

## John H. McCray, Accommodationism, and the Framing of the Civil Rights Struggle in South Carolina, 1940-48

*John H. McCray was a political activist who served as editor of South Carolina's leading black newspaper in 1940-54. After years of dormancy, the civil rights movement sprang to life in the state in the 1940s. This study analyzed the available editions of the newspaper from 1940 to 1948 as well as the personal papers of McCray and his chief colleagues. The findings suggest the newspaper employed what William Gamson has identified as a "collective action frame" to spur black political engagement by framing the civil rights struggle to emphasize African-American agency and self-assertion during a time when strategies of accommodation and negotiation remained dominant in the deep South. Thus, McCray and his colleagues redefined the meaning of full citizenship for black Carolinians and linked it directly to political confrontation.*

John Henry McCray was angry. It was August 1948, a critical moment in the history of southern politics. Black South Carolinians were preparing to vote in a Democratic Party primary—the only primary that mattered in South Carolina—for the first time since the 1890s. At the same time, the state's young governor, J. Strom Thurmond, was running for president as a leader of the "Dixiecrats," a group of white southern Democrats who bolted the national party over its support for black civil rights. As editor of the *Lighthouse and Informer*, the state's leading black newspaper, McCray had helped lead the fight to overturn the whites-only primary in South Carolina.<sup>1</sup> He routinely excoriated Thurmond and other white supremacist leaders in his weekly column, but they were not the source of his anger this time. Instead, he focused his rage on members of his own race.

He called them the "I Killits," which was a reference to mem-

bers of the black community who worked with white supremacists to try to "kill" the civil rights struggle. "The 'I Killits' are low-down skunks," McCray wrote in his column on August 22, 1948. In his view, these "vultures" undermined black civil rights efforts in return for a few scraps from the white man's table. "They try to line up on the side of the already well-capable whites, and where possible, hand to these whites ammunition with which to blast away at us," he wrote. An "I Killit" believed "the white man will win, and if he is at his side some mercy will come to him, and he'll have a little niche a bit higher than the rest of his people." He compared the "I Killits" to another group within the black community: the "I Dumnits":

The "I Dumnits" mean well at heart. They are just weakling fatalists who tremble at the mere suggestion of battling for our rights. They tell you about "trouble" if you think about fighting for what you believe and if this should fail, they run into a hole and hide while the battle rages. But as soon as the victory parade forms, they dash out and fight like the devil to take over the whole business and acclaim the credit.<sup>2</sup>

The man who drew McCray's wrath and triggered the "I Killit" column was a black conservative editor and lifelong nemesis of his named Davis Lee, who did battle with the civil rights movement in the South throughout his career.<sup>3</sup> He had edited the *Savannah Journal* in Georgia in the late 1930s and then moved north to take over the *Newark (N.J.) Telegraph*.<sup>4</sup> In the summer of



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1948, Lee accused black civil rights activists of ruining the business climate in the South. Black and white southerners had gotten along well, he claimed, before outside agitators began stirring up trouble. When Thurmond hailed Lee as the true voice of black southerners, McCray's *Lighthouse and Informer* fired back: "If Governor Thurmond and the Dixiecrats wish to impress southern Negroes with the thinking of Negroes they would do well to quote some other person, one for whom there is respect and esteem among Negroes. Lee has neither."<sup>5</sup>

McCray's attack on Lee and his broadside against the "I Killits" and the "I Dunnits" were not anomalies. A review of all of the available editions of the *Lighthouse and Informer* reveals an ongoing assault on conservative forces within the black community—not just outliers like Davis Lee but more respected black leaders as well. Led by McCray and his chief colleagues, Osceola E. McKaine and Modjeska Monteith Simkins, the newspaper demanded black assertiveness and ridiculed accommodation, opportunism, and apathy. It highlighted the injustices of a Jim Crow South that privileged whiteness, but saved its greatest outrage for black South Carolinians who refused to fight back. With their editorial stance, McCray and his colleagues joined a debate that had animated the black community since the rise of white supremacy and Jim Crow. Put simply, it was a debate between accommodation and protest, between cautious negotiation with the white supremacists and direct confrontation.

Black southerners were grappling with complicated questions that had vexed and divided their community since the end of Reconstruction. Booker T. Washington had been dead for twenty-five years when McCray launched his newspaper, but the strategy of accommodationism that Washington articulated in his famous Atlanta compromise speech of 1895 remained influential among black elites across much of the deep South. Washington proposed a path of accommodation with white supremacy to try to avoid an open war between the races that he knew his people could not win. He encouraged blacks to give up their rights to full citizenship—at least temporarily—and focus instead on economic development and racial uplift. To avoid conflict with whites, he remained vague about accommodation's ultimate goal; but for African Americans the strategy was clear: give up the immediate struggle for social and political equality but obtain those rights over time through racial advancement.<sup>6</sup> Over the next three decades, black Americans, both in the North and the South, debated the merits of Washington and his proposals for negotiating the Jim Crow South. The contours of that debate were never simple and clear cut: accommodationists sometimes called for confrontation, and protesters occasionally practiced accommodation. Most black southerners, however, accepted the basic tenet of Washington's philosophy of accommodationism: a direct political confrontation with the white supremacist power structure would be suicidal. McCray understood the strength of this argument all too well. As a young activist, he had embraced an accommodationist strategy, and it had nearly destroyed his career. By the early 1940s, he had abandoned the cautious approach of accommodation politics. He and his colleagues at the *Lighthouse and Informer* wanted the black community in South Carolina to launch a direct assault on Jim Crow in the courts, at the ballot box, and in the streets. But first, they had to confront the legacies of Washington and the culture of accommodation that pervaded the deep South.

