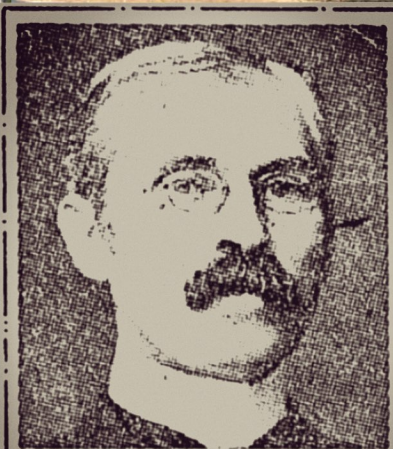




**DR. FREEMAN LABORED
20 YEARS ON 'R. E. LEE.'**

BY JOHN SELBY.

NEW YORK (AP).—Although "R. E. Lee," Douglas Southall Freeman's Pulitzer prize biography, is selling 'amazingly well,' it may never repay its author the expense of its creation. For besides his work as editor of



**MAJOR GEN W.B. FREEMAN
COMMANDING VIRGINIA DIVISION**

“The Virginia Way”: Race, The Lost Cause, & The Social Influence of Douglas Southall Freeman

Lauranett L. Lee, Ph.D. and Suzanne Slye, M.A.
University of Richmond Inclusive History Project

Submitted January 2021

Cover images: “News Leader Building, Richmond Virginia,” Rarely Seen Richmond: Early twentieth century Richmond as seen through vintage postcards, VCU Libraries, <https://digital.library.vcu.edu/islandora/object/vcu%3A1887>; “Major Gen. W.B. Freeman,” in “Survivors of the Confederacy Revisit Old Scenes,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 20, 1922, Chronicling America, Library of Congress; “Second Baptist Church, Corner of Adams & Franklin Streets, Richmond, Virginia,” [1913], Rarely Seen Richmond: Early twentieth century Richmond as seen through vintage postcards, VCU Libraries, <https://digital.library.vcu.edu/islandora/object/vcu%3A1587>; Douglas Southall Freeman, *Alumni Bulletin*, Summer 1953, <https://issuu.com/urscholarship/docs/urm-1953v17i4>; “Dr. Freeman Labored 20 Years on R.E. Lee,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, May 19, 1932.

“The Virginia Way”: Race, The “Lost Cause,” & The Social Influence of Douglas Southall Freeman

Lauranett L. Lee, Ph.D. and Suzanne Slye, M.A.

Submitted on behalf of the University of Richmond Inclusive History Project, January 2021

Content contributions, research and editorial assistance by Shelby M. Driskill, M.F.A.;
Editorial assistance by Meriwether Gilmore, M.A.; Research assistance by Ayele d’Almeida
(BA, 2020) and Catherine Franceski (BA, 2020)

I would say that the study of history is that which gives man the greatest optimism, for if man were not destined by his Maker to go on until the Kingdom of Heaven is attained, man would have been extinguished long ago by reason of all man’s mistakes and frailties.

Douglas Southall Freeman in *Douglas Southall Freeman on Leadership*, edited by Stuart W. Smith (1990)

Content Notice: Douglas Southall Freeman and others whose work is included in this report regularly used the words “colored” or “negro” when writing about Black Americans. These terms appear in contemporaneous quotes included in the text. There are also mentions of lynching, murder cases, police violence, and violence against women. A drawing of a member of the Ku Klux Klan is included in an advertisement in the Executive Summary.

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“THE VIRGINIA WAY”: RACE, THE “LOST CAUSE,” & THE SOCIAL INFLUENCE OF DOUGLAS SOUTHALL FREEMAN

Lauranett L. Lee, PhD and Suzanne Slye, M.A.

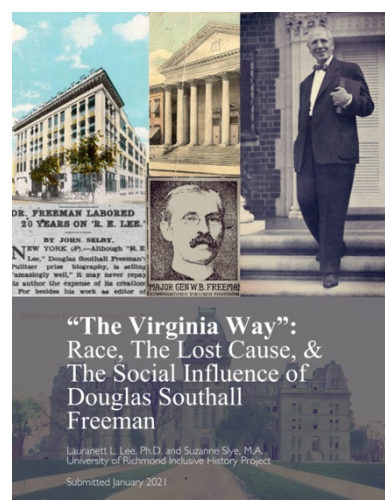
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2018, President Ronald A. Crutcher charged the [Presidential Commission for University History and Identity](#) to study the University of Richmond’s history and its implications for the current campus and the future by exploring how institutional history is recorded, preserved, and made accessible to a diverse audience; re-examining the past to identify people and narratives previously excluded from institutional history; and recommending ways to acknowledge and communicate a more inclusive history.

As part of the resulting recommendations included in the commission’s report, [Making Excellence Inclusive: University Report and Recommendations](#) (July 2019), the university has actively engaged with the institution’s history focusing on areas of enslavement, race and segregation. The Inclusive History Project was tasked with the examination of three subjects: the burying ground on the campus, the life and influence of Robert Ryland, and the influence of Douglas Southall Freeman. The considerations of Robert Ryland and Douglas Southall Freeman were prompted by the joint resolution of the Westhampton College and Richmond College Student Government, “On Changing the Narrative: Regarding Building Names.”¹ In undertaking this research, the University of Richmond is committed to providing a more holistic



¹ The Joint Resolution was passed by the Richmond College and Westhampton College Student government Associations on April 3, 2019. It was sent to the Interim Coordinating Council and to the Vice President for Student Development, Student Development Division. The resolution was co-authored by A. J. Polcari (class of 2021) and Caroline Schiavo.

narrative of its own history, one that is more complete and accurate.² The reports are not intended to reach any conclusion or to offer recommendations. They are designed to provide a thorough and accurate record that will augment existing accounts of institutional history and further future conversations.

This report, *“The Virginia Way”*: Race, The Lost Cause & The Social Influences of Douglas Southall Freeman, is focused on the impact that Douglas Southall Freeman (1886-1953) had on the city of Richmond, the University of Richmond, and the nation. It devotes particular attention to his perspective and actions related to race and racial issues. It contains the research findings of Suzanne Slye, M.A., whose work was conducted as part of the Inclusive History Project led by Dr. Luranett L. Lee between September 2019 and December 2020. Content contributions, research, and editorial assistance have been provided by Shelby M. Driskill, M.F.A. Editorial assistance has been provided by Meriwether Gilmore, M.A. Research assistance has been provided by Ayele d’Almeida (BA, 2020), Catherine Franceski (BA, 2020).

The report provides overall historical context for contemporary consideration of Freeman’s public roles and his work, and an examination of the ways in which he affected the University of Richmond and is memorialized there. The scope of research has included three areas of study:

1. The ways in which Freeman’s work and his public and private views related to the subjects of race and segregation
2. His contributions to the University of Richmond in his roles as a writer, editor, rector and trustee
3. His immediate and lasting influence as a public intellectual

Freeman was a graduate of Richmond College and later served on the University of Richmond Board of Trustees and was University Rector. As an influential newspaper editor, radio broadcaster, historical biographer, educator, and public speaker, Freeman guided public opinion on subjects ranging from household matters to international policy.³ He is most known for his Pulitzer Prize winning four-volume biography of Robert E. Lee.⁴ He also earned a posthumous Pulitzer Prize for

² [“On Changing the Narrative: Regarding Building Names”], *The Collegian*, [n.d.], web, [link](#).

³ Freeman had a similar scope of subject matter in his *News Leader* editorials. One example of his more lighthearted items, which contrasts with his pieces that addressed political and social issues, was his defense of Virginia ham, “Saving Virginia Ham,” (November 6, 1924) in which he suggested the Chamber of Commerce should sponsor the trademark of Virginia ham given the reputation it had acquired. He believed Virginia ham to be the best in the country and saw the need to protect the brand against “imitation.” Freeman described the variety of ham as a piece of “Virginiana,” writing, “Virginia ham has long deserved the fame to which it has now attained...It could be made as renowned a product as Virginia tobacco and could be a source of a large and most profitable trade.” He suggested, “To be protected against imitation that discredits it, Virginia ham should be standardized and marketed under a registered trademark.”

⁴ Both *R.E. Lee: A Biography* and *George Washington* were well-received by the public and by critics. Available scholarly and critical reviews of Freeman’s were almost entirely positive. Johnson notes the

his seven-volume biography on George Washington.⁵ At the height of his career, Freeman wielded extraordinary influence over the general public, military leaders, business magnates, and politicians. Freeman was born in 1886 and died in 1953, one year before the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was handed down by the Supreme Court. Due to limited streams of information – when public awareness of the news was largely confined to newspapers and radio broadcasts – and popular respect for his opinions and advice, his stances on race and racial issues profoundly affected opinion, practice, and policy during his lifetime and helped to lay the groundwork for Virginia’s organized resistance to integration, [known as “Massive Resistance.”](#)

While the report is not intended to be a comprehensive biography of Freeman, aspects of his biography are included as they relate to the subjects considered.⁶

Throughout his adulthood, Freeman held to lessons and traditions of his youth, particularly Virginia history, “ideals” of Confederate heritage, and values centered on his Christian faith. In his adult life, he worked to maintain the social *status quo* and advocated for a “separation by consent” approach to segregation which later became part of what was referred to as the “Virginia Way.” The “Virginia Way” denotes the belief system among Virginia elites that it was their duty to govern through a “genteel brand of paternalism” intent upon maintaining social traditions and managing issues of race.⁷ Freeman’s views on race and social hierarchy were heavily influenced by his father, Walker

reviews of historians Henry Steel Commanger and Dumas Malone, and quotes Malone who wrote of Freeman, “No scholar I have known was more conscientious about personal examination of source material” (Johnson, 329). Historian Samuel Eliot Morison called Freeman “the first of our military historians” (John Lewis Gignilliat, *The Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman*, diss. University of Wisconsin, Madison (1968), 196). According to Johnson, Captain Basil Liddell Hart, a “British military analyst and author, wrote two negative reviews” of Freeman’s work, however the focus of his criticism was Robert E. Lee the man, not *Robert E. Lee: A Biography*. Freeman’s work was, according to Liddell Hart, “almost in a class by itself” (Johnson, 167-168). Of *Young Washington*, the first two volumes in Freeman’s biography of the first president, historian Allen Nevins wrote in the *New York Times* that the books were notable for their “exhaustive thoroughness,” however, he continued, that thoroughness “bears its penalty in an occasional stretch of exhausting detail” (Johnson, 306-307).

⁵ The seventh volume of *George Washington* was completed after Freeman’s death and was based on the research he had conducted. It was written by Mary Wells Ashworth and John Carroll (Johnson, 356).

⁶ Two books have been published since 2000 that consider Freeman’s life at length: a biography, *Douglas Southall Freeman*, by David E. Johnson (2002) and *Sustaining Southern Identity: Douglas Southall Freeman and Memory in the Modern South*, by Keith D. Dickson (2011). Two dissertations offer overviews of Freeman’s life: *The Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman*, by John Lewis Gignilliat, University of Wisconsin, and *Keeping the Faith: Douglas Southall Freeman, 1888-1953*, by John R. Peacock, III, Louisiana State University (1990), available at https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/5086. Stuart W. Smith included an introduction to Freeman’s life in his collection of Freeman’s speeches, *Douglas Southall Freeman on Leadership* (1990). Freeman’s entry in the *Encyclopedia Virginia* (Virginia Humanities) also offers a useful overview of his life and influence and was written by his biographer, David E. Johnson, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Freeman_Douglas_Southall_1886-1953.

⁷ J. Douglas Smith, *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (2002), 3-4.

Burford Freeman (1843-1935). The elder Freeman was a Confederate veteran and a member of the Army of Northern Virginia under General Robert E. Lee. During Douglas Southall Freeman's childhood, his father provided didactic instruction in matters of religious faith and stressed the importance of education. Both also entwined with prevailing Victorian middle-class morality and the emerging tenants of what was already known as the Lost Cause. Historian Caroline E. Janney [describes the Lost Cause](#) as an ideology that "seeks to present the war, from the perspective of Confederates, in the best possible terms."⁸ For the Freeman family and their ancestors, church attendance was a given, and for a time Freeman considered becoming a Baptist minister while a Ph.D. student at Johns Hopkins University. He internalized his father's view of morality: an unwavering work ethic, adherence to tradition, honesty, frugality, and reverence for "great heroes" of the past.⁹ Douglas Southall Freeman was committed to upholding, and later spreading, these aspects of his father's value structure. The Freeman family's emphasis on character was synthesized with the uniquely Virginian devotion to what Douglas Southall Freeman called a "deliberate cult of the past."¹⁰ In addition to advancing Lost Cause approaches to Virginia history and culture, he used his influence to elevate ideas of intelligence and good citizenship, believing these two qualities essential to successful leadership.

Freeman was deeply attached to the military and military leadership. He attempted to enlist in the Army during World War I and World War II but was rejected due to medical issues.¹¹ Instead, he found other ways of serving such as lecturing officers on military strategy and acting as a Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War for the State of Virginia.¹² His acumen as a military strategist was conveyed to his radio listeners through his descriptions and analysis of World War I and World War II battles. He was considered an expert in the field due to his knowledge of the Civil War strategies employed by Confederate leadership and for his ability to explain complicated wartime events in ways the general public could understand. Freeman also drew on the past when speaking to military audiences. Many of his speeches and lectures at the United States Army and Navy War Colleges emphasized the importance of what he viewed as Confederate officers' leadership skills and their character qualities. Speaking at a 2001 celebration of the centennial of Freeman's enrollment at Richmond College, David E. Johnson, author of *Douglas Southall Freeman* (2002), described Freeman's method of bridging contemporary military events and vivid descriptions of the past: "In his radio broadcasts and editorials, Freeman liked to help his audience put events in perspective by

⁸ Caroline E. Janney, "The Lost Cause," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Humanities, July 27, 2016. Web, accessed January 9, 2021, [link](#).

⁹ Douglas Southall Freeman, "Parables of the City Streets," November 23, 1924, DSF Papers, Library of Congress, 10.

¹⁰ Keith D. Dickson, *Sustaining Southern Identity: Douglas Southall Freeman and Memory in the Modern South* (Making the Modern South), Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press (2011), 156.

¹¹ Johnson, 123 and 259.

¹² Telegram, November 17, 1927, DSF Papers, Torres. 1927-30, P-Sa, 13, AC. 10,634; 10,6 Folder Label: PI-PZ 36, Library of Congress.

framing WWII battles in terms of Civil War conflicts, or likening European hamlets to familiar Virginia towns.”¹³

Freeman was also a presidential advisor. He corresponded regularly with U.S. military leaders and during World War I President Woodrow Wilson stipulated that Freeman’s editorials be placed on his desk in the Oval Office.¹⁴ As an expert on military history, Freeman had the ear not only of President Wilson but also that of General George C. Marshall, with whom he enjoyed extensive correspondence.”¹⁵ Freeman helped create what was to become the Government Issue Bill, popularly known as the G.I. Bill, signed into effect by President Roosevelt in 1944. The G.I. Bill offered federal aid to help veterans adjust to civilian life, purchase homes, find employment and obtain an education. In 1942 Freeman proposed to Secretary of War Robert R. Patterson that if 18-year-old students were taken from college for military service, the government should promise to complete their training. Patterson agreed, endorsed the idea, and presented it to President Roosevelt who not only favored it but also made it possible for all veterans to receive an education.¹⁶

As one of the institutions most notable alumni, Douglas Southall Freeman served the University of Richmond as a trustee between 1925 and 1950 and provided leadership on the Executive Committee in various areas including investments, ancillary property management, and endowment growth. He also served as an advisor to institutional leaders. In addition, Freeman was involved in building projects, fundraising, and trustee nominations. As University Rector (1934-1950) he steered the institution through the Great Depression and World War II. Freeman defended the academic freedom of the faculty against an attack led by a local business leader in 1936.¹⁷ In his role as editor of the

¹³ *Henrico Citizen*, November 15, 2001, “Speaker Explores Legacy of Douglas Southall Freeman, 5, File: Freeman, Douglas Southall A-T, VBHS.

¹⁴ David E. Johnson, *Douglas Southall Freeman*, Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing (2002), 10.

¹⁵ Johnson, 10.

¹⁶ Keith E. Eiler, *Mobilizing America: Robert P. Patterson and the War Effort, 1940-1945*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press (1997), 260; “Dr. Freeman Retires as Editor June 30 to Give Time to Historical Writing,” *News Leader*, June 25, 1949, Biographical File, “Freeman, Douglas Southall A-T,” VBHS. It is important to note that the G.I. Bill did not prove to be equally beneficial to Black and white veterans. A number of scholars have examined this history including Hilary Herbold in “Never a Level Playing Field: Blacks and the G.I. Bill,” *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 6 (Winter 1994-1995), 104-108; Ira Katznelson and Suzanne Mettler, in “On Race and Policy History: A Dialogue About the G.I. Bill,” *Perspectives on Politics* 6, no. 3, (September 2008), 519-537; and Sarah Turner and John Bound in “Closing the Gap or Widening the Divide: The Effects of the G.I. Bill and World War II on Educational Outcomes of Black Americans,” *The Journal of Economic History*, 63, no. 1 (March 2003), 145-177. The subject has also been considered in the popular media, including Peter C. Baker’s article, “The Tragic, Forgotten History of Black Military Veterans,” *The New Yorker*, November 27, 2016, [link](#).

¹⁷ University of Richmond Trustee Records, 1936, reel MF-7-120; “Lewis F. Powell Soft-Pedals Out of Dilemma: Critic of University of Richmond’s Radicalism Has Had Liberal Education,” *Suffolk News-Herald*, May 28, 1936, *Virginia Chronicle*; W. Harrison Daniel, *History at the University of Richmond*, Print Shop: University of Richmond (1991), 167.

Richmond News Leader, Freeman used his position to advance the interests of the university and to raise its profile. After his death Freeman Hall was named in his honor and dedicated in 1965.

BACKGROUND AND EARLY INFLUENCES

Freeman considered his father, Walker Burford Freeman, one of the three great influences of his youth. Pride of heritage and birthright is evident in the senior Freeman's memoirs and was amplified in his son's thinking.¹⁸ The power of ancestry and the idea of inheritable character traits is another theme Freeman repeatedly conveyed in his addresses, correspondence and editorials. The concept of strong and weak bloodlines dominated much of Douglas Southall Freeman's thinking. In a 1925 address, "The Safe Executor," given as part of his tremendously popular Men's Bible Study Class at Richmond's Second Baptist Church, Freeman stated,

Some of us are fortunate enough to receive from our parents that greatest inheritance — clean blood, right-thinking ancestry: some of us are unfortunate enough to have an inheritance which no matter what else it may or may not contain, is crossed all over with lust and mental dishonesty, and contains more of a liability than of asset.¹⁹

His thinking on the subject of "clean blood" and "right-thinking ancestry" was drawn from his father's priorities and informed Freeman's attitude toward to issues of race, intelligence, and [the eugenics movement in Virginia](#).²⁰

Walker Burford Freeman was a key figure in the memorialization of Confederate veterans and the public celebration of the history of the Civil War. By 1925, he became Commander of the United Confederate Veterans and in that position he continued to model an idealized view of the Confederacy and its leaders, who were venerated by white Southerners and by many in the country at large.²¹ Much of this reverence for the past was also manifested in the collective Southern memory that solidified during Douglas Southall Freeman's youth. Freeman was immersed in the minutiae of idealized Virginia memory as he listened to accounts of Confederate glory which exalted both the deeds and courage of soldiers and the perseverance of Southerners following defeat, both of which were viewed through a lens of the Lost Cause ideology by most white Southerners. Freeman's inculcation in these ideas of the past united with his family's dedication to

¹⁸ *Memoirs of Walker Burford Freeman, 1843-1935*, privately published and locally held by the University of Richmond (Rare Book Room) and the library at the Virginia Historical Society at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture.

¹⁹ DSF Papers, Articles, and Speeches, 1908-1925. 126 File: Series of Lectures, 1924-25 LOC AC.10,634; 10,660, 1-2.

²⁰ Eugenics was "the belief that genetic abnormalities were an important cause of various social problems, from low intelligence and shiftlessness to promiscuity, prostitution, and other more serious crimes" (Brendan Wolfe, "Buck v. Bell (1927)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Humanities, 4 Nov. 2015, [link](#). 10 Jan. 2021). Further, it argued that "humans can be selectively bred in similar ways to plants and animals" (Brendan Wolfe, "Racial Integrity Laws (1924-1930)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Humanities, November 4, 2015. [link](#)).

²¹ Johnson, 40.

Baptist doctrine. The young Freeman attended veteran reunions, joined those assembled for monument dedications, and witnessed Jefferson Davis' reinterment in Hollywood Cemetery, all at the side of his father. He was among the four thousand people who followed the Confederate president's casket from the train station to the cemetery.²² Douglas Southall Freeman's perspective was permanently fixed on the military heroes of Virginia's Confederate past and he retained a patriotic fealty to the South akin to religious faith.²³ Set against these Lost Cause perspectives, Victorian morality and birthright inheritance are the political and social views that Freeman later voiced as a renowned writer, radio broadcaster, and powerful influencer of public opinion.²⁴

EDUCATION

Freeman's key educational influences were John Peyton McGuire (1866-1948), instructor at the McGuire's University School for Boys in Richmond, and Dr. Samuel Chiles Mitchell, Professor of History at Richmond College and later the University of Richmond. The McGuire School was at the heart of "old Richmond," providing preparatory education to the sons of the city's elite.²⁵ J. Peyton McGuire taught a number of subjects but was particularly notable for "introducing the boys to the 'matchless glories of Shakespeare.'"²⁶ In 1948, Freeman wrote that McGuire "represented everything that was finest in our old educational ideals and in the life of Virginia manhood."²⁷

Freeman became a student at Richmond College at the age of fifteen and by his sophomore year had come under the considerable influence of Samuel Chiles Mitchell. David E. Johnson, Freeman's biographer, drew on the words of Freeman's eldest daughter, Mary Tyler Freeman Cheek McClenahan, in his summary of Mitchell's influence on her father: he was "'the man who above all others' would influence [Freeman's] intellectual development."²⁸ It was Mitchell who was instrumental in directing Freeman's attention to the formal study of history.²⁹ In addition to

²² Johnson, 39; "His Eternal Sleep," *Richmond Dispatch*, June 1, 1893, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#).

²³ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press (2003), 291.

²⁴ Six assertions are associated with Lost Cause interpretation: secession, not slavery, caused the Civil War; African Americans were "faithful slaves," unprepared for freedom and loyal to their masters; the Confederacy was overpowered by the Union's resources and numbers; Confederate soldiers were brave and saintly heroes; Robert E. Lee was the epitome of the Confederate soldier; and Southern white women were not only loyal to the confederacy but also sanctified by the sacrifice of their male relatives (Caroline E. Janney, "The Lost Cause," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Humanities, 27 July 2016). See also Caroline Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Association and the Lost Cause*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (2008).

²⁵ John Lewis Gignilliat, *The Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman*, diss. University of Wisconsin, Madison (1968), 89, 86.

²⁶ Johnson, 41.

²⁷ Johnson, 41.

²⁸ Johnson, 49.

²⁹ "Freeman Hall Named for Former Messenger Editor," [University of Richmond] *Collegian*, April 13,

Mitchell's commitment to the Baptist church, Johnson also notes the professor's other similarities to Walker Burford Freeman, including his reverence for Robert E. Lee. While teaching, Mitchell "was often overcome with emotion when he delivered an address about the general."³⁰ While a student at Richmond College, Freeman participated in a number of extracurricular activities. He was the editor of the student-run literary magazine, *The Messenger*, was a member of the Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity, and was active in the Dramatic Club.³¹ After three years as an undergraduate, in 1904, at eighteen years of age, Freeman graduated from Richmond College with an AB degree (now BA).

GRADUATE SCHOOL

After graduating from Richmond College, Freeman left for Baltimore, Maryland, where he pursued a Ph.D. in history at Johns Hopkins University, joining his older brother, Allen Weir Freeman, who was completing his final year of medical school at the university. Douglas Southall Freeman's dissertation, *The Attitude of Political Parties in Virginia to Slavery and Secession, 1846-1861*, was built on a Lost Cause understanding of the necessity of Southern secession in the face of "the Federal policy of coercion." He wrote that the "unanimity" of the Virginia political response to the "policy of Lincoln" – likely what Freeman had already referred to as "the slavery question" – meant that secession was the only possible course of action for the state.³² In a letter to his father, Freeman wrote of his ambition to tell the story of the Confederate Army: "to write that story of our country, that story of the causes that led up to those four dark years of war, which changed the whole tenor of our nation, and made it a nation, where before we were only a confederation."³³ As was the case with many white Virginians of the time, Freeman described his thoughts on enslavement in terms of regional traditions and, in the case of Virginia, argued that those enslaved there were better treated than elsewhere in the South. He viewed antebellum white Southerners as victims of the institution of slavery. In a 1920 *News Leader* editorial, Freeman wrote that historically "slavery was not of Virginia's seeking," but required by "the crown"³⁴ and in his work, *The South to Posterity: An Introduction to the Writing of Confederate History*, Freeman did not include slavery as a factor of secession.³⁵ Both were beliefs that aligned with Lost Cause absolution of Virginia's leadership role in slavery and the conviction that enslavement was not the cause of secession. Caroline E. Janney

1978.

³⁰ Johnson, 46-49.

³¹ Johnson, 54. See University of Richmond, *The Spider*, volume 5, 1905, [link](#).

³² DSF, "Ph.D. Dissertation, Second Copy," Box 126, DSF Papers, LOC; Gignilliat, *Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman*, 139, citing a letter from DSF to WBF, March 10, 1907. Freeman chose not to reconstruct his dissertation after it was destroyed in a fire in September of 1908. Remnants are housed at the Library of Congress with Freeman's papers.

³³ Douglas Southall Freeman to Walker Burford Freeman quoted in John R. Peacock, III, *Keeping the Faith: Douglas Southall Freeman, 1886-1953*, Vol. 1 and II, dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1990.

³⁴ DSF, "Virginia Anti-slavery Acts," RNL, October 7, 1920, LOV.

³⁵ Douglas Southall Freeman, *The South to Posterity: An Introduction to the Writing of Confederate History*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press (1998), 202-203.

distills this belief, writing, “Lost Cause proponents have stressed the primacy of states' rights and the constitutionality of secession, and have cited the secession crisis—along with political squabbles such as tariff disputes and broad claims about the evolution of different societies in the North and South—as the cause of the war instead of slavery.”³⁶ According to Gary W. Gallagher, who wrote the introduction to the 1998 version of *The South to Posterity*, “none of Freeman’s witnesses would mention a desire to protect a social system based on slavery,” but instead, Freeman found logic in secession born of state’s rights and believed Southerners “fought bravely and fairly.”³⁷

After graduating from Johns Hopkins, Freeman returned to Richmond where he lived for the rest of his life. He married Inez Virginia Goddin in 1914 and they had three children: Mary Tyler Freeman Cheek McClenahan, Anne Ballard Freeman Turpin, and James Douglas Freeman.

FREEMAN AND THE *RICHMOND NEWS LEADER*

In 1915, at the age of 29, Freeman became the editor of the *Richmond News Leader*, one of the two major daily publications in the city. The *News Leader*, an afternoon newspaper, was read widely across the region and was often excerpted in publications in other parts of the country.³⁸ In January 1930, the newspaper reached 73,265 readers.³⁹ His position as editor gave Freeman a unique hold on the public mind. He determined each edition’s news emphasis and wrote up to seven editorials per day. During World War I, his editorials related to ending neutrality were passed to President Wilson prior to the United States’ entry into World War I.⁴⁰ His twice-daily radio broadcasts from WRVA, then the *News Leader*’s radio outlet, WRNL, were heard by eager listeners who felt he was speaking directly to them.⁴¹ In *Douglas Southall Freeman*, David E. Johnson quotes historian Richard Harwell writing that “Freeman’s broadcasts were ‘an essential of the Virginian breakfast.’”⁴² One dedicated listener remembered that Freeman “explained the news.” Her description also provided a

³⁶ Janney, “The Lost Cause,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*.

³⁷ Gary W. Gallagher in Freeman, *The South to Posterity*, xxiii.

³⁸ “Heavy Sleeper Reports on Virginia Coastal Storm,” *Chapel Hill Weekly*, September 01, 1933, *Chronicling America*.

³⁹ [Circulation], RNL, January 7, 1930, LOV.

⁴⁰ Johnson, 115-16. Among these influential *News Leader* editorials are “Why No Little Germany” (January 8, 1916) and “Balkan Campaign Taking Form” (September 19, 1916), both available at the Library of Virginia.

⁴¹ A WRNL station survey included in *The Radio Annual 1940* revealed that the station then reached a primary audience of 735,000 and 125,900 “radio homes.” Its secondary audience was 915,000 and 640,000 “radio homes” (Jack Alicote, ed. *The Radio Annual 1940*, *The Radio Daily* (1940), 544, Library of Congress and the Internet Archive, [link](#)). Here “secondary” indicates some limited listening due to interference from other signals. According to Johnson, Freeman’s radio program was “estimated” to have “reached 63 percent of the listening audience,” and Freeman “continued the pace of thirteen broadcasts a week until his death” (Johnson, 148).

⁴² Johnson, 220.

window into the influence Freeman had on the thinking of his listeners regarding international events: “[t]o the average Virginian, unsophisticated in world affairs, he was indispensable.”⁴³

Freeman’s editorial stances on issues including lynching, judicial equality, and police violence, would at times earn praise from those in the Black community, including John Mitchell, Jr., the editor of the *Richmond Planet*.⁴⁴ Freeman’s stance on segregation and racial equality, however, were regularly challenged by Mitchell. Freeman’s opinions on a wide array of policies, including those focused on race, were rarely questioned by white people. In the decades between 1920 and 1950, the Jim Crow era, many of Freeman’s editorials focused on aspects of white paternal identity. His editorials perpetuated racial inequality and diminished and discouraged the voting power of Black people.

RACISM

As the structures of racial separation solidified in the 1920s, Freeman’s aversion to racial intermarriage and sexual relationships led to his association with and support for key figures in Virginia’s eugenics movement and the rising Anglo-Saxon identity movement. To Freeman, sexual relationships between those of different races risked “pollutions of blood” and his long-standing beliefs about the benefits of racial purity were articulated in a number of editorials.⁴⁵ Like many socially prominent white Virginians in the early 20th century, Freeman held himself above the actions of the Ku Klux Klan while at times still approving of the structures of white supremacy at the core of the organization. In August of 1919, after both the *News Leader* and the Associated Press investigated a group that the AP described as “an organization fashioned after the Ku Klux Klan,” Freeman dismissed concerns raised by Richmond’s African American community, writing that the organization was a “fraternal” one and “does not represent the slightest threat to any law-abiding Negro or to any other citizen.” Freeman continued that the *News Leader* “should certainly call on the corporation commission” to revoke the group’s charter if the organization ever did present a threat, but “we regard such a contingency...as remote in the extreme, because the membership of the order as anyone can ascertain is made of men whom every reputable citizen would be willing to trust.”⁴⁶ John Mitchell, Jr. of the *Planet* used the Associated Press findings to challenge Freeman firing back, “We do not believe that a race riot will take place in this city, but it may be well to have all of these matters brought to public notice before they occur. It may save lives on both sides and prevent much bloodshed.”⁴⁷ Mitchell expressed the deep concerns felt by African Americans across the country as domestic terrorism reigned in the form of race riots. Between 1898 and 1919 large-scale group violence by white rioters against Black people and their property had occurred in

⁴³ Virginia Cavalcade, 46:247.

⁴⁴ Anne McCrery, Errol Somay and the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*. “John Mitchell Jr. (1863–1929),” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Humanities, May 6 2019, [link](#).

⁴⁵ DSF, “The Price of Pollution”, RNL, June 5, 1923, LOV.

⁴⁶ DSF, “No Washington-Chicago Man Hunts,” RNL, July 29, 1919, LOV; reprinted in “The Situation Here,” *Richmond Planet*, August 2, 1919, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#).

⁴⁷ [John Mitchell, Jr.], “The Situation Here,” *Richmond Planet*, August 2, 1919, Virginia Chronicle.

numerous cities, resulting in lynchings and terrorization: Wilmington, North Carolina, 1898; Phoenix, South Carolina, 1898; Atlanta, Georgia, 1906; Springfield, Illinois, 1908; East St. Louis, Illinois, 1917; Houston, Texas, 1917; Elaine, Arkansas; 1919; and Chicago, Illinois, 1919.⁴⁸

In 1920, when a suspicious organization called the American Civic Association was in the news Freeman addressed the group's apparent ties to the KKK and he worked to have their permit for assembly denied. In a private letter from Freeman to his friend, mentor, and *News Leader* owner John Stewart Bryan, Freeman wrote, "I thank God that we had a chance, apparently, to smash an organization that stinks to high heaven."⁴⁹ Five months later an advertisement for the "Knights of the Ku Klux Klan" was published in the *News Leader*. After apparent outcry, Freeman published an editorial expressing regret over its inclusion in the pages of the newspaper. Freeman's apology also expressed a general approval of Klan principles: "The *News Leader* may be in full sympathy with them." Freeman did make it clear that the Klan's methods of "terrorization and mystery" were "no longer" useful as "solutions of the problems in the South." He wrote, "Instead of mystery[,] open council is needed. Instead of terrorization, education."⁵⁰ John Mitchell, Jr. of the *Richmond Planet* included clippings of both the image of the precipitating advertisement and Freeman's *News Leader* response on his own editorial page and wrote, "We note with infinite satisfaction and the greatest of pleasure the attitude of the Richmond, Va. News Leader in dealing with the Ku Klux Klan organization. It states plainly that the advertising patronage of this secret body of men is not wanted. This is the only proper course to take in dealing with this sinister organization." Mitchell did not address Freeman's opinion of the "constructive" KKK "principles" but instead focused on a unified response among "a better class of white and colored people" whom he described as being "of one mind" about the group. He then called for them to work together to "heal the wounds that this and other wars have made."⁵¹



"Much Is In A Name," from the *News Leader* reprinted in the *Richmond Planet*, November 27, 1920

Two years after the Klan advertisement appeared in the *News Leader*, Freeman's editorials featured another group committed to "racial integrity," the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America. He wrote approvingly of the organization's principles and strategies in the editorial, "The Price of Pollution,"

⁴⁸ Walter C. Rucker and James N. Upton, eds., *Encyclopedia of Race Riots*, Vol. I, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press (2007), 310.

