

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EAU CLAIRE

REPRESENTATIONS OF BLACK WOMEN IN THE *CHICAGO DEFENDER* AS
RACE PRIDE AND RACE SHAME EXAMPLES, 1919-1923

THESIS SUBMITTED TO DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY FOR CANDIDACY FOR
THE BACHELORS DEGREE

BY

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Dedicated to my parents

Abstract

Despite the distinctive importance of black women and the *Chicago Defender* during and following the Great Migration and Progressive Era years, there continues to be a lack of analysis concerning their representations in Chicago's famous newspaper. Because the respectability of black women was the standard by which the black middle class and elite marked racial advancement, their images in the *Defender* were conscious and significant constructions. Thus, this study analyzes the representations of black women within the *Defender*'s race advocacy function, finding that examples of race pride and race shame operated in conjunction and were influenced by early twentieth century, black uplift ideology. Correspondingly, the relationship between uplift ideology and the *Defender* is also analyzed as the duality of sexual, racial, and class hierarchies of the former were influential on the newspaper's race advocacy function. Examples of black women were used with two intents: first, to display distinctions and class hierarchy within the black population, and second, to influence the values and behaviors of the black population. Included is a descriptive analysis of the role model, race pride representation of black women, the corresponding negative, race shame archetype, as well as a quantitative analysis of the polarized examples of black women on the paper's front page. The years examined are 1919-1923 due to the transitional state of: American race relations, the black community, sexual mores, black nationalism, and the *Defender*.

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Introduction

“BEHEADS WIFE IN LOVE QUARREL” announced the *Chicago Defender*’s large, bold-typed headline on July 1, 1922, followed by the sub-headlines “JEALOUSY BLAMED FOR BRUTAL ACT” and “Salvation Army Worker Uses Butcher Knife to Win Death Battle.” The article describes the beheaded wife’s, Mrs. Nelson, relationship with another man, whom she brought into her and her husband’s previously “happy [Boston] home.” The murdering husband, Mr. Nelson, claimed that his wife ignored him since the arrival of the other man, Mr. McGallon, even refusing to join in “religious work.” After undermining “his position in the household” for weeks, Mrs. Nelson’s final refusal to kiss her husband led to her murder. Mr. Nelson also claimed to have overheard a conversation between the two in which McGallon, an “alleged doctor,” told Mrs. Nelson, “the marital trouble was under the planet ‘Water’ and [Mr.] Nelson under the planet ‘Wind.’” The huge, sensational headline surely sold papers, but it also made Mrs. Nelson, her infidelity, and her subsequent beheading the most prominent story of the week in America’s largest black newspaper.

Appearing immediately under the headline and next to the article is a distinctly polarized example. The title “A Debutante” labels the large, studio portrait of a young black woman. Bordered with a vaguely classical design and some roses, the image has been placed on the front page amongst news of crime and national issues to announce Miss Thelma Louise Taylor’s debut. The caption describes the merits of Miss Taylor, excelling in her academic and musical pursuits; she is a “violinist of unusual ability.” Additionally, she has a “pleasing personality” making her “a favorite among her friends.”

She appears dignified, beautiful, hair shining and straightened, skin light in contrast to the dark shadows on either side of her face. The image and its presentation imply a connection between material wealth and respectability. In contrast to her beheaded, front page neighbor, Miss Taylor's presentation and short biography embody an irrefutable moral position: the pedestal of Victorian-influenced, middle class ideals. Accordingly, her large image stares out from the monotony of small type: an example of black pride.

On this single front page, two different but historically related images of women are portrayed. First is woman as a sexual being and consequently uncivilized, immoral, the Jezebel no doubt to the Christian reader of the time. Not only was Mrs. Nelson an

"SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY"
GOES UP IN TEXAS SMOKE
(SEE PAGE FIFTEEN, PART TWO)

THE Chicago Defender
WORLD'S GREATEST WEEKLY

20 PAGES
This Paper Not Complete Without TWO PARTS

VOL. XVII NO. 26 CHICAGO, SATURDAY, JULY 1, 1922 PRICE TEN CENTS

REVEALS WIFE IN LOVE QUARREL

NAB 3 BOYS IN PLOT TO BLACKMAIL

St. Louis Lads Annoy Family With Demands of Money for Sum of Money

St. Louis, Mo., June 30.—(Press.)—Three boys, aged 14, 15 and 16, were arrested today by St. Louis police in connection with a blackmail plot against a family in the city. The boys, who were known as the "Blackmail Boys," had been demanding money from the family for some time. The police were alerted by a letter from the family demanding a large sum of money. The boys were taken to the police station and are being held for further investigation.

Must Decorate Halls in Flags in Quaker City

Philadelphia, Pa., June 30.—(Press.)—The city of Philadelphia is preparing to celebrate the centennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The city officials have decided to decorate the city with flags and bunting. The decorations will be in the shape of the stars and stripes of the American flag. The city officials hope that the decorations will help to create a festive atmosphere for the centennial celebration.

REFUSES TO DESERT HIS RACE WIFE

Wealthy White Physician Defies His Neighbors; He Will Not Move

Detroit, Mich., June 30.—(Press.)—A wealthy white physician, Dr. J. C. H. H. H., has refused to move from his home in Detroit. He has been threatened with violence by a group of people who are opposed to his presence in the city. Dr. H. H. H. has stated that he will remain in his home and will not be intimidated by the threats of the group. He has also stated that he will continue to practice his profession in the city.

Lee Anderson, Pugilist, Meets Comical Judge

El Paso, Texas, June 30.—(Press.)—Lee Anderson, a famous pugilist, met with a comical judge today in El Paso. The judge, who was known for his sense of humor, made several amusing remarks during the trial. Anderson, who was charged with a crime, was found guilty by the judge. The judge's remarks were so funny that the courtroom was in stitches.

BLOWS MAN'S SCALP OFF WITH RIFLE

Crippled Landlord Defends Wife Against Tenant Who Abused Her

Louis, Mo., June 30.—(Press.)—A crippled landlord, who was known for his violent behavior, today blew the scalp off a man with a rifle. The man, who was a tenant of the landlord, had been abusing his wife. The landlord, who was enraged, took out his rifle and fired at the man. The man was killed on the spot. The landlord is now being held for further investigation.

A Debutante

MISS THELMA LOUISE TAYLOR

After graduating at East High School, Miss Thelma Louise Taylor, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Oliver A. Taylor, 1783 Crawford road, Cleveland, Ohio, spent a year at Greenview (R. I.) Academy for Girls and then entered the Cleveland School of Education. She is a senior, a brilliant student, pianist of the school glee club and a violinist of unusual ability. Miss Taylor, who possesses a pleasing personality, is a favorite among her friends. She made her debut Friday evening, June 23, at Olive Academy, when Dr. and Mrs. Taylor entertained in her honor at a summer dancing party.

JEALOUSY BLAMED FOR BRUTAL ACT

Salvation Army Worker Uses Butcher Knife to Win Death Battle

Boston, Mass., June 30.—(Press.)—A woman, who was known for her jealousy, today used a butcher knife to kill her husband. The woman, who was a member of the Salvation Army, had been arguing with her husband. She then took out her butcher knife and stabbed her husband in the chest. The husband was killed on the spot. The woman is now being held for further investigation.

Conductor Is Slain by Drunken Boy

St. Louis, Mo., June 30.—(Press.)—A conductor of a streetcar was killed today by a drunken boy in St. Louis. The boy, who was about 15 years old, had been drinking and was running across the street. He was struck by the streetcar and killed on the spot. The conductor was also killed. The police are investigating the case.

Old Slave's Story Told in Art Work

St. Louis, Mo., June 30.—(Press.)—A story of an old slave is being told in art work in St. Louis. The story is being told in the form of a painting. The painting shows an old slave sitting on a bench, looking out over a landscape. The painting is being shown at a gallery in the city.

PROFESSOR KERLIN WILL TOUR NORTH AND EAST

Robert T. Kerlin of Lexington, Va., who was recently discharged as an instructor in English in the Virginia

Figure 1. Defender's front page from July 1st, 1922

unfaithful and negligent wife, but more importantly the article points out her subversion of Mr. Nelson's position as patriarch of the home—considered the basic unit and symbol of civilization. In fact, the breaking of the “happy home,” seems to imply the breaking of the husband's sanity, as if Mrs. Nelson had not only acted in uncivilized ways but also subverted the very symbol of civilization until it crumbled in the form of Mr. Nelson's sanity. Moreover, she is characterized as being ruled by irrationality, believing in “planets” and vulnerable to the theories of her sexual partner, a merely “alleged” doctor, vaguely recalling witchery and the supernatural, as well as a lack of education. In fact, by including only the husband's claims, the *Defender* actually attacks the victim while, to an extent, defending Mr. Nelson and his symbol as the household patriarch. Thus, the article, citing all of Mrs. Nelson's wrong and immorality, conflates her sexual infidelity, lack of domestic virtue, and religious heresy to construct an absolute, negative example. By tone and content, it is implied that for her forfeiture of respectable womanhood and her household, she brought about her own beheading. Thanks to the large, national headline, Mrs. Nelson served as a warning no doubt to every reader.

In contrast is the debutante, educated, younger, reputable (her chastity is implied), and morally pure if not superior. Her debut functioned to introduce her to “society” and announce her readiness for courtship and marriage while maintaining her respectability. Furthermore, she is studying to become a teacher, fitting her neatly into a nurturing role of social service. The image of Miss Taylor, her debut, and her musical ability evidence acculturation. Her debut announcement in the *Defender* displays the elite black community's adoption of upper class, even aristocratic, originally European practices as well as the *Defender's* endorsement of these practices and class distinctions. Though less

exciting than the story of the beheaded wife, the young woman, for her decorum and upper class status, appears notably on the most read black paper in the country.

This juxtaposition of black women characterized into distinct positive and negative images appeared increasingly on the *Defender's* front page from 1919-1922, remaining high in 1923, though dipping slightly. In 1922, counting only the front pages like that of July 1st, these corresponding examples occurred in conjunction on one-third of the *Defender's* front pages. When first studying the *Defender* it was this connection between the duality of the newspaper's positive and negative representations, and the historical duality of gender and race in polarized terms of superior and inferior, rational and irrational, moral and immoral, civilized and uncivilized, white and black, masculine and feminine, that stood apart from the seas of type.

While an abundance of work has focused on the importance of the black press and black women during the early twentieth century, there has been very little analysis of the two in conjunction. This is surprising due to the fact that the status of black women was largely considered to be the benchmark by which the educated black population measured its progress. Numerous studies have focused on the *Defender* due to its wide circulation and influence as well as its two most noted characteristics. First, the paper's emphasis on successful, respectable black individuals as a manifestation of race advocacy, and second, the newspaper's emphatic, sensational headlines accompanied by negative representations of black men and women. Other analyses of the *Defender* have considered its sensationalism as subversive of more important content, or determined it was necessary to sell papers.¹ Additionally, the negative representations of black men and

¹ Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago: a study of race relations and a*

women throughout the paper's pages have been defined as inconsistent with the race pride philosophy, or when noticing the criticism factor of the examples, fail to provide further analysis.²

As a result, generally unrecognized and unexamined is the relationship between the *Defender's* contrasting representations of black men and women, the race advocacy function, and the uplift ideology that influenced the newspaper. Likewise, a study has yet to examine the experiences and philosophy of the *Defender's* founder, Robert S. Abbott in relation to the duality of his paper's representations, especially of black women. Consequently, questions remained. How were black women represented within the *Defender's* race pride advocacy function? What overall images were constructed and for what purpose? How did uplift ideology and its influence on Abbott affect these representations? As the *Defender* sought to "prepare" the black population for "first class citizenship," as T. Ella Strother states, how did the race advocacy function attempt to influence values and behaviors?³ And lastly, why do black women appear increasingly in sensational headlines?

race riot, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1922; St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1945), 411; Mary Elizabeth Stovall, "The Chicago Defender in the Progressive Era," *Illinois Historical Journal* 83, no. 3 (Autumn 1990): 159-172.

² See Frederick G. Detweiler, *The Negro Press in the United States*, (1922; repr., College Park, MD: McGarth Publishing Company, 1968); Drake and Cayton; Gordon, "Survey of the Negro Press," *Opportunity* 5 (January 1927), 8.

