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Earl Wright II[a]
[a] Department of Sociology, Texas Southern University, Houston, Texas, USA

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BEYOND W. E. B. DU BOIS: A NOTE ON SOME OF THE LITTLE KNOWN MEMBERS OF THE ATLANTA SOCIOLOGICAL LABORATORY

Earl Wright, II

Department of Sociology, Texas Southern University, Houston, Texas, USA

Between 1895 and 1924 Atlanta University sponsored yearly investigations into the social, economic, and physical condition of Blacks and hosted conferences where the findings were presented. With the appointment of William Edward Burghardt Du Bois as director of the investigations in 1897 the unit soon became the first American school of sociology. Unfortunately, the contributions of members of the school beyond Du Bois remain buried within the hundreds of pages of the Atlanta University Publications. This inquiry provides examples of three groups of contributors to the research program at Atlanta University—professionally trained social scientists, citizen researchers, and university students.

Between 1895 and 1924 Atlanta University sponsored yearly investigations into the social, economic, and physical condition of Blacks and hosted conferences where the findings were presented. Established by president Horace Bumstead and trustee George G. Bradford in response to the need for objective scientific study of Blacks making the transitions from slavery to freedom and rural to urban life, the sociological research program of the small liberal arts Black college, now known as Clark Atlanta University, began its ascension towards sociological lore with the appointment of William Edward Burghardt Du Bois as director in 1897. Under Du Bois' guidance the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, the moniker bestowed on scholars engaged in sociological activity at Atlanta University between 1895 and 1924, made numerous contributions to the discipline and should be

Address correspondence to Earl Wright, II, Department of Sociology, Texas Southern University, 3100 Cleburne St., Houston, TX 77004, USA. E-mail: wrighte@tsu.edu

included in the small cannon of major sociological schools that impacted the discipline during its formative years in the United States. Specific contributions achieved by the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory include its status as (1) the first American school of sociology; (2) the first school to institutionalize method triangulation; (3) the first school to institutionalize theory triangulation; (4) the first school to institutionalize the use of insider researchers; (5) the first school to institutionalize the public acknowledgement of the limitations of its research; and, arguably, (6) the first school to engage in the study of criminology/criminal justice in the United States (Wright 2002a,b,c; Gabbidon 2007, 1996). Despite these achievements, the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory is not recognized in contemporary introduction, theory, or methods textbooks. In fact, Atlanta University, as an institution, is only noted in sociology textbooks as an addendum to entries on the career of Du Bois. In addition to the lack of recognition of the school the contributions of members of the sociological laboratory beyond Du Bois are, at best, relatively unknown, and, at worst, remain buried within the hundreds of pages of the Atlanta University Publications. While it is true that Du Bois is the most prominent and important figure associated with the school's sociological research program, it would be a misnomer to suggest that he single-handedly elevated the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory to the point that it has now replaced the Chicago School as the first American school of sociology (Wright 2002a). Although Du Bois directed the studies for sixteen years, his collaborative research efforts with professionally trained scholars, citizen researchers, and undergraduate and graduate students produced sizable portions of data that contributed to the school's massive offerings to the discipline. Unfortunately, the contributions of many lesser-known researchers to the Atlanta University studies have been rendered invisible, in part, because of Du Bois' large shadow. The contributions of lesser known Atlanta Sociological Laboratory researchers are further complicated by the fact that no historical record of the lives of the majority of these individuals exists. While the majority of researchers associated with Du Bois' program may never be fully known, publication records cite the participation of numerous well-known persons including Jane Adams (Hull-House Settlement), Franz Boaz (Columbia University), James M. Colson (Virginia Normal & Collegiate Institute), Edward Cummings (Harvard), Eugene Harris (Fisk University), L. M. Hershaw (1886 Atlanta University graduate), John Hope (Atlanta Baptist College), Florence Kelley (Hull-House Settlement), Georgia Swift King (1874 Atlanta University graduate), Kelly Miller (Howard University), Mary Ovington (Greenpoint

Settlement), Mary Church Terrell (Civil Rights Activist), George A. Towns (Atlanta University), Booker T. Washington (Tuskegee Institute), and Richard R. Wright (University of Pennsylvania). Extensive analysis of the contributions of the well-known persons listed above to the Atlanta University studies is a worthwhile endeavor, but falls beyond the scope of this inquiry. Instead, what follows is an examination of two individuals and one group who are representative of the contributors to the first American school of sociology, the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory.

