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Voices of Change: Williams College Black Students and the 1969 Occupation of Hopkins Hall

by

A. Pendleton Beach

A Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honors in History

WILLIAMS COLLEGE
Williamstown, Massachusetts

April 23, 1987
To Preston Washington:
for to a large degree this is his story
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As a headmaster's daughter, I have always been interested in the workings of educational institutions. As a Williams College student, I have often wondered how much control students have over the running of the campus. Thus to study closely an incident in which Williams College students asked in a very dramatic way for more control over the life of the institution was a very exciting prospect for me. This is how my study of the 1969 occupation of Hopkins Hall by Williams College black students began.

In trying to learn about change in an educational institution, I naturally picked the era which is best known for its upheavals: the decade of the 1960's. Early in the decade the civil rights movement shook the country in an attempt to desegregate the South; for the first time in the nation's history, nonviolent, confrontational tactics were used on a large scale. The civil rights movement brought great gains; however, it also bred frustrations as the opposition was great and the pace of change often slow. These frustrations would lead later in the decade to the separatist black power movement, the Black panthers, the urban ghetto riots, and militant black students occupying administration buildings. During this decade whites were protesting as well: the sixties was the decade of the anti-war movement, the Students for a Democratic Society, and the Weathermen.

The 1960's were also a dynamic period in the history of Williams College. The decade began with the abolition of both compulsory chapel and residential living in fraternities. By the end of the decade the fraternities would be phased out completely. The first women, exchange students from Vassar, were to enter Williams in 1969. The curriculum was reformed, and
students gained more power in decision-making on the campus by being allowed on committees which before had been all-faculty. And finally, the 1960's was to see a dramatic climb in the number of black students on the Williams campus.

If all this change was going on at Williams in the 1960's, then how did I chose to study the black student protests on campus as opposed to the fraternity issue or coeducation or the anti-war movement on campus? As stated before, I wanted to study how students could bring about change in an educational institution. Of all these issues only the black student movement and the anti-war movement dealt with change brought about by students; out of these two it was logical to study the black students as they were dealing with internal change as opposed the anti-war protestors who were trying to change the external world. It also intrigued me that in the official history of the college printed in the course catalogue it mentions both the abolition of fraternities and coeducation as having significantly changed Williams but mentions nothing about the increase in black students or the occupation of Hopkins Hall. Thus I hoped to find out how the increase in black enrollment and the occupation had affected the Williams campus.

The two questions I focused on were, first, to what extent did the occupation of Hopkins Hall change Williams and, second, what did the black students think was the best way of bringing about change and how were their methods received by the Williams community.

This thesis is significant because it deals with an area that has been virtually unresearched. A few general histories of the college up through the nineteenth century have been written, including one by Frederick Rudolph, but none have been written on the twentieth century. The literature is also scarce on black students at Williams, the two most notable contributions
being two student papers. The first, "From Freak to Afro-American" by David Reid '69, deals with black students at Williams from 1889 when the first black was admitted up through the mid-nineteen sixties. Although this paper was very well-researched, I had trouble with Reid's rosy conclusions about the life of the Williams black student of the early twentieth century. Another student paper, "Black Williams: A Study of Black Students in a White College" by Walter Clark '75, Michael Darden '74 and Frank Richards '74, covers the history of black students at Williams, college admissions policies towards black students, and a section on black students and academics. This paper contains a lot of important facts but does not interpret them.

Since the secondary sources on this subject are so weak, this thesis was written almost exclusively from primary sources. Important primary sources for me were oral history interviews. In conducting these interviews I followed the advice of Williams Professor Tom Spear who in his work as an African historian has done extensive oral interviewing. On the advice of Professor Spear, I began the interview with a general question. For people involved in the occupation it would be "what do you remember about the occupation of Hopkins Hall in 1969." For black students who went to Williams prior to 1969 it would be "what was it like being one of the few black students at Williams College?" By beginning with a general question one can see what stuck out first and foremost in the interviewee's memory about an event or experience; one can get their thoughts before one's questions start to manipulate them. I would go on to ask specific questions based on what I had learned about the interviewee through written sources. Interviews would usually last anywhere from one to three hours.

Oral history has both its advantages and its drawbacks. One of its
advantages is that it enables the historian to view clearly personal dynamics between individuals that most traditional historians have a harder time seeing. This was especially important for this work as personal interactions were a very important part of the history of the Williams Afro-American Society as it contained only thirty-six members in the spring of 1969. Oral history is also advantageous in that if there is a conflict between two sources you can ask the sources directly about the conflict and thus hopefully resolve it.

One drawback to oral history is that people's memories are often faulty and incorrect. In addition, people tend to inject their present feelings onto their perceptions of the past and distort the facts. One can avoid being misled by checking facts obtained orally against written sources and checking one person's retelling of events against another person's recounting of the same event. Another danger of oral history is that an interviewer simply by his line of questioning can lead his sources to a certain conclusion which may not be true. Thus it is important that the oral historian is constantly aware of this dynamic throughout an oral interview.

I would like to thank the following people who gave me a generous gift of their time and memories in allowing me to interview them: Richard Jefferson, Drew Hatcher, Preston Washington, Clifford Robinson, Gordon Davis, John Gladney, Sherman Jones, Michael Douglass, Francis Oakley, Dudley Bahlman, John Hyde, Joseph Zoito, James Stevens, Philip Smith, Peter Frost, Neil Grabois, Frederick Rudolph, John Eusden, Stephen Lewis, Thomas Parker, and Peter Welantz. In addition I would like to thank John Sawyer for his help through correspondence.

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Even more invaluable in helping me locate sources was Sharon Band, Williamsiana collection librarian. Without Ms. Band's helpfulness and smiling face this project could not have been completed.

Certain members of the Williams College faculty deserve special credit. I would like to thank Professor Charles Dew for giving me the impetus to write a term paper for History 214 on the occupation of Hopkins Hall; that was the beginning of all this. I would like to thank Professor James Wood for his efforts to get money for me to call England. I would also like to thank Professors Tom Spear and Peter Frost. Without Professor Spear's advice, I would not as been half as effective of an oral interviewer. Professor Frost inspired me through his enthusiasm for my topic and his generous willingness to share his memories with me.
Beyond anyone else the person who most helped to make this thesis possible was my advisor, Professor Reginald Hildebrand. Professor Hildebrand's encouragement, constructive criticism, and penetrating insights were invaluable. I would especially like to thank him for his support and willingness to read chapters as quickly as possible when time began running out and I felt like I was never going to make it: without him I probably would not have.
CHAPTER ONE

Williams was built for a purpose that we were not included in. We were an afterthought. After all this was the 1960's. Williams got started in seventeen something. Things were a lot different then, needless to say.

-1986 Interview with Preston Washington, President of the Williams Afro-American Society in 1969

The causes of the 1969 occupation of Hopkins Hall by Williams black students are intimately linked to the entire two-century history of the relationship between blacks and the college. When Williams admitted its first substantial number of black students in the mid-1960's, attitudes and policies which had been in effect since Williams' birth in 1793 helped to propel the black students into radical action.

Williams College before 1969 can be characterized as a racist institution. Williams was not racist in a virulent, overt way. Sterling Brown '22, a black alumnus, stated that racism at Williams was characterized by "benign neglect. I did not meet with anything blatant." Rather the racism was both an institutional racism characterized by a neglect of blacks and a racism born of ignorance perpetrated by individual members of the Williams community. Examples of Williams' institutional racism included its housing system, which was based on fraternities which excluded blacks, and the fact that there were no black faculty members or courses dealing with blacks. Because blacks were ignored, neglected and mistreated on the Williams campus, Williams before 1969 can safely be labeled a fundamentally white institution.

Williams' racist, fundamentally white nature often made it an uncomfortable place for black students to go to school. Adding to the black
students' discomfort were the racially discriminatory policies of many businesses in the Williamstown community. Because Williams remained an inhospitable school for black students, few blacks came to Williams. Only forty-one black students graduated from Williams between 1889 and 1956. The lack of black students at Williams reinforced the ignorance of the white members of the Williams community and perpetuated racist attitudes.

In the late 1950's and early 1960's Williams College slowly began to become aware of its black student population. The abolishment of fraternities as residential facilities in 1962 meant that blacks now had much more of a chance to be fully integrated into nonacademic campus life. Civil rights brought a greater awareness of black issues to Williams. The admissions office, acting on its own, began to admit an increased number of black students. In the mid-1960's the black power movement came to Williams, marking the beginning of the growth of black consciousness among the black student body. The combination of a larger number of blacks and the black power ideology would lay the groundwork for greater change to come.

For almost the first one hundred years of its existence, from 1793 to 1885, the only blacks on the Williams campus worked in service positions as barbers, laundresses and the like. This was because of opinions like the one expressed by the Williams debating society in 1834 that "people of color should not be admitted into the colleges in New England." Williams' only other dealings with issues concerning blacks during this period was the formation of a Williams Anti-Slavery Society in 1823, an organization that disbanded after eight years. They would hold meetings, sponsor orations, and sing songs. This society was not as progressive as it might sound: it wanted
to free the slaves, but then they wanted to send them back to Africa so that they would not have to live side by side with them.

Williams College graduated its first black student, Gaius Bolin, the son of a Poughkeepsie poultry merchant, in 1889. He and the forty black graduates who followed him up until the mid-1950's did not always have an easy time as Williams College students. Life outside the classroom in the early twentieth century was centered around fraternities. These fraternities did not allow black members and thus perpetrated institutional racism at Williams. Black students were virtually segregated from their fellow white students in all areas of college life outside of academics. Rayford Logan '17 stated that he was not allowed to join fraternities, so he lived on Meachem Street with another black student, John Rector, '17. Four black students, Sterling Brown '22, Carter Marshall '20, Ralph Scott '23 and Henry Brown '21 were forced to live off-campus, the college claiming they had not put their money down on rooms. Brown for one knew that his father had paid the money.

Gordon Davis '63 says his father, Allison Davis '24, was segregated socially from the rest of the college: Davis' social life consisted of going to dances in North Adams held by the Pullman porters. Sterling Brown '22 also found his social life off-campus: he joined a Negro fraternity at Boston University.

Other campus organizations discriminated against black students as well. Allison Davis could not join the tennis team. In 1928 the Commons Club, the dining hall for those not affiliated with fraternities, was granted the right to select its own members; from that point forward, if not before, the Commons Club was for whites only. John Davis '33 remembered talking to President Harry A. Garfield about the club; Garfield told Davis that he
had a right to go and that he would go to eat with me; but he advised the sixteen year-old freshman that one should not go where one was not wanted.12

Segregation was not total from 1889 on; many of the black students of this period were active in some parts of campus life. Gaius Bolin '89 was on his class football team.13 Harrison Brown '00 was in the Chemical, Press, and Natural History clubs while George Chadwell '00 was on the football and track teams, sophomore class president and a Gargoyle member.14 There are records of black students living on campus. Thomas Besolow '95 is documented as having lived on campus with two white roomates for the school year 1891-1892.15 Sterling Brown and Carter Marshall lived on campus for one year with a white Jewish student.16 The black student who was well-integrated into campus life, however, was the exception rather than the rule.

Incidents have been recorded of individual acts of racism, some more virulent than others, that were perpetrated at this time on the Williams campus. Rayford Logan cited a professor using the word nigger;17 Carter Marshall knocked a man down for calling him a nigger.18 John Davis remembered a professor telling him that he would have given Davis an A in his course instead of a B if Davis had not been black.19 The track coach put Sterling Brown in one race merely because he assumed Brown could run fast because he was black. In reality Brown was not a fast runner and came in last.20

Racist practices also existed in the Williamstown community. In the 1940s there was a barbershop on Spring Street which would charge blacks three times the normal rate to cut their hair. In 1947, Wayne Caliman, a black, and Williams Record editor Norman Redlich, a white, took action
against this discrimination by entering this barbershop and having the barber quote the inflated price. They then pressed charges against him since such discrimination was against Massachusetts General Law. Reactions to this action among the Williams community were mixed. Twenty-five students set up a two day picket line in support of Caliman and Redlich; however, the Record also printed quite a few letters from white students who believed that Caliman and Redlich were acting in an irresponsible and sensationalist manner. The incident was finally resolved with a Massachusetts court imposing a fifty dollar fine on the barber.21

Racism pervaded the town in other forms as well. Up through the 1960's Williamstown motels would not let blacks have rooms. Ed Coaxum '66 remembered his parents having to sleep in the car when they brought him up to school freshman year after a motel cancelled their reservations when they discovered on the Coaxums' arrival that they were black. He also remembered his black dates having to stay at rooming houses as the motels would not take them.22

This whole environment left many black students with unpleasant rememberances of their Williams experience. Sterling Lloyd '34 had been unhappy at Williams.23 Allison Davis still felt bitter about Williams more than thirty years after he graduated; this can be seen in a few stories of Gordon Davis'. When Gordon Davis was in high school, the Davises drove back to Chicago from Boston through Williamstown. When they got to Williamstown, "he [Allison Davis] said "Oh, by the way, this is where I went to college" and accelerated. It was that kind of bitterness." Davis also remembered that during his four years at Williams his father only came to Williamstown once, for his son's graduation.24

The Williams College experience was not all bad for black students of
the early twentieth century. Black students were treated fairly in the academic realm. Walter Williams '28 thought the faculty was fair and found little prejudice in the classroom. Of the twenty-six blacks who graduated from 1908 to 1934, nine, over one-third of the black students, graduated Phi Beta Kappa; Allison Davis and Rupert Lloyd '30 were valedictorians of their class and John Davis was salutatorian.

In addition, the black students valued their Williams education and diploma. Sterling Brown said he was forever grateful to Williams for teaching him how to read and how to teach. Gordon Davis said his father was "always grateful for the education he got." The black students also seem to have benefited from their diplomas. A large proportion became prominent in the field of education. George Lightfoot '91, Rayford Logan, Sterling Brown, and Mortimer Weaver '25 all became Howard professors. George Chadwell was the Indianapolis supervisor of schools, Richard Plaut '22 became President of the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students, and Ralph Scott '23 was the principal of a Washington, D.C., school. Education was not the only field in which Williams black alumni found success. Bruce Robinson '28, became Assistant District Attorney for Massachusetts, Rupert Lloyd '30 and Clinton Knox '30 were appointed ambassadors, Carter Marshall '20 and Sterling Lloyd '34 went to medical school and became doctors, and Gaius Bolin and his grandson Lionel '40 practiced law.

Nevertheless, the essential fact remained that up until the 1960s Williams College had very few black students and no black faculty members or administrators. Few black students came to Williams during these years for a couple of reasons. First, as has been shown, the atmosphere of the college was not very hospitable towards black students. Second, the
admissions office did not actively recruit black students except in one case. Two black alumni, Willis Menard '09 and Clyde MacDuffie '12, taught at Dunbar High School, an all-black school in Washington, D.C. They encouraged their top students to apply to Williams, and it became a tradition for Williams to offer an annual scholarship to the top student from Dunbar. Rayford Logan, Henry Brown '21, Ralph Scott '23. Allison Davis, Mortimer Weaver '25, John Davis, and Sterling Lloyd all came from Dunbar. Sterling Lloyd was to be the last black from Dunbar until the late nineteen fifties. Charles Keller, Director of Admissions during the 1930s, thought that this was because Lloyd, as mentioned earlier, had been unhappy at Williams and made that clear to students from Dunbar.

The Dunbar connection was a start, but it did not make blacks a significant population at Williams. Charles Keller stated that

blacks just continued not to be interested in Williams--an "away-from" place, a white community with high scholastic standards, and a college with fraternities. Of course we should have done something about it . . . but that isn't the way people were thinking then.

The small number of blacks on campus would perpetuate the all-white environment characterized by a lack of blacks and an ignorance of black concerns.

The situation at Williams slowly began to change in the 1950's as various members of the Williams community began to examine the merit of fraternities. Part of the criticism of fraternities centered on their racially discriminatory policies: no Williams black student had ever been a fraternity member until the mid-fifties when two blacks, Theodore Wynne '58 and William George '59, were admitted to Sigma Phi.
The 1957 Phillips report, a report on racial and religious discrimination in Williams fraternities put together by a group of undergraduates, would confirm that fraternities treated black students unequally. Its final conclusion as concerned blacks was as follows:

even in those few houses where outside influences are especially negligible the undergraduate membership at this time would not pledge a Negro.\(^47\)

The most common method for not allowing blacks to join was the "blackball"; this was where a small number of fraternity members [including in two cases alumni] who can through the exercise of their constitutional rights prevent the pledging of any rushee--this right has operated [with blacks] except in two instances [Theodore Wynne and William George].\(^48\)

Around the same time that the Phillips Report was published, a group of students issued a proposal advocating the abolition of fraternities. One of the six reasons they gave for such an action was that fraternities practiced racial discrimination.

Fraternities are traditionally undemocratic, for they discriminate in varying degrees against minority groups through "clauses" and "gentlemen's agreements." Under our plan, prejudice will no longer be institutionalized at the college.

One of the signees was Theodore Wynne.\(^49\)

President Baxter and the trustees acted on the Phillips Report by giving the fraternities until January 1958 to state whether they were able to elect new members on the basis of merit "as an individual, according to his ability, achievement, personality, and character."\(^50\) By January all but two fraternities had assured the administration that they were free to elect
members regardless of race or creed. In the spring of 1960 the remaining two fraternities were told by the trustees that unless they submitted a statement by September saying that they were "free to elect to membership any individual on the basis of his merit as a person" their campus chapters would be abolished. Phi Delta Theta and Phi Gamma Delta both severed their ties with their Nationals in order to issue statements to this effect and continue their existence on the Williams campus.

The next blacks to be pledged into fraternities were the three members of the class of 1963. They were the first blacks to be pledged under the policy of Total Opportunity. Total Opportunity meant that each sophomore who wanted to join a fraternity had to get an offer from at least one fraternity before anyone in the sophomore class would be allowed to pledge. Gordon Davis was one of those black students. He remembered that people were terrified that the fraternity system would fall apart in the fall of '60 because these three blacks were going to go through rushing and until they got an offer from at least one house nobody could get an offer. . . . So, unbeknowst to [Davis '63, a black student] and myself but maybe to Bill [Boyd '63, the third black student], there was all around us our freshman year . . . great ferment over what was going to happen to the three colored kids in the freshman class. Were they going to go through rushing? Would someone take them? Gordon and Bill Boyd: probably someone will take them. Hot tickets even though they are black students. John Davis, he's a wild man, nobody wants him.

The fraternity system would not fall apart. All three black students got into their first-choice houses but not without difficulties. For example, during the rushing process one friend told Gordon Davis that certain of his fraternity brothers were talking about blackballing Davis. When Gordon Davis went to visit fraternities with a group of white sophomores, the whites were entertained downstairs while Davis was taken
upstairs to the attic where two guys were sitting there in their underwear watching TV and drinking beer. . . . They were purposely insulting me. 54

The fraternity William Boyd got into, Beta Theta Pi, would have to break from its Southern-based National when they pledged Boyd. These incidents illustrate Davis' final point concerning black students and fraternities: "if they [fraternities] were harsh on a white person because of this arbitrary exclusivity they were twice as hard on a black person." 54

In the spring of 1961 a group of student leaders headed by Bruce Grinell, Gargoyle president, fraternity member and football quarterback, issued a petition calling for the abolition of fraternities. The first reason that this petition listed for the fraternities being "incompatible with the aims of the College" was that

despite the Trustees' ruling on the illegality of racial and religious discrimination in the national fraternities at Williams College, the method of selection within individual houses results in the continuation of the use of discriminatory criteria for membership by means of the "black ball," "chop system," alumni pressures and unwritten agreements with national fraternities.

The petition went on to list six more objections to the fraternity system including that fraternities fragmented the campus and upheld a false system of campus values based upon fraternity status. 55

The summer after this petition came out, newly appointed President John Sawyer created a committee of alumni, faculty, trustees and two students, one of whom was Bruce Grinell, to study the issue of fraternities. In the summer of 1962 they published their report; it called for the college to take over from the fraternities responsibility for housing, feeding, and providing a social life for students. It defined the purpose of a liberal arts
college as giving:

a deeply interested group of students maximum opportunity to make real progress by constant exposure to diversity and challenge towards understanding themselves and the world.

They felt fraternities were taking students' energies away from this pursuit and channeling them into fraternity rituals such as rushing which bred "superficial and false values." In addition, the social stratification that the fraternities created limited a student's "exposure to diversity and challenge." Interestingly enough, this report never once mentioned racial discrimination as a reason for advocating the abolition of residential living in fraternities.56

The administration carried through the suggestions of this committee: residential living in fraternities was abolished. This had broad implications for Williams' black students. First, it meant that the college thenceforth took responsibility for the non-academic as well as academic life of the student; since traditionally this was the area in which black students were discriminated against the most, the abolition of fraternities provided greater racial equality. Black students no longer had to live off campus or with the students not affiliated with fraternities. Second, by abolishing residential living in fraternities, the college was condemning social stratification and advocating an open campus where ideally people from diverse backgrounds, including racial backgrounds, treated each other as equals and interrelated freely and comfortably. Third, the abolition of fraternities meant that the college would no longer approve of any house that was in any way restricted as to who could live in it. This became an important issue later during the occupation of Hopkins Hall.