³ T. Ella Strother, "The Black Image in the Chicago 'Defender,' 1905-1975," *Journalism History* 4, no. 4 (Winter 1977): 140.

Literature Review

Secondary Sources

Scholarly studies of the black community established in Chicago by the Great Migration began appearing as early as the 1920s and continued to receive attention throughout the 1930s and early 1940s. The most widely cited of these is Drake and Cayton's *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, a large volume of data and opinion collection, demographics, macro and micro psychological and sociological analyses, as well as history. Invariably, the study of black Chicago required an acknowledgement of the *Defender*. Drake and Cayton, assessing the newspaper's emphasis on negative images of black people associated with crime and deviance, conducted an empirical study of the *Defender*, finding an overall positive image of blacks constructed within its pages. Though their span of analysis (1933-1938) is outside the scope of this study, it notably stood in contrast to the numerous claims of sensational treatment and exaggerated coverage of black crime as well as an overall negative black image in the paper.⁴ However, an overall positive image does not account for where in the *Defender* and with what emphasis the negative images were constructed, such as on the front page. Furthermore, Drake and Cayton's findings do not refute or substantiate claims of inconsistency between the race pride function and negative representations of black individuals, behaviors, and characteristics. The analysis of the *Defender* is only a small portion of *Black Metropolis*. The study also addresses how racial advancement was

⁴ Drake and Cayton, ch. 15.

measured, class stratification and criticism, and the upper class as well as nearly every human aspect of Chicago's black community.

While the Great Migration, its causes and effects, including the *Defender*, received academic attention, Robert S. Abbott was and continues to be underrepresented in historical literature. Seven years after his death, Metz T.P. Lochard, an editorial writer at the *Defender* and former-colleague of the newspaper's founder, published an article titled, "Robert S. Abbott—Race Leader." Appearing in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) mouthpiece, *Phylon*, the biography is fittingly contradictory, short and sharp, not hiding its admiration for Abbott, nor its shame of his "biased" thinking.⁵ Nine years later Roi Ottley's book-length biography, *The Lonely Warrior: The Life and Times of Robert S. Abbott*, was similar in tone and contradiction. Though Lochard and Ottley present similar biographies, they disagree on one crucial point. Lochard establishes the influence of DuBois's "talented tenth" ideology on Abbott and the *Defender*.⁶ On the contrary, Ottley, though acknowledging this influence, claims the newspaper itself was, as Abbot proclaimed, "for the masses, not the classes!" in rebuke of DuBois.⁷ Noting this problem, this paper analyzes the presence of uplift ideology in black women's representations and finds evidence to side with Lochard. Because, as Ottley states, "The *Chicago Defender* was a concrete expression of

⁵ Metz T.P. Lochard, "Robert S. Abbott – 'Race Leader,'" *Phylon* 8, no. 2 (Second quarter 1947): 132. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/271719> (accessed April 29, 2010).

⁶ Ibid., 132.

⁷ Roi Ottley, *The Lonely Warrior: The Life and Times of Robert S. Abbott*, (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1955), 126.

Robert S. Abbott's personality and philosophy," understanding the man is essential to understanding the *Defender*.⁸

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s forced Americans to confront continued racial segregation and violence. For perhaps the first time since the race riots of the Red Summer of 1919, mainstream media and America had to acknowledge the importance of the black population in its midst. As a result, African American studies experienced increasing academic attention, which meant some revival of interest in Abbott and the *Defender*. As racial violence occurred in many Northern cities toward the end of the decade, a generation of historians began to focus on the history of those black communities. For Chicago, Allen Spear's 1967 work *Black Ghetto: The Making of a Negro Ghetto 1890-1920* began a resurgence of interest in the Great Migration to the city. Noting, like Drake and Cayton before him, the segregated nature of Chicago's black community, Spear concentrated on how Chicago had become so distinctly divided. Other works followed, such as William J. Tuttle's *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (1970), the seminal work on the Chicago Race Riots of 1919, and James R. Grossman's *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (1989), a widely cited work on the Great Migration to Chicago. Grossman, choosing a phrase often used by the *Defender* to describe the North ("land of hope"), elucidates an early example of the paper's use of positive representation versus negative, evidencing the existence of this concurrent function. Though all three studies include sections on the *Defender*, most notably Grossman's, a singular work on the newspaper is yet to appear.

⁸ Ottley., 16.

In the place of a seminal study of the *Defender* Armistead Scott Pride, Gunnar Myrdal, Martin E. Dann, and others have contributed works examining the history and affects of the black press. Additionally, as microfilming and more recently digitalization have made the *Defender* more accessible, searchable, and quantifiable, journal articles and Master's theses on specific aspects of the newspaper continue to appear.

Notably adding to the work of black press historian Frederick Detweiler and Drake and Cayton was T. Ella Strother. Her article, "The Black Image in the Chicago 'Defender,' 1905-1975," analyzes the use of personalities within race advocacy function of the *Defender* utilizing a quantitative study of the paper's content. Strother defines the race advocacy function as "." She also delineates four periods, citing Ottley, within the *Defender*'s lifespan, marking the second period as 1916-1919 and the third as 1920-1930, during which time focus on personalities increased. It is partially based on this fact that the years 1919-1923 were chosen, as they were transitional for the *Defender*. After 1919, the paper sought a gradual approach to integration through focus on personalities and assimilation-minded values. Additionally, Strother concluded that overall, the *Defender*, presented a positive image of black people, though charges of sensationalism appear justified.⁹ Though Strother studied the overall image of black people constructed in the *Defender*, stating that personalities were emphasized over the actual news event and recognizing the polarization of these personalities, she did not provide further analysis.

Adding to the historiography of Abbott, more recent analysis by black press historian Alan D. DeSantis of the *Defender* and its founder from 1910-1920 recognizes and attempts to correct the some of the lack of literature. DeSantis, like Ottley, notes the

⁹ Strother, 138-140.

Defender's mimicking of Chicago's white daily papers, from banner headlines and use of photography to varied type size and sensationalism.¹⁰ Additionally, DeSantis focuses on the *Defender*'s "Great Northern Drive" campaign which advocated for the black race with sensational flair and smear by focusing on the brutal injustices of the Jim Crow South while simultaneously exalting Northern economic opportunities, encouraging black agency, and highlighting migrant's success stories. DeSantis notes the corresponding positive and negative examples in the newspaper's pages: the North was civilized, and the South, with its lynching and Jim Crow hypocrisy, uncivilized. Here, the duality of uplift ideology is also present. The implication of the *Defender*'s contrast is that by staying in the South, black people were not only submitting themselves to danger and hopeless oppression, but also the stereotypes which reinforced the general low opinion of all black people as uncivilized. Released from the oppression of the South and seizing on the economic opportunities of the North, it was expected that black migrants would transform into a new, respectable class capable of proving their abilities and thus ensuring their acceptance and equality in American society. Though DeSantis does not explicitly note the influence of uplift ideology, he does establish that from the beginning, the race advocacy function of the *Defender* employed positive example and negative example in conjunction.¹¹

DeSantis does not focus specifically on the contrasting images of women within the "Great Northern Drive" duality, but he does note this *Defender* statement: "They are taking advantages of the opportunities offered in the North by northern industries, where

¹⁰ Alan D. DeSantis, "A Forgotten Leader: Robert S. Abbott and the *Chicago Defender* from 1910-1920," *Journalism History* 23 (Summer 1997): 3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 4-7.

children can get a fair education and where wives and daughters are [safe] from being ravished.”¹² This study finds a similar trend in regards to women. The newspaper’s pages depicted Northern black women as upright, employed, and generally dignified in their womanhood. Conversely, Southern black women were generally depicted as victims of white sexual violence, whether through harassment and rape or as widows of lynched men. As one article stated in spectacular fashion following the death of “an aged Negro woman” in Atlanta, Georgia, “If you can freeze to death in the North and be free, why freeze to death in the South and be a slave, where your mother, sister, and daughter are raped and burned at the stake.”¹³ Thus, the *Defender*’s practice of juxtaposing sensational, negative examples and positive examples to influence behavior was well established, even including its representations of black women. Noted, though not previously explicated, this provides a basis and proof for this study’s findings.

While a surge of interest in black history occurred in conjunction with, in Gerda Lerner’s words, “its acceptance by the historical profession into the body of American history,” black women’s history was not sharing the same “black renaissance.” According to Lerner, this was due to the fact that despite their race “as women they suffer the general invisibility of women in American history.” Lerner noted the work of Cooper, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, black club women, and of other black scholars focusing on black women which was at the time was almost entirely “unorganized and largely unused.”¹⁴ However as the Second Wave of Feminism gained numbers and visibility, black women,

¹² DeSantis, 5-6.

¹³ “Freezing to Death In the South,” *Chicago Defender*, February 24, 1917.

¹⁴ Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 63-64.

in part thanks to Lerner's work, began being better represented in American history. Her work *The Majority Finds Its Past: Black Women in United States History* is an especially important analysis of black women, from lower classes who "provided essential, though poorly rewarded, services for the white community" to middle class and elite women whose "primary concern" was the "defense of the family."¹⁵ Though Lerner began asserting the importance of and studying black working class, upper class, and club women in the 1960s, the works of Cooper, Wells-Barnett, and other early black feminists were not re-published until the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Finally in the 1990s three significant works on black club women appeared. Deborah Gray White's *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves 1884-1994*, Wanda A. Hendricks *Gender, Race, and Politics in the Midwest: Black Club Women in Illinois*, and Anne Meis Knupfer's *Toward a Tenderer Humanity and a Nobler Womanhood: African American Women's Clubs in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago* essentially cover the history of black women's clubs, particularly in Chicago. Knupfer and White's books, respectively, provide histories and analyses of middle class and elite women who embodied uplift ideology values, while serving the black community both as examples and through service. Knupfer focuses on Chicago's black women's club, which, though they had existed since before the turn-of-the-century, increased in importance and service as the Progressive Era accelerated into full swing and as the Great Migration swelled the city's black population. She also notes the club women's adoption of Victorian conceptions of "true womanhood." In doing so, black women's clubs "positioned themselves as community caretakers," partially embodying DuBois's class

¹⁵ Lerner, 67, 69.

distinctions and Booker T. Washington's self-help philosophy.¹⁶ Knupfer and White use the terms progressive motherhood and municipal housekeeping to describe club women's amalgamation of motherhood with social and moral duty to the larger community. Both works also establish the importance and conflict of uplift ideology and black nationalism in the black women's club movement.

Also produced in the early 1990s was Darryl Eduard Graham's Master's thesis, "The Chicago Defender: The Image of Black Women, 1915-1920." The analysis is focused on role models and editorials, identifying the examples celebrating middle class values and criticism aimed at lower class women. Additionally, Graham notes the gap between black women in the *Defender* and the reality of black women during the Great Migration years. Graham provides a thorough analysis of the image of black women in the newspaper and how it recognized or failed to recognize the lives of these women.

Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in Twentieth Century America (1996) by Kevin K. Gaines examines black middle class and elite race, gender, and class politics. His work focuses mostly on the formation of uplift ideology during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, its leaders, and its influence. Dealing heavily with identity construction and the relationship between values and material projection, Gaines's work is indispensable to understanding the images constructed within the *Defender*.

¹⁶ Anne Meis Knupfer, *Toward a Tenderer Humanity and a Nobler Womanhood: African American Women's Clubs in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago*, (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 11-12, 56.

Primary Sources

“Only the Black Woman can say 'when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole Negro race enters with me,’” wrote Anna Julia Cooper in *A Voice From the South*.¹⁷ First published 1892, Cooper’s work is one of the earliest and most influential articulations of black feminism. Recognizing the distinctive role of black women due to their dual oppression, Cooper asserted, as stated in the quote above, that the black race would advance only so far as its women advanced (an increasingly common view among black intellectuals and leaders around the turn-of-the century).¹⁸ In other words, only when slavery and Jim Crow South practices of sexual abuse and denial of motherhood were ended, could the “dignity” of black “womanhood” be established. This was an important symbol for black men too, as they were effeminized by their perceived inability to protect black women from white abuses.¹⁹ Thus, the respectability of black womanhood as unassailable from white humiliation and attack became the basis on which the black middle class and elite judged their empowerment and racial advancement.²⁰ Additionally, *A Voice From the South* expressed a central tenet of the growing women’s club movement, stating it the duty of educated black women to uplift the underprivileged black majority through education, morality, and spirituality. Due to

¹⁷ Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice From the South*, (1892; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 29-31.

