

“YOU AIN’T FROM AROUND HERE, ARE YOU?” A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF  
HARRY GOLDEN AND HISTORY OF HIS QUEST FOR TOLERANCE AND  
JUSTICE IN THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

by

Michael Charles Sullivan

A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts in  
History

Charlotte

2016

Approved by:

---

Dr. Gregory Mixon

---

Dr. Dan Morrill

---

Dr. John David Smith

©2016  
Michael Charles Sullivan  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## ABSTRACT

MICHAEL CHARLES SULLIVAN. "You ain't from around here, are you:" a biographical study of Harry Golden and history of his quest for tolerance and justice in the state of North Carolina.

(Under the direction of DR. GREGORY MIXON)

In the summer of 1941, a thirty-nine year old ex-convict from New York City, that just months earlier changed his name from Harry Goldhurst to Harry Golden, stepped off a bus at the main terminal in downtown Charlotte, North Carolina. Although he initially had no intention of remaining in North Carolina, Golden would in time become one of the best known and some would say most controversial figures in the state. Within a few years of his arrival in Charlotte, the middle-aged son of Jewish immigrants established himself as a reliable bridge between white elites and African Americans. In the 1950s and 1960s, Golden utilized his talents as a writer, his unorthodox humor and his talents as a mediator to lessen racially volatile situations and correct conditions he considered unjust. His talent with a pen and his cavalier spirit attracted converts to his causes and in turn made him a national celebrity. So inspirational was his efforts in the fight for civil rights that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. referred to him in his now famous 1963 "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," as a white brother of the South that grasped the meaning of the Civil Rights Movement and committed himself to it. Utilizing numerous archival collections, interviews with Golden's associates and friends, articles from various newspapers and publications and government records, this thesis examines the background of Golden and his advocacies in his quest for tolerance and justice in the state of North Carolina.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: THE MAKING OF HARRY GOLDEN	10
CHAPTER 3: MAN ON A MISSION	37
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION	97
BIBLIOGRAPHY	101



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In February of 1941, Charlotte author and journalist Wilber J. Cash published his highly acclaimed socio-historical book, *The Mind of the South*. Unlike many contemporary historical and popular books about the Southern United States, Cash's work did not focus on the popular romantic view of the region as a land of gracious ladies, fine gentlemen and magnolia draped manors. Instead Cash projected a more realistic view of the South as a harsh place consumed with poverty, ignorance and racism. Cash believed a major factor in creating these conditions was the mind-set of white Southerners and their intransigence to change.<sup>1</sup> He believed white Southerners would need to move past their fears and hostility if they hoped to advance.<sup>2</sup> Weeks after *The Mind of the South* hit bookshelves, Cash received a Guggenheim Fellowship giving him an opportunity to spend a year in Mexico writing his next novel. Cash would never write another book nor return to his beloved home. Later that year, he tied a noose in a necktie, slipped it around his neck and hanged himself in a Mexico City hotel bathroom.<sup>3</sup>

To some degree Cash's fate mirrored the coming demise of an isolated and static South. Already witnessing an opening-up to the outside world with the arrival of new industries, use of modern consumer goods and acceptance of popular culture, the South that Cash described in his book was fast disappearing. The development and

---

<sup>1</sup> Notable examples of scholarly and popular works that exhibit white Southerners in an unrealistic grand fashion include, Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1929); Eudora Welty, *Delta Wedding* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 1946); Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1936).

<sup>2</sup> W. J. Cash, *The Mind of The South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 333-334.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph L. Morrison, *W.J. Cash: Southern Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 131.

modernization of the South would accelerate during the years of the Second World War and in the decades that followed.<sup>4</sup> But changing the occupations of white Southerners and enticing them to purchase and use new consumer goods would prove easy compared to changing their perspective on how they viewed their Jewish, African American and homosexual neighbors.

A few weeks after Cash committed suicide, Harry Golden of New York City stepped off a bus in downtown Charlotte. The thirty-nine year old came south to write for one of the city's smaller newspapers. On his first day in his new home, Golden was shocked to witness the treatment many of his new white neighbors extended to their fellow black citizens. The son of Jewish immigrants who came to the United States to escape a rigid class, ethnic and religious caste system, Golden had strong convictions against treating people as less due to factors other than their character or actions.<sup>5</sup> To disrespect, discriminate and abuse anyone due to their religion, race, class or other factors Golden considered inconsequential was, to Golden, un-American. His' conception of America and concern for the downtrodden were direct results of growing up poor in New York City and Golden's first-hand experience witnessing how the extension of equitable opportunities could change lives.<sup>6</sup> The failure to extend fair play and a level playing field to African Americans was what disturbed Golden most about Southern society. "The guarantee," wrote Golden, "was if you worked hard, studied and saved, you could

---

<sup>4</sup> Thomas W. Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 224-238

<sup>5</sup> Harry Golden, *The Best of Harry Golden* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1967), 6, 131.

<sup>6</sup> Harry Golden, *The Greatest Jewish City in the World* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1972), 36.

participate in America” on equal terms with all your fellow citizens.<sup>7</sup> When he came to Charlotte he found the social mobility he considered the promise of the nation not extended to most of the city’s Jewish people and all its African American citizens.

Golden believed the South was on the verge of an industrial boom and that to take advantage of future economic opportunities, white Southerners would have to let go of the world delineated by Wilber Cash. Golden knew this change would be difficult and perhaps violent. But he sensed the change was coming and he wanted to have a good seat to watch and record it. In his autobiography Golden commented on why he decided to remain in the South:

There was a compelling ideal which kept me in Charlotte. That ideal was to start my own newspaper. It wasn’t that it was easier to start a newspaper in Charlotte than it was in New York – it is hard to start a newspaper anywhere – it was that the next big story was in the South. The South was on the verge of a revolution – an industrial revolution which would change the entire social order. The last homogeneous area of the country was about to transform itself and not transform itself gradually but suddenly and painfully, as the North transformed itself in the Civil War. As a newspaperman I sensed the story was all mine.<sup>8</sup>

It is the objective of this study to present a biographical examination of Harry Golden and his advocacies in his new home in North Carolina. For the purpose of this study Golden’s activities and efforts will be contained to those in North Carolina with added emphasis on his actions in and around Charlotte. Golden’s activities include his writings, support and work with local civil rights organizations and community groups, and his personal interjection and behind-the-scenes actions to lessen racial tensions and address injustices he witnessed. In constructing this study, two chapters will provide information about Golden’s life and activities. The first chapter examines the early life

---

<sup>7</sup> Hutchins Hapgood, *The Spirit of the Ghetto: Studies of the Jewish Quarter of New York* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), vi.

<sup>8</sup> Harry Golden, *The Right Time* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1969), 250.

of Harry Golden from his arrival in America at age three in 1905 through his early adulthood in New York City. Events in his early life provide insight into the factors that helped shape his concept of the promise of America. In addition the chapter explores Golden's early life in Charlotte from his arrival in 1941 as he orientated himself in his new home, established his newspaper, the *Carolina Israelite*, and began his advocacy to improve the relationship between the city's Jewish people and Gentiles as well as his early involvement in the fight for civil rights for African Americans. The second chapter delineates Golden's activities as he advanced his quest to end segregation and Jim Crow laws. This chapter examines how Golden became a well-known celebrity and used his new noteworthiness to fight for the rights of others including African Americans, the poor and in time, justice for homosexuals. The chapter concludes with Golden's disillusionment with the Civil Rights Movement as more radical factions shifted the Movement in a more militant fashion.

Golden's decision to establish his newspaper and in later years practice his advocacy for civil rights in Charlotte, played an important role in the making of Harry Golden. It is very possible if Golden would have moved farther south to open a shop, where whites were more intransigent in their views on religion and race, he would not have been as successful. Considered more tolerant than other Southern states, North Carolina leaders' main objective in their less hostile reaction to desegregation had more to do with money than concern over the treatment of African Americans. This was especially true in the budding New South city of Charlotte. In the years after the Civil War and into the first half of the twentieth century, the city's white business elites crafted

and nurtured a progressive ethos that projected Charlotte as a good place to do business.<sup>9</sup> When African Americans mounted a threat to that image first in the 1940s with litigation then in the 1950s and 1960s with demonstrations, Charlotte's leaders were willing to negotiate.<sup>10</sup> Golden took note of this and, having connections with both white elites and African American leaders, offered to serve as a bridge between the two groups.<sup>11</sup> Through his words and later his willingness to intervene into tense racial situations, Golden proved himself a reliable mediator able to aid white elites in protecting their business interest and in helping African Americans in obtaining more equality.

In crafting this work, a diverse range of primary sources supports the chapters that compose this study. In particular is the use of papers and documents found in the Harry Golden archival collections located in Special Collections at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte and the main branch of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library. Golden's papers are extensive, consisting of a vast amount of correspondences, notes, essays, speeches, and various personal relics of a well-worn life. The collections contain multiple oral and video interviews with Golden, ranging from his appearances on Jack Paar's *Tonight Show* and Edward R. Murrow's *Person to Person* television show to his many interviews with Charlotte and state journalists and reporters. In addition to information found in Golden's archives, this study makes use of the extensive amount of text found on the many pages of twenty plus years of his personal newspaper, the *Carolina Israelite*, many of his twenty-one books including his 1968 autobiography, *The*

---

<sup>9</sup> Wilber J. Cash, "Close View of a Calvinist Lhasa," *American Mercury*, April, 1933, 443-444.

<sup>10</sup> "NAACP Petition Charlotte School Board," Box 30, Folder 18, Kelly Alexander Sr. Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>11</sup> Mary Snead Boger, *Charlotte 23* (Bassett, Virginia: Bassett Printing Corporation, 1972), 96. Golden, *The Right Time*, 251.

*Right Time*, as well as numerous articles written by Golden for a variety of local, state and national magazines and publications. The utilization of archival collections of prominent Charlotte and North Carolina Civil Rights activists, political and business leaders and leading journalists render additional information about Golden, the city of Charlotte and the state of North Carolina during the 1950s and 1960s. In addition this study will draw upon personal interviews conducted with individuals who knew and worked with Golden. These interviews provide a first-hand and unique view of Harry Golden and his importance to the state and the city of Charlotte. Finally local and state newspapers and publications as well as government records and reports provide additional information about Golden and the historical events of his time. Combined, these sources offer a broad and multifaceted view of Harry Golden and his activities in Charlotte and the state of North Carolina in his quest to expand the rights of his fellow citizens.

Past historical scholarship on Golden has focused more on his importance in the war for civil rights on the national stage and how he used his literary work, publications, celebrity status, as well as his involvement on national boards, committees and his leadership in the NAACP to help bring about an end to legal segregation and Jim Crow regulations and laws in the South. Framing Golden's contributions to the Movement in the context of the "master narrative,"<sup>12</sup> however, belittles his importance. In the shadows of more significant national figures in the fight for civil rights such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, Golden's contributions seem meager. In this context Golden is relegated to a periphery position in

---

<sup>12</sup> The term "master narrative" is credited to civil rights leader Julian Bond. See *Charles Payne, I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007) xiii, 6.

the war for equal rights and his unique ability to combine humor and social criticism seem less serious and worthy of respect and remembrance. In this light Golden appears as a jester in the court of more prominent figures in the fight for equal rights, rather than as an important player. This study argues that Golden's importance to the Movement was on the state and local level and offers as proof his actions during the 1950s and 1960s to help eliminate local injustices he witnessed.

No one wrote more about Harry Golden than the man himself. In his many books and articles Golden helped created the persona of the court jester with his light, unorthodox and sometimes overly flippant published works about serious political and social issues. He once suggested that a "positive cure for anti-Semitism" was an onion roll with lox, cream cheese, and chopped chicken liver. "Who could hate a Jew after a meal like that," argued Golden.<sup>13</sup> Observing that white Southerners only had issues with African Americans when they sat and conversed, Golden suggested that someone ought to remove the chairs from classrooms and lunch counters forcing patrons to mingle and thus end segregation.<sup>14</sup> Unintentionally, numerous writers have reinforced the image of a less-serious Golden with light-hearted articles that frame him more as a figure in an episode of the popular 1960s television sitcom, *Andy Griffith Show* than as a serious civil rights activist.<sup>15</sup>

Clarence W. Thomas attempted to change this interpretation of Harry Golden as a less-serious and unimportant figure in the fight for civil rights. In his 1997 book, *The*

---

<sup>13</sup> Golden, *Only in America* (New York: World Publishing, 1958), 137.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>15</sup> Notable examples include Tom Hanchett, "Remembering Harry Golden: Food, Race, and Laughter," *Southern Cultures* 11, no. 2 (Summer 2005); Elizabeth Smith, "Charlotte's Golden Harry," *Tar Heel*, (Jan. 1979); Deborah McCachern, "Golden, Harry Lewis," <http://ncpedia.org/biography/golden-harry-lewis>; *Charlotte Observer*, "Harry Golden: Wit, warmth, Wisdom," *Charlotte Observer*, October 3, 1981.

*Serious Humor of Harry Golden*, Thomas contended that Golden was important to the Civil Rights Movement and that his use of humor in advocating for racial equality was invaluable in making the serious issues of segregation and equal rights less volatile. “Golden’s gift,” argued Thomas “was his ability to make all parties to a controversy laugh at themselves as well as their opposition. Few people were as vocal and diligent in facilitating racial understanding and acceptance as the late journalist and author Harry Golden.”<sup>16</sup> Thomas used as proof of Golden’s importance to the Movement the fact that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. identified him as one of four white journalists engaged in the fight for African American civil rights in his “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”<sup>17</sup>

In 2000 journalist Kimberly Marlowe-Hartnett completed her graduate dissertation at Smith College reflecting on Golden’s life and his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. In her thesis, “Harry Golden and Civil Rights: Jewish Conscience for a Gentile America,” Hartnett supported Thomas’ assessment that Golden was important in the Civil Rights Movement and that his writings helped in lessening racial tensions during the 1950s and 1960s. She defended Golden’s quirky writing style and dated humor as essential tools that helped attract white Southerners to the cause of civil rights. Golden’s oversimplified solutions to complex problems, Hartnett argued, may seem silly and insignificant in the bigger equal rights fight, but overtime his ability to bring humor to serious and often contentious issues, helped facilitate the Movement. She provided an example of Golden’s simple effectiveness in his answer to a complex question posed to him by a white college student. “What can one person do,” asked the student, “about racism?” Golden’s reply: “The next time someone uses the word ‘nigger,’ put your hand

---

<sup>16</sup> Clarence W. Thomas, *The Serious Humor of Harry Golden* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1997), x.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.



on his wrist and say, ‘please, not in front of me.’ And perhaps he will never use this word again in front of anyone. That is something.”<sup>18</sup> In 2015, Hartnett published a more detailed study of Harry Golden. In her book, *Carolina Israelite: How Harry Golden Made Us Care About Jews, the South, and Civil Rights*, Hartnett expands on her earlier study providing arguably the most extensive and complete biographical study of Harry Golden.

Although both Thomas and Hartnett elevated Golden’s writing and his importance in the national Civil Rights Movement to a loftier place, both authors framed Golden’s advocacy and activities in the hierarchy of the national movement. Positioning Golden alongside the giants of the Movement, takes away from his significance and in turn Thomas and Hartnett’s argument that Golden was more important and worthy of greater acclaim.

Unlike past works, this study will avoid placing Golden actions in the master national narrative of the Civil Rights Movement alongside national figures in the fight for civil rights. Instead this study will examine Golden’s efforts on the local and state level in his quest for justice and a desire to help his fellow citizens of Charlotte and North Carolina that he believed were treated unjustly. Different from many civil rights operatives, Golden, although he often partnered with organizations, was for the most part a freelancer – picking and choosing when and what instances he worked to better. This is the stage where Golden’s importance plays out. Working with his fellow citizens and local progressive organizations, Golden battled intolerance in the place he called home where the struggle for civil and human rights were a daily challenge.

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 2: THE MAKING OF HARRY GOLDEN

Harry Golden was not a native Southerner. In fact the man singled out by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a white brother of the South, who grasped the meaning of the Civil Rights Movement and committed himself to it, had not always been an American, nor always known by the name Harry Golden. He was born Herschele Goldhirsch on May 6, 1902, in Mikulintsy, a village, in what was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Wanting to provide their children with more opportunities than were available in Franz Joseph's empire, Golden's parents immigrated to the United States in 1905.<sup>1</sup> Like many Jewish people who came to the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, the Goldhirschs entered the Americas through the Ellis Island gates and settled in the predominantly Jewish section of New York City – the Lower East Side of Manhattan Island.<sup>2</sup> A busy customs agent misspelled their name as Goldhurst. Golden's parents did not correct him and adopted Goldhurst as their new name.<sup>3</sup>

Although more opportunities were available in the United States than were in their old country, the Goldhursts, nonetheless faced poverty and financial insecurity in their new home. In an interview in 1969, Golden described the Jewish section of New York City at the turn of the twentieth century as little more than a ghetto and his family's four-room flat on Eldridge Street as a dark and cramped tenement infested with rats and

---

<sup>1</sup> John Kobler, "Why They Don't Hate Harry," *Saturday Evening Post* (September 27, 1958): 73

<sup>2</sup> Harry Golden, "What I Have Learned," *Saturday Evening Post*, (June 17, 1967): 31.

<sup>3</sup> Harry Golden, *The Right Time*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1969, 20.

bedbugs.<sup>4</sup> “These tenements were called dumbbell apartments,” recalled Golden, “because the floor plans for each resembled a dumbbell: two rooms in the front, two rooms in the back, connected, two to two, by a narrow hallway. The hallway, with one slit window, let upon a shaft, the bottom of which was always filled with refuse.”<sup>5</sup> The Goldhursts shared a common four stall outdoor toilet with the other tenants of their five story building and the shower at the end of each hall was first come.<sup>6</sup> Years later Golden expressed that the poverty he experienced as a child made him more compassionate for the plight of the downtrodden, especially African Americans. “We had poverty of course, and bedbugs and rats in the ghetto, the same as the Negroes have today [1960s], but the parallel ends there. We had hope; the Negro doesn’t have hope.”<sup>7</sup>

Although the new Jewish arrivals had hope, most had little else. Golden wrote that most of his neighbors in the Lower East Side had few possessions and money was often short. “People scrabbled for a little living,” explained Golden, “Everybody worked all the time.”<sup>8</sup> In Golden’s youth, most children worked to add their part to the family’s total income. “The boys [children of various immigrant groups in New York City during this period] were never children really,” wrote Golden years later. “They were expected to want to work and contribute to the family fortunes.”<sup>9</sup> This was true of the Goldhursts. Golden’s siblings gained employment shortly after they arrived with young Golden obtaining his first job before his teens selling newspapers on the city’s street corners – a

---

<sup>4</sup> Harry Golden, interviewed by LeGette Blythe, Oral history Program, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina, June 24, 1969.

<sup>5</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 20-21.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, “I Visited the Lower East Side,” *Carolina Israelite*, July-August 1958, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, interviewed by LeGette Blythe.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, *Only in America* (New York: World Publishing, 1958), 34.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, notes for article titled “Early Adulthood on the Lower East Side, box 74, “Harry Golden Papers,” Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library, Charlotte, North Carolina.

prelude to his future career.<sup>10</sup> With the coins he added to the family's total, the Goldhursts met the monthly rent of fourteen dollars and made do with what remained. All the Goldhursts did their part – that is except Golden's father, Leib.<sup>11</sup>

Golden described his father as a snob, quick to sum up a man's worth based on his appearance and occupation. The amount of wealth a man possessed did not matter to Golden's father. What did matter was respect. According to Leib, a learned man received more respect than the man who worked with his hands or was involved in trade – regardless of his pay or level of success.<sup>12</sup> Leib's perspective was a carryover from Jewish culture in the old country. Since no one in Leib's home village had any money, status was all important and Leib had status. Educated and instructed as a Hebrew scholar, Golden's father earned the lofty honorary title of "Reb" before he immigrated to the United States.<sup>13</sup> In the new world, Reb Leib continued to function much as he did in the old – with all the pomp and circumstance allotted to him as a man of great status.

Leib Goldhurst was not a lazy man. Most of his days were full. Golden describes him as a full-time, free-lancer – free-lance writer, free-lance music critic as well as free-lance philosopher. Unfortunately, he spent the better part of his days engaged in activities that either paid little or nothing at all. What he did regularly, and enjoyed the most, was arguing and debating with his neighbors. "They drank hot tea," wrote Golden, "as they argued, as they bellowed their opinions. Tea and anarchy I thought filled their whole lives."<sup>14</sup> To Golden this was his father at his best – using his wit and intelligence

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, "Memories of the Lower Eastside," *The Carolina Israelite*, July-August 1962. Golden wrote often about his days as a newspaper boy in New York City, included in his autobiography, *The Right Time*.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, "The Story of My Father," *The Carolina Israelite*, May 1959, sec. A.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, *Enjoy, Enjoy!* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1960), 228.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, *The Right Time*, 19, 21.

to win his point and bring his opponent to their knees. It was a talent Leib passed on to his young son.

Golden understood his father's indifference to work and money as a condition that many immigrants experienced. "American Jewish life," explained Golden, "did not spontaneously spring into existence as immigrants stepped off the gangplank, but rather evolved by peculiar and unique combinations of Old World and New World experience."<sup>15</sup> Golden saw adaptation to life in America as an ongoing series of adjustments, where immigrants and their children strived to reconcile their "duality of foreignness and Americanness."<sup>16</sup> Some, like Golden's father, had a more difficult time making the transition from old to new world. Golden though, considered his father a failure. In an article Golden wrote about his father he stated, "I should start the story of my father by saying that he was a failure...who failed because he refused to enter the American milieu on its terms – to start earning status on the basis of money."<sup>17</sup>

Although Golden did not blame his father for his failure to do more to improve their lot, he nonetheless realized the cost of clinging too tightly to traditions and to old ways that no longer applied or had purpose. In a 1959 article in the *Carolina Israelite*, Golden compared his father's intransigence and refusal to adjust to the realities of his new life in America, to that of white Southerners who refused to break with the traditions of the past and end segregation. "What interests me particularly is the fact that I have seen this [His father's resistance to change] paralleled in the white Christian South. There is still a fairly large segment of Southerners who fought to maintain this status at

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, *The Greatest Jewish City in the World*, 95.

<sup>16</sup> Kathleen Neils Conzen, "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A.," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12 (Fall 1992): 6-7.

