“How Shall We Eliminate It”:
Edward Lowinsky and the Black Mountain College Integration Program

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“To be modern is to be responsive to the mentality of the present; or, to answer the present spiritual need” argued the influential art professor Josef Albers. This statement is pivotal in comprehending the very essence of Black Mountain College, which prided itself on continuously expanding the existing boundaries of modern art and education. By the mid 1940's many individuals at the college had resolved that discrimination based upon race no longer fit into its progressive definition of modernity and sought to rectify this injustice. The initial development of racial integration at Black Mountain College is quite convoluted, primarily due to the issue being the cause of disagreement, controversy, and scandal. When the preliminary advocates of desegregation resigned they left a highly experimental fledgling integration program behind as well; it would take nearly a year before someone with equal amounts of courage, foolishness, and resolve would accept the challenges the integration program presented.

Edward Lowinsky, a German-Jewish music professor was placed in charge of integrating the college and quickly realized the difficult task which lay before him. Despite not being the most qualified, skilled, or connected candidate for the position, he attacked the problem of attracting African-American students and professors to a small, poor, all-white liberal arts college in the mountains of Western North Carolina during a time when segregation in education was commonplace. Other than the numerous colleges with a solely African-American student body, Black Mountain College was one of the few institutions of higher education in the South to attempt full desegregation decades prior to the Brown v. Board of Education decision. By reaching out to numerous African-American intellectuals throughout the southern United States, Lowinsky gradually created a network of individuals willing to assist him in challenging the practice of segregation among institutions of higher learning. Lowinsky was ultimately successful in integrating the college, principally because of his continuous efforts in communicating with African-American scholars and wholehearted dedication to the integration
program. Although the integration program at Black Mountain College was relatively short lived and only marginally successful, by responding to the “mentality of the present” Edward Lowinsky made crucial advances in eradicating racial segregation among institutions of higher education.

Black Mountain College was excessively liberal even by today's standards, and drew a sharp contrast to its conservative surroundings. The college was established in the small community of Black Mountain in the mountains of Western North Carolina. It immediately attracted the attention of the local community with its unconventional educational practices and irregular campus life. When discussing the desegregation of Black Mountain College it is crucial to understand how the integration program was unique for both the time period and the location of the college, especially when compared to common educational patterns regarding African-Americans. James D. Anderson's *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* gives a broad history of the education of African-Americans in the South, while Betty Jamerson Reed's *School Segregation in Western North Carolina: A History, 1860s-1970s* gives a more detailed description of the educational practices of just Western North Carolina. These works exemplify the abhorrent truth that education for African-Americans in the South was not strongly advocated and often times actively oppressed. This truth is incredibly dismal, especially when compared to the more positive message of overcoming discrimination found in *A Class of Their Own: Black Teachers in the Segregated South* by Adam Fairclough which examines the struggles of African-American teachers in the region from the Civil War to the Great Depression.

Black Mountain College and its founder John Andrew Rice were heavily influenced by

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the philosophy of John Dewey, who advocated a progressive, democratic framework of education. The students all participated in the decisions, direction, and doctrine of the college, which when combined with the communal lifestyle resulted in a close knit artistic community. To say that Black Mountain College promoted a liberal arts education would be an understatement; the college centered around the idea that the arts were fundamental to an individual's learning experience, and soon became a paradigm of liberal arts education in early twentieth century America. Since Dewey was a philosopher there are numerous works both primary and secondary on various concepts he discussed. A book of essays from various philosophers about Dewey entitled *Dewey's Enduring Impact* is crucial due to the fresh perspectives these individuals offer, especially the analysis of Dewey's educational philosophy. Another recent work on Dewey's philosophies comes from James Campbell's *Understanding John Dewey: Nature and Cooperative Intelligence*. This work gives a broad, general layout of Dewey's philosophies, but is full of historical context and is aimed at novices to his work. The role of students in dictating the college's overall direction comes directly out of the educational philosophies of Dewey, particularly the concept of democratically voting on important issues.

Black Mountain College was founded in 1933 by several former professors at Rollins College, most notably the controversial John Andrew Rice. The inspiration for the school followed Rice's dismissal from Rollins Collage earlier that year due to disagreements about the college's curriculum. Following a battle to keep his position, Rice and several other professors were fired. Rice along with nine other professors formed the first group of faculty at Black Mountain College, which had luckily found a location at the Blue Ridge Assembly eighteen miles east of Asheville. A number of academic works have been written about Rice and his

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educational philosophy. A biography of Rice *Visions and Vanities: John Andrew Rice of Black Mountain College* written by Katherine Reynolds vividly details the events of Rice's life which lead him to form Black Mountain College and the progressive educational philosophies he advanced. This work is essentially a summation of John Rice's personal history and beliefs, primarily focusing on the rationale behind the educational experiment of Black Mountain College. Reynolds' interpretation of Rice's life is well formulated and refined, although Rice's autobiography *I Came Out of the 18th Century* is applicable as well, although incredibly defensive.

Black Mountain College gained its reputation as a fine arts school at the expense of another liberal arts school located in Germany called the *Bauhaus*. The Bauhaus was founded by the famous architect Walter Gropius and focused primarily on modern art and architecture. The Bauhaus was incredibly influential within the modern art community, but with the rise of the Nazi Party the school became a target for its "degenerate art". Many former Bauhaus professors came to Black Mountain College to teach, most notably Joseph Albers, Anni Albers, and the Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius. Numerous works have been written about the influence of the Bauhaus on modern art and the artists who studied there. *Bauhaus: Crucible of Modernism* by Elaine Hochmin gives a detailed history of the Bauhaus and its progression over its fourteen year duration. The book focuses on the history of the institution, including many of the professors who would ultimately teach at Black Mountain College, but also explains the ongoing legacy of the Bauhaus on contemporary art and architecture. Eva Forgács *The Bauhaus Idea and Bauhaus Politics* focuses on the philosophies incorporated into the Bauhaus rather than its history. Her work is critical in understanding the teaching methods and artistic beliefs of the modern art

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culture emerging in Europe prior to World War II which many Black Mountain College professors ascribed to.\textsuperscript{9}

Books have been written about Black Mountain College itself as well, most notably the extensive work of Mary Emma Harris, whose \textit{The Arts at Black Mountain College} is the integral publication with regards to its extensive and complex history. The amount of information about every minute aspect of the Black Mountain College is astonishing; it is truly the pinnacle of research on Black Mountain College, and the only secondary source which briefly mentions the integration program.\textsuperscript{10} Her work not only details the history of the college in a comprehensive manner, but helps establish the college as a consciously directed liberal arts school rather than an experiment in higher education. The work of Mary Emma Harris contains the most thorough research done on Black Mountain College, but there have been several other noted works on the subject. Although it was published over a decade prior to the work of Harris, the research done by Martin Duberman is crucial to fully understanding the nature and history of the school. In his book \textit{Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community}, Duberman details the later history of the college in a comprehensive manner, primarily focusing on how the experimental nature of its educational framework affected the students. Duberman also discusses the methods of reinvention deployed at Black Mountain College and the financial difficulties which plagued the school, both of which are paramount to understanding the overall nature of the college and the integration program.\textsuperscript{11} The work of Vincent Katz and Martin Brody is very similar, in the sense that it too focuses more on the later days of the college. In \textit{Black Mountain College: Experiment in Art}, the authors use essays, interviews, poems, and works of art to explain the contributions the college had on the modern art world. Their research centers around the works of the numerous artists and poets who attended or taught at Black Mountain College, rather than the

\textsuperscript{9} Eva Forgács, \textit{The Bauhaus idea and Bauhaus politics}. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995).
\textsuperscript{10} Mary Emma Harris, \textit{The Arts at Black Mountain College}. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1987).
\textsuperscript{11} Martin B Duberman, \textit{Black Mountain; An Exploration in Community}. (New York: Dutton, 1972).
history of the college.\textsuperscript{12}

There have been numerous studies, historical and otherwise, on Black Mountain College, but the pioneering integration program and Edward Lowinsky's contributions to desegregating higher education have largely been ignored in these works. It is clear from these publications that Black Mountain College was innovative in both the arts and education, but the cutting-edge character of the college can also be applied to its controversial stance on race relations in the region. During a time period when racial segregation in education was standard, the college made a conscious decision to admit African-American students and professors, and went through great lengths to find African-Americans willing to attend such a strange college in a conservative location. By studying the trials and tribulations of the integration program under Lowinsky both the positive and negative consequences associated with being a progressive institution come to the forefront.