¹⁸ White, 43.

¹⁹ Lerner, 72.

²⁰ Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 114; White, 43.

Cooper's assertions, black women assumed important roles in uplift ideology, both as examples and as agents of community improvement.

W.E.B. DuBois's essay "The Talented Tenth" communicated a similar, but more immaterial route of racial advancement and uplift. In it, DuBois countered Booker T. Washington's advocacy for trade-based, industrial education arguing the "talented tenth" of the black population had to be educated to be "men" not "money-makers." DuBois claimed it was the responsibility of this black "aristocracy" to by "effort and example...of talent and character...inspire the masses."²¹ Aware of the homogenizing nature of institutional racism and discrimination, DuBois hoped that by exhibiting distinctions within the black population, evenly-applied presumptions of inferiority would be disproved and dissolved in favor of class stratification. As a result, the superiority of the talented tenth relied on white recognition and judgment as well as comparison to the uneducated nine-tenths.

Additionally, the black household was an essential symbol to the middle class and elite blacks who influenced and were influenced by uplift ideology. Just as dignified womanhood had been oppressed by slavery and Jim Crow practices, so too had the establishment of the patriarchal home. Articulating the need to institute what was denied by slavery, DuBois wrote in his essay "The College-Bred Negro," "[w]e look most anxiously to the establishment and strengthening of the home among member of the race because it is the surest combination of real progress."²² Like most educated black men

²¹ W.E.B. DuBois, *The Seventh Son: The Thought and Writings of W.E.B. DuBois*, ed. Julius Lester, (New York: Random House, 1971), 390.

²² DuBois,.

and women, Abbott also strongly believed in the household as a panacea to the problems facing the race as well as the “surest” mark “of real progress.”²³

In 1922, two documents concerning the black press appeared, both of which sought to describe and assert facts, but not interpret.²⁴ Following the six days of violence which comprised the Chicago Race Riots of 1919, various black leaders and powerful white Chicagoans demanded an examination of riot’s causes as well as the “Negro problem.” Subsequently, Illinois Governor Frank Lowden requested the creation of the bi-racial Chicago Commission of Race Relations, on which Abbott served.²⁵ The result was 1922’s *The Negro in Chicago*. Due to the importance of the press, empirical studies, text analyses, and interviews were conducted of Chicago’s white and black newspapers. The Commission noted why the black press was so necessary to the black population. First, the indifference of white newspapers and their focus on “the unfortunately spectacular” when dealing with black topics. Secondly, the race advocacy function, acknowledged as “race pride” and “race solidarity” and its purpose defined as “developing morale...creating solidarity...correcting impressions...and centering the attention of Negroes upon themselves and their destiny.”²⁶ In reference to the *Defender*, the Commission cited its circulation, influence, sensationalism, and unrelenting racial advocacy.

²³ Gaines, 78.

²⁴ Detweiler, viii.

²⁵ Arthur I. Waskow, *From Race Riot to Sit-In, 1919 and the 1960s*, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), 60.

²⁶ Chicago Commission on Race Relations, 556.

Though *The Negro in Chicago* recognized the practice of all of Chicago's papers in emphasizing sensationalism, especially the black press which depended on weekly sales, the Commission specifically noted the *Defender's* penchant for "criminal news of a sensational type." Its analysis concluded the *Defender* very much outpaced the city's other black newspapers in amount and prominence of sensational crime news. The *Defender* also outpaced its competition in circulation and influence. Estimating the circulation of the paper at 185,000 per weekly issue, two-thirds being sold outside Chicago, the Commission concluded the *Defender* "was largely responsible for stimulating migration to the North."²⁷ The Commission's report also included a section titled "Group control" in reference to the black press's "attempt to hold individual conduct of Negroes to conventional standards by threat of semi-publicity."²⁸ In reference to the *Defender*, the report recognized its "violent criticism of practices alleged to be inimicable to Negroes."²⁹ This included criticism of black behavior and values considered by the *Defender* as hindering racial progress, exhibiting a fixation on racial representation.

Appearing the same year and making heavy use of the Commission's work, Frederick Detweiler's *The Negro Press in the United States* recognized many of the same characteristics as *The Negro in Chicago*. However, Detweiler also noticed the highlights of successful black men and women and the portrayal of "Negro Life."³⁰ While noting sensational crime coverage, he devotes an entire chapter to "Negro criticism of Negro

²⁷ Chicago Commission on Race Relations, 564.

²⁸ Ibid., 562.

²⁹ Ibid., 564.

³⁰ Detweiler, ch.8.

life.” Almost quoting DuBois, Detweiler states, “there are as many different sorts of people included within the Negro group as among white people...the process of criticism is bound to be more and more in evidence.” Here, Detweiler recognizes the influence of the talented tenth ideology on the black press’s “criticism,” of which he observes “more and more.” He continues, “The process of appraising his own life will lead the Negro also to take particular interest in outstanding individuals or undesirable types.”³¹ However, Detweiler then states, “It is true that the foregoing scenes and criticisms of Negro life present widely varying and somewhat contradictory pictures.”³² While Detweiler notices the same characteristics as *The Negro in Chicago*, and perhaps even one step further, identifying the manifestations of uplift ideology in the black press, he concludes that the “outstanding individuals” and “undesirable types” are “contradictory pictures.” Both *The Negro in Chicago* and *The Negro Press in the United States* noted the significance of race pride examples and racial criticism, but failed to recognize the latter’s function



Figure 2: Robert S. Abbott: source, <http://chictrib.image2.trb.com/chinews/media/photo/2008-08/41632177.jpg> (accessed April 30, 2010).

³¹ Detweiler., 235.

³² Ibid., 268.

in race advocacy.

As established by the work of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations and Detweiler, the *Chicago Defender* is both representative of the black press as well as distinctively important due to its wide-circulation, influence, emphasis on examples of race pride, sensationalism and criticism. It is this individuality which make the *Defender* the focus of this study.

The *Chicago Defender* first appeared in 1905 with Abbott as sole writer, editor, printer, and publisher. Initially only focused on Chicago, the newspaper later became a national phenomenon and one of the most influential papers of the century. Yet, until Abbott's death, the *Defender* remained, as Ottley states, "a concrete expression of Robert S. Abbott's personality and philosophy."³³ As a result, the man and the paper have to be considered in conjunction.

Himself a black success story as a self-made millionaire and product of individuality and self-help, Abbott was strongly influenced by the ideals of uplift ideology. Though he proclaimed "for the masses, not the classes!" in rebuke of DuBois's talented tenth, according to Lochard, Abbott "felt that when differentiations within the Negro group [were] made known to whites, the mass discrimination" of the entire black population would end.³⁴ A proud American, Abbott was not concerned with restructuring the political, economic, or class structures of society. In fact, he believed American values to be inherently on his side.³⁵ Thus, the *Defender* regularly displayed the similar aspirations and merits of blacks and whites through examples of successful black

³³ Ottley, 16.

³⁴ Ibid., 126; Lochard, 132.

³⁵ Lochard, 132.

individuals. Additionally, the paper attempted to mold black behavior to expedite integration through assimilation, often using examples of individual black achievement as role models.³⁶ The *Defender* enhanced these role models to construct embodiments of near-perfect examples of black success in a white-dominated society. Likewise, the paper emphasized examples of racial shame for comparison to discourage behaviors which might hinder integration into the mainstream America and the middle class. Thus, the *Defender* is the most appropriate medium through which to study the black press and their representations of black women during this time period for these two reasons: its prominence and influence, and its adherence to uplift ideology beliefs in both the talented tenth examples and the respectability of black women as benchmarks of racial progress.

The three main categories of primary source work (uplift ideology literature, early data and analysis of the black press, and the *Chicago Defender*) are used in conjunction to examine the representations of black women constructed in and disseminated by the *Defender*. To analyze the relationship between these representations and their purpose, keyword searches were used to interpret the paper's sections including but not limited to the Woman's Page, the Society column, editorials, the entertainment page, advertisements, and advice column. Additionally, I conducted a quantitative analysis of the paper's front pages from 1919-1923 to analyze and prove the interdependence of race pride and race shame examples. The positive, role model example and the negative, warning example are described and analyzed separately, as they developed into polarized archetypes, and then in conjunction as they appear with increased frequency on the paper's front page.

³⁶ Ottley, 156; Strother, 138.

Background: 1919

The events of 1919 collapsed around the *Defender's* "land of hope" in quick succession. While racial tensions had increased during the war, producing protest and violence, the end of the war and return of soldiers caused a considerable escalation. Militant attitudes run high after any war, but black soldiers were especially conscious of the hypocrisy and racial injustice of their treatment at home despite their service and sacrifice. Their message and demands were amplified by black leaders, creating a consciousness and movement known as the "New Negro." The return of soldiers and easing of wartime immigration restrictions also meant the loss of jobs in industry for most black men and women. As black migrants continued to arrive in the city competition for housing and work only further exacerbated the situation. White reaction, protest, and race-motivated violence also escalated to a fever pitch. In the heat of the summer, over two dozen American cities exploded in race riots. Known as the Red Summer of 1919, the generally white precipitated violence showed that racial brutality was as much a reality in the North as the South, not to mention that discrimination and segregation were also blatantly practiced. Though migration continued, the *Defender's* "land of hope" had failed.

As a result, the *Defender* increasingly focused on personalities to mark the race's progress and to fill the space left by the "Great Northern Drive" campaign. The emphasis on personalities was so influential that when Drake and Cayton conducted their study in the late 1930s, they found that the black community measured their advancement by

“individual achievement which ‘reflects credit on the race.’” Undoubtedly, this is partially thanks to the *Defender*. In addition, after the criticism leveled at the *Defender* for its sensational, racially-charged headlines by the Chicago Commission on Race Relations and “indelibly touched by the race riot,” Abbott “boldly modified his point of view.”³⁷ In other words, Abbott decided to pursue a policy of gradualism.

There was not an announcement of this change or diminishing of protests. The *Defender* simply fought injustice with less vehemence, urging patience and increasingly emphasizing black achievement.³⁸ Gradualism, though, meant assimilation through self-improvement. First, the “New Negro” amplified sentiments of black nationalism. According to Gaines, “black nationalism associated civilization with power, mastery, manhood, and the Anglo-Saxon.” As a result, the patriarchal home and other Anglo-Saxon, late-Victorian values were increasingly adopted by the black community in their efforts to advance the black race in comparison to larger, white society.³⁹ The years following 1919 represent a furthering of the black middle class and elite’s emphasis on the patriarchal household and the respectable wife and mother therein—the Republican mother, in fact, the nation builder. Additionally, I theorize that increased comparison to the white, Anglo-Saxon resulting from the war, competition between blacks and whites in Northern cities, and the need to measure racial progress following the “Great Northern Drive” was a factor in the *Defender*’s increased emphasis on successful black personalities.

³⁷ Ottley, 188.

³⁸ Ibid., 208.

³⁹ Gaines, 102.

Yet during these same years of increased black nationalism and the patriarchal home, so too did a new generation of young black women emerge, challenging the de-sexualized ideal of middle class, black womanhood. Urbanization, street culture, the loosening of sexual mores in America's cities, and the birth of the flapper were perceived by the *Defender* as directly flouting immorality and sexuality in the face of the middle class and elite black community, which had worked to disprove those stereotypes. As a result, the years 1919-1923 were loaded with race, gender, and class politics.

Criticism by the Commission on Race Relations and the new philosophy of gradualism, however, did not end the *Defender's* sensationalism. Instead, it simply focused less on racially charged issues in the headlines and more on personalities and crime within the black community.⁴⁰ Therefore, the years following 1919 make for an interesting proof of this transition, during which both positive and negative images of black women increased in frequency, prominence, and polarization on the front page of the *Defender*, as well as within.

Race Pride Examples: Respectable Womanhood

Outside the Home

"Social Welfare Worker" titled the front page portrait of Mrs. Uxenia Scott Livingston on November 19, 1921. The caption below explains the image's presence: as secretary of the Girls' Neighborhood Clubs of the St. Louis Urban League, she recently addressed delegates of the League about the "Problem of the Newcomer." In addition to

⁴⁰ Strother, 138; Ottley, 211.

her service to the Urban League and her previous “social welfare activities,” the article notes her degrees from Fisk University and the School of Civics and Philanthropy in Chicago. Lastly, her status as wife of Dr. E. R. Livingston, a “prominent St. Louis physician,” is also included.

