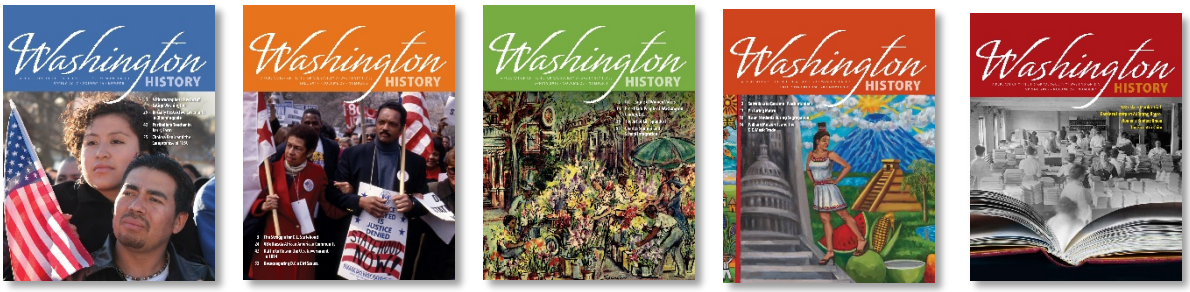
Washington History in the Classroom

 It has been chosen to complement the DC Public Schools curriculum during this time of sheltering at home in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

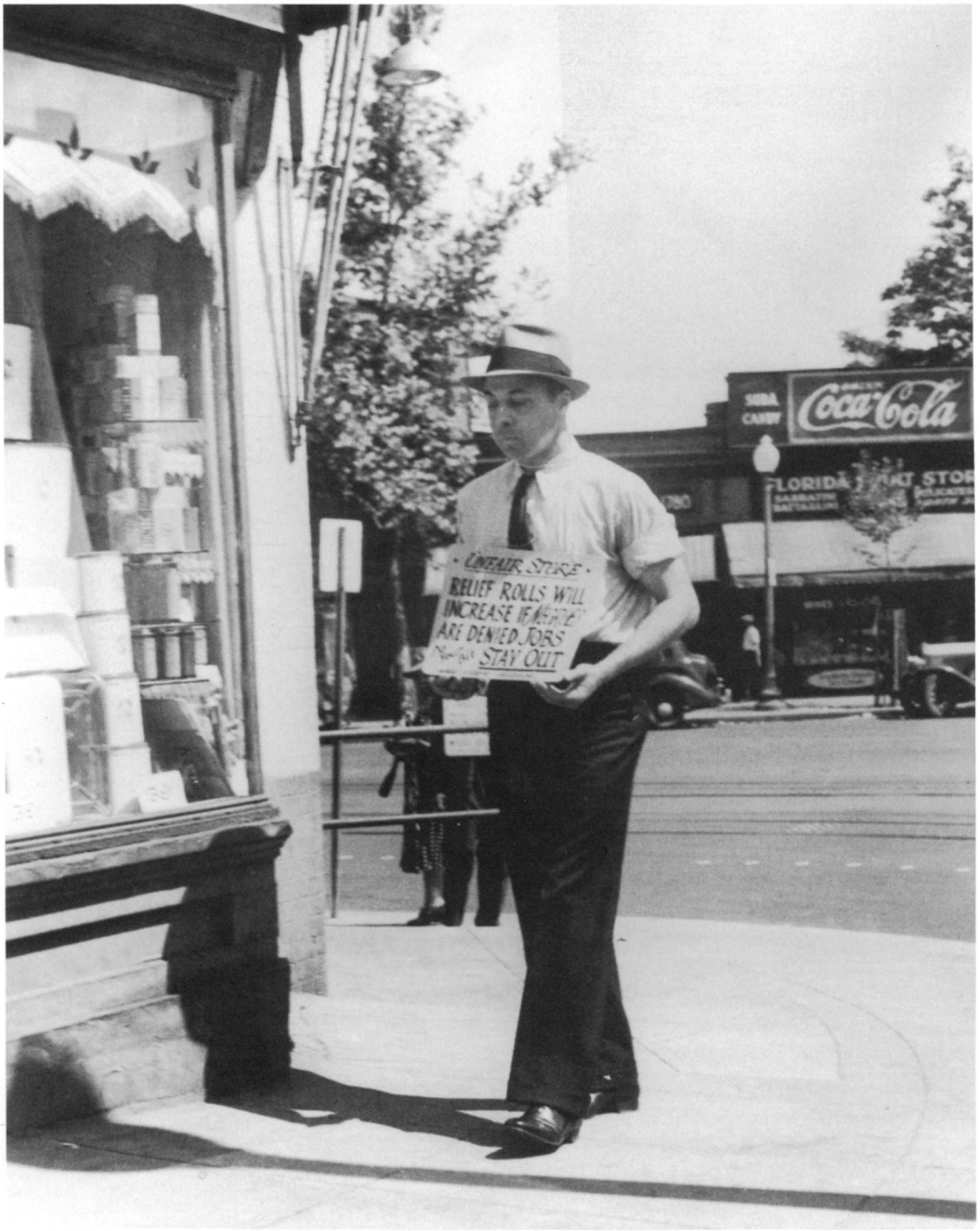


"***Washington History*** magazine is an essential teaching tool," says Bill Stevens, a D.C. public charter school teacher. "In the 19 years I've been teaching D.C. history to high school students, my scholars have used *Washington History* to investigate their neighborhoods, compete in National History Day, and write plays based on historical characters. They've grappled with concepts such as compensated emancipation, the 1919 riots, school integration, and the evolution of the built environment of Washington, D.C. **I could not teach courses on Washington, D.C. history without *Washington History*.**"

Bill Stevens engages with his SEED Public Charter School students in the Historical Society's Kiplinger Research Library, 2016.

Washington History is the only scholarly journal devoted exclusively to the history of our nation's capital. It succeeds the *Records of the Columbia Historical Society,* first published in 1897. *Washington History* is filled with scholarly articles, reviews, and a rich array of images and is written and edited by distinguished historians and journalists. ***Washington History*** authors explore D.C. from the earliest days of the city to 20 years ago, covering neighborhoods, heroes and she-roes, businesses, health, arts and culture, architecture, immigration, city planning, and compelling issues that unite us and divide us.

The full runs of *Washington History* (1989-present) and its predecessor publication the *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* (1897-1988) are available through JSTOR, an online archive to which many institutions subscribe. It's easy to set up a personal JSTOR account, which allows for free online reading of six articles per month in any of their journals, or join the Historical Society at the Membership Plus level for unlimited free access to our publications.



New Negro Alliance leader George Rycraw mans a picket line asking African Americans not to shop where they can't work. Founded in 1933, Washington's Alliance proved one of the nation's most successful "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" organizations, promoting the hiring of African Americans in non-custodial jobs in black neighborhoods. Alliance members resorted to picketing and boycotts only after exhausting all verbal and written negotiation. Courtesy, MSRC-HU.

"Don't Buy Where You Can't Work"

The New Negro Alliance of Washington

by Michele F. Pacifico

Monday morning, August 28, 1933. The Great Depression has reached all regions and all levels of American society. In Washington, three African-American employees of the white-owned Hamburger Grill on 12th and U streets, N.W., are fired and three whites hired in their places. The business is in a black neighborhood and depends entirely upon black patronage.[1]

Almost immediately after the three are fired, John Aubrey Davis, 21, a recent graduate of Williams College, organizes a group of young neighborhood men, most of whom frequent the grill, to picket the business. Their signs urge fellow community members to boycott the restaurant.

The protest proves effective: the following day the Hamburger Grill closes. On Wednesday the three black workers are rehired, business returns to normal, and the informal group of neighbors savor their first victory in a battle to open up African-American economic opportunity.[2]

The foregoing account describes the birth of Washington's New Negro Alliance, one of the nation's first, and most successful, grass-roots protest organizations to employ economic weapons in the battle for social change and civil rights. But like most such simple stories, this one does not begin to describe the forces, both local and national, that combined at a moment of great tension and deprivation in the city's African-American community to launch this movement. Nor does it suggest the enormous repercussions—from significant changes in the local economic structure to a Supreme Court ruling—that eventually emanated from the boycott of the hamburger stand on U Street, N.W.

