
**MANHOOD RIGHTS IN THE AGE OF JIM CROW:
EVALUATING “END-OF-MEN” CLAIMS IN THE CONTEXT
OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY**

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American history has seen its share of episodic crises of American masculinity. Or, to be more precise, American history has seen its share of periods during which American men experienced a heightened, collective anxiety that they were in danger of losing not only their privileged status in society, but the very foundational ideals by which manhood was defined. Although there have been numerous historical moments when larger political and economic transformations have precipitated a societal redefinition of manhood, such as the emergence of liberalism and the Market Revolution in the first half of the nineteenth century, this Essay will focus on another important period during which anxieties about the decline of American men were pervasive: the late nineteenth century.¹ It was during this period that white American men in particular felt their manhood being undermined by the corporatization of the economy and the decline of proprietary capitalism, the “closing” of the frontier, and the incursion of women into the political realm through reform and suffrage movements.² They responded in a variety of ways, including by becoming more involved in the education of boys, defining manhood in terms of physicality, reasserting their role in church leadership, and advocating for a more aggressive American imperialism. Claims about the “end of men,” then, informed everything from U.S. foreign policy and ideas about education to changing leisure practices and conceptions of sexuality.

The late nineteenth century is also an interesting period to examine because it was during this time that the South witnessed the emergence of legal and customary forms of discrimination that eroded the citizenship rights of the overwhelming majority of African American men and women. In the wake of

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¹ For a discussion on liberalism and the Market Revolution, see MICHAEL S. KIMMEL, *MANHOOD IN AMERICA: A CULTURAL HISTORY* 32-57 (Oxford Univ. Press 3d ed. 2012) (1996), and E. ANTHONY ROTUNDO, *AMERICAN MANHOOD: TRANSFORMATIONS IN MASCULINITY FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE MODERN ERA* 3, 16-18 (1993).

² See KIMMEL, *supra* note 1, at 58.

the redemption of Democratic state governments in the 1880s and 1890s, the states of the former Confederacy began to implement laws that enforced the separation of the races in educational institutions, sites of commerce, and public spaces; established practically insurmountable barriers to voting; and made it possible for the landed elite to reassert their economic dominance and control over a formerly enslaved labor force. Moreover, this matrix of discriminatory laws was reinforced by the ever-present threat of extralegal violence in the form of lynchings, rapes, and race riots.

While both black women and men were victims of this racial backlash, this Essay will explore how the struggle over fundamental issues of equality was framed in the gendered language of manhood rights. It argues that African American men understood segregation and disfranchisement to pose an existential threat to their fundamental status as citizens as much as their identity as men. In a political environment in which women did not have suffrage, citizenship and manhood were inextricably linked. Middle-class African American men, upon whom this Essay focuses, responded to these assaults on their citizenship status, in part, by attempting to establish their dominance within their own communities. Although they did not reduce their male identity to their political relationship to the dominant culture and the nation-state, middle-class African American men did seek to shore up their masculinity by reasserting their control, vis-à-vis black women, working-class black men, and black children, in the areas of church and missionary work, the guidance of black youth, and the professional sphere. But these attempts did not go unchallenged, especially in the case of black women. While there was a great deal of collaboration between African American women and men in building up their communities and defending them against white racism, women certainly did not cede leadership of the race to men. As historian Martha Jones explains about black public culture in the nineteenth century, rather than being “patriarchal or male-dominated,” it was an “openly and often heatedly contested space in which activists self-consciously wrestled with the meanings of manhood and womanhood and the implications of those ideas for the structures and practices of institutions.”³

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The 1880s and the 1890s were decades marked by a sense of unlimited possibility, irrevocable change, and a great deal of trepidation. Industrialization and the ascendancy of corporate capitalism laid the foundation for the American century, spurring economic growth that would underpin the United States’ emergence as a global economic and military power. More efficient processes of capital organization and the production and distribution of goods facilitated the expansion of urban areas. Urbanization established new work

³ MARTHA S. JONES, *ALL BOUND UP TOGETHER: THE WOMAN QUESTION IN AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLIC CULTURE, 1830-1900*, at 9 (2007).

patterns and economic expectations, necessitated changes in family formation, and created opportunities to engage in new forms of leisure and consumption.⁴ Industrialism also led to the influx of hundreds of thousands of immigrant men and women, primarily from southern and eastern Europe, who crowded into the nation's cities, altering their cultural environments and political landscapes in the process.⁵ As Americans marveled at the improvements that accompanied the technological and commercial advancements of the period, they were also acutely aware of the "dark side" of progress – extremes of wealth and poverty; the labor exploitation of the nation's most vulnerable populations; the moral and environmental pollution of the city; the rampant political corruption at the municipal, state, and federal levels of government; and a general anomie, a feeling of being "weightless," or untethered from the social networks and cultural values that had served as the bedrock of American middle-class life.⁶ These harmful outgrowths of what many recognized as necessary progress invigorated various reform movements, many spearheaded by women who invoked their unique status *as women* as the antidote to a society mired in corruption and excess.⁷

In addition to fundamentally altering the economic, social, and political landscape of the nation, industrialization and corporate capitalism also precipitated a change in the normative definition of manhood for the American middle class. The pillars of antebellum bourgeois manliness – embodied in the ideal of the self-made man – began to crumble in the wake of the economic transformation of the late nineteenth century. The ideal of the self-made man existed within, and was fostered by, a system of proprietary capitalism in which the optimal form of production was defined by the ownership of property and self-employment.⁸ Becoming a man and maintaining one's manly status depended upon notions of self-control, self-denial, and the ability to produce within the marketplace and provide for one's family. With the intensive consolidation of capital in the late nineteenth century, increasing numbers of American men experienced a loss of economic independence. The corporatization of the economy and bureaucratization of the workforce meant

⁴ See KIMMEL, *supra* note 1, at 72.

⁵ See *id.* at 59.

⁶ T.J. JACKSON LEARS, *NO PLACE OF GRACE: ANTIMODERNISM AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN CULTURE 1880-1920*, at 31-32 (1981).

⁷ See, e.g., PETER G. FILENE, *HIM/HER/SELF: SEX ROLES IN MODERN AMERICA* 37 (2d ed. 1986) ("Toward the turn of the century . . . suffragists began to clothe their demands in more attractive terms: on the basis of expedience rather than justice, and in terms of women as nurturers rather than individuals. Women should be enfranchised, they said, because the female ballot would bring morality, compassion, and peace into public affairs. 'To extravagance they will oppose economy,' promised Ida H. Harper; 'radicalism they will temper with conservatism; to physical they will add moral courage; masculine brain they will supplement with feminine heart.'").

⁸ See ROTUNDO, *supra* note 1, at 3.

that fewer American men were becoming small proprietors. Unlike their fathers, a growing number of middle-class men were working primarily as entry-level sales clerks, bookkeepers, and mid-level managers.⁹

For middle-class white men, this loss of economic independence was compounded by various challenges to their political dominance in the late nineteenth century. Immigrant men vied with native-born men for control of the levers of municipal government while working-class men and women engaged in a quarter-century-long struggle with the business elite aimed at obtaining basic standards of safety and just compensation.¹⁰ But perhaps the most existential challenge middle-class white men faced at the turn of the twentieth century was that presented by middle-class white women.

