

‘War Dreams’: Patriotism and Cross-Class Black Solidarity in WWI-Era Atlanta.

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In 1919, the Atlanta branch of the NAACP organized a voting bloc powerful enough to force the city to build Booker T. Washington High School, the city’s first publicly-funded high school for black students. After years of being asked to vote for municipal bonds to build schools their children could never attend, black voters exploited a loophole in the state’s disfranchisement laws to defeat three bond referenda over the course of ten months. By holding the entire city budget hostage, they compelled the city fathers to invest \$1.5 million in black public education.

This marked a dramatic shift away from an earlier politics of respectability in which black leaders sought to convert elite white paternalism into a genuine interracial politics. This shift was possible because World War One had changed the popular understandings of gender and class that informed older meanings of respectability and offered new ways to assert racial equality rooted in martial valor and patriotic service. My paper argues that, temporarily liberated from the constraints of respectability by the mobilization for the war, Atlanta’s black voters were able to unite across the divides of class and adopt a more confrontational politics and force the city to invest in black public education.

Let me begin by explaining how respectability becomes the basis of a politics. As a strategy, the politics of respectability was a response to fears that African Americans would be entirely excluded from the social and economic gains of the Progressive Era.¹ It was a strategy born in part from powerlessness. To avoid complete exclusion from the benefits of citizenship, black politicians of respectability publicly accepted the principles of disfranchisement and

segregation. However, they sought to redraw the racial exclusions of the new Jim Crow order along the lines of respectability instead.²

This is one reason why they defended the poll tax and other disfranchisement mechanisms as a way to remove the “shiftless, worthless element” from politics. That is, the politicians of respectability sought to remove the race question from politics by instead removing the unrespectable from the electorate. If the target of disfranchisement was the “unrespectable” and not black people, then “respectable” black people could preserve at least some rights. These respectable black leaders then attempted to transform white paternalism into a politics capable of uniting an interracial elite behind a mission to civilize the masses of both races and fit them for citizenship.³ In exchange for policing the morals of the black working class, black leaders successfully argued for segregated (though inferior) schools and streetcars. And, practically speaking, second-class citizenship was better than none at all.

Of course, basing claims to black citizenship rights upon the reputation of the race in the eyes of influential white elites was a shaky foundation upon which to build a politics. White leaders were under no obligation to treat their black allies as equals and working-class African Americans were often unwilling to submit to any sort of civilizing mission. Furthermore, this politics of respectability profoundly limited the political choices open to the city’s black elite. The events in Atlanta during the summer of 1906 demonstrated just how limited they were.

In that summer’s Democratic primary, *Atlanta Constitution* editor Clark Howell and progressive reformer Hoke Smith competed to become the next governor of Georgia. Both Howell and Smith had formerly been seen as “friends of the Negro,” but as each sought the votes of white Georgians, years of arduous interracial alliance-building were undone in the heat of political combat as disfranchisement became the central issue in the election. During the

campaign, Hoke Smith called on Georgia's white men to use their votes to support disfranchisement in order to defend white women from rape at the hands of black men. This equation of black suffrage with the rape of white women was one way in which white men in the South enforced white political solidarity within the Democratic Party. While absurd on its face, this claim was effective because southern white men rooted their claims to independence and citizenship in their control over a household and its dependents. The social and political power of white men could not be "neatly separated into spheres of 'government' and 'household.'" Because of this, the efforts of black men to enter politics could be seen as the first step into the bedrooms of white men's households, where their daughters and wives slept.⁴

