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4-1-2012

How Blacks became Blue: The 1936 African American Voting Shift From the Party of Lincoln to the New Deal Coalition

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Daniel, Daphney, "How Blacks became Blue: The 1936 African American Voting Shift From the Party of Lincoln to the New Deal Coalition" (2012). *Pell Scholars and Senior Theses.* Paper 77.
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With the 2012 election season underway the historical 2008 election has become just that history. President Barrack Obama is facing tough opposition claiming he has not done nearly enough to relieve the tough economic climate. Whether it is because conservatives black are gaining prominence or the numbers of conservative blacks are growing in number, African Americans are becoming visible among that GOP opposition. The black vote would be a boost for the GOP and weakening blow to the Democratic Party which has held the black vote unchallenged for over half a century. I n the upcoming two elections the Republican Party may have the opportunity to bring many African Americans into the Conservative fold. If the GOP learns from what the Roosevelt administration was able to accomplish regard African Americans between 1932 and 1936 elections the possibility in an African American swing may be possible. Roosevelt made his policies more inclusive and delivered a message of relief that resonated with blacks so deeply that in they voted for Roosevelt en masse in the 1936 presidential election despite the fact Roosevelt actually did little to improve their lives.

In October 1929 the stock market crashed causing an economic meltdown, compounded with agricultural crisis the country plummeted into the Great Depression. African-Americans were hit especially hard due to their low wages and poor living conditions prior to the depression.[1] All Americans,

blacks and whites, looked to the exceedingly inefficient Republican president, Herbert Hoover[2] and congress for relief. Increased economic turmoil led many Americans to believe that the Democratic Party produced the better candidate in the 1932 election. 44th governor of New York, and Democratic candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt, see Appendix A, seemed to possess a competent and leading hand and easily defeated Hoover for the presidency. Although handful of African-Americans endorsed and voted for Roosevelt, the majority remained loyal to Hoover and the Republican Party because they expected little effort on their behalf from the Democratic Party. Some in Roosevelt's administration would recognized the potential in the black vote and would reach out to African Americans between 1932 and 1936.

To understand how the Roosevelt administration's outreach to African Americans was able to bring them into the Democratic party fold in four short years so effectively, despite doing little for the African American population the history of African Americans and American politics since the end of the Civil War (1861-1865) must be discussed. Antebellum Reconstruction[3] began with plans to improve the lives of America's nearly 4 million emancipated blacks. The 14th and 15th amendments granted emancipated slaves American citizenship, the right to vote, equal protection and due process under the law. Reconstruction forces including Freedman's Bureaus and Abolitionist built schools and libraries for black children and a few elite blacks even made it to high positions in the government, including Congress[4].

After Abraham Lincoln's[5] death Reconstruction was left up to a Republican controlled Congress and Southern Democratic President, Andrew Johnson[6]. As a Southern Democrat Johnson's loyalties lied with the confederate states and he undermined reconstruction policies by "pardoning thousands of former Confederates, [Johnson]…allowed them to re-enter politics in their states during the crucial autumn and fall elections in 1865" (Robinson 10). Former Confederates won elections throughout the South and soon implemented policies on a state level to disenfranchise African Americans[7] terrorizing those who dared to resist.[8] Empathy for the tribulations of African Americans dwindled considerably as Congressmen realized that representing disenfranchised blacks would cost alienating their racist colleagues. By 1876

"the leading voices of Northern Liberals increasingly voiced indifference to the plight of blacks…and opposition to their former goal of a racially egalitarian nation." (Sitkoff 3) Taking advantage of Republican apathy Democratic legislatures introduced bills[9] that posed tighter restrictions on African Americans, gradually segregated every aspect of African American life from schools and hospitals to pools and theaters. For example of such a bill that was proposed in 1904 see Appendix B. Consequently African Americans continued to support the party of Lincoln in large majorities rather than support traditional enemies. As Harvard Sitkoff observed "the assertion was made that the white South knew best how to handle the Negro problem." (3) African-Americans could do very little to improve their position. Throughout the South where a majority of the black population resided, few could afford to pay the poll taxes. Without political influence blacks could not fight Jim Crow policies, further removing them from political influence. By the 1890's "legislators no longer submitted civil rights bills even perfunctorily." (Sitkoff 3) With little improvement in their condition and a bleak outlook for the future most African Americans remained on the plantations trapped in the sharecropping system, rigged to keep them in debt.[10] According to historian Raymond Wolters "…most sharecroppers lived in abject poverty." (24) Political involvement was all, but closed to the African American masses and the government showed no interest in their welfare. "What positive gain has the operation of the 14th Amendment been to the Negro race?" asked a white scholar in 1912. "We can point to nothing." (Sitkoff 8)

