

More &gt;



# Civil Disobedience, Social Justice, Nationalism & Populism, Violent Demonstrations and Race Relations

## William Pickens: “The Kind of Democracy the Negro Expects”

by Kevern J. Verney, Ph.D.

**Date:** 1918

**Author:** William Pickens

**Genre:** speech

## Summary Overview

“The Kind of Democracy the Negro Expects” is a speech that was first given by the activist William Pickens in 1918 and on a number of occasions in the years immediately after World War I. The entry of the United States into the World War I in April 1917 presented a number of challenges for civil rights organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Many African Americans had little enthusiasm for the war effort. They were forced to make use of inferior, segregated facilities and subjected to the wholesale denial of their political and civil rights across most of the South, and the war at best seemed far removed from their daily concerns. At worst, the rhetoric of President Woodrow Wilson, that the conflict was a war for democracy to free oppressed peoples overseas, could be seen as little more than hypocrisy, given the way African Americans were treated at home. Moreover, America’s wartime allies, such as Britain, France, and Belgium, had imposed colonial rule on nonwhite countries across Africa and Asia, with little concern or respect for the democratic rights of the indigenous peoples.

Given this environment, civil rights campaigners had to maintain a careful balance, drawing attention to the grievances of African Americans but without appearing unpatriotic. Pickens, an African American educator, civil rights activist, and future field secretary of the NAACP, attempted to reconcile these competing objectives in “The Kind of Democracy the Negro Expects.” Seeking to promote black support for the war, he suggested that this backing was also conditional. In the postwar world, African Americans would expect to enjoy the same democratic rights enjoyed by other Americans, and such rights also had to be extended to other nonwhite populations around the world.

## Defining Moment

At the turn of the twentieth century, the best-known African American spokesperson in the United States was Booker T. Washington. Born a slave in 1856, Washington sought to avoid confrontation with southern whites over issues of civil and political rights by arguing for economic self-help as the most effective form of racial uplift for African Americans. In 1881 he founded Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, which promoted a curriculum of industrial education with an emphasis on training in practical vocational skills, such as building and woodworking, as opposed to academic subjects like English literature or history.

Washington’s philosophy reflected not just his own beliefs but also the social and racial climate of his day. The last decades of the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth century were a time of worsening race relations in the United States, with the political disfranchisement of African Americans and segregation in almost all aspects of daily life becoming commonplace across the South. Black southerners enjoyed little protection under the law, and as late as World War I, an average of one African American a week was killed by white lynch mobs in the region, often under horrifying circumstances.

Arguably, Washington achieved the best that was possible under such conditions. Even so, by the early years of the twentieth century a growing number of African Americans in the North began to question his leadership. In particular, the Massachusetts-born educator, scholar, and civil rights advocate W. E. B. Du Bois argued that Washington’s program of industrial education condemned African Americans to second-class citizenship as servants and menial laborers. Instead, the most able black students needed to have access to higher education to be trained for careers in law, medicine, teaching, and other professions. Collectively such individuals would be a “talented tenth” (about one-tenth of the population), becoming the leaders of African American communities at national, state, and local levels.

### Table of Contents

- Summary Overview
- Defining Moment
- Author Biography
- Document Analysis
- Essential Themes
- Bibliography and Additional Reading

In July 1905, Du Bois and a small group of like-minded individuals formed the Niagara Movement to voice their opposition to Washington. An all-black organization, the movement also sought to protest the denial of black civil and political rights in the United States. From the start, the Niagara group struggled to achieve its objectives because of internal divisions within the movement, the ambitious nature of its program, and the hostility of Washington and his allies. In 1909, the movement folded, but it was succeeded by a new biracial civil rights organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Supported by influential liberal whites, like the New York newspaper proprietor Oswald Garrison Villard, the association grew steadily over the next decade. This growth reflected the fact that by this time increasing numbers of African Americans had begun to see Washington's leadership as outdated and overly accommodating to the views of white southerners.