Throughout American history African Americans have persistently been denied opportunities to work in industry or white-collar jobs, instead finding sustenance—and suffering exploitation—in domestic service and farming. Already vulnerable, African Americans found that the Great Depression of the 1930s "magnified all their traditional economic liabilities and created harsher ones," as historian Harvard Sitkoff has written. Often holding the most expendable jobs, African Americans faced the worst kinds of discrimination and, as Howard University sociologist

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Kelly Miller phrased it, the African American was "the surplus man, the last to be hired and the first to be fired." By 1933 approximately two million African Americans were out of work nationwide with the situation worsening every week.[3]

John P. Davis, a founder in 1935 of the National Negro Congress and frequent commentator in the black press, criticized the New Deal alphabet agencies for racist and "vicious" discriminatory practices. "On every hand," Davis wrote, "the New Deal has used slogans for the same raw deal." Black periodicals and newspapers circulated stories of wage and hiring discrimination in the relief agencies. In Washington the Interracial Committee of the District of Columbia found that the Works Progress Administration, the New Deal's earliest and most successful source of employment, rarely hired African Americans in white-collar positions. Indeed, in 1931 the Civil Works Administration's D.C. office employed only 21 African Americans out of 2,000 staff members.[4]

During this period, established African-American organizations such as the NAACP and the National Urban League continued to pursue their traditional and what was coming to be seen as conservative routes to change. Since 1909 the NAACP employed lobbying, litigation, and educational publicity to promote racial advancement, with a focus on securing civil liberties. The National Urban League, founded in 1911 to broaden employment opportunities for African Americans, continued its program of education, publications, and surveys. By 1933, when neither the NAACP nor the Urban League's stress on education, negotiation, and interracial cooperation produced noticeable results, conditions were ripe for new ideas and new leaders.

Black Nationalism resurfaced, this time bearing proposals for a forty-ninth state or a "Black Belt Negro Republic" in Harlem. The all-inclusive National Negro Congress would eventually form in 1935 as a federation of local organizations that relied on protest activities to fight for economic, political, and social change. Quite another, simpler approach emerged as local communities mobilized and took to the streets in efforts to win some form of economic justice. While direct-action protests emerged in the 1930s in a variety of styles, the most popular were the "Jobs for Negroes" campaigns.

William H. Hastie, a 1930 graduate of Harvard Law School and assistant solicitor under Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, was an early NNA member. In some ways the accomplished and polished Hastie represented the NNA style—young, educated, idealistic, and determined to bring about social change. Courtesy, MSRC-HU.

The "Jobs for Negroes" campaigns, also known as "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work," relied on visible, even confrontational actions. They used negotiation, mass protests, and boycotts to force white businesses in black communities to employ African Americans, and to employ

them in non-manual labor positions. Leaders exhorted black citizens throughout the country to boycott local businesses that refused to employ African Americans in clerical and managerial positions. They also worked to prevent black expenditures on goods or services in black neighborhoods where inequitable employment practices prevailed. The campaigns galvanized both poor and middle-class blacks to action.

This form of consumer pressure appealed to depression-era civil rights activists for a number of reasons. In addition to the devastating blow dealt by the Great Depression to black economic security, the economic downswing arrived on the heels of major changes in African-American life and culture. These changes began in 1915 with the Great Migration of rural, southern black families to northern cities. Large urban "ghettos" quickly coalesced in northern cities as the newcomers met pervasive racial discrimination. Increasingly large numbers of unemployed and underemployed African Americans crowded into neighborhoods where businesses generally remained white-owned and operated.

Many of those ghetto residents—southern migrant and northern-born alike—contributed to the Black Renaissance phenomenon of the 1920s, which, like World War I, transformed black political opinion. In 1925 philosopher Alain Locke defined the "New Negro" as a man or woman devoted to erasing racial prejudice and improving economic and social standing through cultural and intellectual advancement. These educated and accomplished African Americans felt alienated from their older, established parents and developed a new race-conscious literature and art. Moreover, in urban centers, the direct-action techniques of the Communist and Socialist parties offered a model for militant behavior—and a lesson that active protest sometimes got results. Even more significant for those inclined to take to the streets was passage of the Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Act on March 23, 1932. The act legalized picketing during labor disputes, thereby facilitating public protest. These phenomena, in varying degrees, moved some middle-class African Americans to action, and when the "old guard" leaders of the NAACP and the Urban League refused to consider tactics of confrontation, impatient young activists formed new organizations.[5]

John Aubrey Davis, photographed in the 1950s, conceived and launched the New Negro Alliance after leading a successful boycott of a U Street restaurant. Courtesy, John Aubrey Davis.

Beginning in Chicago in 1929, African Americans in at least 35 cities across the United States organized economic boycotts or "hire black" campaigns. Many quickly dissolved or achieved only limited success, often because too many participants feared a white backlash. Yet some, including drives in Cleveland, Los Angeles, New York, and especially Washington, evoked widespread community support and achieved genuine, notable

results. The "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" movements shared common goals, but they varied in scope, leadership, and support. Although leaders occasionally consulted from city to city, the campaigns were never coordinated into a united national movement.[6]

Assessed in isolation, the "Jobs for Negroes" movements did not achieve the widespread impact their leaders desired. They won only a limited number of job opportunities for African Americans and did not significantly affect black economic advancement or entrenched discriminatory practices. However, viewed in the continuum of African-American history, these local movements can be recognized for setting the stage for future mass actions such as the 1941 March on Washington, thus laying the groundwork for the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

Born outside the Hamburger Grill on U Street in 1933, Washington's New Negro Alliance (NNA) grew into one of the larger, better organized of the nation's "hire black" movements. After its initial September victory, the group quickly targeted other white Washington businesses. While the New Negro Alliance emphasized winning non-menial jobs through economic pressure, it also led a strong but doomed lobbying campaign from 1935 until 1939 to win passage of a civil rights bill for the District, conducted classes in business and management, and organized community forums for discussion of national and local issues.[7] The Alliance earned the admiration and support of African Americans nationwide when it took the boycott struggles to the U.S. Supreme Court and won the right of non-employees to picket against employment discrimination. Its record in Washington thus demonstrated to the nation that African Americans who coordinated protest with legal action could change their condition and status.

Eugene Davidson, pictured with an unnamed co-worker, was a founding member of the NNA who went on to lead the District of Columbia Branch of the NAACP and collaborated with A. Philip Randolph on plans for the 1941 March on Washington. Courtesy, Robert McNeill, photographer.

The Washington black community historically counted more vocal leaders and highly trained and educated African Americans than most other American cities. Because of their proximity to national power, educated black Washingtonians considered themselves national figures as well as local leaders.[8] Yet living in the capital of American democracy had not given them any edge in the struggle to transcend the color line. African Americans were discriminated against in every aspect of city life: employment, education, housing, and all social activities. Although the black community amounted to 29 percent of the city's population in 1930, it was widely considered a "secret city"—unknown and unknowable—so far as the white majority was concerned.[9]

The market for black labor had always been restricted in the District. African Americans in government generally held menial jobs; outside the civil service they worked primarily as unskilled laborers and domestic servants. As the depression deepened, figures for 1930 show that out of a total of 1,726 male clerks in Washington stores, only 79 were black; yet out of 2,391 janitors and sextons, 2,080 were black. African-American businesses were too few and too small to provide many opportunities for white-collar and skilled positions. In 1930, 284 black proprietors owned 244 stores in the District, with net sales of $1,495,854.00. They employed, however, only 195 workers.[10]

Yet this was an educated community, with an illiteracy rate of only slightly more than four percent. Its schools, although segregated, were viewed as the best black

public schools in the nation. In 1930 black Washington could also boast of 273 clergymen, 95 college professors, 303 teachers, 191 doctors, 98 lawyers, and 173 trained nurses. These figures are misleading, however, as many did not or could not pursue their professions due to discriminatory hiring practices and segregation. Despite their individual accomplishments, black Washingtonians faced the same obstacles as the rest of the nation. They eagerly joined civil rights organizations such as the NAACP and the National Urban League, and, when these groups failed to intervene effectively against the worsening economic situation, just as eagerly responded to the more aggressive tactics of the New Negro Alliance.[11]

While the formation of the New Negro Alliance appeared to ignite spontaneously from its first picket in 1933, John Aubrey Davis, in fact, organized the Alliance with a philosophy and purpose. Davis's commitment to such a movement started early. A native Washingtonian, he grew up in the accomplished environment of what E. Franklin Frazier called "Striver's Row," just northeast of Dupont Circle. Age nine in 1922, Davis marched with the District Branch of the NAACP for the passage of an anti-lynching bill. He remained active in the NAACP throughout his school years. After graduating from Dunbar High School, he majored in writing at Williams College. The short stories he wrote in those years reveal deep concern for the plight of black labor and disgust at white exploitation generally.

After studying the solutions proposed by Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and other intellectuals, Davis concluded that only after the economic parity of African-American communities was addressed could civil and cultural rights be achieved. When the caste structure in employment practices was dismantled and

when African Americans were permitted to join the organized labor movement on equal terms, other changes would follow. Davis reasoned that Booker T. Washington's attempt to develop a separate capitalistic economy had already failed; the little actual wealth found in the African-American community remained in the hands of a very few. Also, depression-era African Americans had neither the experience nor the capital to compete with established white enterprises. Thus, Davis concluded, while the NAACP's fight for civil rights was important, it ignored both the black population's economic problems and the basic white motivation to maintain civil and economic supremacy through economic advantage. Moreover, while Du Bois's proposal to develop the "talented tenth" had long since been fulfilled in the nation's capital, the city's "talented" African Americans still could not successfully compete for jobs, even in their own communities.[12]

Davis asserted that African Americans had to take direct aim on the source of their economic problems and hit local storeowners where it hurt—in their pocketbooks. He argued that "since the basis for minority persecution is chiefly economic, the remedy should likewise be economic." Black Washington was an urban community with cash to spend, and therefore, Davis reasoned, its most effective weapon was consumer pressure. By withholding their custom, black consumers could hurt business to the point where storeowners would have to pay attention. Ironically, the most blatant examples of employment discrimination were found in African-American neighborhoods. There, he believed, widespread public support would be easy to win.