BEYOND W. E. B. DU BOIS

Monroe Nathan Work

Monroe Nathan Work is representative of researchers associated with the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory whose professional training in sociology and affiliation with an institution of higher learning made them ideal candidates for participation in Du Bois' proposed 100-year course of study on Blacks in America. Born in 1866 to ex-slaves, Work delayed his secondary education until the age of 23 because of his commitment to serving as the primary care provider for his aged parents. After being relieved of his care giving responsibilities he vigorously pursued an education. In 1892, at the age of 26, he received the high school diploma and over the next few years worked in the teaching, ministry, and farming professions before deciding to pursue college-level work. Entering the University of Chicago in 1898, Work earned the Bachelor of Philosophy degree in 1902 and the Master of Arts degree in Divinity from the Department of Sociology in 1903. According to Jessie P. Guzman (1949), Work was "the first Negro to receive [the latter] degree from the University" (p. 433). While he never received the doctorate, Work and Richard R. Wright, Ph.D. "were the first trained Negro sociologists. Though Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois was the first working in this field, his formal training had been mainly in history" (Guzman 1949, p. 435). Additionally, Work and Wright were the first in what would become a lineage of Blacks who would receive graduate training in sociology at the University of Chicago with a research emphasis on the Black community.

During his time at the University of Chicago "Work became convinced of the power of sociological methods to improve the lot of Black people in America. 'It was then,' Work explained, 'that I dedicated my life to the gathering of information, the compiling of exact knowledge concerning the Negro' " (Mc Murry 1980, p. 334). Work's

attraction to the relatively young discipline was similar to that of many Blacks during the early 20th century. For them, sociology was viewed as a tool by which American prejudice, discrimination and Jim Crow could be researched, analyzed, and dealt a lethal blow (Bernard 1948). One could find no better graduate program for training in this type of work at the turn of the century than the University of Chicago's Department of Sociology.

Some of the sociologists at the University of Chicago who influenced Work were Albion Small, W. I. Thomas and C. R. Henderson. Despite the impact of these first generation Chicago sociologists on the young scholar, "perhaps the greatest influence on Work during his years at Chicago was his research association with W. E. B. Du Bois through the Atlanta Studies" (McMurry 1980, p. 334). So strong was Du Bois' influence that "Work's desire to continue [working with the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory] was probably a major factor in his decision to accept a position at Georgia State Industrial College in Savannah, [now known as Savannah State University]" (McMurry 1980, p. 334). Over the course of his academic career, three of Work's research reports appeared in the Atlanta University Publications.

Work's contributions to the Atlanta University Publications include reports on religion and crime that were published in the 1903 and 1904 monographs and a 1917 offering on economic cooperation. Work's singular contribution to the 1903 study was a coauthored piece with Du Bois titled, "The Middle West, Illinois," that examined the Black church in the Chicago metropolitan area. One of the findings of this report indicated that churches were carrying massive debt due, in part, to a lack of college trained ministers. Data supporting this position were received from church attendees who indicated a high rate of drunkenness and immorality on the part of their preachers. This discovery impacted the major conclusion of the article—disillusionment over the fact that young Blacks were not involved in church activities in as great a rate as older members preferred. The data collected by Work were useful as they supported the singular resolution of the 1903 Atlanta University Conference which called for the strengthening of the ideals of life and living among Blacks in America.

In the 1904 Atlanta University Publication Work contributed both a single and coauthored report. The single authored report, "Crime in Cities," includes an examination of existing statistics concerning Blacks and the criminal justice system in urban centers including New York, NY, St. Louis, MO, Washington DC, Savannah, GA and Chicago, IL. This report produced two noteworthy findings challenging the existing beliefs concerning Blacks and the criminal justice

