

Thomas Hampton
The Integration of Black Students at Asbury Theological Seminary

Abstract:

This article explores the process of racial integration at Asbury Theological Seminary, especially through the lens of its first African American students, who began taking classes in 1958. Of particular importance is the response of the local community in Wilmore and Jessamine County, Kentucky, which was strongly opposed to the move and led to a shooting incident at the Seminary's administration building which made national news at the time. With material drawn from an interview with Rev. Douglass Fitch, one of the first two students to attend the Seminary, it notes how the support of some administrators, Free Methodist students, and E. Stanley Jones all played a role in making this important transition happen, even with some opposing voices on the Board of Trustees. This key aspect of the history of Asbury Theological Seminary is often left as a marginal footnote in official histories, but is here explored in greater detail.



Keywords: Asbury Theological Seminary, integration, Wilmore, Kentucky, Civil Rights

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OF ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Historical Context of Racial Integration as Asbury Seminary

At the time of the Civil War, Jessamine County, was 40% African American, but post-war persecution¹ lowered the number to one-quarter by 1910. As Jim Crow laws intensified, African Americans were squeezed into an underfunded sector of Nicholasville called “Herveytown” on the east side of Nicholasville’s Main Street. With enforced transportation segregation, high poll taxes, and its own gerrymandered congressional district, Black people² with resources continued their exodus, and Jessamine County was 9.2% Black by 1960.³

Located in Jessamine County, Asbury Theological Seminary largely followed the beliefs and practices common to its location in rural Kentucky. When integration of the first African Americans did occur in 1958, communication between school President J.C. McPheeters and the Board confirms the policy change was motivated more by legal pressure than by any stated beliefs in equality or inclusion from the institution’s leadership. Non-Black international students attended the school only a few years after its foundation, but in practice there was clear discrimination in admissions against Black people for much of the Seminary’s history.

Following historian Peter Wallenstein’s thesis that racial integration is not a moment in time but an ongoing process,⁴ this paper constructs a brief history of the struggle for and against integration of Black people within the Asbury Theological Seminary student body, especially leading up to the enrollment of the first African Americans in 1958. For those involved in decision making, racial integration was either deemed an impractical distraction or a vital sign of a healthy community. Opinion would long be divided at the school, though white people in the surrounding Jessamine County community were almost uniformly against it.

An important moment in the desegregation process was a lawsuit filed in 1948 by Louisville NAACP President, Lyman T. Johnson, who had applied and been denied admission by the University of Kentucky.⁵ The lawsuit pitted the 1896 Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which ruled institutions could be segregated if they were “separate but equal”, against the 1904 “Day Law,” which made segregation compulsory in Kentucky schools.⁶ Lyman Johnson’s lawsuit for admission to the University of Kentucky Graduate Schools was made on the grounds that there was not a separate Black institution offering an equal level of graduate education. In April of 1949, federal judge H. Church Ford ruled, “Until the state shall establish a graduate school substantially equal to the graduate school

at the University of Kentucky, it must admit Negroes on the same basis as whites."⁷ This case desegregated the University of Kentucky graduate programs, and that summer somewhere between thirty and forty Black students enrolled in graduate programs for the first time.⁸ Because of their proximity and because both institutions were in the category of graduate programs without a Black equivalent in the state, faculty and administration at Asbury Seminary would have been well aware of what Johnson's lawsuit meant for them.

Just one month later, on May 24, 1949, the seminary faculty voted unanimously to send a pro-integration resolution to J.C. McPheeters, and a student committee expressed the same interest. Explaining the resolution, the faculty wrote:

The Faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary desire to voice their conviction that compulsory segregation, on the basis of color alone, is un-American and un-Christian. They desire to bear witness to their conviction that the doors of this institution should not be closed to any qualified student, simply because of racial ancestry. They feel that the church should give leadership in modifying our community mores.⁹

The resolution further made a theological case for human rights as a "Christian and American political philosophy," specifically saying that evangelicals should prioritize the freedoms of minorities over collectivism because of the identification of God as creator of all people. It stated that rights for minorities was a natural extension of a Christian doctrine of universal human worth. Considering these rights, practical propositions included stating that the Seminary should be a place of equal opportunity, and that the Seminary should publicly stand against compulsory segregation.¹⁰

