

**FROM THE ISLANDS OF THE SEA:  
EARLY CARIBBEAN ADVENTIST STUDENTS  
ATTENDING SENIOR ADVENTIST COLLEGES UNTIL 1954.**

BY

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**Introduction**

The Fall 2009 FOCUS, Andrews University magazine boasted to its readers that it was ranked by the U.S. News and World Report among America's 2010 Best Colleges as "the eighth most racially diverse national institutions and seventh among the national universities in its percentage of international students."<sup>1</sup> The brief article goes on to state that this ranking was based on the 4,500 institutions of higher learning in the U.S. This is an outstanding achievement and while the article suggests that no other Adventist college came close in the rankings, it is evident that other Adventist colleges and universities in the U.S. have made significant progress in the Multi cultural environment on their campuses, from what existed on all these campuses fifty or so years ago.

The historical process that has transpired over these years on these campuses that has produced the present multi cultural and multiethnic environment has been indirectly studied by a wide range of scholars.<sup>2</sup> It is not the intent of the paper to cover this subject however this study examines a very small and ignored aspect of the international student experience on some of these campuses. The paper will focus on the perceptions, motivations, experiences and contributions of Caribbean Adventist students who matriculated into and mostly graduated from six Adventist colleges and universities.

This is a preliminary study regarding the impact of Caribbean Adventists students on the campus of leading Seventh-day Adventists colleges dating as early as the mid 1880's. The study will show that Caribbean students played a pioneering role in shaping early perceptions and attitudes towards international students and students of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds on these campuses. It will more closely examine the aspirations and perceptions of Caribbean students who attended these Colleges between 1946 and 1954 specifically their role in helping to shape the social attitudes on those campuses.

Beginning with a trickle of professionally trained Adventist converts, the early Caribbean students' main objective was to be further educated at an Adventist School in order to return to help "their people." By the mid 1940's, increasing numbers of Caribbean students were graduating from the two junior colleges in the English speaking Caribbean—Caribbean Training College and West Indies College—a significant percentage of these students would be confronted with a very different cultural orientation on the various campuses than what they were accustomed to in their homelands and most would attempt to challenge the prevailing climate toward cultural diversity in American higher education, as the wider American society also confronted the need to integrate.

This paper seeks to determine the various motives and incentives that encouraged Caribbean Adventist students to attend leading Adventist colleges in North America between 1885 and 1954. It will also probe available sources to ascertain to what extent American Adventist missionaries serving the Caribbean, promoted, encouraged or hindered the attempts of Caribbean Adventist youth to further their education at six institutions. These American Adventist institutions are Battle Creek College, later called Emmanuel Missionary College; The Battle Creek Sanitarium Nursing and Medical School; Atlantic Union College; Washington Missionary College; Potomac University and Union College. The study identifies Caribbean students who attended during this period and seeks to highlight their aspirations, perceptions and challenges at these institutions, and examined how their education contributed to their future work and possibly how they viewed Adventism and Adventist higher education.

These students are exclusively from the former British West Indies colonies. The study suggests that over time these Caribbean students have different overriding objectives for attending and perceptions regarding their experiences on these campuses. The study identifies students in three distinct periods, (1) The Pioneering period 1885- 1919, when the "grateful students" attended; (2) The Post World War I to World-War II Period 1920 – 1945 when the "silent students" attended; and (3) the Post World War II Period 1946 – 1954 when the "questioning students" arrived on these campuses. The study includes the recollections of a wide cross section of students from the last period who were interviewed for their personal stories of triumph and intrigue while attending these Senior Adventist colleges in North America.

The paper will argue that the experiences of these early Caribbean students attending the leading North American Adventist colleges had a very positive influence and that their presence

on these campuses forced American students, faculty and administrators to deal with some of the very pressing social issues that played themselves out in the wider community. It will seek to discover whether these Caribbean students' experiences on these campuses influenced their future academic and professional careers. These findings are also based on one recent autobiography, an examination of available records of American Adventist educators and administrators who worked at the two Adventist colleges in the Caribbean during the later years 1946-1954, including their correspondence and other materials in the holdings of the Department of Archives, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Unsuccessful attempts were made to gather general information and archival student records from these institutions that they attended in the U.S.

### **I. Who were these Caribbean Adventist students?**

All students were Seventh-day Adventists from the British West Indies that until the early 1960's, these Caribbean islands were colonies of Britain and included the Bahamas, Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, British Guiana, the Leeward and Windward Islands.<sup>3</sup> A high percentage of these students were ethnically Africans, however some were Chinese and East Indian. English was their native language and the last group, most had completed the highest education level available to them in their region's Adventist junior college. They were all academically prepared to undertake the college program that they matriculated into on the various campuses.

Many of these students were 'the cream of the crop' bright, hardworking, articulate, eager to have the opportunity to study further and were also extremely committed to serving their church and their community.

A significant percentage of the early students would be attending these 'Missionary Colleges' to be trained to return to work alongside the American Adventist missionaries working in the Caribbean. Especially during the Post WWII period of 1946 to 1954 an increasing percentage of the Caribbean students sought training in fields other than in Religion and Theology that would allow them to work outside the Adventist denomination.

From the outset there were compelling reasons for these students desiring and aspiring to attend the Adventist colleges in North America. During the early Pioneering period of 1885 – 1919 most students were recent converts to Adventism. They were young, well educated

professionals, most were former government employees or civil servants working for the colonial governments in the British West Indies, or as teachers in the colonies' well established parochial school system. However having accepted Seventh-day Adventism, a faith that was largely unknown and viewed as a "cult" by the government authorities and refusing to work on Saturdays, these new converts were dismissed from their jobs. Most were eager to be trained in an Adventist school to further evangelize their Caribbean community. It would be the need to train additional young converts that would lead to the establishment of Adventist Training schools in the Caribbean.

The first Caribbean Pre-college school established by the Adventist missionaries in the Caribbean was established in Jamaica during 1907. It would be called the West Indies Training School since it served students from all regions of the Caribbean as far south as British Guiana (now Guyana). Almost a decade and a half later, East Caribbean Training School started in Panama and operated between 1921-1924. Three years after that closing, the West Caribbean Training School began in Trinidad in 1927. The founding principal of both East and West Caribbean Training Schools in the southern Caribbean was Clarence J. Boyd, who was a former principal of Oakwood Training School located in Huntsville, Alabama then known as the Huntsville School.