<sup>17</sup> Harry Golden, "The Story of My Father," *Carolina Israelite*, May-June 1959, 3.

the cost of their own happiness and happiness of their families, and they too never surrendered.”<sup>18</sup> Leib had made the great journey across the ocean for a better life and to escape the rigid social structure and prejudice that had caused so much pain for Jewish people for centuries, but he could not let go of the traditions of the past and in doing so was a “failure” in the eyes of his son.<sup>19</sup>

In the fall of 1908, Golden’s older brother Jacob took him by the hand and walked three blocks from their home to enroll him in Public School 20. Golden loved school. He was an eager learner and prolific reader, traits that took hold and stayed with him throughout his life. Golden credits PS 20 for not only introducing him to his love of history and literature, but also with making him an American. “It was not just the learning of English, and the pledge of allegiance to the flag, nor the many stories of American history that did the trick,” stated Golden.<sup>20</sup> Golden believed it was the availability of a quality education that leveled the playing field making it possible to enter American society on equal terms. This was his ideal of the true promise of America, where anyone could get a free and quality education, rise above their station, and reach the highest level their talents and determination would allow. In other nations concluded Golden, “the apprentice to a tailor will become a tailor. The boy who throws the peanuts at the cricket game will grow up to be the foreman of the boys who throw the peanuts at the cricket game. But in America that boy can become the center fielder.”<sup>21</sup>

At fourteen years of age, Golden obtained employment with a furrier, Oscar H. Geiger and Company on West Thirty-Seventh Street. Although he did not realize it at the

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, *Enjoy, Enjoy!*, 227.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, *Only in America*, 60.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, *The Right Time*, 442.

time, getting this job would forever change the direction of his life. As Golden wrote years later about his introduction to Geiger, “Mr. Geiger was soon to change me completely.”<sup>22</sup> Oscar Geiger was an unconventional man different from most of the members of the business class of New York. More a socialist than a capitalist, Geiger devoted much of his time to intellectual discussions on left-leaning politics and economic theories. He also had a deep appreciation in nurturing young men he deemed exceptional. One day Geiger found Golden reading Shakespeare and invited him to join a group of boys that met at his apartment once a week for a round-table discussion on various intellectual topics. Golden accepted.<sup>23</sup>

The Round Table Literary Club consisted of Golden and ten other boys who met each Sunday at Geiger’s apartment. When Golden arrived for his first meeting with the group, he was impressed with Geiger’s spacious home and its beautiful furnishings. The apartment was very comfortable and well-lit, with an indoor bathroom complete with a commode, sink and tub. “For the first time,” wrote Golden, “I was looking at the middle class. I felt like Pip in (Charles) Dickens’ *Great Expectations* when he met Miss Havisham.”<sup>24</sup> When Harry met the boys of the club he was equally impressed. Different from the young men in his neighborhood, the club members were impeccably dressed in suits with ties. The club’s set were well read and curious about politics, history, literature and the arts. Golden was amazed how confident and relaxed the boys were about their Judaism. He marveled at how easy and freely they mixed with Gentiles and at how optimistic they were about life. For the first time Golden imagined a world far removed

---

<sup>22</sup> Kimberly Marlowe Hartnett, *Carolina Israelite: How Harry Golden Made Us Care About Jews, The South, and Civil Rights* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 26-27.

<sup>23</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 60

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

from the life he had on the Lower East Side – and he wanted it. Years later Golden wrote in his autobiography about his thoughts after the first meeting of the Club: “From the moment I entered that brownstone, I resolved that this was what I wanted... We are a middle-class society, and that first vision is almost apocalyptic.”<sup>25</sup>

Golden finished his studies in high school and enrolled in the College of New York in 1920. But at this point in his life, academia was not for him. Golden wanted money or at least the possessions it could purchase. In 1923 Golden dropped out of college before earning a diploma. Unlike his father, he was not above working for money. In New York City during the 1920s everyone knew where the money was – the stock market.<sup>26</sup>

In June of 1926 after a small apprenticeship at a stock brokerage firm, Golden opened his own brokerage house at 32 Broadway, New York.<sup>27</sup> Golden found he was good at predicting the ways of the market and more often than not his hunches paid off. With success came more orders and in turn more cash. To distinguish his shop from the other brokerage firms, Golden created and distributed a daily market sheet titled “From 10 to 3 in Wall Street.” The rag was a great success, bringing in even more clients for the firm. Although the market sheet was not Shakespeare, Golden found he had a talent for turning a phrase. Years later he recalled one of his favorites: “Noah was prepared for a Rainy Day – Are You.” Golden once wrote, “Nothing seemed more American to me than making money, which I believe is the basic American impulse.”<sup>28</sup> In the 1920s, Golden was in a business where one could make money and make it fast. “Just before the

---

<sup>25</sup> Harry Golden, *You're Entitled* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1962), 283.

<sup>26</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 53.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.



market opened, wrote Golden of his first day in business, “I got my first order. The phones rang all morning. I do not think I ever had time for lunch during the next few years.”<sup>29</sup> In short order, Golden made a name for himself as a new whiz kid of Wall Street. As soon as he made a profitable investment for one customer, dozens of their friends and relatives showed up wanting to give Golden their money. He was making a fortune. But Golden’s company had a secret – its owner was a crook.

In addition to operating a legitimate brokerage, Golden also operated a Bucket Shop – where he held clients’ money believing the value of their buys would drop.<sup>30</sup> Basically he was betting against his own clients. All are fine unless the broker holding the money guessed wrong. In 1928 Golden made a series of miscalculations that put him on the hook for hundreds of thousands of dollars. Because he used the United States Postal Service to mail fake receipts to clients for orders he had not purchased, Golden was guilty of committing mail-fraud and sentenced to five years in federal prison.<sup>31</sup> Two weeks after his trial and just days before the stock market crash that ushered in the Great Depression, Golden boarded a train headed to the federal penitentiary in Atlanta.

Golden spent a year at the federal facility in Atlanta and thanks to his family’s efforts, transferred for the remainder of his term to the federal institution at Fort Meade near the nation’s capital.<sup>32</sup> In July 1931, Golden became eligible for parole. Nervous but calm, he sat in front of the parole board answering questions about his past crimes, his

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>30</sup> A Bucket Shop lures in clients, puts their money in a bucket (Broker’s pocket) and either waits for the share price to drop before placing an order to buy or waits for the price to rise before selling. Hartnett, 36.

<sup>31</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 144-148.

<sup>32</sup> Hartnett, 41.

behavior and activities while in prison and his plans if released early. Golden's performance played well and was granted early release set for spring 1932.<sup>33</sup>

On the last night of Hanukkah 1931, the warden came to Golden's cell. "Goldhurst," he said, "the parole board is taking it back. It's a no go." Golden would have to serve his full sentence. In his autobiography, he wrote about his feelings when the warden broke the news. "There are disappointments in this world so devastating we do not know how we can possibly survive them. Perhaps we survive them, as I survived this disappointment, because we have no choice. A man cannot go to pieces in jail, nor can his fellow convicts shoulder any of his troubles. I knew that night I would have to serve the whole of my sentence, one of the few federal offenders who had to do so. I knew I would have to serve three years and eight months and twenty-two days, which is exactly what I served."<sup>34</sup>

Nearly four years after his federal fraud trial, Prisoner 32510, sporting a new federally issued blue suit and shiny black shoes, walked out of the prison gates of Fort Meade, a free man. While incarcerated Golden wrote and served as the editor of the prison's newspaper. In his last article in the Christmas edition of 1932, Golden offered his fellow inmates words of encouragement urging them to "take heart" and to remember, that "this experience need not be fatal. You can put it behind you by leading a useful life."<sup>35</sup> Now free, Golden was determined he would lead a useful life. He was going to be a journalist.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> "Glass Ask Why Cannon's Broker Receives Parole," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 12, 1931. Glass' attack on the parole board and the facts surrounding Golden's (Goldhurst's) early release appeared in newspapers throughout the country.

<sup>34</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 160-162. Golden's sentence was reduced for good behavior.

<sup>35</sup> Harry Golden, "The Story of My Life," *Carolina Israelite*, October-November, 1958.

<sup>36</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 209-211.

Although Golden was excited to be free, he was shocked at the changes he witnessed on the outside. When he entered prison, the “Roaring Twenties” were in full swing. But the Great Depression ended all that. Thousands of banks and businesses had failed. Millions were homeless.<sup>37</sup> New York City was one of the hardest hit areas of the country. Before the depression ended one in every three New Yorkers was unemployed, and nearly 1.6 million of its citizens were on some form of relief.<sup>38</sup> Unable to find employment as a journalist, Golden reluctantly accepted employment at his brother’s hotel in New York City as manager with the understanding that it was just for the summer and that he would be leaving once he landed a newspaper job. With the economy what it was and with a prison record, Golden remained employed at the hotel for the remainder of the decade.<sup>39</sup>

Early in 1941 Golden applied for an advertisement and copy writer position with Norfolk, Virginia’s local paper, *The Times Advocate*.<sup>40</sup> To hide his past prison record, Golden changed his name from Harry Goldhurst to Harry Golden. “Before I reported to work,” wrote Golden, “I had resolved to change my name from Goldhurst to Golden. I did not want potential advertisers to know the space salesman to whom they were giving orders had served a federal prison sentence.”<sup>41</sup> A few months later Golden applied and obtained a more promising position selling space and writing editorials for a small union paper in Charlotte, North Carolina. In his 1968 autobiography, Golden reflected back on this period of his life, writing, “When it came time for me to leave for the South, I went

---

<sup>37</sup> Irvin Bernstein, *The Lean Years: A History of the American Worker, 1920-1933* ( Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970), 317.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Kessner, *Fiorello H. LA Guardia and the Making of Modern New York* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989), 27, 31.

<sup>39</sup> Harry Golden, “My Experience as a Hotel Manager on 29<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway,” *Carolina Israelite*, January-February, 1959, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 224.

with the dreaded knowledge that I had failed in New York City. All my hopes should have worked out, and not one of them had. I can blame circumstances only to a certain degree for these failures; the rest of the fault was mine. Perhaps I should have headed south promptly upon my release from prison. I would have done no worse there than I did in the big city.”<sup>42</sup> With a heavy heart and an empty wallet, Harry Golden boarded a bus for Charlotte. He was thirty-nine years old.

Although sophisticated compared with other Southern cities, Charlotte did not impress Harry Golden. Having lived most of his life in the largest and arguably the most exciting city in the world, the sparsely-inhabited, oversized Gentile village of Charlotte paled in comparison. On his first walk-about-town, Golden noted that the few buildings that crowned Charlotte’s skyline were located within a handful of blocks of its center, and reached heights of a dozen or so stories at most. “It was hard,” wrote Golden, “to realize I was in the center of the city and not on the outskirts.”<sup>43</sup> What downtown retail and restaurants there were closed their doors early. “There is no night life in Charlotte whatsoever,” observed Golden. “The sidewalks are neatly rolled up about 10 p.m. every night and after the movie houses usher out their audiences, you can shoot a cannon down the main street without any risk or complication.”<sup>44</sup> Golden noted that the local pool hall, which catered mostly to the less sophisticated townsfolk, was the total of Charlotte’s nightlife. With wide, long roads, traffic flowed smoothly through the city, free of the congestion that clogged roadways in the North. Other than the gridlock each Sunday

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>44</sup> Harry Golden, “Charlotte, North Carolina,” *Carolina Israelite*, June, 1945, 2.

morning, caused by the multitudes of overdressed Christians rushing to make it to church on time, Charlotte was free of any notable traffic.<sup>45</sup>

It seems doubtful Golden would have remained in Charlotte for very long. To some degree, Charlotte was just a place on the map that allowed him an opportunity to escape his problems back in New York City. And while his position at the *Labor Journal* was a paid job in his field of interest, setting type, selling advertisement space and writing copy was not the dream journalist job he envisioned when he was doing time in prison. But he remained south. Maybe it was Charlotte's provincial friendliness and old-fashioned quaintness that reminded him of his childhood days on New York City's Lower East Side. It is possible he stayed because he lacked the funds to leave or for that matter he may have not had another place to go. Nonetheless Charlotte was a medium sized city and its citizens were friendly with a determined can-do attitude. And although it was not New York City, Charlotte did have a number of amenities that Golden appreciated, such as a symphony orchestra, sizeable library and the state's only museum dedicated to art.<sup>46</sup> And of course there was Golden's favorite spot in town: the downtown Dixie Newsstand that sold New York City newspapers and hard-to-find books. Golden referred to it as his "oasis."<sup>47</sup> All these factors played some role in his decision to stay in Charlotte, but he claimed, and did so for the remainder of his life, that the true reason that he decided to stay in the South was his desire to start his own newspaper in the place where the next big story would be. Golden believed that story was the coming

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Golden wrote the article implying that the city he discussed was a fictional town called Elizabeth. It is clear the article is about Charlotte, North Carolina. Harry Golden, "From the American Scene: A Pulpit in the South," *Commentary* (Dec. 1953), 576. Information related to the Mint Museum – Henrietta H. Wilkinson, *The Mint Museum of Art at Charlotte: A Brief History* (Charlotte: Heritage Printers, 1973), 66.

<sup>47</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 236.

industrialization of the South and the role that the economic boom would have in changing the Southern social order constructed around race. “The last homogeneous area of the country,” wrote Golden, “was about to transform itself and not transform itself gradually but suddenly and painfully. As a newspaperman I sensed the story was all mine.”<sup>48</sup> Golden was sure the established Southern newspapers would miss the story completely. To report it would require that they describe the true lot of their black neighbors, shattering the image white Southerners had crafted of a “content and happy Negro.” This he knew they would never do.<sup>49</sup>

Following his arrival in Charlotte in 1941, Golden struggled to make a living and a name for himself among the city’s journalists. His job at the weekly *Charlotte Labor Journal and Dixie Farm News* provided him with just enough pay to make rent at one of the cheap boarding houses in the city’s less fashionable sections. The *Charlotte Labor Journal* was not the most prestigious news outlet in town either. Described by Golden as an eight-page weekly with half of it consisting of advertising and the other half a combination of editorials and reports on the labor movement in the two Carolinas, the paper paled in comparison to the city’s two dailies – the morning paper, the *Charlotte Observer*, and the afternoon paper, the *Charlotte News*.<sup>50</sup> Due in part to the labor upheavals of the 1920s and 1930s in the Carolinas and the harsh reaction of mill owners to attempts by workers to organize, few of the region’s mill operatives carried union

---

<sup>48</sup> Harry Golden, interviewed by Richard J. Stonesifer, College of the Air program, WGAL-TV, February 25, 1969.

<sup>49</sup> Golden stated this as the reason he decided to stay south in multiple interviews, speeches and in his autobiography. Harry Golden, interviewed by Doug Mayes, WBT News, WBT-Charlotte, May 6, 1964; John Kobler, “Why They Don’t Hate Harry,” *Saturday Evening Post*, 231, no. 13 (September 27, 1958): 125.

<sup>50</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 226.

cards.<sup>51</sup> Even if workers in the South had union sympathies, most would have avoided a publication like Golden's; even to have possession of a copy of a pro-union newspaper such as the *Labor Journal* could cost a mill worker his job.

Charlotte's 1942 directory lists Harry Golden as the advertising manager at the *Labor Journal*. The paper's editor, William Witter, had told Golden when he accepted the position that the job consisted of him selling advertising space and writing a few editorials.<sup>52</sup> Golden found, however, that this would not be the case. Often the job required Golden to do it all. It was not that Witter did not know his job. Golden described the forty-year newspaper veteran as brilliant, capable even of becoming the state's governor – that is if it were not for the drink.<sup>53</sup>

Often Witten's drinking or the hangovers that followed the next day required Golden to step up and handle all of his as well as Witter's duties. Nonetheless, the additional responsibilities did not faze Golden. If his experiences in New York City provided him with any lasting attribute, it was his ability to realize an opportunity when he saw one. In the boss' absence, Golden wrote the majority of the text for the *Journal*, providing him the opportunity to craft the editorial short-essay style format that would become his personal trademark. Witten's unexcused time off also gave Golden the chance to meet many of Charlotte's business leaders. It was during one of Witter's many absences that Golden met Hermann E. Cohen, the man who played a major role in Golden's establishing his own newspaper.

---

<sup>51</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s attempts to organize Carolina textile mills were dealt with violently by mill owners. Examples; Loray Mill in Gastonia, Chiquola Mill in Honea Path, Highland Park Mills in Charlotte, Jacquelyn Down Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones, and Christopher Daly, *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

<sup>52</sup> Hartnett, 58.

<sup>53</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 227.

Hermann E. Cohen was a successful textile broker and leader in Charlotte's small Jewish community. Shortly after Golden arrived in Charlotte, Cohen stopped by the *Labor Journal* office to place an advertisement.<sup>54</sup> Cohen described the first time he met Golden:

The *Journal's* quarters were on College Street upstairs in an old rickety building. I remember that it was a hot summer day. I was greeted by a short, dark complexioned fellow who asked, 'What do you want?' I told him that I wanted to see Witter. This short fellow said to me, 'Witter is home sick. What do you want with him?' I told him what I wanted and he said, 'I can do anything around the paper...I can put it to bed. I can set type. I can do anything just tell me what you want.'"... He extended his hand to Cohen saying, "My name is Harry Golden."<sup>55</sup>

Cohen and Golden became fast friends. Wanting his new friend to become oriented with the local Jewry, Cohen took Golden under his wing, socializing with him and introducing him to many prominent members of Charlotte's Jewish community such as local businessman, I. D. Blumenthal and prominent Charlotte attorney and member of North Carolina's General Assembly Arthur Goodman. One day at lunch Golden surprised Cohen by stating, "We need a Jewish paper in the community." Not sure what to make of his friend's remarks Cohen made light of his suggestion inquiring whether Jewish people in Charlotte read Hebrew? But Golden would have none of it, stating that the paper would of course be in English and devoted to Jewish interests. Golden further suggested that they invite Arthur Goodman to join them in the new venture. He had even thought of a name for the new Jewish publication: *The Carolina Israelite*.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Cohen was one of Charlotte's first noted Jewish journalists. He wrote a number of articles for various publications including *The Nation*. Morris Speizman, *The Jews of Charlotte: A Chronicle with Commentary and Conjectures* (Charlotte: McNally and Loftin Publishers, 1978), 109.

<sup>55</sup> Harry Golden, interviewed by LeGette Blythe, June, 24, 1969.

<sup>56</sup> Speizman, 75.



With seed money from Cohen and Goodman and additional substantial financial backing from Blumenthal, the first run of the *Carolina Israelite* rolled off the press in 1942. After a few trial editions in 1942 and 1943, uninterrupted publishing began in February 1944 with the debut of the first edition.<sup>57</sup> Like *The Labor Journal*, much of Golden's new publication consisted of advertisements. But unlike the *Labor Journal* and, for that matter, Charlotte's dailies as well as the city's weekly African American newspaper, the *Charlotte Post*, the *Carolina Israelite* provided little text about current events. There was no room in the sixteen-page paper for news stories or even pictures just advertisements and text of Golden spewing wit and a bottomless well of erudition on everything from recipes to weather comments.<sup>58</sup> John Kobler of the *Saturday Evening Post* commented on Golden's newspaper writing:

*The Israelite* is a sixteen-page tabloid sold by subscription only, at three dollars a year, which Golden tosses together like a chef's salad when the spirit moves him, usually once or twice every two months. It contains no photographs, no typographical embellishments, and no news. "The nearest thing to an obituary I ever ran," stated Golden, "was an account of Julius Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C.." The 30,000-odd tightly packed words composing the average issue he terms a 'causerie'—French for chat—and for the most part they are extensions of his normal conversations among friends.<sup>59</sup>

Claiming he "remember[ed] everything he'd ever read, everyone he'd ever met and what they said," Golden had a plethora of material to work from.<sup>60</sup> Often he wove into the text of the newspaper unusual and humorous tidbits and little-known facts about well-known events and topics. Golden used humor to add unique twists and sometimes an element of surprise to stories. The newspaper covered a wide range of subjects such as history, the arts and books Golden considered to be the greatest works of literature.

---

<sup>57</sup> Hartnett, 61.

<sup>58</sup> Mary Snead Boger, *Charlotte 23* (Bassett, Virginia: Bassett Publishing Corporation, 1972), 97.

<sup>59</sup> Kobler, 125.

<sup>60</sup> Harry Golden, interviewed by Doug Mayes, WBTB News, May 6, 1964.

Although the paper consisted of a rambling range of topics, a theme prominent in many editions was similarities and connections between Jewish people and Christians, particularly religious, historical and cultural aspects.

Golden believed it was important to make connections between Jewish people and Gentiles.<sup>61</sup> “The better Christians get to know Jews,” wrote Golden, “the more friendly they are toward them.”<sup>62</sup> Aware of the deep appreciation white Southerners had for the Civil War, Golden wrote a number of articles regarding contributions made by Jewish people in defense of the Confederacy. A popular figure was the Confederate Secretary of War and later Secretary of State, Judah P. Benjamin. Using the former Jewish statesman as a prompt, Golden reached out to the local chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, suggesting the group work with the local Jewish community to commemorate Benjamin’s service. In 1948 Golden successfully brokered a deal between a local Jewish temple and the national United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) to honor Benjamin’s service. In late 1948 the two entities erected a monument in downtown Charlotte in his honor.<sup>63</sup>

Although small in number, with just some 750 Jewish persons calling Charlotte home when Golden established his newspaper in 1944, Jewish people had been part of Charlotte’s community since the colonial era.<sup>64</sup> From most accounts Charlotte’s Gentiles readily accepted Jewish people, with local Charlotte historian J. B. Alexander

---

<sup>61</sup> One of the main reasons his family immigrated to America was to escape the violent treatment Jews experienced at the hands of their Gentile neighbors in Europe. Golden, *The Right Time*, 19-20, Golden, “Should the Jews Celebrate Christmas?” *Carolina Israelite*, October-November, 1958, 4.

<sup>62</sup> Golden, *The Greatest City in the World*, 199.

<sup>63</sup> Golden, “Benjamin Monument is Dedicated in Charlotte,” *Carolina Israelite*, February, 1949.

<sup>64</sup> Charlotte’s total population was just over 100,000 in 1941 with Jews making up less than one percent of the city’s total population. Stephen J. Whitfield, “The ‘Golden’ Era of Civil Rights: Consequences of The Carolina Israelite,” *Southern Cultures* 14, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 32.

proclaiming in 1902 that “the Israelites of Mecklenburg are among our best citizens.”<sup>65</sup> This closeness between the two groups, however, suffered in the early twentieth century when Jewish people became engrossed in Southern politics. For political gain, Southern politicians such as Tom Watson of Georgia accused Jewish people of having “Northern” sympathies and pervasive economic influence in the South. Golden blamed Watson and other Southern demagogues for fanning the flames of mistrust and prompting the change in Southern Gentiles’ perspective of their Jewish neighbors. “Tom Watson,” declared Golden, “unloosed the most serious anti-Semitic campaign in the history of the South. Aside from the fact that it led to the brutal lynching of an innocent man, it was a nightmare for the Jewish community”<sup>66</sup>

Although less marginalized than African Americans, Jewish people found themselves barred from various aspects of Southern life. Many entertainment venues, accommodations and leisure spaces in the South were off limits to Jewish people. Through restrictive covenants Jewish people could not buy homes in certain sections of Southern cities nor execute leases in more prominent neighborhoods.<sup>67</sup> Hermann Cohen recalled the humiliation his sister and her husband experienced when they moved to Charlotte and tried to obtain a lease for an apartment in one of the city’s more desirable sections.

Some years ago, I had my brother-in-law Jack Passman and his wife, who is my sister, come down here to work with me in Charlotte. In those days, it was hard to find an apartment, especially a desirable one, in the whole town. My sister finally

---

<sup>65</sup> J. B. Alexander, *The History of Mecklenburg County From 1740-1900* (Charlotte: Charlotte Observer Printing House, 1902), 379.

