The Bishop Tuttle School of Social Work and the Life of Fannie Jeffrey: An Oral History

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The Bishop Tuttle Memorial School of Social Work was operated by the Women's Auxiliary of the (then segregated) Episcopal Church of America as a social work and religious education program preparing African American women for leadership in social work, the church, and Black community. Mrs. Fannie Jeffrey was a member of its last graduating class, and subsequently was involved in the closing of the School. This article recounts the intersecting stories of the history of the Bishop Tuttle School and the life story of Mrs. Jeffrey, who fought against segregation and oppression in both the social work and religious organizations.

The contributions of the Bishop Tuttle Memorial School of Social Work to the training of African American social workers in the South during segregation and pre-Civil Rights era has received scant attention in the social work literature. The Tuttle School was a training program for African American women located in Raleigh, North Carolina, which operated from 1925 until 1941. In the course of doing research on the history of segregation and desegregation in social work education, I had the good fortune to meet and interview Mrs. Fannie Jeffrey regarding her recollections of attending the Bishop Tuttle School of Social Work and her own career as a leader in social work and the Episcopal Church. Mrs. Jeffrey, age 90 at the time the interview, reflected upon the training she received at Bishop Tuttle and her career spanning seven decades of dedicated leadership and service in social work and church work in the African American community.

The present article is organized according to the oral history research principle advocated by Charles T. Morrissey, a leading oral history scholar, of "paper trail first, memory trail second" (Kayser and Morrissey, 1998). That is, primary and secondary written historical materials are researched first as a means of aiding the recall of the person during the interview itself. In publishing this oral history account, I have chosen to follow this precept in order to provide an overall context for Mrs. Jeffrey's individual's life story. Primary source material was obtained from the Archives of the Episcopal Church (AEC), the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC), and the Social Welfare History Archives (SWHA). Secondary sources include historical research articles by Burnwell (1994, 1996) and Gary and Gary (1994).

Significant discrepancies frequently arise between the written record and recollected memories. Such is the case in the present project, particularly regarding the circumstances leading to the closure of the Bishop Tuttle School. These discrepancies are to be valued because they restore a sense of uncertainty to history. That is, we know that the School closed, but the written and oral accounts offer conflicting reasons as to why. Discrepancies also may reveal information that heretofore may have remained obscured or suppressed in the written record. Finally, discrepancies provide a stimulus for further historical research, both in searching for archival documents and in gathering additional oral history interviews with other informants.

The Written Record of the History of the Bishop Tuttle School

Bishop Tuttle School of Social Work was located on the campus of St. Augustine's College in Raleigh, North Carolina and operated as national training center for young Negro women for Christian leadership in

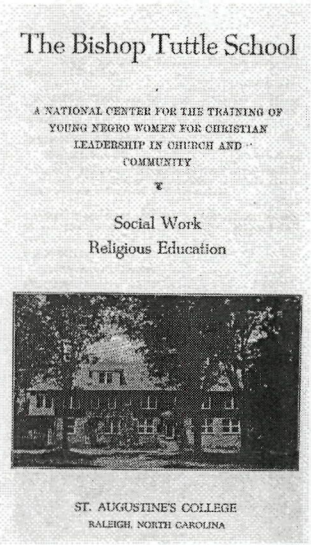
social service and church work (Bishop Tuttle School Bulletin, undated). St. Augustine's College was founded shortly after the Civil War for the education of freed slaves (www.st-aug.edu/about/main.htm). Established in 1925, the Tuttle School offered a two-year social work and religious studies curriculum emphasizing theoretical courses and practical fieldwork in the community (Gary and Gary, 1984). Incoming students needed to have completed two years of college, or its equivalent, and Gary and Gary (1994) note that many students actually entered with bachelor degrees. The School's bulletin described its curriculum as having "junior" and "senior" years.

The school was founded by Bertha Richards. From 1915 to 1923, Miss Richards served as a teacher and librarian at St. Augustine's, and "promulgated the idea that social work and religious education were sister services. . . .in the art of helping people who are destitute while concurrently attempting to improve the social environment" (Gary and Gary, 1994, p. 76). A large two-story building with a finished attic was built as both a school and residence for African American women. It had a maximum capacity of 15 to 17 students, plus an apartment for Miss Richards. In addition to social work courses on casework methods, child welfare, psychology, and community organization, students took courses in home management (i.e., budgeting, cooking), practical nursing, and religious studies. The School contained a large kitchen, and each student was expected to take a turn in preparing congregate meals and performing the household duties of the residence. In addition, courses in sociology and biology were taken at St. Augustine's College, and practical nursing training at St. Agnes Hospital, the surgical hospital for Negro patients.

Tuttle School operated a special inner-city community center in Raleigh, staffed by students and supervised by faculty, which was one of its field training sites. Students were also expected to do field work in rural areas, where poverty was extensive and health and welfare services for Black people were almost nonexistent. The inclusion of nursing training was specifically included in the Tuttle School curriculum in order to provide its students with the skills to help poor rural families in meeting basic health care needs.