Writing in the Inter-American Messenger of September 1924, Professor Boyd, described how as early as 1907, he had taught Caribbean students and was very impressed with them. He wrote, "As far back as 1907, he had taught Caribbean students on that campus and was very impressed with them. He wrote, "As far back as 1907, while serving as a teacher in Huntsville School in Alabama, two young men came to the school from the island of Trinidad and another from British Guiana. All three were exceptional young men and came with the determination to prepare for the work. Two of them are today classed among our most active and successful colored ministers in the United States."<sup>4</sup> Other Caribbean students in subsequent years would be encouraged to attend the other Adventist Colleges in North America, especially the Colleges under review. Many of these later students desired to use their senior college Adventist as a spring board to become medical doctors, scientists, college professors, administrators, business, nursing, library science and in enter other fields not necessarily available on these campuses.

## II. The Pioneering Caribbean Students 1885-1919

Although the published histories of the receiving Adventist Colleges in the U.S. do not mention the presence of Caribbean students in the early years of these institutions,<sup>5</sup> a close examination of a number of archival sources suggest that beginning around 1885 Caribbean Adventists began to seek to attend Battle Creek College soon after it was re-opened after its brief closure. While it appears that they did not become full time students and actually graduated from the college, there is an indication that a few sought and probably attended for some time although the available Battle Creek College records of this period have not identified these students as attending.

Probably the first Caribbean student to attend Battle Creek College was R.L. Jeffrey of British Guiana who arrived on his own in Battle Creek, Michigan to attend the tenth Annual meeting of the International Tract and Missionary Society. Jeffrey's presence at the meeting was greeted with enthusiasm and he was permitted to speak to the members of the society in attendance. In his presentation after describing the process of the Adventist work in Georgetown, British Guiana, he appealed to the leaders to allow him to attend the Battle Creek College.<sup>6</sup>

It is most likely that the committee responded favorably to his request to be trained so that he could return and help spread Seventh-day Adventism among his country men and women. There is no evidence that he attended.

Another young recent Adventist convert from British Guiana who also attended the Battle Creek College in the early 1890's was Philip Giddings, Sr. Giddings was born in Buxton Village, East Coast, Demarara, British Guiana in October 1865. In his youth he attended a number of the colony's schools and excelled and was trained to teach. He taught for a number of years before serving in the colonial British Guiana government as a post master and telegraph operator. One report suggests that he has been a Seventh-day Adventist as a result of reading Adventist literature<sup>7</sup> and not from any direct contact with the small group of Advent believers that R.L. Jeffrey had spoken about almost ten years before in Battle Creek. Wesley Amundsen in his work The Advent Message in Inter- America suggests that it was W.J. Boynton of the International Tract Society operating out of New York City who sent the first large package of Adventist literature of Georgetown in 1883.<sup>8</sup>

Giddings would be faced to resign his government position and soon travel to Battle Creek to attend first Battle Creek Sanitarium Nursing School and on completion of that course would enroll and graduate from the ministerial course at the Battle Creek College. It appears that Giddings spent the period 1891 – 1895 studying and before returning to work in various areas of the Caribbean.

Giddings would be followed by Wilbert Durante Forde of Barbados arriving in Battle Creek during 1900. Like Giddings, Forde was also a young well educated professional who attended the best schools the British colony had to offer. He also taught in Bridgetown and was baptized into the Adventist faith in 1900 by Elam Van Duesen, the first permanent Adventist minister assigned to this British Colony. Like Giddings, Forde would be forced to give up his job on account of his new affiliation with the Seventh-day Adventist and so Van Duesen most likely encouraged him to immediately apply and enroll in the Ministerial course at Battle Creek College. Forde was sent on the condition that he would immediately return to work in Barbados and the surrounding islands spreading the faith he had just embraced.

Forde completed his studies in 1905 and returned to Barbados as was his agreement but not before he was approached by Church leaders in the Mid-west to work in North America among African American congregations. He would serve for four and one-half years in the Caribbean before returning in 1910 to the U.S. to serve as a senior pastor of a fledging congregation in Chicago. He would spend the rest of his years of pastoral service in the U.S. and in 1910 returned to the U.S. to serve as a senior pastor of a fledging congregation in Chicago. He would spend the rest of his years in Adventist ministerial service across the U.S.<sup>9</sup>

A second Barbadian, Charles J.B. Cave also was a well liked and very capable school teacher for a leading parochial school in Bridgetown but was also dismissed from the position for becoming a Seventh day Adventist in 1898. He too would also be encouraged by his parents and Van Duesen to study nursing under the watchful care of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg at the Battle Creek Sanitarium Nursing School. He left Barbados in 1901 for Battle Creek and completed the course in record time in 1903. There were other Caribbean students taking the nursing course, the largest group was from Antigua. On completion of his nursing studies, Dr. Kellogg personally invited Cave to study medicine at Adventist medical school that operated within the confines of the Battle Creek Sanitarium called the American Medical Missionary College. Cave graduated from that medical school in the class of 1907 that had just ten graduates. Six of whom

were women and he was the only ethnic minority in the class. He would return to Barbados the following year and establish his own Barbados Sanitarium and operated it with the support of his Antiguan wife, Eudora who also graduated from the Battle Creek Adventist Nursing School. Cave operated his Barbadian health establishment following many of the medical practices and procedures he learned from Dr. Kellogg. He also found time to work closely with other Seventh-day Adventist church leaders in Barbados, Trinidad, and British Guiana, aggressively promoting the Adventist Health message until his death in May of 1939.<sup>10</sup>

Other Adventist schools and colleges would also admit Caribbean students into their campuses and have them attend regular classes during these early years. According to accounts not yet reconciled by the records of these institutions, a number of Caribbean students attended what was in the early twentieth century called the Lancaster Academy in South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

Two of the most easily identified are David E. Blake of Jamaica and Michael S. Banfield of Barbados. Independent sources stated that they both enrolled in the ministerial course and graduated. First referred to as “That New England School”, this school opened its doors in 1882 by Professor Goodloe Harper Bell, however was not officially designated as a Junior College until 1918 when it was renamed the Lancaster Junior College. A number of independent sources identify both Blake and Banfield as having graduated from this junior college.