Regardless of the reforms taking place in the fraternity system, the
Williams community in the early 1960s was still largely ignorant of and insensitive to blacks and black issues. Gordon Davis noticed Williams' neglect of blacks beginning with his admissions interview. To be interviewed Davis had to travel out from his black neighborhood in the city to the white Chicago suburbs because the admissions office at the time did not visit inner-city high schools. Davis said he had numerous conversations with Director of Admissions Frederick Copeland during his four years at Williams about changing the admissions policy from one of "if we get a qualified black we will admit them but we are not going to look for them" to a more active policy aimed at the recruitment of black students. During his years as a student, Davis had little success.

For Davis, entering Williams in 1959, race was an issue from the beginning. It started freshman fall when he found a letter in his roommate's desk from a member of the administration asking the roommate if he minded living with a Negro. Davis thought they should have asked him whether he minded living with these two white students. That same fall an article came out in *Time* magazine which mentioned Davis' father as "Allison Davis, the distinguished Negro social scientist." A friend of Davis' from Tennessee asked him if that was his father, and after Davis replied yes, the "friend" walked out of the room and never spoke to Davis again. Apparently because of Davis' light skin the student from Tennessee had never before realized he was black.

Similar incidents occurred because of Davis' light color. Davis was on the freshman basketball team; one night after a game with Harvard, he was picked up while hitchhiking to Bennington by two white seniors. The seniors could not see Davis clearly because he was in the back seat and the two seniors were in the front. The seniors asked Davis "where are you coming
from?" Davis told them the freshman basketball game. At this point one of the seniors commented "I hear there's a good nigger on the team." Gordon replied "That be me." Davis ended the story by saying

I could have said stop the car I want to get out but I decided the best punishment I could give them was to continue to ride in that goddamn car with them and let that comment just hang in the air for twenty miles.

Although incidents like this occurred Davis did emphasize that it was not that "my every waking hour was haunted with how I felt about the issue of race."57

As national attention came to be focused on the civil rights movement, the Williams community began to become more aware of the problems of blacks in America and more concerned with the lack of blacks on the Williams campus. The civil rights movement first appeared in the Williams community with two articles on school desegregation, one written by Rayford Logan for the July 1954 edition of the Williams Alumni Review58 and the other written by Political Science professor Vincent Barnett for the February 1956 Alumni Review.59 In the fall of 1957, newly-appointed chaplain William Coffin and New York Times correspondent Benjamin Fine spoke on campus about the Little Rock crisis; Coffin had an audience of fifty60 and Fine of eight hundred.61 Fine's and Coffin's opinions were covered in the November 1957 edition of the Alumni Review,62 and two Southern alumni wrote responses to them in which they charged that with the push for desegregation the NAACP was going too far too fast. One alumnus quipped

If the NAACP wants to make a great contribution to the life of the nation, it might well adopt the slogan "Love Thy Neighbor" in place of "Demand Thy Rights."
The other stated

I don’t believe [Arkansas governor] Faubus would have upset the apple cart, if the NAACP and other more idealistic desegregationists had not forced castor oil down the throats of people that had no idea they were sick. . . . In most of the south it is not customary for a white man and a Negro to shake hands with each other. Why not start our crusade by breaking down this tradition first?63

The concept of pickets and sit-ins was a radical one at first to most Williams students. In the spring of 1960 members of the Theta Delta Chi fraternity, along with liberal students from Amherst, Wesleyan, and Trinity organized a group to picket the White House to show support for Negro students participating in sit-ins. According to Gordon Davis, when the trip was announced in the freshman dining hall, the announcement was met with derision and laughter. Joining in the laughter was a student at Davis’ table; when Davis asked him why he was laughing the student said he thought sit-ins were dumb because his religion taught him that segregation was right. Davis was aghast.64

About thirty-five Williams students ended up participating in the picket. It was not exactly a "radical" event: students went dressed in Harris tweed jackets, ties, and penny loafers.65 Still a Williams Southern white student would claim that the protestors were being too confrontational and that their tactics would only hurt the situation.

Northern coercion, or what appears to the South to be coercion, could quite possibly alienate the moderate [Southern] group from the Negro cause, and persuade them to wash their hands of the whole affair. If they do, the resultant violence among the races will only embitter the contest, and make any final salutory solution to the business difficult if not impossible.66
The situation was to change quickly. In April 1961 Martin Luther King spoke at Williams on the invitation of the Williams College Chapel. Both King's sermon in the chapel and his question and answer session afterwards were attended by overflow crowds. King spoke on the philosophy of non-violent resistance, the civil rights movement and religious topics.67

In the fall of 1961 the Williams Civil Rights Committee (WCRC) was formed under the leadership of Gordon Davis and a white student, Roger Warren '63. WCRC's main goal was to raise money for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and its Northern counterpart the Northern Student Movement (NSM). They went about it by asking each student personally for a contribution thereby forcing everyone to confront the issues.68 WCRC also sent letters in support of the Southern activists, brought speakers on civil rights to Williams, and recruited students to work in Northern cities during the summer as NSM tutors.69 In 1962, WCRC had gained enough credibility so that they were able to raise two thousand dollars70 and the Gargoyle Society, a group of student leaders, would pledge its support of them.71

John Eusden remembered that it was a small minority of the campus which was actively involved in civil rights during this period.72 But even if it was only a small minority who were active participants, most of the Williams community by 1963 was much more supportive of the civil rights movement than they had been in 1960. In the spring of this year the WCRC fund drive raised over three thousand dollars.73 In May 1963 Chaplain Eusden and five students traveled to Birmingham to lend any assistance they could to the civil rights activists.74 Five hundred people attended the talk they gave on their return.75 In the fall of 1963 WCRC had eighty members attending meetings.76 Civil rights activism would continue on through 1965.
In the winter of 1963-64 WCRC undertook a campaign to desegregate local hotels in the area. In the spring of 1965 a group of Williams students and faculty members traveled to Mississippi to rebuild churches that had been bombed by white Southerners.

Gordon Davis described the feeling of the times in this way:

what you had by the end of my junior year was a tremendous sense of change. . . . You could see it change, feel it change, and made it very personal. . . . These things all get mixed up among themselves: change at Williams, change in the world outside Williams, change that a person is going through.

The change began with a new president: in 1961 John Sawyer took over from the retiring Phinney Baxter. Gordon Davis said that his friends and he thought Sawyer to be on first impression "the stiffest, most brittle, most conservative white person we'd ever met." Within a year, Sawyer had abolished both compulsory chapel and residential living in the fraternities; the students reassessed their opinion of him. Williams was beginning the most dynamic period of its history.

The dynamism of this time was also reflected in a new admissions plan implemented in President Sawyer's first year, the ten percent plan. This plan pledged to admit, as ten percent of the incoming class, students who normally would not get into Williams because of a marred academic record but who showed other signs of promise. Although the program was not specifically aimed at black students, their number on campus did rise slightly after the plan was implemented. Whereas the class of 1964 had only one black student and the class of 1965 had no black students, the class of 1966 had three, the class of 1967 four, and the class of 1967 five.

In the year 1964-65, Gordon Davis' wish was realized and the
admissions office began to recruit black students. This policy was undertaken solely by the admissions staff independent of any directive from the administration, which was at this time still deeply occupied with the fraternity issue. One reason that the admissions office might have begun such a policy was that other colleges and universities were beginning to recruit black students because of the heightened awareness of the country in general on racial issues, an awareness fostered by the growth of the civil rights movement. The civil rights activists on campus also advocated and helped carry out this policy; in 1963-64, WCRC members talked to black students at all-black high schools trying to encourage them to come to Williams. For the class of 1969, fifty non-white, disadvantaged students were contacted; twenty-nine blacks and Puerto-Ricans applied and sixteen were accepted. Seven blacks eventually entered in the class of 1969.

Black enrollment was on the rise and it would increase even more. Again in 1965-66 more than fifty students were contacted by the admissions staff. Twenty-six blacks applied, seventeen were accepted, and eleven came. Two black members of the class of 1966 helped with the recruitment: Ed Coaxum helped to recruit Terry Copeland from Coaxum's high school, John Adams High in Cleveland, and Bob Howard recruited two students, George Robinson and Paul Young, from his high school, Eastern High in Washington, D.C. In 1966-67 Williams contacted over one hundred and twenty-five blacks, twenty-nine of whom were accepted and ten of whom entered; the numbers for the following year were comparable.

To help its recruitment of black students Williams in 1966 began to sponsor a summer ABC (A Better Chance) program which gave disadvantaged students, primarily black, tutoring in Math and English prior to their
entering prep schools in the fall. Ultimately the hope was that they would be able to get into good colleges like Williams. The first year sixty students came and were tutored by six juniors and seniors from Williams.\textsuperscript{89}

Williams was also beginning to admit a more diverse group of black students in terms of class background. Prior to 1964 the black students at Williams had come from somewhat homogeneous backgrounds. Seventy-five percent of the blacks who graduated from Williams between 1958 and 1964 had fathers who worked in white-collar occupations.\textsuperscript{90} The American blacks in Gordon Davis' class were all from prominent, successful, educationally-privileged black middle class backgrounds; they were blacks who in growing up had often interracted with whites. As mentioned before, Allison Davis, Gordon Davis' father, had graduated from Williams in 1924; he was now a well-known professor of sociology at the University of Chicago. Gordon Davis said of his background that

\begin{quote}
although we grew up in a segregated neighborhood . . . my social life and my parent's social life was in an integrated circle. . . . So it was not infrequent that white people would come visiting at our house in Chicago.
\end{quote}

John Davis' father was John Davis '33, Allison Davis' brother; John Davis was a professor of government at the City College of New York. Bill Boyd's father had been head of the political science department at Talladega University in Atlanta; Boyd had been the first black to go to Deerfield Academy, an all-male prep school. As Gordon Davis stated:

\begin{quote}
if anybody had a chance of succeeding it was us. If Williams wanted to train some blacks to come to Williams and be relatively effective they couldn't have done a better job.\textsuperscript{91}
\end{quote}

After 1964 many blacks at Williams still came from middle class,
educationally privileged backgrounds. John Gladney '67 stated that during his college years most black students at colleges on the East Coast either knew each other or their families knew each other because their parents had gone to school together.\textsuperscript{92} However, their number was decreasing, probably because Williams was beginning to recruit from inner-city high schools. The black students who graduated from 1966-68 were only forty-five percent likely to be the sons of white collar workers.\textsuperscript{93} The black student population was becoming more diverse.

During the same period an increased concern with black issues would very slowly start to change the curriculum as well. In 1959 a white historian, Robert Collins, was appointed to teach the first history course dealing with Africa, \textit{European Imperialism in Africa}. In 1961 the Economics department added a course called \textit{The Economics of Urban Problems}, in 1962 the History department instituted a course called \textit{Afro-Asian Studies}, and in 1963 the same department began to offer another history course entitled \textit{Studies in African History}.\textsuperscript{94} In 1965 professor Frederick Rudolph began a history course entitled \textit{The Negro in America} which would draw twenty to thirty students a year for the next few years.\textsuperscript{95}

Another sign of the changing times was that beginning in 1962 Williams sponsored two-week exchanges over spring break with black colleges in the South. John Gladney went on such an exchange to Howard University his junior year. He described his motives for going and the experience as follows:

during my junior year I took a two-week exchange to Howard University where Stokely Carmichael was at the time because I'm tired of all these white folk at Williams . . . and there was no political activity there. I was totally shocked. It was very bourgeois, the whole focus was on social . . . orientation. There was very little in the way of political
consciousness. . . . I think there was about the same percentages of students involved at Howard as there were at Williams.96

Other students had the same impression of Howard; one white student who went on an exchange to Howard in 1962 said

While there are members of the Muslim movement and leaders of the nonviolent civil rights groups on campus, this observer was surprised by the lack of radical thought.97

Nor were the students from the black colleges who came to visit Williams very radical; they did not go beyond advocating nonviolent protest.98 For example, the Black Muslim movement was dismissed by one group of black exchange students as "a minor force whose followers were regarded as novelties and crackpots." These students saw their role "as essentially a balance between the radical Klan and Citizen's Council and the Negro appeal of the Muslims."99 Thus these students could not have had much of a radicalizing effect on Williams, especially since they seemed to have only good things to say about the college.100 That these exchanges were held at all, however, indicates the campus' growing concern with black issues.

After 1965, the WCRC virtually disbanded due mostly to a nationwide disillusionment with the civil rights movement and the emergence of both the Vietnam War and the Black Power movement as issues. The spring of 1965 was to be WCRC's last semester of active work, besides a brief reappearance in 1967.101 By 1965 the WCRC had split into an integrated SDS chapter and an all-black group called the Williams Afro-American Society (WAAS).102

WAAS formed sometime before December 1965 when it is documented in the Record as having a conference with other black students from Bennington, Smith, and Harvard. This conference discussed such issues as
black ethnocentricity and nationalism, anti-white sentiment and the white leadership of civil rights. A similar conference was held in December 1966. Sherman Jones '68, a black alumnus, remembered their purpose to be partly social and partly to educate blacks on their history and present problems. The ideologies of black power had arrived on the Williams campus.

The intellectual force behind the transition from an integrated civil rights group to an all-black student group concerned with black power was Don Jackson '66. John Gladney called him "the philosopher king, . . . the intellectual impetus to the development of the black student movement at Williams." In a letter to the Williams Record in 1966, Jackson stated that the civil rights movement had been a coalition of "left-out liberals and Negro puppets," and thus its demise was not to be lamented. Jackson echoed the advocates of black power of his day by stating that social change would best be brought about by letting blacks and whites worked independently of one another within their own communities.

To other black students at this time, however, the black power movement was not of utmost concern. John Gladney's utmost concern at Williams was "having a good time." For him, "race wasn't an all-consuming type of issue." He thought that his experience as a Williams black student was little different from that of a Williams white student.

Black students didn't have a lot of choice. They had to be [politically] involved. Beyond that I don't think the experience was that much different from white students who were directly involved and politically active.

There was racism, but Gladney says he was not bothered by it since when he was growing up in Missouri racism was a given, and so "to be continually
freaked by racism is like to be continually freaked because the sun rises." For Gladney, politics were important, but having a good time and mingling with a diverse group of people was even more important.\textsuperscript{108}

Williams had come a long way. Blacks were no longer segregated in nonacademic life. "Exposure to diversity" was a stated goal of the college. Civil rights activism had made at least part of the campus more sensitive to black issues. A greater number of black students was coming to Williams and there was greater diversity among these black students. Black power was finding proponents on campus.

Change came slowly at Williams. It was almost one hundred years before Williams admitted its first black student, and almost another one hundred before Williams began to recruit black students. The fraternities were abolished in a long process of rational (and not so rational) deliberations that began in the early 1950s\textsuperscript{109} and did not culminate until the late 1960's when the last fraternity chapter left campus. The civil rights and black power movements had brought black issues to the attention of the Williams community, but as of yet there were still few black students and few courses being taught on black issues.

The campus was hardly free of racism and the Williams black students as yet were far from prepared to occupy buildings. What follows is the story of how racism on the Williams campus pushed a fairly moderate group of blacks into radical action.
CHAPTER TWO

I believe very strongly that the miracle was that they [the black students] were willing to go into that building. . . . They put everything that their life represented on the line.

--Preston Washington

Before the reasons why the black students occupied a building are discussed, it is important to detail the three factors that might have kept Williams black students of the late 1960s from taking radical action. The first two factors involved dynamics within the black student group itself. First, this group was incredibly diverse; this diversity made it more difficult for them to come to an unified decision on a course of action to take. In addition, many members of this group were more moderate and did not want either to risk their own futures or to disrupt the college by taking over a building. The third factor that might have prevented the occupation of Hopkins Hall was the administration's efforts to improve life at Williams for black students in the year preceding the occupation.

These three factors are key to understanding both the type of change that was taking place at Williams College and the effectiveness of this change. For example, because some of the blacks were initially opposed to radical action, this modified and shaped the form that the occupation of Hopkins Hall took. In addition, it is important to examine changes the administration was undertaking on its own so that they can be juxtaposed against changes caused by the occupation. And finally, the fact that there were strong reasons for not occupying the building meant that the reasons for doing so must have been even stronger.
Williams black students in the classes of 1969 through 1972 were from a wide range of backgrounds. A 1969 Record article characterized the black students as varied in many ways—in their economic background, their life-styles, their attitudes to whites and their attitudes towards Williams College. "The black students here are a very representative cross-section of black people in America," Chuck Collins said.¹

Richard Jefferson, a black student in the class of 1970, described the black students as "people whose families were wealthy . . . people whose families were domestics."²

The Williams black students whose parents were wealthy and educationally privileged were a definite minority, but they did exist. There was one black student whom John Gladney described as being "the most bourgeois person who ever walked through Williams, white, black, it didn't make any difference."³ This student's father was an attorney and his mother a housewife with a bachelor's degree from Boston University.⁴ He was also one of only two black students to own a car; it was a BMW.⁵

Obviously this was one extreme. There were other students who, while maybe not as privileged, had fathers who were well-educated professionals. Two students had fathers who were dentists; both of their mothers had obtained a bachelor's degree.⁶ Four other fathers had graduated from college and were now professionals: two were professors, one at Morehouse College and the other at Hampton Institute, another father was a minister and the fourth was a market promotions manager.

There were a great number of students who, if their father's occupation is any indication, came from the opposite end of the spectrum. Three of the
thirty-six black students had fathers who worked as janitors. Three had fathers whose job descriptions seemed to indicate that they held unskilled jobs for manufacturing companies: one's occupation is listed as laborer, another as stockchecker, and the third as textile handler. Two other fathers were employed in menial positions in service trades, one as a waiter and the other as a night watchman for the United States Senate.

Other black students had fathers working as skilled laborers. Occupations of these fathers include molder, millwright, electrician, mechanic, two postal clerks and two machinists. Five fathers worked in occupations somewhere between skilled laborer and professional in terms of status and salary. These fathers included two who were foremen for manufacturing companies, one who was a contractor, another who was an inspector, and another who was a supervisor at a state home for boys.7

The point of all this data is not to count numbers of fathers in different economic classes; such specific statistics cannot be obtained from job descriptions which are often rather cryptic. This data is presented merely to point out the diversity of backgrounds from which Williams black students of the late 1960's were coming.

Williams black students during this period also came from a variety of places, from urban, suburban, and rural settings and from integrated communities and black communities. Preston Washington, Clifford Robinson '70 and two other students came from Harlem.8 Washington described his neighborhood as follows:

I lived in East Harlem where I was surrounded by an Italian neighborhood, a Hispanic neighborhood, a West Indian neighborhood and indeed a Jewish community. Then we were Black Americans North and South. All there.9
At least six other students grew up in Northern inner cities. Others grew up in suburban environments integrated to varying degrees. Richard Jefferson lived in a small black neighborhood in the midst of the larger white one of Newton, Massachusetts; his high school was integrated. Drew Hatcher '71 and Michael Douglass '71 grew up in suburban integrated neighborhoods. One student, according to Preston Washington, grew up in an environment where he knew no other black people. His maids were white. His family lived in a sheltered community and his family would not even allow him to interrelate with other black people.

Black students also came from all over the country. Out of the thirty-four blacks in the classes of 1969 through 1972, most students came from the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions, with twelve and ten students respectively. Seven came from the Midwest, one from California, one from Africa and three from the South. The low number of students from the South is unrepresentative as six of the students in the Mid-Atlantic region came from Washington, D.C., a city bordering on North and South.