Though the article notes her recent address as the reason for her front page appearance, the dignity of the image and the content of short biography include every aspect of womanhood prided by uplift ideology and the *Defender*. Mrs. Livingston is educated in fields non-competitive with black men and is married to a man of her social and economic standing. Notably, she is working on the “problem of the newcomer,” meaning the influx of Southern black migrants. By labeling the newcomer as a “problem” in comparison to Mrs. Livingston’s wholly respectable image, a distinction is made from the Southern black “newcomer,” vaguely threatening. Thus, Mrs. Livingston is distinguished as an example of respectability by the mention of the newcomer alone, the problem of which she is working to solve.

The prominence achieved by talented black women, such as Mrs. Livingston, and their work outside the home was a staple of the *Defender*’s pages. Markedly recognized were their talents, education, social work, and marital status which combined to construct a wholly respectable example of late-Victorian notions of “true womanhood.”⁴¹ Similar to Cooper’s assertion in *A Voice From the South*, the *Defender* displayed black women entering successfully into the public world, with their “undisputed dignity” well noted by the paper. In fact, Cooper’s affirmation of black womanhood as a benchmark of racial progress was echoed by a *Defender* in a 1919 editorial titled “A PLEA FOR OUR

⁴¹ Knupfer, 11.

GIRLS” which called attention to the “most neglected member of a rather neglected group of American citizens,” referencing the double invisibility of black women to white America. Furthermore, the articles goes on to match Cooper’s quote (Page 13) almost word for word: “As the Colored girl lives, plays, works, dreams, thinks and acts, so does her Race. The Colored man cannot rise above her standards.”⁴² Thus, black club women’s work outside the home was used as an example of women working in the public with dignity and of the actual uplift concept of uplift ideology. It is important to note that black club women surpassed the talented tenth ideal of uplift by example with actual service to their communities and their race as a whole. However, to the *Defender* it was their example that counted most.

Though the ideals of home, motherhood, and family were central tenets of uplift ideology and the *Defender*’s view of womanhood, work outside the home was not inconsistent with these values. Instead, the historical trend of black women raising other slave children and thus defining motherhood in a larger, communal sense was evoked indirectly through appropriation of similar roles from white women’s clubs such as progressive maternalism and municipal housekeeping. Social work, teaching, and the wide variety of women’s club activities were in the spirit of “other mothering” and “organized motherhood.” Knupfer also notes that “African American women envisioned true womanhood not in terms of submissiveness and passivity, conditions they associated with slavery,” and thus they were not “confined to the domestic sphere.”⁴³ Their “talent and character” were performed and celebrated in the public sphere, increasing the

⁴² “A Plea For Our Girls,” *Chicago Defender*, February 28, 1920; Cooper, 29-31.

⁴³ Knupfer, 12-13.

notoriety of racial advancement. Beyond social welfare work and education, black female entertainers were also featured by the *Defender*. But occupation was superficial. Despite the appearance of personalities, for black women in the *Defender* it was the values and example they represented that were on exhibit. Prominently displayed on the front page, their images were constructed like a moral shield.

An editorial appearing from December 3rd, 1919 titled “SELF-UGLIFT” almost directly references the ideals of both late-Victorian and Progressive Era motherhood: “We must educate ourselves and our children in the ways of love, for God is love. The reading of worth-while literature, the association with ambitious, broad-minded people, and the provision of clean entertainment for ourselves and our family.” Focused squarely on the morality of home and children, the editorial goes on to state, “WE CANNOT AFFORD to wait for others to look after our health. We cannot afford to wait for others to offer us schooling or anything else that is beneficial.” Of course, health and schooling were particularly associated with community mothering and progressive maternalism. When this work has been completed, the piece concludes, equality will be reached as “our day of perfect peace with the world” but “not one moment before.” By referencing private motherhood and then public motherhood as necessary for uplift of the black community, the *Defender* is directly acknowledging the importance and its preference of the kind of womanhood, motherhood, and work embodied by black club women. In short, the kind of Progressive Era, middle class motherhood described in the editorial was considered necessary by the newspaper for racial equality.

Perhaps appropriately, due to their diligence and influence, the work of black club women was given a sizeable portion of the *Defender*’s Woman’s Page. Often with a tone

of gratitude, many articles concerning club women directly mentioned their role as societal caretakers. The *Defender* implied that motherhood was an essential feature of respectable womanhood. Beyond the work of club women, the *Defender* also invoked the municipal housekeeper ideal to advocate for the hiring of black women in public offices, such as police officers. The role of black women as political watchdogs was similarly encouraged. Progressive Era reformers, adopting the belief that women were morally superior beings, considered women the cleansers of corrupt politics and institutions.

The Society, Clubs and Fraternal, News of the Churches, and notes and articles concerning prominent women all appeared together on the Woman's Page. As a result, black women's clubs were associated with, and usually were part of, elite and middle class black "society" as well as the work of the church. Largely unrepresented, though are black women of working and lower classes. Thus, the Woman's Page itself made the distinction between those whose work was recognized, and those whose work was not.

The work of women's clubs to provide services and education for young black girls was well-covered by the *Defender*. This was increasingly the case as urban culture and the flapper were perceived by the black middle class and elite as a threat to the race's future wives and mothers and to the general image of black people in white America. Articles announcing the work of Y.W.C.A. members all over the country to educate and build homes for young women appeared regularly. Especially noted by the *Defender* was the mission for a Y.W.C.A. in Chicago. One article from June of 1920 is particularly telling of the newspaper's portrayal of club women and the general attitude toward young girls. After acknowledging the "drive to secure funds" for the Y.W.C.A. as "fairly successful" but admonishing the black community for not donating more, the article

thanks the “LITTLE BAND OF WOMEN who have thrown themselves into the task of playing godmother.” First acknowledged is the “little band,” implying the exceptionality of the club women. Secondly, the use of “godmother” is an acknowledgment of the progressive maternalism ideal and continuity of black “other mothering.” Additionally, by urging more donations and stating “something more must be done and immediately” the attitude of self-help is invoked. The article also argues that a Y.W.C.A. is as necessary as the existent Y.M.C.A. due to the need “to protect the young women and girls, the future sweethearts, wives and mothers from the wiles and temptations that ever surround them in a big city.”⁴⁴ It is of note that the article connects the club women’s (“god mothers”) work for a Y.W.C.A. to the protection of young girls from the “wiles and temptations” of the “big city.” This connection evidences that with their adoption of late-Victorian “true womanhood,” so too did educated blacks adopt the belief that urban life was representative of lower class immorality, making it a problem, especially to the establishment of the black family as an institution.⁴⁵ Thus, the club women are also portrayed, like mothers, as protectors of the home and children (civilization) against the outside, the uncivilized, disorder of the city. Also, the implication is that the young girls’ futures can either be as “wives and mothers” or as victims to the “wiles and temptations” of the urban life “surround[ing]” them, lurking, with some darker end no doubt, perhaps in a *Defender* headline. Thus, education and protection are implied to lead to wives and mothers while the city leads to a presumably tragic end. Again, there is civilization, moral and hopeful, or the uncivilized temptations implying sexual immorality and criminality.

⁴⁴ “Chicago Needs A Y.W.C.A.,” *Chicago Defender*, June 12, 1920.

⁴⁵ Gaines, 176.

Thus, the dual images conjured by the option of two distinct futures evidences the corresponding positive and negative images in which gender, class, and race stereotypes based on the duality of superior and inferior are conflated.

However, as the feature of club women in the *Defender* modeled decidedly middle class ideals and work, so too were these ideals used to set black club women apart from the average black woman, such as the reference to the “little band” above. In a tone more influenced by DuBois, an editorial appearing in a 1920 *Defender* states, “The fact of the matter is, the great majority of us are underdeveloped and crude. We are refining the process and must go through the same stages of advancement as did other groups who now occupy high places in the social, economic and political life of the world.” Already heavily referencing the assumption of uplift ideology that the black race was maturing from the “underdeveloped and crude” into a more civilized position, the article then continues,

The whites are wont to make no distinction between our lowest and our highest element...Will we never learn the hodcarrier is no associate of the banker; that the washwoman must not expect to move in the same circle as the doctor's wife?...WE MUST HAVE LEADERS; we must have men and women far above the common herd who have secured a foothold on the top rung of life's ladder. We must hold them there and push others up. By this method alone can we hope to find a place in the sun big enough and broad enough for us all.⁴⁶

While the *Defender*, here, might be “for the masses” it is overtly marking and advocating class distinctions, openly discouraging the intermingling of working class and bourgeoisie. Interestingly, while the washwoman is recognized as only an anonymous worker, her counterpart, the doctor's wife, is described by her matrimony and position in the household, free from labor outside thereof.

⁴⁶ “The Mote in Our Own Eye,” *Chicago Defender*, July 10, 1920.

In respect to this facet of the *Defender*'s philosophy, club women also served as examples, still role models but somehow distinct. While this seems ideologically inconsistent, it was materially a fact. Club women could not be totally emulated because most black women did not have the education or material wealth to embody the ideals of progressive motherhood and municipal housekeeping. More importantly, though, the *Defender* shows its cards in this article and the "OUR WEEKLY SERMON" analyzed below. Directly conscious of white judgment and referencing the homogenization of institutional racism, both articles encourage the idea of black leaders as role models in respect to their values and behaviors. However, they exclude the majority from this role, instead focusing on asking that these leaders and "women of vision" be supported even as they are distinct and superior from their supporters.

A similar call for the talented tenth was issued in the column "OUR WEEKLY SERMON." The author stated: "We are building a Race, a nation. The foundation is 'our daughters' not our mothers." Specifically, it called for young "women of vision, vigor, lofty inspirations and living hopes...Dignity resides in character, not in color. The principle of the 'survival of the fittest' will yet obliterate the 'color line.' Again, the achievement of the individual as necessary for proving the distinction of race insignificant is cited, only here in the very biologically determinist language leveled against the black population by white social scientists. The article also directly references the maturation of the black race in terms of savages advancing into a civilization: "We are building a palace, not a hut." To do so, the article continues "our daughters" must be "prepared...along four distinct lines: Physical, moral, social, and spiritual." Correspondingly, the Woman's Page contained these categories: physical in the form of

ads for skin whitener, hair straightening products as well as fashion and health columns, moral in the form of Clubs and Fraternal column, social in the Society section, and spiritual in the News of the Churches.⁴⁷ The Woman's Page was, then, in many ways the talented tenth's page.

Similar to club women, black female entertainers were noted for their talents, as opposed to the attainable virtues of their work, and appeared in large pictures on the *Defender's* front page. When Mrs. Mary Ross Dorsey was displayed on the front page of the December 10, 1921 issue for her star role in and directorship of the morality play *Everywoman*, the caption noted her "exceptional skill in the title role" as well as her leadership as "responsible for the excellent coaching given the entire cast."⁴⁸ "An Opera Star" titled the portrait of Mrs. Antoinette Garnes. Touting her ability to sing in Spanish, French, Italian and German as well as her Bachelor and Master's degrees in music, the article states she is "the only singer of our Race possessing these honors," and concludes by noting her husband is a doctor.⁴⁹ Similar individual highlights, such as "Star in 'Everywoman'" directly sought to influence black women's behavior through acculturation and what were called "morality plays." Thus, like the personality, the actual entertainment was featured for what values it embodied and imbued.

⁴⁷ "Our Weekly Sermon," *Chicago Defender*, March 31, 1923.

⁴⁸ "Star in 'Everywoman,'" *Chicago Defender*, December 10, 1921.

⁴⁹ "An Opera Star," *Chicago Defender*, May 13, 1922.

Still, individuals trumped the event. From 1920 onward, entertainment pieces increasingly focused on female personalities more than the show, act, or music involved. The women's talent and often leadership were highlighted as well as their education, club membership, social work, and marriage. Additionally, most female entertainers celebrated by the *Defender* appeared in morality plays, operas, or in conjunction with the music of the church, and thus the role of respectability of the black women was displayed. They were imbuing the public with morals or proving the culture possible of the black race by excelling in a European art form or celebrating their spirituality through signing. Generally then, black female entertainers were not only examples of talent and exceptionality, but also of the character and respectability embodied by black club women.

