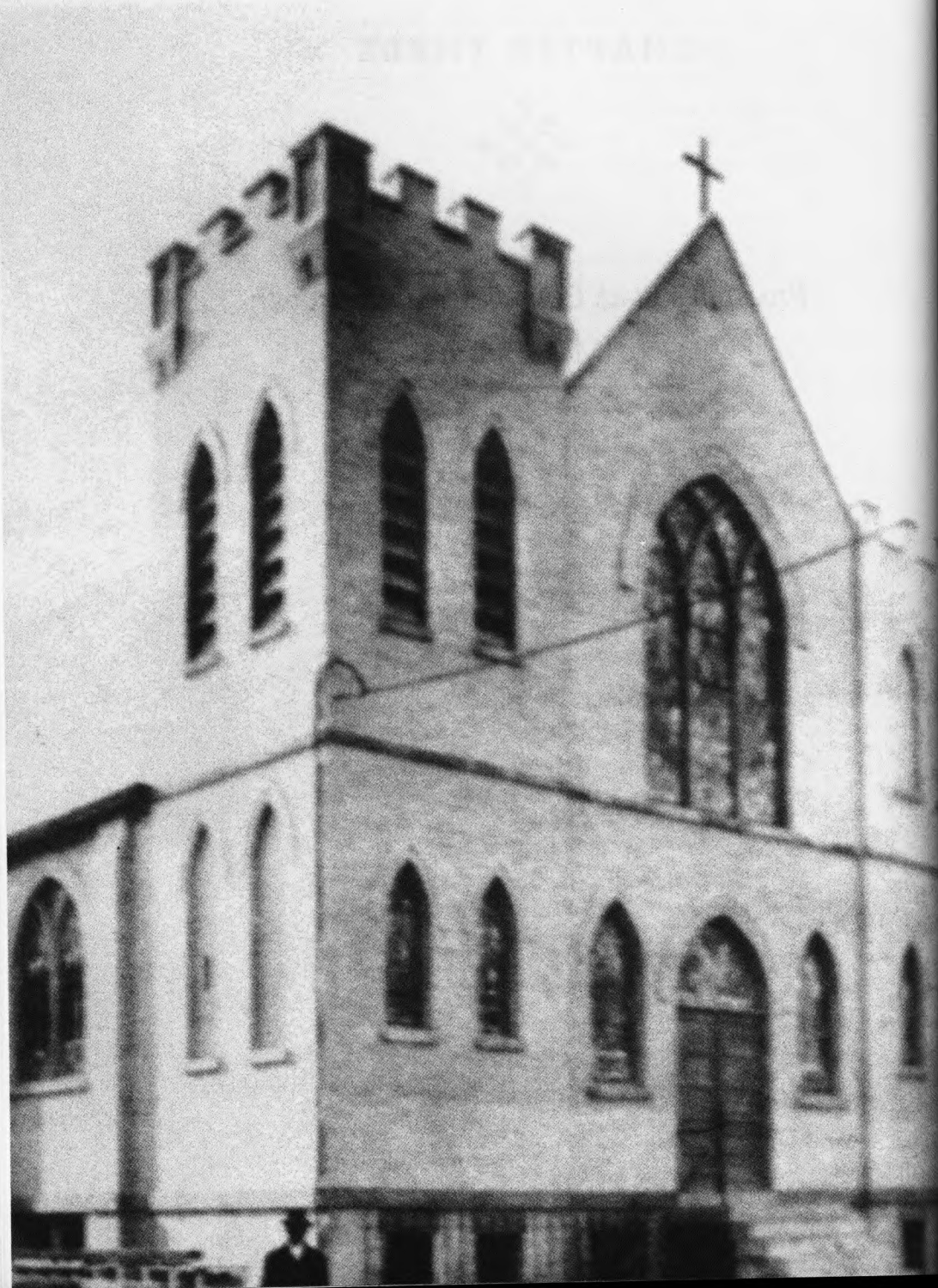


CHAPTER THREE



*Brooklyn's Black Churches and the Growth
of Mass Culture*



In September 1941 the Willing Workers Club of the Newman Memorial Methodist Church, an African American church located on Herkimer Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, held a "successful fashion show." The *Amsterdam News* reported, "The fashion show given by the Willing Workers Club of Newman Memorial Church on Friday evening proved to be one of the season's most colorful events." Women and teenage girls, who were members of Newman, walked in front of a large crowd modeling white and black gowns, and colorful dresses. After the "elaborate show which featured the latest in milady's fashions, an entertaining program was presented and refreshments were served."¹

The significance of the Newman fashion show was its shift from the high cultural activities practiced by most of Brooklyn's mainline black churches in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Numerous black churches, including Newman during that earlier period, sponsored elocution contests, recitals, classical music concerts, literary events, and lectures as a means of moral and intellectual uplift.

The fashion show at Newman suggests that a dramatic change in consciousness had taken place among church members by the fourth decade of the twentieth century. People attending this show revealed their admiration for mass consumption and popular entertainment. Newman was not unique. By the 1930s, as mass culture took on greater significance in Brooklyn's black communities, numerous black churches began sponsoring mass cultural entertainment. This is not to say that black churches stopped sponsoring high cultural activities. Recitals, organ concerts, lectures, and other elite cultural events remained important activities of the churches. However, mass cultural events became popular activities attracting large audiences.

Mass culture continues to have an enormous impact on blacks in Brooklyn. For the most part, African Americans embraced mass cultural forms with little resistance. Yet they were not just passive recipients who swallowed mass culture whole. They molded it to suit their needs as African Americans in an urban environment. They made choices in music, clothing, products, movies, and other forms of recreation. Lawrence Levine correctly notes that popular

culture is not just a matter of what entrepreneurs present. Nor is it just an attempt on the part of entrepreneurs to exploit the masses. It is an arena that people are actively involved in shaping. This trend to mass culture cannot simply be described as assimilation. It was both creativity and resistance to the dominant society. Although blacks adopted mass cultural forms that were popular in the larger white society, the trend toward mass culture was part of the larger struggle led by African Americans that challenged the racist view of blacks as lazy and incapable of succeeding. African Americans used mass culture to become economically independent and make black communities viable. In her study on Chicago during the Depression, historian Lizabeth Cohen argues that "blacks came to feel more independent and influential as a race, not more integrated into white middle class society. Mass culture—chain stores, brand goods, popular music—offered blacks the ingredients from which to construct a new, urban black culture."²

Black churches were pivotal in this reworking of mass culture. By the 1930s, Brooklyn's black churches had begun incorporating aspects of popular culture, including dance, fashion shows, drama, popular music, and recreation, thereby blending the sacred with the secular and making the churches responsive to the desires of African American communities. They brought their own meaning and style to popular culture. They decided what was acceptable entertainment, practicing some forms of entertainment and forbidding others. Black churches also used these popular cultural forms to remain economically stable and socially independent from the white society. Mass culture offered them a means of both raising money and allowing blacks to turn inward for social gratification within a Christian context. Thus, black churches struggled to be institutions that were the cohesive factor in the black community. This chapter examines the impact mass culture had on the black community and on Brooklyn's black churches and how both community forces and the churches manipulated various mass cultural forms.

Popular Entertainment

By the turn of the century, new forms of popular entertainment emerged in America. Cabarets, dance halls, amusement parks, and nickelodeons sprang up in major Northern cities in the early

part of the twentieth century. These forms of popular entertainment not only attracted the middle classes but also the growing urban working classes because they offered them new forms of amusement at affordable prices.³

In addition, modern technology brought entertainment into millions of American homes. By the 1920s the radio had introduced Americans to African American music (ragtime, blues, jazz), to prizefighting, baseball (the World Series), and other competitive sports, and to weekly series such as "Amos 'n' Andy" and "Gang Busters."⁴

The motion picture industry was perhaps the most powerful of the forms of entertainment shaping Brooklyn in the twentieth century. By the early part of the century, numerous theaters had been established in storefronts. Proprietors set up rows of benches and used a projector to show reels of film that flickered on a screen. The five-cent admission fee attracted crowds. On Pitkin Avenue in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, more than twenty "five-cent variety theaters" were operating in 1910.⁵

Many were alarmed at the movies because this new form of entertainment seemed contrary to many conventional values such as hard work, self control, sober earnestness, and industriousness. Opponents of movies argued that the motion pictures stressed senseless entertainment, uninhibited fun, and contributed to immoral behavior. Many felt that leisure time should be spent productively: reading, writing, hard work, and other activities that help develop the moral character of the individual.⁶

Along with being a threat to individual morality, movie opponents argued that movies were a threat to the community at large. Opponents feared that neighborhoods would be destroyed by the undesirables attracted by this form of entertainment. They noted that children were especially vulnerable to the new form of entertainment. According to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*:

It is said that since the establishment of these places the majority of the children who were in the habit of spending their winter evenings in the reading rooms have evinced a liking for the moving picture shows. There has been a noticeable decrease in the number of child readers in the libraries. The manual training classes cannot boast of the

good attendance that they had formerly. It is claimed that this is largely due to the moving picture shows.⁷

The community's leading citizens, among them Alexander S. Drescher, director of the Brownsville Board of Trades, went "on record as unalterably opposed" to these businesses. Dr. Abraham Silverstein, the rabbi of a large Brownsville congregation, lashed out against the moving picture theaters, asserting that they were a menace to the public morals. Several attorneys representing citizens of Brownsville threatened to seek an injunction against the theaters.⁸

Movie theaters met resistance not only in Brownsville but also in other areas of Brooklyn. In May 1910 a group known as the Children's Society obtained evidence showing that Jacob Prislant, a doorkeeper at a theater on Myrtle Avenue and Skillman Street, had allowed minors to enter. The Court of Special Sessions fined him twenty-five dollars.⁹ Two days later, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported, Deputy Chief John B. Braken of the Bureau of Licenses met with prominent Brooklynites, including attorneys, clergy, and people "owning more than a million dollars' worth of property." The meeting, at Borough Hall, protested the granting of a license to the Albany Parkway Amusement Company for a movie theater at Eastern Parkway and Albany Avenue. A lawyer for the group, Manasseh Miller, objected because

the issuance of a license for a common show on Eastern Parkway was contrary to the law regulating the parkway. Second, before the license is granted the permission of the park commissioner would first have to be obtained. Third, it was contrary to public policy. Fourth, it was contrary to the will of the individuals immediately affected by the proposed show.¹⁰

A member of the Twenty-fourth Ward's Board of Trades asserted that he had been instructed by his organization to oppose the granting of the license because "it was something out of place in the section." He stated emphatically that "the people did not want it." Some even challenged the artistic value of movies. Adolph Rosenfeldt, an attorney representing property owners in the area, disputed the Albany Parkway Amusement

Company's assertion that there were redeeming qualities in the picture show.

They will tell you, the lawyer contended, that they are

educational institutions and that they give people a chance to enjoy music and art. If there is any music in the class of songs that are sung in such houses, I don't know what their idea of music must be. And where is the art in the pictures? They will throw any kind of picture on the screen to draw the people, pictures that are often broad and suggestive.¹¹

Some people worried that the moving pictures posed a threat to the community because they attracted working-class people. One man, who testified that Eastern Parkway "was unquestionably the handsomest street in Brooklyn," protested in behalf of St. Paul's Chapel and the children. A movie theater on Eastern Parkway would "bring an undesirable class of people from other sections of the city that were not wanted." Mrs. E. Smith, a property owner, pleaded with Braken not to issue a license "for the sake of the children." As a mother, she did not want her children "to come in contact with the element that was drawn by moving picture houses." Father John I. Smith, assistant rector of St. Gregory's Church on Brooklyn Avenue, spoke for his congregation in opposing a place of amusement in their neighborhood, which had an "orderly, and quiet atmosphere." The cleric called movie theaters "hell-holes."¹² These privileged members of Brooklyn feared that their communities would be under siege by working-class people who would destroy their way of life.

Despite the protest, movies attracted a wide audience. Many enjoyed the excitement of screen action. It offered consumers of entertainment an inexpensive, fun activity during their free time. Because of the popularity of motion pictures, movie stars became more popular and more well known than national political leaders. People admired actors and actresses on the screen and adored their extravagant lifestyles. Newspaper gossip columns reported on the latest rumors about their lives, and mass circulation magazines such as *Daily Variety* were created solely to report on Hollywood.

Entrepreneurs rushed to take advantage of the growing popularity of movies. Recognizing that there were great profits in the movie-making industry, they began building movie palaces able

to seat thousands. In Bedford-Stuyvesant numerous movie houses were built, including the Brevoort theater on Brevoort Place and Bedford Avenue, with a seating capacity of 2,500, one of the largest theaters in New York. According to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, "The structure, both outside and in, is pleasing." The exterior was made of tapestry and brick. The lobby was well-lighted and had polished marble, plate mirrors, and tiled floors. The spacious auditorium had 1,800 chairs on the main floor and 700 in the balcony. The theater contained "massive pilasters of classic design, a painted domed ceiling, ornamental cornices and richly paneled walls." According to the *Eagle*, "There is a promenade foyer on the mezzanine floor. On this same floor are homelike waiting and lounging rooms, with open fireplaces, seats, reading tables and writing desks and all things needed for comfort. There are also well-appointed retiring rooms for women and children. Men will find a smoking room at their disposal."¹³

Besides the Brevoort, other Bed-Stuy theaters included the Apollo, Howard, Comet, Sumner, Tompkins, and Regent. Located in the major commercial areas of Bed-Stuy, they were geographically as well as economically accessible to working-class people. On weekday evenings double features were offered at special bargain prices. On Saturdays, children attended matinees with a double feature of comedy, adventure, or horror films, preceded by several cartoons.¹⁴

As blacks migrated to Northern urban centers, they did not go unnoticed by entrepreneurs of commercial entertainment. By the late 1930s and early 1940s, the owners and managers of the Bed-Stuy movie theaters were attempting to appeal to the taste of African Americans, with ads in the black press offering double and triple features, late shows, matinees, and movies with black casts. The Regent, Howard, Sumner, and other theaters advertised such films as the black filmmaker Oscar Micheaux's *God's Stepchildren* (1937), and Edgar G. Ulmer's *Moon Over Harlem* (1939), as well as *Tales of Manhattan* (1942), featuring Paul Robeson and Ethel Waters, and *Song of Freedom* (1937), starring Paul Robeson.¹⁵

In October 1939 the *New York Age* reported that Benjamin Resnick, manager of the Regent, had brought "bigger and better screen attractions starring Negroes" to the Bed-Stuy audience. The movie *Moon Over Harlem*, a "powerful drama ripped from the

William Augustus Jones (Bethany Baptist Church, 1962) (Bethany Baptist Church Centennial Celebration, 1983)



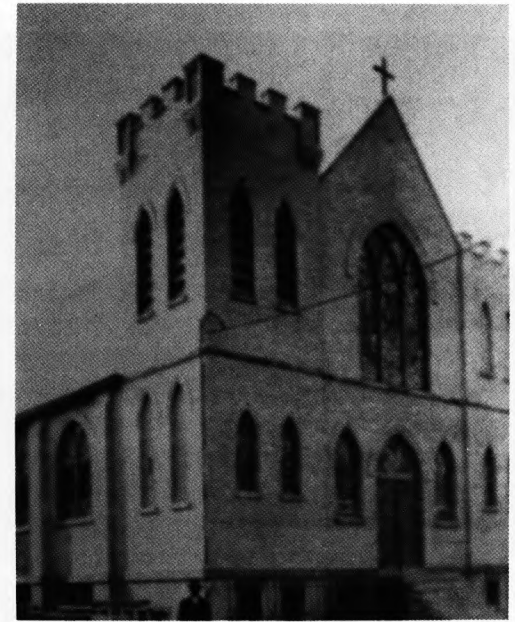
Mount Pisgah Baptist Church (founded by Salina Perry in 1931)



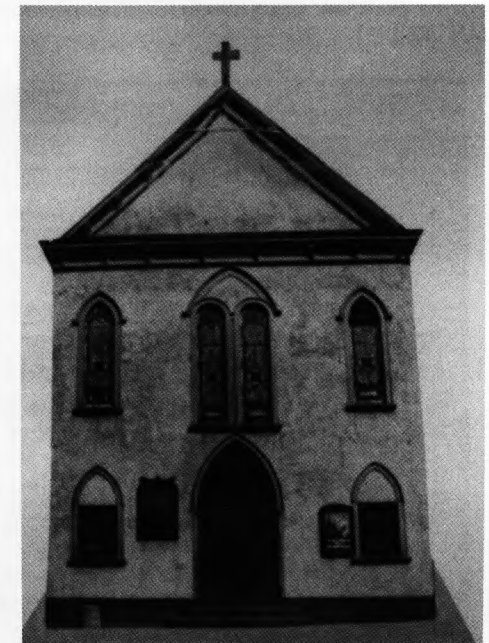
Berean Missionary Baptist Church (built in 1894) (*Weeksville Then and Now, 1983*)



St. Phillip's Protestant
Episcopal Church (1914)
(*Weeksville Then and Now,*
1983)



Bethel Tabernacle
African Methodist
Episcopal Church (sec-
ond structure prior to
1928) (*Weeksville Then
and Now, 1983*)



Mount Lebanon Baptist Church (building pur-
chased in 1911) (*Mount Lebanon Baptist Church
Jubilee Year Book*)



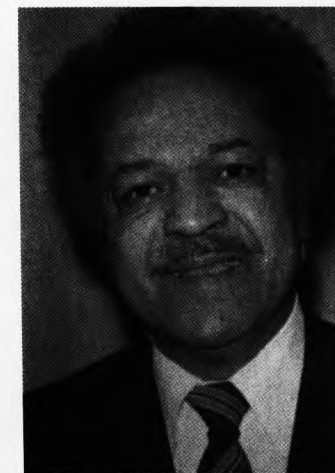
Apostle Arturo Skinner, founder and pastor of Deliverance Evangelistic Center, at a healing service in the 1970s (*Deliverance Voice* 9, no. 1, January–February 1975)



Mortgage-burning ceremony at Mount Lebanon Baptist Church in 1955 (*bottom row, far right: C. L. Franklin, pastor; top row, far left: Gardner C. Taylor, pastor of Concord Baptist Church*) (*Mount Lebanon Baptist Church Jubilee Year Book*)



Church of God in Christ on the Hill



Milton A. Galamison (1923–1988), pastor of Siloam Presbyterian Church from 1948 to 1988 (photo property of author)



First Boy Scout Troop, no. 498 (Mount Lebanon Baptist Church, circa 1954)
(*Mount Lebanon Baptist Church Jubilee Year Book*)

Sunday service at Mount Lebanon Baptist Church on Howard Avenue (*Mount Lebanon Baptist Church Jubilee Year Book*)



Sunday school teachers and officers, First African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (circa 1922) (*First AME Zion Centennial Celebration Book, 1885-1985*)



Board of Trustees, First African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, circa 1950
(*First AME Zion Centennial Celebration Book, 1885–1985*)



Rev. William Orlando Carrington greets First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, First African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, circa 1940 (*First AME Zion Centennial Celebration Book, 1885–1985*)

heart of Harlem" with an all-black cast, promised to be a fine film, "not because it is a sepia picture [movies with black casts targeted at black audiences] rather because it is a good one." The Howard Theater sensationalized the film *God's Stepchildren* with the following ad in the *Amsterdam News*: "THE UNFORGETTABLE STORY OF A BEAUTIFUL MULATTO GIRL WHO DIDN'T WANT TO BE COLORED AND THE STRANGE AND UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WAS THE RESULT OF IT—AN AMAZING PARALLEL TO 'IMITATION OF LIFE.'" In November 1942 the Brevoort began featuring the first all-black newsreel. Current information on African American celebrities, including actors, singers, and sports figures, were major features of the newsreel.

The showing of black films revealed the impact that the black community had on Bed-Stuy theaters. Blacks' eagerness to see and spend money on films with black casts demonstrated their taste and motivated more companies to produce them and more theater owners and managers to show them. The *New York Age* noted that the Regent Theater, under the management of Benjamin Resnick, rushed to the forefront to present "sepia" films. "When bigger and better screen attractions starring Negroes are brought to this town of ours, Manager Benjamin F. Resnick will bring them. He always has and first."¹⁶

Bedford-Stuyvesant, especially the area on and around Fulton Street, was known in this period not only for its movies but also for its sparkling nightlife. As the black community grew, entertainment entrepreneurs rushed to establish bars and grills, lounges, cafes, and nightclubs. By the late 1930s Bedford-Stuyvesant had begun to rival Harlem, offering the best in entertainment.

Blacks were part of the evening entertainment world, not just as consumers but also as employers and workers. Although white entrepreneurs owned many of these establishments, African Americans began opening such centers during and after World War II. Cain Young's Kingston Lounge, Alex and Sylvia Harry's Bedford Lounge, and Henry and Edna Gantt's Pleasant Lounge were among the notable establishments operated by blacks. The bar and grill industry also offered blacks employment opportunities as bartenders, barmaids, chefs, waiters, floor managers, and hosts and hostesses.¹⁷

Bartenders and barmaids were important employees in the new nightlife establishments, in some instances a major drawing

card of bars and grills. Elmo's Lounge at 243 Reid Avenue advertised that it had a "Cozy cocktail Bar & Restaurant," and the Turbo Village on the corner of Reid Avenue and Halsey Street had an "unusual Cocktail Lounge." Cafe Verona on 1330 Fulton Street featured "Mel Williams, chief bartender of the Cafe Verona along with Tony, mixing too, and barmaid Jeanette Britt . . . the center of attraction at this spot. This trio possesses a large following and, thereby, keeps the Verona in the Limelight." Dotty Moore of the Decatur Bar and Grill "has one of the finest personalities and her style of serving drinks is far above par." Described as a mecca of tavern seekers, the Arlington Inn featured barmaid Catherine Williams, who was "one of the most well-liked barmaids in Brooklyn" and "brought new life to this place."¹⁸

Unlike local pubs, which served a predominantly male clientele, the large bars and grills were portrayed as nice places to bring a date, thus becoming centers for heterosexual mixing. Women patronized them as much as men, thus challenging the notion that night entertainment establishments were only for men. Of the forty-one people attending the grand opening of the Kingston Lounge in 1944, twenty-one were women. Dozens of married couples were on hand to celebrate the Kingston Lounge's first and second anniversaries in 1945 and 1946.¹⁹ One element prompting both men and women to patronize the lounges and clubs of Bedford-Stuyvesant was their fine cuisine. Many of these places were sophisticated entertainment centers serving full course dinners.

