The Department of History and the African Studies Program
At the University of Wisconsin-Madison Present the 3rd William Allen Brown Memorial Lecture on African History

Topic

“Remembering Dr. William Allen Brown (1934-2007): Africanists Outliers and Different Roads Taken to the University of Wisconsin-Madison”

(Fourth REVISION-ADDITION [SEE BOLD] January 31, 2012)

By

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Thursday, April 28, 2011, 4:00PM
Wisconsin Memorial Union
Main Lounge
800 Langdon Street
Madison
First, I am grateful to Professor Thomas Spear, my 1968 Fall Semester brilliant classmate at UW-Madison, and former Chair of the Department of History, UW-Madison, for introducing me to this wonderful audience; and, along with Professor Jan Vansina, for laying the earlier groundwork for both the Brown Memorial Service, September 8, 2007, and for role in organizing the Brown Memorial Fund that followed. (Post Script: My nerves got the best of me on this day, and I forgot to say these words of thanks. Sorry!)

Second, I would like to thank the following professors that trained me at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from Fall 1968 through Wednesday, May 17, 1975: Jan Vansina (African History and Anthropology), John R. Willis (West African Islam), Neil Skinner (the Hausa Language), Phillip D. Curtin (The World and the West and Seminar), Steve Feierman ((African History-Anthropology-Proseminar), M. Crawford Young and Dennis L. Dresang (African Politics), Arnold Strickland (Anthropology), John Leddy Pheland (Latin America and Multiracialism), William Allen Brown, my doctoral supervisor (1975-May 17, 1975) and to the Doctoral Committee members (all six of them present!).

Ms. April D. White, the niece of Dr. Brown, is in the audience; and representing the Brown family members from New York City. I thank Ms. White very much for her presence.
Professor Paul Hilbrick (emeritus) of the Department of Music, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, is also in the audience. We are long time U.S. Army buddies from our days at Fort Gordon, Georgia (Augusta) from 1960-1962, where he had a great influence upon me transitioning from the field of music to history in the defining era of the Civil Rights Movement. I thank Paul for coming and wish him a safe return to Eau Claire.

Dr. William Allen Brown, Jr. (1934-2007) was a professor of African Islamic history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for 31 years (1974-2005), and who duly served this great public institution with affection. In remembering Dr. Brown, I take as my epitaph the meaning of “Outliers” from the book by Malcom Gladwell titled Outliers: The Story of Success (2008). Gladwell holds that: “Outliers”—a noun, has two connecting premises,

“1. something that is situated away from or classed differently from a main or related body

2. a statistical observation that is markedly different in value from the others of the sample”¹

Persons that have come to represent these two connecting premises in finding their Gifts on earth and who went on to outstanding achievements did so on the following bases: (1) opportune Time of Births, (2) opportune Location in the Universe
or Geographical Space of residence with availability of options; and upon one finding their Gift under either of these conditions of (3) chance in history, they must be able to engage themselves in the pursuit of their Gifts according to Gladwell’s “principle of working ten thousand hours.” Now we know that “ten thousand hours” requires the right conditions, such as supportive parents who encourages and supports, or special programs that one finds in the Canadian hockey clubs, for example, where the Coach prefers to take those players born between January and April because they bring a certain maturity not found in those born say after April into December. Based on this analogy, we now know why some hockey teams win all the time and others are always losing. In any case, according to Gladwell, one needs “some kind of extraordinary opportunity that gives them a chance to put in those [ten thousand] hours.”

Let us take the Time of Birth first in history and examine some of the personalities in the sample: If one was born in the 1830s, one had already reached a maturation period of intellectual growth to take advantage of the 1860s-1870s, when America reached its transformational era in history: the railroads were built, Wall Street emerged From slavery and complicity between the North and the South, and industrial manufacturing began. If you were born in the 1840s, it would be
too late for you; “you missed it.” Just take a look at the successful list of those born in the 1830s:  

John D. Rockefeller, 1839
Andrew Carnegie, 1835
Frederick Weyererhaeuser, 1834
Marshall Field, 1834
Jay Gould, 1836
Hetty Green, 1834
George F. Baker, 1840
James G. Fair, 1831
Henry H. Rogers, 1840
Oliver H. Payne, 1839
J.P. Morgan, 1837
George Pullman, 1831
Peter Arrel Brown Widener, 1834
Philip Danforth Armour, 1832

Something is going on here with this list. And remember one thing: that you can’t be poor and achieve in this manner because
one has to do lift work and not be able to concentrate on what Max I. Diamont calls “The thirst for learning!” Even more, it takes three generations of affluence to make perfect scores on the ACT and SAT.

Take the case of Bill Gates, born October 1955—a perfect birth date for the future of that time in regard to the coming of Information Systems. He was fortunate enough to hang around the computer room where one learned software programming in the unique Seattle, Washington, private high school called Lakeside that began a computer club with an SAR-33 Teletype that shared a terminal with direct time-sharing link to the mainframe computer in downtown Seattle. Hence, Gates had a connection to a nearby firm on the precipice of the emerging Chip-Age; and at the University of Washington, Gates would sneak into the computer lab, where he spent nights upon nights preparing himself for Microsoft. Although Gates came from an affluent family, father a wealthy lawyer and mother from a well-to-do banker, this explains why Gates could afford to drop out of Harvard University at the end of his freshman year. He had already put in—you guest it!—his “ten thousand hours,” before he even arrived to join the Harvard freshman class.6

Finally, we arrive at Liverpool, England in 1960. The Beatles—John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and Ringo
Starr—had just taken a gig in Hamburg, Germany at a Strip Club that remained opened until the early morning, which meant that they had to play long and hard—some 270 nights over a year and a half. They learned a large number of songs and developed stamina. By 1964, when they arrived in the United States to thrilling crowds and screaming girls, they had already performed over 1200 performances, which were more than some of the finest musicians perform in a life time. America was a piece of cake because the Beatles had already put in—you guest it!—their “ten thousand hours.” In the next round, we turn to “Remembering Dr. William Allen Brown,” who was a true Outlier in our conceptual schema.

Dr. William Allen Brown was born January 29, 1934, at Beaufort (pronounced Boh-fert), Carteret County, North Carolina to William A. Brown, Sr. and to Mildred Dennis Brown. Beaufort, founded in 1722 as a seaport town with the right to collect customs and third largest port city at the time of the American Revolution, is today as then located on the inner bank of a peninsular leading out into the Atlantic Ocean; here one finds the outer banks similar in part to the slave cost of Nigeria and/or the Eastern Delta of Nembe-Brass or Old Calabar of the Niger Delta with its inter-waterways that connect to other land platforms, such as Bonny or the Ogoni inner banks. It is not
yet known whether Brown’s furthest back ancestors, who came over during the First Forced Black Immigration from Africa, entered these inner banks on the “Dungeon of Terror,” namely the Slave ship, or whether the ancestors entered further up in the Chesapeake Bay and next engaged in the Second Great Black Migration to the interior of Virginia on to North Carolina in Carteret County, the location of Beaufort. It is here, however, that Dr. Brown’s furthest-back ancestors provide our initial portraits.

In his book *The Free Negro in North Carolina 1790-1860* (1943), the late eminent historian John Hope Franklin paved the way for our understanding of how the “Negro” became free in the slave state of North Carolina, where African slavery showed its ugly head as early as 1694. By 1790, free blacks and slaves made up about twenty-five percent of the population in the state. Beaufort had both free and the enslaved. The record shows that in 1820 Carteret County had 109 free blacks and by 1860 the number had risen slightly to 153; back in 1790, the county had 709 slaves and by 1860 1,969 slaves. Marriage was not legally recognized among slaves, and with the abolishment of slavery on December 18, 1865, marriages of the newly free blacks before 1868 can be documented as “marriage bonds.” This brings
us Dr. Brown’s earliest maternal or mother’s Mildred Dennis side of his ancestors known as the Dennis.