Brought primarily in the very public realms of employment, education, domestic politics, and foreign policy, middle-class white women's challenge to the economic and political dominance of middle-class white men had wide-ranging ramifications, leading to a redefinition of manhood itself.¹¹ Corporate capitalism fostered an increase in the presence of women in non-household waged and salaried employment, particularly in the "pink-collar" jobs of telephone operator, typist, stenographer, cashier, and sales clerk.¹² The growing presence of native-born white women in these jobs led to a "feminiz[ation] of the middle-class workplace," or the aesthetic transformation of the office to look more like a parlor, replete with carpets, plants, and artwork.¹³

The turn of the century also witnessed a transformation in the higher education of middle-class white women. While the number of women as a proportion of the overall undergraduate student population did not increase significantly between 1890 and 1910 – from only thirty-five to thirty-nine percent¹⁴ – some women were utilizing their college education to enter the professional fields of medicine, journalism, social work, the clergy, and, to a lesser extent, law.¹⁵ This was a marked difference from the nineteenth century as a whole, when college for women generally meant a career as a teacher or a nurse.¹⁶

Finally, middle-class white women were challenging their male counterparts in the public sphere of politics. They engaged in reform efforts in the areas of temperance and child labor, agitated for female suffrage, became involved in

⁹ GAIL BEDERMAN, *MANLINESS & CIVILIZATION: A CULTURAL HISTORY OF GENDER AND RACE IN THE UNITED STATES, 1880-1917*, at 12 (1995); FILENE, *supra* note 7, at 73.

¹⁰ Bederman points out that there were close to 37,000 strikes between 1881 and 1905, involving a quarter of the nation's work force. *See* BEDERMAN, *supra* note 9, at 13-14.

¹¹ *Id.* at 14.

¹² NANCY F. COTT, *THE GROUNDING OF MODERN FEMINISM* 22 (1987).

¹³ ROTUNDO, *supra* note 1, at 250.

¹⁴ FILENE, *supra* note 7, app. at 238.

¹⁵ *Id.* at 32.

¹⁶ *See id.*

party politics and state and local government (primarily in the western United States), and advocated for a peace-oriented foreign policy based on arbitration of international conflicts.¹⁷

White middle-class and elite men responded to these challenges to their economic and political dominance through the deployment of brute political force and rhetorical manipulation, as well as a more subtle reimagining of what exactly constituted manhood and male authority.¹⁸ Resuscitating the early republican political culture of deference, they moved to expel unworthy members of what historian Kristin Hoganson refers to as the postbellum “male fraternity” of electoral politics.¹⁹ They did this by disfranchising African American and poor white men in the South, and implementing various reform measures to prevent illiterate and immigrant men from voting in northern and midwestern cities.²⁰ They beat back women’s rights activists by forming anti-suffrage organizations and attempting to delegitimize women’s growing presence in the public sphere.²¹ One of the ways elite and middle-class men did this was to cast suffragists as unwomanly scolds who endeavored to take the place of men in the workplace, the halls of government, and the home.²² A corollary tactic was to feminize male supporters of women’s suffrage. Moreover, they framed women’s efforts to progress in the world of politics, higher education, and employment as potential threats to the overall health of the white race, cautioning that women’s turn away from their natural roles as mothers would eventually lead to race suicide.²³

Along with an assault on the innate capacities of those who challenged their dominance, middle-class and elite white men engaged in a reconceptualization of manhood away from Victorian ideals of manliness to more modern definitions of masculinity.²⁴ In doing so, they reimagined the relationship

¹⁷ See BEDERMAN, *supra* note 9, at 14; COTT, *supra* note 12, at 243-67; FILENE, *supra* note 7, at 36-38; KRISTIN L. HOGANSON, *FIGHTING FOR AMERICAN MANHOOD: HOW GENDER POLITICS PROVOKED THE SPANISH-AMERICAN AND PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN WARS 18-21*, 29-35 (1998).

¹⁸ In this sense, “intellectual constructs and material practices” were intimately intertwined in the late-nineteenth-century defense of white American manhood. See BEDERMAN, *supra* note 9, at 24.

¹⁹ HOGANSON, *supra* note 17, at 27-28.

²⁰ See *id.* at 27. They also created voting registration loopholes for poor whites, including “good character,” “understanding,” and “grandfather” clauses. GLENN FELDMAN, *THE DISFRANCHISEMENT MYTH: POOR WHITES AND SUFFRAGE RESTRICTION IN ALABAMA* 90 (2004) (explaining that these clauses were “to protect the vote of poor whites, including Confederate soldiers and their descendants”).

²¹ HOGANSON, *supra* note 17, at 34.

²² *Id.* at 31.

²³ See *id.* at 153-54; KIMMEL, *supra* note 1, at 66-67; Laura Briggs, *The Race of Hysteria: “Overcivilization” and the “Savage” Woman in Late Nineteenth-Century Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 52 AM. Q. 246, 249 (2000).

²⁴ BEDERMAN, *supra* note 9, at 17-19.

between manhood, the body, consumption, and sexuality.²⁵ Central to this project, ironically, was an increasing discomfort with, and rejection of, one of the core axioms of the separate-spheres ideology associated with nineteenth-century bourgeois culture: that women's principal mission was to protect the family from the corrosive effects of the competition that was at the foundation of laissez-faire capitalism and democratic politics.²⁶ By the 1880s and 1890s, few middle-class and elite white men could be heard publicly touting the same sentiment captured in an 1845 newspaper article that the "nobler task" of women was "to control the stormy passions of man, to inspire him with those sentiments which subdue his ferocity, and make his heart gentle and soft."²⁷ Indeed, they instead expressed concern that the white middle-class and, by extension, the nation, was becoming over-civilized.²⁸ Mothers had coddled the sons of the elite and the middle class, leaving them ill-equipped to compete in the world of business and – particularly problematic in the age of imperialism – in the world of foreign affairs. Men and boys needed to reconnect with the source of primal manhood.²⁹

As historian Gail Bederman argues, this reconceptualization of manhood is reflected in the linguistic shift from "manliness" to "masculinity," which occurred in the 1890s.³⁰ Whereas manliness, which was defined by character, respectability, self-control, and a commitment to producer values, had been a class- and race-specific construct that excluded men of color, immigrant men, and, to a lesser extent, working-class men, masculinity became increasingly used as a descriptive term that denoted qualities that all male bodies supposedly possessed.³¹ Masculine physicality and virility displaced the earlier subjective, moral characteristics which defined the ideal man. The emphasis on physicality can be seen in the rise of organized sports and particularly the middle-class embrace of boxing, a sport considered unrespectable for much of the nineteenth century;³² the Social Gospel movement's characterization of

²⁵ For two good treatments of this subject, see PETER BOAG, *SAME-SEX AFFAIRS: CONSTRUCTING AND CONTROLLING HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST* (2003), and GEORGE CHAUNCEY, *GAY NEW YORK: GENDER, URBAN CULTURE, AND THE MAKING OF THE GAY MALE WORLD, 1890-1940* (1994).

²⁶ See MARY P. RYAN, *CRADLE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS: THE FAMILY IN ONEIDA COUNTY, NEW YORK, 1790-1865*, at 146-55 (1981); Paula Baker, *The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920*, 89 *AM. HIST. REV.* 620, 629-31 (1984).