Blake is identified by Louis B. Reynolds, in his work We Have Tomorrow: The Story of America, Seventh-day Adventists with an African Heritage, as having graduated from Atlantic Union College.<sup>11</sup> However Blake’s obituary in Review & Health of November 29, 1917, states that he attended South Lancaster Academy and entered ministry work in 1905 and it also states that he graduated from Meharry Medical School in Nashville, Tennessee in 1912. He would work for the church in the American south as well as in Central America.

Michael S. Banfield was born on November 3, 1892 in Barbados and attended one of the leading high schools in the British colony before migrating to the U.S. Although the Atlantic Union College Alumni Directory published in 1987 does not list him among its 1919 graduates, the AUC school’s newspaper the Student Idea Vol. 12, No. 8, 1919 list him as one of its graduates, also carries a photo of the ministerial students where he appears along with the other students. That paper states that he had completed his high school work at the Combermere High School in Bridgetown, Barbados, West Indies. Banfield, like Forde, would work in the

Adventist ministry in the U.S. for the rest of his career establishing numerous African American congregations in the Midwest and south. He served as the third Secretary-Treasurer of the Allegheny Conference between 1949-1960.<sup>12</sup>

A review of the student records and other materials for this early period at these schools would be helpful to further determine further details about these and other Caribbean students who attended these Adventist College during these years.

However what can be determined from the available information, is that those Caribbean students who attended Adventist schools during “this pioneering period” appear to be “extremely grateful” for the opportunity to further their education on those campuses and on completion spent the rest of their careers, using their college training to share faith more effectively in support of working to further evangelize the world with the Advent message. Accumulatively just three of these Caribbean students who studied to be Adventist ministers at these colleges, Giddings, 1895-1946, Forde, 1906-1952 and Banfield, 1919-1966 contributed almost one hundred and fifty years of pastoral service to Seventh-day Adventism and the promotion of Adventist Christian education.

### **III. Caribbean Students at Senior Adventist Colleges, 1920-1945**

During the 1920's and until the end of World War II the number of Caribbean Adventist students attending the Adventist colleges appear to have declined significantly from the constant trickle that arrived and studied in the earlier period. While the numbers and percentages were always relatively small there were even less Caribbean students coming for a number of reasons. Sources about these students are particularly slim and sketchy and so they are presently characterized as “silent students.” There is little evidence presently to give them a voice as can be assigned to the two other periods.

The leading reason for the decline of their attendance directly related to the establishment during this period of the three Training Schools that were established in the Caribbean to specifically educate Caribbean Adventist youth where they live. This approach was far more practical and cost effective. Both the East and the West Caribbean Training Schools were organized in Panama and in Trinidad respectively in the 1920's. The third and older school in Jamaica, West Indies College, was relocated to a better location in Mandeville in 1919 from their confines Bog Walk in St. Catherine.<sup>13</sup> During the 1930's the academic offerings improved over



the earlier emphasis on agriculture, farming and trade skills at the two remaining schools now called Caribbean Training College in Trinidad and West Indies College in Jamaica. There was less of a pressing demand to have Adventist youth travel to the colleges in the U.S. to receive an Adventist education beyond high school.

Additionally the effects of the World Depression in the late 1920's and early 1930's further prohibited most opportunities for considerable numbers of Caribbean students to study at these colleges since most came from families of modest financial backgrounds and even had to enter into 'the work study programs' on these Caribbean campuses to support themselves throughout the duration of their studies. At CTC in Trinidad the first twelfth grade graduation was held at the end of the 1934-1935 school year.<sup>14</sup> Most Caribbean students during this period could not afford the cost of travel, tuition and board at these colleges in the U.S.A. Church officials were not in support of sending students who would not desire that option. Attending the Oakwood School where tuition and board cost less was more likely and a small number attended. In Myron F. Wehtje's And There Was Light: A History of South Lancaster Academy, Lancaster Junior College and Atlantic Union College, 1882-1928, he fleetingly mentions the appearance of both African American Caribbean Students on the campus as early as 1895. He further suggests that the AUC had a more cosmopolitan student body than many other Adventist institutions of higher learning during these years. He would also observe that the number of minority students would remain relatively small until the 1950's.

AUC would no doubt have a small percentage of Caribbean students by this period. One of the Caribbean students attending was Philip Eras Giddings, junior, the son of one of the early graduates of Battle Creek College in 1890's whose mother was Louise Peters Giddings of Antigua. She too graduated from the Battle Creek Sanitarium Nursing School in the 1890's and serve as the head teacher of the first Adventist Church school established in Trinidad. Young Giddings was born in Haiti in 1911 where his parents worked for many years. According to his obituary that appeared in the Adventist Review May 10, 1979 Giddings completed his college degree at Atlantic Union College in 1939.<sup>15</sup> However there is no collaborative evidence from the institution's records so far. He would later teach at Oakwood Training School, were more and more Caribbean students who desired to study in North America would be encouraged to study there. The Oakwood Industrial School which opened on November 16, 1896, later called Huntsville Training School and Oakwood Manual Training School was primary established for

African-American Adventist students.<sup>16</sup> Operated by the Adventist Church leaders in the early days it stressed agriculture, carpentry, and blacksmithing—eventually introducing secondary and collegiate class work.