When Davis returned from college in 1933, he found, according to a 1982 interview, a District Branch NAACP that was "completely dominated by the respectable, well-off, and stuffed-shirt residents of the city," who would not offer assistance to those struggling to obtain and keep jobs. It particularly outraged Davis that such leaders were patronizing white businesses, especially chain stores, that did not employ any neighborhood African Americans except in the most menial jobs. No one was acting to change these conditions.[13]

R. Grayson McGuire, Jr., seen driving the Grand Exalted Ruler in a late 1930s Elks Parade, joined the NNA at its inception. The family's McGuire Funeral Home continues in business today on Georgia Avenue, N.W. Photograph by Addison Scurlock, courtesy, John McGuire.

In 1933 Davis proposed to the District Branch NAACP his strategy of taking direct action against white businesses; when the conservative organization refused to consider such a strategy, Davis decided to tackle it himself. He realized that attempting such a protest during a depression was a radical and possibly even dangerous move, but he concluded it was worth the risk. When events presented the opportunity that hot August day in 1933, Davis was prepared and launched the New Negro Alliance with the highly successful Hamburger Grill boycott.[14]

Davis gave the new organization its name. He used the words "New Negro" to separate it from the previous generation of African Americans whom he deemed too content and passive. Yet Davis did not embrace Alain Locke's "New Negro" movement of the 1920s, noting that "Dr. Locke and the followers of his philosophy believed that racial prejudice would soon disappear before the altar of truth, art, and intellectual achievement." Davis argued that the black people's problems in the 1930s could not be solved by saying, "I'm culturally worth something." He stressed that African Americans had contributed to American cultural life since the time of the slave boats, but their situation had not improved. Overtly founded to win economic

rights for African-American Washingtonians, the New Negro Alliance was an organization "with a new vision, a new thought and spirit, fearless in its undertakings and willing to sacrifice and fight for its own principles, even if it meant being thrown in jail," according to Davis. The New Negro Alliance would surpass the "New Negro" movement in its direct fight for economic progress.[15]

The day after the success at the Hamburger Grill, Davis went to his friend Belford V. Lawson, Jr.'s law office to plan strategy. Lawson, from one of Washington's older black middle-class families, was also a graduate of Dunbar High School. He went on to graduate from the University of Michigan and Howard University Law School. Lawson then joined the law firm of Lewis and Beaubian, becoming the third partner. With Davis and Lawson that day was another native Washingtonian and friend, M. Franklin Thorne. Thorne had just graduated from New York University and was unemployed, though he would soon become the manager of Langston Terrace, the city's first New Deal federal housing project. In Lawson's office at 1232 U Street, N.W., the three men organized the New Negro Alliance. Davis composed the rationale and objectives, the foremost of which was to secure jobs and opportunities for African Americans in their community and thereby increase their earning capacity.[16]

At their first public meeting held a few days later, not only did "the young guys from the street corner" who picketed the grill show up, but so did some of the older, more established residents. Davis later recalled that although he was glad to see some of the community's leaders, he was also "put off" by the presence of those he was essentially attempting to pre-empt. In Davis's view, established leaders best represented themselves, the upper class of the community. Davis wanted the Alliance to be different, to "cast its net as widely as possible" regardless of divisive class and color distinctions. He knew that if the

movement were to succeed, the struggle could not be class-defined. Without the support of the entire black community, the campaign would fail. As it turned out, however, the majority of the new members were college students and young professionals who shared Davis's own educated, middle-class background, although they were as yet too young to be considered established or leaders. The New Negro Alliance had hoped to do better than its elders. Still, its vision for change did rest on new tactics, and some feared they might be putting their own jobs on the line to do battle with discrimination.[17]

Under some pressure from Belford Lawson, a number of Washington's young African-American attorneys joined. Early members included William H. Hastie, a 1930 graduate of Harvard Law School and assistant solicitor for the Department of the Interior under Harold L. Ickes; Thurman L. Dodson, president of the Washington Bar Association, a Howard Law School graduate and member of the law firm Houston and Houston; Edward P. Lovett and Edward A. Beaubian, both Howard Law graduates; and Thelma D. Ackis, a member of the D.C. bar. Charles Hamilton Houston, vice-dean of Howard Law School, showed his support by joining the Alliance although he never actively participated. Davis later explained that some were hesitant about using consumer pressure, the boycott, and picketing, particularly since the new Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Act, legalizing picketing during labor disputes, had not yet been tested. Nonetheless, the involvement of these attorneys would prove crucial to the success and survival of the "Jobs for Negroes" campaigns in Washington and around the country.

Other District residents on the Alliance's first roster included Howard University faculty Jesse W. Lewis, chairman of the Department of Business Administration; Doxey A. Wilkerson, who also served as international vice president of the American Federation of Teachers; and Howard Naylor Fitzhugh, who held bachelor and master's degrees from Harvard and would join the Howard faculty in 1934. Teachers included Clyde McDuffie, Colonel Harry O. Atwood, Julian O. Branch, and Albert L. Demond. Local businessmen included Eugene Davidson, a Harvard and Howard Law School graduate working in real estate and insurance, and R. Grayson McGuire, Jr., of McGuire's Funeral Home. Nellie Cheatham, Josephine C. Davis, Dutton Ferguson, Catherine Grey, Roberta C. Hastie, Lawrence J. W. Hays, Bertha Lomax, Natalie Moorman, Arnetta Randall, George Rycraw, Mae Thorne, James Ward, Norma L. Wilkens, and Peggy Williston were all active members.[18]

Davis and Lawson alone handled the New Negro Alliance's first project: to persuade the *Evening Star* to hire African-American newspaper boys. The *Star* was the city's dominant newspaper and, like most local firms, discriminated in hiring, right down to the young boys who hawked papers on the streets. Davis and Lawson met with the *Star's* personnel administrator and demanded that the newspaper hire African-American paper boys; otherwise, their organization would mount a boycott. It turned out to be an easy victory. Within three weeks, the *Star* changed its hiring policies and hired black newspaper boys.[19]

With two successes in hand by August 1933, the Alliance planned its next campaign. Unlike some other "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" organizations, the Alliance was cautious, turning to boycotting and picketing only as a last resort. Before picketing, the group first carefully researched both the store in question and its clients, then went to great lengths to settle the matter through personal and written negotiations. Only when a store refused to rectify the discriminatory practices did the Alliance boycott and picket. The NNA began this process on a small scale in 1933 with only a few members;

Stay Out of Peoples Drug Stores !

ECONOMIC SLAVERY

A war was fought and won to free the Negro from physical slavery. Another war is being waged to free him from a slavery as vicious, as spirit-breaking, as un-American.

Whenever employers of workers close the door of opportunity for promotion and higher wages on account of color or race; whenever these employers insist by general policies that the Negro worker has a bracket within which he must work, a maximum salary above which he cannot earn, and a position beyond which he must not aspire, then economic slavery flourishes.

DONT CHEAT ON YOUR RACE
Stay Out of ALL Peoples Drug Stores

In 1939 the New Negro Alliance continued its long-standing battle to persuade Peoples Drug Stores to hire black clerks in its outlets that catered to Washington's African-American community. Courtesy, MSRC-HU.

OUT OF EVERY

1 EMPLOYEES OF THE PEOPLES DRUG STORES **5**

ARE

COLORED PEOPLE

THE

Two Hundred and Twenty-eight

COLORED EMPLOYEES

OF THE

PEOPLES DRUG STORES

OF WASHINGTON

Protest

Against Unfair Statements

Peoples refused to comply with NNA demands, offering as a defense its own flyer showcasing 228 black employees. The flyer failed to rebut the NNA assertion that Peoples black workers were "kept in the lowest work and wage brackets for no other reason than that of race." Courtesy, MSRC-HU.

however, by early 1934, the Alliance was incorporated with a constitution, an elected executive council and various committees to run its day-to-day affairs, and approximately one thousand members.[20]

The Alliance mounted its first large-scale campaign in September 1933 against the A&P grocery store chain. A new A&P had just opened on the corner of 9th and S streets, N.W., and as Davis later commented, "in typical fashion it was all white." Early in the month, NNA members contacted A&P managers, asking them to add black staff members. On September 23, while negotiations were still underway, Dr. Joseph Johnson, a prominent member of the Columbus, Ohio, Democratic Party, spoke to an NNA mass meeting about a successful A&P boycott in Columbus. Inspired by the Columbus example, where African Americans were ultimately hired as clerks and managers, and frustrated by two weeks of fruitless negotiations, the Alliance started picketing the store on September 27, 1933. Carrying placards that read "Buy Where You Can Work, No Negroes Employed Here," Dutton Ferguson and James Ward, both recent college graduates, were quickly arrested and charged with carrying a sign without a permit. The charges were eventually dropped after some skillful arguing by the NNA's attorneys, but in the meantime the boycott continued with important support from neighborhood homemakers.

