Remembering the First Black College: The Extended Life of Avery College

Cassondra Desiree Hanna
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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Dr. Justene Hill Edwards
Dr. Christopher Gratien

To my family who inspires me, all of the Black women who have held me up throughout this journey, and to my person for keeping me sane along the way.

REFERENCES

ABSTRACT In the year 1849, industrial philanthropist Rev. Charles Avery founded the Allegheny Institute and Mission Church. Despite the momentous invention of the first Black college, its story has been largely overlooked by historians of race and education. While historians of Black education accept that the college closed in 1873, an 1892 movement to reopen Avery College as an industrial school reveals the continuity of the school beyond that closure. Necessarily, this microhistory weaves through broader histories of race, education, labor, and industrialization in the Ohio River Valley –the Borderlands of American Slavery and expansion across the Long 19th century. Exploring the flow of capital and ideas to and through the school, from its creation to its ultimate demise, casts a critical light on the tentacles of Enslavement and indigenous dispossession within the histories of American education and philanthropy. Consequently, Avery College, as a lens, unveils the role of Racial Capitalism in making the modern American political economy. Ultimately, the decision to bulldoze Avery College for an interstate and replace it with a historical marker embodies a process of discrimination, displacement, and desecration that has reverberated across the entire history of the United States. Overall, remembering Avery College seeks to disrupt the triumphant history of interest convergence as told by the minority of Black schools which survived the 20th century. Instead, from the ashes of Avery Colleges emerges a longer history of race, education, and inequality preserved within the very landscape from which it was erased.

"We were overlooked because there was too much folding of arms, too much sleep, too much trying to be like white folks and too much dependence on the whites." Reverend R.S Laws spoke frankly at the Monday night meeting of the United Ministers Council. The council had convened that night in the Avery A.M.E church to lay out their prospects. It was May of 1892, and Laws had organized the council as an effort to resurrect the old Avery College within the dormant structure beneath their feet. Their movement had just gained some momentum. Not only, had Rev. Laws succeeded in forming a nonsectarian council of Black church leaders to spearhead the effort, but they drew the attention of their wider community to the issue of re-opening Avery College. Their meeting drew the attention of the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* who reported on the gathering the morning afterwards. Laws would carry on, "The executors are not to blame. It is because the negros here are worthless." [1]

On the third floor of the old Avery College building at the corner of North and Avery Streets, the meeting gathered in the city of Allegheny just across the Allegheny River from the growing city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Defined by a southern boundary of the Allegheny River, the small urban center of Allegheny City sat near the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers that form the Ohio River—the largest tributary of the "mighty" Mississippi River and the arterial connector of the American interior. Pittsburgh would go on to forcefully annex Allegheny City in 1907, but during the 19th century, these twin cities perched at the forks of the Ohio, operated as two distinct municipalities. [2]

[1] "Avery Was Left Out," *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, May 3, 1892.
[2] Charles W. Dahlinger, "Old Allegheny," *Western Pennsylvania History: 1918 - 2020*, September 30, 1918, 222–23.

White, wealthy industrialist, Rev. Charles Avery had erected the three-story Greek revival structure upon his Allegheny City property to house the Allegheny Institute and Mission Church back in 1849. First and second floors of the building once accommodated the Allegheny Institute, consisting of a lecture hall, four recitation rooms, a library, and a room for public use. The loftily ceiled third floor served as a home for the congregation of the Mission Church.[3] Both the school and the church had taken on the name of their benevolent founder when the abolitionist Reverend passed away in 1858, to become Avery College and the Avery AME Church. The charter granted to the Allegheny Institute and Mission Church by the Pennsylvania state legislature on March 20th, 1849, should have ensured the institutions would outlive any one man. Crucially, the charter also bestowed the school with the ability to grant collegiate degrees in the arts and sciences.[4] Hence, with the power to confer post-secondary degrees, the Allegheny Institute became the first Black college.

A Black college may seem interchangeable with the concept of the Historically Black College and University, but the latter term poorly reflects the historical reality of Avery College. Otherwise known as HBCUs, this specific classification of Black schools did not emerge until the mid-20th century and the Higher Education Act of 1965. By definition, HBCUs consist of the extant post-secondary institutions that were founded prior to 1964 with an explicit mission to educate Black people.[5] Today, over one hundred HBCUs exist, and their histories reflect a variety of origins at a variety of educational

[3] United States Office of Education, *Special Report of the Commissioner of Education on the Condition and Improvement of Public Schools in the District of Columbia: Submitted to the Senate June 1868, and to the House, with Additions, June 13, 1870* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1871), 380–81.
[4] "Charter of the Allegheny Institute and Mission Church" (1849), https://digital.library.pitt.edu/islandora/object/pitt%3A31735056290509/viewer#page/4/mode/2up.
[5] "Higher Education Act of 1965," Title 20 Education § 1061 (1965).

levels dating all the way back to 1837.[6]

The oldest HBCU, Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, originated in the 1830's. Yet, the earliest iterations of the school did not offer baccalaureate degrees. Though, that does not change Cheyney's status as the oldest HBCU. In fact, indiscriminate structure and overburdened commitments epitomized the early years of most HBCUs, and so, the history of Cheyney University reflects that heritage well.[7] However, unlike many of the earliest HBCUs, Avery College began as a college with its capacity as such outlined in the charter. It is this detail that underscores the true significance of the Allegheny Institute, and subsequently Avery College, within the context of Black education during the 19th and 20th centuries.

The Allegheny Institute offered such a peculiar proposition at the time of its opening that newspapers from New York to New Orleans announced the news of the "African College" as they called it.[8] Some of the journalists admonished the school as a deleterious invention, others admired its enterprise of racial equality. When the Allegheny Institute opened its doors in January of 1850, it became the first institution to attempt what we would later articulate as the mission of the Historically Black College or University—it was the first of its kind.

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[6] For discussion of the limits in the terminologies of Black education see Jarvis R. Givens, *Fugitive Pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the Art of Black Teaching* (Harvard University Press, 2021) and Bobby L. Lovett, *America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Narrative History, 1837-2009* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2011) For Historiography on HBCUs as a collective, see Bobby Lovett.

[7] For History of Cheyney see Bobby L. Lovett, *America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Narrative History, 1837-2009* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2011), 11–12; Carter Godwin Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861: A History of the Education of the Colored People of the United States from the Beginning of Slavery to the Civil War* (Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1919), 268–70.

[8] *The New Orleans Crescent*, August 9, 1849, 2; *Poughkeepsie Journal*, August 25, 1849, 2.

When Martin Henry Freeman moved to Allegheny City and joined the Allegheny Institute's faculty in 1850, he had seized upon a rare opportunity. Freeman graduated from Middlebury College in 1849 and became one of only a few dozen African Americans to hold a baccalaureate degree before the Civil War. Though the American college dates back to the 1636 creation of Harvard University, there's no record of Black students matriculating through American colleges before the 19th century.[9] Black students then began to matriculate at New England schools that allowed restricted Black enrollment. Others would go on to study at biracial institutions like Berea and Oberlin Colleges, that began admitting Black students as early as 1835.[10] Evidently, African Americans had enormously limited opportunities to study at the collegiate level during the Antebellum. Moreover, before the inception of the Allegheny Institute in 1849, a Black College had represented no more than an idea.

Infamously, Black residents in New Haven, Connecticut had moved to erect a Black College in September of 1831. But, perhaps more infamously, Nat Turner's enslaved rebellion transpired just weeks before the announcement of this plan. Nat Turner, a literate, enslaved preacher, had provoked his brethren in bondage to rise together against their enslavers, and the insurrection, claimed the lives of white Virginians by the dozens. Nat Turner's Rebellion in the backcountry of Virginia struck the fear of God within white America.

Large populations of enslaved persons had made the sprawling plantations at the

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[9] Russell Irvine, "Martin H. Freeman of Rutland America's First Black College Professor and Pioneering Black Social Activist," *Rutland Historical Society Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (1996), http://archive.org/details/RutlandHistoricalSocietyQuarterlyVol.26No.31996.

[10] For more discussion of African American access to Higher Education in the Antebellum see Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*; Lovett, *America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Narrative History, 1837-2009*.

center of American chattel slavery so profitable. With the invention of the Cotton Gin at the turn of the century, followed by the conquest of the Deep South and a string of protective tariffs, by the 1830s cotton had become king.[11] Nonetheless, the numerical imbalance of the enslaved majority placed immense vulnerabilities upon the white minority. What Historian Ira Berlin calls Slave Societies— where Black populations often outnumbered the white populations— of the American South deeply entrenched themselves in a violent regime of Enslavement to maintain the subjugation of these massive Black populations. Enslavers relied on outsized political, economic, and social power. Critically, they depended upon the violent use of force to enshrine their right to hold humans in bondage, and to profit from the production of enslaved laborers.

The system had fallen apart before. An enslaved rebellion in a Caribbean Slave Society became the Haitian Revolution and proved the capacity of the enslaved to overcome their oppression. North of the first Black Republic, the spirit of insurrection reverberated in Atlantic port cities of the along the East Coast of North America.[12] In 1822, South Carolinian's foiled the revolutionary plot of Denmark Vesey.[13] By August of 1829, the mere suspicion of enslaved conspiracies had provoked a climate of fear and anxiety in Savannah, Georgia that would lead to the Georgia Legislature's passage of an antiliteracy law in December of 1829.[14]

By then, *An Appeal, in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the United*

[11] Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2015), 102–12.
[12] Julius S. Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution* (Verso Books, 2018).
[13] Michael Angelo Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (University of North Carolina Press, 1998).
[14] Kim Tolley, "Slavery," in *Miseducation a History of Ignorance-Making in America and Abroad*, ed. A. J Angulo (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2016), 13–33.

States of America, by David Walker circulated through port cities around the Atlantic and seeded deep angst within the Slave Societies of the America's. Carving out his audience in this way, Walker both identifies that the Descendants of Africa in America have a particular plight, and that African descendants across the diaspora have a shared interest in overcoming that plight.[15] In other words, Walker identified the African American as a distinct collective, and the African Diaspora overall as a collective of mutual interest. The pamphlet authored by the Black Boston merchant further urged African descendants to seek liberation from their oppression. With Walker's entreaties circulating, and revolutionaries hanging from gallows, state legislatures responded with an onslaught of anti-literacy laws.

While leading citizens supposed the inherent intellectual inferiority of the African justified race-based enslavement, ultimately, they used antiliteracy laws and violence to enforce this social order.[16] The laws criminalized reading, writing and gathering of African descended people, free or enslaved.[17] Within the addendums of these statutes, state legislatures effectively targeted any opportunity for Black people to spread ideas, and validated Walker's assertion, "The bare name of educating the coloured people,

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[15] David Walker, "Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America" (Massachusetts, September 28, 1829).

[16] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Lilly and Wait, 1832), 147–51. In the unpublished manuscript authored by noted enslaver and third U.S President, includes the following passage on page 150: "To our reproach it must be said, that though for a century and a half we have had under our eyes the races of black and of red men, they have never yet been viewed by us as subjects of natural history. I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind." See Tolley, Kim. "Slavery." In *Miseducation a History of Ignorance-Making in America and Abroad*, edited by A. J Angulo, for more on this contradiction.

