

Project Title: Biography of Celeste Parrish

Investigator: Montgomery, Rebecca

Department: History

Project summary: During the second summer session of 2006, I completed the program of research on the life of progressive educator Celeste Parrish for which I received funding through the Research Enhancement Program. In addition to visiting the libraries and archives listed in the grant proposal (Averett College, Longwood University, Randolph-Macon Women's College, Pittsylvania County, and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill), I also conducted several days of research at Hampton University and the Library of Virginia. This research enabled me to flesh out the details of Parrish's early life in southern Virginia, including her childhood and experiences as student and educator. My findings also brought important details to light regarding Parrish's personal and professional connections with the Southern Education Board (SEB) and the northern philanthropists who funded its campaign for southern educational reform.

This research has been invaluable in developing a presentation and several publication projects. Information collected on Parrish's professional career is central to a paper, *Battling Reactionary Racism: Celeste Parrish and the Promotion of Black Education in the South, 1898-1904*, which I will present at the April 2008 meeting of the Organization of American Historians. This summer I will use many of these sources to complete an article for submission to the special edition on feminist biography of the *Journal of Women's History*, and the SEB papers will be used in a future article that takes a regional look at women's participation in the organization's reform campaigns (something heretofore not examined). Moreover, the sources on Parrish's early life will help me to complete the first two chapters of her biography.