Margaret Taylor Goss Burroughs: Educator, Artist, Author, Founder, and Civic Leader

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

MARGARET TAYLOR GOSS BURROUGHS: EDUCATOR, ARTIST, AUTHOR, FOUNDER, AND CIVIC LEADER

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY
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CHAPTER I
THE EARLY YEARS

The Setting

When Margaret Taylor was born Woodrow Wilson was at the helm of leadership in the United States as chief executive officer. Woodrow Wilson was the nation's twenty-eighth president serving from 1913-1923. When Wilson was first initiated into the political arena as the governor of New Jersey in 1910, the majority of the American populace lived and worked on farms. By 1917, when Margaret Taylor was born, he had been re-elected as President and in April of the same year he had asked Congress for a declaration of war bringing the nation into World War I.

By this time fewer people were making their living from the land. Industry had made its debut on the continent. By 1920, at the end of his term, agriculture was being replaced with commercial entrepreneurship and industry. Life was rapidly changing for the American people. In 1910, for example, there were approximately 500,000 motorists. One decade later the roadways were being traversed by more than eight million drivers. Skyscrapers silhouetted the skies the urban areas and electricity was helping to make the
lives of Americans more comfortable.¹ When Margaret was only one year old the phonograph record made its debut. Motion pictures had gained popularity along with jazz music. The American culture was taking on a new complexion. World War I had a profound effect on social life in America. There were numerous and evident changes, prohibition of liquor, and women were enfranchised through the fourteenth amendment. There was a great migration of blacks from the South to the North.

In order to get the Federal Reserve Act passed, President Wilson had to "concede special credit statues for notes secured by crops or farm land."² At the time, usuary interest rates were being assessed farmers on mortgages. Wilson compromised with Congress in mid October, 1919, and conceded there could be special private land banks from which farmers could negotiate a loan at less exorbitant rates. The farmers advocated a plan for government land banks but Wilson staunchly opposed the proposal. "I have a very deep conviction that it is unwise and unjustifiable to extend the credit of the Government to a single class of the community³". This posture affected the Taylor family along


²Ibid., 433.

³Ibid., 433.
with friends and neighbors. The Taylors were unable to purchase additional properties, which might have expanded the family's meager land holdings. Friends who worked the land as sharecroppers lost hope of becoming land owners.

Wilson's ideology and policy of the New Freedom was well known in the black communities.

No where perhaps were the limits of the New Freedom more apparent than in the administration's attitude toward negroes. Wilson, a number of members of the cabinet, and a majority of Democratic leaders in Congress were southerners, at least in origin. Not long after taking office, the Secretary of the Treasury and the Postmaster General began systematically placing negroes in separate offices and fitting out separate lunchrooms and rest rooms for them. Little or no restraint was placed on officials outside the District of Columbia who pursued such a policy more brazenly. The Collector of International Revenue in Atlanta declared 'There are not government positions for negroes in the South. A negro's place was in the cornfields.'

When protest arose from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, northern reformers and newspaper editors, Wilson responded "I do approve of the segregation that is being attempted . . . . I think it is distinctly to the advantage of the colored people themselves."

Note this was the same person who opposed any policy that favored a special group. This, then, was the atmosphere of the nation into which Margaret Taylor was born. This was the legacy she was to inherit and throughout her life respond to through very diverse and poignant channels.

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4 Ibid., 434.

5 Ibid., 434.
Early Years in St. Rose

On 1 November 1917, Christopher Alexander Taylor and Octovia Pierre Taylor became parents to a baby daughter whom they named Margaret Victoria (Victoria after her maternal grandmother and Margaret after her father's oldest sister). The Taylors belonged to the working class like the preponderance of the populace in this small obscure village of St. Rose in the parish of St. Charles. Their house was something of an architectural forerunner of the modern duplex. It was built of clapboard and each unit consisted of two rooms. The two units shared a gallery or porch and had been built by the local men themselves. Several of the more prominent members of the community lived in larger white houses on the main street, Big Street. They were not built by the local farmers but by contractors and these houses were adorned with shuttered windows.

St. Rose is an obscure village about eighteen miles outside of New Orleans but could easily be missed because it is not designated on the map of the area. Before it became the village of St. Rose, the area had been a vast plantation for sugar cane. Margaret's father's ancestors, the Taylors, had been slaves on these plantations. After the Emancipation, it had been divided into small parcels. These were then sold to the former slaves from the area. In 1919

"Margaret Burroughs "Retrospect," TMs, 1965, Personal files, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1."
a number of the tenants pooled their resources and bought the parcel of land that became known as St. Rose. The community was comprised entirely of people of color with the exception of white people who owned the General Store on the main street. Some of the land was owned by the families who worked the land and some was held in joint tenancy where the landowner would reap part of the profits from the land and the sharecroppers would earn a percentage of the profits. There was another group who neither owned or rented the land, rather they worked entirely for the landowner. Most of the members in this group always seemed to be in debt to the owners and worked just to survive from one harvest to another.

Although some of the men worked at the oil wells, Mr. Taylor, like a majority of his neighbors, derived his living from the Louisiana soil. Alexander Taylor's own father had been an adventurous and unusually enterprising agriculturist himself. Margaret's sister, Marion, remembers there were fig trees, orange trees, and grapefruit trees growing in their front yard. She recalled grandfather Taylor once experimented with the notion that he could develop a unique strain of large oranges by grafting them with grapefruits. Mrs. Marion Hummons recalls their grandfather took all of this very seriously and when he had developed a specimen he carefully protected it with a barbed wire fence. He did

7Ibid., 4.
manage to extract a prototype from his numerous experiments but the products were not manifestations of his original intent. What he did develop was an extremely sour citrus fruit, one that was quite inedible.\(^8\) When Margaret's father was not immersed in agriculturally related enterprises, he worked as a measurer on the Mississippi River.

Marion recalls the numerous foreigners her father would bring home to share in their prized evening meal. The girls were intrigued by the diverse dialects they heard from these visitors and were further intrigued by the knowledge that their father seemed to be able to decipher the strange tongues and communicate with them.\(^9\) Mr. Taylor himself asserted that his own family lineage included a Portuguese background and he, himself, was part Native American, his friends often calling him Tonto or Buckup. It was never really clear where the Portuguese entered the genealogy but his physical appearance supported the claim that he was part Cherokee, being a tall, beautifully browned skinned man with long straight hair.\(^10\)

Margaret remembers she and her sisters Dorothy and Marion would entertain themselves by sitting on the docks

\(^8\)Marion Hummons, "Response to Quest," TD, Personal files of Marion Hummons, Chicago, 2.

\(^9\)Ibid., 2.

\(^10\)Dr. Margaret Burroughs of Chicago, interview by author, Chicago, 3 November 1992, Chicago, tape recording, Burroughs' Home Chicago.
and dangling their feet into the waters of the powerful Mississippi River. The river could invoke a sense of solace as well as of doom and impending desparation.

There were times when the men of St. Rose would get together and try to fortify the areas against the impending possibility of the Mississippi River rising, overflowing and flooding the village. They would dig trenches to drain the Mississippi River back into the swamps. The adults deemed this as fortuitous contingency for teaching the young children to swim. The currents in the trenches moved with great velocity and were often infested with snakes. The adults believed that if the children felt they were in imminent danger and expected a hazardous encounter when they were thrown into these threatening waters, they would draw on the instinct of survival and they would swim to safety. As the children awaited the ominous throw, they had visions of being carried by the turbulent waters into the swamps with the alligators and water moccasins if they weren’t able to swim away to safety and if they weren’t rescued.

Digging the trenches didn’t always prevent the river from overflowing its banks and flooding St. Rose. At the times of severe storms and subsequent flooding, the men would again join forces and work the levee in desperate attempts to thwart the devastation the flood waters could bring. The big red church became the gathering place for all the community who were not involved with working on the
levee. Margaret recollected she and her sisters would cling frantically to their mother seeking comfort and assurance that all would be well.

The women prayed fervently that the massive old oak tree would not succumb to the force of gravity crushing the modest structure. The men worked feverishly while the women contributed by praying loudly and enthusiastically that the fickle Mississippi River would become tamed.

This community was the kind where everyone pitched in to help each other. People worked together to accomplish the cultivating of the soil, the hoeing, plowing and harvesting. People would often gather in one person's barn, partitioning the work to be done; working, keeping each other motivated and on task, conversing, laughing, singing and interacting.

Sometimes the activity would be interrupted by the welcomed entertainment of "Hustler," an adult cousin who played the banjo. The group would take a break from their labors joining in the singing, dancing and eating. Hustler would later incorporate his talents by forming a band and traveling throughout the country entertaining a myriad of fans. The Taylor girls were a part of a very large family and boasted of numerous aunts, uncles, seventeen on her father's side and seven on her mother's side. From these marriages sprang numerous cousins.

Hog slaughtering was another occasion which brought about community involvement. When one of the members decided it was time to butcher a hog, it became exciting news and everyone would meet at the person's home, including the young ones. The animal was confined in a wooden pen where he was killed by cutting the jugular vein in his throat. This was the most difficult part for the participants awaiting the carcass for processing. After it had been skinned and quartered the intestines were removed, cleaned, and retained as casing for the blood sausage. They used every part of the animal. This was a long established custom in the south. The head was even used in making hog's head cheese. The skin was cut and fried to make crackling or placed in dough, baked, creating "cracklin bread." These food items are still a part of southern cuisine.

The men also hunted during the established hunting season. Everything was fair game with the exception of the large animals like deer. This did not, however, preclude the men bagging a deer if they had the opportunity to do so. If they brought home game other than raccoons, rabbits, opossums or wild fowl the subsequent preparation and feasting was conducted surreptitiously, not wanting to draw attention to the illegal catch. Margaret recalls a celebration once when her uncle Ike was the rifleman responsible for providing some variance to the usual fare.

Margaret recalled fondly the times when she charmed her
father into taking her with him into the sweet potato fields where he was working. When she would get really hungry she would extract one of these specimens from the soil and eat it. When she became thirsty her father would give her a drink. She remarked "the sweetest, coolest water she ever drank was out of papa's sweaty felt hat."\textsuperscript{12}

When she didn't go into the fields with her father she and her sisters would create entertainment for themselves by creating a game based on locating a spot on the ground where they would await their mother's return from her domestic position in Shreveport. Other women in the area also found employment in nearby Kenner, also as domestics in the homes of well-to-do caucasians.

The girls also kept themselves busy playing house. Instead of playing at dinner or tea parties using cookies and milk, they pretended with small pieces of fried pork, very indicative of the culture of the area. They also remember the times when the fire eater came to St. Rose's downtown area. He often entertained the curious spectators by walking barefoot over hot coals. Margaret, Dorothy and Marion discovered the secret behind his intriguing ability to eat fire and they in turn performed the same stunts in front of visiting spectators much later at the Worlds Fair in Chicago.

\textsuperscript{12}Margaret Burroughs, "Quest," TD, Personal files, Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1.
It seemed everyone went to the Red Church to worship except the Taylors and a few others who were Roman Catholics. The Red Church, the Baptist Church was also located on the main street, Big Street, commensurate with so many other projects in the village the men had pooled their resources and had collectively erected the church. As usual, when the adults were busy with community affairs the children made their presence known. They had a glorious time playing through and around the foundation. They performed all kinds of acrobatics to entertain and impress one another. The men contributed to the fun and fed the creative imaginations of Margaret, Marion, Dorothy and all of the other children with the scraps of wood and shingles which were donated to their cause. They built miniature houses, churches and boats. When the structure was completed it was decided "we're painting it red," said Uncle Ike, "red stand up better than any other color." So that is how the church of God came to be known as the Red Church.13

Attending services was quite the weekly social event. Everyone shed their work clothing and donned their Sunday attire. Just as with so many other collective activities the entire congregation formed the choir and sang in unison. They opted not to select a special group to represent the congregation as their choir. Singing in unison supported

their sense of comradeship.

The sermons were always invigorating, entertaining, exhilarating, and exuded elements of spontaneity. This was in direct juxtaposition to the ritualistic religious mass they participated in the Catholic church. The congregation in the Catholic church was predominantly white, however, the Taylors and a small number of other blacks who were Catholic, were relegated to sitting only in the last three pews of the chapel because of their race. Margaret and her sisters never understood why God would be so concerned about where they sat. They traveled ten miles by buggy, wagon, or clapboard budgies very similar to those seen on television westerns today.\(^{14}\)

The girls were intrigued by the sprightly vivaciousness their neighbors demonstrated in their Baptist services. They sat perched on the rails of the fence outside of the Red Church and listened, laughing, clasping and singing along with their friends and neighbors.\(^{15}\) Vicariously they participated in two religious services each Sunday. In both instances they were outsiders. This, however, didn’t diminish the zealous and impassioned manner which they joined in singing such well known songs as, "When the Saints Go Marching In," "Nearer My God to Thee" and the well known

\(^{14}\)Marion Hummons, "Response Notes to Biography," TD, Personal files, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Chicago 1,.

\(^{15}\)Burroughs, "Retrospect," 9-10.
Baptisms at the church were somewhat frightening for the children. The Catholic ceremony included pouring of Holy Water; however, the Baptists practiced immersion. The youth were reminded of their swimming lessons. Marriages, however, were events that were eagerly awaited. Margaret remembered the wedding of her Aunt Margaret's daughter and because everything was so festive and everyone seemed to be having such a wonderful time she recalls being totally perplexed that her aunt cried and cried. Because she was so young while living in St. Rose, the Taylor girls reflected on the idea that many of the things adults did were enigmatic.

One such instance was the fabled stories they repeated about Aunt Fannie. Aunt Fannie was an elderly lady who lived in Ama, a small town across the river, the region her relatives, the Pierres, originated from. The adults fabricated elaborate stories about the evil Aunt Fannie who would help parents disseminate discipline when children insisted on misbehaving. If they consistently disobeyed their parents the children were informed Aunt Fannie would skillfully cut out their tongues and hide them in her apron pockets. Whenever Aunt Fannie came for a visit the children couldn't be found. They all ran and hid.

Although the community was very fervent and loyal in
its attendance in Christian religious ceremonies, the inhabitants of St. Rose and the surrounding areas saw no contradiction, in accepting the tenants associated with superstitions and voodoo. The dictionary describes voodoo as a "polytheistic religion practiced chiefly by West Indian Negroes, deriving principally from African cult worship and containing elements borrowed from the Catholic religion."¹⁷ The elderly citizens did not hesitate to tell tales related to spells and endless ghost stories. Some of the stories were so vivid the children had nightmares punctuated by screams that would awakened members of the household.

We often saw ghosts walking at night in the moonlight. My sister said she really saw one once for she was born with a veil over her face. There was the voodoo packets which were found in barrels and under door stoops which put spells on some people and took them off of other people. There were the stories that the old folks told which made us shudder when we heard them and even entered into our dreams making us wake up in the middle of the night with screams on our lips and torture on our faces.¹⁸

Margaret recollects the graveyard in St. Rose as being a place they avoided at great lengths. They only went there during daylight hours on the occasion of a burial. In one instance, however, the girls were leaving the home of their uncle Ike, and because the path in front of his home lay near the graveyard, they couldn’t avoid passing it. With visions of the numerous stories they had heard, the girls


¹⁸Ibid., 3.
huddled together seeking support from one another trying very hard not to look directly in the direction of the graves. Still, they all agreed they heard footsteps behind them although they confirmed they were the only people walking along the path at the time. This, of course, was impetus enough to transform slow careful steps into a full sprint as they scampered to safety. Margaret recalls when she turned to determine if they were still being pursued, she saw the ghost of Mr. Polite who met his demise a full year prior to this incident. The galloping accompanied by screams continued until they reached the safety of home.

When we told our experience to our parents, my sisters said they had not seen anyone, but to this day, I swear on a stack of bibles, that I saw Mr. Polite. My father brushed it off as imagination. Mr. Polite had been dead for a year. They had told me that people who were born with a veil over their eyes could see ghosts and spirits. I was born with the veil. So had papa. He could see spirits too."^{19}

Mr. Taylor recounted instances of encounters with a ghost who visited him on the levee where he worked as a cook for the work gang. Sometimes when he would leave the shanty unattended to inform the men the meal was prepared, he returned to find the tops had all been removed from the various pots and skillets. After this same incident had been repeated several times, and Mr. Taylor's research confirmed this was not a prank being initiated by someone in or around the work site, he decided this was an indication

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^{19}Burroughs, "Retrospect," 12.
that it was time to find new employment.

Childhood remembrances of the days in St. Rose embrace congenial memories of the trips the Taylors would make to Ama. Ama was a small town across the river. Margaret's maternal-grandmother, lived there along with other Pierres so they visited frequently, something the girls looked forward to.\textsuperscript{20}

Margaret's grandmother had an interesting story of her ancestry which the elders were fond of sharing. The story was told that Margaret's great grandmother was owned as a slave by a French plantation owner. He was not a very fair man and he worked his only slave "like a mule."\textsuperscript{21} She was impregnated by the slave owner and one day she became so distressed with her life's circumstances she decided death was preferable to her life. She resolved to end her life and that of her unborn child by drowning herself. Ironically, the day she selected for the fateful event was the same day emancipation was proclaimed. Slaves from neighboring plantations had come by to share in this fantastic news and fortunately thwarted her plan. The child she was pregnant with was Margaret's grandmother. This timely interaction between the slaves was a catalyst affecting the subsequent lineage of Margaret's mother, Octavia, and consequently the birth of Margaret Victoria

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 7.

\textsuperscript{21} Hummons, "Response to Quest," 2.
herself.

The plantation owner spoke French and Margaret's great grandmother also spoke French fluently. Margaret's grandmother's linguistic skills were influenced by other Creoles in the region and subsequently she spoke a broken French. Octovia Taylor spoke an even more diluted version of the original French. Margaret and her sisters found the language somewhat difficult to understand. The first few times they heard their grandmother's strange sounding expressions it would send them into fits of laughter. One day the grandmother seemed very excited about something she was trying to communicate to the girls and the vocables sounded even more humorous than usual. A great deal of activity and excitement ensued and when everything had settled down the girls regretfully determined their grandmother was frenzied and flustered because a fire had ignited in the house and she was struggling to ask them to go for help. After the crisis, the girls each got quite a spanking and thereafter were more attentive in listening, analyzing, and interpreting their grandmother's dialect. Tragedy had been averted, however, grandmother wanted to impress on them the seriousness of demonstrating enough respect for learning the syntax of the language in their heritage and inevitably understanding her.²²

Additionally, Margaret acknowledges she affectionately anticipated the visits to her relatives in Ama but harbored fears about the boat ride in John's old skiff. John held the monopoly on transportation to and from Ama. Margaret recalls him as a strong, rugged looking man with protruding muscles and strong capable hands. He was a friendly man who enthusiastically chronicled anecdotes of his encounters while traveling up and down the Mississippi. He was proud of his skillful supervision of his skiff through the sometimes perilous waters. "The old girl gets pretty rough at times," he said, "But some way or other, we always manage to whip her back under control." Old John could remember and recite all the drownings that had happened in those parts for years back. We would get to certain spots in the river and he would stop awhile to rest. Dawdling his oars in the water, he would muse, "Here's just about the spot where Jed Coles' son was drowned. It happened on a Sunday some ten years ago. Fishing on the Lord's Day. That's what he was doing. You see what can happen." 23

John was a single man and the people from St. Rose as well as from Ama repaid him for the rides across the river with goods and services of their own. Money was never exchanged. One person would prepare meals for him, another would clean his modest dwelling, another would do his laundry. Whenever the communities gathered for harvesting

and other food preparation activities, an allotment was always reserved for John. These were the ways of the citizens of St. Rose they looked out for each other.

When traveling across the river Margaret was reminded of the swimming lessons and was afraid of crossing over the deepest part of the river where the children "shuddered to think of the slimy things that would be down at the bottom of the river and my mother would pat me on the shoulder. In a little while, we'll be over on the other side, she said."24

Just as the girls would sit on the dock dangling their feet in the waters of the Mississippi once they had conquered their fear of the scary depths, they felt adventuresome enough to trail their hands in the waters on the sides of the boat and fantasize about fishing for catfish in the river like their father often did. Not very far from the Taylor home was a pond where they could catch crawfish. There were stories that alligators lived in the pond but they probably used this as a ploy to make the girls cautious when playing in the area. The girls admit they never saw any alligators. Dorothy, the eldest of the three girls, proclaimed she did hear a rattling sound coming out of the bushes. She announced that a rattlesnake was the only creature that made sounds like that. The girls brandished sticks as weapons and began beating weeds and bushes in an effort to flush the snake out.

24 Ibid., 8.
It worked.

A large ominous looking snake coiled upon a rock and stared straight at me. I raised my stick at it but my arm suddenly seemed paralyzed and I could not move it. Thank goodness that I did not lose my voice. 'Here it is! I've got it!' I cried to my oldest sister. She ran over and began to scream. My middle sister ran screaming toward the house. Mother heard the commotion and ran outside. "What's going on out here?" 'We're catching a rattlesnake?' Mother was running toward us. She snatched me and my sister away from the clump of bushes, sticks and all. Then she took one of the sticks and gave us a few whacks, "Don't you ever play around with rattlesnakes again! If you do, she said, I'll whip the skin off of you. Do you hear?" 'We'll never catch it now, I began to cry, It's gone and it won't come back again.' "You'll catch something else if you fool around there, my mother said." And when papa came home she told him about it. From that day to this I have had no use for snakes, even garter snakes.25

These are a few of the antics of the little Taylor girls amusing themselves, beginning life in St. Rose and learning about life in general. Margaret was the youngest of the three and she managed to escape much of the mischief Dorothy and Marion got into. Dorothy would lead and Marion would follow her blindly and trustingly. During many of these excursions Margaret was considered too young to participate.26

Dr. Burroughs smiled as she recounted two natural phenomena that she and her sisters shared and that didn't result in a scolding or a spanking. One was a bit scary though; a solar eclipse when the town's people thought this

25Ibid., 10-11.

was an indication the world was coming to an end. The other was a snowfall in St. Rose. Now this was an event. The girls playfully stood with mouths opened catching the flakes on their tongues. The snowfall was big news for sometime thereafter.

Lastly, Dr. Burroughs recounts her first schooling experience. Before leaving St. Rose she was just old enough to attend preschool in the Red Church. Octavia Taylor had achieved an eighth grade education and she was the teacher. On week days the Red Church doubled as the school because it was the most logical site. It was governed on the tradition of the one room school house, all grade levels met simultaneously in the same room. The students would kneel on the floor and use the benches as a desk. The teacher was kept quite busy and often the younger children would await an opportunity to sneak away by crawling under the benches while the teacher was involved with another group of students. She would usually discover them playing in the pasture near the pond. Things were less formal than they were when the children began school after coming to Chicago. School was only in session a few months out of a year. During planting season or during harvest season the children were needed to help out and school was not in session.

As time went by the world outside of St. Rose was changing and St. Rose was not immunized against the effects of these changes. Earning a living and providing for his
family became more difficult and Mr. and Mrs Taylor decided it was time for a change. They had heard from relatives that the North was a utopian environment void of bigotry, economic deprivation and, especially, lynching. Moving his family out of the terrible atmosphere where their lives were in jeopardy merely because they were people of color was an attractive idea.

They began to save their money so they could move in search of a better life. Laughing, Dr. Burroughs shared an anecdote recalling a spanking she received because one evening when her parents were counting the money they had been saving, they proudly announced they had a grand total of one hundred dollars. Margaret decided to share the good news with the neighbors and ran outside and proudly proclaimed, "we have a hundred dollars." At the time she didn’t understand what she had done that was so wrong. After all, her parents seemed so pleased she thought sharing the good news was the appropriate action to take.27

The Early Years in Chicago

When I was about five years old Father received the letter from my uncle who lived in Chicago telling of the fine opportunities there were for those who wanted to work at good wages and better educational facilities. These were things that my parents had been interested in for a long time. . . . Father wanted us to have a chance to take a sock at life with hands untied.28

28 Margaret Burroughs "Untitled Essay," TD, Personal files, Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1.
Margaret, Dorothy and her mother and father arrived in 1922. Marion was left with a childless aunt who cared for her and she joined her immediate family months later.

Margaret remembers the train ride to Chicago was long, arduous, dirty and grimy. People of color were relegated to sitting in the coach just behind the engine. However, the newness of the people and the surroundings filled Margaret with expectancy and anticipation. Before them was a brand new world. She was immediately impressed with the fact that people of color were not obligated to bow whenever a white man passed by, a custom she frequently witnessed in St. Rose.

Their first home was living with relatives, just as most other immigrant and migrating groups have done. When Mr. and Mrs. Taylor had amassed enough money to sustain the family, independent of the help given from his brother, they rented a flat of their own.

The flat had cold but had running water and electricity, and, although old and small, was an improvement over the dwelling they vacated in St. Rose. In St. Rose they retrieved water from a well and during the day used the outhouse and the chamber pot at night. When blacks migrated from the South pursuing improved economic status, they also found they were constrained to coexist in segregated areas. In Chicago, this racially restricted neighborhood was called the "Black Belt" because of the complexion of all of the
inhabitants. The "Black Belt" was comprised of kitchenettes, cold water flats, basements, crowded rooms and apartments that were initially formed when landlords [building owners] would take the conventional seven room apartment which have previously rented at fifty dollars per month when housing whites, and cut it into seven small one room apartments. They installed a small gas stove and sink. Then they were rented at six dollars a week. Now the small square footage that previously netted fifty dollars a month netted forty two dollars a week or one hundred and sixty eight dollars a month. There were as many as five or six people inhabiting these small one room apartments. There was one toilet per thirty or more tenants. These kitchenettes were hotbeds for scarlet fever, dysentery, typhoid, tuberculosis, gonorrhea, syphilis, pneumonia and of course malnutrition.

Although Blacks came North to escape the demoralizing surroundings of the former plantation tenant farms, the living conditions in which they lived subjected them to another kind of "slavery". The kitchenette, the basement apartments, rooms, as well as the cold water flats in the "Black Belt", created deplorable living conditions. In 12 Million Black Voices, Wright and Rosskan, quote a respondent in stating the following.

The kitchenette scatters death so widely among us that our death rate exceeds our birth rate and if it were not for the trains and autos bringing us daily into the city from the plantations, we black folks who dwell in the northern cities would be out entirely over the course of a few years. . . . The kitchenette throws desperate and unhappy people into an unbearable closeness of associations thereby increasing latent friction, giving

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29 Burroughs, "Quest," 6.

birth to never ending quarrels of recrimination, accusation, and accusation, and vindictiveness, producing warped personalities. The kitchenette injects pressure and tension into our individual personalities, making many of us give up the struggle, walk off and leave wives, husbands, and even children behind to shift as best they can . . .

The kitchenette blights the personalities of our growing children, disorganizes them binds them to hope, creates problems whose effects can be traced in the characters of its child victims for years afterward.

The kitchenette fills our black boys with longings and restlessness urging them to run off from home, to join together with other restless black boys in gangs, that brutal form of city courage.

The kitchenette piles up mountains of profits for the kitchenette piles up mountains of profits for the Bosses of the Buildings and makes them ever more determined to keep things as they are. The kitchenette reaches out with fingers full of golden bribes to the officials of the city, persuading them to allow old firetraps to remain standing and occupied long after they should have been torn down.

The kitchenette is the funnel through which our pulverized lives flow to ruin and death on the city pavements.31

Margaret recalls that in her community the sight and sound of fire trucks speeding up and down the street was something to which they became very accustomed. The heating units in the apartments were often defective causing fires which left many families homeless, and in many instances people lost their lives being trapped in a burning apartment. The Taylors feared the possibility of a fire and they often cautioned the girls to be very careful whenever they were in the vicinity of the stove. They were never to

play with matches or "they would be skinned within an inch of their lives."  

The lack of adequate housing was a major problem during this period. It was a situation that had been exacerbated at least twenty years earlier and had since evolved into a potentially volatile climate.

Less than a quarter of a century before, in the early 1900's, Black Chicagoans could reminisce about amicable times of "hostility free mixing of the races." The housing community had not been organized like the trade unions to exclude the black workers by ritual or constitution, and consequently blacks had been able to live in just about any area of the city...Although black people in 1900 represented only 1.9 percent or 30,150 out of a city population of 1,698,575, the competition for urban space and jobs with whites, especially recent European immigrants, quickly became a threatening problem.

It was during this time that the management of many businesses in Chicago began to recognize that hiring Southern Blacks could be a strategic move in their conflict with the unions. Blacks represented an almost inexhaustible supply of cheap labor. Other groups, like Polish immigrants had been exploited in the same way, of course, but the hostility of white labor unions toward Blacks offered employers the added attraction of deflecting some of the animosity away from themselves.

Mr. Taylor secured employment in the stockyards for a while. As time passed the black population between 31st

32Burroughs, "Quest," 6.


34Ibid., 13-14.

35Burroughs, "Quest," 5.
and Wabash and Thirty-Nineth and Wabash grew from .05 in 1904 to 100 percent in 1917. This became the "black belt" and to date has remained that way. Thus, the period when the Taylors arrived found the availability of residences totally inadequate. "On a single day, July 1918, the Chicago Urban League received 664 applications for only fifty-five available dwellings." However, having made Chicago their home, the Taylors worked hard to fulfill the dreams they shared for their children to care for their family and circumvent the negative conditions of their surroundings.

While their parents exerted energy to provide for the family, the girls found diverse ways of entertaining themselves when they were not at school. Like preceding generations of other children, they occupied themselves with hopscotch on the sidewalk, intently watched the glows of colored water in the window of the pharmacy and played ghost games in the basement of their building.

A police station was adjacent to the apartment building and provided an impetus for hours of fantasy for the girls. The bars on the windows of the jail readily transformed the station into an ominous dungeon being safeguarded by giant ogres, the policemen on duty. They were very inventive in their make believe, sometimes going up to the windows, conversing with the inmates and earning nickels running

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36Ibid., 18.
minor errands. Most often, the inmates asked the girls to call family members and alert them that they had been incarcerated.

It was easy to pretend the police officers were ogres because the girls had developed a dislike for whites in positions of authority. They had often overheard the adults discussing the horrendous race riots that took place in 1919. This was a fate they felt assured they were leaving behind when they traveled north.

Because my uncle had decided to make his home there after the first war, he wrote back home saying that there were plenty of jobs for colored people in Chicago and better opportunities and, especially, no lynchings. When Papa read that part, no lynchings, his eyes glinted hard and we children knew that he was thinking of Uncle Ike's and the terrible thing that happened to him.\textsuperscript{37}

The girls had never seen a lynching; however they had been privy to the explicitly descriptive narratives the adults whispered about. "They never talked about it around us but we remembered how the white men had come to our house in the middle of the night brandishing shotguns and waving flaring torches and looking for Uncle Ike's father and they were angry because he wasn't there. They went off and he didn't come home. Everybody had worried looks on their faces and hushed their talk whenever white folks came around. Then one day someone stumbled upon a horrible thing in the field out past town. Papa said it was Uncle Ike's dad alright, he knew by the scar and they wrapped the thing

\textsuperscript{37}Burroughs, "Quest," 4.
up and had a quick burial and wouldn't let any of us children look. After that we came North. \(^{38}\) The usual image of lynchings and various other brutal murders was one that was formidable and long lasting.

After all we had come North to get away from the night riders and there wasn't too much difference except the rioters didn't wear robes or masks to cover their faces. Pictures of white men killing black men filled our dreams at night. We didn't feel sorry for the white men because of the way they treated our folks, not only in slavery, but all the time, that we have heard of. So we didn't feel sorry for them at all. But we had pretty definite ideas about white folks then. We didn't trust them. Mother would come home from working in Hyde Park and tell us how the white women overworked her and didn't want to pay her very much. Papa was always talking about his foreman who didn't like negroes. There were the stories in the colored papers about how bad white folks treated negroes all over the country. Now some white folks would act real nice but we knew that we couldn't trust them cause we never could tell when they would turn on us and act like the mean white people. \(^{39}\)

Although Margaret and her sisters were relatively young, they were rapidly formulating images about themselves and the members of the society in which they lived. Living in Chicago was not all that they had hoped for, yet they did not regret having made the move. Things that initially seemed unfathomable gradually began to be intelligible. Dr. Burroughs recounted, "Chicago was frightening when we first arrived. The buildings were so tall. The elevated trains and flickering electric lights were mysteries that seemed to have no solutions. Hot running water was a luxury. There

\(^{38}\text{Ibid.}, 5.\)

\(^{39}\text{Burroughs, "Quest," 6.}\)
was a school of brick with many rooms, desks and blackboards."  

The school system had a structured established calendar and students were expected to attend regularly, unlike the flexible scheduling at the one room school setting in St. Rose. The girls were initially enrolled in a public school, attending James A. Doolittle School at 35th Street and Rhodes Avenue. All three of the girls found they were impressed by their new school. To them, it was splendid, since their only prior orientation was based on their image of the auditorium of the Red Church which Monday through Friday was transformed into a little red school room. The Doolittle School was three stories high with numerous heated classrooms. There were also indoor toilets. All of this fascinated Dorothy, Marion, and Margaret. The school in St. Rose was, by comparison quite modest.

When Mrs. Taylor had been the teacher at the church school in St. Rose, she was confronted with the imposing task of addressing the individual needs of her amalgamation of students of all ages, all at various levels of readiness with diverse abilities. She was skilled enough, however, to manage to keep the little ones still long enough to teach them to read and write the alphabet. When Margaret was placed in first grade she was already more prepared than her

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"Margaret Burroughs, "Untitled Notes," TD, Personal files, Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1."
classmates something she was very proud of.

I will never forget the experience that occurred to me in that first grade classroom in my first days at Doolittle School, my very first Alma Mater. The white teacher's name I do not recall. The teachers were practically all white in those days and I imagine the black teachers could all be counted on two hands and were real rarities. The teacher decided to teach us how to write our A. B. C's on the board. She gave us each a piece of chalk and place at the blackboard which spanned three side of the room. The game plan was this we were all poised before the board with our piece of chalk. The teacher was to draw the letter on the board first. After the letter was drawn we were to copy it exactly as she had drawn it following the cursive movements very carefully. The teacher held her chalk to the board and placed on it a big rounded capital "A". How was she to know that my mother had already taught us all to write our alphabet from A to Z back home in the country school in St. Rose? However I do know that she would take offense if I let that fact be known? I took off! Before the rest of the class could finish the A. I took my chalk and wrote all the letters from A on up to J. I might have continued right down to Z, but, the teacher stopped me. 'Margaret, she snapped, you are not following directions. I told you to write these letters after I wrote them. Now because you have misbehaved put your chalk down and go over in the corner and sit on that stool.' She folded and clipped a piece of paper. "Here, put this dunce cap on your head"! And, while I sat there in mortification and shame, she went on slowly and methodically with the class in their writing lesson."

Fortunately, this experience did not squelch Margaret’s voracious appetite for knowledge. Many years later, after becoming a teacher herself, Dr. Burroughs reflected on this incident. She concluded that teachers during that period were too harassed with paper work and did not care or have time to be bothered with accelerated pupils. The schools at the time were not equipped for diversified teaching or special attention to exceptional pupils. I saw that it was much simpler for the teacher to stay on top of things if she could keep all of the pupils on and

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"Margaret Burroughs, "Requiem For My First Alma Mater," TD, Personal files, Dr. Margaret Burrough’s Chicago, 2-3."
at the same time and at the same level even if it meant holding them back. 42

She lamented this method was disaster for many students and subsequently many fell by the wayside. She feels she escaped the incident unscathed. It daunted her spirits only momentarily although she has never forgotten it. She wasn’t a "dunce" and she was confused by the teacher’s actions, but she was very clear about that fact, she was definitely not a dunce.

The Taylor sisters were very conscious about their strong southern accent accompanied by colloquial speech patterns. They were determined to camouflage all audibly discernible vestiges of their southern roots. "Up North, as soon as we opened our mouths to talk, people knew that we ‘were from down home’ and they laughed at us but we listened well and soon learned to talk proper just like the rest of the colored people up North and then they couldn’t tell where we were from." 43

Dr. Burroughs recalls that although they had become conditioned to a deep-seated mistrust of caucasians, the preponderance of the teachers were a part of this racial group and she found them to be generally kind to the children. They did recognize, however, that the teachers consistently treated the children of lighter complexion

42Ibid., 3.

43Burroughs, "Quest," 5-6.
different from the children of darker complexion. Students who were endowed with characteristically white features were the students who were chosen for special activities, while alienating and isolating the remaining students. Nevertheless, they still managed to acquire the basics in education: reading, writing and arithmetic. The pervasive lesson they learned from this dichotomy of treatment was that one's physical appearance still played a dominant role in how one was perceived and treated. The message was transparent: one's individual worth and merit were predicated on one's skin pigmentation being darker in complexion was a liability while being lighter was an asset. For children of color, this was one of the seeds that perhaps was inadvertently sown but later yield a harvest of low self esteem, self hate and self disdain. These were acrimonious lessons for young pupils to learn.

Education was highly valued and encouraged in the Taylor household. Mr. and Mrs. Taylor impressed upon their daughters that education this was the fulcrum they could use to actualize a better life for themselves.

Our parents brought us out of the south, Louisiana—because they wanted us to get an education. Education was very important to our parents. They wanted us to have what they could not get. They wanted us to rise further up than they had. They would realize their dreams and aspirations through us. We would represent their immortality. They imbued us with a desire to be somebody. They wanted us to be somebody so they could be proud of us and our people would be proud of us. So
education was very important." Mrs. Taylor encouraged her daughters to read. During the summer months they spent a great deal of time at the library searching for books to read and prepare the book reports mother Taylor required. This served as motivation for the girls developing into voracious readers, curious investigators with a burning desire to know. Margaret was a reflective contemplative child. While analyzing her world she raised numerous questions about people. She specifically wanted to know more about people of color. There always seemed to be major contradictions in the presumed image the rest of the world had about "her people" and what she felt to be a realistic image.

Many Saturday afternoons were spent sitting in darkened movie theaters pretending to live the lives portrayed by the actors and actresses on the screen. For a hour or so their lives were blissfully transformed and they felt prosperous and optimistic.

The girls quickly ascertained that the best roles were always reserved for whites. Whenever blacks made their infrequent appearances on the screen, they were depicted in demeaning, shallow roles which painted a very derogatory picture of their lives and abilities. They concurred this was discouraging and after awhile they no longer found humor in the performances.

"Margaret Burroughs, "Untitled Work," TD, Personal Files, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 3."
It dawned on us that these shadows flashing across the screen were people like us, same color, and the same kind of hair and that white actors and actress were never cast in any ludicrous parts like these. Then we stopped laughing at them and we became quiet, sullen and resentful whenever we saw them on the screen. 'I'd rather dig ditches, papa said, then play a part like that.'

Margaret thought she could find some of her answers in her history books.

I began to read about the history of our country about how Columbus came over and discovered it and how a whole of other people explored it. I read of the time they had fighting Indians and clearing the land and founding cities and building railroads and making the country great. The pictures in the books just showed white people and I wondered where my people were and what they were doing all that time since they were brought over from Africa.

Margaret was even more dissatisfied and even more determined to find something unerringly recorded by historians about people of color. "I had to read deep but I found something. What books there were said that we had been brought over as slaves and had worked on the plantations and had sung and danced and prayed and were ignorant but happy." She read about the Civil War, the emancipation of the slaves, carpet-baggers, negroes elected to office who resembled buffoons and clowns. She read about the formation of the Ku Klux Klan and the Knights Of The White Camelia who convinced blacks that voting could be harmful to their health. Her research left her feeling

^5Burroughs, "Quest," 8.

^6Ibid., 9.

^7Ibid., 10.
deficient, deprived, inadequate and unfulfilled.

As she progressed through the various grade levels her reading improved and she read more and more, continuing her search. Margaret was formulating opinions about herself, her family, her community, her world. Margaret was already coming to understand there was work to be done, work that she felt compelled to be a integral part of that work.

The Taylors were to move several times before Margaret was to leave home and go out on her own. As black families would desegregate neighborhoods, it was not long before the community would be entirely black. As neighborhoods underwent changes it was often a strained and somewhat perilous and atmosphere. The Taylor family was to move many times, each time endeavouring to establish the family in more prosperous conditions. They have lived at Thirty-First and Cottage Grove, Thirty-Sixth and Rhodes, Forty-Seven and Fifty-Eighth and Indiana, Fifty-Ninth and Prairie, Sixty-First and Indiana. On one occasion they moved into a transitional white neighborhood at 315 E. Sixtieth Street. Black families were establishing residence here and the Taylors were among them. They lived there for 18 years.\(^4\) The new neighbors resented this intrusion into their previously racially homogenous community. They elected to register their displeasure by congregating outside of the Taylor's home spewing derogative and

disparaging racially oriented comments. During one such episode someone decided to escalate the demonstration by hurling rocks and subsequently breaking the windows. One night someone went further and set the porch aflame, but the fire department was able to squelch the blaze. A police investigation ensued but they were unsuccessful in arresting anyone for the crime.

Mr. Taylor felt obligated to take a few days off from his job and with several of his brothers stationed themselves in strategic locations around the home, all reinforcing the seriousness of their posture by arming themselves with rifles and shotguns. The brothers interacted, drank coffee and maintained this surveillance around the clock. They persevered in their resolve to protect their family, night after night, until calm had been stored. Margaret and her sisters did not fully comprehend the whole affair.

We went to school with white children. At first they wouldn’t talk to us so we wouldn’t talk to them. Then little by little before either of us knew it we were playing together and found that we were pretty much alike. We played race riot and we played mob violence and whenever we didn’t have enough whites to fight the colored or enough colored to fight the whites we pulled straws to see who would fight on the short side. We found that we were pretty much alike except that we just looked a little different... except once in a while someone would say something that made us remember that some of us were white and some of us were colored and we both withdrew behind our walls.49

While all of this turmoil was transpiring the girls were

49Ibid., 9.
kept safely indoors. Dr. Burroughs recounted that she, Dorothy and Marion would try to look outside and determine what was fermenting and she recalled, "It occurred to me that the sullen white faces of the people who stood in front of our house looked a great deal like those of the night raiders down home in St. Rose, only, they didn't wear robes or masks."\(^{50}\)

The Taylors found out later that some of the people taunting them from the front lawn and frightening their children were some of the leading citizens of the community. Unfortunately, this was not to be an isolated incident. Such hostile and violent reactions were to become the status quo whenever blacks began to move out of the "black belt" and into previously all white areas. The children could not be completely spared the odiousness. "At first they threw stones at them."\(^{51}\) The kids did eventually learn to play together and saw themselves as friends. "One of my friends tried to scrub my face like his but the brown wouldn't come off so we decided to leave it on. It really didn't matter."\(^{52}\)

Initially the girls were enrolled in public schools but later their parents entered them in the parochial school,

\(^{50}\)Ibid., 9.

\(^{51}\)Ibid., 9.

\(^{52}\)Margaret Burroughs, "Untitled Work," TD, Personal files, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1.
St. Elizabeth’s. Margaret was entering fourth grade by this time. "The first few years there were unimpressive except for the Christmas festivities when we were involved in plays and enjoyed parties. I will never forget the sweet disposition of a Sister Carmelita who was one of my teachers."\(^5\)

Dr. Burroughs remembers just one year later she and her fifth grade classmates were involved in a dialogue about where they wanted to attend high school. It was generally assumed they would continue in the parochial system. When the discussion ended Margaret had decided St. Xavier at Forty-Ninth and Cottage Grove was where she would matriculate. She shared her pronouncement with Mother Superior only to have the same old lesson in bigotry and separatism reinforced once again. St. Xavier, she was told, was restricted, for white girls only. Margaret didn’t graduate from St. Elizabeth’s, rather she left there and was enrolled in Carter Elementary School. This proved to be an inspired prophetic decision. Here she met a very special teacher, Miss Mary Ryan who would become an influential role model. Miss Ryan is credited with orchestrating Margaret’s first serious lessons in creative writing. Dr. Burroughs fondly recalled that her very first composition was directed by Miss Ryan and she was encouraged to write more. She was

\(^5\)Burroughs, "Biographical Essay," TD, Personal files, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1.
so pleased with the essay, she asked Margaret to read it before the entire class. She, like Margaret’s mother, supported Margaret in her vivid and ardent interest in the visual arts. She gave Margaret uncensored license to express her thoughts and feelings through her drawings. Mrs. Taylor would often excuse Margaret from assigned household chores and allow her to finish a drawing on which she was working. Her older sisters often resented this because they were then enlisted to do Margaret’s abandoned share of the work. Miss Ryan was an open supportive teacher who went to tremendous lengths to stimulate creativity and involvement in her students.

