

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY



3 2911 04929 5363

INTOLERANCE

Political Animals and Their Prey

Edited by

BRUCE CHILTON AND
ROBERT E. TULLY

DIALOGUES ON SOCIAL ISSUES:
BARD COLLEGE AND WEST POINT

Contents

**Intolerance:
Political Animals and Their Prey**

Edited by Bruce Chilton and Robert E. Tully

SUBEDITED BY NAOMI LACHANCE

DIALOGUES ON SOCIAL ISSUES:
BARD COLLEGE AND WEST POINT

Hamilton Books

Lanham • Boulder • New York • Toronto • Plymouth, UK

Copyright © 2017 by Hamilton Books

4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
Hamilton Books Acquisitions Department (301) 459-3366

Unit A, Whitacre Mews, 26-34 Stannary Street,
London SE11 4AB, United Kingdom


All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017936863

ISBN: 978-0-7618-6917-7 (cloth : alk. paper)—ISBN: 978-0-7618-6915-3 (pbk : alk. paper)—ISBN: 978-0-7618-6916-0 (electronic)

™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Contents

Introduction <i>Bruce Chilton</i>	v
I: Warfare	1
Barbarians at the Gates: The Complexities, Contradictions and Concerns about Modern Asymmetrical Warfare <i>David Wallace and Cynthia Marshall</i>	3
Walzer <i>Contra</i> Walzer: Uncovering the Pluralist Roots of Walzer's Just War Theory <i>Graham Parsons</i>	19
The Hegemon's Dilemma: Power Intolerance from Ancient Athens to the United States of America <i>Scott A. Silverstone</i>	33
Means and Methods of Warfare: Towards an Objective Assessment for Selecting Military Targets—Beyond 'Enemy Thinking'? <i>Mirjam de Bruin</i>	49
II: Internal Divisions	67
From Slavery to Black Power: Racial Intolerance at West Point, 1778–2015 <i>Ty Seidule</i>	69
All Men Are Created Equal: Misogyny under Law <i>Maritza Ryan</i>	89

III: Religious Intolerance	107
On Religious (in)Tolerance <i>Nelly Lahoud</i>	109
Theological Complicity in Religious Violence <i>Ellen T. Charry</i>	119
“And who is my neighbor?”: American Liberators in Transnational Context <i>Stephen F. Barker</i>	129
Poisoned Virtue: Child Sacrifice in Abrahamic Scriptures and Interpretation <i>Bruce Chilton</i>	147
Plagues and Politics: Epidemics and “Re-Framing” in Modern American History <i>Andrew J. Forney</i>	173
IV: Political and Philosophical Considerations	191
Residue of Intolerance: Polluting Civil Rights <i>Robert J. Goldstein</i>	193
Cynicism and Perennial Intolerance: Mendelssohn against the Decisionists <i>Dustin Atlas</i>	211
Overcoming Modernity and Violence <i>Gennady Shkliarevsky</i>	225
Contrariety in Philosophy <i>R.E. Tully</i>	241
Who Takes Whom to Tango: UN Neoliberal Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone <i>Darya Pushkina and Philippe Ch.-A. Guillot with Susanna An</i>	259
Epilogue: A Taxonomy of Intolerance <i>R. E. Tully</i>	283
Index	291
List of Contributors	309

From Slavery to Black Power

Racial Intolerance at West Point, 1778–2015

Ty Seidule

The United States Military Academy, like most American institutions, has a long history of intolerance. No chapter, no book could adequately describe a subject as large and multi-faceted as intolerance at an institution as old as West Point. Yet, even a cursory glance at episodes of intolerance in West Point's long history can help illuminate the subject. Racial intolerance predates the founding of the Military Academy in 1802. This is no surprise. Slavery is America's original sin, going back to the earliest gatherings of Europeans in the New World. While "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" provide a clarion call of tolerance in the Declaration of Independence, in practice, slavery gave the lie to soaring words.

The U.S. Constitution did not mention human bondage, yet it counted African American slaves as three-fifths of a human. For much of West Point's history, intolerance, especially racial intolerance, mirrored the American experience. Yet, cataloguing the practice of intolerance is important for an institution that needs clear thinking for its graduates, not self-congratulatory platitudes. While the prevalence of intolerance at West Point was and remains too high, the historical record shows clearly that when cadets and faculty act against intolerance, they can have a dramatic effect. In 1971, African American cadets demanded and achieved a dramatic increase in racial tolerance very quickly. While the Military Academy has had two centuries of intolerance, that does not preordain what will happen during its third century.

SLAVERY AT WEST POINT, 1778–1802

The story of racial intolerance at West Point begins before the United States Military Academy was founded in 1802. During the American Revolution, General George Washington called West Point the “key to the continent.” He ordered his engineers to create a formidable defensive position to prevent the British from moving north from their perch in New York City and taking the Hudson Valley, thus cutting the New England colonies from the Mid-Atlantic and Southern States.¹

Washington, one of the greatest military leaders in American history, occupies a special place at West Point. In 1783, he wrote a letter to Alexander Hamilton arguing for the creation of a military academy to prepare professionals for the rigors of combat leadership.² Today, West Point recognizes him throughout the campus. The mess hall, which hosts all 4,400 cadets for dinner on special occasions, is named after Washington. Outside its steps stands an impressive statue of Washington on horseback. As the cadets march through the barrack’s sally ports and onto the plain during their dress parades, they pass Washington’s statue and he seems to beckon them forward into battle.