For those attending Black Mountain College, the date of April 14, 1944 was a monumental occasion. For the first time in the college's history the topic of racial integration was seriously discussed, debated, and deliberated upon by those who decided the college's direction: the students and faculty.\textsuperscript{13} By this point Black Mountain College had already been noted for its progressively liberal nature, but even desegregation seemed to be too outwardly defiant of social norms for many at the college. For months prior to this date discussions of race had been circulating among individuals at the college, with mixed reactions among both professors and students, and for good reason. Black Mountain College at this point was an all white school, and due to its position in the mountains of North Carolina the issue of race was a delicate subject. However, the school's focus on the liberal arts had helped craft numerous students and faculty who were freethinking, tolerant, and advocates of social transformation. These individuals were


\textsuperscript{13} Harris, \textit{The Arts at Black Mountain College}, 6-7.
willing to take the risk of allowing African-Americans to attend their college, primarily due to of their view of Black Mountain College as an “enlightened institution.”\textsuperscript{14} Despite the open-minded spirit found at Black Mountain College, the decision to integrate would not come easy, as evident by the tension which developed as a result of this sensitive issue.

The main proponent of desegregating Black Mountain College initially, was a professor named Clark Foreman, who was hired in 1943 to teach political science\textsuperscript{15}. Foreman was from a prominent Georgia family and received his doctorate from Columbia University. His devotion to integration and civil liberties drove him away from a traditional career, as he worked for various public and private agencies aimed at aiding African-Americans in the South. Foreman was the undisputed leader of the group which was calling for the college's desegregation. His passion for racial equality combined with his intelligence would prove useful. In a letter from Stephen Duggan in 1944, Foreman learned of North Carolina law regarding segregation. Segregation of the races was required through the twelfth grade, but this law did not apply to private institutions. Essentially, Black Mountain College fell outside the segregation laws of North Carolina, but as Duggan noted “the practice of obtaining (desegregation), however, is another thing.”\textsuperscript{16} This was one of several points Foreman made in his “Summary of Discussions Regarding Admission of Negro Students.” In this document Foreman states because of the college's status as a progressive institution “we should not exclude students because of race or color”, before going on to list both the potential positive and negative consequences of this action\textsuperscript{17}

In his “Summary of Discussions Regarding Admission of Negro Students” Clark Foreman attempted to make a logical argument in favor of desegregation based upon the moral


\textsuperscript{15} Harris, The Arts at Black Mountain College, 69.


\textsuperscript{17} Clark Foreman, “Summary of Discussions Regarding Admisson of Negro Students”.
responsibilities of a progressive southern college, as well as simple economic principles. According to Foreman, admitting African-American students would certainly help the college out financially since it would gain a revenue stream from those students' tuition, as well as contributions from various African-American organizations. Financial benefits for the college were at the center of his argument which was an appropriate tactic considering the college's lack of funds during World War II. Foreman also emphasized students' expectations of a college devoted to societal progress and the possible contributions African-American students could have on society.\textsuperscript{18} Foreman was not ignorant to the downsides of integration though; he understood that although there was no legal barrier stopping integration, there was a prominent social barrier. He was quite aware of the possibility of violence occurring as a result of this decision, on top of concerns involving legal interference from the college's administration, local merchants boycotting the college, and the effect it would have on future student enrollments.\textsuperscript{19} Foreman commented “we are all in favor of admitting Negros…..the only question is to decide the proper time for the step.”\textsuperscript{20} Although Foreman clearly pushed the issue to the forefront of the college's agenda, not everyone agreed with his personal convictions concerning discrimination.

Correspondence between two of Black Mountain College's founding professors reveal the drama that this issue caused. Robert Wunsch was a driving force behind the establishment of Black Mountain College. He had taught at Rollins College along with John Andrew Rice, and was the individual who told Rice about the Blue Ridge Assembly buildings which would later become the first location of Black Mountain College.\textsuperscript{21} Foreman and the integration debate permeate his letters to John Evarts, a former professor at the school. In April, 1944 Wunsch wrote that a schism had developed on the issue of segregation, with the group in favor of it being

\textsuperscript{18} Clark Foreman, “Summary of Discussions Regarding Admission of Negro Students”.
\textsuperscript{19} Clark Foreman, “Summary of Discussions Regarding Admission of Negro Students”.
\textsuperscript{20} Clark Foreman, “Summary of Discussions Regarding Admission of Negro Students”.
\textsuperscript{21} Harris, \textit{The Arts at Black Mountain College}, 3-4.
lead by Foreman. He claimed that Foreman called those opposed to desegregation “cowards and reactionaries”. 22 Apparently the issue had created a significant split at the college, with Foreman leading a faction of professors and students in favor of desegregation. According to Wunsch the students and faculty were divided on the integration question, although Foreman and his group were the only faction he mentioned. It did not take long for the leaders of the college to recognize this problem and openly attempt to resolve the disagreement tearing the college apart.

With tension building between these two opposing groups and the college's doctrines being disputed, the integration issue was quickly taken into formal consideration. The Faculty and Board of Fellows of the Corporation of Black Mountain College first discussed integration during a meeting on April 19, 1944. 23 Five days later they decided to admit one female African-American during the summer session of 1944, as a test to see how admitting African-Americans would work. The initial decision to choose a female African-American student was not surprising considering the social taboo of African-American males fraternizing with white females. 24 Robert Wunsch's letter to John Evarts on May 6, 1944 reported on this decision's effect on campus. The compromise of letting one African-American student attend the summer session showed that Black Mountain College was willing to consider full scale integration which appeased the pro-integration faction, while those opposed were relieved that full scale integration was still being debated. Although it appeared that a full scale crisis had been averted, Wunsch acknowledged that many were not pleased with the college's decision. 25 Despite some objections, the plan proceeded, but not before informing the patrons and sponsors of the summer session that

an African-American student would be attending.  

The agreement to allow one African-American student to attend the summer session proved that Black Mountain College was willing to accept the positive and negative consequences associated with racial desegregation, as long as the initiative was properly executed. Initially, the summer session was successful, as the one integrated student had no serious issues throughout her stay at the college. For a short time period this achievement proved that the college had taken a forward step towards halting racial segregation, but the integration issue would soon become eclipsed as scandal shook the summer sessions. Two white female students who had both been staunch supporters of integration, hitchhiked into Tennessee to visit Eric Bentley, a Black Mountain College professor. Bentley had been teaching for the summer at Fisk University in Nashville, an institution with a solely African-American student body. On the trip back the girls were arrested in Chattanooga on what amounted to charges of prostitution, receiving sixty days in jail for the offense.  