The Marriage Bond Record of the North Carolina Archives and in the Joy Lawrence Carteret County of Register Of Deeds show Alfred Dennis (slave, b.1851) and Dollie Ann Bell (slave, b. August 19, 185[2]4) marriage date to be August 4, 1866. Alfred and Dollie were Dr. Brown’s great-grandparents born in slavery. Dollie lived to be 104 years old and died on July 26, 1928. The Marriage Record of Deeds show that their son was Goldie Dennis (b. November 10, 1889) and 21 years of age on December 31, 1910, when he, Goldie Dennis, married into the George Fulford and Susan Fisher Fulford family, namely to their daughter Ernestine Fulford Dennis (b.1890), who was 20 years of age on December 31, 1910. To Goldie and Ernestine Fulford Dennis were born Mildred Dennis (b.1913), Brown’s mother. Ernestine Fulford Dennis had a brother named Joseph Fulford, born May 26, 1890 and died on November 1, 1955 at the age of 65, who was the uncle of Mildred Dennis Brown and Dr. Brown’s great uncle. Joseph’s mother was Susan Fisher Fulford. Goldie and Ernestine Fulford Dennis were Dr. Brown’s grandparents on his mother’s side. The Fulford descent line began with the paternal side of Anderson Fulford and Fannie Fulford who were born in slavery during the antebellum era (1830-1860) and the great-grandparents of Dr.
Brown through Ernestine Fulford Dennis, Brown’s grandmother. And Anderson and Fannie became the parents of George Fulford (b.1870), who married Susan Fisher Fulford ca.1902. George Fulford died on December 25, 1950 at the age of 61. So here beyond the maternal Dennis side, we have introduced other Brown collateral links such as the Fulfords and the Fishers. In showing what diseases the family relatives died from, death certificates provide useful tools to contemporary family medical case histories.12

Beaufort of Carteret County was a seasonal fishing port of “menhaden” or “shad fish”—as called by the local fishermen—that drew men from probably the adjacent counties and nearby Virginia. Beaufort was the “menhaden” capital of the world, where company fleets were employed that provided hundreds of jobs; streamers even came from Virginia. “The smell of ‘shad’ cooking on Lennoxville Road was recognize throughout Carteret County as the smell of money that was an important part of this county’s commercial fishing industry,” one writer noted.13

The Brown family paternal descent line began in Petersburg, Virginia. William Allen Brown was the son of George Brown and Mary Brown of Petersburg. And the seasonal “menhaden” fishing time probably can explain the presents of William Brown in Beaufort, who just may have followed his father and others there
for employment from Petersburg. In the meantime, we have come to know this: William Brown, (b. 1908) married Mildred Dennis Brown in 1933, and to William and Mildred were born a son on January 29, 1934; upon naming the son after the father, the son became William Allen Brown, Jr. (our Dr. William Allen Brown), and of course William, the father, became now William, Sr. A caveat must be considered here. The seasonal nature of “menhaden” fishing, its hard work and low pay, and since the US Supreme Court Slaughter House Case (1873) basically circumvented the “equal protection clause” of the 14th Amendment of 1870 by reducing the number of civil rights under federal law and by separating Federal citizenship from state citizenship,14 meant that the Browns lacked protection under the law. These factors entered into the Brown family decisionmaking to leave Beaufort, North Carolina--enabling them to join The Third Great Black Migration of six million other blacks to the industrial North.15

I can see them now with little baby William Allen Brown, Jr. leaving Beaufort on present day highway 70 going West to the railway line at Raleigh; here, they boarded the train for New York City with perhaps baby milk bottles, shoe boxes stuffed with fried chicken, biscuits, and pound cake--sometimes maybe in the late 1930s. I can see now the Brown’s maternal kin at the Raleigh depot, most who would remain behind until an extended
family member already in New York City would send them a ticket so that they could catch the next train out, such as the Fulfords, the Dennis, the Fishers, and other families, waving good-by as the conductor shouted: "ALL ABOARD!--and the train engineer pulled the train whistle that blew: "Chew-cheeeew, chew-cheeeew, chew-cheeeew"--and these sounds caused the sleeping little Junior Brown to wake up suddenly as the train moved slowly and then faster on a journey of unimaginable magnitude to little Brown--stopping to pick-up passengers along the way at Richmond, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, and finally, New York City.

The Brown family arrived in New York City at a precipitous time that would allow young Junior Brown to thrive and to discover his Gift and his sisters Patricia Brown, Marsha Brown, and Mildred Denise Brown would be born in New York City later, where they would all thrive together in a very favorable setting.

Again, we revisit Malcolm Gladwell, who reports:

"In New York City, the early 1930s cohort was so small that class sizes were at least half of what they had been twenty-five years earlier. The Schools were new, built for the big generation that had come before, and the teachers had what in the depression was considered a high-status job."
‘The New York City public schools of the 1940s were considered the best schools in the country….There was this generation of educators in the thirties and forties who would have been in another time and place college professors. They were brilliant, but they couldn’t get jobs they wanted, and public teaching was what they did because it was security and it had a pension and you didn’t get laid off.’

“The same dynamic benefited the members of that generation when they went off to college.”16

In his recent book Children of Fire: A History of African Americans (2010), historian Thomas C. Holt echoes Gladwell and writes also about New York City, too:”….Manhattan, the rising cultural and economic capital of the twentieth-century America, was immensely helpful to the NAACP in pursuing…[its] agenda. Magnet to diverse media, a melangé of foreign peoples and cultures, and political ferment—in short, America’s emerging cultural capital--New York City was fast becoming the black cultural capital as well. The unprecedented migration of southern blacks at precisely the moment of the city’s rapid ascent was the ‘favorable conjunction’…that enabled Manhattan’s Harlem community to assume a primary role in the black cultural renaissance of the interwar years. Indeed, most movements for revitalizing the national black community during the interwar
period eventually found their home in New York, even if they did not start there. Moreover, whatever the validity of New York’s claims to cultural priority, it is indisputable that, as with many other political exiles, the city provided black migrants and immigrants an institutional space for sustained challenges to southern Jim Crow regimes and to the politics of accommodation, then and for long thereafter.”17

The Brown family moved into Harlem upon arrival at Grand Central Station. As the early years began to past, even as a young boy, William Brown, Jr.’s enormous intellect would not go undetected in the elementary and middle schools. As a continuation of the Harlem Renaissance, African American PhDs, who were denied employment in the universities of Columbia, NYU, and sundry, received employment in the Harlem middle schools. One or more such families, especially those who did not have children, Brown often said, would have him over for dinner, where they marveled at his delightful intellect and who designated him as being Gifted, taught him table graces and how to engage himself in the standards of English grammar and how to articulate in the rational logic of conversation. Taught therefore by some PhDs, Brown began attending elementary school in ca.1940 at P.S. 90, Manhattan, New York, and completed its
middle school around 1948 at about age 15, where he prepared himself for high school.\textsuperscript{18}

Only if one lives in New York City—a robust urban place, can one imagine a 15 year old teenager from the projects riding the train from Harlem to DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx that became a weekly pilgrimage. Founded in 1897 as Boys High School and renamed DeWitt Clinton in 1900, this school was rebuilt in 1903 in accordance with the architectural drawings of the “silent genius” Charles B.J. Snyder—a descendant of Dutch ancestry and who designed and supervised 400 schools in New York and others across the United States. Known for their windows, Snyder’s schools dominated their neighborhoods. In the 1930s, when education became compulsory in New York City, DeWitt Clinton’s enrollment reached 12,000—making it the largest high school in the United States and in the world. The Macy Honors Gifted Program in the sciences and humanities attracted some the brightest and hard-working students from poor neighborhoods that prepared them for selected colleges in the East. The course offerings excelled those in all other New York City schools: Integrated Algebra, geometry, algebra2/trigonometry, college algebra, precalculus, science courses, history courses, foreign language such as French and Latin, English and writing, art and
music, some 20 advanced placement classes, physical education, and sports.19

Who might have been the DeWitt Clinton alumni close to “Bill” Brown’s time?: Don Adams (1923-2005), actor in TV series Get Smart, James Baldwin (1924-1987), writer, Romare Bearden, artist, (1911-1988), Ira Berlin (b.1941) and class of 1959, Edward Bernstein (class 1922), First director of the International Monetary Fund, Richard Carmona (b.1949), who dropped out at age 16 and went on to become Surgeon General of the United States (class of 1967), Countee Cullen, poet (class of 1922), Dean Dixon, first African American conductor of the New York Philharmonic (class of 1932), Robert Hofstadter, 1961 Nobel Prize in Physics (class of 1953), Bob Kane, creator of Batman (class of 1933), Basil Paterson, labor lawyer and political leader in New York (class of 1942), Charles Rangel, Harlem’s US Congressman, Bud Powell, jazz pianist and composer, Sugar Ray Robinson champion prizefighter (class of 1938), M. Lincoln Schuster, co-founder, Simon & Schuster (class of 1913), Gerald Shur, founder of the Federal witness Protection Program (class of 1951), Bruce Taub, president, CBS Television Network (class of 1966)20; and although the brilliant “Bill” Brown did not graduate with his class at DeWitt Clinton of 1951, I asked “Bill” at some moment in time why and he said to me: “I got
bored, dropped out, and signed up with the United States Air Force (at about the age of 17).” As one may recall in the military, one has to qualify in a Military Occupational Specialty (or MOS), and I recall from our earlier days that Brown’s MOS was in History and French. So he wrote the history of the Air Force Base Unit in Iceland and sundry; and as then required by the Board of Regents, he used his required four years of French from the three DeWitt Clinton years and now four more years more—a total of seven years in the French language. Brown was Honorably Discharged from the Air force in the watershed year of 1955; and in the same year, he received the GED (Diploma #6598) through the University of the State of New York Education Department.21