system. First, it was noted that there had been a decline in the amount of crime committed by Blacks over the previous ten years. Heretofore, the existing scholarly literature included data supporting the position that there had been an increase in the number of crimes committed by Blacks over the previous decade. Second, Work presented data debunking the notion that the amount of crime committed by Blacks in the North was higher than that committed by Blacks in the South. This "urban coon" theory was grounded in the misnomer that Blacks in the American North were more violent than their counterparts in the American South and that crime in the American North had increased because of the mass migration of southern Blacks to cities like Chicago, Detroit and Cleveland and their inability to successfully adapt to their new urban surroundings. Work's second report in this publication, "Atlanta and Savannah," was coauthored with H. H. Proctor and provided data highlighting the unfair treatment of Blacks sojourning through the Georgia criminal justice system. For example, Work and Proctor present data indicating that while 732 Blacks were arrested in 1903, 61% of the cases, 446, were dismissed. The authors concluded that Blacks were the victims of prejudice and stereotyping because the primary reason for their arrest was "suspicion," largely because of their race. In addition to examining the questionable arrest patterns of the state's two largest cities, the authors proposed that the causes of "legitimate" Black crimes were ignorance, drunkenness, and the lack of philanthropic agencies to assist the cities in their efforts to reduce crime through the establishment of social welfare programs and activities. While it is not explicitly stated, it is plausible that the data garnered from this report were useful in supporting conference resolutions noting the unfair treatment of Blacks in the courts of Georgia and an admonition that the eradication of crime committed by Blacks could be furthered through moral uplift.

Work's final offering to the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory was the 1917 report, "Cooperation and Georgia's New Economic Conditions." In this report he argues that the social, economic, and health conditions among Southerners, regardless of race, were worsening because of the deleterious effects of the first world war. While acknowledging the destitute condition of Whites in the South, Work suggests that "Negroes in some respects are the ones who are economically and socially the most disadvantageously situated" in times of crisis (Brown 1917, p. 20). The means by which to overcome the economic hardship experienced by Blacks, he argued, was through individual, group, and interracial cooperation. While individual cooperation could be actualized through the teaming of Blacks to start

businesses after conducting the necessary research to determine the level of demand, Work called on Blacks to engage in immediate individual cooperation by patronizing Black owned businesses. Speaking to the potential economic power that Black businesses could wield if patronized by Blacks at the same rate as their White counterparts, Work states, "A rough estimate indicates that for each dollar Negroes are spending with Negro business concerns, they are probably spending one hundred dollars with White business concerns" (Brown 1917, p. 22). Reversal of this trend could result, according to Work, in the establishment and strengthening of Black businesses that could rival and exceed in quality those run by Whites. Work also promotes the idea of group cooperation among Blacks. Again, he references the possibility of improved health, work and educational opportunities for Blacks if they pool their resources to address these problems. Support for this idea is taken from data collected on the activities of the Negro Organization Society of Virginia. This organization was comprised of religious, fraternal, business, and other groups, and was focused on improving the condition of Blacks in that state. It was reported that the efforts of this organization resulted in the establishment of new schools and improved health and farming conditions for Blacks. Work envisioned a similar model for the state of Alabama and pushed for its establishment. The third level of cooperation that Work championed was between Blacks and Whites. Referencing the ongoing world war and its negative impact on the cotton industry, Work argued that Blacks and Whites should engage in cooperative endeavors to improve the lives of all Alabama residents in the areas of health, education, and farming. The basis for this pledge of solidarity was their common bond as southerners and Alabamans. According to Work, "no part of the world is being more deeply affected economically than is this southland" (Brown 1917, p. 24). By calling on the development of a class consciousness and operational alliances between Blacks and Whites during the first world war, Work attempted to build a bridge between the two groups in a manner similar to the man who selected him to develop a program of sociological inquiry at the Tuskegee Institute ten years earlier.

In 1908 Booker T. Washington, the leading Black political figure of the era and principal of the Tuskegee Institute, was in dire need of a researcher who could relieve him of the arduous task of serving as his own "fact checker" for his many speeches and writings. According to Guzman (1949): "The demands upon [Washington] for public appearances and statements were so great that it was impossible for him to check carefully every statement he made, and his speeches and writings sometimes contained errors with reference to