Thus these black men, as they entered Williams, had little in common as a group beyond their race. Some did not see race as much of a reason to band together; these black students did not live with other blacks and were not active in the WAAS. Michael Douglass throughout his four years at Williams lived by himself. At a time when Preston Washington’s wife Maria was talking to the WAAS about how insulting it was to her and other black women for black men to date white women, Michael Douglass was dating white women. Drew Hatcher said he never felt part of WAAS, largely because he never felt separate or different from whites. He said he was “not a group person.” Others confirm that there were students who
felt the way Douglass and Hatcher did. Preston Washington stated "most blacks don't need to live in clusters."\(^{19}\) John Hyde, then Dean of the College, maintained that "not all black students were active members of the group [WAAS]."\(^{20}\)

Nor did all black students want to change Williams radically. Michael Douglass stated that when he entered Williams "he knew what it was about and didn't go to change it."\(^{21}\) Other black students had different ideas about how to change Williams. For example, Clifford Robinson '70, president of the WAAS in the year after the occupation, felt that the number of black students on campus should increase, but that only black students clearly capable of handling the academics should be admitted. The admissions office sometimes admitted black students that Robinson felt they should have rejected. Robinson stated:

At one point the college was committed to getting more sort of urban blacks who may not have had the kind of educational credentials that guaranteed their being successful at Williams. My feeling was that we should take the black students who were qualified to do the work. . . . as a result a lot of people just couldn't hack it and I think ultimately that's a lot worse for the students who couldn't hack it than for the college.\(^{22}\)

On the other hand, Preston Washington felt it was these black students without academic credentials that Williams should be recruiting. Washington wanted Williams to admit students who had been under the influence of

a disadvantaging agency that . . . miseducated the person . . . but that does not mean the person is not educated. The person may be academically deficient and still have a lot of other things happening in their life, in their minds, in their spirit that is brilliant. . . . Not that I was talking about bringing somebody there
who can't read or write. That would just be too big of a chasm. I'm talking about somebody who's academically efficient whom you can help become academically proficient. Somebody who may not have gotten seven hundred on the board scores but who has a tremendous sense of motivation, who works hard.23

Washington felt such students could survive at Williams if they "hired sensitive administrators and people from the black community."24 He also felt that such students could survive with the help of the WAAS members who would "teach guys how to write papers, the older guys taught us how to work the system."25

The black students at Williams College in the late 1960's were not a monolithic group. Before they were to take unified radical action, they would have to work out some of their differences of opinion. In addition, the more politically conscious of these students would have to educate some of their less politically aware "brothers" on the concerns then running through the black community before a building occupation over racial issues could take place. This process will be described in the following chapter.

For many of these black students, especially the ones from poorer backgrounds, Williams had a more significant meaning: it was their one and only chance to improve their material position in life. Some students were the first in their families to go to college, let alone a top-ranked college like Williams. Preston Washington was

the first person in my whole family's history, not my immediate family, my cousins, my aunts, my uncles, the first person since slavery to go to college.26

The folks back at home are looking at me to leave Williams, make lots of money, and do something positive for the community.27

some of these guys were the first in their families ever to go to college. After all, this is Williams College. There are a lot of people who had invested a lot in them, money and sweat and a lot of other things. . . . So there were people who really had a lot to lose by getting booted out.28

And the possibility of being "booted out" seemed very real to these black students if they decided to take radical action. Richard Jefferson's sister was expelled from Springfield College for occupying a building; Jefferson thought he remembered that out of about forty-five black students there at the time, forty were expelled.29 Preston Washington, as stated previously, believed that Don Jackson had been forced to leave Williams for just writing an article, so he thought that taking over a building would guarantee expulsion. For Washington and others expulsion meant

all of our futures would have been down the drain and for many of us that was it. That . . . the one way to be somebody was to go to Williams College and then to have the stigma on you that you were a troublemaker and you were kicked out of school was a real trip.30

Nor were many of the black students from slightly more privileged backgrounds eager to occupy a building, for many of the same reasons. They too saw Williams as their chance to make it in the world, even if their material situations were less desperate. For Drew Hatcher, from a black middle class background, going to school at Williams meant a lot; he felt indebted to Assistant Director of Admissions Philip Smith for admitting him. Hatcher hoped to work hard so that he could get into law school; as the eldest son in a large family, Hatcher felt compelled to set a good example. He choose Williams in particular because its isolation meant that there would not be as many distractions so that it would be easy to concentrate
on studying and getting good grades. Michael Douglass, another black from a middle class background, said he went to Williams to take and get what he could; in the case of taking, he meant obtaining a diploma that would get him a good job. He saw it as an opportunity to learn the rules of the white world that he was going to have to compete in to get that good job. In 1969 Douglass was quoted as saying:

From the standpoint of a black person, the education at Williams, whether relevant or irrelevant, is going to mean money when you're finished. . . . It may be irrelevant to a black person, but it's relevant to the white society that I'm going to have to work and live in.

Like Drew Hatcher, he was at Williams to study and liked Williams isolation because it minimized distractions. Douglass saw his father as having sacrificed too much to allow him to attend Williams for him to lose it all now. For these two students, occupying a building might well put blemishes on their records that law schools, companies or their parents might not like. Francis Oakley, then professor of history, summed it all up by explaining that many blacks "didn't want to risk their futures or degrees."

Many black students saw Williams as a great economic opportunity. Seven out of seventeen black students in the classes of 1969 and 1970 who were at Williams at the time of the occupation mentioned monetary goals in their admissions applications as a reason for wanting to come to Williams. Typical statements included "to get a job to support my family and send my siblings to college," "to get a good job," "get into a good financial position," "become a good husband and provider," "improve physical position," and "obtain economic security." In 1969, black students were quoted in the
Williams Record as saying:

Williams is a "stepping-stone to opportunity for greater power in forming economic and political systems of the future." "I view Williams as a meal ticket."37

It would take issues that meant a lot to them for these black students to risk their college diplomas.

Another reason that some Williams black students were unwilling to take radical action was because they were happy at Williams to some degree and did not want to disrupt the college. Clifford Robinson remembered:

I came to love the place. I have very fond memories of Williams. . . . I think I developed relationships with different faculty and other students that have been very valuable. My core group of friends still remain a bunch of people I met at Williams my freshman year.38

Drew Hatcher said that he had "a great time and loved Williams."39

Most black students in the classes of 1969 through 1972 were not angry, alienated, dissonent members of the Williams community but rather active participants in it. This can be seen by their involvement in extracurricular activities. In this they were led by the black students who came before them who were

involved in the recruitment of other blacks, . . . involved in extracurricular activities, plus they were in many instances good students. . . . They had to try to juggle all these balls.40

They would encourage younger black students to "distribute . . . across the campus in varieties of activities so that we were basically involved in the full life of the campus."41

Their encouragement seems to have worked. In sports, Michael Douglass, Richard Jefferson, and Jimmy Jones '71 played football,42 Vernon
Manley '72 played basketball, Elrick Williams '69 rowed, and another black student was on the track team. Clifford Robinson "was in Gargoyle and . . . [president of] Garfield House, had a radio show, [and] wrote reviews for the newspaper." Chuck Collins '69 was president of Gargoyle in his senior year; Preston Washington was to be Gargoyle president the next year. In the classes of 1969 through 1972 there were three more black Gargoyle members, three black junior advisors; and another black student was vice president of his residential house. Preston Washington stated that they were "involved in other activities on campus because this was a highly motivated group of black men." Washington personally, besides being Gargoyle president, "was a newspaper writer, did the daily newsletter, . . . was on the radio. . . . [and] taught Sunday School at a white church."

There were many factors that seemed to indicate that Williams black students would not want to attempt radical action such as occupying a building. First, there would be obstacles to them working together as a group since they came from such diverse backgrounds; their common bond would be race, and some did not feel the fact that they were black was extremely important. In addition, most of the black students saw a Williams degree as a means of upward mobility, and thus they were unwilling to risk this degree. And finally, most black students were, to some degree happy at Williams and active in campus life; they were not radical, angry dissidents. Clifford Robinson summed it up when he said the occupation "was a very difficult thing to have happened."

At first glance, it is especially odd that the building occupation took place in the spring of 1969 when for the preceding year the Williams Afro-American Society for the first time had been working closely with the
administration in an attempt to make Williams a better place for black students. During this period the administration appointed the first Afro-American faculty member and dean, initiated an Afro-American Studies program, and created a black cultural center. The trustees gave a pledge of ten thousand dollars for "a library collection and room for Negro history." The admissions office contacted, admitted and helped financially more black students than ever before. The faculty voted through a resolution that the recruitment of blacks and other minority students become official college policy. The white students generally supported, both vocally and financially, these measures and were interested in black problems in general. Thus the Williams Afro-American Society, in trying to get the black experience recognized, was increasingly being heard on the Williams campus.

Major action on improving black life at Williams was first taken in April 1968, prompted by the assassination of Martin Luther King. Sherman Jones, then-leader of the WAAS, said that they were already working with the administration to make Williams a better place for black students; after King's assassination the issues just became more urgent. It was then that they presented a list of proposals at an open meeting entitled "Where We Must Go From Here!" This document was to be the basis for a more formal document entitled "Where Do We Go From Here?" presented to Provost Stephen Lewis on April 24, 1968.

In this document the WAAS asked for more scholarship money for black students, an endowed chair for an Afro-American history professor, an Afro-American Studies program, the right for students to do projects off-campus, especially in urban areas, and receive credit, student-faculty exchanges with black colleges, an Afro-American fellowship room, a Big
Brother program and a Winter ABC program. In addition they established a Martin Luther King fund to raise money for an Afro-American library and Afro-American lecturers and cultural activities (for full text see Appendix).\textsuperscript{53} Through this fund the WAAS hoped to raise seventeen thousand dollars.\textsuperscript{54}

During the next year, the administration made an attempt to move on all these suggestions. The Board of Trustees voted an objective of one hundred thousand dollars to be used for an Afro-American library; they made an initial pledge of ten thousand dollars towards this objective. In an attempt to begin to raise the rest of the funds an article in the May 1968 Williams Alumni Review sought alumni donations to be used for the library as well as for visiting speakers and a cultural program.\textsuperscript{55} By June 30, 1968, the Fund had received over five thousand dollars and the library had received almost two thousand dollars from alumni.\textsuperscript{56}

The demand for a Big Brother program was not met in the next year. The Winter ABC program, however, would start in September 1969.\textsuperscript{57} WAAS was also given a fellowship room in Mears House in the spring of 1968, although it was not to be usable until the next year.\textsuperscript{58}

In terms of the student-faculty exchange with black colleges, the administration did "not move very actively." They tried to organize a faculty exchange with one black college, but "the individuals involved could not free themselves from other commitments."\textsuperscript{59} Nor did the administration take many concrete steps to make it more possible for students to study independently off-campus for a semester. However, they did approve black students' Winter Study off-campus independent projects;\textsuperscript{60} in addition, there were three regular Winter Study courses in January 1969 which included spending part of the month in a Northeastern city studying urban
problems. In February 1969 the faculty voted through a formal Afro-American Studies program consisting of sixteen courses. Nine of these courses show up in the course catalogue for the first time in the year 1968-69, having been established especially for the creation of an Afro-American Studies program. These new courses included a black literature course, the first such course to be taught in the English department. The other courses were added to departments which already had courses concerning blacks: Anthropology, Economics, and History.

The Black Studies chair was not established although the trustees did make seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the chair a capital objective. In January 1969, the college announced the appointment the first Afro-American professor, Joseph Harris, a history professor. They also appointed in March 1969 a black dean, Curtis Manns, whose duties included heading both the Summer and Winter ABC programs.

Regarding the first demand, more scholarships for black students were not established, but financial aid for seriously disadvantaged students, both black and white, was doubled to over fifty thousand dollars a year. The school did move in other areas to increase black admissions. In the year 1968-69, fifty black urban schools were visited, double the amount visited the previous year. One hundred and thirty-nine blacks applied, forty-seven (thirty-seven percent) were accepted and twenty-six blacks entered, double the number from the previous year. This increased enrollment was attributed largely to WAAS help in hosting and writing letters to black applicants. This help included four black students who for their Winter Study project of January 1969 had worked in admissions.

Clifford Robinson summarized the situation by stating that things got
better after his freshman year (1966-67) because "the college administration was cognizant of the fact that . . . there were things that they needed to be more sensitive and responsive to." WAAS respected the administration for this; this would make it even harder for them to decide to occupy a building. Preston Washington "liked President Sawyer. . . . He struggled because he's the one who kinda created this new campus." Washington compared Sawyer and the occupation of Hopkins Hall to

Lyndon Baines Johnson having to get stuck with the Vietnamese War after all the positive things he did in civil rights. . . . Like Rockefeller--good governor but Attica kicked his butt. I just felt so bad I had to be part of a thing that in a way made this man who made a radical decision [look bad].

In addition, in 1968 the college took its first serious look at what its official admissions policy towards disadvantaged students should be. This began by the admissions office asking the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) to conduct a study on this policy. The chief question the committee asked was what kind of students should Williams try to recruit: was it black students, economically disadvantaged students, educationally disadvantaged students or some combination thereof? The CEP decided, and an unanimous vote of the faculty approved, that it was blacks and economically disadvantaged students the school should be recruiting. In deciding not to recruit educationally disadvantaged students, the faculty was acting on the moderate position put forth by the CEP. This position maintained, first, that establishing a remedial program for educationally disadvantaged students would expend too much faculty time and college money, and, second, that these students might be better off at less demanding schools. The CEP believed they could achieve racial harmony and justice on campus without
having to admit high risk students.76

In voting this through, the CEP and faculty had passed up a more radical CEP policy suggestion which had advocated recruiting educationally disadvantaged students to help them become upwardly mobile; this was necessary as "the natural isolation of the college required a positive effort towards involvement in social change." It was suggested that academic standards should be occasionally bent, that the standards themselves should be reexamined, and that compensatory programs for educationally disadvantaged students should be explored.77

In 1968-69 WAAS was also getting favorable responses from white members of the Williams community on their proposals. The College Council unanimously approved the WAAS resolutions of April 1968;78 they showed their approval by donating five hundred dollars to the Martin Luther King Fund. One thousand more dollars were donated to the fund by miscellaneous students and faculty members.79

White Williams students at this time were also very interested in learning more about blacks and black America. In the spring of 1969 the history course "The Negro in America" had an enrollment of seventy-six of which only eight were black students. This was up from an enrollment of thirty for the previous year.80 Preston Washington confirmed that whites were interested in courses concerning blacks.81 One example of a concerned white student was David Reid, who wrote an editorial for the Record in which he stated:

White America must be ready to sacrifice its time, money, and concern now to cure the afflictions of imposed poverty and to answer the charges that we are a racist society.82

Thus Williams College was moving in the right direction; on the other
hand, they were not moving that far. Some of the money for the Afro-American Studies program, library, lecturers and cultural events had been promised but not yet given. The administration had not produced exchanges with southern black colleges, an urban study center, or an endowed professorial chair. Courses concerning black issues were still scarce. There were only two black professors on campus, and no black admissions officer as of yet. And black students still only composed three percent of the student body.

And finally, white students might have supported the Martin Luther King Fund and black courses, but this scarcely made up for white students who, acting out of ignorance, would help to push the black students in more radical directions, as would the administrative omissions mentioned above. But that is the story of the following chapter: the story of the strong feelings which overrode all these factors which made it seem unlikely that Williams black students would take radical action.
CHAPTER THREE

Not that those demands were the crux of the issue. The issue was the atmosphere of racism, misunderstanding, ignorance and neglect.

--Preston Washington, January 1987 interview

The WAAS suggestions of 1968 were to be followed by the WAAS non-negotiable demands of March 1969. The occupation of Hopkins Hall a month later was undertaken ostensibly to get action on those demands. The WAAS hoped that the occupation would not only get action on their demands, but also enlighten members of the Williams community on what it was like to be a black student, on how alienating Williams was for black students due to its fundamentally white nature. They wanted members of the Williams community to realize that they could do more at their own institution to change the inequitable power relationships between blacks and whites which existed in the country as a whole. In the past the WAAS had asked for concrete changes, but these requests seemed to be transforming the institution too slowly. Now they hoped for broader and more sweeping attitudinal changes that would accelerate the rate of progress towards racial equality at Williams College.

The demands and subsequent occupation, on the most basic level, rose out of alienating incidents that most of these black students experienced at Williams. These alienating experiences occurred when the black students met up with the racism born of ignorance evidenced by many members of the Williams community. It was a racism born of ignorance because it grew out of the fact that many white faculty members and students had never had
much contact with blacks in the past. Drew Hatcher said that some of the white students at Williams had never gone to school with a black student.\textsuperscript{1} Preston Washington confirmed this view:

the campus itself was--I wouldn't even say it was avowedly racist--it was just that people were ignorant about . . . blacks. They had never had contact in many instances for better or for worse so some of their first contacts with black people was at Williams and that included faculty and students.\textsuperscript{2}

Incidents have been recorded of black students feeling as if they were not viewed as individuals but as a new, strange, almost sub-human species. Clifford Robinson had an extremely bad freshman year because of fellow students treating him this way. Robinson related:

I hated it [Williams] the first year, in fact . . . I was in the middle of trying to transfer somewhere else. I found it very isolating, very alienating, it wasn't as friendly as I thought it would be. . . [I felt like] an object for other people to learn from . . . people asking if they could touch my hair and asking all sorts of questions about . . . blacks and were black babies white until they hit the air when they were born and stuff like that. Questions that were born out of the most profound kind of ignorance and all of us found ourselves not really being there for ourselves but being there for other people to learn off or from . . .\textsuperscript{3}

Richard Jefferson told of an incident in his freshman year where whites thought funny a blantly racist, sub-human descriptions of blacks.

One night they showed a movie on campus--\textit{Birth of a Nation} . . . Historically it's well-known because it's the first full-length feature film . . . Unfortunately the movie has . . . very, very bad stereotypes of blacks in it. It's set during the Reconstruction South and there are situations like the blacks have taken over the legislature in South Carolina. They have pictures of the whole South Carolina legislature. . . . Whites, imitating blacks . . . with their feet up on the desk eating fried chicken. Scenes of black men
chasing white women through the woods, leering at them. Every racist image you could think of in that movie. . . Watermelon, the whole bit. And I remember my roommates just laughing their heads off. They just thought this was the funniest thing they ever saw in their lives.  

Other black students were upset about malicious, racist remarks with which they had to live. Washington said he heard two malicious stereotypes from members of the Williams community concerning black students. The first labeled the black students thieves: "we've never had so much thievery on campus but you can document the increase in black attendance with the increase in crime." The second labeled them stupid:

you don't really belong here if we have to go by clear-cut academic standards and in fact with you being here you've reduced our standards.  

Many black students felt that their individuality was denied because they were often forced into the role of spokesmen for the black race. They felt that they had been brought to Williams to educate white students on blacks.  

One black student said he resented the way white students try to develop a friendship with him. "If they want to be your friend, they talk about a famous Negro," he said. "They think that's all we know about."  

Richard Jefferson had this same experience.  

At that time Stokely Carmichael was running around the nation and talking about black power . . . and Rap Brown all doing the same kind of stuff and it really caused a great deal of inquiry among our white colleagues, fellow white students and they would keep us up . . . in these discussions all night long. "What is this black power thing . . . you don't believe in this stuff, isn't this stuff crazy." . . . They'd back us into the situation of having to defend Stokely Carmichiel which maybe some of us didn't believe in anyway. But
we got into these long ideological arguments and they would go on and on and on all night long and it was ridiculous.\(^7\)

This view coincides with a view Jefferson presented in 1969:

"I'm supposed to be part of your education," Jefferson told this reporter. "Until recently black people were brought to most colleges for the benefit of whites."\(^8\)

Cliff Robinson found he was pushed into the role of spokesman as well.

In class [it was] . . . well, what do black people think? And I think what was troubling was a lot of us fell into that role where we became spokespeople for the black race in America. . . . It was an enormous amount of insensitivity.\(^9\)

Professor John Hyde remembered

those early [black] pioneers had to be very, very strong because . . . they were not only representing themselves but their race in a way no other students had. . . . A black student said to me early on: "Don't always ask me what black students think, ask me what I think. I don't know what black students think."\(^{10}\)

One administrative policy in particular reinforced the black students feelings that they were at Williams to educate whites on blackness; this was the "pepper and salt" policy of freshman housing. Under this policy the administration spread the black freshman out as much as possible so that the white students could benefit from their "diversity."

[We] were sort of sprinkled throughout the freshman quad. Literally sprinkled. There were not any places where there were two black students together. It's clear to me now that they sort of intentionally spread us. Not to separate us but to . . . diversify.\(^{11}\)

Clifford Robinson was directly affected and insulted by this policy.

Things got off in a really bad way [freshman year]. Back in 1966 when you were accepted at Williams you were sent a card and it said if you know anyone coming to Williams that you would like to
room with just put the name down. Well my friend Preston Washington and I put our names down on each others' cards thinking that we'd be roommates. When we got to Williams we were told we couldn't room together because there was so few black students that they wanted to spread us out and it made me wonder whether we were there for their benefit as opposed to our own since we didn't have the option that every other student had in '66.\(^{12}\)

The black students also described experiences in which they were reminded that as new members of the Williams community they had little right to complain about the structure of this community. Preston Washington remembered Chuck Collins '69 having such an experience.

Chuck Collins was the president of Gargoyle and he was responsible for engineering along with the Gargoyle members this real dynamic report on the reorganization of the campus, councils and government structures. . . . He was at a meeting one day with some older alums and one guy looked at him and said "I don't understand why you're taking so much interest in our school."\(^{13}\) It was statements like this one that lead Chuck Collins to believe his position at Williams might be temporary.