The black civil rights movement flourished in the 1940s in South Carolina. The *Lighthouse and Informer* worked hand-in-

hand with the NAACP, and by 1944 the newspaper had become the movement's "unofficial propaganda engine and McCray its chief propagandist," according to historian Peter Lau in 2006.<sup>7</sup> During the decade, the NAACP's membership grew dramatically, and the civil rights organization won two critical court cases in the state: a battle over equal pay for black teachers, which was followed by the abolition of the state's all-white Democratic Party primary. The organization also helped launch *Briggs v. Elliott*, the Clarendon County, South Carolina, case that was eventually wrapped into *Brown v. Board of Education*, the landmark Supreme Court ruling in 1954 outlawing school segregation.<sup>8</sup>

While the work of McCray and the *Lighthouse and Informer* is well documented,<sup>9</sup> this article breaks new ground by focusing on the internal struggle within the black community. Using frame analysis, this study identifies the strategies that the newspaper used to help move public opinion in the black community away from accommodation. The newspaper's push for a campaign of protest was not uncontested. Conservative black leaders in the state believed confrontation would trigger a backlash, and they had historical evidence to support their view.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, this study argues that the *Lighthouse and Informer* employed what sociologist William Gamson identified as a "collective action frame" to confront and eventually overwhelm the argument in favor of accommodation. In doing so, the newspaper encouraged black southerners to embrace a definition of freedom and full citizenship that historian Richard H. King described as "autonomous" freedom. Under this concept of freedom, political participation is more than merely a way to bargain collectively for the best available deal from society. Political action is a path to self-transformation and self-realization. As King wrote in his 1992 book, *Civil Rights and the Idea of Freedom*, autonomous freedom derives from such characteristics as self-determination, pride, and self-respect. In this sense, political action is less about "the achievement of tangible gains" and more of what he calls a "religious conversion or therapeutic transformation:" breaking free from "an old sense of self and from relationships of oppression and dependency."<sup>11</sup>

Black conservative accommodationists in 1940s South Carolina argued in practical terms; they accepted politics as merely the art of the possible. But McCray and his colleagues framed the debate to emphasize the power of political action to restore black pride and self-respect. Sociologists, political theorists, and communications scholars have cited the power of media frames to "construct social reality" for the public through the selection and emphasis of certain facts and narratives.<sup>12</sup> Social movement scholars have suggested some political actors are able to create alternative versions of social reality: to "break" a status quo frame and redefine a social problem. If media frames help the public construct social reality, then perhaps activists can generate counter-frames that redefine that reality and propose new solutions for solving social conflicts.<sup>13</sup> In prose laced with anger, sarcasm, and occasional bitterness, McCray and his colleagues used the *Lighthouse and Informer* to help break the frame of African-American acquiescence and accommodation in the Jim Crow South and communicate a message of agency and activism to black Carolinians.<sup>14</sup>

In 1937, the young McCray personified the contradictions and complexity of the black community's struggle with the concept of accommodationism. He wanted to fight for black civil rights, but he also accepted the need to ease white concerns about black militancy. He had grown up in Lincolnville, an all-black community near Charleston that had been founded during Reconstruction. He caught the newspaper bug while a student at Talladega College

in Alabama, where he wrote fiery columns accusing fellow students of political apathy.<sup>15</sup> After graduation, he returned to South Carolina and, at age twenty-seven, launched the *Charleston Lighthouse*. At the same time, he also took over as president of the moribund NAACP branch in Charleston.<sup>16</sup>

When McCray returned to South Carolina, he found a desolate political landscape. The NAACP had organized chapters in South Carolina during World War I, when black activism experienced a brief surge. But by 1930, the civil rights group was basically an organization only on paper with branches in Charleston, Columbia, and Greenville but none in the rural counties where most African Americans lived.<sup>17</sup> After touring the state, one national NAACP official reported that South Carolina's black community was listless and disengaged: "The traditional organizations of the Negro community, their churches, colleges, civic welfare leagues . . . were generally quiescent."<sup>18</sup> The economic depression had hit blacks hardest in South Carolina with unemployed whites moving in to displace black workers in jobs across the state. Later in the 1930s, however, Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal policies began to deliver economic relief. At the same time, a tiny vanguard of black activists began to stir. Their efforts to force such New Deal programs as the WPA to employ black Carolinians had roused sleepy black political organizations in the state.<sup>19</sup> When McCray began publishing his first newspaper, South Carolina's black community was at a turning point. The spirit of protest flickered, but only dimly, and it had to compete with a powerful culture of accommodation that dominated black political thought in the state.

McCray often claimed that his childhood days in what he called "black-ruled" Lincolnville instilled in him the sense of black pride and assertiveness that drove his politics.<sup>20</sup> Yet in one of his first acts as a political leader, he embraced an accommodationist strategy that stunned and angered his NAACP colleagues. In the spring of 1937, he sent a letter to a white newspaper, opposing one of the organization's chief priorities: passage of a federal anti-lynching law.<sup>21</sup> Lynching would fade away on its own, and South Carolinians were "content to wait," he wrote. He also blasted the "caustic methods" of the national NAACP and said Charleston's black community wanted to "promote the basic principles of friendship" with whites. "Hence, we are not involved in the goings-on beyond the Mason-Dixon line."<sup>22</sup> Under a headline that read, "States the Position of Southern Blacks," his letter appeared in the *Charleston News and Courier*, a rabid supporter of white supremacy. His description of NAACP organizing efforts as outside agitation supported the views of that paper's famously conservative editor, William Watts Ball.<sup>23</sup>

McCray's letter ignited a firestorm. The head of the national NAACP, Walter White, repudiated his young branch president.<sup>24</sup> Louise Purvis Bell, a member of the branch's executive committee, called McCray an "Uncle Tom and a traitor" and led an effort to remove him as president.<sup>25</sup> There is no record of him explaining or defending his criticism of the anti-lynching legislation in 1937. In an oral history interview in 1985, he dismissed the incident with-

out going into the details of his letter; instead, he focused on the critics who had ousted him as president, claiming they "had been sitting on their hip pockets doing nothing" and had allowed the NAACP branch to wither before his arrival.<sup>26</sup> He may have avoided discussing his letter directly because it conflicted with his image as a fearless fighter for civil rights, but he clearly had embraced a classic accommodationist strategy. He tried to ease white concerns about black activism, to assure white supremacists that local black leaders wanted gradual reform, not a revolutionary assault on the racial status quo. He wanted to negotiate the pace of change, a strategy that he would ridicule just three years later.