Despite Washington’s importance to the future United States Military Academy, there is only one painting of him at West Point. Jonathan Trumbull, an aide to Washington in 1776 and 1777, painted a portrait of the general with West Point in the background. Trumbull was studying in London in 1780 and painted the general from memory. Trumbull’s painting was one of the first portraits of Washington seen in Europe and it was copied widely. Trumbull’s Washington looks resplendent, wearing the uniform he picked for the Continental Army, blue and buff, the same blue that the U.S. Army wears to this day. Washington points toward West Point, while the American flag flutters high above Fort Putnam. Trumbull depicted the general with fortification plans in his hands, highlighting his genius as a strategist. With his sunburned face, Trumbull’s Washington was no pampered politician or armchair general. He was the leader of the Continental Army on campaign, sharing hardship and danger with his soldiers.³

Yet, there is more to this picture. To Washington’s left, his horse Nelson grazes contentedly. Holding the horse and looking at the general with admiration is Washington’s enlisted aide, William Lee – a slave. The only painting of Washington at West Point includes an enslaved human being. Washington purchased Lee for 61 pounds, 15 shillings in 1768. In Washington’s property book, he is identified as Mulatto Will, meaning that William Lee probably had a white father. Washington owned slaves for his entire life. At his death, the Washington estate listed as property 59 adults and 28 children. 83% of the adult male slaves were married to women who did not live at

Washington's Mansion House Farm. White slavemasters could and regularly did break families up by selling humans for profit.⁴

We know more about William Lee than about any other slave in the 18th century, because he accompanied Washington to every battle of the Revolutionary War. Lee was a "stout active man" and a superb horseman. Lee fixed Washington's hair each morning and slept outside his room every evening. We know that Lee carried Washington's telescope into battle. We know that Washington entrusted his slave with his most "precious papers." Washington freed Lee in his will and provided him with a yearly pension of thirty dollars for "his faithful services during the Revolutionary War." One veteran of the war called Lee the "faithful companion of his military years."⁵

Lee fought to create the country that enslaved him. The Continental Army veteran remained in bondage until Washington's death in 1799. After the general's death, veterans of Washington's campaigns would visit Mount Vernon to see Lee and reminisce about the war until his death in 1828. If Lee had been white, there would be towns and streets throughout the country named for him. Throughout the 19th century, Washington was seen as enlightened for freeing one slave upon his death. Yet throughout his life, Washington owned slaves and in one case went to great lengths to recover a runaway slave. In Philadelphia, he lied to make sure the slaves he brought there would not be freed under the laws of that state.⁶

SLAVERY AT WEST POINT, 1802-1861

William Lee was not the last slave at West Point. White officers had slaves at West Point until 1861, long after it was illegal in New York to own slaves. Scholar Walt Bachman has done groundbreaking work documenting the extent of slave owning among officers in the ante-bellum period. Few, if any, army officers mention that they owned slaves during this period. Because of the paucity of records, no history of West Point mentions slavery or any African Americans at West Point until black cadets arrived in the 1870s. Bachman, however, found an ingenious way to find black slaves and servants at West Point and throughout the army. He looked at tens of thousands of pay records in the National Archives. During the ante-bellum period, the army provided up to 30% extra pay for officers with servants. The Federal Government subsidized slavery for army officers even in states that had long since outlawed the practice. Therefore, every officer had a financial incentive to have slaves who were, of course, much cheaper than servants.⁷

Bachman's exhaustive research points to a large community of slaves and servants at West Point from 1802 through 1861. Sylvanus Thayer, called the father of the Military Academy, had several black servants, as did Dennis Hart Mahan and all of the senior professors. Or were they slaves? The pay

stubs make it difficult to determine slave from servant. Each line from the pay stub lists the name of the servant, their skin color, and height. The description of skin color included, "light, mulatto, dark, and very dark."⁸

Officers often claimed the same servants and slaves on their pay records. Because each servant represented such a drastic pay increase, officers had an incentive to list as many as possible. Officers routinely "shared" servants, allowing multiple officers to reap the financial benefit without actually paying a servant or buying a slave. The practice was illegal but widely used by officers in the ante-bellum period. Although officers would gain a huge monetary advantage, there is no indication that African American servants saw additional money. Much of the domestic life of West Point depended on work done by black servants and slaves, yet no record remains of their lives.

THE CIVIL WAR AT WEST POINT, 1860-1865

Starting in the 1850s, West Point saw the same sectionalism based on slavery that affected the rest of the country. The Military Academy had always served as a national academy, helping to bridge sectional difference, but as the rest of the country moved toward conflict, so too did West Point. J.E.B. Stuart had praised the nationalizing influence of the Academy, saying that at West Point there was no north or south. By 1860, however, southern cadets had started an intimidation campaign against any cadets they thought supported Abraham Lincoln's Republican Party. As the 1860 campaign for president neared a vote, southern cadets held a straw poll, threatening anyone who supported Lincoln. Cadet Morris Schaff wrote later that it took more courage to vote for Lincoln at West Point than it did to face Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg. He would know. Schaff fought for the Union at that bloody battle.⁹

Intolerance at West Point extended not only to African Americans but also to those who championed their freedom. Few cadets openly advocated for the abolition of slavery prior to the Civil War. Avowed abolitionists were "cut" or "silenced," meaning that the rest of the corps of cadets would talk to them only if duty required. This practice was ordinarily directed at cadets whose behavior was considered ungentlemanly. The punishment was harsh indeed. In a place as isolated as West Point, with mountains to the north, south, and west, and the Hudson River to the east, there were few, if any, diversions other than the company of other cadets.

Many cadets silenced and hazed Emory Upton for his abolitionist beliefs. Upton had spent a year at Oberlin College in Ohio, the first college in the country to integrate. A cadet from South Carolina, Wade Hampton Gibbes, accused Upton of having sex with a black woman while at Oberlin. In the mid-19th century, accusing anyone publicly of having sex, much less with an

African American woman, was a grave affront. Gibbes would later resign from West Point, joining the Confederate Army and firing one of the first shots of the Civil War at Union forces inside Fort Sumter, South Carolina. Upton challenged the much larger Gibbes to a fight. As the cadets dueled with bayonets, the rest of the cadets eagerly cheered them on. Upton held his own, but would sport a five-inch scar from his ear to his lower jaw for the rest of his life.¹⁰

The U.S. Senate also saw West Point as a bastion of racial intolerance. In a number of speeches on the floor of the U.S. Senate, Republicans denounced the Military Academy in the most strident language. Senator Benjamin Wade from Ohio argued that "the evil tendencies" at West Point came from its support for slavery. Senator James H. Lane from Kansas decried West Point's "pernicious pro-slavery influence . . . in every department of the Government." If the Union were to perish, said Lane, the "epitaph will be 'died of West Point pro-slaveryism.'"¹¹ With more than a hundred cadets and graduates leaving West Point and the army to fight for the Confederacy, they had a point. The greatest leaders of the Confederacy were all West Point graduates, including President Jefferson Davis and almost all of the senior commanders. In the early years of the Civil War, the West Point graduates fighting against the United States, such as Robert E. Lee, James Longstreet, and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson were more successful in the Eastern Theater than their hapless Union counterparts. The unsuccessful West Pointers fighting for the Union, such as George McClellan, Ambrose Burnside, and Joseph Hooker, added to the feeling that the best Academy graduates were on the Confederate side.