"Most white students think that this is their college and that black people are just invited guests," Collins said "A lot of times they give the impression that you are intruding upon them."\(^{14}\) Preston Washington believed that "black people could be kicked out of Williams tomorrow and the college could go on living its white existence without us."\(^{15}\)

These pent-up feelings of alienation and frustration due to the lack of understanding the black students found among members of the Williams community would help lead to the occupation of Hopkins Hall. Clifford Robinson stated that one reason they took over the building was because of the cumulative effect of experiences such as the white students wanting to
touch blacks' hair and asking if black babies were white.

By 1969 I think we had figured out what had happened for the previous three years and we were mad . . . which is why I think something like Hopkins Hall happened.\(^{16}\)

Richard Jefferson's *Birth of the Nation* incident was an extremely radicalizing experience for him. This was how he described his reaction to his "friends" laughter.

"I'd never had what I call a conversion experience except that once. That night my life changed just like that. That night I realized . . . that they were laughing at me . . . That's the way it struck me. These guys, who I sort of thought were my buddies, they were laughing at me . . . I came back to my room by myself. I was just crying, loudly. I had never had . . . a sense about being impacted negatively because I was black . . . I got on the phone, I called my father, and I told him you got to come and get me right now. If you don't . . . I'm going to start walking. I was serious, I wasn't kidding. I said I will walk to Boston. I'm not going to stay here, not another minute . . . I think I talked to my father for an hour and a half. He cooled me down, got me to stay . . . Ten years down the road I can see myself coming back around from that experience . . . From that day on it was my view that white people were guilty until proven innocent . . . It's really been only the last few years that I've been able to accept . . . that they could be either good or bad. I just take them as a person . . . [In high school] I encountered discrimination . . . but it never touched me. It made it much easier to get involved in . . . something like that occupation which I would not have done before . . . I wasn't the kind of person who would have done things that stuck out.\(^{17}\)

*The Birth of the Nation* incident succeeded in alienating Jefferson from his white peers. From then on his closest friends at Williams were to be black. Jefferson and three other black students chose to room together sophomore year even though they were not close simply because there were no white students with whom they wanted to room. Jefferson had
vivid memories of how we all ended up living together. None of us had been invited when we had to go up to the room selection process . . . by our white roommates to join them . . . I guess I didn't do a lot to try to get invited either . . . I can remember after dinner one night walking out and running into Bennie [Boswell '70, another black student] and saying "Bennie, who you going to room with next year?" We weren't that close . . . He said "I don't have anybody to room with" and Larry [Bronson '70, a black student] was there and Larry said "I don't have anyone to room with either." "So, you guys want to room together?" "Yeah, OK."

He found that an immediate bond with other black students was the shared experience of being expected by whites to be black spokesmen. He found it comforting to be around other black students because they did not make him feel like an object to be studied.

None of the black students knew each other at the time . . . But we began to meet each other, bump into each other . . . and the immediate topic of conversation would become: is this stuff going on with you . . . are you going through this bullshit [being forced to be a spokesman]? Sure enough, we were all experiencing the same thing. . . . We began in twos, and then in threes, and then in fours, began to talk about that experience we were sharing. It was through these kind of conversations . . . that we began to get to know each other. Then we began to like each other. And there was a certain comfort and a certain kind of refuge from the ridiculousness of that situation that we found in one another.18

Other black students also stated that they did not like hanging around white students as much as fellow black students because they felt white students would never be able to understand what they were experiencing.

"There is probably no way in the world I can make you [a white student reporter] understand exactly how I feel," one black student said.
"You haven't lived it and therefore [the] chances that you can understand it are very low," added [John] Clemmons ['71, a black
Preston Washington found in dealing with white peers: "you talk and try and explain, and talk, and try and explain and everything becomes very circular." Thus they felt more comfortable sharing their experiences with other black students for only among each other did they feel completely understood.

"The main source of identity I get at Williams is talking to other black students," said John Clemmons '71 . . . "The only thing that makes this place bearable is the opportunity we, as black students, have to get together and laugh at ourselves," another Afro-American student said. "That's when we can really be ourselves and do our thing. You don't have to worry about anyone being offended."21

The WAAS was to become a very important organization to these black students who felt uncomfortable in the presence of whites. As members of the WAAS, they would come under the influence of Preston Washington who would become WAAS chairman starting in the fall of 1968. Washington had been a preacher since the age of sixteen;22 he was a compelling and inspirational speaker.23 Professor John Eusden remembers him as having an Old Testament, prophetic stance.24 Washington was a supreme ideologue; on entering Williams he already knew a lot about black history, culture, and current black political ideology. Richard Jefferson described him as having a lot of experience . . . He grew up in Harlem . . . and he was one of the only people in our class who was aware of all this literature. He use to hang out in this bookstore in Harlem, it's a famous bookstore for black literature . . . He use to tell us about all this stuff that he had read. I was just amazed at when this guy could have possibly have read this stuff--high school, he must have read it in high school but . . . it was really deep, complex stuff. He was exposed to some stuff before he came to Williams that just somehow allowed him to hook onto us or us hook onto him . . . He
was educating us . . . He was giving us a whole different education, an education that Williams didn't give us.25

These two qualities, his oratorical ability and his grasp of ideas made Washington a "natural leader."26 Professor Eusden remembered that he engendered much respect.27 Clifford Robinson, a close friend of Washington's, described him as "very charismatic, very committed to this kind of thing" and the WAAS as "Preston Washington's little baliwick . . . his little organization to play with."28 Professor John Hyde said of Washington and his fellow leaders: "they were very articulate . . . They were superb at organizing and forming a kind of unity that they felt was necessary."29

Washington would bring the ideologies he had learned to the WAAS members through consciousness raising sessions. These sessions were begun because many in this diverse group of black students knew little about black history and culture and the current issues being discussed in the black community. According to Preston Washington

We began these consciousness raising seminars because many of our students were middle class and had not themselves been really exposed to our community as far as coming from a community like Harlem.30

Richard Jefferson before he came to Williams "did not have a real consciousness of being black."31

These sessions had actually begun on an informal basis in 1966-67 under the guidance of seniors like Boyd Puryear and John Gladney, whom Washington spoke of as "knowing a lot about our history."32 Richard Jefferson remembered:

[The WAAS] met informally . . . my freshman year . . . just sit around and talk, mostly about black literature. Malcolm X, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, seems like we'd talked about that
forever. *The Wretched of the Earth*, Franz Fanon, seems like we talked about that. I don't think I ever read it. It was that kind of thing . . . one or two books that we talked about a lot . . . Some of the few people who had read them would sort of throw out ideas and we'd talk about them.

In the year 1968-69 this process was intensified.

I kind of remember what seemed like an endless series of meetings every night after dinner. I'm sure it wasn't every night but . . . by that time we were eating dinner together in Greylock dining hall . . . I recall these real ideological discussions. There was a lot of dealing with people like Malcolm X, his readings and trying to apply them to our situation, Franz Fanon, the psychiatrist . . . Stokely Carmichael, Rap Brown, lots of black nationalists who were very popular at that time.33

Preston Washington recalled these discussions as follows:

We [WAAS] had been through a process of what we call consciousness raising. I forget the number of times a week we met, but we had seminars, we had special projects that we had to engage in, books that we read.34

This was the first step: trying to learn about black issues of the day. The second step was then to figure out where they, as Williams students, fit into these issues; in other words, asking what they could do to help the black community.

Preston Washington eloquently expressed the first step of consciousness raising in the following fashion:

[They were] concerns of sensitizing ourselves to the needs and issues of the black community . . . We needed to have that kind of sensitivity . . . where we could begin to recognize our own heritage, our own culture . . . Trying to delve into that particular understanding of who we were was really what the whole struggle was about internally . . . Literally we bore our souls and in essence went through a period of not only consciousness raising but really a process of purgation almost like a religious ritual of cleansing
because in so many ways we were really questioning our value system and what we were really committed to and whom.\textsuperscript{35}

The second step was to figure out how to use their education for the betterment of the black community. At a time when the ideology of black separatism was popular, when Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton in \textit{Black Power} were writing about the need for blacks to create their own institutions, some Williams black students felt guilty about going to an institution dominated by whites. Thus they would feel a great need to make their Williams education relevant to the black community. As Richard Jefferson stated

\begin{quote}
I think it was a lot of trying to figure out how we fit into all this . . . how we as . . . a privileged group of people. We were isolated . . . we felt a real need to relate to the larger struggle that was going on in the black community . . . [It was] an education about ourselves and where we fit into the world.\textsuperscript{36}
\end{quote}

This need for relevancy also came out clearly in a letter the WAAS sent to the \textit{Williams Record} in 1967.

The Black Williams student joins the Williams Afro-American Society because this group offers him unique educational and cultural advantages. The society gives the black student an opportunity to develop a consciousness or awareness of himself that eventually might lead him to work positively and constructively for the betterment of the black community. No other group or organization on campus has afforded him this ethnocentric orientation that attempts to assure his identity and define his purpose. The society, then, in a sense, is a family attempting to redirect the values of its members.\textsuperscript{37}

Many black students, to make their Williams education more relevant, did independent projects over Winter Study in black urban communities. Richard Jefferson was one of these students, spending his 1968 Winter Study in Boston doing an independent project entitled \textit{Urban Turmoil} with five
other black students.

We decided that we wanted to do something that would get us off-campus and would be relevant to the black community. So we decided we wanted to do a study of the perceptions of people in the black community of Black Power. We got a professor to help us draw up a questionnaire [to] do a statistical sample in the city of Boston in the black community. . . . We had an experience which allowed us to take a lot of what we were learning in political science and statistical samples and put it into a context that was really meaningful to us.\textsuperscript{38}

Because of their alienation from white peers and through their shared experiences in consciousness raising sessions, black students became close. Jefferson remembered the WAAS as "very tight. People were very close."\textsuperscript{39} This closeness would help make the occupation possible as it made the black students "firm in our beliefs and secure in our strength."\textsuperscript{40} In other words, as a group they would feel strong and committed enough to take radical action.

Under the ideological guidance of Preston Washington the WAAS members learned in consciousness raising sessions about an ideology that drastically conflicted with the administration's thoughts concerning black students. The administration's prevailing position initially was that race was not important. "Integration" was the key word describing the way they hoped to see this new, larger group of black students fit into the college. Black students were to be treated just like any other student. When black students were first admitted in increasing numbers, the faculty and administration did not realize that Williams would have to change to accommodate them. As Professor Francis Oakley put it: "we thought we could help blacks merely by the education we offered."\textsuperscript{41} This ideology began to change in 1968 as the administration started to work on the WAAS proposals.
aimed at making Williams a better place for blacks to go to school. This
administrative policy, however, died hard: for example, Professor Neil
Grabois stated that during his tenure as dean in the early 1970s he still
believed that "special treatment would not serve the college, America, or
blacks." 42

Preston Washington confirmed that the college felt this way about its
new, larger group of black students.

They were going to let some of the niggers from the city come to
Williams. It was going to be nice. It was a nice liberal thing to do
as long as they kept their place. The school was not going to alter
itself; we were going to have to alter ourselves. 43

As evidence that members of the Williams community felt this way
Washington cited an incident in which a faculty member said that
dissatisfied Afro-American students should just leave Williams rather than
have the school try to change itself to accommodate them. 44

These views of the administration's conflicted head to head with the
ideologies of Preston Washington, WAAS' leader and central ideological
voice. Washington believed that it was absolutely imperative that Williams
change because all the power at the institution was then in the hands of
whites; blacks must be given some control over the institution.

The issue was one of who was in control . . . We raised a basic
fundamental issue: we wanted a share in the power, which means
we wanted to make decisions with you as opposed to you making
decisions and telling us we had to follow it . . . the whole notion of
ownership. We were not co-owners in that institution, we were
recipients of white mercy. Some would call it a handout, some
would call it an undeserved gift. Consequently we were on welfare
at Williams. 45

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When I called Williams a racist institution . . . I was referring to
the structure of power relationships here, particularly the fact that Williams, like all liberal American institutions, speaks about integration. Integration is a farce; it is a subterfuge for the maintenance of racism because blacks here, or any place else in America, don't control anything.46

The power of the white world at Williams was evidenced by the fact that Williams' academics at the time barely dealt with black concerns and issues relevant to the black community. Washington felt there was a need for a serious look at Black America and indeed the universal black presence in the world . . . for one to leave the school with a piece of parchment and to be able to say I think I have a basic understanding of what's happening in the world not simply from the perspective of James McGregor Burns, and he was my very wonderful professor in political science.47

In consciousness raising sessions the WAAS members came to recognize the fact that if indeed we had a legitimate story to tell, if we had a legitimate history and culture, and specific scholars we could in fact look to for support, for the possibility of doing research assignments, like a W.E.B. DuBois, a Booker T. Washington, those types of persons and indeed we were studying white stuff but increasingly came to the conclusion that we had a legitimate history that needed to be taught to everyone just as we were learning so-called white stuff, or white educational information.48

Washington felt that Williams had an obligation to teach black students about their community and history so that they could go back into the world and use their knowledge to address some of the greater inequities in power. Williams and the white world it belonged to held the power; Williams must help do something about sharing it. He felt the college was instead coopting thirty black students, training them to think like it thinks and to behave and to act and to work in that system like it wants. Those students come out and wear pin stripe suits or the
silk tie and come out with the same mentality, cooperating and being coopted by that particular system than those persons are not about to bring about change or to even raise a question or concern about change. They want to become a corporate lawyer or . . . doctor. The irreconcilable difference is no matter how many students Williams picks to go there or Wesleyan or Amherst the fact of the matter is that in Black America and in Hispanic America with all the millions of the people that are there the average person there is not going to have the opportunity to go to these schools. That average person lives below the poverty line in the richest nation on earth so that Williams and Amherst and Wesleyan . . . and everybody else . . . I question sometimes whether or not they are indeed part of the problem because ultimately they are not training students to become caretakers in the world, stewards of the resources of the world. They're training them to become greedy consumers and capitalists.49

The WAAS members realized, however, that they could not just go to the administration and ask in general terms that blacks be given more power on campus. They would need a program; thus the fifteen "non-negotiable" demands were created. Basically, the demands were meant to continue the very slow process that had begun the year before of incorporating the black experience into the lily white nature of the Williams institution. Through the demands, the WAAS hoped to institutionalize education on black issues, improve the social life for black students, increase black enrollment, and create ties between Williams and the black community so that blacks could have a more "relevant" education.

Specifically, the demands addressed three areas: Afro-American Studies, administration, and admissions. Under Afro-American Studies, the WAAS asked that there be guaranteed admittance of all black students into Afro-American Studies courses, that Afro-American Studies courses be instituted in departments that presently had none, that committees be formed to examine establishing permanent ties with urban institutions and
to advise the Afro-American Studies Program, that a rotational instructorship in Afro-American Studies be established, and that more funds be allotted to the Afro-American Studies program. Under administration, the WAAS asked that car rules be relaxed, that they be given funds for on and off-campus conferences and social activities, and that they be given a separate black residential house. Under admissions, the WAAS asked that a black admissions officer be appointed, that three African students be admitted per year, and that black students participate in an advisory capacity to the admissions office.50

The demand for ties with urban universities and community organizations grew out of the WAAS members' feelings that education must be relevant, that they should learn how they could best help the black community. The demand for the separate black house grew out of the black students' feelings of alienation from their white student peers. Those who felt uncomfortable living with white students wanted to make sure that they had the choice to live with other black students.

The WAAS members did not feel they had to have a separate house, but they did want to be able to live in groups of more than four. Thus they would be satisfied with being allowed to cluster in the already existing residential houses. In the demands, however, they stated they needed a black house because

we knew when it got whittled down to a compromise if we started out by talking about cluster groups . . . that would have wound up being we'll let two of you . . . You always have to give up something so you start out asking for more. That's just good politics.51

Some of these demands grew out of very minute concerns of the WAAS
members. The demand that there being guaranteed admittance of black students to Afro-American Studies courses was added because black students were having trouble getting into these courses, which were overenrolled due to white student interest. Black students felt they should be let in because they were "an asset to the course because they were black" and also because they felt that these courses were a vital part of their continuing process of consciousness raising. 52

The last demand came about because the WAAS members at the time were beginning to develop relationships with the African graduate students at the Center for Developmental Economics and, finding these relationships informative, wanted the college to admit some African undergraduates. In addition, the WAAS members were influenced by the Pan-Africanism literature of the time advocating the global unity of the black race. Thus, as American blacks, they were interested in getting to know African blacks. The part of this demand asking that the admissions office be especially sensitive to students from the Southern Sudan came about because one of the WAAS members, Moses Ayeun '69, was from the Southern Sudan and wanted the college to be sensitive to the needs of his war-torn country. 53

The demands about car rules and funding for black social events were intended to help rectify the dismal social life of black students at Williams. Williamstown, especially a Williamstown without female students, often bored Williams students, but for the black students the social life was especially bad for a number of reasons. The first was that many black students were dissatisfied with the "white" nature of most of the entertainment and social activities.

"All you have to do is look at a college calendar of events to see that there is very little that relates to black people, [Michael] Hall
'69, a black student] said. . . . "The ACEC (All College Entertainment Committee) and the powers that obtain entertainment have completely ignored the feelings and preferences of Afro-American students in social activities," [Cliff] Robinson said.54

In addition, many black students who came from cities found Williamstown rather unexciting as compared to the urban scene.

"So rural and so dead", he [Richard Jefferson] continued. "Where most black students come from, there were things happening all the time." "To put it in a nitty-gritty way, there's no action," [Michael] Hall said.55

The last factor that made the Williams social life especially depressing for black students was that few black women would visit the Williams campus. Richard Jefferson tells of a typical weekend freshman year:

The women would come down in busloads. . . . The women would get off the buses. . . . The junior advisors from each entry would be responsible for selecting enough women so that the guys in the entry would have enough women to party with. . . . There were never any women for most of the black guys and we just kind of got left out of the party scene.56

Interracial dating was not considered an option by many as it was not favorably looked upon by either white or black students. In any case, many of the black men felt more comfortable dating black women because they had never dated white women in the past.67

The desire of all students, but particularly black students, was to get out of town for the weekend. Clifford Robinson often looked forward to escaping from Williamstown.

I had this thing where there was a bus that stopped in Williams town every day that went to New York. And my feeling was if I missed it . . . every time I knew when that bus left and every time it was past the time that it left I said "Oh God, I'm stuck here, no
way of getting out."58

Escape was often difficult as only one of the thirty-six black students at Williams at the time of the occupation had a car.59 This was because the majority of black students were on financial aid,60 and a college rule, the "car rule," said that financial aid students could not own cars.61 Thus they had to rely on rides from white students; according to some black students, however, white students seldom invited them on road trips.62 Thus they demanded that the car rules be rescinded.

Some of these demands were almost direct restatements of those made the year before which the administration had not granted. The demand asking for the creation of permanent ties between Williams and black organizations and the demand for a rotational instructorship were more general statements of the demand the previous year for student-faculty exchanges with black colleges which had not been fulfilled. Other demands were logical extensions of programs begun in the previous year that the black students felt the administration had not yet taken far enough. Four of the demands asked for more funding; the WAAS felt that in the last year they had not gotten enough money. The demand for the extension of the Afro-American Studies program into departments previously uninvolved was meant to extend the program set up the year before. The demand for a rotational instructorship was aimed at increasing the number of black faculty at Williams as was the proposal for an endowed chair the year before. And the demands concerning admissions were meant to increase the black enrollment as were the scholarships proposed in the previous year.

The WAAS members had become impatient with the pace of change. Things were changing but had not changed fast enough. By calling their demands "non-negotiable," by specifying that the administration must accept
them as a package, and by setting a deadline for administrative response of April 4th, the WAAS hoped to speed up the pace of change. Richard Jefferson stated immediately after the occupation that "the urgency that we felt about this matter caused us to address demands, not proposals or suggestions." Sixteen years later he remembered "as time began to pass we began to feel that the situation was more urgent." Preston Washington also remembered that this issue of pace was an important one.

We said hey, we have to go back to these folks with something in writing and enumerate what it is that we want and put some deadline to it otherwise like Martin Luther King once said "the word that always comes back is wait." And he says wait means never. That's what the demands were. They were originally not meant to be demands but we knew in the psychology of the way Williams reacts, Williams waits for Amherst to react that waits for Wesleyan to react that waits for Harvard. It's kind of an in-house academic game and no one is going to venture forth and do anything so radical that's not going to be in keeping and in company with what the colleagues in the inner sanctum of academia, white academia, deals with . . . They [the administration] were moving on certain things but it was a movement on a very, very slow timetable.

This opinion concurs with emotions he expressed around the time of the occupation.

Quite obviously we're in a big hurry to bring about change overnight. We're trying to make up for years of neglect, disappointment, and frustration.

The Afro-American Society has been continually dragged through the morass of administrative bureaucracy . . . People move when you put pressure on them.