²⁷ ALICE KESSLER-HARRIS, *OUT TO WORK: A HISTORY OF WAGE-EARNING WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES* 52 (1982) (quoting *The Duty of Women*, *VOICE OF INDUSTRY*, Sept. 14, 1845, at 4).

²⁸ See LEARS, *supra* note 6, at 4.

²⁹ See BEDERMAN, *supra* note 9, at 73-74.

³⁰ *Id.* at 17-19.

³¹ *Id.* at 18.

³² *Id.* at 17-19; ELLIOTT J. GORN, *THE MANLY ART: BARE-KNUCKLE PRIZE FIGHTING IN AMERICA 179-206* (1986).

Jesus Christ as a masculine, working-class figure; and the popularity of the “strenuous life” advocated by politician and American war hero Theodore Roosevelt.³³

Over-civilization also necessitated men taking a more active role in the socialization of their sons. This was achieved through the development of a closer father-son bond, and through organizations such as the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), the Boy Scouts, and the Woodcraft Indians.³⁴ Through some of these associations, middle-class and elite white men encouraged young males to cultivate qualities that had previously been deemed as vices needed to be tamed by mothers: aggressiveness, rambunctiousness, and competitiveness.³⁵ Rather than extinguish boys’ innate savagery, fathers sought to teach them how to channel it. An embrace of the “primitive”³⁶ – often manifesting in Native American simulacra – served to revitalize a culture perceived to have become decadent, materialistic, and out of touch with simple virtues, characteristics that would not serve the United States well as it began to compete with other industrial nations for markets and territory.

As this last example suggests, elite and middle-class white men were using racial difference to reconstruct their masculinity in the late nineteenth century. As much as they were appropriating an ersatz Indian-ness to reconnect with an imagined primal source of manhood, they were also positioning themselves as the civilized counterpart to the “uncivilized” Chinese male, whose presence in urban areas was construed as a threat to the social, gender, and sexual order.³⁷ Chinese men were deemed unmanly both because of the feminized labor they engaged in – as cooks, servants, and launderers – and because they lacked self-control over their “savage” sexual urges.³⁸ This latter characteristic posed a particular problem for preserving the sexual purity of white women, who were increasingly moving alone through urban public spaces as missionaries, reformers, and shoppers.³⁹ Despite this paradoxical representation of Chinese masculinity, the unmanly Chinese male served as an important negative referent for the construction of white masculinity at a time when white men

³³ Arnaldo Testi, *The Gender of Reform Politics: Theodore Roosevelt and the Culture of Masculinity*, 81 J. AM. HIST. 1509, 1520 (1995).

³⁴ See ROTUNDO, *supra* note 1, at 257-58.

³⁵ See *id.* at 255-62.

³⁶ BEDERMAN, *supra* note 9, at 170-97; ROTUNDO, *supra* note 1, at 227-29; see also David Anthony Tyee Clark & Joane Nagel, *White Men, Red Masks: Appropriations of “Indian” Manhood in Imagined Wests*, in ACROSS THE GREAT DIVIDE: CULTURES OF MANHOOD IN THE AMERICAN WEST 109, 111-18 (Matthew Basso et al. eds., 2001).

³⁷ MARY TING YI LUI, THE CHINATOWN TRUNK MYSTERY: MURDER, MISCEGENATION, AND OTHER DANGEROUS ENCOUNTERS IN TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY NEW YORK CITY 46-51 (2005).

³⁸ *Id.* at 67.

³⁹ *Id.* at 80.

were feeling anxious about their ability to live up to the standards set by their fathers.⁴⁰

In the South, where ninety percent of the nation's African American population lived in the late nineteenth century, black men served as the central screen against which elite and middle-class white men would reassert their "racialized" gender identity and reconsolidate their masculine authority. With the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments in 1868 and 1870, which, respectively, conferred birthright citizenship on African American men and women and suffrage on African American men, white men lost monopoly control over two of the constitutive elements of normative manhood. One of the ways in which they responded was to make black men's citizenship status and right to vote as meaningless as possible. From the end of Reconstruction through the first decade of the twentieth century, southern Democrats moved to implement laws legalizing inequality and disfranchising African American men.⁴¹

To be sure, the white supremacist reaction to emancipation and black citizenship was ultimately aimed at restoring the antebellum political, social, and economic order and cannot be reduced to a reclamation project for a white southern manhood that was in decline. But gender was hardly incidental. As historian Hannah Rosen has illustrated, the nighttime attacks on freedpeople's homes by white vigilante organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan reminded African American men that they did not have the patriarchal authority or power to protect their families and, therefore, were not worthy of citizenship.⁴² Middle-class and elite white men also convinced working-class and poor whites to support disfranchisement efforts and discriminatory legislation such as bans on interracial marriage by raising the specter of "Negro domination," and its canard that African American men would mistakenly assume that their political power gave them sexual access to white women.⁴³

Given the synonymy between manhood and citizenship, it is not surprising that African American men viewed attempts to marginalize them politically, socially, and economically as assaults on their masculinity. In this period during which the privileges and protections of citizenship were being

⁴⁰ See *id.* at 178; Karen J. Leong, "A Distinct and Antagonistic Race": *Constructions of Chinese Manhood in the Exclusionist Debates, 1869-1878*, in *ACROSS THE GREAT DIVIDE: CULTURES OF MANHOOD IN THE AMERICAN WEST*, *supra* note 36, at 131, 134.

⁴¹ LEON F. LITWACK, *TROUBLE IN MIND: BLACK SOUTHERNERS IN THE AGE OF JIM CROW* 217-79 (1998); see also Nina Mjagkij, *True Manhood: The YMCA and Racial Advancement, 1890-1930*, in *MEN AND WOMEN ADRIFT: THE YMCA AND THE YWCA IN THE CITY* 140 (Nina Mjagkij & Margaret Spratt eds., 1997).

⁴² See HANNAH ROSEN, *TERROR IN THE HEART OF FREEDOM: CITIZENSHIP, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, AND THE MEANING OF RACE IN THE POSTEMANCIPATION SOUTH* 8 (2009).

⁴³ GLENDA ELIZABETH GILMORE, *GENDER AND JIM CROW: WOMEN AND THE POLITICS OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN NORTH CAROLINA, 1896-1920*, at 83 (1996); ROSEN, *supra* note 42, at 194-95; see also HOGANSON, *supra* note 17, at 34.

systematically rolled back – in the South as well as the rest of the nation – the struggle to maintain or regain them was framed as a struggle for “manhood rights.”⁴⁴ As the journalist and political activist T. Thomas Fortune told a mixed-sex audience at the 1890 national convention of the Afro-American League, a civil rights organization, “we shall no longer accept in silence a condition which degrades our manhood and makes a mockery of our citizenship.”⁴⁵ Rather than “manhood” serving as a universal metaphor for African American humanity, however, it often functioned as shorthand for equating race progress with the development of patriarchy within the black community and race leadership with male leadership. This formulation, moreover, was inflected by class as much as it was by gender and it shaped intra-community relations in the spheres of religion, education, and work.