In order to accommodate people for dinner, lounges, cafes, and bars and grills built spacious dining rooms. Frank's Caravan on Hancock Street and Throop Avenue advertised "Excellent Food in 'The Arabian Room,' the Finest Dining Room in the Area." The owners of Wellworth Cafe prided themselves on a spacious dining room.²⁰

Moreover, food represented a form of syncretism. As African Americans came into contact with various ethnic and racial groups in the urban centers, they gained a taste for new cuisines, which they integrated and adopted along with their traditional African American favorites. The variety of foods adopted can be found in the night entertainment establishments in the black community. Many bars and grills, lounges, and taverns served the finest in Chinese cuisine. Smitty's Corner offered both Chinese and American dishes. Both the Wellworth Cafe and Travelers Inn

hired "famous" Chinese chefs. The Arlington Inn on Fulton Street offered an open seafood bar including the "freshest Crabs, Lobsters, Fish obtainable" and specialized in "Chinese-American Foods prepared by our Two Chinese Chefs." Fong Chong "heads the Kitchen" at the Baby Grand and specializes in Chinese-American dishes. The Traffic Lounge at Bedford and Lafayette Avenues served buffet dinners and featured Italian cuisine.²¹

Yet Bed-Stuy nightclubs were more than places of acculturation. They became places offering traditional African American cuisine, thus appealing to a more traditional African American taste. Many of these places continued offering "southern cooking." The Ten-Twelve Bar and Grill at 1012 Myrtle Avenue in downtown Brooklyn boasted that its "Southern cooking is supreme." "Fried Chicken and Chops" were the specialty of the Kingston Lounge, established in 1944. Jack Man's Corporation Bar and Grill advertised its chef Charles Higgins as the "barbecue King," while the Flying Horse Bar and Grill located on Gates Avenue specialized in steaks, chops, and seafood.²²

Bars and grills also offered the best in entertainment that appealed to an African American audience. Not surprisingly, jazz and blues were the music most frequently heard at the clubs. Famous jazz celebrities appeared at Brooklyn's nightspots. Jazz greats like King Curtis, Dinah Washington, and Carmen McRae appeared at nightclubs in Bedford-Stuyvesant. However, more often Bed-Stuy nightclubs offered less well-known talent an opportunity to perform. Many musicians, comedians, and other entertainers got their start at these establishments. At Cafe Verona, Tuesdays were "Audition Nights" offering amateurs the opportunity to win an appearance in the cafe's floor show. The Baby Grand at Fulton Street featured Melvin Smith, "King of the Blues," Janie Mickins, "Song Stylist," and Betty Brisbane, "Queen of the Exotic Dancers." The Eddie Coombs Quartet played at the Baby Grand. Cafe Verona at 1330 Fulton Street offered comedians, jazz bands, trios, and pianists a place to perform. Snooky Marsh, well-known in Brooklyn circles, teamed up with Manhattan Paul, the "dynamic emcee" at the Cafe Verona "leaving the audience in the aisles."²³

In his weekly column in the *Amsterdam News*, "Brooklyn Tavern Jottings," Ike McFowler reported on activities at Brooklyn's bars and grills in the 1940s:

Shows at the Cafe Verona have become the talk of the town. Each week there is a fine performance headlining some of the top-notch entertainers of the day. Highlights of the current bits of entertainment the Verona has to offer you is the piano playing of Robert Harvell. This young man has a playing style similar to that of The Nat King Cole Trio. Keep your eye on this young artist, for he is destined to be one of our stars in the near future. Ray Simmons and his trio have gained a bevy of friends and well-wishers via their fine style. They will satisfy your own dancing desires.²⁴

These venues offered many blacks an opportunity to perform that was otherwise denied them in the larger society. Among the many entertainers were Rector Baily, featured on the Hammond organ at the Kingston Lounge, Johnny Guitar Sanders, appearing weekends at Quincy, and the Eddie Coombs Quartet, performing nightly at Manhattan Paul's.²⁵

Nightlife in Bedford-Stuyvesant reflected the African American community's assimilation into an urban culture and consumer society. But for them it meant more than just accepting the values of the larger society. These places became centers of an African American culture that focused on cuisine, dance, and music. While adapting to elements of the dominant culture, it was also an urban black culture that stressed both economic and social independence from the white community. Movie theaters that showed "sepia films" and bars and grills became a source of pride, demonstrating that blacks were capable human beings able to participate on any level. It was a turn inward for services and entertainment. Nightclubs also provided opportunities for blacks to socialize and enjoy each other's company. This adaptation increasingly transformed and enriched the dominant culture as well, with that culture coming more and more to include elements of the black urban culture.

African Americans and the Impact of Mass Consumption

As in other black urban communities, blacks in Brooklyn owned few businesses. By late 1929, although more than 68,900 blacks lived in Brooklyn, there were only ninety-four black-owned retail stores, including thirty-one candy stores, twenty meat markets,

sixteen restaurants (only seven with table service), and thirteen car garage and repair shops. Although the total number of black entrepreneurs increased by 1940, only 4.7 percent of Brooklyn's 107,263 blacks were classified by the census as employers or self-employed. The dearth of black-owned businesses in Bedford-Stuyvesant meant that blacks were relegated to purchase goods and services from chain stores and local merchant stores owned by whites that operated in the community.²⁶

Companies advertised in the black press, indicating they had a market in the black community. Clothing stores, car dealerships, food markets, wine and liquor stores, and numerous other businesses attempted to appeal to blacks as well as whites. However, certain products advertised in the black press appealed only to a black clientele. Nowhere is this more clear than in beauty products. Beginning in the early part of the twentieth century and accelerating in the 1930s, beauty products—including hot combs or "straightening combs," soaps, pomade for men, hair products for women pledging to make hair longer, brighter and wavier, and skin lightening or "bleaching" creams—were advertised in the black weeklies and sold in local pharmacies and other businesses in black neighborhoods. For example, in 1905 Crane's "Wonderful Face Bleach and Hair Tonic," advertised in the *New York Age*, promised to make the skin of a "black or brown person four or five shades lighter and a mulatto person perfectly white . . . and make anyone's hair grow long and straight." Charles Ford's Hair Pomade promised to straighten kinky or curly hair. "Dr. Fred Palmer's Skin Whitener" advertised in the 1930s and 1940s to give the user "lovelier, lighter skin in just a few days . . . lightens too dark, tanned weather-beaten skin to new loveliness."

Thanks to Madam C. J. Walker, who established the first successful black-owned business making and selling hair and skin preparation products for African Americans, some blacks established businesses producing and selling these products. For example, Anthony George, well known in Bedford-Stuyvesant in the 1940s for selling religious articles such as candles, crosses, Bibles, and oils, also sold "Anthony's Pressing Oil, Anthony's Lipstick, Anthony's Love Me Perfume, Anthony's Menthol Bleach, Anthony's Cream Scalp, Anthony's Cold Cream," and loads of other beauty products.²⁷

It has been argued that African Americans' indulgence in these products suggests a "cultural colonialism." Advocates of this view contend that because black physical features had been portrayed as ugly by the larger white society, many blacks were ashamed of their African features and adopted the beauty standards of white America. They believe that the use of skin lighteners and hair-straightening products was an attempt to hide their African features and look white. This view gained prominence during the black aesthetic movement ("Black Is Beautiful") of the 1960s. Unlike an earlier view that criticized the producers of these products for manipulating the poor and ignorant, critics in the 1960s aimed their attack at the users of these beauty commodities.²⁸

Without a doubt this view has merit. To a large degree, blacks who bought these products were attempting to alter their natural features. However, the cultural colonialism view ignores the fact that African Americans were also actively involved in applying their own standards of beauty. African Americans knew they could not be white nor, for the most part, did they desire to be anything other than black. The use of lightening creams and products that would help make hair wavy is no more of an attempt on the part of blacks to become white than the use of sun-tan lotion by whites is an attempt to become black. The use of lightening creams and hair products indicates that black consumers had particular beauty standards in their community. Black men and women did not just desire lighter skin but wanted even skin tone and unblemished skin, or hair that was long and wavy with an African American texture; hair styles for black women included curling, braiding, and weaving that was familiar to the black community. Black women used ribbons and flowers on the top or sides of their heads with curls extending on the foreheads adhered to the skin and other rare hair designs. They took the standards of beauty used by the larger white society and manipulated them to suit their own taste.

This attempt at "beautifying" also demonstrates that African Americans challenged the popular view that they were unattractive. They clearly demonstrated black men and women were exquisite. The desire for beauty products also strongly suggests the influence blacks had on the beauty industry. It was an attempt on the industry's part to satisfy the taste of African Americans by

providing such products. Black people in Brooklyn were not only shaping mass culture as consumers operating in the free market system and making their demands for certain products known; they were also involved in attempting to win respect and economic independence by waging campaigns for better treatment and jobs in businesses of mass consumption. By the early 1930s African Americans had formed numerous organizations that launched demonstrations against local merchant clothing stores, chain grocery stores, movie theaters, and other mass consumption institutions, demanding employment and better services. One such organization was Post no. 2, founded in 1932 as part of the National War Veterans Association, which was established by white war veterans complaining that the traditional veterans' organizations did not address the political, social, and economic needs of veterans.²⁹

Thanks to an aggressive membership drive led by its president, Elvia I. Sullinger, within a few years Post no. 2 claimed it grew from a small number to 8,500 members. Most members of the National War Veterans Association were not veterans or men. Of the 8,500 members reported, 6,000 were women. One reason accounting for the attraction of a large number of nonveterans was the group's insistence on fighting all forms of discrimination. The group held numerous rallies and led boycotts against stores in Bedford-Stuyvesant that were disrespectful to African Americans or refused to hire them. In 1933 the veterans' association collected a large number of signatures from area residents who accused the manager of the Bohack supermarket on Buffalo Avenue in Brooklyn of sexual harassment. The association launched a boycott when Bohack's general manager's office refused to fire the manager. The veterans responded by holding demonstrations in front of the store and attempting to record the names of blacks defying the boycott. The group threatened to publish the names of the boycott offenders in local black weeklies. In July, E. I. Sullinger, who also held the post of "commander" of the National Colored War Veterans League, expanded the protest by leading a demonstration against a Bohack supermarket on Sumner and Jefferson Avenues. Sullinger and others wore signs reading "This Bohack Store does not Employ Colored Clerks."³⁰

Other community organizations demanded that businesses grant African Americans fair treatment. In 1937 the African

Nationalist Movement, a group associated with Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association, announced that by picketing it had forced the Square Deal Drugstore on Fulton Street to hire two blacks. Soon after its victory, the African Nationalist Movement launched a boycott against the Woolworth store at Nostrand Avenue and Fulton Street.³¹

In 1940 the Amalgamated Labor Association (the Brooklyn branch of the Harlem Labor Union), along with the Brooklyn Branch of the Greater New York Coordinating Committee and the local Affairs Committee of the Kings County Young Republican League, accused the Fulton Civic Association, a group of two hundred Fulton Street merchants, of stalling on their promise to hire blacks. The three organizations decided to picket Fulton Street stores that refused to hire blacks. According to the groups:

Fulton street merchants in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area are notoriously unfair to Negroes who patronize their business heavily. We are endeavoring to make some impression upon the Negro people of this area to induce them to realize that as long as they patronize these ungrateful merchants, so long will the merchants remain ungrateful.³²

Movie theaters were also seen as businesses that were obligated to provide not only quality entertainment but fair treatment to black patrons. Major movie houses of Bed-Stuy experienced demonstrations by blacks demanding the right to work where they spent their dollars. In September 1937, for example, the African Nationalist Movement picketed the Sumner Theatre on Sumner Avenue and Quincy Street in Bed-Stuy, demanding that the owners hire blacks. Demonstrators carried signs that read, "This theater is unfair to Negroes. It does not give employment to the race that patronizes it." The theater manager declared that 75 percent of the patrons were white. "I fail to see the justice in forcing others to give up their jobs on the grounds of representation when the representation isn't sufficient." Yet even by the manager's own estimate, business had fallen off considerably due to the picketing.³³

The Brooklyn African American community's encounter with mass culture, represented in these conditions, resulted in a politicized consumer consciousness stressing the belief that, as consumers spending money and making entrepreneurs wealthy,

blacks were entitled to fair treatment. African Americans defined fair treatment as better services, respect as customers, and the right to work where they spent their money. Businesses were seen by many African Americans as agencies that should be responsible for the social and economic well-being of the community. Any businesses failing to provide jobs or respect to consumers should be held accountable to the community. Borrowing from the Chicago and Harlem "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaigns of the late 1920s and early 1930s, that urged blacks not to buy in stores that did not hire them, Brooklyn blacks launched similar crusades.

In her book on the New Deal era in Chicago, Lizabeth Cohen notes that a "spirited movement to achieve black economic independence through employment rather than entrepreneurship occurred on many fronts."³⁴ This was also the case in Brooklyn. People constantly searched for ways to improve the quality of their lives. The lack of financial institutions in Bedford-Stuyvesant and discrimination against blacks practiced by banks compounded the exclusion of many from establishing businesses. Yet they attempted to search for ways to gain economic integrity. African Americans in Brooklyn developed a consumer ideology that demanded hiring from businesses of mass consumption and entertainment that operated in the black community. Although the various struggles that erupted met with limited early success, they noted a determination for economic independence among African Americans and provided experience for the struggles and successes yet to come.

Brooklyn's Black Churches and Amusement

Some black mainline church leaders abhorred the growth of mass culture. They saw it as corrupting the moral values of their communities.³⁵ For example, in 1930 the Reverend Henry Hugh Proctor, pastor of Nazarene Congregational Church, continued that tradition by lashing out against immoral nightlife in Brooklyn's black sections. Proctor claimed that Harlem's better class of blacks were leaving for Brooklyn to escape the unhealthy effects of Harlem's nightlife, and he warned that Brooklyn might suffer the same moral deterioration if it continued to indulge in night entertainment.³⁶

Not only were taverns, bars, and nightclubs under attack, Christian institutions promoting popular activities also came under criticism. For example, at a meeting of the Interdenominational Ministers Conference of New York, Rev. F. A. Cullen of Salem Methodist Episcopal attacked the YMCA for "fostering unchristian ideals." Rev. Manual Bolden of the First Emmanuel Church in New York reiterated the dangers of the YMCA, warning that this modern age of "materialism and lawlessness" must be challenged.

The modern idea of the gospel as a social cult for a few pretended intellects or demoralizing social uplift agency, such as is seen in some Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations and some religious denominations who stress all kinds of attractions, paraphernalia, festivals, demoralizing activities and degenerating dances, is misleading, erroneous and unrighteous. There may be certain values, but I am sure that they do not represent the Ideal Man, Jesus Christ our Lord; nor his Apostles. The Minister of our Lord should not compromise with evil factors in the nation, in his city, in his community, in his established church, in his home and in his private life. The spirit of lawlessness self-expression and apostasy is rampant throughout the world, and its effects are felt in our immediate local environment. The compromising attitude of professed followers of our Lord strengthens and encourages such conditions as bootlegging, bold prostitution, gambling, cabarets, dens of vice, pool rooms, dance halls and places of degeneracy.³⁷

Despite the warnings from a few such ministers, by the 1930s the members of Brooklyn's black mainline churches had begun to incorporate aspects of popular entertainment into their regular activities. Responding to growing demand in the black community, parishioners of black churches offered gala recitals, musicales, beauty contests, popularity contests, banquets, sporting events, and other forms of popular entertainment. Usually described as "pure fun," these events blurred the boundaries between sacred and secular and demonstrated a growing tolerance for popular amusement. Heterosexual social activities and recreation were not only sanctioned but encouraged by churches.

By the 1930s the black mainline churches of Brooklyn had adopted many mass cultural forms. Like the larger black community, black churches used mass culture to maintain their economic and social integrity and to foster community spirit. The black churches acted as cohesive entities in the African American community. By using mass culture, the people in these mainline religious institutions continued to challenge persistent popular images of blacks as nonthinking and socially dysfunctional beings, incapable of succeeding in American society. Instead they adopted a form of nationalism that stressed pride in the capabilities of African Americans in economic as well as social affairs. Like the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, black churches appropriated the dominant culture and molded it to serve blacks.

For the most part, members of the black Holiness-Pentecostal churches rejected these mass cultural forms. They held firm to the notion that believers were "in the world but not of the world." Their opposition to individualist values of the market meant that mass consumption, movies, and other commercial forms of enjoyment were contrary to their beliefs. However, even some Holiness-Pentecostal churches felt obligated to incorporate mass cultural forms as part of the church's activities, although the majority continued to resist. Baer and Singer suggest that the movement toward accommodating the cultural hegemony of the larger society may be due to a process of "embourgeoisement" (a growing number of members becoming affluent and influencing the church) of members of some black Holiness-Pentecostal churches.³⁸

Church Auxiliaries and Clubs

The expansion of church auxiliaries and clubs are examples of how black church members used forms of mass culture to gain both economic and social independence and build a cohesive black community. Auxiliaries had always been an important feature of church structure, serving the members, assisting pastors, and improving the quality of worship. A good example was the missionary society, which cared for the sick, disabled, young, old, and poor of the church. Other clubs included floral societies, usher boards, and choirs, which also raised funds.³⁹

By the late 1920s and early 1930s and continuing through the 1950s, the number of organizations in Brooklyn's large mainline churches increased dramatically. For example, between 1925 and 1940 Brown Memorial Baptist added thirteen auxiliaries; between 1928 and 1948 Mount Sinai Baptist Church increased from a handful of clubs to twenty-five auxiliaries. Bridge Street had fifteen auxiliaries in 1917; by the late 1950s it had established twenty-seven more. By the mid-1950s Concord Baptist Church had forty-five auxiliaries functioning regularly, making it one of the largest in the nation.⁴⁰

The large influx of blacks into Brooklyn's churches in the 1920s and the acceleration during the post-World War II period, along with a changing consciousness about entertainment, help explain the increase in clubs and auxiliaries. Between 1920 and 1931 the number of mainline churches increased from twenty to forty-nine, with the largest growth among the Baptists (from nine to thirty-six). Even more compelling is the increase in Brooklyn's black church congregations. Between 1920 and 1931, Bridge Street grew from 1,300 to 2,800 members; Fleet Street AME Zion from 986 to 2,400; Berean Baptist from 545 to 1,500; Bethany from 700 to 1,600; Concord from 900 to 2,800; and Holy Trinity from 500 to 3,100.⁴¹ Although Berean experienced a decline from 1931 to 1952 (from 1,500 to 1,300), both Bethany and Concord increased to 3,666 and 8,674, respectively. Cornerstone Baptist went from a storefront operation in the 1920s to a church of 1,500 in 1943. First Baptist Church in Brownsville, Brooklyn, increased from fifty members in 1940 to four hundred by 1952. Mount Lebanon Baptist soared from 350 members in 1940 to 4,500 in 1952. Zion Baptist (established in 1917; not to be confused with Mount Zion Baptist, organized in 1923) increased from 856 to 2,526 between 1940 and 1952.⁴²

The Baptists and African Methodists were not the only mainline black churches to experience rapid growth. The white-affiliated denominations also increased in membership, although far less dramatically. Siloam Presbyterian grew between 1920 and 1931 from 215 to 580 members; St. Augustine from 390 to 651; St. Phillip's from 220 to 460; and Nazarene Congregational from 135 to 800. Although Nazarene's population had decreased to 380 by 1952, St. Phillip's increased to 1,250 and Siloam to 1,020.⁴³

Again, the growth of these major denominations was due, in large part, to the influx of migrants into Brooklyn. Many older established black churches left the downtown area and followed the stream of blacks moving to Bedford-Stuyvesant in the 1930s and 1940s. The first of these older churches to relocate was Bridge Street AME Church, which purchased the White Grace Presbyterian Church building in 1938. The Concord Baptist Church soon followed, purchasing the Marcy Baptist Church in the early 1940s. First AME Zion, Siloam, and St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal all moved to Bed-Stuy in the 1940s.⁴⁴ Owing to relocation and the establishment of new churches, by the late 1950s there were more than eighty black congregations, including thirty-nine Baptist, and eleven African Methodist in Bed-Stuy.⁴⁵

Ministers, church officials, and parishioners established clubs, among other reasons, because of their revenue. Both members and ministers led in the creation of these clubs, although it is often easiest to trace the founding of those started by ministers. Rev. Sandy Ray, pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church from 1944 until 1979, established numerous clubs, including the Friendship Club in 1948, the Bench Members in 1956, the South Carolina Club in 1938, and the Superior and Victory clubs in 1947. All the state clubs of Brown Memorial were organized by its pastor, George Thomas, in 1940, including the South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Georgia clubs.⁴⁶

One major function of clubs was to raise funds by sponsoring social events, such as anniversaries, dinners, and pledges. Nazarene clubs helped pay off the church's mortgage. The Concord organizations raised money for the building campaign. In some cases, ministers relied on clubs to supplement the budgetary needs of the church. As was noted in the weekly bulletin of Bridge Street AWME: To "All presidents, groups, all monies being held in your club treasury must be turned in by Sunday October 28 *Budget Sunday*. . . . We must meet our Budget." Clubs became economically indispensable to their churches.⁴⁷

The migration of blacks to Brooklyn and into the churches probably made many within the churches attentive to the wants and desires of the newcomers. Unlike the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in which black churches stressed moral and intellectual uplift, the 1930s forced churches to examine additional concerns. As mass culture took on greater significance,

churches decided to adopt it, in part, to attract and hold on to members. Many churches made a decision that they could reconcile mass cultural activities with Christian principles. They accepted certain types of activities that were not socially offensive, or seemed less in opposition to the scriptures. This, however, varied from church to church. No church condoned drinking alcoholic beverages, but some allowed dancing and beauty contests. Church leaders were also attempting to challenge the growing preoccupation with secular mass culture by offering their own brand of popular entertainment, remaining moral leaders of the community as they attempted to adopt mass forms within the boundaries of Christian principles.

The social activities planned by auxiliaries demonstrate the growing role of mass culture. Their names alone suggest a growing interest in entertainment. Siloam's Dance Committee, Stitch and Chatter, Currents Events, Talent Guild, and Fortnight clubs; Cornerstone Baptist's Bench Members, Recreation group, social action committee, and Superior clubs; and the First AME Zion Intercultural Club were all established between 1929 and the middle 1940s. Bridge Street AWME Church organized the Silver Spray Social, Mary McLeod Bethune Dramatic, the Rainbow, and the Eureka clubs, while the Nazarene Congregational Church established the Progressive Art and the Epicurean clubs. Mount Sinai Baptist Church organized the Paul Earl Jones Friendly Circle; the Brown Memorial Baptist Church's Men's Energetic Club and St. Martin's Art Guild were others. Many of Nazarene Congregational Church's affairs were organized by the Epicurean Club.