In April of 1917 the North American Division in Council meeting on that campus voted to elevate the Oakwood School to a Junior College level and gradually living conditions and its academic offering improved. However for many years the academic program of at the school was not accredited yet it appeared to be the accepted policy of other North American Adventist colleges during the 1919-1945 period, that all Adventist students of color whether native of international should attend this school. One respondent from Jamaica who attended Atlantic Union College in the mid 1950's remarked in his interview that he had originally applied to attend one of the senior Adventist colleges in California and received a letter from that school informing him that he should not apply to that college but to Oakwood College.<sup>17</sup>

Caribbean Adventist students had been attending Oakwood College since the earliest days of the school's opening. Among the earliest was George Edward Peters of Antigua. Peters was the son of a Moravian teacher-preacher and his entire family became Adventist in the mid 1890's. He migrated to Trinidad and then to Panama and applied from there to attend Oakwood. In 1907 he enrolled at Oakwood Training School and after one year began his church work as an Adventist minister in Alabama. Peters became the first Caribbean born Adventist minister to serve as an officer of the S.D.A. General Conference leadership group. He was elected Head of the Negro Department in late 1929 and early 1930 that supervised the growth of Adventism in the African American communities all across the U.S. Eleven years later, in June 1941, he would return to the position and served ably for twelve years.<sup>18</sup> Peters was well known and highly respected as a leading evangelist, pastor and administrator within all circles of Adventist church leadership. It could be that as uncle of Philip Giddings, Jr., this young man was given the opportunity to attend A.U.C. during this Silent student period. Further investigations will be necessary to further illustrate this point. On the other hand, many other U.S. colleges and universities had for decades been admitting students from the Caribbean on to their campuses to study, graduate and serve the world. Among the most famous was Alexander Hamilton, who became one of America's early leading politicians. He became America's first Secretary of the Treasury. Hamilton was born on the Caribbean island of Nevis and would come to New York city in 1772 and before long apply to Princeton University for admission but would have to settle

for the less prestigious King's College.<sup>19</sup> Other Caribbean students would follow in the nineteenth century, some to religious universities. Alfred University founded in 1836 by the S.D.A. Baptist church in New York State would in 1846 admit its first Caribbean student, Joseph Fulton from Havana, Cuba and four years later its first female international student, Elizabeth Durant of Haiti.

A New England college, Bowdoin College founded in 1794 in the coastal New England town of Brunswick, Maine where future U.S. President Franklin Pierce graduated in the class of 1824, would be one of the earliest American colleges to graduate another Caribbean student. Two years after Pierce's graduation, Bowdoin College would graduate its first Caribbean student, John Brown Russwurm of Jamaica. He had studied and completed his high school training at Hebron Academy in Hebron, Maine. Russwurm enrolled in Bowdoin College in September 1824 and graduated in September 6, 1826.<sup>20</sup> He would become the editor of the first newspaper published by African Americans in the U.S. and would eventually migrate to Africa. He was a very vocal leader and activist within the American Colonization movement.

Decades later yet in the nineteenth century, Caribbean students continued coming to the U.S. to further their education. Howard University in Washington DC graduated its first Caribbean student from Barbados, David Augustus Straker, in 1871 among its first law school graduates and he became an outstanding civil leader during and after the Reconstruction Era and in the early twentieth century.<sup>21</sup> These Caribbean students and many more made outstanding contributions in different areas of American society long before Adventist colleges existed. Caribbean Adventist students would also make their mark as the opportunities presented themselves in a later period as more were able to attend and be exposed the principles and practices of Christian Adventist education in the mid twentieth century.

#### **IV. Caribbean Students at Senior Adventist Colleges, 1946-1954**

An increasing number of Caribbean Adventist College students began to matriculate into America Adventist senior colleges soon after the end of World War II. The majority of these students attended Atlantic Union College, Emmanuel Missionary College (later Andrews University), and Union College. Emmett K. Van de Vere in his narrative of the history of Andrews University during the 1950's made reference to changing nature of the student body during this period.

He wrote “The Emanuel Missionary College student body in 1959 was multiracial and proportionate to most internationally cosmopolitan of any college groups in Michigan.”<sup>22</sup> Van de Vere observed that in a research questionnaire, the college’s alumni responded to 69 percent of those who responded felt that this infusion of international students on the Berrien Spring campus positively fostered “more understanding and acceptance of other nationalities and racial groups” The overall student enrollment at Emmanuel Missionary College had increased significantly after the World War years than before. The Emmanuel Missionary College enrollment had increased from 483 students in the 1943-44 school year, to 507 students during the 1944-1945 and climbed to 590 students during the 1945-1946 school year. Beginning with the 1946-47 school year the enrollment climbed to 975 students, of which 387 were U.S. veterans, while in the 1947-1948 school year there was 1,094 students and 427 were veterans. The student enrollment in 1949-1950 kept climbing to 1,113 students in 1948-1949 school year and 1,119 students in 1949-1950. Van de Vere also pointed out that “about half of these veterans who attended. E.U.C were married”<sup>23</sup> Into this new college environment that included other international as well as African American students, Caribbean students would have to find their way. It would be a new experience for all, not only on this campus but the other campuses under review.

The increased number of Caribbean students attending the senior Adventist colleges was not the result of any strategy by the Emmanuel Missionary College administration or that of any other Adventist senior College’s deliberate plan to have more students from around the world on their campuses. In actuality there were many “push factors” or reasons resulting from the immediate Post World War II conditions that accounted for this sudden influx. Immigration scholars indicate a wide range of “push factors” for the increased Caribbean and other Third World immigrants coming to the U.S. during these years. Caribbean Adventist college students there were other reasons for their interest in attending Adventist senior colleges in North America. First the two Adventist colleges in the Caribbean at Trinidad and Jamaica had improved their academic offerings and achieved junior college status;<sup>24</sup> therefore the logical next step academically for these graduates was to enroll in an Adventist senior college.

For them to attend another senior college not affiliated with the Adventist higher education system would mean that some of their college credits could be reduced. Second, the Adventist junior colleges were increasing their enrollment and graduating rates and so more students than the S.D.A. church in the Caribbean could afford to immediately employ and so many of these graduated sought to continue their education. Third, the very few secular institutions of higher learning in the Caribbean were not inclined to accept these students into their academic programs. The formal post secondary educational programs operating in this region at this time, were in their infancy (including the University of the West Indies beginning in 1948) and were very selective regarding who could enter their limited programs. These secular British West Indian education planners viewed Adventist College education as operating under the American educational system, while they viewed theirs as under the English educational system. Fourth, some students at both Caribbean Adventist colleges were being directly encouraged by their young American instructors to attend the same senior colleges in the U.S. from which the instructors had studied and graduated.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, a number of these students had relatives either in the Caribbean or in the U.S. who were also encouraging them to further their college education in the U.S. and often offered to assist them financially. Some of the respondents to the questionnaire used in this paper pointed out that relatives helped to subsidize their senior college experience on these campuses.