dates, names, places, and figures. It seemed important to his friends that he correct these deficiencies'' (p. 436). In response to the request of his friends, and his desire to create at Tuskegee a unit devoted to the collection of accurate and up-to-date data on Blacks in America, Washington offered the position of Director of the Department of Records and Research to the Savannah based Work. Bolstered by a positive recommendation from future University of Chicago sociologist Robert Park,[1] Work accepted Washington's offer to lead the department. Under Work's leadership the department articulated two goals—''The carrying on from year to year of special research work on particular subjects relating to the Negro'' and ''the collecting, compiling and giving out of information on all aspects of Negro life and conditions'' (Work 1922, p. 24). Perhaps his most important contribution as a sociologist, in fulfillment of the second goal listed above, was his editorship of nine editions of the *Negro Year Book*. The annual monographs were significant because they ''brought together for the first time in a condensed form facts in regard to the present and past of the Negro in America'' (Guzman 1949, p. 447). Work, writing in the 1922 edition, extends this notion when he states:

> **The Negro Year Book is the standard book of reference on all matters relating to the Negro and is the most extensively used compendium of information on this subject. It circulates widelyin every part of the United States and to a considerable extent in Canada, the West Indies, Central America, South America, Europe, Asia and Africa ... This edition of the Negro Year Book has themost extensive and up-to-date bibliography which has yet been putout on the Negro in the United States. (p. iii)**

It is quite possible that the perceived race neutral position of the school's long time principal, Booker T. Washington, and subsequent leaders made the Tuskegee Institute an ideal clearinghouse on race matters because Whites largely considered the school to not be radical in its activities, unlike units such as the Du Bois-led department at Atlanta University. Work, possibly alluding to the school's race neutral position, discusses why the Tuskegee Institute's importance as a clearinghouse on issues of race:

> **Because of its unique position, Tuskegee Institute is expected to furnish information relative to all phases of Negro life and conditions.**

[1]**Between 1905 and 1913 Robert Park served as the Director of Publicity at Tuskegee Institute.**

> **A constant and increasing demand is being made upon the institutionby newspapers and periodicals, by libraries, educators, economists,sociologists, statesmen, and other persons interested in the raceproblem for information relating to the Negro. (2002, p. 25)**

Among the most important data included in the *Negro Year Book* was detailed information on the number and frequency of lynchings in the United States. Given the vulnerability of the Tuskegee Institute in the state of Alabama and the American South, both philanthropically and the via the threat of physical violence at the hands of the Ku Klux Klan and mobs of Whites, Work should be noted for his skilled ability to present factual information on lynching as he "publicized his data in a quiet, scholarly manner that allowed White Southerners to accept severely disturbing facts without animosity toward Work or Tuskegee. He used the innocuous tool of statistical data to explode racial myths" (McMurry 1980, pp. 340–341). Through his efforts at highlighting the inhumane practice of lynching and the condition of Blacks in the South, Tuskegee became the leading clearinghouse for data on issues of race during Work's career. One example of the school's significance as a clearinghouse is that "In preparing the famous Scottsboro Boys Case, the lawyers for the defense worked many nights in the Department of Records and Research using data compiled by Work" (Guzman 1949, p. 451).

Work, the first African American to have an article published in the *American Journal of Sociology*, served as director of the Department of Records and Research at Tuskegee until 1938 (Guzman 1949). While his contributions to the discipline and nation have not been as widely lauded or recognized as Du Bois, Work is well known by those who truly understand the history of the discipline and are scholars of the Sociology of the South. This sentiment is best captured in a biography of Work's life that appeared in the *Journal of Negro History* after his death in 1945. The author notes that "Dr. [Monroe Nathan] Work was not a publicity seeker, and he never received credit for many things which he accomplished. Only in the many learned circles to which he belonged was he given the recognition which he deserved" (Anonymous 1945, p. 355).

Lucy Craft Laney

Lucy Craft Laney is representative of researchers associated with the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, who were not professionally trained social scientists but were community activists who were deeply committed to engaging in activities directed at understanding and

improving the condition of Blacks in America. Born into slavery in 1854 in Macon, Georgia, Laney's early childhood differed greatly from that of her Black peers as she was encouraged to learn to read and write. Born in an era where the pursuit of an education by Blacks was denied, Laney's actions could have resulted in penalties ranging from a fine, to prison, and even death (Du Bois 1901). Moreover, in some southern states there were penalties for Whites who attempted to educate Blacks. For example, in 1770 the state of Georgia passed legislation stating:

> **If any slave, Negro, or free person of color, or any White person shall teach any other slave, Negro, or free person of color toread or write, either written or printed characters, the same freeperson of color or slave shall be punished by fine and whipping,or fine or whipping, at the discretion of the court; and if a whiteperson so offend, he, she, or they shall be punished with a finenot exceeding $500 and imprisonment in the common jail at thediscretion of the court. (Du Bois 1901, p. 18)**

Despite the possible repercussions, Laney's "mother's employer, Miss Campbell, opened her own private library to the child and guided her early reading" (Berson 1988[1994], p. 188). This early encouragement of her educational aspirations proved fruitful as "Mrs. Georgia Swift King, a classmate of Miss Laney at Atlanta University, says that Miss Laney was one among a group selected by the American Missionary Association [AMA] to form a class at Atlanta University" (Griggs et al. 1934, p. 98). The AMA's confidence in Laney's abilities proved fruitful as she was a member of the first noncollege graduating class of Atlanta University in 1873.

Laney was profoundly impacted by the liberal arts education that she received at Atlanta University. Atlanta University, unlike many schools for Blacks located in the American South, not only placed an emphasis on liberal arts but stressed the development of men and women who would assume positions of leadership in their respective communities after graduation. Fully indoctrinated into the mission of her alma mater, after graduation she became a teacher and worked in a number of towns over the course of ten years. In 1886 Laney opened her own school in Augusta, Georgia. Consistent with her training at Atlanta University, her school was unlike most in the area because the curriculum included coursework in literature, the social sciences, and the classics. Laney believed that Blacks at the turn of the 20th century needed a liberal arts, not technical or vocational, education that would provide the holistic mental training

necessary to become productive citizens and leaders in a nation that still viewed them as intellectually and biologically inferior. Because a component of the Atlanta University Studies on the Negro Problems was the repudiation of 'scientific' theories of the intellectual and biological inferiority of Negroes, it seems quite natural that Laney would be a participant of the annual conference from its inception. Throughout the span of the Atlanta University studies, Laney is known to have participated in at least five conferences, but only the 1896 and 1897 publications include her written reports.

The 1896 publication includes a report by Laney titled, "General Conditions of Mortality." In this brief essay her primary focus is on the health issues of Blacks across various class divisions. Although no data are presented to support her positions, she suggests that the *ignorant classes* of Blacks suffer greater health related illness because of their lack of knowledge regarding hygiene and their physical proximity to hazardous environmental conditions. Conversely, Laney proposes that "there is yet another class who, by their perseverance, intelligence and economy, have made for themselves better houses, [and] comfortable homes in healthy locations" (Chase 1896, p. 37). While noting a marked distinction between the haves and have-nots of Augusta, Georgia in 1895, Laney foretells of Du Bois' theory of the talented tenth by promoting the idea that the most successful persons in a society should engage in activities aimed at improving the condition of those less able to help themselves. Predating Du Bois' theory on Negro leadership by more than five years, Laney suggests that the hearts of nondestitute Blacks "ache with alarm at the devastation that is being made, but how to stop it is to them the unsolved problem of the race" (Chase 1896, p. 37). Laney continues her essay by suggesting that the task of solving the race problem should be placed squarely on the shoulders of the educated class of Blacks. Despite her lack of a specific program to ameliorate the race problem, Laney was hopeful that the newly established Atlanta University studies and conferences would serve as the catalyst for the development of such propositions. Speaking to the potential of the newly established Atlanta University studies and the impact that educated Blacks could have in the improvement of American society, Laney concludes her report by asserting "that the moving spirit of these meetings may be a Moses come to lead [Blacks] out of the wilderness ... That from these meetings may be evolved plans that will bring some relief, is the prayer and aim of all concerned" (Chase 1896, p. 37).

