

RACE, LAW, & LITERACY:
A CASE STUDY REVEALING THE VOICES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS OF
THE RANDOLPH COUNTY DESEGREGATION PROCESS
FROM 1965 TO 1975

by

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A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to give voice to African Americans who were students in Randolph County during the desegregation of its schools. The introduction identifies the roadblocks African Americans faced that restricted their acquisition of an education. It starts by discussing the legal battles associated with the attainment of a public education such as *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896). This study also discusses the reaction of African Americans to the *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896) and the questions of educational equality associated with the decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). A brief synopsis of Randolph County Training school is presented along with information about the efforts of Randolph County's African American citizens to enter into previously all white schools. Information is included that discusses the efforts of Randolph County's school board to avoid complete school desegregation by implementing what was known as the Freedom of Choice Plan in 1965. There is also a small discussion of the History of Randolph County Training School that includes information about its founding, its curriculum, and the level of success acquired by some of its prominent students. This study utilizes the framework of Critical Race Theory and Narrative Analysis to examine the students' perceptions of their experiences in segregated schools, during the Freedom of Choice Movement, and the last phase of the desegregation procedures which occurred in 1970. This research provides a history of the desegregation procedures of Randolph County and brings focus to the what the community, students, and faculty lost during

desegregation by presenting a narrative that focuses not on the deprivation associated with segregated schools, but the achievements of the faculty and students against unsurmountable odd

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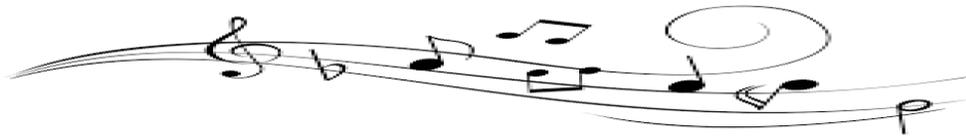
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the mainstream society sought to deny you—a strong sense of pride and the foundation for a wonderful future. I hope that my project has done a good job of projecting that message to the world.

Long live the Bulldog legacy
Randolph County Training School
1919-1970.



“Over In Randolph”

Over In Randolph, Over in Randolph
Over in Randolph Don't you see
The campus clean and cool
We Know “The Golden Rule”
It's a place for me and you
You can ride your little flipper
On the highway can't you see
Join our famous ball team
Oh boy it's a treat
Over in Randolph Over in Randolph
Over in Randolph Don't You See



...written by Mittie Bell Almond c/o '39 RCTS



Picture provided by Dr. Alvin Thornton

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

Upon the emancipation of slaves, Abraham Lincoln expressed a strong desire that racial divisions be mended and Blacks and Whites begin the process of becoming equals rather than separate entities of a vertically aligned social system. Education became intertwined with the legal system as it became identified as a key component in helping to convey this vision of Utopia into reality. Although many of the states acquiesced to the order of supplying education to Blacks, education still remained a key component in the struggle for equality. Rather than opening the already existing school doors and welcome Blacks in, Whites maintained the notions of social separation of the races by providing separate schools for Blacks. With the ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896) the knot in the rope of racist ideology became tighter and seemingly indestructible as the law proclaimed that race was a key factor when determining the quality of literacy to which an individual was entitled. *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896) stressed that separate institutions designated for Black education should be equal to that of White institutions. However, the reality of separate but equal was only one of many empty promises. Governmental entities that were responsible for providing “equal” facilities to Black schools often failed to provide the financial support necessary to maintain equal facilities or acquire equal educational necessities such as books, paper, and other supplies.

Members of the Black community eventually challenged the notion of separate but equal. How can equality be separate? This was one of the key questions of the supporters in the *Brown*

v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). The mere notion that Blacks were not good enough to be educated within the same facility as Whites reinforced the idea of inferiority the Black race. In 1954, the law began to make an effort to alter its views of race relations through the ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)* as it proclaimed that separate but equal was indeed unequal and unfair. With this decision, the courts ruled against the legal segregation of public schools and declared that Blacks and Whites were to be educated together.

The decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)* seemed to spark the struggle for racial equality not only in Kansas, but nationwide. A particular state that seemed to join the quest for equality was Alabama. Approximately seven months after the Brown decision, one of Alabama's strongest fights for equality began in Montgomery, Alabama, with the Montgomery Bus Boycott sparked by the arrest of Rosa Parks for refusing to give up her seat to a White patron. The Montgomery Bus Boycott lasted approximately 13 months and resulted in the decision that segregation of public busing was also unconstitutional.

Two years after the court decision of 1954 order that prohibited educational institutions from denying entrance to qualified African American students, the University of Alabama reluctantly admitted its first African American student, Autherine Lucy (Larson, Ahrenholz, & Grazioplene, 1964). Although Lucy was able to register for classes, her deed was not met without resistance. The campus exploded in an uproar of disapproval that included crossburnings, vocally disgruntled students, and student threats to boycott classes. Tensions became so high that after a mob of students attacked Lucy with a barrage of "eggs and whatnot," she had to be escorted out of Tuscaloosa for her own safety (Hollars, 2013, p. 31)

It was seven years later before African Americans dared to attempt to enter the University of Alabama again. In 1963, two Black Alabama students attempted to enroll in the University of

Alabama only to once again be met with resistance. With his infamous stand in front of the University doors, Governor George C. Wallace took this opportunity to solidify Alabama's defiance of the presence of African Americans within traditionally White settings.

In 1965, Alabama's view of racism reached what could be identified as its most vicious peak in what was known as Bloody Sunday. On March 7, 1965, six hundred African American men and women attempted to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, in an attempt to gain voting rights that had consistently been denied to them. The purposefully peaceful march was met with brutal opposition from state troopers who viciously and bloodily attacked protesters. It was only through the support of federal troops that two weeks later the protesters were allowed to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

As the world watched in horror the manifestation of the true brutality of White racism, approximately 165 miles away in the small County of Randolph, the notion of school desegregation began to take effect. Although the ruling of *Brown* had been eleven years earlier, many schools, including those of Randolph County, were still segregated. Now, in the midst of such racial turmoil, school aged children and their parents began to contemplate the notion of leaving the solace of their all Black segregated schools and venturing into the domain of the White school system. With the implementation of Freedom of Choice plan in 1964, students now had a choice of whether they wanted to remain in an all Black school or continue their education in a previously all-white school setting. The Freedom of Choice plan did not signify the full integration of Randolph County School system, but only represented the beginnings of partial implementation of the Federal order of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). It was not until 1970, sixteen years after the *Brown* decision, that under Federal Court orders Randolph County finally fully integrated its school system.

Prior to Freedom of Choice , the school system of Randolph County had been segregated since the first schools were established during the era of Reconstruction. The original schools consisted of churches and one-room school houses throughout the territory. Prior to 1919, there was not a high school in the community to accommodate the needs of Black students. The first official high school, Randolph County Training School (RCTS), was established in 1919 and served as a feeder school to all of the smaller schools within the area. Although it was entitled a “training school,” RCTS offered a very academically focused curriculum. Students in the elementary school were required to focus on mathematics, language, social studies, science, spelling, writing, music, art and physical education. When students entered the high school curriculum, there were mandated classes such as arithmetic, science, English, social studies, Foreign language (French), and vocational studies. The curriculum offered at RCTS equipped many African American students to leave Randolph County and have successful careers in various branches of the military with various ranks; many became educators in not only the k-12 school system, there were also many professors that earned tenure and administrative positions in well known universities. There were also many that made their mark in the medical field and many that earned degrees in chemistry, engineering and various other fields (Thornton, 2015). From 1919 until 1957 Randolph County Training School was the only high school designed to meet the academic needs of Black youth in Randolph County until 1957 when Wedowee High School was established.

Statement of the Problem

When the decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) was implemented, one of the main concerns of those in favor of school integration was that Black students were not being exposed to the same educational opportunities as their White counterparts.

Dingus (2006) argues that many of the accounts of school desegregation, which are presented from the perspective of the dominant culture, have the effect of producing negative images of segregated schools. Segregated schools are expounded as substandard because of the lack of resources and funding. The transition into White schools is usually identified as advancement for Black students. According to Dingus, gathering accounts only from those from dominant power sources presents a biased view of the school experiences of African American students. Siddell Walker (1996) also discussed the importance of segregated schools to the Black community of the South. In her text *Their Highest Potential*, Siddell Walker discusses the segregated school experiences of students who attended Caswell County Training School in North Carolina. She notes that although it was true that the segregated schools lacked the funding of the adjacent White schools, the dedication of the parents, student, and the community ensured that students were provided with every educational opportunity. Siddell Walker notes that it is unfair to only characterize segregated Black schools according to their meager resources. It is also important to focus on the dedication and tenacity that the Black community placed on educating its children. In order to gather a more accurate perception of the experiences of the desegregation process, it is important to gather stories from African Americans who had firsthand experience in segregated schools and desegregated schools.

Many studies have focused on the firsthand experiences of Black teachers and Black students after the process of desegregation transition had actually begun. Several studies have been done that focus on teachers who were active throughout the desegregation movement (e.g. Cozart, 2003; Wilson & Segall, 2001). There have also been many studies which analyzed the influence of Black teachers within segregated school environments. For example Ramsey (2012) and Dingus (2006) both conducted studies which focused on the dedication of Black teachers who had

the tremendous responsibility of providing quality education to their Black students with few resources and little governmental support.

There have also been several studies which focus on the experiences of Black students after they transitioned into White school environments. Brill (2006) conducted a study which focused on the experiences of the first Black students to transition into Fayetteville, Arkansas, in 1954. According to Brill, extreme efforts were made by the school system and the school faculty to ensure that this initial transition went as smoothly as possible. Cope (2011) conducted a study which analyzed the varying experiences of students who transitioned into Little Rock Central High School. According to Cope, the experiences of these students varied according to the teachers' attitudes towards school desegregation. Eick (2010) conducted a study which analyzed how the intersections of race, gender, and social class of Black students who transitioned into newly desegregated schools impacted the social aspect their experiences.

Dingus's critique illustrates the necessity of analyzing the experiences of Black youth who participated in the transition from segregated to desegregated schools during this pivotal moment in America's history. In the context of Social and Cultural studies, this research seeks to address a gap in scholarship that has only narrowly explored lived experiences of Black students of the desegregation era. The purpose of this study is to give voice to one of the groups which was most affected by the implementation of desegregation process-the students. The participants of this study were either conceived, being born, or beginning their academic career in a public segregated school when the decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) was handed down by the Supreme Court. Even though the decision was implemented in 1954, it was not until eleven years later that Randolph County, Alabama, began any efforts towards moving

these students into desegregated environments. It was not until fifteen years later that complete school desegregation was achieved.

Purpose of the Study

The difficulties of transitioning from an environment of familiarity and comfort into an environment that has been historically conditioned to view one as inferior should be illuminated. There have been few studies that give examination to the experiences of students who experienced the various phases associated with the process of desegregation. This an extraordinary gap in research considering that quite often the students were the ones who were given the task of walking through historically forbidden and possibly hostile doors. Furthermore, depending on their age during the transition, these students could possibly have never encountered racism and were thus experiencing such animosity for the first times in their lives.

The purpose of this study is to analyze how the combination of race, law, and literacy affected the educational experiences of African American students immediately before, during, and after the desegregation of the Randolph County School System. Eleven participants were gracious enough to take the time to share their experiences. It is hopeful that the results of this study will help illuminate how the desegregation experiences impacted students emotionally, academically, and socially. Furthermore, this study seeks to expand Cultural Studies by offering a more comprehensive understanding of the impact race and interracial interactions have on student identities by exploring categories of difference as related to race and ethnicity. The researcher was particularly interested in the perceptions of those who were required to participate in the transition into schools by forces outside of their authority, and those who were given the opportunity to choose which school they wished to attend. Finally, this study presents an opportunity to revisit the era of segregated schools from a different perspective. Rather than

focusing on the financial deprivation of segregated schools, this study challenges cultural studies and acknowledge the contributions of segregated schools to the academic development of African American students. Rather than only focusing on desegregation as a symbol of progress, hopefully the world of academia will also acknowledge the losses that desegregation had on the schools, the community and the students associated with segregated schools.

Research Questions

The guiding research question was: What can African American students share about their academic experiences in the identified small county of Randolph County, Alabama, during the years of 1965-1975? Additionally, more specific research questions and sub questions were established to address the subsequent topics;

- 1) What were the experiences of African American students in segregated schools?
 - a) “What structures of educational and social support existed for African American students of Randolph County during their segregated school experience?
- 2) What were the experiences of African American students during the initial phase of desegregation?
 - a. What were the African American students’ perceptions of the Randolph County desegregation efforts during the designated years?
 - b. What structures of educational and social support existed for African American students of Randolph County during the initial phase of desegregation?
- 3) What were the experiences of African American students during the final phase of desegregation?

- a. What were the African American students' perceptions of the Randolph County desegregation efforts during the designated years?
- b) What structures of educational and social support existed for African American students of Randolph County after schools desegregated?

The objective of this study is to gather the observations and feelings of the contributors in relation to the circumstances they experienced during this era of their lives. Hopefully the data gathered within this study will create a greater appreciation for the contributions schools made towards the education of African American students prior to the movement of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).*

Significance of the Study

Barker (1980) contends that although isolated from White schools, Black schools did an effective job teaching the skills prevalent in dominant America. Even though there was a significant difference in the economic support allotted Black schools during the desegregation movement, there is research that states that the community and dedication of teachers created a learning environment designed to support student academic growth and the development of a positive self identity among Black students. African American students who attended school in Randolph County, Alabama, provided insight into a community that refused to submit to the desegregation policies until they were forced by the federal government at the last moment. Exposure to the stories of these individuals offers a personal perspective of the impact of desegregation on the lives of those involved. The data provided by students who actually experienced segregated and desegregated schooling in Randolph County is not readily available or preserved in an official historical format. It is extremely important that the memories of those who lived through this historical time period become documented so that their experiences can be

appreciated by subsequent generations. This study will broaden the literature by providing a case study of the experiences of African American students from Randolph County, Alabama.

Researcher Positionality

For the purpose of this research, it is important that I acknowledge certain factors such as my race (Black) and my k-12 teaching experiences which I am sure affects my positionality. I was born and raised in small southern town where particles of racism are still active in the undercurrents of its social structure. For example, there are still several schools that can be identified as segregated because they have a student body composed of all Black students. My former high school, which has been all Black for at least the last forty years is in the process of trying to merge with a high school with a diverse population. Quite naturally the parents are split between those who agree and those who disagree with the transition. Furthermore, I have had the opportunity to teach in schools that had all Black students and a school with a culturally mixed population of students. Most importantly, I am currently employed in Randolph County as the only African American instructor in the local community college. Many of the students that I come in contact with are the descendants of those who were students during the desegregation era of Randolph County.

Although I am about two decades younger than many of my participants, I found that it was not at all very difficult to relate to the experiences of my participants. I began my educational career in 1975 which was within the time frame my youngest participant graduated. Furthermore, I have a background familiar to those of the participants. For example, I was educated in a small community in Hale County which is another small county in Alabama located about one hundred fifty miles west of Randolph County. The school that I attended was in a majority Black environment and thus the student body was almost always one hundred percent Black. Also, my

first teaching experience was in another small town with a completely Black student body and a predominantly Black teacher faculty. Moreover, I have always been fascinated with texts that discuss the Civil Rights Movement and school desegregation. When I met with my participants, often my background entered into the conversation on some small scale. I am sure that other factors such as my being a fellow southerner, an African American, and an educator helped the participants feel more comfortable sharing their stories with me. Sometimes the participants used language that made me feel that I was being taken into their confidence and was being viewed as an equal. For example, they often used phrases such as “you know how ‘they’ are” or “you know how ‘they’ can be.” They also shared information that I do not feel that they would have been comfortable sharing with me had I not been of similar cultural background. For example, they noted the manner in which they strongly resented being seen as inferior by Whites both then and sometimes even currently. When one considers the formative years that the students spent under the tutelage and care of their segregated teachers, it was not unusual that quite often their experiences would balance in favor of the segregated school experiences.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in order to bring clarity to this study. The following operative definitions will apply to this research:

Black: This research will rely on Neville, Oyama, Odunewu, & Huggins (2014) definition which identifies “Black” as “Black people born and/or raised in the United States with a shared history or racial oppression and resistance” (p. 415). Quite often Black people who share this definition are also associated with people of color who share an ancestral connection to the African continent and an American historical lineage associated with slavery. Several times within this study, the term “Black” will be interchanged with other terms that have been associated with people of color

such as African American, Negro, and Colored. This is necessary because the terms used to identify “Black people” or “People of Color” has differed throughout various timeframes of history.

White: Johnson & Jackson Williams (2014) identify Whites as those who have privileges such as “the power to define reality, perpetuating the illusion of fairness among cultural groups, the belief in superiority and entitlement of White cultural heritage, and the belief in inferiority of other groups” (p. 2). Within the context of this study, Whites are presented as historically connected to Blacks through the lineage of slaves and slave-owners or those who had the propensity to be slave owners based on skin color and/or cultural heritage. Johnson & Williams continue to assert that Whites are also privileged with the power to restrict or reject access to other races through the use of strategies and laws. The manner in which Whites assert such privileges and powers are discussed throughout the study.

Desegregation: Reid (1956) identifies “desegregation” as the removal of legal barriers which those of the dominant class use to deny access to social privileges based on racial, religious or sexual identities. I have decided to rely on the term “desegregation” as opposed to “integration” because I agree with Reid’s definition that “integration” implies the acceptance of people without referring to racial, religious, or sexual aspects of their identities. During the desegregation process, the issue of race was a constant factor in the discussions of the difficulties that would be associated with combining the schools. Also, during the process of desegregation, Black students of Randolph County were assimilated into White schools thus identifying Blacks as the ones leaving their familiar surroundings.

Freedom of Choice: The initial desegregation policy sanctioned by the Randolph County School System when forced to enact procedures towards the dismantling of segregated schools.

According to the Freedom of Choice plan, students could choose to attend any school within their district without consideration of race. For example, they could choose to continue attending the school they were most familiar with, or they could choose to attend any other school (Black or White) without the fear of being denied access based on race. School personnel was prohibited from influencing student choices.

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, I rely on the following assumptions:

- 1) Participants of this study are lucid, reflective, and capable of providing a clear narration of their experiences in segregated and desegregated school environments.
- 2) Participants in this study will feel free to fully express their beliefs toward the subject. I feel that they will identify with me as a fellow Black teacher and will feel obligated to share their experiences as a relevant part of the Black experience in Randolph County school system.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations of the study are readily acknowledged:

1. Many of the participants may not have shared the same experiences. For example, student experiences may vary according to which school they transitioned from or the school they transitioned into. It was difficult to find students who were desegregated at the same age or grade level.
2. Participants of this study experienced desegregation at different phases of their academic career such as elementary, middle, and/or high school which may have an impact on how they perceived their experiences.

Delimitations

- 1) This study only focuses on the experiences of African American students from Randolph County, not the entire nation.
- 2) The participants only represent a sample of the African American students from that time period. It is conceivable that a large number of students from that era may have passed away or are no longer connected to the Randolph County area.
- 3) The experiences to be studied will only come from the viewpoints of African American students. The viewpoints of White students will not be expressed unless mentioned by Black participants. It is highly possible that White individuals who were a part of that era may have memories and relevant perceptions of the time period. The central focus of this work is Black students because their voices have often been underrepresented.

The specific time frame of this study is limited to 1965-1975. This period identifies the time span in which Randolph County began to implement the desegregation process. This gives the researcher an opportunity to explore the impact of desegregation from its initial phase until final implementation.

Organization of the Study

This study was organized into seven chapters.

Chapter 1 introduces relevant background information on the identified topic. It identifies the relevant research information such as questions, definition of terms, author assumptions and expected limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 provides a thorough review of literature that includes a history of the Black educational experience that begins from slavery and continues throughout the time frame of the study (1965-

1975). Also included are varying accounts of the Black educational experience during the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)* desegregation process,

Chapter 3 discusses and explains why qualitative inquiry is more appropriate to this study than quantitative inquiry. It will also discuss how participants were recruited for participation in the study. Finally, it explains the theoretical framework of the study

Chapter 4 provides information of the specific process of the desegregation of the Randolph County school system. Examples of sources will include but are not limited newspaper articles, government documents, and any personal data that can be acquired from the participants. There will also be an analysis of national and local historical data to ensure that statements made by the participants correspond with the identified time frame (Pellegrino, Mann, and Russell 2013)

Chapter 5 presents a profile of each of the participants. It will include any stories, documents, pictures or other information they wish to share, and the interview data.

Chapter 6 presents the analysis of data. Results of the study are presented and categorized according to each of the research questions.

Chapter VII presents conclusions of the study, the definition of holistic content analysis and an explanation of themes associated with the study

Chapter VIII presents the conclusions derived by the researcher and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter 2 provides important historical information about how political and social practices have contributed to the marginalization of Blacks within America's education system. The timeframe of this literature review is categorized into three specific eras which help define the interactive history between Blacks and Whites. Specifically these periods are slavery, reconstruction, and post reconstruction.

Within the era of slavery I will focus on two factors. First I will discuss how the foundation of America's government system created barriers that inhibit racial equality across various aspects of society including education. Second, I will give a brief overview of not only how the keys to literacy were controlled by slave masters but also how Whites initially conspired to create barriers between Blacks and education. Specific accounts of the efforts of slaves to acquire knowledge and the barriers they faced are also presented in this section.

Next, I will present information that discusses America's effort to "reconstruct" racial relations after enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation. Specific focus will be placed on the efforts to secure literacy for Blacks after slavery. In this section I discuss the efforts of Blacks who had managed to receive an education during slavery to share that knowledge with former slaves. I also discuss the contributions of Whites and the effects their efforts had on the movement. Other issues in this section include the various political and legal efforts to not only create productive educational environments for Blacks but also the open acknowledgement that the

Separate but Equal ruling associated with *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896) was indeed not equal.

Finally the Post Reconstruction segment specifically discusses the reasons for the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) movement, the various attitudes of those who were a part of that time period, and the challenges of getting school desegregation passed into law. Additionally, research is included on the subsequent attitudes the effectiveness of the post *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) movement.

Literacy as a Tool of Racial Dominance

For colored people to acquire learning in this country makes tyrants quake and tremble in their sandy foundation. (David Walker, Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World, 1829 as cited in Dorothy Riley's My Soul Looks Back Less I Forget, 1995)

The liberating power of literacy has been acknowledged since the beginning of America's history. Thomas Jefferson readily acknowledged that if our country was to progress towards its ambitions of greatness, then it was important that opportunities to education be provided to all of Americans citizens. Education could no longer be reserved for the elite or used as tools to separate different caste systems. In 1787 Thomas Jefferson advocated that if America were to be truly free, then it must ensure that education was more readily available. He thus suggested a "popular educational system" that would provide up to three years of free public education to every White child. Although this effort dismissed the notion of superiority based on a caste system, it reinforced the notion of superiority based on race. Jefferson's proposal specifically indicated that the idea of a free education was to be made readily available to "every White child of the commonwealth," but did not sponsor the concept of education for even one Black child (Anderson, 1988, p. 1;

Collins, 2008). Whites were encouraged to readily participate in the learning process, whereas it was often understood that Blacks were not to be included in the education process. The initial failure to include Blacks in the goal of education quickly evolved into purposeful alienation of Blacks from educational opportunities. During the era of slavery, “education was feared by slave owners because slaves might read of their national rights” (Black Chronicle, 1 June 1896 as cited in Riley, 1995 p. 95). There was a fear that once slaves learned to read, they would have the skills to forge passes and thus be capable of traveling to different territories without their owner’s knowledge or permission or that a slave revolt would occur (Genovese, 1974). The notion of denying an education to Blacks was commonly accepted within the American society and continued through many southern regions for almost a century. Bond (1969) acknowledges that prior to 1860, there is no evidence of any Alabama schools that provided education to Black students. Furthermore, he identifies specific laws that not only dismissed Blacks from the law which identified education as an American right, there were many laws that also expressly prohibited Blacks from being educated. Certain laws specifically warranted that any Whites who sought to teach Blacks would suffer fines and or imprisonment.

According to Butchart (2007) “keeping masses of African Americans illiterate contributed to the myth of racial inferiority,...; Blacks were intellectually incapable of mastering the skills of literacy; illiterate Blacks were proof of Black intellectual incapacity” (p. 2). By keeping slaves from participating in the practice of reading and writing, slave masters created a social structure that justified the idea of racial superiority of Whites over their Black counterparts. In order to maintain the notion of superiority, it was important that slaves not be allowed to develop intellectually. .

Even through sanctioned restrictions and other difficulties, there were many slaves who did learn to read and write. For example, Frederick Douglas acknowledged that his initial introduction to literacy was through the efforts of his Mistress. According to Douglas, as a young child he acquired a curiosity of books from hearing his Mistress reading the Bible aloud to her family members. Because he had established a strong bond with the Mistress and considered her to be “kindhearted and remarkably pious” (p. 76), he felt comfortable enough to ask her to teach him to read. Being an extremely bright and quick witted child, Douglas rapidly began to understand the mysteries of letters and their ability to create words. Douglas boasts in his narrative that, “in a short time, by her kind assistance, I had mastered the alphabet and could spell words of three or four letters” (p. 78). As soon as her husband became aware of Douglas’s efforts towards becoming literate, he “quickly forbade her to give me any further instruction (p. 79). According to the master, learning to read “will forever unfit him to be a slave” (p. 78). Unfortunately, due to the strong objections and reasoning of her husband, Douglas’s mistress soon rejected the idea of teaching slaves to read. Fortunately for Douglas, his literacy foundation had already been established, and he soon found himself sneaking into corners or other hiding places to continue his pursuit to learn to read and write.

Many other slaves were also able to slip through the crevices of the closed gates of literacy through various means. Not only were there those sparse few who gained knowledge from the Whites who owned them, there were also those slaves who learned from other literate Blacks. Free Blacks who had learned to read would hold secret meetings to teach their enslaved brethren. Also, those slaves who had gained the knowledge to read would secretly teach other slaves.

These efforts were not looked on favorably by slave owners or other Whites who were opposed to teaching Blacks. Quite often slaves were severely punished if a book was discovered

in their possession. Even Frederick Douglas himself disclosed that his newly enlightened Mistress soon “became more violent in her opposition to my learning to read than was Mr. Auld himself. Nothing appeared to make her more angry than seeing me, seated in some nook or corner, quietly reading a book or newspaper” (p. 82). Douglass’s mistress sought to have complete control of his access to literacy. She was not only in control of his introduction to reading skills, as a member of the White social structure; she also attempted to alienate him from literacy. As soon as Douglas was presented with literacy skills, the space he shared with his White counterparts was no longer just an area occupied by a dominant and a subservient. Douglas struggled to redefine himself by acquiring more knowledge, while his master and mistress struggled to contain his identity to being nothing more than a slave--someone they could continue to dominate and control.

The learning experiences of slavery not only had immediate control over the educational opportunities of Blacks during that era, they “left an indelible stamp upon the attitudes which were to be social forces in determining the reaction of the Whites to education of Negroes in the future, after the institution itself had been abolished” (Bond, 21). Bond’s assertion seems to be quite apparent when one analyzes the struggles associated with the efforts to create educational equality for Blacks after the slave era.

The Efforts of Blacks towards Education

Despite the many obstacles thrust upon them, many ex slaves began striving to become free not only physically, but also mentally and socially. The objective was to create a new identity for themselves outside of the confining roles of slavery. One of the most empowering towards implemented towards the reconstruction of Black identity was education.

Even after slavery, “the political significance of literacy” continued to manifest itself among Blacks (Anderson, 1988, p. 17). Ex-slaves and northern Blacks united in their efforts to

ensure that Blacks would now have access to knowledge. Those who took on the task of educating newly freed slaves not only had the responsibility of providing literary skills; they also took on the tremendous task of dissipating social prejudices. According to Fairclough (2000) providing an “education brought the added duty of dispelling the ignorance, immorality, and superstition that, many believed, slavery had bequeathed to the race—of leading and elevating a benighted people” (p. 65). These newly recruited teachers were responsible for uprooting belief systems that had given legal justification for limiting Blacks to being used for physical labor and defined as property and thus eliminating them from any social or political privileges.

The mission of cultivating the grounds of social equality propelled Black teachers to put their hearts and souls toward their new responsibility. They raised funds to build their own schools, hired their own teachers, and raised funds to make sure that schools ran as smoothly as possible. Private schools dedicated to the mission of educating ex slaves and any other Black people who had been restricted from learning began to spring up all over the South (Butchart R. E., 2010). Teachers, themselves, made tremendous sacrifices in order to meet the growing academic needs. For example, they worked for extremely meager salaries. Quite often they had to take on other laborious jobs just to survive. From the combination of their scanty salaries and subsidized incomes, teachers also often bought classroom materials.

Self-educating allowed Blacks an opportunity to eradicate the full control that Whites had always maintained over education. According to Freire (1993), in order to acquire real freedom, it was necessary for Blacks to be the initiators in their educational progression. Building and creating their own schools gave Blacks an opportunity to develop an image of themselves outside of the confines of slavery. In order to eject the image of slavery ingrained on them from their

oppressors, the oppressed must first “eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility” (Freire, 1993, p. 29).

The efforts of educators were not in vain. Ex-slaves anxiously flocked to schools, churches, homes, or anywhere education was offered. Literacy was much more than a leisure desire. According to Kluger (1977), “the colored people could not rise until they got educated” (p. 13). Many privileges associated with American citizenship were associated with literacy. For example, many Blacks felt that Southern Whites often took advantage of the illiteracy of ex-slaves to ensure that they did not have a voice in the political process. Illiterate Blacks had a strong likelihood of being cheated in business dealings with Whites. Quite often contracts were written in a manner that would defraud Blacks not only out of their property, it would often obligate Blacks to provide free labor to Whites. Ex-slaves soon realized that it was the lack of literacy kept them subjugated to White rule (Anderson J. D., 1988). Quite often written contracts and other legal agreements were created in a manner that inhibited the ability of Blacks to be productive in society. Anderson identifies several incidences where labor contracts were created in a language that not only confused illiterate Blacks, it often inhibited them in a manner that kept them in servitude. Anderson cites a testimony from one witness of a contract that stipulated “that one-third of seven-twelfths of all corn, potatoes, the active participants in helping to legally create a space for their fodder, etc., shall go to the laborers” (p. 18).

The awareness of how Whites were taking advantage of their illiteracy was a strong motivating factor in the determination of Blacks to become literate. Education was recognized as a strong instrument towards “liberation and freedom” (Hayman, 1996, p. 17). Ex-slaves realized that once they could read and write for themselves, they could interpret information and thus engage in the process of understanding laws and become active agents in their struggle for equality.

Who Will Teach?

One concern during Reconstruction was the ability of African American teachers to provide their Black pupils with the skills they needed. In the immediate aftermath of slavery, many of the teachers who were recruited to teach were inexperienced; they were often perceived as ignorant and incompetent by their White counterparts (Hayman, 1996; Fairclough, 2007). Although Blacks made tremendous sacrifices to provide educational opportunities for ex slaves and other Black people, there were also many Whites who contributed to the efforts to educate African Americans. Unfortunately, not all efforts of White Americans toward the education of Blacks were noble. Often the motive behind these good deeds was clouded in the beliefs that African American educators were incapable of providing a good education. Furthermore, according to Bond, many of the schools managed by Whites were religious schools which did not educate Black students but rather reinforced the notion of White superiority.

Even though Northern Whites were allowed to assist in the process, quite often Blacks “resented the paternalism and arrogance of the White efforts” (Butchart R. E., 2010, p. 3). The influence of Whites was often considered counterproductive to the efforts of Blacks to “restructure and control their lives (Anderson, 1988, p. 3). White influence often had the effect of reproducing negative images of Blacks and reinforcing former notions of Black inferiority and White supremacy. Fairclough (2010) identifies how notions of the inferiority of Black teachers was not only encouraged in the initial efforts to educate ex slaves, but the White teachers of that time period have been presented as being superior educators throughout history. According to Fairclough White teachers who were involved in the schooling of African Americans after slavery were described in languages that created images of them as saviors of the Black race. Afterwards much of the scholarly writing and studies focused mostly on the contributions of White teachers. The contributions of Black teachers were often excluded from recognition even though “Black teachers

were by measure the most important of those who entered the Black classroom” (p. 19). Not only did Black teachers provide images for Black students of someone similar to them being productive in areas other than physical labor, they also understand how critical it was that Black students learned to read and write. It was this knowledge that compelled the resilience that motivated them in the most difficult of circumstances.

White Effort towards Black Literacy

The responsibility of creating quality learning environments for Blacks was not limited to the teachers of that era. There were also many governmental and formal organizations that focused on creating productive learning environments for African Americans. Three years after the Emancipation Proclamation, over 4,300 new schools had been set up by the federal Freedman’s Bureau. Also, many northern educational advocates offered support to Black schools. Even as early as 1867 affluent Whites such as George Peabody and John Slater invested in schools designed for impoverished students (Hauser 1996). Another advocate for the development of Black Rural schools was a Quaker by the name of Miss Anna T. Jeanes. In the early 1900s Miss Jeanes noticed the large amount of funds being contributed to the development of the local White schools and decided that she wished to help fund the development of Black schools of the South. She allocated over a million dollars towards the support of the professional growth of Black teachers in rural schools (Bond 1994). Another philanthropist who took an interest in the development of Black educational programs was Julius Rosenwald. Rosenwald is accredited with launching the development of Black school buildings in the early 1900s. According to Anderson, in 1914, Rosenwald contributed \$300 (approximately sixteen percent of the total cost) to the construction of the first Black school house in Lee County, Alabama. The remainder of the funds was gathered from the White community, and the taxes and labor of the Black citizens of the area. This initial

school project was the catalyst to the construction of almost 5,000 rural Black schools throughout the South (Anderson 1947). There were even instances where the few Black politicians who had managed to obtain political offices became ambitious enough to advocate for schools that included Blacks and Whites. However, as Jim Crow laws began to manifest throughout the South, support for Black schools began to diminish considerably. Hausser (1996) reports that although Black children comprised almost one-third of the student population, Black schools received less than fifteen percent of the total funds allocated for education.

Northerners who had become dissuaded from their original goal of providing public education to Black students soon directed their attention towards the notion of equipping students with what was termed as “industrial education.” Rather than stressing academic courses such as reading, mathematics, and philosophical courses, industrial education trained Blacks to be more adept in the types of practical skills and labor that was similar to the physical labor that Blacks had performed during slavery. This arrangement seemed an acceptable compromise between Northerners and White Southerners. Northerners saw industrial education as an opportunity to ensure that Blacks became productive members of society and White Southerners saw industrial education as a sanctioned producer of cheap labor (Anderson 1988; Hausser, 1996). During the year of 1907, the Anna T. Jeans’ foundation was attributed with donating over a \$200,000 to Black higher education institutions such as Hampton and Tuskegee University (Bond 1969). The notion of industrial education also procured favor among some of the more prominent Blacks.

One of the most distinguished Black educators of that time period, Booker T. Washington, strongly believed that industrial education was the most reasonable solution to the plight of Black citizens. Washington asserted that Blacks should focus their attention on acquiring the skills offered through industrial education and strive toward self-sufficiency.

Rather than trying to force a place for themselves within segregated White society, Washington encouraged Blacks to establish their own social, economic, and educational institutions. As cited in Hauser (1996), Washington advised Black advocates seeking civil rights “to let it alone, and it will settle itself” (83). He further encouraged Blacks to accommodate the desires of Whites as much as possible because their support was necessary if Blacks were to progress during this era. Although some Blacks consented to Washington’s concept that Blacks should not pose a threat to the separatist ideals of Whites, there were many Blacks who continued their quest for equal liberties. Even Black civil right activists who agreed with Washington’s concept of self-sufficiency for Blacks still maintained that it was essential that Jim Crow laws be abolished.

Other supporters of the civil rights regime believed that it was especially important that Blacks not shy away from White dominated politics. Blacks were encouraged to continue their pursuit of voting rights and to concentrate all of their support behind Black candidates or White candidates who were sensitive to the needs of Black citizens. Thomas Fortune, a self-made Black newspaperman, insisted that “self -help and economic advancement...would not alone solve Black’s problems; these moves had to be combined with vigorous and vocal protest to Jim Crow” (Hauser 85).

Productive Education Environments for Blacks

W.E.B. Du Bois, another Black educator, was also in disagreement with Washington’s theory that Blacks should retain a mild, unthreatening position in the margins of White society by focusing on industrialized education. On the contrary, Du Bois believed that White leadership “could not be depended upon if American {b}lacks were ever to achieve a destiny of their own beyond mass peonage and political ostracism” (Kluger, 1977, p. 94). Du Bois viewed

Washington's position of an industrialized education, a self-sufficient community, and avoidance of political issues as an admittance of inferiority.

Although he was not in agreement with Washington's stance on industrialized education and political apathy, Du Bois did not feel that Blacks would be capable of acquiring a quality education in White institutions. Though he believed that Blacks possessed the intellectual capability to comprehend as well as any White student, and he had a strong desire to see Blacks equally educated along with Whites, Du Bois sadly admonished:

I am no fool; and I know that race prejudice in the United States today is such that most Negroes cannot receive proper education in White institutions. If the public schools of Atlanta, Nashville, New Orleans and Jacksonville were thrown open to all races tomorrow, the education that colored children would get in them would be worse than pitiable. It would not be education. And in the same way, there are many public school systems in the North where Negroes are admitted and tolerated, but they are not educated; they are crucified. There are certain Northern universities where Negro students, no matter what their ability, desert or accomplishment, cannot get fair recognition, either in classroom or on the campus, in dining halls and student activities, or in common human courtesy...Under such circumstances, there is no room for argument as to whether the Negro needs separate schools or not. The plain fact faces us, that either he will have separate schools or he will not be educated (Du Bois, 1935, p. 329).