While faculty were consistent in arguing against compulsory segregation, they were not arguing for full integration either. The resolution also stated, "It is expressly understood that the removal of racial discriminatory legislation does not commit one to advocacy of 'one world, one race, one creed'." And "It is also understood that an encouragement of intermarriage between race does not follow from an advocacy of human rights."¹¹ It was a public statement that would have been non-offensive to the majority of white Americans in 1949. Asbury Seminary was not a leader in integrating Black students; it followed the exact timeline of comparable

institutions in the state of Kentucky. Motivated by the same pressures, 1950 would also be the year a Black student would be admitted to many of the other Kentucky Christian graduate schools: Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, Nazareth College (now Spalding University), and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.¹²

A student committee also wrote in favor of allowing Black students admission to the school, and McPheeters shared it with the Board of Trustees to officially declare that Asbury Seminary would welcome any qualified applicants no matter race or gender.¹³ Most of the Trustees responded affirmatively to this policy, officially announcing "Asbury Theological Seminary does not, within the context of its religious principles, its heritage, its mission and its goals, discriminate on the basis of sex, race, or national or ethnic origin." This was a major step for the Seminary, but it also opened them up to critique.

Some board members remained advocates of racial segregation. One of the most outspoken segregationists on the board was Walter Hudson (W.H.) Butler. First, he argued against integration at all. Once it became a legally necessary path, he tried to delay integration, arguing that the school should not integrate until controversy over the dismissal of a pro-integration professor had died down.¹⁴

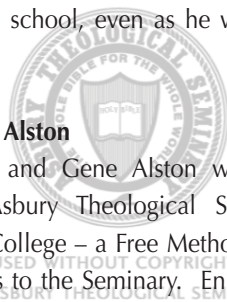
Though President McPheeters would state he was theoretically in favor of integration, he did not believe practical implementation of it was worth the social blowback. He also cited Asbury College and Seminary founder, H.C. Morrison as someone who would be upset by integration if he were still alive.¹⁵ Instead, McPheeters supported a solution in line with *Plessy v. Ferguson's* decision of "separate but equal." McPheeters said, "I would like to have a school like our Seminary at Lexington with a close cooperation between it and the Seminary. This would be the greatest possible opportunity to spread holiness among the Negroes."¹⁶ It was believed that the opposition in Jessamine County would be too strong to resist. Butler thought similarly on this issue, concluding one letter with an appeal to pragmatism, "We can maintain segregation and be just as helpful and Christlike as our Northern opponents. Practically all of the North would feel and act just as we do if they had as many negroes as we have."¹⁷ One sign of Butler's incoherent position was that census data shows the number of Black people in Jessamine County in 1950 was around ten percent - exactly in line with the national average.

In McPheeters's correspondence, it is clear that a major reason the Board had voted to integrate was not goodwill or an intrinsic sense of justice, but fear of a lawsuit if they did not.¹⁸ His position was one which would keep the Seminary free of legal challenges, while *de facto* continuing the practice of segregation. Writing to McPheeters, Butler was clear that though they had made the public statement in alignment with the court order not to discriminate, the school should not accept more Black students than the law required: "You will recall that we passed no formal resolution to admit Negroes but the board voted to leave to the judgment of president McPheeters to admit ONE negro, SPECIFICALLY, the African recommended by Bro. Reid." (Emphasis in original)¹⁹ Butler stated that he consulted with a lawyer who confirmed that admission of the one token African, Shaumba, placed the Seminary with other integrated seminaries without needing to admit others.²⁰

The first Black student to enroll at the Seminary was named Shaumba, an African student hand-picked by Alec Reid, a Methodist missionary on the Board.²¹ I have been unable to find any information about Shaumba's specific experiences at the Seminary, though the way he was selectively admitted, then used to exclude further enrollment of Black people showed a tokenization of Shaumba by the Seminary and conclusively revealed the school's motivations. From a legal protection standpoint, token integration worked for the Seminary, because by admitting one Black student they were no longer considered segregated. In 1956, almost three quarters of Kentucky colleges admitted Black students.²² Asbury College was one of eleven that did not, but Asbury Seminary was listed with the integrated colleges along with all the public colleges.²³ Still, admission of Shaumba was a sign of a small step toward acceptance of African Americans at the school, even as he was used to deflect further criticism on the issue.

