

Chapter 13 *Brown* & White Citizens Councils

A longer-lasting reaction to *Brown* came about with birth of the first “Citizens Council.” This unique white Mississippi organization was quickly formed on July 11, 1954, in the Sunflower County seat of Indianola at the home of D.H. Hawkins, manager of a local cotton compress.

Council members pledged to fight integration with any means necessary, including using the services of the newly invigorated Ku Klux Klan. Growth was rapid, and by 1959, with the election of Governor Ross Barnett, a “Councilor” himself, the Citizen’s Councils were in tight control of the state.

One Itta Bena family soon learned of this new terrorism when a relative, Booker T. Nixon, was lynched in October of 1959. He died in Coahoma county hospital in Clarksdale after remaining in a coma from Oct. 12 until Oct. 23.

A 35-year-old Korean veteran, Nixon was found in a ditch outside of the small town of Marks by a Sheriff’s deputy; Nixon was nude and suffering from abrasions, cuts and contusions. He was reported as a hit and run victim but “Persons who viewed Nixon’s body report that it looked like it had been dragged from a car since most of the flesh on his abdomen and back had been savagely torn from his body.”^{xi}

Mississippi authorities would not grant permission for an autopsy upon Nixon’s death, but the attending physician noted brain injuries and head fractures that would come if dragged by a car, “perhaps, over some grass.”

Mrs. Nixon and his uncle, James, hired an attorney to demand the governor call for an investigation. Nixon had been working in the small town of Crenshaw and had been on the job driving a truck for only three days before the injuries that led to his death.

CITIZENS COUNCILS FOUNDER, Robert B. “Tut” Patterson, managed a 1,500-acre cotton plantation in Leflore County. Charter members for Patterson’s Citizens Council included Arthur B. Clark, a Harvard-educated lawyer; Herman Moore, an Indianola banker and Hawkins, along with the town mayor, the county sheriff, a farmer with large landholdings, a smaller farmer, a farm manager, a dentist, a gin operator, a farm implement dealer, two auto dealers, a druggist, and a hardware merchant. All men “pledged at the charter meeting to preserve segregation and called for a public meeting at the Indianola town hall one week later.”^{xii}

The second meeting attracted between 70 and 100 white men who were told by Moore the meeting “should have been held 30 years ago ... when it was very noticeable that the Negro was organizing.... Then there was a light in every Negro church, every night, regardless of the time you passed.... The Negro continued to meet and organize and through their concerted efforts, with the help of what I believe to be subversive groups and others, have made them a force to be reckoned with.”^{xiii}

Then “cutting to the heart of the matter,” Clark told those gathered “the solution to this problem [enforced desegregation] may become easier if various agitators and the like could be removed from the communities in which they operate.” This would be done through “economic pressure upon those men who cannot be controlled otherwise.”^{xiv}

Patterson was motivated enough to spend the rest of his life growing Citizens Councils and their neo-Nazi successor, the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC) because – he often told others – he did not want his daughter to attend elementary school with black children, whom he detested.

But in *Let the People Decide*,^v Todd J. Moya wrote that Patterson, even before *Brown*, had “railed against the two-headed monster of miscegenation and Communism...[and] portrayed himself as a modern-day Paul Revere in a desperate race to warn his neighbors of the dangers that approached.”^v

Citizens Councils soon became the most powerful organization in Mississippi dedicated to preserving white supremacy; within two years, there were more than 200,000 members in 600 council chapters throughout the South, half of them in Mississippi alone.

In November 1954, the Citizens Councils published a pamphlet to let others know what they were about, declaring:

The Citizens' Council is the South's answer to the mongrelizers. We will not be integrated! We are proud of our white blood and our white heritage of six centuries.... If we are bigoted, prejudiced, un-American etc., so were George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and other illustrious forebears who believed in segregation. We choose the old paths of our founding fathers and refuse to appease anyone, even the internationalists.

Citizens Councils quickly responded to the NAACP as it assisted its branches in petitioning local school boards to desegregate: The Sunflower County Citizens Council in July organized a boycott of all African Americans who signed the school desegregation petition. Then in Yazoo City, names of the fifty-three professionals who signed the petition were printed in the local paper. All who signed were either fired, boycotted, forced to remove their names or forced to leave town.

Shortly after the first Citizens Councils became a reality, the *New York Post* sent a reporter into the Deep South on a fact-finding mission. Reporter Stan Optowsky spoke plainly in his assessment, calling the Councils “a loose federation [with the] avowed purpose [to] battle the principle and practice of integration, and to crush all – the Negro and white – who dare advocate the colored man’s rights.”

After spending five weeks doing research, the reporter declared the “actual purpose was to elect the ‘right’ candidate; to maintain cheap labor; to eliminate a gnawing business competitor; to protect a shaky job; and to make ‘a few fast bucks.’”^{vi}

“The success of this movement is staggering. It collects about \$2 million a year in dues, and does not account for one penny to its members. It induces Jews to belong to an anti-Semite organization; it pressures Catholics into joining an anti-Catholic organization. Even its enemies live in such terror that they literally beg not to be identified publicly, lest they be socially and financially ruined in a matter of months,” Optowsky wrote.

While the first Council meeting was secret, the *Post* reporter claimed to have a copy of the meeting’s first speech, given by banker Herman Moore “who makes this very frank admission: ‘The best thing, we think, is to put him (the Negro) right where we have stayed for 30 years and keep him guessing.’”^{vii} Optowsky added to his story:

Councils have made a special point of snuffing out the dangers of the Negro as a political force. Many of their units have committees which check the voting registration and purge it of Negroes through loss of job or make threats of violence. Mississippi, with the nation's largest Negro population, has 13 counties without a single Negro voter and nine more with less than six Negro voters ... although these pressures upon Negroes by the Councils are well known, there's a less publicized but even greater danger [that] whites, too, are subjected to the same terror if they dare stray from the most rigid segregation line.