Just like these white men, black men also found the sources of their social and political authority in their mastery over a household. In 1900, 92% of black wage-earning women toiled in domestic service, where they faced sexual assault at the hands of the white men who employed them.⁵ The respectable middle-class virtues of hard work, thrift and self-mastery not only demonstrated black fitness for citizenship, it also allowed black male breadwinners to keep female dependents away from these dangers of wage labor.⁶ Similarly, the presence of unruly, unrespectable black women on the streets of Atlanta stood as evidence of the unfitness of black patriarchs for full citizenship. The disorder of black households – exacerbated by rapid urbanization – undermined the claims of black men to political authority. Ben Davis, the editor of the *Atlanta Independent*, the city's most important black newspaper, identified sites of working class entertainment – the "Negro dives, [and] 'dago' joints" – as sources of instability for the black family. He lamented the common sight of "a dozen or more drunken colored women in the streets ... made drunk with liquor sold them by white saloon keepers and borne to them by Negro bums and whiskey heads who do errands for a drink."⁷ This was more than a threat to the

morals of women; it was a concrete and very public demonstration that respectable black men were not masters of their households.

As black leaders responded to calls for disfranchisement, their choices were limited by the ideas of respectable manhood they shared with white elites. In the wake of a media-driven “rape scare” that ultimately propelled Smith to victory, Ben Davis as one of Atlanta’s most influential black leaders could have questioned the truth of these allegations of black criminality. Instead, he called on black and white community leaders to stand together to put an end to the “reign of rapine and terror precipitated in our midst by the black beasts who have been assaulting white women.” To save the “reputation of the race,” he called on black men to unite with white men and “put to death or expel every fiend ... Let us get together and map out a red hot campaign of death and damnation to every brute in the community.”⁸ Upon this bloody ground, Davis and other black elites hoped to re-establish the common ground with the elite white men that had been lost during the gubernatorial race.⁹

At one level, these expressions can be read as the tactical moves of certain black elites to head off white reprisals for the alleged crime wave. On another level, they can also be read as an attempt to retain hard-won class privileges in the face of a wave of anti-black sentiment voiced by white Atlantans unwilling or unable to see these distinctions. These black men grounded their standing as responsible citizens in an understanding of themselves as respectable members of the middle class, capable of restraining savage and sinful impulses they felt were inherent in every man, black or white.¹⁰ What differentiated them from their white counterparts was that they believed this capacity for self-restraint was not a racial trait enjoyed by whites only.

Nevertheless, nothing Ben Davis or his allies did could stem the tide of anti-black violence that broke on the night of September 22, 1906. Exactly one month after the election,

the city of Atlanta erupted in a three-day race riot that took the lives of dozens of African Americans. Though the crimes described in the papers were supposedly committed by members of the black criminal class, the white mob chose to target members of the city's small black middle-class. Despite this catastrophic failure of the politics of respectability, Atlanta's elite and middle-class black leaders would remain bound by the cultural expectations of respectability until a new vocabulary of manhood arrived during World War One.

Eleven years later, when President Wilson urged Congress to declare war on Germany in order to "make the world safe for democracy," most African Americans heeded Du Bois's famous call for African Americans to support the war effort, lay aside their "special grievances" and "close ranks" with their fellow white Americans.¹¹ This call for unity was controversial, especially among those who balked at setting aside "special grievances" in order to serve in a Jim Crow army and defend a Jim Crow nation.¹² Nevertheless, upon passage of the Selective Service Act in May of 1917, thousands of black Atlantans registered for the draft on the first day.¹³ Twenty-seven clerks were required to process thousands of registrants at a special registration precinct for black men established under the aegis the city's black business leaders.¹⁴ As part of the registration effort, the Atlanta branch of the NAACP sponsored a "great patriotic meeting" to encourage "Loyalty to the President and Government" and to exhort all black men of draft age to volunteer for military service.¹⁵ With 5,000 African American men and women in attendance, the turnout dwarfed that of the 1,500 person "monster mass meeting" the NAACP had held two months previously concerning overcrowded black schools.¹⁶ The rally was Atlanta's largest black gathering in recent memory, surpassed only by the number attending the

Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition in 1895 and the Negro Young People's Christian Congress in 1902.¹⁷