Although there was much disagreement as to how Blacks should be educated, there was still an acknowledged need for improvement and support for schools established for Blacks. In an effort to help enhance the conditions of African American schools, the General Education Board

(GEB) was formed in 1902 by business tycoon John D. Rockefeller and several of his friends to aide in the improvement of educational circumstances of these newly formed schools (Davis, 2006). Through the efforts of the GEB, several improvements were noted. For example, approximately 20 high schools were identified as meeting the accreditation standards of Southern Association of Colleges and High Schools. Also, in an effort to help appease “the voracious reading appetites of African Americans,” GEB helped fund the development of many southern libraries (Davis, 2006, p. 148). Many of the efforts of GEB were not done in isolation. Quite often members of the GEB would work closely with already formed Black organizations such as the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools (NATCS) and the Rosenwald Schools (Davis, 2006, p. 147).

According to Butchart (2010) although the GEB provided a large amount of assistance in helping to improve the accommodations of Black schools, the GEB maintained control over all funds that were solicited. Lively (1999) reports various instances in the early 1900s where the amount of funding allocated to public White schools was almost ten times the amount of funding allocated to Black schools. As time progressed, America did not advance in its stated efforts to improve the conditions of Black students. On the contrary, According to Lively the gap in financial support allotted to White schools as opposed that allotted to Black schools had increased to about forty percent by the onset of the civil Rights Movement of 1954.

Separate, but Still Unequal

The interaction between Blacks and Whites had been limited to the confines of slavery and had thus created a relationship of socially acceptable inequality. Both Blacks and Whites had been mentally conditioned to observe the behaviors associated with White Supremacy and Black inferiority (Boles 2004). Many former customs continued to be a part of the lifestyles between

Blacks and Whites. For example, it was understood that public interaction between the two races was forbidden. Common courtesies such as greeting each other in public, making eye contact, or even walking on the same side of the street were strictly forbidden. The interaction between Blacks and Whites was not only a personal preference by some Whites, it became a legal mandate in the ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896)*. The dilemma of *Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896)* began with a challenge against a Louisiana legislative act that required that railroads provide separate cars for Black passengers in order to ensure the comfort of its White patrons. After much deliberation, it was determined that it was legally acceptable to separate the races as long as equal accommodations were provided for both. Although the case stemmed from the implications of Blacks being allowed to ride in the same railroad cars as Whites, the ramifications extended to all social interactions between Blacks and Whites (Kluger 1977). Blacks were forbidden to invade almost any spaces that had the potential to be occupied by Whites. There were separate but equal water fountains, restrooms, restaurants, hotels, and school settings.

Although the claim behind the notion of “separate but equal” was that efforts would be made to ensure that the spaces that Blacks occupied were of equal quality as the spaces occupied by Whites, it soon became apparent that this was not going to be the case. One of the most apparent examples of the dissimilarity was in the learning environments of students. All teaching aids and facilities set aside for the education of Blacks remained inferior to that of Whites.

This state of unfairness did not go unnoticed nor was it passively accepted by Blacks. As early as the 1930’s members of Black political organizations such as the NAACP began implementing strategies that Lively (1999) identifies as “a long-term but eventually successful for defeating official segregation in public schools” (p 106). Advocates against the “separate but equal” notion of education began and were successful in the desegregation of institutions of higher

education; however, the notion of desegregating public school systems was often met with resistance. In order to impede efforts to desegregate public schools, many southern states tried to pacify those who were focused towards desegregation by increasing the allocations of funds to Black high schools. However, those in favor of desegregation did not waver. It was their firm belief that any institution which forced separation of races could never be equal. Not only did legal segregation reemphasize the notion of White Supremacy, it also had the detrimental consequence of generating a permanent sense of subservience in the mindsets of {minority} children which would cause them to question where they belong in their communities.

Inequalities Continue

Although many positive strides were made in the process of educating African Americans after slavery, there was still one fact that remained. Schools were still designed in a manner that required Black students to be educated separately from White students. *Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896)* was initially determined by the government to be an acceptable solution to meeting the demand for education equality. However, the state of the education for Blacks still remained inferior to that of Whites. Lane (1932) argued that due to “historically-descended political, economic and social conditions” the disadvantages of the education being received by Blacks was overwhelming (p. 5). Miller & Gregg (1932) conducted a study which identified inadequate resources, low teacher quality, undesirable teacher student ratios and insufficient funds as major contributors to the underperformance levels of Black students. According to Thompson (1933) in his report on the status of institutions of Higher education which catered to Black students, “not only does the Negro college or university suffer the direct disadvantages of our policy of segregation in education, but it inherits the disastrous results of that policy incurred by the elementary and secondary schools” (p. 257). According to Thompson, various inequities were still

present in the “separate but equal” era of American history that contributed to Blacks receiving an education that was far below that which was considered standard for White children. In his 1933 report on the status of Black schools in comparison to Black schools, Thompson made the following observations:

1. Eighty-two per cent of the Negroes in elementary school are enrolled the fifth grade and below; and only 1.6 per cent are enrolled in the eighth grade. Because of the difference in th length of school terms provided for White and Negro pupils, and because of the inequitable enforcement of the compulsory school attendance laws, Negro pupils are being provided a much more inadequate4 elementary education than the White pupils in the same community.
2. It was estimated that, at least, one million Negro pupils of legal school age were not in school at all; and that of those in school, 48 percent were not provided with seatsw, while there was generally a surplus of seats in the White schools in the same community.
3. A comparison of the White and Negro teachers in the same communities revealed that Negro teachers wsere almost invariably paid less than White teachers, even when they had the same level of training and performed the same type of work, and, in instances where Negro teachers possessed less gtraining, salaries wer not paid in proportion to the amount of training, for, although Negro teachers, on the average, possessed 70 per cent as much training, yet they were paid *only* 41 per cent as much salary as their White colleagues in the same communities. Moreover, using the White teacher in the same community is a norm, the Negro elementary school teaching staff needs an additional 28,000 teachers to equal the pupil-teacher ration in the White elementary schools, and,

in order to raise the level of training of the Negro teacher to the norm of the White teacher in the same community, an additional 13,814 teachers will have to be replaced or given intensive in-service training.

4. Finally, it was estimated that \$75,000,000 would be needed to bring the Negro elementary up to the norm of the White elementary schools in the same communities; and that \$60,000,000 in addition to the present annual expenditures on Negro schools will be required to keep them at the White elementary-school norm. (Thompson, 1933, 257-258).

According to Thompson, the inequities found between the Black and White school systems created a level of inequality that would make the mission of equality an impossibility. Black children who were being educated by such systems were identified as progressing at a level that placed them two to three levels below White students during elementary schools. This incongruity, as well as the limited number of high schools available to educate Blacks, was identified as having such a severe impact on the high school performance of Black students that often less than ten percent of school aged attended high school. Furthermore, only 8.6 percent of those who entered high school even graduated.

Malczewski (2011) also identifies intentional governmental control as a contributing factor in the inability of Blacks to progress as well as Whites. One of the examples of governmental disfavor for educational of Blacks acknowledged by Malczewski's was the government's advocacy of shorter school terms for Black students than those of White students. Specifically cited in Malczewski's article is a letter written by a Mississippi teacher to governmental officials over Negro education complaining that the local government had shortened the school terms for Black students. The teacher (identified as Mag Hannah) realized that if Black students were

exposed to shorter opportunities to receive academic instruction, then their chances of being successful in school would be severely limited. In an effort to construct a positive outcome and a more productive outcome for her students, Ms. Hannah realized that many of the decisions that were created in Jim Crow south was designed to inhibit the progression of Black students. Like other supporters of Black education, Hannah bypassed local policy makers and directed her concerns to higher officials. In an effort acquire more influence over the policies affecting the education of Black schools, Black leaders began to mobilize politically and into special interest groups who focused on lobbying for the improvement of southern Black schools.

Efforts to Desegregate Schools

The idea of Blacks and Whites attending the same school was met with hostility throughout the South. Whites were never able to consent to the notion of White students sharing the same classroom as Black students. Even after the government consented to legalize literacy among Blacks, the schoolhouse still continued to operate as a symbol of racial separation and White social status in America. Quite often there were Blacks who opposed the idea of academic segregation and challenged what had become standard segregation. Although the decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) was the turning point in the fight against segregated schools, it was not the first attempt dismantle separate school systems in America.

One of the first documented attempts of allowing Blacks and Whites to attend the same schools was identified during the slave era. Not all states became emancipated at the same time. Slavery in Boston became illegal in 1781, yet racist attitudes persisted. Although they were identified as being entitled to many of the rights of Whites, Black children in Boston were not being educated. Black, tax paying parents in Boston began to protest for the educational rights of

their children. Legislature soon agreed to allow Black children access to public schools. However, the negative racial attitudes within the school were so intolerable that Black parents made the decision to establish a separate school. The Boston legislature soon implemented laws that mandated Blacks to only attend schools that were designated for Blacks only. Later, the Black community of Boston, Massachusetts, began to resent the notion of legally enforced separation of schooling and began to protest the legislation. As early as 1850, Benjamin Forbes attempted to sue for the rights of his daughter to attend a Boston school that had been designated as White only. Forbes argued that separate schooling reinforced racial prejudices, but as cited in G.J. Marshall (2007), “this prejudice, if it exists, was not created by law, and probably cannot be changed by law” (p. 19).

In the *Plessy-vs.-Ferguson* ruling of 1896, the court system decided that although African Americans and Whites should remain separate, they should have access to facilities of equal quality. Unfortunately, the separate but equal practice was not successful in creating opportunities for social, economic, and academic progress for Blacks equivalent to those provided to White Americans. Accommodations such as bus seating, restaurant accessibility, and educational spaces allotted African Americans were inferior to those of Whites (Merjian, 2010). Many political activists began to believe that the only way to improve the education of Black students was to rally against the social separation of schools. The lack of funds and benefits allocated to Black schools seemed to indicate that the only way Black students would be allotted equal educational opportunities as White students was to place them in the same learning environments.

Another attempt to dismantle forced segregation of learning environments actually occurred in Topeka, Kansas, which later became the location for the landmark decision of school desegregation. In 1920, the Topeka Colored Parents and Teachers’ association approached Elisha

Scott, one of the most noted Black attorneys of the area, to defend their honor when a local newspaper questioned the performance capability of local Black teachers. Furthermore, parents who resided in the district of Coffeyville, Kansas, challenged the decision of the local school board to deny the entrance of several Black students into a newly renovated school which was originally developed to accommodate all students in the district who had performed achieved high levels of academic performance in their school. Through the persistence of parents and the support of the NAACP, the Kansas Supreme Court ruled in 1924 that Black students could not be denied admittance based on race (Rosenblum, 2013). Even though the Coffeyville decision supported the desires of several Black parents to have their children educated in a desegregated environment, there were still parents who were skeptical of having their children assimilated into a mixed school system and therefore resisted any efforts of the NAACP towards such a goal. For example, Black parents of Baxter Springs were well aware that the educational facilities of their schools were not equivalent to the same facilities of White schools in their areas. Rather than insist on school desegregation, these parents preferred efforts to improve the Black schools in the area. Parents of Baxter Springs were afraid that desegregation would have an even more adverse effect on the Black students and Black teachers of that area than segregation (ibid).

Civil Rights Movement

Nothing should be overlooked in fighting for better education. Be persistent and ornery; this will be good for the lethargic educational establishment and will aid the whole cause of public education (Roy Wilkins, speech given at the NAACP Convention, 1969 as cited in Riley, 1995).

During the 1950s, there existed a strong discrepancy in how Blacks and Whites perceived racial progress. According to Hayman, many Southern Whites believed that much improvement

had occurred in the level of opportunities available to Blacks than ever before; however, Blacks were more focused on areas where progression towards racial equality seemed lacking.

In its most monumental efforts to implement school desegregation, courts approved the historic decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) which challenged the notion of separate but equal facilities by arguing that the mere process of separation reiterated the belief of inequality. The *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) decision sought to change the face of America's classrooms and schools by eliminating "statewide sponsored racial segregation in America's public schools" (Patterson J. T., 2001, p. xiii). It was hoped that by providing equal education opportunities for all races, the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) decision be a catalyst towards the elimination of all social racism.

When the decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) was implemented, one of the main concerns of those in favor of school integration was how Black students were not being exposed to the same educational opportunities as their White counterparts. The *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) decision was a refutation against *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896) which had identified that a separate but equal education was a constitutional practice in American school systems (Engl, 2004). Thurgood Marshall and other *Brown* activists adamantly opposed the philosophy of separate but equal as being fair. It was argued that the establishment of separate schools for Blacks and Whites was a violation of the fourteenth amendment which guaranteed equal protection for all citizens (Vile, 2010). Furthermore, these advocates believed that requiring students remain in separate facilities because of skin color "was inherently discriminatory" (Patterson J. T., 2001, p. 93). According to Marshall, by requiring Black students to acquire an education in a space separate from Whites, the

government was subconsciously creating the belief that Blacks were of a lower social standing than Whites and thus emphasizing the belief of Black inferiority in the mindsets of both Blacks and Whites. One of the arguments of the plaintiffs of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) case was that by allowing Black and White students to receive education within the same facility, negative perceptions such as these would cease.

Justice Henry B. Brown opposed the arguments presented by Marshall and other *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) advocates. According to Brown the congressional parties who sanctioned the fourteenth amendment supported the idea of segregated schools for Blacks and Whites. Furthermore, Brown argued that the separation of schools for the two races did not create a sense of inferiority for Blacks. In response to Justice Brown's argument, those sanctioned by the NAACP fund decided to temporarily postpone efforts towards school desegregation. Both Charles Houston and Thurgood Marshall feared that pressing the issue could have damaging effects on previous civil rights' gains. A more feasible opportunity to revisit the idea of school desegregation presented itself in 1950 with Chief Justice Fred Vinson's decision in the case of *Sweatt v. Painter*. Heman Sweatt, a Black law student from Texas, declared that although there was a Black law school available to him, the academics of the Black law school were inferior to that of the neighboring White law school. The courts agreed with Sweatt's argument. The *Sweatt* ruling allotted that there were aspects of equality which could not be measured by tangible factors.

Houston and Marshall viewed this as an opportune moment to revisit the challenge against school segregation. However, rather than focusing only on schools, the argument confronted the entire system of Jim Crow and segregation. In separate challenges, the NAACP launched several

cases in four separate states and focused a fight against the segregation of public schools in the District of Columbia (Stephens, Jr., Schebb, & Stooksbury, 2006).

When the decision of Brown vs. the Board of Education was implemented, the primary focus of those in favor of school integration was how Black students were not being exposed to the same educational opportunities as their White counterparts. The Brown decision was a refutation of Plessy vs. Ferguson, which had identified that a separate but equal education was a constitutional practice in American school systems (Engl, 2004).

Thurgood Marshall and other Brown activists adamantly opposed the philosophy of separate but equal as being fair. These advocates believed that requiring students remain in separate facilities because of skin color “was inherently discriminatory” (Patterson J. T., 2001, p. 93). According to Marshall, by requiring that African Americans be educated in a separate space than Whites, the government was subconsciously creating the belief that Blacks were viewed as having lower social standing than Whites and thus emphasizing the belief of Black inferiority in the mindsets of both Blacks and Whites. In order to support the claim that segregation had a negative impact on the self-esteem and identity of African American students, supporters of the desegregation movement introduced evidence from the Clark Doll project. According to the Clark research project, each time a Black child was presented with the images of a Black doll and a White doll, the child would feel negatively towards the Black doll (ibid). The response of the Black child to the White doll was perceived as an indicator of how Black students viewed themselves when compared to Whites (Patterson, 2001). One of the hopes of the Brown decision was that by allowing Black and White students to be educated within the same facility, negative perceptions such as these would discontinue. In opposition, those against the desegregation of schools declared that allowing Black and White students to attend the same schools would have a detrimental effect

on funding. It was argued that Whites would not only withdraw their children from public schools, they would also refuse to financially support and thus “injure both races” (Stephens, Jr., Schebb, & Stooksbury, 2006, p. 113).

The struggle between the Supreme Court Justices was highly representative of the discrepancies that existed in the court of public opinion. A pivotal change in representation occurred in September of 1953 when the death of Chief Justice Fred Vinson allowed for the recruitment of Earl Warren. Warren adamantly identified himself as opposed to segregation and clearly identified the dismantling of *Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896)* as his objective. With the support of Justices Vinson, Black and Frankfurter, major tenets for segregation were dismantled. For example, rather than advocating a connection between the fourteenth amendment and segregation, it was decided that the true intent of the fourteenth amendment was unclear. The focus was then placed on the role of education within society. Education was identified as the most influential factor in providing children with necessary skills needed to be successful as good citizens and in a good career. After much deliberation, the government concluded that the ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896)* inhibited the ability of education to accomplish either of these objectives.

Kirk (2011) identifies many hindrances associated with the desegregation processes attempted in various Arkansas counties. For example, whereas Thurgood Marshall supported an expedited approach to the school desegregation process, Harry S. Ashmore, an Arkansas newspaper editor, felt that the process towards desegregation should occur slowly and cautiously. Events of the desegregation process of Arkansas exposed many of the issues associated with desegregating southern school systems. For example, Arkansas began its plans for desegregation according to the financial feasibility to the state. It was assumed that counties with smaller

numbers of Black citizens would be easier to desegregate than those with larger numbers of Blacks. In the fall of 1954, Charleston, Arkansas, quietly initiated its desegregation policy thus accommodating the transportation of fourteen Black students twenty miles to the nearest schools which had once been identified as all-white. Fayetteville, Arkansas, began the first widely publicized process of desegregation in 1955 by transporting nine Black students into a White school district. The school district soon abandoned its efforts to transport Black students to White districts by identifying the task as financially unbearable to the town's budget. The issue of desegregation remained a point of contention within Arkansas thus coming to its peak in the fall of 1957. Then Arkansas' Governor Orval Faubus mobilized the National Guard in order to prevent nine students from enrolling in Little Rock Arkansas' Central High School. President Dwight Eisenhower was forced to intervene by requiring federal troops to escort these students into the school and also providing armed security to ensure their safety. This confrontation between the federal and local government created an atmosphere that not only threatened to halt further desegregation attempts, it also endangered previous desegregation successes.

Kessinger (2005) identifies Cincinnati, Ohio, as another city that struggled with the transition from segregation to desegregation. According to Kessinger, in the 1963 lawsuit *Tina Deal V. Cincinnati Board of Education*, Tina Deal, along with the NAACP, claimed that the district was purposely creating attendance zones that had the effect of keeping Black students from attending all-white schools. Not only were Black students required to attend schools that were located in their zoned areas, the board also approached the problem of overcrowding in Black schools by providing temporary buildings to operate as classrooms rather than assigning Black students to White schools closer to their school zones. The case was severely hampered when the

plaintiffs were denied access to the records of the students and personnel. Eventually, the Cincinnati Board of Education was found innocent of all charges.

Another strong protest against desegregation in higher education occurred in Mississippi. James Howard Meredith decided after a career in the air force that he wanted to further his education at a university in his home town. After much struggle, he was finally given permission to enroll in the fall of 1962. Hundreds of White southerners showed up to protest Meredith's entrance into the institution. The protest ended in a violent confrontation that resulted in the death of two people and physical injuries on almost thirty federal marshals and 132 other citizens. Meredith continued to attend classes, but he had to be escorted by law officials for his own safety (Hayman 1996).

Segregation or Desegregation?

Many studies have been conducted concerning the effects of desegregation in the public school system. Research on the effects of desegregation on the achievement levels of African Americans began very early in the century. Long (1935) focused on the effects of desegregation on Black students early in the century. Within his work, Long begins by acknowledging that even within this early stage of the endeavor, opinions toward the attitude of desegregation varies within the Black population. Even in the early stages of the debate of whether or not Black children should be educated in segregated or desegregated environments, the opinions often varied even among those who had struggled to acquire their own education. According to Long, the opinions of Blacks on segregation are usually divided into four groups:

- 1) Those who accept segregation in principle because they are afraid they will lose their status if they speak up.
- 2) Those who identify segregation and its growth as inevitable

- 3) Radicals who challenge every step towards segregation
- 4) Negro educators who acknowledge the inevitability of segregation, but who are opposed of its constant development. (Long, 1935)

In an effort to exemplify the impact of desegregation on the academic experiences of Black children, Long identified a study conducted in 1933 by Mrs. I. B. Prosser. The research was conducted in Northern schools that were experimenting with mixed student populations. Prosser's research (which relied on personality tests and questionnaires) concluded that "the personality development of Negro children in segregated schools is superior to that of mixed schools" (p. 339). According to Long, Prosser's study identified several factors which inhibited the personality progression of African students. For example, in Prosser's study identified negative attitudes of White administration and teachers towards Black students as factors that limited the development of Black students. According to Prosser, many Whites educators believed "that Negroes do not adjust well to the American curricula, probably because of inferior mental equipment, and that, therefore, the separation of the Negroes from Whites is a part of the approach to adequate recognition of individual differences" (p. 341). According to the study, the aspect of being exposed to such attitudes created negative self-images among Black students and thus decreased their determination to excel in their academics.

During the first year of desegregation Rist (1978) conducted another study which focused on the idea of cultural pluralism in a middle class White school. Cultural pluralism is defined as the implication that "several distinct groups come together within a single institutional setting; they are able to maintain their distinctions over time" (p. 13). Rist argues that the desegregation process as it was conducted failed to include aspects of African American culture into the new setting. For example, although African American students were assimilated within the White

school structure, very little effort was placed on adapting the curriculum to fit the needs of the new students. Maintaining a curriculum which focused on White cultural values created an environment of unequal opportunities for African American students.

In order to gather a perspective of the experiences of African American students during desegregation, Rist focused his observations on the experiences and perceptions of students and teachers. Data collected was from formal settings such as the classrooms and parent teacher meetings to informal settings such as the teachers' lounge and cafeteria. Rist's study asserted that even though desegregation had become a reality, the racial attitudes of teachers continued to exist in the forms of low expectations of African American students. Quite often evidence was recorded where African American students were isolated from the learning process not only intellectually, but also physically. He specifically identifies a Black male student who was placed in a corner of the classroom separate from the other students. According to Rist, Black students were continually isolated from White students throughout the school year.

Collins (2008) conducted a generational study which focused on comparing the experiences of current African American students to those of students initially involved in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)* movement. In contrast to Rist's personal observations, Collins relied on the oral histories of those who were directly involved to conduct an acute analysis of various factors that set the backdrop for the educational experiences of current African American students.

The time period of this study was divided into two eras which he identified as the "Black American Period" (1950s-1980s) and the "African American Period" (1980s to present) (p. 5). Collins' study specifically focused on comparing the experiences of a husband and wife who were born during the "Black American" period to the experiences of their children who were born during

the “African American period.” Both parents began their educational career in segregated schools and migrated into desegregated schools. As experienced observers of both integrated and desegregated school systems, the parents believed that the desegregated school system was incapable of meeting the needs of their children. Focusing on their children’s experience in predominantly White schools, the parents were extremely displeased with the school’s efforts to provide a learning environment that allowed their children to experience the same amount of success as their White classmates. In many instances one of the children was identified as a discipline problem and incapable of performing up to the required standards.

In a study conducted by Eick (2010) collected oral histories of students involved in the desegregation of Baltimore City School System to analyze not only the overall experiences of high school students, but specifically how students from different groups related to each other. Although White students, especially White female students, continued to experience extreme favoritism within the newly desegregated schools, Black student experiences were quite the opposite. Two Black female students, Annie Cole and Doris Wright, describe the desegregation period as a time period when they “entered an institution that was forced by law to teach them” (Eick, 2010, p. 372). Rather than receiving a warm welcome, Cole and Wright remember being treated with disdain by their teachers and fellow students. Research indicates that within the walls of the desegregated schools, these two female students were often left to navigate their way through the tumultuous terrain alone. Their mothers, who had often visited them and bought them treats when they were in segregated schools, never came to the desegregated schools. Furthermore, they had to continuously protect themselves from other students who would spit on them and boys who felt free to touch their bodies without permission. Worst of all, was the lack of concern for them displayed by most of the all-White school faculty. Cole and Wright identify teachers who refused

to help them with their assignments and a principal who refused to intervene when made aware of the mistreatments. Wright reported how Black families did not allow their daughters to participate in after school activities for fear of what could happen to them. Incapable of enduring the mistreatment, Cole dropped out of high school. Wright, who managed to complete her studies, identifies some memories as so painful that they have been blocked from her memory.

The experiences of Black male students varied according to the status they had attained in the all-Black schools. Black male students who had experienced success in segregated schools were identified as having experienced continued success in desegregated schools. Many of these young men had developed athletic skills which made the transition easier. However, young Black males who had not done well athletically or academically in the segregated schools were often bullied and or beaten up by the White students in their new environments.

Collins research identifies disfavor with school desegregation. He believes that the implementation of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)* decision not only propagated the belief that the education derived from Black school systems was inferior to that of White school system, but it also created an educational system incapable of meeting the needs of Black students. Fairclough (2006) also shares the belief that the desegregation of public schooling had an adverse affect on African Americans. Fairclough asserts that prior to desegregation, Black communities viewed the education of their students as a collective responsibility. During the era of segregation when Blacks were in control of their own schools, Black communities demanded high standards for their children. Teachers were required to exhibit “an old-fashioned sense of missionary idealism” toward student education (p. 5). According to Fairclough, the employment of many Black teachers depended on schools remaining segregated;

hence, the desegregation movement resulted in the dismissal of many of these dedicated teachers and their replacement with White teachers.

Stories gathered by Dingus (2006) also illustrated how the segregated school experiences of Black students varied according to their social class. For example, students who were identified as members of the middle class were not as limited in their opportunities to attend school as those whose school attendance was dictated by agricultural calendars which required them to work in the fields during parts of the school year. Furthermore, students whose families were of the middle class were not only more capable of acquiring the necessary resources for schools, they also had greater opportunities to attend college.

Dingus's analysis of the participants' perceptions of the impact school desegregation had on the Black community produced various opinions. One positive perception of desegregation included greater access to resources and activities that were allotted Black students. Also, one of the participants maintained that racial relationships between members of the community began to improve. However, it was acknowledged that many citizens of the Black community had difficulty transcending the negative mental impacts of segregation. For example poorer Blacks who had only had only experienced the security of their seclusion found it difficult to trust Whites or to get over feelings of inferiority. The experiences of teachers also varied. Although the levels of responsibility associated with the profession did not change, Black teachers were hindered in their ability to work with Black students. Even worse, many Black teachers lost their jobs thus leaving Black students with very few Black teachers to look to for guidance.

Brill (2006) conducted a study of the desegregation process of the first community to publicly identify efforts towards desegregation after the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) decision—Fayetteville, Arkansas. The purpose of the study was to analyze

the experiences of Blacks that participated in the desegregation process. Although many of the communities that attempted desegregation were marked by hostility and upheaval, Fayetteville, Arkansas is identified as having a rather peaceful transition. According to Brill, Fayetteville's ability to peacefully transition Black students into its all-White facilities was primarily attributed to the small number of African American students that lived within the school district. Unlike Little Rock which had a population of 25,000 African Americans, Fayetteville only identified 400 Black residents out of a total population of 18,000 residents. There was only one school, Henderson, that served the needs of the Black population. Unfortunately, Henderson only provided an education up to the ninth grade. In order to continue meet the needs of those Black students who wished to proceed further, the Fayetteville school board provided tuition and living costs to transport their small population of nine to twelve Black high school students to a Black school that was 50 miles outside of the local school district. The desegregation mandate of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) provided an opportunity for Fayetteville to make a decision that was economically advantageous to its school. It was much cheaper to transport the districts few Black students to White schools that were closer in vicinity than it was to transfer them to Black schools so far away.

Although the desegregation process was identified as lacking much of the racial tension identified in other school desegregation efforts, many of the students identify incidences of racial discomfort. For example, many of the White females would not use the same shower stalls that had been used by Black female students. Also, Black football players who managed to fit in with their home team, were exposed to various examples of racism from opposing teams. For example, several teams refused to play Fayetteville if a Black student was on the team. Also, restaurants refused to serve Black members of the team on roadtrips. However, Fayetteville school stood by

its Black team members by refusing to eat at such restaurants but rather choosing to carry lunches prepared by cafeteria workers on road trips. The strongest difficulties associated with the transition was the inability of Black students to perform as well as White students in their new environment. Because of the inferior facilities of the all Black schools from which these students had transferred, Black students were further behind. Also, students reported not having learned the appropriate study habits needed for academic success.

Cope (2011) conducted a similar study which focused on Little Rock, Arkansas, and the interactions between Black students and White teachers during desegregation. Although both Fayetteville and Little Rock are located in the same state, the process of desegregation was very dissimilar. Because Little Rock had a larger number of students to accommodate during the desegregation process, the transition was not as peaceful. Not only were there riots and protests, but the high schools closed down during the 1958-1959 school term. Cope focuses his study towards White teachers who were responsible for maintaining a positive learning environment in the midst of the chaos. According to Cope, White teachers of that time period were forbidden from expressing any of their views of having Black students enter the once all-white facilities. Therefore, there were very few records of White teachers' attitudes towards desegregation.

Due to the censorship associated with Little Rock's desegregation process, Cope acknowledged the difficulties associated with accumulating reliable information. For example, one issue lay within the probability of participants embellishing incidents in a manner that would make some more heroic or demonic in order to create a more interesting story. However, by comparing the narratives of the teachers with reports accumulated from other student participants, media records, and newspaper reports of the time period, a clear and believable accumulation of data was retrievable. Resulting data from Cope's study indicated that the attitudes of White teachers towards

desegregation was mainly divided among teachers according to their number of years experience. Many of the teachers who had seniority within the schools were identified as pro segregation and were not in favor of having Black students infiltrate their spaces. However, newer teachers were identified as more accepting of the idea of desegregating schools. Evidence of the positive attitudes of the younger teachers is confirmed with corresponding narratives of Daisy Bates, a mentor to the nine Black students who first entered the school. According to Bates many teachers went beyond their required duties to help Black students catch up on work that had been missed due to them being denied entrance during the first weeks of school. There was also a validating testimony from Minniejean Brown, one of the Black students of the desegregation process who stated that one of her White teachers had loaned her a book in order to aid her in catching up on her work.

In addition to validated stories, there were also many stories which produced contradictory data. For example, many teachers claimed many of the teachers stated that they were able to maintain an environment which dissuaded racial tensions. However, many Black students reported incidences, especially in the gyms and around coaches, where antagonistic attitudes for Black students were encouraged. One student Elizabeth Eckford reported having to leave school early because students in her gym class repeatedly attacked her with gym balls. Also, another Black student, Ernest Green claimed that he often felt that gym teachers would intentionally group Black students with the most racially hostile White students and do nothing to protect them. In contrast, a White student, identified as an adamant segregationalist, reported an incident where a Black student was struck by a rock and one of the teachers warned the White students that such behavior would not be tolerated. Many of the Black students also identify varying attitudes of White teachers to their presence. Black students recalled certain classrooms where teachers strictly

forbade any type of aggressive behaviours towards them as well as various situations where teachers chose to ignore and often encourage mistreatments.

Patterson, Mickelson, Hester, & Wyrick (2011) used oral histories to analyze the roles of Black teachers in segregated and desegregated schools. According to research, the professional and social interactions between Black teachers and Black students in segregated environments have proven to be very instrumental in the motivation and levels of success experienced by the students. Patterson, Mickelson, Hester, and Wyrick states that, “African American teachers’ caring was more than a provision of affection to students: it was political and took a variety of forms” (p. 268). Research suggested that African American teachers did not limit their relationship with their students to the classroom. They felt an intrinsic obligation to not only protect their students from the outside cruelties, they also felt committed to ensure that they were prepared to meet the social and academic challenges that awaited them. The narrative data collected by the researchers identified that the participants all remembered positive interactions with their teachers that extended beyond that of “teacher-student” but rather was more comparable to the relationship of a mother to a child.

Another study conducted by Ramsey (2012) uses oral histories to examine the experiences of two African American teachers, Kathleen Crosby and Bertha Maxwell-Roddey, who experienced active careers in both segregated and desegregated schools. Ramsey emphasized how these two activists used their roles as teachers to not only help foster the ideals of gender equality, but also created a forum designed to help Black students develop positive self images. Research indicates that during the era when segregated Black schools were lacking funds to meet the needs of their students, these two teachers donated their time, and oftentimes personal funds, to help develop programs to help meet the academic needs of children. During the era of desegregation

Maxwell-Roddy and Crosby both served as administrators in previously all-white schools. According to Ramsey's research, Maxwell-Roddy & Crosby identify themselves as activists who not only helped Black students adjust to their environments, but also challenged White teachers to treat Black students equally.

Similarly, Dingus (2006) conducted an intergenerational study which included the stories of African Americans who were teachers during the era of school desegregation in Georgia school systems. Dingus's study included three generations of African American female family members from Georgia who had all participated in the teaching field. Through the use of guided, open ended conversations, Dingus created a forum that allowed the participants to share their experiences in the teaching field. Guiding questions allowed Dingus to gather the participants' perspective on how their personal and professional lives had affected their worldviews. The generations of participants spanned from 1920-2006, which included several individuals who had experienced or observed the desegregation movement.

Several participants who were active teachers during the desegregation movement discussed not only the disadvantages associated with segregated schools, but also perceived advantages. For example, one participant (Jane) stated that although there were extreme economic disadvantages associated with Black schools, the actual education acquired in such environments was of exceptional due to the value Black communities placed on education and the dedication of teachers of the Black teachers of that era. Another participant (Madre) identified how teachers used their own funds to buy books and other supplies needed to educate Black students. Participants identified the teacher student interactions as defining influences on their motivation for success and as having a positive impact on their character development. One of the participants who had also been student during the desegregation movement (Faye) compared her experience

in segregated schools to the experiences of her siblings who were educated in desegregated schools. According to Faye, her siblings did not receive the same encouragement and support from White teachers as she had experienced with her Black teachers. It was this participants' belief that African American teachers were better equipped to nurture African American students because of their shared heritage which helped to form greater interpersonal relationships.

Guiding Theoretical Frameworks: Critical Race Theory

The methodology will be a qualitative study based in Critical Race Theory. Delgado & Stefancic (2001) define critical race as “a radical legal movement that seeks to transform the relationship among race, racism, and power” (p. 144). Ladson-Billings (1998) argues that the first step in understanding Critical Race Theory is to “examine how conceptions of citizenship and race interact” (25). In her analysis of race and power interact, Ladson-Billings uses terms “conceptual whiteness” and “conceptual blackness” (as cited in King 1995). Because CRT framework is used to focus on how racial power operates in multiple institutions of power, it can effectively operate “as a tool through which to define, expose, and address educational problems” (Parker & Lynn, 2009, p. 148).

Billings' ideals of racial interaction are explored through the writings of Pratt, Fanon, and Bhabha. For example, in her article “Arts of the Contact Zone,” Mary Louise Pratt presents a theory which parallels Billings' theory of racial interactions. Mary Louise Pratt identifies colonialism as the foundation that created forums of power based on dominance and inferiority. According to Pratt (1991), when two races that have been separated by a hierarchical power system interact, there is a struggle for power that ensues. The forum in which these powers interact is known as the contact zone. Also, Fanon (1967), states that a Black man's “inferiority comes into being through the other” (p. 110). It is not until a Black man is in the presence of Whiteness that

he gets to see himself through their eyes. The interactions between Blacks and Whites take on the role of dehumanization and objectification of Blacks when they are in the same space. Bhabha (2002) reiterates Fanon's theory of "othering" when discussing the interaction between Blacks and Whites. He, too, notes that when African Americans are in the midst of Whites, they become seen as less than human. Because CRT framework is used to focus on how racial power operates in multiple institutions of power, CRT is an effective method of analyzing problems that exist in the field of education (Parker & Lynn, 2009). Since my study seeks to describe the experiences of African American who were students when Randolph County began to desegregate, CRT is an appropriate critical theoretical framework for this study.

According to Critical Race theorists, the difference in educational performance is not limited to the educational arena itself, but rather gathers its origins from the social construction of racial relations and power that are created and executed through various institutional practices. According to Leonardo (2009) "in order for racial hegemony to saturate everyday life, it has to be secured by a process of domination, or those acts, decisions, and policies that Whites perpetrate on people of color" (p. 75). It is through the creation of various forms of legislation that are designed to regulate the behavior of those who exist in society that enable dominant cultures to execute supremacy over others.

Morrell (2008) displays components of critical race theory when he analyzes the discrepancy that exists between the percentage of African American and White students in classes such as gifted and special education classes. According to Morrell, even today there is an overrepresentation of African American students in special education classes and only a sparse number of African American students in gifted classes as opposed to White students. Because my

study seeks to describe experiences of African American who were students when Randolph County began to desegregate, CRT is an appropriate critical theoretical framework for this study.

CRT focuses on the manner in which African Americans construct meaning of their lived experiences. Because one of the objectives of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) decision was to create equal opportunities between two groups that have historically identified themselves as unequal, Critical Race theory is an appropriate discourse. Solórzano and Yosso (2001) identify one of the primary objectives of CRT is to “offer a liberatory or transformative response to racial, gender, and class oppression” (p. 2). By carefully delineating how racial oppression is created within society, CRT seeks to free those who have been oppressed by those in authority from discrimination. When applying CRT to educational studies, one must first acknowledge the strong influence race has in our culture. Solórzano and Yosso (2009) declare that in order to be effective, research from critical race theorists must emerge from the foundational belief that racism is a pervasive and eternal characteristic of society.

Sullivan (2006) argues that racism and its oppressive practices are so ingrained in our psyche that it will always continue. She continues to assert that our school system is one of the strongest contributors to racism. According to Sullivan, “educational structures and practices are some of the most effective ways by which habits are formed and transformed” (p. 27). On the other hand, Brown (1995) believes one of the strongest combatants to racial oppressive practices is the American education system. Although these views are in opposition, each has merit.