Now armed with funds from the GI Bill and a fellowship, William Allen Brown was admitted to the all “Negro” Kentucky State College, Frankfort, in 1955 at 21 years old. The College was filled with other veterans who enjoyed the GI Bill, too, and students operating on at least three tiers of learning based on exposure or the lack there of. The “Negro College” embraced all tiers and would take you from where you are and take you to the highest level of learning and achievement. Founded in 1885-1886 as State Normal School for Colored Persons (SNSCP), as did all other “Negro” Colleges in the 19th century, it began with a high
school preparatory division because most counties through the United States had not yet created all separate black high schools for its “Colored” citizens. Known as Historically Black Colleges and Universities today, or HBCUs, the Kentucky educational foundation at Frankfort in 1886 was 58 years behind Cheney state University-West Chester Pennsylvania, the first and oldest HBCUs founded in 1828; (38 years behind the great University of Wisconsin-Madison, founded in 1848), 33 years behind Wilberforce University, Dayton, Ohio, founded in 1853, and 34 years behind Lincoln University-Pennsylvania, founded in 1854; and 19 years behind Howard University, founded in 1867, which also had preparatory high school leading to university admission. The State Normal School for Colored Persons of 1886 became next the Kentucky Normal and Industrial Institute for Coloreds (KNII) in 1902, to Kentucky State Industrial College for Colored Persons (KSIC) in 1926, to Kentucky State College for Negroes in 1938, KSCN—(and as more black high schools were built, the phasing out of high school preparatory classes that had already begun in 1931 ended in 1938), and just three years before “Bill” Brown arrive in 1955 just having earned his GED, the name was changed from Kentucky State College for Negroes in 1938 (KSCN) to Kentucky State College in 1952. 22
During the 100 years of Jim Crow years that followed after 1865, most professors and teachers of “Negro” colleges and universities went mostly to Harvard, Yale, Chicago, Michigan, Iowa, Indiana, and Wisconsin universities for their graduate education for the MA and PhD. Unless one taught at Howard University or Fisk University, most of the teachers rarely published because of the 15 hour teaching load and the legislative politics against “Negroes” conducting research in Jim Crow states. In spite of this “hidden” prohibition, our teaching-professors did practice the art of historical erudition with great teaching flare and motivation of their students. At Kentucky State College (University in 1972), the most remembered in history and the social sciences for this era were Dr. Harold S. Smith of Milwaukee, and a future 1950s PhD From Wisconsin-Madison in US History, and Dr. Henry Ellis Cheaney of Henderson, Kentucky, a future 1960 PhD in US history from the University of Chicago--both of the Department of History, and the very brilliant Dean Dr. David H. Bradford, a 1940s PhD in political science from the University of Chicago.

Dr. Cheaney talked always, before his passing in 2005 at age 95, with admiration of historian J. Saunders Redding (1906-1988), who became the first African American professor at Brown University and the first African American appointed in the Ivy
League in 1949. In the meantime and back in 1935 at KSU, Cheaney took history classes under J. Saunders Redding, who was then 29 years old, and apparently Cheaney succumbed under the spell of his erudition to discard pre-med for history. "Saunders Redding," he noted, who published *They Came In Chains: Americans From Africa* (1950) and numerous other books, "once brought ex-slaves to class from the 'Negro' Ghetto known as the 'Craw, or Crawfish Bottom, or just the Bottom' that flooded often in downtown Frankfort in 1935. They were in their 70's, and they told us about the herbal medicines that they used to heal themselves in slavery. And I asked them other questions about slavery, too," Cheaney noted. Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois (1869-1963) also visited and lectured on the campus at this time. Recalling the brilliance of this scholar, Cheaney chortled in remembering Du Bois at this time by stating: "He knew that he had it."  

But the four professors at Kentucky State College—Dean Bradford, Smith, and Cheaney, and Dr. A.J. Richards—wielded great influence upon Brown as mentors and a few others over the years. When Brown had exhausted all of the other French courses in the curriculum, Dr. Richards would create a course or two for Brown in French. Dean Ann Jackson Heartwell Hunter served as Brown’s confidant. On the one hand, some teachers became jealous of Brown’s intellect and his sometimes “crafty” behavior
in their classes, and caused some of them to become his nemesis, on the other hand.

I might add in passing that among the HBCUs mission was to prepare the students for assimilation into American society, and although the high school preparatory phase had ended in the 1938, Kentucky State had a course called Freshman Orientation for one semester with required attendance. This one hour course taught students how to respect and talk to professors ((for example, none of this--as one walks into the classroom and hears from a student, “Adell, what are we going to do today?”), how to study, and proper dress code for all occasions. We even had to dress for the afternoon Sunday dinner. In the old “Negro college,” people addressed each other by their professional titles and not on the first name basis ever. Second, there was the Lyceum Program for the students. The Lyceum Program was responsible for bringing to the campus heroic and cultural icons of great African American leaders, performers of music (opera even), and theatrical dance. Messages of uplift, motivation, and inspiration were present in all of these categories to show the students what opportunities existed for them on the American horizon. Most students learned earlier about the importance of standing up for justice in the challenging age of Jim Crow.

Nevertheless, William Allen Brown was a trans-formational
figure at Kentucky State College. Although there were other very bright students there, some of whom would go on to outstanding careers, such as Dr. James Holland in Zoology (Class of 1956), who became a Distinguished Professor-Distinguished Alumni and Administrator at Indiana University-Bloomington and at Kentucky State University; Dr. Cassius Ellis (Class of 1956), M.D., Surgeon, and Associate Dean of the University of Minnesota Medical School; Dr. Jeweline Fulton Brown—Kentucky educator (class of 1959); Charles Washburn—Hollywood Actor and Film Writer (class of 1959); Thomas Lewis—former Chicago Southside bank president (class of 1959); Dr. Clifford Claiborne—Chicago educator and administrator (class of 1958; and Mrs. Claudette Claiborne—Chicago educator), Dr. Luther Burse, Sr.—President of Fort Valley State University (Class of 1958); Dr. Eddie Anderson (1937-2012)—NASA Programmer (class of 1959); Dr. Cuttie Bacon—multimillionaire, educator and administrator (class of 1964); and the musically gifted Joe Henderson (Class only of 1955-1956), jazz tenor saxophonist who had put in his “10,000 hours” before his arrival at KSU and who won three Grammies in the 1990s. This list could go on of outstanding generational graduates at KSU, but Brown’s gifted intellect was immediately recognized at Kentucky State.
Brown became president of the freshman class in 1955-1956. The Sophomore Class Minutes of September 28, 1956, show Brown as the outgoing president in the first meeting with Brown presiding with words of encouragement from our great and delightful and great class advisor Mrs. Helen Exum (1918-2003, who was born in the all black town of Wewoka, Oklahoma), whose husband Dr. William Exum (1912-1988), was Athletic Director with a Wisconsin connection. Born in Carbondale, Illinois, the Exum family had moved to Gary, Indiana, where Exum attended elementary school and graduated from Froebel High School in 1928. Exum enrolled at Wisconsin and used intermittent time-off to play semi-professional basketball that delayed his graduation. His football and track records in the 1920s and 1930s earned him membership in the “W” Club, where he competed with against the legendary Jesse Owens. Exum received the Bachelor of Science Degree in Health and Physical Education in 1936. After a several coaching appointments at Bethune Cookman College, Morehouse College, and Lincoln University-Jefferson City, Exum received the Masters of Science Degree from Wisconsin in 1946. He arrived in Frankfort in 1949 and remained until retirement 1977. (I have an Obituary photo of Exum that shows good resolution.)
Meanwhile, The Senior Class Minutes show William Allen Brown again elected as Senior class president on September 25, 1958. All meetings opened with the saying in unison of the Lord’s Prayer. Brown’s last meeting at the college was held on May 25, 1959, and the issue before this meeting was that of a gift to the College.²⁴ Although Brown was only two to three years older than most of us in the class of 1955-1959, in retrospect, we can easily see that he had the makings of a mature student more intellectually advanced than his years belied. Finally, according to a recent report by Kentuckian John Brown (class of 1959), who was a history major with Brown, Dr. Harold Smith often appointed Brown to teach his U.S. history class, when he had to be away on other business.²⁵

As you obviously recall, Dr. Brown and I first met at Kentucky State College (University, 1972) in September 1955 at Frankfort, Kentucky. We were both members of the freshman class and lived in the same dormitories—Atwood Hall and McCullum Hall—for four years. He, of course was from New York City, DeWitt Clinton High School, and a history major, and I, of course, was from the plantation cotton fields of the Eastern Arkansas Delta near a town called Forrest City and named in honor of the Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest—a man of many ignominious claims to fame. Further, I was a music
Education major, hoping to make my fame playing the jazz trumpet. Brown was speaking and reading French fluently, while out of the Arkansas Delta, I was still learning to speak and write in English. He would go on to become editor of our student newspaper called the Thoroughbred and as already noted, he served in many other student capacities. I recall that he was always introducing us to controversial books, such as E. Franklin Frazier’s *The Black Bourgeois* (1957). He laughed with delight in saying: “This book has really upset the black upper aristocrats, and they are going to go after Frazier for telling about their cultural class habits!”