Douglass Fitch and Gene Alston

Douglass Fitch and Gene Alston were the first two African Americans to attend Asbury Theological Seminary. Both were top graduates of Greenville College – a Free Methodist school in Illinois with longstanding connections to the Seminary. Enrolling in the Fall of 1958, they immediately faced fierce discrimination. Gene Alston converted to Christianity under the ministry of Julia Shelhammer, a white Free Methodist



Minister who focused on ministry to African Americans in Washington D.C. She helped raise Alston, brought him up in Free Methodist churches,²⁴ and provided him with financial support.

Douglass Fitch, a Pentecostal from inner-city St. Louis, felt called to the pastorate while at a college revival service.²⁵ He applied to Asbury and was accepted with a full scholarship from the Broadhurst foundation.²⁶ Before college, he had little experience in majority white spaces, and for him getting to Asbury Seminary was an intense culture shock, because in his life he had not personally experienced intense racism before.

When he was picked up from the airport by Seminary students and driven to the school, Fitch remembers being dropped off with his luggage in front of the dormitory. As he was unloading his bags, a car of white men pulled up next to him, saying “What in the hell are you doing over on this side of town?”²⁷ Fitch told them he just wanted to get to his building and ran inside with his luggage.

Unsure which room was his and fearing he would be chased, Fitch began knocking on doors, but people either did not answer or closed their doors immediately upon seeing him. Eventually he got up to the third floor, where two students – Gale Buckley and Harold Brown – listened to his story of what had happened and invited him inside. They hid him behind a dresser. The sun was setting, and the late-summer heat was overwhelming.

While he was hidden, the people from the car knocked on each door, asking if they had seen a “colored guy.” Eventually they got to their door and knocked. Buckley answered the door saying, “No, he’s not in here.” But one of the men would not go away. The students could smell alcohol on his breath, and Brown prayed until the man exited.²⁸

Unsure how to respond, they called Dean W. Curry Mavis, to tell him what had happened. Mavis called the police who came quickly. When the police chief saw Fitch he said, “I don’t believe in this integration stuff.”²⁹ Seeing that they would not get much support, and because he did not have a room yet, Buckley and Brown told Fitch to spend the night in the belltower atop the Administration building. He recalls hearing gunshots in the night.³⁰

Things did not get easier for Fitch as he spent time on campus. He stayed with Buckley and Brown for safety whenever he went outside. Though professors all allowed him into the classrooms, many students were far less welcoming. Fitch recalls:

And the interesting thing was, going to class, any class, the white students in the class were unbelievably racist in how they dealt with me as a student and how they dealt with the teachers. They didn't curse the teachers, but they were adamant, they were hostile to any of the professors who even remotely thought my being there, my being present was alright, because the students did not think it was alright. They didn't think the professors even had a right to declare anything good about that. And they challenged every class I went in, they challenged the professors.³¹

When going into the town, Fitch and Alston had to pretend to babble instead of speaking English, because they would be more accepted if the people thought they were foreigners.³² At least once their identity was discovered, and they were chased back to the dormitories.³³ Multiple other forms of harassment have been recorded.³⁴

One form of persecution they faced was a shooting at 3am on September 23rd. Five shotgun blasts came from a passing automobile, with two shots striking the Morrison Administration Building, where Fitch and Alston's rooms were on the top floor. The event was covered widely, most extensively written up in Lexington's *Herald Leader*. The article does not name Douglass Fitch or Gene Alston specifically, but it does say that the first two "negro" students were recently enrolled at the Seminary. The article describes the general attitude of the town as dismissive. "Observers in this little Jessamine County community were practically unanimous in their opinion that the blasts were the latest in a series of 'minor' events aimed at the enrollment of two Negro students in the Methodist-supported seminary, a private institution not supported by public funds."³⁵ The *Jessamine Journal*, which had multiple sections reporting minor crimes and town gossip made no mention of the shooting.

The total lack of local news coverage of the incident in Jessamine County is unsurprising given the code of silence shared by most white people in Jessamine County on the topic of race, though anyone who worked against the apartheid system was severely punished. In the 1950s, all businesses in the area were required to have separate bathrooms for colored people, and public schools remained segregated through the decade. When county superintendent Cornelius Hager held a meeting about integration of the local schools in 1956, a group of between 300 and 500 protested angrily. The Ku Klux Klan burned a cross in the front

lawn of the High School. The school was not integrated, and Hager soon resigned.³⁶

Though not reported locally, fueled by public interest in the topic of school integration,³⁷ news of the shooting appeared in papers far more distant from the Seminary including the *Press-Telegram* in Long Beach, California³⁸ and the *Port Angeles Evening News* in Port Angeles, Washington.³⁹ In conducting research for this paper, I found more than fifty different newspapers that covered the event. Though few remember it today, the shooting was likely one of the most widely covered news events in the Seminary's history.