Laney's second report in the Atlanta University publications is an 1897 contribution titled, "An Address Before the Women's

Meeting.'' This report, a continuation of the previous year's study on mortality among Blacks, emphasizes the important role of women in the Black family. Despite a lack of empirical data to support her assertions, Laney argues that the challenge of uplifting America's second class citizens is just as much the responsibility of the women of the race as the men. While she exhorts women to assume responsibility for the uplift of the race and embrace and promote marriage within the race, perhaps the greatest challenge facing women, according to Laney, was the raising of children. Specifically, Laney challenges mothers to raise their young boys as aggressively as their young girls. She notes that ''too often that mother who is careful of her daughter's environment, the formation of her girl's character, is negligent as to her sons'' (Chase 1897, p. 56). In a challenge to the reader, Laney laments, ''our boys need the careful, loving hand of mother; perhaps not more than the girls—but certainly not less'' (Chase 1897, pp. 56–57). While Laney's reports are not supported by data, her conclusions may be construed as an early example of what Patricia Hill Collins describes as commonplace or taken-for-granted knowledge. According to Collins (2000):

> **The commonplace, taken-for-granted knowledge shared by African-American women growing from our everyday thoughts and actions constitutes a first and most fundamental level of knowledge. The ideas that Black women share with one another on an informal, daily basis about topics such as how to style our hair, characteristics of 'good' Black men, strategies for dealing with White folks, and skills of how to 'get over' provide the foundations for this taken-for-granted knowledge. (p. 34)**

This is more likely the theoretical frame and basis of analysis that guided most of her conference reports.

Over the next few years Laney participated in three Atlanta University conferences. At the 1902 conference on Negro artisans she presented a report titled, ''Boy and Girl Artisans in the House,'' that was not included in the final publication. At the 1906 conference, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the annual investigations and conferences, Laney presided over the mother's meeting but did not present a report. It would be almost ten years before Laney would return to participate in the Atlanta University studies. The 1914 publication indicates that Laney was a panelist for a symposium on the topic, ''Social Work among Children.'' Additionally, during that year's meeting she presented a report to the conference titled, ''Social

Service and the Negro American." Similar to the previous studies, her report was not included in the final publication.

While her participation with the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory is noteworthy as it is representative of some citizen researchers who collaborated with the institution, Laney's most important contribution to American society was as the founder of the Haines Institute in Augusta, Georgia. In Augusta Laney established the first kindergarten for Blacks, the first nurse training center for Blacks and the state's first Black high school football team. Most important to Laney was her preparation of students with the requisite liberal arts skills to not only attend college, but serve as proactive agents for Du Bois' talented tenth. This stance, unlike that of Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee Institute who embraced technical and vocational education, had a deleterious impact on the level of funding procured by the Haines Institute and similarly situated institutions. Atlanta University friend and conference participant Mary Ovington, discussing what some Whites thought about the funding of liberal arts education programs for Blacks, said "to give money to teach Negroes algebra and the classics was of no help to Whites, and was considered ridiculous and perhaps dangerous for a newly-emancipated race" (Berson 1988 [1994], p. 190). Despite her difficulty in obtaining funding for her school, according to Ovington, Laney was successful in accomplishing her academic goals because "she meant to send out from her school graduates who would have had as good a training as White graduates, and if her students wished to go to college, they should enter thoroughly prepared. This she accomplished" (Berson 1988 [1994], p. 190). Two examples of Laney's excellence in education include former students John Hope, who became the first Black president of Atlanta University, and Mary McLeod Bethune, who briefly worked at Haines and later founded the institution now known as Bethune-Cookman University.

By the time of her death in 1933 Laney had become a nationally recognized leader in secondary education. Evidence of her acclaim as an educator is noted in the honorary graduate degrees received from Lincoln University, South Carolina State University, Atlanta University Howard University and in her 1992 induction by the Georgia Women of Achievement as a woman who played an immense role in the history of the state. Recognition of her commitment to education and love of young people is captured by Berson (1988 [1994]) who writes, "For sixty years she maintained a fierce, compelling vision of the precious worth of each individual; she had lived with a moral urgency to elicit from each child the personal excellence she believed innate in all people" (p. 192).

Graduate and Undergraduate Students at Atlanta University

Graduate and undergraduate students in sociology courses at Atlanta University comprise the final group that is representative of the collaborative research activities of the school. As discussed earlier, Atlanta University was founded with an emphasis on academic instruction in the liberal arts and in the preparation of men and women who would become leaders in their respective communities. Essential to being trained as a leader at Atlanta University was learning how to conduct research, analyze data, and present the findings upon which one's position was grounded. This point is emphasized in the 1901 publication which includes descriptions of the type of training offered to undergraduate and graduate students in sociology. While there was no established department of sociology at Atlanta University in 1901, as coursework and fieldwork in the discipline were offered through the Department of Economics and History, the objective of the unit responsible for sociological instruction was "[a]im[ed] not only at mental discipline but also at familiarizing students with the great economic and social problems of the day. It is hoped that thus they may be able to apply broad and careful knowledge to the solution to the many intricate social questions affecting the Negro in the South" (Du Bois 1901, p. 2).