At the time, there were few trained Black social workers or instructors in social work, but Miss Richard, who did not have an undergraduate degree, recruited two or three African American social workers who had completed their graduate training in the New York School of Social Work to serve as faculty members (Richards, November 18, 1930). According to Gary and Gary (1994), a number of Tuttle School faculty had bachelors and masters degrees. In addition, students attended special lectures by faculty members at the School of Public Welfare, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Beginning in 1930, the Public Welfare Institutes for Negroes, which previously had been rotated among North Carolina's Black colleges, became permanently housed at Bishop Tuttle School, because its location at Raleigh, the state capital, made it centrally located and easy to access state agencies (Burwell, 1994).

As early as November 1930, the Tuttle School sought accreditation from the American Association of Schools of Social Work (AASSW), then the accrediting organization for graduate professional schools of social work (Bromley, October 29, 1930; November 18, 1930). The School sought assistance from Walter Pettit, Director of the New York School of Social Work, who had previously helped in recruiting Tuttle faculty from graduates of the New York School (Richards, November 18, 1930). Bertha Richards, as dean, and faculty instructor Louise Bromley, who was assisting in the accreditation application process, believed


The Bishop Tuttle School

A NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE TRAINING OF YOUNG NEGRO WOMEN FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP IN CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

Social Work
Religious Education

ST. AUGUSTINE'S COLLEGE
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

School bulletin (Photo courtesy of the Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesotta)

that the Tuttle School was qualified and would be able to meet the AASSW accreditation standards (Bromely, October 29, 1930; Richards, November 18, 1930).

Preliminary inspection of the archival records provide some answers regarding what happened to the Tuttle School's effort to become an accredited school of social work; however, a full understanding of why the School ultimately closed is not yet available. What is known is the following:

• AEC records indicate that the Tuttle School's Advisory Board formally voted in 1936 to explore making the School a fully accredited school of social work, a process they envisioned would take approximately five years to complete. Several committees were formed to pursue the matter. However, problems with the School's finances, low salaries, difficulties in developing new field placement sites, and, most significantly, continued confusion over whether the purpose of the School was to train social workers or church workers eventually led to an abandonment of the social work curriculum altogether. In January 1938, the Advisory Board voted to adjust the curriculum of the School to train church workers rather than social workers. Less than two years later, however, the Tuttle School closed (personal communication, Jennifer Peters, AEC archivist, October 6, 2003).

• SWHA records indicate ongoing correspondence between the Tuttle School and AASSW regarding accreditation, but there is no record in the AASSW files indicating that the Bishop Tuttle School ever submitted a formal application for accreditation.

• As noted in the oral history interview below, however, Mrs. Jeffrey recalls that the Tuttle School did receive some type of formal decision or notification that denied its request for accreditation status. Her recollection is that rationale given at the time for the denial of accreditation was that the Tuttle School did not have its own library, separate from the library at St. Augustine's.

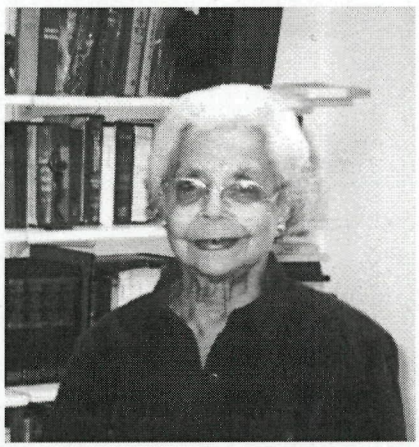
Awareness of the existence of the Tuttle School seems to have faded quickly from the collective consciousness of the larger social work community in both North Carolina and at the national level. For example, in the 1940s, the North Carolina College of Negroes sought to develop a social work training program because of the need for African American social workers in North Carolina. However, their inquiry into obtaining AASSW accreditation contained no reference to the existence of an earlier social work training program at the Tuttle School (personal communication, David Klaassen, SWHA archivist, September 11, 2003). Furthermore, less than 15 years after the program closed, the recently formed Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which succeeded AASSW as the accrediting body in social work education, fielded several inquiries from social services officials and health administrators in North Carolina asking for information about the Bishop Tuttle School and whether it had ever been accredited (Kerr, July 8, 1954; Sherry, August 20, 1954). Presumably, these inquiries were based upon the needs of African American employees to document their education and training in social work.

Mildred Sikkema, then consultant on educational standards for CSWE, replied to these inquiries as follows:

The Bishop Tuttle School of Social Work in Raleigh, North Carolina does not appear on any of the lists which have been kept in the files of the American Association of Schools of Social Work and transferred to the Council; therefore we assume it was never accredited. Universities do make their own decisions regarding acceptance of credits but it would

seem unlikely that professional graduate credit would be given to a person who had been through this program (Sikkema, July 16, 1954). In response to a second inquiry, Sikemma added the following additional information: *Neither do our files show it as an unaccredited school. We do not have information as its sponsorship nor the length of time of its existence (Sikemma, August 23, 1954).*

However, Bertha Richards' memory remained alive in the Episcopal Church. In 1981, the Church established the Bertha Richard Fund, to be used by the Executive for National Mission in Church and Society in the area of work with racial minorities (Episcopal News Service, 1981).