The Seminary itself was tight-lipped about the issue, declining to discuss it with reporters during the first twenty-four hours except to say that no arrests had been made. Many of the newspaper articles did point out that there were two "Negro" students staying at the Seminary, and because of earlier harassment they had reported, they were clear that the shooting was explicitly motivated by a belief in segregation.⁴⁰

Wilmore Police Chief Kirtley Woolums questioned two people the next day. The two men, about twenty years old,⁴¹ denied being involved in the shooting, but admitted going to the dormitory earlier in the week in a group of five at midnight to see if there were negro students at the Seminary. They stated that they did not chase Fitch or Alston, and their denial of these events is printed in the *Herald*,⁴² while the *Herald-Leader* considered it a confession. It is also notable that Fitch and Alston are named in the follow-up articles, but the five white men who admitted to earlier harassment are kept anonymous. The Seminary's Board of Trustees also questioned one of the men, though they declined to press charges.⁴³

An October 2nd article in the *Lexington Herald* shared that the State Police had given a lie detector test to two Jessamine County men, but they had passed the test.⁴⁴ The investigation would not share any further results after this announcement. The article also said that though other non-white students had attended the Seminary before, "This year was the first time that any qualified Negroes had applied for entrance."⁴⁵

The *Messenger and Inquirer* from Owensboro, Kentucky did not share the names of either the people questioned or Fitch's and Alston's names, but they did disclose their exact location in the final line of the article, "The two Negro students live in a dormitory on the third floor of the administration building, target of the shotgun blasts."⁴⁶ Multiple

other versions of the Associated Press story ran across the country, many disclosing the exact building and floor where Fitch and Alston lived.⁴⁷ If Fitch or Alston had seen the papers, they likely would have feared even more for their safety than they already were.

The international enrollment of the Seminary was frequently used to distract from the specific issue of African American integration. Inclusivity in other areas was highlighted to downplay the violence against Fitch and Alston. Likely a quote from one of the administrators, many news articles reported that students from China, Japan, the Philippines and other countries had previously enrolled “without incident.”⁴⁸ Another article from just a week later titled “Asbury Theological Seminary Students From Many Lands And Of Varied Interests” is a glowing profile from the *Lexington Herald-Leader* highlighting the variety of backgrounds represented at the Seminary. Highlighting the athletic achievements of one student and sharing about another student who used to be a school principal, the *Herald* profile presents an idyllic view of student life. It also shares about Dr. Sam Kamalesan, a veterinarian and singer from India⁴⁹ who would later become Vice President of World Vision International, and he shares his positive experience at the Seminary. While on its face the article is a positive celebration of diversity, written just a week after the shooting while the investigation was still open, the profile redirects attention to the school’s forms of diversity that would be acceptable to most whites in Kentucky without mentioning the African Americans – Fitch and Alston.

Even with the intentional diversions, immediately following the shooting, J.C. McPheeters received letters from donors opposing the Seminary’s integration. Responding to each of the letters, McPheeters said that there had been Black students who had applied before but had been judged academically underqualified.⁵⁰ McPheeters also used the earlier presence of Shaumba as a way of minimizing the importance of allowing African Americans. To assuage the fears of segregationists, McPheeters also wrote in multiple letters assuaging concerned donors, “it is not likely that the Seminary will ever have other than a small group of colored students.”⁵¹

Revival

A major revival led by E. Stanley Jones had been scheduled for October 9th through the 17th,⁵² just two weeks after the shooting. Jones was a well-known missionary to India, and his experiences with the caste system had woken him to the injustices in the United States.⁵³ Jones

personally invited Fitch to the still non-integrated Asbury College (a different institution), across the street, seating him in the front row of the revival.⁵⁴

