the 1880s into the early twentieth century. While there are 15 articles in the Cecil Whig and the Cecil Democrat on these ceremonies prior to 1880, there are 21 in the 1880s, 37 in the 1890s, and 49 in the early 1900s. The increasing number of accounts of black Civil War soldier ceremonies may be attributed to the fact that during these decades more blacks were pressing for civil and political rights. They used the example set by their relatives as encouragement to organize movements aimed at gaining concessions.

Moreover, churches served as meeting grounds for the discussion of economic progress and self-sufficiency. During such meetings, blacks discussed the need to acquire good jobs and set up their own businesses. A Cecil Whig article, published on June 25, 1888, explained that Charles Johnson, a young African American lawyer from Baltimore, gave a lecture on The Law of Progress and Human Nature, in which he urged blacks to aspire for better jobs.537 African Americans also used churches as facilities where they could display their economic success to other blacks living in their communities. An August 29, 1893 article in the Cecil Whig noted that on the grounds of the Bethel A.M.E. Church, Pastor William Thurston sponsored an agricultural fair. According to the Cecil Whig, “The colored farmers at this fair featured a credible display of fruits, vegetables, and grains that they had grown.”538

Indeed, agricultural fairs were paramount in bringing together the entire black community and symbolized black progress and pride. At such events, black farmers could display their crops and share with other black farmers tips on how to improve their crop output. Through visible ownership of property, the development of economic self-sufficiency among blacks living in Cecil County was key in strengthening the black

537 Ibid., 25 June 1888, p. 2.
538 Ibid., 29 August 1893, p. 1.
community and in paving the way for additional businesses and farms. The impressive economic exhibits and speeches held at churches may have been vital in encouraging some of Cecil County’s poorer blacks to work harder to achieve economic success. The wealth that some African Americans held in Cecil County gave others hope and a powerful incentive to set up their own businesses.

Even though many blacks viewed churches as places where they could gather together to hear religious issues and discuss social and political rights, churches were also used as the first African American schools. Before the 1870s when African Americans constructed schools with state and private funds, black children and adults eagerly met in church basements to receive a rudimentary education. According to a May 12, 1868 article in the Cecil Democrat, “In the late 1860s, over eighty children and black adults used church schools to teach the colored population how to read and write.” While the number of church schools was about 12 in the 1860s, by the 1870s, that number had increased to 16, and in both the 1880s and 1890s, 3 more schools were added. A June 6, 1872 article in the Cecil Democrat revealed, “The blacks in this town held a school in the basement of an old church in Elkton.” In addition, a May 21, 1885 article in the Cecil Democrat indicated, “The colored children of Wrights A.M.E. Church attend school in a small room in the interior room of the church.” Another article from January 9, 1897 in the Cecil County News noted, “A colored reverend of Reeds A.U.M.P. Church set up a small school for the Negro children of that town.”

539 Cecil Democrat, 12 May 1868, p. 2.
540 Ibid.
541 Ibid., 6 June 1872, p. 1.
542 Ibid., 21 May 1885, p. 1.
543 Cecil County News, 9 January 1897, p. 2.
After 1900, the number of black church schools began to decrease. By then, many public black schools had been constructed for African American children throughout Cecil County. Still, church schools remained important. According to a March 12, 1910 article in the *Cecil Whig*, "Pastor S.I. Mills, of the Elkton A.U.M.P. Church, urges black students to cultivate self-respect and to profit from the facilities offered by church schools." The use of churches as educational institutions suggests that although blacks had initially lacked funds to set up their own schools, they considered education as so important to the success of their communities that they established schools in their churches. Also, the fact that a large number of blacks attended these schools from the 1860s to 1910 is a testament to both African Americans' quest for the betterment of their communities in Cecil County and to their self-sufficiency from whites.

African Americans' participation in social, historical, and economic events organized by churches helped solidify Cecil County's black communities and also demonstrated to many whites that Cecil County's African Americans were industrious, upright, and well-behaved at church events, such as camp meetings and excursions. In fact, in the late nineteenth century, some of Cecil County's whites were willing to attend church camp meetings with blacks. At camp meetings, blacks could display their oratorical skills to whites. Starting in the 1890s, white attendance at African American camp meetings increased significantly. Before this time, there had been only a few isolated instances in the *Cecil Democrat*. For instance, while there were two articles about white participation at African American camp meetings in the 1880s, that number had risen to 12 in the 1890s and 25 by the first decade of the twentieth century. On August 24, 1890, the minister of the Bethel A.M.E. Church held a camp meeting in John Davis' woods. At

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544 *Cecil Whig*, 12 March 1910, p. 2.
this meeting, Reverend E.W. Scott, of Elkton, preached a lengthy sermon, and William Valentine, a prominent black farmer, was chosen as the steward of the church.\footnote{Cecil Democrat, 24 August 1890, p. 3.}

According to this article in the Cecil Democrat, "The meeting was largely attended by both whites and blacks who prayed, sang, and shouted together."\footnote{Ibid.}

Some of Cecil County's whites continued to attend African American camp meetings well into the twentieth century. A July 19, 1904 article in the Cecil County News, entitled The Afro-American, explained that whites who attended a camp meeting extolled the conduct of African Americans. They described black preachers and leaders of the African American community as intelligent men who have appeared from the ranks of the African class who give hope and promise to the colored race.\footnote{"The Afro-American," Cecil County News, 19 July 1904, p. 2.} Blacks pleased white Republicans and Democrats alike by holding events that promoted the moral advancement of their race. Although most articles in the Cecil Whig and the Cecil Democrat are not specific as to whether white Republicans or Democrats attended these meetings, approximately 10 articles published in 1890-1910 indicate that white Democrats sometimes attended black camp meetings. This fact is very significant because it demonstrates that whites of all parties may have been more open-minded than whites further south. Although many whites did not want blacks to achieve full social or political equality, they did not necessarily object to the moral advancement of African Americans or the discussion of their rights.

Not only did whites extol blacks for participating in camp meetings, they also lauded their commendable behavior on excursion events sponsored by churches. For instance, in 1886, the pastor of the Elkton A.M.E. Church held an excursion to Rockaway Beach,
near Cecilton in southern Cecil County, on the steamship, Pilot Boy.548 A September 22, 1886 article in the Cecil Democrat reinforced some of Cecil County’s whites’ favorable opinions towards blacks by noting, “On the excursion to Rockaway Beach, most blacks were well-behaved and orderly.”549 In addition, another article in the October 2, 1898 edition of the Cecil Whig stated, “On an excursion from Chesapeake City to Baltimore last Saturday, the colored people of our town (Elkton) conducted themselves in the best manner. There were no recorded instances of this disorderly behavior.”550

Although both Democratic and Republican newspapers, such as the Cecil County News, the Cecil Democrat, and the Cecil Whig, periodically extolled the efforts of blacks to better themselves through excursions and camp meetings, the number of articles reporting black crime and disrespectability always outnumbered those on the respectable conduct of blacks. For instance, there are about 20% more anti-black articles in the Cecil Democrat from 1890 to the early twentieth century than articles praising blacks. In the Cecil County News, 16% more articles denounce blacks than articles that portray them in a positive light, while 7% more articles in the Cecil Whig describe them in a negative manner than the positive articles. These statistics are significant because they point to the underlying anti-black attitudes that existed in Cecil County from the 1890s to the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, the fact that there are some articles written by both white Democrats and white Republicans in Cecil County celebrating the behavior of blacks signifies the distinct character of whites’ views in Cecil County toward blacks and reinforces the fact that Maryland developed on a “middle ground.”