While the objective above was directed at undergraduates, it is also noted in the 1901 publication that "special research courses are offered to graduate students" (Du Bois, p. 2). The 1902 publication extends the 1901 declaration by providing insight into the expectations of graduate and undergraduate students.

> **Instruction is given by means of a special class room library with reference books and the leading text books, the arranging of charts and tabular work, the presentation at regular intervals of special reports and theses, and field work in and about the city of Atlanta for the observation of economic and social conditions. (Du Bois 1902, p. 2)**

The first Atlanta University study to include an acknowledgment of the contributions of graduate and undergraduate students is the 1903 investigation on religion that Phil Zuckerman (2004) calls "the first book-length sociological study of religion published in the United States" (p. 5). In this publication students from Atlanta University and Virginia Union University were recognized for their assistance. While the students were recognized for participating in the study, the specific ways in which they contributed to the investigation are

not identified in the more than 200-page monograph. The only investigations that clearly acknowledge and identify the contributions of Atlanta University students are the 1908 study on the Black family, the 1913 study on the morals and manners of Blacks and the 1917 study on economic cooperation among Blacks.

Some of the data for the 1908 Atlanta University study, *Negro American Family*, were collected by sixteen members of the graduating 1909 and 1910 sociology classes. The students were charged with examining the living conditions of 32 Atlanta-area families. Specifically, students sketched the physical layout and provided thick descriptions of the homes. The students also used questionnaires to obtain data from each family including the number of bedrooms, size of yard, distance of home from neighbors, cleanliness, wage(s) of the head of household, rent or mortgage, food expenses, expenditures, and various miscellaneous items. These data were utilized to compare and contrast the types of homes lived in and wealth of different classes of Blacks in Atlanta at the turn of the century. While their contributions are limited, the students do have the distinction of participating in "the first study of the sociology of the family in the United States" (Dennis 1975, p. 106). Additionally, it is useful to note that some students, as discussed later, gained valuable experience that would prove beneficial when they became affiliated with the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory in later years as citizen researchers.

Data for the 1913 Atlanta University study were accumulated largely by the undergraduate sociology class at Atlanta University. The methods of research utilized by the students include examination of United States Department of Census data, questionnaires and a local study. Questionnaires were mailed to three groups: Black churches, "trustworthy persons," and 4,000 United States residents. Black churches in Atlanta were mailed questionnaires seeking information concerning the type of denomination, total membership, assets, expenditures expended for missions, educational activities, buildings and repairs, charitable work, care for old people, efforts at encouraging young people, other social services and were asked to identify the greatest challenge facing this institution. Replies were received from 55 of the 63 churches contacted. 'Trustworthy persons,' a concept not defined by the researchers, were included in this investigation because Atlanta University officials believed this group "ought to know of the morals and manners of the Negro" (Du Bois 1913, p. 12). Data received from this group addressed manners, morals, cleanliness, honesty, home life, child-rearing, caring of the old, and a comparison of the present condition of Blacks with the conditions faced by the same group in previous years.

The questionnaire was sent to 4,000 people and ten percent of the recipients, representing thirty states, replied. The data collected by the undergraduate students formed the basis for the four resolutions offered for the 1913 study.

The first resolution called for the strengthening of the home life of Blacks as data from numerous trustworthy persons and Black churches indicated a perceived increase in the immorality of Blacks over the past ten years. The second resolution advanced the position that there were two hindrances in the path of Black advancement in the United States: the persistence of older habits due to slavery and poverty, and racial prejudice. Conference officials suggested that the habits learned during enslavement and the poverty stricken years of reconstruction were hindering the advancement of the race. To this end, the executive committee asserted:

> **The environment of the American Negro has not been in the past and is not today conducive to the development of the highest morality. There is upon him still the heritage of two hundred and fifty years of slave regime. Slavery fosters certain virtues like humility and obedience, but these flourish at the terrible cost of lack of self-respect, shiftlessness, tale-bearing, slovenliness, and sexual looseness. (Du Bois 1913, p. 16)**

The third resolution predicted the awakening of the Black church to its duties and responsibility as a leading organization in the community and the fourth resolution commended the efforts of Black women's clubs in improving their communities.