Despite the call to “close ranks,” it was impossible to completely lay aside the “special grievances” of even the most fervently patriotic black Americans. Several speakers at the NAACP meeting urged the government to expand the opportunities available for black military service. Others linked redress of longstanding domestic grievances to the success of the war effort and argued that well as the poor conditions of black school facilities undermined morale and military preparedness.¹⁸ Later, Ben Davis of the *Atlanta Independent* explicitly linked the fight for equal schools to Wilson's war aims, declaring that any “distribution of public funds that provides ample and modern school houses for ... white children and affords starvation salaries for Negro teachers and provides no [school]house at all for the Negro children is ... inconsistent with the democracy for which we fight.”¹⁹ By connecting these demands for access to city services to Wilson's war aims, Atlanta's black leaders created a cultural space for black political assertion unimaginable just a decade earlier. The war offered a new foundation for black politics outside the bounds of an older politics of respectability and rooted instead in a shared, though contested, patriotism. This had several effects on black politics in Atlanta.

First, wartime mobilization made the terms of black solidarity considerably more expansive. During the war, 2.3 Million black men had registered for the draft; 367,000 of these men served in uniform.²⁰ Through valor and service, those formerly deemed “unrespectable” could establish common ground with both white Atlantans and respectable black elites. This was especially true for those who served in the armed forces. Samuel Blount, upon arrival at Camp Upton was astounded at the broad diversity of the hundreds of black men he encountered: “Heavens! what a collection and assortment of men ... rogues, ‘pimps,’ cut-throats,

longshoremen, hod carriers, tramps, thieves, students, professional men, business men and men who were just plain nothing.” Even though class and status hierarchies would continue to shape soldiers’ experiences, military life served to undermine those divisions, making it easier for “pimps, longshoremen and business men” to find common ground. Importantly, these new meanings for manhood allowed those “pimps, longshoremen” and others far from the pinnacle of established race leadership to step forward as community leaders.²¹ Sergeant Greenleaf Johnson of the 372nd Infantry demanded that African Americans “oppose and denounce” all “Negro men who sit in high places, whether by unanimous choice of their fellows or those ... hand-selected to fill a position of apologist and unction for the insufferable wrongs inflicted on their race.”²² For Sergeant Johnson and thousands like him, it was no longer sufficient for black leaders to draw their power from strategic interracial alliances with influential white men and women. A new standard of race leadership had emerged from the war and with it a return to Reconstruction-era articulations of the true sources of political power.

Second, drawing upon the long history of black military service, African Americans offered a counternarrative to the story of black savages and white heroes that fueled so much of anti-black violence. These history lessons soon became a common feature of the defense of black loyalty and valor during and immediately after the war. In the pages of the Atlanta Independent, Ben Davis responded to accusations of black disloyalty by reciting the long record of black servicemen in every U.S. conflict since the Revolution.²³ Echoing Davis, The Savannah Tribune reminded its readers that “Negro blood was among the first which was spilled in the Revolution and his was the blood that stained the hot sands at Carrizal.”²⁴ In June of 1917, The Crisis reminded its readers that “this country belongs to us even more than to those who lynch, disfranchise and segregate ... it rightly demands our whole-hearted defense as well today as

when with Crispus Attucks we fought for independence.” Another editorial in that same issue asserted that “the American Negro more unanimously than any other American has offered up his services in this war as officer and soldier Up to the present his offer has been received with sullen and ungracious silence ... Nevertheless, the offer stands as it stood in 1776, 1812, 1861 and 1898.”²⁵

These expressions of patriotism began to displace respectability as the primary vehicle for cultural self-defense against racist stereotypes of black criminality and perversity. Black soldiers in government-issued khaki completely upended the gender ideology of Jim Crow; rather than beastly black rapists, the uniforms these men wore defined them as the noble, heroic and disciplined defenders of the nation, usurping the role reserved for white men in the psycho-sexual drama of white supremacy. With celebrations of black martial manhood at their heart, these recitations of the record of black military service served as much as a rebuke to the black beast rapist myth as it was a way to assert equality with white men. Whereas in the weeks before the 1906 Atlanta race riot, the politics of respectability compelled black elites like Ben Davis to publicly accept the rape/lynching narrative, patriotism gave them a language that allowed them to dispense with this narrative altogether.

