.