Fannie Jeffrey (Photo by John Kayser)

An Oral History Interview with Fannie Jeffrey

The following is an excerpt from the first of two oral history interviews with Mrs. Jeffrey, done in 2001 and 2002, which focus on her education at the Bishop Tuttle School and subsequent practice career in the United States in social work and church work. At a later time, I hope to publish a second oral history excerpt, focusing on her international work, particularly with the *Crossroads Africa* program, started by Rev. James Herman Robinson, a Presbyterian minister from Harlem. This innovative college exchange program subsequently became the model for the Peace Corps.

Kayser: I did want to say, especially, thank you. It sounds like you have been interviewed a number of times. The fact that you are willing to do this on your family time and vacation is appreciated.

Jeffrey: Well, as I said, I am really very pleased to do this. I feel honored. I feel that it is one of the ways I can say thank you to both Bishop Tuttle School and to the Church and to lots of people—people who have really enriched my life. Whatever I am, I am because I got my inspiration or was put on the right track. Of course, beginning with my family. My mother and father were both deeply religious, but not in a sanctimonious way. So the Church has been apart of my life from the very beginning. Of course, when I was ready to go to Bishop Tuttle School, everything in my life had led to that, was done through the Church. Since that time, which would be back in 1939, I have combined the social work and religious education. I have felt strongly that the two *must* go together. To do and be committed to social work, you're committed to helping others, doing for others, making life better and that is what religion and your Church is. I felt that it was a very good combination.

I suppose that I should start with how I first learned about Bishop Tuttle's School and how I finally got there. I was living here in Denver and had an unsuccessful marriage. I had separated from my husband and was back home with a child. I did not know what I was going to do, because I had not been working while I was married. One day I was walking past the Holy Redeemer Church and the priest, Father Rahming, happened to look up and see me. He called me, and said, "Fannie, come in. Got a minute to talk?" I

said, "Of course," and went in. He expressed concern about the fact that my marriage had broken up [and he said], "What are you going to do now?"

I told him that I didn't know and I supposed that I would go back teaching again. Then he said to me, "Have you ever thought about social work?" I said, "No, I hadn't." He started talking with me and told me about the Bishop Tuttle School and that he was almost sure that I would find it a good thing to do to go there. And, number two, it would do what he felt was important—to take me out of Denver and separate my life from the life of my husband and so forth. It all sounded very logical to me and so that's how it began. He immediately contacted the Church office in New York to make the arrangements for me to be able to go to Tuttle School. He contacted the school and his contact in New York, because he was asking for a scholarship. The big thing for me was when he said to "go East." I said I didn't have any money and I didn't feel that I should impose upon my parents anymore. I had a child. Jimmy was turning four when this happened. Father Rahming told me that the scholarship would fully take care of me. The only other big expense that I would have had would be caring for my son.

Fortunately, Washington, D. C. came into the picture because it was my mother's home. My sister and I had gone there to high school because of my parents wanting us to have the experience of having the kind of role models and teachers that we were not getting in the schools here in Denver. There was a debate whether we would go to high school in Washington or go to Hampton. My father is a graduate of Hampton University. So, my mother won out. We went to family in Washington. My mother still had two sisters who were living and they were more than delighted and happy to take care of Jim while I was to have these two years at Tuttle School. I was able to get an immediate divorce. I didn't want to leave here with any ties. When I left, I wanted everything to be cut clear, which it was. Jim and I went to Washington, D.C. I stayed there long enough for him to become a member of the family of my aunt and cousin there. Then off I went to Raleigh, North Carolina for the Bishop Tuttle School. The interesting shock to me was to learn for the first time that White people spoke "southern" (laughter). When I got on the train and heard all this southern talk, I couldn't believe it! That was the beginning of my time at Tuttle School.

I guess I should say something about how the Tuttle School came into existence. Bishop Tuttle School was started and founded by Bertha Richards, this very wealthy woman from New York, who, for reasons that I don't think I need to go into now, decided that she must give her life to helping others and doing something for other people. [1] First of all, she had wanted to go to China as a missionary but the Church felt that wasn't the thing for her. They told her to go South to see if there were needs there that she could meet. As a result of her experience going into the rural areas and seeing the deplorable conditions that the Blacks lived under, she felt that this was the place where she needed to go and how could she help. She saw the need to recruit and train women who could go into these communities to work with the families and help them to improve their lives. So it was on that basis and her commitment that she completely paid every penny of the cost of the building of the school. The only thing that was given to her was the land at St. Augustine's College in Raleigh, North Carolina. She built this beautiful two-story building and an attic. It would accommodate 15 students. Everything was there in the school that there was need for a life there. It was of course to be a graduate school. She was seeking women who had been in college and who also wanted to share her ideals about the need for helping people. I don't know the

exact year when the school was opened, but it would have been in the early 1930s. When I went there in 1939, Tuttle School had been opened and operating then a good 10 years.

Another interesting fact about Tuttle School is its place in the Church. At that time, the Episcopal Church was really two churches. There was the Black Episcopal Church and the White Episcopal Church. There was no integration. At that time also, there were three Church schools for women—one in California in Berkeley, Wyndom House [2] in New York City, and Bishop Tuttle in Raleigh, North Carolina for Black women. I remember one student who came there, from the Caribbean Islands, a very charming older person. She was just devastated to find that she was coming to a segregated school.