The domination is total. There is no middle ground, no shade of gray. Only black and white. And woe betide the black! "Stand up and be counted" is the rallying cry at each Council organization meeting, and once, in Alabama, a newspaper reporter who didn't stand up simply because he was writing at the press bench was lifted bodily by two burly rednecks... Business men are badgered by delegations to join up or face boycotts. Ministers are booted from their jobs without ceremony if they protest. With people worked up as they are, it was inevitable that the Ku Klux Klan would simultaneously rise from the dead.... The Klan does not claim the niceties which the Councils wear as their mantle. They're back to flogging again.^{viii}

Help in growing Citizens Councils came from Patterson's "neighbor," Senator Eastland, who wanted to grow an even larger organization for himself. In the summer of 1955, Eastland announced it was "essential that a nation-wide organization be set up" to "mobilize and organize public opinion" throughout the United States in order to combat school desegregation. The senator said that a "great crusade" would be required to fight the NAACP, CIO, and "all the conscienceless pressure groups who are attempting our destruction."^{ix}

Within a month of Eastland's statement, the Federation for Constitutional Government (FCG), a short-lived organization, was formed in Memphis. Representatives from twelve Southern states came together with the support of Eastland, Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, former Governor Fielding Wright of Mississippi, U. S. Representative John Bell Williams of Mississippi, and other politicians.

Patterson, Judge Thomas Brady and William J. Simmons were elected to positions on the executive committee. John U. Barr of Louisiana was selected president, and it was Eastland's intention that the Federation would "coordinate" the work of the Citizens Councils and several other organizations.

Many members of the Citizens Councils did not share this view, however, and in April 1956, sixty-five representatives from Citizens Councils in eleven Southern states secretly met to form their own "overseer," the Citizens Councils of America. The following October, CCA selected Patterson as secretary.

From 1954 to 1989, Patterson spent his time growing the Citizens Councils, as he traveled thousands of miles around the Southeastern states to meet with members and their leaders. As Council numbers grew to over 300,000 members, Eastland helped out, by calling on state governments to fund the movement, even though he was not in control.

Within the first three years, Citizens Councils overseers were freely using the television stations of the U. S. Congress to produce a fifteen minute television program, Citizens Council Forum, broadcast weekly on

twelve television stations in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia, courtesy of Eastland.^x

Councils' work expanded as the organization grew. Once the Civil Rights Act of 1960 was passed, authorizing judges to appoint referees to help blacks register and vote, the CCA called for establishing a separate African American state, for passage of the African repatriation bill sponsored by U. S. Senator Russell Long (D-LA), and for a "Negro relocation plan" that would distribute the South's "surplus" blacks evenly among the states.

Several CCA chapters forced evicted black families onto buses headed out of the region and some Citizens Councils ran Reverse Freedom Rides, sending black volunteers into the North as a publicity stunt supporting voluntary migration and resettlement of blacks. "The plantation bloc seemed to be laughing at the entire nation as it made a joke out of its mass destruction of the African American rural community."^{xi}

Years later, in 1985, Gordon Lee Baum helped Patterson co-found the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), the CCA offshoot.^{xii} Baum had been a regional director in the first Citizens Councils.^{xiii} Patterson remained actively involved in CCC, and was still writing for the organization's journal, *The Informer*, in 2005.

An *Intelligence Report* from the Southern Poverty Law Center reported that names of CCC members are not public. But after collecting the names of 175 members mentioned in council publications and elsewhere, the *Report* "was able to document ties to racist groups of 17 of those members — almost 10 percent of the total." Claiming 15,000 members in 1999, CCC was in the news when Mississippi Sen. Trent Lott landed in hot water after it was revealed he spoke before the group again in 2005, as various state legislators and judges were scheduled to attend CCC meetings.^{xiv}

While the presence and degree of racism in the CCC varies from chapter to chapter, the *Intelligence Report* of the Southern Poverty Law Center found "a significant number of members have been linked to unabashedly racist groups including the Invisible Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan; the Carolina Knights of the Ku Klux Klan; the National Association for the Advancement of White People; the America First Party; and the neo-Nazi National Alliance. Others have ties to militant 'Patriot' organizations such as the extreme-right-wing Populist Party and David Duke."^{xv}

INDIANOLA, SET ALONG the banks of the cypress-studded Indian Bayou, had provided a "natural birthplace" for such a white supremacist movement, observed historian Neil R. McMillen of the University of Southern Mississippi and author of "The Citizens Council." The seat of Sunflower County, near Eastland's vast plantation, was the trading center in the heart of Mississippi's cotton-rich and politically conservative Delta region:

Then, as today, the county was overwhelmingly rural, and most of its 56,031 people earned their livelihood from agriculture. In Sunflower County — where Negroes in 1950 comprised 68 percent of the total population, but accounted for only .03 percent of the registered voters — white resistance to racial equality obscured all other issues. Here, organized segregation would flourish nearly as well as premium staple cotton."^{xvi}

The speed in forming Councils was directly related to Mississippi's defiant mood.^{xvii} But there was another reason, too - a leadership structure for the Councils was already in place by 1954. By simply overlapping membership of the powerful and planter-controlled Delta Council, it was fairly simple for the groups at least to quickly come together under one umbrella of experienced leadership. And that is exactly what occurred.^{xviii}

Patterson – football hero, paratrooper, organizer, segregationist

Robert Patterson had no idea of how powerful his Citizens Councils would become. But the retired World War Two paratrooper would not have settled for a weak attempt at stopping *Brown*, he asserted when interviewed some fifty years later from his home in the Delta town of Itta Bena outside of Greenwood.^{xix}