Although Brown liked to socialize and hold court, his fame at Kentucky State College centered upon the fact that his name appeared on the Honor Roll List in each semester for making all As for the entire four years. And for this achievement, he was given a nickname. In regard to the system of grading during this time, Kentucky State was on a “3 point” system, which meant that an A equaled 3 points, a B equaled 2 points, a C equaled 1 point, and no points were given for a D. The Honor Roll grades were posted at the end of each semester. Only one student received all A’s on a consistent basis between 1955-1959, namely William A. Brown. He topped the Honor Roll each semester and because of his brilliance and straight As achievement, he was
given the nickname “3 Point” Brown. “Hey ‘3 Point,’” students would yell upon seeing him walking around the campus or drinking beer with us in our favorite and only watering hole in the Age of Jim Crow in Frankfurt, “The 40-40 Club,” just a stone’s throw across the street from campus.26

We all graduated in 1959. The future Associate Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall was our commencement speaker. Naturally, “3 Point” was the Valedictorian of the Class and a member of the Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society. The Commencement Program had a section that read: “Awards of Honors and Degrees

THE BACHELOR’S WITH HONORS

With Highest Distinction [in History and Government; French Language and Literature]

William Allen Brown”27

At the end of the commencement, as I recall, some of us had the delightful privilege to meet his mother, Mrs. Mildred Dennis Brown, who had come from New York City. “3 Point” was a genetic picture of Mrs. Brown and his father William Sr. On the one hand, Brown made only two return visits to Kentucky State University after his graduation in 1959: Black History Month, February 1968, and Founders Day, October 1977, on the other
hand. And more will be said about his crucial and important 1968 visit later in the paper.

That same year, 1959, Mr. Brown was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to study at the Sorbonne in Paris. One could hear them saying it: “Well, can he make it in Paris at the Sorbonne? After all, all those A’s of his just came from that little Negro college.” But to their chagrin, “3 Point” did it again at the Sorbonne and jumped to the head of his class there. Away from the Sorbonne, Brown spent much of his creative time speaking perfect French further on the artsy Left Bank of the Seine and moved on to the Louvre on the Northern Seine’s ritzy right bank, where--on both banks--expatriates Pablo Picasso (1881-1993), Earnest Hemingway (1899-1961), Josephine Baker (1906-1975), James Baldwin (1924-1987), Richard Wright (1924-1987), and Existentialistes Jean Paul Sarte (1905-1980) and Alber Camus (1906-1960) had all gathered at one time or another. Brown spoke often of Richard Wright’s journey to Africa and his book *Black Power* (1945) that dealt with the emerging nations of Africa from colonialism; and about another book E.R. Braithwaite’ *A Kind of Homecoming* (1962)--a West Indian’s “Return” from the African diaspora to Guinea, Sierra, Liberia, and Ghana.
As shown in the autobiographies of Jan Vansina, *Living for Africa* (1994), and Philip D. Curtin’s *On The Fringe of History* (2005), 1960 was the watershed date of optimism for the independence of Africa from colonialism, and at the same time, 1960 was the watershed year for the foundation of African studies and African history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. “Most American academics doing research in Africa before 1960—the first generation of American Africanists—came away under the influence of this current of optimism,” Curtin reported in his memoir. On one of my rare visits to his office, Curtin once told me in about Fall 1969 that: “I came out here in 1957 to teach Latin American.” With the onslaught of the Cold War and the East-West rivalry in Africa, the interest in Africa arose exponentially, and then he explained that he began teaching himself African history with a Carnegie Grant of $300,000. Next, he hired Professor Jan Vansina and paid his salary for two or three years out of his grant—with the History Department picking it up after that; and next, Curtin hired Professor John Smail to fill the Comparative History component under the same hiring option. Along with the Wisconsin’s African Studies Program and founding faculty members, such as Curtin, Vansina, Aristide Zolberg of Political Science and Fred Simoons of Geography, African history was born, too, with approximately 30 students, in 1961.
A year earlier, that was the year 1960, “In Walked ‘Bill’ Brown for admission to the graduate program to study U.S. History. Although he never told me who recommended him to Wisconsin, I suspect that Dr. Harold S. Smith at Kentucky State deserves the honor, since he had gotten his PHD in U.S. history at UW-Madison. But Brown’s notion of pursuing U.S. History lasted no more than a glance or nanosecond; for as soon as his brilliance came to be recognized by Curtin, Vansina, and others, I believe after that they literally ganged up on him, and Brown entered the field of African History, where at that time Islamic jihads-theocracies—or “monocracies” (i.e. governments ruled by a single person) as Brown liked to call them, had remained a neglected field in West Africa.

The great Professor Abdullahi Smith (nee H.F.C. Smith, 1920-1984) of Southern and Northern Nigeria deserves a special recognition because of his relationship to Brown and others in the Wisconsin program. He founded departments of histories in both regions in the later 1950s and 1960s. An Englishman first, Smith came to Nigeria from the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and became a Nigerian citizen second, converted to Islam, and married a Fulani woman. Smith, the blond headed “6 feet-3” man, controlled all access to Arabic documentation in Nigeria, and played a supervisory role to most Wisconsin PhD. fieldworkers in
Northern Nigeria. Having travelled from Mali to Nigeria in the late 1960s, Brown held an intimate acquaintance with him in both departments of histories at Ibadan and Ahmadu Bello University Samaru-Zaria. Brown even advised me at Madison how to conduct my behavior with Smith before I went out to the field.

As we may recall, Dr. William Allen Brown was by all standards an engaging raconteur, and those of us that were familiar with him called his sayings or stories by the name of “Brown-isms.” Brown told one interesting story about Professor Smith, who had invited Brown to dinner. Brown reported that they were served by a servant, who apparently acted improperly according to the wishes of Professor Smith. Brown was astonished when: “Professor Smith turned and slapped that servant, who was blind in one eye, right before me, and the servant ran back to the kitchen, and Smith turned and said to me ’They just don’t know how to act since they got their independence!’” Brown uttered last: “Did not the man realize that I, too, was a black man?” Brown said that the servant later came to him complaining while Smith was away from the table, and Brown told him: “Don’t you complain to me; why don’t you just leave!”

Nevertheless, Smith was a towering figure in West African Islamic history. He had changed the field of Islamic history
upon delivering a seminal article in 1960 at the Leverhulme History Conference held at Salisbury, Rhodesia, titled: “Islamic Revolutions in West Africa: A Neglected Theme in the Nineteenth Century”; when this paper appeared in the Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria in 1960, only one other such paper had been published in 1957. As you may recall, Professor Curtin made a research reconnaissance journey to Africa in 1960; and he cited Nigeria as one of his archival visits at Ibadan. “Fortunately,” Curtin wrote,” it appears that the Nigerian National Archives will be one of the most efficient in tropical Africa.” Although Curtin does not mention meeting Abdullahi Smith in his memoir, I am presuming that Curtin met Smith at Ibadan or Kaduna. With the Wisconsin program and its future fieldworkers in mind, Curtin agreed to fund Smith’s archival making efforts with microfiche and sundry. I say this because my first appointment with Professor Smith took place in August 1972 at Arewa House in Kaduna. As you may recall, Arewa House was the residence of the Sarduna of Sokoto, where the Igbo Major Patrick Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeowu scaled the wall on January 15, 1966, and killed the Sarduna that became the harbinger of the first Nigerian coup. Sitting now in this house around a long table, Smith said to me: “Philip Curtin has been very good to us out here in Nigeria, so how can I help you?” I was at my best behavior because Brown had already schooled me back in Madison
by saying: "Whenever you go to see Abdullahi Smith, always display a persona of being a hard worker; have your bag opened after you arrive to see Professor Smith and make sure that he can see your roll of toilet paper." Indeed, Professor Smith and Islam became the topic of major interest among several Wisconsin history graduate students arriving in the 1960s, the 1970s, and with myself and the late Dr. Ashton Welch (1942-2010), from New York City via Barbados, and a graduate of Wilberforce University (an HBCU), Dayton, Ohio (Ph.D., Birmingham University-England, 1942-2010) arriving at Madison in Fall 1968, especially with the publication of the Murray Last new book, *The Sokoto Caliphate* (1967). Dr. Tom W. Shick, from New York and a graduate of City College (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1947-1987) joined us in the graduate program of history in the next year, Fall 1969.

But you must understand this: Brown’s success in the program could easily be predicted upon arrival in 1960 because Brown by this time had become a true Outlier and had already completed and fulfilled Malcom Gladwell’s “principle of ten thousand hours” of scholarly work. In fact, I am going out on a limb with the following opinion: With a little more hindsight, the Department of History might have considered a waiver for the M.A. degree requirement in Brown’s case—and perhaps even for
some others--and allowed him to go right into the PhD program. He could have finished the required course work, field work, and dissertation writing in say six years. This would have made him “Dr. Brown” in about 1966 instead of 1969, allowing for three more years of scholarly writing and publication.

It must not be forgotten that Brown liked to hold court in the Wisconsin Union, where he worked The New York Times Cross Word Puzzles and advised many graduate students in African history about PhD topics for research in West Africa, especially following his fieldwork days in Mali, Timbuctu, and Northern Nigeria. Even then as a graduate student, Brown was like a “professor in residence.” Apparently Professor Curtin sent the graduate student Paul Lovejoy to Brown for his PhD topic, because Brown told me that he gave Lovejoy his topic on “The Kola Trade in West Africa,” and when it came time for me to find a topic, Brown said: “Lovejoy owes me one. You go and tell Lovejoy that I sent you to him and for him to give you a dissertation topic.” I caught up with Lovejoy in the Union in about 1970, who was just back from fieldwork in Nigeria and told him what Brown had said. Paul took less than a nano-second and said: “…nobody has done the Ningi [of Northern Nigeria].” And that was how I got my topic. And the distinguished Paul Irwin writes in the Acknowledgement of his book **Liptako Speaks: A**
History from Oral tradition in Africa, that: “When our Research Plans clashed briefly in 1969, William Allen Brown, then of Harvard University, suggested that material from the history of nineteenth-century Liptako might satisfy my appetite for problems of political integration fully as well as the history of the area where he wanted to work, and I was soon convinced that he was right.” And Irwin goes on: “William Allen Brown and these various [other] institutions are just a few among the many individuals and institutions whose help, sympathy, and kindness made my plans a reality and my work a joy.”

