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Raymond E. Jackson and Segregation in the American Federation of Musicians, 1900-1944

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State University of New York
College at Buffalo
Department of History

Raymond E. Jackson and Segregation in the
American Federation of Musicians, 1900-1944

A Thesis in History

by

Lance P. Boos

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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Introduction

The front page of the July 1944 issue of *International Musician*, the official publication of the American Federation of Musicians, prominently featured an announcement from President James C. Petrillo proclaiming that the union's twelve African American subsidiary local chapters had been granted autonomy and would be issued their own charters. This move, made by the unanimous decision of the AFM's executive board during the union's annual convention, came at the request of a group of seven African American delegates, including International Traveling Representative Raymond Jackson, speaking on behalf of black musicians in twelve cities who were subject to subsidiary status.¹

For Jackson, this was an important victory. In his capacity as International Traveling Representative—a liaison between the national AFM and segregated African American local chapters—Jackson was an advocate for the rights and equal representation of black musicians within the union. The AFM's practice of subsidiary local chapters was an especially pernicious form of racial subjugation in which a segregated African American local chapter would have its charter revoked, often following some sort of conflict with the city's white chapter, and would be re-chartered by the AFM as a subsidiary to that white chapter, completely under its control. Members of subsidiary chapters were required to pay dues and abide by union regulations, but generally had no right to vote in the chapter's elections, no access to union offices, no representation at the national conventions, and ultimately no voice or control in their own union. The abolition of subsidiary chapters did not result in the integration of the AFM—which would

¹ James C. Petrillo, "Subsidiary Locals Granted Autonomy," *International Musician* 43 no. 1 (July 1944): 1. Though important enough to make the front page, the announcement was still trumped by a headline story concerning the AFM's wartime recording ban.

take place primarily during the 1960s—nor did it represent true equality, but it did put an end to a grossly exploitative arrangement and extend the full benefits of union membership to the African American musicians of those twelve subsidiary chapters. It was therefore an important, if incomplete, step forward for race relations in the AFM that came about largely thanks to the work of Ray Jackson and other African American representatives on behalf of black musicians whose skills were exploited and voices were ignored under the subsidiary system.

This paper will examine Jackson's work toward improving the conditions of African American members of the American Federation of Musicians, both nationally as International Traveling Representative and locally as a founding member and later Secretary and President of AFM Local 533 Colored Musicians' Association of Buffalo, New York. Jackson's actions, as well as the racial policies of the AFM will also be discussed within the broader context of the unionism among musicians, and the theme of race and organized labor in twentieth-century America, especially as it pertains to the AFM's status as an American Federation of Labor affiliated craft union.

Chapter One surveys the small body of literature on the American Federation of Musicians as well as labor history more broadly as it applies to African Americans and their complicated relationship with organized labor. Drawing on archival documents from Local 533 along with census records, Chapter Two provides a biographical overview of Jackson with contextual discussion of what it meant to be an African American professional musician in the early twentieth century. Chapter Three details Jackson's work with Buffalo's Local 533, from its founding in 1917, and the affiliated Colored Musicians Club, which survives today thanks to his foresight in establishing it independently of the union. Comparative literature on segregated

AFM local chapters in Chicago, Seattle, and San Francisco put Jackson's work in Buffalo in a broader national context that previous work on Local 533 has not thoroughly explored. Chapter Four examines Jackson's role in the AFM at the national level as a delegate to the annual convention and as the International Traveling Representative, especially in regard to his campaign to abolish subsidiary chapters. Minutes and *Official Proceedings* from the AFM's annual conventions reveal Jackson's persistence in seeking improved conditions and representation for black musicians. Secondary literature on the plight of subsidiary chapters in St. Louis and San Francisco highlight the grossly exploitative and unjust conditions that Jackson sought to ameliorate. The efforts of Jackson and his colleagues throughout the 1930s to establish the Traveling Representative position as a means of bolstering their voice at the national level as well as to abolish the practice of subsidiary local chapters has received only scant attention in the literature—an omission that this paper seeks to address.

Raymond Jackson did not act alone in his endeavors to improve the condition of African American musicians, nor did he completely succeed in rooting out racial inequality and injustice, but through his activities both locally and nationally, he emerged as a powerful voice for the interests of black musicians, and he accomplished much in terms of securing representation and autonomy for segregated black chapters. His involvement with the AFM on behalf of African American musicians demonstrates agency and resilience in the face of oppression and inequality within the AFM's dual union system.

Chapter One

Survey of Literature: Music, Race, and Organized Labor in America

The labor movement of American musicians remains a niche topic, and the majority of its literature comes from musicologists rather than labor historians. This trend is indicative of the longstanding tendency of the general public to view professional musicians primarily, if not exclusively, as artists rather than as workers—a dual identity which is frequently addressed in the historiography, as musicians themselves were often reluctant to identify themselves as workers, thus hindering the growth of unionism within the music profession.

James P. Kraft's "Artists as Workers: Musicians and Trade Unionism in America, 1880-1917" is a key study on the origins of unionism among professional musicians, and is particularly attentive to the artist/worker dichotomy.² Kraft argues that an "expanding leisure market" during the Gilded Age meant increased employment opportunities for musicians, and cites census records to show the growth of music as a profession during this time period.³ Early organizations such as the Musicians' National Protective Unions (1871) and the National League of Musicians (1886) grew out of more loosely organized local fraternal associations and hiring exchanges that had emerged as early as the 1850s, which had sought to establish wage scales and preclude the hiring of non-union performers. These efforts were hindered by the freelance nature of employment in music performance as well as musicians' reluctance to identify themselves as

² James P. Kraft, "Artists as Workers: Musicians and Trade Unionism in America, 1880-1917," *The Musical Quarterly* 79, no. 3 (1995).

³ Music performance as a full-time profession or livelihood was indeed rare in antebellum America; it was more often an amateur or semi-professional pursuit. Aside from rare celebrities such as the Hutchinson Family Singers, the majority of people who did derive full-time employment from music generally did so by teaching or songwriting. See Polly Carder, *George F. Root, Civil War Songwriter: A Biography* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2008); Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001); Scott Gac, *Singing for Freedom: The Hutchinson Family Singers and the Nineteenth-Century Culture of Antebellum Reform* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Nicholas Tawa, *High-Minded and Low-Down: Music in the Lives of Americans, 1800-1861* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000).

workers and align with the broader labor movement; Kraft argues that this explains the refusal of the National League of Musicians to affiliate with the American Federation of Labor, which led the AFL's Samuel Gompers to call for a convention of musicians in 1896 during which the American Federation of Musicians was founded. Although Kraft notes that racial segregation and inequality were prevalent in the early decades of the AFM, he does not address how this artist/worker dichotomy played out among African American musicians, despite its relevance to the emergence and growing popularity of jazz music.

Kraft's article ultimately formed the first chapter of his book *Stage to Studio: Musicians and the Sound Revolution, 1890-1950*, which examines how the development of recording and broadcast technology in the early twentieth century affected professional musicians and partly transformed their profession from a "diffused, labor-intensive, artisanal structure into a centralized, capital-intensive, highly mechanized one."⁴ Noting the irony of the recording industry making musicians the "instruments of their own displacement,"⁵ Kraft dutifully addresses the 1942-44 recording ban instituted by AFM President James C. Petrillo—which is the most thoroughly-covered topic in the literature of the musicians' labor movement. Also of note is a recent article by Marina Peterson that further applies the artist/worker dual identity to the recording ban, and the emergence of sound itself as a musical commodity—a status previously reserved for notated sheet music—rather than an ephemeral experience.⁶

⁴ James P. Kraft, *Stage to Studio: Musicians and the Sound Revolution, 1890-1950* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 2.

⁵ Ibid., 137. See also Tim Anderson, "'Buried under the Fecundity of His Own Creations': Reconsidering the Recording Bans of the American Federation of Musicians, 1942-1944 and 1948," *American Music* 22, no. 2 (2004); Scott DeVeaux, "Bebop and the Recording Industry: The 1942 AFM Recording Ban Reconsidered," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 41, no. 1 (1988).

⁶ Marina Peterson, "Sound Work: Music as Labor and the 1940s Recording Bans of the American Federation of Musicians," *Anthropological Quarterly* 86, no. 3 (2013).

This theme is also addressed by Robin D. G. Kelley's in "Without a Song: New York Musicians Strike Out Against Technology." Kelley discusses a 1936 strike—which was really more of a picketing campaign than a work stoppage—waged by New York City's Local 802 AFM in opposition to theater owners who had shifted from using live musicians to recorded musical accompaniment in movies. Kelley examines "how utterly ill-equipped the union was to deal with the transformation of the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction."⁷ As Kraft noted, the AFM's successes prior to 1920 were at least partly due to the fact that musicians' jobs had not yet been seriously challenged by technology. Increasing competition for fewer available jobs in the Depression era led to friction within the AFM, and Kelley was attentive to gender and racial components in the ensuing unemployment; female organ and piano players were disproportionately eliminated from live movie theater jobs, as were African American bands.

The first book-length study of the American musicians' labor movement was Robert Leiter's 1953 *The Musicians and Petrillo*, which was for many years the standard account of the AFM's founding in 1896 and early decades. While Leiter did not address the issue of the artist/worker dichotomy among professional musicians, he was attentive to the delicate balance that the AFM was able to strike between national control and local autonomy, which he argues was the key to the AFM's early success. Leiter deftly skirts the issue of race in the AFM, briefly discussing subsidiary and segregated locals, and only barely acknowledges the existence of racism, despite the fact that more than fifty segregated chapters still existed at the time of his writing.⁸ *The Musicians and Petrillo* remains somewhat useful for its coverage of the AFM's

⁷ Robin D. G. Kelley, "Without a Song: New York Musicians Strike out against Technology," in *Three Strikes: Miners, Musicians, Salesgirls, and the Fighting Spirit of Labor's Last Century*, ed. Howard Zinn (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 124.

⁸ Robert D. Leiter, *The Musicians and Petrillo* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1953).

early years, and is still regularly cited by modern scholars on that topic, but it is otherwise quite dated, and Leiter's neglect of issues such as race and class, which are central to recent trends in the historiography, undermines its relevance. Furthermore, Kraft has done a superior job of contextualizing the organization of professional musicians in the context of the artist/worker dual identity as well as the expansion of leisure time, changing tastes in arts and entertainment, and the effect of technological change on the performing arts as a profession.

A contemporaneous counterargument to Leiter was Paul Carpenter's *Music, An Art and a Business*, which argued that although AFM President James C. Petrillo secured tremendous benefits for musicians as workers, he and the union contributed nothing to music as an art form.⁹ In exalting musicians' role as artists, Carpenter failed to recognize the necessity of their union to ensure just compensation for the talent, skill, and training that go into professional performance.

George Seltzer's 1989 *Music Matters: The Performer and the American Federation of Musicians* provides a much-needed though imperfect update to Leiter's study, although like *The Musicians and Petrillo* it maintains a national focus and pays little attention to issues that local chapters faced. It is similarly circumspect on the issue of race, arguing that while the AFM's record on race relations has certainly not been pristine, the treatment of black musicians within the AFM was generally no worse, if not better, than in society at large. This conclusion is not necessarily wrong, but Seltzer's coverage of race focuses almost exclusively on the Civil Rights era and does not give sufficient attention to race relations during the Jim Crow era for this argument to withstand scrutiny.¹⁰ It is nonetheless a useful source on the general history of the

⁹ Paul S. Carpenter, *Music, an Art and a Business* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), 149.

¹⁰ George Seltzer, *Music Matters: The Performer and the American Federation of Musicians* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1989).

AFM at the national level, especially for its coverage of union business, labor law, and the AFM's relationship with the federal government.

Michael James Roberts' recent study *Tell Tchaikovsky the News* examines the AFM's response to the emergence of rock music in the 1950s, noting that the union failed to organize rock musicians and consequently its power and stature diminished as the nature of American popular music changed dramatically.¹¹ The crux of Roberts' thesis is that despite rock being a music of working class origins, the rank and file members of the musicians' union took an elitist stance against it, indicating that the artist/worker division that Kraft examined did not entirely abate as the union gained strength throughout the big band era in the 1930s and 1940s. Indeed the clash between established jazz and classical musicians in the AFM and the blues, folk, and rock musicians was an issue of both cultural hierarchy and the skilled vs. unskilled labor rift that permeated AFL-affiliated craft unions. This idea of classism and cultural hierarchy had not been thoroughly addressed in the historiography of musicians' unionism prior to Roberts' study, and it is certainly worthy of further exploration, particularly concerning the early days of jazz.¹² A major point of Roberts' book is that the AFM's desegregation effort "carried within it the institutionalization of first- and second-class musicians within the union," which followed the pattern of AFL craft unions. But the demand for rock increased while the demand for jazz and classical declined in the late 1950s, and the "adherence to an exclusionist craft mentality"

¹¹ Michael James Roberts, *Tell Tchaikovsky the News: Rock 'N' Roll, the Labor Question, and the Musicians' Union, 1942-1968* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

¹² While jazz's ascension from an ostensibly lowbrow entertainment to its acceptance as a legitimate art form recently received sufficient scholarly attention, it has not been extensively discussed within the context of unionism. On jazz and cultural hierarchy, see John Howland, *Ellington Uptown: Duke Ellington, James P. Johnson, and the Birth of Concert Jazz*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009); Lawrence Levine, "Jazz and American Culture," *The Journal of American Folklore* 102, no. 403 (1989); Paul Lopes, *The Rise of a Jazz Art World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Maurice Peress, *Dvorak to Duke Ellington: A Conductor Explores America's Music and Its African American Roots*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Grover Sales, *Jazz: America's Classical Music* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984).

precluded the organization of rock musicians, which ultimately led to the union's decline in power and influence as rock music brought about major "structural changes in the music industry."¹³

Literature that specifically addresses race within the musicians' labor movement is more scattered. William Steeper's 1954 study "Civil Rights in the American Federation of Musicians" focuses primarily on union organization and due process for members, but devoted a brief section to the issue of race, noting that the "colored" membership posed a "definite and difficult civil rights problem."¹⁴ Though he acknowledged the existence of segregation within the union, Steeper's coverage of it demonstrates an utter failure to grasp the nature or extent of inequality, arguing that members of segregated locals still enjoyed the full protections and benefits of union membership. He was also quick to credit Petrillo with unilaterally abolishing subsidiary locals in 1941,¹⁵ which is not only the incorrect year, but as this paper argues was a move brought about by pressure from Ray Jackson and other black delegates rather than by Petrillo's sense of justice and goodwill alone. That Steeper's article appeared in *International Musician*, the official publication of the AFM, might explain his defensive tone about the union's record on race.

Race and the AFM receives passing mention in several books, often in the context of the history and development of jazz music. Among them, William Howland Kenney's *Jazz on the River* stands out, devoting an entire chapter to the emergence of professionalism and unionism

¹³ Roberts, 131.

¹⁴ William P. Steeper, "Civil Rights in the American Federation of Musicians," *International Musician* 53, no. 6 (1954): S24.