Born at home in Clarksdale on December 13, 1921, Patterson's earliest recollection is of his father, "holding me up to look into a bird's nest on the porch." Judge Harvey Ross of Clarksdale offered a less kindly impression of Patterson's father during an interview in 1994: "Tut's father, old man Patterson, was the toughest racist who ever walked the streets of this town."^{xx}

Patterson, nonetheless, sees himself as having lived the ideal childhood, in the house built by his grandfather featuring six bedrooms and five baths, a large lawn with a long hill that sloped down to a creek behind the house. "Beyond the creek were alfalfa and cotton fields where we roamed and hunted rabbits and doves. We spent countless hours watching crawfish and small fish in the creek. ... When we had flood rains the creek would be three hundred feet wide. When it snowed ... we would slide down the hill ... with children from all over town."

School was just eight blocks from home, and when it was raining, "Sylvester, our yardman, cook, butler, housekeeper and chauffeur would take us in our old Pontiac. Sylvester worked for us for twenty years and was one of the finest people I ever knew. He had a little house in our back yard and lived there. He had a key to our house and would come in at five each morning to build fires in all the fireplaces and a big one in the furnace in the cellar, which heated the radiators."

Boy Scouts were important for Patterson and his white friends. Clarksdale had two troops [white], Troop 5 and Troop 7, which met in the American Legion Hut "just four blocks" from Patterson's house. "I joined Troop 7 and we went to Boy Scout Camp at Camp Tallaha near Charleston every summer. One of my proudest achievements was becoming an Eagle Scout. It cost \$5 a week to go to camp."

Patterson's father became wealthy by building the first ice plant in Mississippi "but lost everything when refrigerators became popular." His mother died from a stroke after years of high blood pressure. When the Depression hit in 1929, "Nobody had money, but we were never hungry. Daddy was a cotton merchant and I remember when he got a job making \$150 a month. I thought we were rich."

At Mississippi State, after catching a long pass for a touchdown, Patterson assisted in the defeat of Alabama, becoming the first state team to win the Southeastern Conference Championship. After graduation, he entered the military, was assigned to the British Royal Air Force, and was later quartered with paratroop officers from the 82nd and 101st airborne divisions. At the War's end, Patterson was discharged as a Major; while in Europe he had made a total of 16 parachute jumps in all of the major campaigns.

In the fall of 1951, a polio epidemic struck Sunflower County. Patterson came down with the virus and was sent to the isolation hospital in Vicksburg where he remained for eighteen days. “Neither my family nor anyone else was allowed to visit. I lay on a board and could feel the paralysis settling into my legs and arms. Patterson finally returned home and gradually regained most of his strength “until no one but me could tell that I was slightly crippled.... Of the nine men who were in my ward in Vicksburg, I am the only one who ever walked again or who lived past a few years.”

When “Black Monday” came, Patterson “knew as did most white Southerners that our schools would be destroyed and would be absolutely unacceptable for white children to attend.” At the time, Sunflower County had a black population of about 80 percent. Patterson spoke with “a number of Indianola’s leading citizens and we decided to organize to try to protect our schools and our children.”

Patterson’s sudden interest in this topic was not new. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) noted in 1956 that Patterson had previously written for anti-Semitic publications, including the *National Renaissance Bulletin*. He told representatives of B’nai B’rith that if their ADL branded him as anti-Semite, he would not deny it.^{xxi}

Patterson was elected executive secretary of the Association of Citizens Councils of Mississippi with an office in Winona. Within a year, the association moved headquarters to Greenwood. Word spread and the organization grew to the point “where we built a fine office building in Jackson and made it our State and National Headquarters.”

Many U. S. Congressmen and Senators plus local mayors, ministers, governors, and other officials were “on our side,” Patterson recalled. W. J. Simmons, the son of a Jackson banking family, joined the movement and became “a valuable leader.... He is also a dear friend.”^{xxii}

Patterson claimed his successes in building the Councils so quickly came from years playing football: “I learned in football the team that makes the fewest mistakes wins.” At the age of 84, the senior Mississippian used his cane tip to tap out the framed certificates on his wall awarded after World War II and for Indianola’s Citizen of the Year. The mid-morning interview took place at his home office in Itta Bena, where a book on the *Reich* stood out on his mahogany desktop.

The Patterson home is set on a large lot next to a bayou. “We were able to purchase all of the land down to the water. It’s safer and no one can just move next door,” Patterson pointed out.

The conversation moved to the Pattersons’ children and their individual achievements. One daughter married a Moroccan – “Moroccans are like Europeans, you know. They have kings.”^{xxiii}

Are Citizens Councils – original version – still in tact? Patterson said they are still meeting around the Delta. “People would be surprised.”

AFTER *BROWN*, MISSISSIPPI picked up a new holiday – “Black Monday.” Judge Thomas Pickens Brady (pronounced Braddie, as it used to be spelled) fanned segregation flames by renaming the day of the Supreme Court’s school desegregation decision as “Black Monday.” His suggestion was a quick hit with the Greenwood Sons of the Revolution audience (where he first tried it out) and then with others around the state.

The former Dixiecrat asserted the Supreme Court ruling was communistic and soon expanded his speech into a 90-page document, "Black Monday," full of typos and promoting organized resistance to integration. Brady's pamphlet was an encyclopedia of racist ideas that proposed the creation of a 49th state solely for blacks, and contained such observations as: "Whenever and wherever the white man has drunk the cup of black hemlock, whenever and wherever his blood has been infused with the blood of the Negro, the white man, his intellect and his culture have died."