Hence, Wisconsin was the place to be for African Studies—sitting in the Union watching graduate students either coming from the field in Africa or from classes praising the knowledge of their professors in African history and African Studies.

As matters turned out, Brown joined perhaps the first group of bright students, too, in African history and the second generation of American and Nigerian Africanists to be taught by Professors Philip D. Curtin, Jan Vansina, M. Crawford Young of Political Science, and from African Studies and Literature Program professors Marvin Miracle, Edris Makward, Harold Shueb, and Neil Skinner (who was our Hausa professor and in 1972 while engaged in fieldwork in Northern Nigeria, I would later live in a house in Ningi Town that Professor Skinner had lived in many
years earlier as District Officer!)—making Wisconsin of that era the best African History Program in the world. Several of the graduate students had even done service in the Peace Corps and already spoke and read an African language. Competition was rife and brutal in the seminars; so much so that you learned—if you could help it—to stay out of the seminars with the Great Tom Spear (now professor emeritus and former Chair of the Department) because he would beat up on you with his great analytical mind! But other graduate student Outliers of the Brown first graduate students days were:

outstanding careers. Now about this Brown guy from that “little Negro College”! Between 1960 and 1969, university lore has it that Brown received only one B on his transcript, and that was in Arabic while he was in the hospital convalescing from a minor illness.

More importantly, Brown had learned from the comparative history program how to become more original and analytical in the writing of African history. Between Fall 1968-Spring 1969, I recall a conversation with him about how the professors infused originality into their works. He contended: "Once they developed an original idea for a book on Africa, or sundry, they will first used comparative cases developed and published elsewhere. In examining these cases in regard to causation, they look for fundamental or primary causes, secondary causes, and tertiary causes. Next, they applied these model causation cases to their research proposals of cases in Africa. Originality will arise upon realization that the fundamental or primary to the secondary causation already published would not work, but that the third tertiary cause ratched up originality in the proposed new unpublished case or cases, and the primary and secondary causes in the published cases becomes of lesser importance. And this is the notion...," Brown reported further, "that you must take into the seminars [i.e. the recognition
of...‘national variations in phenomena’] here at Wisconsin and into your proposal for fieldwork in Africa.” Brown ended by saying: “Remember that most scholars will have the access to the same archival data, but it is the difference in one’s intellect that will shape the best outcome.” The advice was excellent.

But without God, chance, and William Allen Brown, I myself would not have ever gotten to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Just back from fieldwork in Mali and teaching in Nigeria, Kentucky State College (University) invited Brown to speak for Black History month in February 1968. By this time, the late Dr. Henry Ellis Cheaney (1912-2006), the quintessential professor at Kentucky State, and mentor of both Brown and much later myself at Kentucky State in Summer 1962, sent to me a telegram at Crispus Attucks High School in Indianapolis saying: “Your classmate William Brown is just back from West Africa and his first academic appointment will be at Yale University. Why don’t you come down to hear him speak and afterwards, since you have become interested in Africa history, I will arrange for the two of you to meet and see whether he can assist you into being admitted to Wisconsin to study African history.”

With permission to miss a class from the Vice Principal Mr. Chaunault, I jumped into my Volkswagen and headed to Frankfort. I arrived at Bradford Hall at KSU just in time for the
introduction of Mr. Brown by Dr. Harold S. Smith. This was my first time seeing Brown—nine years ago—since our graduation in May 1959. In recollection, the subject of speech took on a moderate Afrocentric perspective, namely: “Africa and its Contributions to World Development.” He took note of about five such developments in his eloquent voice for the ages; each time followed with commentary:

1. Africa as the Cradle of Humankind: Commentary (Brown knew about the 1.7 million years old Zinjanthropus findings and later the Homo Sapien Lucy at 2.6 millions years old, but Brown passed on before most of us were even apprised recently of the fossil findings of Ardipithecus ramidus or better known as Ardi in the Middle Awash Valley area of Ethiopia. Ardi was a million years while Lucy was about 2.7 million years old. 37 (Source: Jamie Shreeve, “4 Million Year Old Woman: ’The Evolutionary Road,’” National Geographic, July 2010:35-67)

2. Multiracialism (in Globality): Commentary

3. Africa and the Performing Arts and Cubism (1907-1914): Commentary


The address was well received for an audience that knew mostly little about Africa but the audience loved Mr. Brown.

More importantly, I recall waiting around until after Brown had completed his schedule of bristling activities at Kentucky in February 1968 as Dr. Cheaney could be seen chauffeuring Brown around the campus with Brown sitting in the backseat. With his mission complete at KSC, shortly thereafter, Brown and I rode to Frisch’s Big Boy on East Main Street for coffee to discuss my research interest in Africa and to strategize about my possible admission to Wisconsin’s elite Department of History. We both had pens for writing, but neither of us had any paper to write on. As our discussions moved along, I began writing on a napkin. Afterwards, Brown said that I should rewrite the data on return to Indianapolis and send it to Professor M. Crawford Young, an influential professor in the politics of Africa, and one who was apparently sitting on a lot of graduate fellowship money for recruitment in Bascom Hall. I did as told and wrote to Professor Young, a political scientist, at the recommendation of Mr. William Allen Brown. Seeing that my academic interest was more historical than political science, he wrote me back and said that he had sent my letter and “Statement of Purpose Letter” to Professor Philip D. Curtin in the Department of History. (As an aside, I still have a copy of my original
“Statement of Purpose Letter” written in longhand that was first read by Professor Young, dated 1968; the document was once on file in Bascom Hall because I saw it by accident in the Patton folder with my other recommendations in Winter 1974. It is now attached as an Appendix to this paper.) Professor Curtin next called then Mr. William Brown, who told Curtin about my straight A’s at Howard University in African Studies and foreign languages preparation then in the process of being studied (French and German). In late March 1968, a letter arrived from Wisconsin, but I was afraid to open it, “Just another rejection, after Harvard, Columbia, and the University of Maryland-College Park, that’s all,” I said to myself. A close friend, now Dr. Benjamin Robinson (PhD) just happened to drop by, and he opened the letter. He said, ‘Pat, you are in at Wisconsin and you have been admitted to the Seminar on “African Migrations” for Fall 1968. Trained to be guarded, I held back my emotions. The letter of admission came not from the Graduate School but from The Great One and, as I’ve told my students over the years, the professor who is “The God of African History”—none other than Professor Jan Vansina. Upon my arrival at UW-M, Brown took me to Vansina in his office speaking in perfect French to Vansina, just a few days before the beginning of Fall 1968. Vansina greeted me warmly and provided me with guidance that determined my place in the program and my future in African history. He
said:”...If you enroll in Hausa Language, the Title VI Program will pay your tuition and this language will prepare you for research in West Africa.” I followed Vansina’s direction, enrolled in his seminar on Migrations, wrote my first two papers on the Nilotes of East Africa and the role of serology in identifying Nilotic migration patterns.

I am forever grateful to Dr. Brown for telling me what to write on that napkin back at Frisch’s Big Boy on 709 East Main Street and on the corner of Rolling Acres, February 1968, where stands now a CVS Pharmacy. I pass this corner each year as I return to Kentucky State for Homecoming and reminisce about that GREAT GAME CHANGING MOMENT in my life February 1968! On the one hand, Brown made only two visits to Kentucky State University after his graduation in 1959: Black History Month, February 1968, and Founders Day, October 1977, on the other hand.39

What I find unique is that Brown and I came from the same college, and I ended up after him studying African History at Wisconsin in about the fourth generation. As a former musician, Brown knew that I liked to hang out in taverns and clubs and so did he. Shortly upon my arrival, he suggested that we take a ride to “Mr. P’s” on South Park Street, a black owned tavern by the father of the late Eugene Parks (1947-2005). We sat down and ordered; and then I recall him saying: ”Now, Adell, let me
tell you something; when those folk up there [at Wisconsin] start to drive you crazy, you just get in your car and come here!”\textsuperscript{40} We had a great time on this day, as I recall.