As was the case in antebellum black communities, the church remained a critical institution for community building in the postemancipation period.⁴⁶ Once they were free from laws requiring that black congregations be attached to white congregations or overseen by white ministers,⁴⁷ southern blacks began establishing new independent churches and augmenting existing ones. These churches became incubators for other important institutions, such as fraternal associations, mutual aid societies, trade associations, and literary societies.⁴⁸ Churches also served as important sites of political activism, providing the institutional infrastructure and leadership for many of the early black civil rights organizations, including Union Leagues, the Equal Rights League, and Daughters of the Union Victory.⁴⁹ The black church created an internal public sphere, according to historian Elsa Barkley Brown, or a space in which African Americans could deliberate the political, not just the spiritual, state of the race.⁵⁰

Additionally, the nascent political communities that African Americans envisioned for themselves – and the churches in which they formed – tended more toward an egalitarian ethos and were inclusive along the lines of class,

⁴⁴ BEDERMAN, *supra* note 9, at 20.

⁴⁵ T. Thomas Fortune, We Know Our Rights . . . and Have the Courage to Defend Them, Address Before the 1890 National Afro-American League National Convention (1890), in BLACK NATIONALISM IN AMERICA 212, 216 (John H. Bracey, Jr. et al. eds., 1970).

⁴⁶ STEVEN HAHN, A NATION UNDER OUR FEET: BLACK POLITICAL STRUGGLES IN THE RURAL SOUTH FROM SLAVERY TO THE GREAT MIGRATION 120 (2003).

⁴⁷ See DANIEL W. STOWELL, REBUILDING ZION: THE RELIGIOUS RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SOUTH, 1863-1877, at 86 (1998).

⁴⁸ See ERIC FONER, RECONSTRUCTION: AMERICA’S UNFINISHED REVOLUTION, 1863-1877, at 95 (1988).

⁴⁹ See HAHN, *supra* 46, at 120.

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 120; Elsa Barkley Brown, *Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom*, 7 PUB. CULTURE 107, 110 (1994).

gender, and age.⁵¹ Because these political communities took shape prior to the development of a stable class system, the leaders emerged from the grassroots and consisted of laborers, farmers, teachers, and ministers, most of whom had been previously enslaved.⁵² African American women were also integrally involved in the collective efforts of the race to assert its new relationship to the nation-state. Although in miniscule numbers, black women attended the national colored conventions that met throughout the late 1860s, where they advocated for female suffrage with the support of some of their fellow male delegates.⁵³ On the local level, black women participated in mass political meetings in which communities provided guidance to African American delegates to constitutional conventions; provided protection, sometimes with guns, for African American men at political organization meetings; and sought to influence African American men, often through the use of shame and ridicule, into voting for Republican slates.⁵⁴ Even though the Fifteenth Amendment did not extend suffrage to them, black women exercised a very real franchise within African American political institutions. This reflected freedpeople's conviction that citizenship was a collective status and suffrage was a communal right.⁵⁵

African Americans' inclusion in the civic life of the South as full citizens was short-lived. White Democrats regained control of the state governments by the early 1880s and began to implement a structure of legal and customary practices – disfranchisement, segregation, and economic marginalization through sharecropping, debt peonage, and the convict-lease system – that forced African Americans back into a subordinated position. Abandoned by a Supreme Court skeptical of federal overreach⁵⁶ and a national Republican party and northern population that were weary of dealing with the “Negro problem,”⁵⁷ African Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries engaged in a struggle against white supremacy that took different ideological and strategic forms. Nonetheless, the struggle increasingly lost its communal spirit. As a stable black middle class was brought into existence by the necessity of providing goods and services to segregated communities, men and women of this strata pointed to class formation, and the social hierarchies that came with it, as necessary because it demonstrated to whites that African

⁵¹ See Barkley Brown, *supra* note 50, at 110.

⁵² See HAHN, *supra* note 46, at 222.

⁵³ JONES, *supra* note 3, at 146-47; see also HUGH DAVIS, “WE WILL BE SATISFIED WITH NOTHING LESS”: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN STRUGGLE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS IN THE NORTH DURING RECONSTRUCTION 67-68 (2011).

⁵⁴ See Barkley Brown, *supra* note 50, at 118-24.

⁵⁵ NORALEE FRANKEL, FREEDOM'S WOMEN: BLACK WOMEN AND FAMILIES IN CIVIL WAR ERA MISSISSIPPI 176-77 (1999); JONES, *supra* note 3, at 147; ROSEN, *supra* note 42, at 106-08; Barkley Brown, *supra* note 50, at 118-26; see also HAHN, *supra* note 50, at 122.

⁵⁶ See FONER, *supra* note 48, at 530-31, 587.

⁵⁷ *Id.* at 586-87.

Americans were capable of being citizens and being assimilated into the dominant culture.⁵⁸ Class formation, in other words, was evidence that a segment of the African American population had developed an appreciation for the bourgeois values of thrift, industry, sobriety, regularity, and a public-private organization of gender within the home and community.

In other words, the relative egalitarianism of post-emancipation black political culture began to decline within a generation of freedom. As Barkley Brown argues: “In the changing circumstances of the late-nineteenth century, working-class men and women and middle-class women were increasingly disfranchised within the black community, just as middle-class black men were increasingly disfranchised in the larger society.”⁵⁹

Demonstrating this capacity for citizenship required drawing gender and class lines within the community. Throughout African American churches – Baptist, African Methodist Episcopal, AME Zion – black men attempted to reassert their privileged position by quashing women’s authority. They sought to take control of the churches’ missionary societies or reduce them to auxiliaries of men’s societies, rejected the prospects of women’s ordination, and challenged women’s right to have a meaningful role in church governance.⁶⁰ Of course, there were African American women who resisted marginalization and some African American men who supported women’s empowerment in churches, which were the most important institutions within the community.⁶¹ But in general, black men moved to contain black women’s authority in the church and used two different rhetorical strategies to do so. One was to suggest that African American women’s public roles as pastors and as missionaries rendered them less “womanly.” As one concerned man expressed in an editorial to the AME Zion’s newspaper, the *Star of Zion*,

There are mannish women who, by this example, will come forward and do God’s church any amount of damage. A woman in a river baptizing men; a woman in the army acting as chaplain; a woman celebrating marriage and a woman in the pulpit divesting herself of wig and teeth, when under religious excitement, are sights that even angels would be shocked to see, much less men.⁶²

While the neutering potential of women’s religious authority was a discourse directed at African Americans, black men deployed another discourse that was intended as much for external consumption as it was for

⁵⁸ KEVIN K. GAINES, *UPLIFTING THE RACE: BLACK LEADERSHIP, POLITICS, AND CULTURE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY* 3-4 (1996).

⁵⁹ Barkley Brown, *supra* note 50, at 139.

⁶⁰ JONES, *supra* note 3, at 180-204.

⁶¹ See LESLIE BROWN, *UPBUILDING BLACK DURHAM: GENDER, CLASS, AND BLACK COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE JIM CROW SOUTH* 102-06 (2008); JONES, *supra* note 3, at 180-204; Barkley Brown, *supra* note 50, at 127-30.