In the attempt to fully understand the perceptions, motivations, and experiences of the Caribbean Adventist College students during the Post World War II period: this study solicited the specific views of Caribbean Adventist students who attended these senior Adventist colleges during this period.

### **Overview of Respondents**

The recollections and perceptions of these Caribbean College students of the late 1940's and mid 1950's are significant for they represented the memory and lasting impressions of bright and ambitious students of over fifty years ago. These twelve respondents represent the voices of many of their peers who are now silenced by death and unable to communicate their own experiences.<sup>26</sup>

Seventy-five percent of the respondents are male and 25 percent are female. They attended Caribbean Training College in Trinidad (now University of South Caribbean) or West Indies College (now Northern Caribbean University) in Jamaica. Roughly ninety percent of them graduated from the North American Senior College and 90 percent would pursue further higher education goals. Eighty percent would remain in the U.S. and select professional careers in a wide variety of occupations in higher education, business administration, medicine, mechanical services, as well as in the Adventist ministry. Some would also return to the Caribbean and work for long periods in Seventh-day Adventist Church work administrators, including Drs. Clarence and Sylvia Barnes; Neville E. Ottley; and Rossalind Loo-Mark. Victor Castello would work in private industry. Over fifty percent would receive extensive academic training and return to the classroom as University professors. Dr. Clarence Barnes, M.A. Howard University, and Ed.D., Wayne State University, would chair the History department at Oakwood College. Dr. Earl Gooding, Ph.D. the University of Connecticut; B. Lit., Oxford University, England; Ph.D. Vanderbilt University and post graduate at University of Moscow taught at Oakwood College (now University) as well at Alabama A & T University for decades. Dr. George C. Simmons, M.A. in English and Constitutional Law, Northwest University, M.A. the University of St. Andrews, Scotland and Ph.D. Harvard University taught at the University of Rochester for decades as well. Dr. Lennox Westney studied and graduated with a Masters from Columbia University, and later studied medicine at Howard University Medical School, and would teach in that Medical School serving for many years as Chairperson of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology until his retirement.

The following respondents attended Atlantic Union College: Dr. Clarence Barnes, Dr. Sylvia Barnes, Victor Costello, Dr. Earl N. Gooding and Dr. Lennox S. Westney, Emmanuel Missionary College: Dr. George C. Simmons, Bertrand Straker and Neville E. Ottley; Union College: Sadie Phillips and Henry Wiseman; Potomac University; Lionel Arthur and Bertrand Straker and Washington Missionary College: Rosalind Loo-Mark.

This small group of respondents in no way represents the wide cross-section of Caribbean Adventist college students who attended these North American Adventist colleges students during the 1946 to 1954 period.

However the comments of these respondents can be viewed as allowing a few voices to be heard on a subject on behalf of a larger group that has not been carefully researched before. There is no present estimate on the actual size of the Caribbean students who attended these institutions between 1946 and 1954. Although almost most of the respondents are retired they still live active lives. One respondent, Neville Ottley recently was passed to his rest on January 25, 2010. Most respondents interviewed for the study live in the Mid-Atlantic area. One lives in New York City, another in Alabama. Three respondents were contacted in the Caribbean. Mrs. Rosalind Loo-Mark in Trinidad and Drs. Clarence and Sylvia Barnes in Jamaica. A fourth respondent Dr. Lennox. S. Westney, published his auto-biography in 2008.. In it he carefully described his almost four years of study and campus experience at two separate intervals as a student at Atlantic Union College during the 1950's.<sup>27</sup>

The questionnaire sought to solicit the perceptions, objectives and achievements of Caribbean Adventist students who attended either one of the six senior Adventist Colleges in North America between 1946 and 1954. The questions asked about their educational and work background prior to attending the senior college in North America. Respondents were specifically asked about the period of attendance, their major areas of study and when they graduated. They were asked about who and what specifically motivated them to attend that specific senior college. They were asked what influenced the selection of their major field of study and about their course work, living and working arrangements. Respondents were asked about the presence of other Caribbean students on campus, and whether as a group they felt that they had contributed to the increasing multi ethnic and international student presence on these campuses. The questionnaire further inquired about whether any teachers, students or administrators were memorable in supporting them. Respondents were asked to recall their most positive experience while they were students, as well as any negative experiences. Finally the questionnaire sought to determine to what extent their college experience at this institution prepared them for the work place, further higher education or to work for either the Church or the wider world community.

Additionally, the researcher used specific chapters from the autobiography of Dr. Lennox S. Westney who wrote extensively about "his college days" at Atlantic Union College and also interviewed him briefly about his college experience.

The researcher sought to have a similar percentage of respondents both males and females, as appeared to be the case for Caribbean students attending the 1946-1954 period. An attempt was made to reach students from a wide cross-section of academic interests, and at least two respondents who attended the same institution.

Most importantly, attempts were made to obtain information from the archival records of each institution to determine the number of Caribbean students who attended those institutions during this period without success. Emails and phone calls were made to staff at each institution, focusing on the Library Services, Alumni Affairs, The Heritage Rooms, and Special Collections requesting general student records information for one or all periods. Annual lists of students attending the institution over the period giving their geographical origins were requested. In some cases the Office of Records & Registration and in another effort the researcher was referred to the institution's Business Office but no information has been received to date. Inquiries to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist's Department of Archives and Office of Statistics resulted in receiving the annual total number of students attending these institutions. Another request to the Center for Adventist Research at Andrews University resulted in the acquisition of very general information to date. One research associate at the University Archives observed that this information could not be easily acquired.

However, this researcher visited the Heritage Room within the Weis Library at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Maryland and reviewed a series of College Bulletins and Commemorative Student Year Books from the 1930's and 1949's that included some information on the geographical origins of students at Washington Missionary College.<sup>28</sup> While this information is not part of the official student records for this institution it demonstrates that student records of this period included their places of geographical origin.

It is important to know that although the respondents completed their college experience over fifty years before they were contacted for this project, the researcher found them to be willing to speak and eager to share their college experiences and were able to recall vividly a number of varying details, including the names of the fellow students. They seemed less sure of the chronology of events than the memories of what, in their view had transpired on the campuses over fifty years ago.