As Margaret was developing into an inquisitive bright motivated teenager, she stored the memories of these racially incited incidences in her mind to be retrieved and responded to later. When the time came to embark on a high school career her family was living in an apartment at 315 E. Sixthtieth Street. This predetermined that she would attend Englewood High School. Wentworth Avenue was the well established dividing line between the black and white communities. Just as today the gangs have established territory that marks this tense racial environment. Englewood was approximately 70 percent white and 30 percent black students. There was a great deal of tension among the


55Burroughs "Untitled Notes, Biography," 1.
students and the black students felt more secure arriving and leaving together when they crossed Wentworth Avenue.  

The neighborhood was comprised of Irish citizens then Jewish citizens, and now African Americans were moving in and collectively the white families were moving out as rapidly as they could find new places to sequester themselves from people of color. If the black students attempted to walk alone they again had to endure being pelted with verbal assaults as well as stones. Fortunately, they did find temporary solace manifested through some of their teachers. "For the most part, we were unwelcomed at the school. However there were a few decent teachers at these schools who were dedicated to teaching children and they gave us the best that was in them despite our color."  

Dr. Burroughs remembers her first division teacher, (homeroom teacher), at Englewood High School as a "kindly white woman who was simply interested in children. She didn't see black or white or red or brown." Another teacher who influenced Dr. Burrough's life significantly was Miss Mary Ryan, one of her art teachers from Carter Elementary. The rapport between Miss Ryan and Margaret flourished and was to continue through Margaret's adult

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57 Margaret Burroughs, "Untitled Notes, Biography," TD, Personal files, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1.

58 Schwartz, "Margaret Burroughs," 8.
years. Dr. Burroughs wrote Miss Ryan was a "good Catholic maiden lady, she nurtured not only myself creatively but several other talented Negroes including Charles White, William Sanford and Charles Sebree." 59 Dr. Burroughs recalls thinking about Miss Ryan often during her initial trying experiences at Englewood. Margaret often reflected on Miss Ryan’s understanding knowledgeable, and kind spirit when life’s challenges were proving formidable. She went to visit Miss Ryan after just one semester at Englewood. She wanted to appear mature at the age thirteen and decided to adorn herself in lipstick. After the initial social amenities had been met, Miss Ryan kindly instructed Margaret to go into the girls restroom and wash the lipstick off of her face and save the painting techniques for her canvas.

With help from people like Miss Ryan the years at Englewood were memorable ones indeed. She recalls there were numerous classmates who as early as the eighth grade knew what they wanted and achieved it. Many of them went on to become well respected clergy, band leaders, doctors, journalists, publishers, olympic contenders, artists, and founders.

"Another was Tidie Pechett, the girl runner who went to the 1936 olympics in Berlin." 60 Margaret herself was quite involved in athletics and she excelled in the broad jump.

59 Burroughs "Untitled Notes, Biography," 1.

60 Ibid, 3.
The same year Tidie Pichett was a contender was the same year Jessie Owens brought acclaim and honor to America by bringing home three gold medals from Berlin. Dr. Burroughs reflects on what it might have been like if she had qualified and herself had become a part of the Olympic team. She missed qualifying in the broad jump event by one inch.

"I of course was active in track and similar sports all through high school and ran and jumped against names like Mildred "Babe" Dedrickson, Betty Robinson, and others. I missed qualifying for the Olympic tryouts myself by one inch, my specialty being the high jump . . . . There was Marna Trotter, a pretty olive colored girl who happened to be the spot and married the heavy weight champion of the world, Joe Louis, and went on to fame and fortune." 61

Dr. Burroughs was an active, involved student and worked diligently at circumventing the by products of prejudice and racism which confronted her in the classroom. In an essay she shared the details of two events that are embossed on her memory, pleasant memories.

I had joined the staff of the "E" weekly as a cub reporter. Naturally at that age, with the desire for recognition and approval, one felt quite excited on getting, seeing one's name in print.

I had found a page torn from a book with a wonderful essay on it. I cannot now remember what the essay was about but I know there was no author's name attached to it. Perhaps I felt I had to do something to bolster my ego. Pains taking, I copied the essay on to another

61Ibid., 3-4.
paper and signed it.

I dropped it into the contribution box at the "E" weekly office. The next week the paper came out including this article with my byline. I received many compliments on the article but it was uneasy praise since I knew I had not written it. A few days later, Miss Taylor, the sponsor of the school paper called me to her office. She had a copy of the paper before her.

'Miss Taylor, she asked coldly, Do you know what the word plagiarism means?' "No, Mam, I said". 'Well a person who takes someone else's writing and passes it off as their own is guilty of plagiarism. And that's what you are Miss Taylor, a plagiarist. Where did you get that article?' "I found it in the corridor. It was a page torn from a book. I thought it would be amusing for the paper". 'Was the name of the author printed on the page?' She continued to interrogate me. "No, Mam." 'Do you know who the author is?' "No, Mam." 'Well young lady that piece was written by a very great writer, Mark Twain.' Seeing that, I felt in such disgrace that I was near tears, she softened. "So, apparently it was a mistake. You should have acknowledged the name of the author and then state that it was submitted by you. Do you understand?" 'Yes, Mam'. "Very well, next week's paper will print a correction. That will be all."

I left her office in utter misery. I did not want to see or talk to anyone. I was so ashamed that I was a plagiarist. I went to my division teacher. Red eyed I said to him, Mr. Fitzgerald, I'm afraid that I cannot be your helper any more. 'Why what in the world is the matter?' he asked, You look as if you just lost your best friend. What's wrong?" 'I just don't think I deserve to help you because I have been guilty of plagiarism. Then I told him all about the Mark Twain article." 'Now, now,' he patted me on the shoulder, "You realize that was the wrong thing to do. I'm sure that you won't ever do anything like that again. Now I want you to just forget the whole thing. Ten years from now you won't even remember it." 'Yes, sir, Mr. Fitzgerald.' "And Margaret; 'yes sir, Mr. Fitzgerald,' I will want you to continue on as my helper. I don't think I can find anyone else as dependable." 'Thank you Mr. Fitzgerald,' I said and I really did love him for that. 62

She shared still another memorable event that further

62Ibid., 5-6.
endeared her to Mr. Fitzgerald. On graduation day in June of 1933, Margaret made an appointment at the beauty salon. The receptionist had to squeeze her in but Margaret was assured that she would be beautifully coiffured and she would be at graduation on time. In the life of a seventeen year old this was probably the most important day in her life thus far.

The stylists were running behind schedule with the appointments and Margaret was caught up in rushing from the salon, home to dress and forward to the ceremony late. "I dashed home, dressed, took a taxi to school and arrived a few moments after the processional.

Mr. Fitzgerald was in the outer room. I was almost in tears. I just couldn't go into the hair bit with him being white. "Really unavoidable, I blurted out. No time to talk." 'Rush into your robe let's go!' Mr. Fitzgerald himself adjusted the cap on my head. "Now take my arm," he said. "And that wonderful man marched me down the aisle to my seat making what might have been an embarrassing memory into a shining moment."

In high school my desire for a deeper appreciation of other racial groups developed further. Art and athletics were my favorite pastimes. I worked in the Athletic Association, played on the various teams, drew pictures for the school yearbook and wrote articles for the school paper. I had quite a pleasant time in high school and made many lasting friendships."

\^3Ibid., 7.

"Ibid.
If Margaret had pursued a curriculum based fundamentally on her individual interest she would only have signed up for classes directly associated with art and athletics. Her parents and her favorite uncle were keeping a close watch on Margaret's progress and insisted that she incorporate courses in the sciences, algebra and geometry and compatible college preparatory classes. They had concluded Margaret was avoiding the classes by design. They thought she was intimidated by them and ascertained that since she found she had a natural affinity for the fine arts and athletics, she pursued these arenas which presented little challenge to her. Dr. Burroughs insists she wasn't avoiding math and science, she was just so consumed by her interest in drawing, painting and team sports that she desired to involve and immerse herself in that environment as often as possible. While the senior members of her family saw the panoramic view, Margaret had become too telescopic to see the sustained possibilities of that kind of preparation and they insisted that she enroll in a college preparatory course. She did but rather surreptitiously continued to pursue her fine art and athletic interests simultaneously. Margaret made her parents and uncle very proud by addressing the challenge and emerging triumphant.65 Actually she proved very accomplished in all of her course work and graduated

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65 Burroughs, Interview, 3 November 1992.
with honors from Englewood High School. 66

During the high school experience the Taylor girls were not tempted to hang out in the neighborhood. Gangs were not the concern than as they are now. The girls kept themselves occupied. They didn’t have a great amount of idle time.

The Taylor girls, like many other young people, participated in the wonderful choral extravaganzas Professor Hames A. Mundy orchestrated. He was fevently concerned with working with the teens, assisting them in uncovering their talents and showcasing their abilities. He involved his vocalists, musicians and dancers in varied, vigorous enlivened events designed to include as many teens as possible in situations in which they could excel. Working with these productions kept the students on stage and not on street corners or in jail. Perhaps his most awe-inspiring project was directing a one thousand voice choral ensemble comprised entirely of people of color. 67

Margaret demonstrated a great deal of energy and enthusiasm for embarking on new enterprises. While she enjoyed the activities associated with Professor Mundy and Company, she branched out into additional activities. During the summer months Margaret worked as a counselor at Abraham Lincoln Center Camp at Milton Junction, Wisconsin, as well as Camp Wohica in New Jersey. Both experiences were


opportunities for growth and maturing in a understanding of
the general interaction with diverse racial groups. These
experiences created the framing for many of her activities
as an adult and formulated the humanitarian philosophy she
implemented in her life.

I have worked at other camps . . . which experience
helped to strengthen my understanding and sympathy for
humanity, but I would like to relate an incident which
sheds some light on the development of my interracial
understanding.\textsuperscript{68}

Some of the teens participating in the camp experience went
on to establish themselves in imposing and rewarding
careers, one such person was her good compatriot, and later
world renown artist, Charles White. Margaret's attendance
at the Lincoln Center camp constituted her first real
adventure in interracial living. That summer the youths
were fortuitous enough to be assigned an astute, capable,
and enlightened camp director, Miss Baker. Dr. Burroughs
described her as a good listener who shared most of her free
time with the youth counselors orienting them and
anticipating the need for laying a strong base in the
character of the teen counselors.

Margaret hadn’t given the whole idea of roommates much
thought. However, she was still somewhat surprised to be
paired with a white southern girl from Georgia, Helen. She
quickly mentally processed all of the established tenants in
reference to whites, especially southern whites and became

\textsuperscript{68}\textit{Ibid.}
somewhat apprehensive.

Our family had left Louisiana to get away from them and particularly their practices. As it turned out all of my fears were groundless. Helen turned out to be a real regular and we became close friends.69

They shared so much time together the potential racial barrier completely dissipated and subtle fear had dispersed, at least between the two of them.

One week the counselors were scheduled for a day off. Helen and Margaret decided to come to Chicago. Margaret invited Helen to spend the night at her home, not giving any thought to how her parents might respond to this. They arrived late around 11 o'clock p.m. and the family had already retired for the night. Margaret slept on the hide-away sofa in the living room, and without waking anyone she expertly readied their bed and they both climbed in and easily fell asleep.

The next morning my father peeped in and all he could see were two tousled heads and one of them was blond! He shut the door quick and went into the kitchen where he told my mother, I had done it again! Another insane thing! I had bought a white girl home and we were in bed sleeping like two peas in a pod.

When we did arise, I noticed that both my mother and father and my sisters were polite but maintained a certain coolness toward my friend. The ice broke when my mother apologetically said that we were having grits and eggs, but if Helen didn't eat that kind of food she could have some corn-flakes. 'Grits and eggs?' cried Helen. 'I'm crazy about grits and eggs! I'm from Georgia you know!'

"Oh," said mother and she seemed more than pleased when Helen asked for a second helping. Then mother

69 Ibid., 8.
made for us something which she only made on special occasions or when we had special guests. She made french toast, sometimes called "lost" bread. The bread is fried in an egg and milk batter which has been seasoned with sugar and nutmeg. Later Helen was busier than I was in helping to wash the dishes and clean up the kitchen.

'She's a nice one, mother said. You know some of them can be nice when they want to be.'

Dr. Burroughs wanted to relate another incident referring to her camp experiences which impacted strongly on her interracial relationships from then until the present. This event involved another new friend, Rosalie Dorsey (Davis). The two of them decided to hitch-hike from the camp to Janesville, Wisconsin to see a movie featuring the then popular Greta Garbo. Hitch-hiking during this era was not an uncommon mode of traveling. An elderly white couple driving an old Ford were kind enough to offer them a ride, they were going all the way to Janesville.

The conversation which ensued was more in line with what Margaret had grown to expect from whites. The couple began by asking what life was like for colored people in Chicago, the specific questions implied that all of the people of color knew each other and that all shared the same concerns, reactions, and aspirations. They continued to reinforce stereotypical notions about people of color by stating, "I think you colored people can really sing beautifully," said

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Ibid., 9.
the woman, "I bet you girls can sing too."\textsuperscript{71}

The couple decided to stop at a roadside bar and grill and cool off by drinking cold beers. Perhaps not realizing the girls were only seventeen years old they ordered a mug of beer for them too. Hesitantly they drank the beers. After being so fortified, when they were asked to sing, Rosalie cleverly begged off but Margaret felt adventuresome and sang,"Go Down Moses","Swing Low Sweet Chariot", "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" and other songs. The more she sang the more they refilled her mug and applauded. This encouraged her to continue. When she sang "Motherless Child" she extracted emotionalism from the woman who cried and embraced Margaret and implored "Honey, please don't hold it against me or my husband the way the white people treat the black people. We ourselves don't feel like that at all."

"My grand pap," said the old man proudly, "He like colored people too. He used to tell me when I was a boy as to how he used to help them on their way when they came through these parts, used to take them in and fed them and hide them. That he did."\textsuperscript{72} Margaret sang several more songs and they staggered to the car where Margaret took pause for a moment worrying whether or not the man was too intoxicated to drive safely. Margaret herself was too light headed to

\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., 10.

\textsuperscript{72}Ibid., 11.
assess the situation appropriately and they again climbed into the old Ford with the couple. They fortunately arrived at the theatre unharmed. When they were quietly positioned in their seats Margaret found herself being awakened three hours later with Rosalie announcing the feature had concluded. The girls decided they would be better off with a bus ride for the return trip to camp.

These experiences conditioned Margaret for future interests in issues affecting people who were swept aside by society. Those who were being systematically deprived of the opportunity to pursue dreams and higher goals for themselves and their families.\(^\text{73}\)

During her high school years Margaret also became very active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP. When this organization was originally conceived its characteristics were different from the picture we presently see of this organization. The NAACP was founded in 1909 by a combination of sixty interested persons, some people of color and some white citizens who were concerned with changing the status quo. One year later their publication, \textit{Crisis} made its debut and created a stir by focusing on the positive contribution made by people of color in the arts, business and others fields.

Reading about positive contributions of people of color from diverse walks of life making varied contributions to

\(^{73}\text{Ibid., 12.}\)
society was a relatively new and welcomed experience for Margaret. Something she had searched years to uncover. She recounted the images she saw on the movie screen wherein people of color were presented in derogatory and debasing characterizations.

We could read quite well now. We read the white papers and studied over what they had to say. We noticed that those papers showed pictures of white people most of the time except that ever so often there would be a picture of a Negro. A big black burley Negro with the whites of his eyes showing or a little black Negro child with pigtails tied with white ribbons holding a big red slice of watermelon. Or, whenever a crime was committed, a picture of a Negro was shown and the caption read 'apelike negro with small "n" of course) held as suspect in rape! Or, when a Negro did something outstanding the article read, The fact that this Negro is so brilliant and accomplished must be due at least in part aside from any natural talents he might have, to his Grandmother on his Father's side who was white." 

Lynching of people of color during these years was an offensive injustice that was of major concern, consequently this was one area on which this group focused its energies. They monitored and attempted to adjust other acts of violence against blacks, unjust legal determinations in the courts and job discrimination. All of them were generally accepted by the majority of the white governing body of citizens as appropriate and applicable responses to the racial situation at the time. The first thirty years of NCAAP's existence was devoted to addressing the horrendous

"Burroughs "Quest," 10."
concerns. 75

At one of the meetings of the youth divisions of the NAACP Margaret met and became lifelong friends with Gwendolyn Brooks. Ms. Brooks was later named the poet laureate of Illinois. At that time Frances Taylor Mosely (Matlock) was their sponsor. The youth group convened weekly at the local Y.M.C.A. at the northeast corner of 46th and South Parkway, now Dr. Martin Luther King Drive. That particular facility has since been demolished.

Commensurate with the concerns of the national parent organization, the students were also deeply moved by the barbaric systematized practice of lynching as well as the explosive case of the Scottsboro boys. 76 Lynchings in the United States were "another important instrument for maintaining the racial system."

77 Most lynchings took place in the South and when the number of lynchings decreased "they grew in barbarity as the number of those burned at the stake increased." 78 Men of color were routinely lynched, being accused of raping white women. A conservative estimate states less than a third of the lynchings were ever


76 Margaret Burroughs, "My Friend Gwen," TD, Personal files, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1.

77 August Meier and Elliott M Rudwick, From Plantation To Ghetto, (Hill Waing; 1966), 164.

78 Ibid., 164.
supported factually. The general supposition was that most incidences of lynching occurred because of alleged rape. This has been touted to be an immense exaggeration, "victims of lynchings do not have a chance to defend themselves," and, consequently, were ideal victims to be accused of any unsolved crime, real or imagined.

The Scottsboro Case involved the arrest on 9 March 1931, of nine black youths in Scottsboro, Alabama for allegedly raping two white girls. The evidence was suspect and scant. Although both girls testified initially that they had been raped by these youths, one of the girls retracted her testimony admitting it never happened. Incorporating the cliche "justice is blind" into the proceedings, the court's perspective was this was of no consequence and proceeded as if the retraction never existed. Eight of the boys were sentenced to death while the ninth, only thirteen years old, was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The case was being watched intently by people around the nation and around the world, especially once the verdict had been announced. The renowned attorney Clarence Darrow proclaimed the sentencing was completely motivated by the race of the defendants and the evidence did not support this kind of adjudication. The matter was controversial and so often discussed the defendants came to be known as the "Scottsboro boys." It became an international banner to

rally around.

The case was appealed before the Supreme Court of the United States twice, and twice determined a mistrial. During the six year ordeal of repeated appeals and retrials, five of the initial indictments were thrown out. Four of the men were eventually sentenced to long prison terms. Heywood Patterson, deemed the leader, was given seventy-five years imprisonment. In 1946 he made a successful escape attempt and found sanctuary in Michigan. Government officials in Michigan refused the request for Patterson's extradition to Alabama. The remaining three men were each paroled by 1946.\(^{80}\)

The student branch of the NAACP agreed they should register a formal disapproving declaration against lynching and the treatment of the Scottsboro boys by staging a demonstration march. Mrs. Mosely led the students in their effort to be heard and subsequently affect a change. With the beautiful and youthful Mrs. Mosely at the forefront of the group, they picked up the signs they had painted and began their protest march at Forty-Third and South Parkway, now King Drive, and walked west to State Street. When they arrived here their route directed them south on State Street to Forty-Seventh Street. They then traveled east of Forty-Seventh Street to South Parkway, King Drive. At this

juncture they headed south of South Parkway to Fifty-First Street. At each of these intersections one of the teen protestors, Robert McGee, destined to become a minister, would place a soapbox on the ground, climb up on it and give a rousing oration against lynching.

The students managed to draw a great deal of attention to themselves and the cause they supported. Students, marchers, and onlookers alike would cheer and applaud the capable speaker. There was one incident that had the potential of transforming a peaceful protest into becoming a very tortuous affair. At the intersection of Forty-Seventh and Vincennes they were halted by police officers requesting a look at the permit they did not have. They were anxious to make arrests and made it clear everyone would be taken into custody. The astute and charming Mrs. Mosely spoke with them extensively and managed to get them to abandon that plan. 81

Margaret's involvement with the NAACP provided her with an opportunity to overtly express her reaction to some of the issues which had perplexed, angered and even hurt her throughout these early years of her life. Finally she felt she was able to do something and not leave all of the decisions to the adults and pondering in silence over the reasons why.

Margaret had developed into a pensive analytical young

woman questioning her life, her world, and the factors that impinged on that world. Her high school years were accentuated embellished by the Great Depression. This represented hard times for all throughout the United States.

Working men bore the brunt of the depression. . . . Jobs became harder and harder to find. The total number employed fell from over 35,000,000 in 1929 to under 33,000,000 in 1930, under 30,000,000 in 1931, and 26,000,000 in 1932 and 1933. Nor did these figures tell the whole tale, for many employers had the charity to shorten hours and spread work around. The average work week in manufacturing fell from forty-eight hours in 1929 to under thirty-five in 1932. With pay rates also falling, the average weekly envelope, instead of the $128.50 of 1929, held only $117.05 in 1932.

Workers who had been underpaid in the twenties did not necessarily suffer more than others. While women were usually fired first Italian, Slav, Mexican, and Negro men were often kept on when higher paid Anglo-Saxons, Irishmen, and Germans were let go. By 1932 nevertheless, any man who worked with his hands was lucky to have a job at all.

Work of any kind came to be at a premium. Rumor of an opening for a janitor, a waiter, or a dishwasher would cause a long line to form before any door . . . the International Apple Shippers Association offered apples on credit for street vending . . . tens of thousands . . . responded and set up stand . . . hawking apples at a nickel apiece . . . . By 1932, nearly one man in four was out of work. A special federal census estimated that 15,000,000 were unemployed and looking for jobs . . . . Some of the unemployed left the cities. In 1932, social workers in Chicago described a scene becoming all too familiar: 'Around the truck which was unloading garbage and other refuse were about thirty-five men, women and children. As soon as the truck pulled away from the pile, all of them started digging with sticks, some with their hands, grabbing bits of foods and vegetables.'

The Taylors suffered through like everyone else. After loosing his job, Mr. Taylor was able to work with the

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Works Projects Administration, WPA, which placed numerous unemployed in employed situations. They built a dam, roads, erected buildings, created and composed fine art. In 1933, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, FERA, a federal relief program, was instituted which pumped $500 million dollars into the economy, the beginning of a welfare program. Dr. Burroughs wrote in *Quest*

I understood about the Depression they had all over the country, not just for colored. Rich folks were jumping out of windows because they couldn’t stand the thought of living on twenty-thousand dollars a year when they had been used to living on one-hundred-thousand dollars a year. The Crash came and there were breadlines with no Jim Crow and colored and white were out of work and the veterans forgetting color joined together and marched to Washington to try and get help from the President and colored and white some of them were shot down just like dogs. Black and White folk were on relief and got surplus food from the government. We had beans and neck bones several times a week for dinner, and some of our kinfolk moved in with us. And in the pattern, my people took their place not higher than any other people. Not lower than any other people but natural and true. 83

The 1930’s would cumulatively take its toll on the Taylor family. Margaret’s father was growing weary with life’s challenges and sought solace and comfort from alcohol, becoming an alcoholic. Mrs. Taylor worked as a domestic spending many of her employed years with a family in Hyde Park. "Due to the depression and the humiliation and attack on black males, during the thirties my father couldn’t stand up under it and became an alcoholic. I know

83 Burroughs, "Quest," 12.
that many times my mother was very unhappy but she stuck it out with him until he passed and we had reached the age of understanding that is, in our teens."

Through all of the challenges the family remained a cohesive unit. Dorothy, Marion and Margaret pursued their interests and attended school. Dorothy and Marion worked when they could find employment, especially when their father became too ill to work. Mother Taylor worked diligently to keep things afloat.

Margaret and her sisters participated in extra curricular activities and this proved to be a constructive decoy for any seeming problems. She served on the prom committee, February 1933. There is another cherished memory Dr. Burroughs recorded regarding her relationship with Paul Robeson and "I am happy to say that he was the greatest single influence on my life." 85

Margaret met Paul Robeson at the age of seventeen, her senior year. "For that is when my love affair with Paul Robeson began." 86 She still feels a special fondness for her Uncle Pierre who had the foresight to purchase a ticket for her to attend his performance in concert at Orchestra Hall.

84 Margaret Burroughs, "About Myself," TD, Personal files, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 3.

85 Margaret Burroughs, Untitled Paragraphs, TD, Personal files, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1.

86 Margaret Burroughs, "Rembrance of Paul Robeson," TD, 1987 Personal files, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1.
Uncle Pierre was the member of the family who kept abreast of cultural events and encouraged Margaret and her sisters to pursue excellence.

The event was an awakening for her and she was completely enthralled by this new world she had been exposed to. "As an impressionable teenager, I was entranced. I had not known that this manner of man or that this kind of a world existed. Paul Robeson ascended and took his place as a star in my sky, a place which he still occupies today." 87 After the concert she accepted the invitation which had been extended to all the concert goers to attend a reception at the Appomatox Club on Grand Boulevard. She not only met and shook hands with him but his family also. Margaret was floating. "From that point on, I was touched by the Robeson magic." 88 She began to read everything and anything she could gather that had been written about him. She followed all the news reports that mentioned him. Vicariously she became somewhat literate concerning the experiences in the Soviet Union through his eyes.

Margaret was obsessed. She considered his philosophy, her own. Her thoughts were in agreement with his. His judgements and determinations became hers. "Whatever I concluded that Paul would do, that is what I did. His guidance and direction sustained me through the thirties and

87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., 2.
the forties and left a lasting impression on me."\textsuperscript{89} She even felt knowledgeable enough to challenge her social science teacher when she touted anti Soviet statements. Margaret felt bold and strong in her defense. After all she was sharing what Paul had said and he was inciteful and accurate in his view at least that is what Margaret believed.

The fertile ground had been tilled for a relationship that would flourish and blossom to the extent she labeled him "my idol."\textsuperscript{90} Many many years later she and her second husband would name their adopted son, Paul, as a way of showing respect and honoring what she deemed a magical personality.

In the first part of her life, just seventeen years or so, Margaret encountered, interacted and formulated friendships with people who would go on to have a profound impact on her life, then and now. She met and fostered relationships with numerous personalities who went on to become successful, accomplished individuals. These are persons whom historians would not be able to ignore; persons who impacted the lives of humanity in general. Persons who would influence her own growth, development enabling her to provide contributions of her own to mankind.

\textsuperscript{89}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{90}Ibid., 3.
CHAPTER II
COMING OF AGE

The Setting

In 1933, the same year that Margaret graduated from high school, Franklin Delano Roosevelt also embarked on a new phase in his life, becoming the thirty second president of the United States. As president, Roosevelt was destined to leave an indelible imprint on the nation and the times. He served during an era of overwhelming economic depression and of involvement in a global conflict, another World War.

Between election day, 1932, and inauguration day, 1933, the crisis deepened. In Michigan, after the principal Detroit banks came to the point of collapse, the governor declared a state bank holiday. Panic spread to near by areas, and state after state followed Michigan's example. Practically every bank in the country closed. Meanwhile, hunger lines grew longer and longer, and town after town shut down soup kitchens for want of money to keep them going. A thousand municipalities faced bankruptcy. The nation seemed on the edge of economic disintegration.¹

Roosevelt attacked the banking situation first, declaring the surrender of all gold coins and certificates. Congress was convened in a special session and the Senate as

well as the House of Representatives worked diligently to pass the President's proposed legislation in one day. The landmark legislation became the catalyst for bringing the banks into states of solvency. New Federal Reserve notes were printed and apportioned through all regional banks. The assets and liabilities of more than ten thousand banks were evaluated and in less than one week approximately 50 percent of the nation's banks were licensed to reopen for business. Additionally, another 25 percent within limited guidelines and still another 20 percent "went under 'conservators' or receivers, with the expectation that they would eventually pay some of their depositors; five percent were declared insolvent and closed." The President was so successful in reassuring American depositors that they should put their faith in the banking institution that through his "fireside chats" over the air waves, that within three weeks the public redeposited in access of one billion dollars in money resources. This renewed confidence helped bring the banking crisis to a halt.

Meanwhile, Roosevelt had begun to put before Congress a host of other recommendations on nearly all of which the legislators acted with alacrity. In short order, he got an Agricultural Adjustment Act giving him almost every imaginable power to do something for the suffering farmers; authorization for a Civilian Conservation Corps, through which veterans and youths between eighteen and twenty-five could be put to work on conservation projects; a Relief Act providing $500,000,000 for appropriations of $3.3 billion for new public works.

Ibid., 535.
A "Truth in Securities" law required corporations in future to obtain approval from the Federal Trade Commission before issuing stock. A Home Owners Loan Corporation was created with $2 billion to lend against household mortgages. Reviewing and expanding Nebraska Senator George Norris cherished project of a public power development at Muscle Shoals, Tennessee, where government built dams had stood idle since World War I, legislation provided for a Tennessee Valley Authority to redevelop the whole flood wasted river basin. Power was given the President to reorganize bankrupt and near bankrupt railroads. Finally Congress met Roosevelt's request for "the machinery necessary for a great cooperative movement throughout all industry in order to obtain wide reemployment, to shorten the working week, to pay a descent wage for the shorter week and to prevent unfair competition and disastrous overproduction." It passed an omnibus National Industrial Recovery Act. All this Roosevelt asked and got within a hundred days of taking office.  

Further, the sale of beer and wine was legalized and legislation was put in place, a Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, wherein banks would pay a nominal premium in exchange for which almost all deposits would be protected. Boldly Roosevelt and his supporters worked insistently for the Works Project Administration (WPA), banking reforms, the Public Utility Holding Company Act, a new tax bill, and welfare legislation. The Supreme Court had, in the meantime, overturned elements of the National Industrial Recovery Act. This proved to be a mixed blessing. It was imperative that the rights of labor and unions be protected. Senator Robert Wagner of New York sponsored a bill which Roosevelt supported. This new bill, known as the Wagner National Labor Relations Act, 1935, guaranteed workers

3Ibid., 535.
the right to organize and bargain collectively, gave unions representing a majority of workers the right to bargain for all, and assigned the National Labor Relations Board the duty of arranging supervised elections for the choice of unions. Most important of all, it also empowered this Board to issue "cease and desist" orders to employers who discouraged labor organization, formed company unions, or exerted pressure on employees to influence them against joining unions.  

The Connally Act secured marketing and pricing agreements, collective bargaining, as well as uniform wage and hour scales, particularly targeting the coal industry. Overshadowing both of these bills was the Social Security Act encompassing unemployment compensations and pensions for the elderly. In the final analysis the unemployment compensations aspect of the bill was left to the individual states while the social security benefit’s would be governed by the federal agencies.

Roosevelt was deemed to be a president for all of his constituents.

In his second inaugural he said, 'I see one third of a nation ill housed, ill clad, ill nourished,' and went on to declare, "the test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." And to Congress, he recommended new legislation designed specifically to aid some of the country's least privileged groups.

Rural areas, like St. Rose, Margaret’s hometown, had not fared very well under the existing New Deal legislative agricultural programs. In fact, they had suffered. The

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4Ibid., 554.
5Ibid., 559.
landowners had been the recipients of the benefits. Roosevelt proposed that the federal government make loans available to enable the tenant farmers to prepare and embark on new careers or perhaps purchase their own farms.

In the urban areas Roosevelt turned his attention to the deplorable housing conditions such as those described in chapter one, in urban Chicago. He suggested long term efforts be applied to "rid the nation of its slums and to help the families in the overcrowded sections of our cities to live as American citizens have a right to live." The United States Housing Authority was designed to address this issue and was empowered with $500,000,000 in federal funds to implement policy. These monies were to be made available to the local governments to provide the financial resources needed to build low-cost housing and getting rid of existing substandard housing.

Many of the programs summarized above were catalytic and pivotal elements in Margaret's life. Support from the WPA provided the opportunity for a youthful twenty-one year old to be an integral component in the historical founding of the South Side Community Art Center, the only surviving cultural center established through the Works Project Administration. Social security and the welfare relief programs are presently inextricably woven into the fabric of our economic structure. Without these programs the elderly,

*Ibid., 559.*
disabled, widowed, orphaned, and unemployed would likely add to the swelling percentage of homeless and indigent in our country.

**Getting Into College**

After graduation, Margaret, like her peers, was faced with major decisions about her future. She knew she wanted to matriculate into higher education. During her senior year at Englewood her homeroom teacher, Miss Munson, had been instrumental in assisting Margaret in being awarded a full tuition scholarship to Howard University in Washington D.C. This was an exceptionally rare opportunity. This was 1933, still the depression era, and Margaret’s family was unable to assist by providing the funds needed for room, board, and general living expenses. It was clear she would not be able to accept the scholarship and attend Howard.

Margaret felt somewhat dispirited and dejected and suffered a short lived case of diminished expectations, but she was not defeated. Of course she turned to her mentor, Miss Ryan, with the dilemma. Miss Ryan recommended that Margaret pursue higher education locally at Chicago Normal College, the Teacher’s College, now Chicago State University. Miss Ryan volunteered to coach Margaret as preparation for the compulsory entrance exam. They met at Carter Elementary School one or two days a week after school for tutoring sessions. The first encounter with the exam was an unsuccessful one.
Margaret again felt discouraged but was coaxed by Miss Ryan to prepare herself further and try again. The second undertaking was magical. She passed the exam. Margaret was especially proud of her perfect score in the fine arts category. Black students represented minuscule portion of the student population at the Teacher's College and it was rumored that those who did manage to get in had manipulated and finagled their way in by using "political pull."

Margaret's trump card was manifested in the inextinguishable resolve of the team of Ryan and Taylor with Ryan as captain. Getting accepted was just the beginning. Miss Ryan realized Margaret would need books and other supplies which required financial resources. She suggested that Margaret create still life paintings in water colors as a commercial venture. She then sold raffle tickets to her friends and coworkers; the prize, one of Margaret's paintings. She never retained any of the proceeds for herself, she remitted the entire sum to Margaret who in turn purchased what she needed for school. Margaret attended Chicago Normal College from 1935-1937. Margaret earned an Elementary Teacher's Certificate from Chicago Normal College in 1937. In 1939 she was awarded a Secondary Teacher's Certificate in art.

Marriage

When Margaret was completing her third year at Chicago Teacher's College she attended "one of those Saturday night 'house rent parties' that our artists often gave to raise
much needed revenue."

Many of the artists at the time used these social events as an opportunity for networking. If you were a person of color, and involved in the fine arts, it was very probable you would meet many dedicated hard working novices who were trying to make a name for themselves in the art community.

On this particular Saturday, there was a newcomer in attendance, an artist from Kansas City Missouri, Bernard Goss. Mr. Goss was a recent graduate of the University of Iowa earning a Master of Fine Arts Degree. Goss had come to Chicago to work as an easel painter with a Federal Arts Project in the Works Project Administration. Goss possessed imposing good looks and Margaret was immediately taken with him.

I was attracted to him because he was tall and brown and had a most engaging smile. He had a fine build and to tell you the truth, he looked like a sun-tanned Greek God to me, like the one pictured in Gardener's History of Art. Well I fell for him hook, line and sinker, and he must have seen something in me that he liked because the two of us hit it off from the git-go. 8

They began dating and when Margaret realized how serious the relationship was becoming she wanted her dear friend Miss Ryan to meet him to see if she approved of her choice.

Miss Ryan willingly met and talked extensively with Goss. Afterwards, when Margaret informed her of their

8Margaret Burroughs, "My First Husband And His Four Wives, TD; Private Papers of Dr. Margaret, Chicago, 1.

8Ibid., 2.
intentions to marry, she tried vehemently to dissuade her. The more she tried to show her that Bernard "wasn't good enough" for her the more fervently Margaret stuck to her plans of marriage. After Margaret graduated, they were married, with her mother's blessings, in the Parish House at St. Anselms in 1939. They settled in a coach house in the forty third block on Grand Boulevard, which became South Parkway when the neighborhood was transformed from the grand community it once was when whites occupied the Victorian mansions. The coach house had a large studio styled room flanked by four additional rooms used as sleeping quarters. Margaret and Bernard opened their home to artists and graduate students and rented out several of the spare rooms. Looking back, Dr. Burroughs recalls drafts of Broadway plays that were written at their kitchen table. Many young writers, artist, and educators had sought and found shelter and solace in that coach house. Margaret, Bernard and some of the other artists became very involved in the creation of the South Side Community Art Center, a new cultural center in the area.

Difficulties in the marriage began to become apparent. The fact that both were artists created a distinctive set of conflicts. Due to the uncertainty of a steady reliable income of a freelance artist, it was clear one of the partners needed to secure a position wherein a regular pay

'Ibid., 2.
check would be forthcoming. Bernard made it imminently clear he would not be forfeiting his full time devotion to painting. He was, after all, planning to become world renowned and this required focus and copious attention to creating. That meant the onus of securing more conservative employment fell on Margaret.

Margaret began working as a substitute teacher for the Chicago Board of Education in 1940 and continued through 1945. An old friend from high school returned to Chicago after seeking a dancing career in Detroit and she contacted Margaret needing someplace to stay. Margaret rented one of their spare rooms to her. While Margaret worked, Bernard and her friend developed a romantic relationship. This relationship precipitated the break-up of Margaret and Bernard's marriage.

Margaret, now pregnant, relinquished the coach house and moved back home with her widowed mother. Margaret kept busy with the Art Center, her art, teaching and raising her daughter Gayle. These were painful days but she kept going. In her article, "My First Husband and His Four Wives," Dr. Burroughs recounts there were days the depression was overwhelming.

Several times, I felt so low that only my strong will power prevented me from going over to the lake and jumping in, me, daughter and all. Now that would really have been a waste. But nothing lasts forever, not even grief and pain.10

10 Ibid., 4.
This sentiment sounds hauntingly reminiscent of the incident with Margaret's great grandmother, who also in a moment of an overwhelming sense of strife, thought death was the antidote to obliterate her pains.

Upon reflection, Margaret determined that she needed to undergo a complete make-over. She proceeded by changing her hair color and style and selecting a new wardrobe. She not only had a new look, she adopted a new outlook. She had concluded life was worth living and more vibrant living was what was needed to complete the transformation. She decided to return to society and made her debut by accepting social engagements with groups as well as individual dates. She enrolled in courses at the Art Institute of Chicago working towards a masters degree.

Bernard served in World War II and they remained legally married until after he returned home. This enabled Mrs. Goss and daughter Gayle to be eligible for benefits. This financial help was greatly needed. Later, when he returned, the marriage was legally dissolved.

**Founding the South Side Community Art Center**

Margaret Taylor was the junior member to be a signee on the original charter of the South Side Community Art Center. With the exception of three people, all of the original founders have expired. During the 1930s in Chicago, black artists needed a forum for networking, sharing, as well as exhibiting. Most of the artists were self taught and self
motivated. Without an opportunity to interact with each other they were missing an integral aspect of their development. "There were absolutely no opportunities for us to show in the Downtown Galleries [these galleries did not recognize art by Blacks as legitimate]. Only a very few of those who could afford it were able to attend classes at the Art Institute or the private art school."\textsuperscript{11}

Margaret was the youngest member of the group. She belonged to a club titled the "Arts Crafts Guild". Their president was William McGill a sign painter by profession. The group met each Sunday rotating the meeting site from one member's home to another. They would put an exhibition together wherever they were offered appropriate space, including at the local YMCA or in a church basement. The group was primed for the pronouncement that the Works Project Administration, Arts Project Division, was interested in establishing art centers in metropolitan areas and Chicago was one of the cities designated.

At that time Peter Pollack was the curator at an intimate Art Gallery on North Michigan Avenue. Mr. Pollack was historically the first entrepreneur to host a showing of art works by people of color in a downtown gallery. In 1938 Peter Pollack was concurrently a member of the Illinois Federal Art Project directed by George Thrope. Thorpe and

\textsuperscript{11}Dr. Margaret Burroughs, "Saga of Chicago's South Side Community Art Center (1938-1943)," TD, Margaret Burrough's Papers, Chicago.
Pollack mutually decided the best strategy would be to consult with a small representation of prominent black citizens and aspiring contemporary artists. Margaret was one of these young artists. This initial team of consultants convened at the South Side Settlement House at Thirty Second street and Wabash Avenue to discuss the proposition of an art center. It is perhaps significant that the director of the settlement house, Ada S. Mckinley, was herself establishing a unique place in history. Ms. McKinley was said to have been co-patriots with Jane Addams and they had stood together, marched together and protested the Chicago race riots of 1919. Golden B. Darby was a prosperous owner of an insurance firm and was also Chairman of the Board of the South Side Settlement House. Under his tutelage the Center sponsored a competitive exhibition, a compilation of works from young black artists in the community. Margaret competed with several artists, who were to become highly respected contributors to the field of the fine arts. Among these were the esteemed Charles White, Bernard Goss, Charles Sebree, George Neal, and Joseph Kersey. Margaret was a first time exhibitor and consequently was particularly gratified with the award of a blue ribbon and a certificate. This event precipitated Darby’s appointment as chairman of the Art Center Sponsoring Committee. After several meetings of the committee, the South Side Community Art Center Association evolved,
developed and adopted a legal charter. Mrs. Katherine Moore, spouse of Herman E. Moore, then a federal judge in the Virgin Islands, was elected as the first president.

Edgar E. Mitchum, another person involved in the insurance industry, was named chairman of the Finance Committee. Henry Avery assumed the role of Chairman of the Site Committee. Henry, an artist, worked in conjunction with Ethel Mae Henry, an art instructor who accepted the position as chairperson of a committee designed to locate temporary headquarters for the group. Mary evaluated the new center as a long awaited entity in the community with the potential of becoming a pertinent vehicle for the introduction and transferring of culture to the people on the south side of Chicago.

By 25 October 1939, George Thorpe, still the director of the State Art Project, informed the committee that approval had been sought and granted for the group to find a permanent facility. The Federal Art Project was authorized and empowered to relinquish all necessary funds for possible renovations of a site, salaries for a staff, teachers for workshops and classes as well as maintenance staffing. The only financial responsibility that fell on the committee was to provide funds to make the initial purchase of a site and pay the utility bills incurred. Margaret was destined to begin learning the intricacies of fund raising early. At the age of twenty one, she found herself standing on their
corner of Thirty-Ninth and South Parkway, now Martin Luther
King Drive, soliciting dimes. The community responded with
their eager yet modest participation. Dr. Burroughs
estimates she collected at least $100.00 in dimes.
Interestingly enough, this campaign was called "A Mile of
Dimes." Now, a membership drive was inevitable. An eminent
dermatologist, Dr. Ralph Scull, orchestrated this venture.
His team of cohorts encompassed sculptor, Simon Gordon,
teacher Mrs. A. M. Mercer, entrepreneur William Harrison and
lay persons Thelma Kirkpatrick, Ana Wilkims and Verna
Vaughn. This subcommittee collaborated and developed a plan
for a climatic episode to the membership campaign. The
activity provided a forum for community artists to showcase
their designing talents. Together they planned and
presented the First Annual Artists and Models Ball, 1939, to
the public, hosted at the now demolished Savoy Ballroom.
Frances Mosely Matlock produced the elaborate affair. The
models wore original designs of the aspiring artists. The
event was very successful and the proceeds from this benefit
provided enough capital to place a down payment on a
building located at 3831 South Michigan Avenue. The center
is still located at this site.