Brady's document^{xxiv} became a source of inspiration for Patterson and the Councils movement, and was distributed widely.^{xxv} Funds from Wycliffe Draper were quite possibly used for printing and distributing the Brady document.^{xxvi} With the goals of the Civil Rights Movement perceived by Draper as posing a great threat, the racist financier had already "opened wide his purse strings between the late 1950s until his death in 1972, pouring huge amounts of money into various anti-integration projects conducted by some of the most ardent racists."^{xxvii}

Another of Mississippi's "most ardent racists," W.J. Simmons, was once referred to as "Dixieland apartheid's number one organization man" by a political journalist and then tagged "extremist ... even by Mississippi standards" by the *New York Times*.^{xxviii}

Simmons, considered the "shadow ruler behind Governor Barnett,"^{xxix} had quickly usurped Patterson's power and prestige, becoming the chief organizer and administrator of the Citizens Councils of America. Simmons later inherited control of a large portion of Draper's resources,^{xxx} likely making his first contact with Draper via Eastland.

Not much is known about Simmons' background. During World War II, he served as a civilian with the Royal Engineers of the British Army and later briefly in the U. S. Navy. Simmons told others that his views on race hardened while he was in Jamaica, claiming that "a caste system had sprung up there among Negroes of various shades creating, endless problems," wrote George Thayer in *The Farther Shores of Politics: The American Political Fringe Today*.^{xxxi}

It was easy to see why national publications tagged Simmons as an extremist: As editor of *The Citizen*, the Citizens Council's official publication, Simmons – "perhaps the Councils' most indefatigable speaker...reflecting much of the members' attitudes" – editorially asserted that a "three-pronged attack" was being mounted against constitutional freedoms, "beginning with an attempt to reach an agreement with Soviet Russia, and including recognition of that country and the Test Ban Treaty."

Simmons once advised "an attack was under way on the white race, that all races were to be submerged in a sea of egalitarianism through integration ... to be ruled by a liberal elite in a planned society." His articles typically ranged from school segregation to "the lower intelligence" of black children. One entire issue of the newsletter was devoted to "How to Start a Private School," reflecting a major objective of Simmons and the Citizens Councils. The editor also wrote such pamphlets as "Why Segregation Is Right" that could be purchased by Councilors.

Perhaps coincidentally, Simmons shared the same name as the Methodist preacher from Alabama who in 1915 reorganized the Ku Klux Klan in the South after it had nearly collapsed. When researcher Tucker asked Simmons if he was related to the earlier "W. J. Simmons" of Alabama, the retired Citizens Councils

administrator would only say he didn't "talk about the old days." (The consensus is that Simmons is "probably not" related.)

Numerous Sovereignty Commission files show that Simmons spied on civil rights groups, shared information with agencies including the Commission, and was not bashful in asking that civil rights advocates be harassed.^{xxxii}

In March 1964, another Sovereignty Commission report showed Simmons was able to get his hands on grand jury testimony about Medgar Evers. Zack J. Van Landingham, a Sovereignty Commission investigator, reported having a meeting with district Attorney Bob Nichols "with reference to the testimony of Medgar Evers before a Grand Jury in Hinds County some months ago."^{xxxiii}

"Mr. Nichols advised that he had furnished copies of this testimony to Mr. W.J. Simmons, head of the Citizens' Council, and Governor J.P. Coleman. He said he had only 1 copy left. I told him I would endeavor to get hold of Governor Coleman's copy. Mr. Nichols stated that if I was unsuccessful in securing the Governor's copy to come see him again, and he would see that I got a copy...Mr. Nichols advised that there was considerable information relative to the NAACP in Mississippi in this testimony. He said, however, that Evers had been caught in several lies in giving this testimony."

Years earlier, on September 18, 1959, Van Landingham reported that Simmons contacted him about an upcoming Southern Christian Ministers Conference of Mississippi that included Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. along with other speakers from around the country. Simmons wanted "these speakers coming here from out of the state ... harassed as much as possible."

Simmons specifically wanted Dr. King "arrested by the police, taken down, fingerprinted and photographed ... [and] had already conferred with Chief of Detectives Pierce about such procedures."

Van Landingham spoke with Sam Ivy, director of the Bureau of Identification and "Arrangements were made whereby we could use the recording instrument of the Mississippi Highway Patrol... I will take some steps to see what pressure can be brought to bear on any of [the speakers] and possibly get the meeting cancelled."^{xxxiv}

Researcher Dr. Tucker also discovered connections between Simmons and the money used to fight the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Records of the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission show the agency was notified on September 12, 1963, by Morgan Guaranty Trust Company of an "anonymous gift" of one hundred thousand dollars granted under condition the source of the gift would be kept confidential.^{xxxv}

The money, actually coming from Draper's Pioneer Fund, was used in the fight against civil rights, Sovereignty Commission files confirm. Even more Draper funds would come into Mississippi once the purse strings were untied, with much of the money to be handed out and eventually controlled by Simmons.^{xxxvi}

Oops!

Erle Johnston, Jr., director of the Sovereignty Commission, was not happy with a newspaper article appearing in *The New York Times* on November 5, 1963. The Commission's money laundering scheme – quietly moving private funds from Draper through the Sovereignty Commission to another private group, CCFAP – was the topic.

Writing to John Synon, director of the Coordinating Committees for Fundamental American Freedoms (CCFAF – the group working to halt passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act) – Johnston cautioned, “This is one of the things that we feared of course that money disbursed through the Sovereignty Commission would appear as tax money rather than as donations from firms, associations, and individuals.