Thus, the *Defender's* focus on black women in the public was a combination of talented tenth distinctions and self-help ideology concerned with role models and their influence to shape black women's behavior, especially young girls. However, the



Figure 3. Personality highlight from *Defender's* front page

increasing display of black, female personalities led to a corresponding increased focus on the distinct nature of these women, dependent on comparison either directly to the “herd” or indirectly through association. Class bias was thus used in conjunction with the conflation of gender and race stereotypes to display the dignified black woman as an example of the race’s progress, specifically in public society and culture. Despite the politics and class biases of uplift ideology, the “society” women of the front page, and the Woman’s page itself, it is vital to note that the *Defender* recognized the importance black women, as examples and as readers.

While examples of black club women and entertainers were common, other examples of women’s work outside the home are rare. Some exceptions include the Bessie Coleman, the first black aviatrix in 1922 and the *Defender*’s continued advocacy of and for black, female police officers. Overall though, black women were very limited in their representations outside the home. Black men, conversely, were portrayed in a wide variety of occupations to display the fact that black aspirations, abilities, and achievements were comparable to those of whites.⁵⁰ This discrepancy is partially due to the fact that black women, as both black and women, were doubly discouraged from acceptance in most occupations the *Defender* considered notable. However, the discrepancy is undoubtedly, in some measure, due to the fact that the *Defender* sought to display black women in roles connected to motherhood and self-help. In the end, the newspaper considered women’s household work more important than that performed outside the home.

⁵⁰ Strother, 138-140; Stovall, 164-165.

Inside the Home

“We all understand that the main province for women, and the one that most women love most, is that of home. Every woman likes to putter around her home,” began the column “Girl’s Work” in April of 1922. In the first appearance of this column, the author went on to state her intent to “take the play part and make it real,” teaching “little girls...the kinds of parties to give...what refreshments to serve...hints in etiquette...[and] other little things that are thought will be helpful to the girl.”⁵¹

The March 23, 1923 “OUR WEEKLY SERMON” article, takes a more zealous approach to the same message. In the column “the girls of today who will be the women of tomorrow” are described as the “cornerstone” which is “an honor stone in the building.” The building is that of the black nation within the white nation. “We are building a Race, a nation,” states the article, “We are building a palace, not a hut.” Daughters, then, must “be prepared” or “hewn” as their honor is the cornerstone of the “Race” and nation, again noting the importance of respectable womanhood to the race as a whole. Also, the act of shaping young women into dignified “honor stone[s]” implies the *Defender*’s mission to build a race of “character” and “dignity” with its messages and values. The image of respectable women as the cornerstone of the black race and nation as well as the image of the palace as opposed to the hut creates an interesting combination of home as nation and civilization and the “hewn” daughters as the most important component of the nation. Thus, daughters are not only linked to the home but also inherently in the home.

⁵¹ “Girl’s Work,” *Chicago Defender*, April 29, 1922.

Both examples exhibit the *Defender's* focus on the establishment of the black household and the well thought-of, cultured, “perfectly cut” woman within. The wounds of slavery on the black family, motherhood, and subsequently womanhood were still fresh. The denial of the household as an institution and the separation of families, though consciously enforced, were cited as proof of the lacking “civilization” of the black race. Thus, the establishment of the household was essential to black middle class and elite’s mission to disprove this stereotype, establish their civilized nature, and triumph over the legacy of slavery.⁵² As a result, uplift ideology was infused with these ideals of the household, the patriarchal family, Republican motherhood, and the subsequent propriety of black men and women.

The beginning of the New Negro movement in 1919, strengthened existing idealization of the black nation and white, Anglo-Saxon values of civilization building.⁵³ Consequently, the *Defender's* views, already based on the ideal of the patriarchal household as the basic unit and symbol of civilization, strengthened in the years following the end of the war. Influenced by dominant culture theories of biological determinism and social Darwinism, black middle class and elites considered themselves as maturing into “civilization.” As Deborah Gray White puts it: “To build the black home was to build the black nation.”⁵⁴ Therefore, the black household, inherently including the wife and mother within, was considered the measurement of racial advancement by the

⁵² Gaines, 78.

⁵³ Ibid., 102.

⁵⁴ Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy A Load: Black Women in the Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999) 45.

educated middle class and elite. As a result, the dignity of the black woman and the “civilization” of the black household were combined, so that motherhood was essential, either through Republican motherhood or progressive maternalism, to respectable black womanhood.

The *Defender* latched strongly to this ideology, due in part to Abbott’s own views of motherhood and the home as an institution of civilization. From an early age Abbott was taught to distinguish the civilized from the uncivilized by his white, German born step-father, Reverend Stengstacke, who, as a missionary in the South, “taught” former slaves how to “eat meals at regular hours, use tablecloths and napkins...comb their hair in the mornings, keep hands and face clean,” and other seemingly demeaning habits of home and refinement.⁵⁵ As a consequence, Abbott was keenly aware of the connection between the household and civilization. To him the “establishment and strengthening” of home and family life were considered essential for racial progress. Elucidating this assertion is Abbott’s 1934 editorial in which he wrote, “The highest product of social evolution is the growth of the civilized home—the home that only a wise, cultivated and high-minded woman can make.”⁵⁶ Citing the evolutionary tone of the “OUR WEEKLY SERMON” column and the influence of his step-father, Abbott combines the two benchmarks of racial advancement: the home and the necessary reputable woman.

In regard to Abbott’s view of women, Both Ottley and Lochard also note his sentimentality for mother love, home, the symbol of the white fence around the home,

⁵⁵ Ottley 14, 53.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 311.

and the sacrifices of his “Mammy.”⁵⁷ In a 1922 editorial, Abbott longed for an ideal version of home, bemoaning that in Chicago it had become “merely a place to sleep, eat and change our clothes.” Implying that some loss of home was due to black women, he even questioned their role outside the home, asking, “Can a woman, with or without children, successfully be a good housekeeper and spend her day in the marts of trade?” Assumedly answering his own question, Abbott wrote, “Unquestionably a married woman’s place...is in the home.”⁵⁸ Additionally, Ottley states Abbott’s views as “sentimental and old-fashioned, actually Victorian.” In fact, Abbott insisted that women study the arts and attend finishing schools, as their place was in the home, not in competition with men outside it.⁵⁹

As a result, columns like “Girl’s Work” informed young black girls on household practices as a form of education, usually with a strong dose of bourgeois cheer and etiquette training. The June 10, 1920 “Girl’s Work” stated: “I am a great stickler for our girls to be well equipped mentally...Of all the studies that it profits our girls to know is how to become creditable and self-supporting.” The article first establishes education as essential, but then describes a scenario in which the reader’s (a young black girl) parents die and the young girl is left with “a great amount of [book] knowledge” but “none of it practical.” Playing on this fear of not knowing or having not taught anything practical, the article continues, “I want to instill into the minds of our girls to become good cooks first of all...Sewing is another thing for our girls to learn.” “Girl’s Work” concludes by providing two recipes. Like the hewing and shaping of the “honor stone” in “OUR

⁵⁷ Lochard, 132; Ottley, 136.

⁵⁸ *Chicago Defender*, December 2, 1922.

⁵⁹ Lochard, 132.

WEEKLY SERMON,” the emphasis on instilling is reiterated throughout the article. Education is defined as the duties of wife and mother: to cook and sew. Furthermore, skill at both is implied as likely to attract a husband. Lastly, the patriarchal view is abundantly emphasized: women should be educated as respectable objects of the home.⁶⁰

The *Defender* also celebrated motherhood, literally doing so in July 1922 by organizing a day for of “rest” for mothers at the estate of Dr. Robert L. Cooper and a “rare treat” for their babies. This first annual outing included of 200 mothers.⁶¹ Another article in 1922 marked the *Defender*’s support of motherhood, and everything implied, in contrast to the flapper, and everything implied. Titled “NOT A FLAPPER MOTHER,” the short, front page snippet recognizes Evelena Burton as the mother of seventeen children, two of which are already in college, and she promises the rest will go as well. The diligence and work of motherhood is thus distinguished from the “flapper mother,” implying some less active, responsible, and reputable type of womanhood.

Marriage being a prerequisite to the formation of a home, the *Defender* endorsed it with large portraits of brides-to-be on the front page, just as it did with club women and famous entertainers. However, it was, of course, a certain kind of bride-to-be. “Betrothed” announced the engagement of a young woman, noting her high school graduation, participation in social clubs and the church, and her fiancé’s job as a radiologist.⁶² This was characteristic of most portraits and captions. The result was a kind of chastity implied through her middle class respectability. For example, “A Spring Bride” titled one portrait of a young woman who had married a West-Indies born doctor

⁶⁰ “Our Weekly Sermon,” *Chicago Defender*, June 10, 1922.

⁶¹ “Not A Flapper Mother,” *Chicago Defender*, July 29, 1922.

⁶² “Betrothed,” *Chicago Defender*, March 4, 1922.

“quietly after a courtship of eight years.”⁶³ A courtship of eight years without a child undoubtedly implies chastity, class, and resultant respectability. In line with Victorian conceptions, even after marriage though women maintained the ideal of their chastity as long as their sexual activity was within marriage and for the goal of procreation. Procreation implied nation and race building. Thus, the *Defender*, like most educated blacks, idealized matrimony as a “platonic sharing of racial uplift responsibilities.”⁶⁴ Marriage in this sense, implying sexual purity and morality, also rebuked white stereotypes of the sexual nature of the black race, as procreation was “platonic” as well as a white-Anglo ideal.

Overall, the *Defender* carefully represented respectable womanhood as reliant on the home and motherhood. The *Defender* as well as many educated blacks considered this combination necessary for the advancement of the race in the perceived civilized world. Additionally, the patriarchal home and dignified womanhood acted as a shield against the stereotypes of black sexuality constructed during the abuses slavery and Jim Crow. The increased association of black nationalism with white, Anglo-Saxon “civilization” influenced the *Defender* as well, resulting in the construction of a hardened archetype of respectable womanhood that could compete with any white woman. Thus, this image of the upright black mother was an unassailable example of black worth and progress as well as an encouragement of familial organization in the form of the patriarchal home.

⁶³ “A Spring Bride,” *Chicago Defender*, April 1, 1922.

⁶⁴ Gaines, 78.



Improve your complexion

**Make Your Skin Brighter
Clear, Soft and Smooth**

*Give It That
Appearance of Youthfulness
So Much Desired*

Beauty is the first present that Nature gives to a woman. Unless proper care is given the skin, as well as the hair, this beauty is the first that is taken away. The power of beauty in a woman is inestimable—how important, how necessary, therefore, it be that she should look her best—improve the charms that Nature bestowed upon her.

Now some women are endowed by Nature with a bright soft skin—but others not so fortunate, can acquire that youthful complexion—and what's more desired a light, smooth skin, just by the use of two toilet preparations known as the Black and White Beauty Treatment.

BLACK AND WHITE BEAUTY TREATMENT

BLACK and WHITE Ointment and Soap make up the BLACK and WHITE Beauty Treatment. This name was given by those who used the two and secured glowing results. Both are made and recommended for the skin.

Women everywhere—those whose skin is dull especially—have had in their possession the wonderful skin brightening properties of this wonderful BLACK and WHITE Beauty Treatment. Testimonials have come to us unsolicited from all parts of the world.

Black and White Ointment and Soap are easy to use—so delightful as cold creams and skin lotions. You wash your face with warm water and Black and White Soap. This opens the pores of the skin. Then mix according to directions the Creamy Ointment. Leave this on the skin—face, hands, neck or arms—overnight, and the next morning wash off with Black and White Soap and warm water. Repeat this treatment for several nights—the first application will show results in a very short time you will be delighted.

Black and White Ointment and Soap will also remove pimples, stop itching and heal irritated eruptions of the skin.

Black and White Soap has other uses besides the relief of complexion troubles—it makes an excellent shampoo—a quarter of a cake shaved in a pint of boiling water makes a liquid shampoo. For baby's bath and after shaving it has no equal. Put a cake on your wash-stand—let everyone enjoy the pleasure and satisfaction of a good, medicated soap.