In early October the Alliance added two more A&P stores to the boycott: outlets on the 600 block of T Street and the 2700 block of 11th Street, N.W. Within weeks the A&P agreed to hire four African-American clerks, and by December 1933 the chain had hired 18 African-American clerks, including a manager at the 11th Street store. The Alliance called off the boycott and issued a letter to all neighborhood residents advising them to resume buying at the A&P. The Alliance's first arrests and third success stimulated valuable publicity for its programs and attracted a new community of sympathizers.[21]

On Saturday, December 16, 1933, the first issue of the organization's newspaper, the *New Negro Opinion,* appeared on newsstands; the *Opinion* ran weekly until 1937. As the "Official Organ of the New Negro Alliance," the paper promised "clean, inspiring news." It pledged to show the District's black residents "the absolute need for immediate and united action on the part of every one of Washington's Negro residents." Alliance leaders hoped the *Opinion* would capitalize on recent victories, raise NNA's profile in the community, and generate some sorely needed funds through advertising and sales.[22]

The Alliance continued its negotiations for jobs throughout 1934 and 1935, but most active picketing stopped when two injunctions were issued against the NNA for picketing Kaufman's Department Store at 1316 7th Street, N.W., and the High's Ice Cream Store at 11th and Irving streets, N.W. While boycotts had been used in the past by African-American communities to effect change, picketing was a new, more visible tactic. The Alliance's attorneys, led by William H. Hastie and Belford Lawson, believed the NNA was entitled to the protections afforded by the Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Act of 1932. This act prohibited courts from interfering on behalf of employers in labor disputes, leaving unions free to bring pressure on employers. Hastie and Lawson noted that Section 13(c) of the act defined labor disputes as "any controversy concerning terms or conditions of employment . . . regardless of whether or not the disputants stand in the proximate relation of employer and employee." Thus, they argued, employer-employee relationships were not necessary to define a labor dispute, and the courts could not interfere with otherwise legal picketing by citizens interested in changing labor conditions at enterprises where they were not employed.

Yet both the District Court and the District Court of Appeals ruled that the picketing activities of the NNA were not in re-

sponse to a labor problem as defined by the Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Act. The NNA was not an employee's organization nor were its members in competitive business with the store or employed by the store, thus their interest in the store's labor policies was not protected. Alliance attorneys refused to accept these rulings, recognizing that narrow application of the decisions would prevent the Alliance and similar groups around the country from actively and visibly protesting against economic discrimination. They vowed to take their case to the Supreme Court.[23]

Meanwhile, in response to the Alliance's boycotts—organized through mass mailings, petitions, personal appeals, and meetings—more employers in black neighborhoods were hiring African-American clerks. With each success, support for the NNA's effort grew, and by 1935 most of the District's African-American pastors had not only endorsed the Alliance, but also permitted it to use their churches to explain their program and raise money. Church backing was important to the NNA's success because influential black ministers could and did move the more conservative faction in the community to support the Alliance. The African-American-owned *Washington Tribune* also promoted the Alliance, with weekly front-page coverage of its activities. Prominent black Washingtonians and national leaders as well as local homemakers, black fraternities, and small community groups all voiced their support.[24]

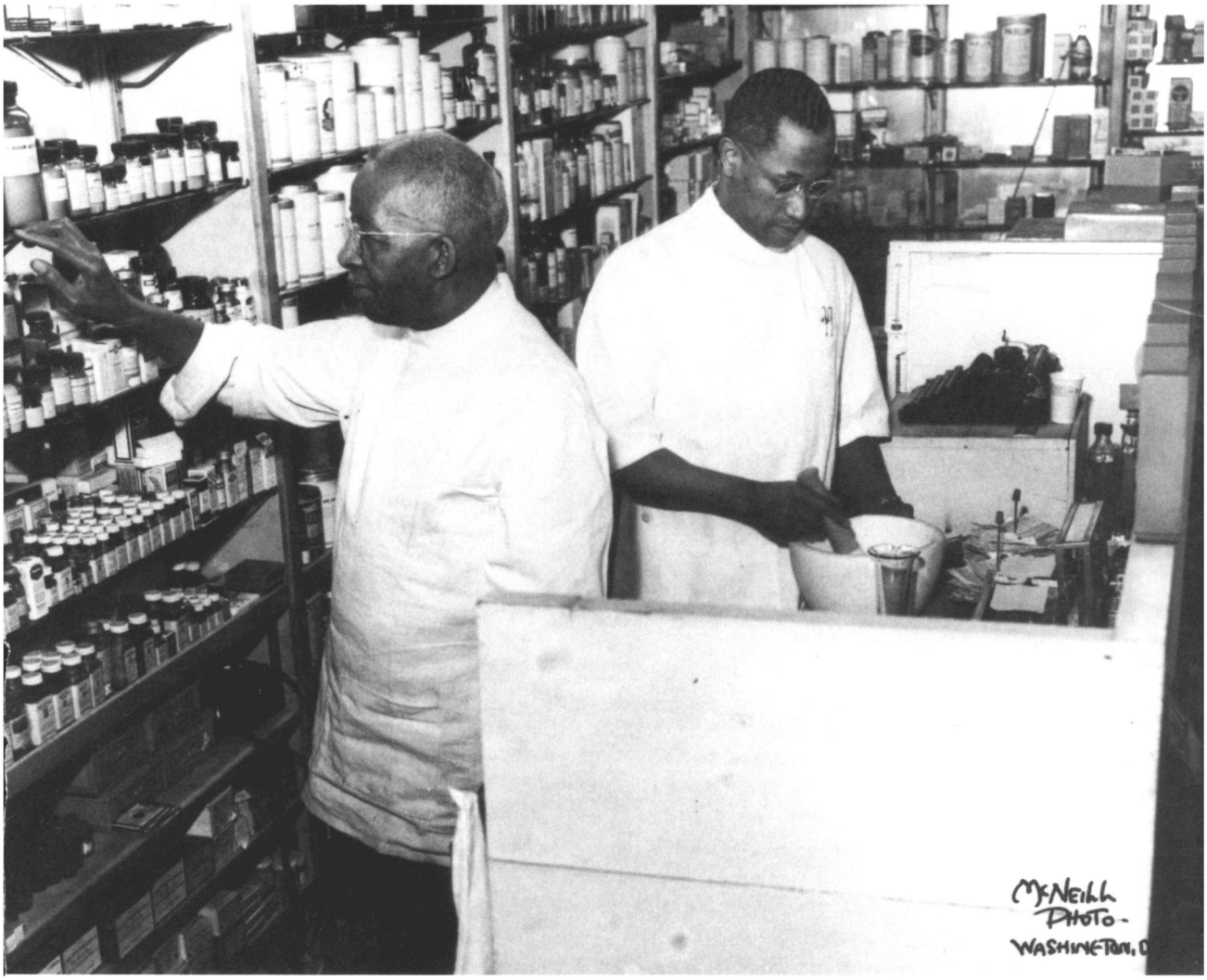
Certainly the most complex relationship the Alliance had with a "supporter" was with the District of Columbia Branch of the NAACP. From the beginning of the Alliance's activities, the D.C. Branch verbally supported NNA efforts, and many Alliance members continued as active NAACP members. But these relationships were complicated by the NAACP's national policy to remain free of "blanket affiliations" with other African-American organizations and by Branch Executive Secretary

Two African-American pharmacists tend the counter at Super Cut Rate Drugs on 14th Street, N.W. The New Negro Alliance offered hope to large numbers of educated black Washingtonians shut out of their professions by segregation. Photograph by Robert McNeill, courtesy MSRC-HU.

Archibald S. Pinkett's conservative leadership. Pinkett refused to sanction the NNA pickets or commit the branch's active cooperation.