When I started at Tuttle School, I can't remember now all of the courses, but we had the required social work courses and Vera Gang [who later became one of the first African American public high school principals in Colorado Springs, Colorado] was one of the teachers that I remember. Because we were on the campus of St. Augustine's College, we also had the advantage of being able to take some classes there at the College. I remember one in Community Relations where the questions of the labor union came up. I expressed great dislike of the unions and so forth and the teacher was absolutely flabbergasted. He said, "Fannie, how can you feel that way?" Well, all I knew about unions was that they did not admit Black people. I just automatically said, "I didn't approve of the unions." I was able to find out, then, that I had a distorted and not really a fair view.

We had lecturers who were brought in. Anytime there was anybody coming, anywhere near Raleigh or Durham, that Bertha Richards felt would be a good contact, or had something they could share with us, she brought them to the campus.[3] We had lecturers who came from the College. It was an adequate curriculum and I think that the basic training that we had would be comparable to that in a similar White school. Tuttle School at that time was recognized as one of the schools for Black Women who were interested in social work.

Kayser: When you came to the Bishop Tuttle School, sounds like you had already done some teaching?

Jeffrey: Oh, yes. I finished college in 1930, in the Great Depression. When I had finished college in 1930, there were no jobs anyplace. I had a degree in education and in secondary education. My parents could not see us wasting our time in Denver going to work in somebody's kitchen. So they had my sister and me go back to Greeley, Colorado, to work on our masters.

That year in which we went back to Greeley is another whole story. The separation and prejudice of that town were unbelievable, including the University of Northern Colorado. There were six Black students. When we'd walk down the street, people would stare at us because they hadn't seen Black women. On the campus, we could only go to classes, because, as Black students, we couldn't belong to anything, or be apart of anything. Except for the YWCA! They reached out to us and invited us to become members of the YWCA, to be active in their YWCA programs. Of course, I knew about the YWCA, because as a child in Denver, I was a member of the Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the YWCA [which served Blacks].

I don't know if I should tell this story or not, because it really has nothing to do with my social work. Black students lived in sort of a little dilapidated house. When we returned to Greeley to work on our masters we felt, since we had been there four years, we were known, and we should get a house that would be closer to the school. We did, and this was the big mistake. One night, that house was surrounded and every window shot out. How

we weren't killed I don't know. That caused a big outcry here in Denver, when these six women in Colorado had their house surrounded and were shot at.

Kayser: Your house in Greeley was surrounded and shot at one time?

Jeffrey: Yes, at one time. They surrounded our house and the guns went off. They broke every window. When the guns when off, that was the signal to break all the windows. When we realized what had happened, we all fell to the floor from our beds and crawled out into a hallway where there were no windows or anything like that. Well, it was a terrible experience and one that had a great deal of effect on all of our lives. When the word got out—well[3], when we called Denver to let them know what happened—the word got around. The men, with my father, gathered together down at Five Points [an inner city neighborhood, north of downtown Denver] with their guns and said that they were going to go up and "wipe out that G... D.... town" and were about to do that. They were getting themselves organized and said that there was going to be "complete retaliation." The governor of Colorado, I don't remember who he was, at this point—it's written down at some place, rushed out to meet the men and asked the men to put down their guns, because this answer was not *the* answer. There was no point in going up to kill people. But he promised them that from then on, the dormitories in all Colorado colleges would be open to Blacks. Oh, and they promised us around-the-clock police coverage. But we knew that maybe police would guard our house a couple of weeks or so and that would be the end of that. So what did we do? We went back to the old shack that we had—nobody wanted it. We finished that year in the shack.

Well, that experience and the experience of the YWCA had a great deal to do with what I did with my life after I went to Tuttle School. Now let me see, where am I?

Kayser: Well, you come to Tuttle School.

Jeffrey: Yes, I come to Tuttle School. That was a wonderful experience. Our life was very good there. Miss Richards was a wonderful woman. Had a great sense of humor. She could tell the funniest stories and she was also a biblical student and she taught Bible study. That was one of the important parts of our curriculum. We had this Bible study with Bertha Richards. She knew the Bible. She could name any book in the Bible and she could quote from it. She knew the Bible by heart. She was just remarkable.

Well, it so happened in 1939, when I was at Tuttle School, there was a women, Elsie Smith, who was one of the four Field Secretaries that were employed by the National Office of the Women's Auxiliary of the Episcopal Church. Elsie, of course, was Black and she was primarily to work with the Black women and Black auxiliaries in churches and communities. She came to Tuttle School as a lecturer or something. She didn't live there. She was there enough that we became very much acquainted. I don't like to say things that make me say that I impress people, but I mean, I did. She was about to get married and she and the National Office were concerned about how on earth they were going to fill her job. So, Elsie spoke to me and said "Fannie, would you be at all interested?" Instead of finishing my second year at Tuttle, I would be going to New York for in-depth training in organizations and work of the Church.[4] They could almost guarantee me that I would have her job if I would go and study in religious education there in New York City. So I said "all right." At the end of that first year, I went to New York and lived at Wyndom House. Of course, it was my role back then to break up a barrier as the first Black at Wyndom House.