Cadets' and graduates' pro-slavery feelings, combined with defections to the Confederate Army, created the greatest crisis in the Military Academy's history. In 1861 and 1863, the Senate voted on bills to shutter West Point by stopping all appropriations.¹² While both bills failed, they rattled West Point's leaders, who feared for the Academy's continued existence. After 1863, superb West Point graduates such as Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, and Philip Sheridan led the Union to victory and changed the minds of many who had condemned West Point early in the war.

INTOLERANCE AT WEST POINT, 1865-1902

West Point basked in the afterglow of a tremendous victory led by Academy graduates. The U.S. Army struggled to translate victory over the South into economic and social gains by the recently freed African Americans. Nearly 200,000 black soldiers served in the U.S. Army, with almost 40,000 dying for the Union cause. Few, however, served as officers. By 1869, only four segregated black regiments remained in the Regular Army: the 24th and 25th Infan-

try Regiments, and the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments who later became the famed Buffalo Soldiers. But the army did not allow any black Regular Army officers. Sending an African American to West Point would seed the army with black Regulars who would not only stay in the army for a career but might also lead white troops.

After the Civil War, Congressman Benjamin Butler from Massachusetts sought to appoint an African American to West Point. Butler served as a general in the Union army. While his competence as an army officer was low, his political skills were much stronger. Butler first used runaway slaves in the army, calling them "contrabands" of war. His embrace of black soldiers led to their later widespread use in the Union Army. As an officer, however, Butler had little regard for Academy graduates. In his memoirs he wrote, "The less of West Point a man has the more successful he will be." Butler argued that Ulysses S. Grant was successful, "because he was less like a West Point Man than any officer I ever knew." Butler found several young African American men to appoint, as did other members of Congress from 1870–1887. During this period, twenty-three black men received nominations to the Military Academy, eleven passed the nomination examination, but only three, Henry O. Flipper, John Alexander, and Charles Young graduated.¹³

West Point cadets and faculty subjected all African American cadets to virulent racism that featured both mental and physical abuse. The first two cadets, James W. Smith and Henry O. Flipper, took different approaches to the abuse. Some historians have blamed Smith, unfairly, for not accepting abuse quietly. Smith demanded equal treatment and protested to leaders inside and outside the Academy when he received abuse. He wrote a series of letters to newspapers detailing his treatment. President Grant changed the results of a court-martial for Smith, turning him back a year rather than accepting the verdict of expulsion. For demanding equal treatment, Captain George Andrew wrote that Smith was the "worst selection" for the first African American cadet, accusing him of being malicious, vindictive and untruthful.¹⁴

The criticisms of Smith smack of a double standard that historians of West Point have been too willing to accept. Some older histories of the Academy, like Stephen Ambrose's *Duty Honor Country*, seem to blame Smith for not being docile. As though a black cadet in the 19th century should not demand equal treatment. What were Smith's alternatives? One cadet dropped a full slop bucket (filled with human urine and feces) on his head.¹⁵

Nor were the faculty much better. Professor Peter Michie was the leader of the post-war West Point faculty. A decorated Civil War hero and a Republican, he nonetheless hated having African Americans at West Point, questioning if West Point was the right place to "solve the problem of social equality of the races."¹⁶ Michie believed that black cadets at West Point

contributed to ill-discipline and he approved of their silencing and ostracism. Michie wrote that black cadets "all displayed a marked deficiency in deductive reasoning."¹⁷ He failed Smith in Natural and Experimental Philosophy (Physics) after a private examination for which Smith received no actual results and then Michie denied him a retest, both unusual practices at West Point at the time. Nor was Smith a marginal cadet. After his second year, he ranked fifteenth out of fifty-nine academically in his class. The evidence points to Michie railroading Smith out of West Point because of his race, and because Smith would not accept abuse. In a series of letters to the *New National Era and Citizen* after his expulsion, Smith detailed his severe mistreatment and mounted an effective defense of his academic performance.¹⁸

The seventh African American appointed and the fourth to enter, Henry O. Flipper, was the first to graduate. He tried his best to accept the institutional racism and abuse without complaint. Despite his ability to accept the insults and cruelty of cadets, Flipper remained completely isolated during his four years – "silenced" in West Point parlance – the target of a form of vigilantism by fellow cadets who felt he disgraced the Academy. No one spoke to the cadet outside the classroom or during official duties. As part of his silencing, Flipper ate alone, slept alone, and had no human-to-human contact for the majority of his four year experience. Yet in his memoirs, he tried to rationalize the cadets' malice, arguing that the majority would have liked to treat him as gentleman but that the "lowest classes," the "uncouth," held sway over the rest of the cadets. His memoirs are heartbreaking to read, as he tried desperately to make sense of his experience as the victim of unvarnished racism. He could not accept that the vast majority of West Point cadets and faculty hated him for no other reason than the color of his skin.¹⁹

Today, the Academy rightly recognizes Henry Flipper for his tremendous accomplishment as the first black graduate. Since the early 1970s, West Point has celebrated him in a host of ways: the annual Flipper Dinner and Award, the Flipper bust, and a small picture in the West Point Museum. Too often, however, the racism and abuse that makes his graduation such an incredible achievement are omitted from his story. Only by understanding the intolerance experienced by Flipper and Smith can we understand their courage.

Yet their treatment at West Point seems tame compared to the pressure experienced by Cadet Johnson Whittaker. Whittaker entered West Point in 1876 and roomed with Flipper for a year. When Flipper graduated, Whittaker remained the only black cadet, and the torture of emotional isolation wore on him. He wrote in a letter to Lieutenant Flipper, "Sadness creeps over me, for I am all alone." Whittaker attempted to emulate Flipper's approach of meeting abuse with silence. However, when a white classmate from Alabama hit him, Whittaker told the Academy's leadership of the assault, infuriating his fellow cadets. Again, the double standard of intolerance was the rule. White

cadets would tolerate African American cadets' existence at West Point only when they accepted "their place".