Finally, this discourse of martial manhood gave black men in Atlanta access to a vocabulary of gender that allowed for a more oppositional politics than the politics of respectability could admit. This was especially important as the interracial patriotism of the war years gave way to the violence of the Red Summer of 1919. In a New York Age column published less than seven months following the Armistice James Weldon Johnson described how the “idealistic war dreams” of interracial patriotic unity – “a new world, a new order, a new South” – had vanished “one by one” as the “solid outlines of the old, pre-war conditions

loom[ed] up clearer and clearer.” Embittered, disillusioned and profoundly wizened, James Weldon Johnson asked:

“Why is it that these war dreams, not only of the Negro but of humanity the world over, have been dissolving ever since the Germans acknowledged defeat? It is the old, old story; as old as the history of civilization. The people dream dreams of a changed and a better world, but generally without paying attention to the machinery necessary for making those dreams come true. Those in control dream no dreams, but use all of their intelligence and energy and power in keeping hold of the machinery by which the established order is maintained.... The Negro should learn that he will never be able to make any of his dreams come true until he is able to get his hands on some sort of machinery. Dreams floating around in the air come to nothing; they must be run through a machine to be realized. The machinery for the Negro is organized and united power.”²⁶

In the aftermath of the war, the Atlanta Branch of the NAACP bent all of its energies to the construction of that black political machine. When the leaders of the equal schools campaign came up with the idea of opposing municipal bond issues as a means of forcing the city to fund black schools, they understood it would not be enough to defeat the bond issues. The city’s white civic leaders had to understand that it was black voters organizing collectively who defeated the bonds. That called for a more oppositional position than the politics of respectability – with its emphasis on interracial negotiation and compromise – could ever admit.

When respectability began to collapse as an organizing principle of black solidarity, it paved the way for mass politics. The NAACP’s Atlanta branch began by expanding its local base well beyond its 300 founding members, all of whom had all been drawn from the ranks of the city’s black elite. By Feb 1919, they had grown to 1700 members. This surge in NAACP

membership was accompanied by an ambitious voter registration drive. Between July of 1918 and April of 1919, the number of registered black voters in Atlanta more than tripled from 750 to nearly 3,000.²⁷

The scope of this campaign indicated a revolution in the meaning of the poll tax. Recall that the politicians of respectability had previously defended the poll tax as a means to disfranchise and eliminate the “shiftless, worthless element” from politics. However, the patriotic fervor of World War One had created a new way for African Americans to stake a claim on full citizenship rights that was not bounded by adherence to a narrow standard of respectability. This is reflected in various appeals that black men heard urging them to pay their poll taxes. In July of 1918, an Atlanta Independent editorial urged its readers to register and castigated those who did not as having “no patriotism.” These “slackers” failed to appreciate “the great sacrifices and rivers of blood which have been [spilt] on battlefields to give them this inestimable right [to vote]” and would “desert the flag on the battlefield in time of war.”²⁸ In January 1919, the Independent reinforced this connection between patriotic sacrifice and the obligation to vote by insisting that every black man of voting age “owed it to the soldier boys who died on the battlefields of France ... that we may enjoy the rights of American citizenship” to pay their poll tax and register.²⁹

Framed in this way, the duty of paying one’s poll tax became an extension of the language of military service. As the Atlanta Independent phrased it, paying one’s poll tax was “one of the most fundamental civic duties of every American citizen” akin to the “duty to repel invasion of the enemy” during wartime.³⁰ The shift from earned privilege to patriotic duty – though subtle – is quite significant for the role it played in undermining the earlier idea that potential voters must prove their respectable manhood in order to qualify to vote. Instead, black

men were being called upon to do just the opposite – prove their manhood by registering to vote. In a published appeal for new voters, the NAACP declared, “Let every young man in Atlanta and every taxpayer not think he is really a man until he has registered.”³¹ Good citizenship was the path to manhood, rather than vice versa – this inversion that helped supplant a partially discredited politics of respectability as a means of asserting formal equality with white citizens.