⁴⁹ Johnson, 138.

⁵⁰ DSF, "Is This the Ku Klux Klan?" RNL, June 30, 1921, LOV; Johnson, 138; DSF, "Much is in a Name," RNL, November 16, 1920, LOV.

⁵¹ Reprint of "Much Is In A Name," from the *News Leader* in the *Richmond Planet*, November 27, 1920, *Virginia Chronicle*, [link](#); [John Mitchell, Jr.], "The Ku Klux Klan," *Richmond Planet*, November 27, 1920, *Virginia Chronicle*.

stating that “the clubs insist on proper laws against miscegenation and seek to insure [sic] the registration by race of all persons now living” in an effort to maintain “racial purity, racial integrity and lofty racial ideals.” Freeman felt the clubs would need to convince and enlist white people rather than relying on legislation to reach their goals because “laws can be evaded sometimes or defied.” Freeman’s prevailing concern was what he believed to be the inherent vulnerability of Anglo-Saxon power given that it both “spread itself throughout the world,” and he argued that it also allowed itself to be diluted through intermarriage.⁵² Freeman’s views were not as extreme as those held by Virginia white supremacy activists such as John Powell, Earnest Cox, and Walter Plecker, founders of the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America.⁵³ [The Racial Bills of 1924-1930](#), designed to protect what their advocates saw as the integrity of the white race dominated Virginia political debate and were ultimately added to the state constitution. An example of Freeman’s modulation appeared in the 1926 editorial, “Not the Virginia Way.” In it, Freeman carved out an exception for what he termed “foreign students” meaning those from Asia. He argued that these students should not be categorized as “non-white” or “colored” as these labels would harm both college admissions and foreign religious missions. Although he advocated for separate but equal education facilities for Black people, he believed students from Asia should be allowed to attend school with whites. He did not believe they should be considered in the same category as Black people.⁵⁴ As noted by historian Pippa Holloway, Freeman’s objections echoed “[a] key element of the criticism of the Public Assemblages Act” and the *Richmond News Leader* “expressed concern that news would travel abroad that Virginians discriminated against Asians.”⁵⁵ As Freeman had written in the 1923 editorial, “The Price of Pollution,” in his later editorial “Not the Virginia Way,” he questioned the advantages of racial legislation: “Virginia has her racial sore spots that call for treatment — careful, intelligent and in some instances drastic treatment — but on the whole she has attained very satisfactory results by avoiding needless racial law-making, and by applying her own methods of adjustment in her own way... Public sentiment can be trusted now, as always, to find the best Virginia Way.”⁵⁶

Freeman rarely, if ever, equivocated in his stances. He would, however, urge moderation in the application of such stances and did have an aversion to what he saw as radical responses to many issues. In his 1926 editorial, “The Racial Bills” he called for a two-year delay in the enactment of pending racial laws to prevent a hurried process because he believed “all Virginians are so completely of one mind on this point” that they could engage in “frank discussions of the best means of having the white and the colored people live harmoniously, but separately.” Despite his seeming reticence to advocate for legislation, Freeman did not hesitate to share his recommendations. In his opinion, laws against intermarriage were a “necessity” and separation on

⁵² DSF, “The Price of Pollution,” RNL, June 5, 1923, LOV.

⁵³ John Cofer Landon, “The Plea for Racial Integrity: A History of the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America,” thesis, Corcoran Department of History, University of Virginia (1978), 9-35.

⁵⁴ DSF, “Not the Virginia Way,” RNL, February 9, 1926, LOV.

⁵⁵ Pippa Holloway, *Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in Virginia, 1920-1945*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (2006), 41.

⁵⁶ DSF, “Not the Virginia Way,” RNL, February 9, 1926, LOV.

streetcars, railways and other forms of public accommodations was essential to prevent what he saw as racial “friction.” Freeman reversed his call for delayed voting on the Racial Integrity Bill of 1926 after an exception was added to protect prominent Virginia families claiming both white and indigenous ancestors.⁵⁷

EUGENICS

At the core of Freeman’s views on race was the concept of “clean blood.” In several editorials between the years 1924 and 1925, Freeman promoted the concept of genetics determining intelligence, social and cultural station, and health and mentality by summarizing for his readers the findings of eugenicists such as Dr. Arthur Estabrook and Dr. Walter Plecker. He shared with members of his *News Leader* Current Events Class his support of the involuntary sterilization measure of 1924 for its “beneficent effects.”⁵⁸ Freeman’s views were part of an international eugenics movement led by a group of scientists and writers who targeted people of color around the world as well as, in the words of Dr. Arthur Estabrook, “low grade white” people. Eugenicists sought to control birth rates in populations deemed deficient by using scientific language that emphasized racial differences and their beliefs in racial inferiority and superiority. Contemporary awareness of the eugenics movement in Virginia is largely centered on involuntary sterilization and [the 1927 Supreme Court case of *Buck v. Bell*](#). While Freeman’s period of influence on the subject preceded this case, his written admonitions primed the public for an acceptance of eugenics’ principles.⁵⁹ Like other newspaper editors in Virginia, Freeman provided publicly disseminated content which promoted eugenic arguments. His editorials included his opinions on “feeble-mindedness” and focused on the reproduction rates of the lower classes as a threat to Virginia’s economy.⁶⁰ According to historian Pippa Holloway in *Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in Virginia 1920-1945*, many elite Virginians believed that “[l]ower-class whites might undermine the social order, damage the economy by reproducing inferior genes, and undermine the white race by giving birth to mixed race offspring.” Holloway continues, “White elites, the governing class whose wisdom brought them to support eugenics, would protect the state. Thus, eugenics in Virginia reaffirmed the rights of certain white men to rule other whites.”⁶¹ Freeman’s editorials on the

⁵⁷ DSF, “The Bill ‘As Is’ and ‘As Was,’” RNL, March 2, 1926, LOV. This clause was commonly known as the “Pocahontas Exception.”

⁵⁸ Smith, *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics, and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (2002), 81; quote from DSF Papers, Minutes, News Leader Current Events Class March 10, 1924, Folder “1923 Ap-Dc and 1924,” box 177, LC.

⁵⁹ See J. Douglas Smith, “The Campaign for Racial Purity and the Erosion of Paternalism in Virginia, 1922-1930: ‘Nominally White, Biologically Mixed, and Legally Negro,’” *Journal of Southern History* 68, no. 1 (February 2002), 65-106; DSF Papers, Minutes, News Leader Current Events class, March 10, 1924, Folder “1923 Ap-Dc and 1924” Box 177, LC; Gregory Michael Dorr, *Segregation’s Science: Eugenics and Society in Virginia*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press (2008).

⁶⁰ DSF, “The Report on the Feeble-Minded,” RNL, October 2, 1915 and DSF, “Who Had the Big Families,” RNL, January 5, 1925, LOV.

⁶¹ Holloway, *Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in Virginia*, 50.

subject of eugenics molded and amplified the opinions of educated, affluent whites throughout the Commonwealth.

In an editorial on the subject of gene determination, Freeman lauded the expertise of Dr. Arthur Estabrook who had written a paper critical of racial mixing among Black, indigenous and “low grade” white people living in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. The editorial quoted liberally from Estabrook’s findings and communicated Freeman’s fear of the moral and health consequences of interracial reproduction on future generations of the white race.⁶² Freeman’s enthusiasm for targeted birth control was linked to his conviction that, “the more ignorant the parents, the more children they are apt to bring into the world.”⁶³ In another editorial, “The New Family,” Freeman wrote in full-throated support of the eugenics movement’s aims, stopping what he called the “great stream of defective and dependent in our population...insuring [sic] the permanence and the improvement even of the moral and physical standards of the human race.”⁶⁴ Freeman’s advocacy for sterilization — which linked to his pre-existing belief in the supremacy of Anglo-Saxon people — resulted in his promotion of the finer points of eugenics. Throughout his life, Freeman remained a vocal opponent of interracial marriage and interracial sexual relationships. This antipathy represented the wide-held white fear that “if racially mixed individuals dominated Virginia’s population, higher civilization would be destroyed and the state ruined.”⁶⁵ He described the need to preserve what he often called the “integrity,” of the white race as a “biological caution.” He wrote, “a white man is guided by the same impulse that keeps the robin from mating with the starling” an instinct that Freeman believed illustrated “the southern point of view.”⁶⁶

In his 1924 editorial, “The Rhinelander Tragedy,” Freeman recounted what he considered to be the social ruin of a wealthy white man who unknowingly married a woman whom Freeman described as “having negro blood in her veins.” He suggested the woman was “calculating” and a “wretched girl” who had deceived Rhinelander. Freeman framed the situation as a biological and social horror story, writing, “In an evening a boy may take a handicap under which he must stagger to the end of his days. No man can defy social usage, the custom of the tribe, and fail to pay the price.” He further noted, “the certainty, not less than the horror of the outcome has inspired such efforts as that represented in the Virginia ‘racial purity law’ to make marriages between whites and persons of colored extraction impossible.” He relayed this story to his readers as a cautionary tale, imploring them to determine the race of prospective partners prior to marriage and, thus, avoid the “reckless” and “impetuous” actions of Rhinelander.⁶⁷

⁶² DSF, “The Mixed Group,” RNL, November 24, 1924, LOV.

⁶³ DSF, “Who Had the Big Families,” RNL, January 5, 1925, LOV.

⁶⁴ DSF, “The New Family,” RNL, February 4, 1925, LOV.

⁶⁵ Holloway, *Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in Virginia*, 33.

⁶⁶ Johnson, 192-194.

⁶⁷ DSF, “The Rhinelander Tragedy,” RNL, November 1, 1924, LOV.

RACIAL INEQUALITY

In Freeman's view, typical of the paternalism shared by many white Virginians at the time, stability and good will between the races rested on a transactional relationship: Black Virginians were to play their role as, in Freeman's words, "the best Negroes in America" in exchange for continued white patronage, provision of services, and infrastructural improvements.⁶⁸ Freeman often appealed to his readers for donations directed at the Black community which funded the construction of playgrounds, shelters for displaced Black women, and efforts to eradicate tuberculosis through education.⁶⁹ In an early 20th century address to a largely Black audience, Freeman admonished them to do a better job seeking health information and noted the racial disparities in rates of tuberculosis and other diseases. In a rare show of public Black resistance to Freeman's authority, [activist Thomas C. Walker](#) challenged Freeman's shaming of the audience by sharing his own treatment at the hands of a dismissive and racist public health worker at the Board of Health office when he had attempted to pick up the "excellent leaflets and pamphlets on health subjects" that Freeman was touting. In his memoir Walker recalled saying to Freeman, "When Negro mortality went down it would be because the manners of white health workers has gone up."⁷⁰

Freeman believed in achieving a "desirable" and "practicable" residential racial separation in Richmond without legislation. In a 1930 editorial, "Separation by Consent," he drew on his paternalistic conviction that he fully understood the needs of both Black and white citizens: "The Negro loves companionship and can never be at ease when living close to people who resent his presence in their neighborhood." He proposed a plan to implement what he referred to as "separation by consent."⁷¹ As Freeman saw it, in exchange for basic services and some limited access to residential opportunities, African Americans would agree to remain in separate designated neighborhoods:

If separation by consent is to be a reality, it must provide at least these three things: First, the city must supply the Negro districts with as good streets as the average white neighborhoods of the same relative valuation have, and the city must give to homes on these streets the same service in street-cleaning, waste removal and the like that the rest of the city enjoys. Secondly, there must be some outlet into better homes for those Negroes who have the means and the ambition to rise above the crowded squalor of dilapidated shacks in old Jackson Ward. This outlet is to be found either through the transfer to Negroes of neighborhoods from which whites move, or through the opening of new districts for Negro home-owners. Finally, separation by consent depends for its smooth operation on the

⁶⁸ DSF, "For Better Negro Schools," RNL, March 3, 1924, LOV.

⁶⁹ DSF, "Will You Help These Playgrounds?" RNL, June 2, 1923, LOV; DSF, "For the Colored Girls Home," RNL, June 28, 1920, LOV; DSF, "Help Them," RNL, March 27, 1915, LOV.

⁷⁰ Clayton McLure Brooks, *The Uplift Generation: Cooperation Across the Color Line in Early Twentieth-Century Virginia*, University of Virginia Press (2017), 76-77.

⁷¹ DSF, "Separation by Consent," RNL, May 20, 1930, LOV.

establishment of some unofficial agency that will handle amicably the situations that arise when the white people begin to leave a street and Negroes move in.⁷²

Nearly two decades later, in response to President Truman's Committee on Civil Rights and the group's landmark report, *To Secure These Rights*, which proposed several areas to confront discrimination directly, Freeman termed the report "unrealistic in application" and "meaningless, because it deals with questions which, fundamentally, are beyond the reach of law." He contended that the recommendations of the committee should instead be left to the "slow and unpredictable operation of time."⁷³

LYNCHING AND OTHER FORMS OF GROUP VIOLENCE

In 1926, three events, one of them the lynching of a Black man, prompted Freeman to speak out against mob-violence and vigilantism. While Freeman did not believe in social equality between white and Black people, at times his belief in equality under the criminal justice system was in evidence. This was particularly true in his response to the three cases that all occurred in Virginia: the lynching of a Black man, the kidnapping and mob interrogation of a Catholic priest, and the kidnapping and whipping of two women of unknown race for "moral transgressions."⁷⁴

In August 1926, Raymond Bird, a Black man who had been arrested in Wytheville, Virginia after having been accused of raping a white woman, was killed by a mob. Two weeks later, in another part of the state, at least twenty-eight "masked and white-robed men" kidnapped a Catholic priest and interrogated him for leading a youth band made up of Black children.⁷⁵ The following day, in Bristol, Virginia, two women were kidnapped, "driven into the country to an abandoned house" and were "whipped... with leather straps."⁷⁶

⁷² DSF, "Separation by Consent," RNL, May 20, 1930, LOV. Freeman's characterization of the "Old Jackson Ward" neighborhood as "dilapidated shacks" must be viewed in the context of the neighborhood's history as a vibrant center of Black art, economic innovation, and cultural importance. See Bowen, Dawn S. "The Transformation of Richmond's Historic African American Commercial Corridor," *Southeastern Geographer* 43, no. 2 (2003): 260-78. Accessed January 21, 2021, [link](#). For information on the "redlining" of Richmond's neighborhoods, see the University of Richmond Digital Engagement Team's *Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America*, [link](#).

⁷³ DSF, "The Report on Civil Rights," *Richmond News Leader*, October 30, 1947, Library of Virginia. The report, *To Secure These Rights: The Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights*, proposed to establish a permanent Civil Rights Commission, a Joint Congressional Committee on Civil Rights and a Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice. Additionally, the report recommended establishing federal protection from lynching; establishing a permanent fair employment practice commission; and the abolishment of poll taxes.

⁷⁴ Alexander S. Leidholdt, *Editor for Justice: The Life of Louis I. Jaffee*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press (2002), 188.

⁷⁵ "To Aid Abducted Priest, Liberties Union Denounces Virginia Sheriff for Failure to Act," *New York Times*, September 7, 1926.

⁷⁶ DSF, "This Is Not Like Virginia," RNL, September 4, 1926, LOV.

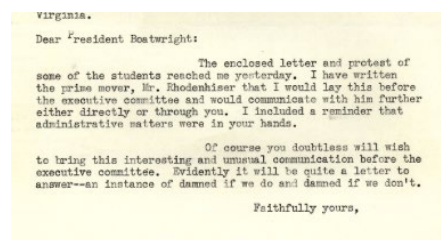
Freeman wrote three editorials in response to the incidents. In one, “This Is Not Like Virginia,” he expressed his outrage that Virginians would participate in a lynching and other forms of group violence. He wrote that these acts represented “the same state of mind – hate, contempt for the processes of law, a determination to take private vengeance and to substitute the mob for the court.” He wrote that the crimes “sound like rural Georgia or inland Texas in the most lawless days of anti-negro, anti-Catholic agitation. Coming close together, and almost without precedent in some of their details, this trio of outrages is enough to make every right-minded Virginian wonder what has come over a people who used to boast their respect for the law and their sense of fair play.” This editorial concluded with a plea for a return to what Freeman believed was the typical sanity, honor and tolerance of Virginia. In his final paragraph he asked if “Virginians so far forgotten the struggle and the victory that they are prepared to deny others what their great-grandfathers accounted the most notable fruit of the revolution?”⁷⁷

⁷⁷ DSF, “This Is Not Like Virginia,” RNL, September 4, 1926, LOV. For more information on lynching in Virginia, see *Racial Terror: Lynching in Virginia*, James Madison University, [link](#); History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group, “History of Lynching in Virginia, The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission, [link](#); Commonwealth of Virginia, General Assembly, Senate of Virginia, “S. Res. 36: Apologizing to the victims of lynching and the descendants of those victims for the failure of the Senate to enact anti-lynching legislation,” (2005), [link](#).

RACIAL SEGREGATION IN EDUCATION

On the subject of education, Freeman advocated for separate but equal educational systems and facilities for Black students. In editorials he wrote between 1936 and 1942, Freeman challenged his readers to acknowledge that the separate schools were far from “equal,” and calling them such was a “legal fiction.” Unless his white readers prioritized funding for adequate school facilities for Black students, they must prepare themselves for court cases demanding the enrollment of Black students in white schools. He also described such investments in schools as a way to prevent the cost of jail construction in the future.⁷⁸ Freeman urged his readers to “remind the [city] council that if Richmond permits the matter to drag along indefinitely, she may expect the Negroes to go into court. They will demand before a federal judge that Negro children be admitted to John Marshall and to Thomas Jefferson [both white-only Richmond high schools], or else that the city provide equal facilities within the just meaning of the words.”⁷⁹

Freeman also articulated his position on educational segregation in higher education. A 1925 incident, resulting in a public scandal, involved an interracial audience at Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) and ultimately led to the General Assembly passing the Public Assemblages Act of 1926. In response to the controversy, Freeman wrote, “To preserve the sympathy and loyalty of Southern whites, the Hampton school must avoid every semblance of the practice of racial equality” which “unsettles the negro’s point of view and ...moves the white race’s deepest emotions.”⁸⁰ In his Current Events Class, Freeman shared his belief that unless Hampton Institute complied with strict segregation, the loss of white good will would erode support for the institution.⁸¹ In other words, in order for the school to maintain the approval of the white community administrators and students must adhere to separation of the races.



Virginia.
Dear President Boatwright:
The enclosed letter and protest of some of the students reached me yesterday. I have written the prime mover, Mr. Rhodenbiser that I would lay this before the executive committee and would communicate with him further either directly or through you. I included a reminder that administrative matters were in your hands.
Of course you doubtless will wish to bring this interesting and unusual communication before the executive committee. Evidently it will be quite a letter to answer--an instance of damned if we do and damned if we don't.
Faithfully yours,

Freeman to Boatwright, March 18, 1944
(Papers of Frederic W. Boatwright,
Boatwright Library, University of Richmond
and compiled by Race & Racism at the
University of Richmond)

In March 1944, while Rector of the University of Richmond, Freeman actively supported President Frederic W. Boatwright’s handling of student complaints regarding the exclusion of a Black visiting speaker, Russell Jones, from the dining hall. Freeman wrote to Boatwright describing the administrators as being in a challenging situation, “an instance of damned if we do and damned if we don’t.”⁸² The university’s official response, conveyed in an open letter from Boatwright to students, reminded them that Jones’ treatment was “according

⁷⁸ DSF, “Equal School Facilities,” RNL, September 25, 1942; DSF, “The City Must Choose,” RNL, June 25, 1936, LOV.

⁷⁹ DSF, “The City Must Choose,” RNL, June 25, 1936; DSF, “Equal School Facilities,” RNL, September 25, 1942, LOV.

⁸⁰ DSF “The South Looks to Dr. Gregg,” RNL, July 15, 1925, LOV.

⁸¹ Smith, *Managing White Supremacy*, 119.

⁸² DSF, “Dear President Boatwright,” March 18, 1944, Boatwright Memorial Library, Presidential Correspondence of Frederic W. Boatwright, 1910-1946. <http://dlxs.richmond.edu/cgi/i/image/image->

to well established custom in this region.”⁸³ A search of the records of the University of Richmond Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee has not revealed any record of a discussion of the controversy.

During the Truman administration, the 1947 President’s Commission on Higher Education issued a report advocating policy reform to allow for integration of colleges and universities. Freeman was one of four members of the commission to sign a letter of dissent. He and other signatories recognized the “gross inequality of opportunity, economic and educational,” for Black students and agreed that “conditions should be improved, inequalities removed, and greater opportunity provided for all our people.” However, Freeman and the cosigners of the dissent letter argued the work of the commission would actually delay improvement, a common argument in the South. “We believe,” Freeman and the dissenters wrote, “that pronouncements such as those of the Commission on the question of segregation jeopardize these efforts, impede progress, and threaten tragedy to the people of the south, both white and Negro.” The recommendations, they insisted, “ignore the facts of history and the realities of the present.”⁸⁴

VOTING RIGHTS

During Freeman’s youth, Virginia almost entirely disenfranchised Black voters through the implementation of poll taxes and literacy tests. Freeman believed this constraint also resulted in low white voter turnout because of the overly complicated franchise regulations instituted in 1902 which was intended to disenfranchise Black voters. While Freeman argued against the restrictions, his exasperation focused on the need to ease the voting process for white Virginians not bringing more Black voters into the franchise. His attention to voter education within prescribed limits of class and race was illustrated in the editorial, “The Negro Question,” in which Freeman described the struggle to regain white control of Virginia after Reconstruction as “elemental” and “biological.” He reminded his readers that although “Virginia negroes are the best in America — the most trustworthy, the most reliable,” he believed that “they are not capable of operating the government of state, of city or of county.” He concluded the editorial by stating, “the biological consideration...is paramount to the political.”⁸⁵

The fear of potential Black voter dominance was especially troubling to Freeman when he considered the power of African American women as a voting bloc. He detailed his concern in his

[idx?id=S-FWB-X-0005152%5DFWB6043.1944.034.001.JP2](https://www.libraryofvirginia.org/record?id=S-FWB-X-0005152%5DFWB6043.1944.034.001.JP2)

⁸³ DSF, “The South Looks to Dr. Gregg,” RNL, July 15, 1925, Library of Virginia.; Smith, *Managing White Supremacy*, 119; DSF, “Dear President Boatwright,” March 18, 1944, Boatwright Memorial Library, Presidential Correspondence of Fredric W. Boatwright, 1910-1946. *The Collegian*, Open Letter, April 14, 1944.

⁸⁴ Richmond C. Beatty, “The Truman Report on Higher Education,” *The Georgia Review*, Vol. 2, no. 3 (Fall 1948), pp. 362-372; VBHS, RG6.2.4 Box 76 Folder Title: Documents [US] Commission on Higher Education and Statement of Dissent as Regards Racial Segregation signed by Douglas Southall Freeman Commission Dissent, undated.

⁸⁵ DSF, “The Negro Question,” RNL, September 14, 1920, LOV

September 18, 1920 editorial, “Offsetting White Men’s Votes.” For Freeman, Black women possessed a “disquieting” voting power which would lower the margin “by which the white population controls the government of the South.” He called upon white women to qualify in significant enough numbers to ensure that the “civilization of the South” would not be endangered. Anti-suffragists were also urged to register so that “their husband’s vote will not be offset by that of some negro woman.”⁸⁶

His 1920 series of editorials, *Intelligent Suffrage*, was published when the 19th Amendment was ratified in Tennessee. Freeman sought to educate new women voters about the intricacies of governance. His tone and subject matter indicate that he viewed his audience as primarily white women, and he hoped that they would cast their vote in the best interest of the white South. By 1927, Freeman no longer feared “negro domination in Virginia” due to a declining Black population and confidence that “the counties know best how to deal with the negroes in areas where they outnumbered whites.”⁸⁷ As late as 1949, Freeman believed the proposed repeal of poll taxes in the South was a sign of “impending Federal domination of local affairs” and considered removal of franchise requirements to herald far reaching consequences. “Concealed in the anti-poll tax bill,” he wrote, “is a legal weapon that could destroy our system of government and the local supervision of elections. If the bill passes, something of America will pass with it.”⁸⁸

⁸⁶ DSF, “Offsetting White Men’s Votes,” RNL, September 18, 1920, LOV.

⁸⁷ DSF, “Virginia Does Not Know The Price She Pays,” RNL, April 5, 1927, LOV.

⁸⁸ DSF, “After the Poll Tax,” RNL, June 21, 1949, LOV.

FREEMAN AS A UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND ADMINISTRATOR

Freeman served as Trustee and later Rector of the University of Richmond Board of Trustees from 1925 to 1950. As rector, Freeman was involved in daily decisions necessary to the operation of the institution. His oversight of institutional practices included everything from revising the institutional charter to approving orders for lab supplies, and it stands in sharp contrast to contemporary expectations of institutional Trustees.⁸⁹ Over the span of twenty-five years, he also served as keynote speaker for countless assemblies including commencements, honorary degree programs, administration and staff retirements, memorials, and university anniversaries. Among Freeman's extensive commitments to civic, non-profit, scholarly, and religious associations, his dedication to the University of Richmond was his top priority.⁹⁰ Executive Committee meetings were generally held at his home, Westbourne, or his *News Leader* office. Freeman's tenure as rector saw the university through exponential growth and debilitating eras of financial hardship. Freeman was instrumental in shepherding the university through the deprivations of the Great Depression and World War II, during which he monitored waning investments, budget losses, faculty staffing, and salaries, and academic needs that resulted from limited funding. In an effort to procure ancillary funding for the university from the Federal Government, he assisted in the establishment of military training programs on the campus.⁹¹ As University Rector, he also donated funds to assist the university at key times when they were most needed, and he provided the institution's mace, chapel reredos, altar tablet, and books for the library.⁹² During more prosperous times, he promoted the University of Richmond through his *News Leader* editorials and approved articles about university happenings in an effort to raise public



Douglas Southall Freeman, *Alumni Bulletin*, University of Richmond, July 1950

⁸⁹ For examples of Freeman's oversight in the minutia of university operations see Presidential Correspondence of Frederic W. Boatwright 1910-1946: Collection of Boatwright's correspondence with Freeman 1922-1946

⁹⁰ Johnson, 208.

⁹¹ Trustee Records, Reel: 7-121-P, VBGB, UR Trustees, Janette-Jackson, F.T. (S), Jeter Diary, yrs. 1942: February 3, 1942 and June 1, 1942; 1943: February 4, 1943 and May 24, 1943; 1944: February 3, 1944 and May 29, 1944; 1954: February 6, 1945 and June 4, 1945, VBHS.

⁹² Presidential Correspondence of Frederic W. Boatwright: Collection of Boatwright's Correspondence with Douglas Southall Freeman, letter from Boatwright to Freeman dated December 30, 1943, Boatwright Library Special Collections, University of Richmond; Executive Committee Minutes, Folder: 1941, Virginia Baptist Historical Society (reredos and tablet); Executive Committee Minutes, Folder: 1944, Virginia Baptist Historical Society (mace); Trustee Records, Reel: MF10-424 P, UR Board of Trustee Minutes, 1947-1967, Virginia Historical Society, yr. 1948 (books).

recognition and support.⁹³ From the moment Freeman became rector, he initiated aggressive development and public relations efforts, employing his noted style of networking with influential people in the state to further the growth of the university.⁹⁴ Through a review of Board of Trustees and Executive Committee minutes, it is clear that Freeman considered university public relations essential for fundraising and growth. He also oversaw the implementation of both life insurance and retirement plans for faculty and staff along with strategizing fundraising efforts such as the Million Dollar Campaign. Approved by the Board of Trustees in 1944, this campaign's goals were to raise the funds necessary to construct a "Central University Library," a "Dormitory for Westhampton College" and supplement the university's "Endowment." Freeman was appointed to the campaign committee in 1944 and President Boatwright oversaw the effort until his retirement in 1946.⁹⁵

In 1936, when local business leader Louis Powell threatened institutional fundraising efforts because of what he believed to be the radicalism of some of the faculty, Freeman stood up for the institution and academic freedom, writing that "the University of Richmond trustees would close the institution 'before they would say that teachers must pussyfoot intellectually or bury secretly the honest findings of their inquiry.'" Were the institution to be influenced by threats such as Powell's, "[b]etter no university than one that is afraid of truth... better a denial to young Richmonders of any college education than timid training by teachers who could be bullied into intellectual trimming." Former University of Richmond faculty member and historian, W. Harrison Daniel writes that the "controversy involving academic freedom represented perhaps the finest hour in the history of the university."⁹⁶

During his tenure as rector, Freeman faced leadership challenges. In March of 1946, a luncheon held in his home following a Cannon Memorial Chapel program to confer honorary degrees upon General Dwight D. Eisenhower and Admiral Chester W. Nimitz unexpectedly spawned the "mint julep controversy." Some Baptist ministers and members of the Baptist Board of Missions and Education were outraged that Freeman served alcohol to the visitors under the auspices of an institutional event. This resulted in Freeman's offer to resign from the Board of Trustees.⁹⁷ President Boatwright adeptly smoothed over the difficulties with the Baptist Board of Missions and Education by emphasizing that alcohol was served at Freeman's home, not during the assembly held at the university.⁹⁸ Three years later in 1949, another issue developed involving long-standing alumni and

⁹³ DSF, "Eleven Hundred Hopes," RNL, June 7, 1923, LOV; "U. of R. President Sees Need of More Equipment," RNL, June 5, 1923, LOV.

⁹⁴ Johnson, 209.

⁹⁵ Board of Trustees Records, 1944, Reel 7-121-P), University Archives, VBHS; Executive Committee Minutes, January 24, 1944, University Archives, VBHS.

⁹⁶ Daniel, 167.

⁹⁷ Executive Committee Minutes, Folder: 1946, doc. 91, 1, April 4, 1946, University Archives, University of Richmond, VBHS. A detailed account of the controversy is found in Johnson, 289-291.

⁹⁸ Presidential Correspondence of Frederic W. Boatwright: Collection of Boatwright's Correspondence with Douglas Southall Freeman, letter from Boatwright to Sen. M. M. Long, June 10, 1946, Boatwright

fraternity member objections to a trustee mandated fraternity housing policy. This policy, calling for the eleven fraternities at the university to build lodges on campus and employ housemothers, met with varied resistance from some fraternities already established on campus in alternate housing, fraternal organizations with off-campus residences, and fraternities which could not afford to build a lodge on campus.⁹⁹ The issue stemmed from claims that not all fraternities were represented on the Executive Committee and, thus, favoritism could be shown. To solve this dilemma, the Executive Committee asked the trustees to establish a special committee to investigate the lodging issue which was to be comprised of trustees who were fraternity alums and several non-fraternity members.¹⁰⁰ The debate led Freeman to “threaten to resign.”¹⁰¹ Freeman’s ultimate decision to resign as Rector of the Board of Trustees of the University of Richmond came in June of 1950 and stemmed from his decades-long disapproval of colleges and universities prioritizing athletics over academics, a matter of wide debate during his tenure on the board. During a special meeting of the Executive Committee and Athletic Program representatives, he refused to agree to further loans to underpin the struggling Athletic Department.¹⁰² This time, he would not entertain attempts by administrators, other trustees, or alumni who were imploring him to remain on the Board of Trustees. No evidence has been located in institutional records indicating Freeman continued to serve as an advisor to President George M. Modlin after his departure from the board. He concentrated instead on his research and writing of the sixth volume in his ultimately seven-volume biography of George Washington.¹⁰³

His personal donations to the University of Richmond include his gifts of the University mace, the Cannon chapel reredos, a scholarship in the name of his son, financial support to meet immediate institutional needs, monetary gifts to Richmond College and Westhampton College, and books donated to the university’s library. Freeman’s daughter, Mary Tyler Freeman Cheek McClenahan and her then husband Leslie Cheek established the Douglas Southall Freeman Chair in History in his honor. The Douglas Southall Freeman Lecture Series was an outgrowth of the establishment of the Chair position.¹⁰⁴ Both the Freeman Society (a midcentury debating club) and Freeman Hall were named for Douglas Southall Freeman but were not funded by Freeman or his family. Freeman Hall was dedicated in 1965, twelve years after Freeman’s death in 1953.

Library Special Collections, University of Richmond.

⁹⁹ While the debate around fraternal housing spanned the years 1938-1949, the period of highest activity was from 1945-1949. A series of emblematic examples can be found in Executive Committee Minutes, Folders 1945-1949: Nov 14, 1945; May 26, 1947; May 31, 1948; and June 10, 1949, VBHS.

¹⁰⁰ Trustees Records, 1947-1967, Reel: MF 10-424 P, June 6, 1949, VBHS.

¹⁰¹ Johnson, 336.

¹⁰² Executive Committee Minutes, Folder: 1950, June 6, 1950, VBHS.

¹⁰³ Volume seven of Freeman’s *George Washington* was written by Mary Wells Ashworth and John Carroll using Freeman’s notes (Johnson, 356).

¹⁰⁴ Daniel, *History at the University of Richmond*, 322-323.

SUMMARY CONCLUSION

Over a lifetime of achievement, influence, and unparalleled public communication, race-based determinism dictated Freeman's perspective on key issues and on his beliefs regarding the equal rights and treatment of Black people. In addition to his literary career, his work in journalism, and other well-considered parts of his biography, Freeman's convictions regarding the inherent dominance of white people is a significant part of his life and legacy. While Freeman did not think of himself as an extremist and, at times, disagreed with racial purity activists, his was a disagreement of approach rather than principle. Historical context provided by this report will enable holistic understanding of the times and environment in which Freeman lived and worked, his beliefs, and the ways in which he shaped the social and political world around him.