This was an exciting phase of the project. To be able
to obtain property in that neighborhood was an
accomplishment in itself. Located on the near south side
the streets were adorned with beautiful Victorian styled
mansions. Before the transition these homes were owned and occupied by Chicago's nouveau riche. When these families moved they often sold the properties and furnishings at less than their market value. The future Art Center was formerly the residence of Charles Comiskey, baseball magnate, and sold for $8,000. The deal included a two story coach house. Once the negotiations between the Art Center Association and the bank were completed, the Federal Arts Project groups came in with their team to complete the renovations necessary to transform the former residence into the appropriate offices, classrooms, galleries, and an assembly hall. They were careful to retain the integrity and beauty of the original architectural style. 12 The first floor housed a beautiful gallery, office and library. On the second floor was another gallery, a small one, and three classrooms and a grand assembly room. The third floor was remodeled to provide a kitchen and another classroom. The coach house was used for a woodworking area and provided several studio apartments. 13

The year was 1940, and was significant not only because of all of the activity at the center, but many of the participants with the center, Margaret included, were also very involved in numerous art related activities associated

12 Ibid., 1-5.

13 Margaret Burroughs "Untitled Essay on the Founding of the South Side Community Art Center", TD, Burroughs Private Papers, Chicago.
with the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of Emancipation Proclamation. Numerous art exhibitions were sponsored at the national and local level. Alonzo Aden of Howard University had been commissioned to curate and display art created by Afro-Americans.

Margaret and two friends from the Art Center Association, Rosalie Dorsey and Catherine Davis, were granted an opportunity to work with Alonzo Aden organizing and setting up the gallery exhibition. This would become a prophetic pragmatic experience. They were able to apply the skills they learned to various cultural activities. All of these activities served as a precursor in preparing them for years of involvement with the incumbent South Side Art Center. These events were preparing the community for their own cultural centers. The center began to sponsor classes and exhibitions in 1940 before the formal opening scheduled for 1941.

Prior to this grand unveiling, a memorable Fourth Annual Artists Models Ball Benefit was being coordinated by Rosalie Davis and joined by the well known dancer Frank Neal. There was a great deal of excitement associated with the last annual artist and Models Ball Benefit prior to the dedication of the center.

The date for the dedication was set for 8 May 1941. Residing as president was Pauline Kigh Reed, a social worker; first vice president Ethel Hillard, a teacher;
second vice-president Walter A. Abernathy, businessman; treasurer, Margaret Burroughs, teacher and artist; recording secretary Laura Stark; and Frankie Raye Singleton, financial secretary. Vital auxiliary positions were supervised by Beatrice Glenn and Daniel Catton Rich of the Art Institute of Chicago; Dr. Alain Locke of Howard University; Robert A. Cole, funeral director; Justice George Quillici, judge; Elise Evans Harris, Katherine Dickerson, Rose Tancil, Jessica Anderson, and Leda Tavernier, socialites; Jeanette T. Jones, teacher; William Y. Browne, realtor; Thelma Kirkpatrick Wheaten, teacher. Businessman Patrick B. Prescott served a chairman of the board and the aforementioned photographer art dealer Peter Pollack was still the director. Each person and their careers has been enumerated to illustrate and magnify the point that the center was born out of the minds, initiative and labor of diverse factions of society. Each person would contribute different perspectives, experiences, and resources related to their individual areas of expertise.

The Federal Art Project was an outgrowth of the Roosevelt New Deal program. The committee, therefore, considered it appropriate they should attempt to invite someone closely associated with the project to dedicate the center. First Lady of the nation, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, was asked and she accepted. Since other centers were opening concurrently, the association and the city felt
honored she would accept their invitation. Another prominent invited guest was Dr. Alaine Locke, author, artist and Professor of Philosophy of Art and Humanities and Howard University. Dr. Locke was the mentor for numerous artists of color, and through his example he inspired and identified numerous artists and fathered many remarkable careers.

On 8 May 1941, Mrs. Roosevelt was escorted from Midway Airport to the beautiful new art facility at Thirty-Eighth and Michigan Avenue. For security reasons a blockade was established around the area bordered by Michigan Avenue and Thirty-Seventh Place to Thirty-Ninth Street. Large crowds had gathered in an effort to see the celebrated first lady. There was the traditional ribbon cutting ceremony followed by the grand tour.

After the tour the guests of honor and several hundred invited guests reconvened at the Savoy Ballroom at Forty Seventh and South Parkway to attend the dedication banquet. Most of those who had participated in significant ways in the opening of the center had been invited to attend the banquet. One Chicagoan, J. Livert Kelly, felt he had been treated unjustly because he never received his expected invitation in the mail. Mr. Kelly held the distinctive position of being the first "life member" of the South Side Community Art Center by contributing the required $100.00. The prominent socialites on the committee voiced concerns related to Mr. Kelly's life style and the source of his
income. They felt his presence at the speaker’s table with such notable persons as Mrs. Roosevelt and Dr. Locke could present a clear opportunity for embarrassment. It was overwhelmingly determined Mr. Kelly would not be invited.

Mr. Kelly, of course, heard about this obvious slighting and he retaliated by announcing, with or without an invitation, he would be attending the banquet and that he would make his presence known. However, the members used their considerable influence and with a few words strategically placed Mr. Kelly was picked up "for questioning" by the local police, just hours before Mrs. Roosevelt was expected. He was restrained until the guests were safely out of Chicago. Some artists also felt they had been locked out. They, too, felt they had to go to the extreme of threatening to disrupt the well coordinated activities in order to receive some kind of representation.

David Ross was chosen as a spokesperson for the artists. He was informed he would be granted five minutes on the program. The artists selected Margaret to write the address which David would deliver on their behalf. Following is a copy of that speech.

This addition to our community, of the South Side Art Center, built by many sincere and hard-working persons, means much to the local artist. This is what it means from the artist’s point of view.

Five years ago, we had practically no place in our community where we could exhibit our paintings and practically no audience. We had to lasso people, cowboy fashion, in order to get them to see our work. We used to meet from studio to studio to draw and paint
and talk about art and other problems as artists. People then thought that paintings were just to look at and never considered buying any to grace the walls of their homes. From our small group came forth one, George E. Neal. George was a pioneer in the development for just such an institution as we have here today. He envisioned an Art Center when he opened up his studio at Thirty Third and Michigan Avenue to us neophytes. He took us on sketching tours. We visited Downtown galleries and the Art Institute. George E. Neal died too young at the age of 34 was the person who, more than any other, we felt was responsible for the sustained interest and development in art which is manifested in many of the young Chicago artists. He died just when he was on the brink of gaining marginal recognition as an artist. He certainly should be remembered for his contribution. George Neal, myself, and other artists rolled up our sleeves and renovated his Coach house into a working studio and school. People from the neighborhood came often to watch the sketch classes. Every other month or so we would have a showing of our work in the summertime. Few people came in the winters because there was only one coal stove which wasn’t too effective.

The end of that "Art Center," such as it was, came with a fire which almost completely destroyed the studio and forty paintings of three of the artists who were having their first show. Thus it was that the golden opportunity for the development of the young Negro artist, hard up for food, materials and schooling, came with the Federal Arts Projects. Here was our chance to stop shining shoes all week and just paint on Sundays. This gave us a means of learning as well as earning our living as artists.

We were not then and are not now complimented by the people who had the romantic idea that we liked to live in garrets, wear odd clothes and go around with emaciated faces painting for fun; living until the day we died and hoping that our paintings would be discovered in some dusty attic fifty year later and then we would be famous. As persons who were creatively endowed, we had to express our creativity and our humanity. We believed that the purpose of art was to record the times. As young black artists, we looked around and recorded in our various media what we saw. It was not from our imagination that we painted slums and ghettos, or sad, hollow-eyed black men, women and children. These were the people around us. We were part of them. They were us. Thus, the coming of this Community Art Center has opened up new hope and
vistas to all of us.

As teachers, some of us were able to unearth, encourage and develop dormant talents of many. As artists ourselves, creatively, we are able to experiment and work in many techniques and processes which were denied to us before because we could not afford to pay to go to art schools or because we were discriminated against as Negroes. We feel that with this Art Center, a worthwhile contribution is being made to all the people of the community. This Art Center is an opportunity for self-expression and development for all people. We truly feel that art belongs to all of the people and should be enjoyed by all.

Now, in this critical war time period, we have our plan for defense; a plan in defense of culture. The opportunities which we have now, in the coming of the Art Center, we did not have before. We realize as you all do, their great benefits to our community. This quickens our determination to see to it that this Art Center, the first cultural institution of its kind on the South Side, and one of the few in the country shall stand and flourish.

This Art Center presents the means for the distribution of culture. It is thriving and in full bud now and we feel that it would be pathetic and graphic should any obstacle loom forward to hamper or destroy it. We, the artists pledge to continue to work untiringly with the admirable and socially minded Sponsors Committee to see that the South Side Art Center continues to grow and serve the needs of our community. To this end, we pledge ourselves!  

After he delivered this speech Mrs. Roosevelt was given a painting created by an artist from the WPA era, Charles Davis. Then there were more speeches, one each, of course, from Mrs. Roosevelt and Dr. Locke as well as the other eminent guests. By the end of the day an exhausted committee felt they could be proud the work they had done.

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14Margaret Burroughs, "Speech Delivered On Behalf of the Artists of The South Side Community Art Center," presented on the Occasion of its Dedication by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, 8 May 1941, Private Papers of Margaret Burroughs, Chicago.
Shortly after Chicagoans were pleased to read a copy of an article written by Mrs. Roosevelt entitled "My Day." It was syndicated nationwide. This account was written in the Chicago Defender, May 1941. She wrote

At 3:15 we went to the South Side Community Art Center to dedicate their building. Chicago has long been a center of Negro art. Many Negro artists have had a hard time getting their training as many artists do, even when they have achieved a certain amount of recognition. The Center is situated in the old home of Charles Comisky, who was once a great baseball magnate. It had become a rooming house before the South Side Art Center bought it a year ago. With the aid of Federal money it has been converted to its present purposes. There are classes in drawing, oil and water color painting, poster lettering and composition. Gradually the teaching of some of the crafts and other skills will be added. It was all a most delightful experience and I am happy to have been able to spend this time in Chicago and to assist at these ceremonies."  

During the first year the Center was the site of numerous events; art exhibitions, lectures, teas, parties, receptions and classes. The archival records report at least twenty five exhibitions were reviewed by twenty eight thousand spectators. Twelve thousand children and adults enrolled in the various classes. The second year was even more notable adding additional exhibitions by prominent artists, and monthly musicals. Poetry classes were added. Gwendolyn Brooks, poet laureate of Illinois, Davis Roberts a Pulitzer Prize Winner and Margaret Danner were all students in these classes taught by

19Dr. Margaret Burroughs, "Saga of Chicago’s South Side Community Art Center 1938-1943," TD, Private Papers, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 12.
Inez Cunningham Stark Boulton. Boulton's involvement in the program is perhaps another barometer that can be utilized to evaluate the quality of the instruction being offered.

Equally many artists were being molded and shaped by taking advantage of the classes at the Center. Notables evolving from these courses and working to build the Center included Eldizer Corter, Charles Sebree, Gordon Rogers Parks, Charles White, William Carter, Bernard Goss, and of course Margaret herself.\textsuperscript{16} In later years the name of noted sculptor, Richard Hunt could be added. Hunt's very first one man show was held at South Side Art Center.\textsuperscript{17}

Just getting the center opened, staffed and frequented was not all that signaled an end to their concerns. It wasn't very long before the word was out the federal funding would not be forthcoming. The Association would again be compelled to focus on fund raising. In support, the Chicago Defender ran an editorial designed to appeal to the conscience of the people who had benefited from the diverse services offered by the center. The article stated that 50,278 patrons had in some capacity utilized the facility. In 1942, 79 percent of the visitors were youth and the remaining 21 percent adults. The thrust of the article pointed out it was imperative the center get the financial

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., 14.

\textsuperscript{17}Margaret Burroughs "Untitled Essay on the Founding of South Side Community Center," TD, Private Papers, Margaret Burroughs, Chicago.
support required to keep the Art Center opened. Committees were reactivated. Margaret, now married, was known as Margaret Goss, and served as corresponding secretary and a member of the board of directors.

The Annual Artists and Models Balls continued to play an integral role in bringing in significant sums of monies as well as providing a forum for practicing up and coming artisans. High profile figures such as Marva Trotter Louis, wife of the heavy weight champion, Joe Louis, worked as producers. This had a magnetic effect and draw well established and talented artists to participate. Margaret was granted an opportunity to direct flamboyant presentations. Talent abounded and many persons credited these activities with getting them their beginning on the stage. One such personality was Carmencita Romero who after the 1943 productions went on to apprentice with Katherine Dunhams who was teaching in Madrid. Ms. Romero gained prominence for herself and remained involved and enthralled with this media of expression throughout her lifetime. The eminent artist Elizabeth Catlett White Mora won a Grand Prize for her designs.

The infancy period of the Art Center, the first three years, was beleaguered by a tug of war between the prestigious predominately black board of directors and the artists. The artists felt they should have greater input concerning the affairs at the Art Center. The Board's
membership included only a meager representation of artists. Their voice was most often drowned out by the combined resonance of the conglomeration of the entrepreneurs and other white collar professionals dominating the board.

Board members were quite content to permit the artists to attend to the menial tasks of building maintenance, hanging exhibits, or teaching. When it came to participating in major decisions making, as related to the overall management of the center, it was made painfully clear the artist's input was not welcomed. The board members felt since they [the artists] did not have any real money, and no significant prestige outside of the community, they, consequently, had no vehicle for influence.

For many of us, particularly artists like myself, Bernard Goss, Charles Davis, Eldzoir Cortor, William Carter, and numerous others, the Art Center was our life. We were at the Center during all of our spare hours. We were deeply dedicated. We taught classes scrubbed floors, painted walls, fought and parried with the Board of Directors, and officers, were kicked out of the Center, regrouped, planned new strategies, bound up our wounds and limped back into the battle with reinforcements. 18

They ran things as long as the Center remained a positive entity to be associated with. Once the effects of its ostentatious emergence began to fade, once the reporters and cameramen left, so did the loyalty and support of these kinds of participants. The dominating influences of these elite bourgeoisie as officers on the board all but

18 Margaret Burroughs, "Untitled Notes on South Side Art Center," Private Collection, Dr. Burroughs, Chicago, 2.
completely dissipated during the 1950s. Their public rationale for their disassociation indicated that during the McCarthy Period they had ascertained "the organization had been infiltrated by Communists" hence a logical withdrawal of support. 19 Forty years later we find, this disparity, this conflict between the Board and the artist still exists to some degree today. 20

The Center was a place of focus for the artist not just an opportunity to be in the limelight; so they continued throughout the lean years to do whatever was needed to keep the center a vibrant beacon. Since the Association had secured the property as a not-for-profit entity, the Center was held in public trust of the members of the community. When the federal funds stopped after 1943, the board wasn't concerned about loosing the building but money was sorely needed to maintain and staff the Center. The hardworking supporters, board and artists can proudly recount that to date, 1993, the Center has never been closed.

In her essay "Saga of Chicago's South Side Community Art Center 1938-1943" Dr. Burroughs wrote the following.

The South Side Community Art Center still stands as a Beacon of Culture. Through the years, in good times and bad, the Art Center has acted as a catalyst which gave great inspiration and impetus to our development

19Burroughs, "Saga of Chicago's South Side Community Art Center (1938-1943)," 17.

20Ibid., 18.
as artists. The Art Center’s activities totally involved all of us. Our former artist group, (The Arts Crafts Guild), had dissolved with the opening of the Art Center. We were now the Artist Committee of the South Side Community Art Center. It included myself, Bernard Goss, Charles White, Charles Davis, Marion Perkins, David Ross, Ellsworth Terrance, Mary Jackson McGee, Eldizier Cortor, William Carter and numerous others.

It hasn’t been easy. In the past the South Side Community Art Center has struggled but it has managed to make do. The names are legion of those who are indebted to this W.P.A. Art Center. They include Gordon Rogers Parks, Charles White, Eldzier Cortor, Gwendolyn Brooks, Margaret Danner, Gerald Cogbill, Charles Sebree, Marion Perkins, Simon Gordon and along with many, many others, not in the least one, Margaret Taylor Goss Burroughs.

The experiences at the Art Center affected and encouraged all of our careers. And we were grateful. I personally am deeply indebted to the Art Center. My knowledge and expertise in organizing and working with people was honed in the over 30 years that I labored with the South Side Community Art Center. At the time of its founding, I was the youngest member of the Board (age 21). I was an artist. I was the "Jane Higgins" and the "Go-For." I kept my eyes wide open and learned much from such cultural leaders as K. Marie Moore, Pauline Kigh Reed, Katherine Dickerson and others. I served for many years in the post of Recording Secretary, then the president and finally as the Chairman of the Board. That was in 1952. Much of what I learned at the South Side Community Art Center motivated me and a few others who were oriented toward history and heritage to believe that there was room in Chicago for yet another cultural institution whose main emphasis would be Black Pride and Heritage. 21

The South Side Community Art Center to date "stands today as the oldest black cultural center in the nation and the only one remaining from the W.P.A. period." 22 The Center

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21 Ibid., 19-20.

was primarily the impetus behind the evolution of internationally famous Charles White, the first black Art Directors Club of Chicago, Fitzhugh Dinkins heading the Art Department of Johnson Publishing Company, founding of the Lake Meadows Art Fair and the National Conference of Artists, the DuSable Museum of African American History, and the Kuumba Workshop. On 17 June 1981, Dr. Burroughs offered remarks at the Fortieth Anniversary of the Center. Her closing statements included "observance of the forty years is a year beginning. Let us look forward to the fiftieth year of the South Side Art Center. Join the Art Center. Build and expand the Art Center. Help to usher it into the twentieth century. Remember, all else passes. Art alone endures."  

"Dr. Margaret Burroughs, "Remarks: South Side Art Center 40th Anniversary," 17 June 1981, TD, Private Papers, Dr. Burroughs, Chicago, 4-5."
CHAPTER III
BURROUGH: AS EDUCATOR, ARTIST, WRITER

The Setting

When Margaret Taylor graduated from high school Herbert C. Hoover, the thirty first president of the United States, held office. He was succeeded by Franklin D. Roosevelt who presided over the country through the era of the Great Depression and our involvement in World War II. Americans had diligently watched the activity of the war in Europe, sitting by the radio, listening intently to reports of Hitler’s armies blitz krigeing their way across the continent, destroying, berating and conquering.

Roosevelt was involved in conferences and summits hoping to keep America in it's neutral status. However, everything changed on 7 December 1941.

At the end of this sad and bloody day, 7 December 1941, the 'day that shall live in infamy' as President Roosevelt said of it, 2403 American sailors, soldiers, marines, and civilian had been killed, and 1178 more wounded; 149 planes had been destroyed on the ground or in water, the Arizona was destroyed beyond possible repair, Oklahoma shattered and capsized, four other battleships were resting on the bottom or run a ground to prevent sinking, two naval auxiliaries, destroyed,
three destroyers and a few other vessels badly damaged.¹

The Japanese had attacked our military base in Pearl Harbor. When the bombing ceased, about a two hour duration the Navy had sacrificed more than three times the number of lives that had been lost in the Spanish American War and World War I combined.²

The war impacted on the home front as well as in the war zones. Families experienced devastating blows. Fathers were taken away, inducted, and mothers went to work to subsidize the shortage of men to fill positions. The enrollment in child care and nursery centers erupted and swelled. "Juvenile delinquency also was on the rise court cases involving juveniles rose 56 percent. Especially alarming was the rise of offenses by young girls."³

America was no longer a nation searching for positions for the numerous unemployed being faced with a shortage of workers for available positions. "The number of women in the aircraft industry grew from 4,000 to 360,000."⁴ Individual income flourished, people were getting out of


³Ibid., 117.

⁴Ibid.
debt and now the concern was not the depressed state of the economy, but the inflated state of the economy. Roosevelt again found himself going before Congress in January 1942, seeking legislation to fix the economy. They implemented the Emergency Price Control Act which allowed for ceilings on specific prices and rents in defense areas, as well as subsidizing producers in an effort to put the skids on rising prices. Rationing of automobiles, shoes, sugar, coffee, meat, cigarettes, and gasoline was the status quo. The black market bulged and created further problems for the Office of Price Administration, (OPA). Roosevelt felt compelled to exert his authority as chief executive officer and

sent a special message to Congress on September 7, 1942, demanding action by the first of October, Roosevelt added an extraordinary threat: "In the event that the Congress should fail to act, and act adequately, I shall accept the responsibility, and I will act. Congress there upon authorized Roosevelt to stabilize prices and wages at their September 15 levels. The President also froze farm prices, extended rent control throughout the nation and forbade wage or salary rises without government approval." 

Price controls accomplished only a percentage of the inflation problems. By the spring of 1943 and lasting for the duration of the war the cost of living rise was contained within 1.5 percent. Another historical legislative act that was implemented was the enactment of the Revenue Act of 1942 "which

\[5\] Ibid., 119.
Roosevelt rightly called the greatest tax bill, in American history, was designed to raise the gigantic sum of seven billion dollars in additional revenue annually.6 This bill accomplished several things. It increased taxes on those in higher income levels by attaching an "excess profits tax of 90 percent (10 percent of which was refundable after the war); a corporate — income levy of up to forty percent, and sharply raised estate and gift taxes." The effects of the impact the year was having on the American lifestyle was like a double edged sword, influencing both negatively and positively.

In many aspects of American life, the war quickened the tempo of change [in college, student 'accelerated'], but the changes wrought were not always for the better. As a farm agent reflected: 'Looks like the war has speeded up every kind of process, good and bad, in this country.'

The social ferment had the enormous impact on race relations. Many Negroes moved from the Deep South; wherever they went they met the special kinds of humiliation which told them they were not accepted as American. When they gave their blood to the Red cross, the blood was segregated. War plants cried for more help, but Negroes often found themselves turned away at the factory gate. In the Army they were segregated in barracks and mess halls; in addition most of them were assigned to menial labor. When white soldiers boarded troopships, the band played 'God Bless America; when Negroes marched up the plank, the band switched to 'The Dark Town Stutters 'Ball'. But Negroes refused to submit passively to the denial of their rights.8

Just as devastatingly as we had been catapulted into this

6Ibid.

7Ibid.

8Ibid.
war our government initiated activities just as lethal to bring an end to the war, the developing of the atomic bomb and the subsequent bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, annihilating more than 96,175 people and

on 2 September 1945, General MacArthur, General Umerge, the Japanese foreign ministry, and representative of Great Britain, China, Russia, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and France, signed the surrender documents on the deck of the battleship Missouri, a few miles from the spot where Commodore Perry's treaty had been signed ninety two years before."

Harry Truman was inaugurated as the president of the United States on 12 April 1945. The alliance between Communist Russia and America during the war years proved to stratum be a strategy of convenience; the two basic philosophical ideologies would soon become evident and polarized. The atomic bomb and later the hydrogen bomb would become the ultimate weapon of blackmail designed to paralyze one's opponent with the overshadowing fear that they might be used. It was ex-Prime Minister Churchill who popularized the term "iron curtain" in a speech he presented in March 1946.

Churchill's 'iron curtain speech was another giant step into the chilly waters of the 'cold war' a phrase used to describe the intense ideological warfare of the 1940s and later. The term generally referred to the diplomatic deadlocks and military confrontations short of direct bloodshed that developed between the Communist world and the

*Ibid., 1045.*
capitalistic world during these postwar decades.  

The wartime cooperation between the Soviets and the West, the creation of the United Nations, and the frightful power of the atomic bomb raised hopes that this truly would be the war to end all wars. Just three months into the new year, former "Prime Minister Winston Churchill, turned out of office in the 1945 elections, addressed a college audience at Fulton, Missouri. He told the gathering and the world, an iron curtain has descended across the continent, allowing 'police governments' to rule Eastern Europe."  

Years of fear, accusations, liable and mistrust were to evolve from the atmosphere of anti-communism. Senator Joseph McCarthy became an advocate for the right-wing constituents during these bitter years. He was a freshman senator, who was elected from Wisconsin based on a platform, encrusted in a lie, concerning his wartime service record and he used a smear campaign strategy against his opponents. McCarthy was an alcoholic who took bribes from lobbyist and was labeled "the worst senator" in Washington. He desperately needed an issue or a cause to pull him out of obscurity and into the public eye. 

One day he came across outdated documents relating to

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old investigations concerning Communists in the employment of the American government. In February 1950, he stated at a women's club meeting that he had a list of 205 men in the State Department who were Communist spies. His announcement seemed short on supportive factual data and in fact elements of the story, the figures, fluctuated each time he told the story. Some claimed he was carrying reams of evidence in his briefcase. Others purported the only thing in the case was a bottle of bourbon. Since he failed to produce substantiating evidence it was assumed that all of this would fall by the wayside and dissipate. Fear nurtured these accusations and mob mentality fertilized the atmosphere.

The findings of the Senate investigation were ignored in lieu of the sensationalism the newspaper headlines popularized. Anything that refuted or negated his accusations was sentenced to obscurity being buried on the back pages of the newspaper.

Time has altered the meaning of "McCarthyism." In 1950 it meant a brave, patriotic stand against Communism; with the broad support of the media and people. Now it has come to mean a smear campaign of groundless accusations from which the accused cannot escape, because professions of innocence become admissions of guilt and only confessions are accepted. Many of those who came before McCarthy as well as many who testified before the powerful House Un-American Activities Committee, (HUAC), were willing to point fingers at others to save their own careers and reputations. To fight back was to be tarred with the McCarthy's "Communist sympathizer" brush. For many, particularly in the entertainment industries of radio, motion pictures, and television that meant "blacklisting" that ruined careers. In this cynical atmosphere, laws of
evidence and constitutional guarantees didn't apply to devious Communists.\textsuperscript{12}

This siege went on for four years. McCarthy became one of the most powerful persons in Washington. If he needed to see President Eisenhower, Eisenhower felt pressured and compelled to make room on his calendar. "He even had to clear appointments through him, and McCarthy's rampage forced President Eisenhower to institute a new round of 'loyalty programs to prove that he too was tough on communism."\textsuperscript{13}

Finally, McCarthy challenged an advocate that proved to be a formidable adversary, it was the United States Army. He took on this foe in an effort to clean the Pentagon of all of its Communists. This time Eisenhower was very defensive and rallied his influence and support to defend the army. This was personal, the army had been his life. They did not stand still and allow McCarthy to attack without staging a counter attack.

Edward R. Murrow, a popular radio reporter, managed to make the war come alive for Americans at home. He featured a television program which initiated our present \textit{Sixty Minutes}. He simply showed a variety of clips of McCarthy without cleaning them up, where he made numerous blunders and he himself became responsible for his own downfall,

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., 326-327

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., 327
revealing a seedy side of himself.

During the thirty six days of the Army - McCarthy hearings, McCarthy finally came undone, his cudgel like attacks, remorseless crudeness, and unfounded accusations being revealed in an unpleasant light. The daily televised hearings dissolved that Joseph Welch, the respected lawyer representing the army, turned the tables on McCarthy and routed him in public. The hearings ended inconclusively, but the rest of the Senate smelled blood. By the end of 1954, McCarthy was condemned by his peers, and his public support eroded. His hold on the Senate and the public gone, McCarthy spiraled downward in a pathetic drunken tailspin. He died in May 1957 of health problems brought on by his alcoholism.14

He died of acute hepatitis failure. His name would be remembered. His anti communist crusade had not uncovered one communist working in sensitive government positions.15 The United States was to again become enmeshed in another war, this time to avert the threat of the spread of Communism. The war began June 1950 when Communist North Korean troops invaded South Korea a direct impingement of the U.N. international peace agreement and called for its participating countries to extend aid to South Korea. A cease fire agreement was reached in 1953.

Educator

Embracing womanhood was an ever challenging exploration for Margaret Goss. She had successfully maneuvered her way through infatuation, love, marriage and motherhood and had

14Ibid., 328.

further evolved into an educator, artist and writer. Her life was always flavored with numerous enterprises undertaken simultaneously. Early in her life and throughout her years of formal schooling Margaret exhibited interest in several creative areas. The visual arts always possessed a magnetic genial charm for her. Miss Ryan had awakened her curiosity for the arresting and entrancing art of writing. It is perhaps the love and respect she felt for her mentor, Miss Ryan, that influenced her to pursue education as a career. She had been greatly inspired and awakened by this educator, and their relationship greatly influenced her to become a teacher. Goss felt if she could be to other youth what Miss Ryan had been in her life she would have made an important contribution to humankind.

From 1940 through 1945 Margaret worked as a substitute teacher. For one year, 1945-1946, she worked as an elementary school teacher and then was assigned to DuSable High School as an art teacher, where she remained for nearly a quarter of a century, twenty three years. During this expanse of time Dr. Burroughs instructed, motivated, molded, encouraged, comforted, advised and befriended thousands of students. Dr. Burroughs knew from her own experiences how a giving, caring, competent instructor could impact positively on the life of a young person. As a teacher one is in a position to build up the self esteem and foster encouragement in pursuit of goals and dreams, or one could
decimate a child's sense of self-worth and dismantle hopes and dreams day by day piece by piece. Burroughs remembers teachers who impacted on her esteem. Unfortunately, many of us can easily remember teachers having a negative affect on us.

Dr. Burroughs' philosophy about education includes the tenant "a good teacher must demand excellence. If excellence is demanded, we will get it. If mediocrity is accepted that is what you will get."16 Dr. Burroughs enumerates the following characteristics that are necessary in order to be considered a good teacher. "A good teacher must possess enthusiasm, a positive outlook, must like people and children, must inspire, must have vision, must have pride in heritage, must let the child know that someone believes in him or her and expects great things of them and lastly must inspire confidence."17

She went on to further expound on the strong feelings, that because children are our immortality, our future, they should be afforded every possible opportunity to learn, to grow, and mature as the valuable entities they are.

Parents have certain responsibilities and should teach their children the difference between right and wrong, and the differences between the virtues and the vices. Parents should take a real interest in their children and their education. Parents are responsible for the actions and behavior of their children. There are also

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16 Margaret Burroughs, Untitled, TD; Margaret Burroughs Private Papers, Chicago, 8.

17 Ibid., 8.
certain responsibilities that we should hold the teachers of our children to.\textsuperscript{18}

Dr. Burroughs tried to set an example in front of her students. She tried to present herself in such a manner that the students looked to her as a caring, conscientious adult; even a mother figure. Margaret Burroughs was a staunch supporter of the theory, when you teach a child, you don't restrict your instruction to information characteristic of the subject area you are teaching; rather it is important to adopt a holistic approach, teaching, administering to the whole child.

Further she felt strongly that African American teachers, working with African American children, have unique responsibilities.

Teachers must have knowledge of true African and African American history including: 1) Ancient African history and contributions to civilization, 2) early man - Zinjanthropus, 3) the missing pages of American history, 4) great Black Americans, 5) the struggle against slavery, 6) the role of Blacks in the Civil War, and 7) Black historical personalities.\textsuperscript{19}

She goes on to refer to a passage she acknowledges is from DuBois when he stated, "the child represents our own immortality. We may, as we must, pass off the scene. However, we will live on through our children and their deeds and actions." She continues in her own works to assert.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.
The education of our children is of utmost importance. As in the African culture, we should train children how to be adults, or have them go through the rules of passage. In total; we have the children, the parents, the school, the church and the community; all are responsible to address themselves to and to act on behalf of our children, who are the immortal children and who indeed represent our future, my future and our future. 20

During her years of teaching, Margaret noted the texts used throughout the system were saturated with biases, racial prejudices and narrow one sided perspectives on history. It is widely purported that textbooks are the primary resource for the dissemination of information within the classroom. In an essay on this topic, Dr. Burroughs reminds her readers, textbooks do not teach children, instructors do. "The well informed teacher can instill understanding in her students irrespective of biases and prejudices in textbooks, and the poorly informed teacher, especially if she herself has racial prejudices, can undermine even the best text." 21 She felt, resolutely, that teachers needed to prepare themselves by engaging in homework in any area in which they knew they were not as competent as they needed to be. "She became increasingly disappointed with school texts, however, which ignored or trivialized the significant achievements of black people." 22

20 Ibid., 9.

21 Margaret Burroughs, Untitled, TD; Margaret Burroughs, Private Papers, Chicago, 8.

In March, 1966, Margaret Burroughs wrote an article for the _Negro Digest_ entitled, "Identity For The Negro Child: Integration of Learning Materials...Now!" In this article Mrs. Burroughs addresses the issue of the real integration of learning materials and not merely applying the letter of the law which required children of color to be placed within the same school setting as white children. She writes,

> It should be evident that integration in education is not achieved by merely permitting Negro and white children to sit together in the same classrooms or to attend the same schools. An examination of the learning materials which have been used is in order. They, too, should be imbued with the same democratic concept which brought forth the historic decision."

Investigations into a variety of tomes used in classrooms disclosed that children weren't shortchanged merely by virtue of the fact they experienced segregated learning environments, but by being introduced to references exhibiting limited or omitted information. "In general, either there is slight reference or complete omission of the Negroes's cultural and historical contributions or such materials are ridden with misconceptions, stereotypes, and slanting distortions".

Mrs. Burroughs sets a case not only for blacks when she states the truth that representatives from every

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24 Ibid.
nationality have forged a place in history, and should have that place in the academics and in the creative arts. Everyone would benefit from an accurate recording of facts.

We cannot expect the Negro child to have positive images to identify with if he is seldom presented with a positive image. The void is not only evident in the books he reads, but is equally apparent in the pictures and films he sees, and in the stories he is told about people who have made heroic contributions. 25

Mrs. Burroughs recommended an assertive role for teachers, administrators and specialists in Negro literature and history. All involved should join efforts to inculcate data for revisions in printed materials. These changes should reflect the inclusion of missing information of other ethnic groups who have been systematically ignored. This could be costly but omission even costlier. 26

In an interview with Marilyn Colbert McDowell, a former art student of Margaret Burroughs, in 1966, this writer interviewer, was able to ascertain a verbal portrait, a profile of Dr. Burroughs from the student’s perspective. Mrs. McDowell asserts that Mrs. Burroughs was often more of a history teacher than an art teacher. Burroughs’ numerous art assignment were always enhanced when she shared personal anecdotes. She would encourage the students to explore probing issues related to their African American culture and history. Mrs. McDowell recalls

25 Ibid., 32.
26 Ibid., 34.
"Every day was like a history lesson to us. I always thought she was ahead of her time . . . . She would tell us everything she had been through and why she felt this way or that way. It was more history than art. She encouraged us to get our heads on straight. I was always hung up on what she had to say."

McDowell remembered all of her classmates listened attentively to Mrs. Burroughs while they worked on their art projects. When someone raised a question she would patiently explain and most often demonstrate the process until it was understood. She recalls that Burroughs did not grade her student’s projects on how closely they could imitate life but "it was obvious that what was really important to her was that you worked up to the best of your ability."

When she told her students how beautiful the colors, patterns and textiles of places like Africa, India, and Mexico were she would come to class wearing beautiful clothing from these and other cultures. She was not daunted by the criticism she often received from her peers when she boldly rejected the traditional dress code for teachers. Her students were impressed with her fortitude and her dignity as she told them over and over how beautiful they

27Marilyn Colbert McDowell of Chicago, interview by author, Chicago, 16 April 1993, Chicago, tape recording, Chicago.

28Ibid.
were. McDowell states

Her thing was, you can do anything anyone else can do and possibly do it better. I didn’t know anything about blackness until I met her. . . . I felt important.

She would be very disappointed with the surface display if that’s all there was. Her thing was what was on the inside. It really wasn’t about the business of looking black, but being black. They would lose what they had but I would never lose mine because it went deep inside me and I got that from her.\textsuperscript{29}

This interview, coupled with the contents of the myriad of personal letters from ex-students over the twenty three years she spent at DuSable, and the ten years spent at Kennedy-King College, laid a firm foundation, painting the portrait of a teacher who was well respected and sincerely admired. Many of these students graduated and went on to establish professional careers of their own. Like Marilyn, they attributed their enlightened attitudes about a higher sense of self esteem, and an illuminated awareness of where people of color seem to fit in the over arching picture of a multicultural society, to Mrs. Burroughs. All of the letters include some statement of gratitude to Dr. Burroughs for being a strong person, who as an instructor, deemed her responsibility, to teach them something about their historical background and clarifying what all that had to do with them and their lives. They would mention the debt they felt they owed her, because of the pride she instilled, not

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
just in word but in deeds.

Ramon Price has known Dr. Burroughs for more than half of a century. He first came to know about her vicariously through his older sister who was enrolled in her art class at DuSable High School. She often returned home from school talking about this very special teacher, Mrs. Goss. She spoke of how independent this lady was, both in her teaching style, her appearance, and her conversation. When Ramon enrolled in high school he too was assigned Margaret Goss as his art teacher. Later she would also teach Ramon's younger sibling.

Mrs. Goss became well acquainted with Mrs. Price and her children and often involved them in extra curricular activities, like the South Side Community Art Center where she taught classes on Saturdays. All of the Price children displayed exceptional inherent talent in the fine arts. Margaret deemed it her responsibility, as a teacher, to arouse and activate those sometimes dormant inventive potentialities. Ramon Price, former student and co-worker of Burroughs, is now the curator of the DuSable Museum. Mr. Prices account is congruent with the account Mrs. Colbert McDowell gives concerning Mrs. Goss' ability to transmit a sense of historical awareness, of the contributions made by people of color, into the mainstream of historical events. She further instilled an awakened sense of pride predicated on the supplementary knowledge of African American history.
Mrs. Goss (Dr. Burroughs) also stimulated a propensity for learning, reading and speculative introspection among students in her classes, attesting to her insatiable appetite for involvement with the arts and subsequently to establish an atmosphere wherein her students would also catch the contagious enthusiasm. Both Mr. Price and Mrs. McDowell feel that as an art instructor, her concern was not in realistic renderings or photographic replications, but in the process, the channeling art could provide for self expression. Mr. Price admits that he himself possessed personal individual talent, while Mrs. McDowell confirms she showed no such inclination. Both, however, earned grades of A. Mrs. Goss' ability to motivate students with dissimilar talents and interest was well known and respected among her students. The students were also intrigued by her flamboyant unconventional appearance and they registered even more respect for the conviction they felt it must have taken to stand behind her principles. Her actions were the most effective exemplification she could manifest. Although she was somewhat of an enigma to them, they accepted the love and devotion she represented. (For a transcript of the interview, see Appendix A.)

Mrs. Goss (Burroughs) and Her Accusers: The Federal Bureau of Investigation

Many of the characteristics that incited and engaged the youth in her class were diametrically juxtaposed to the
viewpoint of some other adults. In his interview, Mr. Price reveals that, as a student, he was aware of the fact that Mrs. Goss was considered an anomaly by her peers and supervisors.

Here's Dr. Burroughs who is maintaining her integrity and her dignity even though she is being looked down upon by principals, district superintendents. Dr. Burroughs should have been an art supervisor; thank God she wasn’t because she would have been taken out of the classroom.

I know how resentful I was that a teacher, I knew as a student, who was about absolutely nothing, got to be a district superintendent over Dr. Burroughs. It just hurt my heart and I know it must have bothered her too, but as I say, thank God, for those things, you know there's good in everything. And so, thank goodness. I'm sorry that Dr. Burroughs had to suffer for whatever reason, but thank goodness that she did, because there wouldn't be all these hundreds of people talking about Dr. Burroughs taught them art, but they all seem to have an increased appreciation for things.

Question: Were you aware of, or do you know whether or not Dr. Burroughs was interested in pursuing any of the positions or promotions you mentioned?

Answer: Yes, I'm sure she did because there were certain exams. I just don't remember what that system was like but it was primarily through performance evaluations and her evaluations would be perfect but she just wasn’t what they wanted, what they were looking for, she didn’t look like what they were looking for.30

During her teaching days at DuSable High School, and while Ramon was still a student, Mrs. Burroughs was accused of being a communist. This was during the early fifties, the explosive atmosphere of McCarthyism, when accusations permeated the media, the workplace, and in an diverse

30Ramon Price, interview by author, 4 March 1993, Chicago, tape recording, Chicago.
segments of the population, lasting for four years from 1950-1954. Dr. Burroughs had been known as a staunch supporter of Paul Robeson, a confessed communist. She kept company with, and entertained people, whose politics, the conservative middle of the roaders, considered too far to the left. Coupled with other avant garde behavior, many persons found what they construed as a presumptively logical metamorphosis from a loyal true blue American citizen into a red communist. Rumors and accusations were rampant and became epidemic throughout the teaching community. The Chicago Board of Education reacted to the times by formulating a loyalty oath which each member was obliged to sign. Those who refused had their paychecks withheld, and were targeted as suspect. Mrs. Burroughs had already become the victim of allegations and innuendo and initially refused to sign the oath. Ramon Price recalls:

I actually went to her home and tried to convince her that she should sign this statement in which she was declaring that she was not, and had not and never was thinking in terms of the progressive movement. Yeah, I remember it because I thought that she was going to be hurt. You see I had an uncle who, just because he had been associating with white people, who had lost his job in the post office in St. Louis, because he had been labeled radical, a red. Knowing that, I was fearful that Mrs. Goss would lose her job.

No, not only did she not back down she never once stopped the associations with those people, she continue to go to political rallies, she was highly visible, you know, in and amongst people who were known to be left of center, she never backed down... I know personally many of the people who talked about her, who ostracized her, I know those same people today, and some of those same people Margaret embraces and they regard themselves as being her very good friend, that
upon occasions would ask her to appear, and are very happy to have their pictures taken with her. I know those people myself I haven’t seen the report that she got from the government that identifies them by name, those people, but when I was a kid they told me that I would do well to disassociate myself from her. Those same people got to my mother and told her that this woman was leading me astray and all that sort of thing... and as I say she is responsible for my political awareness being what it is now and is directly due to the association I had with other people who encouraged you to read ... I know about that and she didn’t back down one bit can you imagine the kinds of criticism she was having .... She actually, at one time, was literally ostracized from the art center, the center that she helped to found.  

Burroughs was forced to confront the accusations by responding to a summons by the Chicago Board of Education where she was subjected to extensive questioning. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Dr. Burroughs where she recounts events surrounding and encompassing the event.

Question: Dr. Burroughs would you please discuss your experience related to the McCarthy era?

Answer: I met people who were socially involved in other things, some were whites some of the people were leftists they were introducing new ideas but I didn’t belong to any of the YCL’s, Young Communist League, but I was around people who did. I met people who had this new thought which I was interested in. People who were, Blacks who were interested in civil rights, some of them were communist yes. There was one gentleman by the name of Ray Hanboro bless his soul, who was a communist, and we lived next door to him, and so forth. He used to let us come by and he would talk to us young people about Black History and things like that because black history at that time, this was back in the early forties, black history was considered subversive. Anybody talking about black folks who achieved this or

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achieved that, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, for
God’s sake don’t be talking about Nat Turner and
Denmark Vissey, people led slave revolts, that was kind
of bootleg. In fact I even had to bootleg it in my
classes because by this time I’m teaching at DuSable
High School and I would be telling the kind about
Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner Truth and everything like
that and how we should be proud of our heritage, of our
blackness and I’d look up and the principal would be
coming in the door. And I would say something like,
Betsy Ross you know she really sewed that flag didn’t
she and the kids would say oh yes, and Patrick Henry
and they would say yeah yeah. When he saw we weren’t
doing anything subversive he would just leave and shut
the door and we’d go back to Nat Turner etc. Of course
I might be skipping a bit but I was also forced to pay
a price for my progressive views and things like that
because subsequently in my teaching career I was called
down to the Board of Education and questioned about my
politics. I would sign any petition that was for the
betterment of black folks. I’d sign it, sure I’d sign
it, free the Scottsboro Boys, yeah I wanted them free.
This was back in the 1950s when McCarthy came on the
scene and um - um - um Chicago schools had at that time
what they called the loyalty oath. I don’t know if
you’ve heard about that?