Whittaker received a note warning him to stay awake at night because cadets had targeted him for retribution. On the morning of April 6, 1880, Whittaker missed morning reveille formation. The officer-in-charge Major Alexander Piper sent the cadet officer of the day George Burnett to see if Whittaker had overslept. Burnett found him gagged and trussed, like an animal, his ear and scalp cut by a straight razor, his bible burned.²⁰

Racism so blinded West Point's leaders that they could not imagine that Whittaker's fellow cadets could plan and execute so horrific an assault. If white cadets could not hurt Whittaker, then perverse racial logic demanded that the only one who could have done this terrible deed was the black cadet himself. West Point's officers accused Whittaker of self-mutilation. They said he had bound and cut himself to garner sympathy. Defensive about external criticism, Academy leaders thought a black cadet attacked himself to aid the enemies of West Point.

Although the charges were ludicrous, the Superintendent John M. Schofield ordered Whittaker court-martialed. The case was flimsy, resting on prejudice and wrongful assumptions. No inventory was taken of the room, which was cleaned before all the evidence was collected. The doctor botched the physical examination of Whittaker after the assault. The investigation was incomplete. Whittaker was nevertheless found guilty. Eventually, after an outcry in the national press, a presidential pardon cleared Whittaker.²¹ He returned to the Military Academy briefly, but a faculty member failed him after a chemistry exam and he left the next day. The Whittaker case, the most publicized court martial between the end of the Civil War and World War I, showed the systemic and institutional racism at West Point.

Professor Michie and his colleagues at West Point saw a different victim in this case – the Academy's reputation, which Whittaker tried to slander. Many historians have concluded that Whittaker had bound and cut himself or that the evidence was unclear. Yet, Senator Daniel Voorhees, a Democrat from Indiana, had it right when he called for an outside investigation of West Point because of "brutality and barbarism" at the Academy.²²

AFRICAN AMERICANS AT WEST POINT, 1890–1948

No African American graduated between 1890 and 1936 during the awful years of legal segregation and white terror called Jim Crow. At the end of Reconstruction in 1877, when the U.S. Army left the South, the gains made by freedman slowly eroded. Starting in 1890, the year after Charles Young left West Point, the last black graduate for 47 years, southern states began to amend their constitutions to limit the voting rights of African Americans.

Black participation in political life dropped to nearly zero as poll taxes, literacy tests, and other requirements first stripped African Americans of the vote and then from serving on juries or running for office. With no participation in politics, black schools and libraries, all segregated, became vastly underfunded. White terrorism served to enforce and expand the laws.

The election of 1912 saw almost no African American voters in the South, yet almost all white voters participated through grandfather clauses meant to include them and exclude black voters. Woodrow Wilson, the first Democrat elected president in fifteen years and the first southern-born president in fifty years, moved to segregate the federal work place. He appointed segregationist southerners and enforced Jim Crow laws throughout the government. In 1913, in a speech at Gettysburg for the 50th anniversary of that battle, Wilson removed all discussion of the purpose of the Civil War: to eliminate slavery. As the historian David Blight noted, the 1913 Gettysburg meeting, "was a Jim Crow reunion, and white supremacy might be said to have been the silent, invisible master of ceremonies."²³

West Point and the Army reflected the commander-in-chief who demanded a completely segregated world, using law and terrorism to enforce it. Reading through the *Howitzer*, West Point's yearbook, is to see those terrible times in stark relief. The 100th Night Show was (and remains) a play written, directed, and acted by the graduating class of cadets celebrating and mocking their time at West Point. Performed with roughly 100 days left at the Academy, the play reflects both cadet experience and the wider world. The show always merits pictures and commentary in the *Howitzer*. Cadets painted in blackface and using racist language were prevalent for at least fifty years. While the worst examples occurred before World War II, even the class of 1953 featured cadets in blackface, despite the three African American cadets in that class. Intolerance is especially easy when a persecuted group is absent or present in vanishingly small numbers.²⁴

No African American cadets graduated from West Point during Jim Crow, the period that included the worst examples of white terrorism in the United States since the Civil War. In 1932, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. entered the Military Academy after two years of college at the University of Chicago. Davis' father was the only black Regular Army officer on active duty. At first, when Davis entered West Point, he found a few friendly faces willing to talk to him. One night, however, he heard a rap on his door and saw many cadets tromping to the latrines. There, the cadets asked what they should do about the African American cadet, though in far more racist language. Davis, realizing that they were discussing him, quickly stole back to his room. The cadets had decided to silence Davis. No one roomed with him. No one talked to him at meals. No one showed him even the slightest human decency. The silencing over the course of four years was emotional torture at the isolated West Point. Yet Davis refused to give in. As he later remarked in his auto-

biography, it would take more than silence to force him out. When he graduated, Davis hoped to become a pilot. The Army Air Corps refused his application despite Davis' high marks at West Point, because there were no segregated flying units for black pilots. Under no circumstances would the Army allow a black officer to command white troops or, especially, to command white officers.²⁵

Davis was the fourth African American to graduate and the first in the 20th century. The next several African Americans had even worse experiences than Davis. Silencing continued. One white cadet said he was "advised to refrain from speaking to him (an African American cadet) and we were threatened with ostracism ourselves." Racism at West Point was institution-wide, not merely limited to a few rogue cadets. While silencing was bad, the graduates in the 1940s were subjected to more physical forms of punishment. Minton Francis, who graduated in 1944, later told a historian and his children that he was always the best-dressed cadet in uniform, maintaining a mirror polish on his shoes and wearing pants so heavily starched, they stood at attention by themselves. Francis, who roomed alone, would stand on his cot and ease himself into the pants to ensure he maintained the crease with no wrinkle. The other cadets knew he waited until the call out for formation to dress. As he put on his pants before one parade, he noticed that a cadet had defecated in his shoes. He could only dump the excrement out without enough time to thoroughly wash his shoes. When he lined up for formation, a cadet cruelly called out, "Why do Niggers stink?"²⁶

The abuse heaped on Francis took many forms. White cadets routinely interrupted his study and sleep time in an attempt to hurt his academic standing. A lieutenant colonel named Samuels conducted thirty-minute interviews daily over two weeks to try to prove Francis unstable. Others accused him of taking money from the NAACP as a bribe to stay at West Point. Years later, Francis looked longingly at the isolation Benjamin Davis endured: "Although I have great empathy for Ben Davis's isolation, I am convinced that I would have thrived and prospered under such circumstances."