“You do as you like about calling to the attention of [New York Times reporter] Ben Franklin, who probably has an office in the National Press building, the fact that we are receiving donations and that tax money, except for the \$10,000 you know about, is not involved. It is very likely that Mr. Franklin will pick up the additional donations of \$15,000 and \$25,000 which apparently were not reported at the time he wrote his story.” Johnston sent a copy of the letter to John Satterfield.^{xxxvii}

From 1954 to 1972, Harry Frederick Weyher Jr., Draper’s attorney and a later president of the Pioneer Fund, helped finance the White Citizens Councils and the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission in their ongoing segregationist battles. The Pioneer Fund provided money for at least three projects in Mississippi: 1) Publishing and distributing a series of questionable reprints and monographs on race and science, sponsored by *Mankind Quarterly*. One of the books, written by Putnam, “Race and Reason,” opposing racial equality on the basis of blacks’ presumed intellectual inferiority, so stirred Governor Ross Barnett that he and the legislature paid for copies to be placed in all schools. Barnett also called for and held a statewide “Race and Reason” Day; 2) An expensive campaign by the Coordinating Committee for Fundamental American Freedoms to stop passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; 3) A campaign by the Citizens Councils to organize a system of racially segregated private schools as alternative to the public school system. The money to Mississippi often came in “gifts of anonymous stock” from Draper funds.^{xxxviii}

Draper and Weyher typically “took extensive precautions to keep the Colonel’s contributions to these efforts secret, and only in the last two of these cases does a record exist – a smoking gun – specifically linking Draper’s money to the project.” But circumstantial evidence “pointing to in the other three cases is overwhelming.” No doubt is left that he was the source of their funds as well, Tucker stated.^{xxxix}

Tucker and others found in Sovereignty Commission files, first open to the public in 1998 (and more records opened in 2002),^{xl} a number of letters, memos, and reports placing Erle Johnston (one of the commission’s most visible executive directors), Satterfield, and Simmons meeting and corresponding with Weyher and others close to Draper and the Pioneer Fund.^{xli}

Before he died, Weyher frequently denied or threatened legal action when questioned about the source and use of Pioneer Funds. A *Wall Street Journal* reporter contacted Weyher in 1999, asking about donations of stock to the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission. Weyher first claimed that he did not recall the transmission of some quarter million dollars worth of the Colonel’s assets to a campaign against integration in which he himself was intimately involved.

“When revelation of the details of the transactions made his position untenable, Weyher pointed out that there had been nothing illegal in attempting to preserve *de jure* segregation in 1964, a position that was

encoded in law in many states at the time and supported by millions of citizens.... The same observation could once have been made about the Nuremberg Laws,” Tucker wrote.^{xliii}

The *WSJ* reporter tracked the money coming from Draper to CCFAF, via Morgan Guaranty Trust Company and the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission, once the first batch of Sovereignty Commission files were released to the public in 1999.

Douglas A. Blackmon traveled to Jackson and hand-searched files to learn that on Sept. 12, 1963, “a vice president of Morgan Guaranty Trust Co. sent a telegram to the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission ... a Morgan client [informing the state commission] ... the bank was setting aside as an anonymous gift [of] stock valued at \$100,000.” There was only one condition: The donor wanted the fact and amount of the gift to be kept confidential:

The matter was referred directly to Mississippi Gov. Ross Barnett, who agreed to the terms and that same day, sent Morgan instructions on where to send the cash. Once the money arrived in Mississippi, it was funneled to an account in Washington, D. C., where segregationists were launching a fierce campaign to defeat landmark civil-rights legislation abolishing segregation in most public facilities. And in the ensuing months, the mystery contributor would follow up with additional, substantial gifts to help the cause.

For nearly four decades, the role of that donor remained concealed in the files of the now-defunct Sovereignty Commission. But last year, a federal judge ordered the unsealing of more than 130,000 commission files. The documents triggered a painful examination of some of the South's most heinous racial crimes. Little explored, though, was the trove of ledgers, invoices and correspondence recording the commission's finances.

Those records show large transfers of money by Morgan on behalf of a client who turns out to be a wealthy and reclusive New Yorker named Wickliffe Preston Draper. Mr. Draper used his private banker to transfer nearly \$215,000 in stock and cash to the Sovereignty Commission for use in its fight against the Civil Rights Act. The entire budget for the effort amounted to about \$300,000.

Adjusted for inflation, Mr. Draper's contributions would be worth more than \$1.1 million today.^{xliiii}

Blackmon was not through with his analysis. The Sovereignty Commission files “do more than simply document one man's role. They show that some of the most virulent resistance to civil-rights progress in the 1960s was supported and funded from the North, not just the South. The files also highlight the ethical issues that confront an institution like Morgan Guaranty, the private-banking unit of J. P. Morgan & Co, when it is drawn, even unwittingly, into a client's support for repugnant causes,” he wrote.

Draper had been a client of Guaranty Trust since the 1930s, which became Morgan Guaranty when it merged with J.P. Morgan in 1959. “It isn't clear whether he used Guaranty to help with funding some of his earlier race related efforts, such as a program in the 1930s to encourage white military pilots to have more children, or research in the 1950s to prove the superiority of whites and the dangers of mixed-race marriages.” Blackmon noted:

When Mr. Draper died in 1972, Morgan was an executor of his estate, overseeing distributions totaling about \$5 million to two race-oriented foundations. The primary beneficiary was the Pioneer Fund, an organization Mr. Draper helped found and which became known in recent years for funding research cited in "The Bell Curve," a book arguing that blacks are genetically inclined to be less intelligent than whites or Asians. In his will, Mr. Draper instructed that after his death, the Pioneer Fund use Morgan for financial advice; the fund did so for two decades.^{xliv}

It was apparent from Blackmon's interview that Morgan bank officers were not happy with their part in the transaction, as indicated by their interviews:

Morgan today says that "racism is deplorable" and that the bank doesn't "support institutions that further racist causes." Moreover, the bank notes that it has been a consistent donor to African American causes, giving more than \$3.3 million of its own money to civil-rights-related groups since the late 1960s. Morgan insists that the Sovereignty Commission transactions it processed for Mr. Draper were routine procedures carried out on behalf of a client, over which the bank had no influence or control.^{xlv}

Morgan eventually closed the asset-management account it maintained for the Pioneer Fund after the furor erupted over "The Bell Curve" in 1994, "according to people familiar with the situation," Blackmon reported. "The bank won't give details on why it did so."