[17] With the exception of Tennessee, the entirety of the former confederacy would institute and/or update Antiliteracy laws between the years 1829 and 1831. Readers should note that the Texas (1836), Florida (1845), and Arkansas (1845) had not yet become states. Kim Tolley, "Slavery," in *Miseducation a History of Ignorance-Making in America and Abroad*, ed. A. J Angulo (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2016), 13–33.

scares our cruel oppressors almost to death."[18]

Though the greatest proportion of Black America resided in the South and under the regimes of Enslavement, race-based discrimination often prevented Black people from accessing education at every level, North or South. Giving a speech before the African American Female Intelligence Society in 1832 Boston, Maria Stewart urged the women to overcome the obstacles of their discrimination by self-educating their children or hiring private tutors. "It is of no use for us to sit with our hands folded, hanging our heads like bulrushes lamenting our wretched condition; but let us make a mighty effort and arise." She proposed they fundraise for the construction of a high school for themselves as a means of freeing oneself from the brutality of manual and servile labor. In all, Stewart, like Walker, represents the promise of education as a means of liberation for her race.[19]

Education as an ideal would long persist as a near universal element in the project of equality, but especially as the racialized identity of the Afro American congealed into a coherent sense of a collective self during the early 19th century.[20] African Americans would leverage the growth of this collective identity into collective action, and education figured prominently within their project of Black liberation. Simultaneously, a national commitment to the practice of schooling would parallel the growth of education as liberation within the Black intellectual tradition. In the pre-emancipation south, state

[18] Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom*, John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Kim Tolley, "Slavery," in *Miseducation a History of Ignorance-Making in America and Abroad*, ed. A. J Angulo (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2016), 13–33.
[19] Maria Stewart, *Maria W. Stewart America's First Black Woman Political Writer Essays and Speeches*, ed. Marilyn Richardson (Indiana University Press, 1987).
[20] Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks the Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

legislatures had near universally criminalized Black literacy by 1835, but fervently developed colleges of their own to rival the old and prestigious institutions of the North.[21] At the same time, New England settlers had begun an effort that would eventually evolve into the modern American public school system.

What historians now call the Common School Movement flourished in the northeastern U.S and, along with white American settlers, quickly expanded westwards during the 1830's. This movement popularized the radical invention of the public school, or schooling for all at the expense of the public within the U.S. Still, despite the success of the Common Schools, and general gains African Americans made in accessing formal schooling, a Black college at New Haven would take things a step too far, even for the New Englanders. In the end, staunch white opposition swiftly mobilized to squash the plan for the Black college at New Haven.[22]

Within a few years, the attempt of Prudence Crandall – a white Quaker schoolmistress—to educate young Black women would provoke retribution and chaos. The "Prudence Crandall Affair" prompted the Connecticut Black Law of 1833 which criminalized the installation of Black schools in the state of Connecticut.[23] New England, the site of America's oldest schools, and the epicenter of America's Public education movement, evidently held a contemptuous relationship to the issue of educating African

[21] Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York, New York: Random House, 1962).
[22] Moss, *Schooling Citizens*; James D. Anderson, *The Education of Black in the South: 1860-1935* (Durham, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988); David Nasaw, *Schooled to Order, A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).
[23] Russell Irvine, *The African American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), 11. See page 148 for the events of the Prudence Crandall affair and trial.

descended peoples.[24]

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Nearly two hundred miles south of Connecticut, the abolitionist Quaker Richard Humphries bestowed $10,000 for his executors to form an industrial college for the benefit of African descended peoples upon his death in the year 1835. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania one of the southernmost cities of the North, saw agitation for the rights of Black education dating back to the 18th century. Advocacy of a French protestant named Anthony Benezet would open Philadelphia's first school for Black children in the year 1750. Over the next century thousands of Black children would move through the schools of Philadelphia, founded by Free Black residents and sympathetic white teachers.[25]

Despite their inheritance, Humphrey's executors, resisted their duties and did not form a board until 1837. Eventually, they would create the early genesis of what we today call Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, the oldest HBCU. But Humphrey's vision would not become a functional reality until the year 1852 when the Institute for Colored Youth opened on Lombard Street in Philadelphia under the leadership of Charles Reason as a school for the training of Black teachers.[26] Throughout the 1850's, Black colleges in Southern Pennsylvania and Ohio followed Avery's emergence in the

[24] The New England colonies where the site of America's oldest "colonial colleges" beginning with the Massachusetts Bay Colony's creation of Harvard in 1636. See Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History*. Historians also recognize the Massachusetts Bay Colony Education Law of 1642 as the first compulsory schooling legislation in America. See Joseph Boskin, "The Origins of American Slavery: Education as an Index of Early Differentiation," *The Journal of Negro Education* 35, no. 2 (1966): 131, https://doi.org/10.2307/2294430.

[25] For Black education in the antebellum see Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*; Irvine, *The African American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College*; Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for Antebellum African American Education in Antebellum America*, Paperback 2013 (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

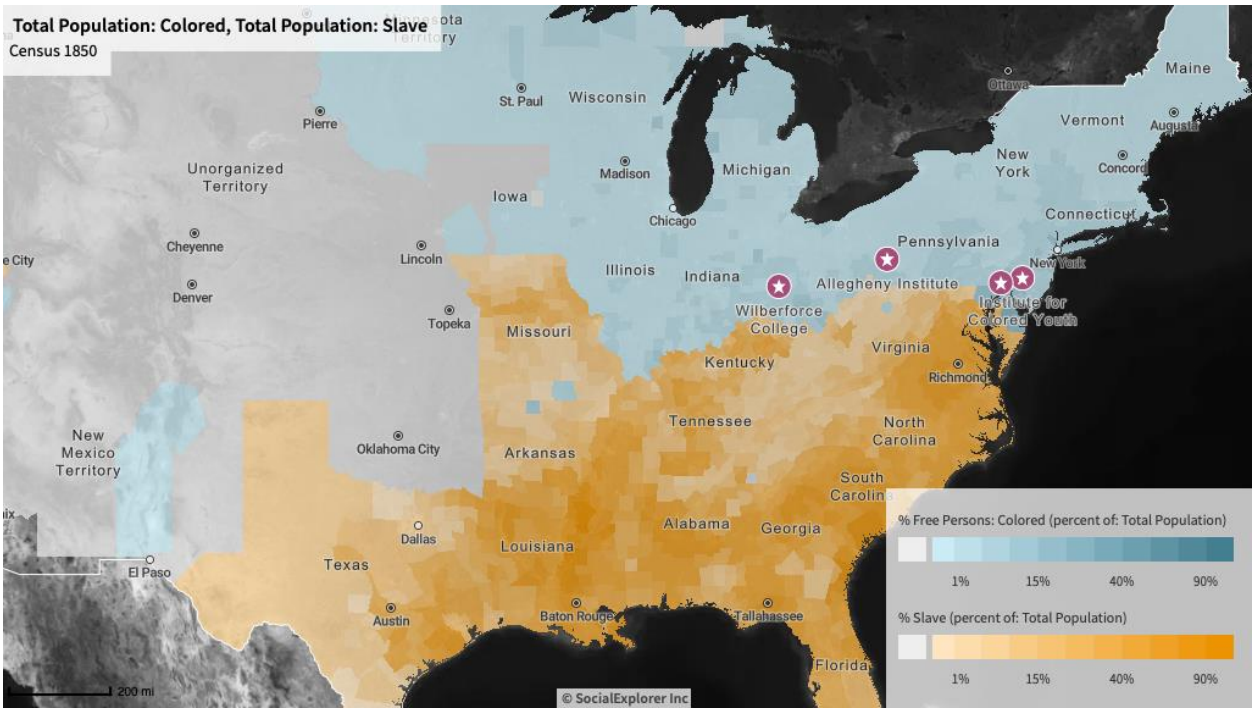
[26] Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, 268–70.

borderlands of Slavery and Freedom. (Figures 1)

Borderlands, or the zones wherein different populations touch, are those regions some may call "frontiers". As Historian Sarah Maza describes this conceptualization of space, "At the messy boundaries where populations meet and nations clash, or when we put water rather than land at the core of an analysis…we can track histories that remain hidden in a more traditional framework centered on nations and capital cities."[27] From histories of frontiers and borderlands, we learn that the center is most often defined by its margins. Under this estimation, it should be no surprise that the first Black College rose over the junction of the Ohio River— the borderlands of the American Slavery and expansion.

[27] Sarah Maza, *Thinking About History* (University of Chicago Press, 2017); Borderlands as a conception of originates from the work of Gloria Anzaldua. See Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza* (Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987).

Figure 1.1



(Figure 1.1) This figure uses Social Explorer software to map the populations of African descended people in the United States by their status as free or enslaved according to 1850 Census data. The color orange reflects the presence of an enslaved majority, and blue a free person majority. Gradations represent the relative concentrations of the majority but should not conflate the sizes of these groups. Grey reflects the "unorganized territory" of the American interior yet to be fully conquered by white settlers. Note pockets of blue in the mountainous regions of Virginia, Arkansas and Missouri where plantation slavery proved less efficient than in places like the Mississippi river delta where a profuse population of enslaved persons lived and toiled during the early 19th century. The Appalachian Mountain range is also depicted by the swath of light orange separating the Virginia and the Carolinas from the newly formed states of Tennessee and Kentucky. In all, the issue of slavery was more diffuse than any line of demarcation, like the titular "Mason-Dixon Line" might suggest.