World War I (1914–1918) brought further evidence of this mood of increased black assertiveness, a climate that can be attributed to a number of factors. The death of Booker T. Washington in 1915 resulted in the breakup of his network of advisers and supporters known as the Tuskegee Machine. In 1916, the Amenia Conference, held to reconcile Tuskegee supporters with the NAACP, led a number of Washington's allies to join the association. The years from 1910 to 1930 saw the onset and development of what became known as the Great Migration. During this time, some 1.25 million African Americans left the South for the factories of the North, to take advantage of employment opportunities created by the effective end to immigration from Europe in the war years. The migration can also be seen as a sign of generational change, as younger African Americans, further removed from slavery, sought to escape the repressive living conditions of the South in favor of the comparatively more enlightened pattern of race relations that existed in the North.

The war also prompted greater awareness by African Americans of the importance of racial issues in an international context. More than four hundred thousand black Americans enlisted in the US armed forces during the war, many of whom served overseas, mostly in France. Du Bois played a leading role in the organization of four Pan-African Congresses in 1919, 1921, 1923, and 1927. The congress movement sought to work with European imperial powers to improve the economic and political rights of colonial peoples. More controversially, the Universal Negro Improvement Association of Marcus Garvey campaigned for the establishment of an independent black state in Africa, with the implicit threat of the use of force to expel European colonial powers from the continent if necessary. First organized in the United States in 1917, the Universal Negro Improvement Association rapidly gathered support in African American communities, achieving a following of around a million at its peak in the early 1920s, as well as establishing branches in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

The speech was intended to simultaneously convey a variety of messages to different audiences. In addressing African Americans, Pickens sought to promote patriotic support for the nation's war effort by stressing that this support was conditional on more respect for the democratic rights of African Americans, and of nonwhite peoples globally, when the conflict ended. With respect to the Wilson administration, the speech highlighted that emphasis on democratic freedoms for oppressed peoples overseas had to be matched by greater concern for the rights of persecuted minorities at home. Speaking to whites who are working for the advancement of African Americans, Pickens aimed to point out that such endeavors had to be undertaken in a spirit of genuine equality, rather than one of patronizing condescension. For present-day audiences, the document serves as a timeless reminder to the governments and peoples of all democratic societies that involvement in any war or conflict must be undertaken in a way that is consistent with their core ideals and values.

## Author Biography

William Pickens was born in Anderson County, South Carolina, on January 5, 1881. Both his parents were former slaves. From 1899 to 1902 he attended Talladega College, an African American educational institution in Alabama run by the American Missionary Association. The predominantly white faculty at Talladega sought to instill Christian values in students and trained them to be leaders in racial uplift in the black community. After going on to study the classics at Yale University from 1902 to 1904, Pickens returned to Talladega to take up a teaching post. At this stage he supported the teachings of Booker T. Washington.

In July 1905, the formation of the Niagara Movement reflected growing opposition to Washington's program by some members of the African American community, particularly in the North. Although he never joined the movement, Pickens was increasingly drawn to the ideas put forward by the new radicals. In doing so, he incurred the displeasure of Washington. The

influence of the latter, combined with Pickens's mounting disagreements with what he saw as the excessive paternalism of some white teachers at Talladega, led to his being dismissed from Talladega in 1914.

In June 1915, Pickens secured a position as dean at Morgan College, a Methodist Episcopal Church-run school for African Americans in Baltimore. There he became increasingly associated with the NAACP, the biracial civil rights organization that succeeded the Niagara Movement in 1909. In these years Pickens developed a growing reputation as a speaker on civil rights issues. He first delivered "The Kind of Democracy the Negro Expects" in 1918 and gave the speech again on a number of occasions in the early postwar years."

In 1920, Pickens left Morgan to take up a post first as assistant field secretary and later as full field secretary in the NAACP, with responsibility for maintaining and expanding the association's membership. His oratorical skills made him well suited to this position. At the same time, he experienced ongoing difficulties in his relationship with the NAACP's board of directors. He felt he was underpaid and the importance of his work undervalued. This contributed to his briefly considering taking a position with the rival Universal Negro Improvement Association of Marcus Garvey.