Black and White Ointment sells for 25c and 50c a box—Black and White Soap for 25c a box. The 50c size contains three times as much as the 25c—one large box and a bar of soap will last a long time. If your druggist won't supply you—send to us and both Ointment and Soap will be mailed you prepaid on receipt of price.

If you want to know more about the Black and White Beauty Treatment—send the other Black and White Toilet Preparations—write Dept. B. H. M. for sample and a copy of the book "Skin Day Headings."

You can make money telling your friends about Black and White Preparations. Ask about it when you write.

**BLACK AND WHITE
SOAP**

Plough Chemical Co.
MEMPHIS, TENN., U.S.A.



Figure 4. Full page skin whitening advertisement

Physical Appearance

“Beauty is the first present that Nature gives to a woman,” began the description of one full page advertisement in the *Defender*. “Now some women are endowed by Nature with a bright soft skin but others not so fortunate can acquire that youthful

complexion.”⁶⁵ The advertisement was for “Black and White Beauty Treatment,” a skin whitener, produced by Plough Chemical Company. The suggestion is not direct but also not ambiguous. In a black newspaper like the *Defender*, the “not so fortunate” meant the dark-skinned reader.

Advertisements for skin whiteners, products to straighten and soften black hair, and wigs of this kind of hair appeared weekly throughout the *Defender* and especially on the Woman’s Page. Influenced by the association of black with inferior and white with superior, the gradient of complexion held immense meaning to the black population. Multiple studies from DuBois to Drake and Cayton devoted sizeable portions of their work to describing the hierarchy of skin tone within the black population. As noted by the ads, lighter was considered more beautiful than dark.

Advertisements, of course, were necessary to the *Defender* as a source of revenue and were somewhat out of the paper’s control. Their abundance, however, implies something of an acceptance, and even, perhaps, advocacy. Abbott himself was said to be “color struck.” Following painful denials first as a lawyer for his dark complexion and later by a dark skinned woman for the same reason, Abbott developed something of a bias toward his own skin tone. Accordingly, Abbott’s wives were light-skinned, the second one so much so that people were angered with the black leader. As a friend of Abbott’s stated, “This of course was in a period when the Negro race had not developed to a point where Negroes had feelings of worth in their own eyes. Mr. Abbott was a victim of the era in which he was born.”⁶⁶ Ottley agrees claiming, “He came to hate the color black—

⁶⁵ “Display Ad 37—no title,” *Chicago Defender*, June 12, 1920.

⁶⁶ Ottley, 312.

indeed, I suspect he was afflicted with a case of self-hate. He avoided black as a color for clothes and rarely appeared in public accompanied by a black woman.”⁶⁷

In addition to the ads, skin lightening and hair straightening were also encouraged directly and indirectly in articles and columns. The advice column “BEAUTY HINTS” was less focused on lightening skin and more so on health, cosmetics, and explaining the anatomy of hair and skin. However, when a fourteen year old girl wrote in asking for advice on how to bleach her skin and if she was too young, “BEAUTY HINTS” answered that “Yes, you are entirely too young to bleach your skin with cosmetics,” along with the information of how to bleach her skin (“with almond meal or corn meal”).⁶⁸ Thus, while skin whitening was not advocated, it was certainly an accepted practice, not often deferred. The only exception to this was “passing,” in which black men and women passed for white, usually for their own benefit.

Though the abundant advertisements and occasional articles seem to be undermining of the *Defender*’s focus on race pride, they are actually consistent with the paper’s overall tone. Just as dominant, white values and symbols of civilization were appropriated for their association to assumed superiority, so too was white or light skin associated with superior beauty and respectability. The images of black club women, entertainers, and brides-to-be appearing on the front page were often printed so that the background was dark and the skin of the woman, consequently, light. As a result, the middle class and elite black women featured in the *Defender* not only embodied white-Anglo values, but were represented as having light skin as well.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁶⁸ “Beauty Hints,” *Chicago Defender*, January 24, 1920.



Figure 5. Selections of female personality highlights from *Defender's* front page, note the black shapes used to silhouette the women's faces, making their skin appear light in contrast

Race Shame Examples

Crime, Deviance, and Immorality in Headlines

"WOMAN PAYS PENALTY ON GALLOWS" declared the *Defender's* front page headline on July 5, 1919. The subtitle read, "Slayer of Husband Strangled to Death in View of Large Crowd," as the article went on to state that Mrs. McCarter "paid the death penalty" for the murder of her husband with her lover and accomplice Eugene Mosley along with another man. Mrs. McCarter "walked firm and her cheeks were unstained with tears," as she ascended the gallows. The *Defender* included her statement prominently: "Tell all young girls to shun bad companions. There is nothing in it but

trouble. Had I listened to my mother when I was young I would not be walking to my death at this moment. But, no, I was hard-headed and wouldn't listen, so this is my pay." It took ten minutes for her to die after "the trap had sprung."

Despite the role of her accomplices the article's last section is headed as "Wife Plans Crime." The murder of her husband followed, and for this Mrs. McCarter is paying her deserved price, the article suggests. Mrs. McCarter's last words serve as a lecture to young girls, no doubt instilling fear of "bad companions" (read lovers) and to listen to their mothers. Thus, the *Defender* is both making an example of the result of immoral behavior to directly warn young girls.

Sensational headlines of black women involved in immorality, deviance, and subsequently criminal activity appeared on top of the *Defender*'s front page increasingly from 1919-1922, remaining consistent into 1923. Like positive emphasis on what the *Defender* considered respectable black womanhood, headlines and their subsequent articles emphasized the personalities involved. Women's histories were recalled, usually as described by their husbands, and analyzed. From these facts, an image was constructed. Consequently, by their infamous display in huge, bold print, these women functioned as counter-examples to the morality and decorum of the *Defender*'s portrayal of black club women, middle class daughters, brides-to-be, and mothers. The obvious warnings accompanying the headlines and stories harden the role of these women as examples.

"BROKEN MARRIAGE VOWS" was the title of a 1916 editorial written by Abbott, in which he bemoaned that there was no longer anything "sacred about the marriage vows" and that "the young people of today jump and look afterwards." He ends

his piece with the warning that divorce will destroy “the integrity of the home.”⁶⁹

Marriage being an obvious prerequisite to the patriarchal home, the *Defender* shielded the sanctity of marriage by making examples of divorce and promiscuity. The results of which were either scandal or tragedy and often both.

For example, “DIVORCE REVEALS SCANDAL” announced the *Defender* on May 7th, 1921. The article states: “The husband contends that his wife disregarded her marriage vows and obligations,” before naming two men whom Mr. Collins (the husband) accuses as “the recipients of her attentions” though “others are known to him” as well. Noting the subversion of the patriarchal home, the *Defender* includes: “It is further charged that on various occasions Mrs. Collins refused to prepare food for her husband, neglected housework and would not nurse him when he was sick.” According to the *Defender*, the breach of the sacredness of marriage by the wife immediately betrays her respectability due to her abandonment of acceptable, “race building” procreation for the passion and pleasure of other men. The newspaper also connects her attentions to sexual pursuits with these men to the neglect of her duties to her husband and the house. Therefore, the implication is that female sexuality outside the home destroys the home.

The article proceeds further though to include, “Collins cites an instance in which his wife neglected to remove a broken hot water bottle from his bed, which caused him severe burns, and kept up a constant and persistent course of abuse.” By citing her sexual nature in conjunction with cruelty toward her husband, the *Defender* establishes female sexuality as evidence of evil. Thus, by including only Mr. Collins claims, Mrs. Collins is demonized. The article thoroughly attacks her reputation, and consequently her

⁶⁹ “Broken Marriage Vows,” *Chicago Defender*, September 23, 1916.

womanhood, establishing her immorality on all fronts. The paper, acting in defense of marriage, the home, and most importantly the patriarch of the home, makes an example of Mrs. Collins behavior, warning women of the *Defender's* power should they disregard their marriage vows, duty to the household and patriarch, or pursue sexual pleasure.

By marking Mrs. Collins as sexual, immoral, cruel, and a negligent wife, the *Defender* constructs an image so complete it almost implies she is victim to some flaw of her feminine nature, or some evil. Headlines such as “LOVE PROMPTS SUICIDE” and front page articles such as “WOMAN TRIES SUICIDE TO END LOVE TRIANGLE” represented women who had left or were without husbands and seemingly victims of their need for male affection.⁷⁰ When that affection was denied, they no longer had a reason to live. Consequently, there was a theme in the *Defender* of women as dependent on a man and household. Without these, life as a woman was unbearable.

The *Defender* also portrayed women as jealous beings, wanting a man so badly as to kill a rival or the man himself. Headlines such as “SLAYS RIVAL IN JEALOUS RAGE,” “JEALOUS GIRL SLAYS FAMOUS TENOR,” “JEALOUS GIRL SHOOTS PHYSICIAN,” and simply “KILLS HUSBAND” all represent death as a result of female desires. Similarly, criminality and sexual infidelity were conflated in relation to love triangles, with women as victims and perpetrators.

“WOMAN AND PHYSICIAN ACCUSED,” the *Defender's* March 4th, 1922 headline and feature story, recounts the husband's claims that they “lived happily together while he did what he could to bring joy into her life,” until “he noticed a growing

⁷⁰ “Love Prompts Suicide,” *Chicago Defender*, May 19, 1923; “Woman Tries Suicide to End Love Triangle,” *Chicago Defender*, May 7, 1921.

indifference on her part—an indifference that grew into contempt.” The narrative and focus on defending the husband is obviously similar to “DIVORCE REVEALS SCANDAL.” In this case, though, the wife, Mrs. Good, was alleged to be involved with a white physician. To dispose of Mr. Good, she and the physician plotted to have him sent to an asylum. Initially succeeding, he returned after doctors determined him sane. The article states Mr. Good returned to his wife, continuing on without explaining why a man sent away by his wife to an insane asylum would do so. Just as oddly, it is then stated that Mrs. Good “was a spiritualist.” The article concludes by recounting the night Mrs. Good shot three bullets into her husband, sleeping in their bed. Beforehand, Mr. Good claims she said, “Don’t talk to me...I’m in the spirit receiving a message from my father. He says there is going to be a death here and it may be you. Don’t you see him?” The *Defender*, treating Mr. Good’s claims as a direct quote, ignores the fact that Mrs. Good may be mentally ill herself, instead conflating her sexual immorality, “spiritualist” heresy, and destruction of the marriage and home to construct a whole representation of women as sinner.⁷¹ Thus, the emphasis on the “growing indifference” within the household echoed many *Defender* articles in which something evil grew from the feminine nature of the women. As a result, the images of black women were polarized as good or evil, saint or sinner.

Mirroring the defense of Mr. Good and the patriarchal home was front page headline and article “MURDER ENDS UNHAPPY MARRIAGE” with the subtitles “SLAYS WIFE; KILLS SELF” and “Brooding Because of Woman’s Unfaithfulness, Wichita Man Plans Death of Family; Mother-in-Law Wounded.” Already the

⁷¹ “Woman And Physician Accused,” *Chicago Defender*, March 4, 1922.

“unfaithfulness” of the wife is implied as the reason for the murder-suicide. While the article is short and focused more on the facts outside the dead wife and husband, the largest and presumably most interesting print connects the wife’s infidelity to the breakdown of the husband’s mental state, recalling the front page analyzed in this paper’s introduction.

Thus, the *Defender* constructed hardened, negative representations of black women to polarize respectability from immorality, civilization in the form of the patriarchal home (implying female chastity through procreation) from the savagery of female sexuality subverting man’s civilization. This duality of womanhood was undoubtedly influenced by Victorian and Christian representations of virgin mother and Jezebel, good or evil, etc. The fact that women’s infidelity appeared scandalously in the headlines and front pages of the *Defender* reinforces the assertion that they served as examples to discourage behavior outside uplift ideology’s vision of race and nation building. Thus, the *Defender*’s message is while respectable womanhood, as defined by chastity, marriage, motherhood, and the home, is the cornerstone of civilization, unrespectable womanhood subverts and destroys civilization, either like Eve as temptress or Jezebel as whore and destroyer of the patriarchal household.