Although the perspectives of Sullivan and Brown seem to oppose each other, each of their opinions can be seen as reflective of educational advocates. Solórzano and Yosso (2001) state that “critical researchers acknowledge that educational institutions operate in contradictory ways, with their potential to oppress and marginalize coexisting with their potential to emancipate and

empower” (p. 133). There are many who agree with Sullivan’s perception that current educational practices are facilitators of inequitable social practices. For example, Leonardo (2009) identifies America’s school system as one of the strongest enablers of the doctrine of White dominance. According to Leonardo one of the strongest instruments used to facilitate the idea of Whites being superior to Blacks is the textbook. Quite often history books present Whites as being heroic conquerors of nations. Textbooks are usually written from the White perspective, thus giving voice to White experiences and marginalizing the historical voices of people of color. Furthermore, Leonardo (2004) advocates the notion that the relations of power “is secured through a series of actions, the ontological meaning which is not always transparent to its subjects and objects” (p. 3). Those in power are not always aware of the manner in which their actions illustrate their subconscious beliefs of White superiority. For example Yosso (2005) states that many educators believe Black students are more academically disadvantaged because they “enter school without the normative cultural knowledge and skills necessary for academic success” (p. 75).

Ladson-Billings (1999) also argues that the educational system begins with the notion that children of color enter the classroom void of skills necessary for success. If students are perceived as having difficulty accessing information through the use of literary tools that are dominant in mainstream culture, they are often perceived as being difficult to teach or incapable of being successful academically. Beliefs such as these have an impact not only on the expectations teachers have on the abilities of Black students, it also impacts the expectations students have of themselves.

Rather than using traditional methods of scholarship, CRT identifies story-telling as a method traditionally used to “reinforce the majoritarian rule” (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2009, p 138). Quite often the only historical stories presented are those from the White viewpoint. According to Solórzano & Yosso, in order to present the stories of those who are

traditionally left out of history, CRT emphasizes the use of counter narratives. Counter narratives are described as a tool which “can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle on racial reform” (p. 138). According to Delgado & Stefancic (2001), many African Americans fail to express the injustices which they have suffered due to dominant ideologies. However, their untold stories can act as a powerful force in the “process of adjustment in our system of beliefs and categories by calling attention to neglected evidence and reminding readers of our common humanity” (p. 24). This research seeks to give voice to those students who were a part of the desegregation experience by giving them a chance to tell the story of their experiences.

CHAPTER III - CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Alabama and Education

Contextual information: Alabama and Randolph County

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an historical examination of Alabama's perception of the relationship between education and Blacks. I focus on how the racial attitudes of Alabamians affected the societal and governmental atmosphere. I will follow with a discussion of Alabama's educational facilities during the era of the twentieth century. Subsequently, I will include a discussion of the formation of separate school systems for African Americans in Randolph County. In the closing segment I will provide information concerning the events occurring during the time frame in which Randolph County was going through the process of desegregation. The purpose of this information is to clarify the significant events that influenced the community during this era and establish a sense of the conditions prevalent during the time frame of the study, 1965-1975.

Alabama

Alabama has a strong history of racist views embedded with the belief of Black inferiority. The election of Abraham Lincoln into Presidency in 1860 sparked a strong revolt by the Alabama government. Due to the fear of losing the economic stability of slavery, Alabama chose to secede from the United States government and establish its own confederate government. According to its ordinance of secession, Alabama declared that "the election of Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin to the offices of President and Vice President of the United States of America, by a

sectional party, avowedly hostile to the domestic institutions, and to the peace and serenity of the people of the state of Alabama,” (The Act of Secession). Not only did Alabama express its desire to leave a government that no longer legitimized slavery, it also expressed its desire to never extend citizenship to Blacks by declaring “that every free White person” who was born after the drafting of the state constitution “shall be a citizen thereof” (ibid). Actions such as these clearly identified that Alabama never wished to extend any rights of citizenship to any Blacks that resided within the states. These aggressive actions by the Alabama government created a foundation for animosity that saturated racial relations throughout Alabama’s history. Because of its strong history of racial animosity, Alabama is a viable state to conduct a study that focuses on the impact of desegregation on Blacks and education.

Alabama recognized education as an important factor prior to its admittance to the Union. Moore (1934) asserts that the first Alabama school was established in 1799. It was identified within the initial legislative act of Alabama as cited in Moore that “schools and the means of education, shall forever be encouraged in this state...” (p. 321). However, similar to Jefferson’s stance on education, there was never any intention to offer any educational benefits to Blacks who resided in the state. Upon entering the Union in 1819, Alabama immediately identified its stance on the quality of life allotted to Blacks by adopting the Georgia slave codes (Bond, 1932). After entering the Union, Alabama continued to focus energies toward the development of effective schools for its citizens. In 1852, the first official Alabama public school was established with an initial enrollment of 400 pupils. As the state continued to grow, so did the allotment of educational funds. The opportunity to attend school was not a privilege reserved only for the wealthy. Resources were set aside to ensure that Alabama citizens had an opportunity to attend schools.

When Alabama entered the Union, it already had an established slave population. Similar to other states already in the Union, slaves had only one purpose—to provide a source of physical labor (Moore, 1934). Bond (1969) acknowledges that prior to 1860, there is no evidence of any Alabama schools that provided education to Black students. According to Bond, in 1860, free Blacks of Creole descent were allowed to attend public schools. This was the only exception to a legislative mandate of 1856 which was entitled “To prohibit the Teachings of Slaves to Read and Write.” Not only did the law specifically deny slaves a right to an education, these laws explicitly warranted that any Whites who sought to teach Blacks would suffer fines and or imprisonment. Not only were there stipulations outlawing the teachings of slaves, there were also severe reprimands. Accordingly,

if any person or persons shall teach or be engaged in teaching, in this State, any slave or slaves to read or write, he, she, or they shall be liable to indictment therefore, and on conviction, shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars and be imprisoned in the county jail not less than three months, one or both, at the discretion of the jury trying the case. (As cited in Bond 1994)

A majority of White southerners adhered to the prohibitions, yet there were opportunities that allowed slaves to learn to read. Sellers (1950) identified slaves who acquired their reading skills not by direct instruction, but by simply being in the same space where Whites were being taught. For example, Sellers identifies one “Negro” who learned to read because he was employed as a full time nurse for children of a White doctor. Because he was often in the vicinity when the children were being taught to read, he soon had acquired the skill of literacy. There were also a few instances where masters who specifically made provisions for their slaves to learn to read. For

example Henry Stiles Atwood and Samuel Townsend , both citizens of Alabama, left provisions in their wills to educate several slaves that had served them faithfully (ibid). Although gestures such as these may seem admirable, it is important to note that the slave owners only left these opportunities as part of their wills to be carried out after their demise. Hence there was no way of assuring that the educational opportunities would be carried out by any living person willing to take the risk.

After slavery, many Blacks began to contemplate leaving the state of Alabama and migrating to areas such as Kansas in hope of providing educational opportunities for their children. However, there were many Blacks who felt that the labor that they had provided to support the economic growth of Alabama entitled them to full rights of citizenships of the states. Between the years of 1864-1867, the establishment of Black national conventions began to illuminate the need for better teachers, resources and longer terms for the Freedmen schools in Alabama (Leforge, 2010).

Although the struggle of Blacks to acquire a quality education after reconstruction was a resounding issue throughout the southern regions of the United States, Alabama was one of the most resistant states in the endeavor to educate Blacks. According to Bond (1932) the constitutional convention of 1901 demonstrated legal provisions associated with the Black populations and their educational rights that had been created in 1890. According to previous statutes, states had a right to divert funds that were allotted to the development of Negro schools and focus them toward existing White schools. It is important to note that no Black representation was present during these proceedings. All decisions concerning the Black schools were being determined by an all-White convention. One of the major proposals was the allotment of White districts to use tax revenues collected from their districts to fund their educational endeavors and

tax revenues collected in Black areas could be used to fund their educational endeavors. Due to the limited taxable resources of Black districts, a decision such as this would have destroyed any hope of educational progress for Black schools. Bond argues that the creation of a dual system of taxation for school districts based on race resulted in the sacrificing of “Negro schools to the end that White schools might be maintained at a high level” (p. 58).

According to Anderson (1947) the progression of Alabama support for Black schools was often severely lacking. According a report from the state department of education as cited in Anderson, many efforts toward the improvement of Black schools were often begun but abandoned before completion. Furthermore, much of the funding allocated towards Black schools was apparently low. According to a report from the state department of education in 1929, only a limited number of Alabama counties made tax provisions for Colored schools, and many Blacks of the era did not have the economic means to fund their own schools (as cited in W. Anderson, 1947). The limitation of funding available made it quite difficult for schools to have equal access to the same materials and opportunities of White schools. Although there was a sense of pride in the efforts that Black leaders put forth to ensure that other Blacks received the best education possible, there were still those who felt that the separation of the two races was a continuation of the belief that Whites were superior to Blacks.

Griffith (1968) presents a different view of Alabamian’s attitude toward the education of Blacks. According to Griffith, the problems Blacks experienced in their efforts were not very different than the problems associated with Whites who wished to acquire an education. The largest obstacle identified for Blacks was that no efforts to educate them had been attempted prior to 1865. Griffith identifies a common desire of many to ensure that Blacks were to receive an opportunity to go to school. Contrary to other historical reports, Griffith recalls “that in a number

of communities both races cooperated in erecting school buildings” (p. 569). Efforts of the federal Freedman’s Bureau are accredited as being a primary catalyst toward the education of Blacks. Resistance to the progression of the development of schools and educational efforts of educating Blacks are identified as scarce and usually harmless. According to Griffith, there were only small “pockets of bitterness against public education” (p. 569). Furthermore, Griffith claims that in an effort to support the educational endeavors of the freedman, students from the University of Alabama were employed as teachers in several of Alabama Black schools.

Other sources testify that Alabama put forth great effort not to give into the dictates of school desegregation. Initially White schools in Alabama denied all petitions of Black students who wished to enter public schools or institutions of higher education. Not only did segregation advocates make their objections to desegregation vocal, “they launched a massive counter attack employing the considerable forces at their command—the legislature, the Attorney general, the press of the state, organized terrorist groups, and agents-provocateur from the state” (Jones, 1956, p. 205).

One of Alabama’s most notorious acts of defiance was the historical rejection of Autherine Lucy’s attempt to enter the University of Alabama. Two years after the court decision of 1954 ordered that no state institution could deny entrance of qualified African American students, the University of Alabama reluctantly admitted its first African American student (Larson, Ahrenholz, & Grazjplene, 1964). The initial controversy that surrounded the entrance of African American students into the University of Alabama was highly reflective of ideals of desegregation throughout the South. During the time period in a study conducted by Larson, Ahrenholz, & Grazjplene (1964), it was discovered that at least forty percent of the students interviewed thought that desegregation should not be allowed because African Americans were viewed as less intelligent.

Furthermore, a majority of “the other students manifested a negative image of the Negro” (p. 330). Further analysis of the study indicated that a majority of the students of that time era who favored segregation of African American students belonged to Greek sororities and fraternities. Many of the sorority and fraternity members of the University adamantly opposed integration of not only the University of Alabama itself, but especially of their organizations.

On June 11, 1963, George Wallace abandoned his efforts to maintain the desegregation policies of Alabama in the area of higher education when confronted by Federalized national troops and forced to allow two Black students to enroll in the University of Alabama (Sitton, 1963). Not only were students affected by Alabama’s animosity towards desegregation, several counties fired teachers who were identified as desegregation advocates. Many politicians such as Jim Folsom and George Wallace promised constituents that they would maintain school segregation in order to gather votes. In his inaugural speech, Wallace acknowledged that education was a right that everyone was entitled to. However, Wallace felt that “each race, within its own framework has the freedom to teach...to instruct...to develop, to ask for, and receive help from others of separate racial nations...” (Wallace, 1963, p. 5).

The protest of the enrollment of African American students into the University of Alabama did not conclude Wallace’s political stand against the educational desegregation movement. Approximately two months later in what became known as *Lee vs. the Macon County Board of Education*, several Black parents, who included Henry Lee, petitioned the Tuskegee school Board to allow their children to enroll in the all-White Tuskegee High School. In retaliation, Wallace initially postponed the opening of Tuskegee High School. Wallace made several attempts to prevent Black and White students from attending the same school. First of all, Wallace postponed the initial opening of Tuskegee High School for one week in order to avoid the entrance of Black

students into the school. After finally consenting to open the school for operation, Wallace then mobilized the Alabama National guard to prevent any non- White students from entering the schools (Curriden, 2013). According to Willie Wyatt Jr., one of the first twelve Black students who attempted to enter Tuskegee public high school, Governor Wallace ordered the school bus driver responsible for transporting them to take them back home as soon as they entered school property (Kitchens, 2014). In response to Wallace's actions, a federal restraining order was issued forbidding the use of troops to prevent the entry of Black students. As a last effort, Wallace removed all-white students from Tuskegee High School and promised that the government would reimburse the cost of transporting their children to a new all-white private school in Macon. The government not only refused to fund Wallace's inventive efforts to create a newly segregated school system, they provided transportation to bus Black students into the Macon school system thus setting the forum for the desegregation of all public schools in Alabama (Curriden, 2013; Kitchens, 2014). The antagonizing actions of Wallace illustrate the extreme reluctance of Alabama to harmoniously accept the presence of Black students into traditionally White schools.

After much resistance, Alabamians attempted to implement a plan that seemed to agree with the federal government's desegregation requirement. The first effort initiated by local school systems to desegregate Alabama school system was identified as the "Freedom of Choice" solution. Under the Freedom of Choice plan, Black parents could choose to enroll their children into schools which had previously been identified as all-white (Elasky 2009). Although this attempt did result in the relocation of some Black students, the traditional system of separate schools still remained intact. In an effort to force southern states to illustrate their efforts to desegregate public schools, the government issued Title VI which threatened to eliminate federal funding unless an acceptable plan for school desegregation was submitted (Elasky 2009).

Slow Progression towards Progress

By the end of the 1965-1966 year, many southern states, including Alabama, had made very little effort in their progress to desegregate schools. The Commission on Civil Rights (CCR) investigated the issues contributing to the lack of progress in the desegregation process and identified inhibiting factors. First of all there was a lack of cooperation from public school officials to help carry out the integration process. Second of all, many parents were skeptical of enrolling their children into all-white schools based on the experiences of others who had attempted the process. Quite often many parents felt that their children were not welcome at White schools. For example, one parent reported the enrollment process as an interrogation of both the parent and the child. Furthermore, students frequently reported being threatened and harassed by many of the White students within the schools (Elasky, 2009).

In the immediate wake of the decision to desegregate schools, Calvin Coolidge Green consistently tried to persuade the local school board to discontinue its operation of separate schools. In March of 1965, with the help of the NAACP, Greene filed *Charles C. Green v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia*, which eventually led to the adoption of a Freedom of Choice proposal. Similar to other states, a majority of the students of Black and White schools continued to operate in racially separate environments. Even those students who transitioned during the Freedom of Choice era reported feeling uncomfortable and unwelcomed in previous all-white school thus diminishing its effectiveness. The *Charles C. Green v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia*, was again presented to the Supreme Court in the summer of 1968 where the courts ruled that the Freedom of Choice Plan was not an effective solution to school segregation. Freedom of Choice was seen as an effort of the schoolboard to take accountability of school desegregation by placing the obligation on parents. School boards were forced to eliminate

all remnants of school segregation and to devise a more feasible plan of desegregation. The aftermath of the *Charles C. Green v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia*, decision quickly spread to other southern states, and eventually led to the elimination of the Freedom of Choice plan and the forced desegregation of other southern schools (Allen & Daugherty, 2006).

Randolph County, Alabama

Alabama is a vast state comprised of sixty-three counties. Although any of these counties would have served as a good source for data collection, I decided to focus on one of its smallest and most rural areas, Randolph County. Randolph County was one of several counties established in 1832-exactly thirteen years after Alabama became a state and thirty-one years before the Emancipation Proclamation. Randolph County developed several small towns that included Luciana, Roanoke, Wedowee, Wadley, Graham, Lamar, High Shoals, and Rock Mills. According to the Virginia Census Report, in 1840, Randolph County had a population of approximately 5,000 people of which 526 were slaves. One hundred and fifty members of the total White population were reported as not being able to read or write (University of Virginia library, n.d.).

The strongest economic contributors to Randolph County was the small town of Roanoke, Alabama. Roanoke had two major businesses that brought a level of prosperity to the small area. In 1887, Central of Georgia Railway provided various opportunities for many of the citizens to earn a living by providing various types of labor such as producing bricks, lumber, and carpentry. Also there were opportunities to earn money for those who owned restaurants, hotels, and saloons. The town soon produced a mill that resulted in what was known as an economic boom for the area. The town soon began to increase in population.

As with many small towns, the population was divided into smaller segments. The smaller segments of were identified as “town folk,” “mill folk,” and “black folk.” The town folk

represented the more professional citizens of Roanoke. Members of the “town folk” class included affluent farmers, educators, bank owners, and merchants. Those who were categorized as “Mill folk” consisted of poorer whites who had once lived in town but now occupied the more rural areas. The “Black folks” consisted of all of those of the African American population. Although the “Black Folk” were categorized as a single unit, they represented individual occupations such as educators, ministers, share-croppers, domestics, and those who had small businesses which served the Black community (Baldwin, 2010).

During its initial settlement, Randolph County clearly had the desire to make education a priority. At first students were taught by either private tutors or in churches. The county used land acquired from a governmental auction to establish their first schools. Although Randolph County identified itself as having organized schools prior to the 1854 legislative passing of the public school act, there were no records identifying financial allocations, school funds, number of teachers, students or any other official information relating to the schools. It is assumed that many of the reported schools were either a continuation of church-sponsored schools or private academies sponsored by the county itself. The operational decisions of the initial schools were determined solely by the white residents of Randolph County.

Two years after the legislative mandate to begin public schools, Randolph County opened its first public schools. The official education forum transitioned from private academies and churches into a sparse number of log cabins. Although efforts to educate its students had occurred prior to this official ruling, Randolph County had very few resources with which to operate its schools. Not only did students have very few, if any, textbooks they also suffered from a shortage of other necessities such as paper, writing utensils, or comfortable desks and chairs. Not only did students experience the inadequacy of the newly formed school system, so did the teachers. Not

only did teachers have students who did not have sufficient materials, teachers often did not have basic necessities such as homes and often they did not receive salaries. In exchange for their services, teachers often boarded with different families for short periods of time and accepted small portions of simple produce such as portions of meat from the farm animals and rations from the families' gardens.

In 1868, the government required that the states provide funding for not only White citizens, but also for the newly freed Black citizens. During the 1880-1881 school years, Randolph County conveyed to the state school board that the number of schools in the area included fifty-three schools for its White citizens and sixteen schools for Black citizens. Initially, all of the schools of the Randolph County School System were identified as elementary schools. The first high school was erected in 1907 after legislation was passed requiring each Alabama County to have a high school available for its students. Although Randolph County initially provided high school education for both its Black and White students, the education availability for Black students soon diminished (Young, 2000). According to a gathered collection of undocumented reports by the county historian and the local board of education, the progression of the schools during Reconstruction was as follows:

Table 3.1: Figures for White and Black Schools in Randolph County from 1880-1915

White Schools

Year	Number of schools	Number of Teachers	Enrollment
1880-1881	53	56	2476
1883-1884	57	58	811

1888	70	70	Not reported
1904	62	62	5623
1906-1908	63	86	
1911	71	107	5242 **200
1913	72	106	3100 **2275
1914-1915	73	Not reported	5,098 **365
1928-1929	47 (elementary/1-6)	103	3919

Black Schools

Year	Number of Schools	Number of Teachers	Enrollment
1880-1881	16	16	777
1883-1884	15	15	482
1888	25	25	Not reported
1904	15	15	1075
1906-1908	20	22	Not reported

1911	20	23	1160 **50
1913	23	26	1200 **0
1914-1915	23	Not reported	1255 **0
**high schools			

After 1915, the system decided to consolidate many of its one-room school buildings into larger schools with combined units. It was during this era that Rosenwald monies were allocated towards the development of schools for Blacks. The Black citizens of Randolph County worked diligently to promote the construction of Black schools. According to Thornton (2013) Randolph County Training School (RCTS) officially opened as the first official high school for Blacks in 1920. The cost of the construction of RCTS was \$14, 700. Support funds were gathered from a variety of sources. The largest contribution, \$5,900, was gathered from public funds; \$5,000 was gathered by those of the Black Community; \$2,000 was donated by the White Community; and \$1800 came from the Rosenwald Foundation. As the only Black high school in the Randolph County area, RCTS received the elementary students from the twelve elementary schools of the area (Rock Mills, Wedhadkee, Wadley, Wedowee, Broughton Ridge, Malone, Omaha, Roanoke, Friendship, and Bacon-Level) whose development were also endorsed through Rosenwald funds.

By 1920, Randolph County had a total population of 27,064 of which 21,123 were White and 5,936 were categorized as “Negroes.” Four thousand seven hundred thirty Whites between

the ages of seven and thirteen were attending school while 2,925 “Negroes” of the same age were attending school (University of Virginia library, n.d.).

The educational inequalities between Blacks and Whites in Randolph County were indicative of a majority of the schools in the rural South. For example, white students were allotted longer school years than Black students who attended schools allotted to Black students. During the 1920 school year, in Roanoke, white students who attended Handley public schools were required to report to school on September 7 (Stevenson, Schools open on Tuesday a.m., 1920). However, black students who attended Randolph County Training School began their first day October 27th (Stevenson, 1920).

From the years of 1920 until the closing of the school in 1969, I was unable to identify any official records which identified school populations or class sizes. However, between the years of 1920 and 1930, the University of Virginia census browser identified an average population of approximately twenty-seven thousand citizens for Randolph County with approximately 6,000 African Americans (University of Virginia library, n.d.). The earliest records of Randolph County Training School indicate a small graduating class of ten students during the year of 1927. According to the records preserved by Dr. Alvin Thornton, the initial class members were The Class members were: Minnie Lee Stitt, Tula Claud Castleberry, Johnnie Pauline Gates, Kary Clinton Rowe, and Annie Maud Tolbert. Class officers were: Kary Clinton Rowe, President, Johnnie Pauline Gates, Secretary, and Tula Claud Castleberry, Treasurer. Due to the lack of interest allocated to keeping official school records of the Black schools of that era, Dr. Thornton stated that he was sure that these were the only records associated with Black student population.

The populations of the graduating class of RCTS fluctuated during its early years. For example, the graduating class of 1941 boasted a number of 27. However, the class of 1942 showed

a decrease in its number of graduating students by identifying only seven graduating students. In 1943, the original RCTS building burned to the ground. However, education still remained a priority as local churches began to operate as school houses. In 1943, seventeen students graduated from these facilities; in 1946 eleven students graduated; and in 1947 twenty-four students graduated. The school was reconstructed and reopened in the fall of 1948. RCTS continued to serve as the only Black High School until the opening of Wedowee high school in the 1950's. Although *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)* ruled that separate but equal education for Black and White citizens was unconstitutional, Randolph County maintained racially segregated schools sixteen years after the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)* ruling.

Although there is not record of the number of students in the 1948 class, there is evidence of a strong surge in high school graduates. From the years of 1949 until its closing in 1970, the number of graduates ranged from 30-50 students per year (Thornton, 2015). During its last years, the number of students in Randolph County identified its lowest numbers of graduates during the latter years associated with the Freedom of Choice plan. However there may have been other mitigating factors which contributed to the decrease in the number of students per year. For example the total population of Randolph County decreased from its peak of 27,064 in 1920 to 19,477 in 1960. When discussing the reasoning for the decrease in the number of students attending the school, various answers were given. For example, "Jean" identified the closing of the Mill as a major reason that many people left Randolph County. She identified that many people began to leave Randolph County in search of better jobs. However, documented texts stated that the mill closed in 1970 after the schools had been completely desegregated (Baldwin, 2010). Dr. Thornton also noted that many African Americans began to leave the county and move towards the northern

states in hopes of finding better opportunities. However, the population of African Americans in Randolph County seemed to remain consistent. The number of African Americans in 1960 was reported to still be approximately 6,000. I did not find any definite evidence as to the reason for the small decreases in students over from 1948 to 1970 (University of Virginia library, n.d.).

Randolph County Desegregation Process

During the era of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) decision, Black citizens of Randolph County were also suffering the same inequalities that plagued many of America's Black schools. Several areas of need identified in January of 1954 included overcrowded schools, limited opportunities for student advancement, over-crowded classrooms, inferior equipment and shorter school years (Stevens, 1954). Although there was no evidence of the desire of Randolph County Blacks to integrate schools, the local White community newspaper suggested that there was a general consensus that even with the challenges associated with Black schools, those of the Black community still preferred separate learning environments. Reporters of the 1954 time period promoted the idea that segregation was in the best interest of all Black citizens by referring to a news article from a neighboring community, Heard County, Georgia, which stated that "it was in the best interest of both races that our schools remain separate, and we request that this practice continue" (Stevenson W. B., Heard Negroes ask segregation in Public schools, 1954, p. 1). The progression of Randolph County School desegregation was also hindered by the 1954 proclamation of the Alabama State School Board which declared that Alabama schools would not follow the example of the ruling of Topeka, Kansas, but would maintain its traditional status of separate schooling. The school board acknowledged that although there was no legal support for the school segregation, the provision for separate schools had not been attacked. As a result, the school systems of Alabama could remain separate "for *at least* another year" (Stevenson

W. B., No Segregation Change in Ala. Schools, '54-55.", 1954, p. 6). This assertion seems to support evidence that Randolph County school system was determined to remain separate for as long as possible. Randolph County continued to express its support of political officials who identified the maintenance of separate schools as a key element of their campaign promises.

Although, Randolph County political leaders strived to reinforce the belief that segregation was indeed in the best interest of all of its residents, Black citizens of the area seemed motivated to change how area schools operated. Rallying for the support of improvement of educational facilities, members of the Randolph County Training School PTA declared that they, too, wanted and were ready for the type of change “which will improve the educational facilities for Negroes in Randolph County, so as to enable our boys and girls to compete with others as they enter various occupations or seek high education” ((Stevenson W. B., Randolph County Training School PTA acts to improve schools, 1954, p. 8). Leaders of the PTA acknowledged that courage would be required in order to facilitate such a change. Because the timing of the meeting closely coincided with the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) decision, it would seem that the Black citizens of Randolph County were now ready to take a stronger stand in their fight for educational equality.

Desegregation opponents were not only verbal in their desire to maintain race relations under their current existence, there were also those whose actions took a violent turn. For example, during a session on interracial relations held at Wadley College, a small college within the vicinity of Randolph County, a band of night riders threatened to attack the biracial forum unless delegates would immediately “get those niggers out of there.” ((Stevenson W. B., Bi-racial meet up is Broken up at Wadley College., 1955, p. 1). Although newspaper reporters scolded the actions of the so-called “night-riders,” it was not because the actions of the group were perceived as

abominable due to unfair treatment to African Americans. On the contrary, the group's actions were seen as horrid because "they gave ammunition to those extremists who will be satisfied with nothing short of complete and immediate destruction of all racial barriers" (Stevenson W. B., No Place for Night Riders, 1954, p. 1). The attitude reflected Randolph County's strong desire against publicizing not only the racial disharmony that existed, but also a lack of desire to advance the cause of desegregation by bringing attention to the commonly accepted segregated lifestyles that were currently accepted. It seems that the community realized that if attention was focused on the Randolph County's distaste for social racial mixing, then there was an increased likelihood that those who rallied for desegregation would focus more effort towards the amalgamation of Black and White organizations..

Although those in attendance at Wadley College were not identified as promoting an agenda of merging the races, it was known that there were changing attitudes towards the notion of having separate schools for Blacks and Whites. In Tuskegee, a county less than an hour away from Randolph County, Black leaders were acknowledging the importance of the court ruling against separate schools. Not only were they appreciative of the legal support for unification of schools, they strongly encouraged "Christians of all faiths and colors" to combine in efforts to secure the same freedoms to all local citizens ((Stevenson W. B., Church Body deplors violence and threats, 1955, p. 6). Those who supported actions towards desegregation acknowledged that the task would not be easy and that efforts toward school integration would unquestionably be met with various types of intimidation methods. If attitudes of disfavor for the local school accommodations existed within surrounding areas, it would be reasonable to assume that citizens of Randolph County were aware of the probability that the same beliefs would soon reach Randolph County.

Literacy and the Law

State officials were explicit about their desire to not only maintain state control of the local education agenda, but also to thwart any effort to eradicate the current policy for school segregation. For example, Austin Meadows, superintendent of education, identified “segregation in our schools administered in accordance with the laws and the wishes of the people of Alabama” as one of the strongest points of his campaign (Stevenson W. B., *Elect Austin R. Meadows State Supt. of Education*, 1954, p. 7). The boldness of Meadows’ statement not only indicated a strong desire to maintain segregation in Alabama schools, it also indicated contempt for federal regulations mandating desegregation of local schools. Randolph County not only focused its attention and support towards the local election process, there was also vigorous attention towards the state election process. For example, in the 1958 election for governor, Congressman Albert McKinley Rains, who had identified himself as a candidate, was identified by his opponent as being “unfeasible” due to his failure to speak out against the integration of schools and other institutions. According to an article in the *Randolph Press*, R.H. “Red” Hardin adamantly discouraged local voters from supporting Rains because Rains did not vote against federal efforts to “force an end to segregation and our Southern Way of Life” (Stevenson W. B., *Congressman Rains and Segregation*, 1958, p. 4). Identifying Rains’ failure to be a strong advocate for the traditional racial views and lifestyles of that era emphasized not only how important Hardin viewed the continuation of segregation, it also indicates his assurance that other citizens of the county shared his perspective.

The political objective of maintaining segregated schools was even more apparent in the gubernatorial race of 1962. Randolph County newspapers such as *The Leader* unwaveringly emphasized each candidate’s perspective on segregation issues. For example, then Lieutenant

Governor Albert Boutwell promoted himself not only as being a strong advocate for public education, he emphasized his prior accomplishments such as “school placement bills calculated to assure continued segregated schools in Alabama” ((Stevenson W. B., Lt. Governor Albert Boutwell will make '62 race for governor, 1962, p. 6). Other candidates who were identified as potential candidates for the office included then Police Commissioner of Public Safety, Eugene “Bull” Conner and Judge George C. Wallace. Eugene Connor also identified himself as “a man people can trust on the issue of segregation” (Stevenson W. B., "Bull" Connor is set to run for governor, 1962, p. 2). The consistency of the attitudes of each candidates view on the continued support of segregation seems to support the notion that a majority of the voting population was not ready for the possibility of Black and White children being educated in the same teaching space. Furthermore, Randolph County’s newspapers consistent notice of each candidates support of segregation accentuates how important it was that each its voting citizens were aware of each political candidates opinions on the issue of segregation.

Wallace’s Stance

The candidate most recognized in the Randolph County area was George C. Wallace. Commonly referred to as “the little Judge,” Wallace identified the continuance of school segregation as one of his strongest objectives if elected governor. Wallace not only identified himself as a longtime supporter of “the southern way of life,” he also assured voters that he was willing to “stand up to those outsiders who would interfere in our traditions” (Stevenson W. B., Judge Wallace makes formal announcement, 1962, p. 4). In order to prove his convictions towards segregation, Wallace stood defiant when faced with the threat of a boycott from outside industries which supported desegregation. According to Wallace, not only would Alabama not be a part of the national movement towards desegregation, but he emphasized that “we in Alabama believe in

constitutional rights. And they know we'll battle for our rights." (Stevenson W. B., Wallace to kickoff campaign for governor Saturday night, 1962, p. 2). The defiant tone of local and state candidates made it unwaveringly clear that desegregation of local Alabama schools, including those of Randolph County, would continually be a central political issue throughout the state of Alabama.

Wallace's stand against school segregation slowly began to define him as a hero in many small Alabama counties. Wallace received praise and support from the Alabama State grand jury which how resentful the citizens of Alabama were of "the efforts of the Federal Government to destroy the social and educational institutions of the South" (Stevenson W. B., State grand jury praised George C. Wallace for "resisting the limit!!! Following is a certified copy of the grand jury's report., 1962, p. 2). Randolph County support of Wallace and his beliefs is not only through an abundance of articles that identified him as a strong combatant of customary southern values, but there was also increasing support made obvious from an abundance of advertisements and local speaking engagements. Other candidates were identified, but as Wallace's stance on segregation became stronger, so did his coverage in Randolph County editorials. After his election into office, Randolph County solidified their support of Wallace's views by initiating its first statewide governor's day and having Governor Wallace as the guest speaker (Stevenson W. B., Wallace to kickoff campaign for governor Saturday night, 1962). Furthermore, there was an intentional effort to obtain as much legal support as possible for the anti-desegregation agenda. Candidates who wished to secure political office quickly aligned themselves with the Wallace movement. Overwhelmingly, they were supported by Randolph County residents when they vowed to "stand up for the promises we all believe in" (Bartlett, 1964, p. 1). Randolph County's staunch efforts to not only support Governor Wallace, but also to celebrate him and all that he believed in seemed to

be a strong indicator that not only were Whites determined to keep both school and society separate, it also informed local Blacks of how challenging and possibly dangerous it would be to send their children to school with children that were nurtured in beliefs of racial segregation.

It was not until 1965, approximately eleven years after the federal decision to desegregate schools that “after exhaustive study and consideration” Randolph County agreed to desegregate its school system (County Schools' Integration Plan: As submitted to U.S. official of Health Education and Welfare in Washington, D.C., by the Randolph County Board of Education, 1965, p.1). Complete desegregation did not occur immediately. During its initial phase of integration, Randolph County decided to gradually implement its plan. Rather than combine all students immediately, Randolph County decided to desegregate four grades each year. Furthermore it was not required that all students of the identified population begin the integration process. On the contrary, the county implemented what it identified as the “Freedom of Choice” plan. Under this new strategy, black students were to choose whether they wished to continue in their same learning environment, or whether or not they wished to attend the county’s all-white schools. According to the Freedom of Choice plan:

All students in the Public schools of Randolph County, Alabama, who will enroll in grades (1), seven (7), nine (9), twelve (12), in 1965-66 and all other grades in the order outlined in the order outlined in paragraph 1 of this solution shall have freedom of choice, in the manner and through the medium herein after stated, to attend any school in the Randolph County School System, regardless of race, color or national origin and enjoy the benefits of all services and facilities available of that school. (County Schools tell Plan for Compliance, 1965)

One of the restrictions of the process required that school officials were not to influence students in their choice. All decisions that related to the integration of Black students into white school systems had to be resolved by parents and guardians of the children involved. However even though teachers were not allowed to influence students' decisions on their choice of school attendance, they were not excluded from the desegregation movement. Schools that were identified as having an entirely white staff were required to integrate Black teachers into their schools. For example, Randolph County High School was required to hire at least two black teachers, Woodland High school was required to hire at least one Black teacher, and Wadley High School was required to hire a tleast one Black teacher.

Efforts to desegregate the teacher population was not limited to the assignment of Black teachers to White schools. White teachers were also assigned to Black schools in order to meet desegregation requirements. For example, two White teachers were placed in both Wedowee High School and Randolph County Training School whereas Pleasant Grove and Mt. Carmel each had to employ one White teacher. The racial distribution of teachers was not viewed favorably by the superintendant of schools. In response to the court order, the superintendant stated:

since teaching assignments had to be made before the beginning of the school term, that if this court order is carried out that it will completely demoralize the Randolph County School System, and many of the teachers, both races will resign from the teaching profession (Stevenson W. B., Recent court order calls for further mixing of races, 1968, p. 1)

Although the school system complied to the desegregation requirements under the influence of a court order, it was evident that a smooth transition was not expected. It was also clear that the

superintendent of schools suspected that many White residents of Randolph County were not agreeable to the idea of sharing learning spaces with their Black counterparts.

Though Randolph County considered the Freedom of Choice plan an effective method of complying to desegregation ruling, the federal court system did not agree. In 1969, the federal courts rejected the county's attempt to resubmit Freedom of Choice as an acceptable effort to succumb to federal order to merge its Black and White populations. An assembly of experts was sent to Randolph County with orders to "disestablish completely the dual school system" which Randolph County was still trying to maintain (Stevenson W. B., County School Mix Plan turned down; court orders HEW to prepare another, 1969, p. 6). In desperation, the Randolph County superintendent pleaded for continuance of the current Freedom of Choice plan. According to the plea, abolishment of the current arrangement would result in inconveniences such as overcrowded schools, difficulties in transporting students, and other financial burdens which would obstruct the learning environment of all students.

The destiny of Randolph County Training School soon came into question. In March of 1969, the board of education chose to send Freedom of Choice forms to notify to all residents that Randolph County Training School would remain an educational option for all k-12 students. According to the school board, there was a high probability that "some students may prefer to attend Randolph County Training School" (Stevenson W. B., School Choice Forms; RCTS not closing, 1969, p. 1). Not only was the desire to meet students' preference cited as a motive to maintain RCTS, there was also a concern that immediately closing the school and transporting students to White schools would be difficult because of insufficient transportation and would result in severe overcrowding. The Board's announcement indicated that in the event of final desegregation it would be Black students that would be transitioned into White schools. White

students would not be transitioned into white schools. Although the decision to continue the operation of Randolph County Training School did not directly defy governmental requirements of school desegregation, it gave Black students an opportunity to continue their education in an all Black school.

Courts rejected appeals of the local board of education and demanded that “on or before February 16, 1970, a plan designed to disestablish completely the dual school system operated by the Randolph County Board of Education be enacted not later than the 1970-1971 school year” (ibid). This mandate not only reflected the government’s impatience with the desegregation efforts of Randolph County School System, it also forced both races to accept that racially separated schools would no longer be a choice.

After careful consideration of the factors which influenced the decision to close schools, the HEW implemented a decision of student transition based on the zones in which they resided. According to the plan all students were required to attend the school(s) within their zoning district. Although the zoning decision forced the school system to desegregate schools, it only focused on sacrificing the original Black schools in the area. For example, it was determined that the 579 students which attended Randolph County Training School would be reassigned to the local White schools of Rock Mills, Wadley, and Randolph County High School.