Freeman Hall, University of Richmond (Suzanne Slye, 2020)

THE DOUGLAS SOUTHALL FREEMAN STUDY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND INCLUSIVE HISTORY PROJECT

In Fall 2019, following the July 8, 2019 release of [Making Excellence Inclusive: University Report and Recommendations](#), and supported by the findings of the Presidential Commission for University History and Identity, the University of Richmond established a research initiative organized by Dr. Amy Howard and led by Dr. Laurant L. Lee. The Inclusive History Project was tasked with the study of three subjects: the burying ground on the campus, Robert Ryland, and Douglas Southall Freeman. The considerations of Robert Ryland and Douglas Southall Freeman were prompted by the joint resolution of the Westhampton College and Richmond College Student Government, “On Changing the Narrative: Regarding Building Names.” This report provides overall historical context for contemporary consideration of Freeman’s life and work and an examination of the ways in which he is memorialized at the institution:

1. Determining how his body of work and public and private views, including in his role as Rector and Trustee, related to race and segregation
2. Compiling a survey of his overall contributions to the University
3. Determining the scope of Freeman’s influence as a writer and editor both in Virginia and nationally

Douglas Southall Freeman (1886-1953), for whom Freeman Hall was named, was a graduate of Richmond College, a member of the Board of Trustees and University Rector. Freeman guided public opinion as a newspaper editor, radio broadcaster, historical biographer, educator and public speaker. He is most known for his Pulitzer Prize winning work on the four-volume biography of Robert E. Lee. He also earned a posthumous Pulitzer Prize for his biography on George Washington. At the height of his career, Freeman’s reach extended beyond the general public to include military leaders, business magnates and politicians. Freeman died one year before the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was handed down by the Supreme Court, but his stances on race and racial issues profoundly affected opinion, practice and policy during his lifetime and helped to lay the groundwork for Virginia’s organized resistance to integration, [known as “Massive Resistance.”](#)

The report is not intended to be a comprehensive biography of Freeman; however, aspects of his biography are included in the report as they relate to the subjects considered.

SOURCES

Two books have been published since 2000 that consider Freeman’s life at length: a biography, *Douglas Southall Freeman*, by David E. Johnson (2002) and *Sustaining Southern Identity: Douglas Southall Freeman and Memory in the Modern South*, by Keith D. Dickson (2011). Two dissertations offer overviews of Freeman’s life: *The Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman*, by John Lewis Gignilliat (University of Wisconsin, 1968) and *Keeping the Faith: Douglas Southall Freeman, 1888-1953*, by John R. Peacock, III, Louisiana State University (1990), available at https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/5086. Stuart W. Smith included an introduction to Freeman’s life in his collection of Freeman’s speeches, *Douglas Southall Freeman on Leadership* (1990).

The bulk of Douglas Southall Freeman's papers are held at the Library of Congress. This enormous collection of 70,000 items includes correspondence, day books, drafts of speeches, research files, and draft manuscripts of his published works. The finding aid is located [here](#). Other material cited in this report is located at the University of Virginia, the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, Frederic W. Boatwright Memorial Library at the University of Richmond, the library of the Virginia Historical Society at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, and the Library of Virginia.

Issues of the *Richmond News Leader* that cover Freeman's 34-year period as editor and include his editorials, which at times numbered seven per day, are on microfilm at the Library of Virginia. The *News Leader* has not yet been digitized, however, the *Freeman File*, an index to both the *News Leader* and the *Times Dispatch*, is located at Boatwright Library at the University of Richmond, the James Branch Cabell Library at Virginia Commonwealth University, and the Library of Virginia.

1.0 DOUGLAS SOUTHALL FREEMAN: AN INTRODUCTION

Douglas Southall Freeman was an American historian, biographer, author, newspaper editor, military analyst, and a radio broadcaster. He is best known for his multi-volume biographies of Robert E. Lee and George Washington for both of which he was awarded Pulitzer Prizes. Freeman became the *Richmond News Leader* Editor in 1915 at the age of twenty-nine and served as editor for 34 years (retiring in 1949). He wrote an average of five editorials a day. In addition to his forty-year career in journalism, Freeman became one of the first radio analysts, in 1925. His twice-daily radio broadcasts, "Dr. Freeman", helped make him one of the most influential men in Virginia.

He earned a national reputation among military scholars for his analyses of operations during WWI and WWII. Freeman also lectured at the United States Army War College for 7 years. Military commanders such as Admiral Nimitz and Generals Marshall, MacArthur and Eisenhower sought his friendship and advice. From 1934 to 1941, Freeman commuted weekly by air to New York City to teach journalism at Columbia University. He served on many national associations and foundation boards. For 25 years, Freeman was a Trustee for the University of Richmond much of it as rector.

Freeman's life spanned sixty-seven years of global upheaval underscored by localized cultural stagnation and racial stratification. From his birth in 1886 to his death in 1953, Freeman experienced and wrote about the challenges of post-Civil War Virginia, a catastrophic pandemic, two world wars, the Great Depression, and the dawn of the Cold War. These events also formed the backdrop for the life of this nationally acclaimed and internationally influential biographer, newspaper editor, radio broadcaster, educator, public speaker, diplomatic advisor, lay preacher, and military strategist. As a newspaper editor, Freeman developed the reputation of "explain[ing] the news" to Virginians.¹⁰⁵ He also shepherded his readers through the unfolding of daily life by celebrating their victories and examining their shortcomings in minute detail. Six days a week, in two editorial columns, and twice daily in extemporaneous news broadcasts, Freeman encouraged people to pray, to invest in education, to work hard, and to seek the joy of service. He also urged his white readers to vote when their poor turn-out threatened political setback to the establishment. He

¹⁰⁵ Margaret V. Rastetter, "Blue Ridge: Eight Months in a Tuberculosis Sanatorium," *Virginia Cavalcade* 46 (Autumn 1997), 247.

encouraged readers and listeners to bravely accept the deprivations of war and see to it that his conception of Virginia traditions was maintained. As a writer of historical biography, Freeman elevated Confederate leaders to models of character, who conveyed Virginia exceptionalism. Freeman's commitment to rigid ideals of Southern heritage and tradition combined with his convictions about racial differences, gave him a unique power over public opinion in matters of race, racism, and segregation.

1.1 EARLY EXPERIENCES

During Douglas Southall Freeman's boyhood, concepts of abiding faith and the importance of education intersected with reverence for an idealized past and prevailing Victorian middle-class morality. In the Freeman home, much emphasis was placed on the value of duty, an unwavering work ethic, honesty, frugality, upright conduct, and adherence to traditions. According to Freeman's father, Walker Burford Freeman, all of these attributes developed character, and Douglas Southall Freeman spent a lifetime committed to these definitions of "character." For the Freemans, church attendance was a given and the excellent schooling of a young Virginia gentleman was the expectation. Freeman cherished both institutions and considered joining the ministry while a Ph.D. student at Johns Hopkins University. The emphasis on character synthesized with the uniquely Virginian devotion to what Freeman referred to as "a deliberate cult of the past."¹⁰⁶ This dual commitment permeated Freeman's childhood, and these concepts became mainstays of his adult thinking as shown in the last sentences of *The South to Posterity: An Introduction to the Writing of Confederate History*:

Seventy years after, when thousands of witnesses have given their testimony, what verdict does the South ask not, surely, that the logic of secession was so completely irrefutable that honest men could not disagree over it, nor yet that war was the only solution, or a reasonable one. The price of war was misery, anguish, social revolution, the waste of the South's best blood and two generations deprivation of a rightful share of culture and of beauty. What, then, is the petition to the court of time? This: That there was historic logic in the right of secession, though rising nationalism might challenge; that the right was maintained with conviction; that the South fought its fight gallantly and, so far as war ever permits, with fairness and decency; that it endured its hardships with fortitude; that it wrought its hard recovery through uncomplaining toil, and that it gave to the nation the inspiration of personalities, humble and exalted, who met a supreme test and did not falter. If, again, on the crowded order book of time, this way too long an entry, then the South amends its petition. It asks the final tribunal to read again the testimony of Alexander Haskell, to consider Phoebe Pember in Chimborazo Hospital, to hear the death-bed witness Stonewall Jackson, to recall Robert Lee to the stand on his resignation from the Army, on Gettysburg and on Appomattox, and then to write across the record, Character is Confirmed.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Freeman quoted in Dickson, *Sustaining Southern Identity: Douglas Southall Freeman and Memory in the Modern South*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press (2011), 156.

¹⁰⁷ Douglas Southall Freeman, *The South to Posterity: An Introduction to the Writing of Confederate History*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press (1998, reprint of 1939 edition), 203-204. *South to Posterity* was Freeman's response to the growing interest in Confederate History following

Such unabashed reverence for the past was a fundamental theme of Freeman's work.

Freeman counted Walker Burford Freeman as one of the three great influences of his youth, the other two being his instructors, J. Peyton McGuire and Dr. Samuel C. Mitchell. In a letter to his father in 1905, Freeman wrote, "Your sentiments, I know, are those from which my own are derived; my views then will only be the reflection of your own."¹⁰⁸ In 1919, Freeman asked his father to write his memoirs and Walker Burford Freeman obliged by detailing his youth, family history and memories of military life in the Confederate Army.¹⁰⁹ The pride of heritage and birthright is evident in W. B. Freeman's recollections, and resonated in his son's thinking. The power of ancestry as a conduit of inheritable gifts was another theme Freeman repeatedly conveyed in his addresses, correspondence and editorials. In 1925, Freeman's thoughts on the concept of strong or weak bloodlines is evident in his editorial "The Safe Executor":

Some of us are fortunate enough to receive from our parents that greatest inheritance -- clean blood, right-thinking ancestry: some of us are unfortunate enough to have an inheritance which no matter what else it may or may not contain, is crossed all over with lust and mental dishonesty, and contains more of a liability than of asset.¹¹⁰

Freeman's belief in inheritable traits led to his view that much of one's station in life and abilities are conveyed through birthright and are, thus, bloodborne.¹¹¹ Freeman's view of the world as filtered through heritage denotes his environment, especially Virginia's devotion to memory as honor. This view sets the stage for the marriage of the God-given transfer of blood inheritance with ancestry reverence in the mind of Douglas Southall Freeman.

Freeman's childhood was steeped in the commemorative era of Virginia, the heart of which was the former seat of the Confederacy, Richmond: "As the capital of the Confederacy and of the state in which so much of the bitterest fighting had occurred, Richmond became the center for ceremonial observances of the Confederate past. It had more oratory, more reunions, and more and larger statuary than any other state in the South."¹¹² And, tellingly, the majority of the "commemorative activity, accompanied on every occasion by military panoply, occurred during the boyhood of

the publication of Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* (1936). It offered what Freeman believed to be accurate and scholarly resources for readers.

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Freeman to W.B. Freeman, March 24, 1905, in John Lewis Gignilliat, "The Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman," PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 126-127.

¹⁰⁹ For more information, see *Memoirs of Walker Burford Freeman, 1843-1935*, privately published and locally held by the University of Richmond (Rare Book Room) and the library at the Virginia Historical Society at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture.

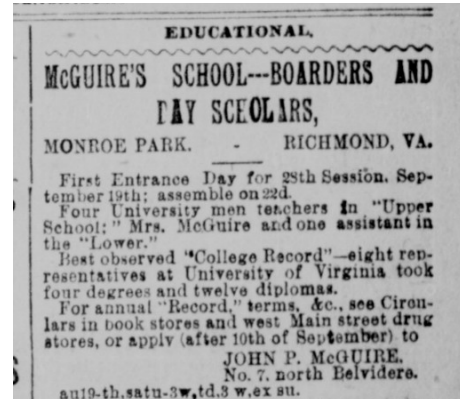
¹¹⁰ DSF, "The Safe Executor," Douglas S. Freeman Papers Articles and Speeches 1908-25 126 File: Series of Lectures 1924-25 Library of Congress AC.10,634; 10,660, 1-2.

¹¹¹ Johnson, 82, drawing on Freeman's "Something of the Freeman Family," DSF Papers, Library of Congress.

¹¹² Gignilliat, Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman, 32.

Douglas Freeman.”¹¹³ With his father, a young Douglas Southall Freeman attended veterans reunions, assembled for monument dedications, and witnessed Jefferson Davis’ reinterment in Hollywood Cemetery, following the Confederate president’s casket from the train station to the cemetery.¹¹⁴ Freeman was tutored in the minutiae of Virginia memory as he listened to accounts of Confederate glory exalting the trials of courageous soldiers and the perseverance of righteous Southerners following defeat.¹¹⁵ This influence on a young, impressionable Freeman, coupled with a familial reverence for heritage, permanently fixed his perspective on the heroes of Virginia’s Confederate past and instilled a patriotic fealty to the South akin to religion.

Freeman’s formal education deepened these associations and prepared him for a life as a writer. As a student at McGuire’s University School, Freeman would have studied “penmanship, geography, arithmetic, English, and Latin.”¹¹⁶ It was literature that drew much of Freeman’s attention, particularly the works of William Shakespeare, but the moral instruction provided by the school’s founder, John Peyton McGuire, also had a significant effect on him. McGuire focused his weekly “anecdotes with moral applications” on the life of the Confederate general, Robert E. Lee. According to Freeman’s biographer, David E. Johnson, “McGuire’s stories of Lee and the Confederacy did more than just impress Douglas; they confirmed the lessons he learned at his father’s knee.”¹¹⁷



Advertisement, "McGuire's School," September 6, 1892, [Richmond] Times, Virginia Chronicle.

Freeman began his freshman year at Richmond College in the Fall Semester of 1901, when he was just fifteen years of age. His brother, Allen, was already a student there and his brother Hamner G. Freeman had graduated from Richmond College Law School in 1893.¹¹⁸ Freeman biographer, David

¹¹³ Gignilliat, Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman, 32.

¹¹⁴ Johnson, 39; “His Eternal Sleep,” Richmond Dispatch, June 1, 1893, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#).

¹¹⁵ See Memoirs of Walker Burford Freeman, x

¹¹⁶ Johnson, 40.

¹¹⁷ Johnson, 40-41.

¹¹⁸ “Graduates In Law,” *Bulletin of Richmond College: Catalog of the Law School for 1906-1907*, UR Scholarship Repository, University of Richmond, 29. Allen Wier Freeman became a highly influential figure in the medical community. Hamner G. Freeman followed in his father’s footsteps and pursued insurance as a profession. Freeman’s other brother, Walker Burford Freeman, Jr., died while in his early twenties. Walker Freeman, Jr.’s health appears to have been tenuous for some time in the mid-1890s. In 1896, he stayed at the Edge Hill “summer home” in Montvale, VA for at least two months (*Bedford Democrat*, August 20, 1896, 3; *Bedford Democrat*, October 15, 1896, 3). After leaving Edge Hill briefly in October of 1896 to attend the wedding of his brother Hamner, Walker Freeman, Jr. was expected to return right away to the retreat where he and other visitors were drinking the healing natural spring water of Montvale because, “his health has so much improved” there (*Bedford Democrat*, October 15, 1896, 3, [link](#)). By November 26th, however, he had returned to Richmond (*Bedford Democrat*, November 26, 1896).

E. Johnson, whose work *Douglas Southall Freeman* contains the most detailed information available on Freeman's years at Richmond College, describes Freeman's attachment to a number of extracurricular activities: *The Messenger*, the college's literary magazine which Freeman led by his senior year; Phi Gamma Delta fraternity; and the Dramatic Club.¹¹⁹ Theatre was an immediate delight for Freeman and Johnson details the brief period during which Freeman considered becoming a professional actor.¹²⁰ In his sophomore year, Freeman began an intellectual association that would shape his entire professional life. University of Richmond Professor of History and Political Science, Samuel Chiles Mitchell, whom Freeman's daughter credited as "the man who above all others' would influence his intellectual development," was in charge of the nascent School of History at the college.¹²¹ In Johnson's words, Mitchell "was a devout Baptist and such an admirer of General [Robert E.] Lee that he was often overcome with emotion when he delivered an address about the general."¹²² Johnson explicitly contrasts Freeman's relatively fleeting consideration of the theatre and his ultimate decision to focus on history: "the theatre had tempted [Freeman], but sitting in S.C. Mitchell's class a new reality grew in [him]: the 'avocation of historical writing.'"¹²³ The admiration between teacher and student was mutual.¹²⁴ Freeman's academic work both as Mitchell's student and in general earned him notice and praise. In his final year as a student, President Frederic W.



[Richmond College] *Spider*, 1905, 27.

According to Douglas Southall Freeman, his brother died by suicide a year later, on December 24, 1897, when Douglas Freeman was eleven years old (Johnson, note, 104, Loc. 4997, Kindle). His death was described as an accidental overdose in the *Staunton Spectator and Vindicator* (December 30, 1897) and in his *Richmond Dispatch* obituary ("Mr. Walker Freeman's Death," December 25, 1897, [link](#)). According to David E. Johnson, Douglas Southall Freeman provided a limited account of his brother's death in the "Freeman Family" manuscript held at the Library of Congress, writing that Walker Freeman, Jr. died "under circumstances of peculiar distress" after "caus[ing] his father and mother much grief by his fondness for things which had best be avoided" (quoted in Johnson, note 104, Loc. 4997-5001, Kindle). The obituary that appeared in the *Dispatch* stated that the twenty-three year old had once again been "in the country" seeking what was hoped to be a healthful "change." He had only been back in Richmond "a few days" before dying by overdose in his parents' home on South Third Street in Richmond (*Dispatch*, December 25, 1897).

¹¹⁹ Johnson, 46, 54.

¹²⁰ Johnson, 46-47.

¹²¹ Mary Tyler Freeman Cheek McLenahan in Johnson, 49. Further information on the development of the Richmond College, later University of Richmond, Department of History can be found in W. Harrison Daniel's *History at the University of Richmond* (W. Harrison Daniel, *History at the University of Richmond*, Print Shop: University of Richmond (1991)).

¹²² Johnson, 49.

¹²³ Johnson, 49, quoting a letter from Freeman to Samuel Chiles Mitchell, December 7, 1943.

¹²⁴ Johnson, 50.

Boatwright wrote to Freeman's father describing him as "overflow[ing] with energy." Douglas Freeman, Boatwright believed, "was destined for a larger work."¹²⁵ The college president provided a very strong recommendation of Freeman's undergraduate performance and his potential for further academic achievement to the Board of University Studies at Johns Hopkins University, writing that Freeman was "one of the most capable students in the institution."¹²⁶ Freeman began studying history at Johns Hopkins in 1905 when he was nineteen years of age. He earned his Ph.D. in history in 1908 when he was twenty-two, and by 1915 was the editor of one of the most influential newspapers in Richmond and in Virginia at large, the *Richmond News Leader*. At this point, Freeman was already a published author. His book, *A Calendar of Confederate Papers*, assembled during his work for and under the direction of the Confederate Memorial Literary Society, was published in 1908.¹²⁷

1.2 INFLUENCE

During Freeman's thirty-four years as the editor of the *News Leader*, he won the respect and admiration of many. He reached a large audience within the Commonwealth of Virginia and beyond, including sitting presidents. As an author and historian, Freeman, often called "Dr. Freeman" by an admiring public, gained worldwide recognition for his unparalleled treatment of military history and its heroic leaders. T. Harry Williams describes the scale of Freeman's influence in "Freeman, Historian of the Civil War: An Appraisal":

Long before his life had ended, Douglas Southall Freeman had become a name and a legend. To him was accorded the rare honor of being accepted, while still alive, as a great historian, as the authority in his field and of having his works acclaimed as classics that would endure permanently."¹²⁸

Freeman's impact on Confederate military literature ensured that "he remains the most widely known figure in the field."¹²⁹ Few individuals have enjoyed Freeman's reputation as a respected expert in military history and trusted media personality.

¹²⁵ Johnson, 54.

¹²⁶ Johnson, 58.

¹²⁷ The Confederate Memorial Literary Society was the "parent organization" of the Museum of the Confederacy, now one part of the American Civil War Museum (J. M. Coski, "The Museum of the Confederacy," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, January 18, 2012, [link](#)). While pursuing his Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins University, Freeman worked for the CMLS on the *Calendar*, which offered him the chance to compile a published list of the manuscripts held by the organization. Its librarian, Kate Minor, wrote that it would allow Freeman to "strike a blow for honest fame as well as to help the cause of the Confederacy" (Johnson, 73, quoting letter from Kate Minor to Douglas Southall Freeman, February 19, 1907).

¹²⁸ Quoted in Gallagher's introduction to Douglas Southall Freeman, *The South to Posterity: An Introduction to the Writing of Confederate History*, Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1998., ix.

¹²⁹ Gallagher, *The South to Posterity*, x.

This sterling reputation served him well as a military strategist and diplomatic advisor. Freeman's military strategy lectures were primarily given to students of the Army War College, Naval War College, and Armed Forces Staff College, but these addresses were also attended by prominent politicians.¹³⁰ Senator Harry S. Truman, an enthusiastic Civil War buff, shared with his wife that a 1937 Freeman lecture on Robert E. Lee was "one of the greatest talks I ever heard."¹³¹ His biographies, *R.E. Lee: A Biography* and *Lee's Lieutenants*, were required reading for U.S. and British officers alike and, during World War II, Freeman corresponded with many of America's top military leaders such as Gens. Douglas A. MacArthur, George Marshall, and Dwight D. Eisenhower, the latter of whom Freeman encouraged to run for president.

In an example of his extraordinary influence, it was Douglas Southall Freeman who suggested using the term "liberation" rather than "invasion" of Europe in World War II, a critical rhetorical framing that yielded a personal letter of thanks from President Roosevelt.¹³² Both before and during the war, Freeman served on several civilian defense advisory committees for Virginia and the nation, and outlined a plan for veteran re-entry into education which ultimately became the G. I. Bill. His relatable editorial and broadcast explanations of battle developments during both world wars are well documented and served to orient an apprehensive and disheartened public as well as educate national leaders. In 1945, Freeman continued his service to the country by accompanying Assistant Secretary of War John McCloy on a global military inspection tour as an advisor which "...cemented Freeman's already close relationship with the leaders of American's military establishment. He was trusted by officers at the highest level."¹³³ His abilities as a strategist and as a persuasive communicator benefited both his nation and his career.

1.3 FREEMAN AS A POPULAR SPEAKER

In a 1905 letter to his father, Freeman wrote "I want to be a strong speaker, to carry conviction to the hearts of men in matters that concern their welfare most."¹³⁴ At this early age, Douglas Southall Freeman was determined to reach and influence people through public speaking and that ambition shaped his future career choices. Freeman's rise to national notice began with a youthful determination to tell the story of the Confederacy and to honor the two men he admired most – his father, Walker Burford Freeman, Commander-in-Chief of the United Confederate Veterans, and

¹³⁰ See Stewart W. Smith, "Douglas Southall Freeman," in Douglas Southall Freeman, *Douglas Southall Freeman on Leadership*, Stewart W. Smith, ed., Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press (1990), 3-14.

¹³¹ File Unit: Correspondence from Harry S. Truman to Bess Wallace Truman, 1921-1959. February 11, 1937 Identifier: 146227699 Collection: HST-FBP Harry S. Truman Papers Pertaining to Family, Business and Personal Affairs, 1280-1975 Series: Family Correspondence Files, 1910-1964.

¹³² Johnson, 282. Original in DSF Papers, Library of Congress.

¹³³ Johnson, 284-287

¹³⁴ Gignilliat, Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman, 27.

Confederate general, Robert E. Lee. Freeman's youthful reverence for Lee became a decades-long research and writing effort.¹³⁵

Throughout his career, Freeman received hundreds of invitations a year to speak at civic groups, professional associations and historical organizations. He willingly accepted numerous college commencement engagements – at times four per week – and rarely used notes.¹³⁶ From the early days of his career, Freeman's talent for public speaking resulted in opportunities to teach at many levels. Venturing into teaching was a natural step for Freeman given his reputation as an editor and historian, and it was an outgrowth of his championing education in his writing. For seven years he was a visiting professor of journalism at Columbia University, travelling to New York and back to Virginia each week while still maintaining his editorship of the *News Leader* and continuing his research as a historical biographer.

Closer to home, Freeman served as a member of the Board of Trustees at the University of Richmond for twenty-five years, nearly fifteen years of that period as rector, and also taught at the Richmond Extension Division of the College of William and Mary. From 1918 until his death, he led a weekly current events class attended by prominent Richmond business and political leaders which allowed him to “become their confidant as well as their promoter.”¹³⁷ As a dedicated member of Richmond's Second Baptist Church, Freeman furthered his renown as a public speaker and shared his own spiritual journey while teaching the Men's Bible Class. On several occasions, loudspeakers had to be placed in the church parking lot when Freeman drew an especially large crowd for his Sunday lectures. Examples of his lessons to the Second Baptist Church congregants examined the sin of wasting time, the need to rededicate oneself to faith when faced with hardship, methods of changing bad habits, and recognizing the blessings of thrift.¹³⁸ Freeman's dedication to faith, education and service was based firmly in formative lessons learned in childhood.

1.4 DOUGLAS SOUTHALL FREEMAN AND RACE

Set against these Lost Cause perspectives, Victorian morality and birthright inheritance were the political and social views Freeman voiced as a renowned historian and editor. In his editorial role, Freeman was called upon to guide readers through life's events, joyful and distressing, and did so with confidence. It is with this same sense of authority that Freeman handled matters of race. At the beginning of his career, he was writing and speaking amid the Jim Crow era, during the rise of the eugenics movement and the inception of Virginia's stringent racial bills. At the height of his notoriety, he was the favorite son of a Commonwealth stratified by institutionalized segregation. In Freeman's thinking, the gifts of his ancestors – his own race, his gender, his level of education, his

¹³⁵ John R. Peacock, III, “Keeping the Faith: Douglas Southall Freeman, 1886-1953, Volumes I and II, PhD diss., Louisiana State University (1990), 50, 15, 55.

¹³⁶ Johnson 212-213.

¹³⁷ Gignilliat, Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman, 474; Johnson, 142.

¹³⁸ DSF, “Parables of the City Streets,” DSF Papers, Box 126, LOC.

economic standing – presented him with all the privileges of social rank. Simply put, Douglas Southall Freeman operated within the Virginia societal standard of paternalism.¹³⁹

Freeman’s thinking on race and paternalism was fully embodied in his views on voting rights, interracial marriage and sexual relationships, educational opportunities for African Americans, and many other issues. While a proponent of educational equality, Freeman was against legal mandates for desegregation of schools; instead, he believed “established patterns of social relationships” should be allowed to change at their own pace.¹⁴⁰ As an advocate for the *status quo*, Freeman played a part in white resistance to racial equality in Virginia. Douglas Southall Freeman sought to retain separate but equal racial delineations and to maintain these divisions by assuming the consent of Black citizens.¹⁴¹

Through speeches, radio broadcasts, thirty-four years of editorials, and multiple educational and advisory roles, Douglas Southall Freeman advocated continued adherence to the *status quo*. Given his national influence as a much-lauded historian and journalist, one must ask how his views impacted those around him and continue to echo in the world today. Douglas Southall Freeman is still studied and still revered by some for his biographies of noted leaders like Lee and Washington. In *Sustaining Southern Identity: Douglas Southall Freeman and Memory in the Modern South*, Keith Dickson observes that Freeman’s “national reputation as a historian and his singular presence in the life of Virginia through most of the early twentieth century helped sustain a collective southern identity by supplying an authoritative historical narrative.”¹⁴² His reverent embrace of a particular approach to Virginia memory left little room for growth. The extent of Freeman’s influence on the public’s perception of history, traditions, and race will be examined in the following pages.

1.5 HISTORICAL CONTEXT: SECTIONAL AND RACIAL HISTORY

1.5.1 THE "LOST CAUSE" AND THE COMMEMORATIVE ERA

In 2003, the historian David W. Blight wrote, “[f]or Freeman, the Lost Cause was Virginia’s civil religion.”¹⁴³ The term “Lost Cause” describes a narrative of the Civil War built on historical inventions and distortions. Historian Caroline E. Janney describes these as “six assertions” that “present the war, from the perspective of the Confederates, in the best possible light.” A brief consideration of these assertions and their influence is key to understanding Freeman’s presentation of the past in his speeches and published works:

¹³⁹ Julian Hayter, “Confederate Monuments are About Maintaining White Supremacy,” *Washington Post*, July 27, 2017.

¹⁴⁰ Freeman Papers, Documents [US] Commission on Higher Education Commission and statement of dissent as regards racial segregation signed by Douglas S. Freeman, RG6.2.4 Box 76, VBHS.

¹⁴¹ DSF, “South Looks To Dr. Gregg,” RNL, July 15, 1925, LOV.

¹⁴² Dickson, *Sustaining Southern Identity*, xv.

¹⁴³ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War In American Memory*, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press (2003), 291.

1. *Secession, not slavery, caused the Civil War.*
2. *African Americans were "faithful slaves," loyal to their masters and the Confederate cause and unprepared for the responsibilities of freedom.*
3. *The Confederacy was defeated militarily only because of the Union's overwhelming advantages in men and resources.*
4. *Confederate soldiers were heroic and saintly.*
5. *The most heroic and saintly of all Confederates, perhaps of all Americans, was Robert E. Lee.*
6. *Southern women were loyal to the Confederate cause and sanctified by the sacrifice of their loved ones.*¹⁴⁴

In practice, the Lost Cause interpretation of the Civil War and Southern identity was woven into literature, popular culture, and a wave of historical narratives that influenced the work of Douglas Southall Freeman.¹⁴⁵ It “originated in Southern rationalizations of the war” which then “spread to the North and became a national phenomenon” eventually “substitut[ing] for the *history* of the war.”¹⁴⁶ Lost Cause thinking grew from antebellum seeds of racism and paternalism, and served postbellum white chauvinism: “foster[ing] a heroic image of secession and the war so that the Confederates would have salvaged at least their honor from the all-encompassing defeat.”¹⁴⁷ It elevated those who fought for the Confederacy to the level of “moral exemplars,” and assigned “god-like” status to those who led it.¹⁴⁸ Most importantly, these beliefs diminished or erased the realities of enslavement and communicated a message of Southern white innocence.

Antecedents of the Lost Cause united with the full force of Confederate defeat in 1865 and a Southern white commitment to controlling the telling of the war’s history. Parts of the myth’s foundation were descriptions of grateful, happy, “well-treated” enslaved people which then developed into the “faithful servant” or “faithful slave” portion of the myth, and a white preoccupation with a belief in moral superiority that turned on blood, pedigree, and Anglo-Saxon ancestry. The term itself was publicly coined in 1866 by Edward A. Pollard, editor of the *Richmond*

¹⁴⁴ Janney, Caroline E. "The Lost Cause," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Humanities, July 27, 2016.

¹⁴⁵ DSF, “Address – Memorial Exercises, May 10, 1916,” *Southern Historical Society Papers 3* (September 1916), 18. DSF, “Slavery in Virginia in 1861,” *Memorial Day Annual, 1912, The Causes and the Outbreak of the War Between the States*, Richmond: Department of Public Instruction of Virginia with the Confederate Memorial Literary Society, 31.

¹⁴⁶ Alan T. Nolan, “The Anatomy of a Myth,” in *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*, eds. Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, Bloomington: Indiana University Press (2000), 12.

¹⁴⁷ Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause*: Athens: University of Georgia Press (1990), 119; Nolan, “Anatomy,” 14.

¹⁴⁸ Nolan, “Anatomy,” 18.

Examiner. Pollard's *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates*, which was described by historian Jon Meacham as the myth's "ur-text,"¹⁴⁹ expressed the essence of Lost Cause mythology, and turned on Pollard's claim that slavery as it existed in the South was not really slavery:

[W]e may suggest a doubt here whether that odious term 'slavery,' which has been so long imposed, by the exaggeration of Northern writers, upon the judgment and sympathies of the world, is properly applied to that system of servitude in the South which was really the mildest in the world; which did not rest on acts of debasement and disenfranchisement, but elevated the African, and was in the interest of human improvement.¹⁵⁰

In Pollard's follow-up, *The Lost Cause Regained*, he framed the war in the context of white supremacy, writing, that slavery had been a "barrier" preventing a "war of races" and that the "cause of the South" would ultimately be successful if it "secured[ed] the supremacy of the white man."¹⁵¹

In November of 1866, Robert E. Lee wrote to General Jubal Early of his hope to "transmit, if possible, the truth to posterity, and do justice to our brave Soldiers."¹⁵² In 1889, Confederate President Jefferson Davis went on his "Southern Tour," traveling from city to city dedicating monuments to the Confederacy, the journey of a "triumphant" man "who had kept the faith."¹⁵³ In the decades that spanned the turn of the century, newspaper columns routinely celebrated Confederate nostalgia while the circulation of *Confederate Veteran* exceeded 20,000, "a total unchallenged by any Southern journal of its time."¹⁵⁴ Reunions and battle reenactments communicated the military memories of veterans and entwined them with Lost Cause notions of elevated morality. In 1916, Freeman delivered an address at a Confederate Memorial Day event that distilled the devotion to the Lost Cause and "heritage": "But it is not only this ideal of patriotism and duty that our dead have given us, a priceless heritage. From the spring that overflowed in the sacrifice of thousands here wells up now, please God, as then, those ideals of progress and of love that insure for us and our children and our children's children a goodly heritage."¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ Jon Meacham, "The South's Fight for White Supremacy," *New York Times*, Aug. 23, 2020.

¹⁵⁰ Edward A. Pollard, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates*, New York: E.B. Treat (1867), 49, Hathi Trust Digital Library.

¹⁵¹ Edward A. Pollard, *The Lost Cause Regained*, New York: G.W. Carlton (1868), 13-14, Hathi Trust Digital Library.

¹⁵² Pollard quoted in Gary W. Gallagher, "Shaping Public Memory of the Civil War: Robert E. Lee, Jubal A. Early, and Douglas Southall Freeman" in Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (2004), 41.

¹⁵³ John A. Simpson, "The Cult of the Lost Cause," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (Winter 1975), 352; Bruce Catton quoted in Simpson, "Cult of the Lost Cause," 253.

¹⁵⁴ Simpson, "Cult of the Lost Cause," 350.

¹⁵⁵ DSF, "Address – Memorial Exercises, May 10, 1916," *Southern Historical Society Papers 3* (September 1916), 18.