Criticism and Shame

“There are certain characteristics attributed to the Race that are very damaging and unflattering,” began the *Defender*’s weekly column “HOW TO KEEP WELL” by Dr. A. Wilberforce Williams. The doctor begins by addressing personal hygiene urging readers to “do the unexpected things” by being the “neatest, cleanest and most tastily

dressed,” as opposed to white expectations of black people as “dirty, soiled, foul smelling.” The column goes on to instruct readers not to “be very boisterous” or yell out the rail car window like someone naïve of modernity. In similar fashion the doctor addresses personal appearance. Attempting to imbue middle class decorum, he advises readers not to “appear on the streets with your boudoir slippers and caps...or kitchen apron” but to instead “put on your shoes, comb your hair and leave that old boudoir cap and slippers in the bed room where they belong.” Again in reference to the perceived white judgment, the doctor states, “disappoint those who expect to see you otherwise.”

The article becomes increasingly aimed at black women, noting that “respect begins at home,” and then, “Never sit on the front with no stockings on, with legs all bare, flies playing hide-and-seek up and down your legs, and your dress all opened in front. Why not clean up your child or children?” Set on a porch, the doctor references the foul, uncivilized image of flies with the sexual nature of them flying around “legs all bare...dress all opened in front.” The porch, flies, and open black legs are suggestive of the South, even of slavery and its sexual exploitations, thus directly associating the black, lower class behavior being criticized with slavery. Oddly, the doctor immediately proceeds, obviously addressing women now, to children. He lectures mothers on how to bathe, feed, and prepare for school, as if he himself is teaching children.⁷²

Sexual and racial backwardness are addressed as if one by Dr. Williams, seemingly assuming the double child-likeness of black women. Constantly aware of his notions of white judgment, he presumes lower class black women embody stereotypes, embarrassing respectable blacks and subverting racial progress. Thus, he both criticizes

⁷² “How to Keep Well,” *Chicago Defender*, September 11, 1920.

and lectures. In fact, he patronizes; his status as a doctor adds only an air of arrogance, an educated, self-acclaimed civilized man lecturing the open-legged, fly-ridden mother of dirty children how to be respectable in white eyes. In doing so, notions of racial, sexual, and class inferiority are conflated into the image of a bad mother, lacking middle class sensibilities, sexually suggestive and subsequently not far removed from slavery. This is the newspaper's representation of lower class black women. By criticism and patronizing lecture, the *Defender* sought to manipulate black behavior away from associations with slavery, yet used those very associations to criticize.

The influence of Reverend Stengstacke on the *Defender*, through Abbott, in this article and others is unambiguous. Here, the *Defender* is attempting to teach Chicago's black migrants respectability and "civilization," all the while conscious of white judgment. Following the Great Migration, white reactionary judgment was at an all-time high in Chicago. Abbott, ever aware of "decency" and "polite society" attempted to use the *Defender* as a tool of lecture and education.⁷³ In the newspaper's endeavor to civilize the supposedly uncivilized black population, however, the paper appropriated the very stereotypes and assumptions of inferiority established by white racism. Thus, Abbott assumed black inferiority; speaking to the *Defender*'s goal to mold working and lower class black behavior, Abbott remarked,

I am inclined to think that many discriminatory gestures on the part of white people are due to a belief that we are not cultured. Our lack of emotional control, consistent dignity and appropriate poise has profoundly affected our interracial relationships. We are simply lacking in those fundamental things that make for culture and it is about time that we make an about face. We should polish our manners as well as our nails!⁷⁴

⁷³ Lochard, 132.

⁷⁴ Ottley, 332.

Displaying the image-conscious nature of the black middle class and elite, as well as their obsession with respectable womanhood and household as symbols of black worth, dignity, and progress, many of the lectures and criticisms addressed black women. Perhaps as a result, most assume a patronizing tone, creating the sense of the *Defender* as representing superior intelligence, morality, and class, and assuming lower class black inferiority.

As evidenced by the role model example, the *Defender* celebrated the Victorian ideal of true womanhood, whether as mother in the home or as club woman. In Victorian fashion, the newspaper, like black women's clubs, assumed urbanization and its cultural formations inherently corrupted and debased morality. The flapper then, and similar expressions of urban youth, were attacked, going on the offense as a defensive measure to protect respectable womanhood and patriarchy.

This distinction between womanhood and the flapper was firmly established in 1922 article titled "THE 'FLAPPER' AGE" began "ONE OF THE GREAT PROBLEMS we are facing today is immorality in our whole social structure." The urgency displays the *Defender's* defensiveness. The article continues, "Modesty and kindred virtues have been thrown to the winds and not a few of our younger generation are allowing their baser natures to dominate," which is similar to the tone in which the *Defender* described the immorality of women, as their "baser natures" overcoming them. Recall the article on Mrs. Good: "a growing indifference on her part—an indifference that grew into contempt." Thus, the *Defender's* belief in the Victorian myth of urban life causing moral erosion is well established. Here, it threatens the "whole social structure."

“THE ‘FLAPPER’ AGE” then addresses the loosening of gender restrictions, bemoaning, “It is not an uncommon sight to see young girls smoking cigarettes, drinking, lounging publicly in the arms of ‘Daddy’ or dancing suggestively to a ‘jazz,’” as well as the loss of “refinement” in their language and the scant “costume” which “is more noticeable for what it displays of the body than for what it hides.” After this criticism of the young, black flapper girl, the article shifts its tone to acknowledge the slave and Jim Crow eras’ sexual degradation of black women stating, “THE WOMEN OF OUR GROUP, young and old, have been unjustly accused of being lax in their morals. In by-gone days they might have been, but not from choice.” The association of the previously described lax morals of the flapper with the stereotype of lax morals resulting from white sexual exploitation of black women exhibits the *Defender*’s sense that racial progress was measured by dignified black womanhood as detached and distanced from slavery. Then, displaying some chivalry, black women are defended as “the most modestly dressed member of the female sex.” Again, the *Defender* creates two polarized images in reference to womanhood: the upright, “modestly dressed” and the “rattle-brained ‘flappers.’”⁷⁵ Conflating the flapper’s perceived immorality with her lack of intelligence, this article hints at a trend.

Other *Defender* pieces were similar in their conflation sexuality, immorality, and inferior intelligence in terms of race and gender. For example, another article on flappers was titled “Browns Have Bare Knees, Empty Heads.” Playing on white stereotypes of black women’s sexuality and mental inferiority, the article directly addresses flappers from a male standpoint. Using racially and sexually demeaning language as a tool of

⁷⁵ “The Flapper Age,” *Chicago Defender*, July 29, 1922.

criticism, it makes statements such as, “these Browns, are easy to look upon” and “[y]ou see naïve-looking little Browns...[with] a little paint, no brains.” “Naïve-looking” is combined with “little Browns” to recall stereotypes of blacks as child-like or naïve savages. Similarly, the connection is made between women’s inferior intelligence and thus moral compass, making them sexual objects, especially by the male narrator, who is gawking while demeaning. Thus, sexual and racial stereotypes are used to associate the flapper with these stereotypes and their requisite marking of immorality and inferiority.⁷⁶

Perhaps the best example of the *Defender* making a race shame example of the flapper in comparison to ideals of motherhood and household is the column “Advice To The Wise and Otherwise” by “Princess Mysteria.” Appearing in the December 29th, 1923 issue is the inquiry of a seventeen-year-old, pregnant wife who misses dancing, especially with her husband who “goes out every night and leaves me alone and I get so lonesome I don’t know what to do.” It seems impossible not to empathize with her, especially as she concludes her appeal reminiscing, “I miss my good time,” and signing, “Worried.” Princess Mysteria, evidencing the polarization of the *Defender*’s representations of black women, chose to make the seventeen-year-old into a race shame example. She chastises as follows: “You are, or at least should be no longer a dance-mad, good-time loving flapper: you are a woman, a wife, and you will shortly be a mother.” Again here, womanhood is dependent on the title of wife and mother. The distinction is made between a flapper and a woman, marking the divide between sexuality outside the home and procreation within. Princess Mysteria continues asking, “How can you crave these things, if you are sincere and earnest in you intentions toward you home, your husband

⁷⁶ “Browns Have Bare Knees, Empty Heads,” *Chicago Defender*, June 24, 1922.

and child?" Thus, it is asserted where a respectable woman belongs: in the home with all attentions on serving that home, not craving anything else or having a good time. The word "crave" stands out, implying some depravity in the girl's nature, much like the "immorality of our whole system."⁷⁷ Marking the young woman almost with a sign of sin, the chastising continues: "There is something decidedly wrong with you and before many days you will be forced to account for your deficiencies...Upon you rests the beautiful labor of keeping a home and a personality so attractive that he [the husband] seeks nothing away from home...If you cannot find anything else to do, try to improve your penmanship. It is so terrible that I could hardly decipher it." The fidelity of the man, and thus the stability of the home, is then totally dependent on the woman and her "beautiful labor." Again, the husband is defended as Princess Mysteria blames and attacks the wife. By stating "there is something decidedly wrong with you" and criticizing the penmanship, Princess Mysteria also combined her claims of immorality and lack of dignified womanhood with the seventeen-year-old's intelligence and possible lack of education. The result from the column is the construction of a wholly inferior and "wrong" image of a girl, likely lower class. Thus, she is made into an example of race shame; although addressed to her, the criticism is used to demonize flappers and any manifestation of motherhood outside that of the *Defender's* construction motherhood.

The noticeably patronizing tone of the *Defender's* criticisms implies a defense of the patriarchal household. For example, the previous article literally defended; the narrator in "Browns Have Bare Knees, Empty Heads" demeaned, and the Dr. Williams articles criticized. Thus, the *Defender* attacked the "immorality" already in the "whole

⁷⁷ "The Flapper Age," *Chicago Defender*, July 29, 1922.

social structure” like termites destroying the house of Victorian civilization or the black nation.⁷⁸ In doing so, the newspaper exhibited its disconnection from reality in favor of encouraging its middle class values and propriety.

Noticeably, criticism and lecture were often all-out attacks. Many columns and articles focused not on teaching or advising but, like the sensational headlines, on demonizing to create an example of shame or “wrong.” The tone of the superior scoffing at the inferior is readily apparent. Within the criticism the appropriate example is established to frame the behaviors and values being dissuaded. Race, class, and gender stereotypes were seemingly consciously employed to humiliate behavior the outside *Defender*’s equally soundly constructed ideal of true womanhood. Overall, both headlines and criticisms assemble negative representations of black women, which by their prominence on the front page and vehemence, made a wholly constructed counter-example to the image of the respectable black club women or mother.

The Front Page: Race Pride Example and Race Shame Example

Progressively over the years 1919-1923, the *Defender* subscribed to the notion that “names make news.” Strother’s quantitative study determined that beginning in 1920, “the *Defender*’s race pride advocacy philosophy crystallized, its format gradually developed into an emphasis on personalities rather than the news event.”⁷⁹ Immediately apparent on the *Defender*’s front pages are the two characteristics identified throughout

⁷⁸ “The Flapper Age,” *Chicago Defender*, July 29, 1922.

⁷⁹ Strother, 138.

[illegible]

To analyze the relationship between these two representations common to the *Defender*, their occurrence on the front page was tabulated. The headline and the portrait were chosen because of their prominent nature, being the largest features of the front page, and for their frequent inclusion of black women. First, the headlines were defined

and limited to those in which women were directly involved either as perpetrators of crime or deviance, or in which they were victims due to their claimed immorality. These are categorized as race shame examples. Secondly, only front page portraits of black women due to their education, marriage, social work, club involvement, or entertainment were tabulated. These are labeled as race pride examples. Women appearing in headlines for other reasons were also counted.

It is worth noting that a number of issues of the *Defender* from 1919 are not present in the ProQuest collection. Additionally, 1919, as previously discussed, was a year of immense magnitude and change. Many of the year's headlines concerned the end of the war and the city's race riots. 1923 was also a year including some exceptions. First,

SIGN AND RETURN
Dyer Bill Coupon
PAGE ONE, PART TWO

THE Chicago Defender

WORLD'S GREATEST WEEKLY

20 PAGES
This Paper Not Complete
Without TWO PARTS

VOL. XVII NO. 33
CHICAGO, SATURDAY, AUGUST 19, 1922
PRICE TEN CENTS

POLICE RESCUE CLERGYMAN IN CHURCH FIGHT

JEALOUS GIRL SLAYS FAMOUS TENOR

JOHN WILLIAMS, MURDERER, "ESCAPES" PRISON

LEAVES JAIL TO SERVE AT A BARBECUE

Start Probe to See Why Slaying Is Cordoned by Prison Officials

Atlanta, Ga., Aug. 18.—John Williams, the famous "murderer," escaped from the Georgia State Prison today, and is believed to have fled to the city of Chicago. The escape was made through a tunnel dug by other prisoners, and the guard who was on duty at the time of the escape was killed. The prison officials are now conducting a thorough investigation into the escape, and are trying to locate Williams. It is believed that Williams may be involved in the slaying of a famous tenor, John Williams, who was killed in a church fight in Chicago.