To speed up the pace of change, the WAAS members felt they needed not civilized negotiations but an event that would dramatize clearly and
unequivocally how serious they were about immediately changing Williams. This was stated clearly in the statement, written by Clifford Robinson, that the WAAS released upon entering the building, otherwise known as the Statement of Occupancy.

The Williams College Afro-American Society has occupied the college's administration building because at this time we can see no other way of reaching those goals which we deem so urgent. We recognize the extralegal nature of seizure but we found it necessary and fitting in light of the present state of discussion here at Williams . . . Through this act we hope to impress upon the college the degree of our concern and the extent of our seriousness.68

The WAAS occupied Hopkins Hall partly because they thought the administration was moving too slowly to bring about concrete change that would make Williams a more meaningful and comfortable place for black students. The occupation, however, was not, on a fundamental level, about instituting more Afro-American Studies courses or obtaining more funding for the WAAS. In actuality it was a cry for the Williams community to realize how

the black student at Williams is isolated and alienated as a result of the overt and covert racist crosscurrents to which he is exposed.69

WAAS hoped to change people's minds and hearts within the institution as well as changing the institution itself. This came out clearly in Preston Washington's thoughts.

Last year we asked for more books . . . more black students, a black dean, a black chair--but we didn't have the understanding to develop a blueprint for effective change. This year we saw that the issue was more basic than we had realized. Black students were pushed through a white, monocultural enviroment. They were being
defranchised and dehumanized in an atmosphere that purported to be liberal.\textsuperscript{70}

This more basic issue contained two components.

The first was affirmation of black power. The second was an anguished cry calling for the limitation of the inculcation of white values in the educational process . . . to point out the complete infiltration of white standards, values and norms in an educational process that dopes people into believing it is value-free and objective.\textsuperscript{71}

To change the attitudes of members of the Williams community the WAAS needed a dramatic event. In other words, they wanted "to create a crisis to heighten the sense of urgency surrounding our problem."\textsuperscript{72} They did not need to look very far to come up with the tactic of a building occupation, which was "happening on a lot of campuses all over the country and almost had become a sort of formal means of protest."\textsuperscript{73} Columbia University students, both black and white, had staged the first building occupations in April 1968. Their occupation was followed closely by occupations by black students at Boston University and Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, and by white students at Stanford University. In February 1969 Duke, Wesleyan, and Colgate black students occupied buildings. In March the Princeton black students were to follow suit.\textsuperscript{74} As Richard Jefferson put it: "things were going on on the campuses all over, all around us. It was . . . contagious. It was everywhere."\textsuperscript{75}

The fact that students were taking radical action all around them put pressures on the Williams students to act in the same way. Clifford Robinson remembered

it may have been important for us to make this kind of statement generally so that we wouldn't be perceived as less than committed to the very things that we were asking for by outsiders, by other
Washington as well remembered this same pressure being present:

here we are at the great Williams College and we’re suppose to be leaders of our people and . . . Wesleyan beat us and Brown beat us, a few other schools. It was not so much as it was other school black student unions were pushing their administrations to become responsive to the needs of blacks and we were being very nice.

The WAAS decided at a meeting just previous to presenting the demands to the administration on March 12th that

if they [the administration] were not going to commit themselves to those demands we were going to go in [to the building] around the time of Martin Luther King’s . . . assassination day.

This decision was approved but only with much dissension.

Within our own ranks there was certainly disagreement over whether or not this was the wisest thing to do . . . There was some of us who didn’t want to do it and there was some of us who did and it got pretty vicious . . . There was a great deal of internal strife.

Richard Jefferson’s memories concurred with these.

There were people who just couldn’t deal with certain kinds of alternatives as we began to talk about the possibility of an occupation. There were some people who . . . felt real allegiance to this group, there was a real bond among the guys there, . . . it was unbelievable . . . People really felt . . . torn. They didn’t want to break away from what the group wanted to do . . . but on the other hand some of these guys were the first in their family ever to go to college.

A few members of WAAS decided that they could not join in the occupation. Drew Hatcher was one of them. He felt that if he went into the building his father would come up to Williams and literally pull him out. His father had been an important public figure, an associate press secretary to
John F. Kennedy, and would not want to be embarrassed; nor did Hatcher want to embarrass his father. In addition, Hatcher feared what the blemish on his record would do for his chances of getting into law school.\textsuperscript{81} Michael Hall, then vice president of the WAAS, also refused to enter the building because "he was not going to jeopardize his education."\textsuperscript{82} Hall grew up in the Newark ghetto; thus for him a Williams diploma would mean a big step up financially.

Clifford Robinson was another student with mixed feelings: he was torn between his commitment to the college and his commitment to Preston Washington.

It was very difficult in that the black students who were involved in the takeover were also in many ways significantly involved in campus life. In doing it there was a certain amount of discomfort and concern over how the experience was perceived by the rest of the school . . . I was president of Garfield House at the time . . . A very close friend of mine, who I actually went to high school with, Preston Washington, was the chairman of the Afro-American Society at the time of the takeover of the building . . . so personally I was torn . . . I wasn't committed to taking over a building. I didn't think that was the best way to go. I was wrongly chastised for feeling that way by some folks in the organization.

In the end Clifford Robinson's allegiance to Washington and the WAAS won out.

Once the decision was made it made sense for all of us to do it together . . . Once the majority of people committed to doing it I went along with it. I had no wish to separate myself off from the main players.\textsuperscript{83}

Michael Douglass, another black student with mixed feelings, also ended up going into Hopkins. He decided to join in the occupation not because he wanted to change anything about his Williams experience but because he saw how other black students might want Williams to change and thus went into
the building to show solidarity with them. For example, he did not want to live in a separate black house but he respected the feelings of others who did. He felt that since there were so few black students, every person that the WAAS could get to go into the building would make a difference.84

The Statement of Occupancy expressed these ambivalences best.

Disruption is not a pleasant task. It was never such for Ghandi, it was never such for the late Martin Luther King, and it certainly is not such for us! It took much soul-searching and selflessness before this decision could be made. We have put our future and our status as students at Williams on the line.85

It was a hard decision to make, but in the end the bonds between the members of the WAAS won out. These feelings of ambivalence, however, are important as they were to effect markedly the tone and the tenure of the occupation.

There were many factors that led the WAAS members to decide to take over Hopkins Hall. The racism born of ignorance of the Williams community led to feelings of frustration and alienation that needed to be expressed. These feelings would give the black students' common ground and strengthen the WAAS into a cohesive, tight organization. These factors, however, could have led to a building occupation before 1969. In fact, Sherman Jones said a building occupation was discussed in the year 1967-68 when he was in charge of the WAAS but was voted down by the WAAS members. What changed over the course of one year? Jones suggested that the leadership became more aggressive.86 This did happen: the WAAS members followed the lead of Preston Washington, a forceful, charismatic leader deeply committed to what he believed was right. In addition, in the year 1967-68, the WAAS had
decided to try to change Williams in small steps through rational deliberations; in 1968-69 it seemed to the WAAS members as though this approach was bringing change about too slowly so that a new and more radical approach was needed. And finally, in the year 1968-69 students around the country had begun to take more and more radical actions; this would embolden the WAAS members.
CHAPTER FOUR

This was a civilized occupation . . . It was a very respectful occupation as much as it was something that was done against people. I do think it had a certain style to it.

--Clifford Robinson, 1986 Interview

On the afternoon of Wednesday, March 12, 1969, the Williams administration, including President John Sawyer, Dean of the College John Hyde, Dean of Faculty Dudley Bahlman and Provost Stephen Lewis, found copies of the Williams Afro-American Society's fifteen "non-negotiable" demands on their desks.¹ The administration's response to most of the demands was positive, but a few were rejected out of hand. Because the administration would not commit itself to all the demands, the WAAS took the final plunge and occupied Hopkins early in the morning of April 5, 1969, one year and one day after Martin Luther King's assassination. The occupation itself would come to a peaceful solution due to two factors: the support given to both sides by faculty, trustees, and white students and the administration's and the majority of the WAAS members' commitment to solving the crisis peacefully and rationally.

The administration's initial reaction to the demands was one of surprise, for they thought that deliberations with the WAAS over the 1968 proposals had been going well and producing significant change. Stephen Lewis stated:

We had thought that things were going along okay, working as we were on the . . . proposals [from April 1968] . . . Then . . . these demands came like a rock through the window.²

Similar sentiments would be expressed by President Sawyer immediately
after the WAAS members took over Hopkins Hall.

It [the occupation] interrupts the steady and significant progress we have been making in a critical area and into which we are prepared to put increasing efforts and resources, as we have demonstrated by positive actions.³

Nor did members of the administration understand why the WAAS had used the term "non-negotiable," for it seemed to them that most of the demands would have been acceded to without resorting to, in their eyes, such drastic terms. To administrators used to solving problems rationally and calmly, the term "non-negotiable" seemed unnecessarily confrontational.

These demands were at first meant to be kept a secret between the WAAS and the administration. Then copies were mistakenly passed out by a dean during a meeting of the student-faculty Committee on Undergraduate Life. The students on the committee passed the demands on to the Record staff who printed an article on them the day students left for spring break, March 14th. Because the WAAS' non-negotiable stance was now public, it would be harder for them to back down or give in on any of the demands.⁴

There were three demands that the administration from the start had problems granting. One demand that the administration objected to was the one concerning scholarships for African students; they thought such scholarships would be too costly. President Sawyer thought "the money for African scholarships might be used more effectively if it went to American black students."⁵ On this point, however, the administration was not to prove immovable.

The administration also wondered what the WAAS meant when they stated

Provisions are to be made for a coordinator of the Afro-American
Studies program acceptable to the Williams Afro-American Society and the administration.\textsuperscript{6}

In the longer text accompanying the demands, the WAAS explained that they wanted "powers to determine who the coordinator of the Afro-American Area Studies will be in conjunction with the administration."\textsuperscript{7} If this meant giving the WAAS veto power over the appointment of the coordinator then the administration would not allow it because

in order to command the respect of the faculty and to protect the individual involved, faculty and staff appointments must go through the approved department and CAP [Committee on Appointments and Promotions] procedures.\textsuperscript{8}

Dean of Faculty Dudley Bahlman thought that

they were asking that the faculty appointments in that field be different from regular faculty appointments and we agreed we couldn't do that . . . It would be bad for the program.\textsuperscript{9}

However, "the straw that broke the camel's back," as Preston Washington was to call it,\textsuperscript{10} was the demand for a separate black residential center. Many objections to this were raised by administrators and other members of the Williams community. One was that it would be illegal because it would violate the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In March 1969 the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare wrote a memorandum to presidents of institutions of higher education which dealt with this issue of separate housing based on race.

Certain actions on the part of an institution of higher education constitute a violation of compliance requirements of Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

1. Separate Housing for Students Based on Race--All housing which is owned, operated, or supported by the institution or a public agency must be available to all students without regard to race, color, or national origin and assignment to such housing must be
made in a nondiscriminatory manner.\textsuperscript{11}

This could not be used as an airtight argument by the administration against a black house, however, for both Wesleyan University and Cornell University had managed to get around this law and establish separate black residential houses.\textsuperscript{12}

One of the main reasons the administration gave for not wanting to establish a separate black residential house was because they thought it would be returning to a fraternity-like housing arrangement on campus. Residential living in fraternities had been abolished in 1962 with the hope that housing arrangements based on exclusivity were ended forever on the Williams campus; the college had hoped to ensure that from now on each residential house contained a broad cross-section of students. For this principle the college had fought hard against influential fraternity alumni. Thus, for many members of the Williams community a separate black house meant erasing the college's hard-won gains and bottling up part of Williams' diverseness, a precious commodity, on one corner of campus. Professor Peter Frost stated

the college had just been through a very nasty fight with some of its traditional alumni on fraternities and had been insistent on the student choice over what students would come to live in that social unit, ending the fraternity blackball system . . . It had been a bruising fight and they [the administration] were very concerned that if they allowed a black house they would be falling back into a fraternity kind of pattern.\textsuperscript{13}

John Hyde also recalled that the bitterness of the fraternity issue had an effect on the demand for a separate house.

Separating out people . . . had at Williams that context of fraternities. That term had a whole overlay of history to it which then got related to the black students and the issue [of the black
house] . . . It had been a very, very difficult period, I'm talking about the fraternity crisis. And finally, President Sawyer referred to the fraternity issue when he explained why a separate house would not be possible in his response to the WAAS demands dated April 3rd.

Educational reasons that led to earlier decisions [concerning fraternities] in favor of an open campus and against discrimination or restrictive patterns continue to be operative. In his response of April 3rd President Sawyer also cited an article by Sir Arthur Lewis, a black West Indian Economics professor at Princeton, which Sawyer said upheld certain educational reasons for disallowing a separate black house. Professor Peter Frost recalled that President Sawyer was quite taken with Lewis' arguments. In the article cited, written for the March 18, 1969, edition of the Princeton Alumni Weekly, Lewis explained why he felt that the strategies of the Black Power movement would not improve the position of blacks in America. Believers in the Black Power movement, including Preston Washington, its spokesman at Williams College, were trying to direct college-educated blacks back into the black community where their skills could be used to help to improve this community. Sir Arthur Lewis thought that such a strategy dealing exclusively with black communities would be useless because some fifty to sixty percent of the labor force moves out of the neighborhood every morning to work in the country's basic industries. So a black strategy which concentrated exclusively on building up the black neighborhoods would be dealing with less that half the black man's economic problems. Thus for Lewis the only way for blacks to advance was in the integrated world; to advance the farthest in this world a black should go to the best
"white" colleges like Princeton and Williams and learn the skills in which to compete in an integrated world. In addition, Lewis argued, separate black housing on these campuses would not be in the black students' or the black peoples' best interests because without living with whites, blacks would not learn how to best get ahead in the integrated world.

I am told that the reason black students stick together is that they are uncomfortable in white company. But how is one to be Ambassador to Finland or Luxembourg . . . if one is uncomfortable in white company? Thus Sawyer's educational reasons against a separate black house were that he, like Lewis, did not believe that black separatism would be the best strategy to take for blacks as a whole to advance.

Faculty and staff members who were at Williams during this period remembered other reasons why many members of the Williams community did not think that a separate black residential house would be a good idea. Apparently some thought it would not only hurt black students but white students as well: white students would no longer be able to benefit from black students' "diversity" as they were meant to through such administrative policies as the "pepper and salt" policy of freshman housing. Philip Smith described this as letting the white students off the hook who had never before met a black person and did not want to associate with one. Professor Peter Frost remembered two other concerns of the college's: that black students who did not want to live in a black house would be coerced into living there and that white students might react adversely to a black house, heightening racial tensions on campus.

The administration also objected to the time limit the WAAS imposed on them for response on the demands; President Sawyer saw no possible way
of giving a complete response by April 4th.

The timing was just not possible. I was going out of town, the college was about to go into recess, and we couldn't convene the relevant committees until everybody returned.\textsuperscript{24} In addition, the trustees would have to be consulted on the funding issues, and they were not going to meet until late April.\textsuperscript{25}

Immediately after spring break, on April 3rd, Sawyer sent his written response to the demands to Preston Washington; in this response he outlined the major points presented above. Sawyer began by going over the past history of the dealings between the WAAS and the administration; this had been done more thoroughly in a letter Dean Hyde and Provost Lewis wrote to Washington dated March 18th. In doing this Sawyer, Hyde, and Lewis hoped to show the WAAS how far Williams had progressed in the last year or two and thus impress upon them how committed the administration was to making Williams College a better place for black students. President Sawyer then proceeded to voice his objections to both the deadline and the demands concerning faculty appointments and the separate black house. And finally, Sawyer criticized the WAAS' tactics.

Nor can any college operate on the basis of confrontation or deadlined ultimata; such methods cannot increase its capabilities to respond and may materially lessen them, as some have sadly learned. An institution can sensibly undertake only what it can intelligently sustain, and a college's ways of decision must remain those of reason, discussion, and cogent long-run planning, despite the acknowledged frustrations of such procedures.\textsuperscript{26}

This response and the misunderstandings that occurred when it was presented would push the WAAS over the brink and lead them to decide definitely to occupy Hopkins Hall. The night that President Sawyer's
response came out, about thirty WAAS members met with Provost Lewis, Dean Hyde, Professor Francis Oakley, chairman of the CEP, and Political Science professor George Marcus. This was the first meeting of the WAAS members and the administration after spring break; three meetings had been held before spring break. Discussions in the meetings before spring break had covered how the WAAS would use its increased funding and why the black students felt they needed to live together. Provost Stephen Lewis had done most of the negotiating for the administration and would continue to do so for two reasons: most of the demands concerned financial matters and, as the youngest member of the administration, it was thought by the rest of the administration that he would be more in touch with the students.

At the meeting on April 3rd the two sides discussed Sawyer's official response to the demands. The meeting began with Lewis going down the demands one by one and explaining the administration's position on each. Lewis was careful to detail the complexities of each because for the administration the demands were not "simple issues. It wasn't a realistic way to do things. There was money involved, the language was unclear." The package could not be accepted until it had been clarified and negotiated thoroughly. For the WAAS members, however, the demands were simple issues: the administration could either respond yes or no to the entire package. Only when the package was accepted would the WAAS members then be willing to negotiate the details of the demands. At this meeting they told the administration exactly this. For example, they said that they did not have to have a physically separate house; that black students could be clustered within an existing residential house. However, they refused to agree to this formally until the "package" was accepted as it had been
Because the administration had failed to accept the package, the WAAS members, feeling that the administration was not serious about implementing change, left the meeting angry. Some black students stated that they felt that the administration was stalling, was "beating around the bush." They saw the administration's objections as just a few more excuses in a long line of excuses. Preston Washington felt this way; he disagreed with the administration's protestations that they could not meet WAAS' deadline.

They told us that they hadn't had enough time. But if they were really interested, if they took us seriously they would have done something over vacation. Nor did he agree with Lewis, Hyde, and Sawyer that much progress had been achieved in the past few years.

No one in the administration really understood what we were talking about . . . It's like the white administration in South Africa. They stop for two days arresting people for political disobedience and they expect their natives to be happy. They brought thirty-eight black students to the campus and you're suppose to feel grateful. Washington also felt that Lewis' tone at this meeting provoked the ire of the black students. He found the provost's tone "condescending" and said some others did as well.

He wasn't facetious and negative but he just rubbed people the wrong way . . . The black students, even those more moderate and middle-of-the-roaders, when they had a chance to hear this man and to listen to his doubletalk, his condescending attitude, [they would get angry.] Basically what he was saying was we've met these so-called demands and why are you bringing this up and creating trouble and furthermore you ought to be glad that you're
Lewis might not have come across in this manner to all black students. But the fact that he came across this way to Washington, their leader, is significant; it could only have heightened the misunderstandings between the WAAS and the administration.

The next day, Friday, April 4th, there was a noon memorial service for Martin Luther King. Both sides thought the other would make some concession at the service, but neither one did; the demands were not discussed at all. That same day the Record came out with the WAAS' official response to Sawyer's letter of the day before. In their response it was clear that the WAAS members had lost faith in the administration's ability to bring about change without some radical action on the black students' part to push it along.

This is a time of action! . . . Because we have found Williams to be a racist institution, which has refused to meet our needs either quantitatively or qualitatively, we feel that it is no longer appropriate to see a passive or educative solution to our problem. . . As a responsible campus organization we are compelled to take whatever action we deem appropriate to see that our demands are complied with . . . Williams has failed us.

What the WAAS saw as the administration's negative response to the demands plus the fact that the administration did not propose anything new on Friday led the WAAS to take the final plunge into radical action. The administration had failed to commit itself to the demands; thus the WAAS would occupy Hopkins Hall. As Clifford Robinson wrote in the WAAS' Statement of Occupancy:

Through this act, we hope to impress upon the college the degree of our concern and the extent of our seriousness. The administration's response to our demands is proof enough that we
have not yet made this point. These events were not the causes of the occupation, but the immediate events leading up to the occupation which reinforced the causes described in the previous chapter. These events made the demands more urgent and the black students increasingly alienated, and thus confirmed the need for radical action.

Friday night April 4th a memorial service for Martin Luther King was held in Thompson Memorial Chapel. Preston Washington, John Clemmons '71, and James Thornton '72 were the WAAS members who spoke. In his speech Washington intimated that the WAAS would take some sort of action. He did not state what this radical action would be except that it did not necessarily mean "taking over a building . . . Frankly, we don't know what we're going to do now." But they did know: the food had already been bought for the occupation. Washington made this statement to mislead his audience.