<sup>66</sup> The innocent man was Leo Frank. Frank was a Jewish factory superintendent in Atlanta, Georgia convicted of the murder of a 13-year-old white employee, Mary Phagan. His case, and lynching two years later, became the focus of social, regional, political, and racial concerns - particularly antisemitism. In 1966 Golden wrote of the event in his book, *A Little Girl is Dead*. Harry Golden, “Jews and Gentile in the New South: Segregation at Sundown,” *Commentary* (November 1, 1955), 408.

<sup>67</sup> Harry Golden, “Judaism and Communist,” *Carolina Israelite*, June 1944, 2.

found one she liked – the agent took her name down and everything was arranged. The man then turned to my sister and said, ‘By the way, who is your husband going to be associated with in business here?’ She said with pride, ‘My brother, Hermann E. Cohen.’ He laid his pen down and said he was sorry but he could not rent to Jews. My sister burst out crying.<sup>68</sup>

The earlier trial runs of the *Carolina Israelite* in 1942 and 1943 convinced Golden that if the paper was to be a success, he had to make an impact – and quickly. He believed the best way to draw attention to his new publication was to connect the *Carolina Israelite* to prominent people and celebrities in the state. At the urging of his main financial backer, I. E. Blumenthal, Golden began organizing, “The Carolina Israelite Annual Gold Medal Award.” Golden marketed the award as the prize presented to “the citizen of the Carolinas who has contributed singularly to a better understanding between Christians and Jewish people.”<sup>69</sup> Blumenthal was devoted to the interfaith movement, serving as an officer of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Devoted to the idea of brotherhood between the two groups, he lavished vast sums of money to encourage it – a fact not overlooked by Golden.<sup>70</sup> The Gold Medal Award fit well with Blumenthal’s objectives by drawing attention to the bond between Jewish people and Christians as well as providing an opportunity to highlight individuals involved in strengthening the connection. To Golden it meant more money for his paper and a better promise of its success.

To legitimize the new honorary award, Golden scheduled its presentation to coincide with the longtime and well respected National Conference of Christians and

---

<sup>68</sup> Speizman, 114-115.

<sup>69</sup> Harry Golden, “The Annual Gold Medal Award,” *Carolina Israelite*, April 1944, 2.

<sup>70</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 278.

Jews' annual Brotherhood Week.<sup>71</sup> Although ballots for the award were printed and widely distributed, Golden was in charge of counting the votes.<sup>72</sup> With complete control over the list of candidates for the award as well as the counting of the ballots, surprisingly, all the winners were men Golden admired and wanted to get to know better. In the coming years winners would include the important and powerful in the state including Josephus Daniels, editor and publisher of the *Raleigh News and Observer*, the outspoken liberal president of The University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham, as well as Charlottean and United Nations' ambassador, Herschel Johnson. The award gave Golden an opportunity to not only sell more newspapers but increase his noteworthiness. By the time newly-elected North Carolina governor W. Kerr Scott received the award in 1949, Golden was the best-known Jewish person in Charlotte, if not the entire state.<sup>73</sup>

With his new popularity, business groups, religious entities and social organizations, in need of a token Jewish person to exhibit their diversity, often invited Golden to attend meetings and events to provide the Jewish perspective. Many of Charlotte's Jewry was concerned with Golden. They believed Golden was speaking out of turn and feared his often progressive views and off the cuff comments might be misconstrued as representing the views of the Jewish community as a whole. When he published his first book, *Jews in American History* (1949), his credentials and reputation as a Hebrew scholar in the eyes of local Gentiles only increased, even though most critics agreed that the book was not very good.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Golden helped organize the Charlotte chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1944. Speizman, 58.

<sup>72</sup> Harry Golden, "The Annual Gold Metal Award," *Carolina Israelite*, November 1944, 6.

<sup>73</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 260-262, 269.

<sup>74</sup> Review of *Jews in American History*, by Rabbi Phillip Frankel and John Wittke, *Charlotte News*, April 13, 1950, sec. C.

In December of 1950, an article entitled, “From the American Scene: Hebrew-Christian Evangelist: Southern Style,” appeared in the prominent national Jewish publication *Commentary*. The article documented the little known and interesting phenomenon of Jewish people, claiming to be converts to Christianity, traveling the South on a mission to “bring the message of Christ to the Jews.”<sup>75</sup> Calling the recent converts out by name – Eddie Lieberman in South Carolina, Arthur Glass in Tennessee and Jerome Fleischer whose headquarters were located in Charlotte, North Carolina – the author of the article accused the bunch of being little more than charlatans out to scam money from gullible Christians drawn to their mass tent revivals. “Don’t let the plate pass you by,” yelled the converted preachers. “Have mercy and pray for the old Jew.”<sup>76</sup> The author of the article was Harry Golden.

The article in *Commentary* marked a change in Golden’s public prose. In articles for the *Carolina Israelite*, Golden was mindful not to offend Southern Gentiles’ beliefs or exhibit tensions and divisions between Jewish people and Christians. If anything Golden went to great lengths to avoid highlighting any issues or differences between the two. With *Commentary* drawing most of its readers from Northern Jewry, it is possible Golden may have felt more comfortable exhibiting a truer picture of the awkward relationship between Southern Jewish people and Gentiles. If nothing else it exhibited his new freedom to be more truthful about the people in his new home.

The following year Golden wrote another article for *Commentary* revealing that the monument dedicated in Charlotte in 1948 to the Confederate statesman Judah P. Benjamin was more contentious than Golden previously reported in the *Carolina*

---

<sup>75</sup> Harry Golden, “From the American Scene: Hebrew-Christian Evangelist: Southern Style,” *Commentary*, December 1, 1950, 377-386.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 380.

*Israelite*. “All was going as planned for the big dedication ceremony set for the October 1, 1948 unveiling,” wrote Golden, “until a letter was received by a member of the local chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy.”<sup>77</sup> The letter sent from a New York banker to his mother-in-law in Charlotte called the entire event into question. Golden published a portion of the letter in his *Commentary* article:

This leaves no doubt in my mind that the United Daughters of the Confederacy have been completely “taken in” by the editor of this Jewish *Carolina Israelite* and unless they withdraw their support of this project, will be made an unwitting tool in another scheme which is nothing else but propaganda for the Jewish race. It is a well-known fact that a powerful effort, well financed here [New York], and country-wide in scope, is being made to identify the Jewish race with things American. The underlying ideal is to counteract the increasing resentment on the part of rightminded people toward the manner in which the Jews conduct themselves. The indictment against them is far too long to submit here, for it would fill many pages. The U.D.C. might also find food for thought in the fact that nearly all the communists in America are Jews, and that most of the funds and agitators used in stirring up your Southern Negroes are Jewish in origin.<sup>78</sup>

Golden claimed his introduction to the peculiar relation that existed between the races in the South happened within hours of arriving in the Queen City in 1941. “As I, a stranger to Charlotte, an immigrant in America, walked down the street, Negroes, whose parents had been in this country for two and sometimes three hundred years, stepped off the sidewalk and tipped their hat.”<sup>79</sup> This and other acts of subservience by African Americans toward whites shocked and disgusted Golden. Golden recalled years later how these encounters affected him: “As much as I remember of my impressions when I first came south is that the segregation I witnessed, which made me an involuntary accomplice, nagged me. It was not as nagging a concern, say, as an impending jail

---

<sup>77</sup> Harry Golden, “On the Horizon: A Son of the South, and Some Daughters,” *Commentary* (October 1, 1951), 440-443.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 237.

sentence, but it was there.”<sup>80</sup> Even without witnessing the interactions between the races in the South, it would have been difficult for Golden or any newcomer to Charlotte to have missed the advertisements for the legal caste system known as Jim Crow. Placards reading “whites only” and “colored” blanketed the city’s commercial district, indicating where whites and blacks needed to stand and sit, and where one could get a drink of water. For most of the locals the placards were not necessary. Through generations of conditioning, intimidation and sometimes violence, Southerners, both white and African Americans, just seemed to know the rules. Golden noted that often and in many places, “almost half of Charlotte’s population, the colored half, was invisible.”<sup>81</sup> It was not that prejudice and exclusion did not exist in the North; as a Jewish person, Golden had experienced racism in New York. But it was nothing like the system that existed in the South. In other parts of the country exclusion of one race or group functioned more along lines of custom or manners. In the South it was the law.

In earlier articles in the *Carolina Israelite*, Golden avoided any reference to any divisions in the Queen City especially related to the division that existed between the city’s black and white citizens. In 1945 he even stated that “ In five years [of living in Charlotte], which has included the turmoil and excitement of war, I have not seen or verified any instance where any person could take serious offense at anything because of his race, color, religion or creed.”<sup>82</sup> Under the guidance of Cohen and Goodman and the often heavy hand of Blumenthal, Golden’s writings reflected this perspective. But by the late 1940s Golden stated he was comfortable in his new home and willing not only to buck the desires and objectives of his financial backers and the local Jewish

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 241-242.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>82</sup> Harry Golden, “Charlotte, North Carolina” *Carolina Israelite*, June, 1945, 2.



establishment but willing to be more honest and in turn more critical of his neighbors in his new home.<sup>83</sup> In the limited readership of *Commentary*, Golden may have felt more comfortable shining light on the peculiar relations between various groups in the South. If nothing else he was willing to be more honest.

The article in *Commentary* marked the beginning of Golden's newfound freedom and willingness to speak his mind about race relations in the South. In the next edition of the *Carolina Israelite* following the article about Benjamin's monument in *Commentary*, Golden's writing had more of a noticeable bite regarding race and hate as well as exhibiting his willingness to venture into politics. On the newly-designed front page of the newspaper dated February 1951, Golden called on North Carolina's General Assembly members to pass what he termed the "Carolina Israelite Bill" – legislation that required full disclosure of any group producing hate literature attacking any individual or group. The piece strategically followed an article by Golden, praising Charlotte's Chief of Police Frank Littlejohn for his recent crackdown on the local chapter of the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>84</sup> In the following edition of the *Israelite*, Golden published a letter written by Unitarian Minister, Dr. Herman Voss criticizing the scope of Brotherhood Week. "Brotherhood Week," wrote Voss, "should concern itself more with the Negro and white segregation," not just the relationship between Christians and Jewish people.<sup>85</sup> Three months later, Golden went even further, venturing into the volatile subjects of race, politics and class, writing in the *Israelite*:

---

<sup>83</sup> In his 1969 autobiography, Golden stated that by 1947 he felt comfortable living in Charlotte and considered the city his home, Golden, *The Right Time*, 279.

<sup>84</sup> Harry Golden, "Raleigh Should Pass This Bill," *Carolina Israelite*, February, 1951, 1.

<sup>85</sup> Harry Golden, "Criticism of Brotherhood Week by The Congress Weekly," *Carolina Israelite*, April, 1951, 1.

In Charlotte, the largest city of the two Carolinas, a Negro ran for city council and two Negroes ran for the school board. While none were elected, all three had enough votes to survive the first primary and enter the run-off. In examining the voting trend for the Negro candidates, by districts, it is interesting to note that the late W. J. Cash outlined the voting pattern twenty years ago exactly as it happened. The Negroes, of course, voted for their candidates. But the surprising thing is that the white support for Negro candidates comes from the upper classes—the rich, and the college graduates. Support for Negro candidates from the middle class and lower middle class is almost non-existent. Hm, interesting.<sup>86</sup>

By the end of the year, Golden's new style and the desires of his financial backers, reached a head. Although he was by then writing most of the paper's text, in the November edition, Golden announced that he would be writing the entire paper from now on. "Slowly but surely," boasted Golden, "I have come around to the ideal to write everything in my paper myself."<sup>87</sup>

Golden's new subject matter and his forthrightness and willingness to shed light on the South's race relations did not go unnoticed by the local Jewish community. The admonition for many Southern Jewish people was to fit in, obscuring their differences from their Christian neighbors. Golden observed, many Southern Jewish people "reflected to a large extent the morals, the hopes, the politics, and even the prejudices of the society around them."<sup>88</sup> Golden was aware of his fellow Jewish people's sensitivity regarding Southern race relations noting that in his view a "great many [Jewish people] seemed to break-out in a constant 'cold sweat,'" when the issue of race was broached.<sup>89</sup> To distance themselves from Golden's new crusade, some Jewish leaders spoke out. Charlotte businessman and local Jewish leader Morris Speizman expressed the concerns

---

<sup>86</sup> Harry Golden, "The Vote for the Negro Candidates in the South," *Carolina Israelite*, June, 1951, 1.

<sup>87</sup> Harry Golden, "I'm Writing the Entire Paper from Now On," *Carolina Israelite*, November, 1951, 5.

<sup>88</sup> Harry Golden, *Our Southern Landsman* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1974), 101.

<sup>89</sup> Stephen J. Whitfield, "The Golden Era of Civil Rights: Consequences of the Carolina Israelite," *Southern Cultures*, Fall 2008, 42.

and predicament many Southern Jewish people believed they were facing during the 1950s. “During those days,” wrote Speizman, “the Jews of Charlotte were troubled both by our desire for justice and our sensitive position in the community. This was true not only of Charlotte but of most other cities in the South. Of course, we had Harry Golden.”<sup>90</sup> Some were less constructive in their condemnation of Golden. One rabbi summed up the view of many of Charlotte’s Jewish people regarding the *Israelite*’s publisher, with the quip, “We wish he’d go away and leave us alone.”<sup>91</sup>

But Harry Golden was not going away. Longtime friend and Golden confidant Walter Klein noted that most Jewish people were at best indifferent to Southern race relations in the 1950s and 1960s – but not Golden. “Rabbis, writers, political leaders of all faiths played it safe, including this writer. Otherwise it was little Harry Golden standing tall in a forest of adversity.”<sup>92</sup> Golden believed Southern Jewish people were overreacting to the retaliatory threats from local whites if they supported better treatment and equal rights for African Americans. “Southerners,” wrote Golden, “don’t worry about Jews because Jews do not threaten them socially. What the South did worry about – and worried about constantly – were the Negroes.”<sup>93</sup> Believing this was the case, Golden encouraged Jewish people to speak out in support of equal rights for African Americans. As he told those in attendance at the 1953 American Jewish Committee meeting in New Orleans, “The time has come for the Jew to fight for democracy when it is not he who is the primary target. I think every Jew in America should contribute his money,

---

<sup>90</sup> Speizman, like many Southern Jewish persons, claimed they were sympathetic to the plight of Southern African Americans and the conditions and circumstances they were forced to endure under Jim Crow but due to their limited numbers and their dependence on white Gentiles for their livelihoods were not in a position to take a strong stance in opposition to segregation. Speizman, 91.

<sup>91</sup> Whitfield, 43.

<sup>92</sup> Klein, 49.

<sup>93</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 237.

experience, and energies to help the Negroes.”<sup>94</sup> Golden was also prepared to do more than write about the events happening in North Carolina. He was willing to reach out and make change happen.

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 266.

## CHAPTER 3: MAN ON A MISSION

On the evening of June 24, 1952, a group Golden described as like-minded liberals met in the private dining room at Kuester's restaurant on East Morehead Street near downtown Charlotte. Defining a liberal as "a man who does not desire to detach himself from those elements in our society which he wishes to reform," Golden was confident he had assembled the right folks.<sup>1</sup> In his 1968 autobiography Golden stated that he considered liberals an important component in advancing progressive initiatives in the South.<sup>2</sup> The dozen or so in attendance fit the bill. In addition to close friends such as local physician Dr. Raymond Wheeler and advertising executive Walter Klein, Golden invited the new assistant editor of the *Charlotte News*, Vic Reinemer, and recently retired director of North Carolina's AFL-CIO, Franz Daniel to join.<sup>3</sup> In his time in Charlotte, Golden had gotten to know most of those assembled through conversations with them regarding the growth of the region and challenges facing Charlotte. In these discussions, Golden found they shared his belief that Jim Crow was not only socially unacceptable but the economic conditions it produced in ignoring the needs of the city's African American communities posed a major obstacle to its continued growth and development. It was for this reason that the group met and formed the Charlotte Committee on Public Affairs.

---

<sup>1</sup> Harry Golden, "What is a Liberal?" *Carolina Israelite*, November, 1952, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Although Golden credits white liberals with advancing progress in the South, he states, "the real progress, came, of course, when the Negroes mobilized themselves." Harry Golden, *The Right Time* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1969), 252.

<sup>3</sup> "Minutes of the first meeting of the Charlotte Committee on Public Affairs," June 24, 1952, Box 5, Folder 31A, Harry Golden Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Serving as the new committee's secretary, Golden recorded the reasons for the organization and the principles that would serve as the basis of its charter:

With the unprecedented growth of this community (City of Charlotte, County of Mecklenburg, and the State of North Carolina) within the last decade, the political, economic, and allied affairs involving social welfare require closer study. This is in accord with the North Carolina tradition of constant and vigilant inquiry in the area of public affairs. It is in line with that tradition that we, a group of citizens of this community, feel there is now a need for an articulate group which could raise its voice in public declaration and public discussion of civic affairs and problems in the interest of our community.<sup>4</sup>

Initially, the small group of liberal friends was cautious, aware that few in the city would look to their group and their discussions about race relations as a major factor in economic advancement and as a constructive force for good.<sup>5</sup> Member, Raymond Wheeler wrote Golden expressing his concern that if the group was outed by the city's conservative publications too soon, it would be devoured like "a cream puff."<sup>6</sup> All appreciated that few of the city's white citizens wanted to discuss race let alone address issues concerning racial disparities. Many white Southerners were confident that African Americans accepted their lot without complaint. In 1952 very few Charlotteans could remember a time when the racial status quo created by Jim Crow and the disparities between the white and black sections of town it produced, did not exist. Golden and his fellow committee members, however, believed that racial separation prompted the disparities to come about. "Our basic problem [in Charlotte] is the normal relationship'

---

<sup>4</sup> "Charter of Principles of the Charlotte Committee on Public Affairs," September 10, 1952, Box 5, Folder 31, Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> The membership of the Charlotte Committee on Public Affairs was all white but Golden and the other members planned to become "inter-racial" as soon as "the opportunity presented itself." No date was set for the Committee's integration. "September, 1952 minutes of the Charlotte Committee on Public Affairs," September 10, 1952, Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Dr. Raymond Wheeler to Harry Golden, September 1, 1952, Box 5, Folder 31A, Harry Golden Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

of Negroes and whites on day to day matters in the community,” concluded Golden.<sup>7</sup> Concerned with skepticism any work produced by their committee highlighting racial disparities would generate, Golden pointed out to his fellow committee members at a meeting in September of the same year that their work may require intensive research, adequate dissemination of information, effective organization and proper timing. “The committee should make haste slowly,” wrote Golden, “with actions calculated to insulate them from failure.”<sup>8</sup> Even with the challenges the committee members faced they appreciated the importance of their actions, with Wheeler expressing in a handwritten letter to Golden a few weeks later that, “with a few such people among us, we can become an amazingly effective force for good within this town – I might even say a revolutionary force in molding the future of Charlotte.”<sup>9</sup>

About two months after Golden helped form the Charlotte Committee on Public Affairs, the *Charlotte Observer* published a series of articles examining the unusually high murder rate in the city’s segregated black sections.<sup>10</sup> Although many whites and some African American leaders such as the *Charlotte Post* editor, Dr. Nathaniel Tross, believed blacks were responsible for their lot, no one could deny that most of the city’s African Americans lived in a separate and very different realm from their white neighbors due to segregation and the poor service they received from local and state government departments.<sup>11</sup> Nothing made the point clearer than the city’s murder rate.

---

<sup>7</sup> “Minutes of the January 1953 meeting of the Charlotte Committee on Public Affairs.” January 28, 1953, Box 5, Folder 31A, Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> “Minutes of the September, 1952 meeting of the Charlotte Committee on Public Affairs,” September 10, 1952, Box 5, Folder 31A, Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Dr. Raymond Wheeler to Harry Golden, September 30, 1952, Box 5, Folder 31A, Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Kays Gary and Randolph Norton, “Root of Homicide Found to be Deep,” *Charlotte Observer*, September 1, 1952, 1

<sup>11</sup> Described by Kays Gary as “perhaps the most articulate of Negro spokesmen in Charlotte,” Dr. Tross believed the blame for the high murder rate and the poor conditions found in the city’s black sections

From 1940 through 1951, Charlotte had the highest murder rate of any major city in the Carolinas. While the national homicide rate during this period averaged 5.4 killings per 100,000 population, Charlotte's African American homicide rate was 58.65 per 100,000. White Charlotte's homicides were below the national average at 4 per 100,000. An African American Charlottean was nearly fourteen times more likely to die at the hands of his black neighbor than his fellow white Charlotteans.<sup>12</sup>

The frustrations of being treated as second class citizens combined with vice and violence produced by poverty and lack of opportunities were segregation's legacy no Southerner could escape. The newspaper's report made a distinctive connection between violent crime in black Charlotte's neighborhoods and Jim Crow limits, and neglect from local and state governments. City solicitor Basil Whitener, described in the *Charlotte Observer's* article as "probably [the individual] handling more major crime cases than any other solicitor in the state," blamed the high black murder rate on Jim Crow induced poverty. Charlotte's Chief of Police Frank Littlejohn agreed, adding that the blame should be attributed partly to "the people [landlords] who exploit the Negro in maintaining these areas [Charlotte's black neighborhoods] and take advantage of his position to get as much out of him [black tenants] for nothing as they can."<sup>13</sup>

In response to the shockingly high homicides in Charlotte's black sections, the Charlotte Committee on Public Affairs completed a comprehensive study that established reasons for the city's black homicides. The committee members refused to accept the popular belief held by many white Charlotte citizens that crime was greater in the

---

on African Americans who live there, declaring "It (the plight of Charlotte's blacks) requires attention in the home and in the school and church. We have failed. We need the help and guidance of white people whose knowledge and experience in social advancement is superior to our own." Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.



segregated black sections due to African American's violent nature. In support of their report, the members of the committee used data and statistical information to craft a survey highlighting the tangible factors that explained the violent crime in Charlotte's black neighborhoods. Identifying "deficiencies in our community" (poor employment opportunities, inadequate health facilities and services and educational disparities), the report made public the root causes that created the violent conditions.<sup>14</sup> Over the next eighteen months, committee members continued their research and interviewed local and state government officials and members of academia, to compile a comprehensive survey. "In making this survey," wrote Golden, "we encountered a common problem wherever we turned. Every social problem in Charlotte has a common background – the relationship of the Negro and white communities." Their findings prompted the committee to conclude, "Charlotte is not a united city. It is a divided city"—separated along racial lines that marked two very different places in the same city.<sup>15</sup>

The committee believed of all the black community's deficiencies identified, none was more paramount in preventing African Americans accumulating wealth than the wage disparity between white and black Charlotteans. "The major problem that confronts the Negro in Charlotte," wrote Golden, "is that of getting a job that will pay a decent wage." A black Charlottean's family income amounted to about half what white Charlotteans earned in the 1950s – averaging just thirty-two dollars per week.<sup>16</sup> "In most of the region's major industries where Negroes are employed," continued Golden, "they perform only menial tasks. Positions that pay the best wages and give one an opportunity

---

<sup>14</sup> "Introductory Notes" The document is not dated, however its contents suggest it was created soon after the committee's summer 1952 inception. Box 5, Folder 31A, Harry Golden Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> "Summation and Recommendation," Box 5, Folder 31, Ibid.

to exercise initiative and assume responsibility are closed to Negroes.”<sup>17</sup> Segregation played a major role in assigning the poorest paying and least desirable jobs to African Americans; specifically racial rhetoric often defined by the area’s textile mill owners was used to elevate poor white mill workers to a position above blacks. This policy, based on their assumptions about racial stereotypes in turn discourages white mill workers from supporting unionization. David Clark, editor of the *Southern Textile Bulletin*, wrote numerous editorials reinforced this policy, insisting it would be a tragedy for “Negroes to go into the textile mills. Their entry,” wrote Clark “would result in Negroes marring the sisters of white mill hands.”<sup>18</sup> For African American men the outcome of these Jim Crow policies and stereotypes meant the only jobs available to blacks in the area’s huge textile industry were low paying, labor intensive positions.<sup>19</sup> In the 1950s over ninety percent of Charlotte’s employed African American men worked in some form of manual labor; only about seven percent held a white collar job. In sharp contrast, more than half of the city’s employed white men held some type of white collar job. Likewise, the majority of Charlotte’s black working women also held low paying jobs as domestics in white homes; less than ten percent of Charlotte’s white women worked as domestic help.<sup>20</sup>

With limited wealth to improve their homes and surroundings and meager resources from government entities to enhance their communities, most of the city’s African Americans lived in near squalor. In the densely populated black Charlotte neighborhood known as Second Ward, most of the community’s streets were unpaved

---

<sup>17</sup> “Negroes and Crime in Charlotte,” Box 5, Folder 31B, Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Bart Dredge, “Defending White Supremacy: David Clark and the Southern Textile Bulletin: 1911-1955,” *North Carolina Historical Review* (January 2012): 66.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> United States Bureau of Census, *Census of Population: 1950: Characteristics of the Population: North Carolina* (1952).

and lacked street lights – a clear indictment of Jim Crow municipal and state services. Charlotte’s police chief, Frank Littlejohn believed street illumination in black Charlotte’s sections would help to reduce criminal activity and in turn lower the murder rate. To support his belief, the chief referenced a report from Chattanooga, Tennessee, showing how street light installation in Chattanooga’s African American neighborhoods substantially reduced violent crime as much as ninety percent. Furthermore, “lighting has helped our situation here,” declared Police Chief Littlejohn, “but we just haven’t gone far enough with it [in Charlotte].”<sup>21</sup> Lighting, paving city streets and adding other taxpayer infrastructure improvements usually did not reach black Charlotte. Many of Charlotte’s homes lining segregated and dirt streets were little more than dilapidated shanties with nearly one-third of them lacking running water and indoor toilet facilities.<sup>22</sup> Barred from renting or buying homes in Charlotte’s better neighborhoods, most of the city’s African Americans found themselves trapped in communities where they lacked the wages to improve their surroundings and the political clout to force city officials to address needed upgrades and improvements.