Although they were ultimately released, the press coverage of this event caused havoc for the school, and the summer session was crippled with controversy. The majority of the faculty called for the resignation of both Bentley and the students' advisor Frances de Gaffe, although the decision was temporarily postponed. In protest several students and faculty members left the college, including professor Clark Foreman.  

Eventually Bentley resigned, but the summer session had already been severely disrupted by this scandal. With the main proponent of desegregation gone and the testing ground for it marred with controversy, the future of the integration program was questionable. It would take over a year before the program would resume, primarily due to the unfortunate series of events which had occurred.

27. Harris, The Arts at Black Mountain College, 71.
During the summer session of 1945 African-American students were once again admitted as a means to test the integration issue, but following the summer a new leader emerged willing to tackle the sensitive issue of desegregation. It is unclear whether Edward Lowinsky volunteered or was assigned to head of the integration program, but what is clear is his unaltering belief in the righteousness of the program. Lowinsky was in fact the polar opposite of Georgia born social activist Clark Foreman, who in all probability would have been in charge of the program, if not for the events during the preceding summer. Lowinsky was born in 1908 in Stuttgart, Germany to Russian-Jewish parents. He studied musicology and philosophy at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, but due to his Jewish heritage he fled to Holland in 1933 after the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany. Lowinsky eventually emigrated to Cuba before finally gaining entry into the United States. Like many of his contemporary refugee intellectuals and artists, in 1942 Lowinsky found solace at Black Mountain College.\(^{29}\) Of the music teachers at Black Mountain College, Lowinsky was thought to be “the most difficult, demanding, arrogant, and self righteous” according to the music students.\(^{30}\) In his inaugural years at the college Lowinsky strove to make the music department exemplary, but his greatest challenge came not in the form of a musical piece or pedagogy. Primarily due to Lowinsky's unfamiliarity with the southern culture, he clearly underestimated the difficulty involved with attracting African-American students and professors to an all-white, liberal arts college in the mountains of North Carolina. Leading the integration program would have been difficult for the well connected Clark Foreman, but for Lowinsky integrating the college proved to be a herculean undertaking. In spite of the numerous obstacles facing him, Lowinsky took charge of integrating Black Mountain College some time during the summer of 1945, and soon afterward realized the precarious predicament he was in.

\(^{29}\) Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, 75.
\(^{30}\) Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, 76.
For Lowinsky simply getting the program started was a difficult task since he had no previous experience dealing with racial discrimination or running an integration program. Even though Lowinsky was inexperienced at promoting Black Mountain College he soon realized the extreme difficulty he would have in getting African-Americans to attend the school. Getting African-American students and professors to an all-white liberal arts college in the mountains of North Carolina was uncommon to say the least, which forced Lowinsky to devise new ways of advertising the college's racial tolerance. His first step was getting in touch with deans, department heads, and professors at various African-American schools throughout the southern United States. On June 25, 1945 Lowinsky sent a letter to these individuals thereby informing them of Black Mountain College's progressive decision to seek out African-American students and professors.\(^{31}\) In his letter Lowinsky indicated that “discrimination is contrary to principles in the Declaration of Independence”. Although Lowinsky may not have been the most qualified individual to head the integration program due to his ignorance of southern culture, his belief that discrimination was contrary to fundamental principles of American society displays his deep commitment and staunch obligation to desegregation. The next line of his letter asks a simple yet complex question with regards to discrimination: “how shall we eliminate it?”.\(^ {32}\)

Despite the open-minded principles Edward Lowinsky showed at the beginning of this letter, he was not foolish enough to exaggerate Black Mountain College's role in ending racial discrimination in education or underestimate the difficulties the integration program would face. He noted that Black Mountain College was not in a position to play a large part in ending discrimination within the Southern education system, but the college was willing to open admissions to African-Americans. Lowinsky also acknowledged that Black Mountain was a less than perfect environment for such a program, but this fact did not appear to even phase him.


\(^{32}\) Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to Percy Baker, June 25, 1945.
Towards the end of this letter Lowinsky adds that he hoped to “slowly attempt to win support and understanding” from the surrounding community, an incredibly optimistic and hopeful statement for a relatively untested integration program being lead by a foreign music professor.  

The letters these individuals sent in response did not always share Lowinsky's impassioned enthusiasm, primarily due to the fact he was an unknown white individual trying to advance racial equality in education by soliciting African-American students and professors. This letter was sent to various notable African-Americans at predominately African-American schools throughout the South including Dr. Percy Baker of Virginia State College for Negros, Horace Bond president of Fort Valley College in Georgia, Sterling Brown head of the English Department at Howard University in Washington, D.C., Rufus Clement president of Atlanta University in Georgia, and I.A. Derbing dean of Tuskegee University in Alabama. These individuals were undoubtedly stunned and befuddled by this letter from the head of an integration program at an unfamiliar, all white, liberal arts college in Western North Carolina. Judging from the responses Lowinsky received, these individuals were certainly hesitant to give him any assistance with the integration program. Dr. Percy Baker simply did not send a letter in return (although Lowinsky would get in touch with him the following year), while the majority of replies were not helpful in the least bit. Sterling Brown was honored to be considered to teach at Black Mountain College, but unfortunately could not accept the offer nor could he assist Lowinsky in seeking students or professors. Brown did however “applaud Black Mountain College's courage” in creating the integration program.  

Lowinsky either, but did “approve of the interracial step” Lowinsky was attempting to produce.36 I.A. Derbing's letter in reply was similar, as he was “unable to make a suggestion”, but did acknowledge that “Black Mountain College is beginning a very vital experience leading towards the solution of the rather complex problem of race relations.”37 Horace Bond was the only person to offer Lowinsky legitimate assistance, offering him several potential leads for African-American professors.38 The individuals who Lowinsky reached out to were understandably reluctant to assist him in his efforts, even though they were all thrilled and surprised that Black Mountain College was taking such a huge leap forward in defying educational norms concerning race. Although these individuals were initially hesitant to work with Lowinsky, throughout the years he would keep in touch, continuing to rely on them for support and assistance.

For Lowinsky the integration program was certainly off to a tedious start. Throughout the summer of 1945 he tried earnestly to get the program thoroughly initiated, but the method he chose of getting in touch with important figures at African-American schools in the South had thus far been unfruitful. The college's previous experiment with integration had been an utter failure, but the success of the 1945 summer session proved that full scale desegregation of the college was possible. During a meeting of the Faculty and Board of Fellows of the Corporation of Black Mountain College on August 31, 1945, Sylveste Martin was accepted as the first African-American to become a full time student at Black Mountain College.39 After a year filled with debates and defeats the college reached the decision that exclusion from its student body based upon race was no longer tolerable. At the same meeting Lowinsky was authorized to

36. Rufus Clement, Dr. Rufus Clement to Edward Lowinsky, July 11, 1945, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.
inform the Julius Rosenwald Foundation of this decision in order to get funding for Martin’s
tuition.\textsuperscript{40} The Julius Rosenwald Foundation had previously sponsored several musical
performances by African-Americans at Black Mountain College, and would later pay tuition for
several African-American students and the salaries of African-American faculty.\textsuperscript{41}

Financing the integration program was a problem of significant concern for Edward
Lowinsky since enlightened ideas concerning race were not enough to keep the constantly
destitute college operating. The college itself had opened in 1933 in the midst of the Great
Depression and had struggled to keep its doors open throughout World War II. This explains why
Lowinsky was told to inform the Julius Rosenwald Foundation of the inclusion of an African-
American student the very same day this decision was made. The Julius Rosenwald Foundation
was not the only institution Lowinsky got in touch with about funding the integration program.
On August 31, 1945, the same day Black Mountain College decided to accept an African-
American student full time, Lowinsky sent a letter to Walter White, the secretary of the National
Association for the Advancement of Colored People.\textsuperscript{42} In his letter Lowinsky stressed the
integration program’s desperate need for adequate funding, due to the fact many African-
American students wanted to come to Black Mountain College but could not afford to do so.
Lowinsky declared that any financial support the NAACP could give would be appreciated
considering that he could not get any funding from the local communities in Black Mountain.\textsuperscript{43} It
is uncertain whether Walter White replied to Lowinsky’s plea for financial assistance, but it was
clear that funding for the integration program would be of vital importance. The righteousness of
the integration program would not be enough keep it operating.