548 Cecil Democrat, 22 September 1886, p. 3.
549 Ibid.
550 Cecil Whig, 2 October 1898, p. 2.
Both before and after the emancipation of Maryland's slaves, churches in Cecil County served as the primary institutions for the assertion of social and political rights for African American communities. Prior to the Civil War, Cecil County's free blacks were instrumental in establishing six churches, which served as the centers of African American communities. Slaves and free blacks alike enthusiastically attended church services. However, churches served as more than religious centers in the African American communities. At churches, lectures and camp meetings were frequent and focused on topics such as the commemoration of black history and the need to fight for their political and social rights.

Indeed, some of the most prominent leaders of these African American churches emerged to be powerful voices in Cecil County's post Civil War era. After the emancipation of Maryland's blacks in 1864, Cecil County's African American churches continued to serve as the cement that unified the black community and held events encouraging African Americans to participate in politics. Some preachers even delivered sermons with hidden political messages persuading blacks not to accept bribes from white politicians and to turn out at the polls in large numbers. Most importantly, churches sponsored events that called for the moral improvement of African American communities and the need for blacks to develop independence from whites. Therefore, churches were the primary institutions for the assertion of social and political rights.
Chapter Four:

Schools and Social Organizations

The Symbols of Upward Mobility and Moral Improvement

Like churches, the establishment of African American schools, which taught children basic skills and moral standards, symbolized blacks’ efforts to better their own communities in Cecil County. African Americans may have placed so much value on a rudimentary education because they felt that whites would only respect literate blacks. Some blacks may have feared that unless they received an education, they would not be able to press for their political and social rights. Since Cecil County’s African Americans valued education as the primary step in earning their rights, black children as well as adults donated small sums of money for the establishment of their own schools.\footnote{Cecil Star, 5 July 1873, p. 2.}

Once schoolhouses were set up in churches and dilapidated buildings, black children were eager to attend classes, which taught spelling, reading, arithmetic, and manners. The enthusiasm of Cecil County’s African American community is most evident in a statement made by a notable black member of an Elkton community. He emphasized in 1878, “Without education, man is diseased and affects the whole moral atmosphere of a community. Education is as necessary to our community as free air and light.”\footnote{Cecil Whig, 10 July 1878, p. 1.}
Indeed, by the 1870s, Maryland’s blacks’ unwavering efforts to establish their own private schools led whites in the state legislature to pass a law that called for the funding of African American public schools.\textsuperscript{553} Although the law stipulated that there must be separate but equal schools for blacks, in reality, African American schools in Cecil County were far from equal and lacked proper supplies and funding.\textsuperscript{554} In fact, some whites in Cecil County denounced schools for African Americans on the grounds that blacks did not need to be educated. This view is best emphasized in a March 12, 1910 article in the \textit{Cecil County News}. It stated, “We are overlooking a great truth. It is impossible to decrease the ignorance of blacks by setting up schools for them.”\textsuperscript{555} Nevertheless, African Americans continued to improve their schools from the 1870s through the early twentieth century by asking the Cecil County School Board for more capital to build new and better schools.

In the years following emancipation, Cecil County’s blacks strengthened their own communities by setting up churches, social institutions, and schools. During the 1860s, only private schools existed for Cecil County’s African Americans.\textsuperscript{556} This may be the case because not until 1872 were public schools constructed for Cecil County’s blacks. Some Democrats in Cecil County viewed the establishment of black schools as a threat to the present status quo. A December 10, 1864 article in the \textit{Cecil Democrat} stated, “The \textit{Cecil Whig} tells us now to abolish slavery and that we should educate the Negro. What next? We fear that blacks will next be awarded with the elective franchise.”\textsuperscript{557} In addition, another article published in the same December 10, 1864 edition of the \textit{Cecil

\textsuperscript{553} Ibid., 12 February 1874, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{554} Ibid., 10 August 1888, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{555} \textit{Cecil County News}, 12 March 1910, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{556} \textit{Cecil Democrat}, 19 March 1868, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{557} Ibid., 10 December 1864, p. 1.
Democrat explained, "The Cecil Whig says that the colored will receive equality of educational privileges. I suppose it will be soon announced that Negro equality is a necessity of the times." The arguments some Democrats made against educating blacks in Cecil County demonstrate the fear some whites had that education would lead to the political and social equality of African Americans. Whites may have also opposed education for African Americans because with their improved skills, blacks might compete with whites for better-paying jobs. Also, some Democrats may have thought education was dangerous because it inspired blacks to question their inferior status in Cecil County and instilled in them a sense of self-worth. In fact, education was vital in training black leaders to strengthen their community and to later organize movements calling for political and civil rights.

Despite the fact that in the 1860s Democrats saw education as a threat to the existing social order, white Republicans extolled the construction of private black schools as necessary to improving the moral character and respectability of Cecil County's blacks. In a December 3, 1864 Cecil Whig article, "Educating the Negro," a white Republican notes, "Since the new constitution went into effect, Negroes are better and more profitable than ignorant labor. It is advantageous that we educate the colored race. Intelligent free labor is preferable to ignorant free labor." In an 1865 edition of the Cecil Whig, another Republican argued that the education of African Americans was key in bringing both stability and peace to Cecil County. He further explains, "It is impossible to support the ignorant blacks. Ignorance is inseparable from vice,

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558 Ibid.
559 "Educating the Negro," Cecil Whig, 3 December 1864, p. 2.
560 Cecil Whig, 21 September 1865, p. 2.
The large number of articles praising blacks for funding the establishment of their own schools suggests that in the 1860s, some of Cecil County’s whites supported the basic education of African Americans. Unlike Democrats, white Republicans apparently believed that educated blacks were not a threat to white power. Rather, both articles suggest that Republicans saw education as a means of increasing the moral character of the black community. Educated blacks would be less likely to commit crimes against whites and would set up their own businesses, which would greatly strengthen Cecil County’s economy.