Urban neglect and denying blacks public services were also evident in the second-rate educational system reserved for African American students. Most structures used in black Charlotte as schools desperately needed repair. Charlotte’s segregated black schools suffered from teacher shortages that led to severe classroom overcrowding. Most books and equipment black students used was antiquated and often hand-me-downs no longer utilized or wanted at the white schools on the other side of town.

---

<sup>21</sup> Kays Gary and Randolph, “Housing: Negro Leadership Seen as Cure for Crime,” *Charlotte Observer*, September 2, 1952, 1.

<sup>22</sup> “Summation and Recommendation,” Box 5, Folder 31, Harry Golden Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

African American students understood the education disparities in comparison to the city's white student's schools and that white Charlotte was at best indifferent to their ability to get a good education. Such inequalities impaired black students learning which affected the way black students viewed the value of an education and the role it played in crafting their futures. "This inequality [in education] has a far greater effect than appears on the surface," wrote Golden. "It tends to color the entire future of the [black] student. Under such conditions the Negro student will drop out of school much earlier than the white pupil, in order to enter the labor market, for he or she can see little value in extending the schooling."<sup>23</sup> In 1950 the average white Charlotte adult had completed 12.2 grades of schooling whereas their black counterpart had completed less than seven.<sup>24</sup> Black students who did graduate and completed higher education often left the South for more opportunities and better pay in the North or they went west, where racism and segregation were less severe and legally imposed. The black brain drain out of the South only added to black Charlotte's deterioration and in turn added to the desperation and hopelessness for those left behind.<sup>25</sup>

Limited employment opportunities, low wages and substandard housing and poor sanitation contributed to a low quality of life for Charlotte's African American neighborhoods. With wages barely adequate to cover the essentials, most black Charlotteans failed to receive even basic medical attention. "Racial segregation," wrote Golden, "is a matter of death as well as a matter of social and political deprivation.

---

<sup>23</sup> In 1951, 34% of elementary students in the Charlotte school system were African American but only 21% of the school system's 12<sup>th</sup> graders were black. Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> United States Bureau of Census, *Census of Population: 1950: Characteristics of the Population: North Carolina Pt. 33*, 62 (1952).

<sup>25</sup> Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Random House, 2010), 530.

Because you are segregated – you die. You die in greater numbers, at a younger age, and you die more frequently from diseases like tuberculosis. Tuberculosis is a disease of poverty. The Negro occupies the lowest income and economic status” and in turn suffers more from the affliction of such diseases.<sup>26</sup> In 1951 tuberculosis was the most common disease afflicting black Charlotteans. With limited medical treatment available to them coupled with cramped and poor living conditions, communicable diseases spread unchecked. Often by the time African American patients received medical attention their conditions had progressed too far for treatment. The tuberculosis mortality rate in Charlotte was five times the rate for blacks as for whites.<sup>27</sup> Even if African Americans had the wages to seek medical treatment, few doctors served black Charlotteans. The ratio of doctors available to the white community as compared to those providing medical care for black Charlotteans was more than five to one. For African Americans with more critical medical needs their plight was grave. While there were 1237 hospital beds for white Charlotteans, only 90 beds were available to the city’s black citizens even though they made up nearly a third of the city’s total population.<sup>28</sup>

Adding to Charlotte’s black citizens’ lot was poor local and state government services. The city and county code enforcement divisions responsible for inspections and monitoring health and sanitation standards at places of business did not serve blacks with the same quality of service as whites. The Charlotte Committee on Public Affairs report

---

<sup>26</sup> Harry Golden, “Tuberculosis and the Negro,” *Carolina Israelite*, January-February 1961, 1.

<sup>27</sup> “Summation and Recommendation,” Box 5, Folder 31, Harry Golden Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>28</sup> During the 1950s, the only hospital in Charlotte that would admit black patients was Good Samaritan, an inadequate facility established by the Episcopal Church in the late nineteenth century. A study in the early 1950s concluded the hospital was woefully inadequate to serve black Charlotte. Kays Gary, “Hospital Need Overshadows Attempt to Confuse Issue,” *Charlotte Observer*, May 7, 1957, 2B, *Ibid*.

examined the poor quality of service African Americans received from government employees responsible for business inspections with Golden writing:

No health inspection of the personnel in the Negro restaurants since the establishment of several businesses ranging from one to five years ago. The minimum requirements demanded by health authorities in the matter of washing and sterilizing dishes are not being complied with in seventy percent of the restaurants and cafes operated for Negro clientele. Several Negro cafes in the city with an "A" class rating would have been certainly closed down if operated for the white population. This weakness in the law makes it impossible to free the Negro group from communicable diseases and works a hardship on those who find it necessary to take their meals away from home. This inequality in enforcing the law is even more flagrant in the matter of Negro barber shops in Charlotte. Our survey shows that in nearly all the barber shops in the Second Ward and in [the] Brooklyn [community], one towel is used for dozens of customers, and the instruments are not sterilized from one week to the next. This is a very low point from methods applied in enforcing the health and sanitation law in barber shops operated for white customers.<sup>29</sup>

In April 1954, the committee presented their findings to the Charlotte City Council and other responsible governmental entities, making these agencies aware of the factors they believed created the conditions that led to crime and in turn the murder rate in the city's African American neighborhoods.<sup>30</sup> "Accepting the thesis," wrote Golden, "that the welfare of our community depends largely upon the continued improvement and advancement of its [entire] health, education, and employment facilities and opportunities this survey was made with our immediate needs in view."<sup>31</sup>

The reports and the committee that produced them were important not because it made city officials and the white Charlotte community aware of black citizens' plight. Many whites and most city officials were already aware although in most cases they

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Golden's committee submitted reports covering deficiencies in Charlotte's African American sections: health and sanitation, park safety, street maintenance and improvements, library services and law enforcement. Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> "Summation and Recommendation," Box 5, Folder 31, Harry Golden Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

refused to take action. The importance was that the group formed so early – nearly two years before the *Brown* decision – when few in Charlotte, or anywhere in the South for that matter, wanted to talk about race relations and the true reason for the conditions in black neighborhoods. By assembling a party of those willing to combine their voices in a chorus pointing out Jim Crow’s costs, Golden provided a forum to expose the truth, showing what more than half a century of segregation had produced in the black community.<sup>32</sup> In addition the committee established a base of Charlotte citizens willing to step forward to improvement race relations. Many of the committee’s members served on future committees and groups to address racial issues.<sup>33</sup> No longer could whites simply accept the stereotype that it was the nature of African Americans to be violent and natural to live in such depressing conditions. Whites were not free of the misery they and Jim Crow had inflicted upon African Americans. In addition, the Charlotte Committee on Public Affairs set the pattern that would be repeated in the future when Charlotte was faced with racial unrest and tensions: assemble community leaders to study the issue(s) at hand, make recommendations and move past the racial flash points, and in turn avoid much of the violence and destruction that erupted in other New South urban centers during the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>34</sup>

In the early afternoon of May 17, 1954, Harry Golden picked up a folder of drawings and illustrations he planned to use in the *Carolina Israelite*’s next edition, and headed out his front door. His stroll down Elizabeth Avenue was short – in fact, less than

---

<sup>32</sup> Janette Thomas Greenwood, *Bittersweet Legacy: The Black and White Better Classes in Charlotte* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 238-244.

<sup>33</sup> Examples of future committees to address racial unrest in Charlotte include: Mayor’s Community Relations Committee following sit-ins at the city’s downtown lunch counters and Charlotte Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee. “Committees and List,” Box 26, Folder 4, Stanford Brookshire Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

a block. It was a walk Golden made often – to the office of local artist Kenneth Whitsett. Golden met Whitsett shortly after he arrived in Charlotte in 1941. Over the years the two men had established more than a working relationship between journalist and illustrator – their business relationship had developed into a friendship. Both men were sophisticated and enjoyed conversations about politics, art and literature and, on occasion, shared a good cigar together. According to Golden in his 1969 autobiography, “Ken is a charming companion, well informed and articulate about a variety of subjects.” The one subject the two never discussed was race: “The mention of the word ‘Negro’ drove Ken haywire.”<sup>35</sup>

When Golden entered Whitsett’s office that Monday afternoon, he was not aware that earlier that day the United States Supreme Court in the case *Brown v. Board of Education* had struck down public school segregation. “It was a little after one o’clock,” wrote Golden, when he entered Whitsett’s office. “Ken rose from his chair, advanced toward me, and shouted, ‘You did it! You did it! You came down from the North and put the niggers up to it.’ He slapped me. Only then did I know what had happened”<sup>36</sup> What had happened was more than just a court decision regarding public school assignments in Kansas, South Carolina and a few other states: The *Brown* decision marked the beginning of the end of segregation and Jim Crow across the South. Race relations in the South were going to change and both men knew it.

The *Brown* decision would in time force communities throughout the South to confront the uncomfortable and contentious issue of segregation in one of the most volatile of places – the public school house. Surprisingly though, in much of the South

---

<sup>35</sup> In a 1969 interview, with LeGette Blythe, Golden stated that he and Whitsett, though good friends, often had heated discussions about segregation. By 1954, Golden was aware of his friend’s beliefs on the subject and in turn the need to avoid the issue. Golden interviewed by LeGette Blythe. Golden, *The Right Time*, 304.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 304-305



following the Supreme Court's ruling, there was little reaction. Golden observed this in Charlotte, writing, "Charlotte was quiet [following the *Brown* decision]. There was a news story that night, but that was the end of it. The [white] ministers did not discuss the ruling from their pulpits, nor did the [white] school superintendents convene the [Charlotte] Board of Education, nor did the local representatives offer political comments. In the South there was... utter silence."<sup>37</sup> Initially Golden thought the muted response was due to his neighbors being shocked about the important ruling, expressing, "I thought this silence was because the South was stunned. But I was wrong. The South was mustering its forces. It was going to preserve segregation. It was planning the strategy of noncompliance."<sup>38</sup>

In August of 1954, just months after the *Brown* decision, North Carolina's governor appointed a special committee composed of a number of the state's leading citizens to study the desegregation decision and craft the state's response to the court's ruling.<sup>39</sup> Selected to preside over the committee was the state's former speaker of the North Carolina House, Thomas J. Pearsall.<sup>40</sup> For the remainder of 1954 and the first months of 1955, Pearsall's committee combed the state, discussing desegregation and the court's ruling with local and state officials, school superintendents, journalists and elected officials. The committee claimed their objective was to gauge public opinion and investigate if desegregation of the state's public schools were possible and if so how best to bring it about. In the end, Pearsall and the committee's members concluded that, in

---

<sup>37</sup> Harry Golden, "Civil Rights and Leadership," Box 101, Harry Golden Papers, Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>38</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 305.

<sup>39</sup> Arthur Carlson, "With All Deliberate Speed: The Pearsall Plan and School Desegregation in North Carolina, 1954-1966" (Master's Thesis, East Carolina University, 2011), 2.

<sup>40</sup> Davison Douglas, *Reading, Writing, and Race: The Desegregation of Charlotte Schools* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 34.

their view, the disruption and potential violence caused by integrating the state's public schools made it impossible to move forward in bringing an end to segregation.<sup>41</sup>

To delay integration, and the assumed suggested threats it poised to the state's peace, the committee made a number of recommendations, among them transferring pupil assignments to local school districts from state control. By vesting authority over student assignments in local boards, statewide desegregation was impossible without bringing lawsuits against each of the state's individual school systems. In March of 1955, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the Pupil Assignment Act, transferring responsibility for pupil assignment, enrollment, and transportation from the State Department of Education to individual county and municipal boards of education with instructions that they were not to consider race as an assignment criteria and in doing so assured that the state's school systems would remain segregated.<sup>42</sup>

White supporters of the new act presented North Carolina's response to *Brown* as moderate. Compared to schemes crafted in other Southern states to physically and forcefully block integration, to some degree North Carolina's passive proposal was moderate. Nonetheless the objective of North Carolina's legislation was the same as that of other Southern states – to interfere with the intent of the *Brown* decision by slowing integration of the public schools and in doing so, keep white children from attending school with black children.<sup>43</sup> Describing North Carolina's response to *Brown* as the

---

<sup>41</sup> Luther Hodges, "Press conference regarding Pearsall Committee's report," WBT-Charlotte, August 8, 1955.

<sup>42</sup> The Pearsall Committee suggested other measures in addition to the transfer of pupil assignment to local control in hopes to slow desegregation – eliminate the state's compulsory attendance law and establish "Education Expense Grants" that would provide funds for students to opt out of the public school system to avoid attending an integrated school. William Chafe, *Civil Rights and Civilities: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Struggle for Black Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 49-51.

<sup>43</sup> Although the Pearsall Plan marked a significant shift in North Carolina's policy regarding public schools, it was more moderate compared to other Southern states' response to the *Brown* decision.

“most successful of all the attempts” to circumvent the court’s ruling, Golden believed the state’s leaders’ action, like that of most white Southern politicians, was in error. If the white Southern governors had complied with the court order, desegregation, though difficult, would have come about with less political complications and in many cases less violence. But they did not. “The [white] leaders of the South,” wrote Golden, “created a vacuum, and into the vacuum came the white supremacists, the racists, the White Citizens Councils, the Ku Kluxers – a sad price to pay for maintaining the Southern way of life.”<sup>44</sup>

In early 1956, North Carolina’s new governor, Luther Hodges, assembled another committee, again headed by Pearsall, to further study public school desegregation.<sup>45</sup> North Carolina’s legislators had rejected Pearsall’s first committee proposals to provide grants for white parents to send their children to private schools due to the cost, and rejected giving local school boards authority to close schools facing desegregation fearful of triggering Federal intervention. The new governor, however, indicated he was willing to accept and fight for these more extreme proposals.<sup>46</sup> Although the committee’s recommendations approval were never in doubt, securing Governor Hodges and a majority of the state legislators support during the summer of 1956, the Pearsall

---

Four states (Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina), abolished state constitutional requirements for public education and four states (Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Virginia) passed legislation withholding school funding from their state’s public school systems that allowed desegregation: Douglas, 35.

<sup>44</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 305-306.

<sup>45</sup> Lieutenant Governor Luther Hodges became governor of North Carolina upon the death of Governor Umstead on November 7, 1954. As lieutenant governor, Hodges opposed the more extreme Pearsall’s committee recommendations: providing education grants for white children to attend private schools and giving authorization to local school boards to close public schools if threatened with integration. As governor, Hodges, however, was mindful to avoid siding against the will of white segregationists, fearing backlash from them, come election time and therefore was more willing to placate the state’s segregationists. As governor he embraced the committee’s more extreme proposals stating, “the people of North Carolina expect their General Assembly and their Governor to do everything legally possible to prevent their children from being forced to attend mixed schools against their wishes.” Luther Hodges, *Businessman in the Statehouse: Six Years as Governor of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 82.

<sup>46</sup> Carlson, 31, Douglas, 33.

committee staged a series of public hearings in Raleigh prior to the North Carolina General Assembly's members casting their votes.<sup>47</sup> In a four-day marathon hearing, dozens of North Carolina's citizens, both white and African American, testified. Two of those from Charlotte appearing before the committee were Harry Golden and his neighbor, Kenneth Whitsett.<sup>48</sup>

The summer before the Pearsall hearings, Kenneth Whitsett had organized a local chapter of the Patriots of North Carolina – a white supremacist organization committed to Jim Crow and segregation.<sup>49</sup> Like the majority of those testifying in Raleigh that summer, Whitsett favored the new more radical proposals that would provide additional tools to further strengthen the state's intransigence to the *Brown* decision.<sup>50</sup> Although the committee permitted views both for and against the pending legislation, most of those providing testimony favored the new proposals that strengthened the state's resolve to resist public school desegregation. The day Whitsett and Golden appeared before the committee to express their views, all except Golden and Dr. Maggs, the dean of Duke University's Law School, spoke in favor of the new anti-*Brown* public school legislation.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> The Pearsall Plan called for the elimination of the state's compulsory attendance law to prevent any child from being forced to attend school with a child of another race; establish "Education Expense Grants" providing funds for students to attend private schools if they were assigned to a mixed raced school and gave authority to local school authorities to close schools if threatened with integration. Jim Chaney, "General Assembly Approvals Pearsall Plan," *Raleigh News and Observer*, July 28, 1956, 1.

<sup>48</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 307.

<sup>49</sup> Although the Patriots group was more effective in other North Carolina counties, it played a minor role in Charlotte. Whitsett believed few Charlotteans were attracted to his organization due to Charlotte's business class's refusal to support their efforts, fearful that such support would be bad for business. The Charlotte branch never had more than a few dozen members and disbanded shortly after its establishment. "Patriots Group Establishes Early Meet," *Charlotte Observer*, August 26, 1955, 8A., Kays Gary, "White Citizens' Council Organized by Kasper," *Charlotte Observer*, September 2, 1957, 1B.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Dr. D. Maggs, dean of Duke University's Law School joined Golden in opposition of the Pearsall committee's recommendations. Golden, *The Right Time*, 307

Realizing that the hearings were little more than “window dressing” for the vote to follow later in the week, Golden decided to have fun at the expense of the committee and the assembled political leaders. With cameras focused on him, Golden surprised the audience, suggesting a completely different approach to the issue at hand. In what he termed the Golden Vertical Negro Plan, Golden pointed out that no one seemed to have a problem with African Americans until they sit with whites. “The white and Negro,” sassed Golden, “stand at the same grocery and supermarket counters; deposit money at the same bank teller’s window; pay phone and light bills to the same clerk; walk through the same dime and department stores; and stand at the same drugstore counters. It is only when the Negro sits that the fur begins to fly. Instead of all those complicated proposals,” concluded Golden, “all the next session need to do is pass one small amendment which would provide only desks in all the public schools of our state – no seats.”<sup>52</sup> The chamber filled with laughter in response to Golden’s remarks.

For Golden and other like-minded liberals, the ridiculousness of his plan was an even match for the nonsensicalness of segregation and the legislation approved by the politicians in Raleigh that summer. Following Golden’s testimony, Governor Hodges laughingly commended Golden for his suggestion, calling the Vertical Negro Plan “a great idea.”<sup>53</sup> Golden’s ridiculous plan to end segregation appeared in a number of newspapers and magazines both in the state and throughout the nation. Likeminded-liberals wrote letters to publishers and covered the pages of newspapers’ editorial columns with praise for the plan and appreciation to Golden for his witty and cheeky suggestion which declared school segregation to be an obsolete measure. Dr. Oscar

---

<sup>52</sup> Unsigned, “Golden Rule,” *Time*, April, 1, 1957. Golden, *The Right Time*, 308-309. Harry Golden, “How to Solve the Segregation Problem,” *Carolina Israelite*, May-June 1956.

<sup>53</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 309.

Coffin, a professor of journalism at the University of North Carolina, commented in an editorial that he was beholden to Harry Golden for his witty suggestion that to him “makes more sense than telling the Supreme Court we [North Carolinians] simply will not take it [desegregation] sitting down.”<sup>54</sup> Dr. Coffin, concluded his letter stating, “I am glad we’ve got living, moving and having his being amongst us – the editor of the *Carolina Israelite*: A man so civilized as to be able to smile at or even chuckle at the joke the bigot is playing on himself.”<sup>55</sup>

In May of 1956, a few months before Golden appeared before the Pearsall committee, he and a number of North Carolina’s leading newspapermen met with Governor Hodges and Thomas Pearsall at the state’s annual North Carolina Editorial Writers Conference to discuss Pearsall’s new recommendations.<sup>56</sup> For the most part those in attendance either agreed with Governor Hodges and Pearsall to oppose public school desegregation or they remained silent – that is other than Golden, Jonathan Daniels editor of the *Raleigh News and Observer* and Reed Sarratt editor of the *Winston-Salem Journal-Sentinel*. The three took turns grilling the governor and Pearsall for their failure to reach out to the African American community to obtain their input on the new proposals, implying that the committee and governor’s fact-finding outreach efforts were little more than an orchestrated sham since both Pearsall and the governor had already announced that they favored keeping the public schools segregated regardless of the information they collected. When Hodges stated that he had “tried and tried to get the Negroes to cooperate with his ‘school committee,’” Golden snapped back enquiring if,

---

<sup>54</sup> Oscar Coffin, Editorial, *Greensboro Daily News*, July 25, 1956.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Letter from Harry Golden to Kelly Alexander, Sr., May 23, 1956, Box 30, Folder 18, Kelly Alexander Sr. Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

“he [really] expected the Negroes to collaborate in their own obituary,” adding that in his view if the governor had reached out in a more open-minded and inclusive fashion the “Negro cooperation would have stretched from the state capital to Mount Mitchell.”<sup>57</sup> Hodges responded that he believed the state’s “good Negroes” were satisfied with separate schools and that “any trouble” and opposition was coming from “outside interference and the NAACP.” Responding to the governor’s comments, Daniels said that he “believed the Southern authorities may be barking up the wrong tree, that from his observation the rank and file of Negroes was pushing the NAACP, and that the whole idea of outside interference may be just a pipe dream.”<sup>58</sup> Hodges responded that “his own information is that the NAACP is behind it all.”<sup>59</sup>

Although Governor Hodges, like many other white Southern politicians, misrepresented the NAACP’s objectives and overestimated the group’s influence in priming and inflaming Southern African Americans’ discontent, he correctly identified the connection between the organization and the education of black children.<sup>60</sup> Since its inception in 1909, a major objective of the NAACP had been to ensure educational equality.<sup>61</sup> It was the lack of equal educational opportunities that prompted Charlotte’s civil rights’ leader Kelly Alexander to establish a Charlotte chapter of the NAACP in

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Golden, “Solve the Segregation Problem,” *Carolina Israelite*, May-June 1956.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from Harry Golden to Kelly Alexander, Sr., May 23, 1956, Box 30, Folder 18, Kelly Alexander Sr. Papers.