The final study to feature data garnered by Atlanta University students is the 1917 investigation into "Economic Cooperation Among the Negroes of Georgia." Data were obtained via correspondences, a first-hand investigation by Asa H. Gordon and field work by members of the sociology class at Atlanta University.

Correspondence was made with "business people and other responsible persons" regarding economic cooperation among Blacks in Georgia. Asa H. Gordon, a 1917 Atlanta University graduate, conducted first-hand investigations in "all cities and towns [in Georgia] having a population of ten thousand or more, and in some instances, for special reasons, places of less than ten thousand inhabitants" (Brown 1917, p. 9). Publication records indicate that "His mission was fruitful of good results; not only from the standpoint of actual information secured, but also from the point of view of his illuminating report on the conduct of Negro business throughout the state" (Brown 1917, p. 9).

The final supplement to data amassed by correspondence and Asa H. Gordon was the fieldwork conducted by members of an Atlanta University sociology class. In 1916 the city of Atlanta experienced a disastrous fire that destroyed many Black owned businesses. Atlanta University sociology students sought out every Black business owner in the area and amassed as much data as available concerning the financial status of those businesses. Unfortunately, this study omits specific information on data collection and information obtained by the students. Additionally, data supporting the resolutions are not offered in this publication. Despite these flaws, the record of sociological achievement of Atlanta University students to the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory is duly noted and is representative of the efforts of students at other institutions who assisted with the annual studies but whose contributions remain largely unknown.

CONCLUSION

The Atlanta Sociological Laboratory was established in 1895 and by the beginning of the 20th century had comprised the first American school of sociology. Under the direction of W. E. B. Du Bois (1897–1913) the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory was the first school to institutionalize method triangulation, theory triangulation, the use of insider researchers, and the public acknowledgement of the limitations of its research; and it conducted the first American sociological studies on religion and the family. Although numerous articles have highlighted the varied accomplishments of the school, beyond Du Bois very little is known about the many women and men who contributed to the scholarly activity of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory. The objective of this inquiry was to provide representative examples of three groups of contributors to the research program at Atlanta University. The first group consisted of professionally trained social scientists who were affiliated with an institution of higher learning. The second group consisted of nonprofessionally trained citizen researchers who were committed to engaging in activities directed at understanding and improving the condition of Blacks in America. The final group consisted of students who participated in the studies as a course requirement. Through an examination of Monroe N. Work, Lucy Laney, and the students of Atlanta University, this objective was achieved and their contributions to some of the seminal developments in the discipline, via the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, highlighted.

The contributions of the scholars highlighted in this inquiry and those of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory are viewed through the sociology of knowledge theoretical perspective. The sociology of knowledge perspective is utilized because "it does not refer to specific assertions which may be regarded as concealment, falsifications or lies . . . [Instead, this perspective allows for an examination of these issues] on structural, [cultural, and/or ideological] level[s], which it views as not being the same for all men, but allowing the subject to take on different forms and aspects in the course of social development" (Mannheim 1968, p. 238). Thus, the accomplishments of the scholars included in this inquiry, while possibly vigorously challenged by some as not significant, are acknowledged here as substantive contributions to the school that made numerous contributions to the discipline during its formative years in the United States.

Despite the immense achievements of the women and men of the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, there continues to be a deafening silence by mainstream sociologists in recognizing the important role of this school in the establishment and development of the discipline in the United States. If one engages in a cursory examination of sociology textbooks they will find, at best, vague acknowledgement that sociological inquiry of *some sort* took place at the all-Black college, and, at worst, the complete omission of the school from the sociological record. In searching for an answer to why the school continues to be marginalized and the contributions of countless women and men relegated to the sociological hinterlands, one can find no more salient an explanation than the race-tinged words of W. E. B. Du Bois: "So far as the American world of science and letters was concerned, we never 'belonged'; we remained unrecognized in learned societies and academic groups. We rated merely as Negroes studying Negroes, and, after all, what had Negroes to do with America or science?" (Du Bois 1968, p. 228).

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