Blacks financed new private schools through donations, and these schools did not receive direct tax funding. The Cecil County School Board agreed to establish a Colored Free School Fund in 1864. Like private school funds today, it set aside some of the tax money African Americans paid for white public schools in a separate fund. This money would be allocated toward the purchase of supplies for black private schools. According to the 1864 Cecil County School Board Minutes, the Colored Free School Fund was exclusively set up in Cecil County, and nowhere did it indicate that this fund existed elsewhere in Maryland. However, a portion of white tax money was not directed toward this fund. The Cecil County School Board Minutes, of April 17, 1867 stated that $2.43 of blacks’ tax money was given toward Elkton’s black private schools in 1865, while $4.21 was allocated in 1866 for their construction. In addition, the tax record for the Colored Free School Fund indicated that the most money from this fund was allocated by the school board toward black private schools in the first and fifth

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561 Ibid.
562 Cecil County School Board Minutes, 8 January 1864, p. 421.
563 Ibid.
564 Ibid., 422.
565 Cecil County School Board Minutes, 17 April 1867, p. 515.
districts of Cecil County. For instance, in 1865, $41.69 was directed toward the purchase of wood to build a new African American school, while in Elkton, $2.43 was allocated toward a black private school in the same year. The fact that more money from the Colored Free School Tax Fund was appropriated toward black private schools suggests that the first district had been an area where blacks owned a significant amount of taxable property.

In addition to using tax money to aid existing black private schools, the Cecil County School Board sometimes gave grants in the 1860s to African Americans who wanted to build these schools schools. For example, a May 20, 1887 transaction from the School Board Minutes explains, "It was ordered that so much of school taxes arising from the property of colored people in the 1885-1886 school year must be used toward the construction of a colored school house in Port Deposit in the fifth district. A grant was also made to aid in completing the building." The fact that the white members of the Cecil County School Board were willing to give a grant to the African American community for the construction of a new school signifies that there was some degree of respect for black efforts to educate their children.

Even though the Cecil County School Board appropriated both tax money and grants toward the establishment of private African American schools in Cecil County’s nine districts, sometimes the school board used black tax funds and gave more grants to build white schools. A May 12, 1866 article in the Cecil Whig reported:

Instead of the money in the Free School Fund supporting the construction of schools, most taxes paid by colored people go to the support of white schools. And yet, the Copperhead Party [Democratic Party] in Elkton has the meanness

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566 Ibid., Tax Record Supplement, May 12, 1865.
567 Ibid.
568 Cecil County School Board Minutes, 20 May 1887, p. 209.
to libel colored schools by ordering them close. They want to make a little political gain from it.\textsuperscript{569}

Also, the \textit{Cecil Whig} revealed in an 1868 article:

\begin{quote}
While taxation for schools is distributed according to population, the Negro population is not allowed to share the benefits. It is an injustice that taxes taken from property owned by the colored are taken to educate whites exclusively. The Democratic Party wants to turn back the wheels of progress to the treachery of Andy Johnson. Rebellion must never rise again.\textsuperscript{570}
\end{quote}

The School Board Minutes of 1871 show the continuing pattern of extremely unequal tax funds given to black schools. Out of $5,254.92 of Cecil County’s school funds, only 11\% was used to build black schools in Cecil County.\textsuperscript{571} The unequal distribution of tax funds given to African American schools in Cecil County clearly shows the widespread prejudice that existed against blacks during the late 1800s in post emancipation Maryland. Blacks could not rely on tax funds to build private schools even though they were required to pay school taxes. However, the fact that blacks still continued building schoolhouses in each black community throughout the county is a testament to their enthusiasm for education and belief that education was key to achieving upward mobility.

In the years after the Civil War, African Americans used money from the Colored Free School Tax Fund, donations, and grants to build private schools throughout Cecil County. According to a December 10, 1864 edition of the \textit{Cecil Democrat}, some schools for free African Americans had existed prior to emancipation.\textsuperscript{572} These first schools were located in churches, such as the Bethel A.M.E. Church of Port Deposit and the Ebenezer A.M.E. Church in Chesapeake City. Like churches, the establishment of black schools before the Civil War trained African American leaders how to effectively organize and

\begin{footnotes}
570 Ibid., 10 June 1864, p. 1.
571 \textit{Cecil County School Board Minutes}, 23 February 1871, p. 110.
\end{footnotes}
efficiently run black private schools after emancipation. Therefore, Cecil County
derived from other southern states in that free African Americans had founded their own
private schools before the Civil War. This further reinforces the point that Cecil County
had developed along a “middle ground.” Also, unlike other southern states, the
Freedmen’s Bureau was not influential in setting up schools for Cecil County’s blacks
during its self-reconstruction era. This may be the case since Maryland was not under the
purview of federal Reconstruction.

One of the most well-organized and prominent African American private schools was
the Friendship Institute founded in the 1860s. After emancipation, former slaves set
aside enough free space in an oak grove to build this schoolhouse. In Unwritten History,
Levi Coppin explained, “In 1866, children moved to this school, which was originally
called the Jane Coppin School. The school was kept open the same length of time as
white schools.” Coppin’s statement concerning the length of the school year indicates
that although blacks lacked adequate tax funds and grants to build schools, they
attempted to improve the quality of their education by keeping their schools open the
same amount of time as white schools. According to Coppin, the first teacher of the Jane
Coppin School was Christopher Jones, Jr., who had been the first black boy to attend
school outside of Cecilton. A July 5, 1873 article in the Cecil Star explained that Jones
had attended school in Baltimore and was later educated at Howard University in
Washington, D.C. Once the schoolhouse in Cecilton had been completed, Jones returned
to teach black children in the community. The next black teacher of the school in

572 Coppin, 132.
574 Ibid.
Cecilton was Sarah Christmas. Like Jones, she was properly certified and taught a basic education to African American children while heading the Sunday school in Cecilton.\footnote{Cecil Star, 5 July 1873, p. 2.}

Blacks of all ages attended night school in the Friendship Church. Coppin notes, “The building was soon filled with young and old alike who wanted to learn the alphabet. It gave older folks a new opportunity since they could not attend regular school.”\footnote{Coppin, 132.} The fact that so many adults and children crammed into the small Friendship Church to learn the alphabet at night indicates that like blacks in many other southern states, Cecil County’s African Americans may have believed that a basic education was necessary for training competent black leaders. For example, John Coppin, one of the most prominent black farmers and church leaders in Cecil County, attended the school in Cecilton where his mother, Jane Coppin, taught.\footnote{Ibid.}

By 1871, the Friendship Institute had to move to a larger building in order to accommodate for more African American students. Coppin explained, “In 1870, a new white school was built near Main Street. The colored people moved into the old white schoolhouse on the south side of Cecilton Road, on Route 213.” The use of the old white school as the site for the new Friendship Institute suggests the unequal status of early African American education in Cecil County. While whites received a new schoolhouse, blacks were not given enough funds to construct a new school of their own and instead had to use an old building for a school.\footnote{Cecil Whig, 2 April 1871, p. 2.}

Prior to 1872, blacks also constructed a private school in Elkton in the first two rooms of an old church. At the school, black children learned basic subjects as well as mastered
a skill. An August 9, 1871 article in the *Cecil Whig* indicated, “In the two small rooms of the schoolhouse, black children learned economic and industrial training.”579 The fact that African Americans also learned basic skills reveals that blacks wanted to improve their self-sufficiency by becoming adept at a particular trade. They could use their newly acquired skills to set up businesses or organizations within their own communities. Blacks living in Cecil County seemed to have valued what would later be called the “Washingtonian” principles of self-help and independence from the white population. African Americans presumably believed that uneducated or unskilled blacks would always be dependent on Cecil County’s whites for jobs and would never earn their respect.