¹⁵ Violinist Julie Ayer makes this same mistake in a chapter on segregation in her book on the labor movement of orchestral musicians, so Steeper's article was the likely source for her error. The chapter in question mirrors Seltzer's coverage of the amalgamation of segregated chapters rather than the Jim Crow era. Ayer makes several other factual errors, and her citation of sources and attribution of textual material is exceedingly sloppy. As such, it may be dismissed as a scholarly source. Julie Ayer, *More Than Meets the Ear: How Symphony Musicians Made Labor History* (Minneapolis: Syren Book Company, 2005).

among African American musicians in the early twentieth century, particularly among the community of musicians who were employed as entertainers on riverboats on the Mississippi River. He is attentive to the discrimination that black musicians faced on the bandstand and in the union, noting the exclusionary practices of the AFM chapters in cities along the river. Excluded from the all-white Local 2 in St. Louis, black musicians successfully formed their own chapter, Local 44, which lasted until the Great Depression, when its charter was revoked by the AFM and its musicians forced into subsidiary status under the control of white Local 2. Kenney does not fully explore the implications of subsidiary status, but does note the iniquity of black musicians paying dues to Local 2 while not receiving equal rights or representation.¹⁶ In *Chicago Jazz*, Kenney focuses on the development of jazz in Chicago prior to 1930, and as such makes several passing references to Locals 10 and 208. White Local 10 generally sought to keep the best jobs in town reserved for its white musicians, but simultaneously was poor at facilitating white musicians' development in the jazz idiom. Black Local 208 thus succeeded in keeping certain nightclub jobs reserved for its African American members.¹⁷ While less attentive to unionism and the development of professionalism than in *Jazz on the River*, Kenney does extensively explore the issue of race in Chicago's music scene.

Burton Peretti's *The Creation of Jazz* similarly argues that in its early stages of development, "jazz was essentially an urban music that grew out of city stimuli and fulfilled uniquely urban social functions."¹⁸ In examining how the Great Migration fostered both the

¹⁶ William Howland Kenney, *Jazz on the River* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

¹⁷ William Howland Kenney, *Chicago Jazz: A Cultural History, 1904-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 31, 161.

¹⁸ Burton Peretti, *The Creation of Jazz: Music, Race, and Culture in Urban America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 7.

growth of northern urban black communities and the development of jazz, Peretti touches upon the development of professionalism among black musicians. By the 1910s, African American musicians were combining African and Latin American musical influences with European instrumental traditions, which facilitated the emergence of the first generation of black professional musicians, many of whom contributed to the development and spread of jazz as they moved to urban centers. Peretti notes that in many cities black musicians were excluded from joining the existing unions and were forced to form their own. Black musicians in northern cities often earned less money than their white counterparts, but their wages were still generally higher than those of black musicians in the South, and often higher than industrial jobs as well.¹⁹ Jazz musicians, however, often had an uneasy relationship with the AFM, and Peretti concludes that while they might have benefitted from the union's protections, jazz musicians often found its regulations restrictive, and were put off by its strict maintenance of segregation. Chicago's Local 208 served the black musician community not only as a union per se but also as a de facto "aid organization" for southern black musicians who migrated to Chicago.²⁰ This theme of urban community aid organizations during the Great Migration is common to African American history, but the role of musicians' unions in this remains generally unexplored.

Race, and specifically the practice of both segregated and subsidiary locals, is more directly addressed in three noteworthy studies that examine Chicago and San Francisco. Donald Spivey's *Union and the Black Musician* is an oral history of William Everett Samuels, a longtime officer of Chicago's African American Local 208. Demonstrating a keen awareness of AFM history, Samuels discusses the union's founding in 1896, and addresses Local 10's refusal to

¹⁹ Ibid., 49.

²⁰ Ibid., 160.

admit black musicians, alleging that its white members resented the fact that admitting black members would entitle them to the same wage scale. Local 208 was therefore chartered as a segregated chapter, and ultimately drew in black musicians who sought protection from exploitation and discrimination.²¹ His assessment of racism in the AFM is blunt, to say the least, describing longtime AFM President Joseph Weber (1900-1940) as prejudiced, and asserting that the union's leadership had no desire to address the issue of segregation, and even remained willfully ignorant of the problems that black musicians faced. He also captures the complexity of James C. Petrillo, who had presided over Local 10 since 1922, and characterizes him as an extremely effective but essentially self-interested leader. Reflecting the general opinion of Local 10's membership, Petrillo resisted integration in Chicago but took steps toward inclusivity upon ascending to the national presidency in 1940 by appointing black members to various national committees. Samuels notes, however, that this was not without a hint of paternalism. The significance of *Union and the Black Musician* lies not so much in Spivey's cursory analysis but in Samuels' account of Local 208 and his life as a black musician during the segregation era. This text has consequently been cited by nearly every subsequent study of the AFM, and remains a valuable firsthand account of the relationship between black musicians and the union.

Clark Halker builds on the narrative of Spivey and Samuels, arguing that Local 208 “emerged in response to the needs of black musicians and grew to meet many of those needs,” and contrary to Kenney's more recent research on St. Louis's Local 44 reiterates the claim that 208 was the first separately chartered African American AFM chapter.²² Halker diverges slightly

²¹ Donald Spivey, *Union and the Black Musician: Narrative of William Everett Samuels and the Chicago Local 208* (University Press of America, 1984).

²² Clark Halker, "A History of Local 208 and the Struggle for Racial Equality in the American Federation of Musicians," *Black Music Research Journal* 8, no. 2 (1988).

from Samuels' assessment of Petrillo's tenure as President of Local 10, noting that despite racial segregation, the two locals maintained a cooperative and cordial relationship, which Halker cites as a major factor in Chicago having a higher wage scale for musicians than most other major cities. Yet despite the generally good relationship between Locals 10 and 208 and decent pay scale for black musicians, Halker argues that Local 10 "promoted and perpetuated the color line," locking black musicians out of lucrative nightclub and hotel jobs, as well as reserving the majority of recording and radio broadcast work for its own members. Halker is much more attentive to the drawn-out and contentious merger of Locals 10 and 208 than Samuels and Spivey, noting the resistance on both sides, and the well-founded concerns of Samuels and President Harry Gray that Local 10 would raid the assets of Local 208 and leave its members with little in return. Integration, Halker concludes, was an overdue but "small triumph."²³

Musicologist Leta Miller's lengthy article on segregation in the San Francisco musicians' union examines a situation in which racial antagonism took a different turn. While Chicago's Local 208 had remained autonomous throughout its existence, the history of San Francisco's African American Local 648 more closely mirrored that of Local 44 in St. Louis. By vigorously enforcing its wage standards in the Bay Area, the white Local 6 effectively barred Local 648 from offering competitive pricing. Legal action and formal grievances ensued, and ultimately Local 648 had its charter revoked by the AFM in 1934 and was reorganized as a subsidiary to the white Local 6 in 1935.²⁴ Owing to meticulous research and balanced attention to both local and national issues, Miller's article stands out as one of the finest sources on race relations and

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Leta E. Miller, "Racial Segregation and the San Francisco Musicians' Union, 1923-1960," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 1, no. 2 (2007).

segregation in the AFM.²⁵

Other noteworthy studies of segregated local chapters take the form of unpublished theses. David Keller's study of Seattle's segregated Local 493 examines the "changing relations between white and black musical unions and the complex Jim Crow arrangements under which blacks worked."²⁶ Keller details the difficulties that Local 493 faced due to segregation and conflicts with Local 76, but concludes that their 1956 integration and merger was not without its costs; black musicians lost work as well as the club and union hall that they had maintained during the Jim Crow era. He also argues from a musicological perspective that the growing acceptance of jazz during the Swing Era helped to legitimize black musicianship.²⁷ Keller also places Local 493 within the context of the African American experience in AFL craft unions, yet strangely neglects the broader history of the AFM itself, leaving the key works by Leiter and Seltzer untouched.

Of particular relevance to this paper are two previous theses that examine Buffalo's Local 533. The first, by Richard McRae, was later published in its entirety in *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*.²⁸ Drawing on Local 533's archived records, McRae thoroughly reconstructed its history from its founding to its merger with Local 43, including the formation of

²⁵ Race and the AFM also receives cursory attention in Ted Gioia, *The History of Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Eric Porter, *What Is This Thing Called Jazz?: African American Musicians as Artists, Critics, and Activists* (Ewing, NJ: University of California Press, 2002).

²⁶ David Keller, "Seattle's Segregated Musicians' Union, Local 493, 1918-1956" (M.A. Thesis, Western Washington University, 1996), iv.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 72.

²⁸ Richard McRae, "Musicians Association Local 533 of the American Federation of Musicians, and Its Role in the Development of Black Music in Buffalo, New York" (M.A. Thesis, Buffalo State College, 1993); Richard McRae, "Paying Their Dues: Buffalo's African American Musicians Union, Local 533, A.F.M.," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 20, no. 1 (1996). The published and unpublished texts are identical, although the unpublished version contains several appendices with useful information about 533 membership and officers. Unless otherwise indicated, such as to reference these appendices, citations of McRae will refer to the published version.

the Colored Musicians Club. Although McRae's remains the definitive study of Local 533 and must be considered the starting point for any research on the topic, its scope is exceedingly narrow. Jackson's role in Buffalo receives adequate coverage, but his work at the national level at the annual conventions on behalf of other segregated and subsidiary locals is almost completely neglected, and biographical details on Jackson are likewise scarce. McRae also does not engage the historiography of organized labor, and offers no discussion of the AFM in general, the experiences of African American locals in other cities, or race and the organized labor movement as whole. Nonetheless, McRae deserves credit for his otherwise thorough and groundbreaking coverage of Local 533 that this paper aims to build upon by focusing more specifically on Jackson and placing his work in the broader context of race, labor, and the AFM throughout the nation during the 1930s and '40s.

William Kayatin's subsequent study of Local 533 focused more specifically on its final years and merger with Local 43, forming Buffalo's Local 92 in 1969.²⁹ Drawing on the same records as McRae, Kayatin adds greater contextualization, providing a cursory background on the formation of the AFM and its subsequent segregationist policies, including a brief reference to the 1944 abolition of subsidiary locals. His discussions of mergers of black and white locals in other cities demonstrate that resistance to amalgamation and concern over forfeiture of assets and representation were not unique to Local 533. In addition to using archival sources, Kayatin conducted interviews with several former members of 533, including Jackson's nephew Jesse Nash Jr. who provides useful insight into Jackson's character and motivations. Like McRae, however, Kayatin's discussion of Jackson is generally limited to local matters, though his

²⁹ William F. Kayatin Jr., "Breaking the Color Line: The Merger of Locals 43 and 533 of the American Federation of Musicians, How It Affected Local 533, Buffalo, New York" (M.A. Thesis, Buffalo State College, 1995).

interview with Jackson's nephew is a welcome addition.

This paper's discussion of Jackson draws from several collections of primary sources. The records of Buffalo's Local 533 Colored Musicians Association, housed in the Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History at Buffalo State College, offer a trove of documents from the local, including minutes of meetings and correspondence between the Local 533 and other chapters as well as the national AFM. McRae and Kayatin built their studies of Local 533 from this collection, and the archive is likewise useful in documenting Jackson's activities, particularly during his tenure as 533's Secretary. Biographical details about Jackson and his family, which McRae and Kayatin did not explore, can be found from US Federal and New York State census records.³⁰ Details of Jackson's involvement with the AFM at the national level are documented in the Official Proceedings of the AFM's Annual Conventions. The *Official Proceedings*, printed annually, are housed in their entirety at the AFM headquarters in New York City, and include minutes of AFM International Executive Board meetings that were held before and after each convention, as well as at other times throughout the year. Excerpts of the proceedings were (and continue to be) printed in *International Musician*—the monthly official publication of the AFM. The complete collection of *International Musician* issues is housed at AFM headquarters as well as at the publication office in Syracuse, New York. These collections of Official Proceedings form the basis of most of the scholarly literature on the AFM, although studies that focus on specific local chapters have made extensive use of records archived locally as well.³¹ The extent of archived record collections seems to vary by chapter.

³⁰ I have found that the most efficient way to examine census records for individuals is www.ancestry.com, which also includes such documents as draft cards, military and immigration records, and local directories.

³¹ Official records of the Traveling Representatives during Jackson's tenure do not appear to have been preserved by the AFM. David Keller stated that he requested these files from AFM headquarters and was informed that nobody knew of their whereabouts. Keller, 98 n. 15. I encountered the same difficulty during my research visit.

In addition to Kayatin's extremely useful interview with Jesse Nash Jr., one other interview of note has contributed to the literature of Local 533; Raymond Jackson himself was interviewed in 1974 by Ralph Watkins and Monroe Fordham as part of Watkins's research on Buffalo's African American community in the 1920s.³² Watkins cited this interview with Jackson several times in his paper, but unfortunately did not include a transcription; the contents of the interview, beyond what was quoted by Watkins, are currently lost.³³

Several additional secondary sources on music, race, and culture of Buffalo, New York allow the experiences of Local 533's musicians to be more thoroughly examined within their local context. Through extensive interviews with surviving musicians, Patti and Gary Lee assembled an impressive oral history of Buffalo's musical scene in the postwar era, and are particularly attentive to the racial dynamics of African American rhythm and blues styles crossing over to white performers and listeners.³⁴ William Graebner's study on postwar youth culture similarly addresses musical and racial dynamics, though in a much more scholarly tone.³⁵ Buffalo historian Mark Goldman's *City on the Edge* discusses Buffalo in the twentieth century and is attentive to both race and culture, and briefly mentions Local 533 and the Colored Musicians Club.³⁶ Building on Ralph Watkins's research, Lillian Williams has devoted considerable scholarly attention in several publications to the growth of Buffalo's African

³² Ralph Watkins, "Black Buffalo 1920-1927" (Ph.D. Dissertaion, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1978).

³³ Dr. Felix Armfield and I made several unsuccessful inquiries around Buffalo in search of this interview. I spoke with McRae, who had likewise been unable to find it and resorted to quoting it from Watkins's paper.

³⁴ Patti Meyer Lee and Gary Lee, *Don't Bother Knockin'...This Town's a Rockin': A History of Traditional Rhythm and Blues & Early Rock N' Roll in Buffalo, New York* (Buffalo: Buffalo Sound Press, 2001). Though indispensable for its perspective and insight on music in Buffalo, the book is marred by numerous grammatical and organizational problems that detract from its scholarly legitimacy.

³⁵ William Graebner, *Coming of Age in Buffalo: Youth and Authority in the Postwar Era* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

³⁶ Mark Goldman, *City on the Edge: Buffalo, New York* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007).

American community in the early twentieth century, with a particular emphasis on community and organizational involvement and activism of African American women.³⁷

While the labor movement of American musicians has not received much attention from labor historians, the scant literature on race in the AFM does reflect several historiographic trends within the broader field of labor history. First among these was a longstanding neglect of African American workers that the field was slow to address. Herbert Hill, a scholar of African American and labor history as well as former NAACP labor secretary, argued in 1996 that “what usually passed for labor history was really union history,” which ignored black and non-white workers except in pointing to the “problems” that they caused for unions.³⁸ Eric Arnesen concurred with this assessment of race in early labor history, noting that just as African American history initially focused on “black professionals and middle class activists” and downplayed black working class, labor history “emphasized institutional union structures and paid little attention to rank-and-file workers of any race.”³⁹ These issues were indeed present in the major studies by Leiter and Seltzer; their studies of the AFM were very much institutional histories that focused on the national organization rather than on the musicians themselves as workers. While Seltzer at least addressed the desegregation of the AFM in the 1950s and ‘60s, both studies are generally neglectful of race and the obstacles faced by black musicians, both within the union itself and the workforce in general. Arnesen noted also that “since the late 1980s, labor historians

³⁷ Lillian S. Williams, "Community Educational Activities and the Liberation of Black Buffalo 1900-1930," *The Journal of Negro Education* 54, no. 2 (1985); Lillian S. Williams, "And Still I Rise: Black Women and Reform, Buffalo, New York, 1900-1940," in *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women's History*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King, and Linda Reed (New York: NYU Press, 1995); Lillian S. Williams, *Strangers in the Land of Paradise: The Creation of an African American Community, Buffalo, New York, 1900-1940* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

³⁸ Herbert Hill, "The Problem of Race in American Labor History," *Reviews in American History* 24, no. 2 (1996).