While McCray never explained his shift from tactical accommodation to full protest, his later columns and oral history interviews suggest the arrival of McKaine played a significant role in the transformation. A charismatic World War I veteran from Sumter, South Carolina, he had organized black soldiers to oppose racism in the military while serving in France and Belgium.<sup>27</sup> After the war, he spent two years in Harlem editing a political magazine and trying to launch a civil rights organization, but frustrated by what he saw as a lack of black militancy, he returned to Belgium in 1922 and spent the next two decades managing a successful nightclub. Far from his childhood home in the Jim Crow South, he enjoyed the racial liberalism of the European continent. Belgians treated him as a respected businessman, and his staff included numerous white employees. In 1940, however, World War II reached

the Low Countries, and he fled Belgium just ahead of Hitler's invading armies and returned home to Sumter.<sup>28</sup>

Depressed by what he found in his native South Carolina, McKaine resumed the civil rights work that he had abandoned in 1922, reviving the town's NAACP branch and working to organize a statewide campaign around the issue of black teacher pay. Under the doctrine of "separate but equal," black teachers should have received the same salaries as their white counterparts. The NAACP had made the issue a priority in the late 1930s and had won concessions from other deep South states, but as usual, South Carolina was a holdout.<sup>29</sup> In 1940, white teachers in South Carolina averaged \$939 in annual salary while black teachers made less than half of that: \$388 a year.<sup>30</sup> Angered by those numbers, McKaine struggled to organize support to challenge the inequity in court. The effort brought him to Columbia, South Carolina's capital city, where he developed a close relationship with an NAACP activist, Simkins. She had grown up in a prominent black family in Columbia, and her mother had helped establish the city's first NAACP chapter in 1917.<sup>31</sup> She married Andrew Simkins, a successful businessman who relied primarily on black customers, and by 1940, she could devote herself to NAACP protest work without immediate fear of financial retribution. In McKaine, she found the perfect ally. Simkins later described a discussion that they had on the back porch of her Columbia home. Over a cool drink, the two activists made a pact: they would challenge the forces of white supremacy directly in South Carolina, and they vowed to "destroy" anyone in the black community who tried to stop them.<sup>32</sup>

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To rally support and overcome the culture of accommodation in South Carolina's black community, McKaine and Simkins believed the NAACP needed the support of a committed newspaper. The *Palmetto Leader* of Columbia, edited by attorney Nathaniel J. Frederick, had been the state's leading black newspaper throughout the 1930s, attacking white supremacy and rallying support for a federal anti-lynching law.<sup>33</sup> But after Frederick's death, the paper turned passive and avoided politics.<sup>34</sup> By 1941, McKaine and Simkins considered the *Palmetto Leader* too cautious and too dependent on white advertising. They wanted a newspaper that would be "a fighting organ" and would work closely with the NAACP and fully embrace black protest.<sup>35</sup> They hatched a plan to have McCray merge his *Charleston Lighthouse* with the smaller *Sumter Informer* and move the new operation to the state's capital city. McCray had grown to respect McKaine's hard-charging style—"fiercely a race man," he called him.<sup>36</sup> The young editor agreed to the merger, and, by late 1941, the new *Lighthouse and Informer* was operating on Columbia's Washington Street, the heart of the city's black business district.<sup>37</sup>

The first big showdown in the newspaper's campaign to demolish the culture of accommodation and promote black political engagement came in the battle over black teachers' pay. Conservative black leaders framed the issue in accommodationist terms: they warned black teachers against the dangers of overreaching and said they should negotiate with the white board of education and cut the best deal they could, even if it meant accepting something less than equal pay.<sup>38</sup> McCray and his colleagues presented a starkly different message. The *Lighthouse and Informer* framed the fight for the equalization of teacher salaries as a test of black self-respect. The newspaper's frame posed a simple question: Were African Americans ready to assume the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship?

The concepts of frame analysis and frame contests offer insights into the success that the *Lighthouse and Informer* had in helping shape public opinion in the teacher-pay debate. Frame analysis developed in the fields of sociology and psychology. In his 1974 study of face-to-face communication, Erwin Goffman said individuals use what he called a "primary framework" to process new information quickly and place it into context.<sup>39</sup> In 1978, Gaye Tuchman was one of the first researchers to use frame analysis in the study of journalism. She argued that journalists use framing as a type of shortcut to help readers and viewers interpret events beyond their everyday experience. Through this framing process, she said journalists and their audiences create a shared sense of how the world works and thus help produce what Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in 1966 called "the social construction of reality."<sup>40</sup> In his examination of media coverage of the student anti-war movement of the 1960s, Todd Gitlin delivered in 1980 a widely cited definition of media framing: the process involves "principals of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of tacit little theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters." For him, these "tacit little theories," delivered over and over in the media, help create social reality.<sup>41</sup>

Gitlin's book, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media and the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*, served as a bridge between the use of framing theory in media studies and in the exploration of social movements. In his study of the anti-war movement, he focused almost entirely on media frames. In 1982, Gamson and his colleagues shifted the frame analysis from the media to political actors. They tried to understand how social movements chal-

lenge widely accepted societal frames.<sup>42</sup> How do these movements "break" a status quo frame and help construct a new one? In his view, a frame identifies a problem and prescribes a solution. For political actors and social movement leaders, the goal is to redefine a societal problem and offer a viable alternative solution, one that mobilizes people to act. Social movement theorists have identified these mobilizing solutions as collective action frames.<sup>43</sup>

Gamson believed a successful collective action frame must include three components working simultaneously: identity, injustice, and agency. The message must identify an aggrieved group with shared concerns, convince the group it is the victim of an unjust act, and persuade the group it can change its circumstances—the fight is worth the effort. For Gamson, agency was a critical component. He defined it as the "consciousness that it is possible to alter conditions or policies through collective action."<sup>44</sup> McCray and his newspaper wanted to use the debate over black teachers' pay to persuade African Americans to move from acquiescence to action—in other words, to become agents in their own history.

The fight over teacher pay equalization in South Carolina triggered a classic frame contest within the black community. The debate pitted the NAACP and its allies against the leaders of the Palmetto State Teachers' Association, the black teachers organization. Headed by John P. Burgess, a high school principal and a well known leader in the state's black community, the PTSA opposed the NAACP's plan to sue the state board of education and sought a negotiated settlement instead. The debate played out in the public and private spheres in South Carolina in black newspapers, group meetings, neighborhood gatherings, and private conversations. At one meeting of the PSTA membership in Columbia's Township Auditorium, Burgess stood before more than 1,000 black educators and told them that they were "crazy little fools" if they believed the board of education would pay them the same as white teachers. He said the teachers should be smart and negotiate for something less than equality; otherwise, they risked being fired. Furthermore, he told the group's rank-and-file to ignore "that ol' crazy newspaper" (the *Lighthouse and Informer*), which was urging teachers to sue the school board.<sup>45</sup> For many of the black teachers, his argument rang true. In the early 1940s in South Carolina, the forces calling for patience and negotiation over direct confrontation were in the majority. For the black community in the Jim Crow South, the threat of financial and physical retribution was real and omnipresent. Most families had relatives or friends who had felt the wrath of white anger firsthand.<sup>46</sup> Some PSTA members believed mere membership in the NAACP could be a firing offense.<sup>47</sup> On the other side, advocates of confrontation had few success stories with which to buttress their argument.