As the local NAACP put it in its published appeal for new black voters, “under a democracy, if we do not have a vote we are at the mercy of those who do have it.” This characterization of democracy is as far from that older politics of respectability as it is possible to get. It recognizes that white voters would continue to displace the social, economic and political costs of development onto voteless black Americans, regardless of any ties that black and white reformers had established previously. The NAACP followed this assertion with another, stating the “white people in Atlanta who are our real friends want to see us get a square deal ... a high school, especially ... but they cannot do for us the things we must do for ourselves. If we make no effort to get what in right belongs to us, they will conclude we do not want those things.” However, for decades these “real friends” had been aware of the dismal conditions of the city’s black schools and had done little to address them. For the 3,000 black voters who had paid their poll taxes in 1919, it was increasingly clear that black Atlantans would continue “to be ignored and fed on fine words” until they threw their votes like monkey-wrenches into the gears of Atlanta’s municipal machinery.³²

¹ Rabinowitz, *Race, Ethnicity and Urbanization*, 61-89, 137-163.

² Historians of respectability such as Victoria Wolcott, Tera Hunter and Kevin Gaines demonstrate the ways in which respectability was a crucial discursive strategy that black men and women employed to combat racialized sexual and moral stereotypes. These understandings of respectability do play a role in this book, but my focus here is on how respectability is used to negotiate racial and interracial solidarity. This is similar Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham’s argument in *Righteous Discontent*, which shows how black women in the Baptist Church employed the politics of respectability to define and advance an ambitious reform agenda. Similarly, Glenda Gilmore’s *Gender*

and Jim Crow demonstrates how black women used the language of respectability to build alliances with white progressives in order to deliver crucial social services to the black community.

The definition of respectability used in this book is historically specific to the South before the northward migration of black southerners beginning in World War One. As the discourse of respectability moved north throughout the 1920s and 30s, it changed dramatically. The best discussion of this is in Davarian Baldwin's Chicago's New Negroes. As Baldwin uses the term, "respectability" is a measure of social acceptance, a yardstick of status – akin to Bourdieu's concepts of social or cultural capital, social statuses that can be exchanged like currency for political power. The denominations in which this currency comes – the terms of respectability – change radically between Atlanta in the 1890s-1910s and the milieu of 1920s Chicago that Baldwin focuses on. Whereas the protagonists of First-Class Citizens contend with Victorian standards of moral behavior in the Jim Crow South, Baldwin's New Negroes recast respectability in response to migration to Chicago and the spread of 1920s black consumer culture. For more on respectability, see Higginbotham, Righteous Discontent, 185-211; Hunter, To 'Joy My Freedom, 130-186; Gaines, Uplifting the Race; White, Too Heavy Load, 21-109; Hine, "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women"; and Gilmore, Gender and Jim Crow, 147-202. For respectability during and after the Great Migration, see Wolcott, Remaking Respectability, and Baldwin, Chicago's New Negroes.

³ Nevertheless, as historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham describes it, this politics of respectability served as a "bridge discourse" and provided a foundation for elite solidarity across racial lines. Higginbotham, Righteous Discontent, 197.

⁴ Kantrowitz, Ben Tillman, 105, 162-165.

⁵ Hunter, To 'Joy My Freedom, Table 2, 242.

⁶ It was in this spirit that the black leaders of the 1906 Georgia Equal Rights Convention exhorted black men to "look to the care and protection of our wives and daughters." In order to "keep them at home and support them there, and defend their honor with our lives" it was as necessary to "earn a decent living..., work hard, [and] buy land and homes," as it was to agitate and protest. Georgia Equal Rights Convention, 16, pamphlet in the Papers of W. E. B. Du Bois, microfilm edition, Reel 1, frames 1017-1025.

⁷ Atlanta Independent, 22 Sept 1906, 4.

⁸ Atlanta Independent, 1 Sept 1906, 4.