Each respondent was able to vividly recall a number of positive circumstances that led them to attend that senior college at that time. In most cases their recollections included the



numerous challenges they faced as Caribbean junior college graduates seeking to successfully proceed through the application process. Some recall gaining college acceptance letters, make financial and visa arrangements so that they could attend the senior college in the U.S.

While each respondent was personally highly motivated to attend a college in an unfamiliar country, it appears that most were encouraged to attend senior college on account of various Adventist educators and administrators that taught or interacted with them while they attended the junior college in the Caribbean. Bertram Straker of St. Vincent was encouraged to attend an Adventist senior college by relatives already residing in the U.S., and who would heavily subsidized his college experiences for travel, board and tuition. Straker recalls that the Caribbean Training College President A.R. Tucker remarked that while the senior college experience would be an excellent opportunity, he also stated that they would be faced with situations on the campuses that they would not fully understand.<sup>29</sup> All the respondents felt that it was a major achievement that allowed them to attend a senior college in the U.S. in the late 1940's and early 1950's. They understood that most of their peers at the junior college in the Caribbean would not have the same opportunity.

Dr. Lennox S. Westney in his autobiography wrote, "I was never satisfied with the Junior College level education which I had achieved at West Indies College. I had a larger vision and goal".<sup>30</sup> Westney like all the other respondents would excel academically in spite of numerous challenges. He had to major in History, a field in which he had only modest interest, but was not able to take the desired science courses because he needed to work when these courses were being offered. He returned to the AUC campus after being married to take courses he needed for medical school enrollment. He applied and was accepted into Howard University's Medical School, graduated later and became professor and chairperson of the Medical School's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. In October of 1991 Westney led a team that successfully delivered quintuplets, one of the highlights of his medical career. In his autobiography Westney wrote a section entitled "Lessons Learned from My Experiences at Atlantic Union College." In this section, he points out that he learned, "a wide range of life survival skills that could help other students with limited resources, as well as students faced with challenges of surviving in a conservative environment." "I learned that survival is the fabric of life. Chief among the attributes...are persistence, hard work and adaptability."<sup>31</sup>

The majority of respondents also recalled, that in spite of their limited financial resources the college's work-study programs allowed them to study and work their way through college. Two of the respondents, Neville Ottley and George Simmons also recalled that they had acquired technical skills that were needed at their College campus work places. Both recalled that their campus supervisors allowed them to perform the technical tasks that could not be performed by other college students, and that their supervisors requested and received permission to pay them higher wages than the college student co-workers.<sup>32</sup> Others were permitted to work at other manual tasks, some at off campus jobs in local communities ranging from industrial manufacturing work and as security guards to working as orderlies at area mental hospitals.<sup>33</sup>

One female respondent, Rosalind Loo of British Guiana (now Guyana) attended Washington Missionary College in Takoma Park, Maryland and graduated in the class of 1952 with a B.A. in Business Administration, recalls having been employed in the College's Business Office, throughout her stay at the college. She remembers that she was given the opportunity to take time from work to attend classes that conflicted with her work schedule. Rosalind had been a student at Caribbean Training College in Trinidad from the mid 1930's and was the only female member of the three member 1939 twelfth grade graduating class. She recalls being the only Caribbean student attending Washington Missionary College and being able to live off campus with a family in Takoma Park, until her graduation.<sup>34</sup>

All of the respondents demonstrated vivid recall of incidents as well as identifying individuals among the College's faculty and administrators who were particularly kind and thoughtful to them in sharing traditional American holidays and celebrations including Thanksgiving and Christmas. Most of the respondents were also very appreciative of the quality of Christian education that they received on these various campuses. Most felt that their senior college experiences ably prepared them for further graduate education and the work place. However some in the physical sciences (not Westney) and in other related areas felt that they were not adequately prepared to cope with the initial graduate school requirements at secular institutions, and consequently, had to spend as much as a year in remedial preparation for the next level of their studies at those institutions.<sup>35</sup>

All senior college Adventist institutions operating in the U.S. during the late 1940's and early 1950's were located in semi rural areas. Another characteristic of these schools was that most carried as part of their name, the term, "Missionary," while the Caribbean Adventist

students had been educated at training schools in the “mission field.” Both of these characteristics and others represented a world of differences between what transpired on these campuses within the context of Christian Adventist education. Most Caribbean Adventist students assumed that their presence on the U.S. Adventist college campuses would simply mean an accelerated academic program. However they also encountered what can be called a “behavioral cultural divide” that reflected social-cultural practices that were evident in the wider American Society. Most had been informed about it, and shockingly experienced it in their way to the campuses from the Caribbean. Westney arrived by plane from Jamaica in January 1951. He wrote “The trip from Miami to South Lancaster was an eye-opener. Travelling through the Deep South, I learned for the first time that in this country there was a masked difference in the treatment of individuals based on skin color.”<sup>36</sup>

Based on the recollections of the respondents, there seemed to be ‘a distinct cultural divide’ on each of these campuses. On these campuses of the 1940’s and 1950’s some students, teachers and administrators accepted students of cultural and ethnic differences as part of “their Adventist family”. Others did not. There were unwritten rules that sought to make cultural and ethnic distinctions. Therefore housing, and dormitory enclaves were created to accommodate the cultural and ethnic diverse students. It seemed also that many on the colleges’ faculty held lower educational expectations for the culturally diverse students. In some cases some of the students were also actively discouraged from pursuing certain fields of study and professional area of expertise. These students were also routinely offered mostly menial jobs, and their social lives were restricted to students with similar backgrounds.

Without failure respondents indicated that they were at one time or another very concerned about how they were perceived and treated. Most arrived with a “certain naïveté” about this largely unspoken social configuration on their campuses. As time passed most observed social practices that they believed to be unchristian and so they questioned the principles that produced these actions. Many had conversations with students and faculty who did not subscribe to the prevailing practices. However few seemed willing to confront those who enforced these practices. They believed that striving to be exemplary students would be the best approach in dealing with this matter. This was not their homeland. Most Caribbean students of this period did not see themselves as pioneers of change, but as Adventist youth on an Adventist

college campus who had the right to question the reasons for the existing cultural divide that existed.