The turning point in the frame contest came in 1943, when the leadership of the PSTA sent a letter to the white state board of education requesting a pay increase for its members. In the letter, the PSTA used language strikingly similar to a famous letter that Washington sent in 1895 to South Carolina's white supremacist senator, "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman, a man best known for his support of lynching. He opened his request for black educational support with these lines: "I am but an humble member of an unfortunate race; you are a member of the greatest legislative body on earth, and a member of the great, intelligent Caucasian race." In 1998, historian Leon Litwack described the letter as "a classic example of accommodationism."<sup>48</sup> Nearly half a century after Washington's letter, the PSTA leadership mimicked his approach in its letter to the school board: "We have come to you, a powerful, influential and authoritative group, begging you to help another

group that is not so powerful.” Simkins responded with a devastating counterpunch in an editorial, “Negro Teachers Called To Arms.” She described the PSTA’s letter as a “stench bomb” that embarrassed “self-respecting Negroes in all walks of life,” called its effort to negotiate “nauseating,” and sent a clear message to the rank and file of the black teachers group: The era of racial deference was coming to an end:

Vow to strike forever from the . . . ranks of the PSTA any cringing, groveling creature who is so distorted in his thinking, and so moronic in his power of expression that he removes the Negro teachers of this state from the ranks of the freeborn and places them in the category of whimpering slaves. . . . Resolve now that you will acquit yourselves as American citizens and not as sniveling, crawling nonentities. Believe me, that BEGGING will not improve your economic condition, or any other condition for that matter.<sup>49</sup>

The confrontational tone of Simkins’ editorial reflected the bitterness of the frame contest over strategy. “Swear vengeance against your ‘misleaders,’” she urged the black teachers. “Single out your delegates from your county and demand proof of how each stood.”<sup>50</sup> She framed the debate clearly to pick a fight with the group’s leaders, to create a stark contrast between her will to fight and their desire to negotiate. As she noted in a later interview, she understood their fear and caution the PSTA leaders were well known in the community and were vulnerable to white retribution. “[They] didn’t want the whites to know that they would sit in a meeting and allow black teachers to sue the state of South Carolina,” she said.<sup>51</sup> However, she was not interested in preserving unity or showing the PSTA leadership any compassion; she wanted to persuade black Carolinians to go into battle—and to shame those too afraid to fight. She wanted to convince them of their agency to confront an unjust system.

Gamson believed the agency component of a collective action frame must be tied closely to efficacy. The frame must empower people as agents in their own history but also “deny the immutability of some undesirable situation.”<sup>52</sup> In the *Lighthouse and Informer*, Simkins framed the goal of the battle over teacher pay carefully to avoid a debate over winning or losing the court case. It was a choice between “American citizens” on the one hand and “whimpering slaves” on the other. The agency would come not necessarily from winning the lawsuit but from simply filing it in the first place. In this sense, she was redefining “citizenship” in a way that was consistent with King’s concept of “autonomous freedom.” In tracing the “repertory of freedom” as articulated throughout the civil rights movement, he identified “autonomous freedom” as a kind of self-realization: a dispensing of the old, oppressed self and embracing personal freedom. Unlike in a pluralistic democracy, in which politics is “an arena where interests are pursued,” where various groups battle for their piece of the pie, “autonomous freedom” is about building self-respect.<sup>53</sup> To stand up for your rights—whether you win every battle or not—is a way of declaring your right to full citizenship. McCray made the same case in a 1947 column that looked back on the teachers’ fight. He described a white “Democrat,” who counseled him to be “less conspicuous” in making political demands. “The question about being nice and quiet,

just because white folks ask,” McCray wrote, “is that it never pays dividends.”<sup>54</sup> This was perhaps a lesson he learned from his earlier accommodationist days.

Simkins’ editorial reflected the bitterness of the battle between the accommodationists and the protestors. To reframe the issue and force a choice by the community, the *Lighthouse and Informer* had to draw sharp distinctions between negotiation and confrontation. As McCray knew from personal experience, most black Carolinians vacillated in their support for direct confrontation. Was this the right time or were African Americans risking a major white backlash? The tone of the debate also engendered criticism.

The paper came under fire from those who believed African Americans should remain unified and from those who thought it unseemly to air their debate in public for whites to see and hear. Later in 1943, McKaine addressed the question of unity in the newspaper’s signature combative tone: “If, to have unity, we must continue to follow and support a leadership which has, without effective protest or action, permitted the Negroes of this state to become the most illiterate group within the nation . . . if to have unity we must continue to support and follow such leadership then the price is

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too high.”<sup>55</sup>

Despite the bitterness, the NAACP activists prevailed and managed to gain support for their lawsuit. The first black plaintiff, a young teacher from Charleston, had second thoughts and dropped her case.<sup>56</sup> But a second teacher replaced her, and in February 1944, Thurgood Marshall, a young NAACP lawyer, argued the first teacher-pay case against the Charleston board of education in the federal courthouse in that city. He expected to lose in Charleston and perhaps win the case on appeal, but much to his surprise, Judge J. Waites Waring, who was the son of a Charleston aristocratic family and a member in good standing of the Democratic Party, sided with the NAACP and ordered the school board to equalize the pay.<sup>57</sup>

The victory was a turning point in McCray’s effort to rally black activism. It gave his newspaper a tangible success story to bolster its case in favor of protest. He referred to the teacher-pay case frequently to convince blacks of their agency and to motivate them to join the battle against the next target: the Democratic Party’s all-white primary.<sup>58</sup>

He had been arguing in favor of black political involvement since the late 1930s, repeatedly emphasizing the potential political clout of a black community that comprised “46 percent of the population, a majority in 22 of the 46 counties” and in four of six Congressional districts in South Carolina.<sup>59</sup> If blacks could get to the ballot box, they could exercise enormous political power. Of course, white Carolinians could do the math as well, and most were determined to keep blacks out.

The New Deal era had triggered a tectonic shift in American politics. After the radical white supremacist Democrats came to power in the South in the 1890s, southern blacks had been excluded from the nation’s political life. The Republicans abandoned

***Next page: Blacks line up in August 1948 to receive ballots in Columbia, South Carolina, to vote in the state’s Democratic primary for the first time since 1876. (AP Photo)***









them, and the national Democratic Party deferred to its racist southern wing on racial matters. During the Depression, however, Roosevelt's New Deal economic policies attracted support from black Americans. In 1936, the national Democratic Party actively solicited northern black votes for the first time, and tens of thousands of African Americans cast their ballots for FDR in that November.<sup>60</sup> Southern blacks embraced Roosevelt and the New Deal, despite the racially discriminatory way most New Deal programs were implemented.<sup>61</sup> A headline in the *New York Times* in August 1936 captured the political sea change: "Negro Vote Jumps in South Carolina—Rush to Register is Ascribed by Official to Desire to Support Roosevelt."<sup>62</sup> Technically, southern blacks could vote in general elections, although whites used legal and extralegal means to block turnout. But blacks in the South were banned entirely from participating in the Democratic Party; since the turn of the century, southern Democrats had barred blacks from joining the party and participating in its primaries. In the one-party rule of the Solid South, with only nominal Republican opposition, the Democratic primary was the main event, and winning it was tantamount to winning the office. Thus, to participate fully in politics, blacks had to gain entrance to the Democratic Party.