The Pioneer Fund was still operating in 2005 under the direction of Canadian psychologist J. Philippe Rushton, an academic from Ontario who once received more than \$700,000 from the Pioneer Fund arguing that eugenics could stave off the threat that black fertility poses to "North European" civilization.^{xlvi}

Besides funding research at major public and private universities, including Ivy League schools, the Pioneer Fund was the primary financial sponsor of California's 1994 anti-immigrant initiative, Proposition 187 – "anonymously," of course. Rushton attempted to halt publication of Tucker's book, *Scientific Racism*, but his publisher forced Rushton to back off and the book was published, Tucker wrote.

THE IMMEDIATE GOALS of Patterson's first Citizens Councils were to make it impossible for any black favoring desegregation to find or keep a job, to cut off credit and to halt blacks from voting.^{xlvii} But there would soon be far worse ramifications, as the anger over school integration built up.

By openly calling for economic responses and social pressure to maintain segregation, rather than use of violence, heads of the Councils were trying to declare "respectability." Hodding Carter didn't buy this, and suggested editorially the Citizens Councils were closer to the Ku Klux Klan or were at least an "Uptown Klan."^{xlviii}

State Representative Wilma Sledge of Cleveland was a strong supporter of the Councils, saying they were anything but irresponsible. While their activities had been kept secret "for tactical reasons," the leadership was composed of the "most prominent, well-educated and conservative business men in each community."

Sledge told fellow legislators that Councils would “maintain segregation through unity of purpose, consolidation of public opinion, and utilization of all legal means available” and “would not advocate violence.”^{xlix}

As Citizens Councils were picking up momentum, “It seemed as if the whites had gone insane,” Aaron Henry observed: “Soon, even white people who had been willing initially to accept the decision hardened their positions.... Intimidation and job loss soon reached such proportions that many signers [of school integration petitions] removed their names. The Council was not subtle in its approach and announced frequently in newspapers that they would continue dealing with us through economic reprisals: ‘Not the lash, not the rope, we’ll starve ‘em out.’”^l

In late 1954, Hazel Brannon Smith, a newspaper editor for over 25 years, became a target of the Holmes County Citizens Council: Smith was found guilty of libel against the sheriff for her story published on a black teacher who was shot after she objected to a white sheriff driving through her yard. When publisher Smith of the *Lexington Advertiser* both published the story and refused to denounce the *Brown* decision, she was sued, boycotted, threatened with death, and then bankrupted by a newly created segregationist newspaper.

The county court award of \$10,000 was thrown out by the state Supreme Court, but pressure continued on the crusading journalist when Smith refused to attack President Eisenhower for his conduct in Little Rock, refused to condemn Governor Coleman for his moderation, and refused to go along with the powerful local Citizens Council.

Often, Smith was accused of favoring integration or criticized for such reasons as taking national awards from “Communist-infiltrated” organizations. Hodding Carter stated in one interview that her enemies even organized a new weekly paper at a meeting at which an officer of the local Citizens Council presided and asked for stock subscriptions from those present.

The forthcoming weekly, *Holmes County Herald*, was subsidized from the beginning by well-to-do Council leaders and “couldn’t have lasted even a brief duration without pressure on its behalf from county politicians and the local Citizens Council.”^{li}

Another journalist targeted for Citizens' Council ire was P. D. East, a young publisher of the *Petal Paper* at Petal Mississippi in Forrest County. East was a persistent critic of the Councils and many of their attitudes, according to George Thayer, early author of a scathing report on Citizens Councils: “When economic pressure was brought to bear upon his enterprise, [East] ran a large headline in his column taunting his adversaries. ‘Go To Hell in a Bucket!’ it read.”

East’s local circulation and advertising dried up, but he survived and fared better than Hazel Brannon Smith because he kept a fairly sizable national circulation. His most famous work was a full-page ad in a 1958 edition of the *Petal Paper* in which he mockingly described the advantages of joining the Citizens' Councils. The ad pictured a braying jackass in one corner and began: “Yes, You too, can be *Superior*. Join The Glorious Citizens Clans!”

The ad went on to list various “freedoms” that would accrue to members: “Freedom to yell ‘Nigger’ as much as you please without your conscience bothering you! Freedom to wonder who is pocketing the five dollars you pay to join! Freedom to take a profitable part in the South’s fastest growing business: Bigotry!”

Freedom to be Superior Without a Brain, Character or Principle!" The advertisement ended with: "This Wonderful Offer Open to White Folk Only."ⁱⁱⁱ

WHEN MISSISSIPPI'S SOVEREIGNTY Commission spies and the state-funded Citizens Councils members weren't trying to hide their own sources of funding or hassle journalists, they often questioned who was underwriting civil rights advocates and their projects.

Anne and Carl Braden, cofounders of the Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc. (SCEF) of New Orleans, were often the focus of government interest. As two of the most active and determined white anti-racist crusaders of the 1950s and beyond, the Bradens spent much of their time in the Delta; easily, over a thousand reports regarding both Anne and Carl Braden, as individuals and as a couple, are contained in Sovereignty Commission files.