As the opening date of the first interracial school opening date came closer, the school system began announcing accommodations designed to make the transitioning process easier for incoming students. For example, elementary schools were provided funds from the Federal Title I Program which were to be allocated towards accommodating individual differences. According to this plan, students would be grouped according to their academic ability. Those students who required extra assistance in reading would be educated in a separate classroom than regular

students. Furthermore, it was determined that lower elementary grades (1-3) would be under the supervision of two teachers, while upper elementary would remain and have different teachers for most subjects. Although the process of desegregating the schools in such a short period of time required many adjustments to accommodate concerns of transportation and overcrowding, it was reported by local newspapers that the first day of school went rather smoothly.

The addition of Black students was not the only change acknowledged. According to court orders, the school system was required to transfer a percentage based number of African American teachers and faculty to each school. Even with the closing of several schools within the district and the transfer of all Black students, only a limited number of Black teachers and faculty were allowed employment in White schools (Stevens, Unitary County Schools open without incident, p. 4). Within a month of desegregation, Randolph County Training School was sold for \$51,000. Although it would no longer operate as a segregated school, the new buyers expressed their intention of maintaining the building as an asset to the community. Future possibilities of the school were for the purpose of recreational activities, job training, and as a site for community meetings. Eventually Randolph County Training School was closed. Even though it was never officially torn down, it was not cared for. Currently the remnants of the building stand on the outskirts of Roanoke, Alabama, as a run down reminder of its former glory.

CHAPTER IV - METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study was to illuminate the experiences of African American students who were present in the Randolph County schools when schools began desegregating. The primary data for the study was produced through interviews with African American students who were enrolled in Randolph County School System during the years of 1965 to 1975. These students strived to acquire their education during a pivotal transition in America's educational history, and their memories produced information concerning historical events and the communal atmosphere within the Randolph County School system which until now had not been documented.

In this chapter I explain why I chose to use a qualitative design for the study. First, I discuss my efforts to review historical documents. Next, I give information on how the participants were chosen and give information on the research population. Afterwards, I present a description of the interview instrument and the interview procedure implemented. Finally, I expound on the two types of narrative analysis used to address both the specific and guiding research questions.

Historical Documents

Because I was aware of the historical significance of my study, I wanted to ensure that I was aware of as many factors that influenced the desegregation process Randolph County as possible. I began the process by contacting the Randolph County Board of Education in order to secure as many documents as possible. Upon contacting the board, I was made aware that no documents were available from the segregated schools for any years after 1969. Dr. Alvin Thornton informed me that when the former schools were closed, there was no official effort to

secure any records or documents associated with the segregated schools. They were just abandoned. The next effort was to analyze newspaper articles which covered that era. Fortunately, the local newspaper office of Roanoke and Randolph County town courthouse which is located in Wedowee both had bound copies of all Randolph County newspapers produced since 1917. I spent 2-3 days per week during the months of June, July, and August searching through newspaper binders. I began with the 1917 edition. As I progressed, I noticed that there was very little mention of the Black schools after 1920. I reasoned that it would be a better use of my time to skip to the 1954 editions. I spent the majority of the summer of 2014 exploring each binder from the years of 1954 (the initial passing of the desegregation decree) until 1970 (the year Randolph County finally desegregated its schools). Also, I had the copy of *Behind These Walls*, a class reunion souvenir program from 2013 that was rich in historical data about the school. I used these two pieces of data to produce questions for background data for each participant (see Appendix A) and possible questions for the interview protocol.

Design of the Study

A qualitative design was chosen because it provided the best avenue to address the guiding research question: What can African American students share about their academic experiences in the identified small county of Randolph County, Alabama during the years of 1965-1975? A qualitative design also provided an opportunity to acquire comprehensive data related to the resulting precise research questions and sub questions:

- 1) What were the experiences of African American students in segregated schools?
 - a) What structures of educational and social support existed for African American students of Randolph County during their segregated school experience?

- 2) What were the experiences of African American students during the initial phase of desegregation?
 - a. What were the African American students' perceptions of the Randolph County desegregation efforts during the designated years?
 - b. What structures of educational and social support existed for African American students of Randolph County during the initial phase of desegregation?
- 3) What were the experiences of African American students during the final phase of desegregation?
 - a. What were the African American students' perceptions of the Randolph County desegregation efforts during the designated years?
 - b) What structures of educational and social support existed for African American students of Randolph County after schools desegregated?

According to Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) the aim of qualitative research is to “demonstrate the complexity, texture, and nuance involved in how groups experience themselves and their worlds” (p. 17). Because the goal of this research study is to analyze how African American students of the desegregation movement experienced themselves in segregated and desegregated schools, this definition is appropriate. Qualitative research refutes the notion that relevant truths in research can only be attained with the use of “quantification and statistical analysis” (p. 1). Quantitative analysis is often perceived to be more detached from the subject matter whereas qualitative analysis focuses more on the dependent on human interaction (Atkins and Wallace 2012). Quantitative researchers enter research focusing on the immediate data that is presented at each stage of the research process. The data gathered is constantly formatted in an effort to reveal important information. The qualitative researcher does not seek to guide the results

towards a preconceived end, but allows it to emerge and take on its own direction (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen 2011).

According to Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) initially qualitative research was almost exclusively limited to the use of ethnographies. However, qualitative research has become increasingly more popular over the last several decades. More credibility has been given to the personal experiences as trustworthy research data. The perception of valid qualitative research has evolved from that of primarily ethnographical into research approaches that include “grounded theory, narrative and life history research, symbolic interactionism, and conversation analysis” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 2)

A case study strategy was implemented in this study. According to Yin (2009), case methodology is commonly used to broaden researchers’ “knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political and social related phenomena” (p. 4). Because the essence of my research seeks to analyze individual and group understandings of a specific social change that occurred within a specific historical era of their lives due to political change, this definition of case study is appropriate for this study. Individuals selected for this study were all students during the desegregation movement of Randolph County, Alabama. From the data collected, I hope to acquire knowledge of how such a change affected the lives of African American students.

Case Selection

This study presented the viewpoints of those who were students during the initial phase of (Freedom of choice era) of the desegregation movement and those students who transitioned during the final phase of the desegregation movement. Because Randolph County is such a small area, I anticipated that I would be able to recruit a relatively large sample of former students to participate in the study. In order to recruit participants for my study, I relied on the method of

snowball sampling. Bernard & Ryan (2010) identify snowball sampling as the “original chain referral method” (p. 367). After several individuals who met the identified standards were identified, I asked those individuals to refer others who met the criteria. During each interview, I received recommendations of others who may be interested. Suggestions often included family members, co-workers, friends and neighbors of the participants. Quite often the suggestions crossed over each other. After following as many leads as possible, I finally ended up with 15 willing participants. However, two of the participants I met with were unable to provide data because they were so very young when they transitioned. I finally ended up with thirteen viable participants for my study.

Recruitment of Participants

I have only recently moved to Randolph County; therefore, I do not know very many people. However, I have made some significant contacts that I feel are beneficial. Upon first moving to the community, I met Mrs. Dorothy Tidwell at the local gym of Roanoke, Alabama. Mrs. Tidwell identified herself as a lifelong resident of Randolph County and the current executive director of the Randolph County Chamber of Commerce. Also, she appeared to be in the age group of participants that I was interested in studying. Although Mrs. Tidwell was White, I felt that in a small such as Randolph County, it was highly likely that she would be able to help identify participants. I told Mrs. Tidwell about my study and the need to identify participants. Mrs. Tidwell gave me limited background information that included the fact that Randolph County began with only one high school for Blacks which had been located in Roanoke, Alabama. During our conversation, Mrs. Tidwell directed me to a woman whom I will refer to as “Jean.” Not only was Mrs. “Jean” identified as having strong connections with Randolph County and Handley High School, one of the schools which initially accepted Black students for enrollment during the

desegregation process, she also had the reputation of being the “county historian.” Mrs. Tidwell set up a meeting with Mrs. “Jean” and also invited me to a community luncheon.

Mrs. “Jean” and I set up a luncheon date on a Sunday evening of February. During a pleasant lunch, we discussed my interest in the Civil Rights Era and the school desegregation process. Mrs. “Jean” discussed various aspects of the Civil Rights Movement and its effects on Randolph County. She gave me various aspects of Randolph County’s history with racism that convinced me that Randolph County would be ideal for a study that focused on the forced integration of Blacks and Whites. For example, she informed me of the strong history of the Ku Klux Klan in Randolph County. She also educated me on the county’s strong relationship with George C. Wallace, one of the most outspoken opponents to school desegregation. Other aspects of Randolph County’s history with racism were also revealed during our luncheon. For example, she explained how the school system had cancelled school field trips and the high school prom after desegregation because the community was afraid of the interaction between the White female students and the Black male students. According to Mrs. “Jean,” her class was the one that insisted that the high school prom be reinstated at Handley High School. Although the prom was reinstated, it was segregated. She also informed me of the scandal perpetuated by a former high school principal of the 1990’s who had threatened to cancel high school prom because he refused to allow it to be interracial. Mrs. “Jean” seemed extremely interested in my study. She expressed that she had also been interested in conducting such a study, but felt that Blacks in the community would not be as open to her because she was White. Mrs. “Jean” then suggested that I speak with Cotina Terry, a local political activist. I contacted Ms. Terry, discussed my interest and invited her to lunch.

Ms. Terry and I arranged a lunch date that took place in the cafeteria of the local community college. Ms. Terry revealed that she was one of the first generation of students to begin school in Randolph County immediately after the desegregation process had been ordered. Ms. Terry discussed various aspects of racism that she had witnessed even in the late 1970s. For example, she identified the reluctance of Handley High School to identify a Valedictorian or Salutatorian when the GPA of a Black student was identified as higher than that of White students. During her entire high school career (1996-1999), Handley High School did not have a school valedictorian. She also identified that her father had been a student at Randolph County Training School, the once only Black school in the community. One of the strongest and most interesting facts identified by Ms. Terry was that the city schools of Roanoke, a small town in Randolph County, did not come from under the consent order regarding desegregation until 2007 and that Randolph County Schools are still under a consent order regarding such. As we continued our communication, Mrs. Terry assured me that finding participants for my study would not be difficult. She informed me that the former students of Randolph County Training School had a biannual reunion (which had just occurred in 2013), and that I should contact Dr. Alvin Thornton, the facilitator of the reunion.

During the month of March, I attended the women's luncheon to which I had been previously invited by Mrs. Tidwell. During the luncheon I was seated with educators from the local school system. One of the people seated at my table was Mrs. Tamara Terry Thomas. During small talk I mentioned my study to Mrs. Terry Thomas. Mrs. Terry Thomas identified that her father had been a student during the desegregation process of that time period. She also identified several other family members who had been a part of the process. It was obvious that Mrs. Terry Thomas, too, would be a valuable asset in identifying possible participants. Over the course of

time, Mrs. Terry Thomas sent me a link to information on the school desegregation process. She also identified a list of possible participants who were still working in the school system or who had recently retired. Similarly to Ms. Cotina Terry, Mrs. Terry Thomas strongly recommended that I contact Dr. Alvin Thornton.

Another important resource for the recruitment of participants was presented in the local church that I became affiliated with when I moved to Roanoke, New Life Baptist Church. Mrs. Tidwell had previously recommended that I attend a Black history program hosted by New Life Church during the month of February. The pastor of the New Life, Lithonia Wright, has a history of political activism within the Randolph Community and currently serves as one of its county commissioners. Although he did not graduate from Randolph County, he has immense influence and I felt he would serve as a great contact for participants. Furthermore, he offered his church for use during the interviewing process if necessary.

As initially stated, because I was new to the community, I had to seize every opportunity to identify the purpose of my study in order to recruit possible participants. During the month of March, Randolph County had a community bazaar that Mrs. “Jean” and I attended. While attending the bazaar, Mrs. “Jean” introduced me to Mr. Gene Thornton. Mr. Thornton, a 1962 graduate of RCTS, was selling an historical magazine that had been produced by former graduates. The proceeds of the magazine go to scholarships for descendants of the graduates of the RCTS. Upon hearing of the purpose of my study, Mr. Thornton gave me one of the magazines and suggested that I contact his brother, Dr. Alvin Thornton.

Although Mr. Gene Thornton invited me to contact him via email for his brother’s contact information, I decided to try to contact Dr. Thornton through Facebook first. After locating Dr. Thornton on the Facebook site, I sent the following message to his private message box:

Dr. Thornton, my name is Effie Fields, and I recently moved to Roanoke, AL to work at Southern Union. I am also a PhD student at the University of Alabama in the process of completing my dissertation. My subject is focusing on the desegregation process of the Randolph County School system. I was given your name as a possible participant by several people-including your brother, Gene Thornton. I would greatly appreciate it if you would accept my friend request and also if you would consider being a part of my study.

Dr. Thornton responded and expressed a great deal of enthusiasm for my project. Dr. Alvin Thornton also expressed a great deal of affection for his former school. Not only did Dr. Thornton identify himself as a former student of one of Randolph County's formerly all-Black schools that had the opportunity to witness the desegregation process, he also identified other personal capital which secured him as an asset to my study. As a current Professor of political studies at Howard University, he has not only had many opportunities to analyze issues of race relations but also acknowledged other qualities. For example, between 1974 and 1998, Doctor Alvin Thornton helped lead the effort to desegregate the public schools of Prince George's County, Maryland, one of the largest school systems in the nation. He also served as an NAACP representative and chair of the county board of education for that particular district. Doctor Thornton also identified himself as not only a lead figure in maintaining contact with as many former students of RCTS as possible, he also informed me of a private Facebook page (RCTS reunion) that he has developed precisely for the purpose of communicating with former graduates and their descendants. Doctor Thornton added me to the private group so that I could not only gather historical information, but I could

also get a feel for the connection that still binds the former graduates. Dr. Thornton placed the following description and purpose of the private group page is presented as follows:

This RCTS Reunion Group was initiated by Dr. Alvin Thornton ('67) to honor The Randolph County Training School (RCTS) and all it did for the Black community in a time of intense racism and segregation. Believing that RCTS and its memory should continue to exist as a testimony of the vision, strength and creativity of the Black community focused on the love of its children, anyone who has a direct relationship to/with this institution is welcome to join this group and invite others of the same persuasion.

After I was added to the page, I noticed that there were over 135 members in the group. Although there were quite a few RCTS descendants who had joined the page in order to keep their parents and grandparents informed of the lifestyles and activities of other graduates, there was also a large number of original RCTS graduates ranging from the years of 1950-1969. Evaluation of the page revealed that many the people who had been suggested to me by other contacts were members of the group. Also, as I perused the page, I also noticed that there were members who qualified for my study who had relocated to many different areas of the world. Not only were the possible participants located in various regions, they also had experienced various careers and life experiences. The careers ranged from local laborers and school teachers to military personnel and professors. Several were identified as having received graduate degrees, post graduate degrees, and founders of their own successful business. It was obvious that being a member of the online community would be very beneficial.

Dr. Thornton's Facebook group had an identifiable email address. I followed through the Facebook page's participants and identified 50 participants that met the age criteria that I was interested in interviewing. I used the email addresses of all participants to send a letter identifying my study and the need for participants. Within the letter, I informed the participants that they would be asked to complete a background questionnaire and agree to a sit down interview which could last from one to four hours. Participants were informed that the interview site would be any place of convenience for them. Participants were also informed of the possibility of being contacted after the initial face to face interview in order to clarify any ambiguous information. Approximately 15 participants expressed an interest in participating in the study. However, not all of the participants were still living in the Randolph County area. Many of them identified themselves as living in other parts of the country and thus would not be accessible for a face to face interview. Interaction with Dr. Thornton's Facebook page provided me with 4 participants that included Mrs. Deborah Dunson Royston, Mrs., Kathy Pate, Mr. Sidney Johnson, and Dr. Thornton.

In an effort to increase my number of participants, I decided to send a participation letter to New Life Church. The First Lady of the Church, Juanita Wright, not only agreed to be a participant, she also gave me a list of twelve possible participants and their phone numbers. Some of the participants recommended by First Lady Wright had already agreed to be participants. I contacted all of the new participants with the given phone numbers. Each of these twelve expressed interest in the project and seemed to be interested in being participants. I gathered email information from each and sent each a copy of the background information form. Out of the twelve that agreed to be participants, four actually returned their forms. Each of these four was also associated with New Life as casual visitors or members of the church.

In a final effort to collect participants, I contacted Tamara Thomas whom I had met at the women’s luncheon earlier. Tamara also identified several participants some of whom had been already contacted. The chart below identifies a list of participants and how I received recommendation information for them:

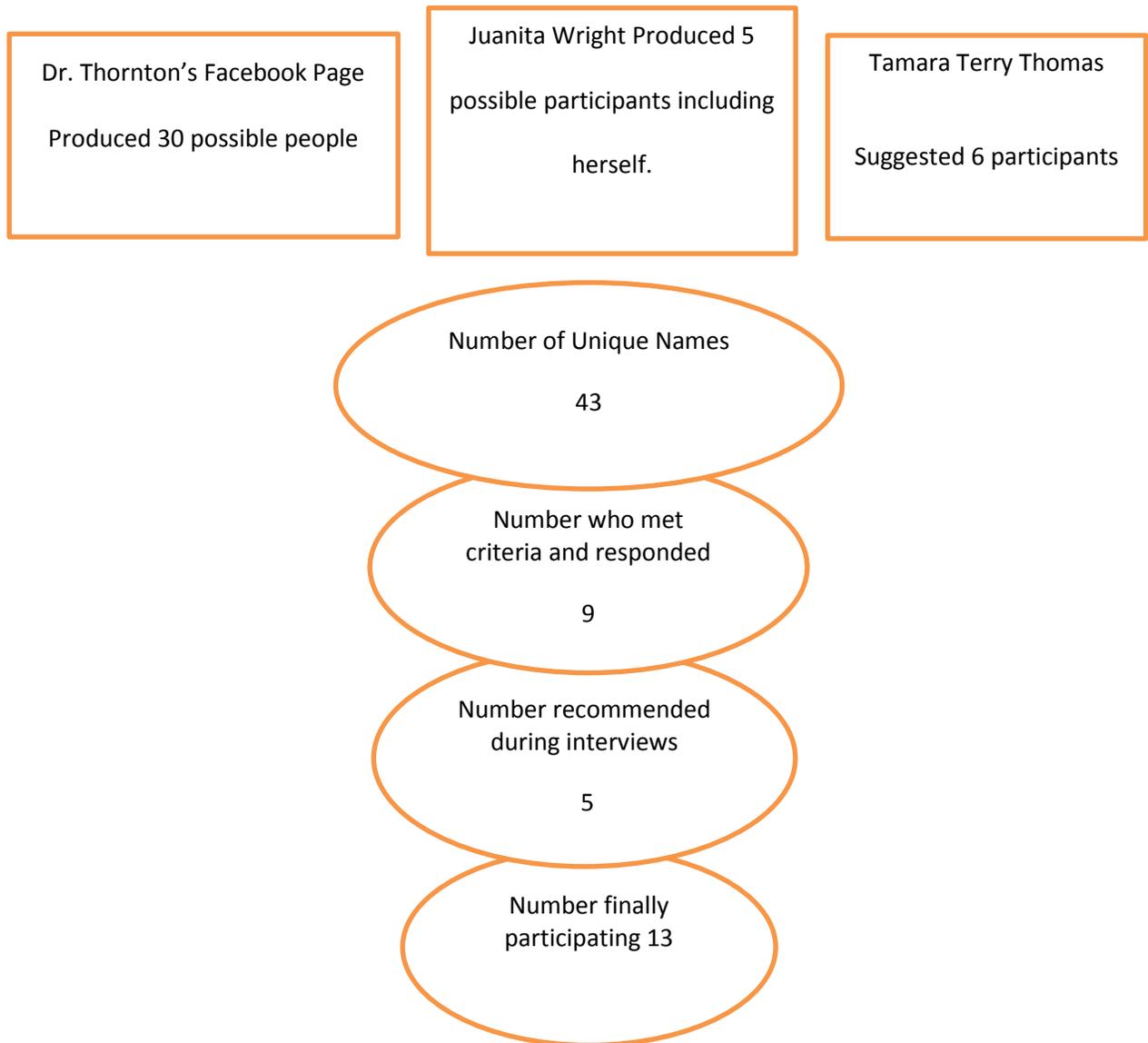


Figure 4.1: Process of Recruiting Participants

Although there were forty-three unique names identified within the initial recruiting process, several factors limited my ability to secure participation. First, some of the initially

identified participants did not meet the identified criteria. For example, one of the criteria identified that students must have not graduated high school prior to 1965, the initial implementation of the Freedom of Choice plan. Approximately twenty of the members who responded had graduated between 1954 and 1965. Although many of these participants were registered as students the decade following the Brown decision, they had no direct experience as students when Randolph County began desegregating its schools. Other potential participants were excluded for a variety of reasons including distant locations and illness.

Interview Procedures

Each of the participants who agreed to contribute was contacted via email, second hand requests, or face to face contact. Several of the interviews were conducted in a private conference room at the public library in Roanoke, Alabama. One individual invited me to her home after church on a Sunday afternoon. Two participants invited me to their office after work. Two interviews were conducted in an empty classroom on the campus of the local community college when school was not in session. Interviews ranged in duration from one and-one-half hours to four hours. Initially, I had planned to try to keep the interviews to a maximum of one and one-half hours. However once the interviewees began talking, many of them easily exceeded two hours. I only had one interview to last approximately one hour. The longest interview session lasted almost five hours. In each case, participants were asked to sign a copy of the informed consent form (appendix?), following IRB protocol (appendix?). The informed consent form also included a section in which the participant could agree or disagree to being tape recorded. All participants agreed to be tape recorded.

I designed my own interview instrument. Because the research is a case study of precise events in a specific location, it was appropriate to design an instrument that focused on the

concerns of my particular research topic as opposed to relying on an interview instrument that had been created by a different researcher for a different purpose. There were two different instruments. The first instrument was designed to solicit personal information from the participants which included information about their childhood, academic, and career backgrounds. The second instrument was divided into two parts. Part I of the second instrument was designed to solicit information regarding their experiences in segregated schools. Questions asked related to their social and academic experiences. Part II of the second instrument was designed gather information concerning the same factors in desegregated schools. Part II concluded by asking members if there was any information that was not explicitly covered within the protocol that they would like to share. One participant presented a large collection of memorabilia such as newspaper clippings, programs, pictures and other artifacts that she had collected over the years. We spent approximately two hours sorting through this information. There were several pieces that I found useful and was allowed to photocopy for my records. There were several participants who took the last few minutes to pay homage to their teachers of the segregated schools. These participants spent this amount of time explaining how wonderful their teachers were and what a tremendous impact those teachers had on their lives. There were several who reflected back on several emotionally debilitating experiences the transition had been on their lives and how it had impacted them in later years of their lives. One individual expounded as to how he had never forgiven his mother for making him go over to that school (Handley).

The information about desegregated experiences was deliberately delayed until the end because of its potential for controversy. It seemed important to use the first instrument to gather as much background information as possible about the participants so that I could gather an idea of what type of follow up questions I needed to prepare for the face to face interviews. For

example, Dr. Thornton's extensive background gave me an opportunity to explore more specific reasons as to why he did not choose to transition into the White school system during the Freedom of Choice plan. Also, a majority of my literature review indicated that most African American students of that era had positive memories of their experiences in segregated schools. Allowing participants to discuss their segregated experiences first provided an opportunity for participants to relax and become comfortable with me as an interviewer. This seemed to work well as an interview technique. All of the students took this opportunity to reflect positively on their segregated school experiences and how happy they were during this time. I deliberately postponed all of the questions about the desegregated school experiences until the end of the interview. I felt that these questions had the possibility of conjuring controversial memories that would place a negative tone on the rest of the interview or cause the participant to shut down had they been asked first.

Interviewing Process

Interviews provide the opportunity for free and open dialog between the researcher and the subject that is especially important when analyzing delicate subjects such as race (Freeman, 2006). Interviews were conducted over a two month span. Due to the short time span and desire for rich data, I opted for a semi-structured interview format. According to Doody & Noonan (2013), a semi-structured interview in which all participants are given open ended questions gives the researcher the flexibility to explore emerging themes that may have not been considered originally. Because this research topic explored complex and personal reflections of individuals, a semi structured interview allowed the opportunity for conversational ease between the interviewee and the researcher. This increased the opportunity for more substantive data as it allowed me an opportunity to ask follow up questions when participant's answers needed clarity and/or more

detail. The interaction with each participant allowed me an opportunity to be a participant in not only the collection of data but also the manner in which data is produced (Freeman 2006). I was allowed an opportunity to interact with the subject and create interpretations based on verbal and nonverbal responses. For example there were several instances where participants' faces reflected childlike joy as they reflected back on the "mothering" they received from their teachers in the segregated experiences. Similarly, many students cried when they began reflecting how they were treated in certain desegregated school experiences. Furthermore, the interviews allowed me to gather and photocopy and gather a greater variety of data such as "factual data, views and opinions, and personal narratives and histories" (Atkins & Wallace, 2012, p. 86).

Although each interview was digitally recorded, I still took notes. Each time something substantive occurred in an interview such as a smile, a grimace of the face, or tears, I would notate such instances on paper. Later when I transcribed the audiotapes, small nuances such as laughter or grunts allowed me to mentally revisit the interview session and possibly capture small distinctions that had escaped me during the actual interview. Each interview was transcribed within twenty-four to forty-eight hours after the initial interviews. I was able to transcribe these interviews after work in my office and on the weekends. Most interviews took between four and eight hours to transcribe and yielded approximately five to seven pages of transcription. The longest interview with Mrs. Charlotte Clark Freisson took three days to transcribe due to the rich, substantive data that was produced. Mrs. Freisson's interview yielded approximately nineteen pages of data.

In order to effectively facilitate analysis and include direct quotations within this study, line numbers were assimilated into the transcriptions. After the completion of each transcription, each participant was emailed a copy for his or her personal records. Each transcribed copy also

included a cover letter which thanked the participant for his or her time. Each participant was also asked to check his or her transcript to ensure accuracy. Each student participant was encouraged to contact me if to clarify any concerns or comments. Only two participants responded with clarifications to their interviews. One participant, after reading her interview, realized that she had misquoted certain dates and wanted to ensure that the errors were corrected. All of the others responded that they were in agreement and pleased with their interview. After seeing their reflections in print, several of the participants responded with a very emotional “thank you.” It seemed that many of my participants felt that participating in this process provided a sort of healing to a painful past that they had chosen not to speak of before this interview. I felt extremely thankful that they had chosen to allow me to tell their stories.

Narrative Analysis

According to Souto-Manning, narrative analysis is one of the most widely used methods to classify human experiences. She defines narrative analysis as “a window into meaning-making processes in the life world and can help us assess and understand institutional and societal differences in power with regard to language, differences which have largely been overlooked in the analysis of every day narratives” (Souto-Manning, 2014, p. 159). Narrative analysis is not only interested in the linguistic manner in which a research participant relays his or her experiences, there is also a focus on the social and historical contexts in which the participants’ story takes place. This is an appropriate method of inquiry for this case study because it provides an opportunity to gather firsthand experiences from individuals who have not yet had their stories documented.

Researchers who choose to rely on narrative analysis do not enter the process with preconceived notions of what data may be revealed through the research process. On the contrary,

narrative analysis only focuses on the stories shared during the interview and allows the data to produce its own results. The plots from the stories shared in a narrative can be developed in many ways. For example, the plots may be formulated from the impulsive utterances of participants; developed from gathering various points from experiences shared throughout an interview; or produce themselves from different aspects of stories shared by various participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Bernard and Ryan (2010) identify four major categories for narrative analysis. First, there is the sociolinguistic category which focuses on the narrative itself by looking for common patterns of how individuals tell stories. Next there are the hermeneutics that focuses beyond the narrative and analysis which looks beyond the story and focuses on the historical and cultural context in which the story is embedded. Phenomenology is another category which focuses on the person telling the story. Phenomenology uses an individual's personal story as a vehicle to create a sympathetic understanding of the person's life. Finally there is grounded theory in which detailed interviews provide enlightenment about the individuals lived experiences and the social factors which influenced those experiences.

As a researcher I relied on interpretivism with the implementation of narrative analysis and critical race theory to create the framework for my guiding and explicit research questions in order to assist in reporting and interpreting the findings. It was imperative to embed the narrative analysis aspect of my study into a critical race frame in order to illustrate the strong impact that race had on the stories of my participants. Because the time frame of my participants experiences were deeply rooted in the strongest part of racial tension in America's history, race created a level of tension in their stories that otherwise would not have existed. Several times through the interviews participants alluded to the strong impact that race had on their experiences. For

example, several participants noted that their interactions with White folks was the strongest influence on their experience.

Analyzing the data was a continual process that required the constant reviewing of my notes and transcripts. The purpose of the first review was to detect any possible breaches in the data thus enabling me to contact the participants for any needed clarifications. Reviewing data also presented an opportunity to ensure that I also had the opportunity to answer any follow up questions that arose. Two methods of analyses were implemented after the interview process.

The first method of analysis that I chose to implement is identified as the content method. According to Berg & Lune (2012) content analysis is commonly used when data is collected from different types of verbal and nonverbal communications such as documents, photographs, film, audio and video tapes. Specifically, the categorical development of content analysis deductive and inductive reasoning applications are applied as the researcher constantly engages with the data in order to produce identifiable patterns to create themes. In order to derive at the final identifiable themes of the research, I began by separating the gathered data into its smallest identifiable segments known as “units.” After the “units” were identified, I then began to create larger groupings for the data by looking for common elements among the “units” and thus combining the “units” into “categories.” In order to create a smaller and more discernable method of presenting the data, I looked for similarities that presented themselves across all of the transcripts using the holistic-content methodology. I identify these commonalities as “themes.” The categorical analysis are presented as findings in chapter VI as they relate to the specified research questions. The identified themes are presented in chapter in the interpretations of the findings as they relate to the presented research questions.

Units

All collected data was coded according to Creswell's of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Creswell, 1994). According to Creswell, this process requires the researcher to continuously compare different incidents until common patterns emerge. The first step in analyzing the data required me to identify various commonalities of small ideas that presented themselves throughout the data. After transcribing the data, I printed a copy of the transcripts in order to make it easier to separate and code the data. I divided the data accordingly into different sections that reflected the research questions and the participants' experiences in each identified school setting and timeframe (segregated, Freedom of Choice, final phase of transition). I was fortunate in that the order of my questions allowed me an opportunity to easily access information. The interview instrument was structured in a manner that solicited segregated experiences, Freedom of Choice experiences, and final desegregation experiences in an organized format. Upon completion of transcribing the data, I separated my transcriptions into those who did not transition when the opportunity presented itself; those who transitioned during Freedom of Choice; and those who transitioned in the final phase of desegregation. I began by analyzing the material associated with the segregated school experiences. All of the data related to segregated experiences was microscopically analyzed for small distinctive units. Because all of the participants had extensive memories associated with the segregated school experiences, the largest number of units was derived from the segregated school experiences. For example, I noticed the notions of teachers sacrificing to supply materials, communications between teachers and parents, parents supplying materials for the school, the relationship between the churches and the school, and so forth. Within each section all common units were highlighted with similar colors. For each similarity, I also drew a line from the idea into the margin and labeled it with a code number. The same process was

applied to the Freedom of Choice section and the, final desegregation section. The process of color coding each individual unit provided an easy visual to follow and seek for larger levels similarities.

After identifying the units, I printed a fresh, unmarked copy of the transcripts in order to gather a stronger sense of the impact of each participant on the data collected. I then created a chapter which presented a profile of each participant which is presented in chapter V. Reviewing the participants' profiles after identifying the smaller units gave me a different perspective of the participants' contributions. I then was able to review the different colors of data and create a sense of order. I then took on the task of looking for commonalities among the participants' comments in order to discern what could be derived about the experiences of African American students.

Categories

Although identifying units demanded looking within the data for minute units of similarities, the classification of categories required reuniting the data in order to create larger segments of meaning. For example when several participants commented on similar ideas, those ideas were placed together to create larger groups of meanings. Case in point, when participants discussed "broken heaters" or "having to borrow the football field of the White school," I placed those topics under the umbrella of facilities.

The creation of categories turned out to be a more difficult process than identifying the units. For example there were often times when I could not decide which category to place different ideas. Ideas were often shifted from one category into another. Also, the category titles were also constantly changing in order to create titles that could accommodate the various units that emerged. I finally ended up with thirteen categories. Chapter V presents the final thirteen categories in conjunction with a various number of subcategories (see figure 6.1).

In order to clearly depict the feelings and emotions expressed by the participants, I decided to include direct quotations to serve as examples of the comments associated with the findings. Quotations which provided clear illustrations of the participants' experiences were highlighted. I then created three charts in Microsoft word-one for each phase of the study. Each section of the charts was labeled with the title of the varying categories. I then placed the participants' quotes within the corresponding segments of the chart. For example in the "facilities" category I placed quotes about the building, the heater, and the lack of a shower room for the athletes as illustrated in the segregated school phase.

Phases

All of the collected data was divided into three separate phases which included: the participants' experiences in segregated schools; the participants' experiences in the Freedom of Choice plan; and the participants' experiences in during the final phase of desegregation. The phases correctly correlate to the specifically identified research questions and the time frame study of the (1965-1975). Chapter VI details the findings as they relate to the categories within the three phases. The first chart for segregated schools produced four labels; the second chart for the Freedom of Choice plan produced five labels; and the chart for the final transition produced four labels.

Themes

After interacting with the data for several weeks, I searched for dominant patterns which could be identified throughout the study. Holistic analysis was used to identify thematic commonalities among the participants' experiences. Whereas chapter VI focuses on outlines the data shared by the participants and discusses how it relates to the specifically identified research questions, chapter VII is used to present my analysis of the data and how it relates to the overall

guiding research question. In order to generate the various themes, I had to complete a comprehensive analysis of all of the narratives in order to illuminate the experiences of the students of Randolph County to create a case study. This process provided me an opportunity to encapsulate the experiences of these former students throughout the three phases which spanned the time frame of the research period.

Validation Strategies

A major issue of qualitative research involve the issue of reliability of the data gathered (Janesick 2000). According to Berg & Lune (2012) state that triangulation method is appropriate when using multiple forms of data collection. In order to validate all data, I used triangulation and thick, rich description. Janesick (2000) identifies the objective of triangulation as to ascertain the different ways the same manifestation is being recognized. Triangulation was implemented by cross referencing all data collected (interviews, newspaper clippings, historical documents, pictures, diaries, transcriptions, and field notes etc). Furthermore, thick descriptions were applied in order to prove the reliability of the research. According to Stake, one of the objectives of phenomenological researchers is to “describe the several cases in sufficient detail for the reader to make comparisons” (p. 83). In order to achieve this goal, I implemented data collected from individuals within the identified themes of the research. I also provide copious details of the correlating experiences of participants. Finally, participants were contacted following their interviews in order to verify their answers. When needed, Follow up questions were asked via telephone or email. Also, transcribed documents were submitted to individuals who participated in the interviewing process for clarification.

Chapter Summary

This chapter is a description of the various aspects of the research methodology implemented. I began with an explanation of why a qualitative design was the best option for my research objectives. I then provide information which illustrates the manner in which the research participants were chosen and I also give a description of the research population. Reviewing historical data and creating a questionnaire prior to meeting with the participants provided me an opportunity to create effective questions for the semi-structured interviews. I provided an explanation of narrative analysis in order to help the readers understand my thought processes as they reviewed the study's findings.

CHAPTER V - PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS

In this chapter, I present a summary of participants' individual background information for each contributor of the study. I elaborate on how I met the participants, the setting of the interviews, and the general atmosphere that surrounded each interview. This is an effort to elaborate on the context in which the data was gathered. Furthermore, I wanted to depict the students in sufficient detail to help the reader to develop a sense of familiarity with the former students as individuals prior to making comparisons among the narratives in successive chapters.

The Research Population

A majority of the nominees' segregated school experiences occurred at Randolph County Training School. Also, most of the participants who transitioned into desegregated schools, transferred into Handley High School. The final list of participants consisted of two males who chose not to participate in the desegregation process when offered the opportunity during the Freedom of Choice plan; one male and three females who participated during the Freedom of Choice plan during elementary school; and two females and two males who transitioned during the final phase of desegregation in 1970. All of the participants except one attended the segregated school of Randolph County Training School in Roanoke, Alabama. Mrs. Portia Lane's segregated school experience took place at Wedowee High School in Wedowee, Alabama. All of those who transitioned into desegregated schools attended Handley High School in Roanoke, Alabama, except three. Mrs. Juanita Wright transitioned into Wadley High School while Portia Lane and Sydney Johnson transitioned into Randolph County Training School.

Participants were given the option of whether they would prefer to use a pseudonym for the transcriptions and/or the final written results of the study. Because none of the participants elected to use a pseudonym, I have chosen to use their real names. Where quotes are given, the interviewees initials are given and line numbers from the interview transcriptions are used in the citations.