³⁹ Eric Arnesen, "Up from Exclusion: Black and White Workers, Race, and the State of Labor History," *Reviews in American History* 26, no. 1 (1998).

themselves have grown increasingly critical of their field's failure to address issues of race” and that “one recent trajectory within labor history continues to emphasize white labor’s role in maintaining and even creating Jim Crow.”⁴⁰ To that end, credit is due to Spivey and Halker for their research in the 1980s on Chicago’s African American Local 208; theirs were the first scholarly works to seriously tackle the issue of race in the AFM before others such as Miller and Kenney followed suit in the 1990s and 2000s.

The issue of skilled labor is complicated when dealing with professional musicians. The training required even of amateur performing musicians is extensive and as such music as a profession must be considered a skilled trade. The notion of music as a skilled trade as opposed to an art was discussed at some length first by Kraft, and later by Kenney and Roberts in the context of a specific musical skill—sight reading—being used first against jazz musicians and later rock musicians as an exclusionary tool. This is a dimension of the skilled/unskilled dichotomy that does not generally appear in other fields of employment in which such divisions would be more readily apparent.

As labor historians expanded their focus from organizational to social history, class became a more important theme in the historiography. Peter Way argues that in “wishing to demonstrate class and convinced of its essentially cultural nature,” labor historians looked to workers who were “skilled and organized” in order to find evidence of class consciousness.⁴¹ While the concept of agency is central to social history, this can be problematic in that the focus on workers who could organize tends to overlook those who could not, and thus frequently

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Peter Way, "Labour's Love Lost: Observations on the Historiography of Class and Ethnicity in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of American Studies* 28, no. 1 (1994).

ignores unskilled workers and the underclass. While such inattention justifiably draws criticism, giving voice to subaltern populations presents a particular challenge in that they rarely leave sufficient written records with which a comprehensive historical narrative can be constructed.

Though Way has a point that agency has become overemphasized, it is nonetheless central to the experience of African American musicians in the AFM. Scholars have not yet examined the working lives of black musicians who were locked out of the AFM and unable to formally organize. At the peak of the Jim Crow era, slightly more than fifty segregated local chapters existed, out of hundreds of total chapters, most of which were racially exclusive. What did black professional musicians in those hundreds of other cities do to protect their livelihoods against unscrupulous employers, and how did white unionized musicians react to them?

African American workers' complicated if not strained relationship with organized labor is a central theme in the historiography on race and labor. Philip Foner's landmark *Organized Labor and the Black Worker* was one of the first major books to tackle the topic. Paying particular attention to the American Federation of Labor, Foner traced the development of "Jim Crow unionism" and the creation of racially segregated affiliates and local chapters in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, noting that Samuel Gompers' initial ideal of inclusivity gave way to racism.⁴² William Harris concurred with Foner's assessment, arguing that "by 1900 opposition to blacks typified the white American labor movement" although a few unions such as the Knights of Labor and the Industrial Workers of the World did accept black union members and supported integrated membership.⁴³ The position of the AFL was, at best, only lukewarm in

⁴² Philip S. Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619-1973* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), 65-73.

⁴³ William H. Harris, *The Harder We Run: Black Workers Since the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 42.

its openness to black membership, and generally allowed local chapters to remain racially exclusive if they so desired; Samuel Gompers unenthusiastically advocated the inclusion of black workers primarily to prevent them from being used as strikebreakers.

Arnesen argued that the founding of the CIO in 1935 was a turning point in relations between African Americans and the larger labor movement, but the true extent of its “racial egalitarianism” has remained a topic of scholarly debate; white workers were not prepared to challenge “deeply-rooted patterns of racial inequality” on a large scale.⁴⁴

Robert Zieger’s *For Jobs and Freedom* similarly addresses this institutional inequality as well, and is also attentive to tensions between established black communities in the north and the newly arriving southern migrants, raising the specter of classism between emancipation generation southern blacks and northern black elites, namely W.E.B. DuBois, who were openly condescending and contemptuous of them. He is equally critical of Booker T. Washington’s accommodationist stance, pointing out that Washington vocally opposed black unionism proposing instead that blacks accept domestic, service, and agricultural employment and “cultivate the goodwill of employers” rather than cast their lot in with the troublesome labor movement. Washington therefore openly encouraged black laborers to engage in strikebreaking, which was a point of contention for organized labor. Zieger addresses this directly, arguing that a “kind of mythology grew up about the propensity of blacks to engage in strikebreaking,” which white labor activists used to “ignore or excuse the discriminatory practices of their own unions and to overlook the extent of scabbing of their fellow white workers.”⁴⁵ There were indeed

⁴⁴ Arnesen.

⁴⁵ Robert H. Zieger, *For Jobs and Freedom: Race and Labor in America since 1865* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 57.

workers of all racial and ethnic backgrounds who crossed picket lines, and while both organized labor and labor historians have often been quick to vilify strikebreakers, Zieger acknowledges the difficult choices that such workers had to make between labor solidarity and meeting their own immediate economic needs.

This theme of African Americans being willing to work for below wage scales in order to enter a particular field of employment is especially prevalent in the history of the AFM. Samuel Gompers advocated organizing black workers in the AFL to prevent such competition, and AFM President Joseph Weber reached the same conclusion. Conflicts between segregated local chapters were often the result of the white local attempting to force black local to comply with its scale, which undermined their ability to offer competitive pricing. The outcomes of such disputes rarely favored black musicians, but advocates such as Raymond Jackson valiantly sought to ameliorate the worst of the injustices that they faced.

The emergence of music as a profession and thus an avenue toward the middle class for African Americans is a topic worthy of further study. At a time when African Americans were generally confined to menial jobs in agriculture, manufacturing, or service, music was an occupation that—despite segregation within the AFM and discriminatory practices of booking agents, record companies, and performance venues—offered African Americans some degree of control over their livelihoods in a highly-skilled field that generally commanded better pay and greater respectability than most alternatives. This respectability was not absolute, of course, as America's racial and cultural hierarchy restricted most black professional musicians to jazz and popular music, which did not carry the same prestige as classical music.⁴⁶ Although segregated

⁴⁶ Levine.

local chapters and unequal treatment for black musicians were the norm in the AFM until the 1960s, the advocacy of black musicians such as Raymond Jackson toward improving their conditions during the segregationist eras is worthy of greater attention. As the following chapters will demonstrate, Jackson and his African American colleagues, both locally and nationally, demonstrate the agency of black musicians in forming and maintaining their own local AFM chapters and in pressing for equal rights and representation at the national level.

Chapter Two

Raymond Jackson and Black Buffalo in the Early Twentieth Century

Raymond Ellis Jackson was born on August 3, 1900 in Buffalo, New York to Samuel and Harriet Jackson. Samuel was born in 1861 in Florida, although both of his parents were originally from South Carolina. Harriet was born in English-speaking Canada in 1873 to a Canadian father and a mother from Pennsylvania. According to census records, she emigrated to the United States in 1891 and presumably married Samuel in late 1891 or early 1892.⁴⁷ In both the 1892 New York State Census and the 1900 Federal Census, Samuel Jackson indicated that his occupation was waiter, and in 1900 he was employed in that capacity at a hotel. Harriet, meanwhile, never listed a specific occupation, but the records indicate that both she and her husband could read and write. In 1900 the family was living in a rented home on Potter Street, and all of the children were attending school.⁴⁸

At some point around 1908 Harriet remarried a man named Milton Hardon, three years her senior, and took his last name. Only two of Harriet's eight children, Raymond and his older sister Frances (born in 1895) were still alive at this point. Both were listed in the census as Milton's stepchildren, although they retained their father's family name. There was, however, no further record of Samuel Jackson. Milton Hardon was born in Indiana, as were both of his parents. In 1910 he worked as a porter for a gas company, had been employed continuously throughout the year, and was able to read and write. The house, now listed as 20 Potter Street, was owned but mortgaged. There is no indication of whether this was the same house on Potter

⁴⁷ 1900 and 1910 Federal Census Records for Harriet Jackson. www.ancestry.com, Accessed November 21, 2012.

⁴⁸ 1900 Federal Census Records and 1892 New York State Census Records for Harriet Jackson and Samuel Jackson. www.ancestry.com, Accessed November 21, 2012.

Street that the Jackson family occupied in 1900.⁴⁹ By 1915, a New York State census indicates that Frances, then 19 years old, had begun working as a seamstress while Raymond, age 14, attended school full time. Milton still worked for a gas company, and Harriet listed her job as “housework.”⁵⁰ The 1920 Federal census similarly lists Frances as a dressmaker, although the 55 year old Milton had moved from working at a gas company to being a laborer at a steel mill.⁵¹

In 1905, Buffalo’s African American community consisted of only 1200 people, and while this number grew to 9,000 by 1925, African Americans still comprised fewer than one percent of the city’s total population.⁵² Employment opportunities for Buffalo’s black population expanded by the 1920s to include industrial labor, although domestic work remained the predominant source of black employment.⁵³ Available work for African American women in Buffalo also increased in the early twentieth century, but their jobs were still mostly unskilled, and women remained “virtually restricted to domestic jobs.”⁵⁴ Despite growing economic opportunities, Buffalo’s black community, like that of other northern cities, was strained by the Great Migration;⁵⁵ a steady influx of migrants from the South led to housing shortages, overcrowding, and increased rental costs in the city’s black neighborhoods—a situation that was aggravated by absentee landlords and poor oversight by the city’s Housing Department.⁵⁶ The

⁴⁹ 1910 Federal Census Records for Raymond Jackson. www.ancestry.com Accessed November 21, 2012.

⁵⁰ 1915 New York State Census Records for Milton Hardon. www.ancestry.com. Accessed November 21, 2012.

⁵¹ 1920 Federal Census Records for Raymond Jackson. www.ancestry.com. Accessed November 21, 2012.

⁵² Williams, *Strangers*, 1-2, 65.

⁵³ Watkins, 77.

⁵⁴ Williams, *Strangers*, 84-5.

⁵⁵ On this tension, see Zieger.

⁵⁶ Watkins, 43-4.

jobs held by Jackson's father and stepfather would not have placed the family in the professional or upper class, but they were still regularly and gainfully employed with decent jobs. The fact that Milton Hardon owned the home on 20 Potter Street does indicate at least some degree of socioeconomic success even if it came within the restrictive framework of the Jim Crow era.

Ray Jackson had already been working steadily as a musician around the time of his eighteenth birthday.⁵⁷ On his World War One draft registration card Jackson listed "musician" as his occupation and "Lake Boats" as his employer.⁵⁸ Other musicians from Local 533, including a band led by its first President Silas Laws, also found employment on these excursion boats during the summertime.⁵⁹ Excursion boats on Lake Erie, which generally featured dance bands for entertainment, were a popular Buffalo pastime until the mid-twentieth century,⁶⁰ and therefore a source of steady employment for musicians. This trend was hardly unique to Buffalo; excursion boats were quite popular on the Mississippi River as well, and these boats served to incubate and spread early jazz music. The riverboats based in St. Louis were also, through the efforts of bandleader and hiring agent Fate Marable, home to one of the first unionist movements among black musicians. Marable organized the musicians partly to protect their jobs—which being both steady and reasonably well-paying were quite coveted—against white musicians who sought to take them.⁶¹ Jackson's employment aboard Lake Erie excursion boats would likely have been considered good and stable work during the summer months when the boats operated. This is also a testament to his musicianship, as it is unlikely that such desirable jobs would have

⁵⁷ 1920 Federal Census Records for Raymond Jackson. www.ancestry.com. Accessed November 21, 2012.

⁵⁸ Raymond E. Jackson, World War I Draft Card, 1918. www.ancestry.com. Accessed November 21, 2012.

⁵⁹ McRae, "Paying Their Dues: Buffalo's African American Musicians Union, Local 533, A.F.M.."

⁶⁰ Graebner, 24-6.

⁶¹ Kenney, *Jazz on the River*, 42-6, 54.

gone to musicians of an inferior caliber. William Everett Samuels noted that black musicians in Chicago had to be both good players and good readers; non-reading musicians could still find work but were excluded from the best jobs.⁶²

Jackson's nephew, Jesse Nash Jr., recalled in an interview with William Kayatin that in addition to directing Local 533's marching band during the 1940s, Jackson "had a couple of bands, and he was an active musician."⁶³ Records indicate that he was an adept multi-instrumentalist; Local 533's 1935 member directory listed Raymond Jackson under the categories of "saxophone and clarinet" as well as "director,"⁶⁴ and Jackson appeared as a cornetist with his sister Frances Nash in a 1933 dramatic recitation at the Michigan Avenue Baptist Church.⁶⁵

There are no available records that reveal where Jackson's musical training came from, although it is unlikely that he received advanced training such as from a conservatory, and Jackson indicated on the 1940 Federal Census that he had completed only two years of high school.⁶⁶ His sister Frances likewise completed only two years of high school;⁶⁷ she had evidently developed her sewing skills enough to put them to practical use in her later teenage

⁶² Spivey, 37.

⁶³ Interview with Jesse E. Nash Jr. by William F. Kayatin Jr., transcribed in Appendix III in Kayatin Jr.

⁶⁴ Local 533 AFM 1935 Member Directory, Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968 (Series 2), Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

⁶⁵ "Michigan Avenue Baptist Church presents Frances J. Nash in Dramatic Recital," Program, September 15, 1933, Papers of Frances J. Nash, Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

⁶⁶ 1940 Federal Census Records for Raymond Jackson. www.ancestry.com. Accessed November 21, 2012.

⁶⁷ 1940 Federal Census, and Jesse Nash, Jr. to George Arthur, August 3, 2005. Papers of Frances J. Nash, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College. Large portions of Jesse Nash's statements appear verbatim on the website "Uncrowned Community Builders: Frances Jackson Nash," indicating that this is the site's original source material for its entry on Frances Jackson Nash. <http://www.uncrownedcommunitybuilders.com/person/frances-jackson-nash> (accessed October 17, 2013).

years.⁶⁸ While Raymond Jackson was undertaking a career in music in the early 1920s, Frances had left the family's home to marry Reverend J. Edward Nash. This marriage tied Jackson's family to one of Buffalo's most prominent African American citizens. Throughout her life, Frances Jackson Nash was an active member of the African American community both in and out of the church.⁶⁹ Ray Jackson's motivations for leaving school early are difficult to confirm from records alone, but it is perfectly reasonable to surmise that he, like many other young men of this time period, might have left school early to seek gainful employment and assist his family.

Burton Peretti points out that although formal musical training among African American musicians was much more common in the urban north than in the rural south, this education generally came from local private teachers rather than established conservatories, and that by age eighteen many black musicians "took control of their own musical developments."⁷⁰ In the early days of jazz, in fact, it was not uncommon to find working musicians who could play their instruments quite capably but did not read music, although this trend changed as the musical arrangements became more complicated during the swing era. The AFM generally tended to exclude non-reading musicians, although the strict adherence to such standards carried a racial component as well, as Michael Roberts argues that "the term 'trained' was explicitly used as a code for 'white' musicians."⁷¹ William Howland Kenney likewise noted that early musicians' unions in cities along the Mississippi River often required passing a sight-reading test for

⁶⁸ Frances Jackson, "Sewing," school essay, undated, Papers of Frances J. Nash, Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.; and 1915 New York State Census and 1920 Federal Census.