On Saturday, April 5th at approximately three-thirty a.m., approximately thirty members of the Williams Afro-American Society took over Hopkins Hall. The WAAS members had been making their plans for this moment ever since they had begun talking about occupying the building before spring break. Cliff Robinson described the talks during this period as

our kibbutzing and our strategizing . . . How are we going to do it, are we going to throw people out of the building, what happens if someone needs to get in. Members of the WAAS were split over the issue of the role they saw force and violence playing in the occupation. The most violent alternative they discussed was tying up a dean, but that was quickly vetoed. A small minority of WAAS members formed their own committee and began
preparing for violent attack with violent defenses. These measures included an electrified wiring system for the basement windows of Hopkins Hall and homemade Molotov cocktails. According to Washington, this committee was composed of black students "who had come from the street, they knew about all that stuff: picking locks and creating Molotov cocktails."

The majority of WAAS members disagreed vehemently with such tactics. Clifford Robinson was against violence of any kind. I was not going to . . . hit anybody or curse anybody or anything like that . . . I was not into barring doors and making weapons and stuff like that, I thought it was totally ridiculous. But I know there were some who did and there were some of us who just wanted to kill two or three people [who were involved with the "defensive measures."]

For Preston Washington as well such tactics were "distasteful." Many WAAS members must have agreed with Robinson and Washington because their commitment to nonviolence was affirmed in the Statement of Occupancy: "we are not nihilists. We do not wish to destroy Williams College. We have no wish to wreak violence on anything or anyone."

However, the fact that the WAAS members allowed a separate committee to prepare weapons and bring them into the building meant that the WAAS was prepared to defend the building violently if it was attacked.

The first black students to enter the building were karate experts; these students entered first in case they had to fight the security guards for the building. The rest, including Richard Jefferson, followed "crawling on our stomachs so that no one would see us." The security guards just sort of said 'Oh, okay, we're leaving' . . . and they got their stuff together and they just walked out, just gave us the building. Probably the security guards had been warned in advance that something like this might happen.
Both faculty and administrators were expecting some sort of action; after all, the WAAS members had stated that if their demands were not met they would take "appropriate measures." Most members of the administration expected an actual occupation. John Hyde was convinced before spring break that a building occupation was probably likely. Dudley Bahlman remembered on Friday taking the precaution of locking my desk. I had a faculty salary book in my office and I usually just stuck it in a box on the floor but I put it in the drawer of my desk and locked my desk.

Other administrators also anticipated an occupation.

Mr. Sawyer took his salary book . . . home. George Howard . . . in charge of payroll . . . took the payroll checks and got them out of there . . . So we pretty well knew that something was going to happen.

The security guards notified Dean Hyde of the occupation, who notified Dean Bahlman who told President Sawyer. The president's first action was to assemble a meeting of the administration. At this meeting the administration resolved not to use force against the black students inside the building. According to Stephen Lewis

It really makes no sense to use violence, particularly on a campus like this, except in the case of someone trying to do physical harm to something or someone else.

However, they did conclude that if someone attacked the building they would have to turn the situation over to outside authorities. The administration also decided as a gesture of good will to offer the black students food; the black students rejected this offer as they had brought in some food and sympathetic white students were supplying them with whatever else they needed.
At one p.m. on Saturday, anywhere from two hundred to three hundred white students gathered in front of Chapin Hall, close by Hopkins Hall, to hold a sympathy rally for the black students. A group of students led by Wade Rathke '71 and Robert Lee '70 had prepared a statement of "unconditional" support.

We regret the administration has failed to make a serious and adequate response to these demands and have forced the Afro-American Society to take action on their own terms . . . We feel that prompt accession to the demands is in the best interests of the college.

Some students at the rally disagreed with the term "unconditional"; they were generally supportive of the WAAS members but also could understand some of the administration's objections to the demands. Ellen Sherberg, an exchange student from Vassar, said that she sympathized with the blacks on the theoretical and emotional levels, but . . . "non-negotiable" sounded unreasonable and taking over a college building as even the blacks pointed out was "extra-legal."

The Williams Record took a similiar position. In an editorial appearing on April 4th, the paper expressed its general support for the WAAS' position, but disagreed with the "non-negotiable" character of the demands. The Record also opposed the proposal to establish a separate black residential house. Since the students, however, all agreed that they were generally supportive of the WAAS, they marched to Hopkins Hall to show this support.

Throughout the rest of the occupation many white students were to remain supportive of the WAAS, or at least the student supporters were to be much more visible than the student detractors. What John Eusden
remembered was a heightened level of cooperation between white students and black students. For example, a small group of white students watched over Hopkins Hall around the clock Saturday, Sunday, and Monday to make sure that the building was not attacked. Clifford Robinson remembered clearly a candlelight vigil that these students held Saturday night when rumours of possible attack were the greatest; he described this vigil as "very moving." Washington remembered this as well.

The students . . . who were pro-us, they came and had a candlelight vigil around the building when there was a question of the building being attacked and they stayed there all night. They really provided a nice ethos and we were in constant communication with them.

One group of students actually headed off an potential "attack," albeit not a very serious one. Peter Frost described the incident as follows:

one guy . . . an older man, who had a lot of troubles mentally . . . He used to drink a lot at the [American] Legion [bar in Williamstown]. . . . He was sort of a professional anti-leftist. Even though he didn't make a lot of sense he was always complaining about radical activities. He came up to the college [Saturday night] and several of the Williams students who knew him, who liked to drink at the Legion, steered him away.

The support of the white students for the black students would continue on past Saturday. On Sunday afternoon the College Council voted to support the demands as a package, that night two hundred students rallied in support of the black students.

At 3:30 p.m. Saturday white students and faculty members packed Jesup Hall to hear Stephen Lewis go over the administration's response to the demands. The North Adams Transcript's depiction of the meeting was as follows:
Most of the students wanted yes or no answers to each demand. It was perhaps characteristic of Steve to go through the demands one by one, telling what each one involved, when many would have advised a more direct approach. But for Steve, who had worked with the Afro-Americans for the better part of the academic year, yes or no answers to each demand were insufficient. There were too many grey areas. After he had spoken for about ten minutes one student interrupted, saying that he had told them nothing and demanding that he get to the point. Slightly flustered, Steve stepped back, not responding immediately.\(^72\)

At this point a young member of the faculty, William Bevis, stood up and said "now if I get what you've said we've already met all the demands except for one or two;" Bevis' interjection was invaluable as it helped the white students understand the administration's position and made them less hostile to it.\(^73\)

The meeting continued with Robert Lee proposing a moratorium on Monday and Tuesday classes so that there could be discussions on the occupation and the general plight of blacks in America; this proposal received "thunderous applause" from the students. His petition eventually was to get seven hundred student signatures, over half the student body.\(^74\)

At this point a student in back of Professor Peter Frost whispered "Oh, goodie, I have a hour test on Monday." This angered Frost because he "sensed that white students were really enjoying this without making any particular sacrifice." Thus Frost stood up and proposed a Martin Luther King Fund to which members of the Williams community would donate to help the WAAS get the money to get professors, get the money to get cultural events . . . I said "why don't you guys figure out what you can give and then give it until it hurts."\(^75\)

Inside the building the black students were becoming scared that they might be attacked. Many were paranoid from the start; for example, they
were constantly fearful that they were being spied upon. Preston Washington felt this was because many were "from the city where we're paranoid by nature which is a survival technique." This paranoia combined with what the blacks students perceived from inside the building led them to believe that the building would be stormed by some outside force. First, they knew that they were being watched by outsiders.

During the whole occupation there was a person stationed at the chapel with high-powered binoculars. We all assumed it was a FBI agent. [He was] very different from everybody around. If there was enough daylight to see us he was there.

The black students were also receiving anonymous, threatening phone calls from white supremacist organizations that they did not know even existed in Berkshire County. Preston Washington didn't know there was a White Citizen's Council in the Berkshires, didn't know there was supposedly Klu Klux Klan chapters in the Berkshires, didn't know that.

The thought of attack really frightened the black students because in that case the more militant members of WAAS would put their "defensive measures" into action and there would be bloodshed. To most WAAS members, this thought was appalling and extremely frightening. Richard Jefferson, for one, was "real freaked out" because of this. So was Preston Washington.

I have never been so scared in all my natural born days. If we were going to get attacked, it was going to be a bloodbath. I was never so frightened in all my life because I was the leader of this thing. All of our knees [were] shaking no matter how big and bad we sounded. We were scared. I found God in that building. I had the lives [on my hands], I felt that sense of responsibility.
Clifford Robinson was scared not only at the thought of violence but also merely by the fact that he had taken such a radical step.

I worried a lot about whether or not this meant I'd be kicked out of school . . . I was so upset at doing this thing that I don't know how functional I was the first day.82

There was to be no attack; however, there was an attempted cross burning Saturday night on the lawn outside of Hopkins. The facts concerning this incident are somewhat fuzzy. Preston Washington does not remember it happening.83 Two sources confirm that this incident occurred but are unsure as to who did it.84 Ellen Sherberg remembered talking to some of the white students who had maintained the candlelight vigil all Saturday night outside of Hopkins who spoke of an attempted cross burning but were uncertain as to who had done it.85 Richard Jefferson did remember the attempted cross burning although he did not witness it as he was on "guard duty" on the side opposite from where it happened.86 No one was sure who the culprits were.

On Sunday April 6th a special faculty meeting was held to discuss the occupation. At this meeting Professor Dudley Bahlman acted on Robert Lee's proposal and asked for a moratorium on classes on Monday and Tuesday. There was some opposition to this motion, especially from older faculty members and members of the science faculty who did not want to have to cancel a week of laboratories. Despite such objections the motion passed; in doing so the faculty showed how seriously they viewed the whole affair.

Recognizing . . . the gravity of the situation, the complexity of the issues involved, and the vital need for a period of institutional self-examination, we, the Faculty of Williams College, wish to endorse the call for a moratorium on classes during the next two days.

At this meeting it was also discussed whether the faculty should
officially support either the WAAS members or the administration or even both. In the end the faculty decided to take no official stand. One faculty member even went so far as to urge "on all members of the faculty not officially involved the value of No Comment." According to Peter Frost a majority of the faculty felt that what they should do was stay home and let the administration handle it . . . I was told by several faculty I never should have made that Martin Luther King Fund speech, that I was just messing up the situation. Let the administration deal with the Afro-American Society. The more people who jump in, the more confused it will get.88

Dudley Bahlman remembered the faculty as being much more willing to get involved. He said that they had a "remarkable, almost spontaneous response to the challenge the occupation presented." Dean Bahlman set up headquarters in the faculty club during the occupation and various members of the Williams faculty would report back to him on developments.89 Thus there were definitely faculty members who tried to help out as Frost and Bevis had at the Saturday meeting in Jesup.

Monday morning six to eight hundred students met in Chapin Hall to discuss the issues brought on by the occupation.90 There they broke into discussion groups of twenty.91 Topics discussed ranged widely. They included the demands, the type of education and social life Williams should provide, and the more general topics of the ethics of seizing private property, urban riots, and black alienation.92 Most found the discussions enlightening and educational. However, one former student said it was like "preaching to the converted" as those who had not thought about these issues did not show up.93 These students treated the two days as a vacation to play outdoor sports in the spring weather.94

Meanwhile, the situation inside the building became even more tense as
the WAAS members grew restless from being cooped up together for so long. According to Richard Jefferson

we [the WAAS members] knew we had to get out of that building before long or things were just going to completely fall apart and we were going to internally self-destruct. People arguing . . . about whether we were going to do this or that . . . little nitpicking things. But with people being cooped up--I don't know if you ever hear about hostage situations, the dynamics that unfold over a period of time . . . That's what was happening.95

Clifford Robinson remembered the tension erupted in fighting among the black students over when to end the occupation.96 Reports drifted to the outside that the black students were tired and wanted to leave the building to take showers.97

The resolution was to come quickly. Negotiations between the administration, primarily Stephen Lewis, and the WAAS had been going on throughout the occupation by phone and letter. Both sides would get help from various members of the Williams community to bring about the negotiations smoothly. Phil Smith helped the administration make phone calls and convey messages;98 John Eusden also assisted with communications.99 Inside the building negotiational responses were formulated in group meetings; Clifford Robinson would "listen to everybody's conversation and . . . put it in writing."100 A black alumni, Edward Coaxum '66, flew in to help the WAAS with the negotiations.101 By Sunday noon even an agreement had practically been worked out; by late Monday night an agreement had been reached.

The black students then spent an hour and a half cleaning the building102 and had Dean John Hyde inspect it to insure that there was no damage, that there was no question of
any disruption of . . . papers . . . Each desk had a note from one of the students who had used the desk . . . that said that nothing had been touched.\textsuperscript{103}

One student had even left a dollar in change and some trading stamps to pay one of the secretaries for crackers he had eaten from her desk.\textsuperscript{104} At one a.m. Tuesday morning the WAAS members walked out of Hopkins Hall.\textsuperscript{105} The occupation had come to a peaceful solution after three days.

Important in bringing about this peaceful solution was the constructive support of both white students and faculty. Many white students in rallies, vigils, and fund drives expressed their support for the WAAS. It made the black students feel as if their action had made an impact on their fellow students, that they had succeeded in educating them. This goal being accomplished it would be easier for the black students to leave the building. On the other hand, the white students did not turn their backs on the administration as was shown at the Saturday rally when many balked at the idea of giving unconditional support to the WAAS members. The white students as well wanted to see the occupation come to a peaceful end. For example, students cancelled a joint concert and rally they had planned for Monday night to show support for the black students because "the issues were being resolved quietly and a . . . concert-rally might possibly result in incidents."\textsuperscript{106}

The faculty gave similar constructive support. Faculty members helped the administration to explicate its position to both the WAAS members and the white students. They showed their support for the WAAS by implementing a Martin Luther King Fund drive and calling a two-day moratorium on classes. True, it was only a small minority of faculty and
students who actively helped work for a constructive solution, but they were important because they were a vocal minority.

The trustees of the college, like most of the faculty, stayed clear of the affair. Jim Stevens '58, then a trustee, said that the trustees counselled but did not intercede. Stevens personally did not believe that the WAAS should be given a separate black residential house, but he had confidence that President Sawyer and Provost Lewis would handle the situation appropriately. He also felt that the black students had "legitimate beefs" and thus there was no need to pull them out of the building by force. Thus while the trustees did not help bring about a peaceful solution to the occupation, they did not hinder the solution.107

The occupation came to a peaceful resolution most of all because of the commitment to nonviolence evidenced by both the WAAS members and the administration. The black students inside the building were more moderate than militant; it is the rare militant who leaves a thank you note. Most eschewed their few more radical brothers who were making Molotov cocktails and the like. As was seen in the previous chapter, many were not thrilled to be inside the building in the first place. The thought of violence made most members of the WAAS uneasy; thus they worked to see the occupation resolved in a nonviolent manner. The administration through its actions also tried to minimize conflict. Their decisions not to use force and offer the black students food were positive steps towards a peaceful solution.

It was a "civilized occupation." The WAAS' confrontational tactics, their "all or nothing" approach to the demands, had collided head on with an administration committed to solving problems through rational deliberation. This would produce misunderstandings between the two sides and lead to
the occupation of Hopkins Hall. The occupation itself, however, was resolved through rational deliberations: when the two processes of bringing about change clashed, the WAAS modified its tactics and the administration did not. This was because whereas the administration had always solved crises through rational means, the WAAS members were split over whether confrontation was the best way to bring about change. Clifford Robinson talked about this disagreement.

There were people who felt occupy the building at any cost, in any way, versus some of us [including Robinson] who said we're going to do this in a very civilized manner.

In the end, according to Robinson, "we prevailed."
On Wednesday April 9th the faculty ratified the agreement reached between the administration and the WAAS (for complete text see Appendix). This agreement promised to fulfill almost all of the fifteen demands except for two: the one concerning the black residential house and the one concerning the hiring of a black admissions officer. The administration kept some of these promises; others it did not. The end result was little institutional change at Williams due to the occupation.

The content of the concluding agreement did not answer the most important question: whether or not the occupation of Hopkins Hall had significantly changed Williams College, and more specifically whether the occupation made it a better place for black students to go to school. To this question there were many answers from different members of the Williams community. Some saw the occupation as changing Williams in concrete ways; others did not. Some saw the occupation as being an important symbolic event; others thought it was important because it led to greater reflection on black concerns within the Williams community. A few disagreed with this last point, saying that the occupation encouraged not thought but rhetoric. Preston Washington pointed out that this reflection on black issues was to be shortlived. Others argued over whether confrontation had been the best way to bring about change; some administrators and faculty members said no while some WAAS members, especially Preston Washington, said yes.

The administration promised to fulfill all but two of the fifteen
demands in the final agreement. They did not guarantee that a black man would be hired in the admissions office; instead, they promised that Dean Curtis Manns would work with the admissions office. The first black admissions officer did not come until the fall of 1973 when the college hired Bennie Boswell '70, a black alumnus who had participated in the occupation.¹

The WAAS members also did not get a separate black residential house. They did get, however, what Preston Washington had said the WAAS had hoped to achieve by asking for a black house: clustering in groups larger than four in existing upperclass residential houses.² Black freshmen were permitted to live in clusters as well if they so desired and requested it. Five residential houses offered the black students clusters of rooms;³ the black students choose Gladden House, and sixteen blacks lived there the next year.⁴ The cultural center in the Mears basement remained where it was. They were promised more space for their cultural center as membership in the WAAS expanded; eventually they would have a whole house as a cultural and social center.⁵

Some of the promises of the agreement were kept. An advisory committee to the Committee on Educational Policy was established consisting of two black students, two other students, and four faculty members.⁶ The college abolished the rules against financial aid students having cars. Black students continued to serve as advisors in the admissions office.⁷

The WAAS also got an increased amount of funding to finance social activities and cultural events mostly through the money given to the Martin Luther King Fund. By May 20th the Fund contained almost twelve thousand dollars: five thousand had come from faculty members and almost seven
thousand from students and residential houses. This fund also received, in the period from June 1968 to June 1969, almost nine thousand dollars from alumni, and from June 1969 to June 1970, four thousand dollars from alumni.

The WAAS, according to Preston Washington, got funding directly from the college as well. The college gave the WAAS money to furnish the cultural center in the basement of Mears House with African and Afro-American books, a bar, and Afro-American art works. The college and James Linen, a trustee, gave the WAAS money to set up a store on Spring Street; the WAAS members ran it themselves, and the money they made went towards augmenting black scholarship funds. The store went into business in September of 1969; it sold items which were popular with students at the time like records, incense, and wall hangings as well as items from the Third World.

The administration also promised to help fund a conference at Williams of leaders of regional Afro-American societies. This conference was never held as the WAAS members decided that the money might be better spent on a series of colloquia on Afro-American issues throughout the year. They felt that these would have more impact on the Williams community because they would take place over more than just one weekend. It is uncertain as to whether these colloquia were actually held; what is clear is that the college did not renege on its promise to hold a conference.

On other promises the administration acted slowly or not at all. For example, no permanent ties were ever established between Williams and urban universities or community organizations. The closest Williams would come to this was the Williams-in-the-City program run by Professor Robert Gaudino of the Political Science department; there is no evidence that
indicates that this program was established as a direct result of the occupation. John Hyde explained why he felt that these ties were never established:

we went through a period where we became very concerned about the isolation of Williams College and there was great talk led by a couple of trustees . . . about the possibility of setting up a branch of Williams in New York where students could go for a year . . . What changed that and in a sense reversed it . . . I trace . . . to . . . a beginning of environmental awareness and a sudden recognition that Williams and its environment were an equally important part of study and concern, that we should take advantage of what we have here to study rather than try and transpose ourselves to the city.13

In addition, the college never hired an Afro-American Studies program coordinator. The WAAS members wanted a coordinator who would spend all his or her time developing the Afro-American Studies program. Professor Joseph Harris served as chairman of the Afro-American Studies program in the years after the occupation, but he spent most of his time teaching a full load of history courses. Thus he was not the coordinator for which the WAAS had hoped.

No evidence was available on whether short-term instructors for Afro-American Studies courses were ever employed at Williams. This demand had been aimed at increasing the number of black faculty on campus: since so few blacks have PHDs, the WAAS members thought that if instructors did not have to have "traditional academic credentials" then more blacks would be hired. The lack of black faculty remains a problem at Williams today. Only about three percent of the faculty and staff are black at a school where about six percent of the student body is black. Richard Jefferson, presently Director of the Affirmative Action program at Boston
College, stated that Williams "never really addressed the faculty issue." However, Jefferson admitted that Williams has a double problem when trying to recruit black faculty: first, the lack of black PHDs in the country as a whole and second, Williams' often undesirable location far from a city or a black community. Preston Washington felt that Williams should have established an endowed chair in Afro-American Studies as was suggested in the WAAS' 1968 proposal so that there would be good monetary incentives for a black professor to work at Williams.

If they're serious about getting good quality black educators you're going to have to pay them. Who's going to want to go up there where there is no real black community . . . You're really going to have to have some incentives or inducement. There's not a heck of a lot of high-powered black faculty floating around this country. The schools that are smart go after that brain trust and pay them. An endowed chair can be very prestigious.