Siloam's events were planned by a variety of auxiliaries, including the Dance Committee, Current Events Club, Stitch and Chatter Club, the Talent Guild, and the Fortnight club. Even some Pentecostal churches, which stressed fundamentalism, associating entertainment with worldly evil and forbidding recreational and leisure activities, had established social clubs by the 1930s and 1940s. The Church of God in Christ (COGIC) on the Hill had sewing, Mothers, and Young People's Willing Workers clubs. The Church of God on Lafayette Avenue had a Men's Progressive League and a Youth Fellowship. The Neighborhood Mission of the COGIC on Fulton Street had a youth organization, the Victory Temple of COGIC had a Women's Circle, and the First COGIC organized a Sunshine Band.⁴⁸

By the 1930s popular music had taken on greater significance in Brooklyn's black churches, supplementing the traditional programs of spirituals, recitals, and classical concerts. Musical programs in many cases provided both entertainment and fund-raising for the church. The Intercultural Club of the First AME Zion Church sponsored a talent show called "The Stars of Tomorrow," featuring promising young vocalists, instrumentalists, and dramatic performers. Noted stars appearing included the "father of the St. Louis Blues," W. C. Handy, and popular radio host Joe Bostic. The Talent Guild of Siloam Presbyterian presented a show entitled "The Stairway to Stardom," presenting romantic songs such as "Don't Even Say Goodby," "I Wonder Can It Be Love," and "Say You Love Me Too." Mount Sinai Baptist set aside one Sunday a month for "cultural activities, particularly musicales." At the annual Spring Concert of Concord Baptist Church a 300-voice choir, the combined Gospel and Youth choirs of the church, mixed classical with popular music. Besides performing Beethoven's "Mount of Olives," "Oh Rejoice, in the Lord," and Leisring's "Let the Nations Rejoice," the chorus sang folk tunes including "Erie Canal" and the "Savage Warrior."⁴⁹

The Reverend James Adams of Concord Baptist organized a youth band, with boys twelve to eighteen, which played at church functions and "for recreational purposes outside and apart from the church." The Women's Auxiliary of St. Phillip's sponsored a musical and "tea" for its congregation. The Auxiliary of the Men's Club of St. Augustine Episcopal presented a "Night in Brooklyn" described as "real fun," featuring a "master magician" as well as popular music. In some religious circles, dancing became a legitimate form of entertainment. In 1942 St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal Church sponsored a "gala fall dance" at Webster Hall in Manhattan, arranged by the church's dance committee, with music by Don Wilson and "his Blue Ribbon orchestra." The Dance Committee of Siloam Presbyterian gave a Coronation Ball presenting a Calypso singer, the "Great MacBeth and his Orchestra," as well as a contest crowning the Queen of the Ball.⁵⁰

Gospel Music

The emergence of gospel music is one of the most significant events in black religious culture in the twentieth century. The

content and performance style of gospel, which had its origins in the Holiness-Pentecostal churches, altered the nature of worship, recapturing a traditional African American Christianity that emphasized the immediate presence of God and guaranteed deliverance by faith. Gospel gave the congregation in mainline churches a greater participatory role. Moreover, no other cultural form revealed the blurring of the boundaries between the sacred and the secular better than gospel music. Gospel demonstrated how blacks had shaped mass culture for their own taste and needs. Gospel music events in and outside the churches became not just religious ceremonies but entertainment and fund-raising events.⁵¹

Like African American Christianity during the antebellum period, gospel music required the participation of the congregants as well as the leader. Thus, the call-and-response format in gospel music altered worship in many black churches. Trained professionals and church officials conducted services, but ordinary parishioners were also given a voice and helped set the emotional atmosphere through their responses. The members would participate in the performance by clapping, shouting, saying amen, and joining in the singing. The audience response, usually elicited by gospel singers, made worship more democratic by allowing all members the opportunity to actively take part in the service.⁵²

Although the message of gospel music rejected the secular, the performance style promoted acculturation to a secular consciousness. To be sure, by the 1930s gospel itself had become an element of popular entertainment. Gospel performers, including Mahalia Jackson and Thomas A. Dorsey, made records and gained wide popularity. Exciting, emotional, usually accompanied by shouting, hand-clapping, and dancing in the aisles, gospel music was sometimes labeled by some as jazz and blues with a religious message because it borrowed instruments, rhythms, and performance styles from popular African American music. Writers Paul Oliver, Max Harrison, and William Bolcom point out that by the 1930s:

It is likely that the contrasts of falsetto and bass on the recordings of the Ink Spots and the vocal imitations of instruments and strong rhythmic emphasis of the Mills

Brothers were influences on gospel groups. The Alphabetical Four used a guitar for additional rhythmic support, and jazz technique was clearly evident in the comb-and-paper muted 'trumpet' accompaniment of their first recording. Dorsey's "Precious Lord Hold My Hand," and many others. Most recording quartets of the 1930s appear to have been Baptist, but the Golden Eagle Gospel Singers led by Thelma Byrd was probably Sanctified. Their "Tome the Bell" is a driving performance, with congregational singing behind the lead, and piano, guitar, harmonica and tambourine accompaniment. In "He's My Rock" the blues harmonica player Hammie Nixon not only played the accompaniment but took a blues-style solo over a humming chorus.⁵³

The Growth of Gospel Music in Brooklyn

Many migrants joined the numerous Holiness-Pentecostal churches with their emphasis on ecstatic participatory style of worship, but others joined the Baptist and Methodists, bringing this style of music with them.⁵⁴ In Brooklyn, Siloam Presbyterian, Nazarene Congregational, and the two Protestant Episcopal churches did not establish gospel choruses; they adhered to the liturgical models of their white counterparts, adopting refined European music. Although it was easier to establish gospel choirs in Baptist and Methodist churches because of their individual autonomy (as opposed to the hierarchical control in Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Catholic denominations), before the Depression few had such musical groups. Class consciousness played a major role in the elite churches' decision not to create gospel choruses before the 1930s. Many in these churches were consciously middle class and saw this music, which originated in the religious institutions of the working class, as a threat to their status and image. Myra M. Gregory, a member of Berean Baptist Church since 1912, recalled that during the pastorships of Rev. Matthews and Rev. Eldridge, from the 1920s through the middle 1940s, such "primitive" music was not heard in the church. Instead of gospel groups, these churches had large cathedral choirs.⁵⁵

However, as Brooklyn entered the Depression, gospel choruses were established despite strong opposition from both leaders

and congregants. Some of the first mainline churches to establish gospel groups were Cornerstone Baptist (1932), Bridge Street AWME (1935), and Bethany Baptist (1937). By the mid-1940s some twenty-four Brooklyn mainline churches, mostly Baptist and African Methodist, had gospel choruses.⁵⁶

Gospel choruses may have been established in the churches because of their message of uplift. During the Depression years, gospel songs offered a message of hope to millions afflicted by economic hardship. As Mahalia Jackson noted: "Blues are the songs of despair, but gospel songs are songs of hope. When you sing them you are delivered of your burden. You have a feeling that here is a cure for what's wrong. It always gives me joy to sing gospel songs. I get to sing and feel better right away."⁵⁷

In Brooklyn as elsewhere, gospel became not only religious but also popular entertainment, thus representing the blurring of sacred and secular. Gospel songs could be heard in record stores in Bedford-Stuyvesant as often as the most popular rhythm and blues hits. Moreover, gospel concerts were inexpensive entertainment. A gospel concert held at Convention Hall in Brooklyn featured the Coleman Brothers, the Sensational Harmonaires, the Jubilee Stars, and Mrs. Ernestine Washington, the renowned gospel singer and the wife of the pastor of Brooklyn's Washington Temple COGIC, F. D. Washington. Admission was \$1.50 at the door or seventy-five cents in advance. In November 1943 the Brooklyn Palace on Rockaway Avenue and Fulton Street featured the famed gospel group, the Clouds of Joy, at an admission price of eighty-five cents.⁵⁸ Gospel music had crossed the line into the realm of popular entertainment at an affordable price for working-class people. This musical form was now part of the entertainment business, in competition for the leisure dollar of consumers.

Brooklyn's black churches also became arenas for inexpensive entertainment. By using gospel music they were able to entertain people in a Christian context and raise money. Both Concord and Cornerstone Baptist gave annual gospel concerts as fund-raisers. To prepare for its concerts, the Brown Memorial Baptist Church Gospel Choir created the offices of traveling secretary, traveling treasurer, and program and refreshment chairmen (although the posts were typically held by women). In 1958 Varick Memorial AME Church hosted a special gospel program featuring Thomas

A. Dorsey and various Brooklyn gospel groups that attracted hundreds. In 1941 some two thousand people attended a national convention of gospel choral groups at Bridge Street AWME. More than five thousand people attended the fifth annual WWRL radio station's Gospel Singing Contest at Washington Temple COGIC. The Lunenberg Travelers of Brooklyn took first prize, winning a one-week engagement at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem and a recording contract with Vee Jay Records.⁵⁹

At the *Amsterdam News's* Welfare Fund-sponsored "City-Wide Jubilee and Gospel Festival" in 1945, forty-five church gospel choirs performed, including twenty-four from Brooklyn. The popularity of gospel as entertainment was demonstrated by ticket sales. The first concert at Holy Trinity Baptist Church drew a crowd of one thousand people. Choir directors and presidents of gospel choirs purchased two thousand tickets for their friends and church members, leaving none for the performers to give to their families. In addition, hundreds of audience members requested the choirs to perform particular gospel songs.⁶⁰ Consequently, black churches played a major role in helping gospel music to cross over into the arena of popular entertainment. By doing so, they appealed to the taste of African Americans and remained an important cultural force in the community.

Church Fashion Shows and Banquets

Besides music and dances, churches sponsored fashion shows, outings, and bazaars. In 1933 the Young Men's Club of St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal Church sponsored a three-day carnival, featuring "a popularity contest participated in by Brooklyn's most beautiful girls," amusement booths, and "dancing to the music of a three-piece novelty orchestra." Club president Edward DeGrant hoped to prove that "church-going girls are just as pretty, fashionable and peppy as those found in other wholesome places." That same year, a revue was presented by the combined organizations of St. Phillip's at the Brooklyn Labor Lyceum, featuring scenes from *The Emperor Jones*. In 1944 the *Amsterdam News* reported that the fifteenth annual Spring Bazaar of Berean Baptist Church, running from April 25 to the first of May, had attracted a "throng" of people and raised \$2,000 for the church. In 1951 Siloam held a dance at the Chateau Gardens, featuring "the

jumping sounds of Jimmie Simmons' Orchestra," and a fashion show, in which "some of this town's most delectable models undulated across the floor." Elsewhere, the Epicurean Club of Nazarene Congregational Church presented a "Fashion Extravaganza" featuring the wife of film and dance entertainer Bill (Bojangles) Robinson, to "entertain and inform our folk in the art of appropriate styles from head to foot." Mrs. Robinson displayed "fashions around the clock." Another fashion show, for women and men held at the Tabernacle Baptist Church at 388 Chester Street in Brownsville, was described by the press as an "evening of wonderful entertainment."⁶¹ The Willing Workers Club of Newman Memorial Methodist sponsored a fashion show featuring "popular lassies" modeling the latest fashions. And the choir of Bethany Baptist sponsored a fashion exhibit of spring and summer styles in its lecture room. Beauty became such an important value that Brown Memorial Baptist gave classes in dermatology and cosmetics in the 1930s.⁶²

Guests attending the seventh annual National Sunday School Convention at Washington Temple COGIC were treated to a boat ride around the Hudson. These church-sponsored rides could be social as well as leisurely excursions. By 1938 the annual St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal Church boat ride became popular enough to be worth a mention in Tommy Watkins's famous gossip column in the *Amsterdam News*:

The St. Phillips boat ride was a humdinger . . . never saw so many pretty sepia maids in my life . . . and the gossip. . . . Guess I'd better commence spilling it. . . . A certain young thing was rampaging after Walter King—and she should have not been. . . . Eric Lane was tripping like a kitten over a barbed wired fence in the company of pretty Barbara [of the Ronrica Girls]. . . . Dorothy Jenkins sighed slightly as she lulled about without her current heart beat. . . . Bernice Degard and Warren Hodges portrayed love in all its glory. . . . Ray Pease was romeoing about in terrific frenzy while endeavoring to captivate the hearts of all the young girlies.⁶³

Another popular social event sponsored by churches was the banquet. Unlike dancing, which in some religious circles was viewed as morally offensive, banquets, testimonial dinners, and other meals gave people the opportunity to socialize without vio-

lating the scriptures. Like taverns, and bars and grills, church banquets brought people together, but in this case it offered them a chance to combine worship with conspicuous consumption and showing off their formal wear.⁶⁴

Many banquets and dinners were elaborate affairs in which participants could display their affluence through formal attire. At least two receptions and banquets were held for Rev. Kimball Warren of Bethany Baptist Church, sponsored by the auxiliaries of the church, with a master of ceremonies, entertainment, and prominent guests. In 1938 the First AME Zion Church held a formal banquet in the church; prominent guests sat on a dais, men wore fine tuxedos, and women were elegantly dressed. The walls were hung with flowers, adding to the ambience. Both Cornerstone Baptist Church and Bridge Street AWME Church held banquets in the luxurious St. George Hotel.⁶⁵

Banquets required planning, so committees were established to provide fine food and entertainment. For Bridge Street AWME's 187th anniversary celebration in 1953, several planning committees were established, including a banquet committee, program committee, decoration committee, a hostess committee, an ice cream committee, cake committee, three kitchen committees, a purchasing committee, and a person to handle the special guests on banquet night.⁶⁶

Although the black Pentecostal churches of Brooklyn tended to downplay amusements, by the late 1950s even some of these institutions held formal banquets offering elaborate cuisine. In 1955 the Victory Temple COGIC highlighted its twenty-third anniversary celebration with a reception. In November 1957 a testimonial banquet was held at a Church of God in Christ in Manhattan. Guests included Wilber Chandler of the COGIC on the Hill and F. D. Washington of Washington Temple COGIC. A banquet was held at the Waldorf Astoria for Rev. Samuel A. White, pastor of the COGIC on the Hill, with a menu featuring quiche lorraine, breast of chicken à l'orange, continental rice, brussels sprouts with chestnuts, bibescot glacé, golden rhum sabayo, and petits fours. Committees organizing the affair included banquet, arrangement, ticket and finance, program, seating, floral, and music committees.⁶⁷

Church banquets, like other church-sponsored leisure events, were unifying elements in the black community. They gave

blacks the opportunity to network, build church and community organizations, raise money, discuss politics, and simply socialize. At the same time, they emerged as a source of black pride, demonstrating that African Americans were able to organize and carry out sophisticated affairs.

Scholars have noted the growing impact of secularism on the black churches. Some have concluded that black churches have moved away from the sacred aspect of religious life and toward a greater concern with worldly matters. E. Franklin Frazier's *The Negro Church In America* suggests that "by secularization . . . the Negro churches lost their predominately other-worldly outlook and began to focus attention upon the Negro's condition in this world. . . . The churches have been forced to tolerate card playing and dancing and theater-going."⁶⁸

Frazier did not take into account the capacity of African American religion to expand, incorporate, alter the secular while maintaining the sacred. Brooklyn's black churches in the twentieth century did not exclude the sacred as they incorporated various secular forms of amusement. On the contrary, church-sponsored social and cultural events usually incorporated the sacred by including religious rituals in these affairs, never losing sight of the church's mission. Invocation, reading of the scripture, singing religious songs, and giving the benediction became important parts of church-sponsored social functions.

Various social events demonstrate the blending of the sacred and the secular. The annual Bridge Street AWME Senior Choir Tea not only included entertainment and refreshments but an invocation by a minister, recitation of the Lord's Prayer by the congregation, readings of the scripture, and a benediction. The Twenty-fifth Anniversary celebration of the Bridge Street Boy Scouts included a doxology, an invocation, a scripture lesson, a sermon by the pastor, and an "Invitation to Christian Discipline." At the fourth annual vespers services of the Brooklyn chapter of the National Association of Business and Professional Women's Club, Rev. Archie Hargraves, pastor of the Nazarene Congregational Church was the principal speaker.⁶⁹

These and other events mark a transformation in Brooklyn's black church culture. As blacks were exposed to commercial forms of entertainment, they began to incorporate many of its

aspects into a religious life. They did not forsake the sacred for the secular, as has been suggested. For the black churches a worldview emerged that was less restrictive in its cultural patterns. It became heterogeneous, blurring the boundaries between acceptable cultural forms. This is not to argue that the churches were blindly accommodationist. As noted, they used mass cultural forms to remain economically and socially independent. The churches demonstrated that they were able to be a cohesive force in the community, incorporating forms of entertainment that appealed to the masses of blacks without abandoning their religious mission.

Evidence suggests that the relationship between the sacred and the secular was not one way. The secular did not just influence the sacred, rather the secular and sacred were naturally transforming. It was not unusual for religious rituals such as invocations, benedictions, and hymns to appear at popular events outside of the church. The Carlton YMCA's gala reception, "Stars on Parade" featured the Striders (an all-male quartet seen in New York nightclubs), "Melody Matt and his five piece ensemble," who performed "several popular numbers which brought the house down," and Maine Sullivan from the Kingston Lounge. An invocation was delivered by Rev. Milton Galamison of Siloam Presbyterian Church. On another occasion, Rev. Garrison Waters, pastor of Newman's Memorial Methodist Church, even spoke at the opening of the Allure Beauty Salon on Fulton Street. In 1942 the Dormitory Club of the Carlton YMCA held a Mother's Day Breakfast. Included in the program was a "brief religious ceremony led by Jacob Marr, Chaplain of the Club."⁷⁰

By the mid-twentieth century, Brooklyn's black churches had responded to a growing community that emphasized secular values, including commercial recreation, and embraced popular culture. Simultaneously, as the secular penetrated the sacred, the sacred spread beyond the boundaries of the church and began to influence popular entertainment. The result was a form of syncretism, creating a cohesive new cultural practice. Accommodating these changes and embracing the secular, while at the same time holding on to their sacred heritage, black churches served the community in a broader social and cultural sphere.

Brooklyn's black churches have always struggled to be an integral part of the black community. As the black population of

Brooklyn grew from the 1930s through the 1950s, and popular culture preoccupied more of its time, black churches molded religious principles and popular leisure entertainment. They reshaped urban America by becoming institutions that offered more cultural choices to blacks. In addition, they redefined popular entertainment by incorporating religious rituals, thus maintaining their positions as moral leaders in their community. Instead of putting people in a position where they were forced to select between sacred and secular, they attempted to provide the best of both worlds. More than any other institution, the church became an organization that linked the secular and religious worlds. It became an important cultural institution by giving people across class lines in the community a means of enjoying pop entertainment and maintaining their religious values. As the community changed, so did the churches. No institution in the black community responded as the churches did, thus making Brooklyn's black churches unique in the community. In a real sense, they were the pulse of the community.

CHAPTER FOUR



*The Failure to Make Things Better: Brooklyn's
Black Ministers and the Deterioration
of Bedford-Stuyvesant*



By the 1930s Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn's largest black community, was becoming one of the city's worst slums. The story of the ghettoization of Bedford-Stuyvesant (popularly, Bed-Stuy) is the story of official government neglect. While housing, employment, education, health care, and other social and economic conditions in Bed-Stuy worsened, little action was taken by government officials to remedy the situation.

Bed-Stuy had also become the home of numerous black churches of various denominations. In fact, many had become the largest institutions in the borough. Many black churches had thousands of members, and the pastors of these institutions were in a position to launch a movement to challenge the forces that were making Bed-Stuy into a ghetto. By the early 1930s black churches had responded to the growth of mass culture by using mass cultural forms to maintain their cultural and economic independence. Yet how did the churches and the men who led them directly respond to the rapid deterioration of Brooklyn's largest black community?

Black Holiness-Pentecostal pastors opposed the dominant political system, urging members to focus on saving their souls by divorcing themselves from secular affairs and concentrating on God. With the exception of a few Church of God in Christ (COGIC) institutions, black Holiness-Pentecostal ministers were not politically active or involved in the social issues of the community. They usually did not back candidates for political office, use their churches for political rallies, participate in demonstrations, form alliances with left and independent forces, or run for political office. Despite their oppositional message, they were not a significant threat to the dominant white society.¹

However, many ministers of the black mainline churches were active in politics and community affairs. Nevertheless, many were political moderates who were not involved in any independent movements or militant activities to fight the ghettoization of Bed-Stuy. Moreover, before the 1960s there were few individual or combined attempts on the part of Brooklyn's black clergy to wage a significant campaign to force city, state, and federal officials to help better the lives of the ghetto poor. For the most part,

ministers viewed the two-party system as the only legitimate political domain. They played the role of insiders, limiting their allegiance to the Democratic or Republican parties. Hence, they also failed to challenge the forces that were making Bed-Stuy into a slum.

However, the church is more than its ministers. Parishioners of mainline and some Holiness-Pentecostal churches did not divorce themselves from the community's crucial concerns. Besides offering religious services and leisurely entertainment, several people in the churches offered a variety of programs for social and moral uplift, especially for children. Scouting and religious education became two major means people in the churches used to save children from the impact of ghetto life.

Unlike the earlier pages of this work, which primarily examined Brooklyn's black church culture, this chapter now moves into the realm of politics. The deterioration of Bed-Stuy and the response to that deterioration were essentially political decisions made by people with power. In part, this chapter looks at why Brooklyn's largest black community became a ghetto and assesses the political performance of some of the most powerful and active black ministers in Bed-Stuy during that neighborhood's decay. However, it would be unfair to ignore the response of ordinary members of Brooklyn's black churches to the ghettoization of Bed-Stuy. During Bed-Stuy's transformation from a viable community to a ghetto, countless numbers of parishioners struggled to improve conditions in that community. Their performance is also an important part of this period and is therefore examined in this chapter.²

Bed-Stuy is located in north central Brooklyn. Its northern boundary runs across Clinton Avenue across to Flushing Avenue, dividing it from the community of Williamsburg. Its eastern boundary is at Broadway and Saratoga Avenue, separating that community from the community of Bushwick. Classon Avenue, running from Flushing Avenue to Atlantic Avenue, makes up Bed-Stuy's western border. Atlantic Avenue extending from Classon Avenue to Broadway is its southern border.³

By the 1930s the black population of Bed-Stuy grew dramatically. The community became an attractive alternative to the already overcrowded black neighborhood of Fort Greene and an increasingly overcrowded Harlem. The opening of the Indepen-

dent subway line (the IND) made it convenient for individuals to travel from other parts of the city to Bed-Stuy. Finally, by the 1940s the area became a magnet for Southern black migrants because of the already established black community.⁴

According to the Community Council of Greater New York, in 1930 Bedford-Stuyvesant's black population was a little over 31,000, or 12 percent of the total number of residents. By 1940 the number of blacks residing in the area had grown to 65,000, or 25 percent of the total population. By 1957 the 166,213 blacks in Bed-Stuy accounted for 66 percent of the total population.