Answer: (Carline) Yes

Answer: Burroughs continued, but all the teachers had
to sign this oath, I swear I am not, no communist, or
nothing like that’, to get your paycheck. Yeah, I
signed it; I had to get my check too. I couldn’t have
no body messin with my money, but apparently during the
fifties, around fifty two, there must have been an
inquiry from down at central office, to find out is
there anybody on your staff that could possibly be
considered a fellow traveler or a subversive or
communist sympathizer. So at DuSable High School,
since I was the only one who would get up in the
lunchroom preaching this, and that about Nat Turner,
Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, free the Scottsboro
boys they all said, ‘that’s her, that’s her’, so I
received this note from Mr. Meegan, the principal,
saying to report down to the Board of Education offices
which was on Wacker Drive. I was scared to death
because they were hounding black people out of their
jobs. Anybody who really stood up for anything - I -
um I asked the principal what is it they want to talk
to me about? I don’t know’ he replied. I called up
the teachers union and said, ‘don’t you think I ought
to have somebody from the union with me? I’m a
member'. 'Oh no just go down and answer their questions.

So I went down and they asked me a whole bunch of questions about my political activities and so forth.

Board: Why did I sign a petition to free Earl Browder, he was communist that was in jail?

Margaret: I said, because I didn't think anybody ought to be in jail because of their political activities.

Board: What did I think about Paul Robeson?

Margaret: Well, I think he is one of the greatest American artist we have ever had.

Board: Isn't he a communist?

Margaret: I don't know, I don't know anything about his politics.

Board: He sent his son to go to school in Russia didn't he?

Margaret: I don't know but I would guess he oughta have the right to send his son to school wherever he wants to. When they came down to the key questions as to why they had me down there. To my knowledge I'm the only one they ever called down there. I'm black and I'm female, I'm a double minority. When they asked me this question.

Board: If you belonged to an organization of teachers would you be able to name the people who might possibly be communist?

Margaret: I said I wouldn't be able to do that because I don't look at peoples politics nor their religion. I have no - I was determined I wasn't going to be nobody's stool pigeon for those people. When they finally got through they said:

Board: Now, do you promise, would you answer these question? If you were called before a hearing before the Board of Education, would you answer these question in the same way?

Margaret: I said, well I don't know, because I didn't expect you all to ask me all these questions. I thought you all were calling me down here to promote me
and make me a principal.

Board: Well, they murmured alright that will be all.

Margaret: Well, I played the nut role. I said, what are you all going to do? They said nothing, but began muttering. So, I got this hysterical tone, well what are you going to do? You called me down here and asked me all these question, what are you all going to do? I said more forcefully.

Board: Quiet down, calm down now, you may go, but don’t say anything to anybody about this experience you had.

Margaret: Okay. I went downstairs and got a telephone book and called everyone I knew and told them. Well, you know I never heard from them again. (The writer has attempted to recreate the original sacastic tone Burroughs evoked when explaining this episode, but retaining the integrity of the language she, humorously chose to express herself in. The facial expressions confirmed her general attitude as well as the "improper English.")

I put in an application for a sabbatical leave, this was in 1952, because I figured, I said, if they’re going to take my job I might as well try to get me something out of it. So, I put in an application for a sabbatical. Now if you put in for a sabbatical and got it you had to sign a statement promising to teach for two years after you come back. So luckily I got it and I happily signed this statement. So, Charlie and I got an old forty seven jalopy and we took my daughter Gayle and my nephew along with us and went on down to Mexico and had the best year from 1952 - 1953 in my life. The longer I stayed down there the stronger I became. I studied with Leopoldo Mendez visited with one of the murals by Securas and Orosco and Rivera. I met Securas, stayed in his home and um visited Freida Khalo, and uh worked with Freida Khalo and entered the art school. According to the terms of my sabbatical, 6 months I’d be traveling and the other 6 months I would be going to school. I got in a class where I was taking mural painting, print making. I was accepted as a guest member of the Faller de Grafica de Popular which is where Elizabeth Catlett worked with her second husband, Francisco Mora. Diego Riviera and all those nice little print makers and I had just a wonderful time. By the time September came I was strong enough
to deal with them. I had renewed my strength.  

On December 23, 1949, after divorcing from Bernard Goss, Margaret remarried. She married Charles Gordon Burroughs who had spent most of his formative years growing up in Russia. Charles and his brother, Neal, were taken to Russia by their mother and the boys remained there for their formal schooling. Both spoke fluent Russian. Charles lived there seventeen years before returning to the United States after being drafted by the United States in World War II.  

A poet, writer, and historian, he and Margaret met after a lecture at which he was the guest speaker. Many of Margaret’s accusers were skeptical about this association and just revealing that Charles had lived so many years in Russia conjured up images of communist affiliations whether true or not. This only fueled their suspicions. The incident with the board of education was not the last time she would be persecuted, because many felt she had not exonerated herself to their satisfaction. In 1956, Mrs. Burroughs had routinely sent in her membership dues to the South Side Community Art Center but to her amazement her dues were returned with a note from the committee indicating

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32 Dr. Margaret Burroughs, interview by author, 3 November 1992, tape recording, Chicago.


they would not admit her any longer as a member. They did imply they didn’t want an association with a communist traced to them. The following is a letter written by Mrs. Adele K. Devera to the Board of Directors questioning their position.
Board of Directors
South Side Community Art Center
3831 S. Michigan Avenue

Gentlemen:

Your recent stand on admitting Mrs. Margaret Taylor Burroughs as a lifetime member of the center came as a shock to contemporary artists, friends and associates of Mrs. Burroughs.

The charges which you have placed against her are most callous and undemocratic, to say the least. If Mrs. Burroughs were the type of person you have pictured her to be, I am sure that she would retaliate legally. But having known her practically all of my life, I know that she is too humble--to loose the dignity which has made her popular with some of the most prominent people of the city--both white and colored.

You have insulted one of the finest artists that the race of humanity for that matter has ever possessed. You have not only insulted Margaret Burroughs, but you have also underestimated one of the greatest Boards of Education the United States possess. I am very happy and proud when I boast of the fact that Mrs. Burroughs, along with others, have satisfactorily passed the loyalty Test required by teachers. I am also proud to boast that Mrs. Burroughs' democratic principles and her love of democracy would never permit her to be guilty of the callous conduct which you have exhibited.

I do not blame the art center for what you have done. Since I am a patron of art, I could never abandon the center, but I assure you that I shall further voice my resentment over the smallness of your attitude. The center needs "big" people to help it to survive. I hope that you will grow before the center crumbles for lack of support.

Very truly yours,

(Mrs.) Adele K. Devera
P.S. - And I quote the Scriptures: "Judge ye not---etc." Dr. Burroughs membership was later re-submitted and accepted after she challenged their decision formally.

Mrs. Burroughs and Her Coiffure

When Mrs. Goss was in her early twenties and going through a marital separation from Bernard Goss, she checked her image one day in a mirror and was somewhat appalled at the face starring back at her. The deterioration she felt in her spirit manifested itself in her appearance. She had managed to keep herself going by immersing herself in work and taking care of their daughter Gayle. She was startled to acknowledge the extent to which she had neglected herself and her personal appearance. The time had come for her to regroup and get back into living, a trip to the beauty salon for a much needed and greatly deserved make over. She emerged with a new hair color as well as a new hairstyle. She gazed at her image in the mirror and decided this was a marked improvement over the former Margaret Taylor Goss.

After leaving the salon, she had her opinion supported and confirmed through the varied comments passerby and friends rendered. She felt stronger and more renewed in her spirit. Now more than a decade later, she found herself experiencing something of a deja vu. The circumstances precipitating her decision to take a sabbatical to tour and

35Mrs. Adele K. Devera, to Board of Directors of South Side Community Art Center, 11 July 1956, Transcript in the hands of Margaret Burroughs, Private Collection, Margaret Burroughs Collection, Chicago.
study in Mexico were stressful, disconcerting and pivotal, just as the reality of continuing life without Bernard Goss as her spouse was. A change of her hairstyle was one major physical overt response to moving forward. When she returned from Mexico she also displayed a novel hairstyle. This new Margaret met with a great deal of criticism and opposition from family, friends and co-workers. The reaction was so fervent and so negative that for months Margaret found herself fluctuating back and forth about her ability and strength to pull off this new look. In fact, she did succumb to pressure and did return to her more conservative, acceptable straightened hairstyle, for a while that is. In 1969, Mrs. Burroughs wrote a article entitled "Down The Straight And Narrow," a copious rendition of the background in understanding the concern many people face involving kinky hair verses conventional grooming practices. In the article she shared her personal frustration and experiences outlining her transformation.

Dr. Burroughs didn’t have an easy time getting people to relax and cease the furor over her choice in how to wear her hair. Most importantly, though, is the fact that she had finally and resoundly settled the issue within herself. She gradually became very comfortable with being seen in public wearing a scarf or hat to conceal the natural hairdo. She eventually grew into a state of complete euphoria with her decision, her appearance. Her family, friends, peers and
even her students persisted in believing they could bring her to her senses and dissuade her from her most recent revolt and social protest. They did not completely comprehend the magnitude of the commitment to herself over this issue. Nor where they privy to the thirty year struggle she had endured never having accepted the processing of kinky hair as many had accepted without reservation. That was fine for them but it was not for her.

Once a student left an anonymous note on her desk asking if she needed the address and name of a very good beautician. Once Ramon Price, her protege, even tried to persuade her to "fix" her hair for a very special event they were to attend. Many students who cared for her and respected her wanted her to "fix" her hair so that other people would stop taunting, criticizing and ostracizing her.

She weathered it all and by the middle sixties the Afro or natural hairstyle was gaining a lot of attention and momentum. It was ushered in with the new ethnic revolution American society was experiencing, the Civil Rights Era, the black power movement, black pride, and the black-is-beautiful movement. By then her critics had given up and accepted the reality that the naturally coiffured hairdo was an integral element of her basic deportment. More than a decade after she made her unforgettable debut, the natural hairstyle was considered by many to be the most contemporary stylish "in" look. Many even went so far as to use it as a
criterion for determining the sincerity of your commitment to the new wave of black pride, black is beautiful movement.

Mrs. Burrough's devoted the majority of her professional career years as an instructor at DuSable High School, a total of twenty-three years. Additionally, she was an Assistant Professor of African and African-American art history at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1968. She also held the position as Professor of Humanities at Kennedy-King City College in Chicago for a duration of ten years, 1969-1979. She was a Professor of African-American Art and Culture at Elmhurst College in Illinois 1968-1969. In 1969 she accepted a position as an Instructor of African-American Art at Barat College in Illinois. She officially retired from the educational system in 1979 after committing thirty nine years, (1940-1979, if you include the years as a substitute teacher), of dedicated service in teaching youth and young adults.

Outside of these contractual arrangements Dr. Burroughs continued lecturing in schools across the country as a presenter and facilitator of workshops. She addressed children wherever she came in contact with them asking about their career aspirations, study habits, and pastimes. After hearing their response she in turn would comment

36 Jessie Carney Smith, Epic Lives, 58.

appropriately, always leaving them with words of encouragement. Like Ray Price who stated he has never ceased to be a student to Dr. Burroughs, she has never ceased to be an instructor, a teacher.

**The Artist**

**Personal Philosophy**

Commensurate with historical artistic traditions of the African artist, Burroughs vigorously believes art is not to be envisioned and created as independent from one’s life and culture. For the African artist, the art forms they created are channels through which religious convictions are expressed. Religion is a consummatory component of life. The usages not only emitted a sense of visual aesthetics but also possessed meta-physical qualities.

Burroughs believes art should not be created as art for art's sake, one should not just concern oneself with manipulation of the elements and principles of art, developing pretty things. She feels the artist has a special obligation to serve human kind in a more substantive manner without sacrificing the desired aesthetics.

There is one category of artist she feels is contemptible: the artist who abandons all sense proportion and propriety and creates whatever will bring monetary remuneration.

It is sad to contemplate, that throughout history, the artists, poets and intellectuals have so often allowed themselves to be enlisted in their service of ambitious
and predatory men . . . . In other words their art is used to legitimize evil acts and deeds and very often to confuse and confound the masses by diverting them and throwing sand in their eyes . . . . These artists were richly rewarded and in some instances shared power with the rulers . . . they were pimps and prostitutes to their profession . . . Ghenghis Kahn . . . . Cortes, who were both looters, rapists and murderers . . . have been glorified by the artists as heroes in poetry, song and painting . . . and there are many others instances. 38

This is very strong language, but even though she fully realizes many do not agree with her, it is one aspect of her personal philosophy she is adamant about. Burroughs gives us an additional look into her basic philosophical tenents when she states in a speech to elementary school students at Alexander Dumas,

An artist is able to see into and beyond. He sees the visible and the invisible. They look into things rather than just at them . . . . It is by stimulating our imagination in various ways that art serves us best. A good artist is not only exceptionally sensitive but he is able to communicate that sensitivity to others . . . . Whether we are artist or not, we should all try to develop our sensitivity. If your sensitivity is dull, you remain undeveloped. You are not better than a human clod. 39

In an unpublished and untitled essay Burroughs wrote, she perceives society as being divided into two separate cultures. One culture is representative of the average man while the other is symbolic of the ruling controlling groups in society. Artists too belong to one of these aggregates.

38 Margaret Burroughs, "Excerpts From An Artist's Diary," Private Collection, Margaret Burroughs, Chicago 1-2.

39 Margaret Burroughs, "You Too Can Be An Artist or an Art Appreciator or Art Is For Everybody," TD, Private Collection, Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 2-3.
They must consciously decide which mores would be expressed through their art. Burroughs states the novice artist is greatly repressed and regulated by the special concessions the ruling segment is empowered to endow him/her with. These would include fellowships, media exposure, and most of all encouragement. She supports the view that this same influential class determines who will be successful in the art community, only those who reinforce the values of that culture. The universities, museums and other structured industries are the greatest patrons and supporters. It is establishment art and culture which is promoted by the universities, the art schools, the museums and academics. Artists approved by the establishment more often create art which is void of humanism; they indulge in abstract expressionism an nonobjective art. This art has non meaning.40

She goes on to say that most African American artists emulate the traditions of ancestral African artisans in that their art generally has more incisive objectives than creating art for art's sake. They are often penalized for adopting this stance. First, she does acknowledge that in this society an artist should not expect, on the whole, to become extremely wealthy with earnings from the sale of creative works. However, artists outside of the mainstream, artists who are not proteges of the dominant culture, suffer more than just from their choice of careers. They have the added burden of electing to support principles and mores

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40 Margaret Burroughs, [Untitled] ,TD, Private Collection, Burroughs, Chicago, 1.
different from those approved of by the "capitalistic society." These works do not sell well. In spite of all of this Burroughs purports the sacrifice as has been worth it.

There are some of us who believe that our art should communicate and make meaningful statements on behalf of the common people and particularly our long oppressed group. We will continue to do meaningful art, even though the rewards, normally due, are denied us. We are artists. We are creators. Our aim is to create a better way of life for all people. We cannot do otherwise.

Before it was fashionable or politically appropriate, Burroughs was a participant in a small delegation of artists and writers who visited the Soviet Union in 1967. This was a diplomatic gesture hosted by the Soviet Union.

The Institute of Soviet American Relations in Moscow extended to me and seven other African Americans their hand of friendship by inviting us to visit their country. We accepted their invitation. In the visit that followed, we joined our Soviet friends in a manifestation of a common desire for Peace and Friendship with each other and with the world’s people.

The delegation was comprised of artists and writers from assorted cities and backgrounds across the United States. All of the members embarked on the excursion with preconceived notions, which had been formulated through the media, about the Soviet Union. In the welcome address the

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"Ibid., 2.

"Ibid.

delegation was invited to see Russia for themselves and make their own determinations. "What we saw there helped immeasurably to clarify many misconceptions and erroneous ideas that many of us had held." In spite of the obvious and even presumed differences, Burroughs notes the strength of the similarities between the groups.

As artists, as writers, as cultural workers, we found that in spite of international boundaries, and in spite of the barriers of language, we spoke a common tongue. There was immediate identity and understanding between us. We found that we in our country and the Soviet Union artist in their country were both engaged in a similar search for new approaches to art, new techniques and new medias, exciting and better ways to express what we wish to say.

Further, Burroughs notes the Soviet artist held that non-objective expressionism was indeed not a viable channel through which they could express themselves. This was in conjunction with Burrough's personal philosophy about artists as a whole and particularly artists who represented suppressed groups, like people of color in the United States.

We saw a great deal of art there too, of varied kinds, folk, traditional and contemporary. Some of it was decorative, some commemorative and some literal but all of it was imbued with purpose. We observed as many approaches in the plastic and graphic arts as there were individual artists. But all that we saw was in contact with the real world. You see, behind Soviet art is the guiding concept of socialist realism, which clearly rejects non-objective expressionism and aimless individualism.

"Ibid., 21.

"Ibid., 21-22."
We brought with us a group of over one hundred graphics by African American artists. In a small preview of these works where we all participated in a critique, we were both surprised to note a close similarity between our work and that of the Soviet artists. The work of both groups was concerned with close-to-life experiences and with people. The Soviet artists paid us a high compliment when they said that had they not known otherwise, they would have thought our graphics to have been done by a group of Soviet artists.

A trip of this kind naturally has a high point. Ours was the day that we spent at the Pioneer Camp in Alma-Ata, Republic of Kazakhstan. As a person who has worked with young people for many years, I felt frustrated throughout our travels there that I could not, because of the language barrier, communicate with the children and young people. Here I had that chance. The greeting given to our delegation by these Soviet children brought tears to all of our eyes. There were tears, not of sadness, but of joy, joy to know that they welcomed us to share their love and respect, their open trust and honesty that I know is characteristic of children all over the world.

We looked at their healthy beaming faces and into their clear, alert eyes and we clasped their pudgy, warm, friendly hands. We were not strangers to them, but friends. And they were not strangers to me either. I felt very much at home and happy with those children. They were not too different from the children that I have seen and worked with in the classrooms, parks and playgrounds of my own city. Children are the true treasures of their countries. If for no other reason, it should be for the sake of the children that all peoples of the world should work and strive for peace in the world.

Speaking of peace, speaking of friendship—those wonderful children of Alma-Ata taught us our first Russian words. They were words that we heard many many times throughout our travels in the USSR. We heard them from artist, from writers, from educators, administrators, factory workers, oil workers, from all of the people whom we met. They were two words that we ourselves will not forget. The words Mir i Druzhba i Mir!" (Peace and friendship between nations.)

On Artist and Wartime

"Ibid., 22."
She shares her personal philosophy regarding the responsibility of the artist during war time. Many people felt the involvement of the United States called for all of its citizens to make unusual sacrifices. In 1944 Margaret Goss wrote an essay entitled "Artists War Time Responsibility - 1944". She begins by writing, the American of color, who was immersed in the fine arts, shouldered the same responsibility as any American involved in a creative arena. Further, these obligations should be viewed as seriously as the role Americans employed in defense plants, and the soldier making the ultimate sacrifice, his life.

So art and life are not things which are separate and apart, one is thoroughly dependent on the other. At this time there is no place for the 'Ivory tower.' The maintenance and extension of art and culture are principals for which the war is being fought. We have seen how fascism devastates the art and culture of the people. We have heard of the book burnings in Germany. We have read that some of the very finest examples of art have been sacked and ruined."

Although she fully supports her ideology that artist of color have special messages to impart to their viewers, they are simultaneously holding memberships in another major society, America. Consequently the onus of utilizing their skill and talents to assist in this awesome challenge, must be equally shared. Artists were involved in building the morale of the soldiers on the front lines of the war, abroad as well as the morale of the families and citizens here at

"Margaret "Burroughs, "Artists War Time Responsibility," TD, 1944, Private Collection, Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1."
home. Those involved in the performing arts offered their special participation while the visual artist worked on posters and other advertising type campaigns. The writers also played an integral role in making the war real.

On Black Women Artist

Of black women artist in America, Burroughs first comments on the extreme void one finds when researching this theme.

The broad picture is that racism has permeated the arts in the past and still does so today to a vast extent. Not only have black women artists been ignored but white women artists have faced the same situation. Let's face it, the Western Art critics, writers and researchers are both racist and chauvinistic.48

Women of Color As Artist

For women of color in the visual arts, they must demonstrate tenacity, fortitude, perhaps even stubbornness. It seemed an accepted premise. This was not a profession which would welcome the female contributions, and they would not encourage her in her effort, or applaud her performance. Many men of color faced the same fate, however, women represented a dual minority, race and gender, thus they were dully rejected. Dr. Burroughs recounts the reaction her favorite uncle had to the news that she was determined to pursue a career in the arts. He was a great supporter of the arts and it was he who introduced young Margaret to numerous cultural events. This included her memorable

48Margaret Burroughs, "The Black Women Artist in America," TD, 1984, Private Collection, Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1.
attendance at a concert performed by her much admired Paul Robeson.

Her Uncle had seen enough bias in the fine arts field to be poignantly aware of the numerous hurdles and heartbreaks his niece would undoubtably need to overcome if she indeed entered this precarious arena. He wanted to spare her the hardships. Fortunately, desire and yearning triumphed over logic and practicality. Margaret put her creative energies to work and found ways of enrolling in art classes and preparing herself for the profession she would devote her life to. Margaret was pleased that she was able to achieve some modicum of success, in the arts, during her uncle's lifetime. She had the added pleasure of hearing him express how very proud he was of her.

Burroughs seems particularly proud that she can be chronicled among those who were not intimidated by the statistics, and ventured into the arena. She felt she had something to say through her visual interpretive images and she refused to be silenced by seeming adverse circumstances or challenges. "Despite all of this, women have contributed to the fabric of social history by stating their own cultural definitions in the visual arts." 49

In her lecture on black female artists, Burroughs notes that many of these artists ready themselves for the inevitable lack of financial support, through their art, by

49Ibid., 2.
majoring in education. In this way they could pursue their ambitious dreams, of earning a living in art, and of being able to address the rigorous financial demands incurred in day to day living. They teach at all educational levels, primary, secondary as well as higher education. Burroughs herself, created a wealth of art projects, within her classroom setting giving practical demonstrations in front of her students, a fact that came through strongly in the interview with McDowell. She created vast numbers of prints, paintings, illustrations, sculpture and graphics over the years, inside her personal studio and in her classrooms. Many of these pieces would later appear in exhibition. Some of the pieces were sold and the remainder became a part of her portfolio.

Burroughs believes:

art has the power to change the lives of people for the better . . . Many times we have tried to solve the problems of our times . . . in my opinion, the true solution, the only solution, the solution involving the hearts, minds and emotions of people, has been largely ignored. I appeal to sociologists, psychologists, community leaders and city planners to try art.

Burroughs believes intently that the fine arts hold an innate magical power to transform hostile, seemingly uncohesive groups, into caring purposeful neighbors. She makes the following statement:

50Ibid., 10.
51Margaret Burroughs, At the Chicago Committee on Urban Opportunity Art Awards Program, Private Collection, Dr. Margaret Burroughs Chicago, 1.
Make walls of art all around us. Bind us together in brotherhood and common purpose through art and culture . . . expressing the multi-rich national cultures which make up the population of our great city . . . . A great festival of folk culture which would be truly representative of the city of the big shoulders, caressing and including all of its dear and necessary citizens regardless of race, creed or class. This is a dream. This is my dream.52

Reflections on Black Art During the Sixties

A copy of a lecture entitled "Black Art of the 60's" was uncovered among Burroughs' private papers. Unfortunately the document is not dated and the content does not render a conclusion as to who her audience was. Burroughs, speaking before an audience, stated that her direct knowledge of black artist involvement revolved around Chicago, being a part of that scene herself. She accepts the basic tenet that Chicago was representative of other metropolitan areas, and it could logically be assumed that many of the same kinds of things were happening with artists of color around the country.

In Chicago, artists of color literally came out of the woodwork. And they worked in all the schools of art known to man or woman. Subjects and techniques ran form extremely conservative to extremely bombastic and radical. No subjects were sacred. Many sought to express all phases of the black experience and many were angry expressions. I imagine that similar events were happening in other areas as a response to the surge for liberation.53

52Ibid., 2.

53Margaret Burroughs, "Black Art Of The 60's" Lecture presented at undisclosed location, Private Papers, Margaret Burroughs. Chicago, Illinois.
She goes on to relate that during the sixties artists utilized the tools of art expression as a kind of weapon. A lot of people had a great deal they wanted to say. Some articulated their feelings and ideals aesthetically, but unfortunately there was a lot of art created that was just plain bad. The artists was looked to as spokespersons for the feelings many were experiencing. It was during this period that "black became beautiful."\(^5^4\) This intense visual statement was as much to shout a message to the world as it was a kind of therapy for the people of color involved in the expression. Natural, unprocessed, unstraighened hair, became popular. This was a way of saying I like myself just as I am. I do not need to feel I must conform to another’s standard for what constitutes physical beauty. Clothing styles changed dramatically and not just for people of color. Bold visual statements were made with color and patterns. Beads, lots of beads and loose comfortable caftans and dashikies became a familiar sight.

In the sixties it seemed as if the black artist and the black people suddenly held up a mirror to America and said look at me! I’m black and I’m beautiful! \(......\) This is how I feel about your racist treatment of me. I don’t intend to take it any longer. I aim to be free! I love myself \(......\) I identify with Africa, my ancestral land. I am an American of African descent. Africans are beautiful people. Africa, too must be free.

It was in the period of the sixties that black became beautiful and the children in my art class, who used to draw only white images, began to color themselves brown.

\(^{5^4}\) Ibid., 2.
and black and to see themselves as beautiful. It was also the time when 'flesh color' (pink) was removed from the crayon, craypas and crayola boxes and dark skins and standup hair became popular. In those times black folks tried to look as African as possible . . . . That was also the period when many African Americans discarded the names given them by their mothers and fathers and took on African names or Arab slave names which no one could spell or pronounce. 55

During this period artists sometimes abandoned traditional tools and techniques opting for bolder more avante-gard and revolutionrary methods of expression. It seemed anything could be targeted.

They were almost as daring as they are in today's non-objective times. They used brushes, sticks, feet and bodies. Anything was a surface to paint on and any kind of paint was used. Some flung paint a la Jackson Pollock and artists used each other to develop new methods of communication. 56

In Chicago, it became a fertile time for the birth of movements for broader expression to a larger audience, one that would not travel to a gallery to view art, but rather to the community at large. This became known as the public art movement fathered by artist William (Bill) Walker. He showcased his messages on outdoor walls, ushering in a mural movement. His first wall painting appeared at 43rd and Langly Avenue and was titled "The Wall of Respect." Walker had begun something that ignited creative inspiration in artists around the country and outdoor murals began appearing in many other communities.

55 Ibid., 2-3.

56 Ibid., 3.
Burroughs recalls that message art, like that evolving during the sixties, was strongly discouraged by art academies such as the Art Institute of Chicago during the forties, when many of these, now flamboyant artist, were in training.

I remember when I was in the Art Institute in the forties such subjects were frowned upon and derisively called 'social significance' paintings. We were discouraged from doing anything that related in any way to humanism. We were guided toward so called abstract expressionism. Being the humanists that we were, we rejected that direction. Still the sixties produced many fine pieces of art, characterized by solid compositions, fine draftsmanship, harmonious color, etc. A lot of bad art came of that period. I am certain that the good art is standing the test of time and the bad art is forgotten and has been relegated to wherever bad art goes.  

The art being created during the sixties followed a pattern. It seems after periods, or in response to periods of overt acts of racism and social stigmatic pressures the artists spoke out. The art movement of the Harlem Renaissance followed the treatment of black soldiers fighting in World War I. Their own reality of democratic treatment was quite adverse to what they thought they fought and died for in Europe.

After the Great Depression blacks expressed themselves through a variety of art projects sponsored by the W.P.A. There is however a distinction between the socially oriented art created during the thirties and forties which reflected a blue color orientation, a class consciousness. The work

57 Ibid., 3.
developed in the sixties addressed not class but "a limited nationalistic outlook." It was also as a consequence of this period that the great debate evolved: "Is there a black aesthetic?" and "what is black art?". Burroughs commences her lecture with the following statements which serve as a compendium of her philosophical beliefs regarding the role of the artist of color during a period of civil unrest in this country, the sixties.

His First Wall was:
1. The Wall Of Respect
2. The Wall Of Peace And Salvation
3. The Wall Of Truth, And
4. The Wall Of Love And Others. (We will look at some of them later).

In the 60's was experienced a renaissance of interest in creative expression as I imagine must have been experienced during the Harlem Renaissance. This is typical of the response of Afro-Americans when under periods of great pressure. The renaissance (of the 20's) came right after World War I's repression and outrages faced by returing black G. I.'s fresh from making the world safe for democracy.

We note that a sudden creative upsurge came after the depression of the 30's when many black artists found a means of expression and sustenance through employment on the W.P.A. Project and mand their social statements showing black life. But there was a basic difference between art of the 30's and 40's and 60's.

In the 30's and 40's, the art was class-based. The black artist expressed his working class orientation. In the 60's, his art became more limited and come not out of a class orientation but out of a limited nationalistic outlook.

In the 60's there were the detractors of the achievements of Afro-American artists. They also

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asserted that Afro-American artists were either artists according to the canons of the mainstream, or they were rank amateurs. Also, there were the art hustlers who defend their monstrosities as black art and who worked with popular themes and motifs. Prime among those were the ones who received public funds to decorate telephone booths, wastebaskets, paint tree stumps, etc. These included many white artists who brought into the mural movement, the so-called graphics school of painting walls with no meaning, stripes, polka-dots, etc.

A spin-off of this was the development of op-art which was used by the pseudo-muralists to create the new graphics for interiors. The public art movement of the 60's brought forth a new awareness of art as a social function. The 60's saw movements to make art available to the masses through the many posters and reproductions that came out. The 50's and 60's too saw the burgeoning of the outdoor art fairs all over the country which brought the man and woman on the street face to face with art and brought a piece of art within the price range of the ordinary working person. While black artists work in all styles, generally, the black artist who have survived are those who work in the representational tradition. The black artist does not make art about art but makes art about people. They are humanists.

The artist that I speak about and knew were Bernard Goss, Charles White, Hughie Lee-Smith, Ernie Crichlow, Marion Perkins, Eldzier Corter, Romare Bearden, etc., came out of a humanist or an integrationist orientation. The 60's it was a time of and philosophy of all men are are brothers, a major slogan was "Black and white unite and fight."

Out of the 60's came also the exciting great debate: "Is there a black a esthetic?" and "what is black art?" Discussions raged and raged. There were as many opinions as artists. I share the opinion of Hugie Lee-Smith, who defined "Black art is that art which expresses the struggles of black people for economic justice" or 'Liberation Art.' It is concerned with liberation of all minority groups. There is no such thing as black art. There is art by black artists. Art is universal and knows no race or color"

Today, unfortunately black art, American art is judged by if it is marketable. Will it sell? It has nothing to do with creativity, feeling or soul.
Unfortunately this is the trend. We ask: Q.) Who is an artist? A.) Anyone who says they are. Q.) What is art? A.) Anything the way it is.

But we must remember just because its hanging on the wall doesn’t mean its art. Despite all this, the serious black artists continue to use their art to speak for liberation as they have done through the years. The black artists are ushering us into an era of a new renaissance, and all that they are doing might not be excellent but much of what they are doing is honest and it is again giving that needed shot in the arm to American culture and if you don’t believe it turn on your tv or radio or open your favorite periodical. And all of this comes from a people who are referred to as culturally deprived and who have been shunted off into compounds and denied basic opportunities of education and economic stability. One cannot imagine what our American culture would be like if black folk were granted social acceptance, economic stability and all the rights to be expected by citizens of a democracy.

How are the art and culture would flourish is such a free society: What a great rich culture would be ours: Can this happen under a system shot with racism? It cannot and will not.59

Burroughs As The Visual Artist

Margaret received her initial introduction to structured art instruction at Carter Elementary School in Chicago under the tutelage of Miss Mary Ryan. Miss Ryan not only taught her primary students the basic lessons in reading, social studies, arithmatic, science and so forth, but she was a trained art instructor. Margaret displayed a proclivity for drawing very early in life. Her mother always supported and encouraged her daughters to work

59 Margaret Burroughs, "Black Art Of The 60’s". Lecture presented at undisclosed location, Private Papers, Margaret Burroughs. Chicago, Illinois, 4-6.
diligently at their class assignments as well as to pursue special interest and extra curricular activities. On more than one occasion Margaret found herself the target of her older sisters' jealousy and displeasure because Margaret was often excused from doing her assigned household chores while she was engrossed in a special drawing project. Mrs. Taylor, on those occasions, would reassign her tasks to one of the other girls, Marion or Dorothy. The siblings didn’t think it was fair that Margaret should be allowed to sit and scribble while they worked. Mrs. Taylor was insistent, however, that Margaret should have every reasonable opportunity to express herself through her visual images and she continued to endorse the policy. Mrs. Burroughs credits this kind of parental support and faith with being an integral component of her success.

Margaret went on to pursue her interest in the fine arts throughout her high school years. Creating art became an important vehicle in enabling her to attend college as well as purchasing some of the necessities for a teenager during the high school years. While in high school she resolved that art would continue to be the nucleus in her life.

Margaret was able to follow through with additional training at the Art Institute of Chicago while enrolled in grade school. She, along with, the later to become famous, Charles White, received James Nelson Raymond Fund
Scholarships which provided that elementary and secondary school children could participate in special classes at the Art Institute. She participated in the program through her high school years. The class structure allowed for lectures and demonstrations and were taught in Fullerton Hall. The class would convene once a week and the participants were students from all parts of the city. Students were given weekly homework assignments which would be critiqued at the following session.

She attended art classes at the South Side Settlement House with Mrs. Ada S. McKinley as its chief administrator. It was in special classes like this Margaret met other youth who later would excel in the arts, and succeed in making an indelible impression on the art community, like Eldzier Cortor, Henry Avery, Charles White and others. Putting all this in perspective, Margaret and her peers felt particularly fortunate to be involved in these special classes. Reflecting on the fact that this was indeed the early 1930s, in the Great Depression, most of the artists of color could not afford the luxury of even anticipating attending the Art Institute of Chicago for intensive study in the arts. Therefore, they had to take advantage of every opportunity made available to them to absorb, analyze, work, cultivate and coordinate their talents and skills.

George Neal, their first instructor at the South Side Settlement House, was enrolled in an evening course of study
at the Art Institute. He was generous enough to conduct Saturday morning classes and share what he had learned with eager students like Margaret. Neal hosted a three person art showing of the oil paintings, pencil renderings, pastels and watercolors of Bernard Goss, Charles White and Margaret Taylor. Unfortunately, Paragon Studios, the site of the exhibitions, burned while the work was still on display. The artist were informed that most of their pieces had been destroyed. Unfortunately, many years later as the artist gained acclaim for their art some of the pieces began to turn up here and there, indicating they were not all destroyed in the fire.

Fortunately, however, this episode did not dissuade the young artists. They went on to become the youngest members of "The Artist Crafts Guild." The group met wherever they could find space to accommodate them, including traveling from one person's home to the other. They would try to put together community art exhibits wherever they could convince proprietors and site managers that this would be a worthwhile endeavor. Consequently, Margaret's early works were generally shown in local YMCA's, YWCA's, church basements and storefronts. As a teenager she participated in her very first outdoor art exhibition. It was showcased in downtown Chicago in Grant Park. She sold her painting.

60 Margaret Burroughs, "Homage To Charles Wilbur White Chicago Artist," Private Collection of Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1-3.
Interestingly, more than thirty years later, she was given the rare opportunity of buying that very painting back from the original purchaser. As a high school student, remember Margaret created numerous watercolor paintings under Miss. Ryan’s guidance, to earn money. This small portrait would be the only piece of art she owned reminiscent of her very very early work.

Burroughs always had a special feeling for outdoor fairs after her first one proved lucrative financially and emotionally. She went on to co-found the Lake Meadows Art Fair in 1959 and it is still thriving today. This fair is family oriented and, as such, hosts categories for elementary and secondary school students as well as adult artists. 61 If one were to try and describe Burroughs’ own work, one could describe it as an exemplification of what her friend and infamous artist, Charles White, spoke to in a speech before a group of Chicago artist. In 1956 White stated he believed using people as a central theme was "the most challenging, the most inspirational theme that an artist can face in his work in life." 62 People, as the theme of a work of art, proved a worthy vehicle for addressing the deeper substantive issues Burroughs felt obligated to address. For her to do less would not have been

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61 Margaret Burroughs "Artist Commentary," Private Collection, Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1-5.

62 Charles White, Comments To Chicago Artists, Private Collection, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 1, 1956.
characteristic of her. White went on to state:

One of the most self-revealing aspects of art in terms of the results, is in the depth of perception of form and content. It is also one of the main areas where the artist often stumbles into the greatest number of problems. For the socially conscious artist this is especially true. For him, the conceptional starting point in the creation of a work of art is the love of mankind . . . . So while his orientation, the love of mankind, is a correct one, he must pause and face a more fundamental question if he is to find ideological clarity.63

Even more profound is his last statement

I use Negro subject matter because Negroes are closet to me. But, I am trying to express a universal feeling through them, a meaning for all men . . . . All of my life I have been painting a single painting. This does not mean that I am a man without anger . . . but what I pour into my work is a challenge of how beautiful life can be.64

If one didn't know that Charles White wrote referring to his own work, it could easily be assumed Dr. Burroughs was the author speaking of her own work. Their work seems to share this same ideology.

Exhibits

Personally, Margaret's accomplishments in the art world consisted of her first exhibit in 1940 at the American Negro Exposition in Chicago. In 1941, she exhibited at the South Side Community Art Center and at the McMillen Incorporated Galleries in New York. During the same year she participated in the historic annual Hale Woodruff activities designed to promote African American art on a national

63Ibid.

64Ibid., 2.
scale. She participated again in 1943 and 1945 at Atlanta University. These early exhibitions laid the foundation for novice and veteran artists to compete for awards and constituted the formulation of a permanent collection of African American art at Atlanta University.

Burroughs continued to participate in this annual exhibition and in 1947 she won a third place award for one of her prints, and in 1955 she won the Watercolor Purchase Award at the Atlanta University Art Annual. She recounts the impact of these annual shows on her career.

But for the Atlanta Show, I might not be here. I never would have seen the creative light of day. For most of us, The Atlanta Show provided the first memory, the first knowledge of the black arts presence. I saw in those catalogs the works of black artists like Jacob Lawrence, John Wilson, Elizabeth Catlett, Charles White, Aaron Douglas, William Artis, and many others. This Exhibition vehicle, was founded by Hale Woodruff and nurtured by Atlanta University. Because of this Annual, Atlanta University became an oasis in the Southern desert, not only for the Black artist of the South, but for those also in the North, East and West as well... To many of us coming up in the 40s... acceptance in the Atlanta Show, helped to bring us Negro artists together from all over the country [Stoelting, 24].

In April of 1945, her lithograph, entitled "Two Girls" was reproduced in Time Magazine. In 1949 she displayed her art at the San Francisco Civic Museum and at the Illinois State Fair. A year later her work was in an exhibition, on the east coast, in New York, at the Market Place Gallery. In 1953 she was represented at the Kenosha, Museum. In 1950

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she was involved in three major shows, one at the South Side Community Art Center, in Mexico City and Hull House in Chicago. In 1956 she had her works at Kenwood Ellis Community Center, in 1961 at Howard University and Winston-Salem Teacher’s College. In 1965 she participated in a memorable exhibit at Pularny Palace, Kazimierz-Dolny, Poland as well as in Leipzig, Germany where she earned a third place prize. Her work from this show was reproduced in *Soviet Womans Magazine* and *Der Bildener Kunst*. In 1967 she exhibited at the House of Friendship in Moscow U.S.S.R. and in 1968 she was a participant in the exhibition of American-Soviet printmakers. In 1969 she was again showing in the United States exhibiting at Fox Valley Presbyterian Church in Geneva, Wisconsin and Ball State Teacher’s College. In 1970 she was at Elmhurst College and Wright Art Center at Beloit, Wisconsin and in 1973 again at South Side Community Art Center and several times since then. In 1975 her work was featured in a traveling exhibition sponsored by Atlanta University and the following year at the Clarence White Gallery. She was a part of "Two Centuries of Afro American Art", another traveling exhibition, this time being sponsored by Los Angeles Museum. In 1978 she was part of a group exhibiting in Chicago and New York, featuring the works of black artists and W. P. A. artists. Two years later another exhibit entitled, "Two Centuries of Afro-American Art", was sponsored by High Museum, Atlanta,
Georgia. Additionally an exhibition of Ten Outstanding Afro-American Artists was compiled and Burroughs was asked to participate becoming one of ten so honored in Washington D. C.

In 1986 she had a One Women Show at Nicole Gallery in Chicago entitled, "Retrospective Forty Years of Art". Just one year later, 1987, she was featured in another One Woman Show - this time highlighting her prints and the South Side Community Art Center hosted the exhibition. Later that year she was part of a highly publicized group show called Sapphire and Crystals, again at the South Side Community Art Center. In 1991 and 1992 she held an encore of her One Woman Show at the Nicole Gallery. In 1993 a showing of her most recent work was hosted at the Carter G. Woodson Library in Chicago. Admirers of her works have collected originals. A permanent collection at Howard University, Alabama State Normal, Atlanta University, DuSable Museum of African-American History, Chicago; Johnson Publishing Company, and the Oakland Museum, among others, are proud to include her work in their permanent collections.

Let us take a look at her style as an artist. Ramon Price has watched the numerous fluctuations in her work for

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almost half a century. In an interview he was asked whether he noted if Mrs. Burroughs demonstrated specific movements, styles or a variety of changes in her work and whether those changes reflected a response to events in her life and in society as a whole. The following is his response.

Question: Do you personally, or have you, in retrospect, seen changes in style, or changes in themes, in her art, both in her writing as well as the visual arts based on the kinds of experiences we are referring to?

Answer: I don't - Dr. Burroughs is a kind of experimenter, she will play around with movements of things - she might 'say this is my Picasso or this is my that' - but I think that if you look at her complete movement I don't think you'll see much of a change, except when she was at the Art Institute. She was very academic in her work. Very, very good at representational renderings and she could draw, and, draw you, and it would look like you and all that stuff. She abandoned that very soon and became a kind of freer person. I know some people who say she can't draw. I know some people who say she ain't a good artist. And yet those were the same people who will look at, whose is that white lady who draw those flowers, oh - what's her name, anyway they'll look at that and say oh how good it is. But I think, if anything, I think, that feelings crop up in her work. Some years ago I was able to write a two paragraph introduction to a show she was doing, and yes, I was able to define her Mexican period. There is a period that when she was hanging around with Marion Perkins when her drawings took on the character of sculpture. It got to be very heavy and big. So I think we find her, there's a jewelry period in her work where they were making a lot of wild jewelry and she translated that into lines in her drawings. And speaking of Marion Perkins there's a time when he began showing everybody how to make earrings with needle nose pliers and copper wire. He was the first one to work in concentric circles. There's a whole time when she was translating that, jewelry feels that sort of thing but I guess because of her interest in people, that if anything, her African period, that she's in now, and has been in for some time that African period that she's in now, and has been in for some time, that African period is one that looks at black people. At
black relationships and of course the family and the
mother and child is so dominant throughout the works
she does do.

She does very little polemics. She has treated the
clan, she has a clan family and I think that was
inspired by something that Bernard Goss did. If there
was anybody whose work she respected, it was Bernard
Goss. She had a very high respect and regard for his
ability as an artist. And I think that she may, I
don’t know who got what from whom, but do know that
her, I think there’s a relationship between her
handling of color, and his handling of color.
However, I think his may be more structured and more
involved in paint forming chiaroscuro colors and in
modeling form. Hers does some, she doesn’t develop it
like that. Hers is a flat bed plane and his is on a
multiple plane but I suspect that if you took a
Margaret Burrough’s painting and you could subject it
to some kind of holograph or something you could, by
making it become more dimensional, you’d have something
that looked more like Bernard Goss.