⁶⁹ See Papers of Frances J. Nash, Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

⁷⁰ Peretti, 105-6.

⁷¹ Roberts, 118, 15.

acceptance, which had the effect of excluding African American jazz musicians.⁷² Based on his regular work as a bandleader and conductor and his advocacy for standards of musicianship and music reading among AFM members, Jackson's musical training must have been at least reasonably comprehensive and included the ability to read music.

Jazz scholar James Lincoln Collier describes how different socioeconomic classes in the early twentieth century viewed the profession of music performance:

At that time [1910s], few middle-class families would have approved of popular music as an ambition for their children. Their children might study the piano or voice with a view to developing a love of the finer things in life, but they would certainly not aim to be professional musicians, except for the rare genius heading for the concert stage. But to working-class people, a professional musician was several steps up the ladder from the sweatshops.⁷³

This opinion of music as a profession was bound more to socioeconomic class than race. Upper class African Americans who fell into the "Talented Tenth" group discussed by W. E. B. DuBois overwhelmingly looked down upon jazz and popular music.⁷⁴ While jazz would ultimately gain greater acceptance among musicians and within the AFM due to the level of musicianship that it required, the AFM's adherence to an exclusionary skilled craft mentality assured that the union would maintain this sort of cultural hierarchy as rock became America's dominant form of popular music.⁷⁵

If Jackson indeed used music performance in his teenage years to contribute to the family's income, then this demonstration of his ability to earn a steady wage from music probably overcame any serious doubts about the legitimacy of the job. The professionalism and

⁷² Kenney, *Jazz on the River*, 54-5.

⁷³ James Lincoln Collier, *Benny Goodman and the Swing Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 11-12.

⁷⁴ Peretti, 61-2.

⁷⁵ Roberts, 117-8.

respectability that Jackson adopted through his early involvement with Local 533 could not have hurt either. That Jackson's nephew, Jesse Nash Jr., the son of a Reverend no less, went on to play music semi-professionally⁷⁶ indicates that by the 1940s Jackson's family had some regard for the pursuit of music, and it is possible that this approval may have been due in part to the reputation for professionalism that Jackson had established.

Jackson continued to reside with his mother and stepfather at 20 Potter Street throughout the 1920s, and was still there even as late as 1935, according to his entry in that year's union directory.⁷⁷ By 1940, based on the Federal Census, Ray Jackson had married a woman named Alberta, and purchased a house at 132 Hedley Place, which was valued at \$6480. His mother, then 70 years old, lived with them. Alberta, age 38, was born in Kentucky and had an eighth grade education, but listed no employment. At the time, Ray and Alberta reported having no children. Jackson listed his occupation as traveling representative employed by the American Federation of Musicians, and worked an average of 60 hours a week for 51 weeks per year, for an annual salary of \$3975. He held this position until 1944,⁷⁸ and during this period he was probably spending much more time as a union representative than as a performing musician. This income was significantly higher than those of others in his census block group, indicating that while his job with the AFM occupied a great deal of time, he was compensated reasonably well for it.⁷⁹ Jesse Nash Jr. confirmed that during Jackson's tenure as International Traveling

⁷⁶ Jesse Nash Jr. interview with Kayatin.

⁷⁷ Local 533 AFM 1935 Member Directory. Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968, Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

⁷⁸ "Special Meetings of the International Executive Board, Morrison Hotel, Chicago, IL, October 9, 1944" *International Musician* 43 no. 6 (December 1944): 9.

⁷⁹ 1940 Federal Census Records for Raymond E. Jackson. www.ancestry.com. Accessed November 21, 2012.

Representative for the AFM he was traveling quite extensively, generally by car, all over the country.⁸⁰

A 1951 Buffalo City Directory lists Jackson, still working as a musician and living at 132 Hedley Place, as residing with Beatrice H. rather than Alberta.⁸¹ No readily available records clarify this apparent change in his marital relationship. In a similar 1960 directory, Jackson still resided with Beatrice at 132 Hedley, although his occupation was listed as salesman instead of musician.⁸² At the age of 60, Jackson would have been faced with a music industry that had changed tremendously since his youth; the era of the big bands had long since ended, and as a horn player and bandleader this would have certainly meant diminishing employment opportunities for Jackson. It is possible that the aging Jackson was no longer able to earn a steady income from musical performance alone, so it most likely moved from his primary employment to a supplemental source of income. Jackson would have hardly been the first or last working musician to face such a situation.

In addition to his extensive work with the Local 533 and the national AFM, Raymond Jackson was a member of several social organizations, most notable the Freemasons and the Shriners. Jackson held the position of Imperial Potentate with the Shriners, which is the highest position within Shriners International.⁸³ As of 1951, he had held this elected position for eleven consecutive years. The position, at the time, paid \$7500 annually, and Jackson had utilized some

⁸⁰ Jesse Nash Jr., interview with Kayatin.

⁸¹ Raymond E. Jackson, 1951 City Directory, Buffalo, NY. www.ancestry.com. Accessed November 21, 2012.

⁸² Raymond E. Jackson, 1960 City Directory, Buffalo, NY. Ibid.

⁸³ "Organization Overview," Shriners International, <http://www.shrinersinternational.org/Shriners/Organization/Overview.aspx>. Accessed December 4, 2012.

political maneuvering to secure his reelection.⁸⁴ Jesse Nash recalled that Jackson had spent years cultivating national support among Shriners during his travels as the AFM's International

Traveling Representative:

He was able to build up his reputation and ultimately became the Imperial Potentate of the Shriners, and remained in that position for a number of years....The Musicians Union, I believe, was the base of his development within the Shriners at the national level because he had become the International Representative of the Musician's Union.⁸⁵

Jackson had worked his way up methodically, as a 1945 program indicates that in 1929 he had served as the Potentate of the Hadji Temple in Buffalo before pursuing national office.⁸⁶

On February 23, 1980, a dinner in Jackson's honor was held by the Masons and Shriners at the Statler Hotel in Buffalo. The program for this dinner is replete with well wishes and congratulations for the aging Jackson. One page heralds Jackson as "A legend in his time and in the development of Masonry among his people and Shriners in the USA." Other items in the program include a note of congratulations from Buffalo Mayor Jim Griffin and a letter from New York State Governor Hugh L. Carey.⁸⁷ While these accolades generally concern Jackson's work as a Shriner and Mason rather than with the AFM, it is nonetheless clear that many people found him to be a dedicated and well-respected man no matter what endeavors he undertook. Jackson died in Buffalo at age 89 on February 14, 1990.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ James L. Hicks, "Dr. Jackson Pulls Fast One to Get Re-Elected," *The Afro American*, September 1, 1951. <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2211&dat=19510901&id=j9QmAAAAIBAJ&sjid=kgIGAAAAIBAJ&pg=3102,564044> Accessed December 7, 2012.

⁸⁵ Jesse Nash Jr., interview with Kayatin.

⁸⁶ Hadji Temple Shriners Program, 1945, Papers of Frances J. Nash, Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

⁸⁷ Program for February 23, 1980 honoring Raymond E. Jackson. Papers of Frances J. Nash, Folder 206, Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

⁸⁸ Raymond Jackson, Social Security Death Index, www.ancestry.com Accessed November 21, 2012.

Chapter Three

Raymond Jackson and Buffalo's Local 533

Buffalo's American Federation of Musicians Local 533, Colored Musicians Association was chartered on February 3, 1917, in response to the inability of African American musicians in Buffalo to join the existing Local 43 AFM chapter. This had been the case since Local 43's founding, but it wasn't until the mid 1910s that Local 43 began objecting to the influx of non-union black musicians working in Buffalo's dance halls.⁸⁹ Raymond Jackson recalled that Local 43's President at the time, John Powell, favored opening his union's membership to black musicians, but the widespread objections of its white membership made this impossible. Powell, however, did assist Buffalo's black musicians in getting their own local chartered.⁹⁰

This situation was hardly unique to Buffalo; as the AFM became the dominant union for musicians around the turn of the twentieth century, many black musicians sought to join as equal members but were frequently rebuffed and forced into subsidiary locals or segregated chapters.⁹¹ It is no coincidence that this trend emerged in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's endorsement of separate but equal policies in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Consequently, as African American musicians began to organize, many major cities would be served by two distinct local chapters of the AFM, one white and one black, although New York City was a notable exception. New York's local chapter was frequently re-chartered as the AFM absorbed competing musicians' unions, and while the New York Local 310 was segregated during its brief existence, Local 802 was integrated from its inception in 1921 and had an unusually good reputation in the area of

⁸⁹ McRae, "Paying Their Dues: Buffalo's African American Musicians Union, Local 533, A.F.M.."

⁹⁰ Jackson is cited in Watkins.

⁹¹ As previously discussed, see Halker, Spivey, Kenney, and Peretti.

racial equality.⁹² Jazz historian Eric Porter credits bandleader James Reese Europe—whose Clef Club served as a quasi-union and booking agency that encouraged professionalism among African American musicians—with spearheading the movement for integration in Local 310 that ultimately led to the formation of Local 802 as a fully integrated chapter.⁹³

At best, the AFM's official policy in racial matters at the time was, according to AFM historian George Seltzer, "ambiguous."⁹⁴ The integration of Local 802, however, was an aberration, which indicates that while the AFM's national policy did not mandate segregated chapters, it was certainly encouraged. The decision was left to the white-dominated local chapters which virtually ensured that segregated locals would be the norm. This followed the general practice of the American Federation of Labor, of which the AFM was a member. According to Philip Foner, the AFL initially refused to affiliate with unions that refused black members, but in being "committed to a principle of autonomy" it allowed affiliated organizations to regulate themselves, and generally only used "suggestion and moral suasion" to urge compliance in racial matters.⁹⁵ AFL President Samuel Gompers supported the organization of black workers into the union in the 1880s and '90s as a means of preventing them from working for lower wages or as strikebreakers. His motivation was certainly more pragmatic than moral, but Gompers still faced resistance from white membership. When local chapters refused to admit African Americans, the AFL's solution was to organize black workers into separately chartered locals as an ostensibly temporary measure until integration could be achieved. Foner concludes

⁹² Leiter, 28-31.

⁹³ Porter, 19. On James Reese Europe and the Clef Club, see also R. Reid Badger, *A Life in Ragtime: A Biography of James Reese Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Lewis Erenberg, *Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

⁹⁴ Seltzer, 109.

⁹⁵ Foner, 65.

that this became the AFL's "preferred method of organizing black workers," and in 1901 the federation formalized the policy of allowing affiliated national and local organizations to exclude African Americans, and ceased demanding integrated locals.⁹⁶ With the dual unionism system firmly in place throughout the AFL, black musicians in Chicago were organized into the "separate but equal" Local 208, setting a precedent throughout the AFM.⁹⁷

In a 1919 letter to all locals, AFM President Joseph Weber made it clear that in cities where two autonomous locals existed, the distinction between the two was strictly racial, such that while they might share the same geographical jurisdiction, each local dealt only with members of its own race.⁹⁸ The letter goes further than merely codifying a segregation policy, it makes the black locals subordinate to their white counterparts in matters of rule enforcement and investigations by specifying that after black traveling musicians deposited their transfer cards with the black local, the local would be required to report the transfer to the white local.⁹⁹ Richard McRae points out that this division of the responsibilities led to difficulties in coordinating their enforcement, particularly in dealing with venues that employed both black and white bands, and this would repeatedly cause friction between Buffalo's two locals.¹⁰⁰ Another such situation is referred to in a letter from the AFM to Local 533 in 1930, which stated that "Your local has no right to try members who have a transfer in Local 43. If such member be

⁹⁶ Ibid., 73.

⁹⁷ Halker; and Spivey.

⁹⁸ Letter from AFM President Weber to all locals, July 28, 1919. Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968, Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ McRae.

guilty of violation of a by-law the attention of Local 43 should be called to the fact.”¹⁰¹ In other cities, such frictions sometimes led to the intervention of the national AFM, which almost always sided with the white local and occasionally meant the dissolution of the black local and its being subsumed by the white local as a subsidiary.¹⁰²

Inequality extended beyond the AFM’s rules enforcement policies and directly impacted black musicians’ employment opportunities. Discussing the situation in Chicago, Clark Halker points out that

Progress...came only within the parameters of the AFM's discriminatory racial policy, ensuring that Local 208 and forty-six other ‘colored’ locals would not gain access to the same opportunities and rewards as white locals. The lucrative downtown nightclub and hotel trade in Chicago and other cities went to white members better suited to the lily white color scheme preferred by patrons and management.¹⁰³

Similar conditions were indeed encountered nationwide, and in situations where the national AFM intervened, it was never on behalf of its African American members. William Howland Kenney concluded that “relations between the segregated locals of the AFM formed just one facet of a racially discriminatory musical world that also included white domination in the band-booking business, the recording business, radio broadcasting, and music publication.”¹⁰⁴ Because of such discrimination in the music industry, there was, on the surface, not much motivation for black musicians to join the AFM. In St. Louis, for instance, Kenney argues that “racism within

¹⁰¹ Letter from AFM to Local 533, February 20, 1930. Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968 (Series 1), Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

¹⁰² As will be discussed in greater detail later, this was the case in St. Louis and San Francisco. See Kenney and Miller.

¹⁰³ Halker.

¹⁰⁴ Kenney, *Jazz on the River*, 167.

the AFM had seriously undermined the unionism movement among black musicians.”¹⁰⁵

Despite the segregation and inequality that individual black musicians and their local union chapters were subjected to, it was nonetheless beneficial for African American musicians to unionize rather than work outside the auspices of the AFM. Kenney argues that unionizing gave black musicians bargaining leverage when seeking regular engagements, as well as giving them “at least some measure of job security, taking away from the whites any possibility of labeling the black musicians as ‘scabs,’” which also conferred upon them a “a definite long-term moral and ethical advantage.”¹⁰⁶ In Chicago, Spivey argued, “black musicians gravitated toward unionization out of a desire to improve their situation.”¹⁰⁷ This motivation of economic self-protection reflects Robert Zieger’s conclusion that “for many African Americans, union activism provided a means by which they could achieve and sustain a place in the new economy,” although the “turn-of-the-century mainstream labor movement was ambivalent, at best, about the prospects of organizing black workers.”¹⁰⁸

Unionism had only begun to spread to large numbers of musicians in the late nineteenth century but was an integral part of their emerging sense of professionalism. Burton Peretti points out that during the early twentieth century, black musicians were fusing African American vernacular musical traditions with “European instruments and techniques,” which thereby “created black America’s first substantial generation of musical professionals.”¹⁰⁹ For many black musicians, unionism represented a step toward a respectable professional career during an

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 108.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 55.

¹⁰⁷ Spivey, 51.

¹⁰⁸ Zieger, 57.

¹⁰⁹ Peretti, 42.

era in which black professionalism was an important facet of the quest for racial equality and socioeconomic improvement.