The Lost Cause diminishment of the specific details of enslavement was also woven into Freeman’s work. In *The South to Posterity: An Introduction to the Writing of Confederate History*, his guide to those inspired to read Confederate history in the wake of the popularity of Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone With the Wind* (1936) and other works, Freeman did not include slavery as a factor of secession.¹⁵⁶ According to Gary W. Gallagher, who wrote the introduction to the 1998 edition of *The South to Posterity*, “none of Freeman’s witnesses would mention a desire to protect a social system based on slavery,” but instead, Freeman found logic in secession born of state’s rights and believed Southerners “fought bravely and fairly.”¹⁵⁷ Freeman also diminished Virginia’s role in enslavement, writing in 1920 that historically “slavery was not of Virginia’s seeking,” but required by “the crown.” Freeman absolved Virginia for enslavement due to its attempts to limit slavery during the Colonial Period. In a follow up to “Judge Parker’s address at Williamsburg,” on the subject of slavery in Virginia, Freeman concurred that colonial-era Virginians did not seek out slavery and that many colonial “legislative acts, designed to discourage slavery” were “vetoed by the king in council.” Freeman continued, “Once free to exercise her own choice, Virginia in 1778 enacted that ‘no slave or slaves shall hereafter be imported into this commonwealth by sea or land, nor shall any slaves so imported be sold or bought by any person whatsoever.’ Any slave brought into the commonwealth in violation of this act was liberated. If only the will of the people of Virginia had been able to prevail from the outset, how different American history might have been!”¹⁵⁸



Alfred Eisenstaedt, [Douglas Southall Freeman], *Time*, October 18, 1948, 108, Florida Atlantic State University Digital Collections

While Freeman’s multi-volume treatments of Civil War figures and history were built on a commitment to research that became legendary, he also leaned heavily on the overall frame of the Lost Cause. “The Last Parade,” a Freeman editorial in which he detailed a reunion of elderly Confederate veterans in 1932, is often cited as an important piece of Lost Cause writing. In it, Freeman conveyed reverence for the past and for Confederate veterans with what Keith D. Dickson describes as an “elegiac tone.”¹⁵⁹ Freeman anticipated the point at which there would be no more Confederate veterans as living reminders of the Civil War:

The armies of the South will march our streets no more. It is the rear guard, engaged with death, that passes now. Who that remembers other days can face that truth and still withhold tears? The dreams of youth have faded in the twilight of the years. The deeds that shook a

¹⁵⁶ Freeman, *South to Posterity*, xxxi; Gallagher, in Freeman, *South to Posterity*, xxii-xxiii.

¹⁵⁷ Gallagher, in Freeman, *South to Posterity*, xxiii.

¹⁵⁸ DSF, “Virginia Anti-slavery Acts,” RNL, October 7, 1920, LOV.

¹⁵⁹ Dickson, *Sustaining Southern Identity*, 142.

continent belong to history. Farewell; sound taps! And then a generation new must face its battles in turn, forever heartened by that heritage.¹⁶⁰

Freeman's admiration for Robert E. Lee formed a significant part of his public persona. Writers would often note Freeman's routine of saluting the statue of the general each day as he made his way down Richmond's Monument Avenue. Images of Freeman giving the salute appeared in both *Life* and *Time* magazines.¹⁶¹ Freeman spoke of his habit in a speech given to the Army War College on February 2, 1939: "We have many monuments to that great man. One of them lies between my home and my office; and whenever I pass him, there as he sits on Traveller, erect, his rein drawn in, I feel like saluting him, because generations of Southerners are passing in review before him."¹⁶² In a salute photograph that appeared in the October 18, 1948 edition of *Time*, the image is captioned with a quote from Freeman on Lee: "I wouldn't dare presume what he was thinking."¹⁶³ Freeman had a stated aversion to psychologizing his biographical subjects,¹⁶⁴ and in the production of a work that reflected two key priorities – to provide "every known, important fact concerning General Lee" and to communicate what he believed to be the man's moral example – Freeman at times used his source material to present Lee as a figure who transcended typical human frailties. For Freeman, Lee was among "those strong men who met tests more severe than our own and kept the captaincy of their souls."¹⁶⁵ While the biography was rooted in what Keith D. Dickson describes as Freeman's attempt to be "scientifically rigorous," avoiding the creation of a "romantic yarn extolling a heroic Lee and an idyllic South," the resulting work is, in the words of historian, Alan T. Nolan, "a wholly adulatory account... setting forth every favorable fact and appealing story that could be reported and rationalizing any act that might be questioned."¹⁶⁶ In historian Gary W. Gallagher's introduction to the 1998 edition of Freeman's *The South to Posterity*, he notes that Nolan wrote "pointedly revisionist critiques of Lee as a man and soldier" while "setting up Freeman as a towering figure whose work on Lee and his army shaped everything that followed."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁰ Dickson, *Sustaining Southern Identity*, 142.

¹⁶¹ "The Virginians," *Time*, October 18, 1948, Florida Atlantic University Digital Library, [link](#); "Virginia Editor Uses Civil War to Clarify War News From Europe," *Life*, May 13, 1940, Google Books, [link](#).

¹⁶² Douglas Southall Freeman, *Douglas Southall Freeman on Leadership*, 168. Lee's horse was "Traveller," spelled in the British style with a double letter "L."

¹⁶³ "The Virginians," *Time*, October 18, 1948, Florida Atlantic University Digital Library, [link](#).

¹⁶⁴ Gene Slack, "Freeman Looks At Biography," *Agnes Scott News* [Agnes Scott College], January 31, 1940, Internet Archive, [link](#).

¹⁶⁵ Freeman's *R.E. Lee: A Biography*, quoted in John L. Gignilliat, "A Historian's Dilemma," *Journal of Southern History* 43 (May 1977), 218-219.

¹⁶⁶ Dickson, *Sustaining Southern Identity*, 112; Excerpt from Alan T. Nolan's *Lee Considered: General Robert E. Lee and Confederate History* (1991) in Gary W. Gallagher, *Lee and His Army in Confederate History*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (2001), 267.

¹⁶⁷ Gallagher in Freeman, *South to Posterity*, x.

1.5.1.1 SELECTED FREEMAN EDITORIALS REFLECTING THE LOST CAUSE IN RICHMOND AND VIRGINIA¹⁶⁸

“Richmond Assets – 1,” March 3, 1920¹⁶⁹

This editorial was the first in a daily series starting in March of 1920 which highlighted the special history, industries, geography, politics, and the more unique qualities of Richmond, Virginia. Topics in this series ranged from the capital city’s exemplary Department of Vital Statistics to its hygienic milk supply. Freeman led the series with an editorial offering the city’s history as its key asset with special emphasis on Richmond’s Confederate history. He heralded Richmond’s “historical atmosphere” and stated with pride, “Richmond’s name is printed at least a score of times in any history of the United States. Every school child must learn it. Every man who remembers anything of what was taught him in youth knows of Patrick Henry’s speech in St. John’s and knows of Richmond’s long defense in the war between the states.” In this editorial, history was listed as second only to Richmond’s heroes in importance and the greatest draw to the city: “Richmond’s history is after Richmond’s manhood, her greatest asset. It advertises the city. It brings hundreds of visitors here every year. The register of the Confederate museum which is visited by practically all intelligent tourists, shows daily the names of men and women from the four corners of America. It would be criminal to capitalize history that represents the suffering of centuries; it is equally criminal to neglect that history.”

“Not To Be Forgotten,” May 30, 1925¹⁷⁰

This editorial is an example of Lost Cause rhetoric describing the history of Confederate Memorial Day and its place in Virginia memory: “It is the day of the dead in Hollywood and Oakwood – men and boys from every Southern state who died in Richmond hospitals or were killed in action during the campaign of the Seven Days. It is the day of the Virginians slain at Gettysburg and brought back to Richmond, just fifty years ago, to sleep under the friendly coverlet of the mother state’s earth. It is the day of a state that fell, not of a government that was victorious.” Freeman saw the support for memorialization as “a good omen for the continued observation of Confederate Memorial Day, the day of all others that makes the strongest appeal to the Southern heart, the day of all others the neglect of which would bring the keenest sorrow to people of the old stock.” He closed the editorial by noting, “Natural then the unvoiced fear in the soul of Southern people that Memorial Day might lose its hold upon the people; if it forgot the day; natural the rejoicing that the new

¹⁶⁸ See also: DSF, “The Last General Officer of the Confederacy,” April 21, 1928; “The Lee’s And The Church,” April 23, 1940; “After Seventy-Five Years,” April 9, 1940; “Poincare In Poverty,” April 6, 1932; “United in the Next Civic Campaign,” October 31, 1947; “Open Your Front Door,” August 23, 1920; “Sixty Years From the Ashes” April 2, 1925; “No Confederate Gold Buried,” October 31, 1947; RNL, LOV.

¹⁶⁹ DSF, “Richmond Assets – 1,” RNL, March 3, 1920, LOV.

¹⁷⁰ DSF, “Not To Be Forgotten,” RNL, May 30, 1925, LOV.

interest of the Sons of Confederate Veterans in the feats of their fathers guarantees the observance of Memorial Day for the lifetime of this generation. Now that the American Legion fittingly has set aside May 30 to honor the memory of the gallant dead in the war with Germany, the grandchildren of the Confederacy, in a double observance will display the 'love that makes memory eternal.'”

“Dissent In Virginia,” April 1, 1925¹⁷¹

In this political editorial, Freeman called for “thoughtful political dissent” in Virginia and uses Lost Cause rhetoric to describe the years following Reconstruction: “After the domination of her government by negroes, carpet-baggers and scallawags [sic], the veterans of the war between the states buried all their differences in an effort to redeem Virginia. Insurgency was close to treason. It meant outlawry or affiliation with the party that had despoiled the commonwealth. This state of mind continued long after the threat of negro rule had passed.”

“The Best New Year’s Wish,” January 1, 1930¹⁷²

This editorial listed hopes for Virginia in the new year which spoke to Freeman’s patriarchal concept of the “Virginia Way” and include “A deeper appreciation for cultural values, a renaissance of interest in the public schools and in the history of the commonwealth” with the caveat that it strives to attain “one thing above all this. It is that Virginia shall seek to develop, but not too fast; that she will enjoy progress, but not at the price of things more precious.” Freeman warned his readers not to allow Virginia to “worship wealth” because “the qualities of spirit that were refined through all the years of trial - kindly ways, the generous outlook on life, the unselfish code of honor - will be lost to her past all recovery. She cannot serve God and mammon.”

“Dark Anniversaries,” April 7, 1932¹⁷³

In his editorial commemorating “the anniversary of the battle of Sailor's Creek,” Freeman detailed General Lee’s “anguish” in the face of inevitable surrender. Freeman noted that though “[Lee] did not flinch...yet his comrades knew what he was suffering, and they sought to ease his anguish by themselves suggesting that he order the men to lay down their arms. In all the wonderful story of what Swinton called the ‘incomparable infantry’ of the Army of

¹⁷¹ DSF, “Dissent In Virginia,” RNL, April 1, 1925, LOV.

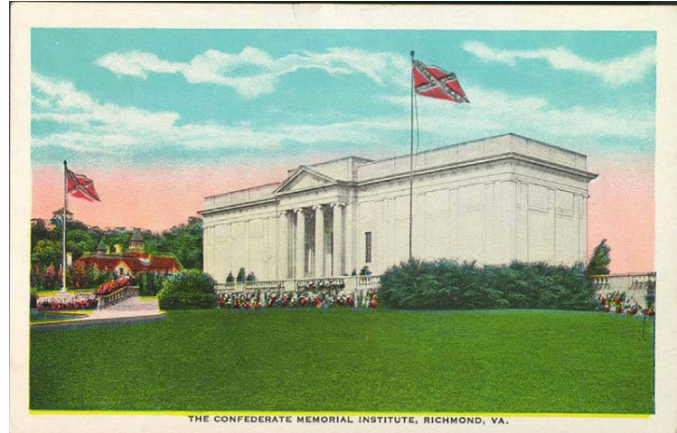
¹⁷² DSF, “The Best News Year’s Wish,” RNL, January 1, 1930, LOV.

¹⁷³ DSF, “Dark Anniversaries,” RNL, April 7, 1932, LOV.

Northern Virginia; there is no finer chapter than that which describes how those to whom Lee had ministered so long came at the end to minister to him.”

“Lee in Floodlight,” June 28, 1949¹⁷⁴

Freeman felt the flood lights were too bright and incorrectly positioned on the Robert E. Lee monument located at the intersection of Allen and Monument Avenues in Richmond, Virginia. In this editorial he gave detailed directions as to placement of lighting: “...the lights are not now so placed to bring out the softer, nobler lines of the face.” He also recommended “a trial period of a month or so” to ensure the lighting is optimally adjusted given that [e]xperiments may be in order.” He concluded by stating “Our belief is that we can have a soft and inspiring illumination of what is, all in all, one of the half dozen most magnificent bronzes in America.”



Confederate Memorial Institute, Rarely Seen Richmond, VCU Libraries

1.5.2 "JIM CROW" SEGREGATION AND RICHMOND

Following the Civil War, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and Richmond in particular, reflected the overall work of white Southerners to constrain the freedoms of newly free African Americans. City newspapers amplified white refusal to accept the electoral power that Black voters could wield, with the editor of the *Times* writing that although former enslavers would offer those they had enslaved “encouragement,” they would “not permit them to exercise the right of suffrage... They are laborers who are to be paid for their services... but vote they shall not.”¹⁷⁵ Direct and indirect disenfranchisement of Black voters was in place in Virginia throughout Freeman’s life.

In the decades after Emancipation in 1865, the rights and freedoms of Black Virginians continued to be constrained by de facto segregation, and during Douglas Southall Freeman’s childhood and early adulthood, those constraints were increasingly written into law. As was the case in much of the South, Virginia schools were segregated, a practice which, in the words of C. Vann Woodward, “took place promptly and prevailed continuously.”¹⁷⁶ Between 1900 and 1904 legislators passed laws

¹⁷⁴ DSF, “Lee in Floodlight,” RNL, June 28, 1949, LOV.

¹⁷⁵ Virginius Dabney, *Richmond: The Story of a City*, Doubleday: Garden City, NY (1976), 202; quoted in Benjamin Campbell, *Richmond’s Unhealed History*, BrandyLane Publishers (2012), 131.

¹⁷⁶ C. Vann Woodward, *Strange Career of Jim Crow* (Commemorative Edition), New York: Oxford University Press (2002), 24, Kindle.

that segregated passengers on railroads and streetcars.¹⁷⁷ In 1911, as Freeman was embarking on his career as a writer, segregation in Richmond housing had moved from being dictated by “custom” to “the most elaborate and comprehensive racial zoning code in the nation, the first major attempt to control property values using government power to separate racial groups.”¹⁷⁸

While the Reconstruction era saw gains in Black representation in elected leadership positions, “[t]he last term of the last black member of the city council ended in 1896 [when Douglas Southall Freeman was ten years old]. From then on, there were no black members until after the Second World War.”¹⁷⁹ The work of teachers in Freedman's schools in the years after the Civil War resulted in a dramatic rise in Black literacy and education.¹⁸⁰ In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, noted [African American educator and leader, Virginia Estelle Randolph](#), developed twenty-three elementary schools for African American children in Henrico County, while others in the area worked for improved access to education despite separate and sub-standard facilities.¹⁸¹ Black resistance included the streetcar boycott of 1904, which lasted over a year, and sustained anti-lynching efforts, like that led by *Richmond Planet* editor, John Mitchell, Jr. Despite the work and achievements of individuals and groups, however, the structures of white supremacy continued to stand and were solidified during Freeman’s lifetime, dictating the society that shaped him and his own influence on the culture.

2.0 BIOGRAPHICAL TIMELINE

1886 Freeman born in Lynchburg, Virginia (May 16)

1892 Freeman family moves to Richmond

1901 Freeman graduates from the McGuire University School

1904 Freeman graduates from Richmond College (18 years old)

1908 Freeman graduates from Johns Hopkins with a Ph.D. in History (22 years old)

1908 Freeman authors *A Calendar of Confederate Papers* for the Confederate Memorial Literary Society

1914 Freeman marries Inez Virginia Goddin (Feb 5th)

¹⁷⁷ Campbell, 141.

¹⁷⁸ Campbell, 142; Marie Tyler-McGraw, *At the Falls: Richmond Virginia and Its People*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 229-230; quoted in Campbell, 142; see also Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 100.

¹⁷⁹ Campbell, 137.

¹⁸⁰ Ronald E. Butchart, "Freedmen's Education in Virginia, 1861–1870." *Encyclopedia Virginia*. Virginia Humanities, February 6, 2017, [link](#).

¹⁸¹ Elvatrice Parker Belsches, “Virginia Estelle Randolph (1870-1958),” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Humanities, October 12, 2019.

1915 Freeman publishes *Lee's Dispatches*

1915 Freeman becomes editor of the *Richmond News-Leader* (held position for 34 years)

1917 Mary Tyler Freeman born

1923 Anne Ballard Freeman born

1924 Freeman publishes *Virginia - A Gentle Dominion*

1925 Freeman joins University of Richmond Board of Trustees

1925 Freeman begins twice daily radio news broadcasts, "Dr. Freeman"

1925 James Douglas Freeman born

1932 Freeman publishes *The Last Parade*

1934 Freeman is named President of the University of Richmond Board of Trustees, later called Rector of the Board of Trustees

1934-1935 Freeman publishes *R. E. Lee: A Biography*

1934-1941 Freeman serves as professor of journalism at Columbia University

1935 Freeman wins 1st Pulitzer Prize

1936 Freeman begins lecturing at the War Colleges

1939 Freeman publishes *The South to Posterity*

1940 *Life* magazine publishes article on Freeman

1942-1944 Freeman publishes *Lee's Lieutenants*

1946 Freeman and Boatwright present honorary degrees to Nimitz and Eisenhower on behalf of the University of Richmond

1948-1957 Freeman (and staff) publishes *George Washington*

1949 Freeman retires from *Richmond News-Leader* on June 25 (age 63)

1950 Freeman resigns as University of Richmond Rector of the Board of Trustees (June 5)

1953 Death of Douglas Southall Freeman (June 13)

1954 Douglas Southall Freeman High School opens

1958 Freeman is awarded posthumous Pulitzer Prize for *George Washington*

1965 Freeman Hall opens on the University of Richmond campus

3.0 NEWSPAPER CAREER

Douglas Southall Freeman served as editor of the *Richmond News Leader*, a six day a week afternoon newspaper owned by John Stewart Bryan. In 1915, at the age of 29, Freeman became responsible for the newspaper's editorial page and accompanying news section, holding daily meetings, referred to by reporters as "the great pow wow," in his office every morning.¹⁸² David E. Johnson describes Freeman as an editor who "tried to avoid extremes on both the editorial page and front page." Freeman believed that "the 'temptation' to 'run to extremes' [was] one of the most dangerous traits of newspapermen."¹⁸³ He remained at the *News Leader* for thirty-four years until his retirement in June of 1949.



Douglas Southall Freeman,
Library of Virginia, World's Fair
Exhibit Images, 1939

Over the years, Freeman developed a close relationship with the paper's publisher, John Stewart Bryan, who also served as a Trustee at University of Richmond. Bryan and Freeman usually corresponded on a daily basis, and jointly made many positional decisions, setting "editorial policy" for the newspaper together.¹⁸⁴ According to historian John L. Gignilliat, "Friendship with the publisher of the paper, John Stewart Bryan, proved crucial in the development of [Freeman's] career."¹⁸⁵ Bryan was "impressed by his talents," and his introductions to politicians and businessmen provided the young editor with opportunities to attain national stature. Freeman "acquired stock interest in the paper in 1923" and after Bryan's death in 1944, continued to work closely with his son, D. Tennant Bryan.¹⁸⁶ Freeman's biographer, David E. Johnson, notes Freeman's despair at the loss of the elder Bryan: "The two men had been business associates, Confederate compatriots, confidants and close friends for more than forty years. There was no man Freeman admired more -- outside of his father and General Lee -- and his death was a 'loss irreparable.'"¹⁸⁷

As an editor, Freeman was known for his prolific output and "eloquent" writing style.¹⁸⁸ He often employed a persuasive tone to encourage his readers to concur with his position. During three decades of writing editorials, sometimes up to seven a day, he gained national attention for his knowledge of American history, the Confederacy, military strategy, politics, and economics. He wrote on a wide array of subjects, from those only relevant to Richmonders, such as city council

¹⁸² Johnson, 237.

¹⁸³ Johnson, 235.

¹⁸⁴ Johnson, 257 regarding World War II; Johnson, 138.

¹⁸⁵ Gignilliat, Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman, 184-185.

¹⁸⁶ Gignilliat, Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman, 185.

¹⁸⁷ Johnson, 275.

¹⁸⁸ Johnson 62, 141.

elections, to items with national and international implications, such as foreign diplomacy. Freeman's editorials provide a window into one perspective on race relations in Richmond, but one that represented the thinking of many white citizens at the time. John Mitchell, Jr., the editor of the city's African American newspaper, the *Richmond Planet*, often reacted to Freeman's editorials that addressed the lives of Black people and would reply to Freeman in his own editorial pages.

Freeman's management of the newspaper was exacting. David E. Johnson writes that "the *News Leader*, and the people who worked there, moved to his tune." This inspired affection and loyalty among the writers he supervised and each "recognized they had a high standard to meet."¹⁸⁹ Along the way, he developed "The News Leader's Twenty Fundamental Rules of News Writing" for his reporters that has been often quoted as still considered valuable by some writers.¹⁹⁰ In order to find time for historical writing, and later, for teaching journalism at Columbia University, Freeman developed a stringent daily schedule that became legendary during his lifetime and remained so after his death. Freeman's work ethic was well known and often remarked upon in introductions, biographical information, and news and magazine profiles.¹⁹¹ His development of a daily schedule became a part of his mythology as a writer and public figure. In order to keep up with his extraordinary output, he was "force[d]...to keep a taxing schedule in order to find time for historical research. In effect, Freeman logged the equivalent of two workdays every twenty-four hours – the first devoted to journalism and the second to his mid-nineteenth century subjects."¹⁹² In his dedication address of Douglas Southall Freeman Hall, successive *News Leader* editor James Kilpatrick spoke of Freeman's remarkable schedule:

He would have been on the job for roughly nine hours (and this was his schedule six days a week), and it was time now for his life as a biographer and historian. So home for a pleasant lunch, a short nap, and then he launched upon his second day. In his small monastic study, surrounded by books and good music, he put together the volumes that won him acclaim as America's foremost biographer of this century.¹⁹³

Freeman's impact as the voice of one of Richmond's two primary sources of news put him in a unique position to guide public opinion on a staggering number of subjects. The impact of the stances he took on the editorial page and the hard news focus of the paper continued to affect life in the city and the state for decades.

¹⁸⁹ Johnson, 141.

¹⁹⁰ Johnson, 141.

¹⁹¹ Johnson, 223, 226.

¹⁹² Smith, *South to Posterity*, 32

¹⁹³ "'Freeman: He Was Unforgettable' Dedication Address of Douglas Southall Freeman Hall by Richmond News Leader Editor James J. Kilpatrick," [University of Richmond], *Alumni Bulletin*, (Winter 1966), 5 in Douglas Southall Freeman Biographical File, Freeman, Douglas Southall A-T File, VBHS.

4.0 FREEMAN ON RACE

4.1 FREEMAN AND JOHN MITCHELL, JR.¹⁹⁴

John Mitchell, Jr. (1863-1929) was the editor of the *Richmond Planet*, a weekly African American newspaper, from 1884 until his death in 1929. He became one of the most powerful Black voices in late 19th and early 20th century publishing. Before the Civil War, Mitchell and his parents had been enslaved by James Lyons, a secessionist and Virginia legislator.¹⁹⁵ While a student in the teacher preparatory program at Richmond Normal School, at times called Richmond Colored (High) & Normal School, Mitchell had studied Latin, French, history, and science.¹⁹⁶ After three years as a teacher, he began to work as a writer, first as a columnist for the *New York Globe*, then as editor and manager of the *Planet*. When Freeman assumed his role as *News Leader* editor in 1915, Mitchell had been working in the corresponding position at the *Planet* for more than three decades. In the fourteen years that followed, there is little evidence of the two editors sharing company outside of isolated events, but because of Mitchell's technique of reprinting Freeman's *News Leader* editorials and intercutting his own "replies" on the editorial page of the *Planet*, their orbits of influence frequently crossed there.

Even before Freeman assumed the editorship of the *News Leader* – when, by Mitchell's account, the white-owned and run newspaper was "reputed to have more colored readers than any other daily paper in Richmond" – the editorial page of the *Planet* already had a history of responding to the white newspaper and challenging its writing on race.¹⁹⁷ In 1904, for example, when Mitchell and Maggie Lena Walker were leading Black Richmonders in a boycott of segregated streetcars, the previous *News Leader* editor had responded that segregated streetcars were "one of the safeguards against the breaking down of the barrier between the races and the amalgamation and mixing, which is the worst horror Southern white people can imagine." Mitchell replied that "white men who mixed the races and gave us our crop of white Negroes didn't do it on the street cars."¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ "Freeman and John Mitchell, Jr." contributed by Shelby M. Driskill.

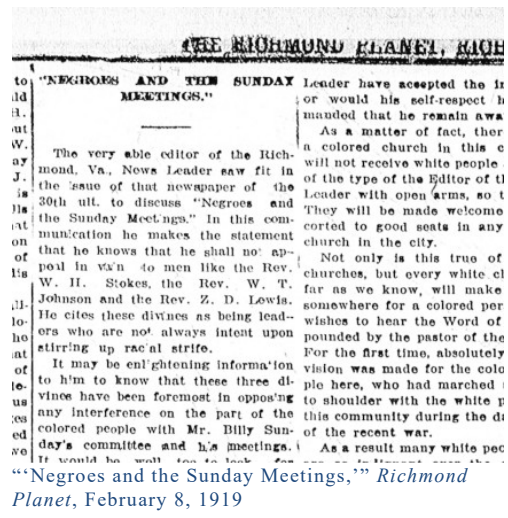
¹⁹⁵ Ann Field Alexander, *Race Man: The Rise and Fall of the Fighting Editor, John Mitchell, Jr.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, (2002), 2-3. Alexander's *Race Man* is highly recommended for more information on John Mitchell, Jr.'s life and influence.

¹⁹⁶ Alexander, *Race Man*, 13;

¹⁹⁷ "A Question of Party," *Richmond Planet*, March 18, 1911, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#).

¹⁹⁸ "Negroes and Street Cars," *News Leader* excerpted in *Richmond Planet*, April 30, 1904, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#); [John Mitchell, Jr.], *Richmond Planet*, April 23, 1904, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#); Mitchell also quoted in Alexander, *Race Man*, 139.

Following Freeman's assumption of the *News Leader* editorship in 1915, Mitchell would at times republish *News Leader* news items and Freeman's editorials in the *Planet* without comment provided they aligned with his own views. In 1918, for example, when a fifteen-year-old white child named Harry Gayle was killed by a Richmond police officer, Mitchell reprinted the editorial Freeman wrote in response to the murder unaltered and without comment. While Freeman defended the decision of the police court that the officer not be charged with manslaughter, he then pivoted and demanded that the police department and the mayor investigate and discipline officers who were "too quick on the trigger." The child's life, Freeman wrote, had been "snuffed out" for attempting to steal chickens, "a very troublesome offence, but it is not, of course, one that warrants the taking of a life under any conditions." Nothing about the alleged crime justified the use of deadly force, Freeman insisted: "We have had entirely too much free police gun-play in Richmond, and we must put an end to it."¹⁹⁹



When Freeman published editorials with which Mitchell disagreed, however, the *Planet* editor would include lengthy Freeman excerpts interspersed with his own commentary. For *Planet* readers, the result created the effect of a public "conversation" between the two men, an opportunity for Mitchell to praise, mock, and challenge Freeman, whose authority was considered unimpeachable by much of the Richmond reading public. These editorial responses to Freeman covered topics including the rise of influence of the KKK and linked organizations, African American soldiers in World War I, Black migration to the north, and segregation. In 1917, Freeman wrote on his own editorial page that segregation was a "fixed principle" that did not have anything to do with "prejudice." "Race segregation is a fixed principle in the South," Freeman wrote, "It rests not upon prejudice but on a correct understanding of our peculiar problems. Being racial, it will persist and it will triumph." In the pages of his own paper, after pasting the above excerpt from Freeman's editorial, Mitchell, in effect, "replied" to Freeman: "We cannot agree with our distinguished and able contemporary when it declares that race segregation does not have for its basic cornerstone race prejudice. We cannot agree either when he says that racial segregation will persist and triumph... Because race segregation is a fixed principle does not imply that it is a fixed right principle."²⁰⁰

In 1929, a post-surgical complication nearly killed Freeman and resulted in his being away from his editorial work for some time. Upon his return, he remarked on the many flowers sent by well-wishers, saying his office was a "bower of roses." Mitchell quoted this on his *Planet* editorial page

¹⁹⁹ "Police Gun-Play," DSF *News Leader* editorial ["Jan. 5"] reprinted in the *Richmond Planet*, January 12, 1918, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#).

²⁰⁰ DSF editorial in "The News Leader's Comment," *Richmond Planet*, November 10, 1917, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#).

on September 7th, then used the moment to express sympathy while emphasizing the realities of segregation in Richmond: “[The flowers were] a reminder that he has many friends. Colored folks cannot get to him up there very well, but he can rest assured that thousands of them have been praying for him.”²⁰¹

After John Mitchell, Jr.’s death two months later, no other figure emerged who offered any consistent and public counterpoint to Freeman’s editorial stances.

Selected "Exchanges" Between Freeman and Mitchell

“Colored Men and the Registration,” *Richmond Planet*, June 9, 1917, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#).

In an excerpted *News Leader* editorial, Freeman had written that the military registration turnout among Black Richmonders was “an inspiration” and gave “the lie to the absurd rumors [of a lack of patriotism among African Americans in Richmond] in circulation during the early days of the war.” Here, Freeman praised through the lens of racism, both those who studied to prepare for registration and those who arrived with a suitcase ready to go at the moment they did: “It was enough to bring tears to the eyes to see these Negro boys, many of them with the physique of giants but with the minds of children, waiting to march instanter to a mobilization camp.”

Despite finding the words of Freeman in the *News Leader* (and a similar editorial in the *Times Dispatch*) “gratifying,” Mitchell responded, “Is the *News Leader* aware of the fact that the edict has gone forth that colored men shall not bear arms, that they shall not be enlisted in the military service of the Southern States and that their employment in this capacity in the army and navy of the United States shall be curtailed?” Mitchell points out that, “[i]f they do not use colored men, they must use white ones” and asks if that’s what white people want, to only see white men occupying returning coffins.”

After he cited a similar item in the *Times Dispatch*, Mitchell called out a history of empty promises from the white community: “What are we to receive in the way of recognition for this loyalty? We have been promised improved housing conditions. Have we secured these conditions?... We have been told that the segregation laws recently enacted will work out to our betterment. Have we been able to observe naught else but irritation and humiliation on the part of those entrusted with its enforcement?” Mitchell also detailed the problem of no military training in Black high schools and the conditions of the streets in Black neighborhoods writing that there were no streets that can be pointed to with pride. “We have proven our fidelity to the government,” he stated. “What will the government and its officials prove to us?”²⁰²

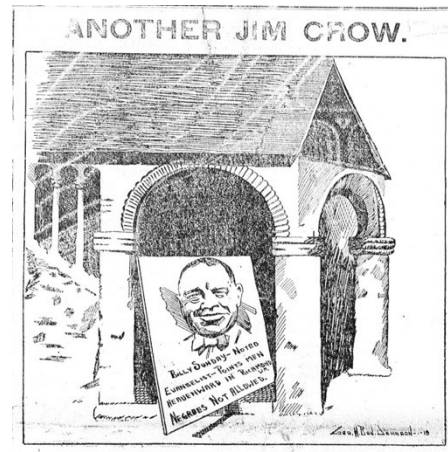
²⁰¹ [John Mitchell, Jr.], [Editorial notes], *Richmond Planet*, September 7, 1929, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#).

²⁰² “Colored Men and the Registration,” *Richmond Planet*, June 9, 1917, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#).

“Negroes and the Sunday Meetings,” *Richmond Planet*, February 8, 1919, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#); “Negroes and the Sunday Meetings,” [Freeman’s editorial excerpted from the January 30, 1919 *News Leader*], *Richmond Planet*, February 8, 1919.

Freeman weighed in on the exclusion of Black attendees at a gathering of the popular evangelist, Billy Sunday, prompting a pointed response from Mitchell. Sunday, a white minister, was known for many non-progressive stances but evidently prided himself and was known for his relatively open views on race and preaching to racially mixed congregations. In Richmond, however, Black audiences were not permitted among the thousands who came to hear him. In response to protest, Freeman wrote that in planning the event, “experience showed that the Negroes did not attend gatherings of white Christians, [therefore] it was not worthwhile to make provisions for them [in a separate section] in a building that would be crowded to the limit.” A protest against the “News Leader strictures” outside the City Auditorium was organized. Freeman responded that the history of separate churches was largely driven by choice on the part of African Americans. He traced his view of that history – citing Robert Ryland, Jeremiah Bell Jeter, and the work of the renowned Black minister, John Jasper – and wrote, “What, then, is the sudden explanation for the sudden reversal of the policy of our colored church members?” He ended the editorial with another question: “Can it be that our colored friends have wearied of their separate churches?”

In his editorial response, Mitchell castigated Freeman for listing three African American ministers opposed to the protest, but making no mention of those in favor, including the pastor of Sixth Mount Zion, a congregation once presided over by [John Jasper](#), most widely known for his sermon “[The Sun Do Move.](#)” By raising the famous minister’s name Mitchell appeared to be obliquely criticizing Freeman for mentioning John Jasper in in the context of his advocacy for exclusion and separate worship.²⁰³ Mitchell also pointed out that one of the ministers listed by Freeman had actually spoken out about the exclusion “from his pulpit last Sunday morning.” In an effort to contextualize the outrage that stemmed from a lack of seats for African American attendees, Mitchell then invented a mirror-opposite scenario in which Freeman was planning to attend a speech given by John D. Rockefeller “at the True Reformers Hall and the invitation had been set forth for the public to come,” and Freeman and other white men found themselves blocked at the door because, “no white folks would be admitted.” Mitchell ended his rebuke of Freeman by writing, “We regret that they cannot



Geo. H. Ben. Johnson, Illustration in the *Richmond Planet*, January 25, 1919, Virginia Chronicle.