Introduction of Participants

Table 5.1: Identification of Participants and School Affiliations

Student	Segregated school	Desegregated School
J. Burnett Jackson	RCTS 1st-12th 1955-1966	
Dr. Alvin Thornton	RCTS 1st-12th 1955-1967	
Portia Lane	Wedowee High School 1964-1968	Randolph County High 1968-1976
Herbert Whitlow	RCTS 1st-6th 1958-1963	Handley High School 7th-12th (graduated) 1964-1968

Charlotte Clark Freisson	RCTS 1st-7th 1959-1966	Handley High School 8-12 1966-1971
Kathy Pate	RCTS 1st-8th 1956-1966	Handley High School 9-12 1966-1970
Linda Chapman Felton	RCTS 1st-9th 1957-1966	Handley High School 10th-12th 1966-1969
Deborah Royston	RCTS 1st-6th grade 1964-1970	Handley High School 1970-1977
Juanita Wright	RCTS 1st—11th 1959-1970	Wadley High School 12th-graduation 1970-1971
Sydney Johnson	RCTS 1st-11th 1959-1970	Randolph County High School 12th-graduation 1970-1971
Thomas Heflin	RCTS 1st-11th	Handley High School 12th-graduation 1970-1971

Juanita Wright (JW)

“We made the best of a bad situation”

My first interview was with Mrs. Juanita Wright. Mrs. Wright attended school in Randolph County from 1959-1970. From 1959-1969, she was a student at Randolph County Training School. In 1969, when the doors of RCTS were shut for good, Mrs. Wright transitioned into Wadley High School. Mrs. Wright was slightly skeptical about how important her contributions would be to my project. She stated that there were not any glaring incidents that occurred during her tenure at the previously all-White Wadley High School. According to Mrs. Wright, “We were received very well by the teachers. As far as the teachers-the classes were small so it wasn’t like we were singled out or anything. We just kind of fit in because if it was an open discussion we had a chance to participant. It wasn’t like we were over looked or anything” (JW. Lines 104-106).

Although Mrs. Wright did not place much emphasis on her desegregated school experiences, she was quite enthusiastic about her desegregated school experience at Randolph County Training School. She was especially passionate about the memory of one of her former principals, Mr. Lewis Hoggs, who was described as a father figure to the young girls at the school. According to Mrs. Wright, Mr. Hoggs was like a father figure to many of the young girls. He constantly warned them of how easy it was to get fooled into pregnancy by the young boys of the school and how detrimental teenage pregnancy would be on their futures.

Mrs. Wright states that although she did not transfer during the Freedom of Choice plan, she did hear stories of the experiences of other students who had transferred during the Freedom of Choice plan. She particularly discussed one of the elementary students who had transferred to Knight-Enloe Elementary school. According to the stories, White students at Knight-Enloe were very mean to the young Black female student. Everyone was supposedly very rude to her and she

was constantly spat upon. Mrs. Wright remembers “shuddering that that could happen to someone” (JW line 68). When it was finally determined that Randolph County Training School would be closing and all Black students would be consolidating into traditionally White Schools, Mrs. Wright remembers having fears that she would possibly suffer the same treatments.

Mrs. Wright acknowledged that her parents did not really discuss the school transfer with her. She was informed of the transfer through Mr. Wilkie Clark, the father of one of her friends, Charlotte Clark. She identified Mr. Clark as always concerned about the future of the Black children of Randolph County. Not only did he discuss current events with those who visited his home, he would also inquire about their future educational plans. Mrs. Wright remembered Mr. Clark being particularly upset when she identified that she planned to go away to school and move out of the community. Mrs. Wright stated that Mr. Clark believed “that if you went away and got an education, then you needed to come back and put something back into the community” (JW lines 46-48).

Kathy Pate (KP)

“There are a lot of good memories from Randolph County Training School. I wish it could have just stayed there, but I know that there was no way for us to be separate and equal” (K.P. lines 16-18)

The second person interviewed was Mrs. Kathy Pate. Mrs. Pate attended Randolph County Training School from 1956-1966 from first to eighth grade. In 1966, she transferred over to Handley High School where she began and completed her high school experience from grades 9-12. After high school, Mrs. Pate attended Alabama A & M University, graduated, and returned to Randolph County where she served as a teacher in the Roanoke City School district for 37 years.

Mrs. Pate was one of the members of Dr. Alvin Thornton's private Facebook page, RCTS graduates. After finding Mrs. Pate on the RCTS Facebook page, I emailed her and asked her to be a participant. Mrs. Pate seemed very excited to share her experiences of the Randolph County Transition era. Mrs. Pate disclosed that she has lived in Randolph County all of her life. Not only did she attend school at the segregated Randolph County Training School, so did both of her parents and her sister. Even though she did not fully graduate from Alabama State University, Her mother was employed as a teacher in the Randolph County School System under an emergency certificate. Furthermore, she also identified herself as being a recently retired school teacher of the Randolph County School System. Her sister also briefly taught in the Roanoke County school system after graduating from Clark University. While attending Randolph County Training School, Mrs. Pate was a member of the band. However, she did not participate in any extracurricular activities at Handley High School. She also describes herself as being an "average" student during her attendance at Randolph County Training School and Handley High School. I include this information to illustrate how deeply Mrs. Pate is rooted in the Randolph County School System.

Mrs. Pate not only discussed her desegregated school experiences, she also detailed some of her sister's experience who had transferred a year prior. For example, she stated that her sister's experience was not a very good social experience. According to Mrs. Pate, her sister had discussed with her how other students had ignored her and other Blacks or called them names. Mrs. Pate identified the principal during her sister's initial desegregated school system as extremely racist.

Mrs. Pate entered the Randolph County School system in 1958. She attended the segregated school of RCTS from 1958 to 1966 for kindergarten through eighth grade. During the initial phase of the Freedom of Choice plan of 1966, she transferred to the previously all-white

Handley High School. Mrs. Pate stated that her parents chose the transfer because her sister had already transferred over into the schools. Mrs. Pate identified her parents as very hard workers and who felt that she and her sisters would get a better education if they attended Handley. According to Mrs. Pate, “They wanted us to have the best. There was basically no other choice” (K.P line 63-64). Mrs. Pate identified that no measures were taken to prepare her for the transfer. She identified one outspoken community leader, Mr. Wilkie Clark, who would contact the school board and superintendent to make sure that the students were being treated fairly.

Mrs. Pate identified differences in her academic performances in the segregated and desegregated schools. She explained that when she was in the segregated schools, the teachers were always there to support and encourage her. She gave specific the specific example of how her math teacher would take out time to make sure she understood all of the questions. However, when she transferred over to Handley, there was very little support for her academically. During her academic year at Handley, she recalls failing math and having to take it over during the summer. Although, the first year at Handley was difficult for her, Mrs. Pate acknowledged that her academic performance did improve as the years progressed.

According to Mrs. Pate, there were two other girls who transferred with her in 1966. The relationship between the Black students and the White students was identified as being very tense. For example, she shared that there were often times when she and the other two girls were called names. Even though the other two girls would retaliate and call the White students names, Mrs. Pate stated that she never retaliated. Quite often these interchanges of name calling would result in the Black girls being sent to the office. Mrs. Pate rationalized that one of the reasons that the Black students may have punished and the White students were not is because the White faculty and student communities had bonds that extended beyond the school environment just as the Black

community had such bonds. According to Mrs. Pate, “teachers knew the parents of the White children and they were altogether in everything and that just made us stand out” (KP lines 15-16). Mrs. Pate stated that she had no regrets about the transfer. Ultimately she stated that the experience of being forced to adjust to a new environment probably made things easier when she went off to college. At the end of the interview, Mrs. Pate strongly encouraged me to contact Dr. Alvin Thornton. I explained to her that I had already contacted Dr. Thornton and was hopeful that I could possibly set up an interview with him. Mrs. Pate also encouraged me to interview Charlotte Clark Freisson. It was emphasized that Mrs. Clark Freisson would be a great participant because she was the daughter of Wilkie Clark, one of the most prominent Civil Rights Leaders in the area during the time period. The names of both of these participants were constantly suggested throughout the interview process, and I did get an opportunity to meet with each of them.

Sidney Johnson (SJ)

Everything we did was centered around that school.

Similar to Mrs. Pate, Mr. Johnson is also a lifelong resident of Randolph County. However, he did not transfer during the Freedom of Choice plan, but rather transitioned during the final year of the desegregation phase when Randolph County High School was permanently closed. Mr. Johnson attended Randolph County Training School from 1959-1970 from grades 1-11. When RCTS finally closed in 1970, he transitioned to Randolph County High School where completed the twelfth grade.

I met with Mr. Sidney Johnson in his home office after work. The actual interview lasted approximately 2 hours. However, I found that after the official interview (after I had turned off the tape recorder) Mr. Johnson continued to add information that was extremely relevant. It was during this meeting that I decided that I would not turn off my tape recorder until I was actually in

my car. Mr. Johnson's home office indicated that he was a very busy man. There were many important boxes of important documents related to his business stacked neatly on the floor. What was even more interesting was that on his wall, Mr. Johnson had several class portraits of students from the renowned Randolph County Training School. During the latter part of the interview, Mr. Johnson informed me that after Randolph County School closed in 1969, the doors of the building were left open. Many people just walked in and took what they wanted. He had managed to salvage several of the class portraits and had taken care to preserve them throughout the years. Even more astounding were several class portraits for several years after the Randolph County High School's closing. Mr. Johnson noted that he had collected pictures from former students that he had kept in contact with. He also had taken his camera and photographed photos from others who had collected or saved photos of friends. He then placed these photos together with the appropriate years of graduation. According to him, these latter portraits illustrated what Randolph County Training School class portraits "would have" looked like if the school had stayed open. There was also much paraphernalia that related to the upcoming reunion of Randolph County Training School. Mr. Johnson shared that he was usually responsible for creating the programs for the reunion. I found this information to be indicative of how strongly connected Johnson is to his segregated school experiences.

When asked if his segregated experience was positive or negative, Mr. Johnson responded, "Positive. It was our life. We spent more time there at that school and with our friends than anywhere else growing up. All of our social events, sporting events. Everything we did was centered around that school" (SJ. Lines 5-7). One key component of the segregated schools identified by Mr. Johnson was the number of male role models who took it upon themselves to act as father figures for the Black male students. The concern for students was both personal and

academic. Mr. Johnson stated that he believes that after the school closed, the principal knew that many students who were struggling academically would rather drop out than transition into predominantly White schools. He further speculated that some of the records of senior students were altered to ensure that some of these students would have a high school diploma. One area of concern expressed by Mr. Johnson was that he couldn't recall many deliberate efforts of segregated school personnel to motivate students to go to college. However, several other students detailed many efforts of segregated students to further their education.

Thomas Heflin (TH)

I cried. I did not want to go based on the history of race relations in the state of Alabama and the South. It felt like my whole world crashed. It hurt me, but I had to go.

Thomas Heflin was recruited from the private Facebook page of Dr. Alvin Thornton. Mr. Heflin attended the segregated schools of Randolph County from 1959-1970 (1st-11th grade). He transitioned into Handley High School, from which he graduated, during his senior year of high school. Mr. Heflin also identified his segregated experience as being very positive. He noted that teachers in the segregated schools taught family values to students. He also noted that parental involvement was extremely strong. Mr. Heflin also noted that teachers in segregated schools placed a lot of emphasis on Black history. According to Heflin, "there was nothing in the books that was taught. A lot of things about slavery mostly came from the instructors themselves" (TH Lines 11-12). Discipline was also identified as being strongly enforced in segregated schools and in the Black community. Heflin and several other participants noted that the community fully supported the school's efforts to maintain strong discipline within the schools. According to Heflin, "If you was disciplined in school, when you got home you got disciplined for being disciplined in school. This was normal and expected" (TH lines 14-16). The combined efforts of

the school and the community ensured that the instructors were respected and students were focused. There was also a strong sense of student support from the teaching staff.

Linda F. Chapman (LC)

“I really became more appreciative of the segregated school after I got to the integrated school. We had excellent teachers, and we were really nurtured. They worked together so well, and they kept us involved” (LC 4-6)

I sent Mrs. Chapman an invitation to be a participant early in my recruiting phase. Like several others, her email address was recruited from the Facebook page of Dr. Alvin Thornton. Initially, she did not respond to my invitation. When I conducted the interview with Dr. Thornton, he asked if I had contacted Mrs. Chapman. Of course, my answer was no. Within a month of Dr. Thornton’s interview, Mrs. Chapman called and said that she would like to be interviewed. I could tell that this was not an easy decision for her. Her email response stated “my memory is not that great on that experience-It was traumatic and I blocked out a lot of things. I guess it's time to deal with.” This emotional response made me even more appreciative of the sacrifice she was making to share such a delicate experience with me. During the interview, Mrs. Chapman disclosed to me that during her tenure at Opelika High School, one of her coworkers had asked her to share her experience during a program during Black History Month, but she had not felt comfortable doing so at that time.

In common with many other participants of the study, Mrs. Chapman had strong connections to the Randolph County School system during and before the school integration era. Her mother had also been a graduate of Randolph County Training School. After graduation, her mother taught school at Randolph County Training School and in the Wadley Community after

desegregation. Although her father was not from Randolph County, he did serve as a principal with one of the local elementary schools.

Mrs. Chapman's interview echoed many of the thoughts exemplified in the interviews of other participants. For example, she felt a strong sense of appreciation for the teachers in her segregated school experience. Similarly to Kathy Pate, she especially remembered the support she received from her math teacher and the lack of support in the math classes after she transitioned into desegregated schools

In contrast, Mrs. Chapman remembered a teacher from the segregated school that taught math but offered her no support. Even though the teacher in the segregated school system helped other students, Mrs. Chapman states that she was absolutely no help to her. There was a memory of at least two teachers who did make an effort to reach out to her. One was a science teacher who "treated us like everybody else" (LC 69). She also identified a science teacher who perceived her as being smart. She remembered that the science teacher took out time to have a conversation with her and encouraged her to continue her education after high school. Mrs. Chapman shared that she maintained high academic achievement in both schools. The only class she struggled in was math.

Herbert Whitlow (HW)

The choice I hated. Seemed like I was being punished for no reason. My mom made me come over here. (HW, lines 27-28)

Mr. Herbert Whitlow was one of my most lively participants. He is an extremely funny individual. However, when it came to the discussion of the desegregation of the of the school system his personality often became more solemn during the interview. Mr. Whitlow's interview lasted approximately forty five minutes. His interview was a bit shorter than the average because he was not able to answer several of the questions from the interview protocol.

Similar to other participants, Mr. Whitlow expressed a fondness for Randolph County Training School. Mr. Whitlow expressed that “Being at a Black school was different than being in a mixed school. We had more fun. We were learning, but we had more fun doing it. We had more activities: May Day, Spring Break, School Princes, and Queen activities.” (l. 4-7)

Mr. Whitlow reported on a strong sense of community that existed between the Black school, the Black church, and the black families of the Randolph County areas. He noted that not only did most of the teachers know the parents of the students, but most of the teachers had also taught the parents of the students. The connection between the parents and the teachers created a strong sense of communication when discipline problems occurred with students. Mr. Whitlow reluctantly admitted that parent-teacher communication relating to discipline issues was not one of his favorite aspects of Black schools.

Mr. Whitlow was one of the participants who transferred to Handley High School during the Freedom of Choice plan. As expressed by many of the other participants, Mr. Whitlow acknowledged that although it was called Freedom of Choice, he was not free to choose which school he attended. According to Mr. Whitlow, his mother made the decision to transfer him to Handley High School when he began the seventh grade. He stated that to this day, he is not sure why his mother sent him to Handley High School. Although he had two other brothers, he was the only one forced to transition into Handley High School.

One of the most painful aspects of the transfer identified by Mr. Whitlow was that he was the only black boy in the sixth grade. He reported various instances of emotional and physical abuse that occurred to him. For instance he noted that at the water fountains, none of the kids wanted to drink after him. During class breaks, whenever he was next in line at the water fountain students would push him to the back of the line. The situation escalated to the point that Mr.

Whitlow had to wait until after class started to get water. According to Mr. Whitlow, the teacher seemed to be aware of his mistreatment at the water fountain and accommodated his request to get water at this time period. Although he suffered various forms of mistreatment, Mr. Whitlow acknowledged that he never told anyone what was going on in school.

J. Burnett Jackson (BJ)

I believe the teachers and the staff really wanted to see us succeed and they really went above and beyond to help us believe that we could do it. (BJJ, lines 4-5)

Mr. J. Burnett Jackson was recommended for participation through the private Facebook page of Dr. Alvin Thornton. Mr. Jackson and Mr. Thornton were the only two participants whose complete education experience was solely within a segregated school. Similarly to other participants, when I asked Mr. Jackson to be a participant, he was extremely willing. Finding a time to accommodate both of our schedules was simple. Mr. Jackson is retired; therefore it was easy for me to leave work a little early to meet him at the Awbrey library in Roanoke, Alabama. When I arrived at the library, Mr. Jackson was already in the back waiting to be interviewed. Mr. Jackson met with me for approximately 1 hour.

Mr. Jackson attended school in Randolph County from 1955-1966. When the Freedom of Choice plan was implemented, he chose to remain in RCTS as opposed to transitioning to the local Handley High School. Mr. Jackson's mother was a math teacher at Randolph County Training School. He identified his mother as a great inspiration to him because she had acquired her Master's degree in mathematics during the 1940's. This piece of information was very useful because it attests to the educational levels of some of the teachers who taught in segregated schools. When discussing the discrepancies between the segregated and desegregated school, he identified the second hand school buses and athletic equipment was what stood out to him the most. He

stated, “We got all of the old school buses and the old athletic equipment after it had been used by predominantly white schools” (JBJ, lines 10-11).

Similarly to other participants, Mr. Jackson related that the relationship between the faculty and the parents were extremely strong. Parents fully supported the school and the teachers. Whenever there was an extracurricular activity sponsored by the school, parents would attend in great numbers. One of the most important aspects of support was in the area of discipline. According to Mr. Jackson, all a teacher would have to say is “I am going to tell your parents” and the child knew he or she was in trouble. He explained that during that era there were no telephones, so teachers had to go to parents’ homes to report on a child’s misbehavior. Mr. Jackson shared, “I remember going with my mother to some of the houses when she wanted to tell parents something about their children” (JBJ, lines 29-30). Because his mother worked at the school, she was more easily accessible to other teachers. Mr. Jackson reluctantly admitted “I stayed in trouble unfortunately” (JBJ, lines 31). When asked how other parents felt about the desegregation process, Mr. Jackson stated that the feelings were mixed. There were parents who thought the idea was good while there were others who were worried about the treatment of their children during the transition. According to Mr. Jackson there were many outside factors which contributed to the emotions and concerns of the Black community. During that time period, the Black community or Randolph County were aware of other civil rights issues. Blacks outside were also tackling concerns such as being able to eat in public restaurants, drink at public water fountains, and the Selma March. These external factors contributed to concerns about children’s safety, the quality of education Black children would receive in White schools, and the amount of attention Black students would get in White schools.

Although Mr. Jackson had no personal experience in a segregated school, he stated that his mother finished her career at Handley High School. According to Mr. Jackson, his mother garnered the same respect at Handley High School that she experienced at RCTS. However, Mr. Jackson could not give any information about the reaction of the community when complete segregation ensued because by that time he had left the area to attend college.

Deborah Royston (DR)

During the first transition, I did want to go—out of curiosity—to see if I could handle it. I was curious to see what it would be like. I did talk to my brother to get an idea since he was already over there. (DR, lines 71-75)

Mrs. Deborah Royston was recommended by Tamara Terry Thomas. When Mrs. Royston was recommended, I was informed that she had just recently retired from the Randolph County School System. We could not interview immediately because she had plans to leave town to visit family. When Mrs. Royston returned to Roanoke, she and I set an appointment to meet in the conference room of the Awbrey Library in Roanoke.

Mrs. Royston attended Randolph County Training School from 1964-1970 for 1st -6th grades. She transitioned into Handley High School during the final phase of segregation in 1970 where she completed her education from 7th-12th grade. She characterized her experience as both a positive and a negative experience. She stated that in the segregated schools, she received a strong foundation in from the basic curriculum in areas such as reading, writing, and communication. She also stated that the socialization aspect of the segregated schools was very strong. According students experiences both inside and outside of the classroom were very enjoyable. During outside activities they were often allowed to play with very little direct supervision. She did not see the relaxed attitudes as negative but rather as evidence to the

comradery between students. Mrs. Royston stated “We were all taught to get along well” (DR, lines 9-10). However, Mrs. Royston shared that when she transitioned into Handley High School, she found that she was behind her peers academically. Mrs. Royston does not attribute her academic shortcomings to a lack of instruction by her teachers, but rather to the inadequate materials that Randolph County Training Schools acquired. Mrs. Royston claimed “the materials that my teachers had to use in the segregated schools-I knew that they were older books and they were certainly not of the same quality of books that my peers were using the next six years” (DR, lines 13-15). Mrs. Royston admitted that prior to her entrance, not only was she unaware of the differences between the two schools, she actually did not know that there were other schools in Randolph County.

Similar to other participants, Mrs. Royston expressed that the relationships between the students, parents, and teachers were extremely positive. In cases where there was misbehavior with students, she stated that even though there were no cell phones during those times, parents would usually know of the situation before the children got home from school. Mrs. Royston also echoed sentiments of the relationship between the church and the community. She stated that, “school, church, and community were pretty much intertwined. Many of the people who went to school with me were also at the church with me on Sunday mornings. It was like one big happy family at all times” (lines, 34-37).

She, too, attested that there were mixed emotions during the final phase of desegregation. Mrs. Royston noted that although she did not transfer during the Freedom of Choice plan, she did have memories of that time period. She shared that her brother had decided to make the transition early. She described her brother as an activist who felt that it was time for Black students to be admitted into White Schools. According to Mrs. Royston, her mother was very concerned about

the brother's decision to switch to a White school. Some of the mother's concerns related to how her son would be treated in an all-White school and whether or not he would be accepted. Although Mrs. Royston did not speak specifically to any direct mistreatment that her brother discussed, she did acknowledge that he struggled academically in the White school. Mrs. Royston stated that most of her brother's time after he transitioned was spent studying; therefore, she did not get to see him much. According to Mrs. Royston, "getting through that curriculum and passing was for us miraculous and we were really concerned about it" (DR, lines 50-51).

Only the older brother was giving the option of transitioning into a segregated school. One of the reasons mentioned for only allowing one child to transition was the expenses. Quite a few financial obligations were required in the all-White school. For example, students had to pay for books and tuition along with other fees. Also, she stated that her mother wanted to see how things would go with one child before considering sending other children.

Dr. Alvin Thornton (AT)

I did not enroll in a school that was reserved for White students.

I was greatly honored to have a participant on the caliber of Dr. Alvin Thornton. When I first began the process of trying to recruit participants for this project, Dr. Thornton was one of the first people suggested. It was clear that Dr. Thornton was someone that the community was very proud of.

During our conversation I discovered that not only is Dr. Thornton a previous graduate of RCTS, he also has quite a bit of professional experience with my subject area. He is currently the associate Provost of Howard University and a political science professor. Furthermore he has served on committees that have helped to facilitate the desegregation of other schools throughout the country. He also has participated in several post desegregation projects for Randolph County.

Dr. Thornton gave me his personal phone number and we agreed to contact each other the next day.

Dr. Thornton and I began our conversation discussing the history of Randolph County Training School and the enormous impact on the community. It was obvious that Dr. Thornton felt that the Black community had suffered a severe loss when RCTS finally closed its doors. It was his opinion that it RCTS not only provided an educational opportunity for the Black students of Randolph County, it also provided a connection which provided a common goal for the adults of the Black community. It was through the school that the teachers, parents, and church members focused their energies into providing the best educational and social opportunities possible for the children of the Black community. He informed me of parents who made personal sacrifices to ensure that not only the needs of their own children were met, but they would pull together to ensure that other students had what they needed.

At one point during the conversation, I unintentionally used the term “integration” as opposed to “desegregation.” Dr. Thornton quickly corrected my misuse of the term. We soon began on a conversation of the difference between “integration” and “desegregation.” Dr. Thornton informed me of how he and John Ogbu also greatly disagreed on the use of terms. The name “Ogbu” was very familiar to me because I had relied very heavily on much of his work in previous research. After our conversation, Dr. Thornton granted me access to his private Facebook page which provided much information about the history of Randolph County Training School. The private page also included much information about the success of many former graduates of Randolph County Training School. Many former graduates had experienced great academic and professional success. There was a great sense of pride as members shared pictures of their RCTS experiences and personal memories from RCTS. Also this private

page became a very useful tool in the recruitment of other members. Whenever I endeavored to recruit participants, I was sure to mention Dr. Thornton's name. I feel that his name gave me more credibility with many of those who did decide to participate.

The depth of Dr. Thornton's background gave both a historical and academic perspective of the school and community. Dr. Thornton attended school in Randolph County from 1955-1967. Although the opportunity to transition into previously all-white schools presented itself within his enrollment, Dr. Thornton chose to complete his education in a segregated school. In his discussion, Dr. Thornton made it clear that although the objective of the Randolph desegregation process was to eliminate racial inequities in education, the process itself was biased. Dr. Thornton maintained that "desegregation did not occur. The historically Black RCTS was simply closed and Black students were required to become part of the previously White county schools with little adjustment to the schools" (AT, lines 6-9). It was noted that many factors associated with the identity of RCTS were abandoned such as the mascot and school colors as students merged into the previously all-white schools. This was a very interesting perception because it illustrated how the sense of familiarity Black students were leaving in order to become a part of a new school.

Dr. Thornton acknowledged that there were various differences between the segregated school and the local white school. He acknowledged that even though he had never entered the all-white school, there were many noticeable external differences such as the external structures of the buildings and the modes of transportation. Black schools also received the hand-me-down books and sports equipment from White schools. Although RCTS received inferior equipment, the students and teachers maintained their self-concept. Dr. Thornton emphasized that they never compared themselves to surrounding White schools, but rather only to other Black schools.

Similar to other participants, Dr. Thornton perceived his segregated school system as an extremely positive one. He submitted that in the midst of a community which was dominated by White political leadership and Jim Crow laws, the black schools provided a place for healing. Dr. Thornton asserted that it was the structure and support provided by segregated schools that prepared students who subsequently participated in the desegregation movement. When discussing the importance of the segregated school experience Dr. Thornton referred to the belief of W.E.B. Dubois that African Americans needed the opportunity to become aware of themselves, their history, and deal with the ramifications of the after effects of slavery before being plunged into a desegregated environment. RCTS was attributed with providing various opportunities of leadership and extracurricular participation in what was identified as “critical mass participation.” Critical mass participation involved the inclusion of large numbers of students without a majority of students being left in the margins. According to Dr. Thornton, it was the bond that existed between the school, community, and the church that produced a student supportive environment. Relationships between students and teachers did not begin in the schools, but rather in the church and community. Dr. Thornton shared that prior to his entrance into Randolph County Training School, many of his teachers had served in positions of his family church. He identified many teachers with whom he had strong bonds that began in church.

Dr. Thornton emphasized how teachers worked together to ensure that students received the best social and academic opportunities possible. The concern for student success was not just limited to students’ k-12 experiences. For example, he identified various efforts of the segregated school to create college connections for students with local HBCUs (historically black colleges and universities). For example, he identified a situation in which the valedictorian of the class of 1959 informed her principal that she would not be able to afford to go to college. The principal

called the director of Admissions of Alabama A & M University and secured funding to allow the student to complete her education. The student is currently serving as principal in a school in Nevada. It was also identified that Tuskegee Institute supported a vocational program on the campus of RCTS. There was also a program known as the Thirteen College Program which was collaboration between Talladega College and other HBCUs. Beginning in the ninth grade, students were allowed to spend several weeks of the summer on the campus of these universities taking college preparatory courses and becoming acclimated to higher education environments. Dr. Thornton identified that many students who participated in such programs became some of the most noted graduates of RCTS. He identified several participants including Dr. Joseph Whitaker who earned a PhD in Chemistry from Talladega and continued to become a professor and department chair at North Carolina AT&T University. Dr. Thornton explained that the expectation of success was shared by not only the school faculty, but also families, churches, and communities.

Dr. Thornton repeated the previous participants' perceptions of the Black community's attitudes of desegregating schools. Although there was very little concern about black students' ability to adjust academically and socially, there was great concern about the amount of support that would be provided to students. Furthermore, Dr. Thornton alluded to an essay entitled "Behind These Walls" by one of the teachers, Mrs. Hattie P. Clark. The essay not only identified a concern about what would happen to the students, there was also a concern of what would happen to the community without RCTS as its core institution.

When asked why he chose not to transition during the Freedom of Choice plan because, Dr. Thornton stated that he did not like the plan. He explained that the plan was designed for the maintenance of the White power structure. For example, there were no strategies designed to transition White students into Black schools. Black students were only expected to transition into

White schools. He explained that as a result of this one sided plan, Black schools lost most of the attributes of their identity such as their mascot, school colors, and many of their Black teachers as role models. White schools, on the other hand, maintained all of their attributes. The only difference was that now Black students were present in the community. Dr. Thornton also noted that he was aware of many other racial issues as a result of his participation in other civil rights activities. He particularly referenced how he had led a sit-in at a segregated restaurant across from RCTS. The sit in was unsuccessful and resulted in the owner of the restaurant threatening him at gunpoint. Furthermore, Dr. Thornton stated that he was not willing to sacrifice the support and encouragement he was receiving from his segregated school environment. During that time period, Dr. Thornton was serving as SGA president and captain of the football team. *The Freedom of Choice* desegregation procedures included a rule which stipulated that students who transferred into White schools were not allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities for one year after transfer.

During the final phase of the desegregation movement, Dr. Thornton stated that there were no formal workshops to prepare students for their transition into White schools. According to Dr. Thornton, “Students of Woodland, Wadley and the Randolph County High School were not prepared to receive the students of RCTS, and RCTS students were not prepared to be received in their new high school environments. That was a major mistake.” (AT, lines 257-262).

Dr. Thornton further noted that students who transitioned into White schools were traumatized for years after the desegregation procedures. The level of trauma was different differed according to the areas desegregation occurred. Blacks from Roanoke were identified as having a greater awareness of their trauma because citizens were more active in civil rights issues. Roanoke had more black teachers, civic leaders, and community organizations such as the

NAACP. Many of these organizations were connected to regional and state Black leader organizations. According to Dr. Thornton, most of the black teachers and intelligentsia lived in Roanoke.

Although Dr. Thornton did not transition into the desegregated schools, his feedback was extremely valuable. His vast life experiences as an advocate for the educational success of marginalized communities gave him strong insight into the needs of Black students. Furthermore, Dr. Thornton maintains strong connections to other students who were involved in the desegregation movement. Also, he organizes a biannual reunion of Black students who attended segregated schools in Randolph County. During the reunion, students organize a panel to discuss their experiences thus giving Dr. Thornton an opportunity to hear various accounts of the desegregation movement. Fortunately, I began this process during the fiftieth anniversary of the initial process of the Freedom of Choice plan. Due to my work on this project, I was invited to be a member of the panel for the July 2015 event.

Charlotte Clark Freisson (CF)

While I was sitting marinating in my mama's womb, the NAACP was waging a war on public education!! It came to a head on May 17, 1954 when I was eight months old!!

Mrs. Charlotte Clark Freisson is a lifelong resident of Randolph County. Both of her parents also had roots in Randolph County. During the era of school segregation, her mother was an elementary school at Randolph County Training School, and her father was the president of the NAACP. The meeting with Mrs. Freisson was one of my most anticipated of the whole project. During each of my interviews and throughout the process of researching historical documents, everyone encouraged me to seek out Mrs. Freisson. Mrs. Freisson's father, Wilkie Clark, had been identified as the strongest civil rights leaders of Randolph County. I received a clearer image of

how legendary Mr. Clark was when I attended a black history program in Roanoke, Alabama. The guest speaker, a long time civil rights activist of the community, constantly alluded to situations in which Wilkie Clark had stood up to the White community of Randolph County.

It was my desire to talk to Mrs. Freisson in the early phase of the interview process. However, Mrs. Freisson had a very busy schedule which made it almost impossible to get in touch with her. She inherited a funeral home from her father, and during that time her services were in high demand. We were finally able to meet in her home on a Sunday afternoon. As I prepared to meet for the interview I realized that I had left all of the hard copies of my interview questions at my office. Fortunately, I had a copy on my laptop. However, as I conducted the interview, I found that Mrs. Freisson only needed the first two questions to guide her. After the first couple of questions, she began to speak freely and inadvertently provided me with much more detail than my questions allotted.

Mrs. Freisson began her interview by immediately giving her opinion of the Brown decision. She made it adamantly clear that she felt this decision was the worst thing to ever happen to Black communities. Although she understood the good intentions of those who fought for the elimination of separate schools for Black and White students, she adamantly disapproved of the manner in which it was implemented.

Mrs. Freisson maintained that prior to Brown, all of the members of the Black community were strong supporters of education for their children. She went into specific details of the strong sense of support and the relationships that were a part of her childhood neighborhood. She explained to me that many of her teachers and classmates lived within the same neighborhood as she and her family. She also noted that she, her teachers, and many of her classmates also were members of the same church. Many of her school teachers were also her Sunday school teachers.

Mrs. Freisson also shared that parents and teachers would visit each other's homes for social activities. Teachers were identified as demonstrating a sense of love and responsibility towards students that extended beyond the classroom. For example, not only did Black teachers inform parents of students' misbehavior within the school or classroom, they would also chastise students if students were misbehaving outside of the classroom. Mrs. Freisson celebrated Black parents, Black communities, and Black teachers behaved as a single force dedicated to the social, moral, and academic development of all of its children. According to Mrs. Freisson, "It was almost like we were an army. There weren't no bullets, or guns, or rifles or anything like that. The parents and all of the adults in the community were an army walking in locked step with one common goal which was "We're gonna educate our children and we gonna have the best school we can have if we have to get out here and raise the money ourselves" (CF, lines 44-49). Mrs. Freisson gave specific examples of how Black schools would unite to raise money to fund programs that the county refused to pay for. For example, she illustrated how it was the parents, educators, and community members financed band programs and supplied typewriters in the school with little to no assistance from the county board of education. Many other participants also mentioned the band and the typing programs as the most memorable and positive experiences of their segregated school experiences.

Mrs. Freisson's session became increasingly emotional as the interview progressed. She shared with me that she was in the process of writing a book about her experiences during this pivotal period of her life. She emphasized that now, at the age of 61, she is finally has the appropriate vocabulary to voice her experiences. Through tears, Mrs. Freisson explained that

When you are a child, you just don't have the vocabulary. I really came to the realization that they were wrong. When you are a child and your parents send you into a setting or a

situation where you are abused, you don't have the words to talk about it. You feel it, but you don't understand why you feel so bad, but you don't have the words. As a child I didn't understand abuse. I had never been abused. I didn't come from an abusive home. I didn't come from a place where the adult role models—the adult role models in my life never spoke to me in a negative manner or just ignored me as if I wasn't there. At Randolph County Training School everybody knew who Charlotte was. That was Mr. Clark's daughter. (CF, lines 68-77).

I include this information to illustrate how intricately the identity of Black students was intertwined within the academic structure of the Black community. It also illustrates that when Black students left segregated schools, they not only left a physical structure and social support system, they were separated from an integral part of who they were. Mrs. Freisson also emphasized how her treatment within Handley High School further devastated her childhood. According to her, teachers had no expectations of success from her or other Black students. According to her, the attitudes of the teachers were “You're here, and I am going to teach you because the law says I have to” (CF, lines 78-79).

Mrs. Freisson believed that the Black community not only felt a strong desire to ensure that Black students had access to the same materials as White students; there was also a need to prove that Black students were just as capable as White students. When deciding which students would transition during the Freedom of Choice plan, she stated that the affluent members of the Black community chose their brightest students. Mr. Heflin also stated that many students were specifically chosen to participate in the Freedom of Choice plan. However, Mr. Heflin argued that the White community approached parents of the more affluent members of the Black community

to solicit students. Although there is inconsistency in the reports as to how students were chosen, both parties agree that the brightest students from Black schools were specifically recruited to participate in the initial phase of desegregation.

Mrs. Freisson identified that her father insisted that she, too, participate in the initial phase of the desegregation movement. According to Mrs. Freisson, her father was one of the primary combatants for school desegregation. She stated that he felt it would send an awkward message if the children of other parents were sent into White schools while his daughter remained at RCTS. Although her father insisted, her mother was extremely skeptical. Mrs. Freisson stated that during the first year of desegregation, she had become ill and her mother insisted that she remain at RCTS where she could keep an eye on her. However, the second year, she was transitioned into Handley High School. Similar to other students, Mrs. Freisson stated that there was no official preparation for her or other students to help them adjust to the idea of transitioning into White schools. She, too, stated that the only communication she received was from her parents who insisted that she monitor her behavior in her new environment. According to Mrs. Freisson, her mother gave her the following talk:

Charlotte, we are sending you to Handley High School to get an education because we want you to be educated as well as any white student in Roanoke, Alabama. Nobody is better than you and you are no better than anyone else, but you are just as good. When you go over there you do your work and be polite. If nobody speaks to you, don't try to speak to anybody. You be respectful. If anybody bothers you, you go tell the teachers. Don't you go over there getting in no altercations with anybody. (CF, lines 216-222)

This information is very significant because it indicates how Black children were not prepared or aware of the racial attitudes of the community. Students had no idea of how White students and teachers might react to them or how they would be treated. Mrs. Freisson did identify precautions that her parents took to ensure her safety as she traveled to school. Mrs. Freisson did not live in an area zoned for the school bus. Students from her area lived close enough to walk to school. However, her parents did not feel the walk was safe and therefore chose to hire a cab to drive their daughter to school throughout the first year of her transition.

Mrs. Freisson stated that for five years she endured what she identified as torture from teachers and students. According to Mrs. Freisson, she did not socialize with any other students. None of the White students would talk to her and she never talked to any of them. Also, she was the only Black student in any of her classes. She stated that she tried to talk to her parents, but although they tried to console her, they did not confront the school, teachers or administration. One reason she stated that her parents would not become directly involved was that her mother was worried about her job security. She felt that if her husband angered the White community, she would lose her job. This evidence illustrates the extreme level of isolation and loneliness that Mrs. Freisson experienced during the school year. Similar to Mr. Whitlow, Mrs. Clark also identified how students would treat her as if she was subhuman by refusing to sit by her. She also stated that none of the teachers would come to her defense. There were even situations where she felt that the teachers were part of what she identified as a conspiracy. For example, she identified feeling a high level of anxiety whenever the Social Studies lessons would focus on African Americans. The textbook would have the term “Negro” throughout the chapters. Instead of using the word “Negro,” the teacher’s accent would sound like “Nigra.” Mrs. Freisson stated that the trauma influenced during these years left many scars that have endured throughout her life.