This was the atmosphere in which Buffalo's Local 533 was chartered in 1917. Ralph Watkins, drawing on an interview with Raymond Jackson, discusses the relationship of labor and music among blacks in Buffalo at the time:

The most significant black involvement in organized labor was carried out by black musicians and predated the 1920s.... Excluded from the local symphony, and kept out of the area's large orchestras, blacks found work playing...at private parties, dance halls, and saloons.... Just before the start of the decade, the all-white musicians' Local 43 began to pressure the various owners of dance halls to exclude nonunion musicians from working for them. Black musicians responded first by attempting to join Local 43. Refused, [they applied] for a separate charter.¹¹⁰

Jackson's statements to Watkins offer great insight into the circumstances of Buffalo's black musician community and their founding of the Local 533. Though not among the first group of the Buffalo Local 533's officers, Raymond Jackson was a founding member of the chapter in 1917, and served a partial term as Secretary during the early months of 1920 before resigning due to conflicts with summer touring engagements. He returned to the post in 1923, and with the exception of 1930 (when he took a voluntary hiatus following his appointment as Business Manager), he remained Secretary until becoming President in 1937.¹¹¹ In its early days, Local 533 used the Eureka Club on Michigan Avenue to hold general meetings while using the home of Treasurer Monte Tate as its business headquarters, before eventually renting space at 96 Clinton Street, although due to that building's eventual condemnation, Local 533 lacked a permanent

¹¹⁰ The aforementioned 1974 Jackson interview is paraphrased in Watkins.

¹¹¹ Appendix I: Officers of Local 533, 1917-1968, in McRae, "Musicians Association Local 533 of the American Federation of Musicians, and Its Role in the Development of Black Music in Buffalo, New York". See also Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968, Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

headquarters from 1924 through 1930.¹¹² Among the records in the Local 533's archives, there is a large quantity of correspondence addressed to Secretary Raymond Jackson at his family's home of 20 Potter Street, indicating that during this period of 533's transience, Jackson carried out his duties as Secretary and Business Manager from his home. The bulk of this material is of a fairly mundane nature, dealing with musicians' transfers, receipts, disciplinary measures taken against musicians, solicitations and notes of thanks from local businesses and organizations, but the sheer volume of correspondence shows that Jackson's involvement with Local 533 must have kept him quite busy.¹¹³ Yet he evidently was thorough and professional in his handling of the union's affairs, as a letter from New York City's Local 802 to Secretary Jackson commends him for his promptness and cooperation in a matter regarding some musicians' receipts.¹¹⁴ There is also an item of note from the minutes of a 1927 meeting of the Board of Directors in which it was moved, seconded, and carried "To pay phone bill of Secretary Jackson until regular headquarters are established."¹¹⁵

Jackson's professionalism and commitment to his post as Secretary is also demonstrated by his attendance record at board meetings. The earliest surviving attendance records for these meetings date from 1931, and from that time until the summer of 1936, Jackson had accumulated a total of only three absences. Beginning in late 1936, Jackson's attendance

¹¹² McRae.

¹¹³ Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968, Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

¹¹⁴ Letter from Local 802 AFM to Secretary Jackson, 1928. Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968, Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

¹¹⁵ Minutes of Board of Directors Special Meeting, Jan. 9, 1927. Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968, Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

became more sporadic, although his absences were almost all marked as “excused.”¹¹⁶ As this coincides with Jackson’s appointment to the position of International Traveling Representative, it is likely that his extensive travels to advise and represent other black locals took him away from Buffalo on a fairly regular basis. However, at this time Jackson also relinquished his role as Secretary and became President, which while ostensibly a position of greater authority, most likely also meant a decreased role in the handling of 533’s day to day affairs, allowing him to focus on his important duty to other black locals nationwide.

While in Buffalo, however, Jackson sought to spread his professionalism and work ethic throughout the rest of the union. A July 1926 record of a Special Board Meeting details a claim that Raymond Jackson brought against musician Ted Brock for “failure to fill an engagement, thereby embarrassing the leader.”¹¹⁷ This demonstrates that Jackson—already leading his own band or bands at age 25—expected certain standards of professionalism from his sidemen. Furthermore, he was willing to use the union’s authority to discipline musicians who did not conduct themselves accordingly. Ted Brock’s offense, incidentally, stemmed from his failure to bring his horn to a performance, and was compounded by his refusal to play on a borrowed one.¹¹⁸ Bringing one’s instrument to a performance is not an especially demanding expectation to place upon a musician, and Jackson’s interest in pursuing the matter formally rather than merely not hiring Brock again indicates the seriousness with which Jackson took professionalism. Even

¹¹⁶ Attendance of Officers and Board Members at meetings of AFM Local 533, Jan, 1931 - Nov. 1967. Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968, (Series 1) Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

¹¹⁷ Special Board Meeting, July 1926, Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968 (Series 2), Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

the phrasing of the complaint, accusing Brock of “embarrassing the leader,” points to Jackson’s understanding that Brock’s offense reflected poorly on himself as the bandleader, and perhaps on the rest of the union too. Being an African American union in the pre-Civil Rights era, 533’s members would have been held to a more demanding standard than their white counterparts, and consequently they could ill afford to develop a reputation of hiring out musicians who conducted themselves with such irresponsibility.

McRae points to Local 533’s policy of forbidding drunkenness during performances, including evidence of a warning to a musician in 1921 that if a venue were to fire a black orchestra for any such offense, it would be difficult for any other black orchestra to get a job like it again. Consequently, he argues, “the sobriety of Local 533 members was more than a behavioral or a moral issue; it was necessary for the Association to maintain its credibility and survival in a discriminatory environment.”¹¹⁹ Jackson, as both a bandleader and officer of the union, therefore sought to maintain high standards of professionalism and musicianship among 533’s members. Their employment may have depended upon it, but on a deeper level, such failures might reinforce negative racial stereotypes and undermine the struggle for racial equality. Nash confirms that Jackson was indeed “a hard-driving man” who sought to instill pride and self-respect in Local 533’s musicians while ensuring that “things were done properly and were done efficiently and effectively.”¹²⁰ Jackson’s complaint against Brock is certainly demonstrative of Nash’s characterization of him.

An emphasis on standards of musicianship is illustrated by the board’s formation of an examining committee in 1925, for the purposes of ensuring that applicants for union membership

¹¹⁹ McRae.

¹²⁰ Jesse Nash Jr. interview, Kayatin.

had adequate musical skills in the areas of reading, instrumental technique, and ensemble playing.¹²¹ While this could potentially keep union membership down, it had the advantage of maintaining 533's reputation for the musicianship of its members. Elsewhere in the nation, musicians of all races were denied union membership based on poor music reading ability.¹²² While Local 533's insistence on high standards of musicianship was not unique, its adherence to and enforcement of union rules and by-laws stands out. LeRoy "Stuff" Smith, a jazz violinist of some renown, ran afoul of Local 533's transfer rules during an engagement in Buffalo, and commented during a trial before the board that he had found no other local in the nation that was as strict as Local 533.¹²³

In 1936, Jackson and other board members proposed changing 533's bylaws to mandate that contracts between bands and venues be signed at the union headquarters rather than at the venue. This essentially transferred control over the process from the bandleaders to the union itself. Jackson asserted that too many bandleaders were lax in their business practices, which allowed their musicians to be taken advantage of by unscrupulous venue proprietors. He also suspected that some musicians were undercutting the union's scale wage by discretely working for less, which was evidently a problem faced by Local 43 as well during the lean years of the Great Depression. Jackson claimed that by turning control of contracts over to the union, musicians' wages would be better protected not only from venues but from bandleaders as well. Musicians who opposed the proposal countered that it took away their freedom to negotiate,

¹²¹ McRae.

¹²² Kenney, *Jazz on the River*, 54-7; Roberts, 118.

¹²³ McRae.

while several proprietors argued that the union scale was already too high.¹²⁴ The contentious measure ultimately passed narrowly. Jackson's vociferous support of it underscores his preference for business matters to be carried out in an orderly and proper manner, as well as his genuine belief in the strength and purpose of the union as the best advocate for the musicians' best interests.

In 1930, following several years without a proper headquarter building, Jackson helped arrange for the Local 533 to rent space from a Masonic Lodge on 168 Clinton Street. Jackson's standing as a Freemason led McRae to conclude that "perhaps through Jackson's influence the two organizations were mutually beneficent for many years."¹²⁵ In 1934 the Local 533 again sought to secure a more permanent home, and by the end of the year began renting the second floor of 145 Broadway, sharing the space with the informally affiliated Colored Musicians Club. This arrangement worked quite well, and when the building was put up for sale in 1943, the decision was made to purchase the building outright.

The Colored Musicians Club was formed shortly after the chartering of Local 533 in 1917 as an informal social organization comprised of 533's musicians though officially independent of the union. The Club utilized whatever space the union was currently renting, and provided 533's musicians a place to relax, socialize, and conduct rehearsals and jam sessions. In 1935, shortly after Local 533 began renting space at 145 Broadway, the Colored Musicians Club was formally chartered. When the first floor storefront became vacant, the union set up its offices

¹²⁴ Minutes of general meeting, March 29, 1936. Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968, Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

¹²⁵ McRae.

on the first floor while the Club took over the second floor.¹²⁶

It was, according to several sources, Jackson's idea to incorporate the Club as a separate entity and obtain a proper club license.¹²⁷ Jesse Nash Jr. described Jackson as having "tremendous foresight," particularly in regard to this decision to officially organize the Colored Musicians Club independently of the union.¹²⁸ During the 1934 discussions concerning the relocation of 533's headquarters, Jackson proposed the idea of incorporating the social club into the new headquarters in such a way that income could be derived from using it as a venue. Furthermore, when 145 Broadway became available for outright purchase in 1943, it was Jackson who recommended that it be purchased in the name of the Colored Musicians Club rather than Local 533, even though union funds helped finance the purchase.¹²⁹ Jackson may have anticipated that segregation in America would eventually abate, leading Locals 43 and 533 might merge and resulting in the forfeiture of 533's assets and real estate. More pessimistically, however, he was certainly aware that black locals were at particular risk for having their charters revoked and assets subsumed by the white local in a subsidiary arrangement.¹³⁰ With the building in the Club's hands rather than union's, its ownership could not be transferred to Local 43, either through integration and merger or through disciplinary action from the AFM, and the separately

¹²⁶ Rachel Bernstein, "Men Working Together: The Colored Musicians Club of Buffalo." *The Colored Musicians of Buffalo, New York*. <http://www.coloredmusiciansclub.org/history.html> (Accessed October 9, 2012), and McRae, "Paying Their Dues."

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, and Kayatin.

¹²⁸ Jesse Nash Jr. interview with Kayatin.

¹²⁹ McRae.

¹³⁰ By the early 1930s, Jackson had already made several inquiries to AFM headquarters concerning the status of several African American chapters whose charters had been revoked. Replies from the AFM Secretary to Jackson in 1929 and 1931 indicate his awareness of their situation. See *Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968 (Series 2)*, Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

chartered Club could remain in existence. McRae concluded that “Thanks to the efforts of Raymond E. Jackson and other forward looking members of Local 533, The Colored Musicians continues to thrive at 145 Broadway” and does so “as a testament to the legacy of Local 533.”¹³¹ Today, nearly twenty years after McRae reached this conclusion, it remains true, and should rightly be considered a testament to the legacy of Raymond Jackson as well.

From its formal incorporation on, touring jazz musicians who performed in Buffalo frequently visited the Colored Musicians Club and often participated in its legendary jam sessions. Among these noteworthy guests were Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, and Billie Holiday, among many others.¹³² The Club’s Sunday night jam sessions continue to this day, along with regular open rehearsals and a youth music lessons program.¹³³ Seattle’s segregated Local 493 established a similar venue, the Blue Note Club, in the late 1940s, which served as the union’s headquarters as well a social space for black musicians. As with Buffalo’s Colored Musicians Club, the Blue Note Club hosted regular jam sessions that were central to the union culture, and occasionally featured prominent jazz musicians such as Kenny Clarke and Thad Jones sitting in during touring visits to Seattle. All of this was firmly supported by the work dues paid by Local 493’s members.¹³⁴

¹³¹ McRae.

¹³² Edward A. Gargan, “Past is Swinging at Club for ‘Colored Musicians,’” *New York Times*, August 7, 1985. http://proxy.buffalostate.edu:2060/hnpnewyorktimes/docview_111182978/13A6737746C14796245/1?accountid=7259 Accessed November 14, 2012, and “Stars who Appeared at the Club,” Colored Musicians Club of Buffalo, <http://www.coloredmusiciansclub.org/stars.html> Accessed October 9, 2012.

¹³³ Bernstein, “Men Working Together,” and Rich Newberg and others, *Buffalo Soul: The Legacy Plays On*. Special WIVB-TV news report; Original air date January 28, 2003. Buffalo: LIN Television, 2003. See also “Weekly Show Schedule,” Colored Musicians Club of Buffalo, <http://www.coloredmusiciansclub.org/schedule.html> Accessed March 19, 2015.

¹³⁴ Keller, 134-40.

Raymond Jackson did not seek reelection as Local 533's President for 1944. McRae speculates that the death of his mother in 1943 may have influenced this decision, and points out that at this time Jackson was taking a more active role in the Colored Musicians Club and the impending purchase of 145 Broadway.¹³⁵ Nash, however, asserted that while Jackson "tried to hold a very tight rein on the Club," he would go on to spend more of his time involved with the Shriners than the Club during the 1940s and '50s.¹³⁶ Perhaps after so many years of such deep involvement with the AFM at both the national and local level, Jackson may have been ready for some change in direction. Regardless, the members of 533 held Jackson and his decades of service in high esteem. Following his retirement as an officer, he was appointed a Lifetime Member and given the title of President Emeritus. Despite this step back from his official roles, he remained involved in Local 533 and the Colored Musicians Club. In 1950 he served a one year term as Treasurer to allow William Kelly, who had been Treasurer for many years, a hiatus to deal with health problems.¹³⁷

In the 1960s, the AFM began pressuring segregated locals to merge. AFM President Herman Kenin appointed his predecessor James C. Petrillo to head the AFM's newly formed Civil Rights department and oversee the complete integration of the union.¹³⁸ Locals 47 and 767 in Los Angeles had merged voluntarily in 1953, but despite the relative ease of integration in Los Angeles, most segregated locals resisted, necessitating the intervention of the national AFM. Jazz bassist Charles Mingus was instrumental in prompting early discussions about the amalgamation,

¹³⁵ McRae.

¹³⁶ Jesse Nash Jr. interview with Kayatin.

¹³⁷ McRae.

¹³⁸ Howard Taubman, "Petrillo Quietly Battles Musicians' Segregation," *New York Times* (April 23, 1966) ProQuest Historical Newspapers, New York Times 1851-2009. Accessed November 13, 2012.

having been “vocal about segregation in the Los Angeles music world of the 1940s” and the poor treatment of African American musicians, for which he lodged several formal complaints with the AFM.¹³⁹ Leta Miller concurs that the employment situation for black musicians in postwar Los Angeles was indeed bad, and Keller argues that Local 767 itself was in disarray, thus prompting 767’s members to push for the merger.¹⁴⁰ Michael Roberts adds dimensions of skill and class to the Los Angeles merger, noting that bebop musicians such as Mingus and Dizzy Gillespie emphasized jazz music as a high art and sought to unify professional musicians regardless of race under the common banner of skilled artists—to the point of excluding rock & roll as lacking appropriate artistry and skill.¹⁴¹

While the amalgamation in Los Angeles set a precedent, Seltzer points out that it was only “slowly” and “with pressure from President Kenin” that other mergers took place, such as in Denver in 1960, and in Cleveland in 1962.¹⁴² In 1957, following the AFM Executive Board’s decision to not immediately mandate further mergers, Petrillo expressed his concern to the *New York Times* that “smaller Negro locals would be swallowed up by the larger white organizations if mergers were enforced,” although he also stated that the union would compel white locals to accept black musicians who sought membership.¹⁴³ This concern about being “swallowed” was reflected by widespread black resistance to forced merging, as the article also noted that “all

¹³⁹ Porter, 109, 135.

¹⁴⁰ Miller; and Keller, 76.

¹⁴¹ Roberts, 124.

¹⁴² Seltzer, 110-1.