You know in two or three years, if you are ever not
with her, then you will be running around and trying to
make up with a lot of artificial stuff about her work.
Margaret approaches painting and drawing just like she
approaches life, in her daily existence, it has to have
some substance to it. But it doesn’t have to be
forced. She might decide that she is going to use up
all the red and blue paint she has left in two jars you
know that’s a very practical thing. You have too much
red and blue and so what am I going to do with all this
red and blue paint, so I’m going to use it. I’m not
going to be restricted by the fact that people are not
blue. I can still paint people blue, I’m not trying to
recreate people anyway. All I’m trying to do is to
show, or create something with the blue paint that
cought my eye. And so we don’t talk enough about our
artist in that sense. We talk about them generically
and we hold them to being either one way or another and
possibly be right about things.

We think black people want you to do things that make
you look somehow different. Dr. Burroughs had adopted
a kind of folk thing, which she, she knew Jacob
Lawrence well. There were a lot of people who saw
Jacob Lawrence getting all that attention and they
began that funny stuff too and she could have done that
too. She could have done a lot of things. In fact she
was encouraged to do so by a lot of people who were
influential in the art world.
Obviously I haven’t thought about it that much I’ve looked at a number of her paintings. Now she’s working with felt markers and things are really big. In fact she’s ready to do a mural. I was really disappointed when Harold Washington Library I really thought that I was going to be successful in having her do a mural in the children’s room. But you know they were busy doing there own thing that was just terrible. I’ll forever feel hurt that she wasn’t able to do the mural especially in the childrens’ section in the Harold Washington Library and that would have made Harold happy too, (Ramon is Harold Washington’s brother), and it would have made the city happy too because the stuff they have now, frogs or something jumping around. She really is, I don’t know if she even realizes, it but her whole format has gotten big, even when she has a small piece of paper, her motif are big, its just big they want more room. I hope she’ll get a chance to do a mural. She works very direct, not like myself although she does some marvelous preliminary sketches. But the preliminary sketches are individual they don’t have a whole lot of relationship to the end product.

Interviewer: You sense the spontaneity in the work, you definitely do, you can call it controlled spontaneity or whatever. I saw the exhibit she presently has at the library, at Woodson, the big bold color, and as you say, shapes are bold and big and big and big!

Raymond: I would like to see her with a big old wall and some three inch brushes and all of the paint she would want. I would like to do a project with her, where all I would do would be to hand her things. Which wouldn’t last very long because she is the type that would say,‘come on and join right in . . . .’ Her most recent artistic achievement is a seven foot painting-the largest easel painting she has yet attempted—for the Hilton Towers on Chicago’s downtown Michigan Avenue.  

To those critics Mr. Price referred to, who devalued the quality of Burroughs’ work, the writer has retrieved a copy of a transcript of her course work evaluation from the

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68 Ramon Price of Chicago, interview by author, 16 April 1993, Chicago, tape recording, DuSable Museum, Chicago.
School of the Art Institute of Chicago. This transcript is for coursework completed in 1940. The transcript reads as follows.
COURSES

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<th>COURSES</th>
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POINTS

TECHNICAL ART SUBJECTS (Laboratory Hours)

**Evening School - January 1939 to May 12, 1939**

- Figure Drawing: A+ 2
- Pattern Design: B+ 2

**Saturday School - January 7, 1939 to June 17, 1939**

- Figure Drawing: B 2

**Summer School - June 26 to August 4, 1939**

- Introductory Drawing: A 2-1/2
- Advertising Design: B 2-1/2

**Day School - September 18, 1939 to March 22, 1940**

- Pattern Design: A 8
- Figure Drawing: B+ 2
- School Crafts: B+ 4
- Composition Criticism: A+ 4
- Drawing, Advanced: B+ 1
- School Pageantry: B+ 1

**ACADEMIC COURSES**

- History of Art I: A- 2-2/3
- History of Art II: A- 2-2/3

There was a period when Margaret thought she might not be able to complete her education because of a lack of financial resources to cover the cost of tuition. She was notified by the Bursar's Office that her tuition was past due. When she was later asked to report to the bursar she was informed her bill had been paid in full by an anonymous donor.

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69 Copy of Official Transcript of Margaret Burrough. Private Collection, Margaret Burroughs, Chicago; original in the Art Institute of Chicago.
due. When she was later asked to report to the bursar she was informed her bill had been paid in full by an anonymous benefactor.

I had a wonderful experience at the Art Institute and met some wonderful teachers there, including Miss. Kathleen Blackshear, an art history teacher. She'd come from Texas, and I was leary of her because of everything I'd heard about white Southerners. But she was a wonderful person and very encouraging to me and other black students.

I remember I ran out of money and one of the counselors at the Art Institute advised me to drop out, go to work and get some money and then come back. I was walking down the corridor with all this sadness on my face, and I met Miss. Blackshear and told her I had been advised to drop out.

About a week later I was called to the bursar's office, and they told me an anonymous donor had paid my tuition and I was going to get an allowance of twenty-five dollars a month for art materials. Intuitively, I knew who it was. 70

**Founding of the National Conference of Artist**

Burroughs has networked to impact on literally thousands of lives. In 1959 she founded the outdoor Lake Meadows Art Fair and another outdoor fair, Chatham Art Fair in 1964. She was also instrumental in the founding of the National Conference of Artists in 1959.

Margaret Burroughs formulated the idea of a conglomerate of artists and supporters of the artists, with the goal of inspiring interest in art created by people of color. In 1954 James D. Parks of Lincoln University put

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together an interest group comprised of teachers of art employed in black colleges. He called his group the National Conference of Teachers of Art. The first session played host to ten colleges and met at Florida A. and M. University. After two short years interest and involvement faltered and dissipated. This was the forerunner of the still functioning National Conference of Artists founded by Burroughs three years later in 1959. James Parks was invited by Burroughs to co-host that first session, in 1959, in Atlanta.

"Negro artist who once worked isolated from each other are now brought together to exchange ideas and to know each other and their work."  

The evolution of this group seemed catalytic in the birth of fine arts centers throughout black colleges. Fine arts centers were established at Maryland State, Mississippi Valley College, Spellman, Howard, Morgan, Grambling, Lincoln University, West Virginia State, Arkansas A. and M., Tuskegee and Savannah. In fact it has been noted that those involved in the creation of these centers were all members of the N.C.A., with one exception. It was also through the efforts of Burroughs that the N.C.A. was a part of a cultural group who were invited to Russia in 1966. Since its inception the N.C.A. has traveled from city to city holding annual meetings both here and abroad, a component which widens exposure to varied lifestyles and

71The History of the National Conference of Artists.
cultures represented in the group’s membership. The artists felt strongly they had a mission which they must take very seriously.

In the minutes from the very first meeting, the document cites, the group not only established what the operational structure would be, they elected officers, received guest speakers, held round table discussions on what they deemed important issues impacting artists of color, and their potential for growth. Burroughs was the first chairperson and served as an officer for many years. She is still a member. 72

For Burroughs, developing her artistic character has been a life long journey, one which could not be ignored. She states,

No genuine artist chooses to be an artist. He is compelled to become one by some force inside himself or herself. This force drives him on and will not let him rest unless he obeys its will, even though obedience may result in him being neglected, poverty stricken and suffering heartbreak. His is not an easy life but no genuine artist thinks that his life is wasted or would wish to follow any other profession if he had it to do all over again. 73

The Writer/Author

Burroughs’ early experiences with writing were at times rewarding, as with her first composition in grade school

72 Minutes, NCA, Burroughs, presiding.

73 Margaret Burroughs, "You Too Can Be An Artist or An Art Appreciator or Art Is For Everybody," TD, Personal files of Margaret Burroughs, Chicago.
under the tutelage of Ms. Ryan. At other times, it was a frustrating learning experience as with her unfortunate introduction to plagiarism during her high school days.

She entered public life in the 1940s when she started writing book reviews and articles for the Associated Negro Press, the first black-owned and operated wire service...Dr. Burroughs said that this is where her interest in writing flourished. 74

Her first published work was "Jasper, The Drummin' Boy" produced by Viking Press in 1947, revised edition, Chicago: Follett, 1970. 75 In 1955 she put together an anthology, "Did You Feed My Cow?", published by Thomas Y. Crowell Company; revised edition, Chicago: Follett 1969. The anthology focuses on a compilation of rhymes, games and chants children recite and entertain themselves with. The idea for the anthology came when Mrs. Burroughs attended a convention of persons interested in folklore, concentrating on children. She was intrigued by the cadence and the rhythm which she heard again and again, as many of those in attendance recited rhymes over and over. What was it about the rhymes and chants that kept even adults mesmerized?

She began her research by collecting rhymes students wrote in each others autograph books. Then she amassed chants and other verbal games children engaged in. She


gathered them wherever she could find them. If she passed children playing in the park she would watch and listen intensively and even ask for an encore performance so that she could accurately record the wording. The book is organized into five categories, "call and responses", "group games or play parties", doorstep chants and rhythms, jump rope rhymes and street rhymes and bounce wall games. In the interview with Gardner of the Milwaukee Journal, Mrs. Burroughs explained that all of the rhymes and chants were grounded in the history of a variety of cultures representing a total world culture. One example is found in the call and response style characteristic of African music, and supports a leading line, followed by a chorus response. The early Negro spirituals duplicated the same format. In this anthology she is not concerned with recording the original versions of these rhymes. Instead she wanted to highlight the contemporary adaptations as enacted and interpreted by children across America. Mrs. Burroughs finds the tongue twisters the most engaging.

In this same article the journalist reports the Mrs. Burroughs freely acknowledged this was not her first effort in attempting to become a published author. She said she had at least twenty manuscripts that had been rejected. She kept them because she was once advised by a highly respected

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author of children's books, Clara Ingram Judson, that she should hold on to all manuscripts. There may come a time when they could be useful."

In 1966, Chicago's Praga Press, published *Whip Me Whop Me Pudding and Other Stories of Riley Rabbit and His Fabulous Friends*. This is another anthology. It introduces readers to a character called Riley Rabbit. One reads about Riley's escapades with numerous friends introducing the reader a diverse array of new characters."

In 1968 Burroughs wrote and published her poem, "What Shall I Tell My Children Who Are Black?" This is undoubtedly her most acclaimed and celebrated poem. In an interview session, Dr. Burroughs revealed she never dreamed the poem would have achieved the kind of notoriety it has received for more than a quarter of a century. Dr. Burroughs recounts that she had been asked to speak before a group of parents at Doolittle Elementary School and she labored over what would be a significant and appropriate theme. Foremost in her mind was that she put together a presentation that did not alienate her audience. She wanted to leave them with something special. When she sat down to prepare her speech she found herself with the poem, "What Shall I Tell My Children Who Are Black". She had

"Ibid.

written the poem for the 1963 Emancipation Proclamation Centennial Celebration. She said she realized fully that she had made an enlightened decision when she looked up from her notes and saw the tears streaming down the faces of many of the people in attendance.

She recalls when she attempted to title the poem, and the idea of "What Shall I Tell My Children Who Are Black" came to her, she telephoned her friend and accomplished author, Gwendolyn Brooks, to ask if she had ever used such a title with any of her work. It seemed so right, so comfortable, so familiar, she thought maybe she had heard it before, and that it was stored in her subconscious. Mrs. Brooks immediately assured her that she had never used such a title nor would she.

After their conversation, Mrs. Burroughs felt assured that the title was her unique brainchild. Unfortunately, after the work had been presented publically and had gained fame, her friend called and accused Mrs. Burroughs of stealing the title from her. She could not produce even one narrative or poem where she had used this title but she and Mrs. Burroughs disagreed over this vehemently. For the first time in their long and intimate association there was a sizeable rift between the two friends. Margaret had, in fact, introduced her friend Gwendolyn to her husband. If it had not been for her forthrightness, they probably would never have met or married. Margaret refused to change the
Feelings between the former friends remained somewhat strained, and although they continued to socialize together and communicate, they have never been as close as they were before this accusation was made. The poem reads as follow.

"WHAT SHALL I TELL MY CHILDREN WHO ARE BLACK?"

(With apologies to Gwendolyn Brooks)

What shall I tell my children who are black
Of what it means to be a captive in this skin?
What Shall I tell my dear ones, fruit of this dark womb
When everywhere they turn, they are filled with abhorence of black.

The night is black and so is the boogie man, Black
dirt. Black villians with black hearts. A black cow
give no milk.

A black hen lays no eggs. Bad news bordered in black.
Mourning clothes, black. Storm clouds, black.
Black is evil and evil is black.

What shall I tell my children who are black
Who have been raised in a white white world
A world where white is the symbol of all
That is good and pure and fine and decent,
A world of fleecy white clouds, beautiful white dolls,
Where heaven is surely a white place
With white angles robed in white and cotten candy is white.

What can I say to them? What can I do when my black
child scrubs his face in vain trying to get the black
off, Comes home to me in tears because a playmate
Called him black, big lipped, flat nosed and nappy
headed.

How shall I lift his head, get him to square his
shoulders. Look his adversaries straight in the eye,
Confident in the knowledge of his worth, Serene
Under his black skin, In love with his textured hair
Strong board nose and full lips?

What can I do to give him strength that he may come
through Life's adversities, a whole human being, That
he might survive. And survive, he must for who knows?
Perhaps my black child here, bears in him the genius to discover the cure for . . . cancer. On land on distant plants and explored new worlds. So he must survive for the good of all humanity. He must survive and he must be strong and unwarped. And human in a world of inhuman people and biased laws and practices. He must and will survive.

I have drank deep draughts from the fountain of my black culture, sat at the knee of my mother Africa and heard the truth of my heritage so often told but seldom written. I have much to tell my children. I shall tell them in their proud blackness the story of their black fathers, and fathers fathers, all black with full lips, textured hair and broad noses. I shall take them back into a way back time from ancient Africa on up until the now time. The heritage of my black child will be his armor. Win any battle he may face. This story is not written

And I must sacrifice to feed, clothe and shelter them. No one else will do it for me. I must do it for myself. I must find the truth of heritage and pass it on to them. In years to come, my children and their children's children will venerate me. For the truth will make us free.

Margaret T. B. Burroughs
February. 12, 1963

Emancipation Proclamation
Centennial Year.

The poem has been translated into several languages. It has been reproduced and circulated around the world including Africa, the West Indies, South America, England, France, Poland, Holland and the U.S.S.R. The poem looks at promoting and teaching black children black history and black culture. She makes it clear to parents that their responsibility is to offset any negative ideals and concepts their children are confronted with in their day to day lives. This information and support from parental figures augments any weakened areas of self confidence and esteem.
enabling them to face the world proudly.

The public response to the poem had unintended consequences. Mrs. Burroughs assembled a book of poems in 1968 that was in fact a response to the responses of the initial poem. She entitled the new book "What Shall I Tell My Children?" This included literary creations entitled "What Shall I tell My Children Who Are White?" "What Shall I tell My Children Who Jewish?" and many others.

On 23 July 1991 Senator Paul Simon officially entered the poem into the Congressional Record. Simon stated,

I do not recall ever placing a poem in the Congressional Record. Perhaps I have, but in seventeen years in Congress, I do not recall having done it.

This poem is important because it tells the story of what many Americans go through, and why all of us have reached out to one another with greater sensitivity no matter what our background is.

Mr. President, I ask to insert the poem, "What Shall I Tell My Children Who Are Black?" by Dr. Margaret Taylor Goss Burroughs, at this point into the Record. The poem follows. 79

After this her next major publication was Africa, My Africa published by the DuSable Museum in Chicago in 1970. This was followed by What Shall I Tell My Children?: An Addendum with a Letter from Ruwa Chiri", again published by the DuSable Museum in 1973. 80


Further contributions to the literary chronicles include, *For Malcolm: Poems on the Life and Death of Malcolm X*, which she co-edited with Dudley Randall. Randall, while at a conference at Fisk, had seen Margaret Burroughs' sketches and heard Margaret Walker rehearse her afternoon reading; as he listened to Walker read about Malcolm X, he observed that most poets were writing about Malcolm, and Burroughs proposed that Randall edit a collection on the subject. When Randall invited her to co-edit the volume, she accepted, and David Llorens giving it some boost, promised to announce the anthology in Negro Digest (later Black World). 81


Burroughs became active in the Chicago black arts movement in literature, and she became more visible as a writer. Her poetry began to appear, along with that of younger poets, Haki Madhuluti (Don I, Lee), Carolyn Rodgers, Eugene Perkins, Sterling Plumpp and others involved in the Organization of Black American Culture. She has never

received the attention given to this group of authors, or to her contemporary Gwendolyn Brooks, who has been a critically acclaimed poet since the 1940s. Margaret T. G. Burroughs has carved out a place for herself as a poet whose work reflects a keen awareness of the multiple dimensions of "Afro-American life and history. Her poems, focusing frequently on Africa and its legacies among blacks in America have developed out of her lifelong commitment to preserving and enriching black culture."

During the turbulent era of the sixties Burroughs chose literature as a channel through which she could become an activist. She did not participate in sit-ins or marches but she was not silent. She wrote loudly and voluminously. Her work was written for a complete range of ages, but targeted youth and was designed to instill a strong sense of self identity in African ancestry. "In poetry and prose she felt able to convey her messages, which she called statements which the time I live in compelled me to make." Her work echoed overarching themes like the valiant qualities manifested in the African American experience; accomplishments within the African American culture; "and the continuity in the heritage of blacks, especially as exemplified by the lives of African and Afro-American

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83 Ibid., 50.
freedom fighters." Dickerson goes on to describe Burrough's poetry as direct, accessible and innovative."

Her participation with Randall in editing and compiling the anthology For Malcolm also featured her own poem, written in 1967, "Brother Freedom" where she elevates Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz). Here she presents him as a Christ figure whose potential was not fully realized. "Lay him down gently, lay him down slow. Swathe him in linen, wrap him just so./Turn his young face toward Mecca's soft flow./Our fallen warrior, or Brother Freedom. In spirit and in hope, Malcolm 'swirls around us./In the vital air, inspiring all./Who seeks saltue Freedoom" Immortal now, he sits in fine company With L'Overture and Joseph Cinque. With Vesey, Turner and Prosser Lumumba and Evers and others Brother Freedom.85

This excerpt identifies the style of imagery that is indicative of her work. Also characteristic of Burroughs is the fact that For Malcolm is a first of its kind initiating this as a significant contribution to the annals of literature.

Of her anthology, What Shall I Tell My Children Who Are Black? Burroughs states,

Little did I realize when it was written that it would help to usher in the black pride era of the decade to follow. This poem has gone a long way since I first

84 Ibid., 50-51.
85 Ibid.
read it to a group of working-class parents at the
Doolittle School P.T.A. meeting in observance of Negro
History Week - 1963. 

Her fellow writer, Haki Madhulutic (Don L. Lee), wrote
the introduction for this anthology. He wrote:

The prose and poetry of this book, beautiful black
words and images, is contagious and if read seriously,
will infect the reader with a black disease, black
pride. Mrs. Burroughs paints beautiful black pictures
with the same alphabet that is so often used against
black people.

Some of the poems use a prose like format to express general
feelings of suppression felt by blacks as well as elicit a
sense of pride in their history. Some of the contributions
could more appropriately be classified as prose rather than
poetry.

More properly prose than poetry, "Everybody But Me" is
indicative of both the strength of Burrough’s messages
and the weakness of her expression. While her prose
poems stir empathetic responses, they are not
memorable. They suggest that Burrough’s sentiments in
"What Shall I Tell My Children Who Are Black" were
shaped not only by the author’s commitment to improving
the conditions of Afro-Americans but also by her
determination to fight oppression among all groups of
people.

Burroughs’ work, after this contribution, showed
maturity in development. She continued to embrace her
humanitarian ideals and to use her poetry, her pen, as a
weapon for expounding political tenants. She was quoted as

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87 Mary Jane Dickerson, Dictionary of Literary Biography’s
(Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1985), 51.

88 Ibid., 51.
quoting Lenin in stating "the finest cause in the world, the fight for the liberation of mankind," and this in fact is the underlining impetus in her poetry.

As she developed, through education and new experiences, her own work reflected the benefits of those experiences. These include teaching a course in Africa and African-American art history at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1968 and simultaneously holding an internship with the Field Museum in Chicago from 1967-1968. Her involvement with the internship was due to a fellowship she was granted from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Immediately following this experience she acquired a grant designated specifically for travel to Africa. This was promoted by the American Forum for International Study project hosted at the University of Ghana.

Her experiences abroad energized her literary creativity. In 1970 she produced her second anthology of poems *Africa My Africa*. Dickerson, in her critique, purports this volume was the most efficacious of her poetry writings to date. Most of these poems were inspired and created during her summer in Ghana in 1968. As Dickerson states:

> However, in "Home Again," the theme of the Afro-American as a stranger in African society introduces the complexity that reverberates throughout the volume the African-American is home but not at home. . . . What Margaret Burroughs attempts in these poems is reminiscent of what Countee Cullen attempted earlier and what Robert Hayden achieves later in *American Journal*: the merging of personal history with her
larger framework of the African-American experience which is both an extension of and a separation from an Afrian experience of memory and desire. In *Africa, My Africa*, Burroughs excercises great control over her language to produce poetry of subtley and meaning. Her poems go as far as any contemporary poems about Africa to evoke the ambiguities of Africa in the consciousness of Black Americans . . . . In the foreword, the poet's husband. Charles Gordon Burroughs, says, "The poem tells us about Africa with love and concern for people and humanity without claiming concern for people to grasp and understand the blackness of our anceestral home." In their honest about preconceptions versus reality and their sensitivity to people and place, the poems instruct by means of confluence of emotions and images, a confluence that liberates Burroughs from the ideolocial constraints of her earlier poetry.

The best poems in the volume are those that render the Afro-American of the late 1960s black revolution in the United States confronting both an historical Africa and a contemporary Afrian society in transition.\(^89\)

Dickerson acknowledges the work of Salim Muwakkil, "A Solid Movement," which ran in *In These Times* 27 February - 12 March 1985 pages 23-24, as her resource in putting together her article which has been extensively referred to in this section.

In 1985 and 1986 respectively, Dr. Burroughs edited and promoted publication of *Minds Flowing Free* and *Black Men Speak From Behind the Walls*, compilations of works created by residents in correctional institutions. The book put together by the female residents was compiled first and was so well recieved it was deemed advantageous that the men have a opportunity to assemble and contribute to a similar volume. Each author - contributor was given two copies and

\(^{89}\)Ibid., 52-54.
the others are sold at five dollars each. All accumulated proceeds were reinvested for future publications.⁹⁰

Dr. Burroughs continues to write as well as to create art. She often illustrates many of her literary works combining two of her many talents in one end product. Her writing was proliferous. She stated in conversation, with the writer, that when she began writing it was exciting and therapeutic. She stated she realized she was not in the same league as her talented friend Gwendolyn Brooks but she did enjoy writing. It was clear to her that writing would not be the principle component in her life’s work. Burroughs decided a wiser course would be to continue developing other artistic vehicles for self expression. Yet she was unable to relinquish the pen for very long. When this writer went through the private papers belonging to Dr. Burroughs, thousands of pages of prose and poetry, all written by Dr. Burroughs, had been typed and set aside. Some had been published, some written for special presentations, then filed away. The creations located at this site alone filled six file containers.

⁹⁰Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Black Men Speak From Behind the Walls How This Book Came About, 1986.
Chapter IV

FOUNDING OF THE DUSABLE MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND ART CENTER

The Setting

The official year for the grand opening of the Ebony Museum of Negro History was 1961, (DuSable Museum of American History and Art). Our thirty-fifth president, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, was the chief executive officer of the United States. Although his tenure was dramatically aborted through assassination, he left an impressionable legacy. His early legislative bills ushered in medical bills for seniors, federal financial aid to education, U.S. involvement in space research as well as civil rights.¹ Also, in 1961, the Peace Corps was formed along with the Alliance for Progress in Latin America. By contract, the U.S. invaded Cuba in the Bay of Pigs incident and the same year made public its support of Vietnam Independence. Kennedy met with noted leaders of superpowers in Europe,

including DeGaulle, Khrushchev and MacMillian to discuss the political environment between nations.\textsuperscript{2} In 1962, there were several precarious political events, incidents such as the Cuban crisis. Information supported rumors that Russia was arming Cuba with missiles. Kennedy presented Cuban officials with an ultimatum, the bottom line being disassemble the missile bases. Fortunately disaster was averted when the Russians withdrew.\textsuperscript{3} Between 1961 through 1963 both governments made major strides in space research. However, all of the attention was not reserved for foreign affairs as there were pressing domestic issues that required attention. In 1962 Kennedy invited Russia to combine efforts to expand space exploration. Between 1961 through 1963 both governments made major strides in space research. The Trade Expansion Act and legislation to condemn racial discrimination in Federal housing were enacted in 1962. In the same year the President ordered Federal troops to Mississippi to ensure the admissions of black students into the University of Mississippi. The following year, 1963, federal troops were sent to Birmingham, Alabama to squelch race riots. Later there was a peaceful integration of black students into the University of Alabama. The nation also


witnessed the historical march on Washington, D. C. by civil
rights organizations and advocates. Kennedy's life came
to a tragic end on 22 November 1963 through assassination in
Dallas, Texas by Lee Harvey Oswald. During 1963 Kennedy
signed the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty with Great Britain and
Russia. The Eisenhower and the Kennedy administrations had
done significant work toward civil rights issues. Many
Blacks, however, construed the accomplishments as being
inadequate and were committed to making further inroads.
The 1954 Supreme Court decision on school integration had
begun to enlighten the nation that race relations in the
United States would not remain as the status quo.

During the turbulent nineteen sixties numerous support
and advocate groups evolved. One such group received
national acclaim and was comprised of nineteen senators and
eighty one members from the House of Representatives from
eleven southern states. Senator Sam J. Erwin of North
Carolina is credited with spearheading this movement.
Collectively they formulated a statement articulating their
view opposing school segregation. They drafted a document,
the Southern Manifesto, of which eleven legislators signed.

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6Ibid.
There were no signatures from representatives from Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma, and West Virginia. These states supported segregated school systems. This group of southern non-supporters argued that the Supreme Court had overstepped its power in applying the Constitution to issues related to the educational arena. They formulated a resolve among themselves gaining strength and firm in their resistance.

They also stated that the court's action was done without the consent of the people and was 'certain to destroy the system of public education in some of the States ... . We pledge ourselves to use all lawful means to bring about a reversal of this decision which is contrary to the constitution and to prevent the use of force in its implementation.'

Ten states and the District of Columbia complied with the law. Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina abstained and did nothing formal. They addressed each incident individually as it arose.

On 1 December 1955 Rosa Parks was arrested and charged with the violation of Alabama segregation laws. Mrs. Parks had refused to relinquish her seat on a Montgomery bus to a white male patron. Black people of Montgomery decided the arrest was unlawful and violated the U.S. Constitution which provides for equal protection under the laws. Black organizations, leaders and ministers formulated a proposal

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calling for a boycott of the city buses. The church became the vehicle for communicating and organizing of the event and the subsequent planned boycott scheduled for 5 December.

This gathering decided an organization was needed to direct the boycott. Dr. Martin Luther King was unanimously elected as the president of the now formed Montgomery Improvement Association, MIA. The boycott was well supported. Buses rolled past empty the first day. Black patrons, old and young, found other means of getting where they needed to go. They walked, hailed cabs, thumbed rides, rode mules, and horse drawn buggies once again populated the city streets.

The boycott was planned to last only one day. However, after Mrs. Parks was found guilty and fined ten dollars plus and additional four dollars in court costs, the movement decided to continue the boycott until conditions changed. On 21 December 1956, more than one year after the boycott began Dr. King and other leaders took a triumphant ride on a Montgomery bus. They sat the front of the bus.

The Montgomery Improvement Association, MIA, was the precursor to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference on Transportation and Nonviolent Integration. This organization evolved into the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, SCLC, with Dr. King as president.

Many other organizations were founded as a response to the need for equal rights, equal protection, and equal
opportunities for all people. The term "sit-ins" was coined during the sixties and has became a familiar component of our vernacular. Initially, in 1960 four students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College went to Greensboro’s Woolworth’s store and sat at the counter to get service. The policy was that blacks were not to be served at the counter. They were ignored. The students just sat without being served. Hours lapsed and the manager decided to close the counter earlier than the scheduled designated time to motivate the student to just leave. This action was defined as a "sit-in." This strategy caught on quickly and became a very popular tactic to address segregation and discrimination encountered in public establishments.\(^6\)

In 1961 with a budget of $800.00, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, SNCC, was formed. The membership began with sixteen students who elected to leave college to work with the program on a full time basis. The membership grew and incorporated students from black southern colleges, white students from northern and western colleges and universities. The group concentrated its energies on working with civil rights issues in Mississippi and Georgia closely followed by Virginia, Maryland and Arkansas.

This group focused on working with members within

\(^6\)Ibid., 14.
communities educating them, feeding them, registering them to vote, and leading demonstrations highlighting injustices. This was a direct approach to addressing the problems. "They felt that nonviolent revolutionary tactics were necessary to move the white power structure which upheld segregation and inequity."

Students were threatened by college administrators with expulsion based on their involvement with such groups particularly if they involved themselves in sit-ins and other forms of demonstrations. Even administrators at black colleges engaged in these bully tactics premised on a fear of offending white college trustees, state legislatures and others who were instrumental in awarding funding.

Freedom Riders were citizens who traveled by bus into areas where conflict was being focused upon. Their primary concerns were to challenge segregated interstate buses and waiting rooms, which were status quo in the sixties, although the Supreme Court had ruled on segregation in public buses as illegal in 1956.

Of course, like their compatriots, they too met with violent opposition. Things erupted and climaxed into startling consequences and president, John Kennedy was forced to intervene. He worked in conjunction with his brother, U.S. attorney general, Robert Kennedy, but often

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Ibid., 18.
couldn't elicit the support of governors of southern states.

The situation was exacerbated by hate groups like the Nazi Party and consequently the tension escalated to the breaking point. Martial law was declared. "An outcome of the Freedom Rides was that the CORE proved the necessity of direct mass action to achieve the equal rights which the courts had granted." ¹⁰

The greatest number of demonstrations and sit-ins transpired between 1960 and 1963. Abuses against participants were epidemic. President Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy intervened during one of King's internments after receiving a telephone call from Coretta King, his wife. She shared some of the specifics about the arrest and subsequent events. Many supporters were confronted with electric cattle prods, high powered fire hoses, billy clubs, burnings, bombings, often resulting in loss of lives, including children.

One of the most memorable events was the historic March on Washington on 28 August 1963, brainchild of A. Phillip Randolph. The marchers were applying pressure to authorities on issues of education, employment, better housing public accommodations and the right to enfranchisement.

The Black Panther party was led by two educated black men, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, who had been

¹⁰Ibid., 25.
influenced by the teachings and doctrines of Malcolm X, a Black muslim leader. They were also avid students of Lenin and Marx, Chinese leader Mao Zedong and Vietnamese leader Ho chi Minh. They were very concerned with the issue of police brutality, rent evictions, and teaching students Black History and about their civil rights. The Panthers differed with SNCC over the issue of involvement of whites in these causes. The Panthers held that whites should be included while SNCC felt that blacks alone should work on their liberation.

The American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU, reported the record of police actions across the nation against the Black Panther Party forms a prima facie [based on first impressions] case for the conclusion that law enforcement officials are waging a drive against the black militant organization resulting in various civil, liberties violations.11

The ACLU also released a list of forty eight major confrontations between police and Panthers.12

President Lyndon Johnson was required to address this issue when increased racial tensions mounted and escalated into riots in the cities. President Lyndon Bains Johnson addressed the nation on 27 July 1967 and said.

The only genuine, long range solution for what has happened lies in an attack mounted at every level upon the conditions that breed despair and violence. All of us know what those conditions are: ignorance discrimination, slums, poverty, disease, not enough jobs. We should attack these

11Ibid., 48.

12Ibid., 37.
conditions not because we are frightened by conflict, but because we are fired by conscience. We should attack them because there is simply no other way to achieve a descent and orderly society in America.\textsuperscript{13}

On 28 July Johnson formed the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. The commission concluded, our nation is moving toward two societies one black, one white, separate and unequal.

Chicago possessed it's own set of unique problems flavored with a full dose of racial bias. Organizations such as the Urban League, People United to Save Humanity, PUSH, and other community based interest groups.\textsuperscript{14} Margaret Burroughs and others made significant contributions to society in an effort to address the primary causes for the unrest and a need for redress for people of color. This chapter will focus on the founding of The DuSable Museum of African American History and Art as her response to these societal ills, in part, her prescription.

\underline{In The Beginning}

The Burroughs' home was often a gathering place for artists, writers, historians, actors, musicians and civic minded citizens. On 20 December, 1960, Gerard N. Lew, Marian Hadley, Eugene Ford, Ralph Turner, Wilberforce Jones, Eugene Feldman, Margaret Burroughs and Charles Burroughs all met

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., 52.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 84.
and initiated the first structured, though informal discussion on establishing a Museum of Negro History. This group constituted the primary steering committee for the emerging museum. This first meeting's agenda included a discussion as to the possible location for such a museum, what would be included in the potential collection as well as the procedures for amassing a collection of artifacts. Interest was stimulated and the group unanimously agreed to meet again in four weeks to review the research collected on each of the above topics.\(^{15}\)

As one has undoubtably perceived, the seed for the subsequent birth of the museum had been fertilized years before this initial steering committee meeting in 1960. Some writers suggest the actual conception took place when Margaret Burroughs worked as the art director and research assistant for the Negro Hall of Fame. The "New Crusader" newspaper sponsored the event which was highlighted at the Chicago Coliseum between 1960 and 1962. Advocates of this theory maintain Burroughs felt strongly that something more substantial, more permanent should be undertaken as a tribute or memorial "dedicated to preserving, interpreting and displaying our heritage."\(^{16}\) During this involvement


Margaret, her husband Charles, and ten others established the National Negro Museum Historical Foundation which sponsored annual activities featuring programs and exhibitions emphasizing Negro History. This organization gave birth to the support group ultimately responsible for the opening of the Ebony Museum of Negro History.\textsuperscript{17}

This writer feels that the seed was planted as far back as the 1940's. During the advent of World War II, Burroughs wrote many articles for the ANP, Associated Negro Press. During the same period a historian and humanitarian, L. D. Reddick, was also writing editorials related to contemporary events. In Burroughs' private papers there was an article by Reddick which discussed the importance of documenting the involvement of the Negro in World War II. Reddick, a white citizen, implored blacks to retain the letters the families and friends received from their relatives involved in the war. He explained the historical value of this correspondences. The unique documentation concerned the facts of how Negroes were treated by the United States armed services, and citizens abroad where they were stationed. He spoke to the issue of the primary onus of preserving accurate documentation of Negro history. He directed readers to send letters from their loved ones to him, therein becoming a part of the Schomburg Collection in New

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid.
Burroughs later echoed the same sentiment in one of her articles. Reinforcing the concept of how important it was for blacks to document their involvement in American history. The museum then was taking the idea a step further, becoming an organized format for showcasing and documenting history for generations.

Another account renders yet another version of the actual inception of the museum. Francis Ward, in an article "DuSable Museum: The Spirit of Chicago's Founder Lives On", states the real inception of the seed began with the membership of Margaret and Charles Burroughs to the National Negro Congress, the National Negro Museum and Historical Foundation, headquartered in New York City. As members were residents of a diverse number of geographic locations, they each could monitor activities in their respective homesites. The Burroughs' recall activities being sponsored at 48th and South Wabash known then as Bacon's Casion, now the Charles Hayes Center. The chairman of the board, A.M.E. Bishop James A. Bray would often expound on the compelling exigency of the organization to inaugurate a museum highlighting negro history.

Margaret was the secretary for the board of directors. Mail and inquiries for the foundation were routed to her home address. Since the title of the organization included the

word "museum" it was a logical conclusion for the public to assume, there was, in fact a museum at that address. One afternoon in the mid fifties there was a knock at the door of the residence at 3806 South Michigan Avenue. Margaret Burroughs states, a courtly-looking black minister knocked on my door and asked if the museum was open. He had seen the word museum in the title and thought it was actually what the foundation operated.

So, with a bit of tongue in cheek, I showed him several rooms where we had a number of pictures, paintings and artifacts. Afterward, the gentleman was impressed and said he would be back and bring his children. From that experience and listening to Bishop Bray, the idea for a museum kinda jelled in my mind.¹⁹

This then could very well be the documentation of the first visitor to the Ebony Museum, Negro Museum of History.

The Burroughs' had purchased the property at 3806 South Michigan Avenue in Chicago. After this incident they began to discuss the notion with close friends and interested persons. This group included

social activist Ishmael Flory, Ralph Turner, a retired railroad worker, librarian Marian Hadley, Gerard N. Lew, a retired postman, and Eugene P. Feldman, a white liberal activist who, through personal study over the years, had gained an extensive background in black history.²⁰

Whichever event is actually responsible for motivating the founding of the institution it was the consequence of eleven


²⁰Ibid.
enlivened individuals who took a pivotal historical step.

The First Home

The first home of the now, DuSable Museum of African American History and Art was the residence of Charles and Margaret Burroughs, originally the John W. Griffith mansion. In 1893 John W. Griffith commissioned, architect Solon Spencer Beman to design a home for the Griffith family. Construction began 9 November 1893 and was completed 27 June 1894. Griffith himself was a famous contractor whose company erected Union Station, The Civic Opera House, The Merchandise Mart, the U.S. Post Office and other well known buildings.

The mansion is a three story turreted graystone housing eighteen to twenty rooms. It sits on three lots, 3806, 3808 and 3810 South Michigan Avenue. The architectural style is French Chateauesque. The entrance is adorned with walnut panels flowing through to the dining room as well as the stairway ascending to the second level. The ceilings of the foyer and dining room are oak. The library, dining room, and front parlor are each separated by sliding oak doors. The dining room is set apart from the kitchen with a door that is oak on the dining room side and rosewood on the kitchen side. The dining room also houses a large built in oak buffet.

The ample foyer and library host fireplaces, the one in
the library embellished with ceramic tiles. The large fireplace in the inviting foyer is of Italian marble with leaded glass windows housed above, a fireplace with an oak mantel was located in the dining room. As one ascends the stairs the light source is two glass windows arranged at two different levels.

The master bedroom and another bedroom are on the second floor, both with fireplaces. The third floor is where one can find the ballroom and several adjacent rooms. All of the rooms in the mansion are large and boast of ample space.

There is a coachhouse on the property which was used as artists studios and residence. The woodworking is quite unique adorned with motifs comprised of geometric shapes. Ceilings in both dwellings are either curved or vaulted. The property also has a spacious backyard, one of the few on the block.

John Griffith willed the home to his son George W. Griffith in 1894. George sold the property to the railroad men's club, the Quincy Club, in 1938. Almost from the beginning of their ownership it became the place for blacks to gather. During that time there were very few places where people of color could assemble, network and
It became known as a place people could rent for weddings, reunions, and other celebrations. During that era the number of banquet halls which would open their doors to blacks was sparse. Additionally, railroad workers found lodging here when they arrived in Chicago and were not admitted in most hotels.

They structured a bar and kitchen in the basement to facilitate in assisting in the success of numerous social functions. By the later part of the 1950's and initial years of the 1960's, the club was in less demand. Many of the initial members had died and the few remaining members were no longer able to keep things running with the same efficiency as they once had. When the Ebony Museum of Negro History and Art officially occupied three rooms of the dwelling there were still residents occupying rooms on the upper floors.

The Quincy Club, was an environment for educational and social interaction. Notable persons such as W. E. B. DuBois, Phillip Randolph, Paul Robeson and many others frequented the club. Many prominent artists, writers, civic leaders and laborers all met there. The club functioned as

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a social spot from 1938-1961. The residence was granted landmark status in 1981.

In 1961, when the dwelling became the home of the Museum, repairs and renovations were imperatives. Funds totaling $12,000 for the exterior included a new roof, $5,500.00; carpentry, $1,000.00; painting, $500.00; masonry and tuckpointing $3,000.00; and steam cleaning $2,000.00 plumbing $2,000.00; carpentry $1,000.00; painting $1,000.00; replastering $500.00 repairs totaling $6,500.00. They consequently needed a grand sum of $18,500.00. The Burroughs redeemed $9,250.00 from their personal savings. The balance they hoped to retrieve by applying for a grant from the Illinois Department of Conservation Grants. They were awarded the funds and the repairs were completed. The museum could now be opened.

About the Founders

Margaret Burroughs is generally credited with being the founder of the Museum. She, however, is quick to correct that statement by stating she is only one of the founders. On 20 December 1960 the Burroughs met with Ralph Turner, a retired railroad worker, Eugene Ford, Gerard N. Lew, a

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retired postman, Eugene Feldman, a white liberal activist and Wilberforce Jones. They came together to brainstorm on the concept of forming an institution designed to preserve and expose the public to African American history.

Eugene Feldman remained an integral force in the establishment of the museum from its inception until his death. The Burroughs were devoted to this cause and committed to seeing it become a reality. When Feldman arrived in Chicago from North Carolina he had already been involved in research centered around contributions people of color had made to history. He had met with a great deal of opposition in North Carolina and Iowa, where he lived previously, as a result of his work and stance on civil liberties. When he arrived in Chicago he was invited to live with a displaced white southerner and his family who lived in Hyde Park.

All along I had been interested (since the 1930's) in doing research and writing in the area of Black history and also about whites of the South who worked for ending slavery. When I became involved in civil rights, I noticed that the history of Blacks had not been offered me in my high school or university work, so I began to read independently. The more I read, the more I wanted to read and the more I wanted to tell others. While living in Alabama I wrote a biography of one of three Black congressmen James T. Rapier. Since the 1940's when I first wrote of Rapier I wanted to publish the material. In Alabama no Black or white paper would do so. In the publishing business no book publishing company was at all interested. (All of this was in keeping with what I found out even before that:
Black history was taboo in established circles). When he shared his objective with his new friends, unanimously, they directed him to the Burroughs who were noted for sharing similar concerns. He was also informed that Margaret was an artist and could be interested in illustrating his prospective Rapier biography. Fate seemed to be working on behalf of putting the two together. Within a few weeks Feldman was told there was an art fair scheduled in Hyde Park and there was a great chance that Burroughs would be an exhibiter, affording him an opportunity to meet her. It proved to be quite an experience for Feldman, since it was his first art fair and he did meet and converse with Burroughs. She agreed to illustrate his book. She responded so enthusiastically that he was encouraged. No one had responded so zealously when reacting to his objectives before. They agreed to meet at the coach house on a Sunday morning soon thereafter. On his first visit he found an enlightening atmosphere. He arrived amidst a gamut of diverse cultural activity. A musician was there giving guitar lessons. Charles Burroughs was giving lessons in the Russian language. Surprisingly, amid all of this diverse activity he found he felt comfortable as if it were natural for him to be there.

As Feldman sat and looked around he was in awe of the

paintings, sketches and sculptures that adorned the rooms. The afternoon was further enriched by a slide presentation featuring major aspects of black history after which everyone was invited to gather around the coffee table and share in the abundant repast of scrambled eggs, coffee, thickly sliced wheat toast and grits.

That afternoon, along with an ensemble of musicians, those in film, politics and other artisans gathered: "Here we discussed rights, unions, technocracy, socialism, educational methods ... truly the "seminars" were educational. For me, just fresh from the South, some things surprised me. I had thought that in the North integration had progressed all along and that black and white writers, artist, etc, were together, but I found that this was NOT true."25

It was here, during these open discussions, that Feldman began questioning the cliché 'mainstream.' "The conventional manner most people had became accustomed would imply inclusions of many cultures and yet very clearly excluded from it were vital factors such as black creativity ... women, gays, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans."26 This was Feldmans casual introduction to a sub-culture that was vibrant and alive attempting to make a difference. This very first meeting became a significant

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25Ibid., 12.