Fully aware of the opposition to Fitch's presence, near the beginning of the revival Jones pointed directly to Fitch and said he would stop the revival and leave immediately if Fitch could not be present. People had been walking in the aisles full of energy before the pronouncement, but after, Fitch recalls they were especially red in the face. "They were truly disturbed."⁵⁵ He did not know Jones otherwise and was quite worried when this statement was made, but Jones's reputation as a successful missionary – twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize among other accolades – allowed him to make that sort of proclamation without direct confrontation in the moment. He integrated spiritual revival language with social concern informed by his international missionary experiences, and at the conclusion of the revival, despite the internal controversy, over 500 students came to the altar dedicating their lives to Christian service.⁵⁶

Jones spoke of integration's importance – calling civil rights "a God-touched movement" – and describing the evils of racial discrimination as giving fuel to communists and hurting the cause of Christ. Jones did not directly mention other members on the Asbury College Board, but in his public confrontation with racism at the school, he was critiquing the perspective held by a majority of the other Board members.⁵⁷ Still, despite his otherwise successful revival, Jones resigned from the Asbury College Board not long after, citing the segregation of the school in his resignation letter: "I am at a loss to see how missionaries can go to the colored races from Asbury College and represent an institution that segregates colored people."⁵⁸

Post-Script

Dr. Gene Alston was the first African American to graduate from Asbury Theological Seminary, went on to earn a PhD in education,⁵⁹ and remained active in cross-racial ministry in the Free Methodist denomination his whole life.⁶⁰ He worked as a school administrator for twenty-five years, was on the Board of Greenville College, and died in 2005.⁶¹

Rev. Douglass Fitch transferred after two years to Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia. While a student there, he was selected by other students for a debate with Malcom X,⁶² and his later civil rights work with the NAACP, Detroit Industrial Mission, and Congress of Racial Equality bridged the Black Power movement with principles of non-

violence.⁶³ From 1974 to 1987 he worked at the United Methodist Church's headquarters, finishing as Associate General Secretary of the Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, opening Methodist ethnic ministry centers around the country. He then pastored at Downs United Methodist Church in Oakland, California for twelve years. In another ironic twist, Fitch was named the pastor of Glide Memorial United Methodist Church in 1999 – the church McPheeters had first planted in San Francisco. Fitch retired from the church in 2006 and continues to live in California. I am especially grateful for his openness to discussing his experiences at Asbury with me on multiple occasions. He is one of the wisest people I have ever met. He has maintained ethical consistency through trial, and his ministry career is long and distinguished. I hope Asbury Seminary finds a way to adequately recognize him for his important role in the improvement of the school.⁶⁴ The racist practices of the school cannot be undone, but they can be carefully examined with a spirit of repentance.

I want to publicly express optimism that Asbury Seminary could be capable of self-reflection and public confession of specific evils, but this would only happen if the perspectives of the marginalized were prioritized over the input of donors. Confusing these priorities is why segregation was tolerated for so long at Asbury, and it continues leading to bad ethical outcomes.

Regardless of policy at the highest levels of the institution, I also hope that this paper is a starting point for other Asbury students and professors to look at the topic of racism at the school in greater depth. Multiple institutional histories have been written about the Seminary, usually coinciding with the kickoff of major fundraising campaigns, and little has been written about any of the first Black students at the school. Integration and inclusion are continuous processes⁶⁵ guided by internal and external pressure on multiple levels of an institution, and there is still much work to do.

End Notes

¹ For example, the lynching of Thomas Brown on the lawn of the Jessamine County Courthouse in 1902. See upcoming work by David Swartz on this topic and the broader context of Jessamine County.

² I use both the term Black and African American. Black refers to the self-identification of the people group, while African American



is a subset of this, applied to members of the African diaspora who are United States nationals. The two terms have much overlap, though African International students are Black but not African American. In a few quotations, the outmoded 'Negro' is also in quotations, with a definition similar to the use of the term Black today.

³ Most of these statistics were provided to me by David Swartz. I will go back to more direct sources on these later.

⁴ Peter Wallenstein, "Black Southerners and Nonblack Universities: The Process of Desegregating Southern Higher Education, 1935-1965," in *Higher Education and the Civil Rights Movement: White Supremacy, Black Southerners, and College Campuses* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2008), 18.

⁵ John A. Hardin, *Fifty Years of Segregation: Black Higher Education in Kentucky, 1904-1954* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 75-76, https://uknowledge.uky.edu/upk_higher_education/11/.