During the academic year of 1945 and 1946 Edward Lowinsky constantly struggled to

\textsuperscript{40} “Minutes of Faculty and Board of Fellows of the Corporation of Black Mountain College”, August 31, 1945.
\textsuperscript{41} Harris, \textit{The Arts at Black Mountain College}, 111.
\textsuperscript{42} Edward Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to Walter White, August 31, 1945, Race Relations, North Carolina
\textsuperscript{43} Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to Walter White, August 31, 1945.
balance his roles as music professor, head of the integration program, and budding social activist. By this point the program had been crudely established under Lowinsky, but with only one full time African-American student it was still well below his expectations. Lowinsky was also responsible for hiring African-American professors to join the faculty, and up to this point he had been exceedingly ineffectual. Attempting to get African-American professors proved to be a difficult task for Lowinsky. Quite frankly the college did not pay its professors well, and combined with the fact that many of the professors Lowinsky contacted already held positions at established African-American universities made Black Mountain College rather unappealing. Although Lowinsky had previously pursued Dr. Percy Baker months prior with no reply, by early 1946 Lowinsky had once again gotten in touch with the professor at Virginia State College for Negros. In Lowinsky's letter dated February 14, 1946, he discussed the recent death of Dr. Heinrich Jalowetz, a fellow music professor at Black Mountain College. Lowinsky knew that Jalowetz would need to be replaced, and actively pursued an African-American professor to do so. Lowinsky suggested the possibility of Dr. Baker replacing Dr. Jalowetz and even offered to talk to the president of Virginia State College for Negros about a temporary residency at Black Mountain. Even though Baker initially did not reply to Lowinsky's letter, through continued correspondence Baker gradually became a main supporter of the integration program and a confidant of Lowinsky's.

Attracting African-American students and professors was proving to be a remarkably difficult task to accomplish, but in spite of the constant obstacles Edward Lowinsky faced he tenaciously pushed the integration program forward. On April 26, 1946, in response to Lowinsky's letter, Dr. Baker regretfully informs him that he would be unable to teach at Black Mountain College due to the fear that he would lose his position at Virginia State. Despite his

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inability to teach at Black Mountain College, Baker recommended several other professors for Lowinsky to get in touch with.\textsuperscript{46} Lowinsky's letter of reply on June 26, 1946 was steeped with disappointment, gratitude, and anticipation. With regards to Baker's inability to teach at Black Mountain College, Lowinsky contends “we felt it as a real blow.”\textsuperscript{47} Although he was frustrated that Baker would not be able to join the faculty, his expectations for the integration program remained astonishingly high. During this period in the summer of 1946, Lowinsky still searched for African-American students to attend Black Mountain College during the regular school year. In this letter to Baker, Lowinsky expressed a desire to have two or three more African-American females apply for the 1946 academic year while simultaneously asking him for any suggestions in accomplishing this. Lowinsky also expressed hope of accepting male students the following year depending upon how the program proceeded.\textsuperscript{48} The confidence exuding from this letter was greatly diminished by the time Lowinsky wrote Baker again on October 31; despite his efforts, once again only one African-American student began that year, the individual temporarily transferring from Fisk University in Tennessee.\textsuperscript{49} Although one African-American student may have been viewed as an utter failure for the integration program, after considering Lowinsky's statement that the college had a “high registration” of ninety-two students, one African-American pupil would have certainly been seen as a promising evolution.\textsuperscript{50}

On October 31, 1946, Lowinsky also sent a letter to the Race Relations Committee based out of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Lowinsky wrote them because he was interested in a traveling lecture circuit the committee was sponsoring, but simultaneously asked for assistance in locating

\textsuperscript{46} Percy Baker, Percy Baker to Edward Lowinsky, April 26, 1946, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.
\textsuperscript{47} Edward Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to Percy Baker, June 26, 1946, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.
\textsuperscript{48} Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to Percy Baker, June 26, 1946.
\textsuperscript{49} Edward Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to Percy Baker, October 31, 1946, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.
\textsuperscript{50} Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to Percy Baker, October 31, 1946.
a “Negro scholar” willing to teach at Black Mountain College.\textsuperscript{51} The secretary of the Race Relations Committee, G. James Fleming, wrote Lowinsky back on November 8, 1946, stating he was more than willing to assist. Fleming wrote that the lecture would cost $150 per week, and that the purpose of the lectures was to allow African-American experts the chance to address diverse audiences, as well as to encourage the hiring of African-American faculty.\textsuperscript{52} The prospect of receiving support in finding an African-American professor from a committee which focused on getting African-American intellectuals into positions in education was certainly appealing for Lowinsky. He replied on December 3, 1946 that Black Mountain College had already decided to hire an African-American professor on a full time basis and that they were currently seeking one. Lowinsky wrote “we have a small but good faculty, and we are looking for a Negro scholar who would...compare favorably.”\textsuperscript{53} In a follow up letter to Fleming later that December, Lowinsky sent information on Black Mountain College and details about the open teaching position. The faculty at Black Mountain College all received the same amount of pay because there was no salary distinction based on rank. At the time each faculty member received a measly “$40 a month in cash” and “$25 for each family member” living on campus, as well as “hospitalization and car insurance.”\textsuperscript{54} Perhaps the low salary with few benefits was why Lowinsky had difficulty attracting African-American professors, but the exceedingly liberal nature of the college, predominately white student body, and rural location were surely deterrents as well.

The latter part of 1946 would prove to be the turning point of the integration program,\textsuperscript{51, 52, 53, 54}

\textsuperscript{51} Edward Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to Race Relations committee, October 31, 1946, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.
\textsuperscript{52} G. James Fleming, G. James Fleming to Edward Lowinsky, November 8, 1946, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.
\textsuperscript{53} Edward Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to G. James Fleming, December 3, 1946, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.
\textsuperscript{54} Edward Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to G. James Fleming, December 24, 1946, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.
primarily due to the monumental breakthrough Edward Lowinsky had in establishing connections with prominent African-Americans scholars throughout the South. Although he was unaware of it, the work Lowinsky put into the integration program over the next several months ultimately resulted in its triumphant success. In a letter to Charles G. Gomillion, Chairman of the School of Education at Tuskegee University in Alabama dated November 16, Lowinsky stressed the need for making higher education readily available to African-Americans, particularly African-American veterans returning from overseas.  