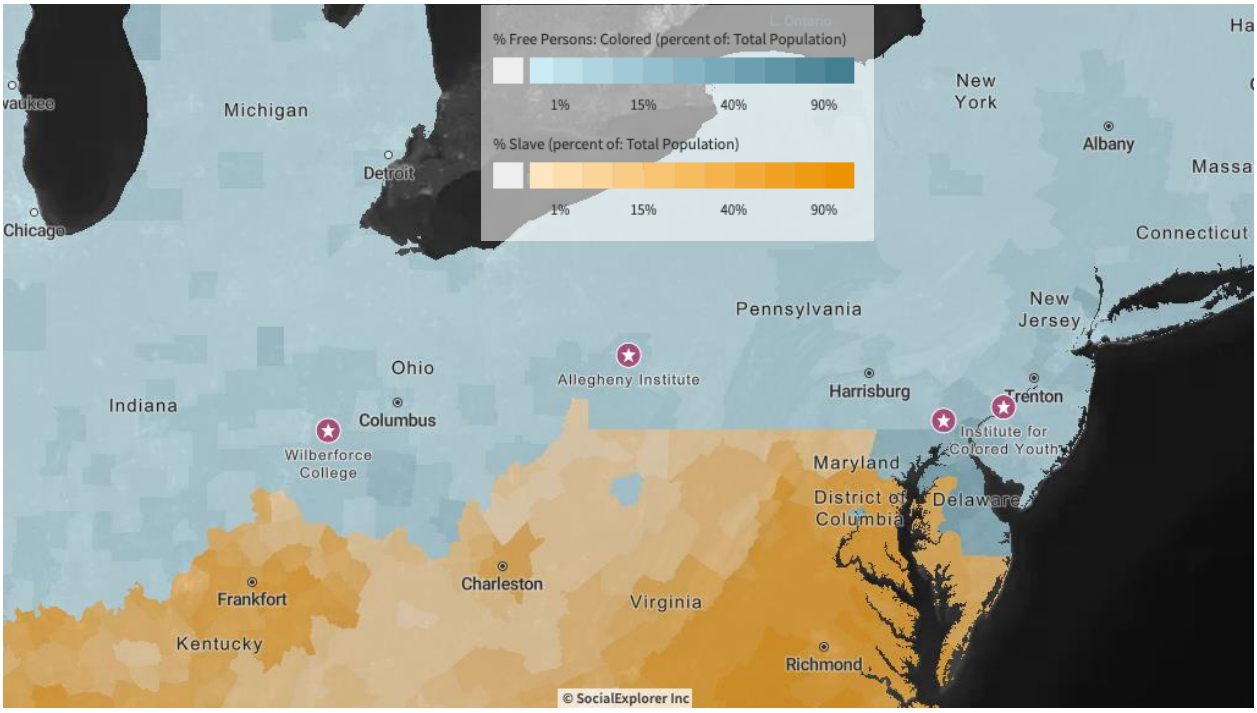


Figure 1.2

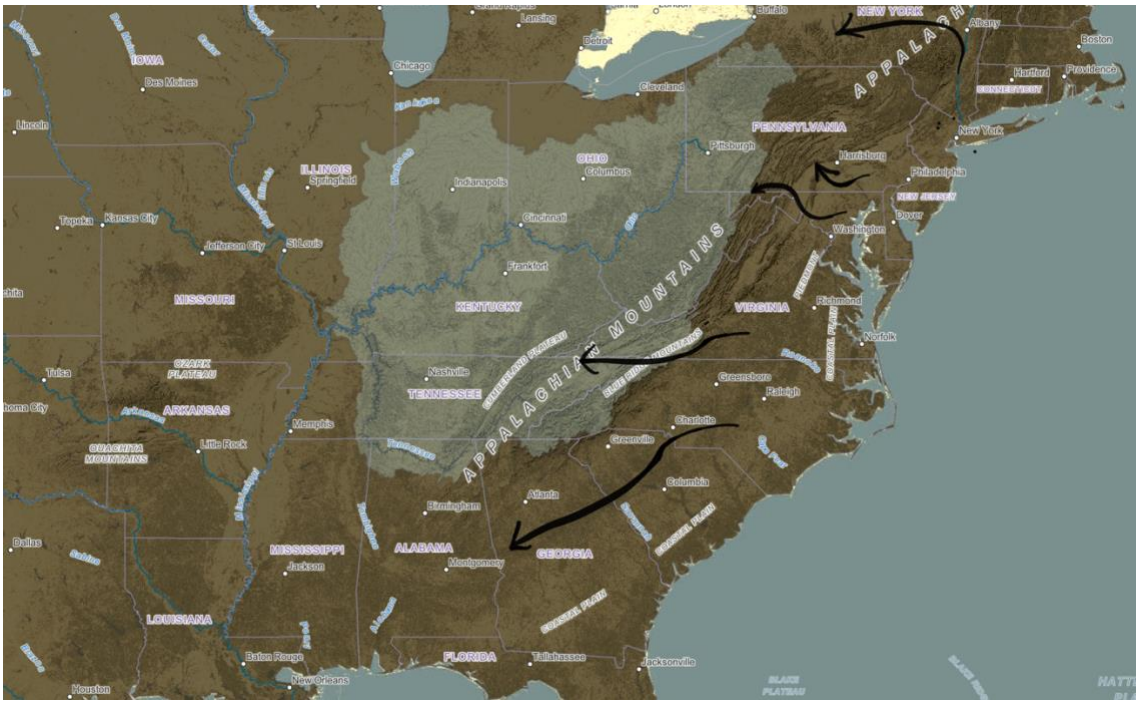
(Figure 1.2) Inset of the above Figure 1.1 noting the single latitude along which the Antebellum Black colleges formed between the years 1849 and 1856. Their sites correlate with the concentrations of free Black populations represented in the darker gradations nearest the Mason-Dixon Line, and Mid-Atlantic Coast, but notably, not in New England.

Western Pennsylvania, nestled amidst the western foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, represents one of the earliest conceptions of the American frontier. Formed over hundreds of millions of years, the Appalachian Mountains had once proved a natural boundary to expansion of settlement into the American interior. Natural passages through the ancient mountain range funneled travelers into the Ohio River Valley.[28] (Figure 2) As one 20th century historian frames it, "From the eastern seaboard there were many river routes into the interior…for the [white] race that fell heir to this continent. But once across the Appalachian range there was but one river and, on the Ohio, and its tributaries that [white] race spread its marvelous conquest." [29] The title of this work, *The Ohio River A Course of Empire*, lays bare the meaning of "marvelous conquest", and the river's vital role within the American imperial project. During the 18th and 19th centuries the City of Pittsburgh became a "portal", or "great channel of emigration" westwards as American settlers moved into the hinterlands of the continent.

[28] Near the intersection of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia the Cumberland Gap offered a land route navigable by animal drawn transport. At the Cumberland Narrows 300 miles to the north, an off shoot of the Potomac cuts through the mountains in Western Maryland. In southcentral Pennsylvania, a handful of streams form ramps to the top of the cliffs in what forms the Gaps of the Allegheny. The next crossing is another 300 miles north across the Mohawk River Valley running east to west across the center of New York State.

[29] Archer Butler Hulbert and C. Stephen Badgley, *The Ohio River A Course of Empire* (New York and London: The Knickerbocker Press, 1906), 1.

Figure 2



(Figure 2) Map of the Ohio River Valley generated by Author using ArcGIS Software. As a major tributary of the Mississippi River, the Ohio River Valley became the natural channel for the westward Migrations of white settlers in the 18th and 19th centuries. Arrows describe the five locations of the Mohawk River Valley, The Gaps of the Alleghenies, the Cumberland Narrows and the Cumberland Gap which has shaped human migration through the mountains for thousands of years. With the advent of locks dams and steamships by the 19th century the natural highways of the Ohio River Valley would prove crucial for the advent of the industrial manufacturing that ushered in the Industrial Revolution. The city of Pittsburgh's position at the head of the Ohio River, and the natural resources that converged in Western Pennsylvania would place the city at the center of the Industrialization of America.

Tensions in the Ohio River Valley initially came to a heed during the earliest European conquests. Though the French empire had claimed the Forks of the Ohio, a part of the Mississippi watershed, as French territory, English settlers moved inland to the region for trading. As the converging fringes of two imperial powers, the Ohio River Valley eventually hosted the battlegrounds on the American front of the imperial conflict of Britain and France, what they call the Seven Years War (1756-1763).[30] Following their defeat in the Haitian Revolution, the French gave up their claims to the hundreds of millions of acres of land west of the Mississippi River, which the new United States "purchased" the rights to in 1803. Later, the Ohio River would become the imagined line between Slavery and Freedom, cutting the natural formation of the watershed in half. Again, the borderlands of the watershed would serve as the early battlegrounds for simmering conflicts that eventually divulged into war. [31]

The natural drainage system of the Mississippi River Basin offered 19th century American settlers an essential system of transportation and trade in a time before steamships and railroads. Navigation through the heartlands further improved with the advents of man-made canals that would stitch the Mississippi basin together with other American watersheds in ways that nature alone could not. American settlers exploited the natural formation of the Mississippi drainage basin, as an apparatus for draining the American continent of its abundant resources. [32]

At the head of the Ohio River, stretches of the riverbanks that formed Allegheny

[30] Maza, *Thinking About History*, 68.
[31] John P. Reidy, *Illusions of Emancipation: The Pursuit of Freedom and Equality in the Twilight of Slavery* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2019).
[32] Hulbert and Badgley, *The Ohio River A Course of Empire*; Archer Butler Hulbert, *The Paths of Inland Commerce: A Chronicle of Trail, Road, and Waterway* (Yale University Press, 1920).

City's southern boundary supported a flourish of industrialization during the 19th century. Not only did the flat land allow for cost-effective building, but access to the river itself further optimized the factories' imports and exports. North of the Ohio, the Allegheny River wound through lush timbers of the Allegheny Plateau.[33] To the south of Allegheny City, on the southern banks of the Ohio River the cleavage of Coal Hill, once exposed the northern edges of Appalachia's most productive deposits of coal, the Pittsburgh Coal Seam. Bounties of timber and coal, at the edge of Pittsburgh and Allegheny, offered a cheap, nearby fuel source for industrialists to capitalize upon. While lumbering operations floated timber down the Allegheny River, mining outfits extracted the coal from across the Ohio River, both were then steered over to riverside manufacturing centers. [34] Proximity, to these fuel sources of timber, water and coal, made Pittsburgh an ideal location for industrial manufacturers to ensure maximum profits. With the level of efficiency in which they could capitalize upon the resources produced by the region, Pittsburgh and its capitalists tapped into a world of Global commerce.

Glass factories and iron works had sprung up early on in the city's development and created the scaffolding that would give rise to the region as a hub of industrial manufacturing. Pittsburgh and Allegheny's industries in lumber, coal, Iron, glass and White Lead made use of the river network to feed the increasing demands of westwards expansion. Though American expansion demanded the genocide of indigenous peoples and the perpetual enslavement of African descendants, the project also demanded white settlers to claim indigenous lands, and free laborers to process the raw resources.

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[33] *Story of Old Allegheny City*, First Edition (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Allegheny Centennial Committee, 1941), 33, 60.
[34] Thurston, *Pittsburgh as It Is: Or, Facts and Figures, Exhibiting the Past and Present of Pittsburgh; Its Advantages, Resources, Manufactures, and Commerce*, 20–26, 46–48.

Pittsburgh and Allegheny exploded in population as Americans and European immigrants alike journeyed West across the continent to claim their prosperity. Altogether, the advantage of Pittsburgh's location and resources set the stage for its environs to emerge as a major center of commerce and industry in the 19th century. The three rivers connected the burgeoning industrial hub of the twin cities to ports, fuel and the American frontier. Most importantly, rivers would eventually all flow directly through the Natchez District on the lower Mississippi River—the heart of the American Antebellum cotton empire.[35]

Long before the city ascended to Carnegie Steel stardom, industrial manufacturers in Allegheny City exploded the potentials of a new kind of capitalism. As what historian Sven Beckert calls "the cradle of industrialization" the production and manufacturing of cotton led the early decades of modern American capitalism. [36] With the 1793 invention of the Cotton Gin agricultural production of cotton exploded. Next, the invention of the steamship allowed for upriver imports from the Natchez District to the twin cities at the Forks of the Ohio for the first time in the year 1812.[37] Finally, tariffs shielded American markets from the competition of imported cotton.[38] And so, Allegheny City's real boom would come from the half dozen cotton mills that spun Mississippi's King Cotton into textile. [39]

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[35] George Henry Thurston, *Pittsburgh as It Is: Or, Facts and Figures, Exhibiting the Past and Present of Pittsburgh; Its Advantages, Resources, Manufactures, and Commerce* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: W. S Haven, 1857), https://digital.library.pitt.edu/islandora/object/pitt%3A00hc03945m.
[36] Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, xvii.
[37] Michael Gillespie, *Come Hell Or High Water: A Lively History of Steamboating on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers* (Heritage Press, 2001), 8.
[38] Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 102–12.
[39] *Story of Old Allegheny City*; Archer Butler Hulbert and C. Stephen Badgley, *The Ohio River: A Course of Empire* (Badgley Publishing Company, 2010); David Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), http://archive.org/details/andrewcarnegie00nasa; Francis G. Couvares, *The Remaking of Pittsburgh: Class and Culture in an Industrializing City, 1877-1919* (SUNY Press, 1984).