⁹ It might be possible to write off Davis's stridency as a quirk of his truculent personality; however, his was not the only black voice offering this response to the threat of lynching. In early September, the Baptist Ministers Union of Atlanta, while asserting the innocence of "negro preachers, teachers, and editors," attributed Atlanta's crime wave to the "vicious, 'rounders,' loafers and [the] grossly ignorant, ... [who] frequent the barrooms, pool rooms, gambling dens, dives, and restaurants attached to these bars." Although Davis's rhetoric may have been extreme, the ministers echoed Davis's call for violent retribution, offering their own services as a lynch mob: "if given an opportunity to compose the entire jury, as the evidence warranted, even if circumstantial, we would instantly bring a verdict of death." Godshalk, Veiled Visions, 75-76; Dorsey, To Build Our Lives Together, 155-158.

To clarify exactly with whom he was trying to forge an alliance, Davis reprinted an article by the Atlanta Georgian's John Temple Graves on the same page as this editorial. Responding to Davis's concern that the innocent not be punished along with the guilty, Graves asserted that history showed that "the mass must frequently suffer from the continued and unchecked outrages of a few of its representatives." Indeed, the "innocent must join with all their hearts and hands with the better element of the white race to terrorize and to intimidate the criminals of the Negro race." He made no mention of white criminality. See Atlanta Independent, Sept 1906, 4. See also Godshalk, Veiled Visions, 74-75.

Finally, black mobs did lynch black men for a variety of alleged crimes, including rape. Of 148 known cases of black men lynched by black mobs, 25% were accused of rape. Most of these accusations were for raping black women. The mob activity of black communities was a response to law enforcement's unwillingness to prosecute

crimes committed against black people. Davis's call was unusual in that it called for an interracial lynch mob to defend white women against black rapists. Feimster, Southern Horrors, 103.

¹⁰ The concerns voiced by Davis and others fed off a common early twentieth century notion of manhood that men were inherently sinful creatures and that to grant power to black men who lacked "the strict discipline" and manly self-restraint needed to contain these passions would lead to the release of these sins and passions in socially destructive ways. Rotundo, American Manhood, 1-9.

¹¹ The Crisis, Vol. 16, No. 3 (July, 1918), 111; Lewis, W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 552-560.

¹² Lewis, W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 555-558; Rudwick, "An Accommodationist in Wartime"; Williams, Torchbearers of Democracy, 75-77.

¹³ Atlanta Journal, 5 June 1917, 1, 3; and 6 June 1917, 1; Atlanta Constitution, 6 June 1917, 1-2.

¹⁴ Atlanta Constitution, 6 June 1917, 1-2.

¹⁵ Atlanta Independent, 5 May 1917, 3; Walter White to Royal Nash, 9 May 1917, NAACP Papers – Microfilm Edition, Part 12, Series A, Reel 9, frames 644-645.

Given the history of the Atlanta Riot of 1906, the organizers of these patriotic assemblies may have been seeking to preempt doubts about black loyalty. As the United States prepared to enter the war, rumors abounded that German agents were attempting to incite African Americans against the government. The Atlanta Journal claimed that foreign infiltrators, disguised as Bible salesmen, were encouraging black workers to abandon their jobs and migrate to Mexico. The Atlanta Constitution cited unnamed "local federal agents" who claimed that imperial German spies were working throughout the black belt from North Carolina to Alabama "to induce the negroes [sic] to rise against the whites," even blaming them for the exodus of black farm laborers to the factories of the North. While reports of German espionage were certainly exaggerated, some black Southerners were in fact disaffected from their government. Less than a week after the Constitution published these espionage rumors, Coleman Akins, a thirty-two year old carpenter was arrested for treason for allegedly fomenting racial discord. In order to prevent a lynching, federal agents were compelled to transport Akins nearly forty miles to the city jail in Atlanta. Even relatively innocuous expressions of discontent were dealt with punitively. Howard Wright was a black prisoner serving thirty days. After one of his supervisors had stuck a flag in his cap, he removed it, threw it to the ground and exclaimed, "I don't care a d—n for the old thing!" For "showing disrespect for the American flag," he had twenty-one days added to his sentence and was fined \$10.75. In order to ensure that expressions of frustration by black men like Coleman and Akins did not come to publicly define black responses to the war effort, it was vital for the city's black leadership to aggressively promote black patriotism. It was for these reasons that just prior to the official declaration of war against Germany, NAACP field secretary James Weldon Johnson declared that "the bald truth is that the Negro cannot afford to be rated as a disloyal element. Imagine the results if he should for an instant around against himself the sentiment ... now directed against the pro-German element."