²⁰³ For more information on John Jasper, see “John Jasper,” in *Virginia Changemakers*, Library of Virginia, [link](#).

hear Mr. Billy Sunday. Some time and somehow, when he comes here again under colored folks' auspices, our colored folks' committee of arrangements will provide some of the best seats for the white people, who overlooked them and who seemed to have forgotten that colored folks, too, were included in God's plan for the redemption of the world.”²⁰⁴

[John Mitchell, Jr.], “The Hegira Northward,” *Richmond Planet*, April 21, 1923, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#).

In 1923, Mitchell responded to a Freeman editorial on the migration of Black people out of the South and, Freeman wrote, “to the Northland, where wages are higher and conditions surrounding them are presumed to be better.” Although Mitchell believed that the South was the “natural home” of Black people, he quoted liberally from Freeman’s editorial and addressed both the reasons and the consequences of the departures: “The able editor of this influential journal [Freeman of the *News Leader*] discusses the migration and the remedy but does not speak specifically as to the cause.” Mitchell noted “two classes of white people here in the dealings with the Negro,” one working in interracial efforts to improve some conditions for Black people and the other persecuting them:

In recent years there has been a systematic attack made on the better class of Negroes...[t]he result has been that this class is asking itself the questions, “What does it profit a man to build up a competency and to earn a respectable livelihood and then have certain elements of the white race come and take it all away, while our white friends simply express their disgust and abhorrence of the happenings and then “pass by on the other side.”

Mitchell noted that Freeman did “praise these people and were [the *News Leader*’s] advice followed, conditions would be improved. But it contents itself with advice and ends there, while the conditions of which we complain grow steadily worse. This situation causes thinking colored people to migrate.”²⁰⁵

4.2 FREEMAN AND RACE IN VIRGINIA

4.2.1 “RACIAL INTEGRITY” AND WHITE SUPREMACY

Freeman’s belief in the superiority of the white race was the wellspring of his stances on white supremacy and racial inequality issues such as segregation, voting rights, and education. Freeman viewed laws against racial mixing to be essential when used in conjunction with “the maintenance

²⁰⁴ “Negroes and the Sunday Meetings,” *Richmond Planet*, February 8, 1919, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#); “Negroes and the Sunday Meetings,” [Freeman’s editorial excerpted from the January 30, 1919 *News Leader*], *Richmond Planet*, February 8, 1919.

²⁰⁵ [John Mitchell, Jr.], “The Hegira Northward,” *Richmond Planet*, April 21, 1923, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#). For more information on this period of migration, see Ed Ayers, *Southern Journey: The Migrations of the American South, 1790-2020*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2020, and the companion site, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/southernjourney/> by Edward L. Ayers, Justin Madron, and Nathaniel Ayers (2020), Digital Scholarship Lab, University of Richmond.

of social standards and on its morality” to maintain racial purity.²⁰⁶ Smith discusses Freeman’s stance on white supremacy when he writes, “Although Freeman and his contemporaries acknowledged and even acted on their paternalistic responsibility to improve the lives of black Virginians, they never freed themselves from a belief in the inherent inferiority of African Americans.”²⁰⁷ As the structures of racial separation were developed in the 1920s, Freeman’s aversion to racial intermarriage and sexual relationships that he described as resulting in “pollutions of blood,” and his long-standing beliefs about the benefits of racial purity led to his association with and support for key figures in Virginia’s eugenics movement and the rising Anglo-Saxon identity movement.²⁰⁸ This occurred in the same era that Virginia’s “Racial Integrity Laws” were imposed which offered a “strict definition of whiteness” and argued that “sexual regulation, economic growth and progressive visions of the state all went hand in hand, because eugenics connected sexual regulation to a progressive agenda and underscored the danger of unrestrained sexuality.”²⁰⁹ The laws, which “protect[ed] ‘whiteness’ against what many Virginians perceived to be the negative effects of race-mixing,” were instituted between 1924 and 1930.²¹⁰

Like many socially prominent white Virginians in the early 20th century, Freeman held himself above the actions of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) while at times still approving of the structures of white supremacy at the core of the organization. In August of 1919, after both the *News Leader* and the Associated Press investigated a group that the AP described as “an organization fashioned after the Ku Klux Klan” Freeman dismissed the concerns coming from Richmond’s African American community, writing that the organization was a “fraternal” one and “does not represent the slightest threat to any law abiding Negro or to any other citizen.” Freeman continued that the *News Leader* “should certainly call on the corporation commission” to revoke the group’s charter if the organization ever did present a threat, but, “[w]e regard such a contingency...as remote in the extreme, because the membership of the order as anyone can ascertain is made up of men whom every reputable citizen would be willing to trust.”²¹¹ John Mitchell, Jr. of the *Richmond Planet* used Associated Press findings to challenge Freeman writing, “The Associated Press is saying one thing and the News Leader is saying another. Which is right?”²¹²

In 1920, when a suspicious organization called the American Civic Association was in the news Freeman addressed the group’s apparent ties to the KKK when he worked to have their permit for

²⁰⁶ DSF, “The Price of Pollution,” RNL, June 5, 1923, LOV.

²⁰⁷ Smith, *Managing White Supremacy*, 37.

²⁰⁸ DSF, “The Price of Pollution,” RNL, June 5, 1923, LOV.

²⁰⁹ Holloway, *Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in Virginia*, 21, 50.

²¹⁰ Brenden Wolfe, “Racial Integrity Laws (1924–1930),” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Humanities, November 4, 2015, [link](#).

²¹¹ DSF, “No Washington-Chicago Man Hunts,” July 29, 1919, LOV.

²¹² [John Mitchell, Jr.], “The Situation Here,” including excerpts from DSF editorial (“July 29, 1919”), August 2, 1919, *Virginia Chronicle*, [link](#).

assembly denied.²¹³ In a private letter to John Stewart Bryan, Freeman wrote “I thank God that we had a chance, apparently, to smash an organization that stinks to high heaven.”²¹⁴ Five months later, however, in an apology for an advertisement for the KKK that appeared in the *News Leader*, Freeman nevertheless asserted that, in regards to the "principles" of the Klan, "The News Leader may be in full sympathy with them" even as he voiced his aversion to the organization's "associations" with "mystery" and "terrorization."²¹⁵

Two years after the Klan advertisement, Freeman was considering another group committed to "racial integrity," the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America. He discussed the organization's principles and strategies in the editorial “The Price of Pollution”. He noted that “[t]he clubs insist on proper laws against miscegenation and seek to insure the registration by race of all persons now living” in an effort to maintain “racial purity, racial integrity and lofty racial ideals.” Freeman felt the clubs would need to convince and enlist white people rather than relying on legislation to reach their goals because “laws can be evaded sometimes or defied.” Freeman's prevailing concern was the inherent vulnerability of Anglo-Saxon power given that it both "spread itself throughout the world" but allowed itself to be diluted through intermarriage.²¹⁶



Richmond Times-Dispatch,
February 10, 1920

Freeman's views were not as extreme as those held by Virginia white supremacy activists such as John Powell, Earnest Cox and Walter Plecker, founders of the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America. In John Powell's own words included in Brenden Wolfe's "Racial Integrity Laws (1924-1930)," the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America (ASCOA) "was dedicated to finding the 'fundamental and final solutions of our racial problems in general, most especially of the Negro problem.' Race-mixing was a priority concern for these men."²¹⁷ The ASCOA organized in 1922 with Post 1 in Richmond boasting four hundred members by 1923 and grew to include a number of posts "all dedicated to 'the preservation and maintenance of Anglo-Saxon ideals and civilization.'" J. Douglas Smith writes that, "[f]or the rest of the decade, John Powell and his supporters dominated racial discourse in the Old Dominion, successfully challenged the legislature to redefine blacks, white, and Indians, used the power of a state agency to enforce the law with impunity and without mercy, and fundamentally altered the lives of hundreds of mixed race Virginians."²¹⁸ A chapter of the Anglo-

²¹³ DSF, "Is This The Ku Klux Klan?" RNL, June 30, 1921, LOV.

²¹⁴ Johnson, 138.

²¹⁵ DSF, "Much Is In A Name," RNL, November 16, 1920, LOV; also republished in *Richmond Planet*, "Much Is In A Name" November 27, 1920, Virginia Chronicle, [link](#). The *Richmond Planet* response, "The Ku Klux Klan" appears to the right of the reprinted *News Leader* item.

²¹⁶ DSF, "Price of Pollution," RNL, June 5, 1923.

²¹⁷ Wolfe, Racial Integrity Laws (1924-1930), *Encyclopedia Virginia*.

²¹⁸ J. Douglas Smith, *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics, and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (2002), 76.

Saxon Club was formed at the University of Richmond in 1923.²¹⁹ The chapter was Post Number 5 of the organization and its activities began with a series of campus addresses by John Powell.²²⁰

[The Racial Integrity Laws of 1924–1930](#), designed to protect what their advocates saw as the integrity of the white race, dominated Virginia political debate and were ultimately added to the state constitution. An example of Freeman’s modulation appeared in the 1926 editorial “Not The Virginia Way.” In it, Freeman carved out an exception for what he termed “foreign students” meaning those from Asia. He argued that these students should not be categorized as “non-white” or “colored” as this label would harm college attendance and foreign religious missions. His objections echoed “[a] key element of white criticism of the Public Assemblages Act” and the *Richmond News Leader* “expressed concern that news would travel abroad that Virginians discriminated against Asians.”²²¹ For Freeman, “separate but equal” segregation applied to Black people, not to students from Asia.²²²

As he had written in the “Price of Pollution,” and in “Not the Virginia Way,” Freeman questioned the advantages of racial legislation. He wrote, “Virginia has her racial sore spots that call for treatment - - careful, intelligent and in some instances drastic treatment -- but on the whole she has attained very satisfactory results by avoiding needless racial law-making, and by applying her own methods of adjustment in her own way... Public sentiment can be trusted now, as always, to find the best “Virginia Way.”²²³

Freeman had an aversion to what he saw as radical responses to many issues, so while he did not equivocate in his stances, he would often urge moderation in the application of such stances. In the 1926 editorial “The Racial Bills”, he called for a two-year delay in the enactment of pending racial laws to prevent a “hurried” process because he believed “all Virginians are so completely of one mind on this point” that they could engage in “frank discussions of the best means of having the white and the colored people live harmoniously, but separately.” Despite his seeming reticence to dictate, Freeman did not hesitate to share his recommendations. In his opinion, laws against intermarriage were a “necessity,” therefore Jim Crow segregation on streetcars and railways were essential to prevent what he saw as racial “friction.”²²⁴ By March 2nd of that same year, Freeman reversed his call for delayed voting on the racial integrity bill of 1926 and recognized its “value”

²¹⁹ “Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America [booklet],” Papers of John Powell, 38:6, File: 1923 Articles/Printed Material – Eugenics, MSS 7284, 7284-a, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library.

²²⁰ “John Powell Helps to Form Anglo-Saxon Club,” *The Collegian* [University of Richmond], February 16, 1923, [link](#).

²²¹ Holloway, *Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in Virginia*, 41.

²²² DSF, “Not the Virginia Way, RNL, February 9, 1926, LOV.

²²³ RNL Not The Virginia Way February 9, 1926, LOV.

²²⁴ DSF, “The Racial Bills,” RNL, February 8, 1926, LOV.

after an exception was added to protect prominent Virginia families claiming white and indigenous ancestors.²²⁵

4.2.2 SELECTED EDITORIALS ON RACE

“No Mentality, Alas!,” April 4, 1932, and “Unjust to Mrs. Everett,” April 6, 1932

After a British artist [Edith Margaret] Leeson Everett visited Richmond, she spoke before the members of the London-based Twickenham Literary Society. Word reached Freeman that she had insulted the intelligence of Virginians, saying that they had “no mentality.” Freeman believed that she was referring to the intelligence of *all* Virginians and he made it the subject of an editorial. He first rebuked her for maligning the state and what he insisted were its many fine writers and thinkers. He listed pianist and founder of the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America, John Powell, on par with writers Ellen Glasgow and James Branch Cabell, President Woodrow Wilson, and Major Walter Reed in “No Mentality, Alas!”²²⁶ In a follow-up editorial, “Unjust to Mrs. Everett,” Freeman offered an apology for his April 4th words on the subject after having received a “cablegram” from Mrs. Everett in which she explained that, in the report of her comments, those referred to as Virginia “natives” meant, in Freeman’s word, “Negroes” not white people. Freeman accepted her apology and stated, “But we should have guessed her meaning. As she intends to return to Virginia to resume her portrait painting, we do not wish her to be handicapped by the resentments of a proud people who might be prejudiced against her by a misunderstanding of what she said, and we hasten to set her right.”²²⁷

“Greater Expectations,” June 8, 1923

In this 1923 editorial, Freeman applauded the impact of preventive health care on life expectancy and suggested the “colored man” had benefited the most from “preventive medicine.”

Excerpt:

“Even more striking is the lengthening of the negro's expectation of life by seven years during the period from 1900 to 1920. Because his sanitary condition was worst, the colored man has been the greatest beneficiary of preventive medicine.”²²⁸

²²⁵ DSF, “The Bill ‘As Is’ and ‘As Was,’” RNL, March 2, 1926, LOV. This clause was commonly known as the “Pocahontas Exception.”

²²⁶ See the following editorials regarding Freeman’s valuing of John Powell’s musical talent as a composer and pianist and his contributions to music for the city of Richmond during and after the efforts of the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America to ensure “racial integrity”: DSF, “John Powell’s Concert” April 23, 1928; “The Effort is Worth While,” May 31, 1923; “No ‘Mentality,’ Alas!” April 4, 1932, RNL, LOV.

²²⁷ DSF, “No Mentality, Alas!,” RNL, April 4, 1932, LOV and DSF, “Unjust to Mrs. Everett,” RNL, April 6, 1932, LOV.

²²⁸ DSF, “Greater Expectations,” RNL, June 8, 1923, LOV.

“Warning to Colored Migrants,” June 4, 1923

Freeman included an article from *The Richmond Voice* (“a very alert weekly paper printed by the colored people”) on the topic of racial economic migration and agreed with the *Voice*’s assessment that Black workers considering leaving Virginia for better employment opportunities were not the most skilled. In Freeman’s opinion, “Most of the Negroes who are being induced to go North -- chiefly to the Pennsylvania steel towns -- are not the ablest or the most sophisticated of their race. With some exceptions, they are those who are easily deceived, those incapable of caring for themselves if they are ‘sweated’ or mistreated. Many of them will be victimized, overworked and dismissed the instant there is a let up in the work at the plants now making alluring offers.”²²⁹

Excerpts:

“Bad as are the conditions some of these negroes are leaving, they are better than those some of the newcomers must face in the North. They will find no allowances made for them and their new homes. Everything will be ‘strictly business’ even among their own race, Dr. W.E.B. Dubois admits, in effect, they will be regarded as an embarrassment and will not be welcomed.”

“This much said, *The News Leader* must add that warning. Extortion [sic] from their own leaders and the certainty of hardship in their new homes will not stop the migration of many colored workers sorely needed in the cotton states and in the industry of Southern towns. Better living conditions, freedom from fear, fair wages, absolute justice under the laws of the Southern states -- these things are necessary if the migration is to be halted.”

“Fair Play In Hard Times,” December 8, 1931

Freeman wrote an editorial regarding racial “fair play” for job opportunities during the economic hardship of the Great Depression. Freeman was for “fair play: “Hard times beget hard feelings between races at the same time that they arouse new sympathies among friends. When jobs are few, the tendency is to discriminate in allotting them. The result may be that an entire race will be forced down to the very border-line of want.”

Excerpt:

“Justice, good understanding, frankness, self-help and intelligent relief must all be invoked to avert this calamity from America. For if any race or class is forced to subsist at a lower level than that of the general community, a belief is apt to be fixed that this level is good enough for it, ‘They don’t know any better: they’re used to it,’ men thoughtlessly say when they are asked how the very poor contrive to live.”²³⁰

²²⁹ DSF, “Warning to Colored Migrants,” RNL, June 4, 1923, LOV.

²³⁰ DSF, “Fair Play In Hard Times,” RNL, December 8, 1931, LOV.

“The Negro’s Chance” January 6, 1937²³¹

Freeman sought economic opportunity, vocational training, and better educational facilities for Black people. This editorial provided insight into his opinions and recommendations on these subjects.

Excerpts:

“Reflection, we think, would have shown them that the passage of this measure would have been another step in the cruel economic process that is closed many legitimate vocations to Negroes.”

“We need not trace again the stages by which, paradoxically, freedom for the Negro actually has reduced his vocational opportunities in many Southern communities.”

“Comparatively, more Negroes followed trades, we suspect, in 1866 than in 1936. The plantation economy was in many respects indefensible, of course, but if a master sought to train a servant and then to have him work as a blacksmith or a wheelwright or mechanic, no man could say him nay. This did not justify slavery, but it does discredit the attitude of many Southerners toward the Negro worker since emancipation.”

“A few Negroes hold their own in the trades. The clerical class slowly will increase, perhaps, but at low wages. All other Negroes are expected to remain common laborers, with no certainty of regular employment, to get the hardest, most unpleasant, least-remunerative work in the tobacco factories, to become chauffeurs and deliverymen or else to be domestics.”

“How can we deny the Negro Economic Opportunity and yet expect good citizenship of him?”

“...we would like to ask the City School Board to extend the imperfect studies heretofore made of educational opportunities for Negroes. We should press the Rosenwald Fund and the State Board of Education to help with a task that must be performed.”

“All the prejudices and all the sloth of man do not blunt the sharp truth that social order depends, in the end, on economic justice.”²³²

²³¹ See other editorials on economic justice: DSF, “Unionizing The South,” RNL, January 7, 1930, LOV; DSF, “F.E.P.C. In Philadelphia,” RNL, August 4, 1944, LOV.

²³² DSF, “The Negro’s Chance,” RNL, January 6, 1937, LOV.

4.2.3 SEGREGATION

In Freeman's paternalistic view, stability and good will between the races rested on a transactional relationship, one that demanded Virginia African Americans play their role as “the best Negroes in America” in exchange for continued white provision of services and infrastructure as their “civic duty.”²³³ Freeman often appealed to his readers for donations to build playgrounds for African American children, maintain homes for displaced Black women, and to provide the means to halt tuberculosis outbreaks in the African American community.²³⁴ In an early 20th century address to a largely Black audience, Freeman admonished them to do a better job in seeking out health information and noted the racial disparities in rates of tuberculosis and other diseases. In a rare show of public African American resistance to Freeman’s authority, [activist Thomas C. Walker](#) stood up and challenged Freeman's shaming of the audience by sharing his own treatment at the hands of a dismissive public health worker at the Board of Health office. Walker recalled saying to Freeman, “[W]hen Negro mortality went down it would be because the manners of white health workers has gone up.”²³⁵

Freeman believed in an ideal of achieving a harmonious residential racial separation in Richmond without legislation, drawing on his paternalistic conviction that he fully understood the needs of both communities. “The Negro loves companionship, and can never be at ease when living close to people who resent his presence in their neighborhood.” He provided a plan for implementation of what he referred to as ‘separation by consent’ in a 1930 editorial of the same name. He detailed a transaction of sorts between the African American community and the white community. In exchange for basic services and some limited access to residential opportunities, African Americans would agree to remain in designated neighborhoods.²³⁶

On the topic of segregation, Freeman also promoted separate but equal educational systems and facilities for Black students. In editorials he wrote between 1936 and 1942, Freeman challenged his readers to face the fact that the separate schools were far from “equal” – in fact calling them such was a “legal fiction” – and unless they prioritized funding for adequate school facilities for African American students, his white readers must prepare themselves for court cases demanding the enrollment of Black students in white schools.²³⁷ Freeman urged his readers to “remind the council

²³³ DSF, “For Better Negro Schools,” RNL, March 3, 1924; “Richmond’s Dividends On Justice,” RNL June 22, 1920.

²³⁴ DSF, “Will You Help These Playgrounds?” RNL, June 2, 1923, LOV; DSF, “For the Colored Girls Home,” RNL, June 28, 1920, LOV; DSF, “Help Them,” RNL, March 27, 1915, LOV.

²³⁵ Thomas C. Walker quoted Clayton McLure Brooks, *The Uplift Generation: Cooperation across the Color Line in Early Twentieth-Century Virginia*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press (2017) 76-77. According to David E. Johnson, as part of Freeman’s “largely voluntary” work with the Virginia Anti-Tuberculosis Association, he would “deliver speeches” for the organization (Johnson, 90).

²³⁶ DSF, “Separation By Consent,” RNL, May 20, 1930, LOV.

²³⁷ DSF, “‘Equal’ School Facilities,” RNL, September 25, 1942, LOV; DSF, “The City Must Choose,” RNL, June 25, 1936, LOV.

that if Richmond permits the matter to drag along indefinitely, she may expect the Negroes to go into court. They will demand before a federal judge that Negro children be admitted to John Marshall and to Thomas Jefferson, or else that the city provide equal facilities within the just meaning of the words.”²³⁸ He also described such investment in schools as a way to prevent the cost of jail construction in the future.²³⁹

A 1925 scandal involving a multiracial audience at a Hampton Institute event ultimately led to the General Assembly passing the Public Assemblages Act of 1926. In response to the controversy, Freeman wrote “[T]o preserve the sympathy and loyalty of Southern whites, the Hampton school must avoid every semblance of the practice of racial equality” which “unsettles the negro’s point of view and...moves the white race’s deepest emotions.”²⁴⁰ In the related minutes of the *News Leader* Current Events Class, Freeman shared his belief that unless the Hampton Institute complied with strict segregation, the loss of white goodwill would erode support for the institution.²⁴¹

In 1944, while the Rector of the University of Richmond, Freeman actively supported President F. W. Boatwright’s handling of student complaints regarding the exclusion of an African American visiting speaker, Russell Jones, from the dining hall. Freeman wrote to Boatwright that administrators were in a challenging situation, “an instance of damned if we do and damned if we don’t.”²⁴² The university’s official response was conveyed in an open letter from Boatwright to students reminding them that Jones’ treatment was “according to well established custom in this region.”²⁴³

In response to President’s Franklin Roosevelt’s 1947 committee on civil rights, Freeman referred to the committee’s work as a “crusade” of “neo-abolitionists.” Freeman termed the report “unrealistic in application” and “meaningless, because it deals with questions which, fundamentally, are beyond the reach of law.” He contended that the recommendations of the committee should instead be left to the “slow and unpredictable operation of time.”²⁴⁴ During the Harry S. Truman administration, the Commission of Higher Education issued a report advocating policy reform to allow for integration. Freeman was one of four to sign a letter of dissent. The signatories recognized the “gross inequality

²³⁸ DSF, “The City Must Choose” June 25, 1936.

²³⁹ DSF, “‘Equal’ School Facilities,” September 25, 1942.

²⁴⁰ DSF, “The South Looks to Dr. Gregg,” RNL, July 15, 1925, LOV.

²⁴¹ Smith, *Managing White Supremacy*, 119.

²⁴² DSF, “Dear President Boatwright,” March 18, 1944, Boatwright Memorial Library, Presidential Correspondence of Frederic W. Boatwright, 1910-1946. <http://dlxs.richmond.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?id=S-FWB-X-0005152%5DFWB6043.1944.034.001.JP2>

²⁴³ Frederik W. Boatwright, “An Open Letter to the Student Body,” [University of Richmond] *The Collegian*, April 14, 1944, [link](#); also compiled by Race & Racism at the University of Richmond, [link](#).

²⁴⁴ DSF, “The Report on Civil Rights,” RNL, October 30, 1947, LOV.

of opportunity, economic and educational,” for Black students and agreed that “conditions should be improved, inequalities removed, and greater opportunity provided for all our people.” However, Freeman and his co-signers argued that the work of the commission would actually delay improvement – a common argument in the South: “We believe that pronouncements such as those of the commission on the question of segregation jeopardize these efforts, impede progress, and threaten tragedy to the people of the South, both white and Negro.” The recommendations, they insisted, “[ignore] the facts of history and the realities of the present.”²⁴⁵

Seventeen years earlier, in 1930, Freeman distilled his paternalistic approach to race relations in the editorial, “Separation by Consent” in which he wrote,

[I]f separation by consent is to be a reality, it must provide at least these three things: First, the city must supply the Negro districts with as good streets as the average white neighborhoods of the same relative valuation have, and the city must give to homes on these streets the same service in street-cleaning, waste removal and the like that the rest of the city enjoys...Secondly, there must be some outlet into better homes for those Negroes who have the means and the ambition to rise above the crowded squalor of dilapidated shacks in old Jackson ward. This outlet is to be found either through the transfer to Negroes of neighborhoods from which whites move, or through the opening of new districts for Negro home-owners...Finally, separation by consent depends for its smooth operation on the establishment of some unofficial agency that will handle amicably the situations that arise when the white people begin to leave a street and Negroes move in.”²⁴⁶

This editorial clearly detailed Freeman’s proposed necessary steps to garner a successful racial transaction in Richmond.

4.2.4 EUGENICS

The concept of “clean blood” was at the core of Freeman’s views on race. As previously discussed, in a 1925 address to the Second Baptist Church Men’s Bible Class entitled “The Safe Executor,” Freeman stated, “Some of us are fortunate enough to receive from our parents that greatest inheritance -- clean blood, right-thinking ancestry: some of us are unfortunate enough to have an inheritance which no matter what else it may or may not contain, is crossed all over with lust and mental dishonesty, and contains more of a liability than of asset.”²⁴⁷ This elitist thinking led him to

²⁴⁵ RG6.2.4 Box 76 Folder Title: Documents [US] Commission on Higher Education and statement of dissent as regards racial segregation signed by Douglas S. Freeman Commission Dissent undated, VBHS.

²⁴⁶ DSF, “Separation By Consent,” RNL, May 20, 1930, LOV. Freeman’s characterization of the “Old Jackson Ward” neighborhood as “dilapidated shacks” must be viewed in the context of the neighborhood’s history as a vibrant center of Black art, economic innovation, and cultural importance. See Bowen, Dawn S. “The Transformation of Richmond’s Historic African American Commercial Corridor,” *Southeastern Geographer* 43, no. 2 (2003): 260-78. Accessed January 21, 2021, [link](#). For information on the “redlining” of Richmond’s neighborhoods, see the University of Richmond Digital Engagement Team’s *Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America*, [link](#).

²⁴⁷ DSF, “The Safe Executor,” Men’s Bible Class lecture, February 22, 1925, DSF Papers, 1-2, Box 126,

concur with many of the racial principles of white supremacy and the burgeoning eugenics movement as evidenced by his editorials on the subject and the *Richmond News Leader's* promotion of eugenics under his leadership.²⁴⁸

Internationally, the eugenics movement was led by a group of scientists and writers who targeted people of color and, as quoted by Douglas Southall Freeman in an editorial on eugenics, “low grade white stocks.”²⁴⁹ The movement sought to control birth rates in populations deemed deficient and rested on scientific language that emphasized racial differences and racial superiority. Contemporary awareness of this movement in Virginia is largely centered on involuntary sterilization and the [Supreme Court case of Carrie Buck in 1927](#). While Freeman’s period of influence on the subject preceded this case, his writing primed the public for an acceptance of eugenics’ principles. Extensive searches of Freeman’s editorials in the months before and after *Buck v. Bell* have not yielded any of his editorial opinions on the trial. Like other newspaper editors in Virginia, Freeman provided publicly disseminated content which promoted eugenic arguments. His editorials included his opinions on “feeble-mindedness” and focused on the reproduction rates of the lower classes as a threat to Virginia’s economy.²⁵⁰ According to historian Pippa Holloway in *Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in Virginia 1920-1945*, many elite Virginians believed that “[l]ower-class whites might undermine the social order, damage the economy by reproducing inferior genes, and undermine the white race by giving birth to mixed race offspring.” Holloway continues, “White elites, the governing class whose wisdom brought them to support eugenics, would protect the state. Thus, eugenics in Virginia reaffirmed the rights of certain white men to rule other whites.”²⁵¹ Freeman’s editorials on the subject of eugenics molded and amplified the opinions of educated, affluent whites throughout the Commonwealth.

In several editorials between the years 1924 and 1925, Freeman promoted the concept of genes determining intelligence, station, health and mentality by summarizing the findings of eugenicists such as Dr. Arthur Estabrook and Dr. Walter Plecker for his readers. He shared his support of the involuntary sterilization measure of 1924 with members of his current events class, touting its “beneficent effects.”²⁵² In the editorial “The New Family”, Freeman wrote in full-throated support of the eugenics movement's aims, stopping what he called the “great stream of defective and dependent in our population... insuring the permanence and the improvement even of the moral and physical

LOC.

²⁴⁸ Holloway, *Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in Virginia*, 33.

²⁴⁹ DSF, “The Mixed Group,” RNL, November 24, 1924, LOV.

²⁵⁰ DSF, “The Report on the Feeble-Minded,” RNL, October 2, 1915 and DSF, “Who Had the Big Families,” RNL, January 5, 1925, LOV.

²⁵¹ Holloway, *Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in Virginia*, 50.

²⁵² Smith, *Managing White Supremacy*, 81; Minutes, News Leader Current Events Class, March 10, 1924, DSF Papers, Folder “1923 Ap-Dc and 1924,” box 177, LOC.

standards of the human race”.²⁵³ Freeman's enthusiasm for this approach – which linked to his pre-existing belief in the supremacy of Anglo-Saxon people – resulted in his amplification of the finer points of eugenics.

In another editorial on the subject of gene determination, Freeman lauded the expertise of Dr. Arthur Estabrook who had written a paper critical of racial mixing among Black, indigenous and “low grade” white people living in the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia. The editorial quoted liberally from Estabrook’s findings and communicated Freeman’s fear of the moral and health consequences of interracial reproduction on future generations.²⁵⁴ Freeman’s support for targeted birth control was mainly linked to his conviction that “the more ignorant the parents, the more children they are apt to bring into the world.”²⁵⁵

Throughout his life, Freeman was a vocal opponent of interracial marriage and interracial sexual relationships describing the urge to preserve the integrity of the white race as a “biological caution.” This antipathy represented the wide-held white fear that “if racially mixed individuals dominated Virginia’s population, higher civilization would be destroyed and the state ruined.”²⁵⁶ In a 1944 letter, Freeman wrote that “a white man is guided by the same impulse that keeps the robin from mating with the starling” an instinct he believed illustrated “the Southern point of view.”²⁵⁷ In his 1924 editorial “The Rhinelander Tragedy,” he details the social ruin of a wealthy white man who unknowingly married a woman whom Freeman described as “[having] negro blood in her veins” and suggested the deception was deliberate. He framed this as a biological and social horror story, writing, “In an evening a boy may take on a handicap under which he must stagger to the end of his days.” Freeman stated “no man can defy social usage, the custom of the tribe, and fail to pay the price.” Further, he noted, “The certainty, not less than the horror of the outcome has inspired such efforts as that represented in the Virginia ‘racial purity law’ to make marriages between whites and persons of colored extraction impossible.” He relayed this story to his readers as a cautionary tale, imploring them to determine the race of prospective partners prior to marriage and, thus, avoid the “reckless” and “impetuous” actions of Rhinelander.²⁵⁸

In “The New Family,” Freeman promoted Plecker’s pamphlet, *Eugenics in Relation to the New Family*, as a “wholesome” guide to a proper “philosophy of life.”²⁵⁹ As Director of the Virginia Department of Vital Statistics, Walter Plecker held a great deal of power in public education, on

²⁵³ DSF, “The New Family,” RNL, February 4, 1925, LOV.

²⁵⁴ DSF, “The Mixed Group,” November 24, 1924.

²⁵⁵ DSF, “Who Have the Big Families,” RNL, January 5, 1925, LOV.

²⁵⁶ Holloway, *Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in Virginia*, 33.

²⁵⁷ Johnson, 193; Letter from Douglas Southall Freeman to Mrs. Eugene Meyer, 10 May 1944, DSF Papers, Container 57, LOC.

²⁵⁸ DSF, “The Rhinelander Tragedy,” RNL, November 1, 1924, LOV.

²⁵⁹ DSF, “The New Family,” February 4, 1925, RNL, date, LOV

hygiene, and on the subject of “racial purity.” Freeman defended Plecker’s use of federal funds, through franking privileges, to mail the booklet to the newly married of Virginia by declaring the outcry at the misuse of funds to be “federal political censorship.”²⁶⁰ Although Freeman and other “original supporters” of the Racial Integrity Act ultimately disagreed with aspects of Plecker’s more stringent views on racial purity, particularly in the matter of prominent white families colonial area mixing with the Indigenous population of Virginia, much of Plecker’s approach to eugenic hygiene remained an endorsed moral imperative.²⁶¹

Freeman also considered what he believed to be the ills of alcohol from a eugenics perspective given he concurred with many who deemed alcoholism “an inherited trait” which “cause[ed] degeneracy, deformity and mental deficiency” in offspring.²⁶² In a 1920 editorial, “Drink and Dullness,” Freeman linked birth defects to alcohol consumption and argued for the importance of prohibition: “The truth is written plainly ...[b]arring the accidents of birth, mental deficiency is inherited, not acquired.” He added, “Hundreds of idiots, of morons and of imbeciles can have their deficiency explained on no other theory than that of alcoholism.” Freeman believed that “one of the great benefits of prohibition will be the decrease in the cases of tainted heredity traceable to strong drink.” He concluded that “[c]hildren will be given more nearly a fair chance in life!” if excessive alcohol consumption was limited.²⁶³ In Bartlett C. Jones’ article on prohibition, “Prohibition and Eugenics 1920-1933,” the author notes many described alcohol as a “racial poison,” a view Freeman mirrored in “Drink and Dullness” and other editorials supporting the principles of eugenics.²⁶⁴

4.2.5 LYNCHING

While Freeman did not believe in social equality between white and Black people, at times his belief in equality under the criminal justice system was in evidence. This was particularly true in his response to three instances of violence that all occurred in Virginia: the lynching of a Black man, the kidnapping and mob interrogation of a Catholic priest, and the kidnapping and whipping of two women of unknown race for “moral transgressions.”²⁶⁵

It is impossible to specify how many lynchings – terrorization through extrajudicial killings of Black people – occurred in Virginia because press reporting of these crimes was inconsistent. According to the Equal Justice Initiative of Montgomery, Alabama, between the years 1877 and 1950, the known lynchings in the Southern states totaled nearly four thousand, and eighty-four of

²⁶⁰ DSF, “It is Political Censorship,” RNL, April 2, 1925, LOV. Franking privileges allow government officials to mail items without paying postage.