Such tensions notwithstanding, Pickens remained with the NAACP until April 1941, when he accepted a temporary position in the US Treasury Department to promote the sale of government bonds to African Americans during World War II. He never returned to the NAACP. Pickens's personal differences with the association's national secretary, Walter White, together with his disagreement with the association's opposition to the establishment of a segregated air base for African American pilots at Tuskegee, Alabama, led the board of directors to terminate his employment with the NAACP in June 1942. Pickens remained with the Treasury Department until his retirement in December 1950. He was buried at sea on April 6, 1954, after suffering a fatal heart attack returning from a holiday cruise to Latin America and the Caribbean on the SS *Mauritania*.

## Historical Document

Democracy is the most used term in the world today. But some of its uses are abuses. Everybody says "Democracy"! But everybody has his own definition. By the extraordinary weight of the presidency of the United States many undemocratic people have had this word forced upon their lips but have not yet had the right ideal forced upon their hearts. I have heard of one woman who wondered with alarm whether "democracy" would mean that colored women would have the right to take any vacant seat or space on a street car, even if they had paid for it. That such a question should be asked, shows how many different meanings men may attach to the one word Democracy. This woman doubtless believes in a democracy of me-and-my-kind, which is no democracy. The most autocratic and the worst caste systems could call themselves democratic by that definition. Even the Prussian junker believes in that type of democracy; he has no doubt that he and the other junkers should be free and equal in rights and privileges. Many have accepted the word Democracy merely as the current password to respectability in political thinking. The spirit of the times is demanding democracy; it is the tune of the age; it is the song to sing. But some are like that man who belonged to one of the greatest political parties: after hearing convincing arguments by the stump-speaker of the opposite party, he exclaimed: "Wa-al, that fellow has convinced my judgment, but I'll be d—d if he can Change My Vote!"

It is in order, therefore, for the Negro to state clearly what he means by democracy and what he is fighting for.

First. Democracy in Education. This is fundamental. No other democracy is practicable unless all of the people have equal right and opportunity to develop according to their individual endowments. There can be no real democracy between two natural groups, if one represents the extreme of ignorance and the other the best of intelligence. The common public school and the state university should be the foundation stones of democracy. If men are artificially differentiated at the beginning, if we try to educate a "working class" and a "ruling class," forcing different race groups into different lines without regard to individual fitness, how can we ever hope for democracy in the other relations of these groups? Individuals will differ, but in democracy of education peoples living on the same soil should not be widely diverged in their training on mere racial lines. This would be illogical, since they are to be measured by the same standards of life. Of course, a group that is to live in Florida should be differently trained from a group that is to live in Alaska; but that is geography and general environment, and not color or caste. —The Negro believes in democracy of education as first and fundamental: that the distinction should be made between individual talents and not between color and castes.

Second. Democracy in Industry. The right to work in any line for which the individual is best prepared, and to be paid the standard wage. This is also fundamental. In the last analysis there could be very little democracy between multi-millionaires and the abject poor. There must be a more just and fair distribution of wealth in a democracy. And certainly this is not possible unless men work at the occupations for which they are endowed and best prepared. There should be no "colored" wages and

no "white" wages; no "man's" wage and no "woman's" wage. Wages should be paid for the work done, measured as much as possible by its productiveness. No door of opportunity should be closed to a man on any other ground than that of his individual unfitness. The cruelest and most undemocratic thing in the world is to require of the individual man that his whole race be fit before he can be regarded as fit for a certain privilege or responsibility. That rule, strictly applied, would exclude any man of any race from any position. For every man to serve where he is most able to serve is public economy and is to the best interest of the state. This lamentable war that was forced upon us should make that plain to the dullest of us. Suppose that, when this war broke out, our whole country had been like Mississippi (and I refer to geography univocally),—suppose our whole country had been like Mississippi, where a caste system was holding the majority of the population in the triple chains of ignorance, semi-serfdom and poverty. Our nation would be now either the unwilling prey or the golden goose for the Prussian. The long-headed thing for any state is to let every man do his best all of the time. But some people are so short-sighted that they only see what is thrust against their noses. The Negro asks American labor in the name of democracy to get rid of its color caste and industrial junkerism.