On concerns over black disloyalty during WWI, see Kornweibel, Seeing Red, 1-18. See also Atlanta Constitution, 5 April 1917, 3; 6 April 1917, 5; 8 April 1917, 3; 10 April 1917, 1; 15 April 1917, A5; and 18 May 1917, 9; Atlanta Journal, 6 April 1917, 12. For James Weldon Johnson quote, see New York Age, March 29, 1917, 4.

¹⁶ Atlanta Independent, 19 May 1917, 1. Atlanta Independent, 24 March 1917, 8.

¹⁷ According to the Constitution, "there were no fewer than 5000 [N]egroes" present for the dedication of the Colored Building at the Expo. For "Negro Day" at the Expo, the Constitution predicted that no fewer than 30,000 African Americans would be in attendance. See Atlanta Constitution, 26 Dec 1895, 5; and 22 Oct 1895, 4. 12,000 attended the 1902 Negro Young People's Christian Congress. See Atlanta Constitution, 11 Aug 1902, 5.

¹⁸ Atlanta Independent, 12 May 1917, 1.

¹⁹ Atlanta Independent, 7 July 1917, 1. See also Atlanta Independent, 20 Oct 1917, 4; 23 March 1918, 4; and 30 March 1918, 4.

²⁰ Capozzola, Uncle Sam Wants You, 33.

²¹ Quoted in Williams, Torchbearers of Democracy, 84.

²² Washington Bee, 18 Jan 1919, 1, 4.

²³ Atlanta Independent, 24 March 1917, 4.

²⁴ The Savannah Tribune, 10 March 1917, 4.

²⁵ The Crisis, Vol. 14, No. 2 (June, 1917), 59, 61.

²⁶ New York Age, 7 June 1919, 4.

²⁷ Contributing to the success of this voter registration drive was the relative affluence of the war years. Not only did black men command higher wages generated by wartime labor shortages, black soldiers received \$30 each month plus a dependency allowance. Taken together, these two factors provided a broadly shared financial security that loosened ordinarily tight family budgets just enough to afford paying poll taxes. Williams, Torchbearers of Democracy, 60.

This remarkable achievement was made possible with help from the Neighborhood Union, whose canvassers could reach 42,000 people in a week, the NAACP identified voters who would previously been overlooked by the politicians of respectability. This claim is supported by reports of the Union's success in their health education efforts. Working with the Atlanta Tuberculosis Association in 1919, the Union was able to visit 5,406 homes, communicating with 23,771 residents. Two years later, during the course of the organization's annual Clean-Up campaign, organizers from the Union visited 2,500 homes twice each. The ability to mobilize hundreds of black women not only helped weave together an incredibly tight knit community, but their periodic neighborhood surveys were able to establish whether the men of the household had paid their poll taxes. In fact, it was a regular question on the Union's surveys. Godshalk, Veiled Visions, 234. Lerner, "Early Community Work of Black Club Women," 166. Shivery, "The History of Organized Social Work," 48, 166.

²⁸ Atlanta Independent, 9 March 1918, 4.

²⁹ Atlanta Independent, 18 Jan 1919, 4.

³⁰ Atlanta Independent, 18 Jan 1919, 4.

³¹ Atlanta Independent, 15 Feb 1919, 1.

³² Atlanta Independent, 15 Feb 1919, 1.