<sup>60</sup> Paranoia of the potential influence and power of the NAACP, in 1957 Governor Hodges backed legislation that would have required the state’s NAACP to disclose its membership list and curb its financial assistance to litigants involved in civil rights’ lawsuits. Douglas, *Reading, Writing and Race*, 40.

<sup>61</sup> The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: To ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, “Mission,” [www.naacp.org/pages/our-mission](http://www.naacp.org/pages/our-mission).

1940.<sup>62</sup> For the remainder of the decade the members of Charlotte's chapter fought for more resources for the city's black students, even filing a petition with the Charlotte School Board in 1948 for its failure to provide separate junior high schools for African American students to mirror those available to white students and its failure to include black students in Spanish and Latin classes.<sup>63</sup> Due to Kelly Alexander, the Charlotte chapter would be one of the most active in North Carolina.<sup>64</sup>

Harry Golden met Kelly Alexander shortly after he arrived in Charlotte in 1941.<sup>65</sup> Sharing many of the same views regarding race and appreciating the importance of civil engagement, the two men became fast friends. It was to Alexander's family business, Golden rushed, to join in the celebration of the *Brown* decision following his altercation with Whitsett in the spring of 1954.<sup>66</sup> During the 1940s and 1950s, Golden and Alexander met often at Golden's office to discuss challenges facing Charlotte – especially issues related to race relations. Although he did not officially join the NAACP until 1958, Golden was sympathetic to the NAACP's mission and often spoke out in favor of issues important to the organization such as equal educational opportunities, voter registration and the elimination of other forms of race-based discrimination.<sup>67</sup> In his early days in Charlotte Golden's help was limited to writing a sympathetic article or two in the *Carolina Israelite* and small contributions for a seat at the organization's

---

<sup>62</sup> Kelly Alexander's brother Fred, went before the local school board in Charlotte to ask that business courses be offered at the city's Negro high school because they were available to students at the city's white high schools. "N.A.A.C.P. Petition Charlotte School Board," Box 30, Folder 18, Kelly Alexander Sr. Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>63</sup> "N.A.A.C.P. Petition Charlotte School Board," Box 30, Folder 18, Kelly Alexander Sr. Papers.

<sup>64</sup> "NAACP Will Seek Integration in Fall," *Charlotte Observer*, July 9, 1955, 1A.

<sup>65</sup> Golden met Kelly Alexander in 1942 through his brother Fred when the three worked on the Associated Charities campaign of 1942. *The Right Time*, 242, 244.

<sup>66</sup> Hartnett, 114.

<sup>67</sup> In 1958, Golden spent part of the royalties from his best-selling book, *Only in America*, to purchase a lifetime membership in the NAACP. Whitfield, 34.



annual fundraiser. But as Golden's popularity and noteworthiness grew in the 1950s and 1960s following the Pearsall hearings, so too did Golden's ability to be of greater assistance to NAACP efforts locally. In the fall of 1958 Kelly Alexander called on Golden for assistance in helping to alleviate a racial crisis in the small mill town of Monroe, North Carolina, located about twenty-five miles east of Charlotte.

A few days before Halloween in 1958, a Monroe city police cruiser picked up two African American boys towing a red wagon full of empty soda bottles down Franklin Avenue – James Hanover Thompson, age nine, and his best friend David “Fuzzy” Simpson, age eight.<sup>68</sup> The police officers told the two boys that they were under arrest. Years later James Hanover Thompson recalled the traumatic events he and his friend experienced that day:

Both cops jumped out with their guns drawn. They snatched us up and handcuffed us and threw us in the car. When we got to the jail they dragged us out of the car. They threw us down and they started beating us. Body punches, hitting us hard in the chest and calling us all kinds of names. They threw us in these holding cells and they talked about how they ‘was’ going to hang us and lynch us. That night, the Klan was outside, trying to get in the jail. People was out there trying to get in there to kill us.<sup>69</sup>

For six days the two boys remained at the city's jail in solitary confinement, absent of legal counsel and without the comfort of their parents.<sup>70</sup> On November 4, their mothers received notices to be at the Union County Courthouse in half an hour for their sons' court proceedings on the charges of sexual assault on three white females, ages six and seven.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 95.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>70</sup> During the 1950s in North Carolina, rape suspects were not permitted to see anyone (other than legal counsel) while police investigated. Robert F. Williams, *Negroes with Guns* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1973), 59.

<sup>71</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 377.

Although the facts that led to the arrest of the two boys varied, most accounts agree that on Tuesday, October 29, 1958, a group of white children – both boys and girls – were playing in a culvert near Harvard Street in a Monroe, North Carolina white working-class neighborhood. As the two African American boys passed pulling their wagon the white kids invited them to join them. When their play ended, one of the white girls, Sissy Sutton, kissed one or both of the African American boys on the cheek.<sup>72</sup> Later, in the course of telling her mother about her day, Sissy mentioned that she had an opportunity to play with an old friend, Hanover Thompson, and that she had kissed him goodbye.<sup>73</sup> The girl's mother later stated she at first did not realize that the boy her daughter kissed was black. When she realized the boy was black, Sissy's mother took the only actions she knew to do: She praised her daughter "for having used her head to escape from such a dangerous situation." Then she took the little girl, and thoroughly washed her "sweet little face."<sup>74</sup>

For more than a year before the kissing incident, racial tensions in Monroe, North Carolina were high. Excluded from the city's public pools, black children in Monroe often escaped the oppressive summer heat by swimming in the area's creeks, ponds and rivers. Many of the places they swam were not safe. "The weather is hot and the water is inviting," wrote local African American leader Dr. A. E. Perry to the Monroe parks' authority. "When there are no proper facilities available these conditions are invitations

---

<sup>72</sup> What game the children were playing (cowboys and Indians, tag, or just running in the shallow water in the ditch) varies as does who kissed whom and the circumstances that led to the kissing incident. Williams, 58-60. Tyson, 96-98. Golden, *The Right Time*, 379.

<sup>73</sup> According to local NAACP leader, Robert Williams, Evelyn Thompson (mother of one of the accused, Hanover Thompson) worked for the mother of Sissy Sutton as domestic help years before the incident. This would explain how Ms. Sutton knew the boy who kissed her daughter was African American. Williams, 58. "Williams Once Aided This Mother of Six," *Charlotte Observer*, August 30, 1961.

<sup>74</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 378-379.

to death. The fact that most swimming-hole deaths involve Negroes is no accident.”<sup>75</sup>

When another black child drowned in the summer of 1957, the president of the local NAACP chapter, Robert Williams, demanded the city provide separate swimming facilities for African Americans or open the “whites only” pools for their use. When Monroe officials refused, stating that the city did not have funds to construct a racially separate facility and denied them access to the “whites-only” pools, Williams exploded. “If they are too poor to afford dual facilities,” he demanded, “then segregation was a luxury they could not afford.”<sup>76</sup>

Leading a small group of NAACP members and African American supporters of integration of the city’s public pool facilities, Williams staged protests outside entrances to the “whites only” swimming pools.<sup>77</sup> Enraged by the provocative prospect of groups of racially mixed youths frolicking in a pool, many of the city’s whites reacted violently. Williams and other local African American leaders received harassing phone calls and death threats. Gun shots outside Williams’ home and the houses of other local black leaders became common. A few weeks before Thanksgiving in 1957, angry whites crafted a petition to have Williams forcefully removed from Monroe, “with all deliberate speed and due process of law.”<sup>78</sup> In the weekend following its creation, more than two thousand white people signed the petition.<sup>79</sup> Throughout the fall of 1957, the local Ku Klux Klan added to the tension, staging a number of well-attended rallies and leading

---

<sup>75</sup> Letter from Dr. A. E. Perry to Union County Park and Recreation Committee,” July 19, 1957, Tyson, 83-84.

<sup>76</sup> Letter from Robert Williams to Kelly Alexander, Sr., July 31, 1957, Box 30, Folder 8, Kelly Alexander Sr. Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>77</sup> Before the racial unrest of 1957-1958, most African Americans in Monroe avoided joining civil rights organizations for fear of violence and retaliation from whites. Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> “NAACP Leader Asked to Go,” *Monroe Enquirer Journal*, November 11, 1957.

<sup>79</sup> Tyson, 86.

motorcades through black communities, blowing their car horns, throwing rocks and bottles, and firing pistols.<sup>80</sup> “A ‘nigger’ who wants to go to a white swimming pool is not looking for a bath,” bellowed Klan leader Catfish Cole at a rally on Highway 74, “he is looking for a funeral.”<sup>81</sup> In response to increased violence and threats aimed at him and his family, Williams brandished a handgun (which was perfectly legal in Monroe) when he ran errands and attended meetings. He encouraged other African Americans to do the same, stating it was time to “start collecting guns,” and that “black people should meet lynching with lynching.”<sup>82</sup>

Desiring to put pressure on the local Monroe government to integrate the city’s pools, Williams contacted the North Carolina NAACP for support. The organization’s new chairman, Kelly Alexander, disapproved of Williams’ handling of the situation in Monroe.<sup>83</sup> Alexander had met with Williams a number of times at his Charlotte office and at Harry Golden’s home. Both men disliked the loud, brash Williams, believing his call for “revolution” and his proclamation that “the time has come to shed some blood” were dangerous and threatened to alienate sympathetic whites against their organization’s objectives as well as provided racists and segregationists’ more weapons to use against them.<sup>84</sup> In addition, both Alexander and Golden thought the swimming pool campaign was a terrible political error that foolishly interjected sexual undertones into the fight for equality. In a letter to Alexander, Golden wrote, “I have felt all along that the Negro

---

<sup>80</sup> “North Carolina Ku Klux Klan Revival,” Box 131, Folder 4, Fred Alexander Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Williams, 59.

<sup>83</sup> Kelly Alexander was elected president of the North Carolina NAACP in 1950. Golden, *The Right Time*, 244.

<sup>84</sup> Letter from Kelly Alexander to the Editor of *Commentary*, April 7, 1961, Box 30, Folder 8, Kelly Alexander Sr. Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

leadership in Monroe has been very bad. I may be doing Robert Williams a great injustice and if so I would like to have you correct it in my own mind.”<sup>85</sup> But the leader of the state’s NAACP did not disagree with Golden’s assessment of Williams. Alexander steered the state’s organization clear of the local leader in Monroe and his desire to integrate the city’s pools – then the Kissing Case came about expanding the public’s view of Monroe’s race relations’ confrontations.

Although the two little boys never went to trial for sexual assault, the presiding judge believed it was important to placate angry whites as well as to set an example against any infringement on the taboo of interracial sexual relations. In the days before the proceedings, Judge J. Hampton Price made contact with the director of the state’s Board of Corrections to arrange accommodations for the two black boys at the state’s institution for delinquent Negro boys in Hoffman, a town an hour east of Monroe.<sup>86</sup> Already determining the case’s outcome, Judge Price proclaimed Hanover Thompson’s and David Simpson’s home lives unsuitable and asserted his belief that the two boys lacked adequate parental supervision. The judge announced that the two would not be going home. Instead, Price instructed state authorities to place the two little boys in the Morrison Training School director’s custody until they turned age twenty-one.<sup>87</sup>

Even before the two boys arrived at the Morrison School, Kelly Alexander and Harry Golden crafted a plan to gain their freedom.<sup>88</sup> “There was every reason why

---

<sup>85</sup> Letter from Harry Golden to Kelly Alexander Sr., December 18, 1958, Box 30, Folder 8, Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Tyson, 100.

<sup>87</sup> The local newspaper in Monroe – *Monroe Enquirer Journal* – did not cover the story for more than a month after the kissing incident occurred. Concerned with negative publicity, the *Enquirer Journals*’ staff buried the story. Tyson, 119, “Jail Kissing Case Kissed Off by Judge, *Charlotte Observer*, November 5, 1958.

<sup>88</sup> To avoid publicity and due to their distrust of Robert Williams, Harry Golden and Kelly Alexander took actions to get the two black boys released without input from the Monroe NAACP or Williams. Letter from Harry Golden to Kelly Alexander Sr., December 18, 1958, Box 30, Folder 8, Kelly

decent people should be outraged over the situation,” wrote Golden, “but the outrage also meant the two little boys would be forever lost in a triangle of legal explanations and definitions.”<sup>89</sup> Golden and Alexander had hoped “to get the boys out of jail on a writ of habeas corpus and then, by arguing for the preservation of their legal rights, [to] keep them out of jail. We hoped to accomplish this before the case drew too much attention.”<sup>90</sup> Taking advantage of a lull in the news reporting following Judge Price’s ruling, Golden and Alexander worked to have the boys released before the press got wind of their actions and in their views, make it more difficult to implement their plan, however, “Williams,” wrote Golden, “beat us to the punch.”<sup>91</sup>

Robert Williams was angry. Not only did he resent Kelly Alexander and Golden for failing to support his campaign to integrate Monroe’s public pools – believing the two leaders were more concerned with white liberals’ sensitivity to interracial sexuality than the wellbeing of African Americans – he also blamed their timid and hands-off handling of the Kissing Case as the reason two innocent little boys were facing up to fourteen years at a reform school.<sup>92</sup> When Williams learned of Alexander and Golden’s plan to get the boys released, he rejected the scheme as foolish and naïve. He believed that the plan would not work and that the scheme allowed the injustice committed on the two boys to go unchecked. Although it would be 1960 before Williams broke with the

---

Alexander Sr. Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>89</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 380.

<sup>90</sup> Harry Golden, “Monroe, North Carolina and the Kissing Case,” *Carolina Israelite*, January-February, 1959, 5.

<sup>91</sup> Before Golden and Alexander implemented their plans to get the two boys released, Robert Williams began his own plan to draw attention to the injustice hoping to create pressure on authorities and in turn get the two boys released. Tyson, 109. Golden, *The Right Time*, 380.

<sup>92</sup> “Reginald Hawkins, a Charlotte NAACP activist close to Kelly Alexander and who was involved in the Kissing Case, suggested in an interview years later that class played a major role in creating the tension between Alexander and Williams. ‘You have to understand the NAACP’ stated Hawkins. ‘It was a bourgeois organization. It did not want to deal with the underclass and such [Williams and rural NAACP organizations].’” Tyson, 109.

NAACP, following Judge Price's decision, he no longer took his lead from the state and national NAACP, believing Alexander and the North Carolina NAACP was more concern with placating white liberals than working in the best interest of the black citizens of Monroe.<sup>93</sup>

Operating independent of the NAACP, Williams frantically cranked out hundreds of press releases, sending them to any news outlet that would accept them; made scores of phone calls to newsrooms and radio stations – both nationally and internationally; bombarded the wire services with the frantic message asking for their help to expose the situation in Monroe; and sent scores of letters to elected officials and national celebrities asking them to intervene to help correct the travesty of justice bestowed on two innocent little boys.<sup>94</sup> After the *New York Post*'s Ted Poston and the left-leaning *London News Chronicle* ran articles about the case, the story exploded on the newswires.<sup>95</sup> The Kissing Case story appeared in newspapers around the globe. Left-wing and anti-American groups throughout Europe staged rallies to help with the boys release, pointing out the hypocrisy of American democracy and justice. Hundreds of thousands of people around the globe expressed their outrage over the incident at rallies throughout Europe. There were huge demonstrations in Paris, Rome, and Vienna in support of the two boys. In Rotterdam thousands of high school students signed a petition condemning the United States for its racism and called on President Dwight David Eisenhower to help in getting the boys released. Groups formed protest committees in at least eight European countries. An international committee made up of leading scholars and liberal

---

<sup>93</sup> Williams, 59-60.

<sup>94</sup> Tyson, 110.

<sup>95</sup> Herbert Shapiro, *White Violence and Black Response: From Reconstruction to Montgomery* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988) 451. Ted Poston, *New York Post*, November 20, 1958. Joyce Egginton, "Why?" *London News Chronicle*, December 16, 1958.

intellectuals formed in Europe to defend the two boys.<sup>96</sup> The world's outcry projected Robert Williams onto the world stage, presenting him as a fighter for the rights of black Americans. By the end of 1958, Robert Williams had been elevated beyond Alexander and Golden's control, traveling throughout the country, collecting hundreds of thousands of dollars to help Hanover and Fuzzy win their freedom.<sup>97</sup>

Alarmed at the proliferation of William's actions and the damage the NAACP leadership believed it posed to the mission and reputation of the organization, Kelly Alexander asked Golden to contact the only person he believed could rescue the two children and in doing so bring the drama to an end – North Carolina governor Luther Hodges. Hodges was aware of the case, having watched it grow from a local news story in a small Piedmont mill town to what was fast emerging as an international embarrassment for both North Carolina and the nation. Concerned that the racially charged publicity would damage North Carolina's well-crafted ethos and image of a racially progressive and tolerant state and in turn hurt the state's commerce, he was more than willing to help bring the drama to an end.<sup>98</sup> Reflecting on the case years later Alexander recalled contacting Golden for help in bringing the Kissing Case to a close.

The [North Carolina] NAACP had asked Harry Golden to intercede in the matter for the sake of the children who at that moment were not only in jail, but were being exploited by fund-raisers all over the North. Mr. Golden had a conference with Governor Luther H. Hodges, and the Governor told him that if we can

---

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. Golden, *The Right Time*, 381. Williams, 60. Harry Golden, "Monroe, North Carolina, And the Kissing Case," *Carolina Israelite*, January-February, 1959, 5.

<sup>97</sup> Letter from Kelly Alexander to the Editor of *Commentary*, April 7, 1961, Box 30, Folder 8, Kelly Alexander Sr. Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>98</sup> Governor Hodges wanted the case to end but was concerned with political fallout if the court's assessment that the boys' home lives were inadequate and not stable was not addressed. He and Golden made arrangements for the Charlotte chapter of the NAACP to find places for the boys' families to live in Charlotte, as well as jobs as domestics for the two mothers. Letter from Harry Golden to Kelly Alexander, December 18, 1958, Box 5, Folder 31A, Harry Golden Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.



arrange suitable facilities for these two families in Charlotte and provide some initial support for each of the families, he would order them released. Golden talked with me, the NAACP director of N.C., over the telephone and when I assured him that this will be done for the two mothers and the two boys, the Governor released the children the next morning.<sup>99</sup>

In the late afternoon of February 13, 1959, Evelyn Thompson opened the front door of her new apartment in Charlotte to find her son, Hanover, standing between two Morrison Training School social workers.<sup>100</sup> The same event had played out at the new home of Jennie Simpson slightly earlier in the day, with the return of her son, eight year old David. The two mothers' fifteen-week ordeal was over. In his 1973 book, *Negroes with Guns*, Williams claimed that world condemnation of the injustice in Monroe compelled Eleanor Roosevelt to contact President Eisenhower to ask him to intervene in the case. In turn, the president called Governor Hodges thus leading to the resolution of the case. "Somebody said something, finally, to President Eisenhower," wrote Williams "and finally he said something to our then Governor Hodges."<sup>101</sup>

Although no evidence exists that that "someone" was Mrs. Roosevelt, or for that matter that Eisenhower pressured Governor Hodges to bring the boys' drama to an end, little doubt exist that Williams' actions proved instrumental in bringing about world-wide attention to the case and in turn putting pressure on state authorities and the NAACP to address and resolve the Kissing Case. But drawing attention to a situation and putting

---

<sup>99</sup> Kelly Alexander believed Robert Williams was using the Kissing Case as a means to raise and collect funds in northeast urban centers. In 1961 the mothers (both of the boy's came from single parent homes) of the two boys stated that they received just \$12.50 from Williams. Part of the deal struck between Governor Hodges and Kelly Alexander that helped secure the release of the two boys was finding new homes and jobs for the mothers of the two boys and in doing so remove the families from Monroe and address the issue of poor home lives raised by Judge Price. "Williams Once Aided This Mother of Six, *Charlotte Observer*, August 30, 1961. Letter from Kelly Alexander to the Editor of *Commentary*, April 7, 1961, Box 30, Folder 8, Kelly Alexander Sr. Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>100</sup> John York, "Kissing Case Boys Returned to Moms," *Charlotte Observer*, February 14, 1959.

<sup>101</sup> Williams, 60-61.

pressure on the powers that be, no matter how effective, did not resolve the issue.

Golden's actions did. Not only did Golden contact Governor Hodges, but he helped craft the logistics to provide political cover to the governor. Working behind the scenes, Golden was able to bridge the gap of mistrust between the NAACP and Hodges, securing guarantees from both Hodges and Alexander that helped bring about the case's resolution.<sup>102</sup> And although a long protracted legal case proved unnecessary, Golden stood ready just the same, retaining the services of well-known civil rights attorney, Conrad Lynn.<sup>103</sup> With Lynn in New York City, Golden stepped up, serving as the high-powered attorney's local contact – gathering facts, filing paperwork with the courts and serving as a conduit between Lynn, the state's NAACP and the mothers of the boys. Golden even fronted the first three hundred dollars of Lynn's bill to defend the case.<sup>104</sup>

In the summer of 1958, just weeks before the Kissing Case came about, Golden published his second book, *Only in America*. Unlike his earlier book, *Jews in American History*, the new book was not about any particular subject. If anything it was an extension of his newspaper, the *Carolina Israelite*. Divided into eight rambling themes with ambiguous titles such as “Death and the Call Girl” and “Merry Christmas Billy Graham,” the book consisted of approximately two hundred of Golden's favorite articles and short essays that had previously appeared in the *Israelite*. Golden believed the short snippets were the key to the book's appeal. “The joy of the newspaper is that the reader picks and chooses not only between the advertising and copy but also which copy is the

---

<sup>102</sup> Both Thompson and Simpson's fathers were absent. Tyson, 100.

<sup>103</sup> Letter from Harry Golden to Kelly Alexander, December 18, 1958, Box 5, Folder 31A, Harry Golden Papers.