While cadets were the cruelest, the faculty maintained an unacceptable level of intolerance as well. None of the cadets in the 1930s and 1940s ever visited a faculty home while nearly all white cadets found invitations. About James Fowler, who graduated in 1941, one white cadet remarked: "Even we could distinguish between our treatment and that reserved for 'Mister Fowler'"²⁷ The commandant sent a letter to one black cadet, probably Fowler, telling him not to come to his house, despite the fact that his entire class was invited. Then the commandant told him not to go to the hop (dance) that followed the open house for fear of embarrassing himself.²⁸

THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA AT WEST POINT, 1948–1971

In July 1948, President Truman signed Executive Order 9981, which ordered the “the equality of treatment in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin.” The president wanted the order implemented immediately, but the armed services, except for the Air Force, refused to act. The first Secretary of the Army, Kenneth Royal, a North Carolinian, refused to implement desegregation, and Truman fired him. The next Secretary of the Army, Gordon Gray, who was another North Carolinian, slow-rolled desegregation, doing just enough to keep his job. As a result, the Army did not desegregate its units until the high casualties suffered during the Korean War forced the army to act. However, the Korean War ended before the barracks at West Point desegregated. The three black cadets in the Class of 1953 roomed together in Company G2 for all four years, despite their protests.²⁹

After the Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that separate was not equal in the famed court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, West Point desegregated its barracks, but racism continued. No class had more than a few African Americans. The Class of 1951 called themselves the “Black Class,” because they had four African Americans.³⁰ Campbell Johnson was a member of the Class of 1965. When he entered in the fall of 1961, he had the misfortune of joining M Company in the First Regiment of the Corps of Cadets. Company M1 had a group that called themselves the Alabama Klan. They conspired to run Campbell Johnson out of the Academy. Joseph Anderson was also a member of the Class of 1965. A star student, athlete, and a natural leader, the Academy gave Anderson prime leadership roles as a plebe (freshman). However, when the superintendent and commandant chose the leadership when Anderson was a senior, he was not selected for any position. Anderson and his classmates felt the decision was part of a pattern of institutional racism.³¹

In the nearly 100 years since the first African American cadet came to West Point in 1869, only sixty-eight black cadets had graduated. During the 1950s and 1960s, no more than twenty cadets attended West Point at any one time (all four classes included). At no time in the Academy’s history before 1968 did the percentage of African Americans reach 1%. Most big changes at West Point come from outside pressure. The vast changes in Civil Rights throughout the country finally started to affect West Point. In 1968, the Assistant Secretary of Defense asked all the service academies to report minority, especially African American, enrollment. In response, the Military Academy created the Equal Admissions Program with one black officer called the Equal Opportunity Admissions Officer.

Even with such a small effort, the effect was immediate. The Class of 1971 had only four black graduates. The Class of 1973 admitted forty-four African Americans. By the fall of 1971, there were more black cadets than

there had been in the previous hundred years combined. The issues of tolerance that hurt black cadets – Confederate symbols, racist language, and segregation – now could be addressed, not by West Point's leadership, but by African American cadets.

BLACK POWER AT WEST POINT, 1971–1976

The heyday of the 1968 and 1969 Black Power demonstrations went largely unnoticed at West Point. The United States Military Academy, the nation's premier college for educating future army officers, saw no protests in those years. In fact, when African American cadets were interviewed in 1969, they were asked if they expected to protest either educational or military policy. They said no. Two years later, however, black cadets at West Point organized quickly, protested dramatically, and forced a conservative institution to change. At no other time in the Military Academy's 200-year history have cadets protested so vehemently or so effectively. Ironically, the impetus for change came from the very top. The commander-in-chief, President Richard Nixon, sparked the cadets to action.³²

On May 27, 1971, on a beautiful late spring day in New York's Hudson Valley, President Nixon visited West Point. After a speech and a parade, the superintendent, Major General William Knowlton took the president to Battle Monument, which lists the names of the Union Regular Army casualties from the Civil War. Dedicated in 1897, the monument honors those who "freed a race and welded a nation."³³ Just back from a trip to Alabama, Nixon asked the MG Knowlton if he could see the Confederate monument. Knowlton told Nixon that West Point memorialized only those who fought for the nation, not against it. Nixon scoffed and told Knowlton that he needed a Confederate monument.³⁴

Back at the White House, Nixon sent a letter to Knowlton ordering the superintendent to create a monument to "West Pointers who lost their lives serving on the Southern side."³⁵ To track the Military Academy's progress, Nixon assigned the project to the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Brigadier General Alexander M. Haig, a 1947 graduate of West Point who had a reputation as the most political of generals, and as a man who knew how to use power aggressively.³⁶

Knowlton, presciently, worried about the "black cadets and graduates reaction" to such a blatantly racist monument. West Point was trying to increase the number of minority cadets to overcome the school's dismal record of African American admissions. Knowlton knew that the negative publicity surrounding a Confederate monument would devastate the Academy's recruitment efforts.³⁷ The year following the creation of the Equal Admissions Office, West Point had admitted forty-four African American

cadets in 1969, far more than the four admitted in 1967.³⁸ By the fall of 1971, 119 black cadets were attending the Military Academy.³⁹

Only eight were seniors. Their informal leader was Percy Squire, the highest-ranking black cadet in the corps. Squire, confident and charismatic, came from a strong African American community in Youngstown, Ohio. He understood the need to organize and he provided black cadets with a rallying point in 1971. Squire's good friend and fellow leader David Brice came from a starkly dissimilar background—a small rural town in South Carolina. When the local paper published an article about Brice coming to the Military Academy, members of the Ku Klux Klan burned a cross on his family's front lawn.⁴⁰