At the same time that the black population was growing, whites were leaving Bed-Stuy in large numbers. This population shift was part of a national trend of whites moving from urban areas to the suburbs. Between 1935 and 1960 the white population of Bed-Stuy decreased by more than 40 percent, leaving the area to be inhabited mostly by working-class blacks.⁵

Housing

Coinciding with the growth of the black population of Bed-Stuy was the rapid deterioration of the community. The most obvious sign of Bed-Stuy's transformation from a viable community to a slum was the rapid deterioration of housing. By the 1930s, as blacks came into the area, realtors saw an opportunity to make profits and bought brownstones and homes, converting them into apartments and charging high rents. Many were absentee landlords who rented to large numbers but provided few services and failed to keep up their property, thus causing overcrowding and inadequate living conditions.⁶

Despite the effort of community groups to convince federal authorities to take action against banks who made loans to these speculators, nothing was done. As sociologist Ernest Quimby notes, this process continued in Bed-Stuy throughout the 1930s and 1940s with no government interference.

More and more private homes were subdivided into apartments and single rooms. Overcrowding became commonplace. An increase in absentee landlords resulted in decreased services to tenants. From 1930 to 1940 there was minimal construction. Two neighborhood locales were

known by the police and non-residents for prostitution and vice, Myrtle Avenue, between Nostrand Avenue and Broadway, and the vicinity of Franklin Avenue and Fulton Street. Despite protests from churches, black and white, home owners and other groups, the city did nothing.⁷

In 1938 Albert Clark, representing the Brooklyn Federation for Better Housing, a community group struggling for better housing conditions for blacks, reported the results of a study on the living conditions of blacks. Examining a twenty-two block area in Bed-Stuy, Clark reported that "4,807 families were forced to live in 3,421 dwelling units in the heart of the slum area covering twenty-two city blocks." A staggering 91 percent of the apartments were in old buildings without central heating; 85 percent were without hot water, 26 percent were without tubs or showers, 4 percent were without electricity or gas cooking, while 16.1 percent lacked private toilets; 80 percent of the dwellings were owned by absentee landlords. Moreover, 84 percent of the housing was between forty and fifty years old.⁸

The early construction of public housing did little to relieve the poor housing conditions. The first housing projects in Brooklyn were built in Williamsburg and Red Hook, where few blacks lived. For the most part blacks were excluded from these projects.⁹

As Bed-Stuy approached the 1950s, housing did not improve. In 1949 a representative for five families living in a tenement on Sumpter Street in Bed-Stuy noted the horrible conditions of their dwelling. Hot water was only available for a few hours a day, rodents were rampant in the building, there were big holes in the walls, and the building and halls were filthy. Despite a formal complaint by the tenants to the Board of Health, the absentee landlord was not forced to make changes.¹⁰

During the postwar boom, the Community Council of Greater New York reported that the number of dwellings in Bed-Stuy decreased from 74,849 units in 1950 to 74,095 in 1957. The decrease was partly blamed on demolition, which accounted for the loss of more than six hundred units. The building of public housing projects in the 1950s did little to relieve the situation. Most people lived in privately owned two-family and multidwellings. By the late 1950s, Bed-Stuy had the second highest rate of overcrowding in Brooklyn. In addition, 19 percent of the hous-

ing was considered substandard, the highest percentage in Brooklyn.¹¹

Employment and Health Care

The World War I demand for industrial labor allowed blacks in Brooklyn to enter the manufacturing industries in unprecedented numbers. Harold X. Connolly notes that by 1920 a quarter of Brooklyn women in the labor force were employed in manufacturing establishments. The largest number of women were in clothing and textiles, while the men were heavily employed as semiskilled operatives and longshoremen.¹²

Yet despite these gains made by African Americans in employment in the 1920s, the Brooklyn Urban League reported that unemployment among Brooklyn's black population had reached its highest level in six years, a fact the league attributed to the "closing of opportunities which brought them here in large numbers during the war." A 1928 Brooklyn Urban League survey of 106 Brooklyn firms revealed that only fifty-eight hired blacks; of the 1,534 black workers hired by the fifty-eight firms, 80 percent were classified as unskilled. A public hearing conducted by the State Temporary Commission on the Condition of Urban Colored Population reported that the public utilities companies in Brooklyn discriminated widely against blacks. The New York Telephone Company refused to hire black operators on any level; the Consolidated Edison Electric Company refused to hire blacks as meter readers, and the Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit Company barred blacks from any position higher than conductor.¹³

The Depression brought hardships to many Americans. However, this period was especially rough on African Americans. In Brooklyn unemployment among blacks was high, despite the effort of the Brooklyn Urban League to find employment for black men, an effort that for the most part was unsuccessful. In 1931 the league noted that only "emergency work" was available for black men. Although many black women were employed, of the 13,825 in the work force in 1930, some 11,664 were in domestic and personal service.¹⁴

By World War II, employment conditions for Brooklyn's black population improved. Although opportunities opened up for blacks in the defense sector of the economy, the greatest number

were employed in nondefense jobs. Firms that had locked out blacks began to hire them in large numbers. This change was due to a labor shortage created by the war.¹⁵

Although the employment picture for Brooklyn's black population improved during the postwar period, employment conditions for black residents of Bed-Stuy did not get better. The 1950 median income of community residents was well below the borough's median income of \$3,447. According to the Community Council of Greater New York, the southwestern part of Bedford-Stuyvesant had a median income of \$2,228, the lowest in Brooklyn. The range in other areas of Bed-Stuy was \$2,426 to \$3,120. By 1957 Bed-Stuy's 9,825 welfare cases accounted for 23 percent of the borough's public assistance cases.¹⁶

Closely connected with growing poverty in Bed-Stuy was the lack of health care facilities servicing the community. In 1957 the infant mortality rate was 38.3 per 1,000, compared with the borough's rate of 25.2 per 1,000. In some parts of Bed-Stuy the rate was over 40 per 1,000 (in one section it was 52.5).

Venereal disease in Bed-Stuy was the highest in Brooklyn. And although there was a slight improvement in the tuberculosis rate between 1956 and 1958 (from 2.88 to 2.30), it was still well above the 1958 borough rate of 0.98.¹⁷

Despite these grim statistics, city officials failed to provide adequate health care to Bed-Stuy residents. In a 1953 report, the Hospital Council of the City of New York reversed its 1949 opinion, which had called for the city to allocate funds for a hospital in Bed-Stuy. The council acknowledged the horrible conditions in Bed-Stuy but rationalized that the causes were environmental. "As long as persons in need of hospital care receive it, the location of hospital beds within the area is not of itself a means for reducing the incidence of tuberculosis, venereal disease, infant mortality or maternal mortality. . . . Of major consequence for the incidence of the above conditions are environmental factors, such as sanitation, housing, nutrition, and health education." This was a clear case of blaming the victim.

Acknowledging that residents of Bed-Stuy must go outside their community for health care, the Hospital Council justified not building a hospital by asserting that it was no real burden for people to travel thirty or forty-five minutes on public transportation to reach other facilities. Moreover, it concluded that a new

hospital in Bed-Stuy would be detrimental because it would reduce occupancy of neighboring hospitals and "thereby increase their operating costs per patient day and impair their present level of efficiency." According to the council, the solution to Bed-Stuy's health problems was to add 125 beds to Cumberland Hospital, almost thirty minutes away by public transportation.¹⁸

The Bedford-Stuyvesant Health Congress, a coalition made up of community activists and other local groups, protested the city's reluctance to provide a hospital. Requesting that the mayor release funds from the capital budget to build a hospital in Bed-Stuy, the congress noted:

The people of the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn, especially the Negro people, have paid and continue to pay a terrible toll in death and suffering because of their residence, race, creed, color and economic status. Year after year twice as many babies die. Dr. Kogel, Former Commissioner of Hospitals, characterized Bedford-Stuyvesant as an area rich in tuberculosis and poor in hospital facilities. The toll of death and suffering increases with the years. . . . Our community is acutely aware of its needs, and experiences mounting resentment over the continued inaction of City authorities to date.¹⁹

Despite the protest of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Health Congress and its insistence that Cumberland was obsolete and too far away for Bed-Stuy residents, the Board of Estimate (which had decided, in 1951, to set aside \$1,250,000 for construction of a hospital in Bed-Stuy) chose, in 1956, to expand Cumberland Hospital, leaving Bed-Stuy without proper health care.²⁰

Despite the health crisis in Bed-Stuy and the high rates of infant mortality, tuberculosis, and venereal disease, city officials did nothing. This failure to act, and the view that the health care problems in Bed-Stuy were purely "environmental," demonstrated that city officials had little concern for black people and that black life was of little consequence.

Education

More than any other institution in America, public schools were seen as a means of upward social and economic mobility. It was a

means by which poor children climbed out of poverty and became successful. However, despite the fact that education was an important means of gaining success, racism and discrimination led to segregated inferior education for black children throughout the nation. Brooklyn was no exception. As early as 1940, when Bed-Stuy's black population was increasing, community and civic leaders complained about overcrowding and segregation in many public schools that serviced the community.

The School Council of Bed-Stuy and Williamsburg, a community group consisting of parents and teachers, asserted that children were receiving an inadequate education in those communities. The group pointed out that twenty of the fifty-six classes at P.S. 3 on Hancock Street and Bedford Avenue received the normal six hours of daily instruction, while all other classes received only four hours because of a teacher shortage. The school was considered the worst in the city. It was called a fire trap with only one hallway for 1,700 children. Classes were overcrowded with forty children assigned to a room; and shop classes were located near the school's boiler, creating a situation in which children could be burned.

P.S. 3 was not unique; other schools in Bed-Stuy limited daily instruction for children to four hours, and classes were overcrowded as well. At P.S. 35, all classes received four hours of instruction. Because of a teacher shortage at both P.S. 44 on Throop Avenue and Madison Street and at P.S. 129 on Gates and Lewis Avenues, overcrowded and oversized classes were the norm. In addition, children were denied hot lunches because of inadequate kitchen facilities. The School Council also complained that children graduating from junior high schools in Bed-Stuy were zoned to older high schools that lacked modern facilities, including swimming pools and industrial shops.²¹

Despite numerous complaints, the Board of Education did little to change these conditions. In the 1950s, community groups reported that the New York school system was essentially segregated and that black and Hispanic children received an inferior education. In 1954 at a symposium of the National Urban League, Kenneth Clark, an associate professor of psychology at City College, asserted that the New York City public school system was segregated and black children were receiving an inferior education. In addition, segregated schools according to Clark left black

children with a sense of inferiority and hindered their educational progress.²²

The Parents' Workshop for Equality in New York City Schools, a community group that struggled for school integration and was led by the Reverend Milton Galamison of Siloam Presbyterian Church, examined the racial makeup of students in ten junior high schools located in Bed-Stuy. It reported that seven ranged from 70 to 88 percent black and Puerto Rican, while three were between 90 and 100 percent black and Puerto Rican. Although the expected reading level for eighth graders should have been 8.6, the average reading level for eighth graders in these schools ranged from 5.4 to 6.2. Students reading on a third grade level or lower in these ten schools ranged from 44 to 63 percent.²³

The Parents' Workshop noted that thirty elementary schools in Bed-Stuy and Brownsville were almost totally segregated. According to the Parents' Workshop, in the late 1950s nine ranged from 86 to 89 percent black and Puerto Rican, while twenty-one schools were from 92 to 100 percent black and Puerto Rican. Although the reading level for sixth graders should have been 6.3, it ranged from 3.9 to 5.2.²⁴ Although the Superintendent and other officials of the Board of Education stated that the board was opposed to "racially homogeneous schools," and that it would integrate segregated schools as soon as possible, little concrete action was taken. The controversy over Junior High School 258 was a good example of the board's inaction. In the early part of 1955, JHS 258 on Marcy Avenue and Halsey Street in Bed-Stuy opened with a student body that was 99 percent black and Puerto Rican. Community groups advocating that the school be integrated claimed that children were not receiving the same instruction as children in predominantly white schools. In addition, few teachers were regularly appointed and thirty-three of the forty-five teachers had requested transfers due to poor working conditions.²⁵ However, despite protests from the Brooklyn branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Brooklyn Urban League, and other community groups, members of the board argued that the school was located in the heart of the black community; therefore, it was not practical to integrate it. Moreover, Superintendent William Jansen asserted that he was in favor of the neighborhood school concept, the belief that children should attend schools in their own neigh-

borhood. In reality, he supported segregation. In March 1957 Jansen assured a group of white parents in Queens who feared that their children were going to be bused to predominantly black schools in Bed-Stuy, "We have no intention whatsoever of long distance bussing or bussing of children simply because of their color. If we bus children, it will be because there is room in one school and not in another, as we do now. We believe in the neighborhood school."²⁶

To add insult to injury, few blacks were hired as teachers. In 1949 blacks accounted for only 2.5 percent of the teaching staff and 1.5 percent were regularly appointed. Of the 64,130 teachers in 1955, 544 were black, 312 had regular appointments, while 232 were substitutes. When the Teachers Union requested that the Board of Education hire more black teachers and integrate its schools, it was ignored. Instead the board argued that it hired teachers based on ability and not race. In 1952 Jack Greenberg, Associate Superintendent of schools, responded to the charge that the board was practicing racism in its hiring practices. "Anyone who can present evidence of discrimination in the appointment of teachers and fails to do so is guilty of racial discrimination. Anyone who charges discrimination where none exists is equally guilty of racial discrimination." Neither Jansen nor the board took serious steps to integrate the teaching staff of segregated schools in the mid-1950s. The board only adopted a voluntary transfer plan for teachers and received very few responses. Board officials did not recognize the impact that a predominantly white teaching staff had on children. By not making an effort to hire blacks and Hispanics as teachers, they denied children good role models and contributed to the notion that people of color were intellectually inferior.²⁷

The board took little action to turn schools in Bed-Stuy into viable learning centers for children. For the most part, education became a narrow avenue to success for black children residing in Bed-Stuy.

Juvenile Delinquency

As Brooklyn's black communities grew in the 1930s and 1940s, juvenile delinquency became one of the most devastating phenomena in the black community. Many young people, "turned

off" by school and alienated from their community, committed unlawful acts including robbery, fighting, and other types of violence. It should be noted that juvenile delinquency was not a social problem unique to the black community. Nationally, juvenile crime was on the increase. This was largely due to the Depression, which had led to massive unemployment and the breakup of many families. In addition, fathers were drafted into the military during the war, and mothers entered the work force. The lack of child-care facilities left many children without adult supervision.²⁸

Juvenile delinquency became such a major problem in Bed-Stuy that in 1936 the editor of the *Bedford Home Owners News* urged Mayor LaGuardia to sponsor boys clubs as a means of prevention. "We believe that such clubs, properly supervised, would do much in giving our youth a healthy outlook on life and at the same time would inculcate a true spirit of Americanism."²⁹ Similarly, in 1943 the editors of the *Amsterdam News* launched a campaign to get community activists, churches, and civic organizations involved in the fight against juvenile delinquency. The *Amsterdam News* called for programs that would "keep the children off the streets and away from temptation. Supervised dances should be planned. . . . Athletic leagues should be brought to the attention of children in the community."³⁰

The alarm over juvenile violence was not without its racial overtones. In August 1943 a Kings County grand jury noted the "alarming incidence" of juvenile crime. The all-white grand jury interviewed very few blacks, thus giving credence to the charge that the report was biased. Recalling an earlier period when Bed-Stuy was "one of the finest residential sections of Brooklyn," the jury asserted that a "state of lawlessness" existed in the area:

Groups of young boys armed with penknives of all sizes and other weapons roam the streets at will and threaten and assault passersby and commit mugging and holdups with increasing frequency. Gangs of hoodlums armed with such knives and weapons commit holdups, stabbing, homicides and serious crimes.³¹

Claiming that most crimes in Bed-Stuy were committed by young people below the age of twenty-one, the grand jury asserted, "These children form into little groups, run into stores, steal

merchandise and run away. They break windows; they snatch pocketbooks; they commit mugging, holdups and assaults."

Although the grand jury stated that "this is in no sense a race problem," it was clear that African Americans were blamed for the dramatic increase of crime in Bed-Stuy. In order to appear nonbiased, the jury argued that African Americans were also fed up with the increase in crime and wanted something done.

The foregoing conditions have been testified to by the many eminent, responsible and trustworthy Colored citizens of this area. They strongly deplore these conditions and have asked and appealed to this Grand jury to do something about them. . . . The desirable elements of this area, negro and white, and of all faiths, are all begging and pleading for relief from these deplorable and shameful conditions.

Despite attempts to appear nonbiased, the jury's racism was blatantly evident. "A great influx of people from out of the State and other areas into this district require more stringent supervision by the public authorities." The jury called for an investigation of the "relief rolls," and a longer waiting period for relief "in order to eliminate the tendency to live off relief." Moreover, the jury advised that the Colored State Guard in Brooklyn could be enlarged and given an armory with recreational facilities to help take care of three thousand boys. It implied that Guard members could be good role models for black youth.³²

Although the grand jury was correct to point out that juvenile delinquency was a growing problem in Bed-Stuy, it inferred that the sole reason for the problem was because more blacks were moving into the area. It made no attempt to examine the causes of juvenile crime.

Police reports indicate that, during the first ten months of 1943, there had been a 53.4 percent increase in juvenile arrests, compared to the first ten months of 1942. In eight police precincts serving Bed-Stuy, there were 356 juvenile arrests in 1941. In the first ten months of 1943, there had been 565 juvenile arrests. By the 1950s juvenile crime had reached epidemic proportions in Bed-Stuy. While in 1957 the overall borough rate was 33.4 per 1,000, in some areas of Bed-Stuy the rate ranged from 46.4 to 89.9 per 1,000. In 1958 the rates in Bed-Stuy ranged from 65.8 to 119.0 per 1,000.³³

One explanation for the increase of juvenile crime in Bed-Stuy was the growth of the "under thirty" population. By 1957 half the area's population was under thirty. Bed-Stuy had more children under the age of fourteen than any other section of Brooklyn (11.4 percent of a total of 606,564). From 1950 to 1957 the number of children between the ages of six and thirteen increased by 19 percent. As the Police Commissioner notes in his report to Mayor LaGuardia in 1943, "The greater the number of children, the greater is the number of possible delinquents." By 1957 Bed-Stuy had more children between the ages of fourteen and nineteen than any other section of Brooklyn.³⁴

Yet the increase in the youth population alone cannot explain the dramatic growth in juvenile arrests. Three other sections had a greater proportion of children overall than Bed-Stuy, yet their juvenile crime figures were lower. Other factors played a significant role, including more accurate reporting on juvenile crime by police and greater police presence in the area. Poverty and despair were also factors. As noted earlier, by 1949 Bed-Stuy's population earned well below the boroughwide median income and by 1959 had one-quarter of the borough's home relief cases. In addition, the area had the worst housing in the borough. These conditions helped create despair and a sense of hopelessness, important factors motivating antisocial behavior.

Institutional racism was also an important factor in the number of arrests of black children. There were very few black police officers in New York, and the vast majority of white officers were from outside of Bed-Stuy and had little understanding of African Americans. They held the same racist beliefs toward blacks as the larger society. This lack of understanding led innocent people to suffer unwarranted arrest and physical assault at the hands of the police; many of these victims were teenagers.³⁵

From the 1930s to the 1950s, the Bed-Stuy branch of the American Communist Party, the American Labor Party, and the Brooklyn branch of the NAACP all waged campaigns against police abuse. The American Communist Party carried numerous articles in its paper, *The Daily Worker*, reporting on acts of police brutality in Bed-Stuy and other parts of the city. In 1936 the Bed-Stuy branch of the American Communist Party sent a letter to Mayor LaGuardia protesting acts of police brutality against children.³⁶ In the 1940s the American Labor Party, a leftist political party,

demanded that Gov. Thomas Dewey name a special prosecutor to investigate allegations of police brutality in the city. Again in 1952, the American Labor Party publicly joined with the NAACP and other groups in Brownsville to win the conviction of a police officer who had shot and killed a twenty-seven-year-old black man. The Brooklyn branch of the NAACP conducted numerous campaigns against police abuse. In May 1959, for example, the NAACP held a rally protesting "This New Wave of Police Brutality in Brooklyn," the death of yet another black man (Al Garret) at the hands of the police, and the beating of a fourteen-year-old girl by police.³⁷ However, despite numerous cases of police brutality and protests from political and civil rights groups, no action was taken by city officials to stop police assaults. This lack of effort was just another indication of the lack of concern and respect that government officials had for people of African origins.