The interview with Mrs. Freisson also produced quite a bit of historical information surrounding the desegregation process of not only Randolph County, but also the nation as a whole. Through the experiences of her father, Mrs. Freisson had quite a bit of first-hand knowledge about the involvement of the NAACP. She explained how Mrs. Attrie B. Henderson, a first grade teacher at RCTS and Mr. Johnnie Tommie Thompson were the first organizers of the NAACP in Randolph County. Mr. Thompson served as the first president of the NAACP in Roanoke, Alabama. In an effort to dissuade African American Teachers from becoming involved in the NAACP, a law called the 'Hatchet Act' was enacted. The 'Hatchett Act' made it illegal for public employees or teachers to be involved in what was identified as "subversive organizations." Mrs. Freisson assumed that Mrs. Henderson felt too intimidated to become the next NAACP president, and thus the offer was made to Mr. Wilkie Clark who served in the position for over forty years. Mrs. Freisson stated that prior to enacting any enacting any community movements on behalf of Blacks, NAACP presidents had to attend regional meetings for training. As the daughter of the local NAACP president, Mrs. Freisson got to attend many of those meetings. She stated that she once had a collection of records from the NAACP. However a reporter from CNN had once visited the area looking to do an historical documentary, and Mrs. Freisson had given the materials to him. We tried to find the reporter by searching for him on the internet. Unfortunately, he no longer worked at CNN and could no further information was available.

Mrs. Freisson also identified that Mrs. Ruby Hurley moved to Birmingham, Alabama, to set up an NAACP headquarters to serve Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and North Carolina. When the Brown decision was enacted, Mrs. Hurley began to assemble all of the regional presidents for special training on the law, changes in the law, and what procedures were needed to enforce the law within different communities. Mrs. Freisson stated that the

NAACP was aware that Alabama and other southern states would do everything possible to avoid enacting school desegregation. NAACP activists were given boxes of materials which informed them of how to approach local school boards, what points needed to be raised with local school boards, and what barriers to expect. In retaliation to the pressure asserted by the NAACP, the state of Alabama filed a lawsuit in 1956 against the organization disabling it from operating within the state. As a result, NAACP meetings began to meet privately. Mrs. Freisson identified the lawsuit as a contributing factor to the slow progress of school desegregation in Alabama. She stated that Blacks in the area had no guidance as to how to organize to carry out the agenda of the NAACP.

Mrs. Freisson's interview was extremely enlightening. Not only did she give information that coincided with information given by other participants, she also eloquently verbalized how she was personally affected by desegregation.

Chapter Summary

This chapter illustrated the circumstances of the interviews and presented the essence of what each participant shared during his or her interview. The profiles of the participants were presented in the order in which I met with each of the former students. There is now a platform to analyze information shared by the participants as it relates to their experiences in segregated schools, their memories of the desegregation process, and their experiences in the desegregated schools of Randolph County.

CHAPTER VI - FINDINGS OF THE STUDY, PART I: CATEGORICAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS

This chapter communicates the results of the study based on one of the first methods of analysis utilized for this project. A review of the categorical-content method is given to provide a context for the findings. Three phases are used to relate the findings as they relate to each of the specified research questions. The phases are followed by a discussion of the findings.

Description of Phases, Categories, and Subcategories

According to Bernard and Ryan (2010) scholars have always been fascinated by the natural story-telling abilities of humans. Brinkman (2009) define narrative analyses as a process which “focuses on the meaning and the linguistic form of texts” the primary focal points of narrative analyses are described as “the temporal and social structures and the plots of the interview stories” (p. 222).

This chapter discusses the findings of the study as related to the identified research questions. Results were created from data through the use of categorical-content technique. Categorical content analysis divides narratives into smaller segments of meanings and constantly rearranged until meanings or themes are identified. I use the term units to identify the minutest forms of meaning. After constantly reviewing and comparing the data, I finally ended up with forty- three units of data.

After identifying “units,” I created a chapter which specifically focuses on giving background of the participants and gives the reader a sense of the type of information provided by each participant. Completed transcripts were then reviewed in order to produce larger frameworks

of meaning that were reflective of all thirteen dictations. These larger frameworks of meaning are identified as categories. Information derived from these categories are presented

The constant analysis of the data illuminated that a clearer understanding of the data could be achieved if the information was arranged according to the time periods associated with each research question. Phase one identifies the participants’ reflections of their experiences in segregated schools. Phase two identifies the research participants’ reflections of their experiences during the Freedom of Choice plan. Finally phase three identifies the participants’ descriptions of transitioning during the final phase of desegregation. In order to provide rationality to the large quantity data produced, each of the categories were divided into subcategories.

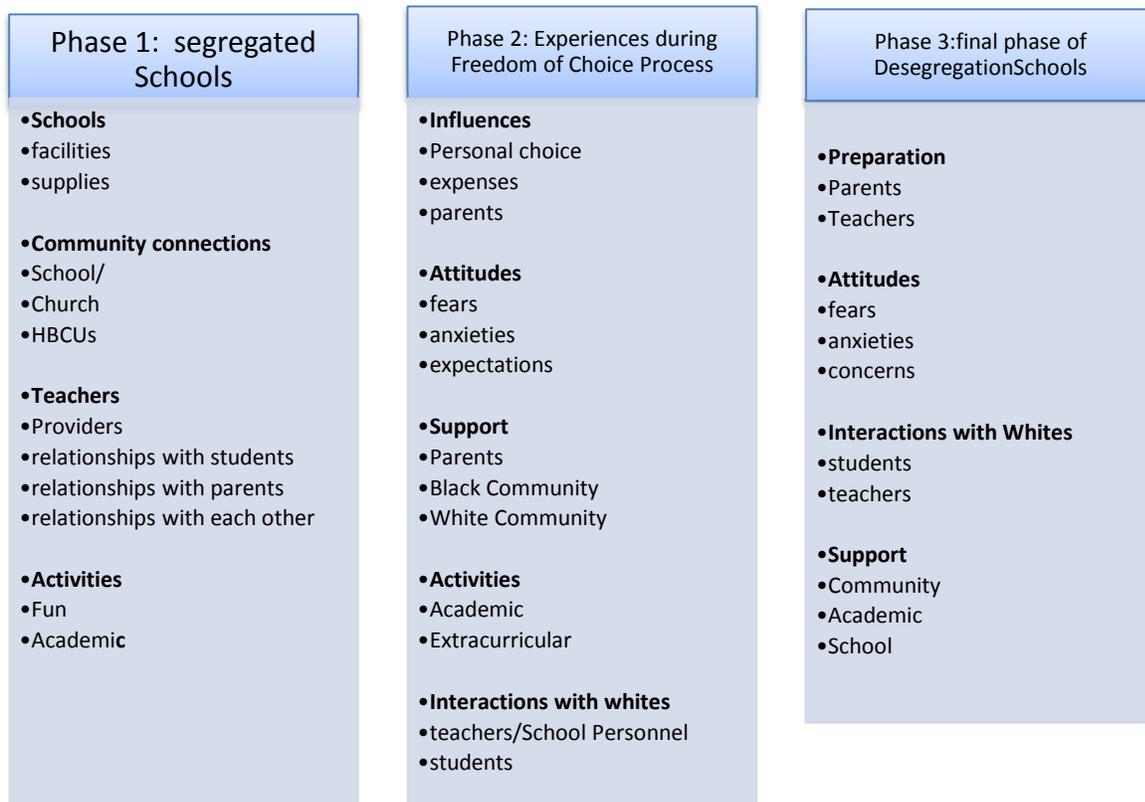


Figure 6.1: Categories and Subcategories of Data

Phase one discusses the students’ memories of their experiences within segregated schools. Phase two discusses students’ experiences during the Freedom of Choice plan. Phase three discusses the

experiences of students during the final phase of the desegregation process. Each category of experience varies according to which stage of the desegregation process the students participated in. Phase Three also varies according to the schools in Randolph County in which students transitioned. Phase three spans the years from 1965-1970.

Findings: Categorical-Content Analysis

This study was designed to investigate the experiences of former African American students of Randolph County during the segregation period, during the era when Randolph County began to implement desegregation policies (Freedom of Choice) and student experiences after complete transition into local White schools. The specified research questions relate to exact time periods, and is therefore treated as a segment in a sequential progression of events.

Phase one concentrates on the African American students' remarks related to being taught in segregated schools during the early 1960s. Important references are made about the role of the segregated school in the Black community, the relationship between the community and the school, the struggles associated with the segregated school, and various levels of support afforded students who attended segregated schools. Phase two focuses on the experiences of African American students during the Freedom of Choice plan. Factors associated with the Freedom of Choice plan span over a time period of four years (1965-1969). This time period examines the immediate experiences of desegregation on Black students who first transitioned into previously all-white schools. The attitudes of students about the transition process, the reactions of White teachers and students to their presence in the schools, and the response of Black students are analyzed in this section. Five participants transitioned during the Freedom of Choice plan. These students discuss factors that influenced their participation in the early phase of the desegregation movement. Phase two not only discusses the experiences of those who initially transitioned into

White schools, there is also discussion of the perceptions of those who did not transition at that time. For example, those who did not participate explain why they did not transition and their thoughts about what was happening with others who had transitioned. Phase three focuses on the experiences of those who were students during the final phase of the desegregation process of Randolph County. Phase three consists of four participants-two females and one male. One female (Deborah Dunson Royston) was in the seventh grade when she transitioned. However the other three (Juanita Wright, Sydney Johnson, and Thomas Heflin) were seniors during the last phase of desegregation. All of these participants were students of Randolph County Training School during the final transition; however, not all of the students transitioned into the same school. Deborah Royston and Thomas Heflin transitioned into Handley High School (Roanoke, Alabama); Juanita Wright transitioned into Wadley High School (Wadley, Alabama); and Sydney Johnson transitioned into Randolph County High School (Wedowee, Alabama). This section focuses on the participants' attitudes of leaving Randolph County Training School, participants' perception of the transition process, and the participants' experiences within White schools. When appropriate, this section will also present thoughts of students who transitioned during Freedom of Choice or those who did not choose to transition. This chapter presents the results of the research in categories as they relate to these three chronological phases.

Phase One: Segregated Schools

My first research question asked: What were the experiences of African American students in segregated schools? Research question one also has a sub question which asks. "What structures of educational and social support existed for African American students of Randolph County during their segregated school experience?" Dividing the question into two sections allowed an opportunity to explore the negative and positive aspects of the experiences. All of the

students interviewed began attending public school within ten years after the Brown decision. All of the students in the study had segregated experiences in either Randolph County Training School or Wedowee High School. This presented an opportunity to present a more holistic view of the segregated school experiences of Randolph County.

School Setting

The school setting was broken into two subcategories which include the materials, facilities. The term “material” is used to denote concrete articles that students used in either their curricular or extracurricular experiences. Materials will refer to books, athletic equipment, and transportation. “Facilities” identify all factors relating to the school building such as the exterior of the building and any features of the interior of the building. The first aspect of the school experiences focuses on the challenges associated with the segregated school experience. The strongest challenge was the school setting. The school setting focuses on the segregated school environment under which the former students were educated. When asked if they were aware of the differences, there were mixed responses. The details the students shared of their environment were so detailed that one could clearly imagine the academic environment. Those who were in elementary school during their segregated experiences admitted that they were not immediately aware of the differences between the Black and White schools. Mrs. Kathy Pate who transitioned during the Freedom of Choice plan in the 9th grade admitted that she only became aware of the differences when she transitioned into Handley High School. Many of the older participants were acutely aware of the differences between the Black school settings and the White school settings. Materials. When asked if they were aware of any differences between the local black schools and white schools, many of the participants agreed that the materials that Black students were allotted were not of the same quality as those of White students. All agreed that the materials made

available to Black students were often in poor condition. Sydney Johnson, who transitioned as a senior in 1970, stated “I knew all along we were getting hand-me-down and second hand items” (SJ, line 15). Students agreed that the Black school was given second hand books and athletic equipment for usage. Thomas Heflin commented, “They had new books, we had hand-me-down books” (TH, line 19). Dr. Alvin Thornton also stated that “Normally, we were given hand-me-down or secondary books and athletic equipment that were previously used by the White student body” (AT, lines 47-49).

Although not directly related to the curriculum or equipment, one of the strongest implications of inequality in the materials was the school bus. According to Sydney Johnson,

For example the school buses. We had the same school buses from the time I was in the first grade until I got to the tenth grade. We always saw new buses on the routes where the White kids were riding and we always had these old buses. We finally got a new bus when I was around the tenth grade (SJ, lines 10-12).

Thomas Heflin also stated discrepancies with the school buses, “We had new buses, they had old buses” (TH, line 21). Mr. Johnson went into specific detail as to why the discrepancies between the school buses were such a major issue.

The issue with the school buses is that the Roanoke City schools (Handley High School was a city school) but Randolph County provided them with school buses so that the White kids who lived in rural areas could go to Handley. That was –I won’t say unlawful-but it was improper. Why would the county schools provide buses to the city schools for the White kids? Like I said we were riding in these

old worn out buses and they were giving the new buses to kids who shouldn't even have them (SJ, lines 19-23).

Even though Mr. Heflin acknowledged a discrepancy in the type of transportation, he did not see an issue with it. According to Heflin, "That was the norm. It was something that was accepted" (TH, line 20). Mr. Johnson also agreed citing that "I was well aware of it, but at that particular time, it did not really bother you that much because all you ever had was hand-me-downs, so you really did not know what you were missing" (SJ, lines 17-19).

Facilities. Although he acknowledged that he had never entered into a previously all-White school, Dr. Alvin Thornton stated the differences between the facilities of the school was evident. He stated that the one could immediately notice that the White school was in better shape than the Black school by simply looking outside of the school. Linda Felton Chapman stated, "With the facilities such as the outer façade of the school. Our school was older. Theirs was very nice-brick. Ours was a whitewashed brick. For the heating system we had this big boiler and sometimes it cooperated and sometimes it didn't" (LF, lines 12-14). Juanita Wright also commented on how uncomfortable the Black school could be at times.

Our school was heated by a coal burner. They had to put coal in the furnace to heat the school. I can remember on some days when it was broken. I never did hear of anything like that happening at the White school which was Handley High School (JW, lines 20-23).

Sydney Johnson noted that the heaters were not the only aspect of the school that was not up to acceptable standards when compared to the White schools.

As far as the facilities and what not. There were no working showers at the school. When they built the gym (they built the gym before I started school there) and there were no showers. When I got to the other school I found that they had showers, hot and cold water, and all of this type of stuff (SJ, lines 12-15).

Dr. Alvin Thornton also commented about the athletic provisions allotted to Randolph County Training School. He explained that although RCTS had a wonderful athletic program which the students, the school, and the community celebrated, it did not have a field for football games. According to Mr. Thornton, “RCTS played its games on Friday night at Wright Field and Handley played its games on Saturday night at Wright Field. Some Whites attended the RCTS games and a few Blacks attended the Handley games and sat in separate areas” (AT, lines 300-301).

The sub question of research question number one asks: “What structures of educational and social support existed for African American students of Randolph County during school segregation?” Although not all of the students could remember the challenges associated with segregated schools, every student did remember the various levels of support that were available to them. Each student remembered the manner in which the teachers, parents, and community banded together in order to ensure that they received the best education possible. Although there were many memories that related to the relationship between the school and the community contributed to the lives of the children, it seemed relevant to make it clear that although each of these units made separate contributions to ensure that students were connected, there was a strong connection that almost made them seem as if they were one organization. Many participants made it clear that in their mind there was really not a separation. The term “community” is used to define

everyone and everything participants encountered regularly. . The term “school” is used to define the environment where students received academic guidance. It includes all individuals who provided educational guidance such as teachers, principals, and other school faculty members. The term “church” is used to define the place the participants worshipped or received spiritual guidance. Prior to discussing the individual contributions, I felt that it was relevant to present the connection the students perceived.

My first participant, Juanita Wright, became emotional when she discussed the relationship between the community and the school. She, as well as many other participants, spoke of these three as a holistic unit before discussing them separately. When she spoke of the nexus between the school and the community she stated:

I think that it was very positive in that this was “our school.” It was the gathering place. It was the focal point of most of the major activities. When activities were going on it was a time for the community to come together. It was just really, really great (JW, lines 30-32).

Charlotte Freisson echoed the similar sentiments about the connection between the church and the community.

A lot of the same people who were in the school and involved in the educational process, they were over here at the church. They had the children and were teaching us Sunday school. They were teaching us about Godly love and right from wrong and how to feel remorseful about the wrong you do. It was all about raising good children and having wholesome activities for those children. It was about making them want to be something by inspiring and talking to them (CF, lines 30-34).

Kathy Pate reiterated the connection between the community, school, and church by emphasizing that everyone such as parents, community members, and educators all had common places in the community where they would make connections. She also explained that these connections created a sense of comfort for the students. As she discussed the manner in which she would encounter her teachers outside of the school environment, a child-like smile came over her face. She relayed that even though not all of the teachers went to her church, they did all attend a church in the community. Mrs. Pate identified several teachers and the roles they played in her church life as well as her academic life: “I remember Mrs. Shephard. I did not get an opportunity to have her, but I knew her. She taught at Randolph County Training School. She taught typing and she was the organist at my church. She was a very, very sweet lady. Another lady her name was Mrs. Shealy. She could sing, and she led the choir in my church” (KP, lines 32-36). Deborah Royston stated that the school and community was one unit. According to Mrs. Royston:

School, church, and community were pretty much intertwined. Many of the people who went to school with me were also at church with me on Sunday mornings. It was like it was one big happy family at all times. The area where I went to school was very near the church that I attended also. It was about one block away. So many of my teachers also went to the same church that I attended. I think that was another reason why everybody knew everything. Church and community were pretty much the same thing or school and community. Everything was altogether (DR, lines 35-40).

Dr. Thornton also agreed that the relationship between the teachers at his school did not begin when he entered the building, but had already begun when began attending church. According to Mr. Thornton:

Some of my RCTS teachers were members of the church. As a child, even before I enrolled in school, I had a relationship with some of my teachers, which was not school connected; it was an extension of the church. There was Mr. E.J. Heard who was a long serving teacher at RCTS and then at Wedowee High School. Also, Mr. J.E. Hendricks who was a RCTS teacher and deacon at the Wehadkee Baptist Church. E. J. Heard was also a deacon at Wehadkee. These men were examples to me long before I entered the first grade at RCTS in 1955. After I enrolled, the unbroken nexus between church family and school continued. When I arrived at the Randolph County Training School, they were already there serving as teachers. There was also my cousin Hattie Peters Clark, a RCTS teacher who visited our home long before I began school at RCTS. My schooling at RCTS was a continuation of my church and community experiences, it was not the beginning of my teacher connected education and cultural development (AT, lines 71-81).

Dr. Thornton continued to explain that he feels that since the desegregation of schools, the connection between the schools and the community is relatively weak. He conjectured that “the absence of this essential bond hurts our students’ academic performance and cultural development” (AT, lines 40-41). He expressed that there needs to be an intense effort to strengthen the bond between the school and the community.

Charlotte Clark Freisson stated that these components acted as one with a singular goal. Mrs. Freisson was one of the most expressive participants throughout the interview. However,

when she discussed the relationship between the community and the school, her words were powerful and her face became extremely stern as she recounted the manner in which the community and the Black school influenced her life as a single force rather than isolated dynamics. She began by taking down memory lane as she gave me a mental tour of her neighborhood. She identified how the home where she currently resides (and the place the interview occurred) had once been the foundation of her church. She also walked me to the window as she pointed to different homes within the neighborhood and identified where many of her former teachers had once lived.

The house across the street was Mrs. Kerri Wilson. She was the second grade teacher. My neighbor next door were the Rosses. To me it was compassion and comradery. We all were centered and focused on that education process and helping children be the best children they could be. Everybody took an interest in the kids. Right here where my house is sitting (now), this was our church. My daddy would take me by the hand and every Sunday morning he would walk me to Sunday school (CF, lines 25-29)

Linda Chapman also verified that the church, the community, and the school operated as a singular unit in order to ensure that the students of the school received educational opportunities that were not funded by the local school board. According to Mrs. Chapman,

They were almost as one. You had school and you had the church. There was always something going on at both. We had a lot of activities. A lot of programs at night and during the summer. A lot of fundraisers because we didn't get the same money or have the same materials so they were always raising money for the school

or to get materials for the children. It was a very close relationship (LF, lines 39-43).

The community invested heavily into the lives of the students while they were in attendance of the segregated schools of Randolph County. This sense of support continued as students progressed to higher levels of education. In reflection of his ascension into higher education, Dr. Thornton explained how critical his success to the school, the church, and the community as a whole. According to Dr. Thornton,

For RCTS students who continued on to college, there was a family and community expectation that they would graduate and succeed. College admission, academic achievements and graduations were major topics of discussion in the community. Students were not expected to fail. If you failed, you had let down your family, church, and community -- all connected parts supporting the student. In my personal collegiate experience, I knew of this expectation. I remember that when I was admitted to Morehouse in 1967, my little church in Wehadkee gave me \$25.00, which was a lot of money at the time. When I visited Wehadkee and Roanoke during breaks from college, high school and other students would seek me out for discussion about what it was like being in college. The support system included the view that as a college student “you represented the community, which had high expectations of how you would perform academically and personally. The community celebrated you not just as a member of a family, but as a member of the larger community. This support system and community expectation motivated us to striving to succeed in college. Students knew that they were representing a people who were trying to gain education and overcome (AT, lines 150-162).

Although it is true the community, the school, and the church were identified as operating conjointly, it is important to realize the individual roles of each.

Contributions of Teachers

This category involves interviewees comments related to the influence of the teachers and educators in their segregated schools. Many of the participants still exhibited a strong emotional bond to their early childhood teachers. None of the students had anything negative to say about any of their teachers. All acknowledged that each of their early childhood educators took the position of educator as more than a job, but as a calling and a duty. Fairclough (2006) also states that teachers of segregated schools viewed the education of children as a collective effort and that they themselves were on a mission to provide the best educational opportunities possible for their students. Within this category are several subcategories. The first subcategory involves “Teachers as providers.” This category refers to the manner in which teachers would take on the role of parents in the school by providing items students needed. The second subcategory is known as “teachers ‘relationships with students.” This category discusses how teachers bonded with students by offering parental advice, or acting as a mentor to students. The third category is labeled “relationships with parents” This category refers to the connection teachers had with parents. Included is the manner in which teachers would function in liaison with students’ parents to ensure that students would behave properly in school and outside of the school arena and factors that made this type of communication possible. The last category is “Teachers as enlighteners. This category discusses efforts teachers would take to ensure that students gained knowledge and experiences outside of the regular curriculum.

Teachers as providers. Many participants acknowledged that often students would enter school without all of their personal or academic provisions being met. For example, many acknowledged that often students would come from poor homes where parents struggled and sometimes failed to get students everything they needed. It was at times like these that teachers would make sure that these needs were provided. Mrs. Cynthia Bonner acknowledged that she was one of the recipients of the teachers' generosity. She stated, "A lot of times we didn't have much. I didn't have paper and pencils, and the teachers would always help out as much as they could in getting some of your supplies" (CB, lines 15-17). Dr. Thornton also acknowledged that teachers would go above the role of educator to ensure that students had the necessities. According to Dr. Alvin Thornton,

We came to school with clear needs across the board. I remember my teachers intervening to address those needs, not so much as teachers, but primarily as caring adult members of the community. There might have been the need for additional clothing, grooming, food and other necessities. At RCTS, there was a sense of general adult caring about the whole child and not only academic achievement expectations in the instructional environment (AT, lines 84-88).

Teachers not only worked together to provide the small needs of students within their school, they were also very active in ensuring that students received assistance to proceed to the next level of their academic career. Dr. Alvin Thornton shared the story of a young woman whom the principal made special efforts to ensure that she was able to continue her college career.

The case of Peggy Magby is representative of how the RCTS staff worked with the community to help its students. Peggy is now the principal of a public charter school in Las Vegas, Nevada. She graduated in 1959 as the valedictorian of her class. Her father

informed her that the family would be able to help finance her college studies. As many other students had done, she sought assistance from Mr. Ben Outland, the RCTS principal. She relayed to me that she said to Mr. Outland, “I am valedictorian, and I can’t afford to go to school. I don’t have any money.” She said “Mr. Outland called the director of admission at Alabama A & M for assistance” and was told to send Peggy to Alabama A & M where she would be taken care of (AT, 122-129).

Dr. Thornton shared that many students would not have been able to continue their education had it not been for the connections the teachers and administrators at RCTS and other black schools of the south formed with many of the Black four year universities. He specifically mentioned how “Principal Warren Minnifield facilitated the enrollment of one of the largest groups of RCTS students to enroll in college. He helped them enroll at Texas College in Tyler, Texas, and assisted them with college visits, orientation and securing financial aid.” (AT, lines132-134). Although the segregated schools lacked many of the amenities found in local White schools, Dr. Thornton insisted that the efforts of teachers and principals ensured that opportunities for academic progression would not be lacking. He also maintained that students did not feel a sense of deficiency. According to Dr. Thornton.

There was not a feeling of relative deprivation that weakened us. There were many high achieving students who continued their education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities like Alabama State University, Morehouse, Spellman, Tuskegee, Alabama A&M, Talladega, and Texas College. Students who did not enroll in college entered the job market or enrolled in the military. Each year, there was a cohort of students that enrolled in college with the assistance of RCTS

principals and teachers. We did not look to White people and their community as the marker of our value (AT, lines 57-62).

Relationships with Students. Teachers of segregated schools not only endeavored to ensure that all of their students' needs were met; they also formed personal connections with the students. Charlotte Clark Freisson remembered being loved by all of her teachers.

I met my teachers in the hall and I got hugs. They called me little nicknames and pet names. One teacher I adored was Lillian Shealy. She always called me "Charlena, come here give me a hug." Just like your mommy. Little things like that occurred to build your self-esteem and your self-confidence and let you know that those teachers know you personally and they value you because they went to the same church and they know your mommy and daddy (lines 232-236).

She stressed that one reason everyone knew her was because of the strong reputation her father had as a local community leader. However, she also stated that all of the children were made to feel special.

Mrs. Kathy Pate also remembered the special attention bestowed upon her by her elementary school teachers. Mrs. Pate noted specific teachers who had a tremendous impact on her early academic experiences.

The teachers were loving and kind and everybody had a good rapport with each other. I LOVED my first grade teacher (giggling). I was left handed so she taught me how to write using a mirror because she noticed I was writing backwards. I also remember the librarian there (Mrs. Riley). After I got into seventh or eighth grade we used to go to the library.

Mrs. Riley was one of the sweetest, kindest people that you could ever meet. She loved books and she motivated us to love to read. I also remember Ms. Ingram. She taught seventh and eighth grade English. She was a very good English teacher. She was very young. She was just beginning her career at RCTS. She was so enthusiastic about teaching. She wanted all of her children to learn and excel (KP, lines 5-11).

Although she was only in the third grade when she transitioned, Mrs. Portia Lane also illustrated the strength of the impression left by her teachers. Mrs. Lane made clearly stated, “I really liked my teachers. I really remember my first and second grade teachers” (PL, lines 4-5). On many of the questions that related to her segregated school experience, Mrs. Lane’s memory was sometimes unclear. Also unlike many of the other participants who all attended school at RCTS, Mrs. Lane attended Wedowee High School. However she, too, had very positive comments about her teachers in the segregated school. She shared specific examples of how invested teachers were in the academic success of the students. She recalled, “Mrs. Daniels she was very good at teaching the beginning aspects of education like letters, spelling, how to write properly. She was very serious about teaching us how to write correctly and how to learn to read on those beginning levels” (PL, lines 15-17). The fact that similar attitudes could be identified within several schools strengthened the notion of the dedication of the students.

Teachers also communicated with students about personal life experiences. Mrs. Juanita Wright stated that her male teachers took a personal interest in giving young girls fatherly advice about boys.

One of the principals was Mr. Lewis Hoggs. I guess he will always be classified as one of my favorite teachers because he would allow us to discuss situations and he was like a

father figure in that he would pass on information to you so that you wouldn't make the common poor choices that some of the other students had made. He was just real in that he would discuss things. It wasn't out of character for him to tell girls not to engage in sex. He would just be forthright with it. He said boys are just out for what they can get and if this happens to you and you have a child out of wedlock then how would this impact your future? You know things of this nature were the same things we heard from our parents. He just reinforced it. Coming from a male just made it all the more meaningful (JW, lines 11-18).

Sydney Johnson also attributed the principal as acting as a father figure to many of the young men in the schools. He shared how important the fatherly relationship with the principal was to him personally. Johnson stated,

My dad passed in 1967. I guess our principal kind of took a lot of us guys under his wings. He was like a father figure to us. Our principal, our coach, and so did some of the other male figures in our school took us on trips and stuff, watched out for us, and tried to lead us in good directions (SJ, lines 25-28).

It was very touching to realize the personal investment teachers made into their students. Not one of the participants interviewed made a negative comment about his or her teachers. They each attested to the love and commitment they felt flowed from each member of their educational faculty. Mrs. Cynthia Bonner also had very positive memories of her teachers. Although she did not refer to specific teachers by name, she noted how teachers had often taken the time to ensure that she and other students had the necessary supplies for school. When speaking of the teachers, Mrs. Bonner stated,

They were tough, but fair. They buckled down on you doing your homework. A lot of times we didn't have much. I didn't have paper and pencils, and the teachers would always help out as much as they could in getting some of your supplies. I learned a lot there. It was rough when we did integrate (CB, lines. 14-17).

Mrs. Linda Chapman had strong memories of the relationship with her teachers. It was quite clear that all of the teachers from her segregated school experience had made quite an impact on her life. She specifically identified several teachers and the contributions they had made her life. She also illustrated the close family connections she had with many of the teachers. Many other participants also identified teachers as not only strong community members, but also members of the family. In addition, Mrs. Chapman identified the severe academic impact transition into a White school had on her. Mrs. Chapman made the following comment:

My first grade teacher Ms. Henderson. She was excellent. The minute you got in that classroom, it was like "Boom, Boom, Boom!" I remember one incidence. She had a practice where you had to read a word a day. I got hung up on a word. I was so upset. She still was there very encouraging. She just held you to a very high standard. Mrs. Hattie Clark-she was a teacher. You got a lot of history with her. I had an Aunt Ms. Lillian Shealy. Mrs. Jackson, my algebra teacher, made me fall in love with math. I soon fell out of love with it when I transitioned over to Handley High School. I just didn't really get help in the classroom-If you had questions about a problem.

With Mrs. Jackson I was very successful in the classroom and that was in algebra. When I got to the tenth grade that was geometry and I struggled with that because I didn't get help in the classroom. I gave up on it. I made it out with a D. I barely passed. I was capable

of doing better .My aunt, Ms. Juanita Moore, taught home economics and that's how I learned how to sew very well. I used to make all of my clothes. We had good principals like Mr. Shaw and Ben Outland. Everybody was pretty strict. It was like they were on a mission. Almost as if they were thinking "We have to get these children prepared to go out into this world." They worked very, very well together. (LC, lines 20-37)

Many other participants also became very emotional as they reflected on the contributions of their former teachers. Mr. Thomas Heflin refused to leave the interview without acknowledging his teachers. At the end of the session he referred to many of his teachers by their names and contributions to the school. It was obvious that he had great respect for each. Unlike the other participants whose memories were of the softer side of the teachers, Mr. Heflin noted that the principals and teachers also ran a very strict school. However, he made it clear that the strictness was elicited respect and adoration. He shared several specific memories of the relationship he had with his teachers.

RESPECT. For all of them. One thing about that school at that time, corporal punishment was present. We knew not to disrespect that instructor or you would suffer the consequences at school and at home. It wasn't until my 7th and 9th grade year that I started to like my instructors and relax. My basketball coach, John Hendricks, he began to teach me things when I started the basketball things. He would always say "what you did was great, but let me show you how to do it a different way."

Several participants indicated that they still maintain communication with those instructors who are still alive. For example, each of participants of RCTS spoke of Mrs. Chapman who is now

in her nineties. At each RCTS reunion, Mrs. Chapman is the guest of honor. Also, Mrs. Portia Lane stated that a large number of students showed up at her father's last birthday party and also at his funeral. Also each person spoke gracious words of appreciation and respect for their former teacher and coach.

Although they were children at the time, the sacrifices of the teachers did not go unnoticed. According to Mrs. Juanita Wright, "Being in that particular school setting, in my opinion, they really cared about the students. We could have that one on one with the instructors which made learning a very good experience" (JW, lines 7-9). Mrs. Wright seemed to echo the attitude of all participants when she noted, "overall we had a genuine sense that they cared about us" (JW, line 27).

Connection with Parents. Participants not only identified how well teachers contributed to their lives directly, they also noted that quite often there existed a strong connection between the teachers and their parents. Mr. Herbert Whitlow noted that many of his teachers had also taught his parents. Dr. Thornton noted that quite often teachers had earned great respect from parents due to the tremendous investments they made into the children. According to Dr. Thornton, parents were aware of this "and gave teachers and principals maximum discretion in the education and disciplining of their children" (AT, lines 88-89). Parents and teachers worked together to ensure that children behaved themselves in school and in the community. According to Mrs. Juanita Wright, "The instructors knew our parents and our parents knew the instructors. It was just like a comradery. The teachers knew what the parents expected of us and likewise. So there was communication between the teachers and parents" Many of the participants stated that if they got in trouble at school, they were sure that the teachers would notify the parents. Reverend J. Burnett Jackson stated that the relationship between the parents and the teachers was "awesome. If you

got in trouble at school, Mama and Daddy knew about it and you would suffer the consequences—that went for all of the students” (JJ, lines 25-26). Deborah Royston quantified Mr. Jackson’s claim. According to Mrs. Royston,

I knew if I did anything wrong, my mother would find out about it before I got home perhaps. Even though there were no cell phones. There may have been a time or two when there was a little friction between me and another classmate or two. I recall getting home one afternoon and my mom already knew that I had gotten into trouble at school. I don’t know who had passed the word along, but she knew about it so I know that they (mother and teachers) had good comradery as far as keeping up with what was going on. I knew, too, that I should behave myself, or I had some explaining to do when I got home (DR, lines 26-32).

Herbert Whitlow also noted that “if you messed up in class, they had no problem telling your mom or your parents. That part I didn’t care for, but the relationship was pretty good” (HW, lines 12-13). Reverend J. Burnett Jackson also indicated how strong the relationship between the teachers and parents were. He had a particularly strong insight into the efforts teachers put forth to keep parents notified of students’ behavior. According to Reverend Jackson,

All people would say “I am going to tell your mother this evening.” People didn’t have telephones back then. I remember going with my mother to some of the houses when she wanted to tell parents something about their children. I stayed in trouble unfortunately. (JB, lines 28-31).

The combined efforts toward disciplining students were expected from the school, the students and the community. According to Mr. Heflin, it was the collaborative efforts of disciplining students that helped the segregated school function efficiently. Mr. Heflin stated that Discipline was strong in the community and at the schools. Sometimes a little bit too strong. If you was disciplined in school, when you got home you got disciplined for being disciplined in school. This was normal and expected. Also, when the parents had a complaint and came to the principal, the principal listened. That was a very positive thing (Heflin, lines 13-17).

Mrs. Pate also explained how parents and teachers had commonalities that extended beyond church and school. According to Mrs. Pate, “your parents belonged to different clubs and some of your teachers belonged to those which provided you another way that you got to see some of your teachers from Randolph County Training School. This made me feel very good actually. I just hoped that they wouldn’t tell my parents anything negative about me” (KP, lines 29-32).

The school connection with parents not only entailed a support of discipline, but also a strong support of all activities associated with the school. According to Thomas Heflin, “parents participated in whatever happened at that school. There was 99% participation as far as the parents were concerned” (TH, lines 5-7).

Relationships with each other. Participants of the study not only acknowledged an admiration for the manner in which the teachers interacted with the community, students, and parents, there was also a strong admiration for the bond that teachers had among each other. Participants indicated that within the school walls it was obvious that the entire school faculty had one goal in mind-providing the best education possible for the students. Dr. Alvin Thornton stated

I remember our teachers being very close to each other; they socialized and worshiped together. Students knew it and could observe it. It was not an individual relationship that students had with one teacher; they intersected with teachers as a collective. They enforced rules, regulations, and order as a group of teachers under the oversight of the principal (AT, lines 97-100).

Mrs. Chapman identified that all of the teachers and principals were united in their efforts to maintain discipline. According to her, they were all strict. She stated that, “It was like they were on a mission. Almost as if they were thinking ‘we have to get these children prepared to go out into this world’. They worked very, very well together” (LC, lines 35-36). Reverend J. Burnett Jackson also noted that there was a strong bond between all of the teachers. He stated that “They used to all come together to help us believe we could do anything we set out to do” (JJ, line 7-8). Dr. Thornton also conferred on how strongly connected teachers were in their desire to provide a quality education for students. He shared the manner in which they united to confront the challenges they were confronted with while teaching in segregated schools

I remember our teachers being very close to each other; they socialized and worshiped together. Students knew it and could observe it. It was not an individual relationship that students had with one teacher; they intersected with teachers as a collective. They enforced rules, regulations, and order as a group of teachers under the oversight of the principal. I recall the manner in which our teachers taught and managed students with different levels of academic preparation and family support. They effectively managed different levels of academic preparation among the students. The different levels of academic preparation among the students did not define the manner in which they interacted with each other.

Teachers worked hard to give all students continuing opportunities to improve academically and culturally, and did all they could to reinforce students' faith in their ability to learn and achieve (AT, lines 97-106).