Now, one of my very, very best friends is Helen Turnbull. She and I are like sisters. She came from Baltimore, and when she saw me there at Wyndom House, she noticed that I didn't have a uniform—a maid's uniform on—and she said, "Oh, this is nice, they are not making the maids wear uniforms." The first evening there, she went into chapel and I went into chapel. [Helen said]: "Oh, my, this place is really advanced, here they are letting their Blacks come into chapel with us." After chapel, we went into the dining room for dinner. When we sat down, Helen said, "The blow came and I realized that Fannie was there the same way that I was, and she was Black." She had only known Blacks in servant roles. So she had to make a decision. Was she going to put down everything that she believed in and thought about Black people or was she going to go along with an institution that accepted Blacks as equals? Helen said that all this went through her mind, whether or not to actually sit down and eat with me. She did. It turned out that she and I had the same classes at Teachers College and at the Seminary and we became, as I said, the closest of friends. Every place that I've ever been, Helen always tells that story about how I changed her life.

Jeffrey: [Speaking of how the Bishop Tuttle School came to be closed.] I always thought it was the National Association of Social Workers that required that you could not be a member unless you graduated from an accredited school and were certified.[5] The organization that Mrs. Jeffrey speaks of here should not be confused with NASW, which did not come into existence until the early 1950s. She is referring to the accrediting body of social work education, the American Association of Schools of Social Work (AASSW).

The essential thing is that you have to be a graduate of, a full time graduate of, a school in social work that was recognized. They would not recognize Bishop Tuttle School. They said then, and I now realize that it was an excuse. Again, it was a time of absolute separation of Black and White. There was a Black world and a White world. They had to find something that would prevent Bishop Tuttle School from being recognized, which meant that if that School wasn't recognized, then no Black could become a member of the National Association. That was a gimmick. Now, it's funny, I always gave [the decision] credit. I said that [not having a library] was the only thing that kept us as being a recognized school, but it was because we were a Black school.

Kayser: Do you remember—you were really in a pivotal position when you went to work for the Episcopal Church, your responsibility was that Southern Region—how the information came about in needing to close the Bishop Tuttle School? You were really given that responsibility.

Jeffrey: That was the first big assignment that I had and did it because we felt, and the Church felt rightly, that we should not operate a school unless they met full standards.

Kayser: Was there any person in the national organization of social workers or that accrediting body? Do you remember having contact?

Jeffrey: That was all done through the National Office [of the Women's Auxiliary]. We had a National Office at 281 4th Avenue in New York City. The application of Bishop Tuttle School came through the National Auxiliary office. It was they who were told that the School had to have a library containing these 15,000 books. I don't know why in all these years I accepted that as a valid reason, when I should know because of many, many other things, that it was just that

Blacks were excluded from the social work world to the extent that they could. I don't know about graduates from the other two schools that I knew about which was at Atlanta and Howard. Maybe they were accepted, but I don't know. One of my first jobs was to close the Bishop Tuttle School out and to arrange the building and all of its furnishings and everything was officially given to the University, St. Augustine's College. My role was to do whatever needed to be done in exchange of records and so forth. Gather all the files and so forth and have them all shipped to New York City office. Officially, to close the doors on Tuttle School.

In the meantime, Miss Richards, as soon as the word came that Tuttle School would not be accepted in the social work association, she left Tuttle School to settle someplace in South Carolina. She had a home or something there. But it was interesting, for as long as Bertha Richards lived, and she lived a good eight or nine years after that, every year she would write a letter to every graduate of Tuttle School. Keeping in touch with us, encouraging us. Oh, if I only had those letters! No, I don't have those letters. We all knew Bertha Richards and she had a personal contact with everyone of us. She knew us personally; she knew everything possible to know about us.

When we closed the School, I asked Bertha for one thing that I could have that came from the School. So she gave me a beautiful cut glass mirror that was framed in bronze or brass that had been in her home. She brought it to Tuttle School, and she said, "Well, this is both from me, I'm giving this to you, and from the School." I kept that mirror, that was in 1940, up until...when was it, until 1980s or early 1990s. I don't know.

I was well established in Washington, the National Cathedral. My particular assignment at that time was to be responsible for the Chaplain's Office. The Chaplains were priests who came there and gave on regular schedule, a day to do the social work aspect of the Cathedral. I was so surprised to see that there was an office and that the Cathedral was carrying on a service, a social work service. We had contact with all the agencies there. How on earth the people would find the Cathedral, but everyday there were people coming there needing jobs, with no money, stranded, every kind of personal problem that was possible. That's what the chaplains worked with. I was responsible for maintaining that office, compiling the records and so forth. That's when they taught me the computer so I could enter their daily records.

One of the priests said to me, "We sure need a mirror in here, I'd like to see myself when I took my robes off or put them on." So, I said I'd see what I could do and it dawned on me..."Gee, that mirror that came out of Tuttle School, which was a training school for social workers in the Church, would be a perfect link," so I gave it. And they were very thrilled to get this. I wrote the story of it and how Tuttle School had been the school that the Church maintained to train social workers to work side-by-side with the priests in communities. So that's the last, years-ago evidence of the School.