By the late 1940s and the 1950s, and probably due to the rapid increase in juvenile crime and pressure from various community groups, the city launched an accelerated program of building both playgrounds and recreational centers in Bed-Stuy. City officials asserted that a variety of sporting and recreational activities was an effective means of stopping juvenile crime because they built character, sportsmanship, and discipline. Proponents of using sports and recreation as a way of fighting juvenile delinquency also asserted that organized physical activity in parks, playgrounds, and recreational centers took children and teenagers off the streets, thus decreasing their chances of breaking the law. Referring to the city's efforts to open playgrounds in Bed-Stuy, Parks Commissioner Robert Moses noted:

The playground is a powerful weapon in the war on "so called" juvenile delinquency. To quote City Council President [Abe] Stark, "only supervised recreational centers, playground activities and healthy athletic competition can provide our city's boys and girls with a healthy environment. How much better it is to fight juvenile delinquency in this manner than to let young people congregate in bars, cellar clubs, and disreputable honky tonks."³⁸

Consequently, parks, playgrounds, and recreational centers became a means of social control. According to Moses, the objective of the parks and playgrounds was not only to provide

"healthy exercise for millions of juveniles, but to create a calming as well as a stabilizing effect on large numbers of people who have experienced ill effects of urbanization."³⁹

By 1944, a year after the Kings County grand jury's report, Brooklyn's borough president John Cashmore persuaded the Board of Education to open fourteen school gymnasiums in Bed-Stuy during the summer. By the 1950s the city operated twenty-two playgrounds in Bed-Stuy, with various recreational facilities, including wading pools, sand pits, and a comfort station. The parks provided teens and older people with softball, basketball, and handball courts, shuffle board, tennis, horse shoe pitching, volleyball, roller skating, and ice skating areas for "healthy exercise."⁴⁰

In addition to the playgrounds, the city established at least five evening, two afternoon, and seven afternoon and evening centers in Bed-Stuy in the 1950s in order to fight juvenile crime. Most operated in elementary and junior high schools, offering young people basketball, table games, and arts and crafts.⁴¹

The Saint John's Recreation Center, located at Saint John's Park in Bed-Stuy was specifically aimed at curbing juvenile delinquency in that community. Opened in 1956, it offered a gymnasium for basketball, boxing, and other sports; a huge swimming pool for recreational and competitive swimming; a senior game room with ping pong tables, a pool table, table hockey sets, and lounge chairs; a junior game room with checker sets, table hockey sets, and ping pong tables; and a woodwork shop. Operating seven days a week from ten in the morning to ten in the evening, the center was staffed by fifty-one people, including specialists in swimming, arts and crafts, cooking, and physical education.⁴²

However, despite the effort of city government to halt juvenile crime, it failed to address the larger issues which helped produce delinquency, such as poverty, dysfunctional family life, unemployment, powerlessness, and alienation. By providing recreational facilities as the sole solution to juvenile delinquency, government officials and many outside of government demonstrated, at best, a lack of vision and at worst a lack of concern for the urban poor. City officials assumed that the major solution to juvenile delinquency in Bed-Stuy was to keep the children in that community off the streets. There was no attempt on the part of the city to understand the problems facing migrants new to urban living. Little assistance was given to people living in dilapidated

housing or to children attending schools that were understaffed, had oversized classes, and received few funds for improvement. Bed-Stuy was a community in crisis. There was a need for a financial commitment on the part of the federal, state, and city governments along with private sources to help improve housing, employment opportunities, and health care and education. Instead of meeting the challenge, government at the city, state, and federal levels limited its involvement.

Black Ministers and Political Leaders

As noted in chapter 3, there was a dramatic increase in Brooklyn's black congregations. The growth was due in large part to the influx of migrants into Brooklyn. Many older established black churches left the downtown area and, in the 1930s and 1940s, followed the stream of blacks moving into Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn's largest black community. Bridge Street AWME, Concord Baptist, First AME Zion, Siloam Presbyterian, and St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal were just a few of the churches that relocated from the downtown area of Brooklyn to Bedford-Stuyvesant.⁴³

This dramatic increase in overall membership in the black churches made black ministers increasingly important figures in the community, giving them an enormous potential for waging a significant war against the ghettoization of Bed-Stuy. Unlike other community organizations which had limited resources and members, the black churches were in a position to organize large numbers of people, raise large sums of money, act as an independent political bloc, hold rallies and demonstrations, speak out against government inaction without fear of retaliation, and take other independent measures to make Bed-Stuy a viable community.

The middle-class ideology of moral uplift and individualism which had been stressed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by African Americans was still a major theme of black churches. Nevertheless, the realities of ghettoization and the Depression called for more drastic solutions and a greater role for the institutionalized church in the lives of its members and in the community.

However, for the most part the churches and the men who led them during Bed-Stuy's decline did not live up to their potential.

Most ministers did not champion belligerent tactics or provide independent leadership. Some were well connected with the major political parties and were unwilling to take aggressive action to force government officials to address the harsh conditions of the ghetto's poor. This is not to say that the ministers did not believe that the government should play a greater role in assisting the urban poor. Many publicly argued that the government must take an active role in ending poverty and racism. However, these ministers did little to force government to take an active role.

A closer examination of several active black ministers during Bed-Stuy's decline reveals that they had strong connections with the major parties. They limited their political activities to working for the election of prominent Republican or Democratic candidates, received political appointments, and ran for political office.

Several Brooklyn black ministers were well-known Republicans, including William Orlando Carrington, pastor of First AME Zion Church from 1936 to 1964; George Shippen Stark, pastor of Siloam from 1920 to 1947; and Schuyler Thomas Eldridge, pastor of Berean Missionary Baptist Church from 1928 to 1946. James Adams, pastor of Concord from 1921 to 1936 was an active member of the Kings County Colored Republicans and often spoke at their functions. In 1936 Adams was the guest speaker at a celebration the Kings County Colored Republicans held at First AME Zion Church. Again in 1936, Adams endorsed the Republican candidate for President, Alfred M. Landon, along with W. O. Carrington; Rev. Mansfield F. Jackson, pastor of Bridge Street AWME Church; and C. P. Cole, pastor of Bethel AME Church. Adams's close connection with the Republican Party and his endorsement of Landon prompted one militant Brooklyn black minister to attack the Concord pastor by calling him a "no account."⁴⁴

Boise Dent was known as a "staunch Republican." Dent, who was born in Virginia in 1895, came to Brownsville and became pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church. In 1949 Dent was selected to head Republican politician Abe Stark's campaign for borough president. Benjamin Lowery, who became pastor of Zion Baptist Church in 1921, headed a ministers and citizens committee to reelect New York Republican Gov. Thomas Dewey in 1950. George Thomas, who became pastor of Brown Memorial Baptist Church in 1938, was selected by the Republican Party to run for Congress in a Brooklyn district.⁴⁵

Sandy F. Ray, pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church from 1944 until his death in 1980, was probably the most influential Brooklyn black minister in the Republican Party. Ray, who received his B.A. from Morehouse College, was known as a "stalwart" of the Republican Party. Before starting his tenure at Cornerstone, he had been a member of the Ohio State Legislature. In Brooklyn he developed close ties with Republican top brass and worked for the reelection of Governor Dewey in 1950. Ray would later develop a close relationship with Nelson Rockefeller, who served as governor of New York from 1958 to 1973. Rockefeller was a frequent visitor to Cornerstone. Ray worked for other Republican candidates and even considered running for a congressional seat.⁴⁶

Gardner C. Taylor noted that he was one of the few Democrats among the active black clergy in Brooklyn. Taylor became the most noted black minister in the Democratic Party. Born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, he received his B.A. from Leland College and his B.D. from Oberlin. He came to Concord in 1948. After serving only eleven months at Concord, the thirty-year-old minister was appointed to a local school board by Brooklyn Borough President John Cashmore. Taylor later developed close ties with Mayor Robert Wagner, who in 1954 named Taylor to an advisory group to improve city services. In 1958 Taylor was selected by Mayor Wagner to serve on the Board of Education, and in January 1962 the Brooklyn pastor was one of three men selected by Wagner to replace Joseph T. Sharkey as Democratic leader of Brooklyn.⁴⁷

Because pastors of several black Brooklyn churches could potentially influence a large number of people, leaders of the Republican and Democratic parties turned to them for support. Consequently, these black ministers gained a certain political leverage within the mainline parties. However, such close political ties probably made these Brooklyn black ministers less likely to seek alliances with the left or to use tactics that would jeopardize their political positions.

At least two Brooklyn ministers even joined the Cold War crusade and attacked the left. Oliver Wendell Jones, pastor of Newman Memorial Methodist Church, accused Communists of attempting to "stamp out Christianity." He asserted, "We have a large group of people in the Kremlin . . . who are in effort to put out the fires of Christianity, close the doors of the church and imprison the ministers."⁴⁸

Although Sandy F. Ray, who was head of the National Baptist Social Commission, testified before Congress calling for the repeal of the Smith Act of 1940 (which made it a crime to advocate the forcible overthrow of the United States government), he joined the anti-Communist crusade and even expressed faith that the democratic system during the Jim Crow era would work for blacks. In 1947 Ray spoke before a Senate committee declaring that the United States was a free and democratic country whose task was to help make the world safe for democracy. The prominent Brooklyn pastor argued, "Our approach is from the Christian point of view. We have not, and shall not commit our convention to any Foreign or subversive ideology."⁴⁹

Ray also told a crowd of fifteen hundred at a National Baptist Convention meeting, "We are going to work within the framework of the United States Constitution and not be fooled by any foreign group or foreign philosophy, for we have in our Constitution provision for equal rights." Again in 1953, Ray defended Protestant clergy from McCarthyism by declaring, "Neither the Negro Protestant clergy nor laymen have given any support to communism."⁵⁰ Historian Manning Marable notes that during the McCarthy period, when black intellectuals such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson were defamed, the black clergy were silent. On the whole, this was certainly true of the black ministers of Brooklyn. Despite their position as prominent men in the community, few ever used their clout to condemn the attacks on left of center forces.⁵¹ For most black clergy of Brooklyn, theology did not serve as a radical ideology calling for concrete action against oppression.

Despite their association with the two mainstream parties, their moderate views, and disassociation from the left and grassroots groups, most black clergy did not join conservative forces that called for the least amount of government involvement in domestic affairs. From their pulpits and in newspaper interviews, the black ministers of Bed-Stuy called on government to take action against racial injustice. In addition, many Brooklyn black ministers were involved in community and civil rights organizations. Many were active members of the NAACP and the Urban League. Hilton L. James of Berean Missionary Baptist, Sandy F. Ray (Cornerstone Baptist), Benjamin Lowery (Zion Baptist), John Coleman (rector of St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal Church from

1932 to 1962), Richard Saunders (Stuyvesant Heights), Archie Hargraves (pastor of Nazarene Congregational Church), C. L. Franklin (pastor of Mount Lebanon Baptist Church from 1938 to 1950), and Thomas Goodall of Bethany Baptist Church were all executive board members of the NAACP and participated in the group's annual membership drives. In addition, these ministers helped recruit members for the civil rights organization from among their parishioners.⁵²

Gardner C. Taylor was an active member of the executive board of the Urban League. In fact, Taylor testified on behalf of the Brooklyn Urban League at public hearings held by the Board of Education. At one such hearing Taylor told Board of Education officials that "the way to integrate is to integrate." In June 1959 Taylor sent the members of the board a copy of a newspaper article that compared New York City to Little Rock, Arkansas. In a cover letter, Taylor suggested that the comparison between Little Rock, Arkansas, and New York was frightening. Taylor warned board members, "I am confident that you will see this as one more instance of the forthrightness with which we must move, in the matter of full and complete integration of New York schools. We condemn the assault on our democracy which came in the infamous attacks on nine little Negro children, and rightly—but Little Rock will never be right until New York is right; and New York will never be right until Little Rock is right."⁵³

Besides individual church and ministerial efforts, there was some collective action on the part of Brooklyn's black clergy to provide assistance to African Americans. One of the most active ministerial organizations in Brooklyn was the Interdenominational Ministers Alliance. Founded in the 1920s in order to promote interfaith cooperation, the group sponsored Emancipation Day celebrations commemorating the destruction of slavery. The group conducted annual services in January by reading the Emancipation Proclamation and commenting on its significance. In the 1930s the Alliance provided food and aid for black families suffering from the impact of the Depression. In the 1940s the Alliance worked with City Councilman J. Daniel Diggs to improve bus service in Bedford-Stuyvesant. In addition, the ministerial group met with city hospital officials and was able to persuade the hospital commissioner to order voluntary hospitals to improve ambulance service in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The group also convinced the com-

missioner to lift a ban that barred city hospitals from issuing contraceptive devices. This action was in response to the demand by black leaders for city officials to take action against the growing problem of teenage pregnancies in Bed-Stuy. In 1950 members of the Interdenominational Ministers Alliance, including C. L. Franklin, W. O. Carrington, and John E. Bryant from the First Church of God in Christ, were selected as delegates to a national civil rights conference sponsored by the NAACP. Benjamin Lowery, Thomas Goodall, and Hilton L. James also attended the conference as representatives of a Baptist organization.⁵⁴

The Interdenominational Ministers Alliance also addressed the issue of education. It sponsored a meeting at Siloam Presbyterian to protest the Board of Education's lack of effort to integrate schools and to seek ways of organizing a campaign for integration. Besides attempting to organize people, the meeting also gave parents and others an opportunity to express their views and to offer suggestions for the struggle for school integration.⁵⁵

Many ministers of the community also joined the struggle for a hospital for Bed-Stuy. In 1950 a community meeting was held at First AME Zion to protest the health conditions of the community. Three years later a community drive was launched in order to get the City of New York to allocate funds for a hospital under a select committee of ministers and civic leaders. The drive was headed by Benjamin Lowery of Zion Baptist Church and was supported by the ministers of Bedford-Stuyvesant. The group, which met at First AME Zion Church, named itself the Citizens Committee for a Bedford-Stuyvesant Hospital Site. Besides many political figures such as the borough presidential candidate Abe Stark and Municipal Court Judge Lewis S. Flag, noted ministers attended, such as Rev. George Thomas of Brown Memorial Baptist, Rev. Charles England of St. Augustine, and John Coleman of St. Phillip's. The *Amsterdam News* reported that many in Bedford-Stuyvesant held special prayer services for the hospital site. The prayer services give evidence that the ministers were keeping their congregations informed on this vital issue. Prayer was a means to raise the issue and, therefore, to make people conscious of the importance of the struggle.⁵⁶

However, when the city decided not to use funds first allocated to build a hospital in Bed-Stuy, the committee had no follow-up plan. Lowery and others made complaints but to no avail.

There were no protests, no organized street demonstrations, no attempt to organize ordinary people in the community. The strategy used by the committee was to win support among prominent politicians in order to influence city officials. When this effort failed, the committee disbanded. The same shortfall was also true of the efforts taken by black ministers of Brooklyn to improve employment conditions for African Americans. Little direct action was taken by ministers to address the employment conditions of blacks. Although they grabbed headlines for various activities, there was no attempt to launch a campaign to challenge government inaction.

It should be noted that there were exceptional ministers, starting from the early part of the twentieth century, who attempted to provide a political voice for the community and addressed crucial issues that had an impact on blacks. The Reverends George Frazier Miller, Thomas Harten, and Theophilus Alcantara were some of the most outspoken clergy in Brooklyn.

Rev. George Frazier Miller was one of the most noted early twentieth-century politically active ministers. Born in South Carolina in 1864, Miller attended Howard University and earned a B.A. in 1888. He served as rector of an Episcopal church in Charleston and soon after as rector of an Episcopal church in North Carolina. He moved to Brooklyn in 1896 to become the rector of St. Augustine Protestant Episcopal Church.⁵⁷

Miller used his pulpit as a political forum. For example, in 1917 when seventeen black soldiers were executed for allegedly inciting a riot in San Antonio, Texas, Miller accused the commanding officer of carrying out a "military lynching" done for the purpose of appeasing the racists in the South. "I ask if this is calculated to increase our patriotism? There are many of us who are not bound by ties of blood to these men who consider that a deep wrong was done to them. They were offered as a sacrifice upon the altar of infamous Southern prejudice."⁵⁸

Miller became a socialist, arguing that Christ was a "revolutionary" who addressed the social needs of the poor. He wrote for A. Philip Randolph's socialist magazine, the *Messenger*, and in 1918 Miller ran for a congressional seat on the Socialist ticket. By ideologically connecting socialism and Christianity, he attempted to put the black church in the vanguard of addressing economic concerns of blacks.⁵⁹ Thus, Miller became an independent voice in

the black community. Nevertheless, Miller did not manage to establish a strong link with working-class African Americans. Despite Miller's concern for the economic plight of blacks, very few were members of the Socialist Party, partly because the party did little to attract African Americans. Miller was never a part of any significant effort to organize blacks for political action.

Another well-known minister publicly addressing the political and social conditions of African Americans in Brooklyn was Rev. Thomas Harten. Harten became pastor of Holy Trinity Baptist Church in 1922. By the late 1920s, Reverend Harten had become one of the most dynamic pastors in New York City. He had gained a reputation as a fiery preacher who was able to excite audiences, bringing men and women to a frenzy. Moreover, Harten gained a reputation as a protest leader. In 1925 he became head of the Brooklyn chapter of the National Equal Rights League, which was organized by William Monroe Trotter. Harten later organized another protest group named the Afro-Protective League. Both groups protested lynchings in the South and combated police brutality and racial discrimination in New York City.⁶⁰

In July 1925 nearly two thousand people jammed Holy Trinity in response to a plea by the National Equal Rights League, protesting the "apparent propaganda of racial prejudice and oppression carried on by the police force in Brooklyn." Several black men had been picked up and brought in for questioning in regard to the murder of a white woman. The crowd at Holy Trinity selected a committee to call upon the office of the District Attorney of Brooklyn and demand an end to police harassment of black men and the prosecution of all offending officers. The delegation included Harten, Rev. George Frazier Miller of St. Augustine Protestant Episcopal, and Rev. Henry Hugh Proctor of Nazarene Congregational Church.

Several months later, more than one thousand people attended a rally called by the National Equal Rights League at Holy Trinity to protest the brutal police assault on a black woman. A few days after the rally, Harten led a crowd of three hundred protesters to Brooklyn Borough Hall to demand that officials take action against the police officer who had attacked the woman.⁶¹

In 1926 Harten led a crowd of five hundred to Brooklyn's Borough Hall demanding "justice and a fair deal" for two black women who claimed to have been beaten by a white police offi-

cer. The demonstration was an attempt to put pressure on District Attorney Charles J. Dodd and a grand jury investigating the alleged beating. Harten, who was joined by William Monroe Trotter, attacked the grand jury for its delay in action. Demonstrators carried banners and marched around Borough Hall.⁶²

In 1928 Harten was arrested when he protested in front of the Court of Special Sessions on Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn for its mishandling of a case where a black woman was allegedly beaten up by police. After Harten's release, the National Equal Rights League held a mass rally at Holy Trinity Church to protest the pastor's arrest.⁶³

Although Harten asserted that he would stay out of politics and concentrate only on his church after the Democratic Party passed him over in 1932 for an elected office, he continued his activities for civil rights and trying to improve the conditions of blacks. In 1936 the militant minister announced he would organize an annual conference of members of several political parties, including Democrats, Republicans, Socialists, and Communists, to discuss "labor problems, lynching, discrimination, jim-crowism, and other evils of the present day social system." He asserted that the conference would motivate these parties to take constructive action to eliminate such problems.⁶⁴

In 1937 he became involved in the defense committee for the Scottsboro Boys. Risking his reputation as a distinguished pastor and criticism from black leaders, he teamed up with the religious cult leader Father Divine in the fall of 1937 and held a mass rally in Manhattan for the defense of the Scottsboro Boys. They attracted thousands to the rally, where Harten declared:

I never thought I'd be on the same platform with Father Divine. . . . I never wanted to meet him—to tell you the truth. But God had to go down to the darkness of an Alabama cell and bring these four lads to Brooklyn to get Harten and Divine on the same rostrum. There are a lot of people who are here and a lot who aren't who are going to talk about me for appearing here. But that doesn't matter. They talk about you wherever you go. That doesn't worry me. I want you to know however, . . . that Father Divine will not convert to me tonight nor I to him. . . . I want you to know that we're not here to do battle. But we are here for a com-

mon cause. For the cause of justice, liberty and righteousness.⁶⁵

In 1938 Harten hosted a meeting of the United Beauty Culturists Association of America at Holy Trinity. At the meeting Harten addressed the plight of domestic workers and promised ways to improve their lot.⁶⁶

In 1942 the *Amsterdam News* reported that two thousand people attended a meeting at Holy Trinity to hear Harten attack lynching and "Jim Crow" tactics throughout the country. The people attending the meeting voted to forward a resolution to President Roosevelt urging him to "use his high office to make the democracy for which we are fighting for abroad a reality for the 15 million Colored Americans." Harten later told the crowd that it was time for an African American to be elected to Brooklyn's 17th Assembly District. "We must endorse our own man. That will prevent the political leaders from endorsing one of us who would be a Negro handkerchief head Uncle Tom, political stool pigeon."⁶⁷

Despite all of the publicity that Harten received, he accomplished little. There was no follow-up in his campaigns, nor did he actively seek to forge any long-term alliance with his fellow clergy. Hence, he gained headlines but little in the way of solutions. Nevertheless, he used his church to organize people for numerous campaigns. In addition, he gained a great deal of news coverage and brought some of the problems African Americans faced to the attention of many New Yorkers. His greatest achievement was in becoming a militant voice for blacks and bringing to the fore the issue of police brutality and lack of black empowerment.

Theophilus Joseph Alcantara was another celebrated black minister of Brooklyn. Born in Guyana in the early part of the century, Alcantara came to the United States in 1921. He soon became a member of the newly formed African Orthodox Church (AOC). The AOC was organized by George Alexander McGuire, a follower of Marcus Garvey, who believed that blacks should reject the whiteness in Christianity and see God in their own likeness. McGuire was a former Episcopalian priest who left the priesthood in order to become a chaplain in Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. He contended that a black religious

hierarchy and liturgy should be created for people of African origins. AOC adheres to the Niceo-Constantinopolitan Creed. McGuire became the AOC's first bishop. As bishop he headed a diocese and was president of the diocesan synod.⁶⁸

In 1928 St. Simon, located at 300 Putnam Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, became the first AOC in Brooklyn. Soon after the establishment of St. Simon, other African Orthodox churches were formed in Bed-Stuy, including St. Michael's, St. Leonard's, St. Paul's, St. Mary the Virgin, and St. Ambrose. In 1935 Alcantara became rector of St. Ambrose.

Alcantara became a central figure in the fight for better housing in Bed-Stuy. He became the cochair of the Brooklyn Federation for Better Housing, a community group that fought for the abolition of slums and for a housing project. The group attempted to make government officials aware of the poor housing conditions for blacks in Bed-Stuy by conducting surveys and making them public. Moreover, the group lobbied government officials for support. When \$25 million was set aside by the federal government for slum clearance in New York City in the 1930s, Alcantara contacted Nathan Straus, administrator of the U.S. Housing Authority and Alfred Rheinstein, chair of the New York Housing Authority in order to lobby for part of the funds to go to Brooklyn. Eventually, the Kingsboro housing project was built in the early 1940s, no doubt in part due to the persistence of Alcantara.⁶⁹

Alcantara also became involved in leftist politics. He ran for the state assembly seat during the 1930s and 1940s on the American Labor Party ticket, a leftist political party that had ties with the Communist Party. In addition, Alcantara was part of a group of prominent Bed-Stuy residents who publicly called for the release of American Communist Party leader Earl Browder, who was jailed in the 1940s.⁷⁰ Like Miller and Harten, Alcantara was an important and militant voice in the black community.