But there is where the commonality ended in regard to “DIFFERENT ROADS TAKEN TO THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON.” I descended from the “Bottom Stuck” and came with a cultural Baggage to Wisconsin that will now be revisited and documented elsewhere in two unpublished volumes. The people of “The Bottom Stuck” did not have the protection of the law, and they had to start all over again after each generation and without inheritance since 1865. According to Arkansas historian Kenneth Barnes: “In Arkansas most of the African Americans could neither read nor write (55.6 percent of black adult males were illiterate in the 1890 census). Thus, school teachers or preachers often corresponded for whole groups of people.”\textsuperscript{41} (Do Not Read to Save Time, Go To Page 38

Parenthetically, Beyond Arkansas, historian Lawrence W. Levine explores the illiteracy rate of blacks as a whole in the American nation from December 6, 1865 up to the 1950s: Do Not Read to Save Time, Go To page 35

“At the time of emancipation at least 93 per cent of the adult Negroes in the United States were illiterate. In 1870 the number had been reduced to
about 80 per cent; by 1890, 56 per cent [slightly higher than Barnes 55.2 percent in 1890]; by 1900, 44 per cent; by 1910, 30 per cent; by 1920, 23 per cent; by 1930, 16 per cent; by 1940, 11 per cent [my generation]; 1950, 10 per cent. Thus in the eight decades following emancipation the figures were reversed. When freedom first came, more than nine out of ten blacks had been illiterate; by the mid-twentieth century, nine out of ten were literate. Literacy brought no miraculous changes in the external situation of the ex-slaves, though it clearly did increase their options in the long run. The most important initial changes brought about by the advent of literacy were internal: Changes in perception and world view. The massive discrimination against black students in school systems throughout the nation, especially the South, undoubtedly kept a far larger percentage of blacks than whites from progressing much beyond the level of sheer literacy—the minimal ability to read and write. Yet that very change was to bring about a revolutionary shift in Afro-American consciousness."
Until separate black high schools were built, they had access to only an eight grade education in the rural countryside, where school attendance was based on the slave planting calendar called the "Split-Term." One had to be reintroduced in each term to what one had been taught in the previous term. PhDs teaching us in the classrooms—who were they? Something to eat? The teachers, of whom we called some by the title “Fessors,” had only a high school education or attended a “Negro College” part time. The blacks worked in the cotton fields from “Cain’t to Cain’t,” meaning “you started when you cain’t see and you stopped when you cain’t see.”

Born in 1936 off the road in a two room shack on the J.D. Heustess Plantation, St. Francis County, South of Forrest City, Willie Wilson Patton—my mother of African-Irish descent—and I were picking cotton under the 95 degree heat from the sun in Spring-Summer 1953 on her ancestor’s place—the Wilson Family Farm. Adell Sr. or Papa, as I called him, was plowing with the mule a short distance away. Wearing straw hats and applied Nadinola Bleaching Cream on our faces to shield the sun and to prevent us from getting blacker than we were, my neck began to hurt from holding my hoe in one position for long periods. It was getting close to Noon. I could tell time this way because I could barely see my shadow.
Willie was singing Negro spirituals in the minor mode.

Next she prayed to Jesus to erase the work of oppression from her consciousness as she chopped the weeds from the budding stalks. That was the Spring-Summer year of 1953. I interrupted her singing and praying and said: “Mama, my neck is hurting, and I want to go to the house and help fix the dinner.” I was tired of this type of work that I never saw white folks do. Mama stopped and turned to me and shouted to me: “Get to work, Boy! We is the ‘Cursed Sons of Ham’; the ‘Hewers of wood and drawers of water [for the congregation] (found in Jos, 9, verses 21-27 and Numbers, 21, verses 47).’” Realizing for the first time that I was a “Cursed Son of Ham,” I accepted my life’s malediction of this inheritance and went back to chopping cotton. I was 15 years old. Quickly flashing forward, I was 33 years of age at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Fall 1969, when my subscription issue of the Journal of African History, Vol. X Number 4 (1969) arrived. And then liberation from my 16 years of malediction began to be lifted. I opened the issue to Edith Sanders article: “The Hamitic Hypothesis; its origins and functions in time perspective,” 521-532. I read the article and realized that this “Curse of Ham” notion was an Exegesis and Invented Tradition on the Bible based on polygenesis thought; and that it all began with Napoleonic’s invasions of Egypt in 1798. His theologian-scholars manipulation’s of our UW-M
historian’s Gerder Lerner’s functions of history\textsuperscript{44} had made Africa and its African diaspora descendants “The Step Child” of the World in the globality of history. Even more, according to historian Ivan Evans in his book \textit{Cultures of Violence: lynching and racial killing in South Africa and the American South} (2009), the white Evangelical Protestants of America supported the \textit{Exegesis} of the “Curse of Sons of Ham”; and racialized the “Negro” as synonymous with \textit{Chattel Slavery}, i.e. slavery for life.\textsuperscript{45} This was in spite of the fact that biblical scriptures show that slavery was to last for only six years and the seventh year was the year of Jubilee (found in Exodus, Chapter 21:verse 2; there may be other Chapter-verses to the contrary).

Hence, the “Curse” and the uprooted nature of the African Diasporas made the Forced First Great Black Migration of the Middle Passage, the Second Great Black Migration, and the Third Great Black Migration to the industrial North, the worst of all diaspora migrations in globality. Unlike in the \textit{Old World} where mobility was based on \textit{Ascending Miscegenation} that allowed for children of slave ancestry to assume the biological and cultural status of the father, in the \textit{New World} of the Eastern Arkansas Delta and beyond in the South and North, one found constraints placed on mobility based on the \textit{Descending Order of Color}. The old folks back home put \textit{Descending Order} very simply: “If you
white you right, if you brown stick around, and if you black get back.”

This changing exponential shift in African American thought from “descending mobility” to “ascending mobility” was noted in the January 20, 2008 inauguration of President Barack Obama. As you may recall, Rev. Joseph Lowery--an icon of the Civil rights Movement and founding member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)--gave the Benediction; and to the delight of the newly inaugurated president, Lowery evoked his laughter, when he ended his prayer by saying:

“……….Lord, in the memory of all the saints who from their labors rest, and in the joy of our new beginning, we ask you to help us work for that day when black will not be asked to get in back, when brown can stick around...when yellow will be mellow...when the red man can get ahead, man; and when white will embrace what is right.

That all those who do justice and love mercy say Amen.”

Hence, other than my birth, my four Game Changing Great Moments occurred right here at “DIFFERENT ROADS TAKEN TO THE University of Wisconsin-Madison” with: (1) Admission to Kentucky State University, 1955-1959; (2) Drafted and Induction into the U.S. Army, 1960-1962 (twenty-seven months), where I began my
journey into the field of history through a single correspondence course: U.S. History: Colonial America to 1865;
(3) The Dr. Cheaney tutelage and mentoring at Kentucky State University, from Summer 1962 until his death in 2006; (4) Professor Emma Lou Thornbrough (1913-1994), history mentor (1963-1994), Butler University, Indianapolis; (5) Admission to the University of Wisconsin-Madison and with (6), the Fall 1969 deconstruction of my malediction of the “Curse Sons of Ham” at UW-M. This explains why I always say--to the disdain of a few--that there are two places in the world: The University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Africa!

Finally, Brown and I both returned to Wisconsin in 1974. He had just departed from Harvard University, and I had completed 18 months of fieldwork in Northern Nigeria. Here, an event at Wisconsin prompts me to share another interesting story about the recruitment of Brown as a faculty member. According to one professor, who shall remain anonymous, the Department of History had apparently sent out an advertisement for an Affirmative Action appointment. The Committee sat around the table reviewing the applications and finally decided on a serious look at Brown’s application. One Committee member, who was apparently a new hire to the Department of History and unfamiliar with Brown’s reputation, especially after looking at
all of those Arabic citations on Brown’s vita, said with emphasis: “What are we doing here; we are suppose to be looking for an Affirmative Action candidate; let us put this Brown vita in another pile for later.” Nevertheless, Brown received the appointment.

And as matters turned out, Dr. Brown became my supervisor in the writing of my dissertation. I thought that I was going to have it easy—with our shared history of Kentucky State College and all. I recall dropping my first typed introductory chapter on methodology into his box in the History Department. Soon thereafter, I caught up with him in Lorenzo’s, a place that we graduate students and some professors frequented, and I sat down next to him and ordered a beverage for myself. I next raised the question to him in this manner: “So Brown, how did you like the chapter that I turned in to you?” What I heard next would astound you today as much as it did me in the Fall Semester, 1974. He expressed his scholarly displeasure and turned and shouted to me in my ear: “Too much God Damn passive voice!” I said under my breath, “No, he isn’t cursing me; he has forgotten that we are old classmates from Kentucky State. “Wait,” I surmised, “he has just pulled his professional rank on me.” I said not another word. I did not even finish my just ordered full glass of drink at Lorenzo’s that evening. I got up
out of my chair without saying goodbye, went back to our residence in Eagle Heights, and began re-writing my chapter through the night. Before I turned the chapter into Brown this time, however, I turned to the expert assistance of my longtime friend Dr. John E. Belknap, who was my perfectly computer matched roommate in Witte Hall in 1968-1969, and who had proofread every one of my pro-seminar and seminar papers presented to my professors over a three year period and typed some of them, too. “Jack” proofread the chapter and assured me that I had enough active voice this time, for I had not yet heard about nor had I read William Struck, Jr. and E.B. White’s Elements of Style, first published in 1959.