Some respondents were more active in their approach to the “strange cultural divide” they found on these campuses. Neville E. Ottley of Trinidad who attended Emmanuel Missionary College from 1946-1951 and graduated with a B.S. degree, double majoring in Biology and Chemistry used his pen to seek change. He became well known on campus for his very pleasant smile and golden tenor voice and technical skills in wood work but he also made repeated appointments with teachers, college administrators and church officials about some aspects of campus life as it impacted the culturally diverse students. He wrote a number of letters to church leaders about the EMC’s unspoken cafeteria restricted sitting arrangements that were soon after officially discarded.<sup>37</sup>

Earl N. Gooding, son of an Adventist minister, attended Atlantic Union College in the mid 1950’s and majored in English and graduated with the class of 1957. Gooding was initially recruited from Caribbean Training College by AUC’s President Lawrence M. Stump (1954-1959). Stump was well respected by international students for his deep compassion for as he had served in the Pacific and the Philippines, and was confined by the Japanese during WWII in a POW camp, but later released. One Sabbath at the end of the service Gooding stood in the congregation and publicly condemned the sermon that he believed had humiliated the Caribbean students in attendance.<sup>38</sup> This action was probably the most openly confrontational action that any Caribbean student made and almost resulted in Gooding’s expulsion from the college. President Stump was able to diffuse what appeared to many as inappropriate behavior by one of the college’s Caribbean students. Incidents like these were rare but they were many other attempts by Caribbean students to seek to make these campuses more hospitable to the increasingly multicultural student bodies.

The Caribbean students of the 1946-1954 period differed in many ways from the early Caribbean students on these campuses. One significant difference was the consistent manner in which these larger groups of Caribbean students began to question a number of the social practices of the senior colleges that made conditions less than hospitable for them and other students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The majority of Caribbean students developed friendships with students from all cultural backgrounds. A number of them roomed with students of different ethnic backgrounds. Lennox

Westney, in his autobiography stated, “During my study at Atlantic Union College, I roomed with a white student who was very accommodating and kind to me. He stated that our occupying the same room was a precedent.”<sup>39</sup> Other respondents also recalled the almost pioneering role that they played in quietly seeking change of the socially mandated separation of American students from the international cultural and ethnically different students in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s.

## **Conclusion**

This brief investigation traced the earliest beginnings of Caribbean students attending senior Adventist colleges up to the mid twentieth century. The study shows that a small group of Caribbean Adventist students attended and many cases graduated from the early Adventist schools and colleges, specifically Battle Creek College, the Battle Creek Sanitarium School of Nursing and Medical School in Michigan operated by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg. The study contends that other Caribbean and African Americans not included in this narrative probably and most likely attended these colleges, but that the lack of verification of student records from that period makes it difficult to determine the specific number of students who attended. However, it appears that these students could not be more than a handful at any given time. Some of these early student records at these institutions were most likely destroyed by the famous fires early in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, in spite of their relatively small numbers, the Caribbean students who attended in the early years received the kind of training that prepared them to make a significant contribution to the promotion and pastoral work of the Adventist church both in the Caribbean and the U.S. While the largest number returned to the Caribbean with a clearer understanding and ably supported American missionaries that had encouraged them to attend in the first place, and helped to advance the Church’s work in difficult areas of the Caribbean, others remained in the U.S. where they worked for decades among their African American brothers and sisters.

The senior colleges identified in the study after WWI were Atlantic Union College, Emmanuel Missionary College, Union College and Washington Missionary College, which were the most likely campuses that an even smaller group attended in the 1920’s to mid 1940’s. The inability of the researcher to review institutional student records of the period has made identifying more of these Caribbean students difficult. Of course there are excellent reasons to

support that their numbers were less than the earlier period except at AUC and EMC. The most significant segment of the brief study deals with the perceptions regarding the challenges and triumphs of the surviving Caribbean Adventist students who attended these senior colleges during the period of 1940 to 1954. The dozen respondents interviewed recalled a very important time in their young lives of having the opportunity to study in the U.S. Most of them believe that they contributed positively to the multi cultural and multi-ethnic environment and academic dialogue among students that presently exist on these Adventist campuses in the early twenty first century. The respondents also hold that in most cases their senior college experience on these campuses during the pre-Civil Rights period helped to prepare them to face the demands of a less sheltered Christian environment as they moved into the American work place.

The next stage of this project will be to seek new ways to obtain archival materials from the institutions of higher learning that will shed light on the cultural and ethnic composition of the student bodies during the years 1954. The researcher is aware that many other international students as well as African American students attended these colleges during these years. European, Canadian and Asian students attended most of these schools especially by the third period, 1946-1954. Obtaining student enrollment lists for each school year that included references to the geographical origins of the students may still be likely. Additionally, increasing the pool of respondents for the 1946 to 1954 period would allow for a more insightful analysis of the perceptions and achievements of this group of students. A review of the existing correspondence of some of the American administrators of the Caribbean colleges can also enhance our understanding of the aspirations and achievements of these students.

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<sup>1</sup> “Enrollment Reaches a New High,” Focus: The Andrews University Magazine, Vol. 45, No. 4, Fall 2009, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Some works that deal with this subject within the wider SDA church in the U.S. include: Warren S. Banfield, “Adventists and Race Relations,” Adventist Review, January 1990, pp. 14-18; Delbert W. Baker, “Evangelism Nurtures Growth and Challenges,” Adventist Review, February 25, 1993, pp. 201-2 ; Megan Brauner, “Adventist Evangelist and Civil Rights Advocate E.E. Cleveland Dies,” Adventist News Network, September 1, 2009; Roger L. Dudley, Edwin I. Hernandez, Sara M.K. Terian, “Religiosity and Public Issues Among Seventh-day Adventists,” Review of Religious Research, Vol. 33, No. 4, June 1992, pp. 330-3; Ronald D. Graybill, E.G. White and Church Race Relations, (Washington, D.C. Review and Herald Publishing Association 1970); Bill Knott, “A Journey and a March: Forty Years Ago, These Adventists Put Their Faith on the Front Line of the Civil Rights Movement,” Adventist Review, May 26, 2005, p. \_; Samuel G. London, Jr., Seventh-day Adventists and the Civil Rights Movement, (Jackson, MS, University Press of Mississippi, 2009); Roland J. Hill, “Why King was Not an Adventist,” Spectrum: the Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums, Vol. 24, No. 2, October 1994, pp.12-17;

<sup>3</sup> Franklin Knight, The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 275-301; Elizabeth Wallace, The British Caribbean: From the Decline of Colonization to the End of Federation, (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1977).