⁶² JONES, *supra* note 3, at 193 (quoting C.H.J. Taylor, *Don’t Need Women Elders*, *STAR OF ZION*, Aug. 11, 1898, at 4); see also Barkley Brown, *supra* note 50, at 129.

internal ingestion. That is, they produced a “narrative of endangered black womanhood,” according to Barkley Brown, which turned the dominant cultural representations of the sexually ravenous “Negro” male on their head and, in the process, reinforced a prescription for racial progress that relegated African American women to the margins.⁶³ While white Democrats crafted a narrative in which black men erroneously conflated political power with sexual access to white women, African American men framed their narrative in terms of their desire to protect their own women from white male sexual assault. African American men needed citizenship, or “manhood rights,” in order to give themselves the ability to protect women and their families.⁶⁴ While this rhetoric did not speak directly to African American women’s role in the church, it was part of a larger masculinist discourse that was aimed at securing black men’s authority within the home, as well as the community’s institutions.

If demonstrating a commitment to the public-private organization of gender within the home and community was central to middle-class African American men’s claims to citizenship, so too was a very self-conscious positioning against working-class and poor blacks. They did this through their efforts to make the black church more “respectable,” by, among other things, suppressing ecstatic worship, call-and-response interaction between ministers and congregations, and the singing of spirituals.⁶⁵ In some southern states, middle-class African American men engaged in more institutionalized party politics, relying less on the mass meeting as a forum for collective political deliberation.⁶⁶ They also became less absolutist in their opposition to voter literacy qualifications.⁶⁷ W.E.B. Du Bois articulated this class-based argument against African American disfranchisement in his masterpiece, *Souls of Black Folk*, published in 1903. “I am not saying a word against all legitimate efforts to purge the ballot of ignorance, pauperism, and crime,” Du Bois wrote. “But few have pretended that the present movement for disfranchisement in the South is for such a purpose; it has been plainly and frankly declared in nearly every case that the object of the disfranchising laws is the elimination of the black man from politics.”⁶⁸

Finally, middle-class African American men deployed a rhetoric of uplift that functioned to legitimize their status as race leaders as much as it did to ameliorate the working and living conditions of their less fortunate brethren. Ultimately, African American men’s attempts to strengthen their claims to citizenship required them to constantly demonstrate their middle-class

⁶³ Barkley Brown, *supra* note 50, at 139-40.

⁶⁴ *Id.*

⁶⁵ *Id.* at 135.

⁶⁶ *Id.* at 133.

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ W.E.B. DU BOIS, *THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK* 131 (Dodd, Mead & Co., Inc. 1979) (1903); *see also* Barkley Brown, *supra* note 50, at 132-37.

identities, which they emphasized through their patriarchal position within the community and their status superiority to working-class black men.⁶⁹

Another realm in which middle-class African American men sought to assert their gender authority was the education of black youth. This not only involved formal education, but extended to socialization through youth-oriented community institutions. As in the case of black public culture – both within the church and electoral politics – African American men’s efforts to educate black youth were inflected by the class formation that was occurring in the late nineteenth century.

By the turn of the century, middle-class African Americans were growing increasingly concerned about the future of the race. Framed within a larger cultural anxiety about racial degeneracy – shared by both blacks and whites – this concern was exacerbated by all of the hallmarks of a modernizing society: urbanization, a nascent consumerist ethos, a creeping secularism, and the generational shift in gender norms and expectations.⁷⁰ Middle-class African Americans were well aware of how the social ills of modernity – rising crime rates, poverty, and disease – reinforced dominant cultural narratives about the inability of blacks to survive outside of the bonds of slavery.⁷¹ Moreover, in keeping with what may be considered the “demonstration of assimilability equals proof of the capacity for citizenship” formulation, middle-class African Americans emphasized the necessity of cultivating respectability among the “coming generations.” This certainly was the primary responsibility of the family, with middle-class blacks promoting “patriarchy and moral motherhood as transformative, regenerative forces within black households.”⁷² But it necessarily extended outward into the community and the religious and secular spaces in which black youth interacted with other adults and their peers.⁷³

As middle-class African Americans became more self-conscious of their status and what they perceived to be their enhanced leverage in the struggle for citizenship, they developed less tolerance for working-class blacks and what they considered to be their uncouth behavior. New migrants from rural areas in particular were blamed for contributing to a less-than-desirable cultural environment, either as purveyors of unrespectable and immoral practices or as

⁶⁹ On the class dimension of reform, see GAINES, *supra* note 58, at 20-21. Black middle-class and elite women engaged in a similar strategy of self-making, which also utilized a discourse of uplift and respectability. For one example, see EVELYN BROOKS HIGGINBOTHAM, *RIGHTEOUS DISCONTENT: THE WOMEN’S MOVEMENT IN THE BLACK BAPTIST CHURCH, 1880-1920*, at 186-88 (1993), although Higginbotham argues that “respectability” was not solely a discourse of the middle class.

⁷⁰ See MICHELE MITCHELL, *RIGHTEOUS PROPAGATION: AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE POLITICS OF RACIAL DESTINY AFTER RECONSTRUCTION* 91-94, 98-100 (2004).

⁷¹ See Mjagkij, *supra* 41, at 142-43.

⁷² MITCHELL, *supra* note 70, at 117.

⁷³ See *id.*; Angela M. Hornsby, “The Boy Problem”: North Carolina Race Men Groom the Next Generation, 1900-1930, 86 *J. NEGRO HIST.* 276, 277-79 (2001).

gullible victims of hucksters, charlatans, and criminals.⁷⁴ Moreover, they risked contaminating the carefully nurtured respectability of the African American middle class, since whites tended to ignore status differences within the African American community.⁷⁵

To address this concern, middle-class blacks, especially professionals and entrepreneurs, developed or took control of community organizations in order to shepherd young black males into respectable black manhood. Black branches of the YMCA opened in cities throughout the North and the South in the 1890s.⁷⁶ Through classes and lectures aimed at enhancing young men's marketable skills, athletic programs to preserve healthy bodies and stalwart souls, and father-son events to strengthen familial bonds, YMCAs became an indispensable complement to the home and the church in instilling respectability in black youth.⁷⁷ They also became central institutions for cultivating sexual purity among young black men, serving as a line of defense against racial degeneracy. "Instead of promoting industrial training or academic education," historian Nina Mjagkij argues, "YMCA leaders insisted that the key to racial advancement was the physical, moral, religious, and intellectual strength of the race's manhood."⁷⁸ The YMCA's rationale and pedagogical agenda was replicated through other youth-oriented organizations, such as Asheville, North Carolina's Young Men's Institute, which emerged in 1890 to handle what that city's black middle class deemed to be a particular problem with its youth.⁷⁹

Youth-oriented organizations operated in the gender identity formation of middle-class African American men in multiple ways. On the one hand, these organizations allowed middle-class blacks to reinforce the difference between their commitment to respectability and what they considered working-class and poor blacks' unrefined behavior. The "street culture" associated with this latter segment of the population was potentially detrimental to racial progress, leading middle-class African American men to simultaneously engage in a distancing from and reformation of working-class black men.⁸⁰ On the other hand, these organizations allowed middle-class African American men to

⁷⁴ Hornsby, *supra* note 73, at 278.

⁷⁵ See Mjagkij, *supra* note 41, at 142-43.

⁷⁶ *Id.* at 140.

⁷⁷ See *id.* at 146-47.

⁷⁸ See *id.* at 146, 149.