Today, there is not a single HBCU within 200 miles of Pittsburgh. Yet, it is precisely within these borderlands—remote and marginal to the centers of power—where otherwise rigid political, economic, and social boundaries were often transgressed. They epitomized spaces where what Julian Bond dubbed the "Master Narrative" unravels. Consequently, Avery's story is much bigger than the history of a single institution or the City of Pittsburgh. In other words, the story of Avery College is a story of the making of modern America.

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Following the arrival of the Institute for Colored Youth, in 1854 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted another charter for the Ashmun Institute located just west of Philadelphia. The school would eventually become Lincoln University of Pennsylvania, today described as the first HBCU to grant collegiate degrees. By 1855, the Allegheny Institute had graduated its first class composed of three Black women: Emma and Caroline Woodson of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Elizabeth Waters of Erie, Pennsylvania. It's likely the young ladies graduated a high school or normal curriculum.[40] Philotas Dean—a young theologian, educated at Yale and Oberlin College— had initially assumed leadership of the college as a favor to Charles Avery. Dean stepped down after the first commencement fulfilled his obligation to the role. And then, Martin Henry Freeman became the first African American college president with his replacement of Dean in 1856.[41]

That same year, the father of the Woodson sisters, Reverend Lewis Woodson

[40] "Commencement of Avery College," *True American*, July 25, 1855.
[41] Irvine, "Martin H. Freeman of Rutland America's First Black College Professor and Pioneering Black Social Activist."

would join the African Methodist Episcopal Church to found Wilberforce University four hundred miles west.[42] Reverend Woodson, an early Black Nationalist, served as the leader of the historic Bethel AME Church in Pittsburgh's Hill District and had long championed the cause of education.[43] In the 1830's, Woodson joined with fellow barber and influential patriarch, John B. Vashon to open a school in the basement of the church—the best their limited resources could accommodate the local Black children barred from white schools. John Vashon's son George became one of the school's first students. The boy, George Vashon, would later find a schoolmate in a young Martin R. Delany, the protégé of Lewis Woodson.[44] Today, the southwestern Ohio HBCU that Woodson helped found, acknowledges itself as the first Black College opened and owned by African Americans.[45]

Reverend Woodson's sister, Sarah Jane Woodson, graduated from Oberlin College in 1856, and retained a job at Wilberforce to become the first Black woman to serve on the faculty of an American institution of higher education.[46] After graduating from Avery College, the young Woodson sisters would follow in the practice of their family by becoming educators. Caroline Woodson would marry another Avery student, Aaron Highgate, and emigrate to Canada where they opened a school. Emma Woodson

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[42] Lovett, *America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Narrative History, 1837-2009*; Irvine, *The African American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College*"

[43] Gayle T. Tate, "Prophesy and Transformation: The Contours of Lewis Woodson's Nationalism," *Journal of Black Studies* 29, no. 2 (1998): 214–15.

[44] Paul N. D. Thornell, "The Absent Ones and the Providers: A Biography of the Vashons," *The Journal of Negro History* 83, no. 4 (1998): 288, https://doi.org/10.2307/2649028; Floyd J. Miller, "'The Father of Black Nationalism': Another Contender," *Civil War History* 17, no. 4 (1971): 310–19, https://doi.org/10.1353/cwh.1971.0005.

[45] "About Wilberforce University - Wilberforce University," August 6, 2016, https://wilberforce.edu/about-wilberforce/.

[46] Irvine, *The African American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College*, 633.

enlisted as a teacher at Avery College, serving under Professor Freeman.[47]

Despite the Allegheny Institute's early progress, on the cusp of the Civil War, increasing racial oppression and the rising power of the Slavocracy stoked chaos for Black people free and enslaved. Successive passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, the Dred Scott decision and the Kansas-Nebraska Act drained the Black populations of Pittsburgh and Allegheny as Black residents escaped north to Canada or across the Atlantic to Liberia. The 1850 Fugitive Slave Act made any Black person susceptible to capture and enslavement, and the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act overturned the precedent of the Missouri Compromise in maintaining a free Northwest. Finally, the 1857 *Dred Scott v. Sanford* Decision effectively determined all African descended peoples, free or enslaved, ineligible for American citizenship, and thus the rights and privileges allotted United States citizens. Disgruntled and disillusioned at the remote possibility of racial equality or in fear of having their freedom revoked by bounty hunters, Black persons, self-emancipated or not, fled the city, halving the local Black population.[48]

Northern Abolitionists and industrialists alike resolutely resisted the rise of what they called the Slave Power. By the laws of the land, enslaved persons existed as categorical property—commodities to be bought and sold.[49] Consequently, enslaved people could not vote. Yet, America's constitution counted three-fifths of the enslaved

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[47] "Avery College," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, April 2, 1858.Irvine, *The African American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College*.

[48] Fidel Campet, "Black Pittsburgh's Struggle to Maintain Citizenship and Rights, 1790-1838," *Western Pennsylvania History*, no. Winter (2012): 34–43.

[49] Roy W. Copeland, "The Nomenclature of Enslaved Africans as Real Property or Chattels Personal: Legal Fiction, Judicial Interpretation, Legislative Designation, or Was a Slave a Slave by Any Other Name," *Journal of Black Studies* 40, no. 5 (May 1, 2010), https://proxy01.its.virginia.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&site=eds-live&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.40648615.

population to determine the electoral power allotted to each state.[50] The enshrinement of Slavery within the U.S constitution, codified the inflation of the Slavocracy's political power. Throughout the 1850s, political tensions rose as coalitions of industrialists and abolitionists formed the Republican Party to confront head on the issue of Slavery, and the outsized power of the South.[51]

After Congress hands down the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, Charles Avery is very vocal of his opposition and refuses to submit any compliance with an act he deems unconstitutional. A Pittsburgh delegation formed to discuss the matter of which Avery is named the President. [52] The Allegheny County Republican Convention came to order in 1856 for the new party's organization against the expansion of slavery. Rev. Charles Avery chaired the convention but declined a proposal for his senatorial nomination.[53] Nonetheless, Avery would never see the final ascendance of the slave power, or the secession of the Confederate states and the nation's descent into Civil War.

When he died in 1858, Charles Avery committed most of his wealth to causes of education a $350,000 bequest.[54] Though interpretations of his bequests are murky, in his last will and testament, the benevolent, Anti-slavery industrialist/lay preacher made clear orders to endow a scholarship at the University of Pittsburgh, support the American

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[50] Garry Wills, "Introduction: The Three-Fifths Clause," in *Negro President: Jefferson and the Slave Power* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2005), 1–13.
[51] For political tensions in the lead up to the Civil War see Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901* (Harvard University Press, 2004); Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (Yale University Press, 2016); Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (Basic Books, 2016).
[52] "Public Meeting--Fugitive Slave Law," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, September 30, 1850.
[53] "Republican County Convention: Nomination of County Ticket, Resolutions Passed," *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, August 30, 1855.
[54] Irvine, *The African American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College*, 385.

Missionary Association in their domestic and international efforts, and generally support the education of Black people in Africa and America as his trustees saw fit.[55]

Upon his death, his will appointed longtime business partners Thomas M. Howe, Josiah King and fellow anti-slavery advocate William Shinn as executives of the estate.[56] Both the college and the church took on the name of their late founder and officially became Avery College and the Avery AME Church in 1859. [57] Despite his request for a humble burial, Avery's executors mounted his grave with a towering monument. They inscribed the words *Charity*, and *Justice* beneath a life-sized marble sculpture of Avery. "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive." Reads one of several scriptures adorning Avery's grave. Another reads, "He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever." and another, "The tree is known by its fruit." [58]

And so, stewardship of the Avery estate began in earnest with a gross distortion of the posthumous preacher's supposed desires. But the epigraph would ring true. For the "fruit" of his legacy, Charles Avery has found many descriptors. Philanthropist, liberal, preacher, Methodist, Abolitionist, Republican, and industrialist, to name a few. These descriptors often pair with citations of his pious humility and an uncommon appreciation for the humanity of Black people.[59] Nonetheless, this memory of Charles Avery, a

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[55] "The Last Will and Testament of Rev. Charles Avery" (W.S Haven, 1858), Documenting Pitt
[56] "The Last Will and Testament of Rev. Charles Avery."
[57] Charter of the Allegheny Institute and Mission Church.
[58] Parke, *Recollections of Seventy Years and Historical Gleanings of Allegheny, Pennsylvania*, 286.
[59] For Biographies of Charles Avery and depictions of his life see: Stanton Belfour, "Charles Avery--Early Pittsburgh Philanthropist"; Henry Pisciotta, "The Avery Monument: The Elevation of Race in Public Sculpture and the Republican Party," in *Making and Remaking Pennsylvania's Civil War*, ed. William Alan Blair and William Pencak (Penn State Press, 2001), 103–40; John E. Parke, *Recollections of Seventy Years and Historical Gleanings of Allegheny, Pennsylvania* (Rand, Avery, 1886), 282–86; "Charles Avery Remembered," *The Pittsburgh Courier (1911-1950), City Edition*, June 6, 1925, sec. Women; "Charles Avery Day Slated for Mar. 20," *Courier (1950-1954), City Edition*, March 20, 1954; Irvine, *The African*

narrative largely deferential and wholesome, often obscures the crucial reality that first and foremost, Charles Avery was a capitalist. This recognition in and of itself deserves closer attention for a variety of reasons, but primarily in the source from which Avery capitalized to build Avery College—American Slavery and expansion. [60]

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Despite reverend Avery's oft celebrated benevolence, and anti-slavery zeal, the basis of his wealth lied in the immense profits he reaped from his investments in racial capitalism and the profitability of Slavery and imperialism for white settlers like himself.[61] When Charles Avery moved to Pittsburgh in 1812, he began his business as a druggist. The young man had picked up the trade while an apprentice in his home state of New York but calculated that his future success would lay in the West. After moving to Pittsburgh, the "Gateway to the West", Avery opened his own shop and began supplying the western settlers with his goods.[62] The wealth he amassed in this trade would become the basis for his fortune.

His shop advertised patent medicines, paints and dyestuffs as early as October of

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American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College, 337–41.

[60] "Cotton Yarn," *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, January 20, 1840.

[61] "…There are some honest hearted men, who not having seen things in the proper light, favor that scheme, simply as a means of elevating the colored people. Such persons, so soon as they become convinced of their error, immediately change their policy, and advocate the elevation of the colored people, anywhere and everywhere, in common with other men. Of such were the early abolitionists as before stated; and the great and good Dr. F.J. Lemoyne, Gerrit Smith, and Rev. Charles Avery, and a host of others, who were Colonizationists, before espousing the cause of our elevation, here at home, and nothing but an honorable sense of justice, induces us to make these exceptions, as there are many good persons within our knowledge, whom we believe to be well-wishers of the colored people, who may favor colonization." Martin Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*, ed. Howard Brotz (London, England: Transaction Publishers, n.d.), 47."