Williams did succeed in recruiting a few more African undergraduates but not many. Four Africans were admitted into the class of 1973 with Hatstack scholarships in the fall of 1969: one student was from the Southern Sudan and the other three were from Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Rhodesia. It is unclear whether they were recruited before or after the occupation. The next African undergraduate was not to come to Williams until the fall of 1973; the WAAS demand of three African students per year was far from met.

The agreement also said that several departments including Art, Music, Psychology and Religion would be searching for faculty to teach courses on black issues. The Art department was the first of these departments to establish an Afro-American Studies course; they began offering African Art in 1973-74. It was much longer before the Music and Psychology
departments offered Afro-American Studies courses: Psychology did not establish an Afro-American Studies course until 1978-79, and Music waited until 1982-83. The Religion department has never had an Afro-American Studies course as part of its curriculum.18

The occupation of Hopkins Hall did not result in much concrete change at Williams. Black students were allowed to cluster in housing. An Afro-American Studies committee was established, car rules were rescinded, and the WAAS received an influx of funds: not a very impressive list.

Some believed, nevertheless, that the occupation had succeeded in institutionally changing Williams College. Clifford Robinson believed it lessened Williams' institutional racism: he thought it changed Williams' policies so that the black presence on campus was no longer ignored in fundamental institutional structures. He cited as institutionally racist policies ones such as "not letting black students room together, . . . courses that were offered."19 Voices from the administration and faculty would disagree with Robinson. Dudley Bahlman and Francis Oakley both felt that the occupation had not made much practical difference as the administration for over a year had been making progress on the main issues encapsulated by the demands.20

Not all black students believed that the institution of Williams College had changed much; Preston Washington did not.

We have a new center, a couple of buses, a few more scholarships, but in a real sense the power relationships here have not fundamentally changed . . . The fundamental problem, as we see it, is not that whites, in their liberalism, won't give us what we want, but that we have no power over resources and the decision-making concerning our own developmental preparations . .
Until Williams has shared powers and no longer lives up to the image of a white man's upper elite school, I won't be able to say it has changed substantively. Washington felt that the change had been more symbolic than real. The occupation, however, was still a significant event because it lay claim to power for black students and blacks in general at Williams. As Preston Washington told a Williams Record reporter in 1970:

the affirmative implications of the "incident" will be lost on no one. Though a tiny minority, African students of the Old and New Worlds emphatically proclaimed that we demand a meaningful role in the decision-making process of this institution. We wanted power as equals.

In the end for Washington

to stand in my dishiki on with . . . Mr. Lewis . . . having him on national television and local media telling the folk that they conceded to our demands . . . was in my mind an incredible victory.

Many of the WAAS members thought that the occupation had tangible effects on the attitudes of the members of the Williams community. They felt that they had educated the community on black concerns, and because they were better understood they started to receive more respect. Michael Douglass stated that the occupation was beneficial because it heightened people's awareness and legitimimized the WAAS. Clifford Robinson wrote in the WAAS' statement concluding the occupation that

the channels of dialogue . . . have been opened to an unprecedented degree. The sincerity that has accompanied this opening is indicative of the new attempts by the concerned at Williams to fully comprehend and alleviate the problems that face all people here.

Robinson would echo these feelings in 1986.
they took us . . . more seriously as a group after that [the occupation]. We weren't to be trifled with. And I think they did end up respecting us for what we did to a certain degree.25

Preston Washington thought that the two days of discussions speeded along this educational process.

Whites among whites had to meet with each other to discuss what we are going to do about this issue . . . It opened up their [the white students'] mind to "Hey, this is serious." The issue was the atmosphere of racism, misunderstanding, ignorance, and neglect. And when you raise an issue to the forefront it makes people have to come to grips with what that means for better or for worse.26

Most members of the Williams community concurred with the WAAS members that the occupation educated many people on campus on the concerns of Williams black students. Professor John Eusden felt that the occupation definitely made the white students aware of these concerns; he thought specifically that the term "non-negotiable" made white students aware of how serious the black students were about bringing about change.27 Professor Ganse Little of the Religion department felt that

Black separatism . . . was played out here in a very productive way, resulting in a much fuller understanding and struggling with the implications among the faculty as well as the students. . . . The experience . . . has enabled many to feel that they were touched by the problem in a way in which they were never before.28

One student described the occupation as having stirred student thoughts and discussions,29 another thought that it "eliminated the naivete of many white students,"30 and a third thought that Williams now had "a new sense of itself."31

Thus the occupation educated the white community then at Williams on black concerns. Preston Washington believed this effect was temporary
because these white students graduated and a new group of students came to Williams totally unaware of the problems black students faced. In addition, Washington felt, the times changed: as the 1960's ended and the 1970's and 1980's began, students became less concerned with solving the problems of the world and more concerned with getting the most out of their own lives. At present Washington believes that

one of the signs of the times is an apolitical student body across the country. People are concerned about quote unquote my success . . . my getting that good job, landing that professional gig. Consequently I don't feel that sense of rage or commitment to anything . . . At least in the sixties there was that one element called hope. H. O. P. E. The thing that really frightens me when I see people going for themselves . . . trying to achieve for personal gain and benefit that means . . . they have been coopted by the system that is really trying to tell people [there is] no sense in you having hope. Rather than deal with the issue of structural change we are coopted into believing we have to try to figure out a way of fitting into that system. As a result of that the rage, the righteous rage, the holy rage that people ought to have so that there can be some parity in the society is not there and it usually comes from minds that are the freest, namely the students who are usually more optimistic than most of us when we get coopted by jobs.32

Thus Washington felt the occupation only temporarily educated the Williams community as the white students at Williams at that time graduated and others took their place.

Some faculty members did not believe that this educational process had been very effective. They thought that the whole emotional atmosphere of the event encouraged white students to mouth empty platitudes rather than think about the issues. Peter Frost remembered one student who proposed that the demands be accepted "unconditionally but not uncritically" which to Frost made no sense. He also remembered "posturing before crowds," or
speech-making just to gain a crowd’s applause without actually thinking about what one was saying.33 Physics professor David Park felt that there was "a certain tendency to let slogans do the work of thinking." An example of such slogans is "racism . . . which as ordinarily used has no discoverable meaning whatsoever."34

Mathematics professor Victor Hill agreed with his colleagues:

There is a high tendency to hang derogatory labels upon people with whom one disagrees, rather than trying to understand the assumptions and thought patterns that really create the disagreement. It's resorting to name calling rather than to an honest critique of one's own thinking as well as other people's.35

In other words, faculty members thought that many students should have thought through the issues more rationally. Rationality was something that was highly valued by many members of the Williams community; many took pride in the fact the the occupation was solved so "rationally." Stephen Lewis believed that "institutions are most constructively changed in an atmosphere of rational deliberation."36 Dudley Bahlman thought confrontational methods were inappropriate at Williams.

The institution of the liberal arts college is fragile and easily damaged. . . . The relationships that exist between the faculty, the administration and the students . . . are all very delicate relationships.37

Professor Vincent Barnett felt that

Williams is especially fortunate in that the vast majority of students are clearly disposed to see issues discussed and settled by a rational process.38

One Williams' alumnus agreed with Barnett. Initially outraged that the incident had occurred, this alumnus came to Williams to talk to students,
faculty and administrators about it. His sense of outrage diminished when he found the black students' tone to be "polite, their approach respectful, and their requests set forth logically," the demands to be "nothing more than "requests" after patience has run out," and the occupation itself to have been "rational, responsible, and completely nonviolent."

Many believed that the same results would have come about without the WAAS having to resort to confrontational tactics. In the statement Stephen Lewis prepared to read at the press conference on the day of the occupation's conclusion, he surmised that

the whole package of demands would have found a positive response within the Williams community without recourse to such action.

Professor Neil Grabois felt that "the ends could have been reached without that step [the building occupation]."

If the issues could have been solved by rational deliberation, and if the administration, as Dudley Bahlman and Francis Oakley thought, already had a firm commitment to improving life for black students on campus, then what did these faculty members and administrators think caused the occupation? They concluded it must have been caused merely by misunderstandings and miscommunications between the WAAS and the administration during the discussions on the demands. Stephen Lewis believed

a number of extremely unfortunate misunderstandings led to the direct action taken during the last few days by the Afro-American Society.

Political Science professor Vincent Barnett

believed that the conclusion in retrospect flowed from a lack of clarity, not administration rigidity: the central problem was a lack
of communication. Some administrators and faculty remained unconvinced after the occupation of the value of confrontational tactics; the WAAS members were more positive about their tactics as they felt the occupation had gained many positive benefits. For example, many black students, as described before, believed they had changed attitudes; some also believed they had brought about concrete change. Some of the black students, however, would not have been happy with their tactics if they had gotten much more confrontational; for example, Clifford Robinson thought the occupation was a positive event because it was so "civilized."

Preston Washington spoke to this issue most directly. Although his opinions on this subject were not necessarily representative of black student opinions in general, his opinions are important nevertheless because he was the ideological leader of the WAAS. Washington was to eschew rationality as a white way of solving problems. He thought Williams should place more value on emotions and confrontations as valid methods of resolving conflicts.

I should be able to stand up and tell Steve Lewis and President Sawyer to their faces that I believe strongly that they're racist if I want to, and they should be able to stand up to my face and tell me what they believe about me. Solving problems through emotion and confrontation would make Williams a more "multicultural institution" because such tactics had a basis in the emotionalism of the black church.

The more enlivening worship experiences that some of the black churches have is a call and response reality . . . I grew up in an atmosphere where singing was very gusty and lively and people enjoyed hearing and responding and you clapped.
More generally, Washington thought Williams should incorporate the black experience by putting the emotional on a par with the intellectual. Part of the "whiteness" of Williams was the fact that everything was academic, academic, academic. . . . The whole thing was just so damn serious, so damn head oriented until I just came across the notion that maybe we needed to think about broadening the whole concept. . . . Our emotional lives need development.47

Washington remembered one of his black friends at Williams who when a record by a preacher was played in his class he wanted to shout, to express his internal need for identity with the spoken word. He felt isolated and alienated, however, because the white experience is basically devoid of personal expression, assertion, and spontaneous acclamation. It's a pity. The brother should have shouted his head off--and blew everyone's mind; for indeed, when it comes to emotional development, whites are culturally deprived.48

The WAAS did not, through the occupation, fulfill Washington's ideal and put emotional development on a par with rational intellectual development at Williams. However, the occupation did get their white peers thinking about such issues. This came through in an editorial written for the Record shortly after the occupation.

The last five days' events argue effectively against Mr. Lewis' crisis-concluding premise that "institutions are most constructively changed in an atmosphere of rational deliberation"--and its educational corollary that individuals are best changed that way, too. In the rain and the time spent standing on cold concrete in front of Hopkins Hall, Williams' white culture confronted something at once tangible and beyond itself. Two value systems met. The "white" one which posits individuals acting "rationally" within tightly-structured institutions . . . met what it usually must mask--"groupness," consulting the emotions to attain a brotherly community. We feel the week's deepest significance
has been this contact with values other than "rational deliberation," the white cultural norm.⁴⁹
CONCLUSION

Institutions by their nature tend to be conservative unless there is constant struggle.


The occupation of Hopkins Hall in April 1969 by the black students of the Williams Afro-American Society was an action designed to attack an atmosphere of ignorance and neglect of the black race that had existed at Williams College for over one-hundred and seventy-five years. Up until this point, change in racial relations and racial patterns at Williams had come about only very gradually. The first black student did not graduate until 1889; it took another seventy years, until the 1950's and early 1960's, before Williams ended all racial segregation in residential arrangements. Also around this time black students began to be admitted in greater numbers and a few courses dealing with blacks were introduced; however, even these gradual changes did not take place at Williams until after the civil rights movement started making gains for blacks in the country as a whole.

When black students in the classes of 1969 through 1972 entered Williams in the years 1965 through 1968 respectively, they found Williams and the white members of the Williams community not much more sensitive to blacks than their predecessors had been for two hundred years before. Alienated by the insensitivity and lack of understanding conveyed to them by their white peers, black students often turned to each other and the Williams Afro-American Society for support. Through WAAS consciousness raising sessions where the ideologies of the black power movement were
discussed, black students began to see how little power was in the hands of blacks at Williams and how this contributed to their sense of alienation. The WAAS began to search for a tactic that would both seek to alter the unequal power relationships at Williams and dramatize the alienation that black students felt.

On first glance taking over a building did not seem like a tactic that these black students might have wanted to use. First, in order for an extra-legal and somewhat dangerous action like a building occupation to work, most of the WAAS members had to believe in the tactic and agree to enter the building; in other words they had to be a very unified group. Initially the WAAS was anything but this: it was a diverse bunch of individuals from varied backgrounds. Many of these individuals did not initially believe that disrupting the campus in such a matter would be the best way to bring about change. In addition, the administration in 1968 and early 1969 had been working on WAAS proposals introduced in 1968 aimed at incorporating blacks into the institutional structure of Williams. With such concessions being made it seemed unlikely that the WAAS members would feel that it was necessary to occupy a building.

In the end the black students' feelings of alienation and powerlessness both unified them and won out over their hesitant feelings towards confrontational action. They decided that occupying Hopkins Hall would be a clear symbolic statement of both their alienation and their demand for more power. The administration had been working on changing Williams but the WAAS members thought the pace of change was too slow. The WAAS wanted the urgency of these issues to be felt. The occupation did not grow out of miscommunications or misunderstandings, as some members of the administration and faculty thought, but out of the black students'
frustrations.

The WAAS members executed the occupation of Hopkins Hall extremely skilfully. By labeling their demands "non-negotiable" and by the act of taking over the building, the WAAS made the campus aware of how serious they were about these issues. At the same time, because of their commitment to keeping the incident nonviolent and their willingness to negotiate rationally some of the "non-negotiable demands with the administration, the WAAS earned the respect of most of the members of the Williams community.

One need only compare the situation at Williams with the situation at Cornell a few weeks later to realize the wisdom of the Williams' black students tactics. The Cornell students at the end of their occupation marched out of the building with semi-automatic weapons in their hands. This action would change many of the black students' supporters among the faculty and students to detractors. From then on the discussion on campus would revolve around the issue of guns rather than the issue of what the black students wished to change at Cornell.¹

Did the occupation achieve what the black students hoped it would? Did they manage to both change the power relationships at Williams and dramatize their alienation? The power relationships changed very little because the concrete gains brought on by the occupation were few. Thus it is a myth that the occupation changed the institutional structure of Williams significantly; in fact, the occupation did little to upset the slow, gradual pace of change at Williams.

If the occupation did not change Williams in a concrete fashion, then what did it accomplish? It did get the white members of the Williams community to begin to think about what it meant to be a black student at Williams. The biggest single indicator of this was the two-day cancellation
of classes which had never been done before. Thus the WAAS members succeeded in dramatizing the alienation which they felt, in educating the community around them. Preston Washington was right, however, when he said the educational effects of the occupation were shortlived. Students do graduate, and thus for this knowledge to live on it must be retaught every four years. To make attitudinal change as well as concrete change last requires a continuing commitment and constant effort.

Even the commitment of the members of the Williams community will not bring rapid change to Williams College. Williams is an integral part of the larger social environment and cannot change significantly until the country as a whole does. Change at Williams on black issues came fastest during the 1960's when change was occurring fastest for blacks all over the country.

The two sides saw two different ways of bringing about change. The administration believed in rational deliberations whereas most WAAS members believed that nonviolent, confrontational actions were better methods of bringing about change. In essence it was a conflict of generation: an older white generation and a younger black one. The younger black generation had grown up in a period when change was being brought about in the South through nonviolent, confrontational protest. To them such methods seemed commonplace since they had seen them dramatized on television from a very early age. They would run up against an older generation of administrators to whom these methods were a new and often risky way of bringing about change. Both sides would be affected by the collision. The WAAS backed down from its confrontational stance. The administration and faculty realized that classes could be stopped and education would still go on. This set a precedent: the following year the college went on strike from
early May to the end of the school year to protest President Nixon's bombing of Cambodia. The strike was not viewed as favorably as the occupation was, and thus this approach has not been tried again.

These two views of how change should be brought about are strikingly similar to views expressed by white Southerners and civil rights activists during the sit-ins in the South. In William Chafe's book *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom*, Chafe says the North Carolina whites believed

that conflict is inherently bad, that disagreement means personal dislike, and that consensus offers the only way to preserve a genteel and civilized way of life.\(^2\)

Chafe maintains that the Greensboro sit-ins' most

fundamental contribution . . . was to provide a new form through which protest could be expressed. . . . The sit-ins represented a new language. . . . In an almost visceral way, the sit-ins expressed the dissatisfaction and anger of the black community towards white indifference.\(^3\)

The administration, like the white Southerners, believed that problems should be dealt with with rationality as opposed to confrontation and conflict. The occupation of Hopkins Hall was important in the same way the sit-ins were: it provided a "visceral" and very effective way of showing black "dissatisfaction and anger . . . toward white indifference," in this case indifference evidenced in the WAAS' view by the fact that the administration was changing Williams too slowly.

The occupation of Hopkins Hall did not change Williams College dramatically in a concrete, visible way, but that does not mean that it was not important. It was important as a symbolic act which dramatized the frustrations that blacks felt as students at a fundamentally white
institution, an institution that had always been based on white culture and controlled by white men. The occupation also introduced nonviolent protest as a method of bringing about change in an educational institution.
APPENDIX

Documents Pertaining to the Occupation of Hopkins Hall in 1969
by the Williams Afro-American Society

I. WAAS Proposals of April 1968: "Where Do We Go From Here?"

1. The establishment of a number of Martin Luther King scholarships so that more black and other minority students could be brought to the Williams campus.

2. The creation of a chair to be filled by a Visiting Professor or Lecturer who will teach a comprehensive study of the history of the black man and his contributions to America.

3. The start of a Black Areas program which will seek to emphasize the role the Afro-American has played in American life.

4. The opening up of the possibility of students being able to go away from campus in independent projects and receive credit--the 'extended credit' idea--connecting books to the real world.

5. Student-faculty exchange with black colleges.

6. Start of an Afro-American fellowship room to increase the dialogue between white and black students. Such a room will also aid in the educative function which our Society has decided to assume.

7. Encourage a Big Brother program so that the students on campus can tutor and aid the qualified underprivileged students in the area. [Also] a Winter ABC program to further aid qualified underprivileged students.

8. We have established a Martin Luther King Fund to:
   a. Start a library in honor of Dr. King containing the works of authors on Afro-American history and thought. Also included in the library will be
books, articles, and other materials to be designated as the Dr. Martin Luther King library.
b. establish an endowment to bring to the Williams campus visiting lecturers, people in residence, to expose students and residents of the Berkshire area to the trends and ideas current in America today.
c. enlarge the number of cultural activities of the Afro-American on campus to stimulate interest on the part of the student body.
II. The Fifteen Non-Negotiable Demands Presented to the
Administration on March 12, 1969.

I. Afro-American Studies

   a. There is to be guaranteed admittance of black students into courses
      of the Afro-American Studies Program.

   b. Plans are to be made and presented (on the requested date) to expand
      the Afro-American Studies Program into departments such as art, music,
      psychology and religion that are presently not taking part.

   c. The creation of a student-faculty committee whose purpose it will
      be to determine the feasibility of establishing permanent ties between
      Williams and institutions relevant to black area studies (i.e., urban
      universities and community organizations).

   d. Academic and financial considerations are to be made for a
      rotational instructorship in the Afro-American Studies Program. These
      instructors may or may not have traditional academic credentials (i.e.
      college degrees) and may remain on campus as long as time and necessity
      permit. This rotating instructorship is to be an integral part of the Studies
      program. The instructors who will come up here will work within the
      framework of the academic structure as it now stands.

   e. Provisions are to be made for a coordinator of the Afro-American
      Studies Program acceptable to the Williams Afro-American Society and the
      administration.

   f. Two representatives of the Williams Afro-American Society and the
      program coordinator are to form the core of a committee that is to function
      in an advisory capacity in the Studies program. This committee is open to
      all participants in the program.

   g. The Afro-American Studies program is to have independent financial
      holdings to facilitate sponsorship of events outside normal curricular
      demands as do formal college departments.
II. Administration

a. There is to be a relaxation of car rules for black students.

b. All the heads (i.e. presidents, chairmen) of regional Afro-American Societies are to assemble on the Williams campus to deal with the pragmatic problems of community development and the problems of black students on white campuses in New England. The structuring of this event has not yet been formally decided, but will consist generally of workshops, discussions, lectures, and cultural events. The Afro-American Society is willing to share costs proportionately with the college.

c. There is to be college sponsorship of group social activities (i.e. mixers) for black students on campus. A continuous financial source is to be guaranteed to provide transportation and entertainment.

d. Supplemental funds to pay for participation of Society members in conferences outside of Williams. (i.e. the Oberlin conference).

e. The establishment of an Afro-American Cultural Center whose purpose it would be to promote a more congenial atmosphere for scholarly and social endeavors among black students. The Center is to contain residential facilities for black students desirous of living there and will necessarily be planned with an eye towards future expansion and accommodation. This center would allow for a greater centralization of activity pertaining to Afro-American affairs (lectures, exhibits, quarters for guests) and would institutionalize the presence and importance of another of the many perspectives that make up the Williams experience.

