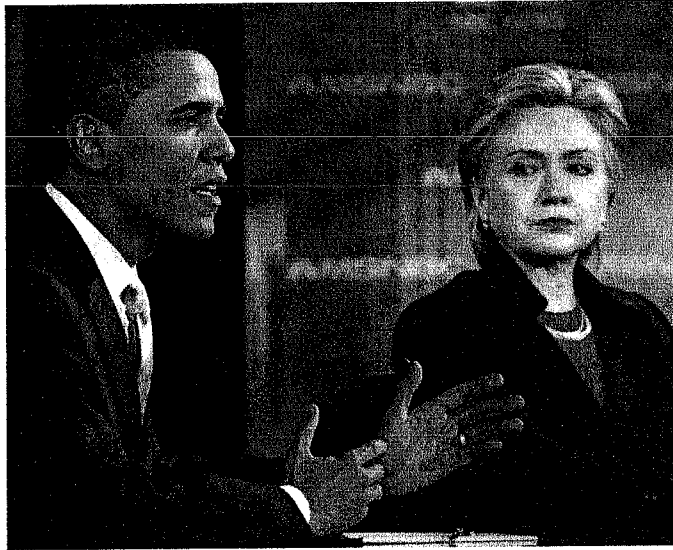


discover my background ... I see the split-second adjustments they have to make, the searching of my eyes for some 'tale sign. They no longer know who I am."

The challenge for Obama and candidates like him is to establish a connection with traditional black constituencies while still maintaining a postracial profile. It's fitting that Obama often closes his stump speeches with an anecdote drawn from a campaign stop in South Carolina that reveals something about how he sees his identity.

As Obama tells it, he was at an event in tiny Greenwood County, S.C., last year, having driven hours out of his way through the rain in pursuit of an endorsement from a state representative, when someone started leading the group in a cheer. "I turn back. There's this little lady standing there," he recalled in Aiken, S.C., not long ago. "She got a big hat. And she's smiling at me. She says, 'Fired up! Ready to go!' And it turns out that this young lady's name is Edith Childs, and she's a councilwoman from Greenwood. And she is famous for her chant. They call her the chant lady. And for the next, it seemed like, five minutes, she just kept chanting. I don't really know what to



## Fallout at the Polls?

After a few tense days, Clinton and Obama reached a truce. But some damage may have been done. On Jan. 15, Clinton won the Michigan primary as expected (she was the only one of the top candidates to appear on the ballot). But some Democrats cast protest votes against her: 40% selected "uncommitted," compared with 55% who voted for her. In Detroit, fully 70% of black voters preferred "uncommitted" to Clinton.

do. But here's the thing, Aiken: after about a minute or two, I'm feeling kind of fired up." He goes on to say that the point of the story is that "one voice can change a room."

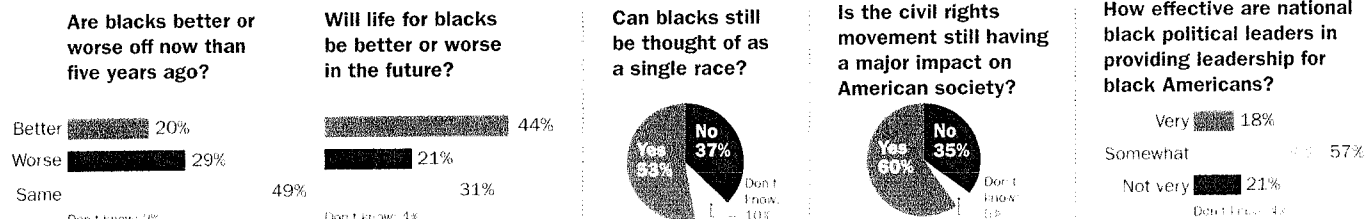
Possibly, but for Obama, the point of the story is also to signal to black South Carolinians that he has learned to be one of them, not only a black man in appearance but also one comfortable with the call-and-response folkways of African-American Southern life.

"I think it's a sort of defining moment in his campaign, and not just because he got a slogan out of it," says Robert Tinsley, 54,

a white attorney who was at the meeting where Childs, 59, started the chant. "He was mesmerized by the enthusiasm he received, and I think it helped him connect better with the Southern black voter." Tinsley is leaning toward Obama but is still considering Clinton and Edwards because Obama can be "a little vague."

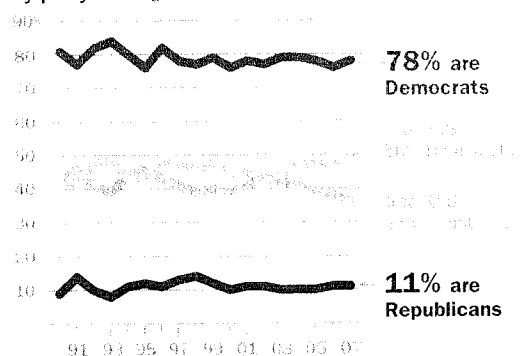
That could become a bigger liability for Obama as the race tightens in South Carolina and beyond. Clinton's victory in New Hampshire showed that Obama's effort to cast his campaign as a broad, generational crusade may not be enough to win

## Poll: What Black Voters Are Thinking

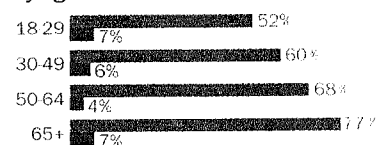


## HOW BLACK AMERICANS LINE UP POLITICALLY (■ Democrats ■ Republicans)

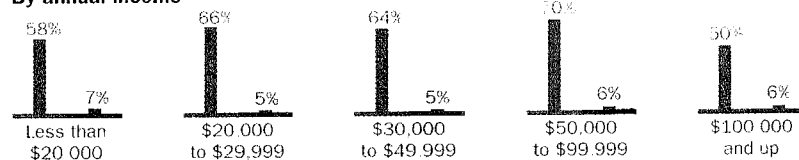
### By party (including those who "lean" toward a party)



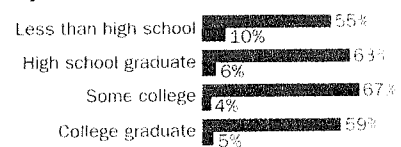
### By age



### By annual income



### By education



Source: Pew Research Center survey of 3,086 adult Americans, including 1,007 African Americans, in November 2007. Margin of error is ±2.5 percentage points overall and ±4 percentage points for African Americans.