¹⁴³ Donald Janson, “A.F.M. Shelves Bid for Integration,” *New York Times* (June 14, 1957) ProQuest Historical Newspapers, *New York Times* 1923-Current File. Accessed March 11, 2015.

Negro musicians who spoke were in favor of continuing on a segregated basis.”¹⁴⁴ Halker argues that as segregated locals were compelled to merge, black locals generally reacted with skepticism and caution because the AFM had “repeatedly refused to give blacks protection for their financial assets or grant them representation in the merged locals.”¹⁴⁵

The idea of merging Locals 43 and 533 was first discussed around 1930, although early proposals evidently would have involved 43 completely subsuming 533, and that this was related to conflicts between the two unions regarding jurisdiction. Members of 533 unanimously rejected the idea.¹⁴⁶ Ray Jackson, despite his efforts on behalf of black musicians and locals for equality, opposed the merger in 1930s and remained displeased with the idea in the 1960s. Jesse Nash summarized Jackson’s rationale:

He never talked much about integrating; he was very proud of what “the colored” musicians have been able to accomplish. My uncle would have been the first to say that there really was no need for two locals had the racial climate been different. But, since it was as it was, it was important that we had our own....and he wanted to instill that pride in the musicians, pride in having their own.¹⁴⁷

As the obstacles faced by African American musicians and chapters demonstrate, the racial climate indeed precluded any solutions that would have entailed true equality, which is reflected in Jackson’s pride in everything that the musicians of 533 accomplished. Keller similarly concluded of Seattle’s Local 493 that “a union, though segregated and unequal, provides a basis of strength.”¹⁴⁸ Although Jackson was “exceedingly reluctant to see 533 die,” he accepted a

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Halker.

¹⁴⁶ McRae.

¹⁴⁷ Jesse Nash Jr., interview with Kayatin.

¹⁴⁸ Keller, 7.

position on the merger committee when the AFM pressed the issue in the late 1960s.¹⁴⁹ This allowed him to serve once more as a voice for his beloved union and an advocate for its members' best interests in the face of a difficult situation.

Aside from this pride in Local 533, there were more tangible reasons for Jackson and his colleagues to oppose merging with Local 43. McRae points out that “despite the overall desire to do away with Jim Crow in society in general,” the majority of 533’s membership viewed the merger as problematic.¹⁵⁰ Their primary concern was representation; Local 533 had roughly one-tenth of 43’s membership, so its members would have less voice in the amalgamated union, its officers would likely lose their positions, and they would lose their delegates at the annual AFM convention. There was also a concern about protecting 533’s assets from forfeiture and maintaining the policies that 533’s officers had successfully cultivated for decades, most notably its life insurance plan. Thanks to Jackson’s foresight, however, the Colored Musicians Club would retain its independence after the merger.

This would not be the case in Seattle; the Blue Note Club had not been incorporated as a separate entity from the union and as an asset of Local 493 was lost in the merger with Local 76. Keller points out that “amalgamation also brought about the end of the Blue Note as the central space for black pride, bebop jazz, and unionism,” while the closure of the club itself “left a gaping hole in Seattle’s black music culture” as well as the neighborhood itself.¹⁵¹ This was precisely the situation that Jackson had prevented by incorporating the Colored Musicians Club separately and purchasing the 145 Broadway building in its name rather than the union’s.

¹⁴⁹ Kayatin.

¹⁵⁰ McRae.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 157.

Locals 533 and 43 resisted the merger throughout the 1960s, but they were ultimately unable to prevent it. Despite Petrillo's reluctance to force amalgamation on unwilling locals, the AFM took control of the situation and set the terms of the merger, which went into effect on January 1, 1969 with the formation of the new Local 92. The terms assured that former 533 members with life insurance or lifetime membership would retain those benefits, and mandated that several officer positions had to be filled by former 533 members until 1975, but almost everything else, from the setting of dues and initiation fees to the headquarter location, would be a continuation of Local 43's policies. As feared, 533's financial assets were forfeited to the new union, employment opportunities for black musicians diminished, and their representation at the local and national level declined.¹⁵²

These concerns about black locals being "swallowed" that Petrillo voiced in 1957 were indeed prescient; noting that black representation at the annual conventions dropped from a high of 73 delegates during the segregation era to a low of ten in 1974, Seltzer concluded that "blacks were not integrated into white locals, they were submerged."¹⁵³ It was through Jackson's foresight and meticulousness, however, that some of what Local 533 represented and accomplished survived. Former members continued to receive the life insurance and other benefits that they had worked for, and the Colored Musicians Club still operates to this day. One of Raymond Jackson's most important contributions to posterity is the preservation of the Local 533's records, which have formed the basis of this and other studies of Buffalo's Local 533. In 1974, it was Jackson who gathered and loaned archival materials from the history of Local 533

¹⁵² Kayatin; and McRae.

¹⁵³ Seltzer, 114.

to Dr. Monroe Fordham and Ralph Watkins for microfilming.¹⁵⁴ For this effort, Jackson was awarded the 1978 William Wells Brown Award for “notable contributions to the preservation and/or popularization of regional Afro-American history.”¹⁵⁵ Fittingly, Raymond Jackson’s work on behalf of Local 533 has outlived the union itself.

¹⁵⁴ Monroe Fordham and Ralph Watkins, Index and Introduction to Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968 (Series 1), Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College. 1974.

¹⁵⁵ “William Wells Brown Awardees” <http://www.aahanf.org/WilliamWellsBrown.htm>. Accessed November 5, 2012, and Raymond Ellis Jackson on “Uncrowned Community Builders.” Author and date unknown. <http://uncrownedcommunitybuilders.com/person/raymond-ellis-jackson-2>. Accessed November 5, 2012.

Chapter Four

Raymond Jackson and the National AFM, 1929-1944

The 1930s were a nadir for the AFM's segregated African American chapters. The Great Depression and the widespread emergence of broadcast and recording technology undermined musicians' ability to earn a living through live performance. This downturn hit black musicians especially hard as competition for a diminishing number of jobs often prompted white AFM chapters to turn against their black counterparts, generally with accusations of violations of wage scales or other rules. In such conflicts, the AFM often revoked the charter of the black local and reorganized its members as a subsidiary of the white local. During this time period, Ray Jackson was actively involved at the national level advocating for proper representation for the union's African American members, succeeding first in prompting the creation of the International Traveling Representative position in 1936 and ultimately having a hand in granting subsidiary chapters autonomy in 1944. From 1929 to 1944, Jackson attended every annual convention as a delegate of Buffalo's Local 533 or as Traveling Representative, and the Minutes and Official Proceedings of these conventions reveal his persistent advocacy on behalf of underrepresented African American musicians.

While the difficult economic climate of the 1930s exacerbated conflicts between black and white local chapters, such antagonism was nothing new. David Keller's examination of segregated locals in Seattle reveals that soon after its inception in 1918, African American Local 458 was regularly accused by white Local 76 of allowing its musicians to work for below 76's wage scale. Yet when prevented from working below scale, black musicians were often replaced by white musicians from Local 76, who also had a greater variety of jobs available while black

musicians were generally limited to dance halls and clubs. Local 76 continued to undermine Local 458 and its members for several years, culminating in a 1924 petition to AFM President Joseph Weber to revoke Local 458's charter due to violations of wage and territory rules as well as improprieties in its finances and elections. Weber upheld the charges and revoked Local 458's charter on April 22, 1924, although Keller does acknowledge that 458's leadership at the time was in total disarray.¹⁵⁶

Though Local 76 approved of rechartering Local 458 under much tighter supervision, Seattle's black musicians preferred the independence that they had enjoyed and succeeded in chartering the new Local 493 by the end of 1924. Conflict soon resumed; in 1926 the board of Local 76 brought Local 493's secretary up on charges of financial misconduct. He refused to participate in the trial as it did not involve his own union, which prompted Local 76 to ask the AFM "define [the] position of Local 493 in its relation to this local." President Weber ruled in 1928 that Local 76 had complete supervision over the affairs of Local 493.¹⁵⁷ This demonstrates that even without being relegated completely to subsidiary status, segregated African American chapters often still lacked the same degree of autonomous control over wage scales, jurisdiction, and disciplinary proceedings that white chapters enjoyed.

Throughout the early decades of the AFM, local chapters both black and white frequently had their charters revoked and reissued, sometimes under different numbers, for any number of offenses.¹⁵⁸ By the 1930s, however, black chapters that lost their charters found it more difficult

¹⁵⁶ Keller.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Miller points this out, *Ibid.*, n. 103. Minutes of Annual Conventions in *International Musician* and Official Proceedings reflect these revocations and re-charterings, which complicates pinpointing the exact number of local chapters, both black and white, in any given year.

than usual to obtain a new independent charter, and the cases of St. Louis Local 44 and San Francisco Local 648 exemplify the AFM's alternative solution of establishing them as subsidiary chapters of the white local.

Musicologist Leta Miller gets to the heart of the issue of subsidiary locals in her examination of the situation in San Francisco. Local 648 was formed in 1916 by African American musicians in San Francisco and Oakland who had been excluded from the white Local 6. The two unions coexisted amicably at first, but their relationship grew strained by the 1930s. Local 6 set about vigorously enforcing its wage standards in the Bay Area, which effectively barred Local 648 from offering competitive pricing to certain venues within their joint jurisdiction. Local 648 sought an injunction against Local 6, and each union lodged grievances against the other with the AFM. The conflict came to a head in 1934 when the AFM revoked Local 648's charter, leaving the Bay Area's African American musicians bereft of union representation. A subsequent application from black musicians of Oakland for a new charter was denied, though in 1935 they were organized as Subsidiary Local 6, in which they were obliged to pay union dues but were denied voting rights, access to the local offices, and representation at the annual national conventions.¹⁵⁹

William Howland Kenney sheds similar light on the situation in St. Louis. The African American Local 44 existed since 1896 without much apparent conflict with the white Local 2 until 1930, when the combination of sound movies and the Great Depression drove many white musicians out of their most lucrative jobs. In light of the economic climate, the Streckfus Line riverboat company sought a lower scale from Local 2, and threatened to replace white musicians

¹⁵⁹ Miller.

with cheaper black musicians from Local 44. At the behest of Local 2, and evidently without hearing from Local 44 in the matter, the AFM revoked the charter of Local 44, as it had done to black locals in Denver and Kansas City under similar circumstances. Local 44's musicians were offered subsidiary status under Local 2.¹⁶⁰ Under this arrangement, African American musicians were obligated to pay full dues to Local 2, but lacked access to union offices or voice in local elections or proceedings. They were also forbidden from contracting gigs without the consent of Local 2, which would handle all monetary transactions and distribute payment accordingly.¹⁶¹ Kenney suggests that black musicians accepted this in order to protect what remained of its riverboat jobs rather than lose them all. He also notes that a number of non-union dance bands flourished in black St. Louis, arguing that "racism within the AFM had seriously undermined the union movement among black musicians in St. Louis." Regular appeals from members of Subsidiary 2 for either proper representation or a separate charter were ignored until 1944, when following the abolition of the subsidiary system they were granted a charter as Local 197, which would eventually merge with Local 2 in 1971.¹⁶²

An item from the minutes of a meeting of the International Executive Board during the 1934 Annual Convention indicates the prevailing attitude of disregard that the white-dominated AFM held for the black subsidiary locals in that "a request of the subsidiary Local of Local 2, St. Louis, Mo., for equal representation on the Executive Board of that Local, is considered and thereafter denied."¹⁶³ This position was reiterated at the 1936 convention at a meeting in which

¹⁶⁰ Kenney, *Jazz on the River*, 106-7. See also William Howland Kenney, "Just before Miles: Jazz in St. Louis, 1926-1944," in *Miles Davis and American Culture*, ed. Gerald Early (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2001), 36.

¹⁶¹ Dennis Owsley, *City of Gabriels: The History of Jazz in St. Louis* (St. Louis: Reedy Press, 2006), 48.

¹⁶² Kenney, *Jazz on the River*, 108.

¹⁶³ "Official Proceedings, Opening Session." *International Musician* 32, no. 1 (July, 1934): 7-9.

“The Board reaffirms its position that a subsidiary of a Local is not entitled to representation of its own at a Convention, being represented by the Local of which it is a subsidiary.”¹⁶⁴ Thus it is clear that at the national level the representation of African American musicians was not a priority for the AFM, which was in fact actively resistant to any change in status for the unrepresented subsidiary locals.

This was the racial climate that Jackson and his African American colleagues faced. Against such obstacles, Jackson was steadfast in his determination to seek better conditions for the segregated African American locals and the unrepresented subsidiary locals. At the 1934 convention, Jackson, along with Fritz Hawkins of Pittsburgh’s African American Local 471, jointly proposed “Resolution No. 54” to the convention:

Whereas, There seems to be a growing eagerness of on the part of the colored citizens of our country to become affiliated with various branches of the organized labor movement, and

Whereas, Unscrupulous agitators and radicals have been carrying on, for a considerable time, ceaseless propaganda amongst them in their attempts to poison their minds against the legitimate labor movement, and inasmuch as proper instruction, sympathy and intelligent leadership are essential for future peace and harmony within our ranks; it be

Resolved, That a colored assistant to the President’s Office be appointed to function as an organizer and good-will ambassador, whose duty it shall be to reorganize fertile territory, assist in establishing new locals where same are needed, and disseminate favorable propaganda for the promotion of the economic welfare of the colored musicians at large; be it further

Resolved, That this convention take immediate action to empower the President to make provision for such appointment.

Fritz Hawkins, Local No. 471

Raymond E. Jackson, Local No. 533¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ “Mid-Year Meeting of the International Executive Board, Detroit, June 5, 1936.” *International Musician* 34, no. 2 (August, 1936): 14-17.

¹⁶⁵ “Official Proceedings.” *International Musician* 32 no. 4 (October 1934): 18-19.

It is noteworthy that prior to raising the argument about the welfare of black musicians, the resolution appeals to the union's general concern about radical agitation within its chapters. The AFM had maintained a strict anti-Communist stance since the early 1920s, due to the general perception that Communist agitation was disruptive to the union and undermining of the union's leadership.¹⁶⁶ With the proposal that black musicians might be of use in boosting the union's membership, the resolution is worded in such a way as to emphasize the proposal's benefits for the union as a whole rather than only the benefits for the African American chapters.

There is no doubt, based on Jackson's dealings with musicians and venues in Buffalo, that he was a devout unionist who shared the AFM's concerns, but it is also clear that despite his appeal to broader labor issues, Jackson was very interested in advocacy and representation for African American musicians. He, perhaps wisely, couched this agenda in broader terms in order to appeal to and garner the support of a predominantly white national union and its leadership that continued to engage in blatantly discriminatory practices against its African American local chapters. This follows a pragmatic approach to civil rights that advocated achievable incremental improvements in conditions and race relations in lieu of direct assaults against segregation that would probably have been defeated quickly by white opposition.

Despite Jackson's strategic approach, success was not immediately forthcoming. The minutes of the convention indicate that Resolution 54 was favorably received by the entire delegation, discussed at some length by Hawkins and Jackson, as well as AFM President Joseph Weber, and ultimately referred to the International Executive Board for further action but not yet adopted.¹⁶⁷ The issue had been brought up in committee, during which "the advisability of

¹⁶⁶ Leiter, 58.

¹⁶⁷ "Official Proceedings." *International Musician* 32 no. 4 (October 1934): 18-19.

appointing traveling representatives of the A. F. of M. to protect its interests, under the supervision of the President's office" was discussed and ultimately "laid over for further consideration." Progress was slow and mired in bureaucracy, but Hawkins and Jackson had at least succeeded in keeping the convention's attention on the issue.