Third. Democracy in State. A political democracy in which all are equal before the laws; where there is one standard of justice, written and unwritten; where all men and women may be citizens by the same qualifications, agreed upon and specified. We believe in this as much for South Africa as for South Carolina, and we hope that our American nation will not agree with any government, ally or enemy, that is willing to make a peace that will bind the African Negro to political slavery and exploitation.

Many other evils grow out of political inequality. Discriminating laws are the mother of the mob spirit. The political philosopher in Washington, after publishing his opinion that a Negro by the fault of being a Negro is unfit to be a member of Congress, cannot expect an ignorant white man in Tennessee to believe that the same Negro is, nevertheless, fit to have a fair and impartial trial in a Tennessee court. Ignorance is too logical for that. I disagree with the premises but I agree with the reasoning of the Tennessean: that if being a Negro unfits a man for holding a government office for which he is otherwise fit, it unfits the same man for claiming a "white man's" chance in the courts. The first move therefore against mob violence and injustice in the petty courts is to wipe out discriminating laws and practices in the higher circles of government. The ignorant man in Tennessee will not rise in ideal above the intelligent man in Washington.

Fourth. Democracy without Sex-preferment. The Negro cannot consistently oppose color discrimination and support sex discrimination in democratic government. This happened to be the opinion also of the First Man of the Negro race in America,—Frederick Douglass. The handicap is nothing more nor less than a presumption in the mind of the physically dominant element of the universal inferiority of the weaker or subject element. It is so easy to prove that the man who is down and under, deserves to be down and under. In the first place, he is down there, isn't he? And that is three-fourths of the argument to the ordinary mind; for the ordinary mind does not seek ultimate causes. The argument against the participation of colored men and of women in self-government is practically one argument. Somebody spoke to the Creator about both of these classes and learned that they were "created" for inferior roles. Enfranchisement would spoil a good field-hand,—or a good cook. Black men were once ignorant,—women were once ignorant. Negroes had no political experience—women had no such experience. The argument forgets that people do not get experience on the outside. But the American Negro expects a democracy that will accord the right to vote to a sensible industrious woman rather than to a male tramp.

Fifth. Democracy in Church. The preachings and the practices of Jesus of Nazareth are perhaps the greatest influence in the production of modern democratic ideas. The Christian church is, therefore, no place for the caste spirit or for snobs. And the colored races the world over will have even more doubt in the future than they have had in the past of the real Christianity of any church which holds out to them the prospect of being united in heaven after being separated on earth.

Finally. The great colored races will in the future not be kinder to a sham democracy than to a "scrap-of-paper" autocracy. The private home, private right and private opinion must remain inviolate; but the commonwealth, the public place and public property must not be appropriated to the better use of any group by "Jim-Crowing" and segregating any other group. By the endowments of God and nature there are individual "spheres"; but there are no such widely different racial "spheres." Jesus' estimate of the individual soul is the taproot of democracy, and any system which discourages the men of any race from individual achievement, is no democracy. To fix the status of a human soul on earth according to the physical group in which it was born, is the gang spirit of the savage which protects its own members and outlaws all others.

For real democracy the American Negro will live and die. His loyalty is always above suspicion, but his extraordinary spirit in the present war is born of his faith that on the side of his country and her allies is the best hope for such democracy. And he welcomes, too, the opportunity to lift the "Negro question" out of the narrow confines of the Southern United States and make it a world question. Like many other questions our domestic race question, instead of being settled by Mississippi and South Carolina, will now seek its settlement largely on the battlefields of Europe.