The 14th Amendment would continue to have little impact and the Republican Party remained apathetic. Republican President Herbert Hoover, fervent supporter of the Lily White Policy. He did his "best to drive blacks from the Republican Party. He segregated blacks and refused to be photographed with any Negro leaders. In fact he did his best to ignore them altogether." (Van Rijn 32) Hoovers blatant anti-black actions like the nomination of John J. Parker[11] began to make African American Republicans question their loyalty to the party of Lincoln. President Hoover did little to help African Americans, and arguably the country, after the October 1929 stock market crash ushering the Great Depression. The

majority of blacks, who already lived in poverty, were hit especially hard as they were fired to give jobs to unemployed whites. According to the 1930 Census "56% of the total Negro population lived in rural areas…97% lived in the South and 80% of those who resided in the South were at the bottom of the agricultural stratum as wage hands, sharecroppers, share tenants and cash tenants." (Wolters 18) When the prices of cash crops like cotton plummeted in the early 1930's[12] African-American tenant farmers, who depended on their share of annual crop earnings to stay afloat within a cycle of incessant debt, were devastated. Landlords still demanded production of crops resulting in farmers continuing "to produce surpluses" and "consequently prices fell drastically." (Wolters 18) Only four years after the stock market crash "prices had fallen by more than 60%, while farm production was 6% below that in 1929" (Wolters 19)

A great number of African Americans migrated to Northern states in hopes of finding employment in industrialized cities. So many blacks left the South the movement was deemed the Second Great Migration see Appendix C. Since "industrial production had declined by more than one-half" (Wolters 24) Depression Era urban centers offered little to migrants. Throughout the country blacks were on the brink of starvation and were often the scapegoats for their frustrated white counterparts.[13] Hoover's Republican administration did little to alleviate the depression and the racist Hoover completely ignored the rise in racial violence. Blacks began organizing in their communities in an effort to create a support system, especially in the North. As migrants became more urbanized these organizations took an interest in politics. Prior to the 1932 election a "…small number of African-American leaders called for blacks to be more open to voting for Democrats." (Kirby 23) A few famous blacks including singer Marian Anderson and Bishop Reverdy C. Ransom endorsed The Democratic candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Publisher of the largest-selling black newspaper the *Courier,* Robert L. Vann, pleaded for blacks to "…go turn Lincoln's picture to the wall. That debt has been paid in full." (Sitkoff 65) Despite this, a majority of African-Americans saw FDR as nothing more than another apathetic politician. Many

opposed FDR basing their arguments on his time as governor of New York.[14] Furthermore, FDR was a self-proclaimed “adopted son of the South” and his running mate John Nance Garner, a Dixiecrat Texan. FDR won the election of 1932, with little more than a handful of black votes. In Chicago, for example, “the Democratic Party received only 21% of the African American’s vote.[15] African Americans, expected very little[16] from the new FDR Administration in both relief and recognition, they had grown used to being ignored by the government.

FDR had little trouble defeating Hoover in 1932 as seen in Appendix D .In his 1933 inaugural address FDR announced his administration’s "greatest primary task is to put people to work." Roosevelt promised to exercise "broad executive power to wage war against [the Depression].” The administration created dozens of federal programs collectively known as the “New Deal”, and often referred to as the "Alphabet Agencies." Alphabet Agencies were given specific areas of the economy to generate jobs and provide relief, to see a list of Alphabet Agencies see Appendix E. The New Deal “with its emphasis on federal supremacy, presented…action to revitalize African American position in the nation’s economy and polity.” (Janken 199)