⁶ The Day Law was a response to Berea College's racial inclusion, because Berea College was the only integrated school in Kentucky at the time it was passed. Berea College was founded by John G. Fee, an abolitionist Presbyterian, and it was financially supported by Methodist Charles Avery. The school's first graduating class included African American troops who had fought in the Civil War, and it continued to be an icon of integration until the Day Law was passed and upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

⁷ "Johnson v. Board of Trustees of University of Kentucky, 83 F. Supp. 707 (E.D. Ky. 1949)," *Justia Law*, accessed August 16, 2021, <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/83/707/1430703/>.

⁸ Mark W. Russell, "Beyond Blue and White: University of Kentucky Presidents and Desegregation, 1941-1987," *Theses and Dissertations - Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation*, 2014, 26, https://uknowledge.uky.edu/epe_etds/18/.

⁹ Faculty memorandum to the Board of Trustees, May 24, 1949. Cited in Kenneth Cain Kinghorn, *The Story of Asbury Theological Seminary* (Wilmore, KY: Emeth Press, 2010), 149.

¹⁰ Claude Thompson, Harold B. Kuhn, et al., "Resolution," 1949.

¹¹ Thompson, Kuhn, et al.

¹² Hardin, *Fifty Years of Segregation: Black Higher Education in Kentucky, 1904-1954*, 130.

¹³ Kinghorn, *The Story of Asbury Theological Seminary*, 149.

¹⁴ Though as described in Kinghorn's "Chapter 7: Campus Conflict" the reason for his dismissal is unclear. W.H. Butler, "Letter to McPheeters to Delay Integration," n.d., Folder 7-8, Asbury Seminary Special Collections.

¹⁵ Butler.

¹⁶ Butler.

¹⁷ Butler.

¹⁸ Butler; W.H. Butler, "Butler to McPheeters on Tax Consideration," n.d., Folder 7-8, Asbury Seminary Special Collections.

¹⁹ W.H. Butler, "W.H. Butler Letter to the Board of Asbury Seminary," May 31, 1951, Folder 7-8, Asbury Seminary Special Collections.

²⁰ Butler, "Butler to McPheeters on Tax Consideration," n.d.

²¹ Kinghorn, *The Story of Asbury Theological Seminary*, 149.

²² "29 of 40 Kentucky Colleges Now Admit Negro Students," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, September 17, 1956, 2.

²³ "29 of 40 Kentucky Colleges Now Admit Negro Students," 2.

²⁴ "The Persistence of Gene Alston," *Free Methodist Connection*, no. January-February (1998): 3-4 Besides her work addressing race in the United States, Shelhamer also started the first telephone suicide hotline.

²⁵ Douglass Fitch, Thomas Hampton Interview of Reverend Douglass Fitch, April 23, 2021.

²⁶ Fitch.

²⁷ Douglass Fitch, Thomas Hampton Interview of Reverend Douglass Fitch, April 23, 2021.

²⁸ Fitch.

²⁹ Fitch.

³⁰ Though the exact date of the gunshots is hard to place. Fitch.

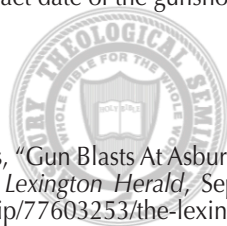
³¹ Fitch.

³² Fitch.

³³ J. Frank Adams, "Gun Blasts At Asbury Seminary Are Blamed On Anti-Integrationists," *The Lexington Herald*, September 24, 1958, <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/77603253/the-lexington-herald/>.

³⁴ Adams; Fitch, Thomas Hampton Interview of Reverend Douglass Fitch.

³⁵ Adams, "Gun Blasts At Asbury Seminary Are Blamed On Anti-Integrationists," 13.



³⁶ W. David Hager, "Changing the Color of Education," n.d., Asbury University Archives.

³⁷ For example, in one California paper, the article about the seminary seems intentionally placed next to an article about Southern state governors trying to figure out how to legally continue segregation after the integration in Little Rock, Arkansas, where court appeals against integration had just been rejected.

³⁸ "Shots Hit Dorm With Negroes," *Press-Telegram*, September 24, 1958, 10.

³⁹ "Shotgun Pellets Pelt Dormitory Housing Negroes," *Port Angeles Evening News*, September 25, 1958, 9.

⁴⁰ Adams, "Gun Blasts At Asbury Seminary Are Blamed On Anti-Integrationists," 13.

⁴¹ "2 Youths Questioned in Shotgun Blasts at School in State," *Messenger and Inquirer*, September 25, 1958.