In the late 1930s, the NAACP's legal arm launched an assault on the all-white primary. It filed suit in Texas, charging that state's primary system violated the Fifteenth Amendment, which guaranteed African Americans the right to vote. The state argued that primaries were the private concerns of each political party and not a part of the state's statutory election law. But on April 3, 1944, the U.S. Supreme Court surprised the South by siding with the NAACP. In *Smith V. Allwright*,<sup>63</sup> the court said the party primary played a significant role in the electoral process and thus represented a delegation of official state power and must be governed by the Constitution.<sup>64</sup> It was a landmark victory for the emerging civil rights movement. But for McCray and his fellow activists, the fight to enter South Carolina Democratic Party politics had just begun.

A few days after the *Allwright* ruling, McCray sat in the balcony of the South Carolina Statehouse and watched in horror as state lawmakers moved to circumvent the court order. In what came to be known as the "extraordinary session," Governor Olin Johnston told the lawmakers, "White supremacy will be maintained in our primaries. Let the chips fall where they may."<sup>65</sup> The legislature threw out all state laws concerning political parties and ordered the parties to establish their own rules and regulations governing their primaries. Since the state would have no connection with political parties, party elections would become the private concerns of independent organizations and would not fall under constitutional scrutiny.

To mount a legal challenge to the new primary system in South Carolina, the NAACP needed to find a black voter who had registered in the Democratic Party but had been denied a vote in the party's primary. This was harder to do than it sounded. White Democrats controlled the process, and they moved the party's registration books around surreptitiously. It was like a shell game: a registration book would open at a local store, but when a black voter approached, the book would abruptly close, only to reopen on the next day at a different location. The stalling technique worked in 1944 and ensured another election year with an all-white Democratic primary.

Rather than accept that outcome and wait patiently for the legal process to unfold, McCray responded with a bold move. He

and McKaine used the pages of the *Lighthouse and Informer* to launch a new, black Democratic party, one designed to empower the African-American community and challenge the white Democrats. Initially called the South Carolina Colored Democratic Party, McCray and McKaine changed the name to the Progressive Democratic Party in late April 1944 and opened the doors to white members. But it is clear that McCray saw the party as a way to motivate black activism and to generate a sense of agency in the African-American community. The party would stay in operation, he wrote, "so long as it shall be necessary to have group action in the matter of group rights and privileges."<sup>66</sup>

To the dismay of some national Democrats, McCray carried out his pledge to challenge the state's white slate of delegates at the party's national convention in Chicago that summer. As Patricia Sullivan has argued, the Democratic Party was at a crossroads on racial issues in 1944. Roosevelt was caught between growing black support in the North and an increasingly wary white supremacist wing in the South. It was an alliance that could not hold, and McCray wanted southern blacks to help break it apart. If South Carolina's black slate of delegates was not seated, he said, "there will be devil to pay." He predicted northern blacks would abandon Roosevelt and perhaps swing the election to the Republicans if the Democrats refused to seat his delegation. To no one's surprise, the national Democratic Party's credentials committee disqualified the PDP slate on a technicality and the white South Carolina Democrats were seated. But McCray used the high-profile moment in Chicago to help organize black activism back home. The PDP nominated McKaine to run for the Senate in the fall and turned his campaign into a recruitment drive to motivate blacks across the state to join both the NAACP and the PDP.<sup>67</sup>

With the *Lighthouse and Informer's* full editorial support, McKaine campaigned in nearly every county in the state in 1944 and challenged black South Carolinians to join the battle for political rights. In doing so, he again framed the issue to emphasize King's concept of "autonomous freedom." The battle would be a "painful, bitter struggle," he said at one stop, but if black men and women wanted to reject the idea of being a "ruled" group, they "must be willing to make every sacrifice necessary to obtain the right to vote."<sup>68</sup> In his frame, black agency would come not from winning a tangible victory in the election but simply from joining the fight for equal rights. In this sense, the PDP's senatorial campaign succeeded. By the end of the fall, the party claimed to have 45,000 members. However, the final election results showed the PDP with only 5,000 votes.

Outraged, McCray charged that white election officials prevented many blacks from voting and failed to count the ballots of those who did, and he reached out to Marshall and the NAACP for help. He knew the PDP had no chance of winning the election, but he feared that giving in to the fraud without a fight would undermine the momentum and sense of agency that McKaine's campaign had generated in the black community. As McCray explained in a letter to Marshall: "We have had a hell of a job beating down the fear in these people, in getting their trust and hopes and don't intend to see them come down with their ballot . . . to be robbed, intimidated and frustrated."<sup>69</sup> Marshall filed a complaint with the U.S. Justice Department, and McKaine contested the election in the U.S. Senate, but neither body took action. Nonetheless, the PDP had succeeded in carrying out McCray's primary goal: to move the black community to act. A man of no small ego, he later described the creation of the PDP as "brazen, daring and smart . . . a single act of terrorism for white supremacists in a state



where by sheer numbers of blacks” held enormous political potential. The new party, he said, “was controlled by blacks, by selected people who wanted no ‘under the table’ payoffs nor . . . pats on the shoulder. That kind of operation scares the daylights out of racist supremacists. It also baffles those blacks who thrive on sell outs.”<sup>70</sup>

In the next election year (1946), McCray and his colleagues tried again to get a black voter enrolled in the Democratic Party and thus launch a new legal challenge against the all-white primary. The activists had failed to overcome the trickery of the white Democrats throughout the spring of that year and were growing desperate, but finally, an unlikely hero emerged. As McCray told the story, he and three other NAACP activists were standing outside a small store in Columbia’s ninth ward. They had seen whites enrolling in the store, but every time a black voter entered, the woman behind the counter claimed the enrollment book was not there. As McCray and his colleagues were about to leave, a cab driver, George Elmore, drove up. McCray described him as a “pest” who “bugged” everybody with his endless chatter and general nosiness. They barely spoke to him, but soon Elmore learned what they were up to and asked if he could try to enroll. McCray described the group’s response as, “Sure, good riddance and relief!” A light-skinned black, Elmore walked into the store and, to the amazement of McCray and his colleagues, the woman pulled out the registration book and let him sign up. As soon as she saw his address, however, she realized he was an African American. By then, she had grown weary of the process and told him to “tell the rest of them damn niggers they can come in and register too.” With Elmore, the NAACP had its plaintiff in a new legal assault on the party’s all-white primary.<sup>71</sup>