It seemed that way in 1933 when FDR signed the Agricultural Adjustment Act, as can be seen in Appendix F, creating the Agricultural Adjustment Administration to relieve the desperate farming industry, including more than two million sharecroppers. The AAA provided relief by providing cash relief and raising the prices of farming commodities[17] resulting in a greater percentage of the national economy going to farmers. Among all the Alphabet Agencies the AAA was in the best position to aid southern blacks due to the large number of African American sharecroppers and tenant farmers. However, relief under the AAA “was monopolized and inequitably distributed by landlords, who frequently reduced the acreage of cotton by evicting their black tenant farmers.” (Janken 236) See Appendix G for a 1930’s political cartoon criticizing the AAA. State supervisors of the federal program rarely worked to get relief for African American citizens. Instead of creating jobs, the AAA resulted in increased unemployment for

African Americans and displacement. The AAA was not the only agency where relief efforts had harmful consequences for blacks. While it is argued that only a number of New Deal agencies helped the American population it is a fact that before 1936 none of the New Deal agencies significantly aided blacks.

Another agency that hindered instead of helped African Americans was the National Recovery Administration (NRA). Established in 1933 by FDR to stimulate business recovery through fair-practice and financial stability[18]. The NRA codes required employers to pay higher wages for less work. Although the administration instituted the NRA codes on the federal level they were neither supervised nor enforced on the federal level, but on the local level making it susceptible to Jim Crow racism. In response to mandatory higher wages Southern employers often fired African-Americans workers as seen in Appendix H, in order to give their newly higher paying jobs to whites, or simply demoted their black workers to lower paying positions. African Americans began referring to the NRA's blue eagle symbol as a blue hawk feeding off their jobs. As one historian put it, "throughout the South relief organizations were perpetuating Jim Crow segregation. (Cash 145). Thousands of reports of racism, and unjust work practices[19] reached the FDR administration, but were at first ignored due to the importance of Southern Democrats[20], a large block in the Democratic party and overwhelmingly segregationist. As author Lauren Sklaroff put it "the support of the Southern Democrats always outweighed FDR's commitment to endorsing measures and policies that would explicitly push for Civil Rights for black Americans." (Sklaroff 1)

Key Liberals in the Roosevelt administration were able to sway the president enough to reform the prejudice conditions of the New Deal agencies. The major liberals that were official office holders in the Roosevelt administration were Mary McLeod Bethune and Harold Ickes. Mary McLeod Bethune was the most powerful African American in the US government during the Roosevelt administration. Her relationship with the Roosevelt's began prior to FDR's election in 1932. In 1927 FDR's wife, Eleanor,

invited Bethune to a dinner at the Roosevelt's New York home.[21] The future first lady was very impressed by Bethune's "feminism, racial pride and magnetism." (Cash 142) They became friends and were often seen publicly together, see Appendix I. Bethune was a common visitor to the White House. As well as meeting with Mrs. Roosevelt, Bethune met with FDR to discuss the problems facing African Americans. FDR recognized Bethune's position[22] meant her support of him could lead to thousands of "potential votes from the club women were important to the FDR administration." (Cash 143) In 1936, FDR appointed Bethune as Administrative Assistant for Negro affairs of the National Youth Administration subsequently she was given the title Director of the Division of Negro affairs. Many considered Bethune as the "president's most important negro adviser" (Van Rijn 200)

The other key Liberal official in the Roosevelt administration was Interior Secretary Harold Ickes. Prior to Ickes role as Interior Secretary he was a social activist. In his younger years the progressive Ickes served as President NAACP in Chicago. Even with his civil rights past Ickes was not very responsive to complaints of discrimination and mistreatment in New Deal programs made by African Americans.[23] Due in part of Ickes' persuasion and the weakening of the Southern hold on the Democratic Party, the Roosevelt Administration "rewrote and enforced new regulations governing the running of labor camps." (Janken 177) Ickes integrated the federal offices of the War Department and personally investigated the worst cases of racial discrimination in federal offices. Ickes also supported the Joint committee on Nation Recovery's proposed plans for a unitary pay scale and black and white co-operation. Ickes was the most influential cabinet member when it came to expanding the relief cloak of New Policies to cover all Americans. Despite his influence and efforts, Ickes' condemnation of widespread inequality "would not translate into an executive policy barring institutionalized racism. (Skarloff 33) Ickes efforts and the appointment of Mary McLeod Bethune revealed a visible growing embracement of racially progressive whites and African Americans in the Democratic Roosevelt Administration; however it did not translate into actual relief. In fact Ickes and Bethune had very little influence over New Deal agencies they were

unaffiliated with including the AAA resulting in little material relief for African Americans.