In May 1937, however, the District Branch closed its doors as a result of a struggle over autonomy between the NAACP's local and national offices, a struggle that led to a revoked charter and a lawsuit. The temporary demise of the local NAACP left a vacuum in the leadership of local civil rights that the NNA moved quickly to fill. Between 1937 and 1939, Alliance membership grew, and its programs expanded. In early 1939, District NAACP members ended their controversy with the National Office, and the District branch reopened. At this point, however, the conservative leaders had been ousted, and members of the branch became much more involved in NNA activities. In fact, when the NNA finally dissolved in 1948, the local NAACP assumed responsibility for Alliance programs.[25]

Of course, the best measure of support was community turnout and the success of the boycotts. The *New Negro Opinion* reported on October 20, 1934, that several thousand people crowded Metropolitan Baptist Church for the first anniversary celebration of the New Negro Alliance. During the boycott campaign at High's Ice Cream Store on 7th Street, N.W., in late November 1933, the *Washington Tribune* reported that "hundreds of pupils of Shaw Junior High School and other schools in the vicinity of the store refused to purchase ice cream at the store." During the 1936 Christmas rush season, 551 people signed a petition to boycott the National Five and Ten Cent Store at 18th and U



streets, N.W. By the end of his Alliance administration in 1936, William H. Hastie was able to comment: "In spite of three separate injunctions filed by three local businesses against the New Negro Alliance, the third year of our work finds us progressing with a greater public interest and support." The Alliance calculated that strong community support resulted in more than 75,000 dollars worth of jobs for black salesclerks by 1936.[26]

Although the NNA enjoyed widespread support from the African-American community, it was certainly not free from criticism. The strongest local attack came as the NNA was organized in 1933. "The young radicals" on the faculty at Howard University, led by political scientist Ralph Bunche and Abram L. Harris, an economist, condemned the Alliance for its "narrow racialism," that is, for dividing labor on the basis of race, which Bunche and Harris believed would antagonize whites and imperil any gains African Americans had made within the organized labor movement. Both Bunche and Harris were heavily involved in the effort to persuade organized labor to accept black members and also were leading efforts to examine the economic position of African Americans. Even though the Alliance had advocated simply that African Americans be placed in jobs when "normal labor turnover affords an opportunity," Bunche and Harris felt that whites inevitably would be displaced from their jobs. When this happened, threatened whites would demand economic retaliation. Harris summarized:

> In the final analysis it would be the hundreds of thousands of black workers in

> white industry who would have to bear the cost of the movement's success in obtaining a few thousand jobs for Negro clerks, salesmen, and managers. . . . Nationalism, whether racial or otherwise, has never found, nor has it ever sought, validity in sheer economics.

Bunche further argued that the Alliance failed to take into account a "defective" economic system that could not supply enough jobs. Imposing a strictly racial solution to a more complex problem would only harm the future of the labor movement and perpetuate segregation. Bunche charged Davis with "destroying black and white labor unity" and concluded that where improving the economic status of African Americans was concerned, the NNA's program would prove futile. This same criticism was aimed at the other boycott campaigns around the nation. African Americans who accepted this analysis feared that the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaigns would give rise to a bitter class struggle and possibly to race riots.

Harris added even harsher criticism when he charged the movement with anti-Semitism. Because many of the challenged businesses in Washington, as well as in New York and Chicago, were owned by Jews, he reasoned, African Americans were essentially attacking another minority, alienating potential allies, and ultimately harming their employment options. John P. Davis of the National Negro Congress added that the Alliance failed to meet the "real issues"—equal wages and the need to establish black-owned enterprises. Other vocal critics sharing these concerns included James Weldon Johnson, former executive secretary of the NAACP; Robert Abbott, owner and editor of the *Chicago Defender;* George S. Schuyler, columnist for the Pittsburgh *Courier;* Oscar De Priest, African-American congressman

A biracial committee of citizens led by the New Negro Alliance pose for a group portrait before presenting a 6,000-signature petition to Safeway Grocery Co. officials requesting the employment of "colored" clerks in 1941. Front row, from left: Mamie Hutchinson, Elks Temple; Francina Biddle, Elks Temple; Rolandus H. Cooper, chair, Case Committee; Eugene Davidson, administrator; George H. Rycraw, chair, Petitions Committee; Elizabeth Lee, Elks; Mary Lipston, Elks; Gertrude Stone, NAACP; Kathryn Johnson, National Non-Partisan Council on Public Affairs, A.K.A. Sorority. Second row: C. Reginald Audrick, Howard Law School; Rev. J. C. Olden, Militant Church Movement; W. A. Hunton, National Negro Congress; E. Lewis Terrell, Howard Law School; W. Robert Ming, NNA; Frederick M. Douglass, Columbia Lodge, Elks; Rev. R. W. Brooks, Social Action Committee, Inter-denominational Alliance; E. W. Baker; E. A. Solomon, Howard Law School; George W. Goodman, Washington Urban League.

The day after the group at left presented its petition, picketers began their vigil at the new Safeway at 14th and U. Passersby received copies of this flyer (right). Even though Safeway (formerly Sanitary Grocery) sparked the NNA's Supreme Court victory for the rights of non-employees to picket a business for its labor practices, Safeway refused to implement non-discriminatory hiring. Courtesy, MSRC-HU.

"Don't Buy Where You Can't Work"

PLEASE STAY OUT!

SAFEWAY
(SANITARY)

UNFAIR

No Colored Clerks Employed in This Store

Five years ago the New Negro Alliance requested the Sanitary Grocery Company to employ Negroes in clerical jobs, especially in stores where most of the trade was colored.

The company refused and a picket line in front of its store at 11th and U Streets, N. W. was used as a basis for a favorable Supreme Court decision upholding the legality of picketing for jobs. The store was later closed under the pressure of a silent boycott.

During the past month the Alliance has been again urging the company to employ colored clerks, particularly in this new store at 14th and U Streets, N. W.

The company REFUSED, although a delegation of twenty organizations waited upon officials of the company and presented petitions signed by nearly 6000 persons.

This company needs your money, but insists that Negroes will not be employed as clerks in this store!

STAY OUT! PLEASE STAY OUT! STAY OUT!
Stay out of ALL SAFEWAY Sanitary Stores
New Negro Alliance and Allied Organizations
Printing Labor Donated

from Chicago; W.E.B. Du Bois; and the Communist Party.[27]

The Alliance worked hard to answer its critics and devoted numerous *New Negro Opinion* editorials and public speeches to defending the NNA's strategy. Such criticism was not unexpected, given the initial reaction. Ralph Bunche and others had tried to dissuade Davis from even starting the NNA for fear of white backlash and retaliation, and Davis later recalled that his "biggest job was to keep the Howard crowd down." In the end, though, criticism from the Howard University faculty never amounted to more than "pot shots" and loud debates. Although they wanted the Alliance to cease its activities, faculty members made no major move to stop the NNA. For, as Davis pointed out, University President Mordecai Johnson did not want Howard labelled "the home of Uncle Tomism, whether it be Marxist Tomism or whose kind."[28]

In time much of the criticism subsided as the Alliance won successive victories and proved many of the critics' fears unfounded. The Alliance took care to ensure fair campaigns. Members always denied that they were trying to separate African Americans from whites. After all, the NNA's stated purpose was to integrate African Americans into white businesses for the benefit of both races and the economic betterment of all. Ignoring logical inconsistencies, the Alliance also contended that racial unity was key to reaching this goal.

The Alliance vehemently defended its tactics, arguing that whites would not be displaced. First, Davis believed that rotating employment opportunities allowed for the "frictionless" placement of African Americans; as new positions opened up, African Americans would be promoted

from within the business or newly hired. Second, the NNA strictly avoided any situation that might cause a white employee to be discharged.

Davis further maintained that to halt civil action for fear of white retaliation was "essentially a type of defeatism," particularly when District employment statistics indicated the great extent of discrimination. He also reasoned that if whites retaliated they would, in effect, subject themselves to a larger boycott; African Americans without incomes could not buy from anyone. The NNA insisted that their protest activities would not jeopardize the positions of black workers, regardless of their participation in boycotts or pickets. In fact, only one such firing would be recorded. In 1939, during a lengthy picket of two Peoples Drug Stores, the black waiters at Union Station, none of whom were NNA members, were replaced with white waitresses in a show of management sympathy for the Peoples chain.[29]

Finally, the Alliance was emphatic that it was not working for the aggrandizement of its members or the establishments they owned, especially since most of the active Alliance members held professional-level federal appointments or worked in law, business, and education—not in retail. The NNA even made it a point to refrain from recommending individuals for job openings gained through their efforts, maintaining that any apparent conflicts of interest would jeopardize community support. Employers seeking black workers in the early years were referred to the Twelfth Street YMCA; later they were directed to the District of Columbia Employment Center.[30]

The NNA's strongest defense against critics was its record of successful and well-attended pickets and boycotts, many staged with the support of the Congress of Industrial Organizations and a few white organizations offering both encouragement and picketers. With this support the Alliance vowed to ignore critics' pessimistic warnings and forge ahead. Optimism was essential, it turned out, because in 1937 the New Negro Alliance would embark on its most important mission—to persuade the Supreme Court of the United States that all citizens should have the right to boycott and picket businesses that discriminated against classes of people in their hiring practices.

Thurman Givens, shoe salesman, on the job in Roy Logan's shoe store, 434 9th Street, N.W. Givens was hired in the non-custodial job as a result of NNA intervention. Photograph by Robert McNeill, courtesy, MSRC-HU.