Marshall returned to South Carolina to argue the case in federal court in Columbia in the summer of 1947. Once again, U.S. District Judge Waring of Charleston presided, and if his ruling in the teacher equalization case surprised white South Carolinians, his judgment in the primary suit sent them into shock. “It is time for South Carolina to rejoin the Union,” the judge wrote in his decision. “Racial discrimination cannot exist in the machinery that selects offices and lawmakers.”<sup>72</sup> By August 1948, he had overturned two Democratic Party appeals, and the all-white primary was finally dead in South Carolina. McCray hailed the rulings in an editorial, “The White Primary Goes Out.” But he also put South Carolina blacks on notice:

The next step is to make certain that the victory is not half a loaf, an empty one. To be certain, feverish efforts will be made to deny this new privilege. . . . The success of this effort will depend on the inclination of Negroes to tolerate or reject it. . . . The clarion call against the primary . . . was “all or none.” And this, henceforth, is the watchword. No membership in the party is complete without all the rights attending that membership. Only through such a stand can the court’s ruling be made practical. Only in this fashion can it be said that “government of all the people by the few of one people” has perished from the earth.<sup>73</sup>

For McCray, the battle was far from over; the era of protest

politics had just begun.

McCray would pay a price for his militant stance. By 1950, the success of the civil rights push in South Carolina had shaken white political leaders, who took more notice of him and his newspaper. In January, he was indicted after publishing an account of a rape case involving Willie Tolbert, a black man convicted of assaulting a white teenager. During a death-row interview, Tolbert claimed the sex had been consensual. McCray published his denial without using the teenage girl’s name. Nonetheless, the county solicitor, who was the girl’s father, charged him with violating a South Carolina statute prohibiting the media from defaming the victims of sexual assault. On the advice of national NAACP attorneys, he pleaded guilty, received a \$3,000 fine, and was placed on three years’ probation. In the following year, he was arrested after leaving the state to make a political speech in Illinois. He claimed he had permission to make the trip, but he was convicted of violating probation and sentenced to serve five weeks on a chain gang.<sup>74</sup> Always strapped for cash, and torn by internal disputes between McCray and Simkins, the *Lighthouse and Informer* never recovered. The newspaper folded in 1954, which was the same year that the U.S. Supreme Court handed down *Brown v. Board of Education*, its landmark ruling prohibiting segregation in public schools.

The decline of the newspaper did not end McCray’s career as a journalist and activist. During the 1950s, he reported on the South Carolina civil

rights effort for two of the most prominent black newspapers in the country, the *Chicago Defender* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*, and he continued to use his Progressive Democratic Party to mobilize black voters and try to integrate the state Democratic Party. In 1960, conservative South Carolina journalist William D. Workman cited his efforts in turning out black support for John F. Kennedy. The Democratic presidential nominee could thank McCray and his Progressive Democrat voters for providing Kennedy’s narrow margin of victory in South Carolina that year, he wrote.<sup>75</sup> Two years later, McCray left South Carolina and took a job as public relations director at his alma mater, Talladega College, where he remained until his death in 1985.

McCray’s *Lighthouse and Informer* challenged the black community in 1940s South Carolina with a powerful collective action frame that helped overcome a culture accommodation and usher in the modern civil rights movement. It would be naïve and myopic, however, to suggest his newspaper deserved all of the credit for rallying black political engagement. Other factors clearly played a role. As historians have noted, the civil rights movement had its roots in community organizing work begun in the 1930s, much it motivated by the New Deal reforms of the Roosevelt administration.<sup>76</sup> By the mid-1940s, black soldiers who fought in World War II began returning with a new commitment to fight aggressively for their rights at home.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, the national Democratic Party began grappling with civil rights after years of avoiding the issue in deference to its southern white supremacist wing.<sup>78</sup>

Nonetheless, the role of McCray and his newspaper should

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***“During the 1950s, he reported on the South Carolina civil rights effort for two of the most prominent black newspapers in the country, the Chicago Defender and the Pittsburgh Courier, and he continued to use his Progressive Democratic Party to mobilize black voters and try to integrate the state Democratic Party.”***

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not be understated either. As media historian Patrick Washburn noted in 2006, black newspapers “stoked the flames of black discontent for four decades” and helped lay the foundation for the successful civil rights movement of the late 1950s and the early 1960s.<sup>79</sup> McCray’s newspaper was significant in the history of the African-American press because of its location: The *Lighthouse and Informer* was one of the first in the heart of the deep South to deliver a militant call for confrontation. In the Southwest, Roscoe Dungee’s *Oklahoma Black Dispatch* was one of the most radical black newspapers in the country during the early 1940s.<sup>80</sup> And in the upper South, Louis E. Austin’s *Carolina Times* in Durham, North Carolina, challenged its readers to confront white supremacy.<sup>81</sup> But in the deep South states stretching from Louisiana to the Atlantic coast, blacks voices were more cautious. The real threat of white retribution muted their militancy.<sup>82</sup> When McCray’s paper began publishing, black literacy rates were on the rise, even in rural South Carolina, thus broadening the potential readership of the *Lighthouse and Informer*.<sup>83</sup> The paper was distributed statewide, with one estimate putting the circulation as high as 35,000 in 1946.<sup>84</sup> As with the *Chicago Defender* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the *Lighthouse and Informer* was passed around the community each week, with each issue reaching multiple readers.

It remains difficult to quantify the effect that the newspaper had on the more than 800,000 blacks who lived in South Carolina in the 1940s.<sup>85</sup> Did McCray’s media frames help change their perception of their reality in the Jim Crow South? The hard data on reader impact is unavailable, but the circumstantial evidence appears overwhelming: black activism increased dramatically in the state in the 1940s, rising along with the newspaper’s circulation. That suggests the newspaper’s collective action frame helped build membership in the NAACP and turn out black support for the fight to equalize teacher pay in the state. The victory in the teacher-pay case emboldened the paper to launch the Progressive Democratic Party, which rallied black political engagement and spearheaded the battle to overturn the Democratic Party’s all-white primary in South Carolina. Throughout the decade, McCray’s newspaper delivered a powerful and unambiguous protest frame in a deep South state at a time when the arguments in favor of caution and accommodation held sway among southern blacks. In this sense, he and his colleagues played a pivotal role in turning the black freedom movement toward direct confrontation with white supremacy, a strategy that would spread across the South in the following two decades. Looking back on the 1940s, one white political activist said in 1987, “John McCray was not afraid of the devil himself.”<sup>86</sup> True or not, that was the message his newspaper delivered as it tried to buck up an African-American community that was gathering its nerve for a fight.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Peter Lau, *Democracy Rising: South Carolina and the Fight for Black Equality Since 1865* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2006); Kari Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Jack I. Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001); Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); and Edwin D. Hoffman, “The Genesis of the Modern Movement for Civil Rights in South Carolina,” *Journal of Negro History* 44 (October 1959): 346-69.