Despite his efforts, Alcantara noted that he could not rally the support of his fellow clergy in his bid to develop a militant voice. Expressing surprise at his failure to win the seat for the 17th assembly district, he lashed out at his fellow black ministers, accusing them of supporting the incumbent Fred G. Moritt. Attempting to figure out what went wrong, the fiery minister told reporters:

I looked back over the innumerable happenings—the speeches, the requests by the opposition to back down from the assembly race in favor of Mr. Moritt, for which a \$6,000 patronage job would be my payment, the endorsements of honest white and outstanding Negro organizations. Looking back over all those things and sifting them with thorough investigations I can come to no other conclusion than that the Negro ministers of Brooklyn, the very same who publicly disdain politics, politicians and patronage, are in it up to their heads.

“Look around you. Name any minister . . .” After naming a few ministers who were exceptions, Alcantara went on to condemn the borough's black ministers for not supporting him.⁷¹

The individual and collective endeavors by ministers were noble at best but fell short of having a real impact on the deteriorating conditions of the ghetto. Although they could point to a few achievements, there were no important gains, largely due to the fact that there was no long-range effort to battle the ghetto's problems. Despite individual efforts on the part of a few of the black pastors of Brooklyn, these could not alleviate the dreadful living conditions in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, and the borough's other growing black communities. Ministers needed to collectively build a movement to address the lack of effort on the part of government officials to provide needed financial support to the community. People needed a collective voice from the black clergy to find solutions to the crises in housing, education, health care, and employment. The black clergy of Brooklyn did not attempt to organize and lead a campaign for financial assistance from the government in order to provide vital health facilities and other services to the children of Bed-Stuy. They did not become a force challenging the hegemonic power of the state. The ministers of Bed-Stuy lacked a class analysis. They did not speak of blacks as part of the economically exploited working class in a capitalist society. Nor was their talk of the detrimental impact of capitalism on the working poor. Instead, they held a view that they could help solve the problems of the ghetto poor through a policy of constructive engagement with government officials. Through a dialogue with people in power, pastors presumed they could win needed services for people in Bed-Stuy.

An important exception was Milton A. Galamison, pastor of Siloam Presbyterian Church. More than any minister in Brooklyn, he attempted to build a movement specifically for school integration that consisted of parents, ministers, and community activists and civil rights organizations. Besides forging alliances, Galamison was willing to use aggressive action to win integration.

Galamison, born in Philadelphia in 1923, received his undergraduate degree from Lincoln and a master's degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1947. Galamison was a "political independent." He embraced socialism and even praised the Communist leader Fidel Castro. Shortly after the Cuban Revolution, Galamison visited the island and was amazed at the feeling of enthusiasm and the love for Castro. He noted that "everywhere there was a feeling of enthusiasm and a sense of newfound freedom. The experience helped me to understand more than ever before what Moses meant to the Jewish people, what Chou En Lai meant to the Chinese people, what George Washington meant to the American people—this is what Fidel Castro meant to the Cuban people." Although not publicly endorsing communism, Galamison condemned capitalism for its failure to end hunger, for not giving "spiritual and moral drink to the thirsty," and for failing to abolish race and class divisions.⁷²

Coming to Siloam in 1948 at the age of twenty-five, Galamison soon asserted his opposition to segregation by refusing to pay a tax to the Brooklyn-Nassau Presbytery, which was attempting to build a Presbyterian church in Long Island where the Levittown private homes were being built. Noting that blacks could not buy the new homes, Galamison told the *Amsterdam News*, "We want to see the extension of the Presbyterian Church . . . but we cannot support movements into areas where we are not certain Negroes would be welcome."⁷³

In the late 1950s Annie Stein, Claire Cumberbatch, and Winston Craig, community activists and militant members of the Brooklyn branch of the NAACP, approached Galamison complaining that the organization was not doing enough to fight for school integration. They asked Galamison to join the fight to integrate the new junior high school on Marcy Avenue and Halsey Street. Galamison agreed and ran successfully for the position of chairperson of the Education Committee of the Brooklyn branch of the NAACP. He later won the presidency of the organization,

hoping to influence the group to take a strong position against the Board of Education's policy. During his tenure, Galamison attempted to force the board to come up with an integration plan and a date of implementation. He launched a campaign to force the resignation of Superintendent William Jansen, whom Galamison accused of not being in favor of school integration.⁷⁴

Unable to persuade the branch, Galamison left in 1959 and formed the Parents' Workshop for Equality in New York City Schools. Consisting of parents and community activists, the group held regular meetings and rallies at Siloam Presbyterian Church and published a newsletter to keep people informed of the its work, such as meetings with Board of Education officials and other activities and events.⁷⁵

In addition, the new organization took militant action, including a number of boycotts of schools, in order to force the board to integrate its schools. In one such boycott, more than one thousand parents kept their children out of schools in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Williamsburg, and Harlem and demanded that the board allow parents to send their children to schools of their choice. Another favorite tactic of the Parents' Workshop was to have parents show up at the school of their choice and attempt to register their children. The board responded to the movement for integration by offering a number of voluntary plans, including an open enrollment plan that offered black and Hispanic students the option of transferring to predominantly white schools.⁷⁶

However, Galamison's and the Parents' Workshop's most extensive effort for school integration came in the winter of 1964 when the group organized two citywide boycotts of schools. This effort began in 1963 when the Parents' Workshop joined forces with the Brooklyn branches of the NAACP and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Harlem Parents Committee and formed a new organization called the City-Wide Committee for School Integration. Milton Galamison was named president of the organization. He announced that the coalition would launch a one-day boycott in protest of the Board of Education's refusal to take concrete steps to integrate its schools.⁷⁷

A number of rallies were held at Siloam and other churches in order to organize parents; ministers urged parents to keep their children out of school, and the Parents' Workshop's newsletters called for support of the boycott. In addition, the large press cov-

erage before the boycott made many aware of the event. Some parents were frightened and thought there would be trouble the day of the boycott and decided not to send their children to school. Besides receiving support from parents and civil rights groups, ministers threw their support behind the efforts of the Parents' Workshop. Many churches throughout the city announced that their buildings would be used as "freedom schools," giving children instruction in math, reading, and black history.

In addition, some ministers were involved in attempting to organize clergy throughout the city for support of the boycott. In July 1963 William Jones, Benjamin Lowery, Sandy F. Ray, and Milton Galamison sent the following letter to the ministers throughout the city:

The times in which we live demand the Ministers of New York City help resolve the crisis in our public school system. To this end, the undersigned ministers, in conjunction with the Parents' Workshop for Equality in New York City Schools and other agencies, have agreed on a plan of action. . . . If you consent to have your church used as a "freedom school" to accommodate children who refuse to attend the public schools, please return the enclosed reply card.⁷⁸

On February 3, 1964, the anticipated boycott took place. Close to half a million children stayed out of schools. They stayed home, joined one of the three hundred picket lines, or attended one of the "freedom schools." Galamison threatened to launch a second boycott if the board refused to integrate the schools. Many who supported the first boycott withdrew from the second one, including the NAACP and the Urban League. They were angry that Galamison had called for the second boycott without their consent. Many also feared that a second boycott threatened their leverage to bargain with the board and would cost the support of white liberals. Despite this lack of support, a second boycott was carried out on March 15, 1964.⁷⁹

Although it was half the size of the first one, Galamison proved that he was able to mobilize thousands of people without the support of the traditional civil rights organizations. The boycotts gained Galamison a reputation as one of the most militant civil rights leaders in Brooklyn and catapulted him to the head of the school integration movement in New York.

Parishioners and Their Struggle to Make Bedford-Stuyvesant a Viable Community

As noted earlier, the black churches were more than just the pastors and ministers. Ordinary people in the churches actively sought ways to address the problems plaguing their community. In order to have a better picture of the churches, one must go beyond the pulpit and examine the activities of the parishioners. Through individual and collective action countless numbers of parishioners were responsible for making their churches into social welfare agencies. They contributed to their church and community by establishing programs, committees, and clubs and organizations that were involved not only in leisure activities but also social and welfare endeavors.

Combating juvenile delinquency became one of the major goals of the members of black churches. Many saw their religious institutions with the imperative mission of helping to protect children from crime, drugs, and other social evils that lead juveniles down a destructive path. By organizing programs for children and teenagers, parishioners attempted to present healthy alternatives to street life. By the 1930s several church members helped keep the church doors open past the usual service hours in order to offer social, recreational, and sporting events for black children. Accordingly, they made their churches into social service centers stressing moral uplift.

Women played a crucial role in the mission to save children. It is mainly through their efforts that the churches were able to offer a variety of services for young people. They were in the fore of attempting to mold the minds of children so they would remain on a straight and narrow course to success. There was nothing oppositional in their approach. Ordinary people in the black churches did not challenge the dominant political order. Instead, they found ways of objecting to the persistent notion of the larger society that black people were incapable of succeeding. As Evelyn Brooks Higgenbotham notes for black Baptist women, "Their efforts represented not dramatic protest but everyday forms of resistance to oppression and demoralization."⁸⁰

One of the most popular programs promoting moral uplift was scouting. For many, scouting represented "clean speech, clean sport, clean habits, and travels with a clean crowd."⁸¹ Many in the

church and community contended that scouting was a means of saving kids from the mean streets and instilling values such as discipline, hard work, gentility, respect for human life, and concern for others.

Scouting programs in Brooklyn's black churches were established in the first half of the twentieth century. Sometime between 1910 and 1925, Nazarene Congregational Church organized a scouting program. Both the girl and boy scouts were involved in recreational and "Christian endeavors." The boy scouts also had a musical program, including a band that played in annual school parades and for community organizations, thus connecting the children to their community.⁸²

Other churches followed suit, and between 1925 and 1945 St. Augustine Protestant Episcopal, St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal, First AME Zion, Mount Lebanon Baptist, and Cornerstone Baptist all established scouting programs. Herbert V. King organized the First AME Zion boy scout troop in 1933 and became its first scout master. Although the Reverend George Thomas was given credit for creating a boy scout unit at Brown Memorial Baptist, several parishioners, including Alexander Jones (the first scout master at Brown Memorial), dedicated their time and effort to recruit boys from the church and community and to meet with them on a regular basis and train them. It was through their efforts that the scouting group at Brown Memorial grew and became a viable unit, winning several scouting awards.⁸³

A group of dedicated members of Bridge Street AWME whose major task was to provide children with a "wholesome atmosphere" created several scouting units. Lawrence Fields, nicknamed "Pap" Fields by church members, organized a boy scout unit in December 1932. Pauline Fields, also a devoted member and wife of Lawrence, created a girl scout unit in 1935. Both Lawrence and Pauline created the Drum and Bugle Corps. The Fields trained both boys and girls corps members to play field, tenor, and bass drums, as well as the bugle. In 1939 Spencer Burton, who was assistant boy scout master to Lawrence Fields, organized a cub scout division. By the early 1940s, several people were involved in operating a Brownie, intermediate, and senior troop units.⁸⁴

The various scouting units at Bridge Street AWME met on certain days of the week in the basement of the church and spon-

sored several events. The adult leaders attempted to instill in the children religious values and a sense of humanitarianism. During scouting events, children were given a scripture lesson, sang religious songs, and recited a scouting pledge that emphasized trust in Jesus and striving to "make this old world better." Bridge Street claimed that its scouting program was successful, reaching a large number of children. Church officials claimed that between 1932 and 1957 more than five hundred boys had been trained as scouts and had advanced to higher ranks within the scouting units.⁸⁵

Thanks to three members of Concord Baptist Church—Paul Stewart, Miss. H. Smith, and Frances Phillips—by the 1930s the church's scouting program was one of the most active in Brooklyn. Stewart supervised the boy scout units, and both Smith and Phillips directed the girl scout division of the church. The scouts had a fife and drum group, a library, and facilities for arts and crafts. Both the girl and boy scouts of Concord used the local YMCAs throughout the year for sports. Additionally, the scouts left the city for sleep-away camp during the summer months, thus exposing children to the outdoors and nature.⁸⁶

Scouting also offered many parents the opportunity to become involved in activities that would help foster better relationships between them and their children. Parents became not just scout masters, cub masters, and other leaders but also den mothers and advisers on committees as well as participants in numerous scouting events. In 1945 the First AME Zion Church hosted the "Scout Parents Organization's Annual Honor Night Celebration." More than five hundred people attended. "Among the events of the evening were eight parent patrols contesting for the most beautifully-dressed table." This and similar activities helped promote a strong bond between parent and child.⁸⁷

Women played a significant role as den mothers. Den mothers served as positive role models for children. Their actions, including financial support for scouting, clearly demonstrated to children that they were caring adults who supported their children's efforts. They presented an image of concerned and reliable parents whose job was to bolster the positive activities of their children. Most importantly, they saw themselves as guardians of children, assisting in their religious development. Moreover,

through their actions they espoused a theory of self help, as black people who were capable of providing for the needs of their children. For example, the girl scout Parents Guild of Concord Baptist Church (which was formed in 1947 and later changed its name to the Mothers' Club) provided financial and moral support to the youth of the church. The club provided food for camping, drums, bugles, flags, and sports equipment. The group hosted a number of "mother and daughter" dinners, cake and pie sales, and fashion shows as means of raising money for the girl scout units. The group asserted that its major objective was to provide children with the opportunity to "grow up with an increasing spiritual enlightenment."⁸⁸

Along with scouting programs, members of churches established recreational and athletic programs. Members of Bethany Baptist established a basketball team. Paul Stewart of Concord organized and supervised baseball and basketball teams. Concord's boy scout unit, basketball team, and baseball teams serviced two hundred boys in the community. As members of the Brooklyn and Queens Athletic Association, Bethany and Concord teams competed with other teams in the city. H. Smith supervised a tennis team for girls while other members of Concord organized a dramatics club and choral groups that were open to both church members and nonmembers.⁸⁹

Besides recreation, several churches offered educational activities. Bridge Street AWME, Mount Lebanon Baptist, Berean Missionary Baptist, and Concord Baptist churches all had summer vacation schools that also offered children a host of activities. Black women were crucial in the creation and operation of vacation Bible schools, Bible classes, and Sunday school departments (see chapter 6).

Women saw their churches as institutions whose major mission was to help provide children with a proper education. It was to nurture them and motivate them to learn. People in the black churches were aware of the failure of the educational system to serve black children adequately and that intervention was needed to save them from delinquency. Through their religious activities, women were taking a prominent role in the fight to save black children.

By the 1930s several of Brooklyn's black churches, including Pentecostal churches, were attempting to involve children in

their activities by creating junior usher boards, children's youth choirs, sunshine bands, and youth day committees. Youth committees were particularly active in sponsoring numerous events for young people, including outings, musical and literary programs, and youth day services. Both Washington Temple Church of God in Christ and Cornerstone Baptist Church illustrate this point. To entertain the young people of the congregation, Washington Temple occasionally showed religious motion pictures. In addition, the young people of the Pentecostal church operated snack bars after Sunday services. The Youth Committee of Cornerstone Baptist Church showed religious movies, made sound movies, and presented dramatic performances.⁹⁰ It should be noted that women played a principal role in the youth committees of Brooklyn's black churches. For example, between 1930 and 1950 the vast majority of the presidents of the young people's auxiliaries were women. Thus, women were in the forefront of fighting juvenile crime by providing a host of activities for young people.⁹¹

These various activities clearly demonstrate that parishioners provided avenues to make children an important part of both the church and the larger community. Moral guidance and education as well as recreation were the means churches used to fight juvenile crime. Although the black churches accepted the notion that recreation was an important way to lessen juvenile delinquency, they did not see children as threatening elements in the community that needed to be kept off the streets. Instead, they viewed recreation as just one aspect of the fight against crime. Many in the churches saw black children as needing direction, moral guidance, and a sense of community.⁹²

From the 1920s to the 1950s the black ministers did little to stop the growing ghettoization of Bedford-Stuyvesant. With the exception of a few independent-minded black ministers, like Milton Galamison, the most active were political moderates who did not help establish any long-term movement, forge alliances with grass-roots organizations, or use aggressive tactics to address the problems of housing, health care, education, and employment. More than any other group of leaders, the ministers were in a position to build an independent movement to challenge federal, state, and city governments over the lack of health care facilities,

inferior schools, and other evils in the community. They missed their chance to save Bed-Stuy from deteriorating.

There is no doubt that the men who led Brooklyn's black churches should have organized themselves into a much more cohesive group, giving leadership by mobilizing people as a political bloc to assure the election of black candidates, work with grass-roots organizations, and guarantee large demonstrations in the streets. The ministers could have organized thousands of people inside and outside the churches and put pressure on city, state, and federal officials to do something about the dire conditions of Bedford-Stuyvesant and other poor black neighborhoods. Consequently, the record of black ministers as agents who could make a significant impact on Bedford-Stuyvesant during that neighborhood's rapid deterioration is at best disappointing. Perhaps unaware of their real potential strength as a group, the ministers remained a sleeping giant, not taking advantage of their resources to bring about significant change in Brooklyn. African Americans would have to wait until the 1960s before the ministers would act collectively to build an independent forceful protest movement.

Yet it would be inaccurate to conclude that black churches were completely ineffective in the struggle to improve conditions in Bed-Stuy. The countless number of members of Brooklyn's black churches have been an active part of community life by attempting to deliver services and leadership to the black community, especially to the young. Before there was a war on poverty and a commitment by federal, state, and city governments to address the problems of the urban poor, black churches were actively striving to improve the quality of life for blacks.

CHAPTER FIVE



*The Ministers' Committee for Job Opportunities
for Brooklyn and the Downstate Medical
Center Campaign*

Table 3 Black Churches of Brooklyn (1950-1952)

Churches (Dates organized)	Pastor	Church Members	Sunday School Members	Money Raised	Property
Baptist					
Antioch	M. Paylor	10,000	500	N.A.	125,000
Berean	H. L. Dames	1,301	201	N.A.	N.A.
Bethany	T. Goodall	3,606	500	N.A.	156,900
Bethel	L. T. Chapman	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Ebenezer (1913)	A. W. Wilson	650	100	N.A.	20,000
Evening Star	M. Logan	400	200	N.A.	18,000
First Baptist	Lynwood Taylor	N.A.	100	N.A.	N.A.
Friendship	V. B. Whitfred	450	75	N.A.	50,000
Holy Trinity	Thomas Harten	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Institutional (1912)	W. B. Scott	480	75	N.A.	50,000
Morning Dew (1936)	H. B. Womak	500	150	N.A.	12,000
Mount Carmel (1936)	J. Carrington	300	150	N.A.	12,000
Mount Lebanon	C. L. Franklin	4,500	500	N.A.	350,000
Mount Pisgah (1930)	S. A. Perry	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Mount Sinai (1919)	Paul E. Jones	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Mount Zion (1923)	A. Murphy	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
New Hope (1935)	J. P. Sawyer	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Pilgrim (1941)	F. D. Harris	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Rose Hill (1943)	Mrs. Carrberry	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
St. Paul Community (1929)	A. S. Smith	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Zion Baptist	Benjamin Lowery	2,562	398	N.A.	426,000
African Methodist Episcopal (AME)					
Bethel	Samuel Grumbs	330	190	N.A.	80,000
Bridge Street	R. C. Henderson	3,000	500	N.A.	275,000
People's Institutional	Charles Stewart	1,786	742	N.A.	85,000
Williams Mission	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Wright Memorial	Harry F. Berry	86	56	N.A.	10,000
AME Zion					
First AME Zion	William Patterson	9,006	550	N.A.	500,000
Naomi	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Varick Memorial	S. H. Williams	450	225	N.A.	75,000
Methodist					
Newman Memorial	D. W. Jones	659	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Congregational					
Nazarene	Vacant	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Protestant Episcopal					
St. Augustine	Charles England	1,189	381	N.A.	90,000
St. Phillip's	John Coleman	1,250	400	N.A.	100,000
Presbyterian					
Siloam	Milton A. Galamison	1,020	250	N.A.	110,000

SOURCES: Protestant Council of the City of New York, *Protestant Directory for Metropolitan New York* (1950, 1952).

NOTES



Introduction

1. The noted exception is Samuel Freedman, *Upon This Rock* (New York: Harper and Row, 1993).

2. The view that black Holiness-Pentecostalism culture was a form of militancy challenges the view that religious fundamentalism is a hindrance to militancy. See Gary Marx, *Protest and Prejudice* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

3. Although I use the terms *pastor* and *minister* interchangeably, there is an important distinction between the two. A pastor is an ordained minister who leads a church, while a minister is ordained and can conduct religious services but may not administer a church.

4. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folks* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1961), p. 144.

1. *The Formation and Development of Brooklyn's Black Churches from the Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries*

1. *New York Freeman*, November 7, 1885.

2. Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1986), p. 142.

3. A few exceptions are Carter G. Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1945); James H. Cone,

Black Theology and Black Power (New York: Seabury, 1969); W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899; rpt., New York: Schocken, 1967); and Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*.

4. Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press: 1978), pp. 97–110; Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 59–71.

5. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, pp. 128–34; Sobel, *Trabelin' On*, p. 85; Gary Nash, *The Urban Crucible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 204–12.

6. Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 157.

7. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, pp. 30–31.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 33.

9. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, pp. 231–39.

10. William Wells Brown, "Black Religion in the Post-Reconstruction South," in Milton C. Sernett, ed., *Afro-American Religious History: A Documentary Witness* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1985), pp. 240–41.

11. Harold X. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn* (New York: New York University Press, 1977), pp. 2–4.

12. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, pp. 4–5.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 6–8, 16–17.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9; David Ment and Mary Donovan, *The People of Brooklyn: A History of Two Neighborhoods* (New York: Brooklyn Arts and Cultural Association, 1980), p. 21; U.S. Census Bureau, Ninth Census (1870), Population Schedule; Tenth Census (1880), Population Schedule.

15. *The African Wesleyan Methodist-Episcopal Church Anniversary Book* (New York: Church Publication, 1980), pp. 13–18 (hereafter, *Bridge Street AWME Anniversary Book*); Leonard P. Curry, *The Free Black in Urban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 183.

16. *Bridge Street AWME Anniversary Book* (1980), pp. 16–21.

17. Bethel AME Church is sometimes called Bethel Tabernacle, Union Bethel AME, or just Bethel AME. *Black Churches of Brooklyn*, exhibition brochure (New York: Long Island Historical Society, 1984). The Long Island Historical Society changed its name in 1985 to the Brooklyn Historical Society.