Following the convention, the International Executive Board further discussed Resolution 54, as the convention had directed, although no further action was taken:

The President's office, while not necessarily in a position to carry out in detail what the resolution proposes, will endeavor to be helpful in the direction indicated. It is understood that colored locals are at all times entitled to all such relief and protection as is accorded to white locals.¹⁶⁸

This response from President Weber and the International Executive Board offered at least a cursory acknowledgement of the difficulties faced by the segregated and subsidiary African American locals, but failed to take substantial action to further the proposal or otherwise ameliorate the situation in spite of the promise to be "helpful." The issue was for all intents and purposes set aside for the following year.

Fritz Hawkins, like Jackson, sought to address on a national level issues that affected his local community of African American musicians. Historians Peter Rutkoff and William Scott discuss the fact that for black musicians in Pittsburgh "joining the local meant jobs," and these union scale jobs were better paying and more secure than jobs offered by potentially crooked promoters and agents.¹⁶⁹ William Howland Kenney elaborates on Pittsburgh's African American music scene, pointing out that Local 471's musicians were shut out of broadcasting jobs by local

¹⁶⁸ "Minutes of the International Executive Board During and After the Convention." *International Musician* 32 no. 4 (October, 1934): 19-20.

¹⁶⁹ Peter Rutkoff and William Scott, *Fly Away: The Great African American Cultural Migrations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 163.

radio stations, and in general the most lucrative jobs went to white musicians, which was the case for black musicians and their unions nationwide.¹⁷⁰ David Keller's thesis on Seattle's segregated musicians' union discusses the efforts of Powell Barnett as an advocate of integration throughout the AFM. Citing Barnett's papers archived in Seattle, Keller argues that Barnett unsuccessfully proposed integrating the AFM entirely in 1933, and enlisted Ray Jackson's help in proposing the creation of the traveling representative position at the 1934 convention.¹⁷¹ Barnett's name, however, does not appear on any such proposals in 1934, 35, or 36 in the *Official Proceedings* of those years' conventions. Keller also mistakenly places the 1934 convention in Buffalo rather than Cleveland, and alleges that Jackson held the Traveling Representative position until 1940 instead of 1944.¹⁷²

Resolution No. 54 argued that there was a clear mutual benefit for both black and white musicians in addressing these problems; extending the full protections of unionism to black musicians would not only raise their wages and protect them from exploitation by dubious promoters and agents, it would strengthen the union as a whole by adding numbers and preventing the same unscrupulous agents from being able to undercut the union's scale wage by using non-union musicians. Resistance to the formation of black local chapters could be formidable; in January 1936 the AFM denied an application for a charter from African American musicians of Butte, Montana based on the objections of Butte's Local 241.¹⁷³ Even when the

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 166-7.

¹⁷¹ Keller, 83.

¹⁷² Ibid. Cleveland and Buffalo share a lake but are in fact distinct cities. Keller did not consult the *Official Proceedings* or *International Musician*, which would have clarified the date and location of the convention. He cited Barnett's papers in discussing this, and perhaps referred to correspondence between Barnett and Jackson, and confused Jackson's home city with the location of the convention.

¹⁷³ *Official Proceedings*, Detroit, 1936.

protections of the AFM were extended to black musicians, it is clear that they still occupied a second-tier status, especially in the subsidiary locals. Jackson, therefore, continued to fight for better representation and equal rights for black musicians in Buffalo and nationwide.

At the 1935 Annual Convention, Ray Jackson took the lead in reintroducing a modified version of the resolution that put forward a stronger argument in favor of establishing the position of a national representative for the segregated black local chapters:

Whereas, recent survey discloses, that many locals of the Federation are still in dire need of the important interpretation of the legislative acts of the International Executive Board, Conventions, By-Laws, Rules and Regulations of the A. F. of M., and

Whereas, In furtherance of the progress of our great institution, it is ultimately necessary that we must curb the activity of unscrupulous agitators and radicals who have spread considerable propaganda against the labor movement, thereby causing much consternation, confusion, argument and unrest within our ranks, and

Whereas, Many problems exist today which hamper the progress of some Locals, and various officers who seek to carry out the Mandates, Laws, Constitutions and Standing Resolutions of the A. F. of M., and

Whereas, Many charters issued recently have been revoked mainly through the neglect of officers to perform their duties, which in most cases caused by ignorance of their interpretations of the various laws, contributes to inefficiency, and

Whereas, We are definitely and conclusively sure that it is pertinent and necessary that the needs of this group of musicians be served;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, That the President be empowered to appoint some member of the Federation from one of the Colored Locals represented at this Convention, whose duty it shall be to disseminate favorable information, organize fertile territory and do such other things that will raise the standards of these Locals.¹⁷⁴

With Franklin C. Brasfield representing Pittsburgh's Local 471 instead of Hawkins, the leadership of the movement for a national representative fell squarely on Jackson, who expanded its support by bringing eight black delegates on board as co-sponsors. Jackson again worded the resolution to appeal to the need for protection from infiltrators and agitators, and strengthening the union by solidifying local adherence to the AFM's policies. He must have agreed to some

¹⁷⁴ "Official Proceedings" *International Musician* 33 no. 2 (August 1935): 11-12.

extent about this latter argument, as he had been known to voice his opinion to the 533's board that subsidiary locals were generally "lax in their business practices."¹⁷⁵

While the protection and representation of black musicians and their respective locals remained Jackson's guiding motivation, he toned down the racial argument from the previous year's resolution, instead focusing his argument to the convention on the representative's role as an agent of the national AFM offering guidance to locals rather than as acting on behalf of the locals at the national level. Again this indicates that Jackson took a more subtle and indirect approach to seeking representation for black locals, but does conform to his aforementioned high standards for the conduct and professionalism of both musicians and local union chapters.

In 1936, Jackson's proposals for the appointment of Traveling Representatives was taken up by the Committee on Law, which recommended that

The President shall, whenever he considers it in the interests of the Federation, appoint investigators whose duty it shall be to visit local jurisdictions to establish more contact between the Locals and the Federation and make such investigations and perform such duties as the President may assign them.¹⁷⁶

The committee's report was adopted by the convention and forwarded to the President's office for consideration. President Weber gave his recommendation on the report, proposing that the "matter of salary and expenses to be left to the International Executive Board." The convention approved Weber's report, moving it forward to the Board for final approval.¹⁷⁷ The Board swiftly approved, setting the salaries of the Traveling Representatives at \$75 per week as well as expenses, and giving the President the authority to immediately hire eight people to fill the

¹⁷⁵ McRae.

¹⁷⁶ "Official Proceedings." *International Musician* 34 no. 3 (September 1936): 15, 18, 24-25.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

positions.¹⁷⁸ Unsurprisingly, Raymond Jackson was promptly offered one, which he accepted.

Jesse Nash Jr. recalled that Jackson

drove all over the entire United States in carrying out the duties of the International Representative of the American Federation of Musicians on behalf of [AFM President] James Petrillo. And, in that process...he was able to use those trips...for organizing and troubleshooting on behalf of black musicians.¹⁷⁹

McRae cites Jackson's description of the job as requiring him to "investigate the conditions in black locals and to assist in organizing non-unionized black musicians" as well as "reviewing contracts of many traveling bands...to ensure that they were meeting scale prices and that all musicians were in good standing with the AFM."¹⁸⁰ It is clear that Jackson carried out this job as he had proposed for years: serving as a liaison between black locals and the AFM to the benefit of both parties. As he had set high standards for members of his own Local 533 in Buffalo, Jackson was now in a position to assist other black locals in conforming to the AFM's standards of musicianship and professionalism. Kayatin elaborates that "from his experiences as an AFM traveling agent, he expressed with authority the needs of black musicians across the country, in addition to their decorum, appearance, talent, and business sense."¹⁸¹ Jackson's record at the AFM conventions show that he continued to advocate for equal rights and representation for black locals, and in his capacity as Traveling Representative was in better position to understand and give voice to the needs and concerns of segregated and subsidiary black locals.

Reports from President Weber at the 1937 and 1938 Annual Conventions highlighted his

¹⁷⁸ "Minutes of the International Executive Board During and After the Convention." *International Musician* 34 no. 4 (October 1936): 11, 14-15.

¹⁷⁹ Jesse Nash Jr. interview with Kayatin. Jackson initially served under President Weber prior to Petrillo.

¹⁸⁰ McRae.

¹⁸¹ Kayatin.

satisfaction with the work of the Traveling Representatives. Noting that the AFM had in the past, due to limited funds, been lax in following the AFL's policy of maintaining close contact with its local chapters, Weber stated that the "field men" had proven quite useful to the AFM, and proposed that their number be increased from nine to ten.¹⁸² He mirrored this conclusion the following year as well, stating that thanks to the traveling representatives, local chapters were "better policed" and traveling bands were better regulated.¹⁸³ Weber also noted in 1939 that despite initial concerns that locals might resent visits from the traveling representatives, locals generally welcomed them, especially those that lacked sufficient funds to regularly send delegates to the annual national conventions.¹⁸⁴ Weber and his successor Petrillo each made a point of clarifying that the traveling representatives were to advise local chapters, especially when disputes arose, but did not have the authority to render decisions, dictate to the locals, or interfere in local politics.¹⁸⁵

Jackson's involvement on behalf of black locals is evident in the Official Proceedings of the AFM annual conventions. In 1937, Philadelphia's white Local 77 sought to revoke the charter of black Local 274 over a wage dispute. Jackson appeared as a witness in the case, and while the minutes do not reveal the details, the Executive Board denied Local 77's request for a charter revocation but continued to investigate the wage violation issue. Jackson also appeared before the Board that year concerning a case in Seattle in which a white musician joined the black local but still wished to work with white musicians without having to join both local chapters or seek

¹⁸² *Official Proceedings*, Louisville, KY, 1937.

¹⁸³ *Official Proceedings*, Tampa, FL, 1938.

¹⁸⁴ *Official Proceedings*, Kansas City, MO, 1939.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, and *Official Proceedings*, Seattle, 1941.

permission. Upholding the segregationist policy, the Board ruled that each local could only accept musicians of its own race, and musicians seeking to contract members of the other local must obtain the chapter's consent.¹⁸⁶

Jackson was involved in obtaining charters for black chapters, and appeared with three delegates of Local 101 of Dayton, Ohio regarding the organization of the city's black musicians. The Board granted them a separate charter, but keeping with its precedent of giving preference to the white local ordered that Local 101 had authority to determine the black local's wage scale and supervise its disciplinary proceedings.¹⁸⁷ Jackson also appeared before the Board in other cases where the management or business practices of black locals were called into question. Black Local 627 of Kansas City was ordered to demonstrate that it was "properly maintained" in response to allegations from officers of Kansas City's white Local 34; Jackson presented findings to President Weber, and 627 was ordered to hire an auditor and "keep better books," as well reprimanded for denying voting rights to members in good standing.¹⁸⁸ Jackson later gave a similar report on the conditions of Local 272 of Sandusky, Ohio when it was "ordered to show cause why its charter should not be revoked."¹⁸⁹ His involvement in such cases demonstrates his commitment not only giving black locals proper representation, but in ensuring that they were run properly and according to the AFM's standards.

The situation that led to the trouble in San Francisco concerned the AFM's policy of "Forbidden Territory" venues, wherein a venue that ran afoul of the union's rules was, for a

¹⁸⁶ *Official Proceedings*, Louisville, KY, 1937.

¹⁸⁷ *Official Proceedings*, Kansas City, MO, 1939.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Official Proceedings*, Indianapolis, 1940.

period of time, forbidden from hiring musicians from outside the local union's jurisdiction, thus granting the local a monopoly on that venue's music. The Forbidden Territory list was regularly published in *International Musician*, and non-local musicians who took work in such venues were disciplined by the union.¹⁹⁰ Where segregated locals coexisted in the same jurisdiction, problems could arise from this, and the national AFM, as it had in Seattle, St. Louis, and San Francisco, frequently gave preference to the white local in sorting these issues out. A problem like this arose in Buffalo in 1937 when Local 43 placed the Savarin Restaurant on the Forbidden Territory list and locked out 533's members from working there, but the AFM mediated the situation in a more equitable manner than it had in San Francisco, although it should be noted that Locals 43 and 533 in Buffalo were far less adversarial, and ultimately took a more coordinated approach when it came to dealing with troublesome venues.¹⁹¹

This issue of fairness within joint jurisdictions was one that Jackson would repeatedly address at the conventions. At the 1935 convention, Jackson introduced "Resolution No. 42," concerning the section of the AFM's bylaws that dealt with Forbidden Territory:

Whereas, Article XIII, Section 18 does not give cities where there are two Locals operating the same concessions:

Therefore, Be It Resolved, That the following be added to the second paragraph of said article and section, to wit:

"This paragraph and section shall include all jurisdictions where more than one Local Functions."¹⁹²

Jackson's resolution was joined by five other delegates, all of whom were representing black locals, indicating that this change was very much a matter of seeking equal protection for black

¹⁹⁰ Leiter, 22-23, 78.

¹⁹¹ McRae.

¹⁹² "Official Proceedings," *International Musician* 33 no. 3 (September, 1935): 19-21.

locals before the AFM's bylaws. The resolution did not get far, however, as the minutes reported only that the "Subject matter has been disposed of."¹⁹³

At the 1937 convention, Lloyd V. Plummer—Jackson's colleague from Buffalo's Local 533—introduced "Resolution No. 86." It served the same purpose as Jackson's previous resolution, arguing that the aforementioned Article XIII, Section 18 should apply only to "traveling bands" and not to any local ensembles that would have been represented by the parallel local. It was co-sponsored by two other delegates from black locals, and was again received unfavorably by the committee.¹⁹⁴ Also in 1937, Jackson's name appeared as one of three black co-sponsors of a resolution which would allow musicians who were forbidden from joining the local in whose jurisdiction they resided in, but were otherwise eligible to join the AFM, to join the nearest local that would take them and still freely work in their area of residence.¹⁹⁵ This resolution, which met with greater success in being adopted and referred to the International Executive Board, tacitly implicated racial segregation as a hindrance to qualified musicians joining their nearest local. While not abolishing the segregation policy or forcing such locals to accept black members, it did propose to extend union protection to those musicians without requiring them to obtain transfers for playing within their own locality. Jackson's co-sponsorship of this resolution again indicates his commitment to seeking union protection and representation for black musicians who otherwise would not have had it, as well as his desire to consolidate the AFM's power by encouraging such musicians to join the union.