²⁶¹ Holloway, *Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in Virginia*, 40.

²⁶² C. Jones Bartlett, “Prohibition and Eugenics 1920-1933” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 18, No. 2 (April, 1963), 161, 160.

²⁶³ DSF, “Drink and Dullness,” RNL, June 24, 1920, LOV.

²⁶⁴ Bartlett, “Prohibition and Eugenics,” 160.

²⁶⁵ Alexander S. Leidholdt, *Editor for Justice: The Life of Louis I. Jaffee*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press (2002), 188.

them were in Virginia.²⁶⁶ In the summer of 1926, Raymond Bird, a Black man who had been arrested in Wytheville, Virginia, accused of the rape of a white woman, was killed by a mob. Accusations against him arose after the birth of Minnie Grubb's child with Bird. Grubb's father responded to the child's birth by accusing Bird of rape. On August 15, 1926, while Bird was in the Wytheville jail, a mob of white citizens, some dressed as women, took the keys to his cell from the jailer and removed him from the building. He was then beaten, shot, and taken to an area close to the Grubb farm where he was hung from a tree.²⁶⁷ It is not clear if he was alive when he was hung, but he died at the hands of the mob. Freeman was outraged, both at the extrajudicial punishment and the shame the lynching brought to Virginia. In his September 3rd editorial "Modern Murdrum," Freeman called upon Virginians to condemn the lynching by demanding the arrest of the citizens responsible and drew their attention to what he believed was the lasting damage to the town's reputation:

The people of the town insist that none of her citizens had a hand in the attack on the jail. But the crime occurred there, and unless some of the guilty men are identified and sent to the penitentiary, Wytheville will suffer more than if she had been an old English hundred and had been required to pay murdrum.

He further castigated the lack of "civic pride" for allowing a Black defendant to be lynched:

In the bad name that a town now gets because of a lynching, is there not an effective method of reducing these outrages? Of course, where a lynching occurs at a rural county-seat that has no civic pride and no reputation to lose, publicity is not a weapon against lynchings. Elsewhere, if it be known to every man that his town will receive notoriety and discredit because of a mob-murder, the mob-mind will not readily be aroused.²⁶⁸

On September 1st, two weeks after Bird was lynched in Wytheville, at least twenty-eight "masked and white-robed men" kidnapped a Catholic priest and interrogated him for leading a youth band made up of Black children.²⁶⁹ The priest was watching the band comprised of boys from his parish at "an open air concert" when he was kidnapped by a group that the National Catholic Welfare Conference called "Kluxers." The kidnapping was prompted by both anti-Black and anti-Catholic sentiment in Princess Anne County.²⁷⁰ The next day, in Bristol, Virginia, two women were

²⁶⁶ Brendan Wolfe and Laura K. Baker, "Lynching in Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Humanities, June 4, 2020, web Jan. 9, 2021; Equal Justice Initiative, *Lynching in America*, Interactive Map, [link](#), 2021. For more information on lynching in Virginia, see *Racial Terror: Lynching in Virginia*, James Madison University, [link](#); History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group, "History of Lynching in Virginia, The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission, [link](#); Commonwealth of Virginia, General Assembly, Senate of Virginia, "S. Res. 36: Apologizing to the victims of lynching and the descendants of those victims for the failure of the Senate to enact anti-lynching legislation," (2005), [link](#).

²⁶⁷ Paul G. Beers, "The Wythe County Lynching of Raymond Bird: Progressivism vs. Mob Violence in the '20s," *Appalachian Journal* 22, no. 1 (1994): 41-53.

²⁶⁸ DSF, "Modern Murdrum," RNL, September 3, 1926, LOV.

²⁶⁹ "TO AID ABDUCTED PRIEST, Liberties Union Denounces Virginia Sheriff for Failure to Act," *New York Times*, September 7, 1926.

²⁷⁰ "Kluxers Kidnap Norfolk Catholic Priest at Concert," *The N.C.W.C.* [National Catholic Welfare

kidnapped, “driven into the country to an abandoned house” and were “whipped... with leather straps.”²⁷¹

Freeman considered all three instances in his editorial, “This Is Not Like Virginia.” He wrote that they all represented “the same state of mind – hate, contempt for the processes of law, a determination to take private vengeance and to substitute the mob for the court.” He questioned Virginia’s claim to an honorable history in light of the spate of mob-violence and assaults by those claiming to be vigilantes. He did not believe the Ku Klux Klan was responsible for all of the crimes but suggested instead “inflaming” of easily influenced and “well-meaning men and women” by “misguided men.” Freeman insisted that “[t]hese crimes were unrelated” and that “[t]hey are not to be attributed to a common organization or to a common incentive.” Regarding anti-Catholicism, he asked his readers if the kidnapping of the Catholic priest would have happened if he had been a Protestant minister. Regarding anti-Blackness, he denounced the Wytheville lynching of Raymond Bird. Freeman’s point of view was one of shock, and he expressed his incredulity that such acts were possible in the Virginia he revered. He wrote that the crimes “sound like rural Georgia or inland Texas in the most lawless days of anti-negro, anti-Catholic agitation. Coming close together, and almost without precedent in some of their details, this trio of outrages is enough to make every right-minded Virginian wonder what has come over a people who used to boast their respect for the law and their sense of fair play.” This editorial concluded with a plea for a return to sanity, honor and tolerance in Virginia when Freeman pondered, “have Virginians so far forgotten the struggle and the victory that they are prepared to deny others what their great-grandfathers accounted the most notable fruit of the revolution?”²⁷²

4.2.5.1 ADDITIONAL FREEMAN EDITORIALS ON LYNCHING

“Lessened Lynchings,” March 29, 1926

In this detailed editorial, Freeman discussed statistics regarding lynchings from 1892 and various times in the 20th century to the lowest number in 1925. He was relieved a federal law was not imposed to outlaw lynching as he believed the states were able to regulate on their own and this aligned with his approach to a number of issues. Freeman was encouraged by the decreased number of lynchings in the U.S and wrote, “In this period of lamentation over increased lawlessness, there is one bright and particular spot, and that is the decrease in the number of lynchings.” In regard to federal intervention he wrote “There was a time when it seemed as if the only remedy was a federal law against lynching. Today without the danger and detriment of national intervention, the states by their own efforts are in a fair way to wipe out the stain of mob vengeance.”²⁷³

Conference] *News Sheet*, September 6, 1926, [link](#).

²⁷¹ DSF, “This Is Not Like Virginia,” RNL, September 4, 1926, LOV.

²⁷² DSF, “This Is Not Like Virginia,” RNL, September 4, 1926, LOV.

²⁷³ DSF, “Lessened Lynchings,” RNL, March 29, 1926, LOV.

“A Dark Disgrace to Virginia,” August 18, 1926

In “A Dark Disgrace to Virginia,” Freeman quoted Associated Press descriptions of the Raymond Bird lynching and then stated,

Right-feeling Virginians will be the more outraged by this atrocity because lynchings have been increasing in the Old Dominion at the very time they were decreasing in other states. For almost a generation the people of this state were quick to assert that they respected the law, no matter how gross the offense. It was not the “Virginia way” to put on masks, to hide individual identity in a mob, to hang some wretch in the dark of the moon, and then to slink away in blood guiltiness.”

He also wrote “There is only one way to stop mob-violence, and that is to resist the mob at every stage of its attempted violence, and to keep on the trail of lynchers until some of them are apprehended and convicted.” He concluded the editorial by calling on Wythe officials to conduct a “thorough-going investigation” into the lynching of Raymond Bird until some of the mob participants are prosecuted. Freeman was certain that “Governor Byrd can help in this. He most assuredly feels the same humiliation that other Virginians confess today” because “Virginia has been disgraced too often in recent years to hesitate now.”²⁷⁴

“The True Test Of Culture,” November 2, 1926

Freeman opened this editorial by quoting lynching statistics and listed Virginia as “11th from the top among the states in number of lynchings” (includes all states). He recommended De Maupassant’s “essay which should be read by any one who is vacillating on the question of the mob’s right to kill when, in the mob’s opinion, killing is justified.” Freeman contended that “Indeed, one may even say that the test of one’s culture and honor and decency and whatever contributes to one’s civilization is one’s reaction to the mob spirit.”²⁷⁵

“The State Will Guard Him,” January 1, 1935

In this 1935 editorial on mob violence, Freeman lauded the governor’s decision to provide “trained state police, adequately armed and equipped with gas masks and gas bombs” to stop “having Virginia justice disgraced by mob-action” in Fincastle. The editorial condemned rumored plans to lynch Black defendant Phillip Jones. Freeman advised “foolish men” “to remain at home, not only for the good name of the commonwealth, but also for the safety of their own bodies.”²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ DSF, “A Dark Disgrace to Virginia,” RNL August 18, 1926, LOV.

²⁷⁵ DSF, “The True Test Of Culture,” RNL, November 2, 1926, LOV.

²⁷⁶ DSF, “The State Will Guard Him,” RNL, January 1, 1935, LOV. More information on the Phillip Jones case see Lisa Dorr, *White Women, Rape, and the Power of Race in Virginia, 1900-1960*, Chapel Hill: The

“No Lynchings for a Year,” May 9, 1940

In “No Lynchings for a Year,” Freeman reiterated his stance against federal mandates regarding lynching and mob violence: “Twelve months have passed since there was a lynching in the South. Has it been because times are better and race friction less? Are we to dismiss it as merely a chance occurrence? Is education beginning to count? Or has the truth seeped down at last to the level of the mob mind that enactment of a Federal anti-lynching law is certain unless mob violence stops?”²⁷⁷

4.2.6 VOTING RIGHTS

Over the course of his *News Leader* career, Freeman’s editorials on the subject of voting rights addressed issues of poll taxes, women’s suffrage, and disenfranchisement. Freeman was clear that the *status quo* for white Virginians was at stake: “The negroes are in numerical majority in thirty-one counties of the state. If all these negroes could vote, they could control absolutely the Tidewater district of Virginia, exclusive of the cities.”²⁷⁸ Freeman’s particular concern was the enormous potential electoral power of Black woman.²⁷⁹ In response to the ratification of the 19th amendment by the State of Tennessee, Freeman published an editorial series in the *Richmond News Leader* to educate potential new voters in Virginia, and his intended audience appears to have been white women. *Intelligent Suffrage - Brief Chapters on Fundamentals of Government, Designed Primarily for New Voters*, began with an August 23, 1920 editorial introducing the forty-part series. Each editorial included parallel reading suggestions such as “Montesquieu’s “Spirit of the Laws,” the Virginia Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and other primary sources. The parallel reading suggestions also covered what Freeman felt to be pertinent topics:

University of North Carolina Press (2004), 183.

²⁷⁷ DSF, “No Lynchings for a Year.” RNL, May 9, 1940, LOV.

²⁷⁸ DSF, “19. The Negro Question,” RNL, September 14, 1920, LOV.

²⁷⁹ For more information on the efforts of Black women in Richmond to secure their right to vote, please see Laurant L. Lee, “Black Women Suffragists in Virginia: ‘Lifting as We Climb,’ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 25, 2020, [link](#). For a comparative study see Glenda E. Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow, Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996. See also Lorraine Gates Schuyler, *The Weight of Their Votes: Southern Women and Political Leverage in the 1920s*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (2006). See also, Suzanne Lebstock, “Woman Suffrage and White Supremacy, A Virginia Case Study,” in Nancy A. Hewitt and Suzanne Lebstock, eds., *Visible Women: New Essays on American Activism*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press (1993), 77.

On states' rights: "Jefferson Davis' long argument in the first volume of his *Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government* (1881) is probably the best of its kind ever made."²⁸⁰

On the importance of civil service: "New voters will need to study the civil service, and for that purpose should consult C. R. Fish: *The Civil Service and the Patronage*."²⁸¹

This series speaks to Freeman's influence at the time on the subject of the franchise, race, and his knowledge of historical politics.²⁸² At the time of the series, in 1920, the *Richmond News Leader* accrued a daily circulation average of 44,600. Special attention should be paid to the extensive amount of information disseminated in this series and the often unreasonable complexity of parallel reading suggestions accompanying each editorial.

4.2.6.1 POLL TAXES, RACE AND GENDER

During Douglas Southall Freeman's youth, Virginia almost entirely disenfranchised Black voters through the implementation of poll taxes and literacy tests. As an adult, Freeman noted that this constraint also resulted in low white voter turnout because of the overly complicated franchise regulations instituted in 1902. His exasperation focused more on the need to ease the voting process for whites, however, not on the inclusion of a larger African American voter pool to the franchise.²⁸³

4.2.6.2 "THE NEGRO QUESTION"

His attention to voter education within prescribed limits of class and race are illustrated in the editorial "The Negro Question," in which Freeman described the struggle to regain white control of Virginia after Reconstruction as "elemental" and "biological." He reminded readers that although "Virginia negroes are the best in America -- the most trustworthy, the most reliable," "they are not capable of operating the government of state, of city or of county." He concluded this editorial by stating "The biological consideration...is paramount to the political."²⁸⁴

Freeman published "The Negro Question" on September 14, 1920. By 1920, Black and white women had started paying the poll tax. Freeman wrote,

Some have disposed to argue that the state could afford to disregard the negro question and strengthen the white Republican vote in the state. If the two parties were more closely matched, these men argue, the government would be better. No one disputes the advantages

²⁸⁰ DSF, "Intelligent Suffrage," RNL, August 27, 1920, LOV.

²⁸¹ DSF, "10. The Executive At Work," RNL, September 3, 1920, LOV.

²⁸² For more information on Freeman's stance on race in the *Intelligent Suffrage* series, see DSF, "19. The Negro Question," RNL, September 14, 1920, LOV and DSF, "20. The Constitution of Virginia," RNL, November 15, 1920, LOV.

²⁸³ DSF, "Shall Voting Be Easier?" RNL, July 29, 1936, LOV. DSF; "The Menace To Richmond," RNL, November 6, 1924, LOV; DSF, "Does It Mean Nothing to Richmond?" RNL, November 7, 1924, LOV; DSF, "An Outrageous Ballot," RNL, November 5, 1924, LOV.

²⁸⁴ DSF, "19. The Negro Question," RNL, September 14, 1920, LOV.

of a strong political opposition. But always provided the opposing parties be of the same intelligence and character. That cannot be in Virginia, where the backbone of the Republican party must remain the negro. It is well enough to say that the white Republicans could control the negro vote, but if the Republicans were to be put in power in Virginia, the sheer numerical strength of the negro vote would work out precisely the contrary result.

Claiming a paternalistic understanding of African Americans, Freeman continued,

[W]hite men must remain united to see that the negroes do not re-enact the tragedy of reconstruction, either directly or through the control of a strong Republican party. The biological consideration, to repeat, is paramount to the political.

Although he acknowledged the attributes and merits of “some negroes”, i.e., the intelligent ones, he believed that they needed to be guided by whites who “had their best interests in mind.”²⁸⁵

4.2.6.3 “OFFSETTING WHITE MEN’S VOTES”

The fear of potential Black voter dominance was especially troubling to Freeman when he considered the power of African American women as a voting bloc. He detailed this concern in his September 18, 1920 editorial “Offsetting White Men’s Votes.” For Freeman, Black women possessed a “disquieting” voting power which would lower the margin “by which the white population controls the government of the South.” He called upon white women to qualify in significant enough numbers to ensure what he termed the “civilization of the South” would not be endangered. Anti-suffragists were also urged to register so that “[their] husband’s vote will not be offset by that of some negro woman.”²⁸⁶ By 1927, Freeman no longer feared “negro domination in Virginia” due to a declining Black population and his confidence in “counties that know best how to deal with the negroes.”²⁸⁷

As late as 1949, Freeman saw the proposed repeal of poll taxes in the South as a sign of “impending Federal domination of local affairs” and considered removal of franchise requirements to herald far reaching consequences, “Concealed in the antipoll-tax [sic] bill is a legal weapon that could destroy our system of government and the local supervision of elections. If the bill passes, something of America will pass with it.”²⁸⁸ Freeman called for simplified voting practices and a franchise reform which advocated a “stiff educational test and the prepayment of only one year’s poll taxes” to expand white voter turnout. He limited the scope of his campaign for policy revision to benefit educated white citizens when he explained, “An extension of the franchise to those who cannot meet the educational tests now applied to white persons would certainly not improve politics.”²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ DSF, “#19 The Negro Question,” RNL, September 14, 1920, LOV.

²⁸⁶ DSF, “Offsetting White Men’s Votes,” RNL, September 18, 1920, LOV.

²⁸⁷ DSF, “Virginia Does Not Know The Price She Pays,” RNL, April 5, 1927, LOV.

²⁸⁸ DSF, “After the Poll Tax,” RNL, June 21, 1949, LOV.

²⁸⁹ DSF, “Must The Franchise Always Remain As It Is?” RNL, April 3, 1928, LOV.

4.2.6.4 "THE MENACE TO RICHMOND"

"The Menace to Richmond," a Freeman editorial published on November 6, 1924 addressed the chronically low voter turn-out in Richmond and followed Freeman's theme of the impact of poll-taxes on seemingly disinterested white voters. Freeman discussed the deplorable voting statistics in Richmond since the poll-tax amendment to the 1902 Constitution of Virginia and considered the removal of "ignorant" negroes from the poll-books also made it more challenging to interest "casual" or "indifferent" white male voters.

Excerpts:

"A poll of 14,890 in a city of 183,000 is worse than disgraceful. It is menacing to the whole great experiment in democratic government."

"Then came the constitution of 1902, designed to purify Virginia politics by removing the ignorant element among the negroes from the poll-books."

"In keeping out the ignorant, the framers of the constitution kept out the indifferent as well."

"They did their work so thoroughly -- set up so many barriers and dug so many pits for the incautious feet of the casual voter -- that they deterred thousands of Richmonders from voting."

"Richmond's finest showing under the present constitution was made in the presidential election of 1920, when women could vote for the first time and wished to show their support of the Wilson policies."

"The males in Richmond in 1920 probably cast fewer votes than did the men of the city forty years ago."

"The negroes are eliminated – yes; but who is prepared to say the result is worth what it has cost?"²⁹⁰

²⁹⁰ DSF, "The Menace to Richmond," RNL, November 6, 1924, LOV.

4.2.6.5 OTHER SELECTED FREEMAN EDITORIALS ON VOTING

Three-part series on the importance of voting in November 1947:

1. “What Your Vote is ‘For,’” November 3, 1947

This editorial listed the mandates of the new charter of Richmond up for vote on November 4, 1947. Freeman urged his readers to vote in approval. He stated, “You are asked to recognize that in government there has been progress during the last 30 years exactly as in everything else.”²⁹¹

2. “Your Rights Are Put First,” November 3, 1947

In this 1947 editorial, Freeman urged all Richmonders to vote for adoption of the new charter because he felt: “That is the manner in which you recover control of your own government under the new charter. The case is with you - with you, the boss of Richmond.”²⁹²

3. “Day of Rededication,” November 4, 1947

Freeman wrote in “Day of Rededication,” “This is perhaps the most important date in the history of our city since Virginia was readmitted to the Union in 1870 after the long nightmare of reconstruction.” but excused voters if “the handicap of physical disability...[kept] them at home.” He also noted, “If there is ugliness in politics, it is because right-minded people abstain from voting. The sole way to eradicate evils is for disinterested, intelligent voters to exert themselves.” Freeman reminded his readers of the importance of intelligent voter turnout: “May we emphasize this by a backward look? This newspaper has been under the same ownership for almost 40 years and under the same editorial direction for more than three decades. If the News Leader were asked to put into a single sentence the observations of all these years as respect good government and progress for our city, the paper would say, Richmond depends on the average intelligent voter.” He also warned, “It is in the hour when ‘the good man sleepeth’ that his liberties are lost.” This admonishment was predicated on his confidence in the charter under consideration as “perhaps the best drawn ever offered an American city.” Freeman concluded that, “The one imperative for the attainment of a great future and the preservation of individual right is the participation of every intelligent citizen in public elections.”²⁹³

“20. The Constitution of Virginia,” “Intelligent Suffrage” series, September 15, 1920

Although the Intelligent Suffrage series is highlighted in the Voting section of this report, this particular editorial is significant as an example of Freeman’s cavalier description of disenfranchisement. The theme of intelligence as necessary to sound voting was echoed throughout the series and in the majority of Freeman’s writing on the subject of voting.

²⁹¹ DSF, “What Your Vote is ‘For,’” RNL November 3, 1947, LOV.

²⁹² DSF, “Your Rights Are Put First,” RNL, November 3, 1937, LOV.

²⁹³ DSF, “Day of Rededication,” RNL, November 4, 1947, LOV.

Excerpt:

“By the latter year conditions had changed greatly. The Democratic party which had redeemed the state, felt that it could purify elections and give Virginia better government if the negro were eliminated altogether from politics. The convention accordingly adopted certain requirements for the franchise the effect of which had been to reduce greatly the electorate and to limit it to literate whites and to the more intelligent Negroes... The Constitution was not submitted to the people for fear it would be rejected by the votes of those it disenfranchised. It was ‘proclaimed’ on June 6, 1902 and went into effect July 10, 1902.”²⁹⁴

5.0 FREEMAN AS AN ADVISOR

Freeman deemed an individual’s character to be the most important asset of a leader and provided a definition extemporaneously following a lecture given at the Army's Command and General Staff College on March 7, 1949:

What is character? It is that quality of man which is going to make a man, in an hour of strain, do the just and if possible the generous thing. Character is that quality of mind which makes truth telling instinctive rather than strange. Character is the essence of all that a man has seen in life and regards as high and exalted. Character is like truth, the substance of the things that a man has forgotten but the substance of the things that are worth remembering in life. Character is the starting point from which we go on. When I say a man has character, I mean that when you go to that man and say, 'What are the facts in this case?' he will tell you the truth, justly, truly, and wisely as he knows, with the minimum of exhibitionism and the maximum of devotion to the common cause. Such character is the character of the American army.²⁹⁵

In addition to character, Freeman touted intelligence and good citizenship as essential to successful leadership His definition of leadership was, "Know your stuff... be a man... look after your men."²⁹⁶ Many of his speeches and lectures at the war colleges emphasized the importance of leadership skills. Given that Freeman could not enlist due to a medical exclusion, he found other ways such as lecturing officers in military strategy to help the American cause.²⁹⁷ For example, Freeman served as a Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War for the State of Virginia.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁴ DSF, “20. The Constitution of Virginia,” RNL, November 15, 1920, LOV.

²⁹⁵ Douglas Southall Freeman (Smith, ed, Douglas Southall Freeman on Leadership, p xvi)

²⁹⁶ Stuart W. Smith, ed., Introduction in Douglas Southall Freeman, *Douglas Southall Freeman On Leadership*, Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press (190), 111.

²⁹⁷ See Freeman, *Douglas Southall Freeman on Leadership* for examples of Freeman’s speeches to the Army and Navy War College.

²⁹⁸ Telegram, Nov 17, 1927, Corres 1927-30, P-Sa, 13, DSF Papers, LOC, Library of Congress, AC. 10,634; 10,6 Folder Label: PI-PZ 36.

His acumen as a military strategist conveyed to his radio listeners through his portrayal of World War I (WWI) and World War II (WII) battles as well. He was considered an expert in the field due to his knowledge of Civil War battles, the strategies employed, and for his ability to explain complicated wartime events. Freeman's biographer, David Johnson, noted during the University of Richmond's centennial celebration of Freeman's enrollment, "In his radio broadcasts and editorials, Freeman liked to help his audience put events in perspective by framing WWII battles in terms of Civil War conflicts, or likening European hamlets to familiar Virginia towns."²⁹⁹ Freeman's World War II editorials "gained national attention" and he was described in *Life* magazine as "probably the sanest and soundest observer of the European war in the U.S. today."³⁰⁰ For many, Freeman's reports held the sway they did because of his national reputation as a military strategy expert and a pervading cultural interest in the Civil War. Freeman's military writings and lectures as well as his knowledge of Civil War battle strategy were widely studied by officers in both the United States and Great Britain during WWII. In fact, "Dr. Freeman's books were widely read by military leaders and statesmen as well as scholars. During World War II he carried on a regular correspondence with many of America's top military leaders around the world. Shortly after the war, he made a globe-circling tour."³⁰¹

In a 1937 letter to his wife, Harry S. Truman recounted attending one of Freeman's war college lectures and thought Freeman an extremely knowledgeable speaker.³⁰² Inspired, Truman undertook several Gettysburg tours studying Freeman's battlefield strategy notes and even gave Freeman's books as gifts.

In addition to his war college lectures, Freeman was also a presidential advisor and corresponded regularly with U.S. military leaders. During WWI, President Woodrow Wilson stipulated Freeman's editorials be placed on his desk in the Oval Office. "As an expert on military history, Freeman had the ear not only of President Wilson but of Gen. George C. Marshall, with whom he enjoyed extensive correspondence."³⁰³

In an Oct. 14, 1929 letter written to his brother, Dr. Allen Freeman, Douglas Southall Freeman wrote that he was touring Civil War battlefields with Winston Churchill and would be attending a dinner in his honor as well.³⁰⁴ Freeman hosted other foreign leaders on tours of Virginia battlefields such as

²⁹⁹ "Speaker Explorers Legacy of Douglas Freeman," *Henrico Citizen*, November 15, 2001, 5 in Biographical File, Label: Freeman, Douglas Southall A-T, VBHS.

³⁰⁰ Johnson, 255.

³⁰¹ "Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman Dies; Pulitzer Prize Biographer Was 67," *New York Times*, June 14, 1953.

³⁰² Harry S. Truman to Bess Truman, February 11, 1937, Harry S. Truman Papers, Correspondence from Harry S. Truman to Bess Wallace Truman, 1921-1959, Identifier: 146227699, National Archives and Records Administration.

³⁰³ "Speaker Explores Legacy of Douglas Freeman," *Henrico Citizen*, November 15, 2001, 5. Biographical File: Freeman, Douglas Southall A-T, VBHS.

³⁰⁴ Douglas Southall Freeman to Allen W. Freeman, October 14, 1929, Corres, 1927-30, C-F, 10, AC.

former British Prime Minister David Lloyd George and Marshal Ferdinand Foch, Supreme Allied Commander during World War I.³⁰⁵

Freeman helped create what was to become the G. I. Bill signed into effect by President Roosevelt in 1944. The G. I. Bill offered federal aid to help veterans adjust to civilian life, purchase homes, find employment and obtain an education. "In 1942 [Freeman] suggested to Secretary of War Robert R. Paterson that if 18-year-olds were taken from college for military service, the government should promise to complete their college training. Patterson endorsed this and presented it to President Roosevelt. The President said he favored not only this but also academic opportunities for all veterans. Out of this and other discussions came the GI Bill."³⁰⁶

In 1944, Freeman suggested "liberation of Europe" instead of "invasion of Europe" and received a personal letter of thanks from President Roosevelt.³⁰⁷ Of this accomplishment, David Johnson said that Freeman "could be said to have served as the first presidential spin doctor, after convincing President Roosevelt to call D-Day a liberation rather than an invasion."³⁰⁸

In the Fall of 1945, Freeman embarked on a trip to "inspect U. S. military installations and study 'the problems of civil versus military occupation'" with Assistant Secretary of War John McCloy.³⁰⁹ During this assignment, Freeman wrote to his wife in "strictest confidence" that he was also assisting McCloy to "straighten out the lines of authority and administration" especially with regard to General MacArthur's "public statements" while directing the U. S. military occupation of Japan.³¹⁰

Freeman established a rapport with General Dwight D. Eisenhower during the lead up and to and during World War II. Their friendship is noted in an article by Guy Friddell: "Earlier, accepting a degree from the University of Richmond where Dr. Freeman was Rector of the Board of Trustees, Eisenhower had said, 'I am such an admirer of Dr. Freeman that I am disposed to conform instantly to any suggestion he makes.'" To that end, Freeman was instrumental in encouraging General Eisenhower to run for the office of president. Eisenhower recalled his friend's support when he recalled, "Freeman was 'the first man in the United States who ever got me to think seriously about

10,634; 10,660, Folder label: 14. Freeman, Dr. Allen W, DSF Papers, Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁰⁵ Johnson, 145.

³⁰⁶ "Dr. Freeman Retires as Editor June 30 To Give Time to Historical Writing," RNL, June 25, 1949, VBHS; also in Johnson, 263-264.

³⁰⁷ "Dr. Freeman Retires as Editor June 30 To Give Time to Historical Writing," RNL, June 25, 1949, VBHS; also in Johnson, 282.

³⁰⁸ "Speaker Explorers Legacy of Douglas Freeman," *Henrico Citizen*, November 15, 2001, 5, Biographical File: Freeman, Douglas Southall A-T, VBHS.

³⁰⁹ "Dr. Freeman Retires as Editor June 30 To Give Time to Historical Writing," RNL, June 25, 1949, Freeman, Douglas Southall A-T, VBHS; also in Johnson, 284.

³¹⁰ Johnson, 285-286.

a possible political career. In 1947 he came to my office and earnestly urged that I go into politics.”³¹¹ The power of their friendship and Freeman’s growing unease with the platform of the Democratic Party policies caused him to vote as a Republican for the first time when Eisenhower ran for office.³¹²

³¹¹ Guy Friddell, “Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman,” DSF Biographical File, RG 22.3 VBHS. The University of Richmond awarded General Dwight D. Eisenhower an honorary degree on March 28, 1946. The service was broadcast nationally over the “ABC radio network.” Daniel, 287.

³¹² Johnson, 342.

6.0 FREEMAN AS A PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL

As Freeman's national reputation grew, so too did his influence. Many people such as subsequent *News Leader* editor and Freeman's close colleague James J. Kilpatrick, considered Freeman a "genius." The combination of his intelligence and his legendary work ethic extended the reach of his newspaper, author and radio platforms and garnered him notoriety throughout the 1930s and 1940s.³¹³ In addition to his roles as an editor, lecturer at the national war colleges, public speaker and biographer, in 1934 Freeman added Professor of Journalism at Columbia University to his resume. He traveled to New York once a week for seven years and was considered "the jewel in the faculty crown" by former student Philip Hamburger, author and *New Yorker* journalist.³¹⁴ Freeman's successor as *News Leader* editor and a former reporter under Freeman's leadership, James J. Kilpatrick, echoed the tone of Hamburger's opinion of Freeman:

I suspect his other constituencies knew him in the same combination of affection and awe. Even as a relatively young man in his thirties and forties, he was the acknowledged Mentor of this community - counselor, final authority, teacher. He saw all of his writing, all of his lecturing, his work at the paper, the books that flowed from his pen, as parts of the total educative experience. Simultaneously, he was scholar and teacher; he never stopped learning and he never ceased to give his erudition away.³¹⁵

To many, Freeman's reputation as a public intellectual was rooted in his popularity as a historian. John Gignilliat considers that Freeman was the most highly regarded historian in Virginia during his lifetime and enjoyed celebrity status in the Commonwealth by his demise in 1953."³¹⁶

6.1 AUTHOR AND ADVOCATE FOR MEMORIALIZATION

Freeman's writing career spanned four decades and included two multi-volume major works, *R.E. Lee: A Biography* (four volumes) and *George Washington: A Biography* (seven volumes, six written by Freeman with the final volume written from his notes). Freeman's first book, *A Calendar of*

³¹³ Johnson, 354.

³¹⁴ Johnson, 186.

³¹⁵ James J. Kilpatrick, "'Freeman: He Was Unforgettable,' Dedication address of Douglas Southall Freeman Hall by Richmond News Leader Editor James J. Kilpatrick," *Alumni Bulletin*, Winter 1966, 20, VBHS.

³¹⁶ Gignilliat, *Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman*, 472. According to James J. Kilpatrick, who was a journalist at the *News Leader* and was chosen by Freeman to be his successor as editor at the paper, Freeman was aware of his public persona and was an active participant in shaping the "Freeman tales" (Kilpatrick, "He Was Unforgettable!," 5). This willingness to indulge the public's perception of his life may be the impetus of the "Freeman salutes the Lee Monument each day" story. It appears to have had its source in a comment in a late 1930s speech, that he "fel[t] like saluting" Lee's statue when he passed the monument in Richmond, and may have shifted first to the public belief that he *did* salute Lee each day, and ultimately led to his "re-enactment" of the act for the photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt. It is, of course, possible that Freeman *did* come to do this each day. Freeman was, in Kilpatrick's words, "fully aware of the legends that grew up about him, of the stories that were told and retold and amplified in the telling, and I am certain that he found a lively enjoyment in contributing to the library of Freeman tales" (Kilpatrick, "He Was Unforgettable," 5).