Outside the administration, the Roosevelt administration recruited African American political, social and intellectual leaders to form the creation of the "Black Cabinet", a federal council on Negro affairs.[24] The creation and public recognition of the Black Cabinet pushed the message "that FDR was more willing to hear the concerns of African-Americans." (Greenberg 55) Roosevelt also appointed more African-American federal employees[25]. The most prominent was Roosevelt's appointment of the first black Federal Judge, William Hastie[26]. African American liberals were often leaders of African American society and were recruited by the Roosevelt administration. Walter White[27]was one such man. Walter White served as the head of the NAACP and was doubtful of the new president, when Roosevelt took over the presidency in 1932. White had "faith that…capitalism and its political system could be made to work for African Americans." (Janken 240) White was able to push for change as a member of the Black Cabinet, "the ready access he had to non-Southern congressional Democrats and the perceived openness of the new administration to African American concerns dampened White's suspicions and eventually won him over." (Janken 227) The Black Cabinet and Walter White while essentially ineffectual did bring great public attention to FDR's efforts to reach out to blacks.

The most influential liberal in FDR's life was not an official member of the administration, but his wife Eleanor Roosevelt, called "...on her husband and Congress to improve New Deal programs with respect to race and to address discrimination, segregation and lynching head on." (Greenberg 56) Mrs. Roosevelt had a great influence on her husband's policy on race and was the most influential liberal. On a personal level she had unmatched access to the president and he weighted her opinion heavily against others. Mrs. Roosevelt's outreach was essential to changing black popular opinion in favor of her husband[28]. Mrs. Roosevelt made public speeches calling for the integration of African Americans into main stream society. In one such speech titled *The Negro and Social Change* she said "...many grave injustices are done throughout the land to people who are citizens and who have equal rights under the

laws...but who are handicapped because of their race." (Kirby 22) Mrs. Roosevelt made sure African Americans had a place in the White House[29]. When the Crown Royals of England visited the White House, the evening included performances by African American music artist.[30] The program for the event stated "above all, the negro has made the most distinctive contribution to American music." (Skarloff 15) Many had a chance to meet her husband, an honor that most likely would not have occurred without the First Lady's intercession. Pictures of the first lady's appearances and parts of her speeches became commonplace in black newspapers. The black newspaper *Opportunity* hailed her as "unparalleled in history of America" (Sitkoff 48) Both black and mainstream press "duly reported her traveling, eating and socially mingling with blacks." (Sitkoff 49) Eleanor Roosevelt was credited for "encouraging the president to appoint William Hastie[31]" (Greenberg 54) The First Lady's championing of civil rights, both privately and publicly "emboldened other New Dealers to work for racial equality and justice". (Sitkoff 49) FDR was one such New Dealer, as FDR's personal secretary remembered FDR would often begin a line of thought concerning administration policy by stating "...my Missus told me so and so." (Sitkoff 46) It was no surprise when a Washington columnist listed her among one of "The Ten Most Powerful People in Washington." (Skarloff 26)

By 1934, it was clear the black vote was a strengthening force in Northern States rich in Electoral College votes underpinning "the efforts made by Ickes, Eleanor Roosevelt, the Black Cabinet and all those within the Roosevelt Administration who were striving for racial justice." (Sitkoff 63) For the first time since the Civil War, African Americans had some political influence and the Democrats, under FDR, set out to gain the newly valuable black vote. The Democratic National Committee and the Roosevelt went on a public relations committee focused on showing that Roosevelt not only helped a majority African Americans during his first term in office, but openly welcomed them to the party despite Southern Democrats. For the first time in 1936 campaign was the first time African Americans were publicly embraced on a national platform and African American delegates were welcomed to the Democratic