Shortly, I re-submitted the chapter by dropping it in his office box again. A couple of weeks went by before I went back to Lorenzo’s again. Who was sitting almost in our previous chairs? You guessed it, Dr. Brown. I went right on past him, only to hear him say: “Adell, your chapter is fine now.” I nodded nonchalantly because I was still angry at being cursed out! But you can bet this, I turned in well-written chapters after that first caper with Dr. Brown. On February 24, 1974, I received an appointment in the Department of History, Howard University, ABD. And I returned to Madison to defend my dissertation on Monday night, May 15, 1975, for my defense on
Wednesday, May 17, 1975, under the excellent supervision of Dr. William A. “3 Point” Brown. In addition to Brown, the Committee consisted of six other professors in the Frederick Jackson Turner Room, located in the Moose Humanities Building. I recall after completing my oral defense, Brown said: “Adell, you will now leave the room and wait next door, and I will come for you after the Committee completes its deliberations.” I did as told and waited and waited and waited. “What are they doing all this time,” I said to myself. “Are they going to flunk me out?,” I wondered. Finally, Dr. Brown came to the room, extended his hand and said: “Congratulations for successfully defending your defense. The Committee is waiting to extend its congratulations.”

After the Committee had departed, Brown and I went into his office to share the news with Dr. Cheaney at Kentucky State College. Before dialing the phone, I asked him: “Why did the Committee take so long to complete its deliberations. And an emphatic “Brown-ism” contended: “Oh no,” he said: “The Committee never entertained the idea of failing you; they took their time talking about you, asking ‘when did he become so articulate, and the question got asked over and over. “Finally, I said to the Committee: ‘Well, you have to understand that Adell has been up there [at Howard University] teaching those ‘Colored’ folk and
one gets in a lot of practice having to explain things a lot!’”

This was vintage “3 Point “Brown-ism,” who went on in 1983 to supervise the doctoral thesis on the Sudan of Janet Ewald, now professor at Duke University.

The global scholarly impact of “Bill” Brown, however, remains to be assessed in the field of West African Islam. Since university departments often turn to evaluating their faculty’s international reputation by individual citations of faculty publications, I now turn to The SciVerse Scopus database which shows the number of times and in what documents Brown’s PhD Dissertation and his other writings appeared—i.e. “The Caliphate of Hamdullahi ca.1818-1864: A Study in African History and Tradition”--of 1969, the forerunner of his unpublished ms.:”Hamdullahi! Hamudullahi! Hamdullahi: Watani! A Social History and Political History of a West African Nomocracy in the Nineteenth Century,” (Accepted for publication by the University of Wisconsin Press), and his other works have been cited:

1. Mendel, M.

2. Klein, M.A.


Type Document: Article

3. Turner, M.D.


Document Type: Review

4. Klein, M.A.


Document Type: Article

5. Veded, T.

6. Turner, M.D.


Document Type: Article

Total: 6 times


There are many more but I will stop here on the citations of Dr. Brown in other scholars’ publications. But as we can see a lot of scholars stopped at the intellectual “well” of Dr. Brown to drink!

How is “Bill” Brown seen from across the nation? I submit five verbal responses about the remarkable intellect of Dr. Brown 48:

First:

Dr. Eddie Anderson (1937–2012; PhD) is the contributor and writer of this essay. He was formerly President and CEO
"Dear friends and others,

It is a great opportunity to write this statement in remembrance of a friend and former classmate, Dr. William A. Brown. I first met Dr. Brown at Kentucky State College in 1955. He was a freshman the same as other freshmen in status, but appeared as he was, a bit older and more mature than did we ordinary freshman. He was friendly and spoke well. For months I only saw him from a distance, going about his business with aplomb. He seemed like a regular person, a bit paunchy, but regular nonetheless.

By mid-term of the first semester the word was circulating that we had a freshman who was making a lot of heads turn. He was acing all his classes and causing a stir. When time came to select officers, William A. Brown became class president. I had no classes with William Brown my freshman year; thus, I had little contact with him. My contact with him the second year was limited mainly because of my work and practice schedule. However, he was piling up the points and accolades. He was designated "Who's Who in American Colleges
and Universities" and a little bit of everything else he wanted to be. The word was out still that he was making all Ks. Soon the name ‘three-Point Brown’ caught on.

My third year was different. Three-Point Brown's room was across the hallway from mine in the junior-senior dormitory. That is when William A. Brown became "My Most Unforgettable Character"--a term coined by Readers Digest in the sixties (maybe earlier) to introduce their special, human-interest stories. By this time I had begun to smoke cigarettes. Unfortunately, I had started the year before because a fraternity brother of mine had left his sample supply in my room to keep his roommate from smoking them. He invited me to sample them as I pleased. By the time I acquired the habit, my fraternity brother quit his job as cigarette salesman.

I had little money to support my new-found habit. William Brown was a smoker too at that time and was an Air Force veteran. I, as did others, would frequent Brown's room to acquire cigarettes. And, of course, it was not polite to take cigarettes and leave without engaging in some manner of conversation. Through my sojourns to Brown's room and the conversations that ensued, I quickly discovered that William Brown was the first really educated person whom I had ever
met. His conversations were seldom personal, except to talk about his having been stationed with the Air Force in Iceland [corrected to: in Iceland, 4-30-2011] for some time and about his work as a base historian. Sometimes he talked about growing up in New York City and about how bright and talented his younger sister was.

He spoke French fluently and delighted in telling funny stories during which he would laugh heartily or chuckle unceasingly. He told a story once about when he was stationed in Alaska and there was a WAF unit there also. He said that the women drill sergeants were extremely tough on their charges. Once his unit was marching near a women's unit and overheard the drill sergeant say, 'When I say attention, I want to hear 50 pussies snap.' He said that when his unit passed by, they all smacked their lips in unison. He said also that when a colonel in the women's unit was asked if she knew a certain general, she said, 'Yes, I know the beady-eyed mother fucker.' We all chuckled. William Brown had a fantastic sense of humor. And, of course, not all his stories were of that ilk. He loved to talk about his conversations with faculty members and his answers to questions on tests of instructors of whom he was not particularly fond of.
His usual conversations were about famous historical events, classics in art, literature, music, and/or about current political figures. I believe one of his favorites at the time was Adlai Stevenson (1900-1965), whom he thought would have been a brilliant president.

William Brown was not intimidating to talk to despite his vast knowledge. He was probably more intimidating to some of his instructors than to his fellow students. He was always kind and supportive. He was a pleasure to talk to. We all enjoyed him and he reveled in the conversations--which were really teaching sessions--with us. He was a natural teacher. He was our hero. We knew that he was the best.

William Brown was not always beneficial to some of his classmates. They listened to the stories and lessons often well into the night omitting their study time and flunked out of school. Soon knowledge of this risk got around and potential candidates to room with him began to weigh the consequences and thought better than to take the challenge.

Once I thought that I would test William Brown's knowledge in my major field at the time, music. I felt that I was fairly well versed in my field; so I engaged him. I found out quickly that he knew composers, symphonies, concertos, operas, and other forms of music which I was not yet
familiar. He delighted in telling the story lines of operas which I did not know. I was embarrassed and never tried to test his knowledge of any subject again.

By our senior year, 'Three-Point Brown' was still 'Three-Point Brown.' He had not wavered academically or otherwise. He had gotten stronger. He was again president of the senior class; was inducted again into Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities and into the Alpha Kappa Mu National Honor Society; was editor of the school newspaper; and held memberships in many other campus organizations. He literally was allover the place.

In the fall of 1958 William Brown was selected to participate in an oratorical contest to be held at the University of Wisconsin (probably the influencing event for his later return to that university). His fellow classmates and students-at-large were invited to a dress rehearsal of his presentation. He was spectacular. His speech was delivered with such eloquence that one wondered if he were there when the subject of his oratory lived and spoke.

Many of us felt that William Brown would win the contest. But to our chagrin and surprise, he won second place. We were all disappointed but delighted to know that at least some of the judges, we were told, had related to William
Brown and his sponsor that they thought William had won. We still believed in our hearts that he had won the contest. But after all, this was in the 1950's and the world was not yet ready for him.

William A. Brown graduated from Kentucky State College with the highest honors and accolades ever bestowed upon any of its graduates. Additionally, he was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study in France and a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship to study at the University of Wisconsin, the university of choice upon his return to the U.S.

It would be amazing, even today, to read the many letters and communications written and put forth on William A. Brown's behalf. These must have been many and tremendously literate and scholarly on the part of the Kentucky State faculty and others.

The last time I saw Dr. Brown was on Thursday, February 3, 1983. He came to lecture at Howard University. The lecture was open to the public and well attended. Dr. Brown was as gracious as ever. Aside from giving a great lecture, he gave acknowledgement to his friends, former classmates, and schoolmates from his Kentucky State days. He was still a hero to all of us and we loved him because he had remained faithful and never forgot us despite his brilliance.
In the intervening years and after his lecture at Howard University, Dr. Adell Patton, Jr. kept many of us abreast of Dr. Brown's whereabouts, achievements, and state of wellness. We owe Dr. Patton a tremendous debt of gratitude for keeping many of us apprised and connected, at least indirectly, to Dr. Brown, who will always remain our hero and my 'Most Unforgettable Character.' I and others from his past will always honor, revere, and cherish his memory.”