## Glossary

**Prussia:** now part of Germany, a formerly independent kingdom with a reputation for a strong militaristic ethos

**junker:** a member of the Prussian aristocracy

**Frederick Douglass:** a prominent nineteenth-century African American author, speaker, and abolitionist

**“scrap-of-paper” autocracy:** probably a reference to the common notion that the Axis powers before and during World War I created governments ruled by one man by routinely invalidating treaties with other nations

**Jim-Crowing:** a reference to “Jim Crow,” the name given to laws and social customs that kept African Americans in inferior segregated positions

## Document Analysis

In this speech Pickens seeks to explain what African Americans, who had collectively fought for the United States in World War I, had come to expect in a democratic society. In the introduction he considers the term *democracy* and notes that it can mean different things to different groups and individuals. The main body of the speech is divided into five sections: “Democracy in Education,” “Democracy in Industry,” “Democracy in State,” “Democracy without Sex-preferment,” and “Democracy in Church.” In two concluding paragraphs he discusses the contradictions between democracy and racial segregation and the need to view the “Negro question” in the American South in a global context.

Pickens reflects on the widespread use of the term *democracy* in the first paragraph. He notes that “by the extraordinary weight of the presidency of the United States many undemocratic people have had this word forced upon their lips.” This is a reference to the stated war aims of President Woodrow Wilson. In his war message to Congress in April 1917, Wilson asked the US Senate and House of Representatives to support his call for a declaration of war against Germany and its allies. He used idealistic language to justify this request. The conflict would be more than just a military struggle. It would bring about a new world order based on peace, freedom, and democracy. He frequently repeated such claims during both the course of the war and the negotiations for the Versailles peace settlement in 1919.

The “undemocratic people” who “have not yet had the right ideal forced upon their hearts” might at first sight be taken as a reference to the governments of Germany and its recently defeated military allies. However, Pickens makes clear that this description also applies to groups and individuals closer to home, referring to an American woman whom he recently heard expressing “alarm” at the thought that democracy might mean that “colored women would have the right to take any vacant seat or space on a street car.” Such a person is someone who “believes in a democracy of me-and-my kind, which is no democracy.” The phrase *of me-and-my kind* can be seen as a critical observation by Pickens on the campaign for the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution in 1919–1920, giving women equal voting rights. Some supporters of the amendment argued for white women to be given the vote, while ignoring the rights of their African American counterparts.

This kind of conduct is not only inconsistent but is indeed similar to the values of the German aristocracy, the “Prussian junker” who “has no doubt that he and the other junkers should be free and equal” but denies these rights to others. Pickens thus restates his earlier suggestion that Americans who oppose democratic rights for African Americans at home are no better than the autocratic German regime that the United States has been striving to overthrow.

In a short second paragraph, Pickens reminds his listeners of the loyal support of African Americans for the war effort by referring to the kind of democracy “he is fighting for.” This language also conveys the idea that the African American struggle for democracy within the United States is comparable to the struggle for democracy overseas in the war against Germany.

In his first point, Pickens highlights the importance of “equal right and opportunity” in education for all. These rights are the “foundation stones of democracy.” “How can we ever hope for democracy,” he argues, “if men are artificially differentiated at the beginning, if we try to educate a ‘working class’ and a ‘ruling class,’ forcing different race groups into different lines without regard to individual fitness?” This can be seen as a criticism of the industrial education movement associated with Booker T. Washington. At Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, Washington promoted the teaching of practical skills and trades, such as carpentry and bricklaying for male students and cookery and sewing for women. This contrasted with the teaching of traditional academic subjects, such as languages and the humanities, as was practiced at other institutions, like Talladega College in Alabama, where Pickens himself was a student. Washington believed industrial education provided the majority of African Americans

with the immediate vocational skills they needed to prosper in life. However, this viewpoint was criticized by Pickens and others for neglecting the need to train black students for careers in higher professions, such as law and medicine.

Pickens then turns his attention to industry. From around 1910 onward, increasing numbers of African Americans left the South as part of the Great Migration to take advantage of employment opportunities in the factories of the North. Before the war such options had been severely limited because of racial prejudice on the part of both employers and trade unions and competition from large-scale immigration from southern and eastern Europe. Where African Americans were able to get factory jobs, it was often only as strikebreakers or at lower rates of pay than those of white workers. Pickens's comments in this section reflect his concern that such practices must not be allowed to return now that the war is over: "There should be no 'colored' wages and no 'white' wages; no 'man's' wage and no 'woman's' wage."