The NNA had failed in its attempts to have the District Court and the Court of Appeals overturn two injunctions that prevented the Alliance from picketing Kaufman's Department Store and High's Ice Cream stores in 1934 and 1935. In April 1936, the Alliance received its third injunction, prohibiting picketing at a Sanitary Grocery Company store. This time the NNA was able to persuade the Supreme Court to hear its case, known as *New Negro Alliance v. Sanitary Grocery Company, Inc.* Members of the Alliance traveled to different cities to explain the cause and the case and gather support. The black press publicized the story. It was a heady time for the young African-American legal team set up to fight this battle. If the New Negro Alliance could win the case, then all "Jobs-for-Negroes" picketers would have the force of law behind them.[31]

While the NAACP doubted that the Alliance could win its case and offered little support, the black community of the District of Columbia rallied behind the organization. The NNA declared Sunday, December 17, 1937, New Negro Alliance Day. Pastors invited NNA representatives to their churches to discuss NNA programs and the legal case, and to raise funds. Capping New Negro Alliance Day was an evening church service with music and

speeches at the John Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church at 14th and Corcoran streets, N.W. John Aubrey Davis was the guest speaker with other presentations by Belford Lawson, Thurman L. Dodson, church pastor Reverend Stephen G. Spottswood, and John Zuker, the national representative of the Retail Clerks Association. The community turned out, donating a critical $500 toward the expenses of the Supreme Court case.[32]

The Supreme Court heard *New Negro Alliance v. Sanitary Grocery Company, Inc.* on March 5, 1938. Belford Lawson and Thurman Dodson presented the Alliance's arguments, researched and prepared by William Hastie, Thurgood P. Marshall, Edward P. Lovett, Theodore M. Berry, and James M. Nabrit, Jr. Attorneys for Sanitary Grocery were A. Coulter Wells and William E. Carry, Jr. As in the lower court cases, the New Negro Alliance argued that first, it had not used force or threats in its pickets; second, the injunction infringed on its members' rights of free speech; and third, its dispute with Sanitary Grocery Company fell within the provisions of the Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Act because it was working in behalf of a group of people with a valid employment dispute. Yet it was probably their fourth argument that ultimately persuaded the Supreme Court that the injunction was illegal. The NNA had to demonstrate to the Court that the group it represented had a cogent employment interest in the stores it boycotted, even though NNA members were not employed by those stores, and that this was not just a legal question but involved "complex socio-economic principles."[33]

After describing the severe economic and hiring injustices in the District and nation, the Alliance ended with a plea to let

Ralph Bunche, pictured here in 1948, led criticisms of NNA tactics, charging that the group's concentration on race-based solutions to black underemployment could lead to white retaliation. Courtesy, LC.

African Americans use their purchasing power to fight these unequal conditions. By using economic, demographic, and sociological data, NNA attorneys established that the Alliance had a bonafide labor dispute to pursue and that African Americans had a "presumptive employment right and interest" in the employment practices of stores in their community even though they were not employees.

In describing the economic plight of black Washington, including the disproportionate number of African Americans on relief, the brief charged that African-American white collar workers "suffered more proportionately from discriminatory practices than any other group" and cited census data, the Unemployment Relief Census, and an occupation census compiled by E. Franklin Frazier. It presented figures to support examples of hiring inequities in the federal government and the District police and fire departments. Charts showed a disproportionately high number of African Americans in the laborer and servant occupations. The Alliance concluded that "employment policies undoubtedly help to keep the masses of Negro workers in the lower occupational groups." NNA attorneys summed up with the plea that negotiations and picketing offered African Americans their "only defense against a discriminatory policy which jeopardizes his economic security."

In a six-two decision, the Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, decided that "those having a direct or indirect interest" in the employment of certain people should have the freedom to disseminate information and "peacefully persuade others" to take action against such injustices.[34]

The climax of a four-year battle, the Supreme Court decision gave African Americans an effective method for fighting discriminatory hiring practices. African Americans now had a weapon they could lawfully use nationwide to combat discrimination in the work place. With the Supreme Court decision, "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" groups organized and multiplied throughout the United States. A study of these campaigns showed unprecedented advances, yielding 75,000 new jobs for African Americans. Some groups, like the Greater New York Coordinating Committee led by Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., successfully picketed major corporations such as Metropolitan Life Insurance and Con Edison. Had the Alliance lost its case, many of these corporations would not have acquiesced to black demands. Moreover, the Alliance had set a valuable precedent for all workers.[35]

For the next three years, until 1941, the Alliance used its newly won right to secure more jobs for black Washingtonians. In the wake of the Supreme Court decision, the struggle eased; white employers preferred compromise to boycotts and picket lines. Stores on 7th Street that hired African-

American clerks in 1938–1939 included Brown's Corner, Leventhal's Department Store, Snappy Dress Shop, Oxenburg's Department Store, Logan's Shoe Store, Hahn's Shoe Store, and Woolworth's Five and Ten Cent Store. Along 14th Street were H. S. King's Five and Ten Cent Store, Wagner's Five and Ten Cent Store, Meenehan's Hardware, Three Score Pharmacy, and Table Supply Store. In August 1939, a five-day picket of the Federated Five and Ten Cent Store on 14th Street produced one new part-time and two new full-time clerks. Alliance member George Rycraw was arrested during the picket for obstructing the entrance to the store but was later acquitted. Old opponents such as Kaufman's Department Store and High's Ice Cream finally hired African-American clerks. "Alliance Gets Colored Crew at High's" crowed the NNA announcement when the High's at 14th and U streets hired an all-black manager and staff.[36]

However, the Alliance did not achieve uniform success. After 16 continuous months of picketing at the Peoples Drug Stores at 14th and U, and 7th and M streets, N.W., the Alliance finally admitted defeat. Its point made, leaders decided there were other projects that needed the Alliance's attention and funds. Although the boycott was deemed successful because few African Americans entered the targeted stores and sales dropped sharply, Peoples, with 40 stores in the area, was able to absorb the losses and maintain its discriminatory hiring and promotion policies as well as its segregated lunch counters.[37]

The NNA's last active campaign was against its old foe, Sanitary Grocery Company (which changed its name to Safeway after the Supreme Court case). The campaign lasted three months, from April to July 1941, and also failed to produce a fair employment policy. However, events on the local and national scene overshadowed this last campaign and contributed to the phasing out of active boycotts and the end of the New Negro Alliance. In April 1941 Eugene Davidson was elected assistant national director of the March on Washington led by A. Philip Randolph. Along with Thurman Dodson, who was appointed chairman of the local march committee, Davidson turned his full attention to coordinating the plan to persuade President Roosevelt to outlaw the national defense industry's discriminatory policies. On June 25, 1941, one week before the march, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, banning racial discrimination in industries receiving defense contracts and establishing a Fair Employment Practices Committee to investigate employment discrimination. Here was a victory the Alliance had fought for locally for almost eight years—the right to be trained and work without discrimination. With this order, the recovering economy of wartime, and a labor shortage, African Americans began to enter the work force in large numbers. The Alliance's local protests for white-collar jobs no longer seemed appropriate.[38]

In addition, since 1940 the Alliance's leadership had dwindled to only a handful as the organization failed to attract young members. Alliance founders were now eight years older, and many had gravitated into what Howard Naylor Fitzhugh called "pretty standard positions." For example, Eugene Davidson was appointed field representative for the Office of Emergency Management in September 1941 and then joined the Fair Employment Practices Committee. John Aubrey Davis was named assistant director of the New York State Commission Against Discrimination in Employment in 1942, and in 1943 returned to Washington to direct the Division of Review and Analysis for the Fair Employment Practices Committee. Most stores in African-American neighborhoods cooperated with Alliance demands. Labor unions, especially the CIO, were willing to unionize African Americans, and the revived NAACP agreed to address the issues

of employment discrimination. Davidson tried to keep the Alliance going, but lack of members, Davidson's numerous commitments, and the changing work environment in Roosevelt's Washington contributed to the end of the New Negro Alliance.[39]

Although former member Rolandus H. Cooper revived the NNA in 1948 after the war ended and recession had set in, it was short-lived. By 1950 the local Branch of the NAACP had strong leaders and was once again leading the fight for civil rights for black Washingtonians. In 1952 the last administrator of the New Negro Alliance, Eugene Davidson, was elected president of the local NAACP, ensuring that NNA goals would not be forgotten.[40]

Like the protest movements of the 1960s, the New Negro Alliance started in the streets. It was a youth movement, "engineered by young men and old men with young ideas" who believed progress had not come fast enough for their race, especially in the crucial field of economic equality. Although it garnered much support from the African-American community, its leadership was made up of a small group of well-educated, middle-class men and women. The Alliance had remarkable success in fulfilling its primary goal: jobs for local African Americans in most black neighborhood stores. By 1940 almost every store in the Upper Seventh Street and Fourteenth and U streets shopping areas employed African Americans, and the Alliance had secured an estimated 5,106 jobs.[41]

Yet critics such as Bunche and Davis were correct about the ultimate limitations of the NNA's struggle. First, the Alliance never tried to ensure equal wages for the African Americans for whom they had campaigned. Second, the efforts never tackled the larger question of unemployment. The NNA's goals were confined to stores in the African-American community, but most African Americans worked outside their neighborhoods. Although white-owned neighborhood stores did retain their white employees and added black staff members, most stores never hired more than a few African Americans. By focusing its attention on neighborhood stores, most of which only used a handful of employees, the Alliance never really improved conditions for most of the city's black population. But NNA members were reluctant to test their tactics beyond the ghetto, choosing to get employment integration firmly established in their own neighborhoods rather than tackling the problem beyond the immediate reach of the black dollar.