Although black students were almost always separated from white students in Cecil County’s schools until the 1950s, there are a few instances of the integration of black students at the predominately white Carter Mill School and at a few schools in Elkton. The Carter Mill School is an octagonal-shaped stone school built in the 1820s.580 For much of its early history, it was used exclusively as a white school. However, after the emancipation of Maryland’s blacks in 1864, the son of William Valentine, a notable black landowner and farmer in Cecil County, attended the school with white students.581 It was very rare that an African American child was allowed to attend classes with whites in the 1860s or later. According to school documents, Gibson Valentine was the only black allowed to attend the school.582 Gibson Valentine and his family lived in an area with a highly concentrated white population and did not have a nearby African American

579 Ibid., 9 August 1871, p. 1.
580 Ibid., 20 November 1875, p. 1.
581 *Cecil County School Board Minutes*, 5 December 1865, p. 470.
582 Ibid.
private school to attend. After school, Gibson Valentine worked in the Carter Paper Mill, which was run by whites. Also, a March 14, 1874 excerpt of an essay read before the Colored Teachers Association indicates, "Twenty-eight years ago, a few colored children attended school with whites, and they often played and studied together. The last names of these children were Berry, Boddy, and Valentine. Their parents were prominent blacks in our community, and the majority of them were good citizens."\(^{583}\) In Cecil County, most white private schools did not allow blacks to attend classes, and starting in the 1870s, public schools segregated black and white students. Not until the 1950s did Cecil County integrate blacks and whites in its schools.\(^{584}\) However, the fact that a few black children had once attended school with white children twenty-eight years before is significant because in other southern states, such as South Carolina and Georgia, blacks were prohibited from attending school with whites. These cases demonstrate the more moderate attitudes of Cecil County's whites toward African Americans.

In 1872, the state of Maryland passed the Public School Law, which called for the establishment of African American schools in each district of every county.\(^{585}\) Chapter XVIII, Section 1, of the Public School Law states, "It shall be the duty of the board of the County School Commissioners to establish one or more public schools in each election district for all colored youth from ages 6 to 20 years. The admission must be free, and each school has to be open as long as other public schools."\(^{586}\) Section 2 of the law stipulated, "Schools shall be under the direction of the board of school trustees."\(^{587}\)

Section 4 of the law ensured that African Americans' tax money was properly used for

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\(^{583}\) Ibid., Colored Teachers Association Supplement, 4 March 1874.
\(^{584}\) Cecil Whig, 3 October 1973, p. 3.
\(^{585}\) Maryland Public School Law of 1872, Chapter XVIII, sec. 1.
\(^{586}\) Ibid.
\(^{587}\) Ibid., sec. 2.
the construction of black public schools in Cecil County. This section explains, “The total amount of taxes paid by colored and all donations shall be devoted to the maintenance of colored schools.” Furthermore, an 1874 addition to the 1872 Public School Law reveals, “Each colored school shall be under the direction of a special board of school trustees to be appointed by the board of the county. Colored schools shall be subject to the same laws as white schools.”

The fact that African Americans in Maryland were taxed separately to pay for their own segregated public schools from the 1870s to the first decade of the twentieth century points to the inferior condition of black education in Cecil County. As in post Civil War Mississippi, Maryland’s blacks were required to pay taxes for both their own schools and white public schools. However, this “double tax system” was far from equal. White tax money was never directed to pay for African American public schools. In his book, *Dark Journey*, Neil McMillen reinforces the unequal status of black education in southern states, such as Mississippi and Maryland by stating, “Similar proposals (as in Mississippi) to provide blacks with just such schools as their taxes could support were adopted in the District of Columbia, Delaware, Kentucky, and Maryland immediately after the Civil War.” Often the tax money blacks paid to a general school fund for their own schools was used disproportionately to build white schools. Therefore, African Americans in Cecil County and in other parts of Maryland received less funds than those appropriated to white schools.

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588 Ibid., sec. 4.
589 *Cecil Whig*, 1 March 1875, p. 1.
Still, the efforts of the Cecil County School Board to set up black public schools in each district suggest that by the 1870s, some of Cecil County’s whites supported segregated black schools and attempted to improve school conditions for blacks. Although public black schools were never on an equal footing with white schools, the response of Cecil County’s whites to the Public School Laws of 1872 and 1874 still indicates that some whites’ attitudes towards black education in Cecil County had changed significantly from the 1860s. Indeed, many whites supported the new Public School Law for blacks and argued that it was necessary for the betterment of the African American community in Cecil County. A February 12, 1874 article in the Cecil Whig reports:

Mr. Billingsley, a Democrat and a member of the county school board, advocated the school law and the bill for the financing of colored schools. He said that after slavery had been abolished, slaves were cast upon us in a state of ignorance, and ignorance leads to crime. It is not a partisan question. It is the duty of the state to educate these people. In 1867, they were given the right to testify in court. It is now our duty to educate these people. Mr. Billingsley no doubt supported the education of blacks, but he was in favor of separate schools for whites and colored.\(^{592}\)

The fact that a Democrat so ardently supported education for blacks reveals that whites saw education as necessary to the improvement of African American communities in Cecil County. To moderate Democrats, such as Billingsley, Maryland’s emancipated slaves might commit crimes unless they were educated in societal values. However, Billingsley’s statement concerning the need to keep black students separated from white students in public schools still shows the unwillingness of many whites to integrate African Americans into their schools and place blacks on an equal footing with whites.

\(^{592}\) Cecil Whig, 12 February 1874, p. 2.
According to the Martinet Map of 1877, the majority of public schools for African Americans in Cecil County were constructed on the edge of highly populated black communities in Elkton, Port Deposit, Northeast, and Cecilton. This map indicates that there were fewer black schools in the ninth district than in the first through the eighth districts. For instance, while there was an average of two black schools each in the first through the eighth districts, there was only one black school in the ninth district. Presumably this is because, according to the 1870s census, fewer black people lived in the ninth district than in the first through the eighth districts, and the ninth district was mostly composed of white communities. Indeed, the Martinet Map indicated that southern Cecil County had the strongest free black community both before the Civil War and after emancipation since most of the African American schools and churches were located in these districts.