He argues that the right to equal employment opportunities is not just a matter of fairness but also is in the national interest: "For every man to serve where he is most able to serve is public economy and is to the best interest of the state." He cites Mississippi as an example of a region where this right does not exist. In the Magnolia State, "a caste system" holds African Americans, "the majority of the population," in the "triple chains of ignorance, semi-serfdom and poverty." This is a reference to the sharecropping system, which was widely used in agriculture across the South at this time. Large landowners or planters provided tenant farmers, or sharecroppers, with land for cultivation, together with food and accommodation throughout the year until their crops, usually cotton, were harvested and sold. In theory, landlord and tenant then shared the profits realized. In reality, the high markup and interest rates charged by planters for goods and services meant that tenants typically received little or no reward. In many instances they were compelled to enter into further sharecropping agreements with planters for the following year, in a vain attempt to pay off debts they still owed. Over time this meant that sharecroppers, for the most part African Americans but also including poor whites, became trapped in peonage, or "semi-serfdom" of the kind that Pickens describes.

Pickens suggests that such unjust labor practices damage the economic well-being of the United States. If allowed to prevail throughout the country, these practices would result in the nation's being either "the unwilling prey or the golden goose for the Prussian." He thus implies that the actions of southern planters are not only unjust but also unpatriotic. Similarly, the personal fortunes amassed by wealthy industrialists in the North at the expense of low-paid workers is a form of "industrial junkerism," comparable to the excesses of the Prussian aristocracy.

Here Pickens links the civil rights struggle of African Americans in the United States with that of colonial populations around the world in the third section, "Democracy in State." Equality before the law is "as much for South Africa as for South Carolina." In this section's second paragraph he argues that the denial of civil and political equality is not only wrong but also encourages "other evils," for "discriminating laws are the mother of the mob spirit." This is an obvious reference to the practice of lynching, the unlawful killing of a person by parties unknown. For much of the nineteenth century, lynching was associated with a form of rough justice meted out on the western frontier. From the 1880s onward, it became a crime increasingly confined to the southern states, with the large majority of lynch victims being African Americans.

On July 26, 1918, President Wilson publicly spoke out against "mob actions." At the same time he presided over the spread of segregation in the federal government bureaucracy and the introduction of new measures that required civil service applicants to provide information on their racial ancestry. During Wilson's two terms of office, from 1913 to 1921, there was a marked fall in the number of African Americans employed by the civil service. Pickens observes that "if being a Negro unfits a man for holding a government office for which he is otherwise fit," then in the eyes of "an ignorant white man in Tennessee" it also "unfits the same man for claiming a 'white man's' chance in the courts." In making this observation, he tacitly accuses the Wilson administration of hypocrisy by suggesting that there is a link between this trend and the persistence of lynching, or "mob actions," in the South.

Pickens next declares his support for women's rights, noting that "the Negro cannot consistently oppose color discrimination and support sex discrimination in democratic government." He cites the example of the nineteenth-century African American leader Frederick Douglass. A former slave, Douglass consistently campaigned both for the abolition of slavery and in support of women's rights.

Pursuing a by now familiar theme, Pickens continues to link the African American civil rights struggle with high-profile democratic causes of the day. He thus concludes that "the argument against the participation of colored men and of women in self-government is practically one

argument.” By logical implication, campaigners who favor equal voting rights for women must also support political equality for African Americans.

Turning to religion, Pickens warns that the Christian church is “no place for the caste spirit or for snobs.” This concern reflects Pickens’s own life experience as both a student and a teacher in church-funded schools and colleges for African Americans. During his time as a teacher at Talladega College in Alabama, he supported a 1914 strike by African American students against the perceived patronizing attitudes of some white teachers employed by the American Missionary Association. Referring to church missionary work overseas, he implicitly questions the ability of the American churches to win new nonwhite converts when their congregations at home are segregated along racial lines. Simply put, “colored races the world over will have even more doubt in the future than they have had in the past of the real Christianity of any church which holds out to them the prospect of being united in heaven after being separated on earth.”