<sup>104</sup> Letter from Conrad Lynn to Harry Golden, December 14, 1958, Box 5, Folder 31A, Harry Golden Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

choicest to read,” boasted Golden. “*Only in America* had the continuity [attractive accessibility] of a newspaper: No one had to read it all the way through in order to learn the news.”<sup>105</sup>

Although, Golden’s publisher at World Publishing, Ben Zevin, described the early reviews of his new book as “phenomenal,” he cautioned Golden that it would take time before the initial good news would translate into book sales. Zevin, however, was wrong.<sup>106</sup> Following a short but very successful interview on NBC’s *Today Show* in July of 1958, *Only in America* became a run-away success.<sup>107</sup> Golden was a natural on television. His friendly, charming manner worked well with the show’s informal talk format, with Golden cracking jokes with the show’s host Dave Garroway and describing his favorite selections in the book. Golden netted his biggest laughs when he described his “Golden Plans” to end segregation.<sup>108</sup> Golden’s television debut was a stroke of luck. In the coming months, it seemed no one could get enough of the portly, witty Jewish man from Dixie or his quirky way of poking fun at Jim Crow and the peculiar rules and regulations it supported.<sup>109</sup> With the book’s success and his increased noteworthiness, Golden received invitations to speak at functions and events throughout the nation and appeared on television programs and served as a guest on radio shows. The exposure made Golden a national celebrity and pushed *Only in America* to record sales. In the

---

<sup>105</sup> Golden, *Only in America*, 347.

<sup>106</sup> Hartnett, 142.

<sup>107</sup> Script from *The Today Show* interview, July 24, 1958, Box 5, Folder 32, Harry Golden Papers, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>108</sup> First introduced at the Pearsall Hearing under the title “Vertical Negro Plan” as a humorous solution to desegregate the state’s public schools. By 1959, Golden had a collection of cheeky solutions to help African Americans get around Jim Crow. Harry Golden, “Golden Vertical Negro Plan in Operation,” *Carolina Israelite*, July-August, 1958. Harry Golden, “White Citizens’ Council of Jackson, Warns of Golden Out-of-Order Plan,” *Carolina Israelite*, January-February, 1959. Harry Golden, “Turban Plan,” *Carolina Israelite*, June, 1960.

<sup>109</sup> Golden exhibited his heavy schedule of events and function in his newspaper. Example of schedule: Harry Golden, “My Speeches in November,” *Carolina Israelite*, September 1959, 8.

coming months more than 250,000 hardback copies sold, with many more selling in paperback.<sup>110</sup> Golden's little book of newspaper clippings would remain on the *New York Times* best seller's list for the next sixty-six weeks.<sup>111</sup>

In the early morning hours of Thursday, February 4, 1960, Charles Jones, vice-president of the student body of Johnson C. Smith University, was driving back to his school in Charlotte from the nation's capital. The twenty-two year old theological student had spent the last few days in Washington testifying on Capitol Hill before the House Committee on Un-American Activities.<sup>112</sup> While driving home that morning, Jones heard a radio news report updating the Greensboro sit-ins that had begun that Monday. Over the past three days African American students from North Carolina A&T University had taken seats at the city's "whites-only" Woolworth lunch counter, refusing to leave until served. Beginning with four students, by mid-week, the number of protesters had grown to more than two hundred.<sup>113</sup> Away in Washington, Jones was unaware of the events unfolding back in North Carolina. He knew, however, when he heard the report that "this was the handle that [was] needed to change racial segregation," not only in Greensboro but in his adopted hometown of Charlotte.<sup>114</sup>

Upon his return to Smith, Jones met with student body leaders to discuss Greensboro. Calling themselves "The Think Tank," the group decided the time had come to integrate Charlotte's downtown lunch-counters as well. For the next few months,

---

<sup>110</sup> Harry Golden, "Thoughts of a Man with a Best-Seller," *Carolina Israelite*, July-August, 1958.

<sup>111</sup> Hartnett, 144.

<sup>112</sup> As a regional officer in the National Student Association, Jones had accepted an invitation to attend the 1959 Vienna Youth Festival. His participation in the left-leaning event proved to be sufficient grounds to draw the suspicion of conservative Washington politicians in search of home-grown communists. Douglas, 85.

<sup>113</sup> Marvin Sykes, "Negro College Students Sit at Woolworth Lunch Counter," *Greensboro News-Record*, February 2, 1960. Marvin Sykes, "Movement by Negroes Growing," *Greensboro News-Record*, February 5, 1960, B-1

<sup>114</sup> Douglas, 85.

hundreds of Johnson C. Smith students crowded the lunch counters of Charlotte's most popular noon-day restaurants and cafeterias, refusing to leave until allowed to sit and eat their meals like their white neighbors.<sup>115</sup>

All of the "whites only" downtown establishments refused service to the African Americans. A few diners even closed their doors. Downtown business owners and city boosters accused the students of being naïve and foolishly disturbing Charlotte's good racial relations as well as hurting downtown commerce. But neither of these accusations were the student's intent. "We never intended to cause merchants any economic loss," proclaimed Jones when asked by a local reporter about the sit-ins. "Economic retaliation is not our motive... just a cup of coffee and a place to sit while we drink it."<sup>116</sup>

While most of the college's faculty and staff supported the sit-ins as did many in Charlotte's African American community, some of the more established black leadership were more skeptical of the students' strategy; none more than the well-connected and powerful publisher of the city's African American newspaper, the Reverend Nathan Tross. Years earlier in 1952, Tross had spoken harshly of poverty-stricken blacks, blaming them for the high homicide rate in Charlotte's black wards – the end result, he concluded, of poor parental oversight and low morals. Tross even compared poor blacks to "stray dogs left to shift for themselves."<sup>117</sup> In 1955, Tross was one of the state's few African American leaders that supported the Pearsall Plan and Governor Hodges attempts to avoid compliance with the *Brown* decision. "We can avoid racial friction on the whole

---

<sup>115</sup> Charles Jones interviewed by Michael C. Sullivan, June 26, 2015, "You Ain't From Around Here, Are You?" (Master's Thesis, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina, 2016).

<sup>116</sup> Roy Covington, "Students Hope to Talk It Over," *Charlotte Observer*, February 12, 1960, 1.

<sup>117</sup> Kays Gary and Randolph Norton, "Root of Homicide Found to be Deep," *Charlotte Observer*, September 1, 1952, 1.

question of integration only on a voluntary basis,” declared Dr. Tross. “I think the governor was right in castigating the false prophets of the NAACP.”<sup>118</sup> Concerned with the complaints from Charlotte’s white business elites and city boosters, Tross condemned Jones and his fellow students, stating that the “sit-down-for-food protest staged by Negro students has set race relations here back for years.”<sup>119</sup> In his weekly radio show and from his pulpit at China Grove AME Zion Church, the Reverend Tross struck out, blaming not only students’ actions for damaging local race relations but accusing the city’s African American leadership such as his fellow clergy and the city’s black business class of neglect in their silence. “Negro leaders have hurt the community,” stated Dr. Tross, “by not speaking out on the students’ call for coffee pleas.”<sup>120</sup>

Although Tross was critical of the sit-ins, the students were not without their supporters. African American business leaders such as Fred Alexander organized rides for Johnson C. Smith’s students, providing them safe and reliable transportation between campus and downtown. A number of the area’s black families stopped shopping at downtown establishments that refused to allow African Americans to dine at their lunch counters. Many in the faith community, both white and African American, supported the students, some joining them in protest.<sup>121</sup> Having reached a number of thresholds in their quest to integrate the city’s public schools, the NAACP was willing to be more aggressive in challenging other forms of segregation.<sup>122</sup> The organization blessed the

---

<sup>118</sup> “Negro Leaders Differ on Hodges School Talk, *Charlotte News*, August 9, 1955, 1A.

<sup>119</sup> John Kilgo, “Dr. Tross Chides Negro Students,” *Charlotte Observer*, February 13, 1960, 1.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> In March, 1960, the Mecklenburg Christian Ministers Association voted to end Charlotte’s restaurant segregation with Charlotte members of the white Unitarian Church of Charlotte joining the Johnson C. Smith University students on the picket lines. Roy Covington, “Ministers: Racial Fight Must End,” *Charlotte Observer*, March 16, 1960, 1B.

<sup>122</sup> Although it was at best token integration, by 1960 the Charlotte school system had begun the process to end segregation, a major objective of the NAACP. Douglas, 104-119.

students' actions, providing them logistical and financial assistance. Many of the writers at the city's major newspaper dailies were sympathetic toward the students' cause. For the most part, the local news coverage was fair and at times even positive. Jones feared, however, being on the wrong side of a powerful leader such as Tross.<sup>123</sup> That is why he reached out to Charlotte's most noted and perhaps most powerful liberal, Harry Golden, for help.<sup>124</sup>

Harry Golden first met Charles Jones when Jones came by the *Israelite's* office on the second day of the protest. Golden considered Jones impressive, describing him as sophisticated and a well-dressed young man who could have easily passed for an Ivy Leaguer.<sup>125</sup> Concerned with Tross and other members of the conservative establishment in the black community, Jones wanted Golden's counsel regarding their tactics and advice on how to deal with some African American leaders' pushback. Together with his friend, the *Charlotte News* columnist Julian Scheer, Golden encouraged Jones to keep up the fight. Both men believed Tross was little more than an "Uncle Tom," concerned only with his power and position – courtesy of the city's conservative white-elites.<sup>126</sup> "Uncle

---

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 86-88.

<sup>124</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 388.

<sup>125</sup> Golden's remarks about the way Jones was dressed as well as additional statements about his appearance ("attractive young man, with beautiful white teeth, and light skin...dressed impeccably, stood erect") leaves little doubt that he viewed Jones as a member of the black middle-class – the class where most of the leadership of the NAACP and other Civil Right Movement organizations were from. This may explain why both the NAACP and Golden was more willing to help Jones and the Johnson C. Smith University students' integration campaign against Charlotte's restaurants than they were Robert Williams in Monroe just two years earlier. Class would be a major issue within the Civil Rights Movement highlighted later in the decade with the rise of the Black Power Movement. Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Dr. Nathaniel Tross, like Kelly Alexander and Charles Jones, was a member of the black middle class in Charlotte, however, unlike Jones and Alexander, Tross supported many of the elements of Jim Crow stating in 1952 that, "We [Charlotte's African American community] need the help and guidance of white people whose knowledge and experience in social advancement is superior to our own." Kays Gary and Randolph Norton, "Roots of Homicide Found to be Deep," *Charlotte Observer*, September 1, 1952, 1A.

Tom's talking to you," proclaimed Scheer. "You keep the sit-ins going."<sup>127</sup> The sit-ins would continue for another five months. Two days after the three met, "a dummy with the words, 'Dr. Tross, Uncle Tom,' written on a placard, was hung from the main entrance of Johnson C. Smith University" – culprit(s), unknown.<sup>128</sup>

About a week later, Jones again visited Golden's office. The city's downtown merchants demanded that Jones and the other Smith students bring an end to the sit-ins. Golden was out of the office but his son Richard, visiting from New York City, met with Jones. Golden instructed his son, to help Jones in any way he could.<sup>129</sup>

I was gone that Saturday, but Richard was in the office when Charlie paid us another call. Now the white merchants had reached him. They told him there were little old ladies from South Carolina who were afraid to come to Charlotte for fear of violence. They complained the boys from Johnson C. Smith were victimizing them. They [downtown merchants] were all for integration, but what could they do about the Southern way of life?<sup>130</sup>

Jones wanted to keep the focus on the reason the students had staged the sit-ins – to end African American exclusion from the city's downtown restaurants. He prepared a letter to send the news wires to keep the focus on the injustice that motivated their actions. Jones stopped by Golden's office that Saturday for Harry Golden to review the letter and help him get the students' side of the story publicized. In the letter, Jones appealed to his fellow Charlotteans to do the right thing and extend to their black neighbors the same courtesy and respect they would extend to anyone. "To see total strangers enter our community from all ends of the earth and be afforded the use of all public facilities available," wrote Jones, "while these public facilities are denied to fourth and fifth

---

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> John Kilgo, "Dr. Tross Chides Negro Students."

<sup>129</sup> Golden's oldest son, editor and writer Richard Goldhurst, was a writer in his own right, publishing a number of articles and stories in major publications. Goldhurst periodically came to Charlotte to help Golden with items related to publishing Golden's books and articles for the *Carolina Israelite*. Hartnett, *Carolina Israelite*, 4, 168.

<sup>130</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 388-389.



generation Southerners is a searing experience.”<sup>131</sup> After reading over the letter Richard added nothing. Jones had said it all. Jones’ letter appeared in *The New York Times* the following Sunday.<sup>132</sup>

The fight for equal service at Charlotte’s downtown restaurants spread well into the summer of 1960. Over those months Golden and Jones communicated often, discussing strategies, the history of segregation and civil rights – even reflecting on religion and literature.<sup>133</sup> Like the mentor of his youth, Oscar Griger, Golden now was the teacher. During the sit-ins Golden attempted to use his connection to white power players as he had done in 1958 with the Kissing Case to end negotiation stalemate. Hodges, however, in his last year as governor with aspirations for higher office, did not want to get involved in Charlotte’s ever growing quagmire.<sup>134</sup> Golden even received the cold shoulder from longtime friend and supporter, George M. Ivey – owner and chairman of the board of Ivey’s department stores – when he reached out to him in the spring of 1960. Golden blamed Ivey and other major downtown department store owners’ such as Belks’ and Efir’s for causing the delay in bringing about a solution to the lunch counter saga. Nonetheless, Ivey realized the impact the demonstrations were having on business. Early in March, 1960, after weeks of resisting, refusing to even discuss the issue of integration with the world famous preacher, Billy Graham, Ivey contacted Golden for

---

<sup>131</sup> Copy of Charles Jones Letter with corrections made by Golden. February 19, 1960, Box 1, Folder 18, Harry Golden Papers, Part 2, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

<sup>132</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 389.

<sup>133</sup> Telegrams and letters during the period between Golden and Jones exhibit the variety of points they addressed, and discussed. Box 9, Folder 3, Harry Golden Papers, Part 2, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina. Charles Jones interviewed by Michael C. Sullivan.

<sup>134</sup> Note from Harry Golden to Charles Jones, Box 9, Folder 3, Harry Golden Papers, Part 2, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

advice on how to bring the protest to an end and in turn stop the damage to the store's sales. Golden suggested he move forward with full integration as soon as possible. To this Ivey responded, "he might let the colored boys use the snack bar in the basement, but he would never desegregate his Tulip Room on the roof."<sup>135</sup> In true character, Golden suggested that that may not be an issue since, "very few people, let alone colored college boys, have six dollars for one of the Tulip Room lunches." In July 1960, Ivey capitulated and integrated his store's basement lunch counter. Within days other downtown venues followed suit, thus ending the Charlotte sit-ins.<sup>136</sup>

In a 2015 interview, Charles Jones discussed the Charlotte sit-ins. When asked what Golden's greatest contribution was in bringing about a positive solution to the downtown stalemate, he quickly said, humor. "It was scary. What we were doing could get you killed. Brother Golden allowed us to look at ourselves and laugh at ourselves. Humor like that, particularly in Charlotte at that time, helped make the transition more smooth."<sup>137</sup> Jones's credits Golden's humor and behind the scenes involvement for helping to bring the Charlotte sit-ins to a positive and relatively peaceful conclusion.<sup>138</sup>

The Charlotte sit-ins provided Golden with a treasure trove of material for his articles and public speeches – especially in crafting new Golden Plans from his involvement in the sit-ins. Jones reflected on his favorite Golden Plan – the Pigment Meter Reader. According to Jones, the plan came about after Johnson C. Smith students sent two light-skinned African American students to one of the diners in the early days of the sit-ins. The two took seats at the lunch counter, ordered lunch and ate while

---

<sup>135</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 392.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Charles Jones, interviewed by Michael C. Sullivan.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

surrounded by unknowing white customers who did not see black students but fellow white patrons. When they finished eating, they paid the smiling waitress, left her a good tip and went outside to join their fellow darker brothers and sisters marching in protest. “Man, I can still see the look on her face,” remarked Jones.<sup>139</sup> After Jones told Golden about the incident, Golden crafted – the Pigment Meter Reader Plan: A machine that could test the pigment in one’s skin, determining if the subject was pale enough to enjoy a lunch counter meal. Jones reminisced, “Man Brother Golden was the best [for his actions and in his ability to interject humor lessening a volatile and possibly dangerous situation].”<sup>140</sup>

As a child, Golden often was warned to avoid the “Evil Eye” – negative circumstances that occur when one becomes smug, complacent, and satisfied.<sup>141</sup> Although the “Evil Eye” was little more than old world superstition, the success Golden enjoyed following publication of *Only in America* made him, a prime candidate for its’ attention. On the morning of September 18, 1958, the “Evil Eye” found Harry Golden. Mixed in a bag of his fan mail a single-spaced, typed letter signed “a friend” was sorted-out and sent to Golden’s editor at World Publishing, William Targ.<sup>142</sup> In part, it stated,

If you do not already know it, you should be made aware of the fact that Harry Golden is an ex-convict, who served a prison sentence of five years in Atlanta Penitentiary back in the thirties...Goldhurst is an ego-maniac, who you may be sure, takes great delight in the fact that he has been able to hoodwink you and the public, just as he did so many innocent victims twenty years or so ago.<sup>143</sup>

---

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Harry Golden, “Now to Ward Off the Evil Eye,” *Carolina Israelite*, January-February, 1960.

<sup>142</sup> Hartnett, 157-158.

<sup>143</sup> Although Golden and others suspected who may have sent the letter. Copy of letter from “Friend” to William Targ, Box 8, Folder 54, Harry Golden Papers, Part 1, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

A number of publishing and news organizations, including the *New York Herald-Tribune*, received copies of the letter. Phone calls soon came into World Publishing from newspaper and magazine outlets wanting a comment on the anonymous note. Targ did not know if the letter was real or if its contents were true. But “he knew it was going to be a big news story.”<sup>144</sup> When Golden received Targ’s call about the letter and told of its contents, Golden was devastated. One of the reasons he had left New York City was to hide his criminal past. Golden had guarded the secret, sharing it with few people outside his immediate family but now all the world would know.<sup>145</sup> His secret was out and with it, he believed, his career and all he had worked to build would be lost. No one, Golden believed, would buy another book from or listen to an ex-convict.

Nervous but realizing that the jig was up, Golden met with Judith Crist of the *New York Herald Tribune* to give her the exclusive on his previous life and the circumstance that led to his arrest. He told her that the information in the letter was true; he had indeed served a prison sentence from 1929 until 1933 for defrauding clients. Golden took full responsibility for his actions, as he had years earlier, asking that he be judged not on his past, but rather on his work and his conduct since his arrival in North Carolina. He ended the interview reiterating his faith in an American dream that provided a future for those who came to this country in past decades to start anew. “I can only rely again on the inherent sense of fair play that I’ve encountered before among my countrymen. It may not have been a coincidence that I called my best-seller, *Only in America*.”<sup>146</sup>

---

<sup>144</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 348.

<sup>145</sup> Golden states that he had shared his past prison sentence with three individuals since arriving in Charlotte: Charlotte’s Chief of Police, Frank Littlejohn, *Raleigh News and Observer* publisher Josephus Daniels and local businessman and friend, Hermann Cohen. Golden did not believe any of them had betrayed his trust. *Ibid*, 349-350.

<sup>146</sup> Judith Crist, “Golden, Best Seller Author, Reveals His Prison Past,” *New York Herald Tribune*, September 19, 1958, 1.

That night, Golden sat in a Warwick Hotel room in New York City calling family and friends to make them aware of what had happened. He worried not only that the story would wreck his career but that it would most certainly create problems for those he cared for and damage the causes he supported and fought for – especially the Civil Rights Movement. “I had already hurt the Civil Rights Movement enough, I thought. The segregationists were bound to say, ‘there is one of your leaders who is nothing but an ex-convict.’”<sup>147</sup>

The next day Judith Crist’s article about Golden’s past appeared as the lead story in the *Herald Tribune*. Front and center it read, “Golden, Best Seller Author, Reveals His Prison Past.” For the most part, Golden was lucky. Crist’s article was as positive as possible, given the circumstances, describing Golden as “one of North Carolina’s most influential citizens.” A person who had used his pen to help right the many wrongs found in Dixie – especially segregation.<sup>148</sup> Crist at the same time made no mention of the anonymous tip that blew Golden’s cover. Anyone reading her article could have easily assumed Golden had come clean on his own.<sup>149</sup> Nonetheless, Golden thought the story would be the end of him; he was wrong. Although some condemned Golden, with editorials in conservative newspapers such as the *Charleston News and Courier*, most news reports and responses were positive.<sup>150</sup> In the days that followed, letters and phone calls, from both the noted and the unknown, flooded the *Israelite*’s office wishing its

---

<sup>147</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 350.

<sup>148</sup> Crist’s article about Golden and her use of broad statements such as “one of North Carolina’s most influential citizens,” to describe him is probably due in part to the fact that as a born and bred New Yorker, she knew little of North Carolina, its citizens or the actions of others that were more influential and noteworthy than Golden in the state. Douglas Martin, “Judith Crist, a Blunt and Influential Film Critic Dies at 90,” *New York Times*, August 7, 2012.

<sup>149</sup> Judith Crist, “Golden, Best Seller Author, Reveals His Prison Past,” 1.

<sup>150</sup> A typical example of article critical of Golden after his prison record was exposed. Nicholas Stanford, “Plugging His Book? Golden Saga Publicity,” *Charleston News and Courier*, September 24, 1958.

publisher the best and confirming their subscriptions as well as their intentions to purchase his future books. Former presidential candidate and Golden's close friend Adlai Stevenson compared Golden to O. Henry, adding that he believed the experience had given Golden "a bigger heart, deeper understanding, and a longer view of life." Carl Sandburg, renowned poet, author and Golden friend, stated that the truth "only ties me closer to him." Women's activist and novelist Fannie Hurst shrugged off the news with, "I couldn't care less," reflecting the feelings of many of Golden's supporters. In the coming weeks, Jack Paar called to invite Golden back as a guest on the *Tonight Show* as did the producers of NBC's *Today Show*.<sup>151</sup> Both *Time* and *Life* magazines ran stories about the man – both Harry Golden and Harry Goldhurst. If anything, the revelation of Golden's past only added to his noteworthiness as well as to his marketability. In an article in the *New York Post*, Max Lerner may have best expressed Golden's rise from the ashes writing;

There is no question here of repentance, expiation, redemption. You don't become a new man at some point of high resolve. Every day, every moment of his life, a man is renewed because he is washing away the past in the stream of the present. Whatever Harry Golden once was, he is no fake now. He does not have to prove he is a new man.<sup>152</sup>

Having served time behind bars and emerged from prison to lead a productive and successful life, Golden's view of prisoners and ex-cons differed from that of most of his fellow neighbors. To him they were no people unworthy of the offer of a second chance. They were men, like him, who had made a mistake. With help, he believed they could emerge from prison able to become new men. For this reason, Golden often used his personal contacts and influence afforded by his acquired celebrity status to help inmates

---

<sup>151</sup> Harnett, 161.