National Convention (Sitkoff 70). Roosevelt personally made sure African Americans had a visible presence at the convention.[32] Even *Time* reported "Democrats were making a serious bid for the Negro Vote." (Sitkoff 70) Local Democrats recruited pillars in African American society to promote Roosevelt, including spiritual leaders such as Adam Clayton Powell Sr. pastor of Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church, and Bishop R.R. Wright Jr. who urged his congregation "to stop voting for Lincoln and vote for Roosevelt instead." (Sitkoff 71) As the historian Harvard Sitkoff put it "from the pulpit African Americans were told 'let Jesus lead you and Roosevelt feed you.' Roosevelt became something of a second Emancipator, a savior." The Black community was besieged with pro-Roosevelt rhetoric[33]. (Sitkoff 71) The Negro Division of the Democratic National Committee distributed a million photographs of "Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt talking with a group of black professors at Howard University" alone.(Sitkoff 71) Voting for Roosevelt and other Democrats was given a more celebratory air as the DNC sponsored mass rallies of Roosevelt supporters. The largest rally in New York's Madison Square Garden was "broadcasted to more than sixty cities." (Sitkoff 71) Contrary to what the DNC and Roosevelt supporters were telling African American constituents most blacks "were ignored by New Deal programs." (Cash 145) A majority of the New Deal policies "aimed at industrial and commercial workers in a society where most African Americans were locked into agricultural poverty." (Cash 153) Even in 1936 agricultural workers still did not qualify for unemployment insurance, domestic workers did not qualify for social security and minimum wage raises still endangered African-American workers. Despite the fact that Roosevelt's relief efforts were not open to blacks, black communities were bombarded with FDR fanfare. Roosevelt did succeed in making Americans, including African Americans feel more assured in their future, but for African Americans "continued oppression meant that, economically, little changed."(Greenberg 44)

Despite the failures of the first Roosevelt Administration to actually help African Americans in 1936 according to the George Gallup, an unprecedented "76% of Northern blacks voted for Roosevelt.

(Sitkoff 72) The lack of substantial change in the conditions of African-Americans and a rise in Democratic outreach is evidence that New Deal policies were not the determining factor inciting the swing of black votes from one party to another. In fact, throughout the campaign black leaders and the black press "mainly emphasized civil rights issues. Economic matters were secondary in their endorsements for Roosevelt." (Sitkoff 72) Ironically, Roosevelt stayed far away from civil rights issues in fear of angering his Southern colleagues. The greatest steps in civil rights were not taken on the federal level by the Roosevelt Administration, but on the local level. Throughout the North, Liberal Democrats promised "African-American councilmen and ward leaders power and authority equal to that enjoyed by white peers." (Nelson 118) This enabled local black politicians to help their communities without the patronage of white counterparts. In Pennsylvania, the predominantly Democratic State Legislature passed "an equal rights bill which granted blacks access to all public hotels and restaurants in the Commonwealth." (Nelson 117) African-Americans who joined their local Democratic Party were offered job opportunities, on the state and local levels. All this is irreconcilable with the black voting block swing since black voters in 1936 municipal elections "still remained more inclined to vote Republican." (Nelson 131) The majority of African-Americans continuing to vote Republican on a local level support the explanation for this disparity that FDR's African American relations campaign worked so well that most Democratic good works aimed at African Americans were attributed to him. After four years of seeing photographs of Eleanor Roosevelt and hearing the promises that the New Deal agencies held many may have simply attributed any positive that came from the Democratic Party as a good deed from their president instead of a local politician. Within this context the shift of African Americans at such a large scale is not terribly surprising. The country voted overwhelmingly for FDR in 1936, see Appendix K. Yet, African Americans have garnered the most attention by historians for voting for FDR because as Sitkoff admitted "no one knows for sure" (72) why the black vote switched so decisively. For millions of disenfranchised black Southern migrants that migrated to the North offered little in job opportunities, but

much in civil rights[34] compared to the Southern states they left. Based on how little the New Deal actually did for blacks between 1932-36 it seems clear that black voters were attracted to the Roosevelt Democratic ticket, not because of what FDR did for African-Americans, but what he was perceived to have done for African Americans. The Roosevelt Administration's outreach to African-Americans was unprecedented, but widely based on exaggeration and omission.