Kayser: You wrote about that story?

Jeffrey: I wrote it in the letter that I submitted [in donating the mirror].[6] It's on record, I'm sure I have a copy of it. The important thing was to know that the mirror came from the School of Social Work that was maintained by the Church. The emphasis was on the social work rather that the fact that it was a Black school.

Kayser: You mentioned the separate worlds in social work of Black and White. What is your experience of the attitudes of social workers or social worker faculty had about those separate worlds?

Jeffrey: There was never a day in my life that I wasn't aware of the fact that part of my work and role as social worker was to help bring about, bring that wall down between Blacks and Whites in whatever way it was. That was the hardest lesson, the hardest task that I had in the South and working with groups there…just to get them to see that *we* needed to open up as much as we expected the Whites to open up. For instance, there was a provincial meeting in Columbia, the capital of South Carolina. It was an official meeting of the Church. Low and behold, at this Church where we were meeting, they put up a rope. All the Black people were to sit behind this rope. When they learned that, the Black women said "We're were not going to sit in any church behind a rope." I said, "I know how you feel, but that the only way to make anyone conscious of the fact that this sin is being perpetrated there in the Church is for us to be there. For somebody to look back there and see that their equals were behind a rope." So I got a few women to come. And sure enough that rope, when the White women came back to say something, they pushed against the rope and it would fall down here and there. Pretty soon there wasn't any rope.

The Diocese—the diocese is made up of all the provinces in that area—would call the Black Women representatives to meet with them, so you would sit down there. Then the rope fell. Then, there was the question of my making a report as the National Advisory Secretary to the Province. The President came to me and said, "You know that I feel that what you have done is been a tremendous thing for the Church." But, she said, "We could never have a Black woman stand up at the pulpit to talk." Can you believe it? That was in the 1940s that this happened! She said, "We got somebody to speak for you [a male church leader]." I had worked with him and he knew me very well, so I said, "Okay, if that's the way it is." She said, "I'm going to make a report and my whole report is going to be about what you have done." I can't remember his name. He had a doctorate from Cornell. He got up and, believe it or not, he started off with a n***** joke. You could almost feel the waves that went over him. He finished and immediately, there was group, said, "Fannie." I wasn't Jeffrey then, I was Fanny Gross. The group said, "We want to hear from Fanny Gross, she has got to speak!" So they called me down and I spoke.

I've always felt that your answer to a problem is not getting rid of the problem, but getting in there with it. And whatever it is, you work through that. That was the thing that I tried always in working with the women in the South. Of course the conditions in the 1940s were terrible. Here I was a National Secretary, but I had to ride the Jim Crow. I rode Jim Crow down to Columbia, South Carolina, or wherever I went. I remember being in Miami and on my way down to Key West. I got on this bus and of course went to the back—Jim Crow. It was all I could do to sit still. I said [to myself], "Fannie, how could you sit here?" "Don't you have any pride?" Then I thought, "I've got a job to do, and if I have to sit in this place, so what!" I saw the need even more to do something about prejudice and discrimination against Blacks.

I worked as the Field Secretary for four years. I had to give it up because of what had happened in my personal life. When I finished Tuttle School and started working with the National Church, my mother came east to Washington D.C. to look after my son. So mother kept Jimmy. Then my mother died quite suddenly, which meant that I had to give up my traveling job immediately. I couldn't carry a job in which I was traveling all the time. That's when I went to work for the YWCA in New York City. I thought that it was the closest to the kind of thing that I was doing with the National Episcopal Church. So I went to work for the Harlem Branch of the YWCA

as the Director of Membership and Community Activities.

Then I got a call to come downtown to the Central YWCA in New York City as Director of Publications. Of course, this was the first Black coming to the New York City branch there. I was with the Y, I guess all together with the Harlem Branch and Central Branch, about 10-15 years.

All kinds of things happened in my life. That was when New York State passed the first legislation regulating daycare for children. They had this Department of Child Care in New York City that was responsible for the regulations and oversight of any agency, church, anything that did anything with children. They had tremendous opposition from the Federation of Protestant Churches in New York City. So many of the physical things, such as installation of proper bathroom facilities for children, they felt that they couldn't do. So they opposed the childcare legislation. At that time, every member of the childcare office was Jewish. That was another experience for me to be in a situation in which I saw for the first time the tremendous hatred and just everything against Jewish people. Well, because it was known that I had good relations with churches, I was asked if I would come on the staff with the primary purpose of working with the church daycare centers and church organizations in relation to day-care center programs. I did. I came on and I worked primarily with churches, but also with civic and community groups.

One of my places that I had to oversee was the YWCA in Harlem. And believe it or not, they violated every rule. [Laughter.] People just didn't realize that you couldn't have a 13 year-old kid in charge of a group of kindergarten children. They couldn't be down in the basement by the furnace. I was amazing how many the violations were and people thought it was all right. Fortunately, that has changed and people now have recognized the importance of daycare and we have to have it now and there have to be certain standards. You have to have people who are trained in child psychology. So then, what did I do from that?