<sup>152</sup> Max Lerner, "The Secret Places," *New York Post*, September, 21, 1958, 22.

who, in his view, received too harsh sentences or whose actions did not justify punishment. “I have helped forty-two convicts [both white and African American] during the past fifteen years. This was more than writing a letter. I got them Out! Out! The most important word to a man in prison, Out!”<sup>153</sup> Most of the forty-two prisoners, and probably many more, were known only to Golden and the entity he contacted on their behalf for help.<sup>154</sup> Golden was not afraid to be a champion for those whose crimes had more to do with social dislikes such as homosexuality than with the malice of individuals’ actions. This was the case of a man Golden helped, arrested for the unspoken crime of being gay in the American South.

Wriston Locklair, who everyone called “Wink,” was the young and friendly arts and entertainment reporter with the *Charlotte Observer* in the 1950s. Sharing an appreciation of opera, literature, and the cultured world outside of Charlotte, Golden often made it a point to stop by Locklair’s desk when he visited the paper. The two shared many conversations about new publications, current shows in town and recent happenings in New York City.<sup>155</sup> It came as a shock to Golden, as it did to others in the news room, when in the spring of 1955, Locklair was snagged in a police raid with a group of men believed to be homosexuals and charged with committing a “crime against nature.”<sup>156</sup> Appreciating the stigma that accompanied the charges, the *Observer* acted

---

<sup>153</sup> Although the note is undated, the contents relates to a story that appeared in the *Carolina Israelite* July-August 1966. “I have Helped Forty-Two Convicts,” Box 110, Harry Golden Papers, Special Collections, Charlotte Mecklenburg County Public Library, Main Branch, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>154</sup> One individual Golden worked to have released and wrote about it in books and articles, was the labor leader, Boyd Payton – Arrested in 1959 on trumped up charges accusing him of being involved in planned bombings of buildings in Henderson, North Carolina. Letter from Harry Golden to Billy Graham, November 16, 1960, Box 8, Folder 42, Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Hartnett, 123.

<sup>156</sup> “Crime(s) Against Nature” were loosely defined for centuries but often were used by authorities to prosecute homosexuals. William N. Eskridge, Jr., *Dishonorable Passions: Sodomy Laws in America 1861-2003* (New York: Viking Publishing, 2008), 88.

fast to distance itself from their young reporter. The newspaper fired him on the spot. Concerned with his family's position, and wanting to avoid the public humiliation of a long protracted trial, Locklair pled guilty to the charges, and received the standard sentence – five years at the state's penitentiary in Raleigh.<sup>157</sup> In a letter to Locklair, Golden expressed his shock concerning the arrest and accompanying circumstances but that he was “even more shocked at the severity of the sentence.”<sup>158</sup>

Homosexuals have always been part of American society. Fearful of ostracism, gays often hid their sexuality and sexual desires. Their outward indifference to sex prompted many heterosexuals to view gays for the most part as asexual.<sup>159</sup> This view of homosexuals changed though in the 1950s when political leaders in Washington entangled gays in the politics of domestic anti-communist campaigns. Labeled as both a national security risk and as moral perverts, homosexuals faced greater harassment and discrimination than the common rude euphemisms and laughs behind their backs. Being gay in the 1950s could cost a person their job, home and good societal standing. Given the repressive anticommunist green light from Washington and from many state capitals, local police departments cracked down on gays in the 1950s and 1960s. Police raided bars, clubs, and other suspected gay hangouts. Homosexuals faced arrest with many heterosexuals expressing little regard for their rights or safety. Afraid of the social backlash and fearful of accusations that one was gay, most citizens refused to step up and speak out regarding the abusive treatment of homosexuals. When photos of those

---

<sup>157</sup> Hartnett, 124.

<sup>158</sup> Letter from Harry Golden to Locklair Wriston, May 21, 1955, Box 7, Folder 48, Harry Golden Papers, Part 2, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>159</sup> James T. Sears, *Growing Up Gay in the South: Race, Gender, and Journeys of the Spirit* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 6.



arrested at suspected gay bars appeared on the front pages of newspapers, many citizens grinned in approval believing that the “fags” got their just deserts.<sup>160</sup>

In February 1955, a few months before Locklair’s arrest, Golden wrote an article describing the “violent vindictiveness” the Irish playwright and poet Oscar Wilde faced after being sentenced to prison for homosexual acts in 1895. Golden blamed the “destruction of this genius,” and his early death on the crippling punishment imposed on Wilde by a “guilt-ridden public.” Golden believed by 1955 attitudes regarding homosexuals had improved ending the article optimistically with, “we are more tolerant today. There is less stupidity about it. Things are getting better.”<sup>161</sup>

Although Golden did not personally approve of homosexuality and, like many of his day, thought it a condition, curable if addressed with the appropriate treatment, he believed sending gays to prison was wrong and would not cure their “disorder.”<sup>162</sup> “The key attitude in applying the democratic principle to human relations is not equality,” wrote Golden, “but acceptance of man – to accept all men for what they are, including their differences, their weaknesses, their strength, and the potential creative development which exists in every man.”<sup>163</sup> At a monthly meeting of the Charlotte’s Philosophy Club, Golden cornered the judge presiding over Locklair’s trial, questioning his sentencing logic.<sup>164</sup> “I went up to Judge Francis Clarkson, who that day had sentenced a young

---

<sup>160</sup> John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 42-49.

<sup>161</sup> Harry Golden, “The Sins of Oscar Wilde,” *Carolina Israelite*, February, 1955, 1.

<sup>162</sup> Letter from Harry Golden to Locklair Wriston, May 21, 1955, Box 7, Folder 48, Harry Golden Papers, Part 2.

<sup>163</sup> Harry Golden, “White and Negro Social Equality,” *Carolina Israelite*, January, 1955.

<sup>164</sup> The Charlotte Philosophy Club members consisted of leading Charlotte intellectuals such as Judges Francis Clarkson, Francis Parker and James McMillan as well as Dr. D. W. Colvard, president of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The organization not only gave Golden an outlet to exercise his intellectual prowess, but afforded him an opportunity to meet Charlotte’s political, business and academic leaders. Hartnett, 121. Golden, *The Right Time*, 296.

newspaperman to five years after a jury returned a guilty verdict on a homosexual charge,” asking, “how could you send that boy away?” Aware of Southerners’ sensitivity on the subject, Golden attempted to lighten his remarks, adding, “Sending a homosexual to prison is like sending an alcoholic to a brewery.” Not wanting to discuss the sentence, Clarkson whipped back, “I didn’t do it. You did it. You Jews prescribed stoning. All I did was cut down the severity. I gave him a break. I gave him five years.”<sup>165</sup>

Golden neither found Clarkson’s statement amusing nor did it discourage him from helping to right a wrong. He wrote Locklair often during his incarceration, sending him articles regarding new shows debuts, recent publications, news about town, and of course back copies of the *Carolina Israelite*. Golden also contacted Governor Hodges to plea for mercy and an early parole.<sup>166</sup> In a letter just before Christmas in 1955, Locklair wrote Golden excited about the possibility of early parole.

The time is moving right along. My eligibility date for parole is February 24 and I believe some work is in progress in my behalf. My plan is to go to Dr. Fisher at the Mental Hygiene Clinic in Charlotte upon my release. I want to have some psychiatric consultations with him. Then, I shall consider work. I have enough money saved, of course, and I have a home, so I’ll not have to immediately plunge into the job scramble.<sup>167</sup>

When Locklair realized that gainful employment was a component of his release, he asked Golden for help in early 1956. After discussing his plan of providing work to Locklair with the local police chief, and the case’s presiding judge, Golden offered to give his friend a thirty-five dollar a week job, writing and selling advertisements for his

---

<sup>165</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 298.

<sup>166</sup> Letter from Harry Golden to Locklair Wriston, May 21, 1955, Box 7, Folder 48, Harry Golden Papers, Part 2. Letter from Harry Golden to Governor Hodges, June 21, 1955, Box 7, Folder 47, Harry Golden Papers, Part 2, Special Collections, J. Murry Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>167</sup> Letter from Wriston Locklair to Harry Golden, December 9, 1955, Box 7, Folder 48, Ibid.

newspaper.<sup>168</sup> By offering a position to a convicted and known homosexual, Golden was taking a chance. With the view many had of gays, having Wink around the office could cost Golden business, damage his reputation, and end his celebrated celebrity. But Golden did not seem to care. In a 2015 interview, former newspaper man and friend of Golden and Locklair, Jack Clairborne, recalled the event and Golden's help. "As a former prisoner, Harry Golden understood the circumstances Wink was facing, and wanted to help him – and did. He was one of the few persons in Charlotte who would have done that. I have to take my hat off to him for that."<sup>169</sup> After serving nearly a year in the state penitentiary, Locklair earned parole. After a short stay in Charlotte, he moved to New York City, living just a few doors from Golden's childhood flat. From their conversations, Locklair knew about Golden's childhood on the Lower East Side and that his family once rented a flat on Delancey Street. In a letter to Golden shortly after he arrived in New York City, Locklair proclaimed, "I feel like I've known Delancey Street all my life. The freedom, the peace of mind, the relief, the feeling of doing a creative job again – all this is wonderful."<sup>170</sup> Locklair worked for different publishing outlets in New York City before landing a job at the renowned Juilliard School in public relations. He remained at Juilliard until his death in 1984.<sup>171</sup>

Just months after Locklair's release in 1956, Golden in an article in the *Carolina Israelite* wrote of his dismay at the way society viewed homosexuals and at the excessive

---

<sup>168</sup> Letter from Golden to Police Chief Frank Littlejohn, January 15, 1956, Box 7, Folder 41, Harry Golden Papers, Part 1, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>169</sup> Jack Clairborne, interviewed by Michael C. Sullivan, "You Ain't From Around Here, Are You? An Biographical Study of Harry Golden in His Quest for Equality and Justice in North Carolina." University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina, March 15, 2015.

<sup>170</sup> Hartnett, 125.

<sup>171</sup> Unsigned obituary, "Wriston Locklair, 59, Is Dead; Led Juilliard Public Relations," *New York Times*, March 5, 1984.

prison sentences gays face if caught in a compromising position. “The problem is the boy who is a homosexual, and what to do about him...and what to do about our attitudes, laws, remedies, if any, and what to do in the area of human relations. That is the problem,” wrote Golden.<sup>172</sup> Before the episode with Locklair Golden optimistically expressed in his article about Oscar Wilde that contemporary society in 1955 was “more tolerant, less stupid” and he believed “that things were getting better [for gays].”<sup>173</sup> If the treatment of his friend served no other purpose, it provided proof that he was wrong in his belief that things had improved. In a letter to a state psychiatrist Golden was working with to help gain an early release for Locklair, Golden expressed his change of heart, stating, “I am fully aware of the strong feelings society has with respect to the charges for which Locklair was convicted. Someday perhaps there may be as great a tolerance toward that as we are now beginning to show for alcoholism, but that day is still far off.”<sup>174</sup>

Although Golden often lent a helping hand to address a variety of wrongs he witnessed in society throughout the 1950s and 1960s, most of his talents and energy focused on the fight against the old adversary – racism and discrimination faced by African Americans. Throughout the 1960s Golden worked tirelessly to keep the local Movement moving. Armed now as a popular celebrity, Golden was a favorite on nationally viewed television variety shows and news programs, where he defended desegregation and argued the need to break down walls that divided Americans. Also

---

<sup>172</sup> Harry Golden, “Tea and Sympathy,” *Carolina Israelite*, September-October 1956, 5.

<sup>173</sup> Before the episode with Locklair, Golden was more optimistic that society was more tolerant of homosexuals. The treatment of his friend indicated that this was not the case. Harry Golden, “The Sins of Oscar Wilde,” *Carolina Israelite*, February, 1955, 1.

<sup>174</sup> In the letter, Golden declares his intention to hire Locklair - meeting one of the components necessary for his parole. Letter from Harry Golden to Dr. C. H. Patrick, January 16, 1956, Box 7, Folder 48, Harry Golden Papers, Part 2, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

with a number of best sellers under his belt and a regular on the nation's most watched shows, Golden was at the height of his celebrity.<sup>175</sup> Well known and armed with a reputation as a "talking head" able to pack a room, Golden often found himself standing at a podium or up on a stage in front of thousands who had paid to hear the "little Jew from Dixie" poke fun at the etiquette of segregation or answer the question, "why he never bawl out a waitress."<sup>176</sup> At a 1960 NAACP fundraiser in Detroit, Golden joined Sammy Davis Jr. on stage to entertain the audience with jokes, songs, and a little dancing. The gig raised more than \$50,000 for the organization.<sup>177</sup>

Although Golden's schedule was crowded and kept him on the road most days in the late 1950s and early 1960s, he nonetheless managed to spend some time at home. During his down time in Charlotte, Golden worked on political campaigns ranging from his good friend Fred Alexander's city council campaign to John Kennedy's campaign for president in 1960.<sup>178</sup> Nationally known for his appearances on television shows and his advocacies, Golden was dubbed "Charlotte's Top Tourist Attraction," by the *Charlotte News* in 1960.<sup>179</sup> Many visitors to the Queen City made it a point to stop by his home and meet the famous Harry Golden. Well known journalist Eli N. Evans visited Golden

---

<sup>175</sup> By 1960 Golden had published two more books that made it to the New York Time's Best Seller list since *Only in America: For 2 Cents Plain* (1958) and *Enjoy, Enjoy?* (1960). He was a regular on the *Tonight Show*, *Meet the Press* and *the Today Show*. Stephen J. Whitfield, "The Golden Era of Civil Rights: Consequences of the Carolina Israelite," *Southern Cultures* 14, mo.3 (Fall 2008), 34.

<sup>176</sup> Golden crafted his imagine as the wise-cracking Jew from Dixie fighting for the underdog. Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Hartnett, 164.

<sup>178</sup> African Americans were barred from voting and holding office in all of North Carolina in 1902. Fred Alexander would be successful in his bid for an At-Large seat on Charlotte's City Council in 1965 and in doing so became the first African American to hold elected public office in Charlotte in the twentieth century. Janette Thomas Greenwood, *Bittersweet Legacy: The Black and White Better Classes in Charlotte: 1850-1910* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 225. Examples of Golden's political involvement, Letter from Harry Golden to David McConnell asking for contribution for Fred Alexander's Charlotte City Council campaign, April 29, 1965, Box 1, Folder 18, Harry Golden Papers, Part 2, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina. Golden, *The Right Time*, 376, 228.

<sup>179</sup> David Nance, "Charlotte's Top Tourist Attraction," *Charlotte News*, August 25, 1960, 4B.

in 1965 and recalled how Golden, relaxing “in the Kennedy rocker, with his feet barely touching the floor,” looked like “a twinkling Jewish Buddha.”<sup>180</sup> When the Freedom Riders came through North Carolina in 1961 and 1962 on their way south to end segregation on interstate buses, Golden’s home served as a rest stop. “I gave them money and dinner,” boasted Golden, regarding his aid to the young change agents. Limited in space due to piles of books and boxes of correspondence littering his home, Golden made do, letting the Freedom Riders make pallets and “sleep on the floor.”<sup>181</sup> Organizations such as the NAACP and AFL-CIO often asked Golden to share stages with prominent figures when they visited Charlotte. In the fall of 1960, Golden introduced Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at a NAACP gathering in Charlotte.<sup>182</sup> In February 1963, the civil rights icon invited Golden to the now famous March on Washington rally planned for later summer, 1963. In his 1968 autobiography, Golden described the March on Washington as “the last happy moment of the Civil Rights Movement.”<sup>183</sup> Within a year of the March, the Civil Rights Movement would shift in a more radical fashion forcing Golden and other more conservative individuals involved in the fight for civil rights to reassess their position and commitment to the cause.

In the summer of 1964, a crime wave allegedly carried out by black youths broke out in a number of northern urban centers such as New York City and Philadelphia. Golden, like many other white liberals and more conservative black members of the civil rights establishment, spoke out against the violence carried out by what they termed a

---

<sup>180</sup> Whitfield, 33.

<sup>181</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 393.

<sup>182</sup> Hartnett, 179.

<sup>183</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 393.

small group of “black hoodlums.”<sup>184</sup> Concerned that the violence would take away from the signing of the Civil Rights Bill scheduled for execution just weeks away, Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the NAACP, spoke out. Calling the teens “punks, foul-mouth smart alecks and Harlem and Brooklyn morons,” Wilkins, accused the youths of “undercutting and wrecking the gains made by hundreds of Negro and white youngsters who went to jail for human rights.”<sup>185</sup> “These hotheads,” barked Wilkins, were “tearing up subway cars and attacking innocent people, are selling the Freedom Riders down the river. We can help matters along by recognizing that a punk is a punk, white or black, and by putting them in his place.”<sup>186</sup> When James Farmer, the national director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) suggested that the best solution for the violence would be for the cities to “assume responsibility in wiping out the root causes [of the violence] by providing more jobs, de-segregating the schools, and building better housing,” Wilkins snapped back, accusing Farmer of “offering the same old thread-bare excuses to cover up pure, unadulterated, vicious crime.”<sup>187</sup> In full agreement with Wilkins, Golden added but one word: “Amen!”<sup>188</sup>

Golden, like many of the civil rights leaders at the time, believed the recent rash of crime and violence in the summer of 1964 was little more than cases of juvenile delinquents and small-time thugs posturing for attention, best left to the police to handle. Roy Wilkins, A. Phillip Randolph and other members of the Movement’s hierarchy were

---

<sup>184</sup> Harry Golden, “A Hoodlum is a Hoodlum,” *Carolina Israelite*, July-August, 1964, 1.

<sup>185</sup> Wilkins, like much of the leadership of the Civil Rights Movement proudly exhibited limited desegregation of Southern public schools, transportation, leisure spaces, increased African American voter registration and increased black political officeholders as gains made possible by the efforts of blacks and whites working together in the fight for equal rights for blacks. “Wilkins Denounces Negro Hoodlums,” *New York Times*, June 24, 1964.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> Golden, “A Hoodlum is a Hoodlum,” 1.

mostly upper-class African Americans and failed to appreciate the living conditions of their less affluent black brothers and sisters. Blocked from living in the better parts of towns, excluded from many jobs and regularly harassed by law enforcement officers, many American blacks lived lives in isolated areas best described as ghettos. After decades of hopelessness, resentment, and abject poverty, many of the predominantly African American sections of cities, were fragile powder kegs ready to ignite. When, on the evening of August 11, 1965, a routine traffic stop in the majority-black Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles went bad, all hell broke loose.<sup>189</sup> For six days looting and arson followed with police and National Guardsmen's abuse and murders in response. Tens of thousands of poor blacks joined in the violence and lawlessness. When the violence subsided, 34 blacks had been killed by police and National Guardsmen, thousands were under arrest and nearly 300 structures destroyed.<sup>190</sup> Summing up the importance of the events in Watts during that hot summer, civil rights leader Bayard Rustin proclaimed, "The whole point of the outbreak in Watts was that it marked the first major rebellion of Negroes against their own masochism and was carried on with the express purpose of asserting that they would no longer quietly submit to the deprivation of slum life."<sup>191</sup>

Over the next twelve months the violence witnessed in California would play out in other American cities such as Chicago and Detroit. Golden like most of the old

---

<sup>189</sup> The Watts riot began after a white Los Angeles police officer pulled over a black driver suspected of being a drunk driver. After an altercation between the white policeman, driver and his family members, a crowd grew around the scene and police called in backup. Efforts to defuse the situation failed. Robin Kelly, "Watts Remembered: What They Built, Not What They Destroyed," *Los Angeles Times*, August 11, 2015. Hartnett, 231.

<sup>190</sup> Pat Brown, "Violence in the City: An End or a Beginning," A Report by the Governor's Commission On the Los Angeles Riots 1965, December 2, 1965, [www.usc.edu/violenceinthecity](http://www.usc.edu/violenceinthecity) (accessed December 17, 2015).

<sup>191</sup> Bayard Rustin, "The Watts," *Commentary*, March, 1966.



guard of the Movement watched as black neighborhoods went up in flames. Golden was aware that violence from white racists was a constant threat to African Americans. Even in relatively quiet Charlotte the homes of Kelly and his brother Fred Alexander and civil rights attorney, Julius Chambers were bombed in the fall of 1965.<sup>192</sup> But the Charlotte bombings paled in comparison to what was occurring in Los Angeles and in the North. And like many other Movement leaders and white liberals, Golden was unable to understand how, in his view, African Americans could destroy their own neighborhoods.

It is interesting that Golden failed to appreciate the conditions responsible for the violence in Watts and other cities in the North in 1964 and 1965. Just a dozen years earlier in 1952, Golden launched his career in the fight for civil rights for African Americans because of the murder rate in Charlotte's segregated black sections. He and other liberal members of the Charlotte Committee on Public Affairs believed it was the poor living conditions, limited employment opportunities and lack of hope that fostered the violence in Charlotte – many of the same factors responsible for the destruction in California and in the North. Perhaps Golden's own success and position in the Movement blinded him to the reasons for violence in black neighborhoods that he appreciated and pointed out to elected officials and Charlotte's citizens a decade earlier. Nonetheless, when Los Angeles and Detroit's black neighborhoods went up in flames, Golden like many Civil Rights Movement leaders failed to appreciate the frustration experienced by millions of black American youths who had lost hope that their lives would improve using non-violent tactics of the immediate past.

Much of the Movement's older leadership viewed the new violence as little more than lawlessness that threatened to undo decades of progress accomplished through

---

<sup>192</sup> "Negro Homes Blasted Here," *Charlotte News*, November 25, 1965.

cautious and moderate achievements. Dr. King shared this view that the violence threatened the non-violent methods he believed had been so effective in addressing segregation but understood that the “riots grew out of the depths of despair which afflict a people who see no way out of their economic dilemma.” He ended his statement with an ominous warning to the Movement’s leadership: “there exists a growing disillusionment and resentment toward the Negro middle class and the leadership which it has produced: This is not only a crisis for Los Angeles,” stressed King, “It is a crisis for the non-violent movement.”<sup>193</sup>

On a hot evening in June 1966, the new leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC), Stokely Carmichael, addressed a group of followers at a roadside park in Greenwood, Mississippi. Upset over the recent shooting of James Meredith, first African American admitted to the segregated University of Mississippi, and the violence that had consumed many black neighborhoods such as Watts in Los Angeles and other cities in the North, the brash new leader struck out at the established leadership of the Civil Rights Movement. “We been saying freedom for six years,” he yelled. “What we are going to start saying now is ‘Black Power.’” Calling out to the small group assembled, he told them to not be “afraid” or “ashamed” to ask for more than the second rate treatment and meager and disproportionately small resources invested in black communities. Stirring the crowd to a fever pitch, the twenty-five-year-old

---

<sup>193</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., “Statement to the Press, Los Angeles, August 20, 1965, [www.thekingcenter.org/archieve/documents/mlk-press-statement-regarding-riots-los-angeles#](http://www.thekingcenter.org/archieve/documents/mlk-press-statement-regarding-riots-los-angeles#) (accessed January 25, 2016).

Carmichael bellowed out the same question over and over, “What do you want?” To this the small assembly responded with, “Black Power!”<sup>194</sup> A new movement was born.