26Ibid.
pivoting point in his life. He would from that day until his death, become a loyal, integral component of this family of concerned and involved citizens, diligently campaigning for inroads into the evolving Black cultural movement.

Feldman purports that the founding of a museum honoring and acknowledging a rich history of black history and culture and its appropriate position in the world at large, and certainly in America, was a natural outgrowth of the group whose discussions often returned to a need for just such a forum for exposure.

When we met at the long wooden picnic table at the coach house apartment of Charles and Margaret Burroughs we talked often about the denial of Black history and culture in American and world life. If you opened a history book used in grade school, high school or on a collegiate basis you would find no mention of Black contributions [or for that matter the contribution of Indians, Mexican-Americans, women, gays, Jews and other ethnic groups]. We were determined to help change this. Yes, we were changers in society but I, for one, was ever the novice in spite of the fact that my opponents have termed me an expert or even specialist. It isn't only humility but truth that makes me know otherwise. 21

It became evident that there was a real possibility the museum would become a reality when the Griffith family home at 3806 S. Michigan came up for sale. When the proposal for the new museum was discussed the residents of the old mansion were very excited and supportive of the idea. Two bachelor brothers, the Watkins, occupied the second floor

21 Ibid., 14.
with their mother.

One of the surviving members of the now defunct Quincy Club, Ralph Turner, was also a staunch advocate of this novel idea. Turner was a self-educated man reading extensively on a variety of related and non related topics. Mr. Turner became one of the founding members of the museum. Twenty years after he signed the original petition for a charter for the museum, Mr. Turner was often the scheduled senior lecturer at the museum.

Others were also drawn to the cause for which Margaret and Charles Burroughs were crusading. Another such person was Gerard N. Lew. He had been successful in tracing his ancestors back to the early 1700s. Lew’s ancestors were early settlers in Massachusetts, and some were members of the army fighting in the French-Indian War in 1763. Other ancestors became soldiers in the American Revolutionary Army. Lew had in his possession a powder horn used by his ancestor, Brazallai Lew, during that war. Lew had been long involved in civil rights work and was an avid historian. He often used poetry as his vehicle for sharing many of the numerous facts he had accumulated about black history. Most often he would involve significant personalities from history. Lew often lectured at the museum disseminating a great deal of information to hungry ears. He had been the first museum president. When he died in 1965 he willed his papers to the museum. At the event of
the Chicago Exposition of Negro Life, History, Culture and Business, when Margaret Burroughs wrote a book entitled *Figures of Black History*, she included a biography of Mr. Lew and his family.

The exposition was programmed and sponsored by Balm Leavall, the editor of the "Chicago New Crusader," a weekly black newspaper. Margaret was asked to work with the project as the art director and Mr. Lew was assigned as the historical researcher. Lew also served as the editor for the museum's 1964 heritage calendar utilizing the theme, Black Scientists and Inventors, for which Bernard Goss created the accompanying portraits. He worked with the museum as a loyal supporter until his death.

Marion Haley, a former librarian, had been a long-time collector of black history materials. Wilberforce Jones had been a longtime friend of the Burroughs and an Oxford University Fellowship student as well as an ex-auto worker involved in the Automobile Workers Union.

Nothing more has been mentioned about James O'Kennard accept to list his name among the initial signers of the petition.

**Purposes And Objectives Behind Establishing The Museum**

The Museum shall be dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of the history and culture of Africans and Americans of African descent to world history, and to American history, life, culture, and democracy, primarily, through its programs and activities. . . . The Museum shall operate exclusively for charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes; and shall provide such
services as permissible for organizations
described in Section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal
Revenue Code of the United States of America. 28

The objectives were also succinctly delineated in the
same document written by Burroughs in 1977. Today, its
objectives are the same as they were in 1961 when the Museum
opened. They are:

1) To become an important educational and cultural center
for the preservation and dissemination of African-American
history and culture.

2) To help the total community develop a greater
appreciation and understanding of Black Americans.

3) To serve as a major resource center and depository for
African-American history, culture, and artifacts.

4) To provide the total community with meaningful programs
reflecting the broadest range of African-American culture
and history.

5) To become a major institution for students, educators,
and scholars who are interested in furthering their

28Margaret Burroughs, "The Statement of the Case for The
DuSable Museum of African-American History, Inc. A Theatre of
Heritage for the Enrichment and Understanding of All the
People," TD, November 1977, Burroughs Papers, DuSable Museum
Archives, DuSable Museum, Chicago.
knowledge of African-American history and culture and to help bring about a greater awareness of African societies.

6) To provide an attractive place where all people can appreciate the beauty of African-American art and culture.

7) To become a significant and visible institution which will help enhance Chicago’s image as a major cultural center."

From its inception the institution has never lost sight of their primary objectives. Every activity and occurrence has been designed to manifest these objectives. In the first year of being opened the museum was host to 525 visitors. A decade later the number of visitors escalated to 25,107. Minimally thirty three percent of these visitors were suburbanites. The other two thirds were groups of senior citizens, disabled and handicapped individuals, school children and other adults.

Following is a breakdown of the numbers of people supporting the museum through attendance.

"Ibid, 1-2."
Table 1.—Museum Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>3806 S. Michigan Av.--</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>3806 S. Michigan Av.--</td>
<td>2,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>3806 S. Michigan Av.--</td>
<td>2,913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>3806 S. Michigan Av.--</td>
<td>3,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>3806 S. Michigan Av.--</td>
<td>4,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>3806 S. Michigan Av.--</td>
<td>7,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>3806 S. Michigan Av.--</td>
<td>9,153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>3806 S. Michigan Av.--</td>
<td>21,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>3806 S. Michigan Av.--</td>
<td>23,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>3806 S. Michigan Av.--</td>
<td>28,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>3806 S. Michigan Av.--</td>
<td>25,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>3806 S. Michigan Av.--</td>
<td>26,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>740 E. 56th Place----</td>
<td>29,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>740 E. 56th Place----</td>
<td>33,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>740 E. 56th Place----</td>
<td>10,000---*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>740 E. 56th Place----</td>
<td>11,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>740 E. 56th Place----</td>
<td>10,000---**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE:  
* - Updating usable space - renovation.  
** - Attendance reduced due to commencement of construction.  

30 Ibid. 3.
Much of the initial planning for the museum convened at the large wooden picnic table in the Burroughs's kitchen. High level discussions between Garvyites, socialists, communists, and those affiliated to the Democratic party and the Republican party took place. Margaret Burroughs listened, offered more hot coffee, added her own comments but primarily she listened and learned. She and her husband Charles kept "open house" and provided the bottomless cup of coffee while the exhibits, film color slide shows, discussions and workshops were conducted.  

Charles Burroughs had accepted the challenge to obtain a charter for the group and he submitted this document to the group on 23 February 1961. There were several alterations discussed. Members decided to withdraw a clause which prohibited political involvement of any of the members. Subsequently changes were made so that the museum could qualify for tax-exempt status. Once the appropriate changes had been made this initial charter was signed by Charles and Margaret Burroughs, Ralph Turner, Marion Hadley, James O'Kennard and Wilberforce Jones. Mrs. Hope I. Dunmore supplied the official notarization. The required ten dollar

\[\text{Ibid., 31-32.}\]
registration was paid and the museum became a legal entity. Margaret Burroughs, Eugene Ford and Wilberforce Jones accepted the responsibility of drafting a constitution for the group. This was unanimously adopted 25 June, 1961. Following incorporating the constitution was installation of the first permanent officers:

______________________________
Officers
______________________________
President------------------------ Gerard N. Lew
Vice President------------------- Samuel Stratton
Secretary------------------------- Marian Hadley
Treasurer------------------------ Ralph Turner

______________________________
Board Members
______________________________
Charles Burroughs
Margaret Burroughs
Ralph Turner
Eugene Ford

______________________________
Trustees
______________________________
Christine Johnson
Serna Belgrade
Felicia Ford
Fern Gayden
Marion Perkins

The official opening and dedication was held on 21 October

1961. The public was invited and did turn out in respectable numbers. In the early years the museum operated with a staff comprised completely of volunteers. This meant the hours the museum was opened was limited to 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and from noon to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. When more funds became available and a full staff could be employed the hours were extended to 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. schedule on Tuesday through Friday and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

During the first year of operations the museum hosted monthly or bimonthly displays and activities. The DuSable Museum Agenda 1961-62 was as follows.

DU SABLE MUSEUM AGENDA--1961-62

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Display/Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October-November</td>
<td>Arts and Crafts of Southern Plantations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Index of the American Design National Gallery, Washington D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December-January</td>
<td>Portraits of Great Negroes by the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-1962</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February-March</td>
<td>Thelma McWorter Kirpatrick Family-Papers entitled &quot;A Free Negro Family in 1840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April-May</td>
<td>All About Africa--Pictures from Permanent Files Saluting African Freedom Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 1962</td>
<td>Les Arts Afrique--Portfolio of Photographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July-August</td>
<td>Senegal Ghana, Nigeria--Photographs by Leroy Jefferies of Johnson Publishing Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 1962</td>
<td>Portraits of Great Negroes As Seen By Child Artists--Students of Art Classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of Dr. Margaret Burroughs

October-November 1962


The record of the attendance for 21 October 1961 through 30 September 1962 attests to the interest in this new cultural contribution to the Chicago area.

Table 2.—Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,438</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,226</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,664</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33Ibid., 42.

The minutes from the November 1962 Steering committee meeting records that by 1962 visitors were coming from various regions of the country. In 1962 people came from at least thirteen different states: New York, Georgia, Indiana, North Carolina, Virginia, Louisiana, Connecticut, California, Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan, Mississippi and the District of Columbia. Closer to home guests were reported to hail from Winnetka, Barrington, Morton Grove, Highland Park, Evanston, Midlothian, East Chicago, Maywood, Elgin, Joliet, Phoenix, Collinsville, LaGrange, Collinsville, LaGrange, Downers Grove, Robbins, Skokie, and Chicago Heights. The committee was also elated to report visitors came from fourteen foreign countries to visit the modest museum. Citizens from Ghana, Tanzania, South Africa, Nigeria, Liberia, France, England, Sweden, Sierra Leone, Barbados, Columbia, Mexico, Canada, and Germany. The following table serves to give one an idea of who made up these numerous groups of visitors. Table 3 presents figures for the various visiting clubs and groups.
Table 3.-- Attendance Figures For Group Tours From December 10, 1961 to July 7, 1962.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tour</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-10-61</td>
<td>Chicago Writers Group Meeting</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-23-61</td>
<td>Herb Roth Guitar Class Hootnanny</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-27-62</td>
<td>Chatham Girl Scouts Heritage Tour</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-12-62</td>
<td>Modern Teens Club of Rogers Park</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-16-62</td>
<td>A Fourth Grade Class - Ms. Carter</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-17-62</td>
<td>Negro History Lecture - Mr. Lew</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-22-62</td>
<td>Brownie Boy Scout Troop</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-22-62</td>
<td>Boys Brotherhood Republic</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-22-62</td>
<td>South Park YMCA</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-23-62</td>
<td>Newberry Avenue Center</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-28-62</td>
<td>Crane High School</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-11-62</td>
<td>Tea for Contest Winners of Negro History Essay</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-18-62</td>
<td>Negro History Roundtable Group</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-08-62</td>
<td>Tea for Former Students of Ms. Burroughs</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-16-62</td>
<td>South Park YMCA - Girls</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-26-62</td>
<td>Chicago Conference of Christians and Jews</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-02-62</td>
<td>Senior Citizens of Newberry Center</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-03-62</td>
<td>3 classes from Douglas School</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the subsequent years since its debut into society thousands of visitors have toured the facility and utilized the museum's numerous services and products. Additionally it adopted the onus of publishing a series of books and poems.  

**The Print Shop**

The DuSable Museum didn’t initially plan to go into the

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area of printing. Circumstances presented themselves in such a fashion that this was a logical conclusion to a series of events. Dr. Burroughs previously had two books published by other companies. She had also authored numerous newspaper articles and magazine articles. Her poem "What Shall I Tell My Children Who Are Black?" had been translated into Russian, Chinese, Spanish as well as languages of many European countries. She created several series of prints highlighting people of color who made important historical contributions. She created a series called Great American Negroes. Later she completed a multicultural series of prints entitled "Prints of Peace". These were printed by the museum press.

Feldman came to the organization with experience and knowledge in publishing a magazine. He had devoted six years to layout and editorial work on a civil rights magazine. He had a friend with an offset press which they were able to use at the museum.

that could be used to further enhance the material. This text was incorporated into the curriculum at the Christian Action Ministry Academy, and experimental alternative education school. It was also used by the education staff in many prisons. This early press was the place where the original heritage-freedom calendar was printed. All of the 3,000 originally produced calendars sold out quickly. Subsequent annual productions have also been printed at the site of this first print shop within the museum.

It was after such efficient success of the calendar the press staff felt secure in publishing the second edition of *Whip Me Whop Me Pudding and Other Stories of Riley Rabbit and His Fabulous Friends*. The staff was a small nucleus of volunteers and they were determined to make the print shop work. Feldman writes

> We’re big enough for such projects. Actually the strength of one determined person makes one big enough but when you get even four determined persons that is an unbeatable team for almost anything on the earth God made. The person, or persons plus the enthusiasm and determination indeed move more than mountains and so it has been in Margaret Burroughs's life[^37].

Mrs. Marion Beach, was also very involved in the museum press in conjunction with Eugene Perkins who co-edited *Poetry of Prison*. This museum press also published Margaret Burroughs poems, "Africa: My Africa," "Why Have the Youth Today Not Heard About This Man?" Also, "The Poetry of King

Lonie" by Albert Law Jr. Editions of *Poetry of Prison*, edited by Eugene Perkins and Eugene Feldman and *My Name is Arnold* a *Ghetto Primer* by Essie Branch.38

**Help For Growth**

When the retired railroad workers decided they had outlived the function of the Quincy Club, and that it was time to close their doors, they alerted Charles and Margaret Burroughs of their intent. The Burroughs were eager to avail themselves of this opportunity to house the museum in the residence at 3606 South Michigan. They purchased the main building as well as the coach house in which they lived. They moved into the main building reserving three rooms on the first floor for the "Ebony Museum of Negro History and Art", the initial name for the DuSable Museum of African American History. The Official opening was October 1961, even though the charter was acquired during "Negro History Week", in February of the same year.

The primary participants were all involved in full time employment or other intricate enterprises. Consequently, the hours the museum was open was restricted to the weekends. At the onset the visitors were sparse and consisted fundamentally of old friends, supporters, and well wishers. Margaret engaged herself in the onerous task of promoting the museum and cultivating its holdings for

exhibitions. This included a consistent supply of letters being forwarded to editors of newspapers, contacting associates in search of artifacts, family histories, and any other pertinent documentation of significant persons and events related to African American history. As items began to trickle in "store rooms" were opened in the basement.

Margaret also became the self-appointed fund raiser for the museum. Initially she could not garner the often sought after corporate support, however, membership dues gradually added a significant contributions to the financial status. Requests began to come in, soliciting Mrs. Burroughs talents as a lecturer. Sometimes a gratuity accompanied the request and acceptance and sometimes it didn't. On those occasions, when no fee was forthcoming, Mrs. Burroughs would boldly ask the sponsors and organizers of the functions to take out a membership with the museum. In most instances the response to this request was received very positively.

As the word about Margaret's objectives and search began to get around people would sometimes attend the lectures bearing gifts. The gifts might be an old letter, a journal, a diary or photograph that had been resurrected from the belongings of an elderly relative who had died. The survivors felt these items might be important and useful to the museum.

During the early years of the museum the expenses were nominal but funds were needed in order to progress.
Subscriptions to trade magazines were deemed beneficial. Additionally, sometimes people would bring artifacts they desired to sell and not donate. If this item was considered to be a valuable acquisition for the museum they would agree upon a price and pay. Funds were needed to support these endeavors. There were some volunteers who wanted to help in the maintenance and growth of the museum and they even volunteered to work with fundraising. Additionally, there were utility bills to be paid and rent to the Burroughs for use of the space the museum occupied, as well as the aforementioned publishing projects. The first significant fund raising benefit was held at the United Packinghouse Workers Union Hall at Forty Ninth Street and Wabash Avenue. Financially, it was a successful event.

As the first president of the museum, Charles Lew left his mark on the museum. Upon his death Margaret Burroughs determined that in access of one hundred books in the museum collection be designated and listed in his honor and memory. Also a series of drawings by artist Jennie Washington, were also named in his honor. After the CETA project of 1977 and 78 which involved commissioning two sculptors to create pieces honoring eight important contributors to black history, had been also dedicated and named for Lew, his family turned over the powder horn and other artifacts in their possession to the museum.

Charles Burroughs was another very important member of
the DuSable Museum family. Charles has been mentioned throughout this paper, generally in the role of Margaret's husband. Charles began life in New York where his mother worked for the public school system. Mrs. Burroughs was very active in civic and social issues. As a socialist she watched with great interest, the development of the social political structure of the USSR. She made the arduous decision to take her children to Europe to participate in their school system. Her daughter was enrolled in a school in Switzerland while Charles and his brother Neal attended school in the Soviet Union.

Charles remained in Russia until he was twenty years old. At that time World War II was spreading across the continent. As an American soldier who was eligible for the draft he ventured into Iran where he enlisted with the American forces there. Once the war was over he returned home to the United States. As a student, Charles had developed an avid appetite for reading. He had a strong foundation immersed in the liberal arts with a vigorous emphasis in African history as well as African American history. Charles, like Lew, became a lecturer at the museum. His message was so well structured and informative, he was often invited to speak at workshops sponsored by corporations who were concerned with an examination to the issues related to race relations in the United States. Charles often assisted students, young and old, with
research as they came to the museum's educational programs. His own reservoir of knowledge had been compiled from copious independent research on the topic. Charles Burroughs became the museum's first curator and librarian.

Because of Feldman's tireless efforts to educate people about Black history, Margaret Burroughs designated him as the Director of Research and Publications. Mr. Feldman was often queried about the reason why a white person would become such an integral component in the cause of blacks. Most often he would take advantage of yet another opportunity to adjust his critics perspective on the indivisible integration of human kind. The meagre staff of four soon increased to a staff of five. They were joined by Margaret's sister, Mrs. Marion Hummons. With her she brought energy, and much needed secretarial skills. After organizing the records that go along with such an enterprise she began structuring the membership campaign, the financial life blood of the museum at that time. Unanimously, they agreed to make her the Membership Director. Mrs. Hummons was very efficient and effective in this capacity. Membership went from a handful of people to more than one thousand in a relatively short period of time. Members included people from diverse ethnic backgrounds as well as diverse professions. Over the years Mrs. Hummons devotion to her cause, the growth and development of the museum, only seems to have been nurtured and flourished. As time moved
and the museum thrived, and Margaret’s role became more entrenched, Mrs. Hummons became Burroughs personal secretary. Mrs. Hummons also appointed herself a surrogate mother to the staff, seeing they ate well, (she would buy, prepare, and bring the food herself), and seeing that they dressed well (she was not above bringing clothing for anyone she saw who needed them).

Ralph Turner, one of the original signers of the incorporation papers, also came on staff while the museum was still a fledgling institution. Besides playing an integral part in securing the Quincy Club as the first official site for the museum he had played a significant role in organizing black railroad workers in a union. He had lived his life fighting racism and attempting to help blacks regain some measure of self esteem. He fit in with the existing staff very well. Although he did not have a lot of formal education his innate desire propelled him to become a self educated man. He read extensively, listened and participated in assemblies on public issues. He traveled and shared his experiences with the youth who came to the museum.

He demonstrated himself to be a tireless disciple for the issues and causes he believed in. If there was an important assembly coming up, or an election it wouldn’t be unusual to find Mr. Turner standing on the corners at 4:30 A.M., passing out handbills in order to catch the person
leaving early for work. The University of Illinois was so impressed with his work they sponsored the creation of a film about Mr. Turner entitled "Mr. Turner's History Lesson". Although Mr. Turner died in 1980 he is still fondly remembered by the survivors of that early core team who nurtured the museum through its inception, infancy and adolescent years.

The museum served as a magnet or beacon for many people from diverse backgrounds and associations. Jan Wittenber was contracted by Margaret Burroughs to complete some necessary repairs on the premises. Once Mr. Wittenber became familiar with the objective and goals of the museum he became a supporter. Wittenber offered his skill as a talented craftsman and made the basic repairs plus adding his special genius and artistry to make the physical environment beautiful. When the museum was later moved into the old administration building in Washington Park at Fifty-Seventh Street, it was again his generous spirit, his unsurpassable skills that made the previously abandoned building, workable, inhabitable. Wittenber managed everything from restoring the electricity to working order, to the plumbing and carpentry, to actually restoring paintings that had begun showing the impact of time. Jan Wittenber was a one man powerhouse. He was almost singly responsible for the museum participating in the exposition of Negro Business and Culture. It was he who contrived a
technique for making the fifteen paintings from the museum collection mobile and then transporting them to minimally twenty diverse sites. He made frames, restored work and lectured. Jan Wittenber became an inextricable entity in the growth and development of the museum.

Mr. and Mrs. Reeves also played a significant role during those early years. Mr. and Mrs. Reeves lived on the third floor of the building, housing the museum. They lived in the Quincy Club before it was sold to the Burroughs. They were concerned they would be required to find lodging elsewhere when the property was sold. The Burroughs assured them they could live there as long as they desired to do so. They remained until their deaths. In the interim they made numerous personal contributions. Mr. Reeves worked as a janitor and he provided security for the premises. Mrs. Reeves helped by working in the museum gift shop.

All of the volunteers and participants seemed to be there because they were able to see Margaret Burroughs' vision and desired to experience her dream for the museum. They grew to respect and revere Mrs. Burroughs to the extent they felt protective of her and supported her in her overwhelming endeavors to the point of self sacrifice.

The goals and dreams were not only a beacon to people of color but also affected the social humanitarian consciousness of whites. In his account Feldman recalls one family in particular who were not only sincere committed
workers for all humanity, but became close social friends with Charles and Margaret, Ed and Joyce Gourfain. The Gourfains lived relatively close to the Burroughs residing at Fifty-Second and Kimbark in Hyde Park. This close proximity facilitated in these friends spending a great deal of time together sharing similar concerns, interests and tastes. The Gourfains didn’t merely support an end to racism and fair and just treatment for all of mankind, they lived what they purported as a personal social philosophical approach to life. They often opened their very pleasant and comfortable home up to the homeless. They often hosted open house sharing the bounty from their table. Joyce and son Peter were both artist while Ed was a photographer. Their home became something of a gallery of love, art, artifacts and books.

Because the Gourfains were adamant in their stand against social injustices, the McCartities accused them of being communists spies who associated with other so-called communists spies, the Burroughs. They managed to weather the assaults and ostracizing with their spirit undaunted. When both Ed and Joyce passed away their heir, Jeannie, felt certain that her parents would want Margaret and other staffers from the museum to come and select anything from her parents volumous collection that would be of value to the museum. The gift was generous and welcomed as it
strengthened the resources of the museum measurably.  

Naming the Museum

The name of the museum has undergone several modifications. Initially, the museum was named The Ebony Museum of History. At that time Ebony was also the name of a popular magazine featuring people of color and published by a prominent black owned publishing company. Attorneys representing this company notified the Board of Directors of the museum seeking to enjoin the museum from including the word "Ebony" in its name. It was originally deemed possible confusion could arise from such use. The first reaction of board members was not conciliatory. After giving the matter further comptemplation and discussion it was determined that abandoning the use of Ebony would be advantageous. Their strategy noted that when seeking funding from donors they might, in error, assume they were in fact associated with the publishing company. In so doing they might further conclude that such an affiliation also meant they were somewhat affluent and in fact not in need of solicited financial support.

Consequently, a petition was tendered to the Illinois Secretary of State to document and name the organization the Museum of Negro History and Art. Later another modification

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was adopted, this time titling the museum the Museum of African American History and Art. Founders determined the name should reflect the fact the museum represented the Black experience globally and it was not restricted to the American experience.

The museum would undergo yet one more change of name, finally it was named The DuSable Museum of African American History and Art. Adding the name of Jean Baptiste Point DuSable in order to honor and commemorate the first settler in Chicago. The constituents of the museum affirmed they were confronted with the fortuitous opportunity to include some of the history inherently symbolized embodiment of the museum in the very name of the establishment.

In "The Reader", David Moberg writes "You couldn't tell it from the Buy Centennial signs in the Loop, but there is an unsung Revolutionary War hero in Chicago's past. And despite the ardent efforts of a small band of advocates--researchers he and his role might just stay there in the past as official America rushes ahead with its July 4th hoopla. You see, there's this problem with him: he was black. The problem of nonrecognition is not new for Jean Baptiste Point DuSable. He was the first non-Indian permanent resident of what was then Checagou, a swampy edge of a vast, dull prairie where a small sluggish river was part of a crucial canoe route between the Great Lakes and the giant waterway system of the Illinois, Mississippi, Ohio, and Missouri rivers. Yet until recently he was largely ignored in his own town."


"David Moberg "Will Someone Please Stand Up for the Real Jean Baptiste Point du Sable?" The Reader, 1976,
Who then was this person and where did he come from, and why did he stop and settle in an area that had been shunned by many travelers before him? Research describes him as a freeman from Santo Domingo. His father was French while his mother was African. He had been sent to France to acquire an education. He then went to Haiti where he remained until circa 1697, then moving to live in the French inhabited regions of Louisiana.

He had developed into a handsome young man with imposing physical attributes. He made his living as a fur trader and trapper. In pioneering, he recognized the area that would become known as Chicago, as an expectional opportunity to establish a thriving commerce since it was a natural crossroads of travel for both Indians and Europeans with a natural bridging of the Mississippi River and valley. This would also eventually provide a connection between Detroit and Mackinac, the Fort and Trading Center. Author Dr. Milo M. Quaife writes "DuSable achieved unaided, a position of commercial importance and assured respectability. He was enterprising and industrious, he inspired friendships which were not shaken by fortune's frown, and he commanded the confidence of men in responsible governmental and commercial stations."42

In Moberg's article, "Will Someone Please Stand Up for

42 Margaret Burroughs,"His Name Was DuSable and He Was The First," (Chicago: DuSable Museum Press), 4.
the Real Jean Baptise Point DuSable?," he proceeds by discussing Chicago's disputed role in the Revolutionary War. During that era DuSable had established a trading post in this region inhabited primarily by native Americans. Thomas Hutchings, who had surveyed the area from 1765 to 1775, drafted a map and clearly "indicates a 'Chikago:, Indian Village, and Fort at the Entrance". There has been furious discourse among historians as to whom the credit for the founding of Chicago should actually go to, John Kinzio or Point duSable.

An ardent local researcher, Virginia Julien, has taken up the gauntlet and completed intricate detailed research into this issue. Her research reveals the Indians later named the area "Chicagou" because of the damp flat area overgrown with onions and garlic. When it was hot and the produce was rotting in the damp heat it produced quite an odor. It had the same effect on people as inhaling black pepper, they sneezed creating a sound like 'Eschicaghou'. Consequently, Indians named it Chicagou, the land of onion and garlic. Many travelers passed by, Joliet, Marquette and others but they didn't remain. DuSable however saw the commercial potential of settling here, therein establishing the first permanent home in Chicago. He worked diligently to make a trading post on the north portion of the Chicago river. He was a linguist who spoke, French, English, Spanish, and several Indian dialects. He is purported to
have migrated from Haiti, beginning in New Orleans and traveling up the Mississippi settling in Peoria. He farmed thirty acres of land and later took possession of 800 acres in this same area. He met and married an Indian woman and they reared two children Jean Baptiste DuSable and Susanne. They migrated north where he built and initiated a trading business. It was an ideal site establishing a trading network between St. Joseph, Mackinac and Detroit. DuSable remained a total of at least sixteen years and in 1800 sold it all to a Frenchman, Joseph LaLime. In 1804 LaLime sold the property to John Kinzie which later spawned much controversy as to who the founder of Chicago was." Julien had been a public school teacher for twenty five years. Julien devoted eight years to an in depth study of everything she could unearth concerning du Sable. She notes she uncovered conflicting evidence including numerous renditions of even the appropriate spelling of his name. He had been referred to as Point deSable, Point DuSable, Point Sable, Pointe deSaible, Poinstable, and Point Desables.

Her research further discloses that there is valid documentation to support DuSable's involvement in the Revolutionary War. She reports she arrived at this fact after extrapolating supportive data from old letters, a historical poem written by a British army officer and

"David Moberg "Will Someone Please Stand Up for the Real Jean Baptiste Point du Sable?", The Reader, (1976):
French trappers and traders, numerous Indian tribes who followed in the footsteps of Chief Pontiac's earlier ill-fated uprisings against the British, and of course, some of the free blacks like duSable cooperated with Clark. The successful fight of the Illinoisans against the British in the northwest territories after Clark's departure in 1780 kept Illinois out of British hands. This was crucial in the years after the Revolution, for British forces and the Ohio Indian allies could have seized control of the west if they could have taken Chicago, according to Julien.

She further offers the following as documentation. DePeyster the British commander at Michilmackinac, wasn't very happy with what was going on at Eischicagou in 1779. There was a handsome Negro well educated and settled there, but unfortunately he was much in the French interest. DePeyster mentioned five main enemies of the British, among them George Rogers Clark, and Jean Baptiste Point du Sable. The Black Chief 'from Chicago was blamed in other sources for diverting the support of the area's Indians from the British side to the American.'

A great deal of dispute was also waged regarding the grandeur (or lack) of his settlement home in Chicago. Some describe it as small and crude. Others paint it as a large but simple edifice with four smaller cabins housing a meat-processing smokehouse, a grit mill, a bakehouse, stables and barns, a dairy, and other buildings. There seems to be more supportive evidence for the later rather than the former. It is stated that Kinzie, the other purported founder, killed Jean LaLime, who is recorded as purchasing the estate


"Ibid."
from DuSable. Whenever Kinzie is referred to as the founder, the site would be described in the later more grand terms. Scattered interest groups have maintained a vigil and continued to try and bring acclaim and honor to the name DuSable. They felt he played such a significant role in the history of Chicago and is indeed the rightful founder. An alley was named for him, a high school in the 1930s, and a small plaque with his name is located between the Tribune Tower and the Equitable Life Building on North Michigan, (approximately at the initial settlement site... "and the Illinois Historical Society has promised an official marker telling his story.""

In 1933 at the Century of Progress exhibition, a replica of the cabin was erected positioned next to a reconstruction of Fort Dearborn. In 1969 Mayor Daley assigned a commission to discuss the proposal to erect a ten million dollars cultural center in DuSable’s name. The plans were abandoned and later a parking garage was constructed at the site instead, Grant Park Garage. The museum supporters decided to seize the opportunity to honor this man by including his name in the museum’s title, The DuSable Museum of African American History and Art. 47

46Ibid.
47Ibid.
Growing

Around 1966 the museum had encouraged yet other troopers to join ranks, Eugene Wade and the late Eugene Edau (later just Eda). Edau was a gifted artist. He presented gifts of his work and was later commissioned to paint murals on the walls in the basement of the museum. The theme revolved around black history in the United States. Edau had been a part of the team of artist, including William Walker, who painted the highly publicized outdoor mural at 43rd and Langley Street, the first of its kind giving birth to the contemporary outdoor mural painting movement in America. Edau often shared and collaborated with these same artists over coffee at the museum. A lot of networking and brainstorming transpired. A great deal of tangible contributions came out of the "coffee seminars".

The Burroughs' home, and the museum itself, established an air of exploration, discussion and investigation. Many projects evolved from this group of talented intellectuals with their cultural and social concerns. They all agreed, artists could and should preserve, enlighten and promote history.

They believed that art must serve yes beauty, yes the esthetics, yes the color inspiration and also offer educational lessons, arouse, awaken, point out, stir, loosen people to thinking about justice and injustice, about struggles of Blacks against all forms of a

slavery past and present."

In 1965 the museum sponsored its first training session for teachers, the theme being black history. School systems were being compelled to add courses in black history to their curriculum, however the teachers were not prepared to teach these courses. Companies like Bell Laboratories were interested in hosting seminars in race relations and the museum's evolving education department provided training and lecture sessions for these kinds of concerns. The United States Army contacted Margaret Burroughs concerning putting together training awareness sessions for them. The museum addressed each of these issues.

Now the museum wasn't just a place where one could view exhibitions but rather a place developing and addressing service to the community. They were actively developing a library and archives for important historical documents.

The Education Department, fell under the auspices of Dr. Ruth Fouche organizing the committee during the late 1960's. Dr. Fouche elicited the assistance of numerous educators particularly during the summer months when there were larger numbers of student groups attending the museum. Their help was invaluable. Noted volunteers included, Mrs. Lois Ricks, Mrs. Doris Brown, Mrs. Helen Frederick and Mrs. Bernice Walker, all educators. Mrs. Burroughs was becoming very proficient at tapping into numerous available resources

"Ibid."
when soliciting aid for the growing museum. As an educator she never bypassed an opportunity to network with her colleagues campaigning the causes of the museum. Many responded building the cache of friends and supporters whose assistance was irreplaceable in the overall success of the museum.

In 1966-67, the Parents Guild donated a substantial check to the museum to use in their cause. As a way of showing their appreciation Mrs. Burroughs directed Eugene Feldman, Don L. Lee (Haki Madhubuti) and Charles Burroughs to host a class in black history and culture at the home of one of the guild members.

This gave birth to another project. Mrs. Burroughs often assigned the classes where there was a need as well as an interest. She became aware of a group of white parents in the suburbs who had adopted black children. They were very eager to have the children exposed to such a class. Mr. Phillip Drotning, public relations director of Standard Oil, was often acquainting Margaret Burroughs with similar settings, knowing this was the kind a project she found worthwhile. Feldman and team were often chosen to execute these projects. Burroughs also went out to teach, lecture and speak.50

Mrs. Peggy Montes has devoted many years to the museum. She was the person who initiated the first annual Walkathon.

50Ibid., 113-114.
Mrs. Montes is not only an important official at the museum today, but a friend to Dr. Burroughs.

Mrs. Marion Beach is a published author of prose and poetry. She performed a key role in establishing the Writers and Poets Festival at the museum. This became a forum for educating and assisting numerous novice writers.

Dr. Erwin France made key contributions, serving as Chairman of the DuSable Museum Board. Being an influential political force in Chicago his contributions have impacted greatly on the museum.

Husband Charles Burroughs has been the exemplification of the concept of one person being another's right arm. As one of the founders he has gone on with Margaret doing whatever was needed to keep the dream alive and operating. Other close family members, sisters Dorothy T. Brazil and Marion Hummons and her husband, have also stood steadfast and energized doing any and everything they could. People from all walks of life, related and unrelated, affluent and struggling. People from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds all came, shared and devoted themselves to the ideals embodied in establishing the museum.\textsuperscript{51}

Ramon B. Price is another ingredient in the formula for success at the museum. Price, as mentioned earlier, is now the curator for the museum. Price has been there as a supporter of Margaret Burroughs goals and dreams from the

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid., 22-28.
days of his youth. Price helped Dr. Burroughs amass and assemble the numerous paintings she collected as director of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. "He is most knowledgeable, sincere, and a most loyal disciple of his teacher, Dr. Burroughs."  

Christine Johnson is another ally in the evolution of the museum. Johnson’s involvement with Burroughs dates back to the 1930’s. When the museum needed a teacher she came and volunteered her services. She later became a full-time staff member and the Director of the Gift Shop.

Couples like Eugene and Felicia Ford often came to the rescue and pitched in doing whatever is needed. They performed tasks like registering participants for seminars, and conferences. They served on numerous committees always there until the job was done. Eugene Ford was the editor and director of the 1973 Heritage Calendar.

The Mayer’s, Robert and Beatrice, was another couple who could be relied upon to render service. They donated and loaned beautiful African art pieces, from their personal collection, to the museum. Their contributions of African art made the first African Art exhibition possible when the museum opened at its’ new home in Washington Park. After Mr. Mayer passed away Mrs. Mayer continued in her devotion to the cause at the museum. She made purchases for the

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52 Feldman, Chapter Four notes on a proposed Biography on Dr. Margaret Burroughs, 22.
museum whenever she noted there was a need.

Private citizens were not the only source of assistance. Persons from the business community made immeasurable contributions. Theodore Wordav of the Standard Oil Company came participated and later served as president of the Board of Directors. In the infancy period of the museum Phillip Dorthing also of Standard Oil was very supportive. Odell Hicks became a financial consultant. Carl A Murrain, also of the business arena rendered extensive assistance and advice. Fund raising benefits have been sponsored arranged by business monguls like Daryl E, Grisham, President of the Parker House Sausage Company and Dr. Donald Walker, publisher and president of the Blackbook and Dollars and Sense Magazine.

Rodney Wead of the Chicago Renewal Society became integrally immersed in helping the objectives of the DuSable Museum to become reality. When he became aware of the renovation plans for the new building he offered whatever help was within his purview.

Theresa Christopher, another former student of Dr. Burroughs, began at the museum as a loyal volunteer. She too worked, and became an art instructor with the Chicago Public Schools. She has a fervent interest and love of art, culture and history and bought those characteristics to the museum. She is the full time registrar of the museum. Christopher continues to prove her love for the causes
represented by the museum with an endless commitment of time and energy.

Eugene Perkins, son of famed sculptor Marion Perkins carries on his father's legacy with continued participation and support to the museum. He shared in his father's respect for Margaret Burrough's and the ideals she purports.

Further significant assistance came from other political channels. Senator Newhouse presented the following resolution before the senate 1 June 1973.

PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS
Senator Newhouse offered the following Senate Resolution and, having asked and obtained unanimous consent to suspend the rules for its immediate consideration, moved its adoption:

SENATE RESOLUTION 183
Whereas, For centuries African-American culture and African-American history have virtually been ignored by museums, schools and in literature, and

Whereas, Dr. Margaret G. Burroughs of Chicago, Illinois, has been the inspiration for a small group of pioneers dedicated to the perpetuation and preservation of African-American culture and history; and

Whereas, Dr. Burroughs has been a teacher in the Chicago Public schools since 1940, has authored several children books and has written articles for many national publications, and

Whereas, Dr. Burroughs has been active in many community organizations and projects such as the National Conference of Negro Artists, Coordinator, Annual Lake Meadows Art and Crafts Fair, the South Side Community Art Center, the New Crusader [Negro History Hall of Fame], the State of Illinois Centennial of Emancipation Commission, the American Forum of African Studies Program, staff member of American Forum of International Study at University of Ghana, staff member of American Form for International Study at University of West
Indies in Jamaica, the Illinois Art Council (Art Panel), the Chicago Council of Foreign Relations, Urban Gateways, the Better Boys Foundation; and

Whereas, Dr. Burroughs was the moving force among the educators; artists; historians and civic leaders who founded the DuSable Museum of African-American History in 1961; and

Whereas, The DuSable Museum of African-American History was a pioneer in 1961 and fostered the founding of similar institutions in other parts of the country; and

Whereas, The DuSable Museum is the only such museum in the country to be supported entirely by private funds, receiving no help from either local, state or federal government, and

Whereas, In 11 years the DuSable Museum has grown beyond capacity and is busting at the seams with visitors and activities, and must expand and

Whereas, The Chicago Park District made available to the Museum the former Washington Park Administration Building at 57th Street and Cottage Grove Avenue, and

Whereas, Dr. Margaret G. Burroughs, Executive Director of the DuSable Museum of African-American History and its Board of Directors have given generously of their limited means and of their time and energy to nurture and develop the Museum to a position of prominence and inestimable value; therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Senate of the Seventy-eight General Assembly of the State of Illinois, that we heartily commend Dr. Margaret G. Burroughs for her pioneer work in perpetuating and preserving African American culture and history in the United States; that we further commend the DuSable Museum of African-American History for acquiring the Washington Park Administration Building, so that these outstanding efforts can be continued and even expanded; and be it further

Resolved, That a suitable copy of this preamble resolution be presented to Dr. Burroughs.

JUNE 1, 1973
The motion prevailed.
And the resolution was adopted. Senator Knupple asked and obtained unanimous consent for the Journal to reflect his negative vote on the adoption of Senate Resolution No. 183.

Senator Kosinski, and Senator Harris, President of the Senate, and Senators Bartulis, Bell, Berning, Bruce, Buzbee, Carroll, Chew, Clarke, Conolly, Course, Daley, Davidson, Donnewald, Dougherty, Fawell Glass, Graham, Harber H. Hall, Kenneth Hall, Hynes, Johns, Keegan, Kneupfer, Latherow, McBroom, McCarthy, Merritt, Mitchler, Howard R. Mohr, Don A. Moore, Netsch, Newhouse, Nimrod, Nudelman, Ozinga, Palmer, Partee, Regner, Rock, Roe, Romano, Saperstein, Savickas, Schaffer, Scholl, Shapiro, Smith, Sommer, Soper, Sours, Swinarski, Vadalabene, Walker, Weaver, Welsh and Wooten offered the following Senate Resolution. 53

Funding

The museum received its first major grant from a corporation during the summer of 1967. The Wieboldt Foundation endowed the museum with a $9,000.00 grant to be assigned over a three year period. The first year they would get the major portion $5,500. The second year $2,500 and the third they were to solicit for funds to match the remaining sum of $1,500. This was a catalyst receiving such a grant said to the founders and staff that someone else supported and condoned their efforts and was willing to fund that position. They were encouraged.

This grant was truly a very significant impetus for us. In the words of an old time cartoonist is was 'a grand and glorious feeling' to know that someone gave us a golden star in the form of financial support. The boost to our morale was just marvelous and Mr. Bob Johnson and the Board of the Wieboldt Foundation are high in our esteem for all time and even after that if

53 (Congress, Senate, Resolution No. 183, 1973).
Burroughs and her team were always searching for innovative ways of building up the resources in the museum. They often became recipients of whole libraries upon the death of a supporter patron. Books were often donated as individual gifts and Burroughs wrote letters to publishers requesting gifts of specific titles.

After being open for just five years their innovative museum began to demonstrate a need for more space. Several ideas were discussed. It was briefly considered feasible to add an addition to the existing structure or to purchase the building just south of the Burroughs’ home called Regency House. The idea of constructing a new building was explored. Bids were made on available desirable lots but the museum never won any of these bids for lots. While all of this was transpiring the Board of Directors approved interior remodelling. By 1969-70, however, it had become very apparent that larger facilities were a must. The present site could only accommodate a group of fifty participants comfortably. An appointment procedure was adopted designed to stagger the arrival of groups thus elevating the congestion. There were always groups and individuals who would show up without an appointment effectively sabotaging the scheduling efforts as an avenue

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to address the problem. Margaret Burroughs was increasingly annoyed with seeming inefficiency of the whole matter.

Burroughs and the staff had been alerted that a building sitting in potentially beautiful surroundings in Washington Park were not being occupied. Burroughs found out the building had been an administration building for the Chicago Park District. It was later taken over by the police department and used as an administration facility, now the property wasn’t being used at all. She proceeded to determine who she needed to see to discuss her proposal to acquire the edifice as the site for the new museum. 55 "Dr. Burroughs and the museum's Development Committee (E.E. Hasbrouck, John Sengstacvke, Wendell Smith, Archie Listenbee, Lemuel Bently, Lee Helary Andrew Smith) were aided in their efforts to obtain the building by Congressman Ralph Metcalfe." 56

In order to strengthen their position, a strategy was developed to solicit signatures on a petition from the swelling numbers of student visitors to the museum. Further at important sessions with Park District Representatives, Burroughs would always embellish the visit by inviting numerous, knowledgeable supporters of the museum to come


along. All of the letters, reports of financial pledges and petitions were reviewed by the Park District Commission on 9 November 1971 before a staunch group of more than fifty supporters.

The pledges totaled $175,000, just over half of the $300,000 that would be needed to perform the necessary renovations. The museum was granted the building for its new museum home on 27 December 1971. There were specific conditions that were agreed on by both parties. The first was that the building only be used for the stated purpose, as a museum. Secondly with specifications established by the Park District, taking the needs of the museum into consideration, special guidelines for remodeling. Lastly it was made succinctly clear that it was the responsibility of the museum to raise the funds needed for remodeling.