In a concluding section, Pickens develops his attack on racial segregation, or “Jim-Crowing.” Held to be lawful under the Constitution by the US Supreme Court in the 1896 landmark ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, by this time the use of segregated facilities in public transport and accommodations was widespread across the South. The wartime influx of African American migrants prompted the further spread of segregationist practices to cities of the North.

In the final paragraph Pickens reminds his audience of the patriotism of African Americans during the war. He also returns to the theme of internationalism that runs throughout the speech, arguing that the “Negro question” in the southern United States is part of a wider “world question.”

## Essential Themes

Pickens’s speech had limited impact in its day. The return to peacetime conditions at the end of 1918 saw few gains for African Americans as a result of their support for the war effort. A southerner with conservative views on race relations, Woodrow Wilson made no effort to secure greater civil and political rights for African Americans. In the South, inferior, segregated schooling continued to be the norm for African Americans until May 1954, when the US Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. In the cities of the North, the growing numbers of African Americans living there as a result of the Great Migration led to increased racial tensions and the spread of segregationist practices. Although women secured equal voting rights in the United States with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution in 1920, this advance can be attributed to factors other than the efforts of Pickens and the NAACP.

In the longer term, the speech has taken on greater significance. During World War II, from 1939 to 1945, memories of the painful experiences of World War I contributed to a greater sense of militancy in many African American communities. This new mood was encapsulated in the Double V campaign promoted by the NAACP during the war. First popularized by the African American newspaper the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the slogan called on black communities to fight against both Nazism abroad and racial injustice at home.

Viewed in historical perspective, the document is important as a sign of an increased assertiveness on the part of African American civil rights campaigners during and immediately after World War I. The continuing work of Pickens and other NAACP activists in the interwar years sowed the seeds for the later successes of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. The document is also ahead of its time in depicting the campaign for black civil rights within the United States as part of the wider global struggle for independence and equality by nonwhite colonial populations.

## Bibliography and Additional Reading

- 1 “African-American Soldiers in World War I: The 92nd and 93rd Divisions.” National Endowment for the Humanities EDSITEMent Web site.  
[http://edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=497](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=497)  
([http://edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=497](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=497)).
- 2 Avery, Sheldon. *Up from Washington: William Pickens and the Negro Struggle for Equality, 1900–1954*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989.
- 3 Barbeau, Arthur E., and Florette Henri. *The Unknown Soldiers: Black American Troops in World War I*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974.
- 4 Ellis, Mark. *Race, War, and Surveillance: African Americans and the United States Government during World War I*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

- 5 Kornweibel, Theodore. "Investigate Everything": Federal Efforts to Ensure Black Loyalty during World War I. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.
- 6 Lewis, David L. W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868–1919. New York: Henry Holt, 1993.
- 7 Patler, Nicholas. Jim Crow and the Wilson Administration: Protesting Federal Segregation in the Early Twentieth Century. Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2004.
- 8 Sullivan, Patricia. Lift Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement. New York: New Press, 2009.

## Citation Types

Type	Format
MLA Style	Verney, Kevern J. "William Pickens: "The Kind of Democracy the Negro Expects"." <i>Civil Disobedience, Social Justice, Nationalism &amp; Populism, Violent Demonstrations and Race Relations</i> , edited by Editors of Salem Press, Salem, 2017. <i>Salem Online</i> .
APA Style	Verney, Kevern J. (2017). William Pickens: "The Kind of Democracy the Negro Expects". In E. Salem Press (Ed.), <i>Civil Disobedience, Social Justice, Nationalism &amp; Populism, Violent Demonstrations and Race Relations</i> . Hackensack: Salem. Retrieved from <a href="https://online.salempress.com">https://online.salempress.com</a>
CHICAGO Style	Verney, Kevern J. "William Pickens: "The Kind of Democracy the Negro Expects"." <i>Civil Disobedience, Social Justice, Nationalism &amp; Populism, Violent Demonstrations and Race Relations</i> . Hackensack: Salem, 2017. Accessed January 10, 2019. <a href="https://online.salempress.com">https://online.salempress.com</a> .