18. Records of Church Incorporation at Kings County Clerk's Office: *Black Churches of Brooklyn and First African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Centennial Celebration, 1885–1985* (New York: Church Publication, 1985), p. 14.

19. Curry, *The Free Black in Urban America*, p. 177.

20. *Amsterdam News*, June 4, 1855.

21. *Berean Missionary Baptist Church Anniversary Book* (New York: Church Publication, 1976), pages unnumbered.

22. Stanley M. Douglas, "The History of the Siloam Presbyterian Church," in the *Centennial Yearbook of the Siloam Presbyterian Church (1849–1949)*; *Black Churches of Brooklyn*; *Amsterdam News*, July 8, 1925.

23. *Amsterdam News*, October 9, 1948, and October 21, 1950; *Black Churches of Brooklyn*.

24. For the early history of Concord Baptist Church see *Amsterdam News*, June 4, 1955; *Bethany Baptist Church Centennial Celebration: Commemorating Our History—Celebrating Our Hope, 1883–1983* (New York: Church Publication, 1983); *Black Churches of Brooklyn*; Douglas, "The History of Siloam"; *Book of Memories: The Holy Trinity Baptist Church, Inc., 1899–1972* (Hackensack, N.J.: Custombook, 1972); *New York Age*, February 13, 1892.

25. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac* (1889), pp. 96–103.

26. *New York Age*, October 25, 1906.

27. Douglas, "The History of Siloam"; *Bridge Street AWME Anniversary Book* (1980), p. 40.

28. *Amsterdam News*, June 4, 1955; Douglas, "The History of Siloam"; *Bridge Street AWME Anniversary Book* (1980), 53–54.

29. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, p. 14; *Weekly Anglo-African*, February 2, 1861.

30. *Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Brooklyn Sabbath School Union* (1858–59).

31. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac* (1891).

32. U.S. Census Bureau, Ninth Census (1870), Population Schedule.

33. *Ibid.*; *New York Times*, July 14, 1895; Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), p. 9.

34. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac* (1892), pp. 104–10; (1896); (1900), pp. 348–56.

35. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, pp. 23–24, 27.

36. *Amsterdam News*, January 17, 1943.

37. William Seraile, "Susan McKinney Steward: New York State's First African-American Woman Physician," in *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 9, no. 2 (July 1985): 27–40; *New York Times*, July 14, 1895, and June 5, 1887.

38. Maritcha Remond Lyons, "Memories of Yesterday: All of Which I Saw and Part of Which I Was: An Autobiography," pp. 5–38, Harry A. Williamson Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York (Harlem).

39. Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*, pp. 219–21; Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, p. 25.

40. *New York Age*, February 27, 1908.

41. *New York Age*, June 10, 1909.

42. Charles E. Wynes, "T. McCants Stewart: Peripatetic Black South Carolinian," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 80 (1979): 311–17.

43. Seraile, "Susan McKinney Steward," pp. 27-40; *New York Times*, June 5, 1887, and July 14, 1889.
44. *New York Age*, 2/27/1892.
45. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 16, 1892; *New York Times*, July 14, 1895.
46. *New York Age*, July 20, 1905.
47. *New York Globe*, February 1, 1885.
48. Maritcha Lyons to May Loeb, August 17, 1918 (Harry A. Williamson Papers).
49. *New York Globe*, February 1 and February 17, 1883; *New York Freeman*, October 10 and October 31, 1885.
50. *Annual Report of the African Civilization Society* (May 31, 1865).
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum Annual Report* (1912-13); Carleton Mabee, "Charity in Travail: Two Orphan Asylums for Blacks," *New York History* 55, no. 1 (January 1974): 55-77.
53. *Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum Annual Report* (1912-13).
54. *Brooklyn Directories* (1893-1918).
55. Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*, p. 196.
56. *The Twenty-Third Quadrennial General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Churches* (1908), p. 64.
57. *Berean Missionary Baptist Church Anniversary Book* (1976); *Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac* (1891); *Weeksville Then and Now* (New York: Society for the Preservation of Weeksville and Bedford-Stuyvesant History, 1983), p. 30.
58. *New York Freeman*, January 24, 1885; *Bridge Street AWME Anniversary Book* (1980), pp. 38-40.
59. *New York Globe*, March 31, 1883; *New York Freeman*, April 11, 1885.
60. *New York Globe*, February 3, 1885; *New York Age*, October 31, November 21, and December 5, 1891; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 17, 1892.
61. Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow Lowbrow* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 158.
62. *New York Age*, April 1, 1909. For Holy Trinity Baptist see *New York Age*, August 3, 1909. For St. Augustine see *New York Age*, February 20, 1892; *Bridge Street AWME Centennial Book: 1818-1918* (New York: Church Publication, 1919); *New York Freeman*, November 22, 1884. For Nazarene Congregational Church see *New York Age*, April 1, 1909; for Concord see *New York Age*, January 23, 1892.
63. For choir experts see *New York Age*, April 20 and June 1, 1905, April 2 and May 21, 1908. *Bridge Street AWME Centennial Book: 1818-1918*; Douglas "The History of Siloam"; *New York Globe*, August 23, 1924; *New York Freeman*, January 24 and October 17, 1885.
64. *New York Globe*, August 23, 1884; *New York Freeman*, November 22, 1884.

65. Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*, pp. 181-97.
66. C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 53; *Twenty-third Quadrennial General Conference* (1908), pp. 50-51.
67. Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*, pp. 180-82.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 219-21; *New York Age*, February 20, 1898, June 15, 1905, July 12 and July 19, 1906, and June 10, 1909; *Flatbush of Today* (1908; published on the occasion of the tricentennial celebration of the coming of the Dutch to Flatbush), p. 57.
69. *New York Globe*, September 22, 1883.
70. *New York Globe*, August 4, 1883, and February 2, 1884; *New York Age*, October 31, 1891.
71. *New York Freeman*, December 5, 1885, and February 27, 1886; *New York Globe*, September 27, 1884.
72. *Constitution and By-Laws of the Brooklyn Literary Union* (1886); *New York Age*, September 26, October 17 and 31, 1891, February 27 and March 26, 1908; *New York Freeman*, September 26, 1885, and February 27, 1886; and Douglas, "The History of Siloam."
73. Rufus L. Perry, *The Cushite; or, The Children of Ham, as Seen by the Ancient Historians and Poets* (published by the Literary Union in 1887, a copy of this paper is at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture); *New York Age*, October 31, 1891; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, September 17, 1892.
74. *Constitution and By-Laws of the Brooklyn Literary Union* (1886).
75. *Ibid.*; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 18, 1892.
76. *New York Age*, February 27, 1908.
77. Daniel Walker Howe, "American Victorianism as a Culture," *American Quarterly* 27 (December 1975): 521-31.
78. Levine, *Highbrow Lowbrow*, p. 199.
79. George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), pp. 1275-82.
80. Wyn Craig Wade, *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 119-39.
81. John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Knopf, 1988), pp. 238, 312-13.
82. Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, pp. 238, 312-313.
83. *Thirty-Fifth Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention USA Incorporated* (1915), pp. 234-35.

2. The Rise of Black Holiness-Pentecostal Culture in Brooklyn

1. *Amsterdam News*, January 18, 1947.
2. *Amsterdam News*, July 19, 1958.

3. George Hobart, "The Negro Churches of Brooklyn, N.Y.: Study Made in 1930-31" (New York: Brooklyn Federation of Churches and the Greater New York Federation of Churches, 1931), pp. 5-10; First Church of God in Christ (COGIC) reported 700 members in 1952; Overcoming COGIC reported 350 members (New York: Protestant Church Directory of Brooklyn, 1952), p. 95.

4. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 326.

5. Arthur E. Paris, *Black Pentecostalism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1982), pp. 17-18; Hans A. Baer and Merrill Singer, *African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), p. 148.

6. Baer and Singer, *African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century*, p. 150

7. E. Myron Noble, "Genesis of W. J. Seymour in Perspective," *MAR Gospel Ministries Newsletter* 10, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1990): 3.

8. *Ibid.*; James R. Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988), pp. 62-111.

9. Leonard Lovett, "Black Holiness-Pentecostalism" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1979), pp. 57-60. Neely Terry, who had invited Seymour to preach in Los Angeles, had been exposed to Holiness teaching while visiting Houston and wanted Seymour to become an associate pastor to the church. Noble, "Genesis of W. J. Seymour," pp. 4-6; Sherry Sherrod DuPree, *Biographical Dictionary of African American Holiness-Pentecostals, 1880-1990* (Washington, D.C.: Middle Atlantic Regional Press, 1989), pp. 207-208.

10. Elenora L. Lee, *C. H. Mason: A Man Greatly Used by God* (Memphis, Tenn.: Women's Department of COGIC), pp. 1-6; Lovett, "Black Holiness-Pentecostalism," pp. 4-5.

11. Charles Price Jones, "Autobiographical Sketch of Charles Price Jones, Founder of the Church of Christ (Holiness) USA," *Journal of Black Sacred Music* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1988): 52-58.

12. Morris E. Golder, *History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Published by Golder and Grace Apostolic Church, 1973), pp. 65-70, 139.

13. *Census of Religious Bodies, 1936, Church of Christ (Holiness) USA* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Commerce, 1940), p. 5. Divisive issues were not always racial. Mason and Jones split over the issue of speaking in tongues. Another issue dividing groups was the concept of the Trinity. According to many Holiness-Pentecostal groups (including COGIC, the United Holy Church of America, Inc., and Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas), God appears in

three forms: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Trinitarian doctrine, a major tenet in most Christian denominations, claims that there are three distinct personalities in the Godhead, each with a specific role.

However, by 1913 the Trinitarian view was under attack by some Holiness-Pentecostal leaders. Ministers who attended a 1913 Pentecostal camp gathering at Arroyo Seco in southern California questioned the validity of the Trinity. The Reverend Frank J. Ewart, a Pentecostal minister from the West Coast, asserted that the only personality in the Godhead was Jesus Christ and that the Father and Holy Spirit were only titles for God to reveal his personality. This belief, known as the "Jesus Only" or the oneness doctrine, was soon adopted by some Holiness-Pentecostal groups, including the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World and the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith. Lovett, "Black Holiness-Pentecostalism," pp. 90-94.

14. Elmer T. Clark, *The Small Sects in America* (New York: Abingdon, 1937), pp. 117-24; DuPree, *Biographical Dictionary*.

15. *Pentecostal Assemblies of the World* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1936), p. 36; *Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas; Statistics, Denominational History Doctrine, and Organization* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1940), p. 4; Lovett, "Black Holiness-Pentecostalism," pp. 70-71.

16. Lovett, "Black Holiness-Pentecostalism," pp. 76-79.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-84.

19. Wilbur L. Jones, "Tongue-Speaking (Glossolalia): A Biblio-Historical Account" (New York: Beulah Church of God in Christ Jesus, n.d.).

20. Jon Michael Spencer, *Protest and Praise* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), p. 153.

21. Spencer, *Protest and Praise*, p. 155.

22. Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 179-80.

23. Morris E. Golder, *The Life and Works of Bishop Garfield Thomas Haywood* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Published by Golder and Grace Apostolic Church, 1977), p. 23.

24. Charles Price Jones, "The History of My Songs," *Journal of Black Sacred Music* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1988): 62.

25. Mary Tyler, *The Bridegroom Songs*, (Indianapolis: Christ Temple Bookstore, n.d.), pp. 17, 35, 39, 91; Charles Price Jones, "The History of My Songs," p. 61.

26. Tyler, *The Bridegroom Songs*, p. 93.

27. Arthur W. Fauset, *Black Gods of the Metropolis* (New York: Octagon, 1970), pp. 17-18.

28. Robert C. Spellman and Mabel L. Thomas, *The Life, Legend and Legacy of Bishop R. C. Lawson* (Scotch Plains, N.J.: Published by the authors, 1983), p. 42; Bishop Smallwood Williams, *This Is My Story*, pp. 50–51.

29. G. Norman Eddy reported visiting numerous House of Prayer of Our Lord churches in Harlem and described a typical testimonial service at one such institution: "Perhaps the most distinctive thing about their services is the frenzied congregational participation. After a brief period of spontaneous singing, the young and old line up to take their turn at the microphone to offer testimony. It may be a long or short effort, but occasionally it becomes so emotional that a few lose control of themselves completely. They start to clap their hands while the speaker moves around in ever-increasing tempo until eventually he jumps high off the floor. He throws back his head as if from a violent spasm. His actions are contagious and those waiting in line to offer testimony begin to imitate him," G. Norman Eddy, "Storefront Religion," *Religion in Life* 28 (1958–59): 77.

30. Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 175.

31. Hobart, "The Negro Churches of Brooklyn," pp. 5–11.

32. *Protestant Church Directory of Metropolitan New York* (1948), pp. 136–37, *Protestant Church Directory* (1952), pp. 137–39; *Amsterdam News*, June 29, 1957.

33. Ithiel Clemmons and Alonza Johnson, "The History of the First Church of God in Christ" (New York: Published by the First Church of God in Christ, n.d.); *Amsterdam News*, May 30, 1964.

34. Clemmons and Johnson, "The History of the First Church of God in Christ."

35. Author interview with Ulysses L. and Louise Corbett, Brooklyn, April 20, 1990.

36. Author interview with Taffie Brannon, Brooklyn, July 25, 1990.

37. *Protestant Church Directory* (1950), pp. 142–50.

38. Blanche Redd, "History of Washington Temple Church of God in Christ, Inc. in Brooklyn New York" (New York: Church Publication, 1989); *Amsterdam News*, February 1, 1957.

39. *Protestant Church Directory* (1950), pp. 142–50; Charles Emmanuel Grace, popularly known as "Sweet Daddy Grace," was formerly a member of COGIC but left over financial differences with Charles Harrison Mason. Grace founded the United House of Prayer in the 1920s. The group stressed sanctification, baptism of the Holy Spirit, and healing. Fauset, *Black Gods of the Metropolis*, pp. 22–30; DuPree, *Biographical Dictionary*, pp. 104–105.

40. Author interview with Maritcha Harvey, Brooklyn, May 3, 1990 (Harvey is the daughter of Peter J. F. Bridges).

41. *Protestant Church Directory* (1963) and *Protestant Church Directory* (1966).

42. Author interview with Samuel Gibson, Brooklyn, May 8, 1990. Gibson had met Skinner at Mother Horn's church in the 1940s. He later joined Skinner's church in Newark and was one of the founding members of Deliverance Tabernacle in Brooklyn; DuPree, *Biographical Dictionary*, p. 251.

43. Arturo Skinner, *Nine Gifts of the Spirit* (Newark: Deliverance Evangelistic Center, 1975).

44. Author interview with Samuel Gibson; *Deliverance Voice* 9, no. 1 (January–February 1975); author interview with Henri Ann (Penny) Hooks, Brooklyn, August 22, 1990; Esther Hooks, *The Penny Hooks Story: God Specializes* (New York: Hooks Publishing, 1986), pp. 14–25; *Amsterdam News*, February 8, 1964.

45. Cynthia E. Hedgepeth, *Lord Why Me? The Making of an Apostle* (New York: Tabernacle of Prayer Publishing, 1989), pp. 32–52.

46. Hedgepeth, *Lord Why Me?* pp. 32–52.

47. Huey C. Rogers, *The Dynamics of Christian Faith* (New York: Total Truth Publications, 1982), pp. 7–17.

48. Author interview with Taffie Brannon; author interview with Maritcha Harvey.

49. Author interview with Morry Bryant McGuire, Brooklyn, July 25, 1990.

50. Author interview with Nettie Kennedy, Manhattan, May 24, 1986.

51. Author interview with Nettie Kennedy.

52. Author interview with Ulysses L. and Louise Corbett.

53. Lovett, "Black Holiness-Pentecostalism," p. 104.

54. Author interview with Maritcha Harvey.

55. Author interview with Evelyn Smith, Brooklyn, April 30, 1991.

56. T. J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *American Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (June 1985): 571.

57. Author interview with Taffie Brannon.

58. Author interview with Taffie Brannon.

59. Author interview with Maritcha Harvey.

60. Lafayette Avenue Church of God, *50th Anniversary, 1928–1978* (New York: Church Publication, 1978), p. 46.

61. Lafayette Avenue Church of God, *50th Anniversary*, p. 34.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 35–36.

63. Esther Hooks, *The Penny Hooks Story*, pp. 1–25; author interview with Penny Hooks.

64. Hooks, *The Penny Hooks Story*, pp. 1–25; author interview with Penny Hooks.

65. Author interview with Maritcha Harvey.

66. Ian Robertson, *Sociology* (New York: Worth, 1987), pp. 64–65.
67. Baer and Singer, *African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century*, p. 172; author interview with Maritcha Harvey.
68. Author interview with Samuel Gibson.
69. Author interview with Ruby Richards, Brooklyn, June 16, 1991.
70. Author interview with Ruby Richards.
71. *Church Directory of Greater New York* (1938); *Protestant Church Directory* (1944–1955); author interview with Maritcha Harvey.
72. Melvin Williams, *Community in a Black Pentecostal Church: An Anthropological Study* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974), p. 157.
73. Joseph R. Washington, Jr. *Black Religion* (Lanham, Mo.: University Press of America, 1984), p. 115.
74. Williams, *Community in a Black Pentecostal Church*, p. 162.

3. Brooklyn's Black Churches and the Growth of Mass Culture

1. *Amsterdam News*, September 20, 1941.
2. Lawrence Levine, "The Folklore of Industrial Society: Popular Culture and Its Audiences," *American Historical Review* 97, no. 5 (December 1992): 1369–99; Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 148.
3. Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), pp. 11–16; John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), pp. 4–8; Roy Rozenweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 208–21.
4. Sam J. Slate and Joe Cook, *It Sounds Impossible* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), pp. 41, 43–45, 49, 51, 57–58, 105–106, 149–51, 163–67.
5. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, January 26, 1907, and September 27, 1942.
6. Rozenweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will*, pp. 204–20; *New York Age*, January 26, 1907, and September 27, 1942; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 16, 1910.
7. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, January 26, 1907.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 16, 1910.
10. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 18, 1910.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.* Not all prominent citizens opposed the new establishments. Realtors who were putting up new buildings on Pitkin Avenue were not opposed because they could collect high rents for the double stores needed for movie houses. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, January 26, 1907.
13. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 21, 1918.
14. For example, the Brooklyn Apollo advertised a Little Rascals com-

edy short, along with "The Adventures of Galahad" and five cartoons. Saturday matinees were nearly an all-day affair, beginning at noon and lasting until five or six o'clock in the evening. By the late 1930s, Brooklyn residents were spending a great deal of their leisure time in movie palaces, engrossed in comedy, horror, western, romance, and cartoons. *Amsterdam News*, August 6, 1938, June 14, 1941, July 25, October 10, and December 19, 1942, February 27 and November 27, 1943, March 18, 1944, November 16, 1945, and January 25, 1947; *New York Age*, September 25, 1937, and September 10, 1938.

15. *New York Age*, September 10, 1938, October 28, 1939, and December 19, 1942. See also G. Williams Jones, *Black Cinema Treasures Lost and Found*, pp. 31, 203, and 215.

16. *New York Age*, October 28, 1939, and November 14, 1942; *Amsterdam News*, December 19, 1942.

17. *Amsterdam News*, February 16, 1946; *Amsterdam News*, Ike McFowler's "Brooklyn's Tavern Jottings," January 5, 1946.

18. *Amsterdam News*, July 26, 1947; *Amsterdam News*, McFowler's "Brooklyn's Tavern Jottings," June 1, 1946.

19. *Amsterdam News*, Clyde Williams's "Nite Life," March 18, 1944; *Amsterdam News*, February 24, 1945, and February 16, 1946.

20. *Amsterdam News*, April 28, 1959.

21. *Amsterdam News*, McFowler's "Brooklyn Tavern Jottings," February 16, June 22, and July 19, 1946, July 26, 1947, and April 8, 1950.

22. *Amsterdam News*, McFowler's "Brooklyn Tavern Jottings," February 16, June 22, and July 19, 1946, July 26, 1947, and April 8, 1950; *New York Age*, February 5, 1955.

23. *Amsterdam News*, McFowler's "Brooklyn Tavern Jottings," March 2 and June 8, 1946; *Amsterdam News*, September 13, 1952, and May 29, 1959.

24. *Amsterdam News*, McFowler's "Brooklyn Tavern Jottings," July 27, 1946. McFowler, in an interesting potential conflict of interest, also managed and presented entertainment groups. In June 1946, Ike McFowler Enterprises presented "Five Hilarious Sessions of Entertainment Each Week," including star musicians of radio, stage, and screen every Monday night. On Tuesday evenings there were big-name acts and an amateur contest. Sunday matinees featured a "great show," dance music, music by "John English and his Society Orchestra, Clint Smith and his Clintonians, and Rector (Wizard of the Strings) Baily and his sensational combo" (*Amsterdam News*, June 15, 1946).

Bedford-Stuyvesant became such a popular entertainment spot that black weeklies carried regular columns highlighting Brooklyn's nightlife. In the 1940s the *Amsterdam News* featured not only McFowler's column but also Clyde Williams's "Nite Life," and Tommy

Watkins's "Escapading in Brooklyn." The *New York Age* ran both Larry Douglas's "Swinging in Brooklyn" and Buddy Franklin's "Brooklyn After Dark."

25. *Amsterdam News*, November 16, 1946, and January 18 and 25, 1947.

26. U.S. Census Bureau, *Negroes in the United States, 1920-32* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1935), p. 525.

27. Lerone Bennett Jr., *The Shaping of Black America*, (Chicago: Johnson Publishing, 1975), pp. 221-22; *New York Age*, March 16, 1905, February 27, 1908, September 8, 1945; *Amsterdam News*, May 16, 1931, November 17, 1945, July 5, 1952, December 8 and 22, 1956. For hair and skin products see *New York Age*, April 15, 1944; *Amsterdam News*, October 14 and November 4, 1944, March 22, 1947, July 12, 1952, May 23, 1959. For Anthony George see *Amsterdam News*, July 14, 1945, and January 3, 1948.

28. L. Eldridge Cleaver, "Black Is Coming Back" in John H. Bracy Jr., ed., *Black Nationalism in America* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970), pp. 429-42.

29. S. Michelson, "The National War Veterans Association," WPA Research Papers, Schomburg Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York (Harlem); Harold X. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn* (New York: New York University Press, 1977), p. 9.

30. *New York Age*, June 24 and July 29, 1933.

31. *New York Age*, August 28, 1937.