Allowing African-American veterans to attend Black Mountain College was an understandable proposition, since they would be able to pay their tuition using the newly instituted G.I. Bill. A number of male students attended Black Mountain College on the G.I. Bill during the post-war years including the first two African-American males to attend the college. A December 2 letter from Louis E. Burham illustrated the notoriety the integration program was gradually gaining among the African-American community in the South. Burham was a member of the Southern Negro Youth Conference who praised the integration program and its potential impact on society, stating that the program “demonstrated the possibilities for common action of Americans regardless of color, in the cause of democracy and security in the South.”  

Burham's letter was seemingly inspirational for Edward Lowinsky, for the following month proved to be one of the most beneficial and prolific periods of the integration program.

A letter from Maynard Catchings on December 18, 1946 proved to be the most vital piece of correspondence Lowinsky received through networking. At the time Catchings was a professor at Fisk University, the university the only African-American student attending Black Mountain College.

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55. Edward Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to Dr. Charles G. Gomillion, November 16, 1946, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.
Mountain College at the time originally attended. Maynard Catchings proved to be more than helpful in expanding Lowinsky's network of African-American scholars throughout the South, since he gave Lowinsky the names and mailing addresses of five presidents of all African-American schools. Catchings divulged information on presidents from Dillard University in Louisiana, LeMoyne University in Tennessee, Talladega College in Alabama, Tillotson College in Texas, and Tougaloo College in Mississippi. On Christmas Eve of 1946, Lowinsky was hard at work following up on the new leads he had recently obtained. The letters he sent that day informed the presidents of these schools that Black Mountain College would be delighted to receive applications from African-American students at their schools. These letters were the first time in his correspondence that Lowinsky acknowledged the “usual segregation patterns” outside of the college.

Lowinsky once again remarked that the integration program at Black Mountain College was a small step in changing social views regarding race, but implied that the college was trying to “set new patterns for interracial education in Southern colleges.” The president of Talledega College, A.D. Beitell, responded four days later commending Black Mountain College for its initiative, but also stated the uneasy truth that “it won't be easy to find the proper kind of person.”

The end of the fall semester of 1946 would ultimately be the point at which the integration program would have a dramatic turn around.

By 1947, the integration program had rapidly developed and improved, primarily due to the assistance of Maynard Catchings and the effort put forth by Lowinsky. Lowinsky sent Catchings a letter on February 27, 1947 thanking him for his assistance and reporting on the

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57. Maynard Castings, Maynard Castings to Edward Lowinsky, December 18, 1946, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.
recent success of the program. Lowinsky happily reported that Black Mountain College had three African-American females and two African-American males now attending the college. The two males were fresh out of the military and used their G.I. Bill to pay their tuition.⁶¹ All five individuals came from LeMoyne College. In a rare moment of elation and pride Lowinsky enthusiastically described the developments of the integration program to Catchings. The arrival of several African-Americans to the college had not caused any controversy and according to Lowinsky they had become “an integrated part of our community.”⁶² For Lowinsky, his dedication and hard work was beginning to show tangible results, and the community of Black Mountain College had embraced the integration program he had established. “We are very happy to have them and have not encountered the slightest difficulty” he wrote to Catchings, a clear indication of how far both the college and the integration program had progressed.⁶³

The integration program was the first step Black Mountain College took towards bringing the issue of discrimination in education to the forefront of southern consciousness, and by 1947 other civil rights campaigns began to emerge on campus. Just three years prior the campus had been severely divided on the issue of desegregation causing serious internal factions to emerge, but by 1947 there were five African-American students out of a student body of less than a hundred. Changing the face of southern culture may have been an unreachable goal in 1947, but transforming the prominent beliefs about race at Black Mountain College did occur. In April of 1947 the Freedom Riders, individuals traveling through the South challenging segregation in interstate commerce, stopped overnight at Black Mountain College. The college canceled all classes that day, so that every student who wanted to could participate in a lively discussion on

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A major shift in beliefs about race, racism, and civil rights had occurred at Black Mountain College in a short period of time, undoubtedly aided by Edward Lowinsky. Even though the integration program had improved dramatically and the college's view on segregation had changed drastically, for Edward Lowinsky this was not enough; throughout the rest of 1947 he tirelessly worked towards expanding the integration program even further.

Although the enrollment of African-Americans had quickly increased, Lowinsky was hoping for more than five African-American students. He continually tried to solicit more students any way he could, often resorting to familiar tactics and familiar contacts to do so. A letter to Dr. Joseph Bunzel, the president of Fisk University, on May 20, 1947 demonstrated the lengths which Lowinsky was willing to go in order to attract more African-American students. He informed Dr. Bunzel of the current state of the integration program, but clearly expressed that he wanted to find more willing students. In this letter he also stated that he was willing to cut tuition for African-American students, which was a huge risk for a destitute college which relied on tuition as its main source of funding. Bunzel's response four days later stated he had found two more female students willing to apply, and had spread information about Black Mountain College around campus. Even this positive reply of students willing to come to Black Mountain College would not be enough be enough to satisfy Lowinsky's desire to amplify the integration program. Throughout the summer of 1947, during the standard time to review and accept students, Lowinsky worked at getting more African-American students to Black Mountain College.

Although the integration program had been deemed somewhat successful by the end of the 1947 school year, Edward Lowinsky continued to pursue his vision of an integrated college.

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64. Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, 111.
On June 20, 1947, Lowinsky sent out another highly idealized letter to numerous African-American scholars from his ever growing list of contacts. The letter boldly stated that Black Mountain College had decided to “open admissions to all races”; although they had previously been open to African-Americans attending the college, all individuals would be able to apply to the college without concerns of being turned away based on their skin color.\(^{67}\) This was certainly a risky move for Black Mountain College, since segregation was still commonplace throughout North Carolina. Lowinsky emphasized that the college previously had to solicit African-American students and was trying to avoid the practice if possible. Lowinsky was hoping that students of different races would apply to the college on their own simply based on the college's reputation without him having to actively pursue them.\(^{68}\) Lowinsky concluded his letter by politely asking the individuals he wrote to proliferate this message among the students and faculty at their various institutions.\(^{69}\) Using all of his networking abilities he sent this letter to both new and old contacts in an effort to spread this information as widely as possible; students and professors at predominately African-American universities across the South were sure to hear the news that Black Mountain College was fully desegregated and seeking students.\(^{70}\) The responses Lowinsky received from the dozen or more letters he sent out were incredibly promising, although not always helpful.

In these response letters it appears that Edward Lowinsky had been fully accepted by his African-American peers as an individual who was actively striving for social change, even though his aspirations may have been seen as grandiose by some. G. James Fleming, the

\(^{67}\) Edward Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to A.D. Beitell, June 20, 1947, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

\(^{68}\) Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to A.D. Beitell, June 20, 1947.

\(^{69}\) Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to A.D. Beitell, June 20, 1947.