By 1941, when the Alliance dissolved, African Americans still occupied the lowest rung of the socio-economic ladder, and when the war was over they continued to be excluded from all but the lowest-paying custodial and clerical jobs in the District and nation. Employment discrimination was still the rule.[42]

Overall the New Negro Alliance's tangible achievements may have been modest when compared to the larger problems facing African Americans in the 1930s, but the NNA taught one very meaningful lesson—the power of the boycott and nonviolent protest in the fight for positive change. It left black Washingtonians with a heightened race consciousness, raising expectations and bolstering the determination to fight harder for civil rights. Even critic Ralph Bunche remarked at the end of the 1930s, "Never before have Negroes had so much experience with picket lines, and it may be a lesson that will sink in."[43]

The New Negro Alliance's Supreme Court triumph was a victory not only for African Americans in Washington, but for all labor, black and white. Establishing the legal right to picket to protest unfair employment opportunities was considered by many within the Alliance to be the highlight of their group's efforts. Attorneys Hastie and Lawson set precedents for future civil rights cases, including *Brown v. the Board of Education*, by citing economic,

New Negro Alliance Success Stories*

By the time it disbanded in 1941, the New Negro Alliance significantly changed the employment prospects for Washington's black community. Most new opportunities for black workers resulted from written requests and site visits made by NNA members. Occasionally the group resorted to picketing and boycotts.

In July 1938, after the Supreme Court decision in favor of the NNA's right to picket, the group completed a survey of businesses on 7th and 14th streets, N.W., and targeted stores not already employing African Americans in non-custodial jobs for their special attention. Nearly all stores capitulated quickly, either as a result of NNA efforts or after watching their neighbors comply.

Following is a sample of NNA success stories. Those stores marked with an [I], were claimed as "indirect" victories by the NNA leadership even though the NNA didn't actually approach the stores. All were located in Northwest, unless otherwise noted.

1933

Hamburger Grill, 12th and U sts.
Evening Star, city-wide
Two A&P stores, T St. and 11th St.
Temple Luncheonette, 10th and U sts.
Hollywood Shoe Store, 7th St. and Florida Ave.

1934

Brown's Corner, 7th St.
Brown's Haberdashers, 7th and T sts.
Capital Five and Ten Store, 7th St.
American Store, S.E.

1935

Hechinger, 15th and H sts.
Elite Laundry, 9th and U sts.
PJ Nee Furniture Co.

1936

Northwest Amusement Company, U St.

1937

Matthew's Drug Store, South Capitol St., S.W.
Martin's Five and Ten Cent Store, 14th St.

Courtesy, MSRC-HU.

1938

National Five and Ten Cent Store, 18th and U sts.
Harry Kaufman's Department Store, 7th St.
Brown's Corner, 7th St.
Leventhal Department Store, 7th St.

1939

Simm's Department Store, 7th and Q sts.
Bonnett's Shoe Store, 7th St.
Jack's Hardware Store, 7th St.
Gabby's Shoe Store, 7th St.
Logan's Shoe Store, 7th and M sts.
Golden Shoe Store, 7th St.
Tabb's Shoe Store, 7th St.
Joe Oxenburg's Department Store, 7th St.
Wellworth's Five and Ten Store, 7th St.
Snappy's Dress Shop, 7th St.
Washington Meat Market, 7th St.
Salus Style Shop, 7th St.
Lil's Dress Shop, 7th St.
Erhlick's Pharmacy, 7th St. [I]
Old Original Market, 7th St. [I]
Capital Shoe Store, 7th St. [I]
Max Alperstein Store, 7th St. [I]
Blumenthal's Store, 7th St. [I]
Capital Five and Ten Cent Store, 7th St. [I]
Quick Photo Shop, 7th St. [I]
Pawnbroker Shop, 7th St. [I]
O Street Market [I]
Earl's Shoe Store, 7th St. [I]
Variety Shop, 7th St. [I]
Wagner's Five and Ten Cent Store 14th and S sts.
Meenenhan's Hardware Store, 14th St.
Three Score Pharmacy, 14th St.
Table Supply Co., 14th St.
Federated Five and Ten Cent Store, 14th St.
Washington Laundry Stores, city-wide

1940

Heurich Brewing Co. Trucks, 26th and D sts.

Sources: New Negro Opinion, *1934–36;* Washington Tribune, *1933–39; Rycraw Administration file, Eugene Davidson Papers, MSRC, HU; Reports of the NNA Case Committee, 1938–39, Davidson Papers, MSRC, HU;* NNA Annual Report, *1939.*

Feldman's Drug Store on 17th Street, N.W., bowed to NNA pressure and hired Levester Taylor as a clerk. Photograph by Robert McNeill, courtesy, MSRC-HU.

demographic, and sociological data to argue that African Americans had both a bonafide dispute and the right to fight to correct discrimination. *New Negro Alliance v. Sanitary Grocery Company, Inc.* was truly a landmark case.[44]

The Alliance's tactics would be used again by the generation that would tackle discrimination in the 1960s. Boycotts, picketing, and court action would be central to the 1960s struggles to obtain economic, civil, and social changes for African Americans. While the civil rights movement introduced a new strategy of intentionally violating existing laws, it owed much to the New Negro Alliance of Washington's role in awakening the African-American community. Its struggles and victories served as a vital bridge to the modern civil rights movement.

Michele F. Pacifico is an archivist at the National Archives assigned to the Archives II project. She co-authored with James G. Bradsher "History of Archives Administration," in Managing Archives and Archival Institutions *(Mansill Publishing, 1988).*

Glazier, "No Negro Need Apply: A Brief Glance at the Employment Situation in the District of Columbia as Related to Colored Citizens," pamphlet, n.d., Printed Material, Box C-435, NAACP Paper, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

4. Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 54–56; Leslie H. Fishel, Jr., "The Negro in the New Deal Era," *The Negro in Depression and War* ed. Bernard Sternsher (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), 10; John P. Davis, "A Black Inventory of the New Deal," *The Crisis* 42 (May 1935): 142; T. Arnold Hill, "Labor Briefs from the South," *Opportunity* 11 (Feb. 1933); 55; *Washington Tribune*, Dec. 7, 14, 1933, 1, July 13, 1933, 6; Glazier, "No Negro Need Apply," 7; Constance McLaughlin Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 223–32.
5. The applicable portions of the Norris-LaGuardia Act that the Alliance argued provided them with the legal right to use the picket to protest unfair employment practices are: Section 4: "No Court of the United States shall have jurisdiction to issue any restraining order or temporary or permanent injunction in any case involving or growing out of any labor dispute to prohibit any person or persons participating or interested in such a dispute from doing, whether singly or in concert, any of the following acts: . . . E. Giving publicity to the existence of, or the facts involved in, any labor dispute, whether by advertising, speaking, patrolling, or by any other method not involving fraud or violence. F. Assembling peaceably to act or to organize to act in promotion of their interests in a labor dispute." Section 13(c) read: "any controversy concerning terms or conditions of employment, or concerning the association or representation of persons in negotiating, fixing, maintaining, changing, or seeking to arrange terms or conditions of employment, regardless of whether or not the disputants stand in the proximate relation of employer and employee." Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Act, Mar. 23, 1932, 47 STAT 73; August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Along the Color Line: Explorations in the Black Experience* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 315.
6. Meier and Rudwick, *Along the Color Line*, 315–16; On six of the largest "Jobs for Negroes" campaigns, see Gary Jerome Hunter, "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work: Black Urban Boycott Movements During the Depression, 1929–1941," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1977.
7. While many similar organizations left no records, the NNA left some documents; see Pacifico, "A History."
8. Haynes B. Johnson, *Dusk at the Mountain: The Negro, the Nation, and the Capital—A Report on Problems and Progress* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), 7; Constance McLaughlin Green, *Washington: A His-*

"Don't Buy Where You Can't Work"

Michele Pacifico, pp. 66–88

1. This essay is adapted from Michele F. Pacifico, "A History of the New Negro Alliance of Washington, D.C., 1933–1941," M.A. thesis, George Washington University, 1983.
2. John Aubrey Davis, interview with author, New Rochelle, N.Y., Mar. 22, 1982; *Washington Tribune*, Aug. 30, 1933.
3. Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 34, 37; Harlan E.

Pacifico, continued

tory of the Capital, 1800–1950 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), vol. 2.