32. *New York Age*, August 3, 1940.

33. *New York Age*, September 25, 1937.

34. Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, p. 153.

35. It should be noted that even before the turn of the century some black ministers and churches were involved in the temperance movement, condemning establishments that sold alcohol of morally corrupting African Americans. William T. Dixon of Concord Baptist was an advocate of prohibition. He addressed the Prohibition Party of Brooklyn, noting the negative impact alcohol had on the black community. Concord Baptist had a Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) that met on a regular basis, and a series of "Gospel Temperance" meetings were held at Siloam Presbyterian on Sunday evenings, while the WCTU of Berean Missionary Baptist Church met on Monday evenings. Bars, taverns, and other places that sold alcohol were blamed by these groups for corrupting the morals of African Americans. *New York Freeman*, October 17, 1885; *New York Age*, March 23, 1905, and February 27 and September 2, 1908.

36. *New York Age*, March 8 and 15, 1930; *Amsterdam News*, March 5 and 12, 1930; William H. Welty, "Black Shepherds: A Study of the Leading Negro Clergy in New York City, 1900-1940" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1969), p. 187.

37. *New York Age*, May 16, 1925.

38. Hans A. Baer and Merrill Singer, *African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), p. 177.

39. Darlene Clark Hine, *When the Truth Is Told* (Indianapolis: National Council of Negro Women, 1981), pp. 19-27; *Bridge Street AWME Centennial Book: 1818-1918* (1919), pp. 33, 37, 41.

40. *Amsterdam News*, June 4, 1955; *Bridge Street AWME Centennial Book: 1818-1918* (1919); *Bridge Street AWME Historical Brochure* (1951); *Church of Mount Sinai Sixtieth Year Retrospective* (New York: Church Publication, 1979); *Brown Memorial Baptist Fiftieth Anniversary Journal* (New York: Church Publication, 1966).

41. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac* (from 1920 to 1929); George Hobart, "The Negro Churches of Brooklyn" (New York: Brooklyn Federation of Churches and the Greater New York Federation of Churches, 1931).

42. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac* (1929); Hobart, "Negro Churches of Brooklyn"; *Cornerstone Baptist Church Sixtieth Anniversary Book* (New York: Church Publication, 1977); *Protestant Church Directory of Metropolitan New York* (1952); *New York Age*, April 3, 1943.

43. Hobart, "Negro Churches of Brooklyn"; *Church Directory of Greater New York* (1936); *Protestant Church Directory* (1945, 1950, 1952).

44. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, pp. 65-66; *Protestant Church Directory* (1945, 1950, 1952).

45. *Communities Population Characteristics and Neighborhood Social Resource*, vol. 2 (New York: Bureau of Community Statistical Services, Community Council of Greater New York, 1959).

46. *Cornerstone Sixtieth Anniversary Book* (1977); *Brown Memorial Fiftieth Anniversary Book* (1957); author interview with George Beard Sr. (member of Brown Memorial), Brooklyn, May 5, 1988; author interview with Rev. Clarence Norman Sr., pastor of First Baptist Church of Crown Heights, Brooklyn, February 8, 1988.

47. *Amsterdam News*, June 4, 1955; *Bridge Street AWME Sunday Bulletin* (May 18, 1952); *Bridge Street AWME Annual Women's Day Program* (May 5, 1957); *First AME Zion Church Bulletin*, "Tenth Anniversary of the Occupancy at Tompkins Avenue" (October 5, 1952).

48. *Amsterdam News*, February 3 and March 22, 1944, January 13, February 3, and June 2, 1945, December 2, 1950, and April 14, 1956; *Bridge Street AWME Anniversary Book* (1980); *Concord Weekly Bulletin* (October 13, 1957); *First AME Zion Bulletin* (October 5, 1952); Siloam Presbyterian Church brochure (no date); *Protestant Church Directory* (1950); *Brown Memorial Fiftieth Anniversary Book* (1957); First Church of God in Christ, "A Congregation Designed for the Eighties" (New York, n.d.).

49. For Intercultural Club, the First AME Zion Church, see *Amsterdam News*, January 26, 1946; for the Talent Guild of Siloam see *Amsterdam News*, December 2, 1950; for Mount Sinai see *Church of Mount Sinai Sixtieth Year Retrospective* (1979); for Concord's annual Spring Concert see *Amsterdam News*, May 6, 1950.

50. Baxter R. Leach, "Important Negro Churches in Brooklyn," *Amsterdam News*, October 10, 1942, December 2, 1946, and April 14, 1956.

51. Anthony Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound* (New York: Limelight, 1985), pp. xii-xvii; Kenneth Morris, "If I Can Just Make It In," in Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps, eds., *The Book of Negro Folklore* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1983), p. 322; Mellonee Burnim, "Music in the African-American Religious Tradition" (Paper presented at the conference on "African American Religion: Research Problems and Resources for the 1990s," May 26, 1990, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York/Harlem).

52. Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 180-88.

53. Paul Oliver, Max Harrison, and William Bolcom, *The New Grove: Gospel, Blues and Jazz* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986), p. 203.

54. Oliver, Harrison, and Bolcom, *The New Grove Gospel*, pp. 210-14; Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, pp. 174-79.

55. Author interview with Myra M. Gregory, Brooklyn, July 1, 1987. Ms. Gregory has been a member of Berean Missionary Baptist Church since 1912.

56. Author interview with Myra M. Gregory; *Bridge Street AWME Anniversary Book* (1980), p. 118; *Brown Memorial Baptist Fiftieth Anniversary Journal* (1966); *Cornerstone Sixtieth Anniversary Book* (1977); *Amsterdam News*, November 17, 1945.

57. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, p. 174. Wyatt T. Walker remarks, "The creation of Gospel music is a social statement that, in the face of America's rejection and economic privation, Black folks made a conscious decision to be themselves. It was an early stage of identity awakening and identity nourishing." Walker, "Somebody's Calling My Name": *Black Sacred Music and Social Change* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1979), p. 144.

58. *Amsterdam News*, August 16, 1941, and August 26, 1944; *New York Daily News*, January 30, 1965.

59. *Brown Memorial Baptist Fiftieth Anniversary Journal* (1966); *Cornerstone Sixtieth Anniversary Book* (1977); *Amsterdam News*, August 16, 1941, June 4, 1955, March 2, 1958, and May 4, 1963.

60. *Amsterdam News*, November 10 and 17, 1945.

61. *Amsterdam News*, May 10 and August 16, 1933, May 17, 1944, January 12 and November 17, 1945, March 22, 1947, and February 2, 1951.

62. *Brown Memorial Baptist Fiftieth Anniversary Journal* (1966); *Amsterdam News*, April 17, 1929, February 20 and July 20, 1957.

63. Watkins's "Escapading in Brooklyn," *Amsterdam News*, June 8, 1938.

64. Many churches built kitchens and served inexpensive meals after the morning service, and church clubs sponsored dinners. The St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal's June Birthday Club gave dinners in the lecture room of the church. On July 14, 1958, Friendship Baptist Church held a southern-style barbecue. The *Bridge Street AWME Sunday Bulletin* announced weekly dinners given by various clubs; *Amsterdam News*, June 10, 1944, June 3 and June 30, 1957, and June 14, 1958.

65. *Amsterdam News*, April 21, 1934, May 4, 1940, and August 25, 1956; *First AME Zion Centennial Celebration Book, 1885-1985* (New York: Church Publication, 1985), p. 29; *Brown Memorial Baptist Fiftieth Anniversary Journal* (1966); *Bridge Street AWME 187th Anniversary Book* (New York: Church Publication, 1953).

66. *Bridge Street AWME 187th Anniversary Book* (1953).

67. *Amsterdam News*, September 17, 1955, and November 2, 1951; COGIC "On the Hill" Banquet Program: *Banquet Celebrating 50 Years in the Ministry* (September 28, 1974).

68. E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken, 1954), p. 56.

69. *Annual Senior Choir Tea Program* (Bridge Street brochure, November 5, 1951); *Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Bridge Street AWME Sunday Bulletin* (February 4, 1958). The sacred even spread into political affairs. In a protest rally sponsored by the Brooklyn branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1959, an invocation was given by Father Julian Dozier of St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal, and the benediction was given by Rev. Richard Gay of Concord Baptist (Brooklyn Branch of the NAACP, Protest Rally program, May 19, 1959).

70. *Amsterdam News*, May 24, 1941, February 8, 1947, and December 4, 1948; *New York Age*, May 27, 1939.

4. The Failure to Make Things Better: Brooklyn's Black Ministers and the Deterioration of Bedford-Stuyvesant

1. There were a few exceptions, such as F. D. Washington and John E. Bryant of COGIC on the Hill. Washington was a noted Republican, and both were active in civic affairs. Hans A. Baer and Merrill Singer, *African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), p. 176. A list of the Ministerial Alliance of Brooklyn can be found in the Milton A. Galmison Papers at the State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

2. It should be noted that a close examination of the churches is limited because most black churches did not keep records or evaluate their own social programs. However, the black press serves as a useful source because it reported weekly activities of the churches and ministers. For instance, both the *Amsterdam News* and the *New York Age* provided weekly columns on the various church activities. Moreover, interviews, the directories of the Protestant Council of Churches, and various church publications provided limited but beneficial information on the churches and ministers.

3. David Ment and Mary Donovan, *The People of Brooklyn: A History of Two Neighborhoods* (New York: Brooklyn Arts and Cultural Association, 1980), pp. 6–7.

4. Ment and Donovan, *The People of Brooklyn*, pp. 32–37; Harold X. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn* (New York: New York University Press, 1977), pp. 52–55.

5. *Communities Population Characteristics and Neighborhood Social Resource*, vol. 2 (New York: Bureau of Community Statistical Services, Community Council of Greater New York, 1959), pp. 107–109.

6. Ernest Quimby, "Black Political Development in Bedford-Stuyvesant as Reflected in the Origins and Role of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation," (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1977), p. 87. A 1929 Welfare Council report asserted that the housing conditions for many blacks in Brooklyn were terrible. Many lived in frame buildings without fire escapes. Some buildings were turned into single-room apartments, causing overcrowding. Toilets were found in the yards of some tenements and in other buildings were located in the halls, forcing families to share them (Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, pp. 118–19).

7. Quimby, "Black Political Development in Bedford-Stuyvesant," p. 111.

8. *Amsterdam News*, October 15, 1938. In one case in 1941, tenants living in a tenement on Myrtle Avenue in Bed-Stuy were so fed up with their living conditions that they launched a rent strike. The tenants asserted that there was no central heating in the building. In addition, the building had loose wiring and gas and oil leaks and was infested with rodents and roaches. *New York Age*, February 26, 1941.

9. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, p. 119.

10. *Amsterdam News*, September 17, 1949.

11. *Communities Population Characteristics* 2:107–108.

12. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, p. 119.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–15.

14. "Labor Conditions of American Negroes," Brooklyn Urban League Industrial Department Report, June 15 and 16, 1930 (New York: Brooklyn Urban League, 1930).

15. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, pp. 186–87.

16. *Communities Population Characteristics* 2:106. Structural changes added misery to the employment situation for blacks in Brooklyn. Manufacturing employment declined as businesses shifted from the Northeast to the South, West, and other parts of the country. Many places closed, relocated, or cut back production. The Brooklyn Navy Yard serves as a good example. Although the Navy Yard was well equipped to build war ships, the federal government attempted to reduce its costs by turning to private shipyards to build ships. The cutback eventually affected thousands of workers, including eight hundred who lost their jobs when laid off from the Navy Yard clothing store. Many were black workers residing in Brooklyn who were the last hired and had the least seniority, Joshua Brown and David Ment, *Factories, Foundries and Refineries: A History of Five Brooklyn Industries* (New York: Brooklyn Educational and Cultural Alliance, 1980), p. 68; *Amsterdam News*, April 4, 1953, and June 27, 1964.

17. *Communities Population Characteristics* 2:106–107.

18. *Report on Hospital Needs of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Area* (New York: Hospital Council of Greater New York, 1953), pp. 5–8; Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, pp. 202–204.

19. Bedford-Stuyvesant Health Congress, *Newsletter* (New York: Health Press, Spring 1953). A copy of the newsletter is found at the Brooklyn Historical Society.

20. *Amsterdam News*, February 2, 1952; Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, 203–204.

21. *Amsterdam News*, November 14, 1945.

22. Kenneth Clark, "Educational Factors in the Prospects for School Integration in New York City" (Speech delivered at the meeting of "Children Together," New York City, December 4, 1956).

23. Parents' Workshop for Equality in New York City Schools, "Fact Sheet on Brooklyn Junior High Schools—Open Enrollment" (January 1961).

24. Parents' Workshop for Equality in New York City Schools, "Fact Sheet on Brooklyn Elementary Schools—Open Enrollment" (January 1961).

25. *The Daily Worker*, June 19, 1956.

26. Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars*, (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 256.

27. Teachers Union, "Discrimination Against Negro Teachers" (1949); Teachers Union, "Employment in New York Schools in Order to Correct the Situation Revealed by a Survey Conducted by the Teachers Union (June 14, 1955); Jack Greenberg, February 25, 1952. Most of the papers of the Teachers Union are located in the Teachers Union Collection, Cornell Labor Archives, Cornell University (School of Industrial Labor), Ithaca, N.Y.

28. "Report to the Honorable F. H. LaGuardia on the Conditions existing in the Bedford-Stuyvesant Area of Brooklyn in Connection with the Charges made by the Kings County Grand Jury in its Presentment of August 1943: Part One," Police Commissioner, pp. 17-19. A copy of this report is found at the Brooklyn Historical Society.

29. *Bedford Home Owners News* 1, no. 5 (August 1936).

30. *Amsterdam News*, November 20, 1943.

31. Report of the Grand Jury of Kings County (August 1943). A copy of the report is found at the Brooklyn Historical Society.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Communities Population Characteristics* 2:103-105; "Report to the Honorable F. H. LaGuardia on the Conditions existing in the Bedford-Stuyvesant Area of Brooklyn, Part One," pp. 17-19.

34. *Communities Population Characteristics* 2:103-105; Report to the Honorable F. H. LaGuardia on the Conditions existing in the Bedford-Stuyvesant Area of Brooklyn, Part One."

35. As early as February 1933 the *Amsterdam News* reported that Bed-Stuy had been selected as a "stamping ground for two hundred additional policemen who began their duties on Monday with purposes of stamping out crime." It was asserted that police went on a rampage, rounding up and arresting innocent people. "Negroes, Puerto Rican and white workers in Harlem and Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant district seethed with anger yesterday as hordes of detectives and police swarmed into their districts arresting innocent citizens by the scores in a pre-election dragnet ordered by acting Mayor Vincent R. Impelitteri." According to the article, some thirty blacks and Hispanics were arrested indiscriminately in Bed-Stuy on charges of vagrancy. "Police Brutality," Schomburg Clippings, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York (Harlem).

36. "Police Brutality," Schomburg Clippings; *New York Age*, August 15, 1936; "The Struggle for Negro Rights in Brooklyn: Report by Carl Vedro for the County Committee." A copy of this report is at Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York (Harlem).

37. Milton Galamison to Archie Hargraves, Gardner C. Taylor, Henry Hucles, Benjamin Lowery, Henri Deas, and Sandy Ray (letter dated May 14, 1959); "Protest Rally, Tuesday May 19th," Flyer in the Galamison Papers, State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

38. "Brownsville Boys Club of Brooklyn, City of New York" (New York: New York City Department of Parks, September 1954). A copy of this paper is found at the Brooklyn Historical Society.

39. "Brownsville Boys Club of Brooklyn" (September 1954).

40. *Communities Population Characteristics* 2:113-19; "Reports to the Honorable F. H. LaGuardia, Mayor of the City of New York on Conditions existing in the Bedford-Stuyvesant Area of the Borough of Brook-

lyn in Connection with the Charges made by the Kings County Grand Jury in its Presentment of August 1943: Part Two," Parks Commissioner, pp. 1-3; *Amsterdam News*, July 8, 1944.

41. *Communities, Population Characteristics* 2:116-19.

42. New York City Department of Parks, "Saint John's Recreation Center in Brooklyn" (1956).

43. *Protestant Church Directory* (1945, 1950, 1952); Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, pp. 65-66.

44. *First AME Zion Centennial Celebration Book, 1885-1985* (19??), p. 14; author interview with Rev. Gardner C. Taylor, Brooklyn, August 1, 1988; *Amsterdam News*, October 17, 1936, and October 30, 1948; *New York Age*, November 24, 1936.

45. *Amsterdam News*, September 17, 1949, and November 4, 1950; Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, p. 182n.

46. Sandy F. Ray, *Journeying Through a Jungle* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979), pp. 15-23; *Cornerstone Sixtieth Anniversary Book* (1977); *Amsterdam News*, October 2, 1948.

47. Author interview with Gardner C. Taylor; *Amsterdam News*, February 15, 1958, and January 27, 1962. Both Hilton L. James of Berean Missionary Baptist and John M. Coleman of St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal were also active Democrats (see *Amsterdam News*, July 24, 1948, and July 23, 1955).

48. *Amsterdam News*, April 16, 1949.

49. Andrew Michael Manis, *Southern Civil Religions in Conflict* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), pp. 53-54.

50. *Amsterdam News*, August 22, 1953.

51. Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), p. 200.

52. *Amsterdam News*, December 9, 1950, and August 3, 1957.

53. Gardner C. Taylor, Speech before the Board of Education Public Hearing, 1959 (the speech is found in the Special Library at Teachers College, Columbia University); Gardner C. Taylor to members of the Board of Education, June 18, 1958.

54. The membership list of the Interdenominational Ministers Alliance is found in the Galamison Papers, State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin; author interview with Gardner C. Taylor; *Amsterdam News*, December 26, 1953, and January 14, 1950.

55. *Amsterdam News*, December 22, 1958.

56. *Amsterdam News*, December 26, 1953.

57. *New York Age*, May 22, 1943.

58. *Ibid.*

59. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, pp. 93, 102-103.

60. William H. Welty, "Black Shepherds: A Study of the Leading

Negro Clergy in New York City, 1900–1940 (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1969), pp. 189–93.

61. Welty, "Black Shepherds." pp. 189–93; *New York Age*, March 20 and March 31, 1926.

62. *New York Age*, April 3, 1926.

63. *Amsterdam News*, January 18, 1928.

64. *New York Age*, August 1, 1936.

65. *Amsterdam News*, September 11, 1937; for the Scottsboro Boys see the *New York Age*, September 24, 1938.

66. Welty, "Black Shepherds," pp. 189–94; for the rally see the *New York Age*, September 11, 1937.

67. *Amsterdam News*, February 21, 1942.

68. *Amsterdam News*, June 5, 1948.

69. *New York Age*, August 20, 1938; *Amsterdam News*, July 1, 1939, and February 14, 1942.

70. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, p. 103; *New York Age*, August 27, 1938; *Amsterdam News*, January 1 and October 15, 1938, and April 29, 1944.

71. *Amsterdam News*, November 19, 1938.

72. Milton A. Galamison, untitled paper on the Cuban Revolution, April 20, 1961 (in the Galamison Papers, State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin).

73. *Amsterdam News*, January 28, 1950.

74. Author interview with Rev. Milton A. Galamison, Brooklyn, October 21, 1988.

75. Author interview with Milton A. Galamison.

76. *Amsterdam News*, September 19, 1958, and April 15, 1962; Ravitch, *The Great School Wars*, p. 262.

77. Ravitch, *The Great School Wars*, pp. 273–74.

78. Ministers' Letter, July 19, 1963. A copy of the letter is found in the Galamison Papers, State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

79. Ravitch, *The Great School Wars*, pp. 278–79.

80. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 2.

81. Baxter R. Leach, "Colored Boy Scouts of Brooklyn," WPA Research Papers, Schomburg Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

82. *Amsterdam News*, July 1, 1925.

83. Herbert V. King became the first African American to hold the post of Commissioner of the Bed-Stuy District Boy Scouts of America. *Amsterdam News*, January 16, 1954; *Brown Memorial Baptist Fiftieth Anniversary Journal* (1966).

84. "Twenty-fifth Anniversary Boy Scouts of Bridge Street" (pamphlet, February 9, 1958); *Bridge Street AWME Anniversary Book* (1980), pp. 129–30.

85. *Amsterdam News*, October 24 and November 10, 1945, January 18, 1954; "Twenty-fifth Anniversary Boy Scouts of Bridge Street" (February 9, 1958); "Boy Scout Family Night" (pamphlet, March 30, 1958); *Bridge Street AWME Anniversary Book* (1980), p. 129.

86. Louis R. Bryan, "Concord Baptist Church Sunday School," WPA Research Papers, Schomburg Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; *Yearbook of the Churches of Brooklyn* (New York: Brooklyn Federation of Churches, 1930–31), p. 70.

87. *Amsterdam News*, November 10, 1945.

88. For Concord see *Amsterdam News*, June 1, 1955; for Bridge Street AWME see *Bridge Street AWME Sunday Bulletin*, "Boy Scout Family Night" (March 30, 1958); "Twenty-fifth Anniversary Boy Scouts of Bridge Street AWME Church" (pamphlet, February 9, 1958).

89. Bryan, "Concord Baptist Church Sunday School."

90. *Protestant Church Directory* (1952); *Amsterdam News*, January 15 and May 28, 1949, and January 14, 1958.

91. *Yearbook of the Churches of Brooklyn* (1930–31), pp. 70–193; *Church Directory of Greater New York* (1939–40), pp. 103–57; *Protestant Church Directory* (1950), pp. 82–138.

92. Author interview with George Beard, Jr., Brooklyn, October 27, 1988.

5. *The Ministers' Committee for Job Opportunities for Brooklyn and the Downstate Medical Center Campaign*

1. Some of the few works that focus on northern as well as southern civil rights campaigns are David Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: William Morrow, 1986); August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, *CORE: A Study of the Civil Rights Movement, 1942–1968* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Alan B. Anderson and George W. Pickering, *Confronting the Color Line: The Broken Promise of the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986).

2. Meier and Rudwick, *CORE*, pp. 199–200.

3. Author interview with Oliver and Marjorie Leeds, Brooklyn, August 11, 1988; Meier and Rudwick, *CORE*, p. 184.

4. Author interview the Leeds; Meier and Rudwick, *CORE*, p. 200.

5. Author interview with the Leeds; *New York Times*, July 11, 1963.

6. Author interview with the Leeds; *New York Times*, July 16, 1963; *Amsterdam News*, July 16, 1963.

7. Same as note 6.