The 1937 convention also saw what may have been the first direct assault on the practice

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ "Official Proceedings," *International Musician* 36 no. 4 (October, 1937): 16-19.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

of subsidiary locals. Led by Jackson's colleague Lloyd Plummer, a group of three black delegates proposed Resolution 93 in favor of abolishing subsidiary locals:

Whereas, There is no provision for, or mention of Subsidiary Locals in the Constitution and By-Laws of the A. F. of M.; and

Whereas, The very foundation of these United States was laid on the fact that "Taxation Without Representation" is tyranny; and

Whereas, This form of organization is a subterfuge to evade the organic law of the A. F. of M.,

Therefore, Be it Hereby Resolved, That beginning immediately no further Subsidiary Locals shall be organized; that the Subsidiary Locals now in existence shall be either absorbed by the parent body giving said members of same voice and vote; or given a full and separate charter; and that from this day forward no Local shall be given supervision over another.¹⁹⁶

The Board declined to put the proposal before the convention for a vote, asserting that "the present system works out satisfactorily, and therefore no reason exists why a change should be made at the present time." A request for full autonomy from Subsidiary Local of Local 2 of St. Louis was likewise denied based on the Board's ruling on Resolution 93.¹⁹⁷

In his capacity as International Traveling Representative, Jackson was in a good position to bring issues concerning the status of black musicians and local chapters to the attention of the President and the International Executive Board. Jackson's name appears on a Committee on the Secretary's Report during the 1942 Convention,¹⁹⁸ which indicates that he had gained some clout and influence at the national level. His attention turned to the abolition of the subsidiary locals, which in the late 1930s were still relegated to positions of inferiority. The International Executive Board continued to reaffirm this subjugation, practically making an annual tradition of rejecting petitions for autonomy from Subsidiary Local 2 of St. Louis, holding that "any modification of

¹⁹⁶ *Official Proceedings*, Louisville, KY, 1937.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ "Official Proceedings," *International Musician* 41 no. 3 (September 1942): 23-28.

the rules under which Subsidiary Locals are maintained cannot be made except through agreement with the white Local which agreed to the original conditions.”¹⁹⁹

With the threat of being relegated to subsidiary status by the AFM, black locals had a great deal to lose if they challenged the white local or the national AFM. This made Jackson’s role as their spokesman all the more important, and it was an issue that he had followed closely for quite some time. Several letters from the AFM to Jackson indicate that he had been inquiring as to the status of several African American locals; a 1929 letter apprised him that Locals 698 and 708 had their charters revoked, only Local 710 of Washington, D.C. had been restored to good standing,²⁰⁰ and a 1931 letter informed him of the revocation of the charter of Local 300 in Indianapolis.²⁰¹

A major change in the AFM’s leadership took place in 1940 when James C. Petrillo, a member of the International Executive Board and longtime President of Chicago’s Local 10, succeeded Joseph Weber as AFM President. Although Petrillo was much more amenable to civil rights concerns, Clark Halker argues that he still required some prompting:

Petrillo reacted slowly but deliberately in his home local and in the AFM.... Aware of black discontent, he cautioned patience and made overtures towards black members. He balked at ending Jim Crow locals, however, until black members, with aid from white members, demanded equal treatment.”²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ “Minutes of the International Executive Board During and After the Convention.” *International Musician* 34, no. 4 (October, 1936): 11, 14-15.

²⁰⁰ Letter from AFM Secretary to 533 Secretary Raymond Jackson, June 29, 1929. Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968 (Series 2), Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

²⁰¹ Letter from AFM Secretary to 533 Secretary Jackson, October 14, 1931. Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, 1917-1968 (Series 2), Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

²⁰² Halker..

Leta Miller agrees with this assessment of Petrillo, pointing out that while he boasted about insisting upon the immediate abolition of subsidiary locals upon becoming President, his “claims of sole responsibility and early timing were overstated,” although Miller does acknowledge that his “support for this policy change must have spurred its passage,” albeit four years into his Presidency and only following pressure from black delegates.²⁰³ While Petrillo at first may not have been an outright ally of Jackson’s cause, it is clear that he was at least responsive—certainly more so than Weber had been—when pressed to take action on racial issues.

Two changes to the role of Traveling Representatives were proposed and discussed during the 1942 annual convention. Resolution 23 proposed that the Traveling Representatives should not be seated at the annual conventions as delegates representing any particular local. Despite an unfavorable committee report, the resolution advanced and ultimately passed, although an amendment clarified that the Traveling Representatives, despite not acting as delegates, would still attend the convention and be compensated appropriately.²⁰⁴ This rule change explains Jackson not receiving credentials as a delegate to the 1944 convention, although starting in 1937 when Jackson had started serving as a Traveling Representative, Local 533 had been sending both Jackson and Secretary Lloyd Plummer as delegates.²⁰⁵ Resolution 70, which was withdrawn prior to a vote, likewise sought to curb the influence of the Traveling Representatives, proposing that they be elected by locals in the region they were to represent rather than appointed by the President.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ Miller.

²⁰⁴ *Official Proceedings*, Dallas, 1942.

²⁰⁵ Correspondence from AFM, 1920s-1950s, Records and Documents Pertaining to the Colored Musicians Association Buffalo Musicians Local 533, Microfilm, Monroe Fordham Center for Regional History, Buffalo State College.

²⁰⁶ *Official Proceedings*, Dallas, 1942.

Due to a wartime request from the federal government to conserve transportation resources the AFM did not hold an Annual Convention in 1943,²⁰⁷ which delayed Jackson's progress in combating the problem of subsidiary locals by a year. The convention resumed in 1944, and opened with concert by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, featuring African American vocalist Marian Anderson performing a combination of arias, art song, and "Two Spirituals."²⁰⁸ Anderson's presence as the headlining performer of the opening concert indicates a move toward greater racial inclusivity among the delegates.²⁰⁹ An especially noteworthy item from the 1944 convention was the adoption "Resolution No. 47," which asserted that because "Music is created without regard to race, creed, or color," the AFM ought to "endorse and support the President's National Committee for legislation leading to permanent fair employment practices."²¹⁰ This refers to the Fair Employment Practice Committee, which was established by Franklin Roosevelt in 1941 and strengthened in 1943 to include a President's Committee and, at the request of A. Philip Randolph, more specifically address racial discrimination in labor unions.²¹¹ Jackson later submitted a statement to the Executive Board concerning Resolution 47, seeking permission to request funds from Congress. His statement was approved by the Board, although there is no

²⁰⁷ Leiter, 77.

²⁰⁸ "Official Proceedings, Opening Session." *International Musician* 43 no. 1 (July, 1944): 6-8, 10-11, 15-16.

²⁰⁹ On Marian Anderson's role as a musical voice for racial equality, see Raymond Arsenault, *The Sound of Freedom: Marian Anderson, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Concert That Awakened America* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009).

²¹⁰ "Official Proceedings, Fourth Day." *International Musician* 43 no. 4 (October, 1944): 10, 15, 17, 19.

²¹¹ A. Philip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, proposed a 50,000 person march in Washington D.C. in support of racial equality in the workforce, prompting Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 8802 creating the FEPC in order to avert the march. Randolph was simultaneously lobbying AFL conventions, seeking to improve its record of racial discrimination. Harris, 116-8; and Foner, 241-2. See also William H. Harris, *Keeping the Faith: A. Philip Randolph, Milton P. Webster, and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, 1925-37*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977).

record of further action regarding it.²¹² It is evident, however, that there had been at least a modest shift in the mood of the AFM concerning race, and it is appropriate then that it was in 1944, following a performance by Marian Anderson and a resolution about fair employment, that President Petrillo and the International Executive Board finally acknowledged and addressed the inequality of subsidiary locals at the behest of Jackson and his colleagues.

Despite the rhetoric of racial progress at the convention, Jackson and his colleagues may have anticipated lingering antipathy toward their cause, and therefore did not raise the issue of subsidiary locals during the general convention. Bypassing the risk of opposition among the delegates, they set the policy change in motion by appealing directly to a presumably more sympathetic Executive Board; the *Official Proceedings* of the noted that a delegation of black representatives, which included Jackson, brought the issue of subsidiary local chapters before the Board during its post-convention special sessions on the evening of June 10:

Delegates Goodwin, Local 550; Cooke, Local 462; Gray, Local 208; Plummer, Local 533; Bailey, Local 767; Bailey, Local 710; and Traveling Representative Jackson appear on a matter of interest to them. They discuss various phases of the situation and ask that subsidiary locals be granted independent charters.²¹³

The details of their proposal and the subsequent discussion were not recorded in the minutes, but it is clear that after years of dismissing the proposal outright, the Board finally took the matter seriously; they revisited the request the following evening and decided in favor of putting an end to the practice:

The question of eliminating subsidiary charters is considered. On motion passed, it is decided that subsidiary locals be discontinued and that such locals be given separate

²¹² *Official Proceedings*, Chicago, 1944.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

charters on condition that they are bound by the price list of the principal local for the class of business done by such local.²¹⁴

This decision by the Board, though a major victory for subsidiary chapters that would be granted autonomy, still perpetuated a dual union system would continue to favor white chapters as the “principal local” in the cities where segregated chapters existed. By compelling these segregated chapters to abide by wage scales set by the white chapters, the Board continued to relegate them to an inferior status and preventing them from offering competitive pricing that was often the best chance to provide employment for black musicians. The difference, however, between a thoroughly subjugated and exploited subsidiary chapter and a fully autonomous segregated one was indeed substantive. Though still bound by the wage scales of corresponding white locals, the newly-chartered black chapters would be able to elect their own officers, control their finances, establish their own offices, and be directly represented by their own delegates at the AFM’s annual conventions. These fundamental rights of unionism were precisely what Jackson and his colleagues had been fighting for, and the abolition of subsidiary chapters was an important victory for African American musicians, even if still came within the confines of a segregationist system that would continue to take decades to dismantle. Although progress toward integration and full equality still needed to be made, this victory marked a turning point for race relations in the AFM in that the Board had finally become attentive to the unjust nature of subsidiary locals and respond pressure from Jackson and his colleagues to grant them autonomy.

Immediately following the 1944 convention, *International Musician* published a declaration from President Petrillo concerning the Board’s decision on the matter:

²¹⁴ Ibid.

The colored delegates to the Chicago Convention appointed the following delegation to represent them before the International Executive Board, requesting that the Board consider granting the subsidiary colored locals full autonomy and that subsidiary locals be abolished:

R. L. Goodwin	Local 550, Cleveland, Ohio
P. S. Cooke	Local 462, Atlanta, Georgia
Harry W. Gray	Local 208, Chicago, Illinois
L. V. Plummer	Local 533, Buffalo, New York
Edward Bailey	Local 767, Los Angeles, California
William H. Bailey	Local 710, Washington, D. C.
Traveling Representative Jackson	

After due consideration, the International Executive Board by unanimous vote has abolished subsidiary charters in connection with colored locals. There were twelve locals operating as subsidiaries under control of the white locals in their respective jurisdictions. This means that these former subsidiary locals will receive a charter of their own from the American Federation of Musicians and will govern themselves in the same manner as any other local.

James C. Petrillo, President²¹⁵

For the twelve white unions that controlled subsidiaries, this was undoubtedly an objectionable move that granted their unrepresented black members their own independent charters that could potentially compete with the former parent chapter. Six of these white locals submitted letters of protest to President Petrillo, arguing that their subsidiaries wished to remain as such, but these assertions were almost certainly false, and merely attempts by the white locals to retain control of the subsidiaries rather than grant them autonomy or representation. In any event, Petrillo promptly denied their requests.²¹⁶ Petrillo continued to serve as President of the AFM until 1958, and was appointed by his successor Herman Kenin in 1964 to help facilitate the amalgamation and integration of remaining segregated local chapters throughout the country.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ James C. Petrillo, "Subsidiary Locals Granted Autonomy," *International Musician* 43 no. 1 (July 1944): 1.

²¹⁶ Miller.

²¹⁷ Howard Taubman, "Petrillo Quietly Battles Musicians' Segregation," *New York Times* (April 23, 1966) ProQuest Historical Newspapers, New York Times 1851-2009. <http://proxy.buffalostate.edu:2060/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/117092706/13A638A5AA1BAE13A5/1?accountid=7259> Accessed November 13, 2012.

In October of 1944, several months after the convention, Petrillo informed the Executive Board that Ray Jackson had left the position of Traveling Representative.²¹⁸ This coincided with Jackson's retirement as President of Local 533, although he remained an active member in both the union and the Colored Musicians Club. After a long and successful tenure as a delegate and Traveling Representative, Jackson had accomplished much of what he had intended to on behalf of black musicians and their local chapters, giving them a voice at the national level.

²¹⁸ "Special Meetings of the International Executive Board, Morrison Hotel, Chicago, IL, October 9, 1944" *International Musician* 43 no. 6 (December 1944): 9.

Conclusion

During more than two decades as an officer of Buffalo's Local 533 Colored Musicians Association, Raymond E. Jackson was arguably one of the most influential members of the union. As Secretary, Jackson understood that as an African American union, Local 533 was held to stricter standards than its white counterparts, and therefore encouraged 533's members to maintain high standards of musicianship and professional conduct. He sought to protect musicians from unscrupulous venue proprietors as well as bandleaders who undermined the union's scale wage. While Jackson advocated for racial equality, he took great pride in the fact that when barred from joining Local 43, Buffalo's black musicians created their own local which survived the Depression and prospered well into the 1960s when it was forcibly merged by the AFM. He helped establish the Colored Musician Club as an entity separate from the Local 533, which ensured its survival following the 1969 merger. It is now recognized as a historic Buffalo institution, and thrives today because of Jackson's foresight in the 1930s.

Raymond Jackson's influence spread beyond Buffalo; from 1929 to 1944 he attended every AFM national convention and pushed for policy changes to address the inequalities and indignities suffered by black locals. Jackson lobbied to establish a Traveling Representative position to serve as a liaison between African American local chapters and the national AFM, which he saw as a means of ensuring proper adherence to AFM policies and standards among locals as well as providing them with a voice at the national level. Serving in the position himself from 1936 to 1944, Jackson regularly appeared before the International Executive Board to give reports on the conditions of black locals, and speak on their behalf when conflicts with the white local arose. In this manner he aimed to assist them in meeting the same high standards that he

expected of his own Local 533, but also provide some protection against the Executive Board revoking their charters or placing them in subsidiary status. Jackson was also a central figure in the movement to abolish the subsidiary status that subjugated twelve black locals without local or national representation.

Jackson did not act alone in securing the creation of Traveling Representative position and the abolition of subsidiary locals; these successes ultimately required the acquiescence of AFM Presidents Weber and Petrillo as well the International Executive Board, as well the concerted efforts of other African American convention delegates such as Fritz Hawkins, Harry Gray, and Lloyd Plummer. Yet it is clear from over a decade of AFM Annual Convention records that Jackson was the single most persistent advocate for the rights of black musicians and black locals, both chartered and subsidiary. Year after year, Jackson and his colleagues lobbied the Convention and the International Executive Board for equality, appealing both to a sense of justice as well as practical issues of encouraging union membership and guaranteeing proper adherence to AFM policies.

The work of Jackson and his colleagues, as well as the resilience of African American musicians in forming and maintaining their own local AFM chapters, demonstrates both agency and perseverance in the face of a repressive and exploitative Jim Crow dual union system. While the story of African American musicians in the AFM reflects the critiques of Peter Way and Eric Arnesen about labor history's excessive focus on skilled and organized workers and the agency they demonstrate, these are nonetheless significant themes that are worthy of attention. While AFM President James C. Petrillo's record on race relations was certainly an improvement over that of his predecessor Joseph Weber, it is unlikely that such changes as the abolition of

subsidiary locals would have happened without persistent pressure from Jackson and the other black AFM delegates. Indeed the racial climate of pre-Civil Rights era organized labor was one in which unions were not inclined to grant equal rights to black members, if they were even accepted at all. Thus Jackson's work toward empowering African American musicians to shape their own destinies within their local chapters—especially those who were initially denied the basic rights of union membership in subsidiary chapters—demonstrates the importance of agency among black musicians who were skilled but nonetheless oppressed. While their achievements during Jackson's period of activity at the national level did not bring about full integration or equality, they made significant improvements toward those ends. The 1944 abolition of subsidiary chapters marked a key turning point; black musicians would no longer be subjected to such subjugation and exploitation. Within the next decade the AFM began its long march toward a full though imperfect integration, and it is largely thanks to Jackson's work that black musicians found representation and voice at the national level during the Jim Crow era.

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