9. Johnson, *Dusk at the Mountain*, 10; "The Secret City: An Impression of Colored Washington," *The Crisis* 39 (June 1932): 185–87.
10. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Negroes in the United States, 1920–1932* (Washington: GPO, 1935), 500; "Men Ten Years Old and Over in Selected Occupations, by Color, Nativity, and Age for the District of Columbia," 1930, William H. Hastie Papers, Manuscript Division, Harvard Law School Library; Glazier, "No Negro Need Apply," 2; Bernard Braxton, "The Negro in the History of Washington," *New Negro Alliance Yearbook* (Washington: New Negro Alliance, 1939), 6.
11. "The Secret City: An Impression," 185; Census Bureau, *Negroes in the United States*, 292; "Men Ten Years Old and Over," 3; Davis interview, March 22, 1982; W. Montague Cobb, speech delivered at " 'In the Shadow of the Capital,' a Colloquium—An Experiment in Collective Memory," Folger Library, Washington, Apr. 12, 1981; Lewis Newton Walker, Jr., "The Struggles and Attempts to Establish Branch Autonomy and Hegemony: A History of the District of Columbia Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1912–1942," Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1979, 221.
12. Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1981; John Aubrey Davis, "We Win the Right to Fight for Jobs," *Opportunity* 16 (Aug. 1938): 234; *New Negro Opinion*, Nov. 10, 17, 1934.
13. Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1982; Walker, "The Struggles," 171; Davis, "We Win," 231; Davis's short story, "Virginia Idyll," was published in *Opportunity* 9 (Apr. 1931): 109.
14. Davis, "We Win," 234; *New Negro Opinion*, Dec. 1, 1934; Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1982.
15. Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1982; B. Rhoden Coward, "The History of the Alliance," *NNA Yearbook*, 15; Davis, "We Win," 231; *New Negro Opinion*, Oct. 13, 1934.
16. Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1982; Davis telephone interview with author, Sept. 13, 1982.
17. Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1982; Howard Naylor Fitzhugh, interview with author, Purchase, N.Y., Mar. 22, 1982; see, in general, *New Negro Opinion* and *Tribune*, 1933–34.
18. *New Negro Opinion* and *Tribune*, in general, 1933–1934; *NNA Yearbook*.
19. Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1982.
20. *New Negro Opinion*, Feb. 3, 24, 1934.
21. Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1982; *New Negro Opinion*, Jan. 8, Mar. 31, Oct. 13, 1934; Hastie Papers, Harvard Law School Library.
22. Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1982; *Tribune* Sept. 14, 1933; New Negro Alliance to John Harford, Sept. 14, 1933, Box 106, Hastie Papers, Harvard Law School Library; *Tribune*, Sept. 28, Oct. 5, Dec. 1933, Oct. 19, 1934; *New Negro Opinion*, Jan. 6, 1934.
23. For documentation on the court cases, see Eugene Davidson Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University Library, and Hastie Papers, Harvard Law School Library. *The New Negro Alliance, A Corporation et al. v. Harry Kaufman, Inc. A Corporation*, Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia (1934), No. 6187; *L.W. High (High's Ice Cream, Inc.) v. The New Negro Alliance, et al.*, Supreme Court of the District of Columbia (1934), Equity No. 57,545.
24. Pastors of the Metropolitan Baptist Church, Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, Third Baptist Church, Vermont Avenue Baptist Church, People's Congregational Church, Union Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church, and others were encouraged by the NNA's successes and urged community participation. Fitzhugh interview, Mar. 22, 1982; Fitzhugh interview with Robert N. Martin, Aug. 16, 1968, 49–51, Manuscript Collection, MSRC, Howard University. For letters from supporters see Davidson Papers, MSRC, and *NNA Yearbook* (1939). See also *New Negro Opinion*, 1934–36 and *Tribune* 1934–38.
25. *Tribune*, Dec. 12, 1933; Assistant Secretary Norma Wilkens to Virginia McGuire, Nov. 28, 1934, and "Personnel of the Executive Committee," D.C. files-G38, NAACP Papers, LC; Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1982. For more on the Branch NAACP's problems in the 1930s, see Walker, "The Struggles," chap. 3.
26. Fitzhugh interview with Martin, Aug. 16, 1968, 61; *New Negro Opinion*, Oct. 20, 1934; *Tribune*, Nov. 30, 1933, Dec. 3, 1936; *Afro American*, Oct. 31, Nov. 21, Dec. 5, 1936.
27. Abram L. Harris, *The Negro as Capitalist: A Study of Banking and Business among American Negroes* (College Park, MD: McGrath Publishing, 1936), 181; *New Negro Opinion*, Mar. 19, 1934; Ralph Bunche, *The Programs, Ideologies, Tactics and Achievement of Negro Betterment and Interracial Organizations* 4 vols. (New York: Carnegie-Myrdal Research Imprints, 1940), vol. 2, 380–92; Ralph Bunche, "The Programs of Organizations Devoted to the Improvement of the Status of the American Negro," *Journal of Negro Education* 8 (July 1939): 543; *New Negro Opinion*, Mar. 23, 1935; Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 253–60. See also, Pacifico, "A History," 113–40.
28. Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1982; Fitzhugh interview with Martin, Aug. 16, 1968, 54.
29. Davis, "We Win," 235–36; *New Negro Opinion*, Aug. 18, Oct. 6, 1934; *Afro American*, Dec. 5, 1936; *Tribune*, Feb. 6, 1937; William H. Hastie to *The Crisis*, Apr. 5, 1934, Box 106, Hastie Papers, Harvard Law School Library; *NNA Yearbook*, 23; William Jones, "A History and Appraisal of the

Economic Consequences of Negro Trade Boycotts," M.A. thesis, Atlanta University, 1940, 36.

30. Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1982; Davis, "We Win," 235–37; Fitzhugh interview with Martin, Aug. 16, 1968, 17, 55; *NNA Yearbook*, 22; *Tribune*, July 21, 1939.
31. Wil Haygood, *King of the Cats: The Life and Times of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 75–77; Hunter, "Don't Buy," 119–20; *New Negro Opinion*, 1935–36.
32. NAACP Board of Directors Minutes, Sept. 13, 1937, Box A-3, NAACP Papers, LC; Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1982; New Negro Alliance Day Circular, Dec. 1937, Davidson Papers, MSRC, HU.
33. *New Negro Alliance, A Corporation, et al. v. Sanitary Grocery Company, Inc., A Corporation*, 303 US 552 (1938), "A Brief for the Petitioners" in Supreme Court, *Records and Briefs* (Washington: GPO, 1938), 29.
34. *NNA v. Sanitary Grocery*, 303 US 552 (1938), "Brief for Petitioners," 35–41, and "Decision of Supreme Court," 8.
35. Hunter, "Don't Buy," 284; Haygood, *King of the Cats*, 76–78; Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Or Does It Explode: Black Harlem in the Great Depression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 133–36.
36. *NNA Yearbook*, 25; Circular, June 1939, Reports of the Case Committee, June 14, July 13, 27, Aug. 24, Dec. 14, 1939, Davidson Papers, MSRC, HU. The reports list stores that hired or refused to hire African Americans, and detail the handling and resolution of each case.
37. Case Committee Reports for 1939 and NNA Annual Report, 1939, Davidson Papers, MSRC, HU; Jones, "A History and Appraisal," 36.
38. Press Release, ca. July 1941, Davidson Papers, MSRC, HU; *Chicago Defender*, May 17, 1941; *Tribune*, May 31, 1941; clipping, Eugene Davidson, "The Birth of Executive Order 8802," Davidson Papers, MSRC, HU; Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 322; Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1982; Fitzhugh interview, Mar. 22, 1982; Walker, "The Struggles," 175.
39. Davis interview, Mar. 22, 1982; Fitzhugh interview, Mar. 22, 1982.
40. Rolandus Cooper to Charles Hill [ca. Apr. 1948], Cooper to Rev. Stephen G. Spottswood, June 12, 1948, Cooper to Executive Secretary, NAACP, Nov. 19, 1948, NAACP District Branch Papers, Box 73–50, MSRC, HU.
41. *New Negro Opinion*, Nov. 10, 1934; Case Committee Reports and 1939 Annual Report, Davidson Papers, MSRC, HU; *NNA Yearbook*, 25; Meier and Rudwick, *Along the Color Line*, 330. Hunter does not explain how he calculated this figure (Hunter, "Don't Buy," 294), but apparently he used both those jobs obtained strictly through boycotts and negotiations and those claimed as an indirect by-product of the campaigns. Of course, it is impossible to calculate precisely the number of jobs for which the Alliance was responsible.
42. Meier and Rudwick, *Along the Color Line*, 330–31; Robert H. Brisbane, *The Black Vanguard: Origins of the Negro Social Revolution, 1900–1960* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1970), 143; Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 58; Kenesaw M. Landis, *Segregation in Washington: A Report of the National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital* (Chicago: National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital, 1948), 63.
43. Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 263.
44. Fitzhugh interview with Martin, Aug. 16, 1965; Fitzhugh interview, Mar. 22, 1982. Not only had the Alliance won the right to picket for its own race, but it created a precedent on behalf of the larger laboring community. For examples of the use of the *New Negro Alliance v. Sanitary Grocery Company* decision, see Pacifico, "A History," 221.