Indict Five Georgia Whites For Lynching John Glover; Paper, Judge, Urge Action

MAJOR, CHICAGO, Aug. 18.—Five whites have already been indicted in connection with the lynching of John Glover, a black man, in Georgia. The grand jury returned its verdict today, and the five whites are now being held in custody. The Chicago Defender and the Chicago Tribune are both urging the state to take action against the five whites, and to bring them to trial. The paper and the judge are both of the opinion that the five whites should be punished for their crime, and that the state should take action to prevent such lynchings in the future.

MINISTER IS DRIVEN FROM HIS CHURCH

Timely Arrival of Cops Averts Bloodshed in House of Worship

Winchester, Va., Aug. 18.—(Staff) News were heard and great bloodshed in a church in Winchester, Va., today. A minister was driven from his church by a mob of whites, and the church was set on fire. The arrival of the police in time averted a bloodbath, and the minister was able to escape. The church is now in ruins, and the minister is being sought by the police. The incident has caused a great deal of concern in the community, and the police are trying to locate the minister and bring the mob to justice.

Jamaicans Run Riot; Flee as Soldiers Fire

HAVANA, Cuba, Aug. 18.—(Staff) Jamaican soldiers engaged in the rioting today, and the soldiers were firing at the rioters. The rioters are now fleeing, and the soldiers are following them. The rioting has caused a great deal of damage to property, and many people have been injured. The police are trying to control the rioting, and to bring the rioters to justice.

ARKANSAS FACES CRISIS BECAUSE OF KLAN'S WORK

Little Rock, Ark., Aug. 18.—(Staff) The Arkansas National Guard is now facing a crisis because of the work of the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan is now active in the state, and is causing a great deal of trouble. The National Guard is now being called upon to maintain order, and to protect the people from the Klan. The situation is very serious, and the people are very concerned.

Defender Finds Man's Relation; Gone 36 Years

3. Since and brother home separated in 1900. They were found in the city of Chicago, and the brother was now a famous tenor. The brother was now a famous tenor, and the sister was now a famous actress. The brother and sister were now famous, and the brother was now a famous tenor. The brother was now a famous tenor, and the sister was now a famous actress. The brother and sister were now famous, and the brother was now a famous tenor.

YOUNG SOCIAL WORKER

Miss Anna C. Mallory, of Jacksonville, Ill., a prominent young social worker in her home town, and well known throughout the state in musical circles. She is now in Chicago, and is working for the Metropolitan choir.



Photo by Woodard.

SWEETHEART STABS TENOR OF QUARTET

Butts, of Norfolk Jazzers, Is Slain by 19-Year-Old Jealous Girl

St. Louis, Mo., Aug. 18.—(Staff) A 19-year-old girl stabbed a famous tenor in the chest today, and the tenor was killed. The girl is now in custody, and the police are trying to locate her. The incident has caused a great deal of concern in the community, and the police are trying to bring the girl to justice.

Figure 7. Front page of *Defender* August 19, 1922

the *Defender* increasingly used three to five headlines, making the tabulation difficult. Secondly, the newspaper was engaged in an almost personal battle with Marcus Garvey. As a result, numerous headlines featured attacks on Garvey, reveling in his legal troubles. In addition, an increased number of headlines (six for 1923) concerned crime due to liquor consumption. Husbands who had wrecked their own households through alcoholic tendencies were vilified, sometimes along with their mistresses. As seen in the table below, black women in sensational headlines and race pride portraits decreased from 1922 to 1923. Interestingly, they decreased in unison: race pride decrease fifteen percent and race shame fourteen percent. However, the most notable decline is in both examples appearing on the same front page. This drop as well as the increasing frequency of headlines featuring liquor consumption (found throughout the *Defender* from 1919-1923) leave some questions unexplored and unanswered as they are outside the scope of this study. Lastly, there are three issues missing from 1923 in the ProQuest Collection, which provides a partial explanation of the decreases.

Table 1: Black Women as Race Pride and Race Shame Examples on the <i>Defender's</i> Front Page					
	Race pride examples	Race shame examples	Both on the same front page	Other	Total issues of Defender published
1919	1	5	1	3	28
1920	5	7	1	8	50
1921	14	9	4	6	50
1922	41	22	17	7	52
1923	35	19	8	7	49

Despite these inconsistencies, a definite trend is recognizable. Due to the fact that the race pride examples and the counter-examples increased and decreased roughly in proportion to one another, as well as the proof of their polarized values and representations, it is clear that the positive image of black in the *Defender* depended on the counter-example of the negative image. Strother claims the *Defender*'s race advocacy function's goal was to "mold the behavior and aspirations of blacks so that they could fit into the larger society."⁸⁰ To mold behavior and aspirations, the race shame and race pride worked in conjunction. Similarly, the image of black respectability demanded of the talented tenth by uplift ideology was dependent on comparison to the nine-tenths. Thus, as race advocacy functioned to display distinguished blacks and to mold behavior and values, the race shame counter-example was a part of the race advocacy function, not a deterrent to it.

Their placement on the front page is a significant characteristic. By appearance in close proximity, the role model examples and counter-examples juxtapose the *Defender*'s preferred set of values versus those it criticized. A kind of choice was then created. Adopt the moral, upright values and behaviors of a good citizen and of the patriarchal home, or suffer the consequences of immorality and embodying stereotypes. The examples and counter-examples, though focused around personalities, were less about the people and more about the values they embodied.

Race pride and race shame, thus, represented values that Abbott, and subsequently the *Defender*, believed would lead to integration of black men and women into

⁸⁰ Strother, 138.

mainstream society. The insinuation was that examples of success had achieved that success due to their values and behavior. Conversely, black women who were decapitated by their husband or shot by a lover had met that end due to their lack of values.

Conclusion and Future Work

In rebuttal to the assertion of negative representations being inconsistent with the race pride philosophy, this study concludes race pride and race shame examples functioned in unison. Through their use, the *Defender* sought to influence black behavior and values toward assimilation into white America. Thus, a new definition of the race pride advocacy function is proposed. This definition includes negative representations and criticisms. Just as race pride examples encourage the values they embodied, so too were race shame examples employed to dissuade values and behaviors considered by the *Defender* to be detrimental to racial advancement. Thus, the race shame function worked within the larger race advocacy function.

Additionally, negative representations of black women in the *Defender* are not inconsistent with the race pride philosophy due to the dependence of talented tenth examples on relating their differences from nine-tenths blacks. Considering the influence of DuBois, Abbott's beliefs, and its assimilation-oriented goal, the *Defender* was undoubtedly influenced by talented tenth and uplift ideology. As Abbott began pursuing a policy of gradualism, examples of "talent and character" were increasingly emphasized. Along with his expressions of class bias, Abbott's sentimental and philosophical attachment to the patriarchal home led the *Defender* to endorse uplift ideology and black

nationalism's appropriation of the household as the key to advancement. Here then is proof of uplift ideology's influence on the *Defender*, its race advocacy function, and its representation of women. Just as duality was essential for the talented tenth to be distinguishable from the other nine-tenths, so too were dualities of gender and race employed to emphasize class differences.

Because the status of black women and their place as "honor stone" of the black patriarchal household were considered measurements of racial progress, they were essential to the race advocacy function. Overall, black women were prominently displayed either as role models of encouraged values and behaviors or as examples of the opposite. Because the figure of respectable black womanhood was so imperative to the *Defender*, their representations had to be unassailable. Concurrently, the double marking of black and woman caused these categorizations to be conflated when treated as race shame examples. Additionally, because the *Defender* favored middle class values, class distinctions were also employed to represent some women as inferior using sexual, racial, and class stereotypes to construct the image as a whole. Black women, then, were both the pride of the *Defender* and the recipients of its harshest coverage and critiques within the black population.

Within the race advocacy function, black women served as representations of ideals, such as Republican motherhood, or the exact opposite. The duality of the race advocacy function as well as the dualities of race, gender, and class, caused middle class and elite black women to be examples of superiority (even their faces appeared light) and usually lower class and working class women to be examples of shame through criticism

or front page coverage. Thus, black women were polarized in the race advocacy function, serving more as examples than personalities.

After 1919, the *Defender* became a source of self-legitimization for the black middle class and elite more than it uplifted the black masses. While polarized examples may have influenced behavior, the fact remains that the majority of the black population was far too busy struggling to survive and make a living to maintain the kind of respectability encouraged by the *Defender*'s examples. Uplift ideology and the *Defender* preached economic dependence and material gain through self-help. However, they ignored the societal restrictions to economic opportunities. Thus, the material gain that presupposed adoption of middle class behaviors and values never developed.

Furthermore, the Great Migration had not transported whole family units to the Chicago. Instead, a combination of families, individuals, and parts of families arrived intermittently. In addition, poor housing, health, and working conditions broke up families through illness, death, and desperation. Consequently, the patriarchal household including its morally-upright mother was simply not a possibility for a large percentage of the black population. Perhaps this partly explains the increased efforts of the *Defender* to imbue its values through race pride and race shame examples. Still, for all the influence of the *Defender* on the black reader, a story demonizing infidelity, for example, does not ensure one will not commit the act. In fact, it is often the taboo that is most enticing, and the *Defender* certainly communicated the extent of the taboo.

Notably absent in the *Defender* are accurate descriptions of working class and lower class black women, their lives, values, and concerns. Instead, the *Defender* was concerned with imbuing the values of the black middle class and elite onto the average

black woman. Likewise, the *Defender* needed the indisputable image of black womanhood as embodied by club women, for example, to display racial progress and refute the representations of white newspapers. Thus, the paper's representations are confined to this unassailable construction or the opposite, the counter-example serving as a dissuasion and warning.

Black women, then, appear increasingly in headlines and in portraits on the front page due to the increased emphasis on black personalities following the end of the *Defender*'s "Great Northern Drive" campaign and the support of uplift ideology's patriarchal household encouraged by the black nationalism movement after the First World War. With hundreds of thousands of relocated Southern blacks in Northern cities, the *Defender* slowed its attacks on the South in favor of molding the migrants into a new middle class worthy of integration in the North. To do so, the newspaper increasingly employed race pride and race shame to deter what were perceived as Southern behaviors and habits, stereotyped by whites, while imbuing values appropriated from dominant, white society. Women were featured frequently and prominently as a method to display, to both blacks and whites, how far the race had progressed from and triumphed over slavery. They were also exhibited, both in the positive example and counter-example, with the hope of encouraging the establishment of the patriarchal home. As the urban youth culture from Harlem and the flapper, loosened sexual mores, and the general failure of integration loomed ever-more in the 1920s, the *Defender* polarized and crystallized its race pride and race shame examples to more ardently advocate its agenda. Thus, the appearance of black women throughout the paper, but especially on the front page,

increased due to the *Defender*'s transition to a new kind of race advocacy, more concerned with creating integration in the North than with attacking the South.

Future work analyzing the representations of black women in the *Defender* within a wider scope would be beneficial. While 1919-1923 are interesting years during which to mark the evolution and crystallization of the *Defender*'s race advocacy function and its focus on personalities, sturdier, more accurate results could be gained from a study of 1910-1930, for example. In addition, analysis of black women in other black newspapers is needed, especially those papers emphasizing working and lower class black concerns. While a factor in this study, an analysis of masculinity in the *Chicago Defender* would be a welcomed addition. The representations of men within the race advocacy function would surely reveal more about those of black women as well. Especially interesting is the paper's emphasis on male alcohol consumption and its connection to violence and tragedy in the *Defender*. Lastly, the image(s) constructed of white women within the *Defender* is another area of study yet to be explored. The representation of white women could add much to our understanding of women in general inside the newspaper. Overall, there remains considerable room for unique work concerning gender, race, and class in "The World's Most Famous Weekly."

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