The Great Depression resulted in millions of discontented and angry Americans who formed thousands of protesting groups and organizations. Records "indicate that Roosevelt devoted an enormous amount of time contacting people involved in these activities." (Lipset 2) Roosevelt was set to unifying these groups behind him in order to push his New Deal legislation which was controversial and in some ways socialistic. Roosevelt accomplished this by keeping a steady line of visitors to the White House to meet with him. According to historian Seymour Lipsett, these visitors were often told what they wanted to hear: that the president had not known of the circumstances since his staff failed to tell him, and that he sympathized with them "…but then came the caveat. Something like, unfortunately we cannot do this right away, because it would antagonize certain blocs in the Congress who support a particular program. After we get this legislation passed, then we can tum to their particular measure." (Lipsett 2) Many left with the feeling that the president was going to do something when he could.[35] Lipsett's description of countless Roosevelt meetings sounds very similar to the meetings he had with black leaders including Walter White and Mary McLeod Bethune. It is safe to say that Roosevelt told each interest group what he knew they wanted to hear, and perhaps African Americans were no different. Under FDR, the Democratic Party became a "coalition that included trade unions, minority ethnic groups, particularly blacks and Jews, in addition to white Catholics...white Southern populists, and assorted Midwest and Western groups." (Lipsett 75) African Americans simply became another part in the coalition and unfortunately credited Roosevelt with more than he actually did or was even willing to do. However, in the context of 1936 simply being told what they wanted to hear was enough for many African Americans.

Undeniably Roosevelt made his policies more inclusive and delivered a message of relief to millions of African Americans. However, compared to racial progressives around him such as Harold Ickes and his wife, Eleanor, Roosevelt, he pushed for very little for the civil rights of African Americans. FDR's New Deal failed the majority of African Americans, yet he was able to show them that he deserved their vote because he did something; he helped some African Americans, compared to the Republicans who had failed to help any and who did nothing under Hoover. Roosevelt deserved the African American votes he won in 1936 and in preceding elections. What he does not deserve is the reputation of a champion for African Americans interest because he was arguably a champion of no one's interest, but his own. FDR was a great president, but not so great and not so influential to justify the permanence of African Americans in the Democratic coalition. Just like those who pleaded in 1932, in 2011 the GOP should be pleading with African Americans that it may be time to stop voting for a ghost and time to look at what party can actually advance the African American cause instead of just telling blacks what they want to hear in great speeches with little results.

Endnotes

[1] Due to the extent of their poverty at first the Great Depression had little impact on African Americans. To read more about the plight of African Americans prior to the Great Depression see Sitkoff p26

[2] Herbert Hoover was the 31st president (D) of the United States from 1929-1933.His administration proved unable to implement successful policies to deal with the skyrocketing increase in joblessness, homelessness, and hunger in the US during the early years of the Great Depression. Too read more about Herbert Hoover see the Encyclopedia Britannica Academic Edition "Herbert Hoover" entry at http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/271392/Herbert-Hoover Herbert Hoover was one of the most anti-black Republican presidents going as far as to oppose anti-lynching bills. See Van Rijn p32 to read more about Hoover's relationship with African Americans.

[3] Reconstruction was an era of rebuilding the defeated and devastated Confederate states after the Civil War. Southern white resistance and the withdrawal of federal supervision brought the end of Reconstruction in 1877. The end of Reconstruction saw black disenfranchisement, greater racial separation and increased white intimidation and violence. For more information visit the National Museum of American History at http://americanhistory.si.edu/presidency/timeline/pres_era/3_656.html

[4] By 1876, 17 African Americans served in congress and 633 served in State Legislatures.

[5]Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president of the United States(R). He was in office from1861 to 1865.

He preserved the Union during the American Civil War between the "free" Union states and the slave-holding seceding Confederate states. Lincoln declared the emancipation of the slaves in the Confederate states on January 1, 1863 setting in motion the abolition of slavery in the US at the end of the Civil War.

[6] Andrew Johnson was 17th president of the United States (D) from 1865–69. Johnson was sympathetic to the South after the Civil War resulting in lenient Reconstruction policies. To read more about Andrew Johnson see the Encyclopedia Britannica Academic Edition's "Andrew Johnson" entry at http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/305256/Andrew-Johnson.

[7] Less than half a century after Lincoln the Republican Party adopted the "Lily White Policy", an umbrella term for efforts by "white conservatives to oust blacks from positions in the party leadership in the early 1900's."(Myrdal 478)

[8] In the South those associated with the Republican Party and Reconstruction were targets of acts of violence. For more about acts of violence in the Reconstruction South see American Experience, Reconstruction: The Second Civil War's Forty Acres and a Mule: Special Features page sponsored by PBS http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/40acres/sf_violence.html

[9] These laws became known as" Jim Crow" laws or "black codes" they effectively of denied African Americans most of their basic citizenship rights.