⁷⁹ ANGELA HORNSBY-GUTTING, BLACK MANHOOD AND COMMUNITY BUILDING IN NORTH CAROLINA, 1900-1930, at 82-94 (2009).

⁸⁰ See *id.* at 58-60. Mjagkij points out that

[a]lthough black YMCA advocates claimed to work on behalf of the rural migrants, they made no special efforts to recruit them. . . . The absence of membership drives specifically designed to attract the migrants suggests that black YMCA supporters were less interested in building manhood among the lower classes than they were in preserving the manhood of members of their own rank.

Mjagkij, *supra* note 41, at 144.

perform their class identity by assuming the role of instructor of black youth in the values of industry, thrift, moral rectitude, and sexual probity.⁸¹ In doing so, they sought to ensure that these values would be reproduced in the next generation.

As in the case of the changing dynamics in the black church, the collective formation of a classed gender identity within these youth-oriented organizations operated through a marginalization of African American women. Black women were often blamed for the problem of wayward youth because their wage work or civic activism necessitated their absence from the home, allowing children to run around in the streets; or, black women exposed their children to potentially immoral individuals when they took in boarders out of economic necessity.⁸² In order to address African American women's mishandling of the wayward youth, African American men needed to reassert their patriarchal position within the home. Many YMCA programs, for instance, operated on the logic of instilling in young African American men a commitment to the male-breadwinner/female-homemaker model of the family.⁸³ In even more concrete ways, Asheville's Young Men's Institute increasingly excluded women (who had previously used the space for religious services, lectures, and banquets), reserving more of its space for male-owned businesses and dedicating more of its resources to young men's activities.⁸⁴ "While women retained a place within the YMI," historian Angela Hornsby-Gutting argues, "their activism was circumscribed so that the organization's primary, or authentic, identification as a black male institution remained intact."⁸⁵

Along with the church and youth-oriented civic organizations, the professions became principle sites in which disfranchised middle-class African American men asserted their gender and class identity and authority. While Jim Crow laws were conducive to the robust development of some professions in the black community – such as the ministry, education, and journalism – it stunted the growth of others, mainly medicine and law. African American physicians and lawyers in the segregated South encountered substantial barriers to professional success, not least of which was the exclusion of blacks from most southern professional schools.⁸⁶ Once aspiring African Americans were able to complete their professional degrees – by either attending the few black law and medical schools in the South or pursuing a graduate education in non-southern or European universities – their professional paths were

⁸¹ Mjagkij, *supra* note 41, at 141.

⁸² See MITCHELL, *supra* note 70, at 117-18, 153-54, 172.

⁸³ Mjagki, *supra* note 41, at 152.

⁸⁴ HORNSBY-GUTTING, *supra* note 79, at 83-94.

⁸⁵ *Id.* at 94; see also Mjagkij, *supra* note 41, at 152. Elsa Barkley Brown discusses a similar marginalization within Richmond's black civic organizations in the 1880s and 1890s. Barkley Brown, *supra* note 50, at 138.

⁸⁶ LITWACK, *supra* note 41, at 143.

obstructed by discriminatory regulations, racist customs, and, often, lack of support from their own communities.⁸⁷

African American lawyers, for instance, were commonly denied admission to the bar by racist examiners.⁸⁸ If they managed to gain admission to the bar, segregationist statutes often prohibited them from enjoying the same privileges as white lawyers, such as defending their clients from the counsel's table.⁸⁹ African American physicians similarly encountered difficulties passing state licensing exams,⁹⁰ probably due as much to the education received at black medical schools as to racist examiners. Once a physician passed the boards, however, it could be incredibly difficult for him or her to secure a loan to start a private practice and build a stable clientele.⁹¹

A number of factors contributed to the difficulty African American physicians faced in developing a steady community of patients. Part of their natural constituency, working-class and rural African Americans, were not inclined to consult physicians to begin with, often drawing on home remedies or utilizing the services of midwives and folk healers.⁹² Even middle- and upper-class African Americans, motivated by contradictory impulses, were often unwilling to employ the services of black physicians. On the one hand, there was a white-supremacist-conditioned skepticism of the intelligence and talent of African Americans, which undermined the confidence that blacks had in each other's abilities.⁹³ On the other hand, some black communities may have been hesitant to support an African American physician for fear that the appearance of a thriving professional sector might engender the hostility of local whites.⁹⁴

The machinations of white physicians and state and local medical societies also contributed to anemic growth in black physicians' clientele. When an established white doctor perceived a black physician as potential economic competition, he could easily lower his fees and, due to his large patient base,

⁸⁷ *See id.* at 155.

⁸⁸ *Id.* at 250 (describing how a black lawyer in Florida "faced a grueling examination from three white attorneys" and ultimately was not accepted to the bar because one examiner was "unable to accept" the result of a black man being admitted to the bar).

⁸⁹ *Id.*

⁹⁰ *Id.* at 339.

⁹¹ *Id.* at 340-41; THOMAS J. WARD JR., BLACK PHYSICIANS IN THE JIM CROW SOUTH 105-06 (2003).

⁹² TODD L. SAVITT, *Entering a "White" Profession, 1880-1920*, in RACE AND MEDICINE IN NINETEENTH- AND EARLY-TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA 269, 276-77 (2007). Their reluctance to engage professional doctors resulted from a combination of distrust of the medical profession, their comfort with traditional medicine, and the lack of money to pay fees. *Id.*

⁹³ *Id.* at 275-76.

⁹⁴ *Id.* at 278; WARD, *supra* note 91, at 108-09, 121-24. There were, of course, many communities that embraced African American physicians.

not suffer financially. White physicians also withheld the professional courtesy of consultation and assistance from black doctors. That is, they often refused to assist black doctors performing complicated medical techniques, including surgery. For a lone black physician attempting to serve a community, this could be very damaging to his or her practice.⁹⁵ Moreover, white physicians also typically did not consult with black physicians about the latter's patients.⁹⁶ At a time when consultation – in essence, the second opinion – was an important tool for establishing a physician's legitimacy with a skeptical public,⁹⁷ not being able to rely on one's white colleagues placed the black doctor in a very precarious position. Finally, African American physicians generally did not have admitting privileges at local hospitals.⁹⁸ The fact that black doctors could not assure their patients continuity of care certainly made some African Americans hesitant to engage their services in the first place.⁹⁹

The lack of admitting privileges among African American physicians was a product of their exclusion from local and state medical societies, perhaps the most egregious form of blacks' marginalization within the medical profession.¹⁰⁰ Because membership in the American Medical Association (AMA) was contingent upon membership in local and state medical associations, the majority of African American physicians were precluded from participating in the national professional organization.¹⁰¹ Although black physicians began forming their own state medical associations in the 1880s, the AMA did not admit these societies as constituent members.¹⁰² Founded in 1847 as an effort to define legitimate medical practice and to rationalize the medical marketplace, the AMA's postbellum policy of excluding African Americans and women supported the philosophy behind its origins.¹⁰³ "Crucial to this process of institution building," historian Douglas M. Haynes argues, was an association discourse that included defining the social identity of medical authority in relationship to the subordination of marginal groups – blacks and white women. This discourse rendered the absence of blacks and white women in medicine as natural through the use of masculine,

⁹⁵ SAVITT, *supra* note 92, at 280.