<sup>4</sup> Glenn O. Phillips, The Making of a Christian College, Caribbean Union College, 1927-1977, (Port of Spain, Trinidad: The College Press, 1977), pp. 9, 13 ; “West Indies College,” S.D.A. Encyclopedia, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996), p. 867.

<sup>5</sup> Everett N. Dick and George Gibson, Union College, Light Upon the Hill, (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1967, 2004); Meredith Jones Gray, “As We Set Forth, Battle Creek College and Emmanuel Missionary College,” Andrews Heritage, Vol. I, (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002); Emmett K. Van de Vere, The Wisdom Seekers: The Intriguing Story, (Nashville, TN: Southern Press, 1972); Myron F. Wehtje, “And There Was Light: A History of South Lancaster Junior College and Atlantic Union College,” Vol. 1, 1882-1928, (South Lancaster, MA: The Atlantic Press, 1982); Theofield G. Weis, Hail Washington: The Story of a College, (Takoma Park, MD: Washington Missionary College Press, 1945).

<sup>6</sup> The S.D.A. Yearbook 1886, (Battle Creek, Michigan: S.D.A. Publishing Association, 1886), p. 59.

<sup>7</sup> C.B. Sutton, “Philip Giddings,” Inter-America Division Messenger, July 1946, p. 4.

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<sup>8</sup> Wesley Amundsen, The Advent Message in Inter-America, (Takoma Park, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1947), p. 78; The S.D.A. Yearbook 1888, (Battle Creek, MI: S.D.A. Publishing Association, 1888), p. 135; Glenn O. Phillips, Seventh-day Adventists in Barbados, Over a Century of Adventism 1884-1991, (Barbados: Caribbean Graphics and Letchworth Ltd., 1991), p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> "Wilbert Durante Forde," 1791 PC File Roll Number 29, M58, Department of Archives, S.D.A. General Conference Headquarters, Silver Spring, MD; Louis B. Reynolds, We Have Tomorrow, the Story of American Seventh-day Adventists with an African Heritage, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1984), pp. 213-216.

<sup>10</sup> Glenn O. Phillips, "Barbados, Battle Creek Doctor: Charles J. B. Cave 1879-1939," Adventist Heritage, Vol. 5, No. 2, Winter 1978, pp.22-33.

<sup>11</sup> Louis B. Reynolds, *Ibid*, p.139.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 371.

<sup>13</sup> "West Indies College," *Ibid*.

<sup>14</sup> Phillips, The Making of a Christian College, *Ibid*, p. 33.

<sup>15</sup> "Philip Eras Giddings," Adventist Review, May 10, 1979, p. 1

<sup>16</sup> Jacob Justiss, Angels in Ebony, (Toledo, OH: Jet Printing Service, 1975), p. 72.

<sup>17</sup> Clarence Barnes, Telephone Interview, March 14, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Jacob Justiss, *Ibid*, p. 137; Louis B. Reynolds, *Ibid*, p. 121.

<sup>19</sup> Nathan Schachner, Alexander Hamilton, (New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1961), pp. 2, 27-29.

<sup>20</sup> Clarence G. Contee, "John Brown Russworm," Dictionary of American Negro Biography, edited by Rayford W. Logan, p. 538. And Michael R. Winston, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 198), p. 538.

<sup>21</sup> Glenn O. Phillips, "Historically Contextualizing the Morgan State University Experience," presented September 21, 2009, at Carl J. Murphy Fine Arts Center, Morgan State University, Baltimore, MD, p. 3; Glenn O. Phillips, "The Response of a West Indian Activist: D. A. Straker, 1842-1908," The Journal of Negro History, Vol. LXVI, No. 2, Summer 1981, p. 128-139.

<sup>22</sup> Emmett K. Van de Vere, The Wisdom Seekers, *Ibid*, p. 238.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 239.

<sup>24</sup> Phillips, The Making of a Christian College, *Ibid*, p. 45.

<sup>25</sup> Sadie Phillips, Telephone Interview, October 3, 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Lionel R. and Sheila Arthur, Interview in Adelphi, MD, November 10, 2009; Clarence and Sylvia Barnes, Telephone Interview, March 14, 2010; Victor Costello, Telephone Interview, November 18, 2009; Earl N.



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Gooding, Telephone Interview, February 7, 2010; Rosalind Loo-Mark, Telephone Interview, December 6, 2009; Neville and Myra Ottley, Interview in Adelphi, MD, November 10, 2009; Sadie Phillips, Telephone Interview, October 3, 2009; George C. Simmons, Interview in Bowie, MD, December 7, 2009; Bertrand Straker, Telephone Interview, October 25, 2009; Lennox S. Westney, Telephone Interview, November 15, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Lennox S. Westney, The Autobiography of: Just As I Am, Challenged but Confident, (Trafford Publishing, 2008), pp. 53-66, 79-81.

<sup>28</sup> See Student Association of Washington Missionary College, Student Yearbook: Golden Memories, 1952, (Takoma Park, MD: College Press of WMC, 1952).

<sup>29</sup> Bertrand Straker, Telephone Interview, October 25, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Lennox S. Westney, *Ibid*, p. 56.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p. 59.

<sup>32</sup> Neville and Myra Ottley, Interview in Adelphi, MD, November 10, 2009; Bertrand Straker, Telephone Interview, October 25, 2009.

<sup>33</sup> Clarence and Sylvia Barnes, Telephone Interview, March 14, 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Rosalind Loo-Mark, Telephone Interview, December 6, 2009.

<sup>35</sup> George C. Simmons, Interview in Bowie, MD, December 7, 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Lennox S. Westney, Autobiography, p. 62.

<sup>37</sup> Neville and Myra Ottley, Interview in Adelphi, MD, November 10, 2009; Nevilla E. Ottley-Adjahoe, "Obituary of Neville E. Ottley," A Celebration of Life of Neville E. Ottley, February 5, 2010.

<sup>38</sup> Earl N. Gooding, Telephone Interview, February 7, 2007.

<sup>39</sup> Lennox S. Westney, Autobiography, p.56.