On October 23, the superintendent asked Squire about the President's proposed Confederate monument. Knowlton described the reaction as "instant turmoil and chaos." Squire and Brice convened a meeting of all African American cadets on the night of October 25, 1971. Anger over the Confederate monument created seething resentment that bordered on mutiny. Some cadets argued for resigning en masse; others called for strikes, mass demonstrations, or sit-ins.⁴¹

After the meeting, the cadets wrote a "militant manifesto" (some called it the "black manifesto"). Modeled after the Attica prisoner demands written in September 1971, the cadets' manifesto listed the thirteen grievances against the Military Academy.⁴² The manifesto was no mealy-mouthed protest, but a full-throated cry of Black Power demanding equality, respect, and understanding. Here was a mandate for tolerance. Squire wrote the manifesto, influenced by the book, *The Greening of America* by Charles A. Reich. The best-selling book trumpeted on its cover, "There is a revolution coming... the revolution of the new generation."⁴³ On November 8th, every African American cadet signed the manifesto and Squire delivered the six-page document to the superintendent the next day. As black Americans, they entered West Point with "awe and expectation." Their goal was to join the army and improve the quality of leadership for the "black military man." Instead, they found a "long train of abuses and usurpations" and "blatant racism."⁴⁴

Nixon's Confederate monument proposal was the 13th and final grievance. The cadets charged that Nixon's proposal, more than any other, "seriously weakened the faith we had in the administration to understand our racial pride." They argued that Confederate graduates "abrogated their oath." The cadets noted that when they became officers, they might lead a military unit against a group of African American citizens like the radical Blackstone Nation. If, as officers, they left the army to accept positions of leadership among "rebellious blacks," they would be punished, even though "emotion, birth and racial ties" attracted them to this cause. If the cadets fought against the US Army, would they be immortalized with a monument? Or would they be court-martialed and thrown in the stockade?⁴⁵

With the issuance of the manifesto, General Knowlton understood that he and the Academy were in crisis. If the monument process continued, he could face a mutiny. A savvy, intelligent officer who had previously served in diplomatic posts, he acted quickly. Knowlton wrote a letter to the Pentagon detailing the vociferous reaction of the African American cadets and arguing that a Confederate monument would hurt minority-recruiting efforts and cause a publicity nightmare.⁴⁶ On December 6, the Pentagon wrote back; the White House asked West Point to "terminate" the project. Nixon's Confederate Monument at West Point died. A hundred black cadets had defeated the President of the United States.⁴⁷

The manifesto's effect did not stop with the demise of the Confederate monument initiative. West Point was a male enclave in 1971. The cadet hostess bused young women in from the surrounding area colleges for hops, as the cadets called dances, but few of those colleges had African American women. Those that did come were unimpressed. One black woman recalled her visit to West Point with horror, "We spent the whole evening square dancing!"⁴⁸

The manifesto generated resources from the Academy to fix the problem. The superintendent provided a bus that Cadet David Brice sent to his uncle, a deacon in Hackensack, New Jersey who filled it with local women and sent it back to West Point. Brice and Squire arranged for use of the Superintendent's yacht. As the boat cruised the Hudson River to the melodious strains of soul music, black cadets danced – for one night, not that much different from college students anywhere in America. For many cadets, that was tolerance.⁴⁹

Other grievances addressed broader issues. Memory plays an important role at West Point, home to many monuments recognizing America's military heroes. Yet no memorial on campus recognized the important role African Americans played in U.S. military history. The cadets demanded that the Academy recognize the 9th and 10th Cavalry, the Buffalo Soldiers, who had served at West Point for over forty years supporting the cadets' equestrian training. Soon, the old cavalry parade ground was named Buffalo Soldiers Field. More changes came: no more Confederate flags in rooms; no more playing of Dixie by the West Point band.⁵⁰

Cadets searched for ways to use their newfound power to help all African Americans. Imbued with leadership and a sense of mission, they strove to show those outside the gates that they were not the instruments of white repression. At the time, sickle cell anemia, a scourge of the black community, had captured America's imagination. *The Washington Post* called it "the top attention getting disease of 1971."⁵¹ Could the cadets create a fundraising event to benefit all African Americans? Squire, Brice, and a black officer, Major Melvin Bowdin, brought the issue to the superintendent who by early 1972 needed no cajoling. The African American cadets were clearly

in a position of power. With the full backing of the Academy, the benefit concert for sickle cell anemia research became a huge event.

"The Concert for the Blood" occurred on May 20, 1972, a week shy of a year from the date Nixon first mentioned the Confederate monument. Percy Squire sold the first ticket, priced at \$5, to the newly promoted Lieutenant General Knowlton. African American cadets who earlier in 1971 had simply tried to have a soul-themed dance planned and executed an outdoor, Woodstock-like concert that featured soul royalty—Stevie Wonder and the Supremes.⁵² The media predicted 50,000 people for the concert in West Point's football stadium. Heavy rain that day brought the total to fewer than 10,000.⁵³ Despite the wet conditions, "The Concert for the Blood" was a remarkable success. One white officer called the concert, "the first socially conscious event ever held at the Academy."⁵⁴ Later that month, cadets travelled to Washington, D.C. to visit Howard University, named after a former superintendent at West Point, and gave the Sickle Cell Anemia Research group the first proceeds check. By the final tally, the cadets had raised \$41,000 for Sickle Cell Anemia research.⁵⁵

The changes initiated by the cadets extended into 1972 as well. The Black History Week celebration became the highlight of the African American social calendar with speakers such as Representative Ron Dellums and Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan. The reorganized and revitalized Race Relations/Equal Opportunity Office gave all cadets eight hours of mandatory race relations training, while faculty and staff trained for sixteen hours.⁵⁶

Why were the African American cadets able to change the Military Academy's policies so quickly? Leadership made the difference. Percy Squire, David Brice, and the seniors in the class of 1972 knew how to lead. Well organized with a clear strategy, firm goals, and unity, the black cadets were a formidable force. Moreover, the cadets and officers did not want to discredit or disparage the Academy. They believed in the importance of having African American officers in the army's elite. They wanted to save the institution, not ruin it. West Point's African American cadets led the Academy toward a more tolerant position on race.