<sup>2</sup> John McCray, “The I Killits,” *Lighthouse and Informer*, Aug. 22, 1948.

<sup>3</sup> Theodore Hemmingway, “Black Press in South Carolina,” in Henry Louis

Suggs, ed., *The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1983), 163-81.

<sup>4</sup> Lee returned to South Carolina and edited the *Orangeburg Herald* in the 1950s and the 1960s.

<sup>5</sup> “They Should Have Asked,” *Lighthouse and Informer*, Aug. 22, 1948.

<sup>6</sup> See Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Making of a Black Leader, 1856-1901* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 218-28; and Robert J. Norrell, *Up from History: The Life of Booker T. Washington* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 122-35.

<sup>7</sup> Lau, *Democracy Rising*, 136.

<sup>8</sup> See Lau, *Democracy Rising*; Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*; Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968*; Sullivan, *Days of Hope*; Hoffman, “The Genesis of the Modern Movement for Civil Rights in South Carolina;” and I.A. Newby, *Black Carolinians: A History of Blacks in South Carolina from 1865-1968* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973).

<sup>9</sup> See Sullivan, *Days of Hope*, 145-71; Wim Roefs, “Leading the Civil Rights Vanguard in South Carolina: John McCray and the *Lighthouse and Informer*, 1939-1954,” in Charles M. Payne and Adam Green, eds., *Time Longer Than Rope: A Century of African American Activism* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 462-91; and Lau, *Democracy Rising*, 115-210.

<sup>10</sup> For some examples, see Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998); and Neil R. McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> Richard H. King, *Civil Rights and the Idea of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 26-27.

<sup>12</sup> See Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Doubleday, 1966); Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978); Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media and the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, “Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach,” *American Journal of Sociology* 95 (July 1989): 1-37; William A. Gamson, *Talking Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Robert Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm,” *Journal of Communication* 43 (April 1993): 51-59; and Kevin Caragee and Wim Roefs, “The Neglect of Power in Recent Framing Research,” *Journal of Communication* 54 (June 2004): 214-23.

<sup>13</sup> See William A. Gamson, Bruce A. Fireman, and Steven Rytina, *Encounters with Unjust Authority* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1982); William A. Gamson, “Political Discourse and Collective Action,” *International Journal of Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 1 (January 1988): 219-44; Gamson, *Talking Politics*, 1-9; David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, “Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization,” *International Social Movement Research* 1 (January 1988): 197-218; David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, “Master Frames and Cycles of Protest,” in Aldon Morris and Carol Mueller, eds., *Frontiers of Social Movement Theory* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1992); Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 611-39.

<sup>14</sup> A full run of the *Lighthouse and Informer* does not exist. This study examined the forty-eight existing issues and focused its analysis on two key civil rights campaigns in South Carolina during the 1940s: the fight over equal pay for black teachers, which was followed by the battle for full voting rights in the Democratic Party. To supplement the analysis of the *Lighthouse and Informer*, the author reviewed the personal papers of John McCray and his chief colleagues, Osceola E. McKaine and Modjeska Monteith Simkins, as well as oral history interviews that McCray granted in 1985-86. The papers are in the South Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. Also examined were the oral history interviews of McCray by Patricia Sullivan and Charles Franklin Beall in 1985 and 1986 respectively.

<sup>15</sup> Roefs, “Leading the Civil Rights Vanguard in South Carolina,” 496.

<sup>16</sup> Interview, John McCray by Patricia Sullivan, Feb. 18, 1985. The transcript is in the author’s possession.

<sup>17</sup> See Theodore Hemmingway, “Under the Yoke of Bondage: A History of Black Folks in South Carolina” (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1976), 391; and Hoffman, “The Genesis of the Modern Movement for Civil Rights in South Carolina,” 354.

<sup>18</sup> Hoffman, "The Genesis of the Modern Movement for Civil Rights in South Carolina," 354.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>20</sup> See John H. McCray, "The Way It Was," *Charleston Chronicle*, Feb. 20, 1982; and interview, McCray by Sullivan.

<sup>21</sup> See Patricia Sullivan, *Lift Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: New Press, 2009), 172-73; and Lau, *Democracy Rising*, 116.

<sup>22</sup> John H. McCray, "States the Position of Southern Negroes," *Charleston News and Courier*, April 13, 1937.

<sup>23</sup> Sid Bedingfield, "The Dixiecrat Summer of 1948: Two South Carolina Editors—a Liberal and a Conservative—Foreshadow Modern Political Debate in the South," *American Journalism* 27 (Summer 2010): 91-114.

<sup>24</sup> See Lau, *Democracy Rising*, 116; and Sullivan, *Days of Hope*, 172-73.

<sup>25</sup> See Hoffman, "The Genesis of the Modern Movement for Civil Rights in South Carolina," 368; and Lau, *Democracy Rising*, 116.

<sup>26</sup> Interview, McCray by Sullivan.

<sup>27</sup> Miles Richards, "Osceola E. McKaine and the Struggle for Black Civil Rights, 1916-1946" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1993).

<sup>28</sup> See *ibid.*, 90-94; Sullivan, *Days of Hope*, 196-97.

<sup>29</sup> Sullivan, *Days of Hope*, 197.

<sup>30</sup> Newby, *Black Carolinians*, 141.

<sup>31</sup> Sullivan, *Days of Hope*, 145.

<sup>32</sup> Barbara Woods, "Black Woman Activist in Twentieth Century South Carolina, Modjeska Monteith Simkins" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1978), 44.

<sup>33</sup> See Hayes, *South Carolina and the New Deal*; and Hemmingway, *Black Press in South Carolina*.

<sup>34</sup> See Woods, "Black Woman Activist in Twentieth Century South Carolina, Modjeska Monteith Simkins," 47; and Richards, "Osceola E. McKaine and the Struggle for Black Civil Rights, 1916-1946," 202.