⁹⁶ LITWACK, *supra* note 41, at 341.

⁹⁷ GLORIA MOLDOW, *WOMEN DOCTORS IN GILDED-AGE WASHINGTON: RACE, GENDER, AND PROFESSIONALIZATION* 97 (1987).

⁹⁸ LITWACK, *supra* note 41, at 341.

⁹⁹ MOLDOW, *supra* note 97, at 96-98; SAVITT, *supra* note 92, at 281-82.

¹⁰⁰ WARD, *supra* note 91, at 193.

¹⁰¹ *Id.*

¹⁰² *See id.* at 194, 199-200.

¹⁰³ *See* Douglas M. Haynes, *Policing the Social Boundaries of the American Medical Association, 1847-70*, 60 *J. HIST. MED. & ALLIED SCI.* 170, 174-75 (2005).

affective rhetoric that defined the AMA as a distinctive space for white males.¹⁰⁴

The marginalization of African Americans and white women, along with practitioners of irregular medicine such as homeopathy, continued throughout the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth. This marginalization culminated in the closure of many sectarian medical schools as well as medical schools that catered to African Americans and women as a result of the 1910 Flexner Report on standardizing medical education in North America.¹⁰⁵ In addition to limited access to medical schools, African Americans found that their opportunities to pursue specialties were severely restricted. Internships at hospitals with clinical training programs were rare for African Americans and residencies were practically non-existent.¹⁰⁶ White hospitals routinely excluded African Americans from their residency programs and there were few black-controlled or segregated hospitals with sufficient resources to support residencies.¹⁰⁷

Despite their general accommodation to the development of a separate realm of medical education and health care, African American physicians were critical of the unequal treatment meted out by their white “peers.” In an article aimed at raising awareness about the need for early diagnosis of cancer, F.J. Shadd, a professor at Howard University’s medical school and a surgeon at Washington, D.C.’s Freedmen’s Hospital, departed from a standard presentation of his clinical findings to comment on the unprofessional treatment afforded black physicians.¹⁰⁸ Shadd’s censure was occasioned by the appearance in a surgery textbook of a case of an African American man with a malignant tumor whom Shadd had treated. To his chagrin, there was no mention of Freedmen’s Hospital.¹⁰⁹ “This is only another illustration of class proscription,” Shadd inveighed,

which confronts us at every step up the ladder of professional success. As gold is tried by fire we may be purified and strengthened by rebuffs and

¹⁰⁴ *Id.* at 173. On the founding of African American state medical associations, see TODD L. SAVITT, “A Journal of Our Own”: *The Medical and Surgical Observer in Late-Nineteenth-Century America*, in RACE AND MEDICINE IN NINETEENTH- AND EARLY-TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA, *supra* note 92, at 295, 304, 309.

¹⁰⁵ ABRAHAM FLEXNER, MEDICAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA: A REPORT TO THE CARNEGIE FOUNDATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING, at vii-xvii (1910), available at http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/sites/default/files/elibrary/Carnegie_Flexner_Report.pdf. For a general discussion of the effects of the Flexner Report on African American medical schools, see DARLENE CLARK HINE, *To Heal the Race: African-American Health Care Professionals in Historical Perspective*, in SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER: BLACK PROFESSIONAL CLASS IN UNITED STATES HISTORY 181, 185-86 (1996).

¹⁰⁶ WARD, *supra* note 91, at 60.

¹⁰⁷ *Id.* at 59-60, 72-74.

¹⁰⁸ F.J. Shadd, *Sarcoma*, 1 MED. & SURGICAL OBSERVER 57, 61 (1893).

¹⁰⁹ *Id.*

opposition. But I, for one, am getting tired of being classed as inferior when every avenue of advancement is locked and barred against me. This digression is only inserted to enter a mild rebuke to authors who fail to give us credit when we justly deserve it; as it is customary for authors to mention the fact that the patient was an inmate of a hospital – especially as this was a very uncommon and rare case.¹¹⁰

Of course, not every white physician refused to acknowledge African Americans' medical proficiency and many treated them as their peers, consulting with them, advocating for their admission to the AMA, and so forth.¹¹¹ But for Shadd, the textbook author's unwillingness to attribute clinical research to African American physicians, even as their competency was routinely questioned, encapsulated the fundamental problem that Jim Crow posed for black professionals.

Shadd's article appeared in the *Medical and Surgical Observer*, a short-lived journal established by Miles Vandahurst Lynk, an African American physician based in western Tennessee. A graduate of Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Lynk opened a private practice at the age of twenty and began the *Medical and Surgical Observer* one year later in 1892.¹¹² Like other medical journals of the period, its principal function was to provide African American physicians with professional information, as well as to give them the opportunity to share knowledge about disease diagnosis and therapeutic procedures.¹¹³ This was critically important given the barriers to professional development black doctors faced.¹¹⁴

For Lynk and other African American doctors, this move toward collective organization and professionalization was intimately connected to their class and gender identity. In her history of African American healers and healthcare professionals in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Gretchen Long argues that the medical literature produced by black doctors during this period was aimed at representing themselves as community leaders as much as it was about securing their status as competent medical practitioners. "The articles helped doctors to define themselves to themselves as upper-middle-class, educated 'race men,'" Long writes.¹¹⁵ Long was specifically referring to the *Journal of the National Medical Association*, which began publishing in 1909, but it is easy to see a similar dynamic in other publications beginning as early as the 1890s.

Central to this collective identity formation and self-representation was a very conscious positioning against traditional health practices – both home

¹¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹¹ WARD, *supra* note 91, at 192.

¹¹² *Id.* at 195.

¹¹³ *Id.*

¹¹⁴ SAVITT, *supra* note 104, at 297.

¹¹⁵ GRETCHEN LONG, DOCTORING FREEDOM: THE POLITICS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MEDICAL CARE IN SLAVERY AND EMANCIPATION 169 (2012).

remedies and folk medicine – associated with rural and urban working-class African Americans. In the inaugural issue of the *Medical and Surgical Observer*, Lynk stressed that the journal “pledges itself to scientific medicine and whatever is conducive to the advancement thereof.”¹¹⁶ He further touted the benefits of the journal as “supplying the colored medical profession of the U.S., with a very necessary weapon in combating disease, ignorance and quackery.”¹¹⁷ Contributors to the journal used the circulation of medical knowledge as a vehicle for the production of a collective class and gender identity. Monroe A. Majors, a Meharry graduate and founder of the Lone Star State Medical Association, Texas’s black medical society,¹¹⁸ published an article in the journal detailing his treatment of a woman suffering from acute septic endometritis.¹¹⁹ It took more than two weeks of administering purgatives, cathartics, and topical applications of various medicinal compounds, but Majors proudly declared at the end of the article that “[s]he is now fully recovered, thoroughly convinced that *men* and *medicines* are the two most potent factors of this progressive age.”¹²⁰

Although Majors did not explicitly reference traditional folk healers in his article, his (or Lynk’s) emphasis on men and medicines worked to masculinize scientific medicine – and the medical profession more broadly – in juxtaposition to popular medicine, which was embodied in the irrational figure of the conjurer and the skilled but unlearned figure of the midwife. To be sure, African American physicians recognized the indispensable service midwives provided in delivering babies and tending to women postpartum. Many women’s reliance on midwives to attend to their overall healthcare needs, however, not only represented competition for trained physicians,¹²¹ but also reinforced an association of black medicine with “ignorance and quackery.” As Long points out, “[i]n the later years of the nineteenth century, when most Americans imagined African American healers, they thought of . . . a woman working as a midwife on a plantation, relying on flora, magic, and community, rather than [university-educated men] trained to trust scientific and technical progress.”¹²²

In addition to a masculinized discourse of medical authority, African American male physicians produced a collective class and gender identity through their organizational efforts. There were associations for black doctors in Texas and North Carolina at the time that the *Medical and Surgical*

¹¹⁶ Salutory, 1 MED. & SURGICAL OBSERVER 14, 14 (1892).