\(^{70}\) Edward Lowinsky, Edward Lowinsky to A.D. Beitell, June 20, 1947, Edward Lowinsky to Horace Bond, June 20, 1947, Edward Lowinsky to Dr. Joseph Bunzel, June 20, 1947, Edward Lowinsky to Maynard Castings, June 20, 1947, Edward Lowinsky to Dr. Albert Dent, June 20, 1947, Edward Lowinsky to I.A. Derbing, June 20, 1947, Edward Lowinsky to Luther H. Foster, June 20, 1947, Edward Lowinsky to Dr. Charles G. Gomillion, June 20, 1947, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.
secretary of the Race Relations committee, seemed more than willing to “spread the info that Black Mountain College is anxious to have all kinds of students without regards to race, creed, color”; he congratulated Lowinsky for all his work “pushing the frontiers of this matter forward” in his letter.\(^\text{71}\) A.D. Beittel replied “we shall cooperate with you in every possible way” and promised to “solicit this information among promising persons”.\(^\text{72}\) This positive sentiment was shared by many individuals who received this letter, including I.A. Derbing, who assured Lowinsky “we shall do all that we can to forward the interest of Black Mountain College.”\(^\text{73}\) Some gave him more practical advice such as “releasing a statement to the negro press”, while others took a different tone altogether.\(^\text{74}\) Dr. Bond congratulated Black Mountain College before informing Lowinsky of his current teaching position at Lincoln University; he rather sarcastically added that at Lincoln University “no special effort has been made to recruit white students” and that if Lowinsky “should know of any who care to enroll here, we would be glad to consider their application.”\(^\text{75}\) The overwhelmingly positive responses would have certainly meant a lot to Edward Lowinsky, whose dedication and ceaseless efforts were finally being rewarded. Not only was the integration program succeeding, but the steps Black Mountain College was taking to change the structure of higher education were appreciated among African-American scholars in the South.

The integration program was seemingly incident free throughout its duration, despite the conflict it had originally created and the numerous challenges it posed. Although Professor Theodore Driers suspected that some fires in neighboring woods may have been set by local

\(^{71}\) G. James Fleming, G. James Fleming to Edward Lowinsky, June 24, 1947, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

\(^{72}\) A.D. Beittel, A.D. Beittel to Edward Lowinsky, June 24, 1947, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

\(^{73}\) I.A. Derbing, I.A. Derbing to Edward Lowinsky, June 26, 1947, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

\(^{74}\) Maynard Castings, Maynard Castings to Edward Lowinsky, June 30, 1947, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

\(^{75}\) Horace Bond, Horace Bond to Edward Lowinsky, July 9, 1947, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.
people in opposition of the college's decision to desegregate, there is no evidence to support it.\footnote{Harris, \textit{The Arts at Black Mountain College}, 111.}

In 1946 Lowinsky was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship but had to delay his acceptance following the death of fellow music professor Dr. Jalowetz. After the summer of 1947 he decided it was finally time to take advantage of this opportunity, and left Black Mountain College to study in Italy.\footnote{Harris, \textit{The Arts at Black Mountain College}, 118.} After Lowinsky's departure the integration program never really recovered, as it seemed no individual was courageous enough to tackle such a difficult task. The program would ultimately collapse two years later, although its profound influence was evident by the few African-Americans who attended the college during its final years. Lowinsky would never teach at Black Mountain College again, although he would go on to have a distinguished teaching career at Queens College in New York, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Chicago.\footnote{Harris, \textit{The Arts at Black Mountain College}, 118.} Although the program ultimately collapsed following Lowinsky's departure, in under five years the integration program accomplished its intended goal of desegregation and was aimed to become a fundamental component of ending the common practice of segregation in higher education.

It is clear that the issue of racial segregation at Black Mountain College was not taken lightly. From the first time the idea of integrating the college was mentioned it caused a significant uproar among the college community, a portion of which were not ready to accept individuals of a different color. Despite resistance, the progressively liberal framework of Black Mountain College allowed for Clark Foreman to push for a change in the college's policies regarding racial exclusion. Following the scandal involving Foreman during the summer of 1944, integrating the college transformed from an idea into reality, primarily due to the ceaseless work of Edward Lowinsky. Even though Lowinsky was not the most suitable professor for the position, his belief in the righteousness of the integration program allowed him to surpass the
numerous difficulties which arose as a result of desegregation. His resolute dedication to the program, combined with his ability to create a network of African-American scholars willing to assist him, ultimately made the integration program a successful venture. By continuous correspondence with these individuals Lowinsky was able to fulfill the programs intended goals. Although the number of African-Americans who enrolled remained low throughout the duration of the integration program, overall there were no serious incidents concerning their presence at the college. Through the effort of Edward Lowinsky, an entirely new audience of educated African-Americans were introduced to the college, while Black Mountain College itself was introduced to new ideas regarding the status of African-Americans in society. The college's innovative contributions to the fields of fine art and educational philosophy are clearly reflected in its groundbreaking attempt to eradicate the normal patterns of racial segregation found in higher education. Edward Lowinsky would never be able to achieve his aspirations of completely eliminating educational segregation, but for a brief period of time he effectively brought this dream into existence at Black Mountain College.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Baker, Percy. Percy Baker to Edward Lowinsky, April 26, 1946, Interracial Program
In this letter Percy Baker regretfully informs Lowinsky that he will be unable to come to Black Mountain College and teach, even after praising the school following his visit. He simply can't risk his career or finances on the integration program at an experimental liberal arts school. Baker tries to help Lowinsky out though, recommending several other African American professors.


This is a response to Lowinsky's letter on December 24, 1946; Beittel, the president of Talledega College, commends Black Mountain College for this important step and says he will give the college publicity on campus. Beittel is somewhat skeptical though, and makes his reservations clear as he states “it won't be easy to find the proper sort of person.

———. A.D. Beittel to Edward Lowinsky, June 24, 1947, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

In this letter A.D. Beittel congratulates Lowinsky on the program, wishing him “every measure of success in this forward step.” Beittel is also willing to assist Lowinsky, as he states “we shall cooperate with you in every possible way.”


This letter is a response from Horace Bond, the president of Fort Valley College, in which he congratulates the college on it's decision. In one of the few instances of legitimate aid, Bond gives Edward Lowinsky several leads on African American professors.

———. Horace Bond to Edward Lowinsky, July 9, 1947, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

This response from Horace Bond is particularly amusing. He congratulates Black Mountain College on accepting students of all races. He is now at Lincoln University which has made “no special effort...to recruit white students” and then tells Lowinsky that if he knows any “who would care to enroll here, we would gladly consider their applications.” Whether this last part is serious or sarcastic is hard to tell.
In this letter Sterling Brown turns down a job opportunity at Black Mountain College, but states some other year he may consider it. He also applauds Black Mountain College's courage for creating the integration program.


This is a letter in response to Lowinsky's letter on May 20, 1947 in which Dr. Bunzel offers Lowinsky assistance. Bunzel found two more female African-Americans willing to apply to Black Mountain College, which was certainly good news for Lowinsky. Bunzel also claims that he spread word about the college's decision to integrate around the Fisk University campus.


This is an extremely helpful letter from the leader of the Southern Negro Youth Conference, in which he divulges the names of several prominent African Americans in the South. Burnham thanks Lowinsky in this letter for demonstrating “the possibilities for common action of Americans, regardless of color, in the cause of democracy in the South.”


This letter from Maynard Castings, a professor at Fisk University, is very useful to Lowinsky, as he gives him the names of five presidents of African American colleges. The colleges are Dillard University, LeMoyne College, Talladega College, Tillolson College, and Tougaloo College, all of which Lowinsky contacts at some point.


This letter is in response to Lowinsky's letter on June 20, 1947. Castings tells Lowinsky he should write a press release and send it to the “Negro Press” in the South, a move which Lowinsky would eventually make.

Clement, Dr. Rufus. Dr. Rufus Clement to Edward Lowinsky, July 11, 1945, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

Clement, the president of Talledega College, is one of the few president's who is of absolutely no help to Lowinsky, although he “approves of the interracial step” Black Mountain College is taking.