SCEF grew out of the Southern Conference on Human Welfare (S'CHW), a New Deal organization formed in 1938 "based on a vision of a new democratic south that would be built jointly by black and white people." Supporters included Eleanor Roosevelt. In 1948, SCEF was formed as its tax-exempt educational arm and later took over when SCHW closed down. SCEF raised funds for black activists, lobbied for Truman's civil rights proposals and tried to educate southern whites on racism.^{liii}

Frequently the Bradens were labeled as "Communists" by Mississippi's segregationist leaders because of their ties to SCEF and to a liberal retreat center in Tennessee, The Highlander Center (also attended by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and many others in the civil rights movement). Julian Bond referred to them as "modern abolitionists."^{liiv}

Their troubles began in 1954 when the couple purchased a house in a segregated area of Louisville, Kentucky for an African American family. Local racists targeted the house and burned a cross in the front yard. The house was finally destroyed in a bomb blast. The criminals were never brought to trial; instead, they and several other anti-racist activists were accused of conspiring in a Communist plot against the state.

Carl Braden received a fifteen-year prison sentence for sedition, a sentence that the U. S. Supreme Court overturned within months. "The unique thing about the Cold War in the South was that [fighting it] was inextricably tied to the battle against white supremacy," Anne Braden told author Catherine Fosl. "That was the reason for all the hysteria against us in Louisville. It was anti-red and anti-black hysteria wrapped up and thrown at us."^{liiv}

SCEF became a nurturing force behind the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), providing it with funding, mailing lists, and access to major Northern donors. The Bradens were active in the Delta and often linked to Amzie Moore, who once received a loan from SCEF with their assistance, to save his business and home while personally supporting civil rights activists.

Activists like the Bradens were frequently summoned to testify about their "disloyal" activities before the infamous House Committee on Un-American Activities Committee or before SISS. As a result, some activists left the movement altogether while others continued to work for equality despite the false charges and terrorism they faced coming from their own government and fellow citizens.

ⁱ Burleigh Hines, "Victim Dragged Behind Car, Dies," unmarked newspaper clipping from Sovereignty Commission files, Nov. 3, 1959. Possibly from the *Chicago Defender*. SCR ID # 10-70-0-2-1-1-1.

ⁱⁱ Moye, 64.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid. Moye cites Opatowsky, "Dixie Dynamite," 5.

^v Ibid.

^{vi} Stan Opatowsky, "White Citizen's Council Menace To South, North," (reprinted in [The Pittsburgh Courier](#)), N.Y. Post Corp., 1957.

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^{vii} Ibid.

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} Neil R. McMillen, "The Citizens Council," (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 116.

^x Woods, 157.

^{xi} Woods, 158. Cites McMillen (1971), 24, 63, 117, 58, 122-124, 332. "One Delta legislator suggested that 'a few killings would save a lot of bloodshed later on'".

^{xii} While the Citizens Councils of America formally closed its doors in 1989, "Most of the Councils still meet" according to Patterson (2004 interviews with S. Klopfer). This was confirmed as late as 2005 by several other black leaders in the Delta. "They are just more sophisticated now, they are mean in less violent ways," said one small town politician (2005 interview with S. Klopfer). No stranger to organized racism, Patterson went on to co-found the Council of Conservative Citizens or CCC, a group that has been identified with the Christian Identity, Klan and Aryan movements. Some founding members of the new group were old CCA members including John Barr, the first FCG president. On March 7, 1985, the Council of Conservative Citizens was officially set up as a 501(c)(4), meaning that it does not pay taxes but that donations are not tax-deductible. The same day, the Conservative Citizens' Foundation was organized as a 501(c)(3). Donations to the foundation, unlike the CCC, are tax deductible. Weeks before Governor Haley Barbour's November 4, 2003 election victory, media reports linked Barbour to the "racist and anti-Semitic Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC)" — the same group that landed Sen. Trent Lott (Miss.) in hot water after he gave several speeches at CCC meetings that became public in 1999. By 1999, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, CCC numbered 15,000 members in more than 20 states; it has been particularly active in Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia.

^{xiii} Southern Poverty Law Center, "Sharks in the Mainstream: Racism underlies influential 'conservative' group," 2004.

^{xiv} The Associated Press, Emily Wagster Pettus, "Conservative group to meet with state lawmakers," January 23, 2005.

^{xv} "Sharks in the Mainstream," *The Intelligence Report*, The Southern Poverty Law Center, 2004.

⁴⁸⁵ McMillen, 19.

^{xvii} Ibid.

^{xviii} Woods, 157.

^{xix} From two interviews with Mr. and Mrs. Bob Patterson at their home in Itta Bena, Mississippi by Susan Klopfer, July 2004.

^{xx} "An Oral History with the Honorable Harvey Ross," December 1994, interviewed by Homer Hill, cooperative project of University of Southern Mississippi Libraries and USM Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage.

^{xxi} George Thayer, "The Farther Shores of Politics: The American Political Fringe Today," (New York: Simon and Schuster), 107-123.

^{xxii} Unlike Patterson, W. J. Simmons was the son of one of the state's "most successful" bankers and was a member of Mississippi's "upperclass." Historian Neil R. McMillen (122) observed it had been "darkly rumored, though never substantiated, that the future Citizens Council chief was a Nazi sympathizer during his college years and that he actually affiliated with fascist organizations while in Europe on the eve of the war." Some observers, McMillen wrote, "have even suggested that his discharge from the service came after it was discovered that he was 'a security risk because of his association with Nazi groups.'" But Simmons claimed such assertions came from "liberals and race-mixers who wish to discredit the segregation movement he leads by associating it with 'the lunatic fringe of the far right' and thereby 'pin[ning] the anti-Semitic label on the Citizens Councils'".