**Funding For The New Museum**

Now important work of a different kind was to begin. Securing the building was a necessary milestone that had been achieved. The building had to be readied. Meetings were arranged with Joseph Hoffman, a fund raising consultant, Lee Hillary architect and Gus Cherry, contractor. Hoffman had worked for the Better Boys Foundation and it was clear to him that the staff associated

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57 Ibid.

with museum needed to refine their objectives changing their operation to a more unscaled institution.

Eugene Feldman was selected to take an office adjacent to Ms. Hoffmans at 127 North Dearborn. Here he became an avid an eager apprentice of fund raising strategies and proposal writing. One of his first ventures included a proposal to the Oscar Mayer Company, one that was subsequently awarded. Chicago Community Trust awarded the building fund $300,000. The Woods Charitable Fund and the Field Foundation each donated $100,000.00 Standard Oil Company gave $45,000.00 In 1977 a grant was awarded to the museum in the amount of $83,000.00 by the Community Development Committee of the Department of Human Services. Numerous foundations and corporations came to the aid of the building project providing sorely needed funds. In 1966, the 22 January 1966 minutes of the steering committee indicated a capital fund drive was successful in initiating a three year working grant of $9,000.00. George Johnson, president of Johnson Products earned the distinction of becoming the first Black business person to contribute a substantial sum to the cause, pledging $30,000.00 to be distributed over a three year span. In her own way Dr. Burroughs became an eager apprentice in the school of public relations and fund raising. It had become, after all, the sustaining force of the museum.

In an interview with curator Raymond Price, he shared a
memorable antidote regarding Burroughs tenacity and boldness when it came to fundraising. He recounts an occasion when Dr. Burroughs had been invited by a prosperous friend and supporter of the museum to hold a fundraising luncheon at their beautiful lakeside home. The event was well attended by friends of the host, who came prepared to give altruistically. The event was well organized, delectable food, great music and amiable companionship. After networking and attempting "to work the party" discretely, Margaret became very impatient and decided to take matters into her own hands. She stood on top of a picnic table and called for everyone's attention. She gave a brief statement about the museum mission and boldly stated the objective of the party was to raise $50,000.00 for the museum. When the donations were totalled she had indeed collected $50,000.00. All contributors played a significant role in getting the building fund off to a notable beginning. Private citizens made contributions and the museum continues to rely on this kind of support for the museum. Mr. Thomas E. Quisenberry in recorded in the 15, February 1961 Steering Committee Meeting minutes, as donating the very first monetary contribution to phase I of fundraising with $100.00 given as a memorial to his late wife and former

59Raymond Price, Interview by author, tape recording, Chicago, IL, 4 March 1993.
friend of Dr. Burroughs.  

Journalists Charles Hightower and Mary Ellen Billboard assisted in the fund raising efforts. They came on board and worked quite effectively with the Park District advisory group, Irwin Salk, a mortgage banker, and professor of history at Columbia College, with Mr. Lee Hilary, architect of the Robert Martin Construction Company were also hired. Lemuel Bently the attorney drew up the appropriate contracts. Mr. Bently was presented with a herculean task of drafting a document that would get the approval of the Park District, the museum Board of Directors as well as the Martin Construction Company. He worked conscientiously for months until they had a contract everyone could agree on. Margaret Burroughs was in the middle of the negotiations assuming the role of arbitrator. This was unequivocally on the job training for this artist educator. Many capable people volunteered their skills, talents and resources to see this dream manifested.

The first phase of the renovation encompassed work in the basement of the facility. A new furnace, plumbing, toilet fixtures, a cafeteria, photographic dark room, air conditioning, monolith glass windows as well as classrooms. Moving up to the main floor and the remodeling included new offices, glass doors, carpeting, an assembly room and

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conference room.

During the remodeling process most of the activities associated with the museum continued to thrive. Dr. Tena Roseman and Mrs. Thelma Wheatons, both educators, did a miraculous job of keeping the education department functioning.

Among the 'ten or so volunteers who worked long and hard to build and develop our programs,' Price says the late Tena Roseman stands out as a giant of commitment and dedication. A public school teacher at the time, Roseman was the museum's first education director and initiated several programs which have continued to date as key components of DuSable's community outreach. Two of these are the "Know - Your Heritage' program, aimed at bringing the museum's wealth of knowledge to elementary and high school students, and the annual Book Fair.\textsuperscript{61}

For more than a decade the Sears Company had been the sponsor of a summer institute called the Sears Heritage Institute. Here between twenty five and thirty youths were assembled together to study Black history and Black culture. During the renovations they continued their support and the institute was well attended.

During the winter months the small core staff faced more difficult challenges trying to keep programs going. When the furnace was being installed they were without a central heating source. This meant the activities were confined to one two or two rooms where they relied on warmth emitting from small insufficient electric heater.

The summer bought its own unique set of inconveniences. The old fashioned toilet arrangements were more than sacrificial. Feldman notes the following participants deserve special consideration for the unselfish giving during those days when a great deal was required of a very few for the ultimate benefit of many. Those persons include Mrs. Veda Alexander, Mrs. Marion Hummons, Mr. John Hummons, Mr. Joe Brown, Mrs. Dorothy Brazil, Mr. Nate Robinson, Mr. Ralph Turner, Mr. Alphonso Wesson and Mr. Ramon Price.62

The proposed remodeling was to be completed in three phases. The total estimated cost for all three phases is $1,278,42.00. Phase I begun 5 September 1977, projected a need for 689,598.00. Phase II required 311,286.00 and Phase III 277,6508.00. A figure of $200,000.00 was reserved as the sum needed for an operational budget. It was anticipated that a portion of the necessary funds for the operational budget would be forthcoming from the Chicago Park District’s Museums Tax Levy. The museum began a major fund raising campaign to garner the balance needed to complete the renovations and initiate new programs and projects. Varied existing organizations or departments of staffers and supporters rallied, formulated and implemented specific activities designed to make significant monetary contributions to this project. Additionally, assistance was

sought from private entities, foundations, corporations, citizens groups, as well as small business and community leaders. 63

In the late 1970s DuSable Museum was accepted in the Consortium of Museums. This is an amalgamation of respected established museums and it was mandatory they meet set criteria systematized by the American Museum Association. Membership in this elitist club helped the financial portrait of DuSable. When a museum is located on Park District property they are entitled to receive a percentage of tax allotments for the Park District. DuSable joined the company of the Field Museum, Adler Planetarium, Chicago Academy of Sciences, Chicago Historical Society, Shedd Aquarium, Art Institute Museum of Science and Industry and Mexican Fine Arts Center. The first year alone this translated into an additional $150,000 in funds for operating expenses. The second year this was increased to $200,000 and presently the figure is approximately $500,000. Of course, the proponents of the museum are grateful for this help however it is noted they still receive less funding from this source than any of the other eight member museums. 64

63 Margaret Burroughs, "The Statement of the Case for The DuSable Museum of African-American History, Inc. A Theatre of Heritage For The Enrichment and Understanding of all the People" TD, Personal files of Margaret Burroughs, Chicago, 3.

Holdings and Acquisitions

As aforementioned, the museum, not only solicited for financial support but for artifacts and documents for the collection. Among the early and significant acquisitions providing important historical documentation are Captain Harry Dean's papers and diaries. Manuscripts from noted author Langston Hushes were donated as well as essays and papers of W.E.B. Dubois, writer and social activist. Papers from the private collection of actor, orator, and musician Paul Robeson, were also among the early contributions to the museum collection. Feldman contributed papers from James T. Rapier, an earlier black congressman from Alabama.65

Donations came through many channels and persons from diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds. A very rare book from political activist Claude Lightfoot and manuscripts from Arna Bontempts author, and Sterling Studkey. Artists, sculptors Marion Perkins and Robert Jones donated a bust of DuSable. A private citizen R. Cooper from New York contributed a cherished photograph of Countee Cullen.

A public relations strategy encompassed the idea of composing a graphic and narrative brochure designed to stimulate interest and support in the museum ideology. This brochure launched a mail campaign including addresses in foreign countries. The committee was very anxious to

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retrieve authentic examples of African art. Curators from the Liningstron Museum in Northern Rhodesia, and others responded positively to the request by forwarding three dimensional artifacts such as statues, carvings, paintings and textiles.

During the summer of 1964 Margaret and Charles Burroughs vacationed in New England. As, had become her trademark, Margaret rarely passed up an opportunity to do public relations work on behalf of her beloved museum. She had taken some of the descriptive brochures from the mailing campaign. Her efforts were rewarded when she received "a Negro History Journal, Abraham Lincoln's lunch pail, and minute balls from the Revolutionary War." Sources never seemed to dry up. The Citizens Committee managed to arrange for gifts such as an oil painting of Ulysses Grant Daily, private papers and tomes from Lewis White, a uniform and portrait of the deceased astronaut Robert Lawrence, as well as a portrait and the remaining personal effect of PFC Milton Olivie, Jr. The late Bernard Goss had been commissioned by publisher Balmer L. Leavell to complete a series of twenty portraits, "The Black History Hall of Fame". After his demise Leavell's widow donated this collection to the museum. Noted, contemporary sculptor, Richard Hunt donated a life-size statue of a slave created

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Additional support has been generated through the Educators' Committee. They were an amalgamation of teachers, Dr. Tena Roseman, Cathern Flory and Leo Sparks. This group has consistently raised between $3,000.00 and $5,000.00 annually designated for operating expenditures.

Beginning in 1963 through 1977 a Heritage Calendar had been designed and marketed as a fund raising venture. This idea was born in the mind of Gerard Lew with the initial idea of creating a Centennial Calendar in 1962. The idea burgeoned and consequently fifteen Heritage Calendars were published. The project was a very popular one and recipients collected them year after year building on their own knowledge of historical figures as related to the black experience in America. Each year the calendar featured a different theme the first being Famous Black Men and Women and in subsequent years went on to include themes like Black Scientists and Inventors, Black Musicians, Black Artists, Black Creative Writers, Black Women and more.

Many supporters both recognized and unsung have been integral entities in establishing as consistent sources of gifts and services to the museum. One example includes unsolicited monetary gifts participants would render as a memorial to the memory of a deceased loved one. Therefore,
in 1976, the Gift for Life Living Memorial Program was formed. There has been more than fifty living commemorative gesture established under the auspices of this program.

Board member Theodore Wordlaw organized the very first telethon membership drive on behalf of the museum in October of 1977. Renewed support and innovative ideas are the catalyst propelling the museum forward annually. The DuSable Museum library has more than 10,000 volumes on the subject of history and culture of Africans and African Americans. These subjects have been explored and interpreted through fiction, fine art, prose, poetry, sociology and history. The compilation includes rare books and other valuable books that are no longer in print. Even the rare and valuable books can be made available for students doing research.

The museum also has tape recordings of musicians, orators and special interviews. This includes a tape of Paul Robeson discussing human rights in 1951, Tom Mboya, in 1958, on African nationalism, Dr. Martin Luther King on black liberation in 1963 and Dr. John Hope Franklin of the University of Chicago on Black history in 1964. There are, also, tapes from notables like James Baldwin in 1966, Malcolm X in 1964, Lorraine Hansberry in 1964, Dr. W. E. DuBois in 1957, Mrs. Rosa Parks in 1958 and many others. There is a cherished musical collection from recording artists from the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s covering jazz,
blues, and spirituals embracing Bessie Smith, Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Josephine Baker and others.

A series of visuals have become a part of the permanent holdings of the museum. They include color slides on travels in East and West Africa, the West Indies and South America. These can be borrowed when one desires an accurate reliable reference for examining customs in dress and day to day artifacts of people from these geographic locations.

There is also a series of paintings, mural panels, created by Eugene Eda on ancient Africa and the African influence on western culture. Jeannie Washington completed a set of twenty five paintings on African American history. This collection can be taken out on loan for exhibitions and instructional props. An informative diorama was created by Robert Jones again highlighting African American life and history.

Margaret Burroughs had been commissioned to assemble a collection of representative paintings featuring people and events significant in the history of African American in Illinois as a component of the 1963 Centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation Celebration. These paintings became property of the museum.

The holdings also includes a current events file, the Richard Morgan Memorial Current Events Collection. This is an aggregate of current event facts extrapolated from
newspapers and magazines. This is a contemporary approach to documenting modern events about African Americans as interpreted by journalists and artists. Great efforts are expended to maintain updated biographical files on persons whose lives impact on the life of African Americans. Whenever possible, this file includes original primary documents, personal papers of the subject. This is a work in progress. Lastly Dr. Burroughs has assembled a biographic file featuring black visual artists. Dr. Burroughs continues to add to this file. Within ten months of the grand opening the museum provided a full menu of services and programs outlined as follows.

**African American History Quiz:**

A structured six week curriculum in African American History designed for elementary students. The program culminated during the Black History Week (now Month) celebration in February. Teams of students compete for Black History Books being quizzed on historical topics.

**African-American Studies Institute:**

Educational resources that target education, politics, economic, and culture in African and African American societies.

**Art Classes:**

Classes designed to explore a variety of art forms

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utilized by African and African American artisans.

**Artist-In-Residence Program:**

Artists will be invited to work on a piece destined to become a part of the permanent collection at the museum. Simultaneously these artists work/operate as consultants.

**Black History Contest:**

Students at the primary and secondary levels are encouraged to enter an essay contest aimed at researching specific themes related to aspects of African-American history.

**Children's Theatre:**

The theatre staff will invite veteran performers and involve the students themselves in productions. Children will be exposed to African fables, folk tales, puppetry, poetry, dance, and plays.

**Christmas Music Festival and Program:**

This is a five-day celebration wherein schools are invited to send their choirs to perform and share their talents. They perform before standing room only audiences.

**Community Programs:**

The museum works in conjunction with groups like the Neighborhood Youth Corps, the Department of Human Services, the Public Library, the public schools, churches, and other community organizations as a co-sponsor.

**Consultant Services:**

Museum staff work with groups who solicit their
assistance when putting together activities associated with African-American history.

**Correspondence Courses in Black History:**

A course opened to all interested parties. This course has been widely used by prison inmates and other shut ins.

**Cultural Programs:**

Weekly lectures, demonstrations and shows, poetry readings, designed to stimulate interest in the museums objectives and well as educating audiences in African American history.

**Exhibition and Programs:**

The museum has a traveling exhibit that goes out on loan to educational institutions. Two primary collections have been very popular as a traveling collection, one hundred portraits comprising the Balm Leaveall Memorial Black History Hall of fame and the fifty paintings making up the Emancipation Proclamation Centennial State of Illinois Collection.

**Extension Exhibits:**

Through this program artifacts, documents and other materials have been made available to schools public and private organizations as well as other museums.

**Extension Lectures:**

Requests are often made for knowledgeable speakers to do presentations at colleges, universities to address themes on history literature, art, music and culture of Afro
Americans, Africans and Caribbean.

High School Oratorical Contest:

This program was installed in 1976 and is an annual event. Scholarship Awards have been sponsored by local businesses as incentives for participants.

Independent Study and Work-/Study Training of College Youth:

Training program geared for students at all levels workings in various capacities in the museum.

Monthly Film Series:

Selected films featuring African American history and culture are viewed weekly. This airing is followed by a discussion led by a facilitator.

Monthly Lecturer Series:

Open lectures are planned for the public highlighting high profile speakers.

Music Classes:

Using the same model as the art classes, courses will be held on an individual and group premise featuring African and African American music.

Music Series:

On a monthly basis musicians will be invited to perform and present in their own individual interpretive fashion. When the weather permits concerts are hosted out of doors in the beautiful landscaped land surrounding the building.

Prison Program:

Under the auspices of this program books, magazines,
counseling, and correspondence courses are made available for prisoners in several prisons in Illinois.

Publications:

The museum sponsored the publishing of an annual Black History calendar, a quarterly News Bulletin and several books by a variety of authors.

Sears Youth Heritage Program:

A special program offered during the summer months to introduce youth to structured research on topics related to African American History.

Seminars:

Experts will conduct seminars on African American history and culture.

Senior Citizens Programs:

Special programs are designed for senior citizens and they make up a significant body of the volunteer work force.

Teacher Training:

Staff is available to show teachers how to incorporate African American History into their curriculum.

The Black Book Festival:

This fair runs for a full week and school children are invited to attend. This particular function is coordinated by a volunteer group of retired teachers. Local authors, illustrators, librarians and publishing companies are encouraged to participate. The primary objective is to stimulate interest in reading and research.
University and College Programs:

The educational branch of the museum put together a relationship with several area colleges forming a consortium. These include Lewis University, Kennedy King College, Triton College, Chicago State University and Northeastern Illinois University.

Young Peoples Writer's Workshops:

These events are a weekly activity aimed at nurturing and developing the dreams, skills, and talents of interested youth. 68

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Chapter V

BURROUGHS: CIVIC WORK, TRAVELS AND AWARDS

The Setting

When the museum was founded in 1961 President Kennedy held office. As the evolution of the new museum transpired under the auspices of four presidents: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965-1969; Richard Nixon, 1969-1974; Gerald Ford, 1974-1977; and James Carter, 1977-1981 the nation too, underwent changes. It was during the Ford and Carter administration the museum moved to Washington Park.

Lyndon B. Johnson served two terms; the first completing two remaining years of Kennedy's term. Johnson was responsible for appointing the celebrated Warren Commission to probe into the assassination of the late John F. Kennedy. This was an era of momentous legislation and reform. In 1964 Johnson announced his "War on Poverty." Under this program he created the Office of Economic Opportunity, OEO. In 1964 historic vital legislation on school desegregation and other civil rights concerns were signed into law.¹

Johnson's forefathers, his father and grandfather, both served the state of Texas as legislators. Johnson himself began his political career in Washington as secretary to Representative Richard M. Kleberg in 1932. He came to the House of Representatives in 1937. Johnson was elected minority leader to the Senate in 1953 as a freshman senator. Clearly, this was a testimony to the esteem and professional respect his colleagues held for him. Johnson became Kennedy's vice president, and upon Kennedy's death, he became president of the United States.

While it is undoubtedly true, as Kennedy once said, that there is no adequate preparation for the presidency, no man ever came to the office with greater knowledge and mastery of the national political process than Lyndon Johnson.

The new president was direct and earthy, and his speeches frequently sounded like the homilies of a rural preacher. Vain and sensitive, he desired constant praise and approval and what he termed a national consensus. He was a hard-driving quick-tempered man, harshly intolerant and abusive of associates who displease him or critics who opposed him. His most striking personal characteristics were immense energy, drive, and determination - all of which, lacking outside interests, he channeled into politics. Though unideological in political philosophy, he had a deep and passionate concern for the poor, the elderly, and the downtrodden. Government, he believed, existed to serve people and do for them what they were unable to do for themselves. Johnson, far more than Kennedy, was thus a direct inheritor of the New Deal tradition and its commitment to social and economic justices.²

This philosophy was manifested in his continued support for

the Kennedy program working toward a significant reduction in the national deficit. His support for civil rights issues was unquestioned and staunch. The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was of historical significance. Although it was voted in without contention in the House it met with poignant opposition by the southerners in the Senate. They managed to stage a filibuster and fifty-seven days later "the Senate voted cloture on a civil rights debate for the first time in its history." 

The United States involvement in South Vietnam escalated beginning in 1965. In 1966 Chicago was the site of destructive race riots. Thurgood Marshall, the first American of color to be appointed to the Supreme Court, was appointed by Johnson. Sadly two bright points of light to mankind were assassinated, Senator Robert Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King. These were times of agitation, confusion, and transformation. The nation had weathered the violent deaths of John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy.

Observers, as well as participants of diverse ethnicity, who were in support of the social political changes and issues taking place across the nation, disagreed as to whether the black revolution was, in fact, improving the status of life for Americans of color in the United

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Ibid., 847.

Far from crumbling the walls of white resistance appeared to be rising higher than ever to contain the tide of black aspirations. This somber picture was confirmed in March 1968 when the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, recently appointed by the president to investigate the causes of the riots, issued its report. The commission headed by former Governor Otto Kerner of Illinois, set forth the appalling conditions in America's inner city slums and uncompromisingly placed primary blame for these conditions upon a deep-seated, pervasive pattern of white racism. An all-out effort to provide slum dwellers with adequate housing, job training education, and welfare was imperative. Otherwise the commission concluded starkly, America would continue irrevocably along the path it was now following; toward 'two societies, one black, one white--separate and unequal.  

The United States, known as a world leader, became embroiled in numerous military conflicts around the world. Our involvement was usually explained as a logical strategy in protecting our interest throughout the world.

One of the most important occurrences during this era was our involvement in Vietnam. In 1964 General Maxwell Taylor succeeded Henry Cabbot Lodge as the ambassador to South Vietnam. General Westmoreland became the primary military presence in Saigon. The U. S. involvement was becoming more and more entrenched. "Covert military operations against North Vietnamese commando raids and American naval intelligence operations along the North Vietnamese coastline, selecting bombing of 'targets of

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opportunity' by American Airmen over Laos. Contingency plans for full-scale American bombing of North Vietnam were also prepared, and administration officials spoke in early 1964 of seeking a congressional U.S. actions in Indochina. On 2 August, 1964 the House approved action to continue to promote peace, by a vote of 410 to 0, and to contain communist aggression. The modest number of 3,500 marine troops had escalated into forces of 190,000 by the close of 1965. By April of 1966 the troops numbered 250,000 and by the end of the same years figures reached 400,000. Progress seemed deadlocked.

President Johnson sought diligently, through, negotiations, peace feelers, halting of bombing and even suggestions of the U.S. assisting with restoring the economic status of the nation to arrive at a peaceful solution to the conflict. Before it was all over the anti-Vietnam supporters had created civil unrest at home in attempts to protest the U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

By mid-1968 there were some 530,000 American military personnel on the scene. It had become the longest war in American history and one of the bloodiest: over 35,000 Americans had died in combat, another 75,000 had been injured, and hundreds more were confined in North Vietnamese prison camps. The financial cost approached $100 billion. Nearly 5,000 planes and helicopters with a value exceeding $5 billion had been destroyed by enemy action. The cost to the people of Vietnam in deaths injuries, suffering, dislocation,

devastation of homes, village towns, and the very land itself had been staggering and incalculable.\textsuperscript{7}

The effects of the war had fully taken its control of the society in many ways before the United States finally withdrew from the conflict. Additionally, during the mid 60s there were significant inroads into the scientific community. In 1966 the first "soft landing" on the moon. Dr. Christian Barnard performed the first human heart transplant in South Africa.

Johnson was succeeded by Richard M. Nixon whose responsibility it was to formulate and implement laws for deescalation of the United States involvement in Vietnam and later negotiated a cease fire. The nation witnessed the violent reaction to the deaths of four Kent State students when Nixon ordered the national guard to respond to student protestors. \textsuperscript{8}

In 1973 a cease fire agreement was signed in Vietnam. It was during the Nixon administration that historians record improved foreign relations with the Chinese People's Republic squelching decades of strained alliances with Peking. Nixon also ushered in a new political atmosphere of conservatism which had not been apparent through four previous administrations. Nixon represented the epitome of

\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., 880-881.

a complex personality creating problematic situations for political analytical historians.

The man of the hour had truly met: a controversial and enigmatic figure elevated to leadership during the most controversial and enigmatic of periods; a leader who stressed traditional American values in a society that longed for such reaffirmation, yet a man whose interest in success, which reflected his country's outlook at its very marrow, had a way of giving pious affirmations of honor, justice, and fair play a hollow sound; a professed conservative leading a people who were fearful of change, and yet a bold unpredictable policymaker who often refused to be bound by controversial wisdom; a versatile man whose very inconsistencies and ambiguities were a mirror for his generation.9

Nixon was elected to two terms in the White House. This second bid for office is sadly marked by the assassination of the Democratic hopeful, Robert Kennedy. Nixon, through extensive lifelong hardwork and study mastered the political arena driven by a desire for success. His mentor was Woodrow Wilson, with whom he shared a similar ideology for America. "Nixon's baffling combination of qualities unquestionably included consumate skill, courage, and dedication. At bottom, though, the combination also obtained fatal flaws - hubris, insensate ambition, and susceptibility to the corruption of power."10 Under his auspices President Nixon pursued reform of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program as well as an aggressive bill, the Education Amendments, which increased the student assistance

9Ibid., 883.

10Ibid., 893.
program. Clearly this term was beset with economic, environmental and social-welfare legislation from 1969 - 1972. These bills did not fail to attract a great deal on controversy and opposition from the moderate and conservative cabinet and congress. This consequently limited his success with domestic issues. He labeled his program "new federalism."\(^{11}\)

His position on civil rights issues was conservative and guarded at best

neither Congress nor the president was inclined to challenge conservative white opinion. In January 1971 Nixon announced his firm opposition to federal efforts to 'force integration of the suburbs,' calling such measures 'counter-productive, and not in the interest of race relations.' . . . Civil rights advocates were variously depressed and enraged at the president’s stand on busing. School officials North and South, who had devised and implemented busing plans in accordance with court orders, felt undercut to the point of betrayal.\(^{12}\)

The Supreme Court had three new appointments due to the retirement of justices Earl Warren, Hugo Black and John M. Harlan. The novice justices delivered landmark decisions on important issues of education and women’s rights. In 1969 Neal Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin made a place for themselves in the annals of time by being the first men to walk on the moon.\(^{13}\)

\(^{11}\text{Ibid., 895.}\)

\(^{12}\text{Ibid., 897.}\)

\(^{13}\text{Bowman, Pictorial History of the American Presidency, 175.}\)
In 1972, after eight long years of devastation, peace in Vietnam was on the horizon. Henry Kissinger had worked diligently to bring this to a conclusion.

Dry statistics the people might not otherwise have grasped—perhaps 650,000 South Vietnamese death, nearly one million North Vietnamese and Vietcong deaths, some ten million from Indochina as a whole, an American bomb tonnage many times greater than that of all the explosives dropped in all theaters during the Second World War had come unforgettably alive day after day in photographs and on television live action shots of napalmed children, grieving mothers, wounded soldiers, piled corpses, smoking rubble, wrinkled old refuges straggling down shell-pocked roads; these two, were the part of the price people paid. ¹⁴

Nixon is prominently remembered because of the infamous break-in of the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate Hotel. The subsequent cover-up eventually led to the recommendation of three Articles of Impeachment by the judiciary committee. Nixon resigned in August of 1974. His own resignation was preceded by the resignation of his vice-president Spiro Agnew. The final epitaph of this administration was the judicial system’s message to the world that no American was above the law.

Gerald R. Ford succeeded Nixon in August 1974 completing the remainder of Nixon’s second term. One of his first official tasks was to grant Nixon a pardon. The integrity of the office of president was considered back on track when Gerald Ford assumed the helm. His administration

was commensurate with his previous political history and did not bring any surprises. "Ford was not the man to break with tradition or attempt bold changes in American policy." Ford could not escape the legacy he inherited from the Nixon era. Ford did not endear the public to an optimistic view of the potential for a new regime under his leadership when he granted Nixon a "full, free and absolute pardon." Many felt this did enhance Ford's public opinion. Many citizens strongly felt Nixon should have stood trial and faced sentencing just as any average citizen would have. This view was especially supported in light of the fact that those who worked for Nixon and had been involved in the Watergate cover-up were tried and convicted.

James E. Carter, Jr. served our nation as the thirty ninth president serving one term from 1977-1981. Carter too granted historical pardons Ford the former president, and Carter awarded full pardons to Vietnam draft evaders. Plans were drafted and implemented to return management of Panama Canal of Panama by 1999.

Significant happenings in 1978 included the mass suicide of 900 members of the religious cult in Jonestown Guyana and the accident at Three Mile Island Nuclear Plant followed by the oil shortage. Carter signed a peace treaty with Israel and Egypt. Carter was from a working class

\[\text{\cite{15}, 982.}\]
\[\text{\cite{16}, 984.}\]
rural background. He served two terms in the Senate and one gubernatorial term.

These, then, were some of the qualities and attitudes that Jimmy Carter brought to the presidency in January 1977. Deep religious conviction, compassion, love of country, and desire for reform were in some kind of balance with ambition, a craving for managerial efficiency, and a salesman's interest in marketing his product. His blue eyes could sometimes take on a steely glint and offset the toothy grin that became his trademark during the campaign. He proclaimed a new foreign policy that was democratic . . . based upon fundamental values. At the center of this new foreign policy was a concern for human rights, which Carter sought to dramatize in several ways: by signing an Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, by asking the Senate to approve the UN Human Rights Covenants of 1966, by urging that such international machinery be strengthened by withholding assistance from nations that did not meet legislated standards in this area, and by expanding American refugee and asylum programs.¹⁷

Progress was made between the United States and Panama concerning maintenance and protection of the canal. This had been a thirteen year discussion. It took a great deal of diplomacy to get the treaties approved by both interest groups. Carter also engineered effective achievements in the Middle East. Under the positive manipulative guidance of Carter and Secretary Vance, history was made when Israel Premier Menahem Begin extended his hospitality to Egyptian President Sadat to visit and share in a discourse on peace. Sadat and Begin signed a treaty on 26 March 1979.¹⁸

¹⁸Ibid., 1019.
viewed this as a momentous beginning with still much to be done before there would be an expanded peace in the Middle East.

President Carter recorded two other diplomatic achievements that were, like his Mideastern treaty, at once momentous and fragile, hopeful and incomplete, subjects of acclaim and controversy. One was the sudden announcement the United States and the People's Republic of China had agreed to establish full diplomatic relations; the other was the signing of a new strategic arms limitation treaty with the Soviet Union. Both demonstrated the continuity of American foreign policy in the 1970s; Carter's steps toward closer relations with the two Communist powers were, like the Israel-Egyptian treaty, advances along lines that his predecessors had laid down.¹⁹

Energy was the issue which dominated the domestic area. Campaigns were waged to curb the use of energy resources. This was the era of long lines at the gas pumps, increased manufacturing and demand for the sub-compact automobile and other government regulations. Under the weight of the domestic problems Carter's credibility with the American people suffered greatly. The portrait of race relations during this period is tantamount to the unsettled confusion noted in the economy.

Much depended on whether one regarded the bottle as half full or half empty; the evidence warrants neither complacency nor despair. On the one hand, the number of blacks elected to state and local office continued to grow, as did black college enrollment. Black middle and professional classes were generally able to hold their own in terms of jobs and incomes. On the other hand, there were indications that black employment and median income in relation to figures 1974-1975 and that

¹⁹Ibid., 1921.
fewer poor blacks were rising to the middle class. Certainly the unemployment rate among black youths in the seventies was appallingly high, at time approaching 40 percent. Defacto segregation in most northern and western cities remained the rule, reinforced by 'white flight to the suburbs and soaring real estate costs that restricted housing opportunities for moderate income black families.\textsuperscript{20}

Blacks were not the only group fighting for their civil rights. The Equal Rights Amendment was at an impass. Hispanic Americans were making inroads incorporating bilingual education in public schools yet they too experienced high unemployment. Native Americans were well organized in their efforts to chance their plight yet they made little to no progress and "they remained the most depressed and deprived of the nations minorities."\textsuperscript{21}

Ronald Reagan became president of the Screen Actors Guild in 1947. In 1981 he became president of the United States. He had established a political reputation as governor of California in 1966. He was swept into the office of the presidency in 1981 on the shoulders of conservatives and promises to restructure of the crumbling government.

That meant lower spending, lower taxes, less regulation and a rollback of government activism in the areas of civil rights, environmental policy and social welfare. As part of his Reaganomics, he made deep cuts in personal and business taxes and in general clung to the view that increased productivity, rather than social programs, would

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., 1040.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., 1041
be most beneficial to the nation as a whole.\textsuperscript{22}

His most controversial stance was the Strategic Defense Initiative, Star Wars, a grand research program designed to determine methods to intercept incoming enemy missiles in space.

Reagan was a very popular president among the general populace. They even stood behind him in the Iran - Contra Affair in which top administration aides, hoping to free U.S. hostages in the Middle East, had sold arms to Iran and then had used the proceeds illegally to fund anti-government rebels in Nicaragua.

It was under the Reagan administration, that the first female, Sandra Day O'Conner, was appointed a Supreme Court Justice. Sadly, it was also during his administration on 28 January 1986 that seven citizens on the Challenger space shuttle were killed in an explosion.\textsuperscript{23} His administration left the nation with a budget out of control, huge deficits in trade, little to no impact on the unemployment across the nation, the escalating drug problem and the environmental problems and a deficit in the faith the public had in the Republican Party.

It is on this note that George Bush won the vote of confidence to the nations highest level elected office.

\textsuperscript{22}Bowman, \textit{Pictorial History of the American Presidency}, 185.

\textsuperscript{23}Patrick, \textit{The Presidents: Washington to Bush}, 86.
Bush hails from a family rooted in the political arena. Prior to coming to the presidency Bush had an engaging background in politics.

**Civic Leader**

From the days of her early teens when Margaret Burroughs joined the youth division of the NAACP she has been involved in the affairs of people of color who had difficulty accessing their fair piece of the American pie. More than thirty years ago Burroughs was asked to arrange activities in Chicago when Paul Robeson was scheduled for a visit. This was at a time when Robeson was an outcast. Robeson was a professed communist and was treated as a poison entity. Anyone associated with him was also considered a communist.

A relative in Pittsburgh reported to Paul's sister, Marion Forysthe, that Paul acts rejuvenated once more. He had seemed so quiet for a while, but it all seems to be in the past now.

By the time Robeson reached Chicago in April, his spirits had soared, and the reception in that city further cheered him. Essie had written in advance to Margaret Burroughs [school teacher, political activist, and later founder of the DuSable Museum of African American History], Paul wants you, if you will do so, to coordinate whatever he can do in the Negro community.  

During that trip he had been invited by a local black minister to sit down and talk with people as well as the membership of the Chicago chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, "which

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offered to give him a smoker (introducing Robeson to the Alphas, Oscar Brown, Sr., told them, Brothers, you are looking at immortality). Margaret had possessed special sentiments of reverence and awe of Robeson since she was a young girl in high school and her uncle had taken her to one of his performances. She, of course, was eager to help in facilitating his visit in any way that she could.

Margaret Burroughs, angry at the 'black bourgeoisie' in Chicago for having earlier, in her opinion, turned its back on Paul, and sharing his commitment to a socialist vision, felt it was an honor to open her home to him. For her straightforward advocacy, she was called before the Board of Education and questioned about whether it was true that she was "sympathetic to that red, Paul Robeson." 'Yes indeed, she responded, she was sympathetic, she was even down right proud of him since, from everything she could gather, he was a fine artist and a fine human being': Burroughs kept her job, but by a hair.

This is a stance Burroughs became well known for. If she believed in a person or an ideology she supported them without consideration to whether or not it would be the "politically correct" thing to do.

In 1983 Margaret Burroughs received a letter from Willie Lee Taylor of Jackson Mississippi. Taylor had been a member of the class of 1959 of DuSable High School and was a former student of Margaret's. The letter told Burroughs how she had been an inspiration for him, and he ended with "your

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25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.
brilliant and caring leadership is a source of mental
treasure at this very moment, thank you." 27 Burroughs' lifestyle was a beacon and testament to her ability to lead people without deliberately setting a course for that.

In 1963 Doris Sauders edited an article entitled "The Day They Marched" which was an editorial on the 28 August march to the Lincoln Memorial. This included the marchers pledge. In summary the pledge states, during this centennial year of emancipation, personal commitment for the struggle for jobs and freedom for all Americans, marchers will not relax until victory is won.

I pledge that I will join and support all actions undertaken in good faith in accord with the honored democratic tradition of non-violent protest or peaceful assembly and petition and of redress through the courts and the legislative process.

I pledge to carry the message of the march to friends and neighbors back home and to arouse them to equal commitment and an equal effort. I will march and I will write letters. I will demonstrate and I will vote. I will work to make sure that my voice and those of my brothers ring clear and determined from every corner of our land.

I will pledge my heart and my mind and my body, unequivocally and without regard to personal sacrifice. 28

Burroughs had embraced this pledge long before this historic march was organized.


Burroughs had a great respect for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his methods for bringing attention and change to the plight of underclass, the forgotten citizens, who has not been privy to the same civil rights as other citizens. In an essay, she describes the array of young, old, the palette of colors and backgrounds who assembled for this famed speech at the Lincoln Memorial. There was praying, and displays of great emotion. Primarily they came to hear a gifted orator in whom they had placed their confidence. They counted on Dr. King being able to formulate a speech that was the acculcation of their thoughts, feelings, hopes and dreams. This revered speaker did not let them down. When he had finished his oration Burroughs, wrote

For a deafening moment, there was no sound. Then burst forth a rustling of swallowings in the throat, muffled coughs and shifting of feet. Tears, trickled openly down the faces of the women and men dabbed at their eyes unashamed. The air flurried with waving of programs, handkerchiefs and banners. The great mass of pilgrims were in motion. With renewed strength, faith, courage and determined hope they were on their way. The prayer pilgrimage was over.  

As a responsible citizen, Margaret Burroughs, supported many civic functions locally, on various college campuses from the lecturns of grade schools and high school as well as numerous adult oriented activities. On one occasion she exercised her civic responsibility by making a gift of

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several paintings to the Prime Minister of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, on the occasion of their independence. She did not know him personally nor did she have a strong rapport with those close to him. She just felt a rapport with all people, especially where there appears to be injustice. She felt in her own modest way the gift was representative of the amassed feelings of people of color in the United States. Prime Minister Kwane Nkrumah made a public appearance in New York when she was there enrolled in a summer course. She made it her business to get close enough to him to at least shake his hand. A smile and nod transferred between them and she felt very honored. Burroughs often opened her home to foreign visitors and as any good hostess would, she would show them Chicago. Burroughs launched numerous letter writing campaigns concerning issues such as positive, historically correct texts in classrooms and just treatment for prisoners. She worked tirelessly to accurate establish memorials to black heroes and heroines. She contributed further by establishing institutions like the Southside Community Art Center as a place where burgeoning young talent could come for guided instruction to learn and to grow. More mature talents like Charles White, or Gwendolyn Brooks were able to network with other evolving talent. Burroughs devotes

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30 Margaret Burroughs, "It Could Only Happen in New York," TD, Private Papers, Margaret Burroughs, Chicago.
minimally one day per week to work with the penal institutions in Illinois. During 1985 and 1986 Burroughs was introduced to the Jessie "Ma" People United to Share Humanity P.U.S.H. Prison Ministry Program supervised by Reverend Helen Sinclair. Margaret volunteers her time and talent as the instructor of a creative writing class at the women's division of the Cook County Department of Correction.

The results were of such quality, Burroughs thought it was important the contributions be put together for an anthology of works from the entire class. From there she sought to have this edition published. At that time Mr. Ed Garner, C.E.O. of Soft Sheen Corporation, was sponsoring a community project called "Black on Black Love." Through the director of this project, Frances Williams, Burroughs was successful in getting the edition published through the financial generosity of Mr. Gardner.

Burroughs became further involved in the Correctional Institutions when she began receiving and accepting invitations to lecture and present her own poetry.

It has come to be my feeling after being invited to make poetry presentations and lectures at several of our Correctional Institutions, that we, out here in 'the free world' are indeed our brothers and our sisters keepers. The successful rehabilitations of; many of the men and women who are incarcerated depends in large part on the interest that we 'in the free
In the early part of 1985 Burroughs was invited to present her poetry orally at the women's correctional facility. As a result of the very positive response Burroughs agreed to conduct a class in poetry writing for women also. The group of twenty women met twice a month. In between the sessions the women poured their hearts out on paper with poetry as their vehicle for expression. When the group reconvened they would read their work in front of the entire group. Burroughs would collect dictionaries, paperback books, paper and anything else she could get her hands on that could become a resource for her novice writers.

Most recently Burroughs has served the citizens of Chicago as a member of the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners. Presently she serves as vice president. Burroughs was appointed to the commission by the late Mayor Harold Washington and she officially took her seat on 29 May 1986. This appointment was amid a flurry of controversy.

Travel

Burroughs made her pilgrimage voyage to Ghana in 1968. That opened the door to many subsequent trips. Burroughs has been a travel guide for numerous subsequent journeys.

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3Women's Division of Cook County Department of Corrections, Minds Flowing Free, (Chicago, 1985) Intro. Burroughs.
She has traveled to Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Dahomey, Togo, Nigeria, Morocco, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad. The Burroughs' travels span several continents. They traveled to Europe, South America, Africa and North America. She had a particular fondness for Paris and was very much the typical tourist in search of souvenirs and that all illusive Paris fashion with the Paris label. Burroughs wrote an essay detailing her first trip to Paris entitled "The Suit with the Paris Label."

When she and her husband Charles ventured out into the Paris shops she was enthralled with the stylish fashions. With the assistance of a very helpful saleslady she selected several pieces she thought were much too great a bargain to pass up. In her mind the matter of the purchase was settled once Charles added the affirmative nod of approval. She was feeling particularly pleased with a grey Dior suit that she felt was absolutely gorgeous on her. When the time came to secure the selections, Margaret became keenly aware that she had made a monumental error in ascertaining the costs of her selections. What she assumed would cost her about thirty francs were actually valued at 200 and sixty francs, quite a discrepancy, and one she clearly could not afford. After all the trying on and deliberating, Margaret felt she should purchase something and since she had fallen in love with her

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33Salim Muwakkil, "A Solid Monument," In These Times (27 February - 12 March 1985), 24-23.
grey wool suit that was the logical choice. She felt she could not return home without at least one Paris label. When she unwrapped her purchase at the hotel she noted much to her disappointment she could not find a label on the garment. She had paid ninety francs for a Paris original and now she wouldn’t be able to prove it to her friends at home.

Charles consoled her and her own appreciation for this well made garment served to comfort her somewhat. The next morning when the tourist aide came to escort them safely to the airport she complimented Margaret on the smart grey suit she was wearing.

‘That is a beautiful suit, Madame, the aide said as we stepped into the taxi. Did you get it here?’

"Yes, I got it here, but I can’t prove it, I said, since the label was cut out when I bought it. It only cost me $20.00." ‘Where did you get it? Twenty dollars, that can’t be so Madame.’ "At a little shop in the arcade near the Tuilleries. I don’t remember the name." Charles joined in with a chuckle. ‘You can’t miss it. There is a sign in the window advertising dresses for fifteen francs.’

The french woman fingered the jacket. ‘Paris has been very good to you, she said. What you have here is an original design from one of the big houses, Dior’s perhaps. It is their practice after have been shown to snip out the labels and then offer them to the small shops to sell at reduced prices. For ninety francs. I must get by there to see if there is anything in my size.’ Then she called good-bye to us as she hustled us onto the bus for Orly Airport.

As I sat back in the French Carravelle bound for Copenhagen, I smoothed down the pleats of my skirt. At least I knew it would not be wrinkled. I settled back feeling quite smart in my label-
Margaret's first trip to Paris had a story book ending. Margaret loved to travel and wherever she went she would take color slides, motion films, and tape songs and conversations of the people of that country. She often captured something of the culture, lifestyle and architecture of the varied locations in her drawings and paintings.

Her travels further include trips to England, Holland, France, Poland, China, Mexico, the West Indies, Brazil, and several trips to Russia. As stated in chapter three, that Margaret lived and studied in Mexico for an extended period. She felt it was a beautiful loving experience. She grew as an artist. Her paintings reflected the bold interaction of color and shape that was indicative of the muralist painters from Mexico. She and Charles lived a peaceful simplistic existence and she pensively notes they missed that life filled with the warmth and acceptance of the people once they returned to the United States.

The Burroughs' home always displayed beautiful objects of art they had purchased from many places around the world.


34Eugene Feldman Notes For a Biography on Margaret Burroughs, TD, Chicago, Burroughs Private Papers, Chicago, 1.