This is the response to Lowinsky's letter on June 25, 1945. Initially unable to offer any legitimate leads to Lowinsky, which would later change. Although he is unable to help, Derbing praises Black Mountain College for “beginning a vital experience leading toward the solution of the rather complex problem of race relations.”


This is the response to Lowinsky's letter on June 20, 1947; Derbing is willing to aid Lowinsky with the integration program. Derbing states “we shall do all that we can to forward the interests of Black Mountain College.”


This letter concerns the legality of admitting African American Students. North Carolina law at the time required segregation through twelfth grade in public schools, but in private institutions and higher education segregation was not forced. Duggan notes that although it is legal for Black Mountain College to integrate, doing so “is doubtless another thing altogether.”


G. James Fleming was the secretary of the Race Relations committee and writes Lowinsky in response to his letter on October 31, 1946. Fleming tells the cost of the traveling lecture and states it’s purpose of exposing individuals to African Americans who are experts in their fields, as well as encouraging institutions to hire African Americans. Fleming is more than willing to help find African American professors for Black Mountain College.


In this letter Fleming, , says that he will “spread the information that Black Mountain College is anxious to have all kinds of students without regards to race, creed, color.” He congratulates Lowinsky for “all [he] has done in pushing the frontiers of this matter forward.”


This source is very important because it was written by one of the main proponents for allowing African American students to enroll at Black Mountain College, Clark Foreman. The source goes over the potential consequences, both positive and negative, which may result from allowing African-Americans to attend the college. Ultimately the results of this discussion are that the college will use the summer sessions as an experiment to see if integration is possible.

This is one of the several formatted letters that Edward Lowinsky sent out to notable African-American scholars at the time seeking help finding African-American students and teachers; this letter was sent to Percy Baker, a professor at Virginia State College for Negros. The letter is incredibly idealistic, stating that racial discrimination is against the principles found in the Declaration of Independence and asking “how shall we eliminate it?” Lowinsky acknowledges that Black Mountain College may not play a large role, but the school wants to slowly win support and understanding for this cause.


Percy Baker was one of the few scholars Lowinsky had correspondence with who was actually interested in teaching at Black Mountain College. This letter is simply Lowinsky following through on trying to get Percy Baker to come to the college, and he even goes as far as saying he will talk with the president of Virginia State College for Negros if need be.


Letter sent to Percy Baker after receiving the news that he can't teach at Black Mountain College; Lowinsky is clearly upset over not hiring Baker, as he states “we feel it as a real blow”. Lowinsky asks Baker for help finding two female African Americans to attend classes, although he feels confident the college will eventually accept males.


This is a follow up letter in which Lowinsky tells of the one African American student they have from Fisk University. Although disappointed in the results of the program, Lowinsky is hopeful of it's future, as the college had a record high registration of 92 students that fall.

———. Edward Lowinsky to A.D. Beitell, December 24, 1946, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

This is a crucial formatted letter which Lowinsky sent to multiple African American Scholars; this one is being sent to A.D. Beittel, the president of Talladega College. Lowinsky is once again trying to find students to enroll but makes it clear that although Black Mountain College is segregated, the surrounding areas are not. Lowinsky admits it's a small step forward, but the college is trying to “set new patterns for interracial education in Southern colleges.”

———. Edward Lowinsky to A.D. Beitell, June 20, 1947, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

This is a crucial formatted letter which Lowinsky sent to multiple African American Scholars; this one was sent to A.D. Beittel, the president of Talledega College This letter states the Black Mountain College has to decided to readily admit students of all races. Lowinsky tells him to
spread the word to African American students and teachers, as he is hoping to no longer seek out individuals and they will apply on their own fruition.


This is one of the several formatted letters that Edward Lowinsky sent out to notable African-American scholars at the time seeking help finding African-American students and teachers; this letter was sent to Horace Bond, the president of Fort Valley College. The letter is incredibly idealistic, stating that racial discrimination is against the principles found in the Declaration of Independence and asking “how shall we eliminate it?” Lowinsky acknowledges that Black Mountain College may not play a large role, but the school wants to slowly win support and understanding for this cause.

———. Edward Lowinsky to Horace Bond, June 20, 1947, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

This is a crucial formatted letter which Lowinsky sent to multiple African American Scholars; this one was sent to Horace Bond, the president of Fort Valley College. This letter states the Black Mountain College has to decided to readily admit students of all races. Lowinsky tells him to spread the word to African American students and teachers, as he is hoping to no longer seek out individuals and they will apply on their own fruition.


This is one of the several formatted letters that Edward Lowinsky sent out to notable African-American scholars at the time seeking help finding African-American students and teachers; this letter was sent to Sterling Brown, the head of the English Department at Howard University. The letter is incredibly idealistic, stating that racial discrimination is against the principles found in the Declaration of Independence and asking “how shall we eliminate it?” Lowinsky acknowledges that Black Mountain College may not play a large role, but the school wants to slowly win support and understanding for this cause.


This letter is important because in it Lowinsky informs Dr. Joseph Bunzel, the president of Fisk University, about the current state of the integration program, as there were five African American students in attendance at Black Mountain College at this point. Lowinsky is still trying to find more students though, and even goes as far to say he is willing to reduce their tuition.

———. Edward Lowinsky to Dr. Joseph Bunzel, June 20, 1947, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

This is a crucial formatted letter which Lowinsky sent to multiple African American Scholars; this one was sent to Dr. Joseph Bunzel, the president of Fisk University. This letter states the Black Mountain College has to decided to readily admit students of all races. Lowinsky tells him to spread the word to African American students and teachers, as he is hoping to no longer seek
out individuals and they will apply on their own fruition.


This letter was written to Maynard Castings, who was leading the Department of Race Relations in New York City. It's essentially an update on the integration program, which at the time had three females and two males who had served during World War II. According to Lowinsky the college was “very happy to have them and have not encountered the slightest difficulty as a result.”

———. Edward Lowinsky to Dr. Rufus Clement, June 25, 1945, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

This is one of the several formatted letters that Edward Lowinsky sent out to notable African American scholars at the time seeking help finding African American students and teachers; this letter was sent to Dr. Rufus Clement, the president of Atlanta University. The letter is incredibly idealistic, stating that racial discrimination is against the principles found in the Declaration of Independence and asking “how shall we eliminate it?” Lowinsky acknowledges that Black Mountain College may not play a large role, but the school wants to slowly win support and understanding for this cause.

———. Edward Lowinsky to Judson Cross, December 24, 1946, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

Lowinsky wrote this letter to Judson Cross, the president of Tugaloo College, because of his correspondence with Maynard Catchings. It is a similar formatted letter in which Lowinsky is trying to find students to enroll. He also makes it clear that although Black Mountain College is segregated, the surrounding areas are not. Lowinsky admits its a small step forward, but the college is trying to “set new patterns for interracial education in Southern colleges.”

———. Edward Lowinsky to Dr. Albert Dent, June 20, 1947, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

This is a crucial formatted letter which Lowinsky sent to multiple African American Scholars; this one was sent to Dr. Albert Dent, the president of Dillard University. This letter states the Black Mountain College has to decided to readily admit students of all races. Lowinsky tells him to spread the word to African American students and teachers, as he is hoping to no longer seek out individuals and they will apply on their own fruition.
This is one of the several formatted letters that Edward Lowinsky sent out to notable African-American scholars at the time seeking help finding African-American students and teachers; this letter was sent to I.A. Derbing, the dean at the Tuskegee Institute. The letter is incredibly idealistic, stating that racial discrimination is against the principles found in the Declaration of Independence and asking “how shall we eliminate it?” Lowinsky acknowledges that Black Mountain College may not play a large role, but the school wants to slowly win support and understanding for this cause.