III. Admissions

a. A black man is to be hired in the admissions department acceptable to the Afro-American Society, who will act as a liason and counselor to the Society.

b. The Afro-American Society is to participate in an advisory capacity
in the admissions process of black students.

c. The addition of at least three African students on scholarship per year with special sensitivity towards students from the Southern Sudan.
III. Agreement Reached Between the Provost of the College and the Williams Afro-American Society

1. Participation of black students in the Afro-American Studies Program

   a) Among the many purposes of the newly-created program of Afro-American studies was that of providing easy access, through a special concentration of courses, to specialized courses in the area of Afro-American Studies. Although the Afro-American Studies Program is open to the entire College, black students will be guaranteed admittance to the courses of the Program, as will all students who have signed up for the concentration of Afro-American Studies.

   b) Members of the Afro-American Society have a particular interest in the development, expansion, and operation of the Afro-American Studies Program. Because of this, the President indicated his readiness to appoint an advisory committee to the Committee on Educational Policy which would include two students chosen by the Williams Afro-American Society. The composition and duties of the Committee are discussed at 2 c and d below.

   c) A primary concern of the Afro-American Society has been that the cultural, intellectual, and social life of the College reflect the new elements introduced into the curriculum by the Afro-American Studies Program. Therefore, the Society will undertake the sponsorship of cultural events related to the Studies Programs through the use of monies in the Martin Luther King Fund, which will be supplemented by further appeals, and through the re-allocation of funds controlled by the student organizations, on which the College Council acted in its meeting of April 6, 1969.

2. Expansion and Development of the Afro-American Studies Program

   a) The College and the Afro-American Society are anxious to have as full a program of Afro-American Studies as is feasible for a small college. Several departments, including Art, Music, Psychology, and Religion, which have not made faculty appointments (although in several cases offers have been made) or listed courses offerings in the Studies Program, are continuing to search for individuals to teach in this area.

   b) Because of the nature of the subject matter and also because of the
relatively short time that Afro-American studies have been recognized by major universities, it will often be the case that an individual who is capable of teaching effectively in certain areas related to the Afro-American Studies Program will not have the traditional academic credentials. Several departments intend to include such visitors in the Afro-American Studies courses for short-term periods, and the Afro-American Society has indicated its willingness to aid in locating individuals with expertise in these areas.

c) Because it is both a new and special field, there will be an advisory committee to the Committee on Educational Policy on Afro-American Studies and related programs. The Committee will consist of two Afro-American students chosen by the Society, two other students, and four faculty members chosen according to regular procedures, including the coordinator of the Afro-American Studies Program when he is named. After the coordinator for the Studies Program is appointed by the President, in consultation with the advisory committee, the committee will serve as advisors to the coordinator of the program in its operation and development.

d) The Committee on Educational Policy and the advisory committee will study the expansion of the Afro-American Studies Program to include the possibility of exchange arrangements with the urban universities and with black colleges and the possibility of urban studies centers, which might be established in collaboration with other institutions.

e) The Society has expressed its concern at what has historically been the lack of diversification of cultural and entertainment offerings on campus. The use of Martin Luther King Fund money and a re-allocation of funds controlled by the College Council will be sought to remedy this, with the help of the Society and the Provost. The College Council has gone on record in favor of such diversification.

3. The life of the Afro-American student at Williams

a) The Afro-American Society sought the establishment of a Fellowship Room and Afro-American cultural center whose purpose it would be to promote a more congenial atmosphere for cultural, scholarly, and social endeavors. The cultural, intellectual, and psychological reinforcement the Society seeks does not have to take place in one geographically distinct
location. The Society feels that, so long as its activities can be centralized, it will create the type of environment that enhances the growth and brotherhood of individual members. The basement of Mears House will continue to serve as the social and cultural center for the Afro-American Society, providing office facilities, space for social gatherings for members of the Society and their guests, as well as lounge and library. As the Afro-American Society expands its membership, more space in the building will be required. Black freshmen should be given the opportunity to live in clusters of a minimum of five throughout the freshmen entries, to provide the type of reinforcement sought by the Society. Within the existing residential house system, black upperclassmen should have the alternative of living in larger concentrations within the houses to increase the feeling of solidarity. Specific locations and arrangements will be worked out with the Afro-American Society, relevant house presidents, and the College Council Student Choice Committee. In the same vein, eating facilities for Afro-Americans should be provided in either Greylock or Baxter Hall dining areas, so that access between freshmen, upperclassmen, the cultural center, and the eating facilities may be central and convenient. This plan avoids the legal and educational drawbacks that a "black house" would entail, at the same time that it gives the social and cultural unity the Society hopes to provide for its members.

b) The geographic isolation of Williams College from major metropolitan areas bears heavily on the experience of Afro-American students here. This isolation, combined with the high proportion of Afro-American students who are on scholarship, presents certain problems which must be met. A part of the isolation problem, will be met by the easing of car regulations for scholarship students generally, plans for which have been in progress for some time. In addition, a portion of the Martin Luther King general funds can be used to further ease transportation problems as the Society sees fit; the Society may wish to purchase and maintain a vehicle for its group activities. Finally, at the discretion of the of the Society, some portion of the Martin Luther King funds can be used for group social and cultural events.

c) Contact with other Afro-American Societies at the neighboring colleges and with the community agencies in nearby cities is an important part of the life of Afro-American students at Williams. To further reinforce this contact, it is agreed that Martin Luther King Fund money could appropriately pay transportation expenses of members of the Society
attending conferences of Afro-American students. In addition, the college is ready to help support a leadership conference of New England Afro-American Societies at Williams College sometime next fall, hopefully to take place in order to inaugurate the Afro-American Studies Program at the College.

4. The Admission of Afro-American students to Williams

a) Members of the Williams Afro-American Society have been actively working with the Admissions Office in recruiting and advising on the admission of black students to Williams. The Admissions Office feels that the contribution of the Society to its work is already substantial, and it welcomes further consultation and cooperation from the Society.

b) Among the duties of Mr. Curtis Manns, who was recently appointed Assistant Dean, will be to work with the Admissions Office in connection with the admission particularly of the Afro-American students. The society actively participated in the selection of Mr. Manns, and he will act as liason and counsellor to the society.

c) The Afro-American Society and the College are anxious to have a larger number of African undergraduate students at Williams. To meet this need, the College will endeavor to attract African undergraduates who do not require full scholarship, will seek to re-allocate the Haystack scholarship priorities towards African students, with special sensitivity to students from the Southern Sudan, and will seek funds to support a larger number of African students at Williams.

Stephen R. Lewis, Jr., Provost
Williams College

Preston R. Washington, Chairman
Williams Afro-American Society
ENDNOTES

Chapter One


4. Spring, pp. 139-140.

5. Reid, p. 3.

6. Rayford Logan interview with David Reid, April 9, 1969 cited in Reid, p. 4.


10. Davis interview.

11. Williams Record, January 24, 1928.

12. Letter from John Davis to David Reid cited in Reid, p. 9


15. Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Williams College for 1891-92, Williamsiana Collection, p. 15


17. Interview with Logan cited in Walter Clark '75, Michael Darden '74, and


23. Letter from Charles Keller to David Reid cited in Reid, p. 16.

24. Davis interview. One then wonders why Gordon Davis chose to go to Williams. He says it was for "the most obvious reason of all: children act out against their parents . . . you parents say no and you say yes."

25. Interview with Walter Williams cited in Clark, Darden and Richards, p. 2.


27. Information on Rupert Lloyd comes from Rudolph, p. 314. Information on the two Davises comes from the Gordon Davis interview.


29. Davis interview.

30. Fifth report of the class of 1891, p. 58, Williamsiana collection; seventh report of the class of 1891, pp. 29-30 cited in Reid, p. 6.

31. Rudolph, p. 324. Rayford Logan was a history professor, Sterling Brown an English professor, and George Lightfoot taught Latin.


34. Rudolph, p. 324.


37. Rudolph, p. 324.

38. Transcript of Sterling Lloyd's son, Sterling Lloyd Jr. '68.

39. Fifty Years after the Class of 1889, pp. 9-10 cited in Reid, p. 3.


42. Rudolph, p. 318.

43. Respective class books cited in Reid, p. 7.

44. Keller interview cited in Reid, p. 16.

45. Keller interview cited in Reid, p. 19.

46. Transcripts of Ted Wynne and William George.


49. Plan for Replacing Fraternities with Special Housing Units, Williamsiana collection.


54. All of the above is from the Davis interview.

55. *Alumni Review*, July 1961, p. 5-6


57. Davis interview.


64. Davis interview.


68. Davis interview.


72. Interview with John Eusden, December 12, 1986.

73. Record, May 1, 1964.


76. Record, September 27, 1963. There were about twelve hundred students in the entire school at the time.

77. Articles on WCRC trying to desegregate local inns can be found in Record, November 22, 1963, December 13, 1963, and February 19, 1964.

78. Articles on students and faculty going south to rebuild churches can be found in Record, February 9, 1965, March 2, 1965, March 12, 1965, and April 9, 1965.

79. Davis interview.

80. Davis interview.


82. McFarland, pp. 2-3.

83. Interview with Philip Smith, December 12, 1986.

84. Record, March 20, 1964.


87. Report of the Director of Admissions, 1966-67, Williamsiana collection,
pp. 30-31.


90. Transcripts of black students from the class of 1958 to the class of 1964, Office of the Registrar, Williams College. Grouping as white collar/blue collar was arbitrarily done by me. For example, educator, restaurant proprietor, and real estate broker were typical white collar jobs. Typical blue collar jobs were postal clerk, soldier, and maintenance worker.

91. Davis interview.


93. Transcripts of black students from the class of 1966 to the class of 1969.

94. Course catalogues from 1959-60 to 1963-64, Williamsiana collection.

95. Interview with Frederick Rudolph, November 6, 1986.

96. Gladney interview.


98. Record, April 27, 1962.


101. Record, April 21, 1967.

102. Gladney interview.

Chapter Two


3. Gladney interview.


5. Interview with Clifford Robinson, December 10, 1986.


7. All the above data comes from transcripts of black students, classes of 1969-72.

8. Transcripts of black students, classes of 1969-72.


15. Douglass interview.


17. Douglass interview.

18. Hatcher interview.


21. Douglass interview.

22. Robinson interview.

23. Washington interview.


25. Washington interview.


27. Record, April 14, 1970.


29. Jefferson interview.

30. Washington interview.

31. Hatcher interview.

32. Douglass interview.
34. Douglass interview.
35. Oakley interview.
38. Robinson interview.
39. Hatcher interview.
40. Washington interview.
41. Washington interview.
42. Douglass, Jefferson, and Washington interviews respectively.
43. Douglass interview.
44. Picture on the wall of the Williams Crew boathouse. Philip Smith remembered that this black student, Elrick Williams '69, slipped out of Hopkins Hall on the Saturday morning during the occupation to go to a crew race.
45. Transcripts of black students, classes of 1969-72.
46. Robinson interview.
47. Transcripts of black students, classes of 1969-72.
48. Williams College Address Book and Phone Directory, 1968-69, p. 54. this black student's name was William Preston.
49. Washington interview.
50. Robinson interview.
52. Telephone interview with Sherman Jones.


57. Letter from Hyde and Lewis to Washington.

58. Alumni Review, May 1968, p. 12. There is a question as to when the WAAS actually moved into this fellowship room. This Alumni Review article states only that the room was "established" in May 1969. Another source, The Hopkins Occupation: A Williams Record Report, Williamstown: Williams College, p. 4, states that the WAAS moved into the room in January of 1969. Preston Washington does remember that they met in the room before the occupation in April 1969.


60. Transcripts of black students, classes of 1969-72. Winter Study Period is a month-long term in January between semesters in which students take one pass/fail course or else design independent projects.


62. Oakley interview.


64. Letter from Hyde and Lewis.

65. Record, January 14, 1969. The first black professor at Williams was Rene Belance, a professor of Romance languages who came to Williams in the fall of 1967. He was Haitian and thus not the first Afro-American professor; also, few of the black students seem to have remembered his
presence on campus and thus he is not important for the purposes of this paper.


70. Robinson interview.

71. Washington interview.

72. Smith interview.

73. Report from the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), December 11, 1968 in December 18, 1968 faculty minutes folder, Williamsiana collection, Williams College.

74. Faculty minutes, December 18, 1968.

75. Faculty minutes, November 6, 1968.

76. CEP report.

77. Faculty minutes, November 6, 1968.


80. Rudolph interview. Enrollment in courses dealing with black issues was so large that the WAAS' first demand in the set of demands leading up to the occupation was that there be guaranteed admittance of black students to Afro-American courses because they were generally
overenrolled and people were kicked out.

81. Washington interview.

82. Record, April 12, 1968.

Chapter Three

1. Hatcher interview.

2. Washington interview.

3. Robinson interview.


5. Washington interview.


7. Jefferson interview.


9. Robinson interview.


12. Robinson interview.


15. Washington interview.
16. Robinson interview.
17. Jefferson interview.
18. Jefferson interview.
22. Washington interview.
23. This was definitely apparent in the two hours I spent listening to him.
24. Eusden interview.
27. Eusden interview.
28. Robinson interview.
29. Hyde interview.
30. Washington interview.
32. Washington interview.
33. Jefferson interview.
34. Washington interview.
35. Washington interview.
36. Jefferson interview.
37. Record, October 6, 1967.

38. Jefferson interview.


40. Transcript, April 7, 1969.

41. Oakley interview.

42. Interview with Neil Grabois, December 9, 1986. Grabois also said that he no longer believes in this philosophy.

43. Washington interview.

44. Record, April 14, 1970.

45. Washington interview.

46. Record, April 14, 1970.

47. Washington interview.


49. Washington interview.


51. Washington interview.

52. Washington interview.


56. Jefferson interview.
57. Jefferson interview.

58. Robinson interview.

59. Robinson interview.

60. Seven out of nine of the black students admitted to the class of 1969 were on financial aid; ten out of eleven of those admitted to the class of 1970 were on scholarship. Report of the Director of Admissions. Williamsiana collection, 1964-65 and 1965-66.


63. Transcript, April 15, 1969.

64. Jefferson interview.

65. Washington interview, January 1987. Henceforth this interview will be referred to as Washington interview and the telephone interview will be specified.


67. Transcript, April 7, 1969.

68. Transcript, April 7, 1969.

69. This statement is from the text accompanying the demands. Record, April 4, 1969.

70. The Hopkins Occupation: A Williams Record Report, p. 4.

71. Record, April 14, 1970.


73. Robinson interview.

75. Jefferson interview.

76. Robinson interview.

77. Washington interview.

78. Washington interview.

79. Robinson interview.

80. Jefferson interview.

81. Hatcher interview.

82. Washington interview.

83. Robinson interview.

84. Douglass interview.

85. Transcript, April 7, 1969.

86. Jones telephone interview.
Chapter Four

1. Bahlman interview.

2. The Hopkins Occupation: A Williams Record Report, p. 5. Henceforth this source will be referred to as Report.

3. Transcript, April 9, 1969.

4. Frost interview. Here I am using Frost's own interpretation for how the publication of the demands made negotiations harder.


6. Report, p. 15. This contains just the fifteen demands. A copy of the demands plus the accompanying text is in Faculty Minutes, April 2, 1969, Williamsiana collection and Record, April 4, 1969.


10. Washington interview.

11. Memorandum to Presidents of Institutions of Higher Education Participating in Federal Assistance programs from Ruby C. Martin, Director, Office for Civil Rights, copy in Faculty Minutes, April 2, 1969.


13. Frost interview.


17. Frost interview.

18. My guess is that Lewis wrote this article in response to the Princeton black students who occupied a building in March of 1969.


20. Lewis, p. 10.

21. Lewis, p. 11.

22. Smith interview.

23. Frost interview.


27. Report, p. 5.

28. Hyde and Bahlman interviews.

29. Report, pp. 5-6; Washington interview; Record, April 14, 1970.

30. Report, p. 6. John Hyde remembers that the black students were angry coming out of this meeting.

31. Washington interview.
32. Washington interview.

33. Report, p. 6; Record April 14, 1970.

34. Record, April 4, 1969.

35. Transcript, April 7, 1969.

36. Transcript, April 7, 1969; Report pp. 6-7.


38. Washington interview.

39. Robinson interview.

40. Washington interview.

41. Washington interview.

42. Washington interview.

43. Robinson interview.

44. Washington interview.

45. Transcript, April 7, 1969.

46. Washington interview.

47. Jefferson interview.

48. Report, p. 7 and Transcript, April 9, 1969 said it was two guards Jefferson remembered it as one.

49. Jefferson interview.

50. Copy in Faculty Minutes, April 2, 1969.

51. Hyde interview.
52. Bahlman interview. Professor Bahlman told an anecdote about him and his wife going to a Music in the Round concert on the Friday night that the occupation occurred. Bahlman's wife wanted to go use the bathroom in the basement of Hopkins Hall and Bahlman remembered warning her that that might not be a good idea. She went anyway.

53. Bahlman and Hyde interview. Professor Bahlman told another anecdote about calling President Sawyer to tell him the news. Apparently the President hated talking on the telephone. When he answered Professor Bahlman's call at seven a.m., Sawyer waited until Bahlman had said "Hello, Jack?" and, discovering that it was none of his children, hung up. During the occupation President Sawyer was also in bed sick with a cold.

54. Bahlman and Hyde interviews; Report, p. 7; Transcript, April 7, 1969.


56. Hyde interview.

57. Hyde, Grabois, Robinson and Washington interviews; Record, April 15, 1969; Transcript, April 7, 1969. Robinson remembers white friends passing him Sara Lee poundcake through the windows.

58. Transcript, April 7, 1969; Record April 9, 1969; April 14, 1970; Report, p. 10.

59. Transcript, April 7, 1969.

60. Record, April 14, 1970; Transcript, April 7, 1969; Report, p. 10.

61. Record, April 15, 1969.


63. Report, p. 10; Record, April 14, 1970; Transcript, April 7, 1969.

64. Eusden interview.

65. Record, April 15, 1969, April 14, 1970; Frost interview; Transcript,
April 8, 1969.

66. Robinson interview.

67. Washington interview.

68. Frost interview.

69. Report, p. 12; Record, April 9, 1969.

70. Report, p. 12; Transcript, April 7, 1969.

71. Record, April 9, 1969; April 15, 1969; April 14, 1970; Transcript, April 7, 1969; Report pp. 10-11.

72. Transcript, April 12, 1969.

73. Bahlman and Frost interviews.

74. Record, April 14, 1970; Transcript, April 7, 1969; Frost interview.

75. Frost interview.

76. Jefferson and Washington interviews. Jefferson thought that there may have been administration spies within their ranks or that the administration had bugged their meetings. Washington was sure that their were spies for the administration among the WAAS members.

77. Washington interview.

78. Jefferson interview.

79. Washington interview.

80. Jefferson interview.

81. Washington interview.

82. Robinson interview.
83. Washington interview.


85. Record, April 14, 1969.

86. Jefferson interview.

87. Faculty Minutes, April 6, 1969.

88. Frost interview.

89. Bahlman interview.


93. Interview with Tom Parker, April 1986.


95. Jefferson interview.

96. Robinson interview.


98. Smith interview.

99. Eusden interview.

100. Washington interview.


103. Hyde interview.


108. Robinson interview.

**Chapter Five**


2. Freshman were allowed to apply in groups of up to four people for upperclass housing.


5. The present Black Student Union Building is Rice House.


7. Black alumni also became actively involved in the recruiting of minorities. Sherman Jones said he helped the admissions office from 1969 to 1977.


13. Hyde interview.


15. Washington interview.


19. Robinson interview.

20. Bahlman and Oakley interviews.


23. Washington interview.


25. Robinson interview.


27. Eusden interview.
30. Parker interview.
31. Record, April 15, 1969.
32. Washington interview.
33. Record, May 9, 1969.
34. Record, May 9, 1969.
35. Record, May 9, 1969.
36. From Stephen Lewis' statement concluding the occupation, Record, April 9, 1969.
37. Bahlman interview.
38. Record, May 9, 1969.
40. Record, April 9, 1969.
41. Record, May 9, 1969.
42. Lewis' concluding statement, Record, April 9, 1969.
43. Record, May 9, 1969.
44. Robinson interview.
45. Record, April 14, 1970.
46. Washington interview.
47. Washington interview.
Conclusion

1. For an account of this incident see *The New York Times*, April 20, 1969 and subsequent issues.


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