[62] Pisciotta, "The Avery Monument: The Elevation of Race in Public Sculpture and the Republican Party"; Russell Irvine, "Chapter 6, Charles Avery, Avery College," in *The African American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), 335–93.

1814. Avery and his partner at the time claimed that their prices matched those found in Philadelphia. [63] With the high cost of trans-Appalachian shipping, this would not have been an easy feat. The reverend then ventured into Pittsburgh's white lead industry when he formed a new partnership with a proprietor by the name of Stevenson in 1816.[64] Over the course of his life, Avery would acquire a reputation for his business acumen, his frugality and his piety. It is likely that these traits contributed to even his earliest success as a merchant in the industrializing City of Pittsburgh amidst the violent, westwards expansion of the American empire.

During Charles Avery's commercial endeavors, the first wave of the Industrial Revolution rippled across the United States at an unprecedented rate. The extraction of land, labor and resources in the new world, produced an immense amount of wealth for Europeans in the Global North. Conversion of their conquest into capital then powered the advances of Industrialization.[65]

In the earliest days, the invention of industrial spinning looms emerged from Europeans tinkering with centuries of traditions in spinning textile. Once their machines and their mills cornered the global textile market, the earliest inventors of industrial spinning technology had little incentive to share their trade secrets. The profitability of an industrial cotton mill would have proven apparent to anyone that bore witness to its growth.[66] Nonetheless, the means of erecting one's own cotton mill remained behind two hurdles: capital and know how. In the end, a prolific culture of corporate espionage, and

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[63] "Avery & Van Zandt, Wholesale and Retail Druggists (of Philadelphia)," *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, November 22, 1814.
[64] Parke, *Recollections of Seventy Years and Historical Gleanings of Allegheny, Pennsylvania*, 282–84; "Dissolution of Partnership," *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, January 27, 1816.
[65] Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).
[66] Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, xvii.

artisanal memory expanded the method of industrial production around the globe.[67]

America's first industrial cotton mill opened in 1790 Rhode Island. There, the merchant Moses Brown had grown his fortune in the profits of provisioning food and supplies to the Caribbean. In the island colonies, settlers devoted agricultural production to growing cash crops—notably sugar—rather than to waste precious arable land growing food for the people living on the islands. Instead, port cities on the North Atlantic where the agricultural production of cash crops made less sense, used their resources to supply the subsistence of colonial populations to the south.[68] Samuel Slater, an English apprentice who had committed their machines to memory would join forces with Brown. Together they combined their assets—money & know-how—to unlock the secrets of industrial textile manufacturing.[69] Of the utmost clarity, in the example of America's first cotton mill is the centrality of Slavery (and empire) in the growth of this early manufacturing industry. "The 'lords of the lash' and the 'lords of the loom' were tightly linked."[70]

Moses Brown, the Rhode Island merchant, poured his capital acquired from commercial trading into industrial manufacturing. Though today he stands out as the first, he most certainly was not the last. Across the United States, merchants and skilled artisans naturally became partners as the earliest investors in the risky new business of industrial textile production.[71] Charles Avery would break into industrial cotton manufacturing by partnering with an immigrant from Glasgow, Scotland. Thomas

[67] Beckert, 152–53.
[68] Wendy Warren, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2016).
[69] Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 139–45.
[70] Beckert, 147.
[71] Beckert, 145–46.

Arbuckle had trained as a machinist near the epicenter of the Industrial Revolution. But, after moving to Allegheny City, he and his two sons had found work in one of the town's first Cotton Mills. Opened only a handful of years prior, The Hope Cotton Mill became the Arbuckles' employer around 1830. For two years, the men worked in the basement of the factory as mechanics. Unbeknownst to their employers, the family spent their evenings designing their own machinery. Once discovered the Arbuckles found themselves swiftly dismissed from the Hope Cotton Mill. [72]

Nonetheless, with this experience as a machinist, and their intimate knowledge of the inner workings of a cotton mill, Arbuckle and his sons were now in a position to go into business for themselves. But, as wage workers, the Arbuckles would not have had the necessary capital to go into business on their own. Industrial spinning looms required a considerable amount of financial investment before they could realize any returns. However, Charles Avery had continuously scaled up his trade in drugs and paint. Together, Avery and his capital along with Arbuckle and his expertise in the manufacturing of cotton textiles would join forces to erect the Eagle Cotton Mill in 1832. Charles Avery oversaw the business financials, while his partner Thomas Arbuckle oversaw their factory's operations. By 1837, Avery's Cotton Mill processed twenty one percent of the bales of cotton going through the Allegheny City Mills. The Eagle Mill also represented twenty one percent of the industry's value, yet they employed only seventeen percent of the city's employees and spindles within the cotton mills. [73]

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[72] *Story of Old Allegheny City*, 64–65.

[73] Eagle Cotton Mill processed 18% more bales of cotton than the Phoenix Mill, which had 40 percent more spindles and 46% more hands, the companies both valued at $150,000. Hope Cotton Mill processed only 15 percent more bales of cotton than Eagle, but required 40 percent more spindles and 25% more hands to produce only 20% more value; Thurston, *Pittsburgh as It Is: Or, Facts and Figures, Exhibiting the Past and Present of Pittsburgh ; Its Advantages, Resources, Manufactures, and Commerce*, 137–39; *Story of Old Allegheny City*, 64–65.

Eventually, the Eagle Cotton Mill would become the foundation of Avery's wealth, for, as the Eagle slogan reminded, "Cotton is King".[74]

The partnership between Avery and Arbuckle closely resembles the partnership of the proprietors in Providence nearly four decades prior. Moses Brown, the merchant from providence and his partner the English immigrant Samuel Slater veritably birthed the American Industrial Revolution.[75] Slater, like Arbuckle, had fled the English empire at the center of the Industrial Revolution and gambled on the marginality of the colonial world as an opportunity to transgress the limits of the rigid British class order. While Brown inherited his business and its wealth from his family's presence established over generations in Providence, Charles Avery came from more modest means.[76]

Upon mastering the business of drugs, Avery calculated his opportunity resided in the frontier City of Pittsburgh, rather than the more established markets of his home on the East Coast in Westchester County New York. [77] Still, both Avery and Brown accumulated status and wealth from the transactions of the resources which supplied the mechanisms of colonization. Both supplied settlers with the necessities of building a life on the edges of an empire. Both men grew rich in this process, and both men also became strong advocates for the abolition of slavery.

Brown agitated for gradual emancipation in his home state of Rhode Island in the 1770s. In 1765, his family's slaver *Sally* met a tragic end with the mass-suicide of its

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[74] Avery later invested in mining companies farther west, which also contributed greatly to his wealth. The source of those investments, however, originated from the profits of his Cotton Mill. *Story of Old Allegheny City*; Irvine, "Chapter 6, Charles Avery, Avery College"; Belfour, "Charles Avery--Early Pittsburgh Philanthropist."

[75] Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*.

[76] James B. Hedges, "The Brown Papers: The Record of a Rhode Island Business Family," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 51, no. 1 (April 1941): 21–36; Belfour, "Charles Avery--Early Pittsburgh Philanthropist."

[77] Parke, *Recollections of Seventy Years and Historical Gleanings of Allegheny, Pennsylvania*.

captives. Within the following decade, Brown freed his enslaved workers and converted to Quakerism. In 1784, he won his crusade when the state adopted the extenuated abolition program. All of the New England states, and Pennsylvania, would go on to adopt gradual emancipation in an attempt at the abolition of slavery. In 1789, Brown formed the Providence Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade targeting the perpetuity of the trans-Atlantic trade. [78] The same year, he joined with Samuel Slater to construct a spinning factory, the success of which became an American first. [79]

Like Brown, Avery committed himself to causes of abolition before his entry into cotton manufacturing. In 1827 he joined the Pittsburgh Colonization Society a localized arm of the American Colonization Society.[80] The ACS, founded in 1816, aimed to gradually end the system of Slavery by sending African Americans to colonize Africa and spread the gospel.[81] Many recounts of Avery's life attribute his benevolence as a response to the horror's he witnessed conducting business in the south. These confrontations would likely have taken place as he sourced the cotton for his mill that opened in 1832. By 1834, Avery withdrew from the Colonization movement. Historian of Charles Avery suggests he kept abreast of crises in New England and Ohio that involved Colonizationists.[82] Additionally, in the early 1830's Pittsburgh attracted a prolific community of Black abolitionists. Black abolitionists in Pittsburgh, advocated against the Colonization movement in the city and all over the east coast. What motivated his

[78] Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, 75–76.
[79] Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 139.
[80] Irvine, *The African American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College*; "Democratic Jackson Republican Convention," *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, August 3, 1832; "The Union Ticket," *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, March 19, 1824.
[81] Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, 162–63.
[82] Irvine, *The African American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College*, 340.

decision, we may never know for sure, but in 1834 he halted his financial support and, instead he focused on his private business endeavors.

In 1846, Thomas Arbuckle sold his share in the Eagle Cotton Mill for a rumored six-figure sum; he would later enter into partnership at another cotton mill, also in Allegheny City. [83]During the 1840s, Allegheny City doubled its population and the half dozen cotton mills on it shores would soon become the city's primary employers. The year 1847 saw the greatest success for Allegheny's Cotton Mills, but mass strikes rocked the local labor force.[84] In 1848, another Scottish immigrant—the young Andrew Carnegie— entered Arbuckle's new mill as a strikebreaking bobbin boy in what would ultimately begin his ascent to U.S Steel industrial Titan. [85]

Arbuckle and Avery's Eagle Cotton Mill not only rewarded the capitalists with immense profits, but it positioned Avery to take on his next endeavors. On March 18th, 1848, Avery and his partners incorporated the Pittsburgh and Boston Mining Company—he served as the company's president. [86] Proprietors from Pittsburgh, Detroit and Boston had formed a joint stock effort in 1845 to explore the plausibility of mining copper on the shores of the Great Lakes. For years the men who formed the company netted losses as they constructed their mine, but a century after the fact, a reporter would frame Charles Avery as the savior of the enterprise. [87] When stockholders refused to sink any more capital into the mine that had yet to strike a lode, Avery supposedly contributed a

[83] "Local Matters.--Reverend Charles Avery," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, March 3, 1849.
[84] Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie*, 32.
[85] David Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 31–32, http://archive.org/details/andrewcarnegie00nasa; *Story of Old Allegheny City*, 98.
[86] Pittsburgh and Boston Mining Company of Pittsburgh, "Charter and by Laws of the Pittsburgh and Boston Mining Company of Pittsburgh" (1848), 6.
[87] George Sweetnam, "The Men Who Made Copper...a Doctor a Druggist and a Preacher," *The Pittsburgh Press*, February 9, 1969.

$60,000 loan if they would turn to European methods and receive better results.[88] After they secured Welsh technicians to build the mine, the Cliff Mine of the Pittsburgh and Boston Mining Company became a standard blueprint for copper mining on the Great Lakes. [89]

By 1849, stockholders saw their first profits at $7 a share, and their dividends doubled by the following year. [90] Avery cashed out his interest in the drug and paint business, and his cotton mill kept on strong. Though the windfall of profits from the Copper Mine would go on to become the bulk of Avery's wealth, the nature of capital investment would not have allowed this if he had not first converted his commercial profits to the industrial manufacture of cotton.