¹¹⁷ *Id.* at 15.

¹¹⁸ HERBERT M. MORAIS, THE HISTORY OF THE AFRO-AMERICAN IN MEDICINE 58 (rev. ed. 1976).

¹¹⁹ M.A. Majors, *Acute Septic Endometritis and Its Complications*, 1 MED. & SURGICAL OBSERVER 27 (1893).

¹²⁰ *Id.* at 29.

¹²¹ WARD, *supra* note 91, at 123-24.

¹²² LONG, *supra* note 115, at 153.

Observer began publication, but a national organization did not exist.¹²³ We know little about the rank-and-file membership of these associations, but it does not appear that there was significant involvement by women physicians. No women appeared as contributors to the *Medical and Surgical Observer*,¹²⁴ which covered the associations' activities and provided an intellectual outlet for its members.¹²⁵

In Washington, D.C., where there were a significant number of women physicians in the late nineteenth century, black female doctors were shut out of professional organizations.¹²⁶ Excluded from the District of Columbia Medical Society, African American male physicians joined with many of their liberal white peers to form a biracial medical society in 1884. Women, however, were not admitted.¹²⁷ The society became moribund and was resuscitated by African American doctors as the Medico-Chirurgical Society in 1895.¹²⁸ Again, however, there was no female presence.¹²⁹ According to Gloria Moldow, black women physicians in the District were "triply disadvantaged" vis-à-vis elite white male physicians, white female physicians, and African American male physicians.¹³⁰ "Black women doctors, too few in number to create the professional networks that white women doctors found so helpful, faced exclusion from organizations that black male doctors formed," Moldow argues.¹³¹ A national organization was finally founded in 1895, when a dozen African American male physicians met at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta to form the National Medical Association.¹³² Although the national organization included female members, some of whom published their research in the pages of the organization's journal, none occupied positions of leadership at the national level until the 1920s.¹³³

The connections that black physicians drew between collective organization, professional development, and masculinist notions of citizenship were evident with the advent of Jim Crow. Indeed, in the first issue of the *Medical and Surgical Observer*, Lynk wrote that "[a]n association of medical men of color,

¹²³ TODD L. SAVITT, *Walking the Color Line: Alonzo McClennan, the Hospital Herald, and Segregated Medicine*, in RACE AND MEDICINE IN NINETEENTH- AND EARLY-TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA, *supra* note 92, at 316, 322.

¹²⁴ SAVITT, *supra* note 104, at 302.

¹²⁵ *Id.* at 302-04.

¹²⁶ MOLDOW, *supra* note 97, at 104.

¹²⁷ *See id.*

¹²⁸ *Id.*

¹²⁹ *Id.* at 112.

¹³⁰ *Id.* at 94.

¹³¹ *Id.* at 112.

¹³² WARD, *supra* note 91, at 195.

¹³³ *See* DARLENE CLARK HINE, *Co-Laborers in the Work of the Lord: Nineteenth-Century Black Women Physicians*, in HINE SIGHT: BLACK WOMEN AND THE RE-CONSTRUCTION OF AMERICAN HISTORY 147, 158 (1994); MORAIS, *supra* note 118, at 68.

national in its character, we think would have a very inspiring effect upon the profession."¹³⁴ Although the journal never became the organ for a national association, folding a little more than a year after its first publication due to lack of subscriptions, African American physicians clearly took a great deal of pride in the journal as a testament to their medical competence. Yet it represented something more. When M.A. Majors declared that this "journal of our own" was "a real living proof of capacity in science and art," he was pointing to its value in demonstrating black professional men's overall character.¹³⁵ Surely such men were capable of self-government and responsible participation in the body politic. The association between professional competence and fitness for citizenship was articulated even more explicitly in one of the last issues of the *Medical and Surgical Observer*, when Lynk reported on the formation of physicians' protective associations in New York and Detroit. Although the organizational efforts most likely did not extend to African American physicians, Lynk felt compelled to quote an address by one of the leading organizers in Detroit:

We are supposed to be an educated, sober, industrious and upright body of men – possessing, indeed, all the requirements of the higher order of citizenship. These qualifications are generally conceded, and yet in spite of the fact what body of men wield so little influence in the affairs of state?¹³⁶

Where organizers of the protective associations were motivated by not having a sufficient role in the bureaucratic and legislative processes that regulated their profession, the rhetoric certainly resonated with an African American audience that was increasingly finding itself politically disfranchised and socially marginalized. The metaphorical citizenship invoked in the organizer's address could be easily translated into literal citizenship as black male physicians contemplated their changing status in America at the turn of the twentieth century.

* * *

In the late nineteenth century, there was a concern that an "economic and cultural power shift from men to women"¹³⁷ was underway, a concern that was perhaps more pervasive than that which is evidenced in the wake of the Great Recession of the twenty-first century. While this concern had significant, transformative long-term cultural impacts – from the relationship between manhood and the body, to the changing valuation of leisure and consumption in constructions of masculinity, to the very redefinition of normative manhood

¹³⁴ Salutory, *supra* note 116, at 17.

¹³⁵ M.A. Majors, Letter to the Editor, 1 MED. & SURGICAL OBSERVER 47 (1892).

¹³⁶ Editorial, *The Physicians' Protective Association*, 1 MED. & SURGICAL OBSERVER 207, 208 (1893).

¹³⁷ Hanna Rosin, *The End of Men*, ATLANTIC, July/Aug. 2010, at 56, 64.

itself – in many ways, claims about the “end of men” were cynical rhetorical ploys aimed at reasserting white male hegemony. Far more disconcerting for African American men in the late nineteenth century was the fact that they were systematically being stripped of their citizenship, still a foundational signifier of manhood at the turn of the twentieth century. While they did not reduce the totality of their manhood to their political relationship to the nation-state, it was impossible for middle-class African American men not to interpret their disfranchisement through the lens of their gender identity. As such, they moved to shore up their manhood by reinforcing their differences from working-class black men and by marginalizing black women in the realm of reform activism, civic institution building, and professional development. “Men could engage in the public sphere as guardians, protectors, and custodians of their families, and by extension their communities,” historian Leslie Brown argues, “as black men with their manhood – if not manhood rights – intact.”¹³⁸ Unfortunately, this was a poor substitute for substantive citizenship rights. Nevertheless, African American women and men would continue to collaborate in their efforts to achieve full citizenship, even as they struggled with each other over questions of gender, authority, and leadership within black communities.

¹³⁸ BROWN, *supra* note 61, at 140.