Mr. Jackson also noted that he often observed that the teachers would socialize with each other outside of work. His mother's role as the math teacher allowed him the advantage of also establishing strong relationships with the other teachers and their children. According to Mr. Jackson, his mother "had friendship/kinship with almost all of the teachers so I got to know all of their children. Everybody visited each other's house. It was just a growing experience" (JJ, lines 14-16).

Activities. The community not only assured that its students received the proper academic advantages. There was a strong desire to ensure that students were exposed to as many extracurricular opportunities as possible. When communicating their experiences at the segregated schools, many of the participants commented on how much fun they had. Mr. Herbert Whitlow stated that in segregated schools, "we had more fun. We were learning, but we had more fun doing it. We had May Day, spring break, school princes and queen activities" (HW, lines 4-6). Mrs. Portia Lane also shared memories of activities such as May Day. She remembered having more game oriented lessons and many more activities. Mrs. Lane also remembered winning spelling bees when she was in elementary schools. Kathy Pate expressed fond memories of recess. Mrs. Pate noted,

I remember recess. I loved recess because we got to play little games and buy cookies, chocolate milk and other snacks out of the machine. The food in the lunchroom was delicious. It was a different kind of feeling. I can remember we used to have Mayday every

year. It was a wholesome experience at Randolph County Training School. There are a lot of good memories from Randolph County Training School” (KP, lines 13-17).

Mrs. Royston also remembered having fun during physical education classes. She noted that they were often trusted to have playtime unsupervised. She stated that this was possible because the school staff made sure that they were taught to get along with each other.

Many students also discussed participation in activities such as athletes and the band. According to Mrs. Portia Lane, “sports events were huge among black community and well supported. My father was the coach and the chemistry teacher. They had a very good team. It was well supported by the community” (PL, lines 26-27).

According to Dr. Thornton, his segregated school experience observed teachers creating opportunities for every child. There were no “favorite students” who were chosen or allowed to gain life changing experiences.

At RCTS, Black students had many positive and diverse experiences, even in the midst of discrimination and disadvantages. My schoolmates and I had the opportunity to lead; and those of us who wanted to could participate in school activities in large numbers (critical mass participation). Participation was not limited to a few students with the majority of students on the margin (AT, 30-33).

Charlotte Clark Freisson strongly pointed out how closely associated each facet of the community was. According to Mrs. Freisson, each separate unit operated with a single goal in mind.

It was almost like we were an army. There weren't no bullets, or guns, or rifles or anything like that. The parents and all of the adults in the community were an army

walking in locked step with one common goal which was-- “We’re gonna educate our children and we gonna have the best school we can have if we have to get out here and raise the money ourselves. There were many programs and other things that the county wouldn’t pay for. They wouldn’t fund the band; they didn’t fund the typing program for as far back as I can remember. But guess what—Black folks in Randolph County, Alabama, they got together and they raised the money. They put those typewriters in that school (CF, lines 44-51).

Although all of the participants agreed that the segregated school experiences were riddled with challenges such as inadequate facilities and lack of support from the local education board, they all expressed that the teachers, parents, and the church united in an effort to make sure that all students had were given the best educational opportunities available. It was acknowledged that many students left RCTS and Wedowee High School and continued on to successful careers such as doctors, military personnel, college professors, and business owners. Many also identified that a strong sense of community was lost when school desegregation was implemented. According to Charlotte Clark Freisson, “My father was one of the Black education advocates when all Black families valued education. They promoted it. They pursued it. They wanted their children to have it. They were active participants in the education process UNTIL Brown v. Board” (CF, lines 5-8). Many participants felt that the fervor associated with The Black community’s dedication no longer existed because they no longer had “their” school, but rather became a part of someone else’s school.

Phase Two: Freedom of Choice

The second identified research question asked: What were the experiences of African American students during the initial phase of desegregation? Question 2 also has two sub questions:

a. What were the African American students' perceptions of the Randolph County desegregation efforts during the designated years?

b. What structures of educational and social support existed for African American students of Randolph County during the initial phase of desegregation?

Randolph County did not implement strategies to desegregate schools until eleven years after the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) decision. Newspaper research indicated that Randolph County was quite resistant to the notion of combining Black and White students into the same environment. For example, the white citizens of Randolph County vehemently supported candidates who made school segregation their platform. Mrs. Charlotte Clark Freisson whose father was president of the NAACP during this time offered much history on the struggle to desegregate schools in Randolph County. According to Mrs. Freisson, it was under the leadership of NAACP representative Ruby Hurley that Alabama became engrossed in the battle towards civil rights. According to Mrs. Freisson, Mrs. Hurely left the NAACP headquarters of New York City in order to set an NAACP headquarters branch in Birmingham, Alabama. Each president of the local chapters was required to attend meetings that trained them on laws associated with the Brown movement. According to newspaper articles, Randolph County constantly postponed efforts towards desegregation. It wasn't until 1965 that the school board issued a decree that stated that students were no longer required to attend schools based on race. Each student and their parents would be allowed to choose which school children would attend. This was known as the Freedom of Choice plan. According to the Freedom of Choice plan, it was

illegal for any outside forces such as the community, school faculty, or school board to try to influence the decision. The Freedom of Choice plan indicated the first attempt of Randolph County to desegregate its schools. Phase two analyzes the experiences of participants when they were given the opportunity to participate in the Freedom of choice program. It includes perceptions of those who participated in the program and those who did not. Phase two is divided into five categories: Influences, attitudes, support, activities, and interactions with whites. Each of these sub categories is divided into smaller categories. In the attitudes category I address the attitudes of those who were presented with the idea of *Freedom of Choice*. Where appropriate, I include stories participants relate on the experiences of siblings, family members, or others. The last three categories relate only to the experiences of those who transitioned. In the support category, I present participants' comments on their perception of the type of support they received. This category will relate mostly to the experiences of those who transitioned. The activities categories discuss any extracurricular activities students participated in, and their academic performance in the new learning environment. Finally, in the interaction with whites categories, I explore the participants' comments on various experiences of coming into contact with white students and teachers.

Influences

In the "influences" category, I discuss the participants' comments relating to the reasons they participated or did not participate in the Freedom of Choice plan. These statements are addressed in the subcategories of financial, personal choice, and parental influence.

Financial. Although the Freedom of Choice plan allotted that each student and his or her parents had the option of choosing whether their children could continue to attend the all-black school or transition into White schools, there were external factors that influenced that decision.

One of the primary factors that had to be taken into consideration was the financial obligations. Mrs. Juanita Wright stated that the cost of transportation precluded many students from being able to make the transition into the local White school. According to Mrs. Wright,

If you lived in the county, depending on where you lived, it was pretty much understood where you would go to school-unless you had your own transportation and could come into the city. There were kids that lived where we did that had transportation and they chose to come to Handley whereas we had to ride the bus to Wadley (JW, lines 50-53).

Mrs. Deborah Royston noted that she would have liked to have participated in the Freedom of Choice plan. However, there were financial considerations that prevented her from making the transition. Mrs. Royston noted that she had an older brother who the family allowed to make the initial transition. However, “the expenses were too high. Books had to be purchased and there were other fees. For us they were extravagant. Allowing one of my siblings to go was as much as my family could afford to do” (DR, lines 56-58). Although Mr. Sidney Johnson stated that he lived in an area where bus transportation was possible, he mentioned that there were extra fees associated with attending White schools.

Personal Choice. There were several students who made a personal choice not to transition when given the opportunity. The participants who chose not to transfer were all older students in their last years of high school. These students cited various factors that influenced their personal choice not to transfer. For example, although he acknowledged that there were fees associated with relocating into a different school, Mr. Sidney Johnson noted that there were many things at RCTS that he did not want to leave behind. He stated, “I was so involved with the activities at the Black school I couldn’t see leaving that. We had activities such as the football team, the basketball team,

the dances, May Day, and all the activities related. Also, there was a certain comfort level being at what we called “our school” (SJ, lines 52-55).

Dr. Thornton also noted that one of the reasons he chose not to shift into the local White school was because of the attachments he felt at RCTS. Dr. Thornton stated,

I was a student leader at RCTS; student government president and student athlete. I did not want to leave an environment that had served me well as an individual student and my family and community generally. I would have entered an environment that was not conducive to my development. I was not willing to make that sacrifice. I understand why other students made a different decision. At RCTS, I had an identity and a role. I was a high performing student academically, captain of the football and the basketball teams, and student government president during the 10th, 11th and 12th grade years. Another consideration was that there was a rule that stipulated that if a student transferred from one school to another, the student could not play sports for one year. This rule was a consideration in my decision not to leave RCTS and enroll at Handley. It is a decision that I have never questioned. (AT, lines 226-234).

Mr. Thomas Heflin also noted that he chose not to attend the local White school when offered the opportunity. Mr. Heflin did identify that efforts were made to convince him to transfer to the local White school. According to Mr. Heflin, members of the local White School board visited the parents of the more affluent members of the Black community in an effort to recruit their children for entry. Mr. Heflin stated, “The school board of the White schools had come to certain parents asking for their kids to come to Handley. I was one of those chosen. When they came to the parents and asked them, I told them “I DON’T WANT TO GO!” It is important to

note that Mr. Heflin was the only participant who mentioned efforts of the school board to recruit specific students. It is very important to note that Mr. Heflin may have been in a position that allowed him more access to such information. For example, during the Civil Rights Movement his parents were very active. His father was identified by several people as being one of the strongest Civil Rights leaders of the era. Mr. Heflin identified that knowledge about racial issues was one of the reasons he did not choose to transfer. He stated,

My main reason for not wanting to go was that the Civil Rights movement was going on. I was well aware of what the Ku Klux Klan was about. I was well aware of Blacks being manipulated by the Whites. How Blacks' property had been stolen. I was young, but I remember reading about that. I remember the conversations about those things among adults about how certain people's property was stolen from them. That affected me and I didn't want to go (TH, lines 49-56).

Although Mr. Heflin evaded transitioning during the Freedom of Choice plan, he did participate in the final transition of 1970.

Dr. Alvin Thornton also noted that he, too, was aware of the racial unrest in Randolph County. He cited this knowledge as another factor that influenced his decision not to transition into White Schools. Similar to Mr. Heflin, Dr. Thornton's parents had also played active roles in the Civil Rights Movement of Randolph County. When sharing his knowledge, Mr. Thornton stated,

My father, King George Thornton, was very active in the community, and my mother, Lilly Baker-Thornton, was very active in the civic life of the city and county. She was secretary of the local NAACP Chapter, and a member of the Alabama Democratic Conference

(ADC). Their involvement shaped the environment in which I grew up. We were expected to be leaders and involved in community affairs. (AT, lines 113-116).

Dr. Thornton also stated that it was his parents' participation in Civil Rights issues that not only influenced his opinion about transitioning; it also encouraged him to become active in Civil Rights issues of the community.

I did not believe in the plan. Organizers of it knew that White students would not enroll at RCTS. Like other RCTS students, I was very aware of developments in the on-going Civil Rights Movement. In 1965, I led a student sit-in at the segregated restaurant located across from RCTS. I unsuccessfully sought the prosecution of the owner of the restaurant (Dan Clement) who threatened my life at the point of a gun. I observed and participated in civil rights activities led by my mother and Wilkie Clark. I had no interest in leaving RCTS during the final year of my high school experience. My mother and father did not put any pressure on me to participate in the Freedom of Choice plan.

Mrs. Cynthia Bonner did not give specific reasons as to why she did not transfer when given the choice. Although she did state, "I was happy I didn't have to transfer" (CB, line 33).

Reverend J. Burnett Jackson did not have a clear memory as to why he did not transfer.

Parents. When asked why they participated or did not participate in the Freedom of Choice plan, many participants identified their parents as a contributing factor. Many of the parents of the older children allowed the children to decide whether or not they wanted to attend the all-white school or remain in the segregated schools. However many of the younger participants of my study noted that they did not really have a choice in the Freedom of Choice era. There were five participants

who transferred during the Freedom of Choice plan. Each of my participants who entered White schools during the Freedom of Choice plan noted that it was their parent(s) who made the choice for them. Portia Lane was one of the youngest to transition into an all-White school. Mrs. Lane was only in the third grade when she was moved from a segregated school into a desegregated school. Unlike the other participants who transitioned from RCTS into Handley, Mrs. Lane was the only participant who transitioned from Wedowee High School into Randolph County High School. Both of Mrs. Lane's parents were teachers at the segregated White school. Mrs. Lane indicated that her parents transitioned her because they wanted her to have a better educational experience. According to Mrs. Lane,

Actually, I think I went one year earlier because of my father. He wanted to make sure I was acclimated into the New Year. My Dad was a teacher, and he wanted his kids to have the best. He probably felt that the school had a better quality of materials-not necessarily teachers- but better materials to work with (PL, lines 35-38).

Mr. Whitlow transitioned when he was in the sixth grade. When asked why he transferred, Mr. Whitlow stated, "I transferred because my mother made me. I have no idea why to this day. None of my other two brothers had to go. I was the oldest" (HW, lines 20-23). Mr. Whitlow further stated that he did not desire to leave RCTS. Later in the interview, Mr. Whitlow speculated that his grades may have been one of the reasons that his mother chose to send him to Handley High school. After further discussion of his experience, Mr. Whitlow stated, "My mom sent me to help with my grades. I guess I was playing too much at the other school" (HW, lines 77-78). Mr. Whitlow noted that when he was transferred into Handley High School, he felt that he was being punished for something. According to Mr. Whitlow, "The choice I hated. Seemed like I

was being punished for some reason. I had no idea. My mom made me come over here. When I got here I was the only black boy in the sixth grade” (HW, line 26-28).

Mrs. Kathy Pate also noted that it was her parents who decided that she should attend Handley High School. Mrs. Pate was allowed to complete her elementary experience at RCTS. She was in the ninth grade when she transitioned into Handley High School. Unlike Mr. Whitlow, Mrs. Pate was not the first child in her family to attend the desegregated school. She had a sister who had transitioned in 1965. Mrs. Pate did not view her transition as a means of punishment by her parents, but rather as her parents’ effort to give her a better opportunity in life. Mrs. Pate stated,

I did because my sister was there and my parents wanted me to have the same experiences she had. We did want to go to college. My parents were very hard workers and they wanted better for us. They wanted us to have the best. There was basically no other choice. My parents drove us to school initially. Then we began to walk because we did not live far from the school. (KP, lines 61-65).

Mrs. Linda Chapman also stated that her parents made the decision to move her from RCTS into Handley High School. Although both of her parents were educators in a segregated school, they wanted her to transfer. Mrs. Chapman did not state that her grades were a determining factor, nor was there a question of the quality of education being offered at the all black school. According to Mrs. Chapman, her transition into an all-white school was viewed as an important part of the civil rights movement. Mrs. Chapman stated, “I transferred the second year. My parents made that decision for me. The attitude was “This is what you need to do. This is the part you have to play in the Civil Rights Movement, and you are just going to have to do it” (LC, lines 56-59).

Charlotte Clark Freisson also transitioned as an elementary school student. Like the other participants, Mrs. Clark identified the decision of transitioning from RCTS as a decision that was out of her hands. Although it was her parents' decision to transition her from RCTS, Mrs. Clark noted that her parents were divided on the issue. Her mother an elementary school teacher was very concerned about the idea of allowing her to transition into an all-white school. However her father was insistent that she transitioned as soon as the opportunity presented itself. According to Mrs. Freisson,

My daddy was the president of the NAACP. It looked bad for certain ones to be going and your child is not going-especially if you are a proponent of immigration. As NAACP president and because it was the NAACP that sponsored this big litigation. They had gone to the Supreme Court and had won, and y'all are trying to enforce it. If your child doesn't go, who's going to listen to you? That was his thing. I became the sacrificial lamb. (CF, lines 118-122).

Something to Prove. Although it was stipulated in the Freedom of Choice plan that the decision of whether or not to transition schools should be made by the parents and students involved, there were often other factors. Mrs. Freisson indicated that her father's role as president of the NAACP greatly influence the decision to send her into a White school. During my interview with Mrs. Clark, she also ventured into a more deeply rooted rationale as to why many in the Black Community felt that transitioning into White schools was a step forward. According to Mrs. Freisson, "we were steep in that mental brainwashing and indoctrination that had been done on our people for so long we just assumed that, "Hey, they've got it so much better. They've got better teachers; better books (maybe); better facilities (maybe)," (CF, lines 13-15).

Mrs. Clark noted that when the opportunity to send Black students into White schools presented itself, many members of the Black community saw this as an opportunity to dispel the notion that Black people were inferior and unteachable. According to Mrs. Clark, the community the community expressed one mindset:

We got to pick the best kids to send over there. We gone send our best and our brightest so they can see. Where is Joseph Whittaker, he's smart. He will do well over there. Charlie Dunson is a smart kid. The Rachel girls- Janice and Betty- oh they are real smart (CF, lines 113-115).

Mrs. Freisson identified that it was also this desire to eliminate the notion of inferiority which motivated her father to send her into the white schools. According to Mrs. Freisson,

That's what they did. They cherry picked. My daddy was having a fit. "Charlotte, you can go. You can go over there. I want you to go over there and show them crackers what a Black gal can do." He had that type of motivation that he wanted me to be over there (CF, lines 116-118).

Mrs. Chapman also echoed the sentiment that the community placed a lot of pressure on students to disprove the myth that Blacks were inferior. According to Mrs. Chapman she did not want to leave the environment with which she was familiar and transfer into a strange place. However, the community decided that she was a good candidate for transfer. Mrs. Chapman Felton shared the following: "I remember community and group leaders coming along and talking to my parents and talking to me. They were saying that I was a very good student and they felt that I would represent them well." (LF, lines 48-50)

Portia Lane also noted that she, too, was driven to perform at her best because she did not want to be perceived as inferior. Although Mrs. Lane was only in the third grade she was keenly aware of how important it was that she did well in school. Mrs. Lane stated,

I was afraid, but I was always one to like a challenge. I kind of felt like I always had to prove myself when I was among them. Even at a young age. I was not going to let them label me as inferior. I know that was heavy for a young person, but that's how I felt. (PL, lines 85-87).

Attitudes

Although the decision of *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka Kansas of 1954* outlawed the legal segregation of public schools in America, many schools continued to operate racially segregated schools. When discussing the Brown decision, Mrs. Freisson admonished, "It was just a court decision. White folks weren't fixin' to do that on their own. They were not fixing to honor that court decision. Hell, they could have cared less," (CF, lines 96-98). It took the activism of the NAACP and community leaders to force school districts to allow black and white students to attend the same schools. The citizens of Randolph County rallied tirelessly against the desegregation laws of its school system. This category analyzes the attitudes of the participants as they relate to their experiences of the initial desegregation process. Included in this section are the participants' memories of the attitudes of the Black community as well as their personal attitudes towards the transition. I have divided the "attitudes" section into two subcategories of "concerns" and "dissatisfactions."

Concerns. Although the citizens of Randolph County had put forth much effort to desegregate the schools, there were various concerns associated with the process. According to Mrs. Royston, when the notion of Freedom of Choice was presented, the community was shocked. According to

J. Burnett Jackson, the attitudes of the community were “Mixed. Some people thought it was a good idea and some thought it wasn’t,” (J.J., lines 34-35). In addition to the Civil Rights Movement Mr. Jackson asserted that many of the fears of the Black community were due to the civil rights actions occurring outside of the community. Mr. Jackson identified many of the external factors that influenced the attitudes of the families of Black communities.

There was so much going on as a whole. The desegregation process as a whole-eating in restaurants, white/colored water fountains and restrooms. All of this was kind of culminating at once. Then you had the Selma march. There was so much stuff going on and people had different attitudes about whether or not the kids were going to be safe. Whether or not they were going to be pushed to the side or get the same type of attention they got in the predominantly black school. You really got a lot of attention in the Black schools. Some people still say today that kids don’t get the same attention they used to. (J.J., lines 36-41).

Mrs. Chapman Felton noted that the attitudes of the community were a mixture of fear and acceptance. According to Mrs. Chapman, there were “feelings that it was long overdue-particularly in the south. I didn’t do very well. I refused to go in the first wave. I cried and carried on very badly,” (L.F., lines 46-48). Mrs. Chapman further stated that there were other factors that contributed to her fears of transitioning into White schools. According to Mrs. Chapman,

I didn’t want to leave the known world to go to the unknown. Plus I was afraid of how I would be treated. Especially from watching TV and growing up in that time. Watching the dogs attack people and what happened in Birmingham. With the civil rights movement and

everything I was afraid. I had cousins that went that first year, and it was traumatizing for them. We didn't talk that much about it. (LF, lines 51-55)

Mrs. Pate also noted that many parents were concerned about how the students were going to be treated once they were transitioned into a white school. Similar to Mr. Jackson, she cited that parents and community members were concerned if students would be able to succeed in a school which may not offer the same support as was received in the desegregated schools. According to Mrs. Pate,

Everybody was afraid of how the children were going to be treated. If they were going to be able to excel once they got there because the learning environment took a 360 degree turn there. It was much harder at Handley Classes, learning and everything was much harder at Handley, and they did not try to help you at all. (KP, lines 44-48).

Mrs. Pate stated that her anxiety of transferring to Handley High School was heightened due to her sister's experiences. Mrs. Pate transferred the second year of the Freedom of Choice plan whereas her older sister had transitioned a year before. When asked of her knowledge of the experiences of her sister and others who transitioned during the first year, Mrs. Pate shared the following:

It was not very good socially. The other students would either ignore you or call you names. There was very racist superintendent by the name of Mr. Rollins. They really did not want the Blacks to come. There were two other Black guys who may have come before Patricia—Joseph Whittaker and Frank Dunson. Along with my sister was Betty Rachel. They sort of just had to stay with each other. They had to really study together just to try

to make it because it was so different and so hard. I don't think it was really that difficult before we got there. But they made everything so difficult. It was almost as if you were set up for failure. For example, Algebra. My sister had not had algebra, and when she got there she didn't have anyone to tutor her or anything. The teachers at RCTS were great teachers, but the approach and techniques they used were totally different from Handley. So there was no one to help you if your parents couldn't help you with Math. Back then, Black parents were just trying to make it. They did not have the education to really help you with work that you needed help with. (KP, lines 49-60).

Mrs. Freisson was not aware of the previous incidents which occurred at Handley High School.

Mrs. Freisson made the following statement.

For the first crew that went over there it seemed fairly quiet and everything. You just didn't hear anyone talking about things. To me it seemed like they tried to act like it wasn't happening. It was just something that was kept quiet. That was one of the greatest things to ever happen in the history of this country or this state. I had no idea. I don't think anyone ever just got with the kids and talked to them about what went on over there at the school. (CF, lines 130-135).

Mrs. Freisson may have been unaware of the incidents of previous students because she was an only child and had no one who shared their experiences with her. Furthermore, Mrs. Freisson's father was focused on the goal of desegregating Randolph County Schools. Mrs. Juanita Wright, who was a friend of Mrs. Freisson, remembered how determined Mr. Clark was to desegregate the school system. According to Mrs. Wright,

When I think back to those days I can remember one of the community leaders, Mr. Wilkie Clark, who was a focal point in bringing this about. He felt that we needed the same advantages that the other children had at the other schools. He was really a fighter and a motivator. He felt that if our children were in the same setting that we would have the same advantages and opportunities that those children had. (J.W. lines 36-40).

Mr. Heflin also noted that the community viewed the Freedom of Choice plan as progress. Mr. Heflin stated that

As far as the Freedom of Choice, we saw it as a move forward. The community saw it as a move forward, but didn't too many people want to make that move because of their awareness of the surrounding and the history. I don't know what they thought was going to happen. I was mostly concerned about what was on my mind. (TH, lines 56-59).

Mrs. Freisson also stated that even though the opportunity to transition into White schools was offered, there were very few who wished to make that transition. Mrs. Freisson stated

They were just going to let the Black folks choose which way they wanted to go. "If they want to come to the White schools, they can. If they want to stay in their schools, they can." Well who in the hell do you think is going to volunteer to come to some strange school you know nothing about. Freedom of Choice was kind of governing where the children were placed. It's my assumption that it was just something Alabama chose to do to implement *Brown* because they had to do something. All of the Black folks were talking about Freedom of Choice and "you can send them over there." (CF, lines 105-111).

Dr. Thornton noted that there were also other concerns associated with the desegregation of public schools. For example, he noted that during the Freedom of Choice plan, RCTS was losing students at a rapid rate. Many families were moving to other areas in order to advance their financial opportunities. The relocation of families in conjunction with students migrating into previously desegregated schools resulted in the diminished enrollment of Black students in desegregated schools. Sydney Johnson also identified that the enrollment population of Randolph County Training School had intensely decreased by the final desegregation process of 1970.

Interactions with others

One of the strongest aspects of the segregated schools was the support students received from various members of the community. In every aspect of their lives students had positive interactions with teachers and faculty, parents, church members and others in the community. In the analysis of the segregated school experience, participants testified as to how these connections created a sense of emotional security. The Freedom of Choice plan was the first time students were severed from the communal nexus that centered itself on the school. This category analyzes the participants' interactions with others as they experienced the Freedom of Choice plan. The subcategories include interactions with parents and interactions with white populations in the segregated school system. When reviewing the parents, I analyzed the participants' communications with parents as they prepared to enter White Schools, the participants' interactions with faculty and students during the Freedom of Choice plan, and the communications with parents during the Freedom of Choice plan.

One of the questions of the interviews asked participants what type of preparation they received when preparing to enter previously segregated schools. Although he did not transition into formerly all-White schools, he did note that he was "aware of the fact that there were no

formal pre-enrollment workshops and community sessions to prepare students and the community. Within individual families, there may have been discussions and preparation activities” (AT, lines 253-255). Kathy Pate confirmed that she had not received any preparations for the transition. According to Mrs. Pate, “No one told us how to interact” (KP, line 83).

Mrs. Portia Lane noted that the only formal preparation involved in arranging for her transfer into White schools was the process of making arrangements for the bus to transport her to school. She did note that there were informal preparations that were designed to keep her and other black students out of trouble and safe. According to Mrs. Lane,

Parents had general conversations with us about trying not to be isolated or by yourself. Stick together. Also “do as you are told.” Say “yes, sir. Yes, ma’am. Or “no, sir. No ma’am” follow all of the rules and directions and they can’t help but be fair if something occurred or if there was any injustice in the classroom. (PL, lines 79-82)

Mrs. Chapman also noted that students who were transitioning were told how to conduct themselves when they entered into White schools. According to Mrs. Chapman, “The community members and parents talked to us about what type of attitude to have how to conduct ourselves, not to fight. If anything went on unfair to come to them and let them know.” (LC, lines 94-95)

Many of the participants seemed to have been led to believe that if they remained on their best behavior, they would be welcomed into their new environment. They were not instructed on the possibility that they could possibly come in contact with those who would reject and mistreat themselves due to racist attitudes. The only participant who indicated that parents attempted to prepare her for the possibility of a negative response to her presence was Mrs. Freisson. Mrs. Freisson noted that due to her parents’ involvement with the NAACP, they were aware that

transitioning into White schools would be difficult. Mrs. Freisson speculated that leaders of the NAACP had warned parents that school faculty would make life for the children very difficult and would seek any reason possible to suspend them from school. Mrs. Freisson stated that her mother counseled her on how to conduct herself in order to avoid such situations. Mrs. Freisson viewed the communications with her mother as another form of brainwashing. According to Mrs. Freisson, her mother told her

“Charlotte, we are sending you to Handley High School to get an education. Because we want you to be educated just as well as any white child in Roanoke, Alabama.” Her sermon was, “Nobody is any better than you, and you are no better than anybody else. But you are just as good. When you go over there, you go over there and you do your work, you be polite. If nobody speaks to you, don’t you try to speak to anybody? You be respectful. If anybody bothers you, you go tell your teacher. Don’t you go over there getting in no altercations with nobody. (CF, lines 217-223).

According to many of the participants, it was assumed that simply placing them into White environments would be enough to facilitate change. As students in segregated schools, many of the participants identified that they had very limited experiences with Whites of the community. Most of their social and academic experience was limited to intermingling with other African Americans. Several of the students stated that they were not prepared to interact with those who were dissimilar to themselves.

Interactions with Whites. Many of the participants identified their initial entrance into white schools as shocking. Most participants noted that when they entered the school they were immediately made aware of the differences between the schools. For example, Chapman identified

that the building was larger and more modern. However, even though she was now confronted with the opportunity to be a part of modern facilities and better materials, she still did not feel comfortable. Mrs. Chapman stated, “I just really missed the community of what we had in the Black school. I missed the atmosphere and the feelings. I felt like we were not wanted-like we were intruders. There was coldness-except for a few. I didn’t feel good.” (LC, 98-100)

Several participants noted that they became aware that their presence into White schools would be uncomfortable from the moment they arrived onto the school grounds. Mrs. Pate noted that she transferred into Handley with two other girls. When asked about her reaction when she first entered Handley High School, Mrs. Pate exclaimed,

I was scared as HELL. I remember that. Excuse my language. Everybody was looking at you. There were all of these White people. I was not used to that. We saw White people, but not all together like that. You always thought you were going to be beat up or something. (KP, line 99-102).

Although she was initially afraid, Mrs. Pate acknowledged that eventually things did get better for her. She even noted that she did not have any negative interactions with teachers or any of the other students. According to Mrs. Pate the White students would call her and the other students names. She stated that she never retaliated, but the other girls would respond by returning similar name calling insults. According to Mrs. Pate this would often lead to brawls which she was not a part of.

Mr. Whitlow’s transition was much more isolated. He noted that when he transitioned, he was the only little black boy in the school. He stated that when he arrived “I didn’t belong. I wasn’t going to fit in” (HW, line 61). Unlike Mrs. Pate, Mr. Whitlow identified that he felt

extremely miserable throughout his first year. Mr. Whitlow stated that he did not have any major problems with any of the teachers. His only complaint was that the teachers would ignore him when he raised his hand and would never let him go to the Blackboard.

Mr. Whitlow stated that his greatest source of misery was the sense of isolation. He no longer had the same social circles that he had experienced when he attended RCTS. He noted

I was the only black person there except for one girl. None of my friends were there, so I felt lonely. It also seemed dull. It may have been dull because I had no one to talk to at play period or recess or anything. (HW, lines 61-63).

Furthermore, Mr. Whitlow noted that many of the students treated him as if he was nonhuman. One of his strongest memories was the manner in which he was treated at the water fountain.

At break time, I could be out at the water fountain, and be the second or third one in line to get water from the fountain. The next thing I knew I was pushed all the way back to the end of the line. They didn't want to drink behind me. It got so bad that (we had to wait 'til the bell would ring to start class), I would wait until after the bell and then raise my hand and ask the teacher if I could go to the restroom or get water. She didn't have a problem with it. I guess she knew what was going on. (HW, lines 31-36).

Mr. Whitlow stated that initially none of the students would even allow him to play with them during recess classes. He shared with a story that he often tells others when discussing his transition into Handley. According to Mr. Whitlow, one of his greatest skills as a child was his ability to play baseball. Initially, he was always overlooked when the other boys of the school were picking their teams. However, one day he did get an opportunity to display his skills.

I had one experience that was sort of funny. I had been playing baseball all of my life. There was a brick wall behind the library. I used to sit on that brick wall every day and watch them play softball. First we would stand out in a circle and these two guys would choose their team, and I never got called and had to sit on the wall. One particular day, one of the players slid into home plate and sprang his ankle. They had to have nine players to play and this made them have eight. So I had to become the ninth player. By me having always played ball, the first time at bat, I knocked the ball over the wall. Everybody came over and shook my hand and patted my back. From that day forward, I could get water when I wanted to; I could go to the bathroom. It seemed like everything changed. The two guys who chose the teams were the biggest bullies in the school, and I happened to be on the biggest bully's team, so I had no problem doing anything after that-except when the bell rang at 3:00. I had to learn to take different routes cause they were waiting on me all the time to pick at me and so forth. I tell people all the time, that's how I learned to run so fast. I used to have to run home every evening. Even after the baseball game because the bullies would be gone home by then. They didn't know and I didn't tell them because I didn't know if I was going to get jumped on during class or whatever. (HW, lines 31-50).

Mr. Whitlow also noted that he was often called names such as "spook or monkey" (HW, line 51) by the other students. However, he insists that he never was referred to by the n-word.

Mrs. Linda Chapman also commented on her interactions with White teachers. The only negative comment noted by Mrs. Chapman was the interaction with her math teacher. According to Mrs. Chapman the math teacher was of little help to the black students, but "she helped the other students" (LC, line 75). According to Mrs. Chapman, many of the other teachers simply tolerated

them. She did, however, identify several teachers who were very nice to her and the other black students. She identified that a few of the teachers treated them like everyone else. Mrs. Chapman only identified having a personal relationship with only one of her teachers.

Really no interaction with the desegregated school except in the classroom- except for Mr. White. I'll never forget the conversation I had with Mr. White. He said, 'You are a good student, you should go to college.' I said, 'Oh, I am.' He seemed startled and taken aback. He said, 'You are going to college?' I said, 'Everybody in my family goes to college.' Then he started to stop and take time. He said, 'Where do you live?' and I told him where I lived and from then on it was a different attitude with him. He didn't know that my mother was a teacher and my father was a principal and that others in the family had gone on to college. He didn't know any of that. (LC, lines 112-120).

Although Mrs. Chapman identified very few negative exchanges with teachers, similar to Mr. Whitlow, she did express that many of the students were particularly rude. For example, she noted that when she and other Black students would take a seat in the classroom, a few of the other students would move. She also shared that one of her cousins was particularly tortured during that time period. According to Mrs. Chapman, one of her cousins had his books taken away from him and thrown into the river on a regular basis. Mrs. Chapman stated that although she never experienced anything that drastic, she always felt sorry for her cousin. I tried to contact the identified cousin for an interview. Unfortunately we could not come up with a time to accommodate both of our schedules.

According to Mrs. Chapman, with the exception of the math class, her academic performance did not diminish in any capacity. On the contrary, she noted that her academic performance actually improved. Mrs. Chapman proudly shared,

In other academic areas, I think it got even stronger in the desegregated schools. I wanted them to know “Black people are smart, too. Smarter than y’all.” I learned then that the notion of White Superiority was something they made up cause it definitely wasn’t true (laughs) as far as some of my classmates. (LC, lines 125-128)

Mrs. Chapman also stated that the teachers and other faculty soon came to realize that she and the other transition students were not unteachable. She stated that many of the white teachers were shocked when they noted how academically capable she and other students were.

Similar to Mrs. Pate, Mrs. Freisson described her first day at Handley as “scary as hell” (Freisson, line 248). According to Mrs. Freisson, her parents were extremely concerned about her safety the first day of school. In order to protect her, they hired a black taxi service to transport her to and fro from school the entire first year. Even though her parents had tried to talk to her, she also stated that she had no idea how petrifying it would be until she arrived. According to Mrs. Freisson,

Walking down that walkway to school, a little Black girl with nappy hair and all them white kids just stared me down. Back then everybody had to stand outside the school until they rang the bell and they went in. I am standing out here in a damn sea of White and I can’t see nothing else but. Even though there were other Black children you didn’t see them so you are just there. And they (white kids) are standing up there making hick remarks with their southern drawl like “Nigra, Nigra, Nigra, Nigra.” (Freisson, lines 253-257).

Mrs. Freisson stated that her parents had indicated that name calling would possibly take place when she transitioned. They had also given her strict instruction not to respond or react to anyone who may call her names.

Mrs. Freisson noted that through much of her experience she was the only Black student in many of her classes. Although there were other Black students, she would only see them during study hall or P.E. classes. A majority of her high school experience she spent in racial isolation being abused in one manner or another. For example, similar to other participants, she also shared that many of the White students would treat her as if she was less than human. According to Mrs. Freisson,

You took stuff and you just.... For example, I would get up every morning and I would take my bath. A lot of people raise their kids to take their bath at night and then you would get up in the morning you'd do a wash up. I always loved to get up in the morning and do my bath so I could be fresh. I wanted to walk out of my door clean and fresh. When you walk in your classroom you got to walk by all them white folks and everybody is staring at you. When you sit down and whoever's in the desk next to you they get up and move like you are contaminated. The one beside you and the one behind you would move, and you got to just sit there. Do you see what that would do to the emotions of a child? I am a child. I know that I came to school clean and I am not dirty. I don't stink and the Black is not gon' rub off on you. But they acted just like you was something nasty. If you sit at one table in the lunchroom, everybody at the table got up and moved. All of these little incidents served to just crush me emotionally, and I would have to go through all of that. (Freisson, lines 275-286)

Mrs. Freisson also noted that when her parents finally felt that it was safe enough to allow her to walk home, she was able to share some of her pain with another student. At the end of the day she and one of her friends would sit by the road and pick spitballs from each other's hair. Mrs. Freisson shared the following story:

All of the Black kids we had a particular route that we had to walk home. All of our parents made sure we took that route so that we wouldn't get ambushed. Me and my girlfriend would get so far away from the school and we would sit on the curb for about 15 to 30 minutes and pick spit balls out of our hair. Our parents always told us never to sit in the back cause anything could happen. We could be seen so that if anything happened in the back we wouldn't get blamed. We were sitting in the front of the room and crackers were blowing spit balls in our hair all day long. That was when we were wearing the afros. You leave school and your hair is full of balls where they have taken pieces of paper wet it and blow it our hair. We walked around with spit balls all day long because we didn't have anywhere we could go and clean our hair. You had to take that mess. I figured out very early on don't tell the teachers nothing cause they do not care. (CF, lines 414-423)

According to Mrs. Freisson, none of the teachers came to her defense. She even stated that often she felt that there was a conspiracy between the teachers and students to make her life as miserable as possible. Mrs. Freisson had particularly strong memories of discussing chapters on slavery when she was in her history class. Mrs. Freisson stated that she had particularly strong

reactions when students would take turns reading to the rest of the class. The southern accents of the students would often mispronounce the term “Negro” and enunciate “Nigra.” Not only did the students mispronounce the terms, but so did the teachers. Mrs. Freisson shared the following account of the situation:

There would be certain times of the school year that I would be so stressed and so nervous. I never did well in social studies and history. You know there is always that chapter about slavery. That term Negro would be scattered throughout that chapter. Every time I would be in a class and the course would get toward that point I would start getting nervous. I have a lot of built in anxiety. I think I knew what it was about as a child, but I didn’t have the words as a child and I couldn’t explain it to anybody. I just felt it. We would be sitting in the classroom and they would have people reading out loud and everything. When those white kids would see the word “Negro” they would pronounce it “Nigra this, and Nigra that.” What is that? I know good and well if you taught or if you have a degree in education and you understand phonics. You understand how to pronounce a word, you know good and well that the word is not “Nigra.” The word is “NEGRO”! But I had to sit in the classroom and listen. Not only the students, but the teachers did it too! (CF, lines 295-306). Mrs. Freisson stated that she did make some connections during that time span of her life, but overall she felt that she was left with emotional and physical damage that still affects her. When Mrs. Freisson, reminisced on that time of her life she stated, I had developed my own little cocoon. I didn’t talk to anyone and they didn’t talk to me. I had built this little cocoon around myself. I could loosen up at home, but in that environment I was a whole different person. I was introverted. I was quiet. I was not aggressive. It did such a number on psychologically that during my senior year, I started

lashing out at everything and everybody. I was so full. I remember telling my mother and father “this is it. Y’all might as well get ready to come and get me because if anybody messes with me, they are going to catch hell.” I told my parents that I had become a nervous wreck. As a rising senior I had matured enough mentally and socially and maybe intellectually that I had only begun to understand what the previous four years had done to me. I was skinny; stomach was easily upset; just abnormal. I remember telling my mother, “I can’t do this year. I can’t sit there and take being called a nigger. I can’t do it because it’s killing me.” It was just so much. (CF, lines 398-408).