Although some whites supported the 1872 and 1874 Public School Laws and set up the number of schools required by these laws, petitions from blacks may have been most responsible for the construction of additional public schools and the hiring of black teachers. A clear indication of Cecil County’s African Americans’ attempts to establish adequate schools was through petitions in which they asked the Cecil County School Board to construct new black schools in their communities. African Americans’ efforts to petition whites for schools were first recorded in the 1870s by both the Cecil Whig and the Cecil Democrat. For example, a November 15, 1879 article in the Cecil Whig reported, “The board met last Thursday to read a petition from some colored people...

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593 Martinet Map of 1877. The Martinet Map shows the major communities and institutions in Cecil County.
594 Ibid.
asking for a new public school house in Elkton." In addition, a March 11, 1872 article in the *Cecil Democrat* revealed, "The board received a petition from the Friends of the Colored School, near Rowlandville in the eighth district, requesting the said school be moved to a new building." Likewise, in the 1880s, petitions from blacks asking for new schoolhouses were widely published in the *Cecil Whig*, the *Cecil Democrat*, and the Cecil County School Board Minutes. A May 12, 1887 School Board Minute Report states, "G.N.S. Hawkins, colored, appeared before the board asking for a new schoolhouse at Cokesbury in the seventh district."

Into the early 1900s, blacks continued to petition the school board for the establishment of new black public schools. An April 13, 1895 article in the *Cecil Democrat* notes, "Travilla P. Dickson confirmed the establishment of a colored school that the black people of the area had petitioned for." A September 2, 1896 edition of the *Perryville Record* indicated, "The colored people of Principio Furnace asked the school board for a new schoolhouse since their children had to walk four miles to school." While analyzing these petitions from Cecil County’s African Americans in the 1890s and 1900s, I noticed that the number of petitions in the newspaper and those recorded in the School Board Minutes had increased significantly by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, while there were 52 petitions issued by blacks in the *Cecil Whig*, the *Cecil Democrat*, and the *Cecil County News* in 1870, by 1910, there were over 114 petitions. This may be attributed to the fact that either the newspapers did not consider it important to record the petitions issued by blacks in 1870

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596 *Cecil Democrat*, 11 March 1872, p. 2.  
597 *Cecil County School Board Minutes*, 12 May 1887, p. 199.  
598 *Cecil Democrat*, 13 April 1895, p. 2.  
599 *Perryville Record*, 2 September 1896, p. 1.
or at this time, blacks were not confident that they could successfully convince the school board that they needed new schools and supplies for their children. However, by the late 1880s and early 1900s, blacks issued more petitions because African American communities in Cecil County had become better organized and more politically assertive as time went on.

Not only did blacks increasingly petition the Cecil County School Board for new schools, but they also were able to convince white school commissioners in the late 1890s and early twentieth century to elevate them to higher jobs in the education system. For instance, the November 13, 1897 edition of the Cecil Whig noted, “Blacks convinced the board to appoint Emma V. Thomas, colored, as a trustee of No. 1 colored school, first district, and George Haines, colored, as a trustee of No. 1 colored school, eighth district.” Furthermore, the November 19, 1910 School Board Minutes reported, “The School Board decided on Monday to appoint Miss Charlotte I. Slowe, colored, as the head supervisor of the Colored Industrial School. She will receive a $50 advance.”

These instances in which whites appointed African Americans as trustees and supervisors of African American public schools signified the slight change in whites’ opinions regarding what positions blacks should hold in the education system. Before 1890, most newspapers and School Board Minute transactions only indicate that some black teachers and some principals were hired. Even then, it is clear that there were more white teachers appointed to teach at African American schools than black teachers. For example, in 1870, the Cecil Whig mentioned that 16 white teachers taught at black public schools, while only 8 African American teachers were hired to teach at black public

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600 Cecil Whig, 13 November 1897, p. 2.
601 Cecil County School Board Minutes, 19 November 1910, p. 35.
602 Midland Journal, 18 November 1888, p. 2.
schools. Also, the fact that so many blacks were appointed to higher positions in the black public school system suggests that by the early twentieth century, blacks' occupational mobility had improved from what it had been in the 1870s.

Indeed, from 1872 to 1910, the large number of petitions blacks sent to the Cecil County School Board were successful in convincing the school board to set up the required number of schools and a few additional schools. By the late 1870s, the school board had fulfilled the mandate of the state's new Public School Law and set up thirteen African American public schools in Cecil County. Many more black public schools were built in Cecil County during the 1880s. Some of the most prominent of these schools were the Colorea School in the sixth district, the school at Earlesville, and the black school in Rowlandville. The establishment of a large number of black public schools in the 1870s and 1880s gave African Americans hope that their children could now receive a public education. Although black public schools were far from equal with white public schools, at least blacks could now attend the schools.

By the 1890s, the Cecil County School Board established a black industrial school in Elkton, which taught African American children who were 16 years and older manual skills. Although a June 5, 1973 edition of the Cecil Whig indicated that African American public high schools were not constructed until the 1950s in Cecil County, black industrial schools may have functioned as black high schools until this time. However, instead of teaching blacks reading and writing skills, this school instructed blacks in vocational skills.

603 Cecil Whig, 12 December 1879, p. 2.
605 Cecil County News, 4 August 1889, p. 1.
The Maryland State Legislature passed a law in 1898 that appropriated $1,500 annually out of the state treasury for the maintenance of a colored industrial school in each county.\textsuperscript{607} Also, in 1899, the \textit{Cecil Whig} explains, "Colored industrial schools will teach colored children cooking, sewing, washing, ironing, and etc. The education of the colored race until now has been regarded a failure. Our county must give the Colored Industrial School in Elkton a fair trial."\textsuperscript{608} Whites' willingness to build the Industrial School for blacks in Elkton shows that they may have believed that blacks should only be taught practical skills that they could later use in service and menial jobs. However, at the same time, the fact that black high schools were not established for African Americans in Cecil County indicates that whites thought that blacks were suited for a manual training education rather than an education based on book learning. This view is most evident in a 1903 article published in the \textit{Cecil County News}. The \textit{Cecil County News} states:

We established an industrial training school for Negro children because we believe that they are better adept to an industrial education than a text-based education. The establishment of an industrial school will not be an additional cost to the taxpayers of this county. Professor Carroll Edgar of this county helped to set up this manual training school for blacks and willingly prepared a detailed plan for the school. He also picked suitable teachers.\textsuperscript{609}

Furthermore, some African Americans in Cecil County considered industrial schools as necessary in teaching black children on how to set up their own businesses and farms. An article written by a Cecil County black in the March 11, 1899 edition of the \textit{Cecil Whig} reinforces this point by stating, "The Colored Industrial School in Elkton provides an excellent education for our children. They learn a variety of trades, which will help

\textsuperscript{607} Ibid., 13 May 1899, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{608} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{609} \textit{Cecil County News}, 5 June 1903, p. 1.
them in farming and other occupations.\textsuperscript{610} Although all blacks in Cecil County may not have supported a manual training education for their children and instead preferred a text-based education, it is still significant that some of Cecil County's African Americans supported the "Washingtonian" principles of self-help and education based on industrial skills. In the 1880s, Booker T. Washington had established the Tuskegee University in Alabama, which promoted a manual training education.\textsuperscript{611} Some blacks in Cecil County may have followed his example by supporting the Colored Industrial School in Elkton.