I stayed there four years with the child welfare program and then I went to the National Council of Churches to work with United Church Women. I went there as Director of Publications. In the meantime I had been doing some study at the New York School of Social Research and Publications. In that field, I studied a year. One of the best teachers that I had was Benjamin Fine, who was the head of the *New York Times* paper. So I went to work with the United Church Women as Director of Publications. And, again, the people who hired me always were aware of the fact that I had to be in a position where people would have to work with me, whether or not they would accept the fact that I was Black or not.

As Director of Publications there, I was co-editor of *The Church Woman*. It was the only publication of the national group, but they've changed their name. Now, it's *Episcopal Church Women*. But, they still do *The Church Woman* magazine. So I had relations with people throughout the country then. I attended conventions, meetings, and so forth. I remember out in California, there was a national meeting of something. Our whole staff was going and our Director said, "Well this will be a good opportunity for us to spread out, and on our way out, stop at various areas to meet." So we were all given an assignment and one of states that I was assigned to was Arizona. This was United Church of Women. Church Women United, they changed their name. The Arizona women, when they learned I was Black, said no, no, they wouldn't have me. So what to do? So our executive said that she would take Arizona and she assigned me to Missouri. I went to Missouri and met with the women there.

Now I'm going to bring this story to a close. Let me try to make a general statement.

Everything that I've done in my life has grown out of the basic needs. I say that I'm a Tuttle Woman. I've known that and I've always given Tuttle School credit. Every time I've talked about my life, I talk about the complete change in my life that started when I went to Tuttle School. I can talk about Tuttle School in very general terms. Some of the specifics of what our classes were, some I remember and some of them I don't. Then there is the fact that I was there only a year. The other students were there for the two-year course.

Kayser: You've really had some transformational experiences.

Jeffrey: Yes. Well, I have. When I look back to how each one has led to the other and yet they had been so completely different. My life has been in very definite sections and chunks. All stemming from, and I won't give Bishop Tuttle all the credit, because it was my family. My mother and father were both very dedicated people. They believed in the community and doing things, that unless you helped other people you had no right to live.

Kayser: You mentioned that your parents were concerned that you be exposed to something different than what you were getting in Denver. What were you getting in Denver?

Jeffrey: Well, we were enrolled in the public schools here. Of course, Denver had top schools but, of course, there were no Black teachers. Both of my parents having been graduates, my mother graduated from Minor Normal School, which was a Black school, had gone to a Black school throughout her life. The same schooling was for my father who graduated Hampton. Both met each other when they were working in Tuskegee. My father was in charge of the school business affairs and my mother was teaching at Tuskegee when they met. So they have always been a part of and were committed in helping our people, Black people, particularly to move up and get out of the rut they were in. We believed, and I believe very firmly, in Booker T. Washington's philosophy. At various times, I had been very vocal in my criticism of W. E. B. DuBois, who finally began to see that you had to do more than teach "the upper tenth." The Booker T. Washington philosophy [was] "you let your bucket down where you are and pull up from there." My parents felt that they wanted us to see Black people who had succeeded.

At that time, Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C. was the icon for Blacks. Students were a wide variety coming from other parts of the country because of that. The few Black Ph.D.s that we had were teachers at Dunbar High School. If you mentioned Dunbar, people knew you came from the best. So that is what my parents wanted us to have - an experience with accomplished Black people. When we went to Dunbar, we were going to go on like my mother did, on to Minor Normal School. After our first year there, we said, "Heavens no, we have to go to college." Eighty percent of my high school class went to college. You just didn't think of doing vocational work like that. So, where to go to college? We hated Washington, D.C. Washington was the most prejudiced city in the world. We wanted to come back home. So we finished high school there and they let us go to college in Greeley. At that time there were only two fields open. You were either a teacher or maybe a social worker. But, mostly, teachers. Whether you were male or female, you went to teachers' college. That was the limit of what I wanted to be. I was born, fortunately into a family who felt that you have got to continue to go up the ladder and as you go up you've got to take someone with you. So, that's me. [Laughter.]

Kayser: Your life has intersected with some other significant people. E. Franklin

Frazer certainly would be a key figure in social work education at the time. Howard Odum at North Carolina and Dean Lindsey at Howard. You really have had a chance to have contact with them.

Jeffrey: Well, I have. I have been very fortunate in that I've been able to be a part of the field of social work *and* the church. To me, they are inseparable.

Kayser: I just want to again say thank you for sharing this. You've done many ground-breaking things in your life. I think at the time a person's life, there is a sense of unfolding and you don't always appreciate the milestones that you have made.

Jeffrey: Of course, that's the way I feel. I was amazed at the thought that you wanted to talk with me. My life has just been an ordinary life. I've worked, I've tried to be decent. I've made lots of mistakes and I haven't put in the mistakes that I have made in my life. But, as I said to my niece, "I just can't feel that I've done anything." I look back at these 90 years and so what! What have I really done? I've worked and met people, and so forth. I don't feel that I'm anybody, which it may be true or not, I don't know.