^{xxiii} Klopfer interview of Patterson, July 2004.

^{xxiv} George Thayer, "The Farther Shores of Politics: The American Political Fringe Today" (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 107-123. Thayer heads the Institute for the Study of Academic Racism (ISAR) at Ferris State University, a non-profit educational foundation that acts as a resource service for students, academics, journalists, legislators and civil rights activists. Thayer points out

that “Brady produced some startling prophecies in Black Monday. His most famous one, and perhaps a reason why the book has become the Councils' bible, was fulfilled barely a year after publication date. In his book, Judge Brady wrote: “The fulminate which will discharge the blast will be the young negro schoolboy, or veteran who has no conception of, the difference between a mark and a fathom. The supercilious glib young negro, who has sojourned in Chicago or New York, and who considers the councils of his elders archaic, will perform an obscene act, or make an obscene remark, or a vile overture or assault upon some white girl. In the first week of August 1955, the battered body of Emmett Till, a Negro teen-age schoolboy from Chicago, was fished out of the Mississippi River. Till died because he allegedly "wolf whistled" or leered at a young, attractive white girl in a little town called Money (population 100), just a few miles North of Greenwood, the home of the Citizens' Councils at the time. Two defendants, one the husband of the girl, were acquitted of any complicity in the crime. The Councils denied any involvement. To this day the killing has gone unpunished.”

^{xxv} McMillen, 17.

^{xxvi} Tucker, 67.

^{xxvii} *Ibid.*, 66-67.

^{xxviii} McMillen, 123; “Racists’ Strategy,” *New York Times*, September 28, 1962, 22.

^{xxix} William Doyle, “The Making of an American Insurrection,” essay.

^{xxx} Tucker.

^{xxxi} Thayer.

^{xxxii} The twelve members of the Sovereignty Commission, created by the Mississippi legislature in 1956, included the governor, lieutenant governor, and several legislators. The purpose of the Commission was to prevent outsiders from changing Mississippi’s Southern or segregationist way of life. It was supposed to publicize how well segregation worked and secretly keep watch over those who tried to overturn the system. When it was closed down in 1973, investigators had amassed files on 87,000 people. It was the largest state-level spying effort in the nation’s history, though some other states had lesser efforts of the same sort.

^{xxxiii} [Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission file\(s\) SCR ID # 1-23-0-33-1-1-1.](#)

^{xxxiv} Sovereignty Commission, memo to director from Zack J. Landingham, September 18, 1959. [SCR ID # 1-15-0-7-3-1-1](#)

^{xxxv} [Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission file\(s\) SCR ID # 6-70-0-105-1-1-1; SCR ID # 97-15-0-15-2-1-1; SCR ID # 97-15-0-16-1-1-1; SCR ID # 97-15-0-17-2-1-1; SCR ID # 97-15-0-17-3-1-1.](#)

^{xxxvi} *Ibid.*, 22. Tucker reports “the portfolio that Draper’s father had accumulated and managed,” Draper “left to the equally sensible stewardship of Guaranty Trust, later to become Morgan Guaranty.” Tucker cites Draper’s will “described in a number of articles in the Milford Daily News.”

^{xxxvii} Mississippi Sovereignty Commission, letter from Erle Johnston to John Synon, November 5, 1963. [SCR ID # 6-70-0-419-1-1-1.](#)

^{xxxviii} Tucker, 71.

^{xxxix} *Ibid.*

^{xl} The legal battle to open the files was initiated in 1977, when the American Civil Liberties Union/Mississippi filed a class-action suit charging state agencies with illegal surveillance of its citizens. In 1998 United States District Court Judge William H. Barbour, Jr., ordered all Commission records not involved in litigation to be opened to the public. The majority of records were made available in electronic format on March 17, 1998. Additional court ordered releases occurred on July 31, 2000, and January 18, 2001. In 2002, the state provided an online full text version of the Commission records accessible from a website. <<http://www.mdah.state.ms.us>>

^{xli} Mississippi journalist Bill Minor once called the Sovereignty Commission the “KGB of the cotton patches.” Formed by the Mississippi legislature in 1957, its main purpose was to preserve the system of segregation between whites and blacks in Mississippi. During its 20-year existence, 1957-1977, the Sovereignty Commission accumulated over 132,000 documents on thousands of Mississippians including newspaper clippings and “warning” letters that had been sent out to employers informing them of the “subversives” they employed. On March 17, 1998, after working their way through the court system for more than 20 years, the Sovereignty Commission files were made public under orders from the U. S. District Court. The rest of the files were opened to the public in 2002.

^{xlii} Tucker, 207-208.

^{xliii} Douglas A. Blackmon, “New York Millionaire Secretly Sent Cash to Mississippi Via His Morgan Account: ‘Wall Street Gang’ Pitches In,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 11, 1999.

xiv Ibid.

xv Ibid.

xvi Hywel Probert, "New Statesman," (online) April 5, 2002.

xvii Henry, 91.

xviii Silver, 36.

xix Sledge quote in *Southern School News*, October 1, 1954, 9.

i Henry, 93.

ii Silver, 39.

iii Thayer.

iiii [Barbara Ransby, "Ella Baker & the Black Freedom Movement." \(Chapel Hill: North Carolina, 2003\), 231.](#)

v [Ibid., 231.](#)

vi Edith Alston, reviewer, "Subversive Southerner: Anne Braden and the Struggle for Racial Justice in The Cold War South," by Catherine Fosl: (Palgrave, 2002), in *The Anniston Star*, December 1, 2002.