In addition to funding the Industrial Training School for African Americans in Elkton, the Cecil County school board continued to build public elementary schools for blacks during the 1890s and early 1900s. By 1907, the Cecil County School Board Minutes show that there were a total of 15 African American public schools in all the districts of Cecil County out of a total of 78 schools.\textsuperscript{612} Clearly, the fact that by the 1890s, white public schools still outnumbered those for blacks reveals that the Cecil County School Board placed less emphasis on African American education and that they only set up a minimum number of black public schools to abide by the 1872 and 1874 Public School Laws.

Even though Cecil County's African American public schools were poorly funded and lacked proper supplies, many articles in the Cecil Whig, the Cecil Democrat, and the Cecil County News insisted that the school board gave adequate funds for black schools. All of these newspapers reported favorable concerning the conditions of black public schools built during the 1870s in order to justify why African American public schools

\textsuperscript{610} Cecil Whig, 11 March 1899, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{612} Cecil County School Board Minutes, 15 September 1907, p. 624.
did not need additional improvements. Some articles even claimed that African American public schools were on an equal footing with white schools. A December 31, 1872 issue of the *Cecil Whig* includes the Report of Commissioners of Education for the U.S.\(^6\)\(^{13}\) The report focuses primarily on the conditions of African American public schools in Maryland. It reveals, "The commission must give Cecil County the most credit for her advanced public schools. Four years ago, Cecil County's colored schools were on the same footing with her white schools and treated colored and white students alike."\(^6\)\(^{14}\)

While this report indicates that black public schools in Cecil County were more advanced than African American schools in southern Maryland and Baltimore, it is too optimistic since it does not refer to the unequal conditions of African American public schools in Cecil County. From the 1870s to the early twentieth century, African American public schools in the county often lacked funds and used outdated books in the classroom.\(^6\)\(^{15}\) In fact, the Cecil County School Board Minutes from September 22, 1873 indicated that the Colored School No. 1, in Cecilton, lacked ventilation, while Colored School No. 3, in Elkton, used old textbooks.\(^6\)\(^{16}\) Some whites may have chosen not to report the unfavorable conditions of African Americans schools in order to reinforce why the Cecil County School Board should not allocate more money toward African American schools. By arguing that blacks did not need an advanced education, white Republicans could possibly broaden their political base to win the support of both conservative and moderate Republicans in the elections during the 1870s.

\(^6\)\(^{13}\) *Cecil Whig*, 31 December 1872, p. 1.
\(^6\)\(^{14}\) Ibid.
\(^6\)\(^{15}\) *Cecil County School Board Minutes*, 22 September 1873, p. 167.
\(^6\)\(^{16}\) Ibid.
Newspaper reports from the 1880s through the early twentieth century consistently failed to address the substandard conditions of black public schools and may have selectively cited evidence, which made it appear that African American schools in the county were in excellent condition. White reporters may have chosen to describe the conditions of black public schools as equal to those of whites to make it appear that Cecil County was abiding to the Maryland Public School Laws of 1872 and 1874, which stated that black public schools must receive the same funding and supplies as white schools. A March 25, 1882 article in the *Cecil Whig* explained, “According to Comptroller Keating and the Census Bureau of 1880, from 1870 to 1880, there was an increase of 460 black students in public schools, while white pupils decreased by 210.”

By citing evidence that 460 more black students attended school by 1880, this article makes it appear that the conditions of black education improved. However, nowhere does it report that during the same year, many black public schools had to close due to a lack of attendance. For example, a July 1, 1884 transaction in the School Board Minutes indicated, “Colored School No. 3, at Fair Hill, had to close due to a lack of attendance of colored students who work at neighboring canneries.”

Some authors of these newspaper articles may have chosen to describe the conditions of black public schools as equal to those of whites to make it appear that Cecil County was abiding by the Maryland Public School Laws of 1872 and 1874, which state that black public schools must receive the same funding and supplies as white schools. Also, since the Republican Party was weaker in the 1880s than it had been in the 1860s, it may have attempted to downplay the need to improve black schools by publishing articles that

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618 *Cecil County School Board Minutes*, 1 July 1884, p. 50.
indicated that black public schools were in excellent condition. This propaganda may have appealed to both conservative and moderate Republicans, which would strengthen the party.

During both the 1890s and early 1900s, whites may have portrayed the conditions of black public schools in a favorable light in order to justify why blacks did not have to attend mixed schools to receive a good education. By indicating to their readers that blacks were given a suitable education, white Democrats and some Republicans strengthened their arguments that mixed schools were not necessary in Cecil County and were actually dangerous to the “excellent education system” established for blacks living in the county. In fact, some articles published in Cecil County newspapers as late as the 1890s cited part of the Public School Law and explained that black public schools throughout Cecil County were in a suitable condition. An April 25, 1896 article from the *Cecil Whig* noted:

Chapter 226 of the Public School Law is an act which provides for the construction of a schoolhouse for colored children in the first election district. This schoolhouse will be very suitable for colored children. Section 1 of the Maryland Public School Law states that it shall be enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland that county commissioners purchase a suitable lot to build a schoolhouse for colored children. According to this law, the school board should set up a colored school in Johnstown, located in the first election district.\(^{619}\)

Also, a September 13, 1905 article in the *Cecil County News* indicated that black public schools were in excellent condition, and there was no need for mixed schools in Cecil County. The *Cecil County News* emphasizes:

> The system of black public schools in this county is the best in the state and in the whole U.S. Colored schools are sufficiently equipped, and blacks can attend the Colored Industrial School in our county to learn business and basic industrial skills. Mixed schools, which are a probability if Republican candidates are

\(^{619}\) *Cecil Whig*, 25 April 1896, p. 2.
elected, will break up our splendid school system. White parents will never agree to send their children to school with Negroes. Even an old Republican in Pennsylvania says he hopes that old Cecil County will never adopt a mixed school system as Pennsylvania did. People in our county will never submit to such a terrible calamity.  

Not only did Republicans cite the Public School Law as evidence to support their argument why blacks should not be integrated with white students, but they also argued that they were benefactors of black public schools. As a result, whites explained that black public schools needed no further funding. For example, a June 10, 1893 Cecil Whig article noted that Strawbridge & Clothier paid $18 to repair the Colored Industrial School in Elkton and that the Keys & Miller Lumber Company donated $67.48 for repairs to the Colored Industrial School in Elkton.  

Thus, from the 1890s to the early twentieth century, white Republicans and Democrats may have distorted statistics and facts concerning black public schools and used them as political propaganda to convince voters not to support mixed schools or equal rights for blacks. Also, by selectively citing evidence, which made it appear that whites were the benefactors of black schools, white Republicans may have been successful in adding more black voters to their electorate.