[10] Sharecropping, a method of farm land tenancy would eventually become a new form of slavery African Americans could not escape by legal means. To read more about the system of sharecropping

read Truddier Harris's article "Sharecropping" In *Modern American Poetry* published by Illinois University. Visit http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/brown/sharecropping.htm for the online edition.

[11] John J. Parker, Herbert Hoover's nomination for the US Supreme Court. He deemed anti-black by the NAACP and was defeated by a vote of 41-39 in the Senate.

[12] In North Carolina, one of top cotton producing states, the 1920 price of cotton was roughly 14.8 cents per lbs. with 961,000 bales made. The 1930 price of cotton fell to 9.6 cents per lb. with 803,000 bales made. For more information visit the North Carolina Business History's Cotton page at http://www.historync.org/cotton.htm .

[13] After a sharp decline in late 1920's the numbers of reported lynchings between 1930 and 1935 totaled 87. To read more about the relationship between the Great Depression and an increase in lynchings see Wolters p338.

[14] One journalist for the black newspaper, *The Negro Star,* stated FDR "has not made a single appointment of a Negro to office nor performed a single act, upon his own motion, to honor or encourage the race…"

[15] A decrease from four years earlier when Al Smith, the Democratic presidential candidate received more African American votes than any previous Democratic candidate. To learn more about Smith's presidential bid and African Americans see Weiss 30.

[16] As one journalist from the African American newspaper, *Plaindealer,* admitted "our hope and expectations are moderate, but if this comparatively modest expectation is fulfilled, the [GOP] will be forced to relinquish forever its hold on the race…" (2)

[17] To raise prices, the AAA paid farmer owners subsidies to not plant surplus-prone commodities such as tobacco, milk and cotton. To read more about the AAA see Wolters chapter 2.

[18] The NRA authorized the president to institute and enforce industry-wide codes intended to eliminate unfair trade practices, reduce unemployment, establish minimum wages and maximum hours, and guarantee the right of labor to bargain collectively. To read more see Sitkoff 97-99.

[19] In response to the NRA's minimum wage rule most employers simply refused to hire blacks. When hired blacks were given the most dangerous and arduous work and were often physically disciplined and cheated by employers. To read more about black labor during the Depression especially in New Deal agencies see Wilson chapter 3-5.

[20] While Democrats had a more progressive wing that included FDR Southern Democrats were still needed to pass important New Deal legislature. To read more about the Southern Democratic voting block and their influence on the first Roosevelt administration see Sitkoff Chapter 1 and Wolters p19.

[21] To read more about Mary McLeod Bethune and Eleanor Roosevelt's first meeting and resulting friendship see Cash 139-145.

[22] Prior to her roles on the FDR administration Bethune opened a school for young black girls in Florida, championing her idea that blacks, especially women needed education to better themselves and their people. She was also stalwart club women with high positions in many clubs and organizations and was a popular national black leader. For more about Mary McLeod Bethune's life prior to her role in the FDR administration see Cash 137-9.

[23] Due to the political volatility of race, and Southern Congressmen Ickes took half-measures to correct abuses of African American in New Deal agencies. However, as the administration became more progressive Ickes met less resistance. For more see Sitkoff 59.

[24] The Black Cabinet was essential to turning the Republican tide of African American public opinion Democratic. The Black Cabinet's members included African American leaders Mary McLeod Bethune, the only woman and Walter White. The cabinet's functions included informing the president on the problems and concerns of African Americans, a growing political block in Northern cities, advising the president on racial affairs including legislation and urging the president to make New Deal policies more inclusive. To read more about the Black Cabinet see Greenburg 55-56 and Sitkoff 58-61.

[25] African Americans were hired as clerks, interviewers, secretaries, investigators, auditors, and assistants and directors of various programs in Washington D.C. This also occurred in progressive Democrat cities like Philadelphia See Nelson 118 for more.

[26] William Hastie served as Judge of the District Court of the Virgin Islands from 1937-39. To read more about his appointment and his role in the FDR Administration see *Oral History Interview with*

Judge William H. Hastie at http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/hastie.htm.