The cadets used President Nixon's politically cynical ploy at West Point to their advantage. African American cadets did not end racism or intolerance at West Point, but they did make a difference. Cadets in the 1976 yearbook paid for a two-page ad that featured two poems. The last line of the second poem provided an antidote to intolerance and an endorsement of diversity at the United States Military Academy:

"Once I was held in servitude, but now, it is my right to serve."⁵⁷

GENDER INTOLERANCE AT WEST POINT, 1976–2015

Yet by 1980, that Black Power movement that filled African American cadets with racial pride began to wane. True, in that year an African American, Vincent Brooks, was appointed as First Captain, the highest-ranking cadet, but the racial pride so evident in the 1970s both at West Point and nationwide had dissipated. African American cadets had demanded and received more respect, but in 1976 a new group entered West Point – women. If African American men had spent a hundred years receiving poor treatment, now a new group competed with them and perhaps won the prize for intolerance from cadets and faculty. Racism remained at West Point, but intolerance towards women, through derogatory language, abuse, and disrespect, became endemic.

Women came to West Point in the fall of 1976 by Congressional mandate. An aggressive campaign to keep women out of the Military Academy by the Secretary of the Army, the Superintendent, and other army luminaries failed. General Matthew Ridgway, a World War II and Korean War hero, General William Westmoreland, the senior commander in Vietnam, and many former superintendents pronounced publically that the admittance of women would ruin West Point. The vast majority in Congress, however, felt differently. Republican Pierre S. “Pete” DuPont from Delaware argued that the exclusion of women from West Point was “ridiculous, wasteful, and anachronistic.”⁵⁸

When women arrived, they found overt and covert sexism from men who found their presence threatening to their own conceptions of masculinity and tradition. While leaders vowed publicly to support the decision, the early denunciation of women’s inclusion left no doubt in the minds of male cadets of how their leaders really felt. The 119 women admitted in the class of 1980 found some male friendship, a few life partners, and plenty of abuse. While many men accepted women, a large number did not and those in leadership positions could and did make life hell for female cadets. One squad leader told women during their first weeks at West Point that, “I’m gonna’ get everyone of you fuckin’ bitches out of here!” Another man in a leadership role told his charges, “God did not make women to be soldiers.” A cadet company commander held illegal formations every morning. The purpose of these hazing sessions, he told the women, was to eliminate every woman from his command. Women had condoms filled with water thrown at them. During physical training women were groped, and sexual slurs were commonplace both verbally and in graffiti all over campus.⁵⁹

Intolerance in the form of sexism, sexual harassment, and sexual assault were prevalent for the first classes of women at West Point. Forty years later, are women treated better? The short answer is Yes. The early classes of women paved the way for greater acceptance, but problems – significant problems – remain. A survey taken in 2014 found that 91% of West Point

women had suffered from sexism in the previous year, while 55% reported sexual harassment. West Point must work harder to change such awful statistics. While there has been movement from the Academy's leadership to address these significant issues, more must be done to document and discuss intolerance, and then fight it through education and leadership.⁶⁰

Educating students on the prevalence of racial and gender intolerance provides one way to help combat this scourge. Strong leadership that promotes diversity can help as well. For more than two centuries, West Point has suffered from intolerance. The historical record can look bleak. Are there ways to combat intolerance? There are. When students and faculty acknowledge the systemic nature of intolerance, then they can demand fixes. In 2014, African American cadets petitioned the Academy's leadership to name the first barracks at West Point since 1971 after General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., Class of 1936, the first black graduate in the 20th Century. With support from faculty and alumni, the cadets realized their goal. Davis Barracks is now a reality. African American cadets read about the example of Percy Squire and David Brice in 1971 and the effect they had in combating intolerance. Even within the military, people who demand equal treatment can receive it. Institutions, however, must do a better job of creating tolerant organizations and not rely on minority demands for equal rights.⁶¹

NOTES

1. John Bradley, "West Point and the Hudson Highlands in the American Revolution" (Unpublished, 1976). <http://www.usma.edu/history/SitePages/West%20Point%20History.aspx>

2. George Washington, "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment" letter to Alexander Hamilton, 2 May 1783.

3. The Trumbull painting hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY. <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/24.109.88>

4. Mary V. Thompson, "Slaves at Mount Vernon in 1799 and Slaves on the Mansion House Farm, 1799," March 31, 2015. Author's file. George Washington, Memorandum: List of Tithables and Taxable Property, *The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series*, 8:104 and 104n.

5. Elkanah Watson, January 1785, in Jean B. Lee editor, *Experiencing Mount Vernon: Eyewitness Accounts, 1784-1865* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 23. George Washington Parke Custis, *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington, By His Adopted Son, George Washington Parke Custis, With a Memoir of the Author, By His Daughter: and Illustrative and Explanatory Notes by Benson J. Lossing* (Bridgewater, VA: American Foundation Publications, 1999), 157 and 450-451. George Washington, Last Will and Testament, July 9, 1799, *The Writings of George Washington*, 37:276-277. *Accounts, 1784-1865* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 23.

6. Gary B. Nash, "The African Americans' Revolution," in *Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution* (2012), ed. Edward G. Gray and Jane Kamensky, 250-70.

7. Walt Bachman, *Northern Slave Black Dakota: The Life and Times of Joseph Godfrey* (Bloomington, MN: Pond Dakota Press, 2013), 3-9.

8. Officer Pay Records, National Archives, courtesy of Walt Bachman. Author's files.

9. Morris Schaff, *The Spirit of Old West Point, 1858-1962* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1907), 149.

10. *Ibid.*, 142-148. Upton also served as the Commandant of Cadets.