In reality, while the conditions of African American schools in Cecil County improved considerably by the 1900s in Cecil County, the School Board Minutes and statistical data cited in the Cecil Whig, the Cecil Democrat, and the Cecil County News reveal that black public schools were far from equal with white public schools. Often, the Cecil County School Board only set up the minimum number of schools that they had to under the 1872 Public School Law and refused blacks' petitions calling for the improvement or the construction of new schools. The unwillingness of the white school board officials in Cecil County to provide proper funding for supplies and for the construction of new black schools...  

\textsuperscript{620} Cecil County News, 13 September 1905, p. 1.  
\textsuperscript{621} Cecil Whig, 10 June 1893, p. 1.
schools is evident in an article from the October 23, 1886 edition of the *Cecil Whig*, in which the school board rejected a petition issued by blacks from Porters Bridge asking for a colored school near that place, and it was refused by Commissioner Everist. Mr. Everist reported in regard to the schoolhouse for colored people in Port Deposit by stating that the board could not afford the cost of a new schoolhouse for black children.\textsuperscript{622}

Another instance of the school board’s refusal to allocate money for a new black public schoolhouse is emphasized in the School Board Minutes of October 13, 1886: “Mr. Everist refused to open a new colored schoolhouse stating that the board at this time could not afford to build a new school and that colored children should attend the school set up at their church.”\textsuperscript{623} Also, on August 10, 1886 the *Cecil Whig* noted, “The blacks of the Warwick area will now use the old white schoolhouse, while money will be given towards the construction of the new school for whites.”\textsuperscript{624} The refusal of the Cecil County School Board to construct more schools than the minimum required by the 1872 Maryland Public School Law points to the attitudes of some whites that education was not as necessary for blacks as for whites. Also, it revealed that education for African Americans was far from equal.

One of the most telling indicators of the separate and unequal status of African American education was that black principals were paid much less than white assistant teachers from the 1890s to the early twentieth century. A June 9, 1891 article in the *Cecil County News* reported, “White assistant teachers are paid $310 annually, while black principals of this town (Elkton) receive a salary of $280 per annum.”\textsuperscript{625} Also, a 1908-

\textsuperscript{622} *Cecil Whig*, 23 October 1886, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{623} *Cecil County School Board Minutes*, 13 October 1886, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{624} *Cecil Whig*, 10 August 1886, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{625} *Cecil County News*, 9 June 1891, p. 2.
1909 salary schedule recorded in the Cecil County School Board Minutes explains that white assistant teachers in the first, second, and third districts received a salary of $450 per year, while white assistant teachers were given $600 per year in the fourth district.\textsuperscript{626} In contrast, black principals in Cecilton, Elkton, and Port Deposit only received $350 during the 1908-1909 school year. African American principals who ran schools with below 15 students were given salaries of $240.\textsuperscript{627} It is significant that blacks were allowed to serve as principals during the 1890s and early twentieth century because prior to that time, only whites could be principals of schools. However, the fact that there was a large disparity between white assistant teachers’ salaries and African American principals indicates that by the early twentieth century, blacks were far from equal with whites in Cecil County’s education system. The prejudice that existed against blacks in Cecil County’s schools undermines the fact that Cecil County developed along a “middle ground.”

Another indication of the separate and unequal status of African American public education was that the Cecil County School Board allocated much less money towards the construction and maintenance of African American public schools. In a June 21, 1879 copy of the School Board Minutes, the Comptroller of the Treasury for the Cecil County Board of Education gave $2,546.84 of that quarter’s tax money towards the building of white public schools, while he allocated $542.97 of that quarter’s tax funds for the construction and improvement of black public schools.\textsuperscript{628} According to the July 1, 1879 transaction in the Cecil County School Board Minutes, there were approximately

\textsuperscript{626} Cecil County School Board Minutes, 1908-1909 Salary Schedule Supplement.
\textsuperscript{627} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{628} Cecil County School Board Minutes, 21 June 1879, p. 321.
4,682 white school-age children, while there were about 1,192 black children who were eligible to attend school, which is a 4 to 1 ratio.\textsuperscript{629}

Clearly, the 5 to 1 ratio of funding in the 1870s indicates that there was a slight disparity of tax funds that were given to black public schools in Cecil County. The fact that less tax funds were allocated for black public schools could suggest that Cecil County’s white school officials may have had an indifferent attitude concerning the education of African Americans. They may have believed that blacks only needed a rudimentary education and basic skills to survive, while it was necessary for whites to receive a more advanced and costly education since they would acquire better jobs. However, it is significant that there was only a slight difference in the proportion of funding appropriated toward white and black schools in Cecil County. These numbers may suggest that since public schools for blacks had just been established seven years earlier, white school officials may have wanted to make it appear that they were following the 1872 Public School Law, which emphasized that black schools must be separate but equal.

By the mid 1880s, the amount of quarterly tax money used toward the establishment of black public schools had slightly decreased from the late 1870s. The \textit{Cecil Star} published a March 5, 1884 tax statement, which explained that $537.42 in tax funds was allocated to black public schools, while the tax funding for white public schools had increased by about $167.90 from 1879, which resulted in the allocation of $2,714.74.\textsuperscript{630} At this time, the Cecil County School Board Minutes indicate that the number of eligible white school-age children was 4,802, while there were 1,304 black school-age children,

\textsuperscript{629} Ibid., 1 July 1879, p. 342.
\textsuperscript{630} \textit{Cecil Star}, 5 March 1884, p. 1.
which is a 4 to 1 ratio.\textsuperscript{631} The fact that there was still a 5 to 1 ratio of tax funding for white and black public schools suggests that the funding from the late 1870s to the mid 1880s had basically remained the same. This suggests that as in the 1870s, Cecil County's school officials may have still wanted to abide by the Public School Law by ensuring that there was not a significant disparity between white and black school funding.