This is a crucial formatted letter which Lowinsky sent to multiple African American Scholars; this one was sent to I.A. Derbing, the dean of the Tuskegee Institute. This letter states the Black Mountain College has to decided to readily admit students of all races. Lowinsky tells him to spread the word to African American students and teachers, as he is hoping to no longer seek out individuals and they will apply on their own fruition.

This letter is to G. James Fleming the secretary of the Race Relations Committee in Philadelphia Pennsylvania. Lowinsky tells Fleming of his intentions of hiring a full time African American professor, and tries to solicit any possible leads.

Lowinsky thanks G. James Fleming for all his help so far, and sends along information about Black Mountain College. In this letter Lowinsky explains how teaching at Black Mountain College works, since there is no distinction in pay based on rank. Each professor receives “$40 a month in cash and $25 for each member of his family”, as well as “hospitalization and car insurance”.

This is a crucial formatted letter which Lowinsky sent to multiple African American Scholars; this one was sent to Dr. Luther H. Foster, the president of Virginia State College for Negros. This letter states the Black Mountain College has to decided to readily admit students of all races. Lowinsky tells him to spread the word to African American students and teachers, as he is hoping to no longer seek out individuals and they will apply on their own fruition.
This is a crucial formatted letter which Lowinsky sent to multiple African American Scholars; this one was sent to Charles G. Gomillion, now the dean of the School of Education at the Tuskegee Institute. This letter states the Black Mountain College has to decided to readily admit students of all races. Lowinsky tells him to spread the word to African American students and teachers, as he is hoping to no longer seek out individuals and they will apply on their own fruition.

———. Edward Lowinsky to Race Relations, October 31, 1946, Interracial Program Correspondence 1944-1947, Black Mountain College General Files 1936-1956, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

This is a letter to an organization in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania which had a traveling lecture program on the history and future of African Americans. Lowinsky writes in order to find out information on the costs of the lecture, but also takes the opportunity to try and solicit any leads he can on African American professors.


In this letter to Walter White, the secretary of the NAACP, Lowinsky stresses the integration program's need for funds. Although there are African American students who want to come, many can't afford to do so. Lowinsky says that any help would be greatly appreciated, especially since he can't get any financial support from the local communities in Black Mountain.

“Minutes of Faculty and Board of Fellows of the Corporation of Black Mountain College”. April 19, 1944, Race Relations, North Carolina Museum of Art Black Mountain College Research Project 1933-1973, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

The issue of taking in African American students during the summer session was first discussed during this meeting. This is the first time the issue was given any real consideration. The discussion obviously brought controversy with it, as not everyone was pleased with the idea and it keeps reoccurring in faculty meetings.

“Minutes of Faculty and Board of Fellows of the Corporation of Black Mountain College”. April 24, 1945, Race Relations, North Carolina Museum of Art Black Mountain College Research Project 1933-1973, North Carolina State Archives, Asheville, NC.

After much discussion the faculty voted in favor of admitting one African American female during the summer sessions of 1944 as sort of an experiment to see if full integration was possible.


The faculty votes to accept Sylvesta Martin as a regular student at Black Mountain College and they get Edward Lowinsky to inform the Rosenwald Fund of this decision so they can receive some financial support. This is the first full time African American student and essentially the
beginning of the integration program at Black Mountain College.


This letter is vital to understanding how the integration program was perceived by those at Black Mountain College. Wunsch writes his colleague telling him there are two opposing groups of students and faculty, and the school is divided by the issue of allowing African Americans to enroll. The pro side is lead by Clark Foreman, who called those opposed to the program “cowards and reactionaries.”


This is another letter informing John Evarts of the updates at Black Mountain College, including the board's decision to accept one female African American during the summer session. This decision is upsetting to both sides of the argument, as one side wanted more African American students and the other felt that one African American student was too much. It's clear that the issue had a significant impact on the students, faculty, and campus life.

Secondary Sources


This book is about exactly what the title says it is, education of African Americans in the South from the Civil War to the Great Depression. It's important due to the background and framework it gives on the educational practices leading up to the time period I'm discussing, as well as covering the importance of the Tuskegee Institute.


This book is crucial in understanding the works and philosophy of John Dewey, which is the fundamental structure Black Mountain College was established upon. This book in particular is aimed at novices to Dewey's work and is full of the historical context needed to fully grasp his concepts.


This book is a general history of Black Mountain College throughout its twenty four year existence. This work along with *The Arts at Black Mountain College* are the two paramount works on the history of Black Mountain College, and will undoubtedly be very influential in my research.


This is quite a unique book, as it is about the struggle of African American teachers in the South from reconstruction to integration. Rather than focusing on students or education as a whole, Fairclough focuses on the hardships, discrimination, and hopefulness African American teachers
felt while trying to educate their communities.

Forgács, Éva. *The Bauhaus idea and Bauhaus politics.* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995.)

Rather than centering on the history or art of the Bauhaus, Forgács focuses on the philosophy of the Bauhaus and how it developed through the years. This book is critical in understanding the Bauhaus, as well as how the philosophies of the Bauhaus effected Black Mountain College when many of its professors escaped there in the 1930's and 1940's.


This book is the pinnacle work of Black Mountain College's history. It covers every aspect of Black Mountain College in great detail, and helps establish it as a consciously directed liberal arts school that grew out of the progressive education movement rather than a disorganized, chaotic mess.


This work is on the history of the Bauhaus and its affect on modern art and architecture. The book focuses on the history of the institution, including many of the professors who would ultimately teach at Black Mountain College, but also explains the ongoing legacy of the Bauhaus on contemporary art and architecture.


This is another work on the history of Black Mountain College, although not nearly as detailed as the work of Mary Emma Harris. This book gives a decent history and description of the college, but focuses on artists who attended the college and their impact on the art world. This book is useful in understanding the influential art which Black Mountain College produced, but historically it focuses on the later days of the college, which is not very helpful in my research.


This is another work on African American education in the South, but is of particular importance due to its focus on Western North Carolina. It accurately documents the obstacles and triumphs of a somewhat isolated community's goal of equal education, in the less than progressive location of Western North Carolina.


This is a biographical/philosophical piece on John Andrew Rice, the founder and first rector of Black Mountain College. It covers his life and personal philosophies regarding education, democracy, and the arts, all of which lead him to quit his job at Rice University and start a new progressive liberal arts institution.

Rice, John Andrew. *I Came Out of the Eighteenth Century.* (New York: Harper & Brothers,
John Andrew Rice's autobiography is an important work when discussing Black Mountain College, since he was the individual who created the college after his dismissal from another school. This work is great when trying to understand how the college was established and the motives behind the way the college operated. Although this book is very informative on the background of the Black Mountain College, it contains a certain degree of bias due to Rice's own personal perspective on the subject and lack of supporting evidence.


This is another great work on John Dewey which certainly aids in understanding his philosophical concepts. The authors used essays from various philosophers which explain Dewey's ideas on several different subjects. This allows them to explain both Dewey's philosophies and how they are perceived in the modern era. *Dewey's Enduring Impact* is great for understanding both Dewey's philosophical concepts and their effect, specifically his radical ideas regarding education practices.