35Margaret Burroughs, Interview, 1991.
Sites of her travels further include Peru, Cuba, The Caribbean, Portugal, Spain, Haiti, Trinidad, Curocca, Aruba, Barbados, St. Vincent. She has traveled to the African continent so often she is often known to many of the airport employees. Her private papers includes a large file of personal correspondence she has maintained over the years with people from across the globe and in particulary Africa. She has frequented the African countries of Ghana, Togo, Dahomey, Nigeria, Mali, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Zaire, Sudan, Egypt, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia, and recieve request to take groups as a tour guide. Such frequent travel, of course, comes with some personal sacrifices. Margaret has contracted at least two instances of malaria while traveling abroad, one within the last two years.  

Her first visit to Africa was in the early sixties when she was an integral component of a group of educators who supported and sponsored travel and study for students and educators to Africa. In the thirty years since her first trip, Burroughs has performed as a knowledgeable guide and facilitator for many many groups. In 1981 Dr. Burroughs became a member of a group comprised of friends and students who called themselves, The African American Heritage Studies Program. This group is the catalyst behind annual tours to Africa. As a delegate on the executive committee she states

36Ramon B. Price "Dr. Margaret Taylor Goss Burroughs", TD, Chicago, DuSable Museum Archives Chicago.
I cannot over emphasize the importance of visiting one's ancestral land. Irish Americans visit Ireland. Polish Americans visit Poland. They touch their ancestral sod and return to the American homeland renewed and inspired. African Americans will find new and deeper meaning and understanding of their history and culture after a visit to Africa. It is a must.  

Burroughs' experiences in travels to Africa inspired a series of poems entitled "Africa, My Africa." Her poems share her impressions and feelings about historic tours, the people, the culture, the religious beliefs as well as the physical aspects of the continent. Reading these poems gives the viewer a sense of the substance of Africa in a vicarious way.

It was during one of travels Margaret was able to arrange for an exhibition of her art in Poland. It was in the early sixties that Charles and Margaret were cruising on board of the Polish liner, Batory they met and befriended a cultural attache from Poland. As they traveled and shared time together each revealed their personal involvement in the arts. Arrangements were made for Margaret's art work to be displayed in the castle of Kusciusko, the Pulavy Palace at Dolney Poland. Feldman records, Kusciusko was a Polish patriot who came to America during our Revolutionary War. As a tribute of gratitude for his participation in the cause for independence he was awarded property in America. Prior

37 Feldman, Notes for a Biography on Margaret Burroughs, 56.
to his death, he drafted a will in which he delineated his wishes that his accumulated wealth and estate be set aside and used for the education of American blacks. Thomas Jefferson was given the onus of executing these mandates. For Burroughs it seemed somewhat appropriate that her art would be hung in a gallery in a place honoring such a man.

"Though they lived in different ages Dr. Burroughs and this great lover of freedom had much in common being lovers of human culture and of liberty." 38

One memorable excursion to Africa for Burroughs is expressed in a long detailed essay entitled "Fame of Her Own" or "My Week In Cairo As Guest of Shirley Lola Graham". This was on one of the study group trips to West and East Africa. After seeing the group safely boarding a plane in Nairobi she decided she would take advantage of this opportunity to explore and sightsee on her own, apart from any structured contrived educational experiences. She decided to venture off on her own for several weeks and head for Cairo and visit with her friend Shirley Graham, widow of her associate, the famed historian, writer, William E. B. DuBois. They had not seen each other in two years when Graham was in Chicago for a lecture tour. Her friend gave her accommodations in their son David's room. The attractive apartment was filled with memorabilia from Dr. DuBois' life. Although she had been married to a renown

38 Ibid., 57-58.
scholar and a very popular man, Shirley Graham was not a shrinking shy violet content to be relegated to the background. She was active, vibrant, and very involved in her own writing and lecturing. During the visit Graham availed herself of the opportunity to take a rest from her own congested agenda. She adopted the role of tour guide while, for a change, Margaret was the student. They visited "AbuSimbel both an ancient miracle and a modern miracle."39

The visit was a significant one in that Margaret had the opportunity to become well acquainted with the woman, Shirley Graham DuBois. "Shirley had already donated "DuBois' cowl, academic robe and cape"40 to the museum and promised to forward a volume of personal letters she had written to her husband. DuBois had been a co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP. He had married his former student, Shirley, in 1951. A decade later she supported him in his move to Ghana at the invitation of President Kwame N. Krumah, they adopted Ghanian citizenship.

In March of 1977 Burroughs' visited China as a delegate with the National Delegation of American Women who were invited to come to China by the Women’s Federation and the China People’s Friendship Society. While there, Margaret

39Margaret Burroughs "My Week In Cairo As Guest of Shirley Lola Graham", TD, Chicago, Private Papers, Burroughs, 3.

40Ibid.
had heard Graham was very ill and was in a hospital in Peking and Burroughs went to see her. Shirley succumbed during this physical challenge. Burroughs and company left Peking before her memorial services were held.\textsuperscript{41}

Burroughs' travels afforded her a unique opportunity to be something of an informal ambassador for the United States. Wherever she went they looked at the American and made certain assumptions about all Americans, and certainly about Americans of color. Wherever she and Charles went after 1961, they were researching on behalf their beloved museum. "We visited museums in every country to see what we could learn and apply in Chicago," said Mr. Burroughs curator of the Museum of Negro History and Art, which he and his wife established four years ago.\textsuperscript{42}

Their travels became an integrated component of their lives. Most of the time they were able to combine business with pleasure. When Charles was asked to assist in taking a tour group into Russia he was elated by the prospects of returning to the place where he spent his youth, adolescents and early adult years. His command of the language and cultural literacy was very much in demand by small groups traveling abroad. Margaret was enlivened by the opportunity to travel and meet new people in new places with whom she

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 12-16.

found she not only shared a humanity by many interests and philosophies."

Both Margaret and Charles served as delegates from the United States who were invited to attend a cultural conference in Kiev. The conference was sponsored by the United States and U.S.S.R. Committee for Cultural Relations.

We explored the idea of setting up a sister city relationship. We had a marvelous time visiting Kiev, Leningrad and Moscow. For Charles it was a most touching return home. Despite having to talk with the use of an electro-larynx his Russian was as fluent as ever.""

Charles' esophagus had been removed.

**Awards**

Margaret Burroughs has led an active personal and professional life in her quest for changes in our world. While many citizens engage in lengthy on-going discourse concerning the ills in the world most often these discussions were mostly all talk and very little action. Margaret is among that elite group of average citizens who would come away from this kind of discussion with a plan for action. "Dr. Margaret Burroughs has spent a life-time in active social change through her art, her work as educator,


"Margaret Burroughs, Untitled Essay, Address to Art Institute Essay, Address to Art Institute of Chicago Graduates, TD, Chicago, Private Papers, Burroughs, Chicago."
poet, writer and cultural organizer."45

See appendix for a list of many of the numerous awards that have been bestowed on Dr. Burroughs. There may be additional awards and honors that do not appear in this listing.

Although Margaret Burroughs pursued her doctorate degree at Columbia College she never completed the required residency and dissertation. In an interview she stated at that point in her life she couldn’t afford to take off from work for the required one year of residency and take care of her familial obligations. Consequently she completed the necessary course work but never finished the doctoral program in its entirety.

Subsequently, Dr. Burroughs has been awarded many Honorary Doctorate Degrees. In 1972 she was awarded a Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Lewis University, Lockport Illinois. Chicago State University, Columbia College and North Central College also awarded Burroughs with an Honorary Doctorate Degree.46

Burroughs is very honored and proud of all her honorary degrees and that her life’s work was perceived as worthy of these honors. She is perhaps most elated with her Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts Degree which she received from the

45Feldman, Note on a biography for Margaret Burroughs, 42.

School of the Art Institute in Chicago.

On Sunday, May 17, 1987, my alma mater, the school of the Art Institute of Chicago, paid me its highest tribute given to an alumnus. I was awarded the Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts! Only three other African-Americans have been honored thusly. They are: Archibald Motley, Romare Bearden and Richard Hunt. The ceremony was very moving and I was emotionally impressed when the 400 graduates arose and gave me a standing ovation on my acceptance of the honor."

This was a very very special moment for Margaret especially since she had missed her own graduating exercises from the Art Institute. She records that while her peers were walking across the stage and accepting their diplomas she was "up to my elbows in wheat paste and papier-mache working with 35 art one students.""

In her humanitarian spirit when she gave her acceptance speech she thanked, by name, the numerous faculty members who had impacted on her life at the institute. "I owe a great debt to this school and the faculty of my time who propelled me in the direction of advocacy and community cultural service.""

The other honor Dr. Burroughs is very proud of was when President Carter honored her with a Presidential Citation as one of the nations ten most accomplished artists of color. "President Carter Wednesday honored 10 black artists,

"Margaret Burroughs, "I Share My Response", Burroughs Private Papers, Chicago, TD, 2.

"Ibid., 3.

"Ibid.
including three living in Chicago, who, he said, had protested discriminations with their work long before civil rights demonstrations and legislation."

Dr. Burroughs wrote an essay detailing her experience at the Whiter House as an honoree. She recounts they were given a royal welcome, and treated with every courtesy. They were greeted in the Blue Room by the vice president's wife Mrs. Joan Mondale, followed by the president's wife, Mrs. Rosalynn Carter. As President Carter introduced each artist and gave them their award the applause was sounding and cameras were flashing. His speech reflected a well researched and knowledgeable understanding of the entire history of the art movement as its encompassed African-Americans. In so doing he also stated that Margaret Burroughs was the founder of the DuSable Museum and the idea of the National Conference of Artist was also her brainchild. Margaret sat and listened with great pride. A reception followed during which Burroughs spent most of her time autographing programs.

In our interview Dr. Burroughs commented that she later remembered "I wonder if the F.B.I. will record this wonderful day into my file." Several years later, when the file on her was officially closed, and she was able to get a

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51Margaret Burroughs, Interview by author, tape recording, 3 November 1992.
copy of it, she recalls there was absolutely no mention of her day at the White House.
Chapter VI

EPILOGUE

Margaret Burroughs is an energetic driven woman. At a time in her life when her peers are taking it easy in retirement she continues a rigorous regime she began more than half a century ago. As a grandmother now she maintains strong family ties with her husband Charles, daughter Gail, son Paul, and her five grandchildren, four boys and one girl and two great grandchildren. Margaret was the first of her generation to graduate from college. Her daughter Gail followed her mother’s lead and went to the pinnacle of the educational ladder earning her Doctorate of Philosophy Degree. The grandchildren, too, are preparing for college.

Margaret Burroughs spent thirty seven years of her life as an educator teaching at the elementary, secondary and college levels. She has never been involved in only one isolated activity. She has always balanced varied projects simultaneously. To date, she has a great respect for teaching, believing it to be the noblest of professions. To be in the role of shaping and influencing the life of a developing person is the most important and significant job one could have. Although she officially left the profession, whenever Margaret encounters a child she stops
and begins a dialogue. Minimally, she will ask their name, age, whether or not they enjoy school and about their career aspirations. She always leaves them with a word of encouragement.

As a writer Burroughs continues to write her poetry as well as to maintain a rigorous demanding lecture schedule. Burroughs', calendar is filled annually with requests for commencement addresses from elementary and secondary schools, as well as colleges. She is asked to present, in her own way, during black history month, February, at more engagements than she can accept. Dr. Burroughs has plans for several research writing projects. She plans to write a book highlighting the history of blacks in Chicago and Illinois as a whole. The content would be geared toward elementary and secondary school children. The research has already been compiled, she must now find the time to put it in publishable form. Another project she's looking forward to completing is a children's book of prose and poetry detailing the life of Captain Harry Dean. Dean was a sea captain who owned his own ship and navigated it to and from Africa many times around 1900. This was an unusual feat for a person of color at that time. She feels Dean's diaries, which are in the DuSable Museum, hold a great deal of potential for capturing and enlivening the imagination of youth while giving a history lesson at the same time. She has already titled the book Dean's Commonplace Diary.
As a consequence of her numerous travels throughout Africa, she has also planned a book entitled Every Child's African Fun Book. This book is for any child who would be interested in becoming familiar with games, foods, rhymes and African phrases. Burroughs has been collecting data for this book since her very first trip to Africa in 1968.

Lastly, she wants to assemble an anthology of her own journalistic contributions spanning thirty years. She would embellish the book with illustrations she creates herself. The book would include the lectures and essays she had prepared for presentation before numerous audiences.

Dr. Burroughs has proven herself to be a lady of substance earning the title of Chicago's First Lady of Arts and Letters. 1 February 1986 was proclaimed Dr. Margaret Burroughs Day in Chicago. At the age of twenty one she was one of the founders of the South Side Community Art Center with its historic grand opening christened by the grand Eleanor Roosevelt. She served as secretary and as chairman of the Board of Directors of the center. The center is still in full operation today and still located at the same site. It has been the nurturing ground for numerous notables who grew to establish permanent places for themselves in their individual arenas; Gwendolyn Brooks, Richard Hunt, Charles White, Bernard Goss and Margaret Burroughs to name just a few. In their respective fields these names are immediately recognized and highly respected.
Burroughs also was an influential member of the team that founded the National Conference of Artists, NCA. Still thriving after thirty five years of evolution, it now boasts of chapters in thirty six states which meet annually at various host locations around the world. Artists meet, network, stimulate, and create. Likewise, the Lake Meadows Art Fair, founded by Burroughs, is visited by burgeoning numbers of quests yearly.

As a teen, Margaret made a decision to become an active participant in society and not merely an onlooker. As early as the 1930s Margaret was already marching down the streets of Chicago as a demonstration to protest the inhumane lynching of blacks in the South. She has used her writings as a vehicle to address a myriad of social issues. She uses her art as a channel for advertising social themes and to "break down barriers racial and social."

She earned numerous awards for her sensitive yet bold contributions to the world of art and the world at large. She has exhibited around the world representing and her family, race and country. She chose prints as her primary vehicle, a media that would allow the average citizen to be able to afford her art. She felt she had an poignant message that her spirit dictated must be shared. She was counseled by other artists that she could become a very prosperous

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1Ramon Price Dr. Margaret Taylor Goss Burroughs, TD, Chicago, Burroughs Private Papers, 2.
artist because her work was well received. In order to turn her talent into financial gains, she would, however, need to stop placing so much emphasis on the print media the money was in originals. She listened to her colleagues but she chose the path not traveled by many. Though not making much money, she felt fulfilled that she was able to share her vision with many others through her woodcuts, lithographs and linoleum prints.

In later years, after Dr. Burroughs was well established as a graceful yet stubborn professional, people sought to acquire original works of Margaret Burroughs. She has relaxed her posture in that she will sell the original painting from which prints have been made. Some fortunate individuals have been able to acquire her pieces. On 3 February 1991 Mary Daniels completed a beautifully photographed article for the Chicago Tribune entitled "Gold Market, Black Art." Margaret Burroughs is featured as one of the names budding collectors should consider when ready for an art purchase. Atlanta University, Howard University, Hampton University, Alabama A. and M. University, Jackson State College, Chicago State University and George Washington Carver Museum are a few of the high profile institutions owning Burroughs' originals as a component of their permanent collections.² Dr. Burroughs is still

²Feldman, Notes for a biography on Margaret Burroughs, 51.
creating works of art and participating in exhibitions as well as shows featuring only her works.

Burroughs is not only active as a lecturer, writer, and artist, and civic leader, she has also maintained an interest in athletics since the days of her youth. To date she is a member of a bowling team which meets every Friday evening. She will tell you, proudly, that she has a better than average scoring record.

Long before civil rights became "the black movement" Margaret was busy protesting and demonstrating in her own way. From 1960-1962 she was a Research and Art Director of the New Crusader's Negro History Hall of fame. In 1963 she formulated a proposal to present for participation in the State of Illinois Exhibition in Commemoration of the Centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation. Again, a collection of paintings was central to this exhibition which would be held at McCormick place in Chicago. Upon the conclusion of the event the paintings were placed on permanent loan to the DuSable Museum.

In 1968 she became a member of the American Forum for International Study, the organization sponsoring travel for persons interested in studying various aspects of African life. In 1968 she earned a Rockefeller Brothers Fellowship to travel and study in West Africa. Burroughs supports what she believes in by working with organizations that reflect those concerns. Burroughs has served on the boards of the
Chicago Council of Foreign Relations, Advisory Board of Hull House Association, Urban Gateways Advisory Board, Board of Directors for the Art Institute of Chicago Alumni Association, Board of Directors for the South Side Community Art Center and the American Forum for International Study. She has also served on panels for the Illinois Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Expansionist Arts Program, National Endowment for the Arts.

In 1971 Governor Ogilvie appointed Burroughs to the commission to study and make recommendations on the financing of the arts in Illinois. In kind, Mayor Richard J. Daley appointed her to a two year term as a member of Chicago's first Fine Arts Council. In 1980 President Carter appointed her to the National Commission on Negro History and Culture.3

The co-founding of the DuSable Museum of African American History is perhaps her most significant contribution to black art and culture and the world. She served as its Executive Director for years, however when she was appointed to the Commission for the Park District opponents of her appointment felt if she held both positions it would represent a conflict of interest. Burroughs resisted for a time but decided in the interest of peace and the spirit of co-operations she would resign from the post as director of the museum retaining a place on the board.

3Ibid., 47-48.
"She was voted the title Founder and President-Emeritus by the Board, which she retains today."

The museum has undergone numerous name changes before it was finally named after DuSable, founder of Chicago. Today the name of DuSable is again up for controversial discussion. One faction proposes a name change for Lake Shore Drive in order to honor Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable just as the board of directors wanted to do in naming the museum. Another faction opposes the renaming proposal. Burroughs dug her heels in and learned the museum business on the job from the ground floor. She completed an apprenticeship program with the Museum of Science and Industry which gave her an invaluable knowledge base in the museum business. She recounts that she would like to train young interested students of color in a similar setting so they too would have a stronger foundation if they were interested in going into this arena.

Burroughs has dedicated her life to always improving her beloved museum. "She has worked both at home and abroad to expand global consciousness and to promote human rights and awareness of the beauty and durability of black art and culture."  

In 1993 another dream for the museum was realized, a

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"Notable Black American Women," Margaret Taylor Burroughs.
grand opening of a new wing. The addition was erected as a south wing on the original structure. It houses a 466 seat theater/auditorium, a 200 seat cafeteria, new galleries, office space, lecture rooms and lounge. Burroughs hopes this 7.2 million dollar construction will be able to offer classes in the fine arts, dance, music and writing. If this space is not sufficient, perhaps the day will come when yet another wing will be added.  

Margaret Taylor Burrough’s contributions to art, education, literature, and the preservation of black American history and heritage seem almost limitless. She brought about a necessary focus on African-American art, first through her own work, then through her founding and directorship of the DuSable Museum for African-American History. And through her teaching and lecturing both in the United States and abroad, she has helped promote human rights and expanded global consciousness to an awareness of the beauty and permanence of black art and culture.


"Jessie Carney Smith, Epic Lives, 55."
Appendix A.

Question: Can you tell me when and under what circumstances you met Dr. Burroughs.

Answer: I should say, I knew about Dr. Burroughs before I actually met her, and at that time she was, her name was, Goss. My older sister, who went to DuSable High School was a student of hers and when she came home talking about the teacher who had done the unpardonable, she had come to school with her hair unpressed. She had, she was, in this school with her hair nappy and everyone was talking about that. Of course, my sister was extremely enamored of her and praised her. My sister, myself, and a couple others in the family all showed a talent for art and so she was a very special person. I suppose sometime later, maybe five or six years later I was to come to DuSable and I was looking forward to meeting this lady and working with her. So that was when I first started high school. I’ll think of the date in a minute, I can’t believe I’m this old . . . that was in the late forties. I met her in about my second year in high school and I sat in her art class and that was my first meeting with her. And then I went on to further that relationship by going to the South Side community Art Center. I think I had been there before but she recommended me to go to the South Side Community Art Center and to take their free classes there and that’s how it all began. When she taught another sister, a younger sister, so she taught an older sister, then she taught me, then a sister right under me. By that time she had become very close associates with our family. Then when I finished high school, she encouraged me to go to art school, and to the Art Institute, which I did, and then quite by accident, I think, I’m not sure, it might have been set up, I don’t know, they had opened up the DuSable Upper Grade Center. I was told I was to take the class that was transferring from the seventh grade at Coleman. I actually marched the kids from Coleman over and nobody ever relieved me so I stayed with that class. You know it was a self contained class so I taught them for a year, then at the end of the year they transferred me from DuSable Upper Grade to DuSable High School and I ended up teaching in the same room that Mrs. Goss had taught me.
Question: Was she still on staff there?

Answer: Yes, she was still on staff at the time.

Question: So now you became co-workers?

Answer: Yeah, in fact, I subsequently replaced her as the chairman of the art department.

Question: Speaking of Dr. Burroughs, educator, can you describe any innovative teaching methods she instituted while at DuSable?

Answer: You mean peculiarities? (laugh)

Answer: No, (laugh) any unique approaches she might have utilized?

Answer: Well yes, I think she was the first black teacher I ever had or was she, no she was the second black teacher I ever had. Any way she was the first teacher I had, who ever, or she was the first adult, who ever introduced me to Afro-American history. What would happen, in fact she, was she really introduced me to literature as such. What would happen was, to be in Dr. Burroughs' class, she'd give the assignment, then she'd get you started, then because art is the kind of activity where you could do that and you could listen, and you could absorb the things around you, in fact, you could actually absorb things so they could become apart of what you were doing, she would, at various times read to us. She would at various times read about someone we had never heard of. She would read about Benjamin Banneker, she would tell us about Harriet Tubman.

I remember once she read to us a famous short story about Maupassant, by one of the french writers and she told the story as if it had happened to her. I remember I went home and told about this tragedy in her life. It was a very famous story. If I told you, you would probably recognize the story and none of us had ever hear it. What happened was she told it as if it were her own life, and I, and I guess a lot of others in the class, became fascinated with reading and how adventuresome it could be. It was almost like Santa Claus, and when I found out she was really just recounting, that she was telling it in the first person, at first I felt like she had lied to us, but what she had done was to make us get involved. But
back to the black history, or negro history. It was not considered to be material of the curriculum as it was taught and of cause, it was not thought of by the administration to be proper to the course, that if you were teaching art, that you would teach people how to paint, draw and do those kinds of things but here she was giving black history lessons, at the same time she introduced us to the concept of partnerships because we were partners with her. So much so that, while she was reading, because she would have her head down in a book, the principal or assistant principal who were white, [and those who weren’t white were very fair skinned blacks, and they tended to identify with the white power structure] and if one of those people appeared at the door and one of us saw them we would give her the high sign. She would immediately shift gears and begin talking abut how to mix colors and that sort of thing. And the minute they left, began talking about the revolutionary works of Paul Robeson and so forth. Yeah, she was, she was really a marvelous kind of person, and the thing that she would do, I guess that the importance of the short, story is she never called what she was doing an introduction, she would just get right in it and there you were.

Her approach to art was the same way, she would get you to start doing it and then direct you, as opposed to setting down a bunch of guidelines, you know, how to draw a face. Well first of all, try and draw the face as you understand it, then once she saw how you were approaching it, then she could better tell you how to straighten it out. And then she had a very high respect for what the student did so if you drew a lopsided face she wouldn’t tell you it was a lopsided face. She might even encourage you to continue doing it like that because that indeed was the way you saw a face. Now if I saw you were frustrated, the way I was, because I would get, I won’t say emotional, but I could get extremely frustrated if I couldn’t make it look the way I wanted it to look. I don’t even know if she knows this, but could get really hot under the collar and I guess I was even competitive because if I saw someone doing a better drawing than me I would get very upset and so I’m not really sure what she did about that but I began to see better. I began to see things and she would also make the subject matter secondary to what you were doing with it. So, if there were a bunch of flowers in a vase, rather than trying to get everybody to do that still life exactly the same, she might encourage you to do it just a little different. She taught rhythm. There was a sense of rhythm in her class, yet half of the time she was talking about one
thing and she was doing something else. It flowed, it flowed so much that I literally drew my way through four years of high school because I was cutting classes and staying with her. At one point I knew I annoyed her because I stayed under her so much it had to get on her nerves you know. And I remember my mother telling her once that she was just turning me over to her because I was just completely lost to the family. I spent all my time, every moment that I could to be in the company of her and the people that gravitated around her, actors, and singers, dancers. I even tried it myself. I tried my hand at theater, dancing and all of that.

Well I guess the bottom line of all that was materials, we never had a wealth of materials and we learned, we really learned the creative process. We learned that with a bottle of ink and the same two or three colors you could juxtapose, and that if you didn’t have a brush to make a nice fine line, then maybe the fine line wasn’t that important, maybe you could get the same affect with a fuzzy line. That was pretty much it.

She also taught you to think she really respected people with a certain intelligence. I think that was part of the tug of war that went on between me and her because I don’t think I impressed her with my intelligence. When I was in high school they would group you, and somehow I had gotten placed in a division for very, a high achieving division. Really, I was in the wrong division. I didn’t belong there and I couldn’t get out really. I was constantly around those people. There was a girl, her name was Jerry Wenn and she had a fantastic mind, she was really brilliant, she had a kind of photographic mind and she would read and all she and I were very close and Mrs. Goss compared me with Jerry Wenn which was, I was just wiped out. She encouraged you to read and to think and to be involved in other things. She developed my political awareness. It was from her that I knew about Paul Robeson, I mean I met that man. I mean I sat in the room with him. I mean I actually shook that mans hand. I sat listening to him and other scholars and adults talking about world peace and equality and parody and all the things that were so prevalent during the civil rights movement of the sixties. I mean I was exposed to that as a teenager.

When I went into the service I went in there with a very sharp awareness of what war was about as opposed to a service man who was just there to fight for my
country. In fact when people are in conflict it is hard to say which one is right and which one is wrong because they both apparently think they are right and (and) there has to be a better solution. Dr. Burroughs was a person who talked about resolutions to the conflict. She was a very humanistic person. She was not subject to crying and tearing, you didn’t see a lot of those kinds of feminine things about her. She maintained a kind of aloofness. A lot of time she'll have people thinking she’s kind of cold and all, but I think that’s because she has some substance that kind of precluded trying to be pleasant.

What else do you want to know about her?

Question: How did you find the transition from being a student to becoming a co-worker with her?

Answer: It has never happened. (laugh). Dr. Burroughs will still, in public, say things like "Dummy, fool, shut up" and so um - no the - um - it was such that at this point when I walked over from the upper grade center she called me Mr. Price. I mean I thought she was crazy. I was like don’t you know me? Indeed, I was Mr. Price. Really, most of the time she refers to me as a professional people, of all things. (Laugh) You know that professional thing more so on my part than hers and then there were the times, suddenly she was looking to me for ideas and things. We’d sit down and I’d tell her about a lesson plan I was developing, to find her using it and I’d think, wow, that’s something. So then I think I just wished we had more of those kinds of relationships today. The students are so mobil so transistor, you know I had one teacher who taught me for four years. And then to go into a situation where you are going to have teachers who have taught older siblings, it’s hard then to carry on or come up with some kind of accurate scale to say how that teacher which was exceptional because there is so much that came to the class so much had already been established now the fact she was further able to develop it is something I won’t talk about. But I think that in all due honesty we need to keep people things within a kind of frame. And so we are talking about a time in history. So we aren’t just talking about Dr. Burroughs we’re talking about a whole aura so that Dr. Burroughs could exist.¹

Appendix B

"Down The Straight And Narrow"

I AM IN REVOLT! I have just performed a drastic act! I have just thrown into the garbage one straightening comb and one curling iron, in good condition. Never again will they glow to a glistening cherry red over the gas stove or the Sterno can. No more will the acrid scent of burning, frying hair disturb my nostrils. No more opening windows and frantically fanning the air to get the odor out before guests come. No more will I be panic-stricken when caught in a sudden shower without a head covering. No more of those hasty early morning touchups before dashing off to work. And not ever again will I darken or lighten the doorway of a hair parlor, at least not until the hair psychiatric comes up with some method of grooming Negro hair in its natural stare without the use of hot combs.

Why my revolt after thirty years of hair frying in which I was conditioned to believe that my appearance was improved? Having ceased to look for the key to the spiral look, I have found a new freedom and sense of ease. I have accepted and am pleased with the image of myself as I am as God made me.

I am not alone, either, for a growing number of Negro personalities are flaunting the prevailing customs in regard to Negro hair and going au naturelle. Katherine Dunham, the dancer, was one of the pioneers. Then came Odetta, the folk singer. Now, there is Miriam Makeba, the South African chanteuse. All of them proudly and beautifully wear their hair in its natural state, but groomed and cut to fit their shape of face and head.

Do not get the idea, however, that my revolt was a sudden one. It came about as a result of five or more years of pondering and wondering about the state of my hair. Now, as I look back, I am not sure that I was ever really satisfied with my gleaming, freshly done pate. It was easier to pull a comb through, yes, but clinging so close to my head, it revealed every single bump or protuberance. And then it wasn’t permanent.
One of the most exciting events that an American Negro girl-child experiences is her first trip to the hair dresser's. Comparable to this, I suppose, are puberty or coming of age rites that so-called primitive peoples require of their children. The girl-child's hair is washed, pressed, curled or waved. At an early age, one is made aware of the temporary quality of this transformation. One learns to guard against moisture of any type, perspiration or rain, for fear that one's hair will go "back." One develops a mind-set against swimming, unless it is just before one is to go to the beauty parlor. I wonder how many Negro female swimming champions have been lost to us because of this consideration.

Thus, for the negro girl-child, who does not happen to be born with the much admired "straight" hair, the process of straightening or non-permanent becomes an integral part of life itself. She is not considered well-groomed if the hair is not "done" for all occasion and in-between. If one cannot afford the every-two week date at the hair parlor, one can invest in a straightening comb and a pair of curling irons and bootleg at home.

The Chicago psychiatrist, Dr. Kermit T. Mehlinger, says, 'We live in a society where the standards of beauty are white standards. Negro women generally put a high premium on this standard but the genes just won't go along with it. The net result is that a great number of Negro women are bent on achieving impossible standards of beauty.'

Dr. Mehlinger cautions that parents should be particularly careful in the formative years when the personalities of many Negro girls are warped by impossible beauty standards.

I am not sure how much my personality suffered, but I do know that certain sympathies were extended to me because I was the 'unfortunate' one of three sisters. While the genes from our Indian ancestors on my father's side to produce an abundance of lustily growing hair on the pates of my two sisters, those same genes ignored me completely. Characterized as "stubborn," my hair was of fine texture and broke off as fast as it grew.

I believe that my poor mother's personality was more warped by this situation than mine, for she seemed to feel that she had not done quite right by me. Money was spent on all kinds of lotions, pomades and creams
which were supposed to make my hair grow. An assortment of women who were reputed to have 'growing hands' tried to persuade my hair, but to no avail. I sat in the chairs of a succession of beautician who had been known to grow hair, but for some strange reason their methods did not work on me. My head was even shaved close on the dark of the moon in hopes that a more manageable crop should come forth. It came back, just as before. Same texture, same length: short.

As I grew into a young woman, I was serenely confident about all aspects of my personality and development. All, that is except my hair.

A series of events and reactions finally cleared up the dilemma of hair, sowing the seeds of my personal revolt. On a trip to Mexico I travelled equipped with comb, iron and a can of Sterno - in case a gas stove or hot plate was not available in the hotel.

On one occasion I was invited to a party and did not have time to go through my "ritual". Feeling most self-conscious, I merely brushed my hair and went to the party wearing it natural.

"Que bonito!" my Mexican friend exclaimed. "How beautiful your hair is! It has such wonderful body and texture. Senora, you look like a beautiful piece of African sculpture. Pobre de mi! (Poor me!) with such lank and lifeless hair."

I was astounded. What was the matter with these Mexicans? And here I had always thought that they had the most admirable type of hair in the world. When I came home from the party, I sneaked another look at myself in the mirror. Oh no! My Mexican friend must have been pulling my leg. How could I possible have gone out in company with my hair looking like that? I returned to the seeming security of my combs and iron.

When my Mexican friend saw me later with my gleaming processed lock, they said, "Que lastima! What a pity! What have you done to your hair, Senora? You have lost your wonderful curl!" I took a second look at myself. Well...Maybe they had something there. I wasn't sure. On a visit to Vera Cruz, a few days later, I saw a young Mexican Negro woman who looked just like me in face, feature, and texture of hair. There was one difference. Her hair was shaped to the head in a boyish style, and it was natural. She looked positively handsome. Then, on the spot, I wondered if I could ever garner up sufficient courage to wear mine
likewise. What would my friends think?

Feeling a bit more confident on my arrival home, I tried the new coiffure for about a week, but this proved to be too great a shock for my family and friends. The advise me that if I could not get an appointment with my regular operator, they would arrange one for me. In my office, my well marcelled co-workers stared and whispered behind my back. The assumed that I was 'spent out' after my vacation. Then they mentioned that they would pass the hat for me, I chickened out and went back on my every two week schedule. And everyone, family, friends and co-workers seemed happy. Everyone except me.

Preparatory to spending a humid summer at school in New York, I went to my neighborhood barber. I asked him to cut my hair about an inch and a half long and to shape it to my heard. Hesitating, he asked, "Lady, are you sure you want it cut that short? That's kind of short, you know."

"Sure, I'm sure," I replied. "I have decided that it's the nature of my to be short. Therefore, I want to look as if I wish to wear it short. I'm finally convinced that it will never grow long enough for me to sit on any way."

"It's none of my business, ma'am, but you are going to look kinda peculiar with your hair short like that. You gonna get it straightened, ain't you?"

"Nup, gonna wear it natural."

"Okay, okay, lady. It's your hair." He started snipping. After he had finished. I was handed the mirror. What I saw there brought all of my doubts rushing back. But it was too late now.

The barber was sympathetic. "Lady, I can give you the address of a hair weaving place out south. You still got enough to weave onto."

I thought of the Vera Cruzana. Perhaps this hair bit was going to be an educational job. "I don't think I'll need it," I told him, as I rushed out of the shop with my abbreviated locks. It was me against the whole community.

In New York I lived at International House. One humid morning as I sat in the dining room immaculately cool in my natural coiffure, a woman of color came up to me
an spoke.

"Excuse me, you are an African student, aren't you? Is it Ghana, Nigeria, perhaps Tanganyika [sic]?"

"-No-" I said. "I'm an American. I'm from Chicago." I was struck by your hair-do. It's beautiful! How did you get it that way?"

"I didn't do anything," I said. "Just had it cut. I'm wearing it natural."

"Gee, honey." She became familiar. "With all of this humidity, I can't do a thing with mine. I know that touch it up every morning is ruining my hair. I sure wish I had your courage."

I must say that I felt stronger in my determination to find my own image. When I went out into the street, I left off the kerchief which I had been wearing, in my uncertainty, for a crutch. Soon I was receiving more compliments than criticism about my natural hair-do, and besides, I was not really alone, for it seemed the vogue of natural hair was more wide-spread in New York than in Chicago. I noted that the African students and delegates to the United Nations took pride in their vibrantly alive heads of hair.

Discussions with the African students acquainted me with a new concept: the quest of the African to recover a normal self pride, a confidence which had been shattered by centuries of colonization and subjection. It is an effort to recover a work in which he may have a sense of unashamed identity and an unsubordinate role. This search for a cultural patrimony is a necessary state in the liberation of the African people. It occurred to me that American Negroes who were aspiring toward full citizenship in this democracy could accelerate their forward march by formulating their own concept of these roots.

Thus, though three hundred years removed, I found kinship with my African cousins. My search for a type of hair conditioning peculiar to me was in essence an effort to reject adherence to white standards of beauty in the grooming of hair. Mine was a determination to become aware of myself, and to aid other Negroes to become aware of themselves as a beautiful contribution to the human race.

This search for our own image is in no way meant to depreciate the work of the Negro beauticians. To them
is issued a challenge to create ways of grooming Negro hair smartly in its natural state. They could do research on hair styles developed in Africa and Egypt thousands of years ago. In Africa today these styles are still being used. Many are far superior in classic beauty to some efforts to straighten Negro hair. The styling is the important thing not the texture.

Perhaps now you understand the reasons for my revolution and why I am wearing my hair the way God made it. When you see me or other women on the street wearing our hair natural, perhaps you will not stare so hard or feel ashamed. You will understand that we are pleased and satisfied with our image. We are being our own true selves. We have ceased to look for the key to unlock the spiral in our hair.²

APPENDIX C

Honors, Awards and Recognitions


1955 First Watercolor Award, Atlanta University, Georgia

1962 Best in Show, Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Mo.

1964 Meaningful Service in the Community: Women’s Alliance of All Souls Award, Unitarian Church

1967 National endowment for the Humanities: Museum Internship at the Field Museum of Chicago

1968 Certificate of Merit - National Conference of Artists

1968 Honoree: The Propsair Girls Social and Charitable Club

1969 Third Place in Sculpture, N.C.A., Atlanta University

1969 Strategy for the New City Award: Better Boys Foundation

1969 Malcolm "X" Black Manhood Award, W.C. Anas Lugman

1971 Award of Distinctive Merit: National Conference of Negro Artists

1971 Hawthorne Festival Poet: University of Missouri

1972 Distinguished Service Award: Englewood Businessmen’s Association

1972 Theta Omega, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Community Torch Bearer Award
1972 Honorary Doctorate of Human Letters, Lewis University, Lockport, Illinois

1973 National Association of College Women’s Imprint Award

1973 Y.W.C.A. Leadership Award

1973 Commended Resolution No. 183 in the 78th General Assembly of the Senate, offered by Senator Richard Newhouse, Chicago

1973 Urban Gateways Award for Cultural Contributions to the Arts

1973 DuSable Museum Made Principal Monument to DuSable (William California Hartman and Ralph J. Metcalfe)

1974 "Color Her Proud" Award: DuSable Upper Grade Center, for contributions to Black Heritage

1974 Y.M.C.A. Leadership Award for Excellence in Art

1974 M.P.M.A. Chapter, for contributions to Black History

1974 Spotlighted by Chicago Defender Artist, Joe Commodore on "Accent - 1975"

1975 Center for New Horizons Humanitarian Award

1975 International Year of Woman Award: Catalyst for Chicago

1976 Citation for Service: American Federation of Teachers

1976 Certification of Appreciation: Black Caucus of American Federation of Teachers

1976 Appointed a Member of Chicago’s First Council of Fine Arts

1976 Certificate of Award: National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Mu Chapter
1977 Named in Chicago Defender Newspaper Survey as one of Chicago’s Ten Most Influential Women
1977 Abraham Lincoln Center Ward
1977 Certificate of Recognition, FESTAC - LAGOS, KADWA, NIGERIA
1978 Outstanding Educator Achievement Award: Coalition for United Community Action
1978 The National Association of College Women Central University Alumni Association, Chicago Chapter, Award
1978 The Hammurabi Robb Memorial Award for preservation of Black Cultural Heritage
1979 Lewis University, Outstanding Citizen Award, Black Students Union, Lockport, Illinois
1979 "Footprints in the Sands of Time" Award: Grant Elementary School, Chicago
1979 Honored in a Proclamation for 37 Years of Teaching, by Mayor Jane M. Byrne, Chicago
1979 Honored in a Tribute to the DuSable Museum, by People United to Save Humanity (P.U.S.H.)
1979 Certificate of Award: National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Mu Chapter, for contributions to Black Culture
1980 Presidential Appointee to National Commission on Black History and Culture
1980 Presidential Citation, National Conference of Artists,
White House, Washington, D.C.

1980 Awarded a Plaque by the Chicago Chapter of the Continental Societies, for work with disadvantaged and underprivileged

1980 Clara Muhammad Educational Memorial Foundation Award, for outstanding efforts to preserve Bilalian History

1980 The Washington Bar Association Award

1980 Honoree: National Conference of Artists, as one of the Ten (10) Black artists who made significant contributions to African-American Art and Culture

1980 Award: Chicago Park District, for a lifetime of dedication and service for the betterment of mankind

1980 Award: The African-American Museums Association, for being a pioneer in the preservation of African-American Culture

1980 National Black Arts Festival, Award, Atlanta, Georgia

1981 Award - "Senator Citizen of the Year" by the Chicago Park District

1981 Special Tribute: for obtaining the most Sponsors in the DuSable Museum Annual Walkathon (Ten Miles)

1981 Special Award: for being the oldest Walker in the DuSable Museum Annual Walkathon (Ten Miles)

1981 Award, Midwest Black Theater Alliance, for promoting Black Culture

1981 Cook County Bar Association, awarded their Presidential Plaque
1981 Award: John E. Johnson Award by the Tersahan Youth Organization, For Excellence
1981 The Chicago Black F.F.'s for Black culture preservation
1982 Certificate of Recognition, Florida Festival of the Arts
1982 Received "Excellence in Art" award: National Association of Negro Musicians
1982 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major Award
1983 Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters: Chicago State University
1983 Outstanding Alumni Award: Chicago State University
1983 Citizen Honors Award - The City Club of Chicago
1985 DuSable High School Class of 1985 Award
1985 Lifetime Achievement Award, Trans Africa
1985 Chicago Support Committee
1985 Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc., President's Humanitarian Award
1985 Selected: One of America's Top 100 Black Business And Professional Women: by Dollars and Sense Magazine
1985 Outstanding Service Award: Blackbooks
1985 Bud Billiken Award: for Community Service, Bahai House of Worship
1985 Running With the Eight Ball Award for Merit and Achievement
1985 Saluted by Black Athletes Hall of Fame
1986 Certificate of Appreciation, Austin's Black Experience
1986 Legislative Salute House Resolution No. 1009
1986 Citizen of the Week, W.B.B.M., Radio 78
1986 Margaret Burroughs Day in Chicago: Mayor Washington
1986 Certificate of Appreciation, Jessie "Ma" Houston
Prison Outpost
1986 Cited for Outstanding Service in the Arts and
   Humanities, by Chicago, DuSable, Fort Dearborn
   Historical Commission, Inc.
1987 Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts, School of the Art
   Institute of Chicago
1987 Paul Robeson High School Award
1987 Citation - School of the Art Institute of Chicago
1987 Certificate of Appreciation: United States Postal
   Service
1987 Certificate - Sheraton Nile Cruise
1987 Progressive Black Woman's Award: Enverite Charity Club
1987 Chicago Youth Center Award
1987 Community Service Award: Black Law Students
Association of John Marshall Law School
1988 1955-Parachute Infantry Association Award
1988 Certificate of Recognition, Mankata State University,
   Pan-American Conference
1988 Certificate of Participation: International Conference
   of Artists Salvador, Bahia, Brazil
1989 Finer Womanhood Award: Zeta hi Beta Sorority, Inc.
1989 National Conference for College
1989 Council of the Elders Awards, National Black United Front
1989 Woman of Distinction, National Association for Women Deans, Administrators, Counselors
1990 Community Stateville "New Era" Jaycees (Service Award)
1990 Outstanding Religious Leader
1990 Northern Illinois University Distinguished Service Award
1991 Black Rose Award, League of Black Women
1991 Certificate of Recognition, Gershwin School
1991 Cultural Enrichment Award, Human Enrichment Development Assoc.
1991 Tribute to Q Great Achiever, "A" Students Omni U.
1991 Appreciation Award, Brookwood Junior High School
1991 Appreciation Award, Wallou Park Advisory Council
1991 First Lady of Arts and Culture, Chicago S.D.A. Academy
1991 Scholastic Achievement Award, National Association of Black Workers
1991 Certificate of Membership, African Travel Association
1991 Heritage Achievement Award, Morgan Park Family Heritage Festival
1991 Arts and Humanities Award, DuSable Class of 1951
1991 Award for Contribution to African-American Life, History and Tradition
1991 Second Congressional District Award
1991 Certificate of Appreciation, Jessie "Ma" Houson Prison
Outpost

1991 Artistic Excellence Award, Ebony Museum of Arts, Oakland, California

1992 Woman of the Year Award, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
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The author, Carline Evone Williams Strong, was born in Joliet, Illinois.

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The dissertation is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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