Confederate Papers, commissioned by the Confederate Memorial Literary Society, required Freeman to analyze and detail over “five thousand miscellaneous letters, manuscripts, documents, reports, and pamphlets” housed in the Confederate Museum.³¹⁷ This first work was published in 1908 before he obtained his Ph.D. and was considered both “scholarly and authoritative.”³¹⁸ Between the years of 1910 and 1915, Freeman wrote his second book, *Lee’s Dispatches to Jefferson Davis, 1862-1865*, an annotation of a private collection of communiques between Robert E. Lee and the President of the Confederate States of America.³¹⁹ After the positive reception of the *Calendar* and *Lee’s Dispatches*, the editor-in-chief of Charles Scribner’s Sons asked Freeman’s former supervisor during his brief period at the *Times-Dispatch*, Henry Sydnor Harrison, if he believed Freeman to be the person to write a biography of Robert E. Lee. Harrison recommended Freeman for the book contract which was signed in 1915.³²⁰ This opportunity was ideal for Freeman given his lifelong idolization of Robert E. Lee and his teenage memory of watching elderly veterans reenact the battle of the Crater in 1903.³²¹ The transformative experience prompted him to vow “to record their achievements for posterity” and “would become a defining moment of recognition and understanding...[that would] mold Douglas Freeman’s life in a way that no other experience ever did.”³²² Historian Keith Dickson describes the source Freeman’s growing commitment to honoring the past through his historical writing: “As he witnessed the old men cross the field with a wavering rebel yell, he realized that time was growing short for them, and soon there would be no one left to tell their story of valor and sacrifice....At that moment, Douglas Southall Freeman resolved to record their achievements for posterity, before time robbed southerners – and all Americans – of a direct association with the men who had fought under General Lee.”³²³

Another influence on Freeman’s decision to pursue biographical writing was his admiration for his mentor and former Richmond College professor, Dr. Samuel Chiles Mitchell. In a 1943 letter to Dr. Mitchell, Freeman recalled “It is to you that I own my avocation of historical writing...and to you that I owe my approach to public questions. I have not held always to the same opinion or even to the same approach that have been yours, but from you I always have had a faith in the out-working of a man’s destiny and a resolution to have a part in that process.”³²⁴ Over the years, Freeman developed his own method of writing of Confederate history, informed by a childhood grounded in the Commemorative era and, as ever, guided by the men who influenced him most in life, his father, Walker B. Freeman, a Confederate veteran who served under General Lee, and his mentor, Dr,

³¹⁷ Johnson, 73.

³¹⁸ Johnson, 83.

³¹⁹ Peacock, 69.

³²⁰ Gignilliat, 188, Johnson, 88.

³²¹ Dickson, 45-46.

³²² Dickson, 46, 45

³²³ Dickson, 46.

³²⁴ Peacock, 29-30.

Samuel C. Mitchell. Historian John L. Gignilliat defined three elements of Freeman's approach to writing about the Confederacy in his dissertation, "The Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman": [1.] "As a student and as a productive historian, Freeman regarded the story of the Confederate Army as that of moral victory;" [2.] "Freeman's interpretation of the war achieved a philosophical consistency through his acceptance of the inevitability of struggle in life;" [3.] "He saw struggle as the necessary agent of historical progress as well as of personal achievement. With a sort of Christian stoicism he regarded fortitude as man's primary moral imperative: a battle bravely fought always had a special significance for him."³²⁵

While the four decades of Freeman's career as an historical writer largely remained rooted in the telling of the history of Civil War and Confederate figures, he chose for his last biography the Revolutionary War hero and first President of the United States, George Washington. Although Freeman's *George Washington: A Biography* did not enjoy "quite the level of acclaim from either the reading public or the critics that *Lee* and *Lee's Lieutenants* did...it constituted another monumental portrait of a moral hero for Americans."³²⁶ In James J. Kilpatrick's address at the dedication of University of Richmond's Freeman Hall, the successive editor of the *News Leader* noted: "Doc did 'strive with gods.' His dearest friends were those great men of America's past – Washington, and Lee, and Lee's lieutenants, and the ghostly array of figures who towered so before the end of his own rich and productive life, he did indeed produce 'works of noble note."³²⁷ Freeman's reputation as an historiographer brought him closer to his idols and accomplished the goal he set in this youth, that of sharing his version of the Southern past with the world.

Both *R.E. Lee: A Biography* and *George Washington* were well-received by the public and by critics at the time. Available scholarly and critical reviews of Freeman's were almost entirely positive. Johnson notes the reviews of historians Henry Steel Commager and Dumas Malone, and quotes Malone who wrote of Freeman, "No scholar I have known was more conscientious about personal examination of source material."³²⁸ Historian Samuel Eliot Morison called Freeman "the first of our military historians."³²⁹ According to Johnson, Captain Basil Liddell Hart, a "British military analyst and author, wrote two negative reviews" of Freeman's work, however the focus of his criticism was Robert E. Lee the man, not *Robert E. Lee: A Biography*. Freeman's work was, according to Liddell Hart, "almost in a class by itself."³³⁰ Of *Young Washington*, the first two volumes in Freeman's biography of the first president, historian Allen Nevins wrote in the *New York Times* that the books

³²⁵ Gignilliat, 142.

³²⁶ Peacock, iii.

³²⁷ Kilpatrick, "Freeman: He was Unforgettable!," VBHS.

³²⁸ Johnson, 329.

³²⁹ John Lewis Gignilliat, *The Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman*, diss. University of Wisconsin, Madison (1968), 196.

³³⁰ Johnson, 167-168.

were notable for their “exhaustive thoroughness,” however, he continued, that thoroughness “bears its penalty in an occasional stretch of exhausting detail.”³³¹

SELECTED BIOGRAPHICAL WORK: ROBERT E. LEE: A BIOGRAPHY

Within Freeman’s historical approach to promoting Confederate memory is his affinity for the subject matter of his first biography. General Robert E. Lee was his “special hero, the great man of action as well as the great commander of his father’s army.”³³² According to historian John R. Peacock, one reason Freeman was so drawn to Lee was because he was “a man whose character best exemplified [Freeman’s] own moral values” which allowed Freeman to “[paint] a vivid portrait of a moral hero.”³³³ The bridge of collective Southern memory also connected the two men. This bond enabled the young biographer to “adopt Lee as a marker of identity... Once drawn to Lee’s heroic appeal, Freeman would strive in his own way to exhibit Lee’s greatness in his professional career and throughout his life. Lee’s birthday became a personal holiday and a time for special reflection” by Freeman.³³⁴ Freeman even served as a live model for sculptor Edward V. Valentine as he sketched studies for a statue of Lee, posing in the Confederate general’s uniform.³³⁵

Douglas Freeman dedicated himself to writing the manuscript of the Lee biography for nearly twenty years. Due to his exacting and exhaustive research methodology, what was intended to be a single book became a four-volume set during those years. With the aid of support staff, Freeman’s close investigation of primary sources and previously “unused material” allowed him, in his words, to “grasp the spirit of the times.” Using a metaphor of a trial, Freeman wrote that he sought to “learn the credibility of the witnesses whose testimony” he cited as he presented his “brief at the last tribunal of time.”³³⁶ In this biography as in his other works, he employed a historical writing method now coined “Freeman’s fog of war” which, again in his words, allowed him “to maintain a single point of view and to describe the battles on the basis of what Lee knew rather than on a basis of what we now know.”³³⁷ This tactic required Freeman to include lengthy explanatory support materials to his manuscript to historically inform the narrative for his readers.³³⁸

Charles Scribner’s Sons released volumes 1 and 2 of *R. E. Lee* in October of 1934 and volumes 3 and 4 in April of that same year.³³⁹ The reviews, both from journalists and academics, were

³³¹ Johnson, 306-307.

³³² Gignilliat, 162.

³³³ Peacock, iii.

³³⁴ Dickson, 45.

³³⁵ Johnson, 76

³³⁶ Johnson, 118. For more information on Freeman’s historical writing method, see Johnson, 329-331.

³³⁷ Johnson, 119.

³³⁸ Johnson, 119.

³³⁹ Johnson, 166.

overwhelmingly positive. Freeman kept a collection of these reviews, but most valued the praise from “professional soldiers.”³⁴⁰ *New York Herald Tribune* columnist, Stephen Vincent Benet, reviewed *R. E. Lee* and then wrote Freeman a letter “congratulating him for ‘the best life of Lee that has ever been written and one of the finest American biographies we have ever seen.’”³⁴¹ In 1935, Freeman won the Pulitzer Prize for his biography of Lee. This would be first of two such awards for the historical biographer who was known as “the authority in his field.”³⁴²

³⁴⁰ Johnson, 167-169.

³⁴¹ Johnson, 167.

³⁴² T. Harry Williams in Freeman, *The South to Posterity*, ix.

6.1.1 SELECTION OF PUBLISHED WORKS³⁴³

- 1908 *Calendar of Confederate Papers*
- 1912 *Volume of Reports on Virginia Taxation published in 1912*
- 1915 *Lee's Dispatches to Jefferson Davis, 1862-1865*
- 1924 *"Virginia - A Gentle Dominion" (in These United States: Portraits of America From the 1920s)*
- 1932 *"The Last Parade"*
- 1934-1935 *R.E. Lee: A Biography*
- 1939 *South to Posterity: An Introduction to the Writing of Confederate History*
- 1942 *Manassas to Malvern Hill, Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command, Volume I*
- 1943 *Cedar Mountain to Chancellorsville, Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command, Volume II*
- 1944 *Gettysburg to Appomattox, Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command, Volume III*
- 1947 *John Stewart Bryan*
- 1948 *Young Washington, Volumes I and II of George Washington*
- 1951 *Planter and Patriot and Leader of the Revolution, Volumes 3 and 4 of George Washington*
- 1952 *Victory with the Help of France, Volume 5 of George Washington*
- 1954 *Patriot and President, Volume 6 of George Washington (posthumously published)*
- 1957 *First in Peace, Volume 7 of George Washington (based on Freeman's research and written by his assistants, John Alexander Carroll and Mary Wells Ashworth)*

³⁴³ From Stewart W. Smith, "Chronology of Life and Books," in Douglas Southall Freeman, *Douglas Southall Freeman on Leadership*, 16.

6.1.2 “FREEMAN MARKERS”

While touring Civil War battlefields during his research for *R. E. Lee: A Biography*, Freeman was concerned that few of the locations were marked. Along with “his friend, [J.] Ambler Johnston,” Freeman raised the funds necessary to place inscribed markers at these sites. David E. Johnson notes that Freeman was the primary author of the markers’ text. At the time of the publication of Johnson’s *Douglas Southall Freeman* (2002), fifty-eight markers remained, “each one a cast iron plate set horizontally on a large capstone made of concrete. When dedicated, the markers were the first highway markers in Virginia.”³⁴⁴ They have become known as the “Freeman Markers.”



“Freeman Marker,” No. 27, “Battle of Cold Harbor,”
historyarchives.org/freemanmarkers

6.2 SPEAKER

Throughout his career as an editor, biographer, and lecturer, Freeman was a sought-after speaker. As a doctoral student in 1905, Freeman wrote to his father of his career ambitions: “I aim at many things in this world, you know. I want to be a good scholar, one whose name will not be forgotten tomorrow; I want to be a keen thinker, the impress of whose mind will mould the thought of days that come after; I want to be a strong speaker, to carry conviction to the hearts of men in matters that concern their welfare most.”³⁴⁵ In preparation for a life as a public speaker, he also took elocution lessons. His study of elocution “led to awareness of ‘voice-placement’ and, consequently... his speaking voice became perceptibly lowered in pitch.”³⁴⁶ According to historian John L. Gignilliat, “For a future generation of Richmonders that low-pitched voice, on radio or from podium, was to become an accustomed feature of their daily lives.”³⁴⁷

At the height of Freeman’s national reputation as a noted editor, strategist, and historian, “His public speaking schedule was staggering...he sometimes delivered more than 100 addresses a year and accepted only a fifth of the invitations he received.”³⁴⁸ Freeman spoke at countless college commencements, but also “faced a constant barrage of speaking requests from civic groups, professional associations, and Civil War organizations.”³⁴⁹ His habit of speaking extemporaneously was well-known, “but Freeman made a careful study of the art of speechmaking” which resulted in

³⁴⁴ Johnson, 212. Johnson provides an overview of Freeman and Johnston’s efforts in the creation of what became known as the “Freeman Markers.” Text of the markers themselves can be found at <https://www.historyarchives.org/freemanmarkers/plates.html>. For information on Freeman’s role in the Virginia’s Highway Marker program, see https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/historical_highway_marker_program#start_entry.

³⁴⁵ Gignilliat, *Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman*, 27.

³⁴⁶ Gignilliat, *Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman*, 82.

³⁴⁷ Gignilliat, *Thought of Douglas Southall Freeman*, 82-83.

³⁴⁸ “Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman Dies; Pulitzer Prize Biographer Was 67,” *New York Times*, June 14, 1953 [dateline: July 13, 1953], Biographical File, Freeman, Douglas Southall A-T, VBHS.

³⁴⁹ Johnson, 212.

the development of “four fundamentals needed in public speaking: Have something to say, know your audience, have self-confidence, and develop a proper speaking voice.”³⁵⁰

6.2.1 EXAMPLES OF FREEMAN’S SPEECHES

“A Confession of Redoubled Faith”

Freeman espoused his belief that “Christian spirit” is a crucial aspect of “excellence” in higher education. This address was published in *The Religious Herald*.

Excerpts:

“Nothing that I have seen or learned in the decade has impressed me so much as this: Assuming a level of adequate financial support, decent equipment and competent faculty, the true excellence of a college is almost in direct proportion to the sane vigor of the religious spirit that pervades the institution.”

“Insofar as my small activities are related to higher education for the remainder of my life, I hope I shall not fail in support of scientific research and of humanistic study, but I am persuaded that the Christian spirit, disavowing sectarianism, must be put first in our colleges.”³⁵¹

“Tax Reform in Virginia: The cooperation of the Press Essential to the Enactment of Better Laws.”
“An Address before the Virginia Press Association at Natural Bridge, Virginia, July 12, 1911 by Douglas S. Freeman, Secretary of the State Tax Commission Richmond, VA., State Tax Commission, 1911.”

This address was written when Freeman served as Secretary of the State Tax Commission. He presented this proposal to the Virginia press to garner support for the commission’s report on tax reform.³⁵²

Excerpt:

“A united press means a responsive Assembly, and if the editors of Virginia as a whole will approve this measure, the Assembly will enact it into law. Perhaps no editor here will agree with all that we recommend. But I beg you, in behalf of this great cause, to consider our recommendations as a whole and, if you can do so, to urge their passage intact, rather than to endanger the bill by objection to a single measure. We have a splendid body of men in the Assembly - enlightened, patriotic; but an Assembly of sixty days is woefully brief and its members have much to do besides read tax reports. They look to you for advice and counsel. Will you not give it and help enact into law, without delay, the measures for which you have

³⁵⁰ Johnson, 213.

³⁵¹ “A Confession of Redoubled Faith,” “Douglas Southall Freeman,” RG 22.3, VBHS.

³⁵² Johnson, 92-94.

so long fought and upon which, we believe, so much of the old Commonwealth's future progress is to rest."³⁵³

"The Stewardship of American Wealth: An address delivered at the Carnegie Day exercises of the Carnegie Institute of Technology on November 25, 1935, in commemoration of the Centenary of Andrew Carnegie's birth." Reprinted from the *Carnegie Magazine*, November 1935

This address delineated Freeman's objection to taxation of the wealthy as he believed it reduced donations to non-profits, the arts and education. Freeman termed increased taxation on the wealthy a "confiscation of wealth" and defended foundations as philanthropic, not "tax havens." It is interesting to note the glowing speaker profile preceding the address:

Excerpts:

"A Virginian and a scholar of whom all the South has long been proud, Dr. Freeman has won distinction in many fields of intellectual accomplishment. As the master mind behind a newspaper wielding far-flung influence, a trustee of the University of Richmond, president of the Edgar Allan Poe Shrine, and the guiding spirit in many other interests, his capacities are infinite. His most current fame rests on his 'R. E. Lee,' the Pulitzer winner for the best American biography teaching patriotic and unselfish service to the people - a work which follows here shows a breadth of view, a depth of philosophy, and a courage of conviction which should mark it, in this critical time, as an epoch-making contributions to platform discussion."

"It must be plain to thoughtful men that if Federal appropriations continue to be set at staggering figures in the expectation of large revenues from the estates of the rich, the exhaustion of those estates will not mean a reduction of the cost of government but a widening of the bracket of taxation. The destruction of the wealth of any class is an invitation to assail the wealth of those who have a little less, and then of those who have still less."

"What our government has been unable or unwilling to do, private philanthropy has achieved."

"Again, governmental relief has rightly been extended to distressed American childhood, to the prevention of disease, and to the protection for old age; but government has simply done from necessity what individual Americans have done from love of their fellow men."³⁵⁴

³⁵³ "Tax Reform in Virginia," Freeman, Douglas Southall, 18, RG 22.3, VBHS.

³⁵⁴ "The Stewardship of American Wealth," in *Carnegie Magazine*, November 1935, in Freeman, Douglas Southall, RG 22.3, VBHS.

6.2.2 CURRENT EVENTS CLUB

For more than thirty years, Freeman presided over the News Leader Current Events Class, a public speaking group comprised of local businessmen, academics, and politicians. The class had its beginnings in an economics course Freeman taught before becoming editor of the *News Leader*: “In 1914 Dr. Freeman began teaching a class in economics, first started by the local chapter of the American Institute of Banking. The next year this became a class in public speaking and thereafter began meeting for dinner and discussion.”³⁵⁵ Meeting weekly at the Commonwealth Club, the group had a “limited membership by invitation, of about 45 members” and was considered “one of Richmond’s most sought after memberships.”³⁵⁶ The *News Leader* Current Events Class “was a place for Richmond leaders from across industries ‘to discuss current issues at a national, state, and local level.’”³⁵⁷ According to Freeman’s biographer David E. Johnson:

The class was more however, than a fraternity meeting for strait-laced businessmen. Once the meetings were underway, serious discussions occurred on the issues of the day, and Freeman used the class as a sounding board for ideas and editorial opinion. The class was hardly representative of the community – the members being all successful and prominent white males – but it was certainly representative of the forces that moved the political, economic, cultural, and social life of Richmond. The opinions formed during the meetings spread through the city like the ripple effect of a pebble in water; the consensus of the steady, solid, and responsible leadership of Richmond, of which Freeman was becoming the personification.³⁵⁸

The *News Leader* Current Event Class is now known as the Forum Club and still references Douglas Southall Freeman as its founder. It offers monthly current events discussions.³⁵⁹

6.2.3 MEN’S BIBLE STUDY CLASS

Douglas Freeman was a member of Second Baptist Church from childhood, regularly attending church throughout his life. In keeping with his family’s priority of faith, as an adult Freeman taught a Sunday school class named the Business Men’s Bible Class. Large crowds often assembled to hear his weekly lessons. According to John S. Moore, author of *The History of Second Baptist Church Richmond Virginia 1820-1995*, on Mother’s Day in 1927, “The Sunday School had a record

³⁵⁵ “Dr. Freeman Retires as Editor June 30 To Give Time to Historical Writing”, RNL, June 25, 1949, 2, Biographical File, Freeman, Douglas Southall A-T, VBHS

³⁵⁶ Frank H. Fuller, “Dr. Freeman Completes ‘Lee’s Lieutenants,’” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 18, 1944 in Biographical File, Freeman, Douglas Southall A-T, VBHS; “Dr. Freeman Retires as Editor June 30 To Give Time to Historical Writing,” RNL, June 25, 1949, 2, Freeman, Douglas Southall A-T, VBHS; Johnson, 114.

³⁵⁷ Michael Rao, Remarks to the Forum Club”, October 16, 2017, <https://president.vcu.edu/bio/speeches/2017/remarks-to-the-forum-club-2017/>.

³⁵⁸ Johnson, 143

³⁵⁹ Rao, “Remarks to the Forum Club,” October 16, 2017, president.vcu.edu/bio/speeches/2017/remarks-to-the-forum-club-2017/ and “The Club Scene”, October 7, 2007, <https://richmondmagazine.com/life-style/club-memberships-in-richmond/>.

attendance... with 1,000 present. Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman, teacher of the Business Men's Bible Class, delivered an address on that special day. The sanctuary was filled and hundreds on the street heard the service through amplifiers.”³⁶⁰ Few of Freeman’s lessons were written down, but his 1924 series of “homilies” entitled “Parables of the City Streets” was transcribed. These lessons dealt with the concepts of “work and service” and Johnson writes that in them Freeman “applied scripture to lectures on practical aspects of life such as the value of time, good reading habits, and giving up the use of profanity.”³⁶¹

In addition to teaching the Business Men’s Bible Class, Freeman wrote a monograph for Second Baptist Church’s centennial week entitled “Historical Sketch of the First Thirty Years of the Second Baptist Church.” He presented his sketch during the centennial celebration week in May of 1920. Freeman’s monograph was also included in a 1964 book on the history of the church entitled “Historical Sketches of Second Baptist Church Richmond, Virginia.”³⁶²

6.2.3.1 SELECTED LESSONS FROM FREEMAN’S “BUSINESS MEN’S BIBLE CLASS”³⁶³

“The Value of Time,” November 30, 1924

Freeman offered a lesson on the value of time and considered wasting time a “sin”:

“Yet I think the truth is that one of the worse wastages of this world is the wastage of time; and very few of us there are who appreciate its sacredness. Very few I apprehend, would agree with me that when you waste time you sin.”³⁶⁴

“Counting the Cost,” January 25, 1925

Freeman presented this lesson in January of 1925 on the parable “For which of you... intending to build a tower sitteth not down first and counteth the cost whether he have sufficient to finish it, lest haply after he hath laid the foundation and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock, saying, ‘That man began to build and was not able to

³⁶⁰ John S. Moore, *The History of Second Baptist Church Richmond Virginia 1820-1995*, The American Book Company, Chesterfield, Va., 1998, 81.

³⁶¹ Johnson, 144.

³⁶² DSF, in Solon B. Cousins, H.K. Ellyson, et al, *Historical Sketches of Second Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia*, Richmond, Virginia: Garrett and Massie, Incorporated (1964), 32-48.

³⁶³ All located in Douglas S. Freeman Papers, Articles and Speeches, 1908-25, Box 126, File: Series of Lectures, 1924-25, Library of Congress, AC.10,634; 10,660.

³⁶⁴ Douglas S. Freeman Papers, Articles and Speeches, 1908-25, Box 126, File: Series of Lectures, 1924-25, “The Value of Time,” November 30, 1924, 1, Library of Congress, AC.10,634; 10,660.

finish.”³⁶⁵ In this lecture, he addressed the negative consequences of being idle, “careless” and self-indulgent.³⁶⁶

Excerpts:

“There is nothing more certain in this world than that men do not rightly count the cost of the things they do. They underestimate the price they have to pay for indulging themselves.”³⁶⁷

“Brethren, I beseech you, reckon the uncounted cost of carelessness; of laziness; of fear; of selfishness.”³⁶⁸

“The Safe Executor,” February 22, 1925

This lesson, also considered in several key sections of this report, delineated Freeman’s belief that attributes of character, both positive and negative, are inherited. Positive characteristics, in Freeman’s mind, came from “clean blood” and “right-thinking ancestry.”³⁶⁹

“Mothers,” May 10, 1925

In this lecture, Freeman suggested that no amount of “adaptability” can substitute for a mother’s “influence”:

“Nothing is more remarkable in this world than man’s adaptability.”

“Yet as to mothers there could be no satisfactory, no adequate substitute for them, no matter what man might do in an effort to adjust himself to this new condition.”

“The first thing, I think that would happen in this world if the influence of mothers was destroyed, would be the loss of most of the grace and beauty in this world.”³⁷⁰

³⁶⁵ Douglas S. Freeman Papers, Articles and Speeches, 1908-25, Box 126, File: Series of Lectures, 1924-25, “Counting the Cost,” January 25, 1925, 1, Library of Congress, AC.10,634; 10,660.

³⁶⁶ Douglas S. Freeman Papers, Articles and Speeches, 1908-25, Box 126, File: Series of Lectures, 1924-25, “Counting the Cost,” January 25, 1925, 1 and 13, Library of Congress, AC.10,634; 10,660.

³⁶⁷ Douglas S. Freeman Papers, Articles and Speeches, 1908-25, Box 126, File: Series of Lectures, 1924-25, “Counting the Cost,” January 25, 1925, 3, Library of Congress, AC.10,634; 10,660.

³⁶⁸ Douglas S. Freeman Papers, Articles and Speeches, 1908-25, Box 126, File: Series of Lectures, 1924-25, “Counting the Cost,” January 25, 1925, 13, Library of Congress, AC.10,634; 10,660.

³⁶⁹ Douglas S. Freeman Papers, Articles and Speeches, 1908-25, Box 126, File: Series of Lectures, 1924-25, “The Safe Executor,” February 22, 1925, 1-2, Library of Congress, AC.10,634; 10,660

³⁷⁰ Articles and Speeches, 1908-25, Box 126, File: Series of Lectures, 1924-25, “Mothers,” May 10, 1925, 2-3, Library of Congress, AC.10,634; 10,660.

“A Hundred For One,” March 1, 1925

This lesson discussed the need for men to respect and protect women, especially female family members. He suggested that with privilege comes “enormous responsibility”:

“God puts on us, along with all the richness of this request, a solemn, and unescapable [sic] responsibility.”³⁷¹

“Yet, it is characteristic of life. Don’t expect great opportunity, but that with it enormous responsibility will be yours.”³⁷²

“Have You Had A Successful Year,” December 28, 1924

This lesson exemplified Freeman’s common themes of hard work and “ambition”:

“Man’s effort, other things being even, is in direct proportion to man’s aspiration, or if you choose so to call it, to man’s ambition.”³⁷³

“Growth” May, 3, 1925

This lesson concerned another common theme found in Freeman’s work, that of intelligence equivocating to “power” and considers the verse: “To him who shall be given.”

“To him who hath the power of analysis or criticism shall be given more power, and to him who hath not the power, whatever he may possess of inherent ability is more than apt to be taken from him.”³⁷⁴

“The trouble with us is not that we lack ability; not that we are deprived of the ability to increase, but that we do not learn.”³⁷⁵

6.2.4 RADIO: NEWS, “LESSONS IN LIVING,” & “TRUE VIRGINIA LORE”

An integral part of Freeman’s influence was felt by his radio audience in Richmond and the surrounding areas. Freeman delivered the news “twice daily Monday through Saturday” and continued to do so after his retirement from the *News Leader*. He had a transmitter in his home and

³⁷¹ Douglas S. Freeman Papers, Articles and Speeches, 1908-25, Box 126, File: Series of Lectures, 1924-25, “A Hundred For One,” March 1, 1925, 7-8, Library of Congress, AC.10,634; 10,660.

³⁷² Douglas S. Freeman Papers, Articles and Speeches, 1908-25, Box 126, File: Series of Lectures, 1924-25, “A Hundred For One,” March 1, 1925, 10, Library of Congress, AC.10,634; 10,660.

³⁷³ Douglas S. Freeman Papers, Articles and Speeches, 1908-25, Box 126, File: Series of Lectures, 1924-25, “Have You Had A Successful Year,” December 28, 1924, 4, Library of Congress, AC.10,634; 10,660.

³⁷⁴ Douglas S. Freeman Papers, Articles and Speeches, 1908-25, Box 126, File: Series of Lectures, 1924-25, “Growth,” May 3, 1925, 7, Library of Congress, AC.10,634; 10,660.

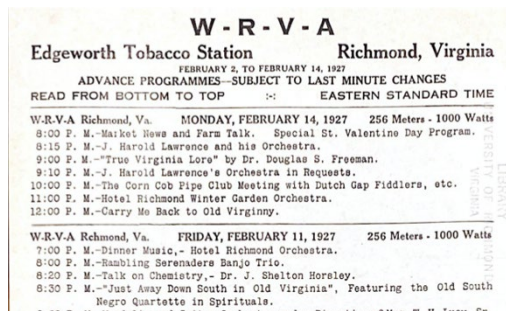
³⁷⁵ Douglas S. Freeman Papers, Articles and Speeches, 1908-25, Box 126, File: Series of Lectures, 1924-25, “Growth,” May 3, 1925, 11, Library of Congress, AC.10,634; 10,660.

presented the morning news until his death in 1953.³⁷⁶ Freeman began his radio career in the 1920s and “was one of radio’s first news analysts, beginning in 1925...His drawing ‘Good morn-ing la-dies and gentle-men...’ was as customary as breakfast to thousands. Such was their faith in his judgement that ‘Dr. Freeman says...’ often brought an end - or at least a pause - to any argument.”³⁷⁷ On Sunday’s he delivered a religious program called “Lessons in Living” that was inspired by a tedious surgical recovery and his realization that “shut-ins” did not have access to religious services.³⁷⁸

Known for his self-confidence on air, Freeman would often arrive seconds before a broadcast: “About three minutes before the broadcast, he would put aside his work in the newspaper office, walk around to the radio station and sit down at the microphone just in time” to deliver the news.³⁷⁹

Freeman’s radio career began on WRVA when he wrote and voiced a weekly program called “True Virginia Lore” for the Richmond Chamber of Commerce.³⁸⁰ After the *News Leader* began broadcasting news on WRNL, Freeman expanded his programming to include the news and Sunday programs that reached thousands. His influence as a military historian and news editor aided him in the 1940s: “During World War II his daily analyses of the battles in a calm, deliberate voice - the words were as distinct as pebbles dropped one by one in a well - were a steadying force for families whose sons were in the military service. Many a Richmonder “relayed his inspirational words to sons on the fronts he had described.”³⁸¹ Freeman was known for “[m]ixing editorial comments with news.... [he] would often call Richmond ‘the greatest city in the greatest state in the greatest nation in the history of the world.’”³⁸²

A WRNL station survey included in *The Radio Annual 1940* revealed that the station then reached a primary audience of 735,000 and 125,900 “radio homes.” Its secondary audience was 915,000 and 640,000 “radio homes.”³⁸³ Here “secondary” indicates some limited listening due to interference



Douglas Southall Freeman Miscellaneous Biographical Material, Virginia Baptist Historical Society

³⁷⁶ Johnson, 148.

³⁷⁷ Guy Friddell, “Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman,” 3, VBHS.

³⁷⁸ Johnson, 220-221.

³⁷⁹ Guy Friddell, “Dr. Freeman Counted Seconds But Always Had Time For Others,” RNL, May 13, 1985, Douglas Southall Freeman, A-T, VBHS.

³⁸⁰ “Douglas Southall Freeman,” Folder: RG 22.3 Freeman, D. S. VBHS.

³⁸¹ Guy Friddell, “Dr. Freeman Counted Seconds But Always Had Time For Others,” RNL, May 13, 1985, Douglas Southall Freeman, A-T, VBHS.

³⁸² Richard Johnstone, “Freeman Hall Named for Former Messenger Editor,” *Collegian*, April 13, 1978, 3, File: Freeman Hall RG 30.2.33 VBHS.

³⁸³ Jack Alicote, ed. *The Radio Annual 1940*, The Radio Daily (1940), 544, Library of Congress and the

from other signals. According to Johnson, Freeman’s radio program was “estimated” to have “reached 63 percent of the listening audience,” and Freeman “continued the pace of thirteen broadcasts a week until his death.”³⁸⁴ In honor of his pioneering broadcasting career, the “Douglas Southall Freeman Award for Public Service in Radio Journalism” was established in 1955.”³⁸⁵

6.2.4.1 AN EXAMPLE OF FREEMAN’S BROADCASTS

“A Free Church in A Free State”³⁸⁶

In this broadcast, Freeman explored the theme of religious liberty and discussed at length the history of freedom of religion in Virginia. One of his few transcribed broadcasts, it originally aired on the “Baptist Hour” and was also published in *The Chronicle: A Baptist Historical Quarterly* in 1944.³⁸⁷

“If only each generation might pass on to the next the knowledge that comes through trial and error, how many, many pitfalls our sons and our daughters could avoid!”

“Every observer of our national life will tell you that government seldom makes new mistakes. It simply repeats old mistakes in a new way. The experimental mind is much more frequent in government than the historical mind.”

“We still have religious liberty – ‘soul freedom,’ as older Baptists loved to call it; but sometimes we observe tendencies to deny others what we demand for ourselves. Free examination of truth is a right that inheres in religious liberty. That right many men exercise in their appraisal of the faith of others.”³⁸⁸

“The sweetness and the freedom of religious faith long have been enjoyed in America and have been epitomized in the history of this State of Virginia.”³⁸⁹

“Jefferson was right. We have solved the question. In a free state, the church can be free. Without a free state, there can be no assurance of religious freedom.”³⁹⁰

Internet Archive, [link](#).

³⁸⁴ Johnson, 148.

³⁸⁵ “Va. AP Honors WRNL, WSVS For Public Service in Radio,” Broadcasting, November 14, 1955. Web. January 20, 2021.

³⁸⁶ “A Free Church in a Free State,” “Douglas Southall Freeman,” 86, RG 22.3 VBHS.

³⁸⁷ “A Free Church in a Free State,” *Chronicle: A Baptist Historical Quarterly* VII, no. 2 (April 1944), 86-89, 96.

³⁸⁸ “Free Church in a Free State,” 86.

³⁸⁹ “Free Church in a Free State,” 87.

³⁹⁰ “Free Church in a Free State,” 96.

6.3 POLITICS

Freeman was an active Democrat for the vast majority of his life. He wrote many editorials about Woodrow Wilson's presidency and admired him greatly.³⁹¹ He considered himself a progressive regarding social issues. Freeman often used his editorial platform to educate the public on the aims of vying political parties, candidate platforms, and policy developments. More often than not, Freeman encouraged his readers to exercise their patriotic duty to vote as illustrated in his "Intelligent Suffrage" series and other editorials such as "Qualify, New Voters!" where he chides women for their "apathy" to combat the "varied sorts" who seek to "control the government."³⁹² It was not until later in his life that Freeman grew weary of what he saw as Democratic spending and onerous federal oversight of local government. Historian John R. Peacock provides a concise overview of Freeman's political views in "Keeping the Faith: Douglas Southall Freeman, 1886-1953":

In state politics he was an independent Democrat who consistently, if cautiously, opposed Virginia's political machine. In national politics he considered himself to be a liberal for the first two decades of this editorship. By his own definition of the term, he was perhaps a life-long liberal, but after 1935 his insistence on fiscal conservatism and limited federal power no longer placed him in the liberal camp. Despite his growing opposition to the tax and spend policies of the New Deal, he endorsed each of Franklin Roosevelt's bids for re-election, primarily because he trusted FDR's experienced hand in guiding the nation's foreign policy. He soon lost faith in Roosevelt's successor, Harry Truman, and openly endorsed Republican Dwight Eisenhower for President in 1952.³⁹³

Decades earlier, in 1920, Freeman wrote an editorial entitled "G.O.P. and Negro Voters." He derided the Republican Party for attempting to include African Americans in political conventions.³⁹⁴ By the late 1940s, Freeman's stance on race and his rigid fiscal conservatism left him disillusioned with an evolving Democratic platform. The world was changing around him, but Freeman was never one to surrender the traditions of his paternalistic Virginian upbringing and he found a political home in the Eisenhower-era Republican Party.