Charles Avery began his accumulation of capital in the inland shipping commerce, capital he then invested in an industrial cotton mill. With his profits, he went on to capitalize investments in mining and transportation infrastructure. Reverend Charles Avery's business dealings that gave rise to his immense wealth rarely exists as little more than exposition, or a footnote, in the grand scheme of his life. Like that of other early industrialists, Avery's capital hinged on the outputs of slavery, expansion, and the extraction of resources from a stolen continent. [91]

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By 1863 the Civil War was well underway, but prospects of continued racial subjugation in the Americas sueded Martin Henry Freeman to resign from his position as the

[88] George Sweetnam.
[89] Jonathan Leitner, "Red Metal in the Age of Capital: The Political Ecology of Copper in the Nineteenth-Century World-Economy," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 24, no. 3 (2001): 373–437.
[90] Pittsburgh and Boston Mining Company of Pittsburgh, *Report of the President and Directors* (W.S. Haven., 1849).
[91] For the another portrait of early industrialist process of capital accumulation, see James B. Hedges, "The Brown Papers: The Record of a Rhode Island Business Family."

president of Avery College and emigrate to Liberia. Like many Black intellectuals in the ballooning emigration movement, Freeman had determined life outside of the United States was his only chance at enjoying his "full Status of manhood. "[92] Leveraging the support of the Colonization movement, and funding from the Pennsylvania Colonization Society, Freeman moved to Liberia where he worked the with prominent Black intellectuals Alexander Crummell and Edward Blyden at Liberia College. George Boyer Vashon, by then the first Black graduate of Oberlin College, replaced Freeman in the role of Avery College president in the following fall of 1863.

Black Abolitionist, George B. Vashon's tenure as head of Avery College did not last very long. But, unlike his predecessor, Vashon had little interest in departing for other realms of the world. He had already emigrated to Haiti, but disillusioned with the premise of emigration, had returned to the United States after only two years.[93] Still, Vashon, a lawyer by profession, would relinquish his role at the school within four years after the State of Pennsylvania again refused his admission to the Pennsylvania Bar in the year 1867.[94]

As Civil War turned to Reconstruction, the limited resources supporting Black education turned south to aid in the cause of the Freedmen. Once the country abolished the institution of Slavery as it was known, so too fell anti-literacy laws throughout the south. Formerly enslaved people understood that their education had been withheld for a

[92] Irvine, *The African American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College*, 356–57; Paul N. D. Thornell, "The Absent Ones and the Providers: A Biography of the Vashons," *The Journal of Negro History* 83, no. 4 (1998): 295, https://doi.org/10.2307/2649028.
[93] Thornell, "The Absent Ones and the Providers," 291.
[94] "Duane Morris LLP - After 163 Years, African American Legal Scholar and Abolitionist George B. Vashon to Be Admitted to Pennsylvania Bar," accessed January 22, 2023, https://www.duanemorris.com/pressreleases/african_american_legal_scholar_george_vashon_admitted_pa_bar_3839.html.

reason, and in turn sought education en masse from the outset of their emancipation. [95] Benevolence from the north flooded into the South early on to aid in the humanitarian crisis that was the emancipation of four million enslaved persons.[96]

Though more obscure than his contemporaries, Charles Avery embodies a larger body of Abolitionists, Christian missionaries, and federal bureaucrats pulled from these ranks, who would profoundly shape the construction of Black education in the latter half of the 19th century. The humanitarian and philanthropic endeavors exported from white protestants in the north to the causes of "civilizing" the African domestically and abroad describe a distinct historical phenomenon known as Northern Benevolence. By offering their service as educators and administrators, white, Christian missionaries assisted in the development of schools for the freedmen across the U.S South.[97]

Executors of the Avery estate, like the Christian missionaries and agents of the Freedmen's Bureau, similarly came from Republican, Protestant, and Abolitionist backgrounds. Defined by William Watkins seminal, *White Architects of Black Education,* these "White Architects" represented the homogeneity of power and wealth consolidated behind the missions of whiteness, northern capital, and southern expediency. Watkins

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[95] W.E.B Du Bois, "Founding the Public School," in *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Harcourt Brace & company, 1935), 637–69; James D. Anderson, *The Education of Black in the South: 1860-1935* (Durham, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom*, John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture. (Uri) Http://Id.Loc.Gov/Authorities/Names/N98090591 (Uri) Http://Viaf.Org/Viaf/SourceID/LC|n98090591 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Jarvis R. Givens, *Fugitive Pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the Art of Black Teaching* (Harvard University Press, 2021).

[96] Amy Murrell Taylor, *Embattled Freedom: Journeys through the Civil War's Slave Refugee Camps* (UNC Press Books, 2018).

[97] Two organizations featured prominently in these endeavors: The American Missionary Association, or AMA, and the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, also known as the Freedmen's Bureau. Together, the AMA and the Freedmen's Bureau founded and staffed hundreds of schools, including dozens of those that survived to become todays Historically Black Colleges and Universities. This includes the historic institutions of Shaw University and Atlanta University in the year 1865, Fisk University in 1866, Howard University in 1867, Tougaloo College in 1869

accounts for only a survey of this group, such as Samuel Chapman Armstrong, Booker T. Washington's "Great White Father" and the architect of the Hampton Institute.

Remarkably, General Armstrong hung a framed a portrait of Josiah King, an executor of Charles Avery's Estate, in his office at Hampton.[98] Armstrong's tribute reflected an appreciation for the generosity of the Avery estate in purchasing the land for them to build the Hampton Institute.[99] Again, these architects represented a homogenous group of a white Protestant and Republican gentry with social circles, and political ideologies that overlapped considerably. Many of them received education at abolitionist schools, and specifically Oberlin College. As Watkins concludes, the White Architects' eventual defeat of the Black Architects hinged on the immensity of wealth and power that the group leveraged over the matters of Black education. [100]

When George Boyer Vashon stepped down from his role as president of Avery, the school stayed closed until 1868. That year Henry Highland Garnett famed Black orator, activist, and abolitionist ascended to the role of the presidency. When he arrived in 1868, he opened the school under a faculty including Miss Harriett C. Johnson, Miss Clara G. Toop and Professor Benjamin K. Sampson. Born in Philadelphia, Harriet Cassell Johnson graduated from the Institute of Colored Youth in 1864. After working locally for a few years, she traveled west to Pittsburgh and took on the Principalship of the Ladies Department at Avery College. [101] Toop's background is less clear; it's unlikely she held a

[98] "Decline of the Race: Facts as to the Mortality Among Indian School Graduates," *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, January 12, 1890.
[99] Irvine, "Chapter 6, Charles Avery, Avery College."
[100] William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, The Teaching for Social Justice Series (New York, New York: Teachers College Press, 2001).
[101] Fanny Jackson Coppin, "Teachers, Graduates and Under- Graduates of The Institute for Colored Youth," in *Reminiscences of School Life and Hints on Teaching* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1913), https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/jacksonc/jackson.html.

baccalaureate degree, and she served as an instructor of music.[102]

Both Henry Highland Garnett and Benjamin Kellogg Sampson attended biracial institutions before the Civil War. Evidently, their divergent experiences characterize the limited opportunities for Black higher education in the Antebellum. Sampson enrolled at the biracial Oberlin College, Henry Highland Garnett, however, found greater difficulty in his higher education in New England. Eventually, he graduated from the Oneida Institute in New York with a cohort of Black students including a young Alexander Crummell and Garnett's first wife Julia Williams, a former student of Miss Prudence Crandall. [103]

At Avery College, Garnet received a $1400 salary, an amount comparable to the compensation received by the president of Oberlin college. Despite this investment, Garnet found himself increasingly in opposition with Avery's Board of Trustees. Historian Russel Irvine, surmises that Garnet believed that the Board meant to remove him, and instead hire a more palatable white administrator. Alas, Garnet's tenure as President of Avery College lasted only two years, for the death of his beloved wife Julia would ultimately send him back to New York in 1870. His time at Avery is unaccounted for in many recollections of his life and times. Nevertheless, Garnet ended his time at Avery College in a flurry of pomp and circumstance.

During the commencement ceremonies of his final year at the institution, the momentous affair of July 1870 inspired quite the national attention for the bestowal of

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[102] Irvine, *The African American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College*.
[103] Maurice Lamont Adkins, "Leadership in the Shadow of Jim Crow: Race, Labor, Gender, and Politics of African American Higher Education in North Carolina, 1860-1931" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cincinnati, Ohio, University of Cincinnati, 2021); Henry Highland Garnet, "A Memorial Discourse," 30, accessed October 27, 2022, https://www.proquest.com/bap/docview/2522663583/citation/441CF4F13CB24210PQ/7. See page 11 for Prudence Crandall Affair

honorary Doctorates, to the Black Reconstruction Senators Hiram Rhodes Revels of Mississippi and the Honorable Judge Jonathan Jasper Wright of South Carolina. Both had recently won election to become the first African Americans to serve within the U.S Congress and the South Carolina Supreme Court. Local papers dedicated several columns of full-page text detailing the procession of the ceremonies and the orations of the commencement speakers.[104] Hiram Rhodes Revels would leave his Congressional seat after only a year, and in the year 1871 he took charge of the newly opened Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College—today the oldest public historically black land-grant institution in America. [105] Johnathan Jasper Wright would later in life recall the 1870 Avery College Commencement event as one of the grandest moments of his life.[106]

With Garnet's departure, the appointment of the white professor Thomas E. Suliot as the president of Avery College confirms Garnet's suspicions. [107]Suliot, a staunch abolitionist, intended to improve standards that in his assessment amounted the college to little more than a High School for the city's Black elite.[108] Likewise, Suliot presents a markedly progressive educational philosophy of a stark contrast to those typified by Missionary and industrial models proliferating elsewhere in the twilight of Emancipation. Suliot presented his objectives for the school in a meeting before the public at the historic

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[104] "Avery College-- Commencement Ceremonies," *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, July 8, 1870; "The Utility of Learning," *Harrisburg Telegraph*, July 16, 1870."Avery College -- Commencement Exercises," *The Pittsburgh Daily Commercial*, July 8, 1870. Notably, the Daily Commercial would have to publish another full column justifying their decision to report on the event, as it represented proof of the mental capacity of African Americans. "The Avery College Commencement," *The Pittsburgh Daily Commercial*, July 9, 1870.

[105] "History - Alcorn State University," accessed April 27, 2023, https://www.alcorn.edu/discover-alcorn/history.

[106] "Avery College-- Commencement Ceremonies"; William J. Simmons and Henry McNeal Turner, *Men of Mark: Eminent, Progressive and Rising* (G. M. Rewell & Company, 1887).

[107] Suliot does not appear in any of the secondary sources surrounding Avery College, but his connection is noted extensively in primary source materials, particularly the Abolitionist press.

[108] "State of Avery College, President Suliot at Bethel AME," *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, October 26, 1870.

Bethel AME church: "We [have]…been striving to emancipate our scholars from the bondage of set forms to train them to depend on the living power of analysis instead of the deadening bondage of rules-- to walk by the natural light of common sense instead of blindly following arbitrary authority; listen to the inner voice of duty rather than to the word of command…" [109] In whole, the new president expressed an uncommon commitment to critical thinking, rather than subservience and obedience as the purpose of Black education .