[27] Civil Rights leader Walter White (1893-1955) while influential to the Roosevelt Administration, had little actual power which eventually led to his parting ways with the administration. For more information see Jenkins chapter 3-6

[28] On a public level her efforts to help African Americans were often covered by both black and white press. For more see Sitkoff 59.

[29] Not only did she hire blacks as domestics, but she also invited African Americans leaders and performers to the White House.

[30] The King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visited Washington D.C. And the Roosevelt White House in June 1939. The Roosevelts threw a state dinner for the royals and 300 prestigious guests. The evening highlighted performances considered "authentic representations of Americans music. The central focus was on African American acts. For more information on the night's events and act see Skarloff 15

[32] FDR chose a black minister to offer the convocation invocation and picked the first African American elected to Congress as a Democrat, Arthur Mitchell, to deliver the welcoming address. African American reporters, who were seated at the convention press box for the first time, filled newspapers of accounts of the mixed reactions of the Democrats to the strong presence of

politically active blacks. For more about the 1936 Democratic National Convention see Sitkoff 70

[33] Speakers supporting FDR's presidential bid made the campaign circuit pointing to the thousands of black youth [aided by New Deal Agencies], the many new black appointees and federal employees, and the scores of government-sponsored programs that aided blacks. Democratic billboards were placed in black communities proclaiming "Don't bite the hand that feeds you" On the radio blues singers such as Ethel Waters congratulated and thanked the president's efforts for the black community. For more see Sitkoff 71-2

[34] Many African-Americans felt, for the first time, they were being treated like American citizens." Not only were they able to vote for the first time, but they were being treated as if their vote, and their voice mattered. For more see Nelson 118

[35] For more information about Roosevelt's style of presidency see Lipsett

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AAA AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT ACT	Created in 1933, he AAA paid farmers for not planting crops in order to reduce surpluses, increase demand for major farm commodities, and raise prices. Farm income rose, but many tenants and share-croppers were pushed into the ranks of the unemployed. In 1936 the Supreme Court voided the AAA.
CCC CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS	Created in 1933, the CCC took unmarried men aged 18-25 from relief rolls and sent them into the woods and fields to plant trees, build parks, roads, and fight soil erosion on federal lands. Young men sent their $30 a month home to their families and left a legacy of outdoor recreation areas. The CCC provided jobs for 2.5 million young men during its ten years.
CWA CIVIL WORKS ADMINISTRATION	Created in 1933, the CWA employed four million people--paid an average of $15 a week--many in useful construction jobs such as repairing schools, laying sewer pipes, building roads.
FHA FEDERAL HOUSING ADMINISTRATION	The FHA was created in 1934 to stimulate the building industry by providing small loans for home construction. A related program, also created in 1934, was the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC).
NRA NATIONAL RECOVERY ADMINISTRATION	The National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 created the NRA to promote economic recovery by ending wage and price deflation and restoring competition. The NRA set business codes and quotas. The NRA temporarily restored investor confidence and consumer morale, but it failed to stimulate industrial production. In 1935 the Supreme Court declared the NIRA unconstitutional.
NYA NATIONAL YOUTH ADMINISTRATION	Created under the Emergency Relief Act of 1935, the NYA provided more than 4.5 million jobs for
PWA PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATION	Established by the NIRA in 1933, the PWA was intended both for industrial recovery and unemployment relief. Eventually over $4 billion was spent on 34,000 construction projects including public buildings, highways, bridges (e.g., San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge), and dams for water and power.
SSA SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION	The Social Security Act of 1935 established the SSA to administer a national pension fund for retired persons, an unemployment insurance system, and public assistance programs for dependent mothers, children, and the physically disabled. The pension was financed by a payroll tax to begin in 1937. It exists to this day as the nation's most important and expensive domestic program, accounting for about one-fourth of the federal budget.
WPA WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION	Established under the $4.8 billion Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935, the WPA lasted until 1943 and employed at least 8.5 million people. They built thousands of roads, schools and other public construction projects. In addition, under the WPA's Arts Program, thousands of unemployed writers, musicians, artists, actors, and photographers temporarily went on the federal payroll, producing public projects ranging from murals to national park guidebooks.

Appendix E

Some of the Roosevelt's Administration's New Deal "Alphabet Agencies"

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