<sup>35</sup> Woods, "Black Woman Activist in Twentieth Century South Carolina, Modjeska Monteith Simkins," 51.

<sup>36</sup> John H. McCray, "The Way It Was," *Charleston Chronicle*, March 5, 1982.

<sup>37</sup> Interview, McCray by Sullivan.

<sup>38</sup> The best account of the teacher pay battle can be found in Richards, "Osceola E. McKaine and the Struggle for Black Civil Rights, 1917-1946." The papers of McCray and Simkins include accounts of the teacher pay fight as well.

<sup>39</sup> Ervin Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Free Press, 1974).

<sup>40</sup> See Tuchman, *Making News*, 15-30; and Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*.

<sup>41</sup> Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching*, 3-6.

<sup>42</sup> Gamson, Fireman and Rytina, *Encounters with Unjust Authority*.

<sup>43</sup> See Gamson, *Talking Politics*, 6-8; and Hank Johnston and John A. Noakes, eds., *Frames of Protest: Social Movements and the Framing Perspective* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 7-11.

<sup>44</sup> William A. Gamson, "Promoting Political Engagement," in Robert M. Entman and W. Lance Bennett, eds., *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>45</sup> Interview, McCray by Sullivan.

<sup>46</sup> Among the many examples, see Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*; and C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).

<sup>47</sup> Interview, McCray by Sullivan.

<sup>48</sup> Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 360.

<sup>49</sup> "Black Teachers Called to Arms," Modjeska Monteith Simkins papers, Politics, reel 2, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Woods, "Black Woman Activist in Twentieth Century South Carolina: Modjeska Monteith Simkins," 165.

<sup>52</sup> Gamson, *Talking Politics*, 7.

<sup>53</sup> King, *Civil Rights and the Idea of Freedom*, 26-27.

<sup>54</sup> John H. McCray, "The Need for Changing," *Lighthouse and Informer*, June 15, 1947.

<sup>55</sup> Osceola E. McKaine, "What Price Unity?" *Lighthouse and Informer*, Jan. 10, 1943.

<sup>56</sup> Richards, "Osceola E. McKaine and the Struggle for Black Civil Rights,

1916-1946," 137-38.

<sup>57</sup> See Tinsley Yarbrough, *A Passion for Justice: J. Waites Waring and Civil Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 43-46; Lau, *Democracy Rising*, 128-32; and Richards, "Osceola E. McKaine and the Struggle for Black Civil Rights, 1916-1946," 144.

<sup>58</sup> Examples include John H. McCray, "Sticking Together," *Lighthouse and Informer*, Jan. 19, 1947; and John H. McCray, "Primary Test Looms," *Lighthouse and Informer*, Feb. 9, 1947.

<sup>59</sup> John McCray, "No Apparent Unity," *Lighthouse and Informer*, Feb. 6, 1944.

<sup>60</sup> Sullivan, *Days of Hope*, 143-44.

<sup>61</sup> See *ibid.*; and Karen Ferguson, *Black Politics in New Deal Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

<sup>62</sup> "Negro Vote Jumps . . .," *New York Times*, Aug. 22, 1936.

<sup>63</sup> *Smith v. Allwright*, 321 U.S. 649 (1944).

<sup>64</sup> See *ibid.*; and Darlene Clark Hine, "Blacks and the Destruction of the White Primary, 1935-1944," *Journal of Negro History* 62 (January 1977): 43-59.

<sup>65</sup> See Sullivan, *Days of Hope*; Lau, *Democracy Rising*; and John H. McCray, "The Way It Was," *Charleston Chronicle*, March 13, 1982.

<sup>66</sup> South Carolina Colored Democratic Party Organizational Plans (1944), John H. McCray papers, Politics: General, folder 7, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina. See also Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968*, 43; Sullivan, *Lift Every Voice*, 283-84; Sullivan, *Days of Hope*, 145-46; Lau, *Democracy Rising*, 136-37; and John H. McCray, "The Way It Was," *Charleston Chronicle*, March 13, 1982.

<sup>67</sup> See interview, John McCray by Sullivan; and John H. McCray, "The Way It Was," *Charleston Chronicle*, March 13, 1982.

<sup>68</sup> Osceola E. McKaine, "Black Voters at the Ballot Box," Southern Youth Negro Council, 1944, John H. McCray papers, Politics: General, folder 7, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

<sup>69</sup> John H. McCray to Thurgood Marshall, Nov. 9, 1944, NAACP papers II-B, 2009, as cited in Sullivan, *Days of Hope*, 191.

<sup>70</sup> McCray, "The Way It Was," *Charleston Chronicle*, Feb. 27 and March 13, 1982.

<sup>71</sup> See *ibid.*; McCray account in oral history interview cited in Sullivan, *Days of Hope*; and Lau, *Democracy Rising*, 175-76.

<sup>72</sup> *Elmore v. Rice*, 72 F. Supp. 516, 528

<sup>73</sup> John H. McCray, "The White Primary Goes Out," *Lighthouse and Informer*, April 25, 1948.

<sup>74</sup> See Charles Franklin Beall, "With Malice Intent: John McCray, Willie Tolbert and the Struggle for Equal Justice in South Carolina" (Unpublished honors thesis, University of Virginia, 1987), 1-62; and Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968*, 211-16.

<sup>75</sup> William D. Workman, "State's Negroes Backed Kennedy," *Greenville (S.C.) News*, Dec. 4, 1960.

<sup>76</sup> Sullivan, *Days of Hope*.

<sup>77</sup> See John T. Kneebone, *Southern Liberal Journalists and the Issue of Race, 1920-1944* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press); and Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968*.

<sup>78</sup> See Sullivan, *Days of Hope*; Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968*; and Kneebone, *Southern Liberal Journalists and the Issue of Race, 1920-1944*.

<sup>79</sup> See Patrick Washburn, *The African American Newspaper: Voice of Freedom* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2006), 8.

<sup>80</sup> Charles Simmons, *The African American Press: A History of News Coverage During National Crises, with Special Reference to Four Black Newspapers, 1827-1965* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co., 1998), 51.

<sup>81</sup> Henry Louis Suggs and Bernadine Moses Duncan, "The Black Press in North Carolina," in Suggs, *The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979*, 268-69.

<sup>82</sup> Simmons, *The African American Press*, 65.

<sup>83</sup> See Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998); and Newby, *Black Carolinians*.

<sup>84</sup> Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968*, 43.

<sup>85</sup> U.S. Census, 1940, at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0056/twps0056.html>.

<sup>86</sup> Alice Spearman Wright, Feb. 20, 1987, quoted in Beall, "With Malice Intent," 5.



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