Although both School Board Minutes and the \textit{Cecil Whig} indicate that the quarterly tax fund increased by $375.10 for white public schools in 1890 from what it had been in the 1870s, the amount of funds given to Cecil County colored schools from the Free School Tax Fund basically remained the same as it was in the 1870s and 1880s. For example, the \textit{Cecil Whig} reported in 1890, “Cecil County’s quarterly share for the public school tax is $2,921.94 for white public schools and $526.47 for black public schools.”\textsuperscript{632} According to the School Board Minutes from this year, there were approximately 5,791 white school-age children eligible to attend school, whereas there were 2,057 school age black children in Cecil County, which is a 3-1 ratio.\textsuperscript{633} However, the 6 to 1 ratio of funding between white public schools and black public schools clearly shows that there was indeed a substantial increase in the amount of money that was given to white public schools for that year. Likewise, a September 5, 1904 report in the Cecil County School Board Minutes shows that the funding for white schools had increased significantly since the 1870s and 1880s, while the funds for black public schools only rose slightly.\textsuperscript{634} The School Board Minutes indicated that Comptroller Joshua Hering reported in the School

\textsuperscript{631} \textit{Cecil County School Board Minutes}, 10 March 1884, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{632} \textit{Cecil Whig}, 14 November 1890, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{633} \textit{Cecil County School Board Minutes}, 15 March 1890, p. 409.
\textsuperscript{634} Ibid., 5 September 1904, p. 710.
Board Minutes of Cecil County that $4,552.67 of the Free School Tax Fund went towards the construction of white public schools, while $695.27 of tax money was allocated toward colored schools in the county.\(^{635}\) Also, the School Board Minutes revealed that the number of eligible white school-age children was 5,904, while there were 2,801 black school-age children, which is a 2-1 ratio.\(^{636}\) The 7-1 funding ratio between white and black schools clearly shows the unequal funding black schools received in the early twentieth century.

Both the ratios of tax funding for the 1890s and the early twentieth century signify that there was a significant increase in funding since the 1870s and 1880s, but the amount of tax money for black public schools only increased slightly. The wide disparity between the funding for white and black public schools coincide with the political agenda of many whites in Cecil County during the twentieth century. A July 3, 1901 article in the *Cecil Whig* had revealed that the Cecil County School Board was composed mostly of Democrats. As a result, Democrats on the school board may have chosen to limit black school funding to prevent blacks from becoming literate. The prevention of blacks from receiving a good education would make it easier to disenfranchise African American voters since they would be less likely to understand or give an explanation of the Maryland Constitution.\(^{637}\)

Indeed, the repeated refusal of the Cecil County School Board to fund new schools for blacks shows that white schools were given a higher priority in Cecil County especially during the 1890s and early twentieth century. A transaction in the Cecil County School Board Minutes of May 11, 1897 reinforced whites’ refusal to improve black schools in

\(^{635}\) Ibid., p. 711.
\(^{636}\) Ibid., p. 712
\(^{637}\) *Cecil Whig*, 3 July 1901, p. 1.
Cecil County by indicating, "In regards to the enlargement of the colored school in Port Deposit, this board has determined that it cannot be enlarged at this time."\(^{638}\) However, the School Board Minutes from a year later indicated that the same school commissioners of Cecil County, who had rejected a proposal to expand the black public school in Port Deposit, approved a bill of $368.75 paid to the Alexander & Son Company to repair the No. 1 white school in the sixth district.\(^{639}\) Also, according to the School Board Minutes of November 16, 1897, J.B. Gill, the School Commissioner, was reluctant to give money for the purchase of a few books for black pupils. He claimed to have considered the matter very seriously but finally declined to give money for the books.\(^{640}\) Clearly, if the Cecil County School Board could afford to build new schoolhouses for whites, they had enough money to establish new black public schools, and chose not to do so. The fact that they established public schools for Cecil County’s African Americans at all may have been attributed to the fact that they had to abide by the 1872 Public School Law, which required that there was a black public school in each district of a county.

Furthermore, the number of public schools built for black children in Cecil County was far less than those established for white children. A school expense report published in the March 21, 1874 edition of the *Cecil Democrat* explains that there were 76 white public schools in 1874 and 10 public schools for black children.\(^{641}\) While there was about a 4-1 ratio of white and black school-age children eligible to attend school during that period, the number of public schools for whites still far outnumbered those for black children. By the 1880s, the number of schools for both whites and blacks had increased.

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\(^{638}\) *Cecil County School Board Minutes*, 11 May 1897, p. 352.

\(^{639}\) Ibid., 20 August 1894, p. 544.

\(^{640}\) Ibid., 16 November 1897, p. 375.

\(^{641}\) *Cecil Democrat*, 21 March 1874, p. 2.
The ratio of white and black school-age children eligible to attend school remained about 4-1, which indicated that there were still more schools built for whites. A May 17, 1884 report from the Cecil County School Board Minutes indicated that there were 16 colored schools during the mid 1880s, while there were 78 white schools in Cecil County.\textsuperscript{642} By 1898, the number of African American schools had only increased by 1, while the number of white schools increased by 4. The ratio of white and black school-age children eligible to attend school was 3-1 at this time.\textsuperscript{643} By 1907, according to the Cecil County School Board Minutes, there were still only 19 schools for blacks in Cecil County and 84 schools for whites.\textsuperscript{644} Even though at this there was a 2-1 ratio of white to black school-age children eligible to attend school, blacks had far fewer schools than whites in both the 1890s and the early 1900s. Although the Cecil County School Board had abided by the 1872 Maryland Public School Law by ensuring that there was at least one black public school in each district, the refusal of the board to guarantee that an equal number of schoolhouses were established for black children embodied some whites’ attitudes that not as many blacks needed a public education. This view is best emphasized in a March 12, 1910 article in the Cecil County News. This article stated, “We are overlooking the great truth. It is impossible to decrease the ignorance of blacks by setting up schools for them.”\textsuperscript{645}

Since black public schools both lacked sufficient funds and had inadequate supplies, members of the African American community joined together to help fund public and private schools. During the 1870s, when Cecil County’s white school board members

\textsuperscript{642} Cecil County School Board Minutes, 17 May 1884, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{643} Ibid., 5 May 1898, p. 512.
\textsuperscript{644} Ibid., 7 September 1907, p. 620.
\textsuperscript{645} Cecil County News, 12 March 1910, p. 2.
refused to give more money to a black public school in Mt. Zoar, blacks organized a community-wide effort to raise small and large donations. The November 2, 1878 edition of the Cecil Democrat revealed, "When Commissioner John Berry, Jr. refused to give money for lumber to furnish the colored school in Mt. Zoar, the colored people of that area had a meeting at their church in which they agreed to donate money and to sell stock to raise $250 to paint, plaster, and furnish the schoolhouse." Blacks' enthusiasm for the betterment of their schools quite evidently symbolized their strength and independence from the white community. Also, the great interest that blacks took in constructing and improving public schools reveals that blacks valued education as the primary tool for the success of their community and a major opportunity for upward mobility. Blacks may have felt that by constructing their own churches, social institutions, and schools, they would prove to Cecil County's whites that they were hardworking and independent. In addition, education was necessary in training competent black political leaders, who could organize movements to petition whites for civil and political rights.

Blacks' attempts to better their schools are evident in their purchase of new supplies. A March 24, 1880 article in the Cecil Whig revealed that the Elkton Colored Public School was in need of new maps, but the School Board of Cecil County had refused to purchase them. Therefore, the members of Elkton's black community agreed to raise money for updated maps. The Cecil Whig stated, "Mrs. Julia Ivory, colored, helped organize a fundraising event in which $20 was raised for the purchase of maps for the

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646 Cecil Democrat, 2 November 1878, p. 1.
647 Ibid.