⁴² "Two Youths Queried But No Charge Filed In Asbury Case," *The Lexington Herald*, September 25, 1958, 20.

⁴³ "Youth Admits Chasing Negro Students; Windows Shot Out," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, September 24, 1958, 19, <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/77604724/>.

⁴⁴ "Lie Test Fails To Establish Guilt In Seminary Shooting," October 2, 1958, 2.

⁴⁵ "Lie Test Fails To Establish Guilt In Seminary Shooting," 2.

⁴⁶ "2 Youths Questioned in Shotgun Blasts at School in State."

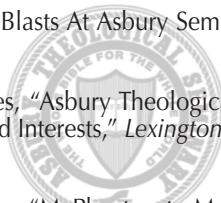
⁴⁷ "Shotgun Blast Inquiry Continues at Asbury Seminary," *The Park City Daily News*, September 25, 1958, 10.

⁴⁸ Adams, "Gun Blasts At Asbury Seminary Are Blamed On Anti-Integrationists."

⁴⁹ Henry C. James, "Asbury Theological Seminary Students From Many Lands And Of Varied Interests," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, October 2, 1958, 5.

⁵⁰ J.C. McPheeters, "McPheeters to Mrs. Geo Seiple," n.d., Folder 7-8 from McPheeters Papers, Asbury Seminary Special Collections.

⁵¹ McPheeters. See also letter to Luther R. Stokes (among others) from same collection.



⁵² "Wilmore Revival Oct. 9-17; Noted Missionary In Charge," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, September 27, 1958, 10, <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/77605477/>.

⁵³ For a fuller story of Jones' transformation and the events at this particular revival meeting see "Chapter 3: Sat Tal 1958" in David R. Swartz, *Facing West: American Evangelicals in an Age of World Christianity* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020); David R. Swartz, "Christ of the American Road: E. Stanley Jones, India, and Civil Rights," *Journal of American Studies* 51, no. Special Issue 3: Exploring the Global History of American Evangelicalism (November 2017): 1117–38.

⁵⁴ It is uncertain if Alston was also there.

⁵⁵ Fitch, Thomas Hampton Interview of Reverend Douglass Fitch.

⁵⁶ Swartz, *Facing West: American Evangelicals in an Age of World Christianity*, 66.

⁵⁷ Swartz, 65–67.

⁵⁸ "Jones to Z.T. Johnson, February 20, 1959 in Box "600 Faculty/Staff: E Stanley Jones Correspondence," Asbury University Archives. Citation from Swartz's *Facing West*, footnote 48.

⁵⁹ Marti Theune, "Camp Historian's Report for Annual Conference 2007" (Peach Orchard Christian Retreat Center: Maryland-Virginia Conference of the Free Methodist Church, 2007), <http://www.redpeninc.com/camp/documents/2007.doc>.

⁶⁰ "The Persistence of Gene Alston," *Free Methodist Connection*, no. January-February (1998): 3–4.

⁶¹ Bethany Forsyth, "Rev. Gene Alston Dies at 68," *Alton Telegraph*, February 6, 2005; Theune, "Camp Historian's Report for Annual Conference 2007."

⁶² Fitch, Thomas Hampton Interview of Reverend Douglass Fitch.

⁶³ This is a wholly inadequate summary of Fitch's thought and work. To learn more, see Say Burgin, "Locating Douglass Fitch: The Roots of Colour and Activist Traditions of United States Critical Whiteness Studies," *Critical Race and Whiteness Studies* 9, no. 1 (2013): 1–13. no. 1 (2013)

⁶⁴ The University of Kentucky recognized Lyman T. Johnson, the man who sued them and opened the graduate school to African Americans, with an honorary Doctorate in 1979. Asbury Seminary awards honorary doctorates to people "whose commitment, scholarship and achievements in leadership for the church and world merit recognition and award." Rev. Fitch certainly meets this criterion.

⁶⁵ Peter Wallenstein, "Black Southerners and Nonblack Universities: The Process of Desegregating Southern Higher Education, 1935-1965," in *Higher Education and the Civil Rights Movement: White Supremacy, Black Southerners, and College Campuses* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2008), 18.

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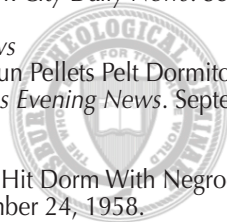
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