³⁹¹ For more information on Freeman's devotion to Wilson, see the following editorials: "Wilson and the Test" January 5, 1916; "Mr. Wilson's Labor Policy" December 3, 1919; "Wilson Mentally Himself" December 12, 1919. Johnson writes of Freeman's later membership on the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "Since his days of writing editorials on behalf of Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations he had a special interest in the passionate dedication to the cause of World Peace that's he viewed his membership on the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is a real effort to advance the dream of Wilson" (Johnson p 207).

³⁹² DSF, "Qualify!" RNL, September 9, 1920, LOV.

³⁹³ Peacock, "Keeping the Faith," iii-iv

³⁹⁴ DSF, "G. O. P. and Negro Voters," June 4, 1920, LOV.

6.3.1 SELECTED POLITICAL EDITORIALS BY FREEMAN

“The Conservatives’ Day,” August 19, 1926

In this 1926 editorial, Freeman advocated conservative politics over socialism with European examples. He noted the swing to more conservative views in parts of Europe and provided a comparison of the U.S.’s successful conservative views when compared to European liberalism.

Excerpts:

“This may merely illustrate what everyone knows – that socialism is impracticable and its agents unskilled.”

“Conservatives’ courage is their chief advantage in dealing with political problems the sort Europe has had since 1918. They have had background which the socialists have lacked... They have been quicker to visualize the problems presented by depreciated currency and unsettled foreign relations, and they have not suffered as the left-wing cabinets have from the divided counsels of inexperience.”³⁹⁵

“Liberal or Lost,” December 8, 1931

Freeman discussed the responsibility of the Democratic party to the people of the United States given its “control” of the House of Representatives with the last election.

Excerpts:

“Face the fact frankly. The Democratic party is in power not because it is Democratic, but because it is not Republican.”

“The choice of the Democratic party is very clear: It may look to Wall street or it may look to the unhappy tenements of the cities and to the mortgaged farms of the West. It cannot compete with the Republicans for the favor of the privileged class. It must be liberal, or its latest tenure of office will be its last. It cannot equivocate, and it must not be a hypocrite.”³⁹⁶

“How ‘Liberal’?” April 2, 1940

In this editorial, Freeman shared his concern over setting boundaries of liberalism in the Democratic party. He asked, “How ‘liberal’ is the Democratic party to be? What, in fact, is a ‘liberal party’? Although definition often is the refuge of dissent, it becomes of importance in 1940 to define liberalism and, having done so, to determine the degree of liberalism that the Democratic party should attempt to represent.”

Excerpts:

“Liberalism does not imply a specific program. Neither does it represent continuing

³⁹⁵ DSF, “The Conservatives’ Day,” August 19, 1926, LOV.

³⁹⁶ DSF, “Liberal or Lost,” December 8, 1931, LOV.

surrender of property right [sic] to the demands of those who intend to take from others that which they cannot or will not earn for themselves. That it's not the policy of liberalism but of revolution.”

“Liberalism is essentially the state of mind which prompts intelligent experimentation for the advancement of society as a whole.”

“Liberalism cannot disregard cost. It never should have done so. Put in plain terms, this means that the Democratic program of 1949 must not be one of halt but it must not be one of acceleration. The application of that will be a test of statesmanship. Is the Democratic party able to measure up to that test? Have we in sight a leader courageous enough to say, ‘We must go on – but not too fast’?”³⁹⁷

³⁹⁷ DSF, “How ‘Liberal’?,” April 2, 1940, LOV.

7.0 FREEMAN AS A UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND ADMINISTRATOR

Freeman served as Trustee on the University of Richmond Board of Trustees from 1925 to 1950. He became President of the Board of Trustees in 1934, and proposed a resolution changing the title to Rector of the Board of Trustees in 1939. This was to prevent confusion between the titles “President of the University” and “President of the Board of Trustees.” In the role of rector, Freeman was involved in daily decisions necessary to the operation of the institution. His oversight of institutional practices included everything from revising the institutional charter to approving orders for lab supplies, and the scope of his oversight stands in sharp contrast to contemporary expectations of institutional Trustees.³⁹⁸ Over twenty-five years, he also served as keynote speaker for countless assemblies including commencements, honorary degree programs, administration and staff retirements, memorials, and university anniversaries. Among Freeman’s extensive commitments to civic, non-profit, scholarly, and religious associations, his dedication to the University of Richmond was his top priority.³⁹⁹ Executive Committee meetings were generally held at his home, Westbourne, or his *News Leader* office. Freeman’s tenure as rector saw the university through exponential growth and debilitating eras of financial hardship. Freeman was instrumental in shepherding the university through the deprivations of the Great Depression and World War II, during which he monitored waning investments, budget losses, faculty staffing, and temporary salary reductions, and academic needs that resulted from limited funding. In an effort to procure ancillary funding for the university from the Federal Government, he assisted in the establishment of military training programs on the campus.⁴⁰⁰ While rector, Freeman also donated funds at key times to assist the university when they were most needed and provided the institution’s mace, chapel reredos, altar tablet, and books for the library.⁴⁰¹ During more prosperous times, he promoted the University of Richmond through *News Leader* editorials and approved articles about university happenings in an effort to raise public recognition and support.⁴⁰²

From the moment Freeman became rector, he initiated aggressive development and public relations efforts, employing his noted style of networking with influential people in the state to further the

³⁹⁸ For examples of Freeman’s oversight in the minutia of university operations see Presidential Correspondence of Frederic W. Boatwright 1910-1946: Collection of Boatwright’s correspondence with Freeman 1922-1946

³⁹⁹ Johnson, 208.

⁴⁰⁰ Trustee Records, Reel: 7-121-P, VBGB, UR Trustees, Janette-Jackson, F.T. (S), Jeter Diary, Virginia Historical Society, yrs. 1942-1945.

⁴⁰¹ Presidential Correspondence of Frederic W. Boatwright: Collection of Boatwright’s Correspondence with Douglas Southall Freeman, letter from Boatwright to Freeman dated December 30, 1943, Boatwright Library Special Collections, University of Richmond; Executive Committee Minutes, Folder: 1941, Virginia Baptist Historical Society (reredos and tablet); Executive Committee Minutes, Folder: 1944, Virginia Baptist Historical Society. (mace); Trustee Records, Reel: MF10-424 P, UR Board of Trustee Minutes, 1947-1967, Virginia Historical Society, yr. 1948 (books).

⁴⁰² DSF, “Eleven Hundred Hopes,” RNL, June 7, 1923, LOV; “U. of R. President Sees Need of More Equipment,” RNL, June 5, 1923, LOV.

growth of the university.⁴⁰³ Through a review of Trustee and Executive Committee minutes, it is clear that Freeman considered university public relations essential for fundraising and growth. He also oversaw the implementation of both life insurance and retirement plans for faculty and staff along with strategizing fundraising efforts such as the Million Dollar Campaign. Approved by the Board of Trustees in 1944, this campaign's goals were to raise the funds necessary to construct a "Central University Library," a "Dormitory for Westhampton College" and supplement the university's "Endowment." Freeman was appointed to the campaign committee in 1944 and President Boatwright oversaw the effort until his retirement in 1946.⁴⁰⁴

In 1947, a road widening project on campus revealed two sets of human remains between the Steam Plant and two buildings in the "Science Group": Puryear and Richmond Halls. News accounts in both the *News Leader* and the *Times-Dispatch* attributed the remains to the graves of enslaved people who were once bound to the land's owners.⁴⁰⁵ The day after the bodies were uncovered, Freeman weighed in with an editorial ... in which he noted the discovery but argued that "forgotten graves" should not get in the way of development. In a contrast to his enthusiasm for preserving the graves of Confederate soldiers, Freeman wrote, "Were every grave left forever undisturbed, the globe would be a cemetery in which there would not be room for men to till and to harvest."⁴⁰⁶

In 1936, when local business leader Louis Powell threatened institutional fundraising efforts because of what he believed to be the radicalism of some of the faculty, Freeman stood up for the institution and for academic freedom, responding unequivocally to Powell's effort in items published in the *News Leader* and the *Religious Herald*. Former University of Richmond faculty member and historian, W. Harrison Daniel includes Freeman's response in his account of the controversy in *History at the University of Richmond*: "[T]he University of Richmond trustees would close the institution 'before they would say that teachers must pussyfoot intellectually or bury secretly the honest findings of their inquiry.'" Were the institution to be influenced by threats such as Powell's, Freeman insisted that "[b]etter no university than one that is afraid of truth... better a denial to young Richmonders of any college education than timid training by teachers who could be bullied into intellectual trimming." Daniel writes that the "controversy involving academic

⁴⁰³ Johnson, 209.

⁴⁰⁴ Board of Trustees Records, 1944, Reel 7-121-P), University Archives, VBHS; Executive Committee Minutes, January 24, 1944, University Archives, VBHS.

⁴⁰⁵ "Human Bones Unearthed at U. of R., RNL, October 31, 1947, LOV; "Skeletons Are Found on U. of R. Campus," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 1, 1947. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* article was provided by Eric Kolenich of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. This history has been examined by Shelby M. Driskill, who has conducted research since 2018 that is compiled in *Paths to the Burying Ground: Enslavement, Erasure & Memory on the Campus of the University of Richmond* ([link](#)), and was also published in "Knowledge of this Cannot Be Hidden: " *A Report on the Westham Burying Ground* ([link](#)), submitted by Dr. Loranett L. Lee and Shelby M. Driskill as the first report of the Inclusive History Project.

⁴⁰⁶ DSF, "Forgotten Graveyards," RNL, November 1, 1947, LOV.

freedom represented perhaps the finest hour in the history of the university.”⁴⁰⁷



Richmond Collegian, March 22, 1946

During his tenure as rector, he faced several leadership challenges. In March of 1946, a luncheon held in his home following the Cannon Memorial Chapel program to confer honorary degrees upon General Dwight D. Eisenhower and Admiral Chester W. Nimitz unexpectedly spawned the “mint julep controversy.” Some Baptist ministers and members of the Baptist Board of Missions and Education were outraged that Freeman served alcohol to the visitors under the auspices of an institutional event. This resulted in Freeman’s offer to resign from the Board of Trustees.⁴⁰⁸ President Boatwright was able to smooth over any difficulties with the Baptist Board of Missions and Education given that alcohol was served at Freeman’s

home, not during the university assembly. As part of the effort to repair the damage, Boatwright enlisted the help of Senator M.M. Long to stopping a prospective resolution condemning Freeman. Boatwright wrote that, were he to resign from the Board of Trustees, the loss would be “incalculable.”⁴⁰⁹

Three years later in 1949, another issue developed involving long-standing alumni and fraternity member objections to a Trustee mandated fraternity housing policy. This policy, calling for the eleven fraternities at the university to build lodges on campus and employ housemothers, met with varied resistance from some fraternities already established on campus in alternate housing, fraternal organizations with off-campus residences, and fraternities which could not afford to build a lodge on campus.⁴¹⁰ The issue stemmed from claims that not all fraternities were represented on the Executive Committee and, thus, favoritism could be shown. To solve this dilemma, the Executive Committee asked the trustees to establish a special committee to investigate the lodging issue which

⁴⁰⁷ Daniel, 167.

⁴⁰⁸ Executive Committee Minutes, Folder: 1946, Virginia Baptist Historical Society. A detailed account of the controversy is found in Johnson, *Douglas Southall Freeman*, 289-291.

⁴⁰⁹ Presidential Correspondence of Frederic W. Boatwright: Collection of Boatwright’s Correspondence with Douglas Southall Freeman, letter from Boatwright to Sen, M. M. Long, June 10, 1946, Boatwright Library Special Collections, University of Richmond.

⁴¹⁰ While the debate around fraternal housing spanned the years 1938-1949, the period of highest activity was from 1945-1949. A series of emblematic examples can be found in Executive Committee Minutes, Folders 1945-1949: Nov 14, 1945; May 26, 1947; May 31, 1948; and June 10, 1949, VBHS.

was to be comprised of trustees who were fraternity alums and several non-fraternity members.⁴¹¹ The debate led Freeman to “threaten to resign.”⁴¹²

Freeman’s ultimate decision to resign as Rector of the Board of Trustees of the University of Richmond came in June of 1950 and stemmed from his decades-long disapproval of colleges and universities prioritizing athletics over academics, a matter of wide debate during his tenure on the board. During a special meeting of the Executive Committee and Athletic Program representatives, Freeman refused to agree to further loans to underpin the struggling Athletic Department.⁴¹³ This time, he would not entertain attempts by administrators, other trustees, or alumni to persuade him to remain on the Board of Trustees. No evidence has been located in institutional records indicating Freeman continued to serve as an advisor to President George M. Modlin after his departure from the board. He concentrated instead on his research and writing of the sixth volume in his ultimately seven-volume biography of George Washington.⁴¹⁴

Freeman’s personal donations to the University of Richmond include his gifts of the University mace, the Cannon chapel reredos, a scholarship in the name of his son, financial support to meet immediate institutional needs, monetary gifts to Richmond College and Westhampton College, and books donated to the university’s library. Freeman’s daughter, Mary Tyler Freeman Cheek McClenahan and her then husband Leslie Cheek established the Douglas Southall Freeman Chair in History in his honor. The Douglas Southall Freeman Lecture Series was an outgrowth of the establishment of the Chair position.⁴¹⁵ Both the Freeman Society (a midcentury debating club) and Freeman Hall were named for Douglas Southall Freeman but were not funded by Freeman or his family. Freeman Hall was dedicated in 1965, twelve years after Freeman’s death in 1953.

7.1 SELECTED FREEMAN-BOATWRIGHT CORRESPONDENCE

Boatwright to Freeman, May 11, 1932; Freeman to Boatwright, May 12, 1932 and May 12, 1932

In this series of three letters, President Boatwright thanked Freeman for the newspaper coverage and series of editorials covering both the Centennial Celebration and Boatwright’s many years of service to the University of Richmond. He also thanked Freeman for his planning efforts with the Centennial Celebration and sent his regrets that Freeman was not able to attend the programs. In Freeman’s May 21st response, he concluded the exchange by stating that his providing publicity for the University was more important than him attending the programs himself.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹¹ Trustees Records, 1947-1967, Reel: MF 10-424 P, June 6, 1949, VBHS.

⁴¹² Johnson, 336.

⁴¹³ Executive Committee Minutes, Folder: 1950, June 6, 1950, VBHS.

⁴¹⁴ Volume seven of Freeman’s *George Washington* was written by Mary Wells Ashworth and John Carroll using Freeman’s notes (Johnson, 356).

⁴¹⁵ Daniel, *History at the University of Richmond*, 322-323.

⁴¹⁶ Boatwright to Freeman, May 11, 1932; Freeman to Boatwright, May 12, 1932 and May 12, 1932,

Boatwright to Freeman, June 12, 1946

In this letter, President Boatwright thanked Freeman for an editorial regarding Boatwright's fifty years as president of the university. He also expressed his gratitude for Freeman's years of friendship and service as trustee.⁴¹⁷

Freeman to Boatwright, January 22, 1935 [two letters on the same day]

In 1935, Freeman wrote to President Boatwright to provide suggestions for "bringing the city to the University and...the University to the city." He also recommended establishing an advisory committee of female leaders in the city to guide Westhampton's "social life of our girls." He included in the list of possible committee members the president of the League of Women Voters, various wives representing prominent families, presidents of ladies' clubs, and principals of private schools. He also suggested hiring a social director for Westhampton and the organization of winter courses in vocations and Virginia government. He followed up with a second letter of the same date detailing a list of plans to enhance the university's connection to the city of Richmond and concluded by requesting a meeting with Boatwright to consider his public relations strategy.⁴¹⁸

Boatwright to Freeman, July 1945, from Monterey, VA

President Boatwright wrote to thank Freeman for planning a celebration of his fifty years as President writing that it will be "memorable in the history of the University" and he said that he doubted any other trustee could have planned an event holding such statewide and national significance. He stated that Freeman's remarks on his character will remain a "cherished possession" and noted their shared ideals for the future of the university. Boatwright wrote, "Inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness must characterize the future." He concluded by sending his sympathies over the loss of Freeman's brother, Hamner Freeman.⁴¹⁹

Presidential Correspondence of Frederic W. Boatwright 1910-1946: Collection of Boatwright's correspondence with Freeman 1922-1946, Boatwright Library, University of Richmond.

⁴¹⁷ Boatwright to Freeman, June 12, 1946, Presidential Correspondence of Frederic W. Boatwright 1910-1946: Collection of Boatwright's correspondence with Freeman 1922-1946, Boatwright Library, University of Richmond.

⁴¹⁸ Freeman to Boatwright, January 22, 1935, Presidential Correspondence of Frederic W. Boatwright 1910-1946: Collection of Boatwright's correspondence with Freeman 1922-1946, Boatwright Library, University of Richmond.

⁴¹⁹ Boatwright to Freeman, July 1945, Presidential Correspondence of Frederic W. Boatwright 1910-1946: Collection of Boatwright's correspondence with Freeman 1922-1946, Boatwright Library, University of Richmond.

8.0 DEATH AND LEGACY

Douglas Southall Freeman died on June 13, 1953 at the age of sixty-seven. At the time of his death, he was completing *Patriot and President, 1784-1793*, the sixth volume of his biography on George Washington, and he had spent the day tending his rose garden and delivering his morning news broadcast.⁴²⁰ Word of his death spread quickly and received international notice. President Eisenhower was “profoundly distressed” at the news and “hundreds of telegrams followed the president’s.”⁴²¹ Journalist and author, Guy Friddell shared that, “The News Leader phone rang continuously after his death, and one housewife, recalling her dependence on his wartime commentaries, unconsciously paraphrased General Lee’s remark on the death of Stonewall Jackson when she told a reporter, ‘I’ve lost my right arm.’”⁴²² In the 1953 minutes of the Current Events Class, the members prepared a moving memorial account of Freeman’s death and held an “emergency meeting to prepare for his funeral.”⁴²³ The vast number of articles about Freeman’s career printed in the days and weeks that followed June 13th, speak to the impact of his influence on the public. A substantial collection of news clippings on Freeman’s death are housed in the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, University of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia. One article printed in the *New York Times* on June 14, 1953, described Freeman as ‘the definitive historian of the Confederacy.’⁴²⁴ This opinion was shared by historian John L. Gignilliat, who writes that Freeman “became undeniably the greatest historian in the Cavalier state, and he may well have been her most famous citizen at the time of his death.”⁴²⁵ To “educate the public” about Freeman’s life and career, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources placed an historical highway marker near Freeman’s birthplace in Lynchburg, Virginia in 1998.⁴²⁶



Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Virginia
(Shelby M. Driskill, 2021)

⁴²⁰ Johnson, 351.

⁴²¹ Johnson, 353.

⁴²² “Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman” in Douglas Southall Freeman RG 22.3 VBHS, 3.

⁴²³ Folder: RG 22.3 Freeman, D. S. VBHS “Douglas Southall Freeman 1886-1953 Minutes of Meeting and Resolution by The News Leader Current Event Class.”

⁴²⁴ “Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman Dies; Pulitzer Prize Biographer Was 67,” in Biographical File, Freeman, Douglas Southall A-T.

⁴²⁵ Gignilliat, 472.

⁴²⁶ “Douglas Southall Freeman, Q-6-17,” Virginia Department of Historic Resources, <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/highway-markers/>.

The work of Alfred Lord Tennyson was always particularly precious to Freeman. In one editorial he had written, “Read to your father, if he be old, Tennyson’s fine “Ulysses.”⁴²⁷ On Douglas Southall Freeman’s gravestone in Hollywood Cemetery, his epitaph is a line drawn from “Ulysses”: “‘Tis not too late to seek a newer world.”⁴²⁸

CONCLUSION

His own mind ranged over every conceivable subject; he could tolerate no fetters on his opinions. Yet his abiding love for the military service, and for the disciplines of academic life, left him with a powerful devotion to rank, and position, and class. He knew he was a most uncommon man and that uncommon achievements were expected of him.

James J. Kilpatrick at the dedication of Freeman Hall, 1965⁴²⁹

Douglas Southall Freeman’s links to the University of Richmond are extensive. He was a student at Richmond College, a highly active and committed alumnus, a member of the Board of Trustees, and the University Rector. As an internationally known, Pulitzer Prize winning historical biographer, his association with the institution helped to elevate its profile, and his active support for the university in the pages of the *Richmond News Leader* functioned as a powerful public relations tool. He was a significant donor and several institutional symbols were gifts from he and his family.

Over a lifetime of achievement, influence, and unparalleled public communication, race-based determinism dictated Freeman’s perspective on key issues and on his beliefs regarding the equal rights and treatment of Black people. In addition to his literary career, his work in journalism, and other well-considered parts of his biography, Freeman’s convictions regarding the inherent dominance of white people is a significant part of his life and legacy. While Freeman did not think of himself as an extremist and, at times, disagreed with racial purity activists, his was a disagreement of approach rather than principle.

Few theories are dangerous until they are found acceptable. Thereafter, the danger is to be gauged not by the validity of the theory but by the number of those who may acquiesce in it.

Douglas Southall Freeman “Must the Caesars Return?” June 10, 1936

As a writer, Freeman had the power to mold public opinion, drawing attention to some topics, and dismissing others. Regarding a number of social issues, he considered himself to be a progressive for most of his adult life, while remaining a staunch fiscal conservative. His stances with regard to improvements for the Black community were informed by race-based paternalism, his deep conviction that he, and other members of the white elite, knew what was best for Black men, women, and children. According to J. Douglas Smith, Freeman and other “white elites... continued to believe that they could manage race relations on their own terms.”⁴³⁰ His version of this

⁴²⁷ DSF, “After the Paper, Read –,” RNL June 7, 1923, LOV.

⁴²⁸ Johnson, 358.

⁴²⁹ Kilpatrick, “He Was Unforgettable,” 20, VBHS.

⁴³⁰ J. Douglas Smith, “Campaign for Racial Purity and the Erosion of Paternalism in Virginia, 1922-1930,”

perspective was entwined with his deeply-rooted convictions about the superiority of those of Anglo-Saxon descent and of white superiority in general, and his lifelong belief in the role of “clean blood” in determining character and achievement. In Freeman’s mind, the autonomy of Black and indigenous individuals, and white people who were uneducated and impoverished, were viewed as threats to the “Virginia Way.”⁴³¹ These beliefs were also shared by many white Virginians who held themselves above other Southerners. What set Freeman apart was the power of his platform.

Journal of Southern History, 106.

⁴³¹ DSF, “Not the Virginia Way,” RNL, February 9, 1926.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Douglas Southall Freeman Papers, held by the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., are an extraordinarily rich resource for biographical information on Douglas Southall Freeman. Members of the staff in the library's Manuscripts Division were extremely helpful. Following the COVID-19 lockdown, which prevented the Inclusive History researchers from making a planned return visit, Bruce Kirby, Reference Librarian, Manuscript Division, provided access to vital Freeman material. The staff of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society have welcomed me to their archives many times over the last sixteen months. VBHS Director Nathan Taylor and Research Assistant Darlene Herod offered essential direction and assistance, accommodating research on-site during an extensive renovation process. They and Robbie Jones Miller, Operations Specialist, also provided access to materials during the COVID-19-related restrictions on campus. Significant research for this study was conducted by Inclusive History researchers on-site at the Library of Virginia which holds the *Richmond News Leader* on microfilm. Staff members welcomed me and student researchers Ayele d'Almeida (BA, 2020) and Catherine Franceski (BA, 2020), providing access to the essential Freeman editorials. The Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia provided access to several collections. The Library at the Virginia Historical Society (Virginia Museum of History and Culture) provided access to background materials in several collections. As part of the research process, I met with two members of the staff at Boatwright Library, University of Richmond: Lynda Kachurak, Rare Books and Special Collections Librarian, and Dywana Saunders, Metadata and Digitization Associate, University of Richmond Digital Engagement Team at Boatwright Library. They both provided insights and useful materials. Digitized documents such as *The Spider* [University of Richmond yearbook], *The Collegian* [University of Richmond student newspaper], and *The Messenger* [University of Richmond student literary magazine] were available through the work of the University of Richmond Digital Engagement Team at Boatwright Library. Dr. Nicole Maurantonio, Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Communication Studies, University of Richmond, and her students engaged with Douglas Southall Freeman's editorials as part of their project-based coursework in Spring 2020. They also hosted a classroom visit from members of the Inclusive History Study. I was also privileged to guest lecture in two classes of Leadership and the Humanities taught by Dr. Laurant L. Lee, Visiting Lecturer in the Jepson School of Leadership Studies (2018-2020) and Assistant Adjunct Professor in the School of Professional and Continuing Studies. In June of 2020, the Inclusive History Team was invited to meet with participants in the Race and Racism Project led by Dr. Ernest McGowen, Associate Professor of Political Science.

Eric Kolenich of the Richmond Times Dispatch provided the clipping of "Skeletons Are Found on the U. of R. Campus," Richmond Times-Dispatch, November 1, 1947. Kathy Driver, Office Manager of Second Baptist Church in Henrico County, Virginia, shared materials on the history of the church and Freeman's contribution to *Historical Sketches of Second Baptist Church* (1964). These resources and the church's website were very helpful.

The extent of Freeman's papers held by the Library of Congress is legendary in scale. While Inclusive History Project researchers visited the collection and were also able to retrieve additional materials during the COVID-19 lockdown, the publications of the scholars and writers who have worked extensively with the material has been indispensable to this report. The work of David E.

Johnson in particular, provided a critical point of access to the vast collection of Freeman's papers. We are grateful for his considerable scholarship which resulted in his comprehensive biography of Freeman, *Douglas Southall Freeman* (2002).

From Suzanne Slye, January 15, 2021: My sincerest gratitude to Dr. Laurant L. Lee and Shelby M. Driskill for their guidance, shared professional experience, and friendship. I am grateful to Meriwether Gilmore, Ayele d'Almeida and Catherine Franceski for their efforts on this project. Finally, to my family, I offer my heartfelt appreciation for their support, love, and patience.

APPENDIX

AWARDS, HONORS, AND BOARD MEMBERSHIPS

SELECTED AWARDS AND HONORS

1932	New York Southern Society, Parchment of Distinction ⁴³²
1935	Pulitzer Prize for <i>R.E. Lee: A Biography</i> ⁴³³
1946	Academy of Arts and Letters ⁴³⁴
1947	American Philosophical Society, Franklin Medal ⁴³⁵ Virginia State Chamber of Commerce, Distinguished Service Scroll ⁴³⁶
1951	Best News Commentary Over Larger Radio Stations from Virginia Associated Press Broadcasters ⁴³⁷
1952	Guggenheim Fellowship to support his research as he prepared to write his biography of George Washington ⁴³⁸
1958	Pulitzer Prize for <i>George Washington: A Biography</i> ⁴³⁹

SELECTED HONORARY DEGREES

Although the true total number of honorary degrees conferred upon Douglas Southall Freeman may never be known, according to his eldest daughter, Mary Tyler Freeman Cheek McClenahan, Freeman held twenty-three honorary degrees from leading institutions across the country and a July 1960 *Reader's Digest* article on the life of Freeman mentioned Freeman held twenty-five honorary degrees.⁴⁴⁰ Honorary degrees were conferred on Freeman from institutions such as Yale, Columbia,

⁴³² RNL, Dec. 10, 1932 "Two Virginians Receive Honor: Awards Made for Services in Conserving History of South," VBHS.

⁴³³ Johnson, 170-171.

⁴³⁴ "Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman Dies; Pulitzer Prize Biographer Was 67," New York Times, June 14, 1953.

⁴³⁵ Stewart W. Smith, *Douglas Southall Freeman on Leadership*, 10.

⁴³⁶ "State Chamber Will Present Service Scroll to Dr. Freeman," April 18, 1947, RTD, VBHS.

⁴³⁷ "Douglas S. Freeman Wins Award For News Commentary," Kingsport News, April 6, 1951.

⁴³⁸ "Dr. Freeman and Dr. Simkins Win Guggenheim Fellowships," RTD, April 21, 1952.

⁴³⁹ Johnson, "Douglas Southall Freeman (1886-1953)," Encyclopedia Virginia, *Virginia Humanities*, May 27, 2014.

⁴⁴⁰ "A High Calling: Douglas Southall Freeman and Robert E. Lee," 12, VBHS File Label: Freeman,

Harvard, Princeton, Washington and Lee University, William and Mary College, University of Richmond, Wake Forest College and the University of Pittsburgh.⁴⁴¹ Freeman received his Doctor of Laws honorary degree from University of Richmond in 1923.⁴⁴²

SELECTED BOARDS/COMMITTEES

Tuberculosis Association; Chair of the Virginia Rhodes Scholarship Committee; The Oxford Group; Rockefeller Foundation; Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; The General Education Board; Member, The Council of the Library of Congress; President of the Southern Historical Society; First President, Society of American Historians; Chair, Advisory Committee, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*;⁴⁴³ Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, later named the Douglas Southall Freeman Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities; a founder of the Virginia League for Planned Parenthood;⁴⁴⁴ Committee of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation with Dr. S. C. Mitchell and Maggie L. Walker;⁴⁴⁵ President's Commission on Higher Education (1946);⁴⁴⁶ Chair, State Board of Charities and Corrections; Chairman, Virginia Rhodes Scholarship Committee of Selection; Council Member, Virginia Colleges; Trustee, Children's Memorial Clinic; Secretary and Trustee, Confederate Memorial Institute; Member, Advisory Board for the Confederate Museum; Member, Advisory Board of the National Economic Council; Vice President, Battlefield Parks Association; President, Edgar A. Poe Shrine; Member, John Hopkins Alumni Council; Member, American Historical Association; Virginia Historical Society; Phi Gamma Delta; Phi Beta Kappa; Omicron Delta Kappa; President, General Alumni Association of the University of Richmond (until 1924); Member, Moral Rearmament group (Buckmanites); Member, Advisory Council, Dictionary of American History; Member, The Council of the Library of Congress; Member, American Academy of Arts and Letters⁴⁴⁷

AUTHOR PROFILE SAMPLES

AUTHOR PROFILE ON PAMPHLET ADVERTISEMENT FOR *R. E. LEE: A BIOGRAPHY*:

“Douglas Southall Freeman the editor of *The Richmond News Leader*, has long been distinguished in Southern journalism. He has been prominently identified with various movements and

Douglas Southall A-T; Charles Henry Hamilton, “The Most Unforgettable Character I’ve Met,” *Reader’s Digest*, July 1960, 150, File Label: Freeman, Douglas Southall A-T, VBHS.

⁴⁴¹ Freeman, Douglas Southall, RG-22.3, VBHS.

⁴⁴² University of Richmond Trustee Records, Reel: MF-7-123, February 1, 1923, VBHS.

⁴⁴³ Various, File: Freeman, Douglas Southall A-T, VBHS.

⁴⁴⁴ Various, Douglas Southall Freeman Papers Corres. 1946, PI-R, 72, Library of Congress AC. 10,634; 10,660.

⁴⁴⁵ Papers of Douglas Southall Freeman, Box 9, No. 5220 Folder: 1935 Interracial Commission 1935 Investments Freeman 5220, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library.

⁴⁴⁶ Douglas Southall Freeman Papers, Corres 1946, PI-R, 72, Library of Congress AC. 10,634; 10,660.

⁴⁴⁷ Collected from Douglas Southall Freeman Biographical and Misc. Files, A-T and RG 22.3, VBHS.

associations for furthering Southern historical study and for perpetuating Southern tradition, as secretary of the Confederate Memorial Institute, a member of the advisory board of the Confederate Museum, vice-president of the Battlefield Park Association, and president of the Southern Historical Society. He is the author of various studies in Confederate military history, and editor of "A Calendar of Confederate Papers" and "Lee's Dispatches." To this monumental biography of the great South leader, which has been truly a labor of love of Robert E. Lee and of the South, he has devoted twenty years of closest application and thousands of dollars in investigation and research."⁴⁴⁸

AUTHOR PROFILE ON PAMPHLET ADVERTISEMENT FOR *GEORGE WASHINGTON VOLS. 1 AND 2*

"Douglas Southall Freeman stands today as one of America's greatest living historians. As the author of the monumental biography, R. E. Lee, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1934, and later the three volumes devoted to Lee's Lieutenants, Dr. Freeman is accepted as a writer and historical biographer of exceptional distinction. In addition to his many literary achievements Douglas Southall Freeman has been since 1915 the dynamic, liberal editor of the *Richmond News Leader*, and for a period of several years he also lectured one day a week as Professor of Journalism at Columbia. Such an exacting schedule could only be maintained by the strictest regulation, and for many years he has been accustomed to begin his day by arriving at his desk promptly at 5:40 A. M. and sending 2½ columns of editorials to the composing room before 8:15. A graduate of Richmond College and of Johns Hopkins University, where he received his Ph.D. as a fellow in history, Dr. Freeman has been awarded honorary degrees from no less than 12 other institutions of learning, among them Yale, Columbia, and William and Mary. Above the big electric clock in his office in the *News Leader* there hangs a printed sign which tells Dr. Freeman's story for him. 'Time alone is irreplaceable; waste it not' reads the motto. It is no empty slogan, but the rule of a lifetime."⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁸ "Pamphlet Advertisement for *R. E. Lee: A Biography*," [unnumbered], Folder: Douglas Southall Freeman, RG 22.3, VBHS.

⁴⁴⁹ "Pamphlet Advertisement for *George Washington: A Biography*," [unnumbered], Folder: Douglas Southall Freeman, RG 22.3, VBHS.

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