Eddie Anderson

March 3, 2011

Second:

Tue, March 29, 2011 2:45:43 PM

Art Kennedy, Legislative Assistance to Congressman Alcee Lamar Hastings (D.Fl), Orlando, Florida, on William Brown/Kentucky State College....1955-58

“I met William (3.0) Brown at Kentucky State College in 1955. I was a freshman student and so was he. 3. Brown was brilliant and took a liking to me. We were both residents of Atwood Hall and took a few classes together. In all of the classes we took together he was by far the SMARTEST student in the class. In the dormitory we would Be in and out of his room during the night asking questions.”
3. Brown was from New York and had traveled extensively. He was very well read and would let you know it. Our Freshman year the college was having an oratorical contest on the subject: ‘SEGREGATION A WAY STATION, INTERGRATION OUR DESTINATION.’ Mrs. Helen Holmes was our English instructor and 3. Brown told me that he would write the speech if I would give it. I agree to do so and won the contest. That really helped me as a student & as a football player. We became even closer after this event and spent a lot of time talking. I tried my best to get 3. Brown to join a fraternity but he would not have any of it.

When I was expelled from college at the end of my junior year 3. Brown was one of the many who assisted me in Enrolling at South Carolina State College. We stayed in touch with each other for many years. I went on to graduate School at the University of Illinois & he went to the University of Wisconsin.

My friend William 3. Brown was a class act and I am a much better person for having known him.

Third:

“I first heard of William A. Brown in January of 1956, the first semester of my sophomore year at Kentucky State College. Hot news spread around the campus like windblown fire. Brown, a freshman had made four A’s and a B in gym, yielding a grade point average of 2.8 rather than the then perfect 3.0. Brown’s scholastic achievements the first semester of 1956 and thereafter was motivational and inspiring for me. I wanted to be a scholar.

To say that Brown was not a typical freshman was and is a gross understatement. He graduated at the head of his class from New York City’s finest academic school, spent six years in the U.S. Air Force—at home and abroad—and was fluent in French at age 25. Brown made the abstract three point GPA tangible and possible to achieve. I recall him doing it each semester after his first. I tried to do it, but never quite made it. Wanting to see how I measured up to him, on two or more occasions I enrolled in history classes I knew he would be taking. I wanted to try to set the scale on William Brown. I came close but never succeeded.

Years later, after William earned his PhD in history and joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin, I met a
colleague of his, Dr. Arnold Mitchell, who studied at Madison. Dr. Mitchell and I lobbied the U.S. Congress for federal funding and other educational issues. I was able to keep tabs on my friend through Dr. Mitchell.” (Received, Saturday, March 12, 2011)

Fourth,

The late Professor Armstead Robinson (1947-1995) of the University of Virginia-Charlottesville (UVA), Director of UVA’s Carter G. Woodson Center, and "...who was the first black man and the youngest man to receive Yale University’s highest distinction, the Yale Medal for Distinguished Service, had this to say about Dr. Brown in Fall 1991 at UVA: “Brown taught me at Yale University, and he was the best history teacher I ever had.”

Fifth:

Thursday, March 17, 2011 11:15:50 PM

Prof. William Brown

From: Naomi R. Patton, Former student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, now Staff Reporter, Detroit Free Press, and recently appointed to THE DAILY CARDINAL ALUMNI BOARD:

“My very first class with Prof. Brown, I walked in assumed I had an advantage in some familiarity with Africa and with him.
That was Fall 1990. I remembered his visit to my home as a kid on Thursday evening February 3, 1983, at Lanham, Maryland. I'd heard so much about him over the years from my father. This wasn't my first history class at Madison, so I assumed I knew what to expect. We never really acknowledged our connection, which was fine with me since I wanted no hint of special attention. Little did I know, I might as well have been a student who randomly registered for the class.

He walked in looking not at all like I remembered. A bit disheveled. A stretched baseball cap from which his wiry, wild gray afro spilled from all sides. As he began to speak it was clear he was brilliant and irreverent. He talked about the general content of the course, and mentioned the books that would be in the bookstore. He even began a lecture. The class was about half full. Most of us had never studied Africa, so it seemed we hung on every word. But there was another reason. Occasionally throughout the hour and after, we exchanged bewildered looks, shrugging our shoulders as if to say, 'Beats me.' The class ended and there we were—with no syllabus. And we would never see one. He was our able and erudite guide, but even more than that—he was mysterious.

Later that semester I found out that a friend of mine that played on the football team had taken his class. He was from
Columbus, Georgia, and had never met encountered anyone, let alone a black man, like Prof. Brown before. I asked him what he thought. Imagine hearing the thickest country accent you might imagine, and then hearing this: "I don't understand a word he's saying, but I know he's smart as fuck." Knowing my friend as I did, it made me think Prof. Brown was terribly gifted as a professor that he could convey his genius to a 19-year-old guy who relied on the Oakland-based rapper Too Short for his philosophy lessons.

I took a **second class** with Prof. Brown in the summer 2000 as a returning adult; this time armed with experience. His unorthodox teaching style still gave you pause if you thought about it enough, but mostly you knew you were learning. One day, I found myself outside his office, with other students. At least three or four of us were waiting for him, despite the fact, he never kept regular office hours (so I can't imagine why we were there). But I remember one of the students expressing the same sentiments as my friend (if not as profane). She casually said she thought he was a really good professor even though he was kind of weird. Tellingly, we all agreed on both counts. And we still wished we had a syllabus.”

This litany of similar responses from across the nation could go on.
But I end now with the following and hopeful lasting words: William Allen Brown was a stalwart in African history, who assisted in developing a number of graduate students, some of whom have become stars in the field; and in my opinion, there will never be another such brilliant Outlier in African Islamic history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. And as we say in the South, “You can depend on it.” I am indeed grateful for this opportunity to share in the memory of my great friend Dr. William Allen “3 Point” Brown and his many “Brown-isms.” His remembrances as an outlier in African history shows how he soared--just like a Hawk--and soared and soared into the academic twilight of University of Wisconsin-Madison and Islamic Africa!

I thank you very much for this evening, Thursday, April 28, 2011, Wisconsin Memorial Union, Main Lounge.
Endnotes

1. I express profound thanks to the following persons for being “the main shakers and movers in organizing the events [email from Tom Spear: July 5, 2011]” for this Third Memorial lecture: James Delehanty (Associate Director, African Studies), Catherine A. Reiland (Assistant Director, African Studies), and Professors of the Department of History James Sweet (Winner of the AHA James A. Rawley Prize in Atlantic History, January 6, 2012, Chicago) and Neil Kodesh (Co-Winner of the Melville Herkovits Award for the African Studies Association best book, November 2011). I express appreciation to Attorney Carlton B. Cummings, J.D., Law Department, City of Philadelphia, for support rendered (UW-M, M.A., Political Science). Dr. Brown would have approved this statement of appreciation.


2. Gladwell, Outliers, p.42.


9. Mrs. Iona Whitehurst, The Joy Lawrence Carteret County Registrar of Deeds, Courthouse Square, Beaufort, NC 25816-1898. In January-February, 2011. The Brown family and I will always be indeed grateful for all of her indispensable and voluntary
efforts; “Beaufort, North Carolina,” http://www.beaufort-nc.com;


18. William A. Brown and Adell Patton, Jr. Historical Conversations, 1955-2005; and see William Allen Brown,


William R. Harvey, “Op-Ed Article to the Wall Street Journal,” President of Hampton University, Chairman, President’s Advisory Board on Historically Black colleges And Universities (HBCUs), January 11, 2011:4-5.


24. Kentucky State University, Frankfort, Kentucky, Secretary Book: Class Minutes, 1955-1959 (Dr./Mrs. Jeweline Fulton Brown, PhD(class of 1959), provided me with this source at KSU Homecoming, 2007. The Secretaries were Wanda Jackson, Mary R. Holt, Lucille Samuels, Anna Porterfield, Emma chambers--Class Minutes 1955-1956 (Freshman), 1956-1957 (Sophomore), 1957-1958 (Junior), 1958-1959 (Senior)
Mr. John M. Brown (KSU, class of 1959) confirmed this fact during the festivities at the Kentucky State University Homecoming, on Saturday, October 8, 2011, in the presence of his wife Dr. Jeweline Fulton Brown.


Brown’s notion about how originality is achieved in research is substantiated in a number of studies on comparative history but especially see another Wisconsin history outlier graduate, David Thelen, “The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History,” 972, 965-975, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 86 No.3 (December 1999): 972, 965-975, “The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History—A Special Issue.”


William A. Brown and Adell Patton, Jr. Historical Conversations, 1955-2005; see the vindication of Brown’s
perspective about the importance of “Mr. P’S” to UW-M black students and other black folk in Madison in the recent Dan Simmons, “Madison’s African Americans have fewer black-owned nightspots even as population grows [17,000 blacks],” Wisconsin State Journal, Sunday Edition, June 26, 2011:A1, A13.


47. Dr. John E. Belknap and degrees: BA, History, U Mich, 1961; MA, Interl Econ and Portuguese, 1969; MA, UW-M Agri Econ, 1975 (given for just passing the PhD Prelims);PhD, UW-M, AGRI and Resource Econ, 1979 (The dept changed their title).

8, 2007, Madison, Wisconsin. Tom did a great job here in recording and typing these documents.