Alas, Suliot predicted that none of the students will have satisfied the training necessary to bestow a Bachelor of Arts by the close of the academic session and that commencement was unlikely. He also suggested that the school may do better if relocated, and he presented an option to temporarily close Avery's doors until they could perform competitively. [110] These suggestions reveal the shifting priorities of Black education's White Architects in the long arc of Reconstruction, and what would ultimately become the downfall of Avery College.

Under Henry Highland Garnet, the college rose to national acclaim. But following the death of his wife, Garnet ultimately succumbed to the pressure of the board's angst to replace him with a white president.[111] Their selection, Thomas Eugene Suliot died shortly after taking on the role.[112] Plagued by instability, the college had closed its doors and ceased its operations indefinitely by 1873.

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[109] "State of Avery College, President Suliot at Bethel AME."
[110] "State of Avery College, President Suliot at Bethel AME."
[111] Irvine, *The African American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College*.
[112] "Avery College -- Its Present Condition and Future Prospect," *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, October 26, 1870; "Death of Prof. T.E Suliot," *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, March 28, 1871.

"There is not enough work. You talk of race equality. The only thing that will bring it is Christianity and money, and the Christianity does not put you there unless you have the money. The only way to get it is in the trade, and we must have a school to fit our people for that work." Reverend Laws identified the necessity of an industrial school in a distinct, yet familiar imprint of racial uplift during the Monday night meeting of the United Ministers' Council in May of 1892. In this moment, the proposed revival of Avery College had little concern for the legacy of the school. In fact, in 174 years since its first opening, the school has received decidedly little appreciation for its historic status as the first Black college. Instead, the movement to re-open Avery College staged the concerns taken on by Black Americans navigating the realities of this period between Civil War and World War as they sought to establish themselves politically, economically, and socially in a post-emancipation world of violent racial terror and blatant oppression.

As chattel slavery faded from the lived experience, and the dreams of emancipation stunted, Black Americans continued to seek a realization of the American promise. Laws insistence that an industrial school would grant progress toward racial equality reflects the economic tensions that emanated from what historians of the African American experience refer to as the Nadir, or the lowest point of our fortunes. Segregation of American History from that of the African American has produced another label for this era defined by crippling inequality—an age "Gilded" in only a thin veil of gold, corporate profits.[113] For Black Americans, industrial education signified an opportunity for tangible, economic progress that Reconstruction had utterly failed them.

[113] Wilmoth, *Pittsburgh, and the Blacks*; Heather Cox Richardson, *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (Yale University Press, 2007); *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901* (Harvard University Press, 2004).

The movement bubbling up that spring on the north shores of the Allegheny River mirrored conversations taking place far beyond the realms of Western Pennsylvania. Reverend Laws contemporary, the principal of the Tuskegee Institute, Booker T. Washington epitomized the logics of this particular brand of racial uplift. Like Laws, Washington rejected the attitude of the previous generations, and both men saw racial progress as a matter of self-determination. They viewed self-reliance and economic prosperity as a prerequisite to political advancement.[114] A figure like Washington thrived in this moment because it coalesced with the post-Slavery vision of liberal white capitalists in the north. Historian Heather Cox Richardson describes this assessment, "Social equality would come not through legislation but with freed people's success as free laborers…The blossoming of the country under a national system of free labor would usher in the economic prosperity that would erase racial tensions." [115] Incidentally, industrial education, or manual training schools, offered Black children the potential to acquire trades and skills that would accelerate their transformation into proper Free Laborers.

At the Avery AME Church that night, the ministers addressed not only the importance of education, but the limited opportunities for advancement available to Black people of Pittsburgh and Allegheny City. De jure segregation persisted throughout the labor forces proving strenuous and limiting for African Americans seeking any sort of social mobility. Integration, or "mixed schools", had proven deleterious to the prospect of Black teachers in the twin cities of Allegheny and Pittsburgh. Though the state of

[114] "A College in Court--Rev S. Laws Will Take Action on The Avery Endowment," *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, March 3, 1892; "The Meeting a Fizzle," *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, April 22, 1892; "Avery Was Left Out," *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, May 3, 1892.
[115] Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction*, 3.

Pennsylvania integrated their schools, Black educators remained restricted from the instruction of white children. Meaning, without Black schools, little opportunities existed for the pursuits of Black educators in the region. [116] As industry had come to define the city's labor market, it had attracted immigrants from all over Europe to fill factories and mills. But resistance of bourgeoise and the proletariat alike, restricted African American access to this market of opportunities at every level.

By re-opening Avery College as an industrial school, Black children in Pittsburgh and Allegheny would gain access to a means of acquiring skillsets usually obtained via apprenticeships that excluded Black youth. An industrial school could offer both the training of an apprenticeship, in an expedited fashion while producing more graduates and requiring fewer instructors than the traditional apprenticeship format. Essentially, the industrial school industrialized the teacher-pupil relationship, and should have churned out a growing population of skilled free laborers.[117] Empowered to compete within the labor force with the bypassing of racial barriers to entry, industrial schools proved uniquely appealing to the African American in the 1890s urban context, especially in Pittsburgh.

Industrial education had increasingly come into vogue specifically for its plausible ameliorations of racial inequality. Following the reunification of the nation, and the dissolution of Reconstruction, federal legislators passed the second Morrill Act (1890). Specifically, the 1890 Morrill Act took aim at the former confederate states which denied African American entry to their state-supported land grant colleges.[118] The

[116] "The Meeting a Fizzle."
[117] "The Avery College Fund," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, October 11, 1886.
[118] Lovett, *America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Narrative History, 1837-2009*.

logic foreshadowed the codification of segregation in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* doctrine of "separate, but equal". The updated Morrill Act mandated the creation of land-grant colleges for people of color if the land-grant colleges created by the original Morrill Act made use of any race-based admissions standards. Though, it did not apply to states such as Pennsylvania with supposedly integrated public systems, it would suggest that in seeking a Black industrial College, the ministers of Western Pennsylvania would require private resources to support the endeavor.

Industrial fortunes of the North became vital sources of the capital required for the philanthropic maintenance of Black education. In 1882, the descendants of Samuel Slater created the Slater Fund to contribute to the education of African Americans in the south.[119] By the early 20th century, the proliferation of bodies like the Slater Fund, had a weighty deterministic role in the survival of Black schools. Northern Benevolence, in this case the benevolence of industry titans' and their peers, maintained Black schooling after support from the Reconstruction entities waned from existence. In this transitional period, these actors understood they were filling the void of religious charity and even sought to commodify an active role in social reform as support for the propagation of their philanthropic models.[120] Thus, "Corporate Philanthropy embraced the legacy of missionary charity", however, historian William Watkins emphasizes that the new apparatus was also "discernably political."

Evidently, the Republican Party's identity in the 19th and 20th centuries was defined by the ideological commitments to Anti-Slavery and Big Business.[121] The

[119] Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, 176.
[120] Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*, 16–23.
[121] Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction*.

Republican Party founded by men like Charles Avery the Anti-Slavery zealot, would go on to become the party of Andrew Carnegie the industrial titan. Both men from Allegheny City of two different lifetimes, yet two clearly resembling philosophies of capitalism and philanthropy. Decades after Reverend Avery's death the bobbin boy from Allegheny City would further codify the lay preacher's philanthropic impulse into a mission, "The Gospel of Wealth".[122] Carnegie, and his peers oil titan John D. Rockefeller and Sears mogul Julius Rosenwald would become prolific benefactors of industrial education for Black children well into the 20th century. Much like the contradiction of Charles Avery's racial capitalism, the ethos of Corporate Philanthropy assumes that capitalism can somehow solve the very problems it creates.[123]

Though the burgeoning mode of education had gained quite the support, industrial education did not appeal to all as the sole prospect for racial uplift. W.E.B Du Bois finds fame for his position against Mr. Washington and supports that the principal's program wrongfully forsakes the need for political and civil rights to empower any sort of economic freedom. Still, Du Bois remained proponent of industrial education and especially for the masses of men and women he found unsuited for higher learning. In his comments at Hampton's annual summer "Negro Conference" in 1906 he reassured, "After we have sent our most promising to college then not only the rest, but the college men to, need training in technical schools for the actual technique."[124] The dichotomic debate of the Head or the Hand, of classical or industrial training, as typified by

[122] Pisciotta, "The Avery Monument: The Elevation of Race in Public Sculpture and the Republican Party"; David Nasaw, *Andrew Carnegie* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006).
[123] Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954*.
[124] William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, "The Hampton Idea," in *The Education of Black People, Ten Critiques 1906-1960,* ed. Herbert Aptheker (New York, New York: Monthly Review Press, n.d.), 21–31.

Washington and Du Bois vastly oversimplified the contemporary realities. For educators on the ground, navigating these questions proved neither neat nor categorical in the way that such a "debate" would imply.

Likewise, not all of the United Minister's Council seemed as enthusiastic as Laws in the specificity of the industrial school in the former Avery College. John Boyden, pastor of Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church and graduate of Lincoln University spoke first that night among his peers. Lincoln, established as the Ashmun Institute six years after Avery, had also embraced a liberal arts philosophy for its students. Founders of the Ashmun Institute maintained a primary goal in preparing Black students for missionary work in Africa. And so, they meant the school to support the colonization efforts of the early to mid-nineteenth centuries that hoped to repatriate African Americans to the African continent. Renamed Lincoln, after the assassination of the president, ostensibly, the institution outlived the American Colonization Society.[125]

Boyden received an A.M degree from the school in 1884 and graduated its seminary in 1887. By the time Boyden, had joined Reverend Laws movement, he had led at least two churches, moving from Lincoln to Wilkes-Barre before coming to Pittsburgh in 1890. During his oration, Boyden bestowed praise upon the endeavors of his own alma mater and the success they had found in surmounting difficulties. Conversely, he spoke quite generally on the benefits of education, and the prospects such would bring the people of the two cities. His comments offered support for the school, as it fit within his commitment to uplifting the race. Still, he did not speak once on the proposed nature of Avery, or, as Reverend Laws would later, on the expected benefits of industrial

[125] Irvine, *The African American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College*.

education.

In this manner of artful avoidance, Boyden clearly articulates his motivation in the general urgency for the education of Black people, but not as much in a commitment to the prospect of an industrial school as the best, or only, means of offering such. [126] Hence, the limit of understanding this critical moment under the dichotomy of industrial and liberal arts curriculums. When faced with the realities of individual circumstances, educators on the ground navigated these ideological tensions with a deep sense of practicality.

Despite the various concerns over what form the school would take and how it would fit within the larger system of education, an interview in the *Pittsburgh Press* revealed that the endowment the ministers had hoped to seize, in fact did not exist. An informant recounted that money left in the Avery estate had gone to the Hampton Institute, the American Missionary Association, The American Colonization Society, and the University of Pittsburgh, among else, but the college itself had not received any permanent allotment. [127] The discovery armed a less hopeful, and more urgent atmosphere and it's at that moment that Reverend Laws decried the inactions of the local Black population for missing out on the endowment.