11. Congressional Globe, 37th Cong., 3d Sess., 325, 328.
12. James Tyrus Seidule, "'Treason is Treason:' Civil War Memory at West Point" *Journal of Military History* (April 2012).
13. Benjamin Butler, *Butler's Book: Autobiography and Personal Reminiscences of Major-General Benj. F. Butler* (Boston: Thayer, 1892), 199.
14. Krewasky A. Salter I, *The Story of Black Military Officers, 1861-1948* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 28-30.
15. See Stephen Ambrose, *Duty Honor Country* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 219-230.
16. Peter Michie, "Caste at West Point," *North American Review* 283 (June 1880): 604-13.
17. William S. Freely, *Grant: A Biography* (New York, 1981), 379.
18. Salter, *The Story of Black Military Officers*, 28-30.
19. Henry O. Flipper, *The Colored Cadet at West Point* (New York: Homer Lee & Co., 1878), 29-30.
20. John C. Marszalek, *Court-Martial: A Black Man in America* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1972), 47.
21. See Ambrose, *Duty Honor Country*, 222. Marszalek, *Court-Martial: A Black Man in America*, 241.
22. *ibid.*, 75.
23. David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (New York: Belknap, 2002), 9-11.
24. For examples see the 1915, 1923, and 1953 *Howitzers*.
25. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., *American: An Autobiography* (New York: Penguin Press, 1992), 27-28.
26. Salter, *Black Military Officers*, 115. Interview with the Francis Family. Author's files.
27. Salter, *Black Military Officers*, 115. James Daniel Fowler, *Assembly Magazine* 46 (July 1988): 181-182.
28. Letter from Commandant of Cadets to unnamed cadet, 1938, Special Collections, USMA Library.
29. Interview with Cliff Worthy, West Point Center for Oral History, 2015.
30. Interview with Charles Ewing, Class of 1951. Author's files.
31. Interview with Joseph Anderson, Class of 1965. Author's files.
32. Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 1-12. Ibram H. Rogers, *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965-1972* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 103-106. Student Survey, 1969, USMA Archives.
33. Charles Larned, "The Battle Monument at West Point," *Harper's Weekly*, 12 June, 1897, 594.
34. Memorandum to the Gifts Program Officer from Charles D. W. Canham, Assistant to the Superintendent, Subject: Memorial to West Pointers who served the Confederacy, 16 July, 1971. USMA Archives.
35. Letter from Richard Nixon to William Knowlton, 1 June, 1971. White House Central Files, Trip 20, West Point, New York, 5/28/1971, Box 56, Nixon Presidential Library.
36. Memorandum to the President dated 31 May, 1971 from Brigadier General Alexander Haig. Subject: Follow-up actions resulting from your visit to the US Military Academy, (Stamped "The President has seen"), National Security Files, Subject Files, President's West Point Speech, Box 377. Nixon Presidential Library.
37. Joel Morgovsky, "One Hundred Years of Blacks among the Grays," Office of Institutional Research, 1971. USMA Archives.
38. "Negro Cadets at the Academies Triple," *Washington Post*, 25 August 1967.
39. Fred S. Hoffman, "Record Total of Negroes Attend Service Schools," *Washington Post*, July 21, 1965. Four African American Cadets graduated with the class of 1965. West Point had a total of 29 African American cadets that year. James Ferron, "Blacks in The Long Gray Line," *New York Times*, 2 June 1991.
40. Interview with David Brice, July 27, 2012.

41. Memorandum to Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Department of the Army from William Knowlton, Superintendent, United States Military Academy, Subject: Possible Civil War Memorial, 4 November, 1971. USMA Archives.
42. Joseph Ellis and Robert Moore, *School for Soldiers: West Point and the Profession of Arms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 216, 282. Richard C. U'Ren, *Ivory Fortress: A Psychiatrist Looks at West Point* (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1974), 118.
43. Charles A. Reich, *The Greening of America* (New York: Random House, 1970).
44. "Manifesto." Author's files.
45. "Manifesto." Memorandum to Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Department of the Army from William Knowlton, Superintendent, United States Military Academy, Subject: Possible Civil War Memorial, 4 November, 1971. USMA Special Collections. Interview with Peter Bailey, July 19, 2012; Interview with David Brice, July 27, 2012; Interview with Arthur Hester, July 24, 2012; Interview with Percy Squire, August 12, 2010.
46. Memorandum to Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Department of the Army from William Knowlton, Superintendent, United States Military Academy, Subject: Possible Civil War Memorial, 4 November, 1971. USMA Archives.
47. Letter to Lieutenant General William Knowlton from Walter T. Kerwin, Jr., December 6, 1971. USMA Archives. Memorandum to President, Association of Graduates from William Knowlton, Superintendent, USMA, Subject: Possible Civil War Memorial, 6 January, 1972. USMA Archives.
48. Peter Bailey, "Getting It Together at 'The Point,'" *Ebony Magazine*, December 1971, Volume XXVII, No. 2, 136-144. Interview, David Brice, July 27, 2012. Ellis and Moore, *School for Soldiers*, 216.
49. Interview, David Brice, July 27, 2012.
50. "Progress Report on the 9th and 10th Cavalry Memorialization," March 31, 1972, Museum, Historical Memorialization Committee Files, West Point Museum.
51. "Group Sponsors Sickle Cell Anemia Tests," *Washington Post*, August 18, 1971.
52. *The Pointer View*, April 20, 1972. Interview, David Brice, July 27, 2012.
53. "Town Braces for Saturday, Crowds Could Reach 50,000," *New of the Highlands*, Highland Falls, New York, May 18, 1972. "Raindrops Dampened Saturday's Busy Schedule," *News of the Highland*, May 25, 1972, 1. George Basler, "Downpour Dampens USMA Festivities," *Newburgh Evening News*, May 20, 1972, 1.
54. U'Ren, *Ivory Fortress*, 119.
55. *Assembly: The Magazine of the West Point Association of Graduates*, October 1972.
56. Black Studies Report, September 1971. Superintendent's Annual Report, 1973. USMA Archives.
57. 1976 *Howitzer*, 406.
58. Lance Janda, "The Crucible of Duty: West Point, Women, and Social Change," in *West Point Two Centuries and Beyond*, ed. Lance Betros (Abilene: McWhiney Foundation Press, 2004), 348.
59. Janda, "The Crucible of Duty," 353-355.
60. Briefing to the Academic Board on Character Development, April 2015. Author's files.
61. Petition to the Superintendent on Barracks Naming, November 2014. Author's Files.