Golden was appalled by Black Power. He believed the confrontational language of Carmichael and others involved in Black Power would break up the coalition of African Americans and white liberals he believed were responsible for many of the successes of the Movement such as integration of lunch counters and schools and increased African American voter registration.<sup>195</sup> Golden believed he had witnessed the roots of Black Power in the actions of Robert Williams in Monroe during the Kissing Case in 1957 and 1958. At the time Golden considered Williams’ language and calls for self-defense violence, dangerous. He had not changed his mind.<sup>196</sup> Golden blamed the recent violence in large urban centers and the language of Black Power leaders for the national election results in 1966. ““Black Power”” wrote Golden, “not only helped elect Ronald Reagan [in California], Charles Percy [in Illinois], and caused Lester Maddox and Bo Callaway to successfully contend to lead Georgia.”<sup>197</sup> Not only did Golden believe the new movement would push whites from engaging in the fight for civil rights and hurt sympathetic candidates of the Movement’s objectives at the ballot box but would aid racists in their quest to insert wedges between blacks and whites. “Black Power,” Golden surmised, “is not what the Negro leaders say it is. Black Power is what the white

---

<sup>194</sup> “Black Power/White Backlash,” *CBS News Special Report*, by Helen Moed, CBS News, September 27, 1966, [www.cbsnews.com/news/from-the-vault-black-power-white-backlash/](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/from-the-vault-black-power-white-backlash/).

<sup>195</sup> According to its leaders and supporters, Black Power did not mean violence. The organization’s intention was to address overt, institutionalized racism found in the systems and institutions of the nation. It was not exclusively an American issue but resonated internationally. Kwame Ture (formerly known as Stokely Carmichael), *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 4, 18.

<sup>196</sup> Golden was disturbed by Robert Williams calls for “blood” and “My people want revolution.” Golden, *The Right Time*, 380.

<sup>197</sup> Harry Golden, “What is Black Power?” *Carolina Israelite*, November-December, 1966.

segregationists say it is.”<sup>198</sup> Now “hundreds of thousands of whites who did not find it decent to speak out against the Negro during the past ten-years [since the *Brown* decision] have now found their tongues. Stokely Carmichael had handed them a weapon, a very powerful weapon. There’s no need to holler ‘nigger’ when you can holler ‘Black Power.’”<sup>199</sup>

The Black Power Movement disturbed Golden. Growing up in New York City, he had witnessed how immigrants from all corners of the globe had come together to become part of the nation.<sup>200</sup> In Golden’s view, if the black separatists were correct, then the importance he placed in inclusion and all that he and others in the Movement had accomplished to expand civil rights to African Americans was moot. Golden supported A. Phillip Randolph’s new “Freedom Budget” – a Marshall Plan for inner-city neighborhoods and job training for the poor – in 1967.<sup>201</sup> But neither he nor Randolph understood that Black Power was not about working within the system that yields at best inadequate resources to address the needs of the black community. Black Power was an entirely new approach to power in America, free of the old structures and methods utilized in the past to get resources. When SNCC published a cartoon in 1967 condemning the Israelis’ treatment of Palestine’s Arabs, Golden accused the organization of being anti-Semitic and resigned. “Your organization,” wrote Golden in his letter of resignation, “has made a mockery of non-violence and you have done the Negro struggle

---

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Golden, like many of the Civil Rights Movement’s leaders were weary of language that may put a wedge between white liberals in support of desegregation and African Americans. Golden believed the language of Black Power provided whites opposing integration a powerful tool to use in their efforts to stop desegregation. Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Harry Golden, interviewed by LeGette Blythe, Oral History Program, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina, June 24, 1969.

<sup>201</sup> Hartnett, 233.

for equality in America a grave injustice.”<sup>202</sup> Years later Golden reflected on his decision to disengage from the Movement, admitting, “The romance has gone from the Civil Rights Movement. It went out the day the black militants came in.”<sup>203</sup>

In February of 1968, about six months after Golden resigned from SNCC, the headline for the first edition of that year’s *Carolina Israelite* simply read, “Goodbye.”<sup>204</sup> For nearly a quarter of a century Golden’s little newspaper had served as his personal vehicle allowing him to share with his neighbors his views on whatever popped into his head. In many of his articles Golden had championed the underdogs whether they were Jews, African Americans or homosexuals, pointing out the hypocrisy and evils of what many considered unquestioned traditions and commonplace. Golden often asked publicly in his writings for his white neighbors to open their hearts and heads and to view the world from the perspective of the person no one would sit with, or lend a helping hand. Although Golden’s humor offered successful ways to lessen racism as well as homophobia in the 1950s and 1960s, his humor may appear campy by today’s standards. Yet in the mid-century they were rare and even brave. When asked why he shut down his newspaper, Golden replied: “I gave up the *Israelite* not because the country was going to the dogs, but because I was old and going broke and my old pals weren’t there to cheer me on.”<sup>205</sup> When asked if he planned to stay in Charlotte with the paper’s closing,

---

<sup>202</sup> Golden believed SNCC failed to appreciate the efforts made in the fight for civil rights in the 1950s and early 1960s and in failing to do so, made a mockery of the advancements they produced. Golden, *The Right Time*, 395.

<sup>203</sup> The use of the word “romance” exhibits Golden view of the early days of the Movement and looking back in 1968 of his idealized reality of earlier events and his importance. Ibid, 13.

<sup>204</sup> Harry Golden, “Good Bye,” *Carolina Israelite*, February, 1968.

<sup>205</sup> By 1968 Golden had a number of health issues, including a gallbladder operation in 1966 where complications nearly cost him his life. In addition many of Golden’s friends and individuals who supported his efforts were dead. Just six months before he announced the end of the *Israelite*, longtime friend and supporter, Carl Sandburg died. Ibid, 14.

Golden snapped back, “I have no intention of leaving. Charlotte has been good for me. And I haven’t done it any harm.”<sup>206</sup>

With the paper gone and his estrangement from the Movement, Golden had a great deal more time to fill. In 1969 he published his autobiography, *The Right Time*. Golden admitted that he had waited to write the book, “not because he was modest or humble, but because he wanted to see how things would turn out.”<sup>207</sup> Although his autobiography sold well, future books such as *The Golden Book of Jewish Humor* and his attempt to write a more scholarly work, *The Greatest Jewish City in the World*, did not. Reviews were not good, and sales meager. Many of his admirers had passed away and new readers seemed to have little appreciation for the stories Golden was peddling about immigrant Jewish life in New York City’s Lower East Side at the turn of the twentieth century and his quips about race and segregation seemed silly and dated.<sup>208</sup>

With his phone ringing less and big holes in his day, Golden engaged more in Charlotte events. Like his father, Leib, at the beginning of the twentieth century in New York City, Golden took on the role of village elder and local wise man. Like it or not, Golden had an established status in Charlotte as the city’s resident sage. During the late 1960s and 1970s Golden, from the big porch on the front of his home in Charlotte’s Elizabeth community, greeted neighbors and chatted about current events. And like Leib, Golden eased into the positions of honorary elder and community leader. He volunteered with the American Council of the Blind, serving as its keynote speaker at its national

---

<sup>206</sup> Bill Noblitt, “Not Planning Any Moves, Golden Says About Future,” *Carolina Israelite*, December, 1967, 1.

<sup>207</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 440.

<sup>208</sup> Hartnett, 256-257.

convention in Charlotte in 1969.<sup>209</sup> Golden partnered with a local television station, WBTV, for a literacy drive.<sup>210</sup> In 1971, he taught a class on writing and composition at the main campus of Central Piedmont Community College and even found the time to serve as a judge for the Miss Nude Contest of 1975.<sup>211</sup> Just before Christmas in 1969 he reached out to his old friend, Kelly Alexander, suggesting the two work to create a new organization: the Mecklenburg Voter League. Volunteering to provide seed money for the League, Golden believed if the organization could succeed in registering 8,000 new black voters the balance of power in both Charlotte and at the state capitol would shift.<sup>212</sup> To this day, the organization works to provide funds for liberal causes and elect progressive candidates. Golden was even able to score a presidential pardon clearing his record for his 1929 arrest from, of all people, Richard Nixon in late 1973.<sup>213</sup>

Although Golden kept up a good show with these local projects, with each passing year, he got a little slower. He could not do as much as he once did and his words ceased to flow with ease. Harry Golden was getting old. In his autobiography's epilogue Golden confessed, "I was waiting for that event or series of events that would not only climax the work but lend it scope and significance, make every word or sentence and paragraph instantly meaningful and dramatic. But in the end, I had to forsake my

---

<sup>209</sup> "Harry Golden will Address Convention of the Blind," July 13, 1969, *Charlotte Observer*, 13B.

<sup>210</sup> Victor McElheny, "Golden to Help Spread TV Literacy Program," February, 1, 1971, *Charlotte Observer*, 3.

<sup>211</sup> One of Golden's students, Rosie Shores recalled an assignment whereby Golden had students write their own autobiography. When Golden singled out Shores' paper out and asked her to read it out loud, she responded, "I have barely lived yet, to which Golden replied, "Believe me, my darling, you've lived! Now read.'" David A. Moore, "Who was Harry Golden?" *Creative Loafing*, July 12, 2013, 23; Hartnett, *Carolina Israelite*, 257.

<sup>212</sup> Letter from Harry Golden to Kelly Alexander, December 4, 1969, Box 9, Folder 3, Harry Golden Papers, Part 2, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>213</sup> Golden campaigned against Richard Nixon in his campaign for president in 1960 and often spoke out against him and the Republican Party. Copy of Letter of clemency from President Richard Nixon, December 5, 1973, Box 61, Folder 32, *Ibid*.

personal apocalypse. What made me commence this book was the realization that I was no different from any other; I was growing old: I was mortal: No, I realized, I couldn't wait to see how things turned out. I couldn't afford to. Now was the right time. The only time is now!<sup>214</sup>

Harry Golden died on Friday, October 2, 1981. Per his instructions he was buried in the city's Hebrew Cemetery just outside downtown in his beloved adopted hometown of Charlotte. He was 79 years old.

---

<sup>214</sup> Golden, *The Right Time*, 443.



## CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

Golden often told his audiences, “You are never safer than when you are fighting for someone else – when you fight for others, you build a wall of security around yourself.”<sup>1</sup> For more than three decades Golden fought for someone else. Through his newspaper articles, books, speeches, lectures, interviews, and his personal involvement, Golden fought for and gave a voice to those overlooked or even worse, those treated as less by society. It is difficult for most today to imagine that just a few decades ago being racist, homophobic and anti-Semitic were accepted social behavior. Many whites considered African Americans as lesser beings with some viewing them as little more than animals. If an African American “forgot his place” it was acceptable that whites had the right to step-up and correct him. A great number of Christians considered Jewish people to be Christ killers. Many others viewed them as un-American and believed they harbored communist sympathies. As far as homosexuals – well, they deserved the harsh treatment they received. Through his actions and deeds Golden worked to address the many injustices that were commonplace and accepted practices by millions of his fellow white North Carolinians. As his son William described his father, “I find him, as most of his readers have found him, tolerant of all things human except sham and cruelty.”<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Golden believed the rights promised by the United States Constitution were safe as long as those same rights were extended to all citizens equally. Harry Golden, *The Right Time* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1969), 260.

<sup>2</sup> Like C. Vann Woodward, Golden believed Jim Crow regulations were a great sham put over on poor white Southerners by white Southerner elites to retain political and economic power. Harry Golden,

Today Golden's published work is not well known and his efforts to better the lives of his neighbors, forgotten. This is due in part to the scholarly tendency to exclusively frame the Civil Rights Movement in a master national narrative that focuses primarily on a handful of prominent leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and President Lyndon Johnson and provides few details about the fight for civil rights other than the events in Birmingham and Montgomery; places of great racial strife. Golden's local contributions, like thousands of nameless others who fought a good fight for civil rights in Charlotte, seem meager when compared to the Movement's titans. And although Charlotte experienced violence, it experienced nothing like the violence that occurred in Alabama.<sup>3</sup>

In recent years, historians have expanded their interpretation of the Civil Rights Movement to include more than the central figures scholars have traditionally focused on, the outcomes of flash points of conflict in the deep South and the significance of major legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act that became law a year later. As historian William H. Chafe, who wrote a history of the Civil Rights Movement in Greensboro, North Carolina put it, "While all these [master narrative] studies contribute to our understanding, very few have examined the story of social change from the point of view of people intimately involved in local communities, where the struggle for civil rights was a continuing daily reality, year in and year out."<sup>4</sup> In Golden's quest for tolerance and understanding, willingness to serve as a bridge to

---

interviewed by LeGette Blythe, Oral history Program, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina, June 24, 1969.

<sup>3</sup> Alex Coffin, *Brookshire and Belk: Businessmen in City Hall* (Charlotte: Monarch Printing, 1994), 43-44.

<sup>4</sup> William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 1-2.

connect black and white citizens and his efforts to ease points of racial contention, Golden fought a good fight for civil rights in Raleigh, Charlotte and the small mill town of Monroe.

In May, 2014, the state of North Carolina placed a historic marker near Golden's last home in Charlotte's Elizabeth neighborhood. The black and gray marker simply read, "Harry Golden: Journalist, humorist and civil rights advocate. He published 1944-1968 the *Carolina Israelite*."<sup>5</sup> It is not surprising that North Carolina, finally, saw fit to commemorate the life of such a notable Charlottean. What was surprising is the size of the crowd that assembled for the dedication. Although it had been more than thirty years since Golden's death, scores of people came out on the hot Sunday afternoon to share in the tribute.

At the reception that followed the dedication, individuals who personally knew Golden made brief remarks. Surprisingly, no one talked of Golden's fame as a national celebrity and successful author who regularly appeared on popular early morning and late night television talk shows. Nor did anyone mention his inclusion in Dr. King's famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail" or that he hobnobbed with noted writers such as James Baldwin and Carl Sandburg and celebrities such as Sammy Davis Jr. and that he was personal friends with governors, senators, and presidents. To them Golden's noteworthiness was not who he knew but that they knew him. Retired editorial writer for the *Charlotte Observer* and former paperboy for Harry Golden, Jack Claiborne told the gathering about people's appreciation for Golden and how many of Charlotte's citizens listened to what he had to say about local events – especially integration. "He [Golden]

---

<sup>5</sup> Danyne Romine Powell, "Marker will Honor Civil Rights Activist, Harry Golden," *Charlotte Observer*, May 2, 2014.

said what many other wanted to say but didn't" regarding race and intolerance.<sup>6</sup> Former anchor from WSOC-TV news Bill Walker remembered Golden as the serious guy in town that "could make you laugh while thinking and thinking while laughing – much the same as Jon Stewart [social and political critic and comedian] does for us today."<sup>7</sup> A 1968 letter written to Golden from a North Carolina preacher may have summed up Golden's importance best stating, "Your stand in Dixie has enabled others to stand."<sup>8</sup> Golden's friend and local Charlotte writer, LeGette Blythe asked Golden in 1969 to give his philosophy of life. Golden leaned back in his rocking chair focused upward and said, "Well, my philosophy could be summed up in my hopes for myself – that I will have acquired the affection of my neighbors and to prove that my citizenship has been useful. That's all."<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Amy Krakovitz, "Harry Golden, Remembered by Those Who Knew Him Best," *The Charlotte Jewish News*, Sivan-Tammuz-Av, 5774. Jack Claiborne interviewed by Michael C. Sullivan, "You Ain't From Around Here, Are You? A Biographical Study of Harry Golden in His Quest for Equality and Justice in North Carolina." University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina, March 15, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Reverend William Everhart to Harry Golden, February 23, 1968, Box 22, Folder 24, Harry Golden Papers, Part 2, Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>9</sup> Golden interviewed by LeGette Blythe.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Primary Sources

## Books by Harry Golden:

- Golden, Harry. *A Little Girl is Dead*. Cleveland: World Publishing, 1965.
- Golden, Harry. *Enjoy, Enjoy*. Cleveland: World Publishing, 1960.
- Golden, Harry. *Only in America*. New York: World Publishing, 1958.
- Golden, Harry. *Our Southern Landsman*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1974.
- Golden, Harry. *The Best of Harry Golden*. Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1967.
- Golden, Harry. *The Greatest Jewish City in the World*. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1972.
- Golden, Harry. *The Right Time*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1958.
- Golden, Harry. *So What Else is New?*. New York: Fawcett Crest, 1967.
- Golden, Harry. *You're Entitled*. Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1962.

## Articles by Harry Golden:

- Golden, Harry. "From the American Scene: Hebrew-Christian Evangelist: Southern Style." *Commentary* (December 1, 1950): 377-385.
- Golden, Harry. "On the Horizon: A Son of the South, and Some Daughters." *Commentary* (October 1, 1951): 440-457.
- Golden, Harry. "From the American Scene: A Pulpit in the South." *Commentary* (December 1, 1953): 574-579.
- Golden, Harry. "Jews and Gentiles in the New South: Segregation at Sundown." *Commentary* (November 1, 1955): 403-412.
- Golden, Harry. "What I Have Learned." *Saturday Evening Post* (June 17, 1967): 30-37.

## Manuscript Collections:

- Alexander, Frederick Papers. Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.
- Alexander, Kelly Sr. Papers. Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.
- Brookshire, Stanford Papers. Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.
- Golden, Harry Papers. Special Collections, J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.
- Golden, Harry Papers, Carolina Room Manuscript Collection, Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library, Charlotte, North Carolina.
- Hawkins, Reginald Papers. Special Collections. J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, North Carolina.
- Whitsett, Kenneth, Special Collections. J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

## Government Documents:

- United States Bureau of Census, Census of Population: 1950: Characteristics of the Population: North Carolina.
- Charlotte City Council Minutes. Books 21-25. Office of the City Clerk. Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center. Charlotte, North Carolina.

## Oral Interviews:

- Clairborne, Jack. Interviewed by Mike Sullivan. March 15, 2015, Charlotte, North Carolina.
- Golden, Harry. Interviewed by LeGette Blythe. Oral History Program. Special Collections. University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina. June 24, 1969.

Golden, Harry. Interviewed by Edward R. Murrow for his Person to Person television program that aired February 3, 1959. Carolina Room Manuscript Collection, Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library. Charlotte, North Carolina. January 1959.

Golden, Harry. Interviewed by Richard J. Stoneseifer. Carolina Room Manuscript Collection, Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library. Charlotte, North Carolina February 25, 1969.

Golden, Harry. Interviewed by Doug Mayes. Carolina Room Manuscript Collection, Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library. Charlotte, North Carolina. May 1964.

Jones, Charles. Interviewed by Mike Sullivan. January 23, 2015. June 26, 2015. Charlotte, North Carolina.

#### Newspapers:

*Carolina Israelite*, 1942-1968.  
*Charleston News and Courier*, September 1958.  
*Charlotte News*, 1942-1981.  
*Charlotte Observer*, 1942-1981.  
*Charlotte Post*, 1960-1961.  
*Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 1929.  
*Creative Loafing*, July 12, 2013.  
*Greensboro Daily News*, February 1960 – March 1960.  
*Greensboro News Record*, February 1960 – March 1960.  
*London News Chronicle*, December 16, 1958.  
*Monroe Enquirer Journal*, June 1957- March 1958.  
*New York Herald Tribune*, September 1958.  
*New York Post*, September 1958.  
*New York Times*, 1926-1929.  
*Raleigh News and Observer*, 1942-1981.

#### Unpublished Material:

Carlson, Arthur, "With All Deliberate Speed: The Pearsall Plan and School Desegregation in North Carolina, 1954-1966." Master's Thesis, East Carolina University, 2011.

## Secondary Sources

## Books:

- Alexander, J. B.. *The History of Mecklenburg County from 1740 to 1900*. Charlotte: Observer Printing House, 1902.
- Bernstein, Irvin. *The Lean Years: A History of the American Worker, 1920-1933*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970.
- Boger, Mary Snead. *Charlotte 23*. Richmond: Bassett Printing Corporation, 1972.
- Cash, Wilber. *The Mind of The South*. New York: Vintage Books, 1941.
- Chafe, William H.. *Civilities and Civil Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Claiborne, Jack. *Jack Claiborne's Charlotte*. Charlotte: Charlotte Publishing, 1974.
- Coffin, Alex. *Brookshire and Belk: Businessmen in City Hall*. Charlotte: Monarch Printing, 1994.
- D'Emilio, John. *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- Douglas, Davison. *Reading, Writing, and Race: The Desegregation of Charlotte Schools*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.
- Eskridge, William. *Dishonorable Passions*. New York: Viking Publishing, 2008.
- Greenwood, Janette Thomas. *Bittersweet Legacy: The Black and White Better Classes in Charlotte, 1850-1910*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994.
- Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones, and Christopher B. Daly. *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987.
- Hanchett, Thomas. *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
- Hapgood, Hutchens. *The Spirt of the Ghetto: Studies of the Jewish Quarter of New York*. New York: Schocken Books, 1965.



- Hartnett, Kimberly Marlowe. *Carolina Israelite: How Harry Golden Made Us Care About Jews, The South, and Civil Rights*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015.
- Hodges, Luther. *Businessman in the Statehouse: Six Years as Governor of North Carolina*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962.
- Kessner, Thomas. *Fiorello H. LaGuardia and the Making of Modern New York*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989.
- Klein, Walter. *The Bridge Table: A Love Story*. Charlotte: Temple Beth El, 2007.
- Kratt, Mary. *Charlotte, North Carolina: A Brief History*. Charleston: History Press, 2009.
- Kwame, Ture. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.
- McGill, Ralph. *The South and the Southerner*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1964.
- Morrison, Joseph. *W. J. Cash: Southern Prophet*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967.
- Phillips, Ulrich Bonnell. *Life and Labor in the Old South*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1929.
- Sears, James. *Growing Up Gay in the South: Race, Gender, and the Journeys of Spirit*. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Shapiro, Herbert. *White Violence and Black Response: From Reconstruction to Montgomery*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988.
- Speizman, Morris. *The Jews of Charlotte: A Chronicle with Commentary and Conjectures*. Charlotte: McNally and Loftin Publisher, 1978.
- Thomas, Clarence. *The Serious Humor of Harry Golden*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1997.
- Tyson, Timothy. *Radio Free Dixie: Robert Williams and the Roots of Black Power*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Greatest Migration*. New York: Random House, 2010.
- Wilkinson, Henrietta. *The Mint Museum of Art at Charlotte*. Charlotte: Heritage Printers, 1973.
- William, Robert. *Negroes With Gun*. Chicago: Third World Press, 1973.

## Articles:

- Conzen, Katherine. "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the USA." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12 (Fall, 1992): 3-41.
- Dredge, Bart. "Defending White Supremacy: David Clark and the Southern Textile Bulletin: 1911-1955." *North Carolina Historical Review* (January 2012): 59-91.
- Hall, Jacquelyn Dowd. "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past." *Journal of American History* 91, no.4 (March 2005): 1233-1263.
- Kobler, John. "Why They Don't Hate Harry." *Saturday Evening Post* 231 (September 27, 1958): 31-35.
- Rustin, Bayard. "The Watts." *Commentary* (March 1, 1966): 290-303.
- Whitfield, Stephen J.. "The 'Golden' Era of Civil Rights: Consequences of the Carolina Israelite." *Southern Cultures* 14, no 3 (Fall, 2008): 26-51.