Nonetheless, the preacher remained resolved in that even without the money, they must still pursue their mission, further reasoning that their access to the building and its equipment alone should provide a valuable resource. While opposition remained among the assembly, the concern centered on the inability of an underfunded institution to truly

[126] "Catalogue of Lincoln University, Chester County, Pennsylvania, for the Academical Year 1904-1905" (Press of Allen Lane and Scott, 1905), Langston Hughes Memorial Library Special Collections and Archives; "To Celebrate the Opening," *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, April 21, 1892.
[127] "The Meeting a Fizzle."

service their community. [128] Ultimately, the group elected to pin matters, this time until they could settle a more complete picture of their financial backing. Whatever inspired the United Ministers Council or the Reverend R. S Laws' crusade in the restoration of this legacy remains unclear, as does their fate. Following that May meeting, this operation falls off the record.

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Later revelations offer that though Avery had not specifically endowed the Institute but left behind shares of the Monongahela Navigation Company that had grown to the worth of approximately $70,000. Preparations again commenced with opening the college for the fall, and Avery College reopened in 1892 as an industrial college. Pittsburgh's first licensed Black doctor, Dr. George Glasgow Turfley, headed the Board of Trustees, while Joseph B. Mahoney became superintendent. At this time, the school seems to have been rather successful; it secured contracts to build local homes, and students may have even submitted their work for display at the 1895 Atlanta Exposition. The Avery Trades School held Commencement exercises in 1894 and the Avery College Industrial School's first annual commencement took place in 1895. [129]

Avery College celebrated it's fiftieth anniversary on Monday June 19th, 1899, at the Avery AME Chapel. Rep. George H. White, the last remaining Black member of the U.S Congress addressed the audience at the ceremony. [130] While there's little record of this event, the decision to assemble this program alone would suggest the affiliates of

[128] "Avery Was Left Out."
[129] "Colored Artisans Graduate," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, June 21, 1895; "Avery Commencement," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, June 18, 1894.
[130] "Avery Trade School -- Arrangements for Observing Its Fiftieth Anniversary," *The Pittsburgh Press*, June 8, 1899.

Avery College understood the creation of the Allegheny Institute as the legacy they lived in. Attention to this detail proves vital, for the few appearances of Avery College within the history of Black education do not acknowledge this continuity. [131] Though historians of turn of the century Pittsburgh often reference the school, none make the broader connection of the Avery Trades School to this longer history of Avery College and the Allegheny Institute or identify it as the first Black college. [132]

At some point, the school transitioned to an exclusively female institution. An 1899 advertisement in the *Pittsburgh Press* reveals that the female dressmaking and millinery students out earned the combined sales of their male counterparts, in carpentry, masonry, and plastering. As a self-sustaining enterprise, income should have weighed heavily on managing the curriculum of the Avery school. By 1904, Avery graduates are mostly, if not all, women, and advertisements in 1912 reference it as an all-girls' school. Near this time, the college became a regular recipient of appropriations from the state, and in 1908 it opened a Training Hospital for Nurses. Originally, the college named the hospital in honor of Andrew Carnegie with his permission, but without his fiscal support. Carnegie supposedly placed the hospital on a period of two years' probation, and after a satisfactory period, speculation arose as to whether he would bestow the new school with a grand donation. Nevertheless, in 1910, the hospital's name became the Lincoln Memorial Hospital and Training School for Nurses. Weekly advertisements for the schools ran in the Pittsburgh Courier and The Appeal in St. Paul, Minnesota for years.

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[131] Irvine, *The African American Quest for Institutions of Higher Education Before the Civil War: The Forgotten Histories of the Ashmun Institute, Liberia College and Avery College*. Irvine argues Avery's 1873 closure marked the final demise of the institution.

[132] Laurence A. Glasco, *The WPA History of the Negro in Pittsburgh* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004); Ann Greenwood Wilmoth, "Pittsburgh and the Blacks: A Short History, 1780-1875." (Ph.D. Dissertation, United States -- Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University, 1975) Both innocuously reference the Avery Trades School

Alas, trouble again fell the college, as in 1913 it came under investigation by the state of Pennsylvania for accusations of mismanaged financials. The investigation resulted in a clean bill of health, but the Pennsylvania governor still vetoed its 1913 appropriation for cited lack of state funding.[133] The college did seem to survive this withdrawal, but not for long. Joseph B. Mahoney long time head administrator of the school, and a man less than favored by the locals, suddenly died in 1915.[134] At the end of the academic year, the graduating class of 1916 would seem to be the last class of Avery College. By October of 1917, a court handed down an order for the dissolution of the college due to reports of its inactivity. Wilberforce University petitioned the receipt of the schools' remaining assets, and the court approved.[135]

Avery College's demise fits squarely within the trends of education that eradicated hundreds of other Black schools in the early 20th century. Following Reconstruction, humanitarian interests that had primarily driven these schools' proliferation had withdrawn, and survival, rather than expansion, took over these schools' preoccupations. From 1913-1954 over 500 Black schools to were lost to closures and mergers in the consolidation of Black education, mitigated by the need for funding, support, and later at the assault of regulation efforts. [136] With the inability to find consistent growth or stability as interests turned South, and as the Antebellum colleges faced a sharp increase in competition for students, these factors ultimately squeezed Avery College out of existence.

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[133] "$23,614,564 Cut Made by Tener in Appropriations," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 27, 1913.
[134] "Trades School Head Dies in Rest Room," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, December 8, 1915; "College Head Not Poison Victim," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 9, 1915.
[135] "Court Decree Ends Life of Negro College Here," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, October 19, 1917; "Court Order Closes Northside College," *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, October 19, 1917; "Transfers Recorded-- City of Pittsburgh," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.
[136] Lovett, *America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A Narrative History, 1837-2009*, 136.

The Avery College building remained at the corner of Avery St and Nash (formerly North) until the city entered the mid-century Urban Renewal and interstate construction phase. Then, city planners, real estate developers, and federal legislators worked in tandem to resurrect the city of Pittsburgh from the soot and darkness of its industrial heritage. The Urban Redevelopment Association and the Allegheny Conference on Community Development joined with public officials and private developers hoping to accomplish ambitious redevelopment projects. Pittsburgh's Renaissance mission sought to remake the image of the smoky, steel city into a pinnacle of the modern American metropolis.[137]

Despite the efforts of local citizens and the newly formed Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation, officials seized the Avery building by eminent domain. They then demolished the structure in 1971. The Avery AME Memorial Church, which had remained active, relocated four miles away to the North Side's Brighton Heights neighborhood where they celebrated 150 years at the turn of the millennium. (Figure 3)

[137] Joe W. Trotter and Jared N. Day, *Race and Renaissance: African Americans in Pittsburgh since World War II* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010); Laura Grantmyre, "Selling Pittsburgh as America's Renaissance City," *Journal of Urban History* 41, no. 1 (January 1, 2015): 5–13, https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144214551728.

Figure 3

(Figure 3) December 2015 Google Street View capture of current site of the Avery Memorial AME Church in Pittsburgh North Side's Brighton Heights neighborhood. Four miles away from the former Avery College building, the church relocated her following the city's demolition of the Avery College building for the construction of Interstate 279. The white sign in the front of the church commemorates the church's 150-year heritage.

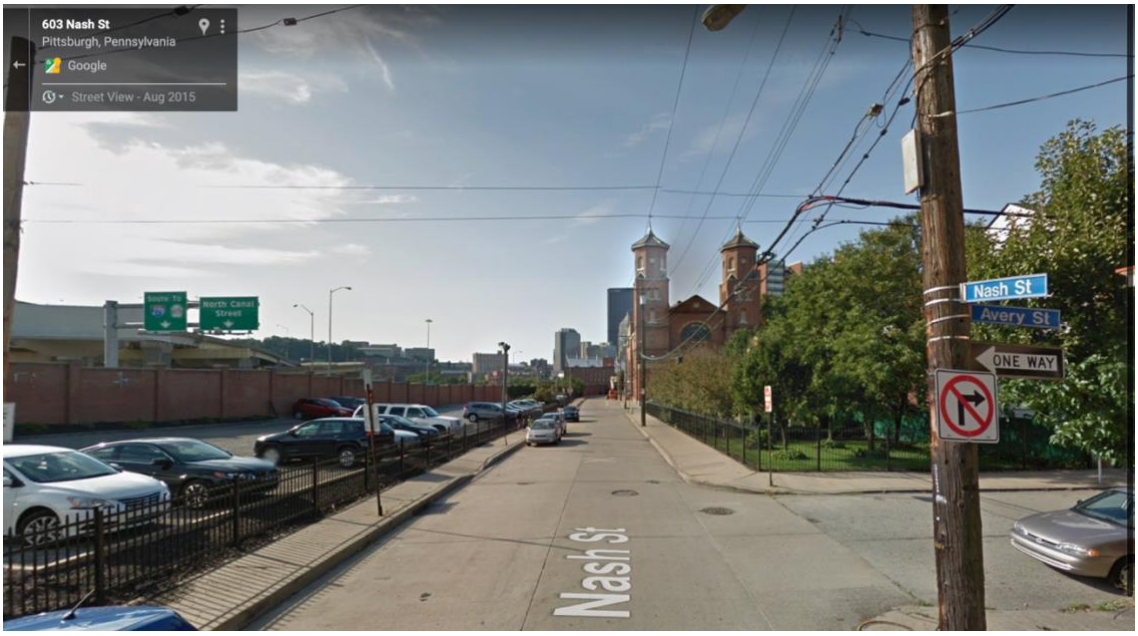
Today, in place of the first Black College lies an interchange for Interstate 279.[138] (Figures 4) At 619 East Ohio Street, a sign contains two sentences: "To the south, at Nash and Avery Streets, stood Avery College. Founded in 1849 by Charles Avery (1784-1858), Methodist lay preacher, philanthropist, abolitionist to provide a classical education for Negroes." These two lines remain the primary memory of Avery College in Pittsburgh's built environment.

[138] William M. Rimmel, "Alleghenian's Dream Ends," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, November 20, 1971; Margaret Carlin, "A Dream and a Bulldozer," *The Pittsburgh Press*, February 16, 1969.

Figure 4.1

(Figure 4.1) Present aerial view of the Avery College site, represented by Black box in center of frame.

Figure 4.2



(Figure 4.2) Google Street View Capture of the intersection of Avery and Nash Streets. Interstate 279 occupies the left of the foreground, as does the adjacent parking lot which occupies the former site of Avery College.

In extending the lifetime of Avery College, and accounting for its afterlives, a much more complex history emerges from its ashes. Obscure, and often contradictory, memories of Avery have persisted among niche communities of scholars and within the local lore, the college was not forgotten.

Colleges like Avery, schools that have not lived to see the present and whose work exists as bygones of the past, live beneath the present structures of a white supremacist society across the United States.[139] Erasure of these tensions from the built environment, and their burial them beneath the infrastructure of the modern world, bares plainly a crucial gap in the history of education —a history too often told by the victors.

[139] Like Avery, a defunct Central Texas College became the site of a federal highway project in Waco, Texas. In another instance, Vanderbilt University built the Peabody College of Education on the site of the former Roger Williams University in Nashville, Tennessee. See Lovett, 78 and Eugene TeSelle, "The Nashville Institute and Roger Williams University: Benevolence, Paternalism, Black Consciousness, 1867-1910," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly (Tennessee Historical Society* 41, no. 4 (1982): 361–75.

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