Last night while I was thinking about this, "What can you say? What am I going to say tomorrow?" I talked less about Bishop Tuttle's School, but I didn't think you wanted a description of what a day is at Bishop Tuttle's School. It was a well-rounded program. I think that I mentioned the fact that we had to take these classes in basic anatomy at the hospital. To participate in some of the nurses' responsibilities for patients, well, you wonder, "What was that for?" Well it was to give us as much of a basic understanding of people and things that they had to go through bodily as well as socially. Graduates from Bishop Tuttle thought of themselves as going into the rural areas. We had to know a little bit about anatomy, we had to know a little bit about common diseases and things. Things that people should or should not do. Some of us did go into more or less rural work. Most of the graduates ended up, though, in cities working with social service departments. Of course, I'm delighted that you discovered Bishop Tuttle School and see it as a part of the social work history as it relates to Black history.

Kayser: Yes, this is clear to me that this type of history is not part of the official history or memory of social work. We really have some real gaps there. I think of the point you also mentioned about things that were said at the time, like why Bishop Tuttle closed. The issue was not having a library. But in the context of there only being few other schools of social work for the training of Black social workers, it was really a very, very unfortunate thing to close the Tuttle School.

Conclusion

The boarding school experience at the Bishop Tuttle School for small groups of African American women provided, in the words of Bertha Richards, 'the atmosphere of home and family life which I consider our peculiar strength. There is thorough training in Home Management—which means actual cooking and budgeting and living on 35 cents a day—and the girls are ready to put a trained and competent hand upon the home problems with which they will later deal" (Richards, November 18, 1930). Likewise, Gary and Gary (1994) offer the following summary of the Tuttle School:

The school designed a curriculum which was responsive to the social conditions of Black people; it offered a course on the Black experience; it had a unique course on club work which was a major approach to community development in the Black community; it

tended to place great emphasis on the role of religion and home management in social work; it was successful in providing scholarships for its students; it had an interracial faculty; it was able to recruit female students with college level training; and it was under the leadership of a woman (pp. 77-78).

To those summaries, I would add the following observations. The Bishop Tuttle School of Social Work has a number of unique features not found in other social work educational programs of its era. It combined an interdisciplinary educational instruction in social work, lay religious studies, home management, and practical nursing. As a women's boarding school, it provided a sense of purpose, solidarity, and leadership training for women facing the difficult task of meeting the needs of poor African American families during times of pervasive racism and all encompassing systematic disenfranchisement. As a faculty/student settlement house, its members were actively involved in urban and rural social work outreach, community building, and social reform. As an extension of the lay Women's Auxiliary of the then segregated Episcopal Church, it trained students to minister to the spiritual, social, and practical needs of both church members and the larger community of African Americans. Finally, it was one of the earliest schools of social work affiliated with a religious denomination.

From the vantage point of today, it seems clear that it was not recognized, valued, or supported for the unique institution it was, either by existing social work organizations of the time and (possibly) by the Episcopal Church itself. The central unanswered question remains to what extent racism in the social work profession and/or the Church contributed to its closing. The mystery of its demise awaits in-depth archival research and additional oral history investigations.

The impact of the program, however, can certainly be seen in the life of one of its final graduates. Fannie Jeffrey's life story is an exemplar of the power of the religious virtues of faith, hope, and charity when harnessed not simply for personal salvation in the hereafter, but for obtaining social justice and racial equality for African Americans in both religious and lay social service organizations. She was the first African American woman to integrate the previous all White programs or positions in the Episcopal Church, the YWCA, and United Council of Churches. Her life's work has been played on both a national and international stage. Her story, and the story of Bertha Richards, founder of the Bishop Tuttle School, deserve a place of greater recognition and honor in the history of the social work profession.

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Legend

AEC: Archives of the Episcopal Church, Austin, Texas

RAC: Rockefeller Archives Center, White Plains, New York

SWHA: Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Endnotes

[1] In an earlier conversation, Mrs. Jeffrey noted that Bertha Richards had been engaged to be married, but her fiancé was killed in the sinking of the Titanic. Devastated by the loss and, because of her religious background, she felt that God was telling her life was not her own, and that His will was for her to meet the needs of others' lives.

[2] Mrs. Jeffrey's hand written correction on the original interview transcript spells the name of this institution as "Wyndom House." However, the spelling of this institution is listed as "Windham House" in records of the Archives of the Episcopal Church (Breck, July 1, 1982). I have chosen to follow the spelling given by Mrs. Jeffrey, in part because Mrs. Jeffrey's former name is misspelled in this same archive document, casting some doubt on whether the Archive's spelling is the correct one.

[3] Workshops and courses were offered to Tuttle School students by staff members from the North Carolina State Department of Public Welfare, and by instructors from the University of North Carolina School of Public Welfare (Walker, S., March 7, 1927).

[4] At the completion of her second year of training at Wyndom House, which included attending classes at Teachers College and the Union Seminary in New York, Mrs. Jeffrey's received a social work certificate from the Tuttle School in 1940.

[5] Jeffrey, F. (September 14, 1988). Letter to Rev. Cannon Carole Crumley, Washington Cathedral.

[6] St. Agnes Hospital Training Program.

Bertha Richards and members of the last graduating class. (Photo courtesy of Fannie Jeffrey, second row, far right.)