Many of the participants who were a part of the Freedom of Choice plan identified their experience as traumatizing. According to Mrs. Felton, “I think all of us were sort of traumatized. We don’t talk about that experience. We don’t participate in any of the reunions or anything like that. It’s like a PTSD sort of thing” (LF, lines 93-95).

Parental Support. When asked how their parents reacted to the happenings that occurred in their integrated environment, many of the participants stated that they did not tell their parents. Mr. Whitlow admitted, “I never told my parents about any of those situations. I kept it to myself. I was still angry at them I guess. So I kept everything inside. I stayed mad at my mama for a couple of years” (HW, lines 54-56)

Even though her father was an educator in the segregated schools, Mrs. Lane noted that she did not receive any parental support during the difficulties she was faced with during her transition. According to Mrs. Payne,

I felt like I was forced to go to the school of hard knocks. It was like survival every day to try to get along with people who didn’t like you. I tried to discuss situations with my

parents, but I think they probably felt like their hands were tied. If I had been a really, really serious situation, probably my dad would have stepped up and confronted the principal. The word had gotten out that this principal was harsh and unreasonable. So if you came off as a complainer, he would try to make your day a living hell. He was a bully himself. The community learned real quick to pick and choose their battles with him. (PL, lines 69-75)

Mrs. Freisson's father was one of the strongest Civil Rights leaders in Randolph County; she did not feel that she had parental support during her initial years at Handley High School. The only support she acknowledged receiving was encouragement from her mother at home. She stated that her parents never went to the school to confront the teachers or administration concerning the manner in which she was treated. According to Mrs. Freisson,

My mama was a teacher and she felt like that if they went out there and raised all that hell she would lose her job. She was always worried about job security. They felt that if they could just get me out of school. The whole goal was just get Charlotte out of school. My mother would say to him I don't want you going over there and raising hell and stirring up them white folks and they take it out on her. (crying) I had to take so much. (CF, lines 269-273).

All of the participants who matriculated into White schools described feeling isolated and alone. Even though many of them identified having other Black classmates with them, there was very little adult support. Although the participants began their dissension into previously White Schools early in their high school careers or in some cases in their elementary schools, they

acknowledged that they never felt as if they never found a place of comfort in their new surroundings. They continued to feel like outcasts throughout their entire academic career. Even more disheartening is that they also lost the sense of belonging that they had acquired from their segregated school experiences. All participants noted that they no longer had any meaningful associations with any of her former Black teachers after she transitioned. Although several Black teachers transitioned during the final segregation phase, they did not take any classes with them. Many were assigned to elementary schools, and by the final phase of desegregation these students were in high school. Dr. Thornton stated that the disconnect between Black teachers and Black students was a great tragedy of the desegregation movement. He stressed that when schools were segregated, Black students had positive Black role models functioning in roles of authority. However, when transitioning was complete, high school teachers were diminished to roles of elementary teachers and former principals were reduced to shop teachers or gym teachers. Dr. Thornton stated that the demotion of faculty not only affected teachers, there was also a tremendous psychological effect on students. Mrs. Freisson also acknowledged that the Black role models had an extremely negative impact on the lives of the students

The bottom line is we had come from a situation where we had –I can't even come up with a word that would do justice to the concept what happened to the self-esteem of every child that went over there under the Freedom of Choice; the emotional well-being. There was no, not a single leader (education leader) in the school. Not a single principal or assistant principal. Everybody who made decisions, who called the shots, who had any authority, was White. You were just stuck because you were the underdog there and you knew it. There was no equality. It was such a limiting experience. Not to mention that the teaching and education quality was no better. If I dare say it, it was inferior to where we

came from. We were just there. You were ignored. Nobody paid you any attention. It was one of the most emotionally demeaning experiences I ever had in my life. (CF, lines 335-343)

Mrs. Pate acknowledged that there were some White teachers who tried to be nice to them and make them feel comfortable; however she could never find a feeling of comfort. She noted that desegregation was very new to those teachers also, and they were also struggling to adjust. At one point of the interview, Mrs. Pate suggested that she should have possibly waited to transition with the other students during the final phase. She soon repealed that notion and acknowledged that going over during the Freedom of Choice may actually have been a good idea. According to her, her former classmates were the last ones to complete their education in a segregated school. Hence, had she not transitioned during Freedom of Choice, the opportunity would have eluded her. She continued to accredit her transitional experiences with preparing her to go away to college. By the time she graduated high school, she felt stronger and more resilient.

Mrs. Chapman noted that not only was there a loss of connection with teachers, many friendships were also dismantled. She does acknowledge that she and the other students she transitioned with developed a strong bond. However, she currently does not feel a connection to Randolph County Training School nor does she feel a connection to Handley. For example, she states that she rarely attends the Randolph County Training School reunion. Occasionally she will attend in order to transport her mother who is one of the few remaining teachers of that era.

Although Mr. Whitlow noted a loss of relationships with friends, he also noted that he did eventually make new friends at Handley. He identified one friend in particular whom he identified one friend with whom he still maintains a close relationship. Mr. Whitlow noted that he continued

to play baseball and also volunteer with a local youth baseball league where he is still currently the only Black person involved.

Similar to others, Mrs. Freisson noted a loss of relationships when she transferred into Handley High School. Mrs. Freisson's tribulations at Handley High School seem to have followed her throughout her life. Mrs. Freisson shared the following statement about the effects of her experience:

When I went home to try to tell my mama and daddy and I couldn't. The thing I couldn't tell them was that I was hurt emotionally. All those years sitting in that classroom with those same students-grades 8-12- sitting in that classroom with those kids wreaked havoc on my mind and it messed up my heart. Not one teacher ever spoke in my defense. They would act like they didn't see it. It was almost like a conspiracy. I had to go into that every day. Here is what I understood and my mama and daddy understood. A court order may get you into an education setting, but a court order can't fix their hearts so you just got to deal with that. My mama tried to encourage me by saying "You just be strong. You don't answer to Nigger cause your name ain't Nigger." But why did I have to even hear that. Why was it allowed to go on? Teachers used it to. I had so much anxiety. At one point and time I got so that I couldn't even eat. I had a nervous stomach. I would get stressed out. (CF, lines 286-295)

Many of the participants noted that even though the experience was painful, it was necessary.

Mrs. Pate admitted, "I know that there was no way for us to be separate and equal. Especially as far as academics and books" (KP, lines 17, 18). However, Mrs. Freisson identifies the desegregation of the Randolph City School system as one of the most devastating experiences of

her life. It was of her opinion that even though doors were opened for other African American students, it just wasn't worth it. She noted that those experiences affected her entire life. For example, when her own children began attending Handley High School in later years, she stated that she could not go into the school to support them in extracurricular activities.

I was so traumatized by what went on during that time; I couldn't support my own children when they went to school over there. I couldn't go over there. I still had all of that hate within me. Every time I would go over there I felt the fuel of hatred just return to me. I remember my children were in the band, and one of the biggest fights was about that band when I was president of the NAACP. There was a majorette competition, and I basically just went ballistic and got accused of tearing up the band. My own children said that I ruined their band. (CF, lines 321-326).

I tried to contemplate what it must have been like for these young children to be forced to go into an unfamiliar environment for whatever reasons. All I could do was feel pity for them. As I listened to their stories I realized that I was now teaching the children and grandchildren of the White peers of my participants. I noted how difficult it seemed to be for my White students to adjust to me, their only African American teacher. I could only imagine how tumultuous it was for my participants to be in the middle of a racial civil war where hatred was encouraged and carried out against them without any remorse or empathy. As each of my participants told his or her story, it was obvious that they were still affected by their former experiences. Several cried and shuddered as they reflected on the most painful moment of their lives. I could only feel sympathy and gratitude for each participant.

Phase Three: Final Phase of Desegregation

The third specific research question asked: What were the experiences of African American students during the final phase of desegregation? It also consists of two sub questions: a) what were the African American students' perceptions of the Randolph County desegregation efforts during the designated years? b) What structures of educational and social support existed for African American students of Randolph County after schools desegregated? This segment of the research focuses primarily on the experiences of those who were forced to transition into previously all-white schools after their previously segregated school was closed. It is important to note that only Randolph County Training School was permanently closed when the final phase of desegregation was implemented. All of the participants that transitioned during this phase were former students of Randolph County Training School. Although I would have liked to have interviewed students from Wedowee High School for comparison of experiences, I was not able to locate any participants. However, due to the fact that RCTS was the original school established for Blacks, the data gathered from this interview is quite valuable. Although most of the data gathered derives from those who waited until the final phase to desegregate, information from those who transitioned during the Freedom of Choice plan is also included because many they were still students when the last group transitioned. The similarities of categories allow an opportunity to identify changes which may have occurred after the Freedom of Choice plan. The participants shared positive and negative information about this phase of the desegregation process. Many of those from the final phase identify that their transition was less traumatic due to the sacrifices of those of the Freedom of Choice era. The analysis of the data of the third phase is a replica of the data from phase two. Three categories are identified: Attitudes, Preparation, and Interactions with Others. This phase yielded less about the motivations of the transfer and student

interactions with the Black community. Much information was provided about the impact of the transition on the Black Community and Black teachers.

Attitudes

Resistance. As stated previously, the Black school had played a tremendous role in the Black community. Not only had it provided a place to educate Black students, it had also offered a sense of security and belonging for not only Black students, but the whole community. Both Black and White citizens had become accustomed to the notion that a separate area for educating Black and White students. True, the Freedom of Choice program had been implemented, but it did not create full desegregation of the school system. According to Mrs. Freisson the Freedom of Choice plan was only implemented to partially satisfy the notion of school desegregation. As noted previously, Randolph County board of education constantly derived reasons to resist the idea of total desegregation. The board of education constantly sent out notices to residents stating that students had the choice of whether to continue in Black schools or desegregate into White schools. Even with the “choice,” many Blacks chose to remain in their familiar environment. Mrs. Freisson noted that “Eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade there were just a few of us. Every year a few more would come. But still, it was a just a scant few people in a big sea of White folk” (CF, lines 332-333). Mrs. Chapman also noted, “When I was a part of that initial transfer, there were no Black teachers at Handley High School. It seems that there weren’t even that many Black students to transfer during those first few years. It was just that same core group of students.”(LC, lines 149-151)

When federal orders insisted that full desegregation be implemented, there were continued excuses such as a lack of space and the inability to accommodate a large influx of new students. At one point, federal funds of up to \$75,000 were threatened to be withheld unless Randolph

County agreed to comply with the desegregation order (Thornton, Thornton, Thornton, & Thornton, 2005). According to newspaper accounts, the white members of the school board also constantly submitted the Freedom of Choice plan to the federal government as evidence that the county was indeed complying to desegregation orders. However, several members of the Black community which included a principal, teacher, and local businessman, were summoned to Washington to testify as to the progress of desegregation of the schools. The testimony of these individuals confirmed that school desegregation in Randolph County was occurring at an extremely slow pace. In February of 1970, Randolph County was mandated to ensure complete desegregation of the schools.

Fear. Five of my participants transitioned into previously all-white schools during the final aspect of the desegregation era. Many of the students were aware of the difficulties associated with their peers who had transitioned during the Freedom of Choice plan. Furthermore, they were also aware of other racial conditions that plagued the nation. The participants noted that much of the tension concerning the transfer was influenced by the tense reactions of many of the adults of the community. Mr. Johnson noted that there was great concern about the welfare of the children. He stated, "My parents were quite concerned having grown up in the integrated south plus seeing things on TV about the other schools integrating. They were concerned about our welfare" (SJ, lines 73-75). Mrs. Bonner also noted that her parents were also afraid. When asked about the reactions that she noticed from others, she stated, "I remember my mom being scared. There was a fear of them jumping on or mistreating your kids. My mom told me to respect my teachers and not get into fights" (CB, lines 31-33). When asked his reaction when he discovered that remaining in his segregated school was no longer an option, Mr. Heflin stated, "I did not want to go based on the history of race relations in the state of Alabama and the south" (TH, lines 79-80). Mrs. Royston

also noted that she was exposed to many fears from the adults of her environment. Teachers were also expressing feelings of anxiety about job security. According to Mrs. Royston

Fear, anxiety, a lot of anxious feelings. No one knew what to expect. I know that I personally did not know what to expect. Many of my teachers that were with me at Randolph County Training School lost jobs, yet some did manage to transfer into the Handley school system because with more students coming in there would be a need for more teachers. A few of the teachers that I had at Randolph County Training School were able to teach at Handley high school. (DR, lines 82-87)

The fears associated with transitioning were not just limited to how they would be treated by the White community. There was also a fear of not being prepared. As Mrs. Freisson stated previously, the Black community had been brainwashed to think that factors associated with the White school was so much better than everything associated with the Black school. It would stand to reason that when the students saw the larger, more modern building the White students attended school or the notion that the White students were being given newer books, that the Black students would assume that the education was better. Mrs. Wright noted her response when she first entered the White school

I think it was probably like “Wow!! I sure do wish I was back at Randolph County Training School! I wonder if I am going to be able to make the grade. It helped to have a couple of classmates there with us. The 3 of us just bonded together. The studies were not really any different than what we had experienced at Randolph County Training School. (JW, lines 91-95)

Several other students noted that they were afraid that their previous school experiences had left them feeling unprepared for their new environment. However, only one student noted that she felt unprepared for the academic challenges associated with Handley High School. Mrs. Royston the youngest of my participants to transition stated that she felt overwhelmed by the academics of Handley High School. When asked about her early experiences at Handley, Mrs. Royston shared the following:

Uncertainty. I didn't know what to expect. I was afraid. I felt inadequate. Especially after that first week of school when I did not understand everything. It was the first time I had ever had to take notes. It was the first time I had gotten to a classroom and there was something I didn't understand. I had been able to get through my classes at the Training School without ever having to do homework. I felt pretty bright when I was there (RCTS), but I felt like an absolute idiot after the first week at Handley. I was just not prepared. I just thought, "I'm a failure. I am going to fail this school year." I went home day after day, and I cried and cried because I could not understand my lessons—especially in math. The language arts and reading were a different story. They just came easier for me. It just seemed as if I was never going to be able to do as well in Math. (DR, lines 101-110)

Mrs. Royston noted that eventually she did manage to improve her grades although it was a struggle. I feel that it is important to mention that when Mrs. Royston transitioned into Handley High School, she was also transitioning into high school as a whole. This was her first year out of elementary school, so there is not any way of knowing if she would have experienced the same difficulties had she began her high school career at RCTS. Mr. Heflin, who had experienced high school at RCTS expressed that the academics at RCTS was extremely strenuous. He, too,

expressed that when he transitioned into Handley he wondered if the academic lessons from RCTS had been sufficient to prepare him for the challenges of Handley. According to Mr. Heflin, he found the academics of Handley to be even less difficult than. Mr. Heflin shared the following story about his experiences at Handley:

At first, before we even started classes, we had to come over so that they could look at our transcript and see where we were standing. When we first got there, Wayne Cato, he was our history instructor. He looked at my transcript and said, “You were supposed to have graduated last year.” I said “No, I wasn’t.” He said, “You got all of your units you need to graduate.” I said, “I know.” He asked, “How did you all do it?” “That’s what we did at Randolph. We had advanced settings. If you had a study hall or free period, and you could take a class ahead, you go ahead and take that class. He said, “I don’t know how y’all did it.” As we looked at the transcript the question was if our grades were compatible to the grades of the White kids. Was our “A” the same as their “A.” They were compatible and above. It was hard at Randolph. The best grades I got was at Handley. (TH, lines 94-105)

The statements of Deborah Royston and Mr. Heflin seem to contradict each other as far as the difficulty of the class work. However, as I reviewed the statements of the other participants, many of them noted that they had difficulty with math as they transitioned over. Mrs. Pate noted that a possible reason that students may have had difficulty with math was that it was taught differently at Handley High School than it was at Randolph County Training School. Mrs. Pate noted that during the final desegregation transition, several teachers were given jobs at the previously all-white schools. She specifically noted that her math teacher from RCTS had difficulty in the classroom. According to Mrs. Pate,

Not only could some of the students not survive without help from others, but some of the teachers couldn't handle it. Many of them only stayed one year. They could not handle it. I remember there was a math teacher from RCTS who taught higher level math. She came to Handley to teach it and she was so challenged by the students over at Handley about her method of teaching that she didn't stay. It was very hard for her. (KP, lines 84-88)

Historical documents indicate that the teachers of historically White schools were often given opportunities for professional training. However, teachers of Black schools were not allotted these opportunities. Also, when the teachers and students were placed in their new surroundings, they had previously been accustomed to the older, outdated books from the White schools. Hence, they had not been exposed to the more modern techniques and ideas associated with the White schools. Furthermore, there was not any type of preparation to train the teachers in the teaching methods used in White schools or to assess the learning environment.

Preparations

Parents. Similar to the students of the Freedom of Choice plan, very few arrangements were made by the school system to prepare African American students for their new transition. Mr. Johnson commented on how uninformed he and the other students were of the actual transfer. According to Mr. Johnson, "If we had had a better understanding of what was actually going on at the time—I guess it was a gradual thing-but even still we had no clue as to what was going on as far as that integration was going on." (SJ, lines 120-122). However, there were some efforts made by the parents and school officials to ensure that the transition was as smooth as possible. Similar to the students of the Freedom of Choice plan, many parents tried to guide children on their behavior. Mrs. Royston noted that the only guidance she received was from her mother telling her to behave and obey the teachers. Cynthia Bonner also noted that she received instructions from her parents

to monitor her behavior. She also noted that she was warned by her mother that she would hear “Nigger this” and “nigger that” (CB, lines 39). However, the notion of transition seemed to have been so new that the parents really didn’t know what to expect. Most of the participants noted that there was very little support that the parents could offer them. Mr. Johnson seemed to speak for all of the participants when he noted, “The main thing was that no one told us anything about integration coming overall. I was kind of blindsided by it” (SJ, lines 137-138).

Teachers. Even though there was uncertainty among the Black community as to where they would be placed, many of the teachers still put forth effort to make things as comfortable as possible for those students who were transitioning. Mr. Heflin noted that his band instructor took extra care to ensure that he would be able to play in the band after the school transfer. Mr. Heflin explained that when he was a student at RCTS, he had always played an instrument in the band. This is one of the stories Mr. Heflin shared about his early band experiences with the RCTS band:

When we was at Randolph, Mr. Cook said, Heflin I want you to go over to Randolph and try out for the band. You do your best. He had already talked to Mr. Hyche, the band director at Handley about us. When I was at Randolph I had started playing the saxophone and so forth. I wanted to play trumpet so I bought a trumpet and taught myself how to play. Mr. Cook asked if I wanted to play saxophone or if I wanted to play trumpet. I told him I wanted to play trumpet. So he let Mr. Hyche know. Handle band was the pride of Roanoke at the time. They were the pride of Randolph County.

The first day on the field when we were practicing and the Black kids were marching like we had done at Randolph in 90 degree angles. Mr. Hyche said no, that’s not how we do it here. It was night and day. He had us march more like in a walking style. Once we got the hang of it we were fine. One day he had us all march on the fields and he was watching

everybody. He suddenly came out and started raising a million dollars' worth of hell about the way everybody was marching. He focused on me. "Thomas! Thomas!" he yelled. "Come out here in front! March up and down the Field!" I thought, "He is going to eat me up!" I started marching up and down the field and then he brought me back up. "You see that?! You see that?! I want y'all to march just like him!" I thought "Whew! I did it right! I did it right!!" (TH, lines 143-158).

Mr. Heflin's experience with the band not only displays the great efforts that were taken to ensure that he had a place in extracurricular activities after his transition, it also displays how well his teachers had prepared him in order to compete with surrounding schools. As Mr. Heflin told his story, it was clear that he was proud to explain how the experiences of the segregated school had equipped to him to succeed and compete in his desegregated environment

There were other stories shared by participants of opportunities in which their segregated school experiences seemed to exceed the experiences of their White counterparts. Another example that was shared by many of the participants was the training in typing that students had received. According to the participants, their typing teacher had instilled skills that were viewed as astonishing when the students transitioned. Mrs. Chapman shared the following story of how skilled she and many of her classmates were in the field of typing:

They soon started realizing how smart we were. I remember it was Betty Ann Rachel. She had transferred back in the ninth grade. We had plain typewriters back then. We were in competition with each other. That girl, my gosh, she could do like a hundred and something words per minute. I think I got up to 80. We were very good at that. They also taught short

hand. We did so well with short hand that we began to take all of our notes in shorthand. Teachers started to see that “okay, these kids can learn.” (LC, lines 129-134).

Mr. Heflin also noted an experience in which his typing skills surpassed those of his white counterparts. “When we got ready to have our first class we took a timed writing, I was fastest in my class at 61 wpm. When she checked the timed writings, the Blacks outperformed the whites, and she said, “I am not lowering my standards.” That was fine with me” (TH, lines 106-108). Ironically, as Mrs. Freisson had informed me, the county schools had refused to supply the segregated schools with typewriters for their typing program. It was the parents and community who sacrificed in order to furnish the necessary typewriters for the school’s typing program. However, the system did agree to pay the salary of the typing teacher if the Black community raised the funds for the equipment. The skills displayed by the students served as an example of the dedication of the teachers and the community without the support of the community.

The teachers and faculty of the segregated school wanted to ensure that their students had an opportunity for success even after the school was closed. Near the closing of our interview, Mr. Johnson and I continued to converse casually about the closing of the school. Mr. Johnson speculated that during the last year of operation, the principal of the segregated school altered the records of some of the students in order to ensure that they would graduate. According to Mr. Johnson, the principal and faculty knew that these students would not continue their education if they had to go into a school with all of those white folks.

Although no one identified any organized methods of preparing students for transfer, Mr. Johnson did mention more subtle methods of preparation that was implemented by the system.

According to Mr. Johnson, one of the ways the school system began preparing for desegregation reflected in the manner in which the bus operated. Mr. Johnson stated the following:

When I was in the tenth grade we started (I lived in Rock Mills rural), they started having us to ride the White bus to Handley High School and then from Handley high School we would transfer to another bus to get to RCTS. That was breaking the ice of having Blacks and Whites ride the same bus. The first day I got on the bus the driver had this new rule about boys on the left and girls on the right. I had never heard of anything like that prior to this. Again that was all his idea of keeping the Black guys from the White girls. That got me accustomed to the idea of being transported to school with them. (SJ, lines 122-129).

The History. One of the greatest disappointments discussed by many of the students was the lack of preparation the county had implemented to respect the building the Black community had come to love. According to Mr. Johnson, very little effort was placed to secure the artifacts and records of the building. Dr. Thornton expressed similar concerns. According to both participants, the method in which the school was abandoned illustrated the lack of respect the school system had for the years of labor the Black community had put into the building and maintenance of the Black school. Each noted that when the school was finally closed, there was no effort to preserve artifacts such as pictures, trophies or any of the furniture or equipment. According to Mr. Johnson, the doors were left open and people pillaged the building taking whatever was desired. Dr. Thornton also noted that many of the records were also lost in the transition. Many of the records of the earlier students who had attended RCTS in the earlier years were simply lost. This was later confirmed when I went to the school board hoping to find any records that I could possibly use for my study. The secretary regrettably informed me that there were no records for either of the Black

schools because they had not been transferred. In an effort to secure some of the history of the school, Mr. Johnson noted that he had come in contact with some former students who had taken objects such as class photo hangings and other ornaments. He stated that he had taken photos of the plaques and other objects to maintain as much of the history as possible. One of the most impressive feats noted by Mr. Johnson was that he had taken photos of the photos of former students and placed them in a frame according to the year in which they would have graduated.

According to newspaper articles, the Black community was very concerned as to what the community would do with the RCTS building. One of the town's leading black businessmen purchased the building at a public auction sponsored by the county. It was hoped that the building would continue to function as a gathering place for community activities or educational programs. However these efforts were short lived and the building was abandoned. The building is now a dilapidated structure that stands as a reminder to former students of their former school experiences. The Wedowee High School building did not suffer a fate so careless. Instead of being abandoned, it was used as a desegregated middle school. Ironically, the descendants of the segregated Wedowee High School were not active participants in the biannual reunion held by the descendants of RCTS prior to this study. I found this ironic because they each shared the same history of segregation. I was happy to see that the 2015 RCTS reunion committee put forth efforts to include the Wedowee graduates in the planned reunion festivities. I would like to think that the efforts of this study somehow played a part in this effort.

I could tell from my interviews that it was extremely important to the participants that the history of their school be preserved in any format possible. The participants also directed me to other possible candidates. Not only were they anxious to meet with me, but many actually thanked

me for taking it upon myself to focus on RCTS for my study. With each interview I felt as if I was not only completing a study, but that I was capturing a part of history.

Interactions with others

In this section, I focused on gathering data that described the way in which participants viewed their transition into White Schools during the final phase of desegregation. All of the participants who were members of the final phase were former students of Randolph County Training School. However, not all of them transitioned into the same school. Three of the participants transitioned into Handley, one transitioned into Wadley High School, and the other transitioned into Randolph High School.

White students and Teachers. Many of the students who participated in the final desegregation movement stated that their experiences with white students and teachers were not as tumultuous as those of the Freedom of Choice Participants. Mrs. Juanita Wright noted that due to her knowledge of what happened to previous students, she was at first afraid of interacting with the White teachers and students. However, she noted

But of course when we arrived in Wadley High School, the {Black} students that lived in Wadley were already attending that school—at least most of them were. So we didn't have an unpleasant experience for the 9 months that we were there. It was really ok. I cannot think of any incident that happened that was unpleasant. (JW, lines 71-75)

Many of the participants accredited their smooth transition into their new environments to the resilience of the students who had transitioned during the Freedom of Choice plan

Although she noted that she and her brother had experienced a relatively smooth transition into Handley High school, Mrs. Deborah Royston noted that not all of the interactions with other

students had been as smooth transition she also stated that was not true in all situations. For example she noted that many fights occurred between the Black and White male students. She stated that the fights were extreme- “even to the point where broken noses took place. I kept thinking “why? Why?” Nobody had done anything to provoke these people. Why do they not care for each other?” (DR, lines 168-169). Mrs. Royston also noted that she could observe the reactions of teachers, “at times I felt like I was being singled out by some. I felt like they were picking on or judging me. That was just some of the teachers. There were some who tried to make me feel at ease. It all depended on the teacher.” (DR, lines 134-137).

Teachers of the Black Community. During the final desegregation movement there were a number of Black teachers who transitioned into White schools. The students of the final desegregation movement noted that they had more interaction with their former Black teachers than those of the Freedom of Choice plan. Although many of the participants had surpassed the elementary grades that most of the Black teachers were assigned, they noted that they still had interactions with them on a regular basis. For example, Mrs. Royston not

As far as the teachers from the segregated school, naturally I didn't have them because I was in another grade level. I did on occasion see some of them, so that did make me feel a little more comfortable when I had interaction with them. None of them were people whom I had already been taught by. Some of them did try to keep me encouraged. Especially when I saw them at church, they would ask me how the year was going. Let me know if I can do anything to help. Just whatever they could do because it was an adjustment for them as well. It was quite an adjustment for us all. (DR, lines 137-143).

Mr. Heflin noted that the Black parents and the Black community did not participate in quite as many activities in the new school surroundings as they had within the Black community.

According to Mr. Heflin,

The black community didn't do the things at Handley that they did at Randolph. At Randolph parents were at every activity. When we got to Handley everything was already established. It was like knocking on someone else's door trying to get in. It's already set and the only thing you have to do is follow. As far as making changes that wasn't even thought of. (TH, lines 138-141)

Although Mrs. Bonner noted that she did occasionally see her former teachers in town, there was never an opportunity to socialize with them. Many of the participants seemed to indicate that there was a strong loss of much of the influence of Black educators after the transition. As indicated earlier, many of the Black educators lost much of their social stature in the transition process.

Mrs. Freisson indicated the frustration that the Black educators may have felt over the manner in which the transition changed their stature in the community. According to Mrs. Freisson, her mother was one of the last teachers placed during the transition process. It was speculated that the community was slow to place her because of her husband's civil rights activities within the community. Mrs. Freisson painfully shared the following information about her mother's transition,

That very last year when they shut down the old school, the teachers were just displaced. These were professional people who had worked in education all their lives. My mother had worked toward a master's degree at Alabama State. My mother was the best damned elementary teacher that ever walked the halls of Randolph County Training School. She

was competent and she was smart. She was so smart she was coordinator of the elementary department. That says that you have been here long enough. You are mature enough. You are seasoned enough to be called what we would call today a Master teacher. She mentored so many of the other younger teachers coming through. When they closed down the school, my mama had nowhere to go. They found a place for everybody but her and one other teacher. They didn't find a place for my mother, and they didn't find a place for Mrs. Ruby Kingston. They were not placed until a supplementary court order was issued that mandated that they find a place for her. That may have had something to do with who she was and whose wife she was. Those things happen. My mama was so proud to be a teacher. She loved education (and I loathed it). She was assigned as a title I teacher in the basement. They were not going have her, a black teacher, teaching their little angels. (CF, lines 364-377).

Mrs. Freisson indicated that her mother's frustration finally revealed itself when she (Mrs. Freisson), had an altercation with one of the White teachers. According to Mrs. Freisson, her mother left the classroom where she was teaching in order to confront the White teacher about the treatment of her daughter.

Extracurricular activities. For many of the students, extracurricular activities played a major role in helping to smooth the process of transition. Unlike the Freedom of Choice plan which included a rule which disallowed Black students from participating in extracurricular activities, students of the final phase of transition were allowed to participate in many of the activities. Mr. Heflin not only noted how his former RCTS band teacher paved the way for him to become a member of Handley High School's band, he also discussed some of the interactions with his new band

instructor. As a new band member, Mr. Heflin noted that he and four other Black band mates always strove to be top performers. He identified one instance in which both he and the other Black members refused to play a particular piece that had been traditionally played by Handley's band.

One day we were getting ready to go to Jackson Alabama, and I looked at the sheet music. I told the guys, "this look like 'Dixie'". They were like, "No, man. That looks more like the "star spangled banner." We started to thumb through it and it was "Dixie." They said "What you going to do"? I said, "I don't know what y'all going to do, but I am not going to play it." We got ready to start. Everyone took their music out to start. Everyone started playing their music and Mr. Hyche started looking around and he noticed that there wasn't a full sound coming from the trumpet section. "Trumpets! I want the trumpets to play!" He was not hearing that full brass sound. There were 26 trumpets. Four of us were not playing. We got ready to play, and we held the horns up against our mouths and didn't let out a sound. He looked at us, dropped his head and said "Everybody, let's play this song!" He didn't say a word to us. He understood how we felt. After that day, he and I became close. We are still close friends to this day. He was a good man. Good man. (TH, lines 159-169).

This indicates one situation in which an extracurricular activity played a major role in bridging the gap between the two races. Mrs. Royston also indicated a similar story in which extracurricular activities acted as a liaison between the two cultures. When she transitioned, Mrs. Royston became a cheerleader. She stated that all of the other cheerleaders treated her as if she was one of them. She indicated that it was her own self-consciousness which may have played a

major role in her feelings of discomfort. Mrs. Royston shared the following story of one of her cheerleading experiences.

My second year at the high school, I chose to try out for the cheerleading squad and I actually made the squad which was something people thought was not going to happen. I and one other African American girl did make that squad- the junior varsity. There was also an African American that made the varsity squad that same year. That was definitely a first for Handley high school to see African Americans on the cheerleading squad. I was really surprised at how well those girls treated me. I was the one feeling weird about some of the things they did. For example when we went off that summer to a cheerleading camp and we had to sleep in the same rooms and what not. I remember there we were at lunch and I remember cringing because one of them offered me a drink that they had been drinking out of and said "Here, taste this!!" I was thinking "are you serious? You want me to drink after you? This is not happening?" There they were being that accepting and I was thinking "whoa." I was just shocked. They treated me like I was just another cheerleading sister. I felt then "Okay, I am being accepted here. I'm actually being accepted. Perhaps it was watching t.v. and thinking nothing like that could ever happen. I ended up having a very good year. A very good year. (DR, lines 152-165)

Others also noted the manner in which the extracurricular activities initiated the involvement of many of the African American community into supporting the schools. For example, many of the Black students became involved in quite a few of the sports activities of the high school and thus the community members would come out to support them. Mrs. Freisson also

noted that in her last years at Handley High school, she, too, became active in extracurricular activities.

During the first years there were very few activities that we could be involved in. During the last year I was invited to write for the triangle newspaper staff. None of my articles were ever printed. I graduated and was floored and I was given the Johnny B. Stevenson Journalism award, and not a single thing I had ever written appeared in that paper. How does one reconcile that? That was May of 1971. (CF, lines 408-411)

Mr. Heflin noted that the interactions of with white band mates also provided an opportunity for both Black and White students an opportunity to improve themselves. He gave a specific example of one of his band experiences in which he was challenged by one of his white female band mates.

Case in point. We were getting ready to have a concert band and Mr. Hyche informed us that some of us were not going to make the concert band so we were going to have tryouts, so choose who you want to try out against. One white girl chose to try out against me. This was my first year playing trumpets-self-taught. She played second trumpet. I played first year third trumpet. She played third year second trumpet. She said “Thomas, I am challenging you today. I got to make it,” she said. “I got to make it, too.” I had to practice. I practiced, and practiced, and practiced. What I did was found some rudiments that were a high accountability-mid-range that wouldn’t stress me to play and that I could play straight through and sound like a professional. When she would come through the band room, I would start playing. Each time she would look, she got intimidated. She finally said, “I am going to drop out. I don’ think I can beat you.” It was a psychological game I played and I won it. She could have easily beaten me. With the music that Mr. Hyche was

going to give us, she could have trampled all over me. She had kept hearing how I was practicing and it frayed her nerves and she backed out. She could have beaten me easily. She was a good friend of mine. When she backed out, I went up to her and said, “You could have beaten me. If we would have gone up against each other, I would have been playing just to see if I could play the music. You are very good. You just lost your nerve.” By making us compete with each other, Mr. Hyche was challenging us to practice. That made us a better group. (TH, lines 177-194)

Unfortunately, not all extracurricular interaction was positive. There were often times when racist attitudes tainted the experiences of the students. For example, Mr. Johnson noted that when he arrived at the White school, he experienced a rude awakening as to the opportunities of extracurricular activities available to him. According to Mr. Johnson, he was often shut out of extracurricular opportunities for leadership at Handley High School.

As far as activities I didn't participate anything. It was a rude awakening going from the segregated school where I was real active. I was the class president and vice president of different organizations. When I got up there most of the students were white and you were always out voted for officer positions or anything like that. I remember when we had the class elections; I got nominated for every office. When you got nominated you had to step outside the door so that the class could vote. Let's say there were 35 White students and 10 Black students, the votes would always be in favor of the white Student 35 to 10 in favor of the White person. (SJ, lines 105-111)

Mr. Heflin also noted that even though he did develop a sense of respect for Mr. Hyche and enjoyed his experience in the band, not all instructors at Handley were as welcoming. One of his strongest memories was associated with the basketball team.

I also tried out for the basketball team. The coach, Cato, was happy because he had a starting lineup come in. When I first came in I was late because I left band practice to get there. The coach asked me why I was late. He pulled me to the side and said “if I can’t have you on my team, I don’t want you.” I said, “We did this at Randolph.” He said, “You are not at Randolph anymore. Either quit the band or leave the basketball team.” I talked to Mr. Hyche about it. He put a frown on his face and looked down. I knew something was wrong. He said, “Look, Thomas, you decide what you want to do. You are doing good in the band, and I want to keep you in the band. I don’t see a problem with you playing basketball and being in the band. You decide what you want to do.” I thought about what basketball was going to do for me and what band was going to do for me. I knew band was going to be a part of me for the rest of my life, so I quit basketball. I told the rest of the Black guys, “you better watch Cato, he ain’t quite right. Y’all will see what I’m talking about.” We had one guy named Owen Shealy who would go in and score 8 or 9 points really quickly. Cato would take Shealy out and put a White boy in so the white boy could get all the glory. He kept doing that and Owens quit. We had another player, Luther Greer, would score a bunch of points, and he would pull him out and put the White boy in. Luther finally quit. We had another one, Melvin Robinson, who could score 20 and 30 points. He would pull him out and put the White boy in there. Melvin finally quit. When he saw he was losing all of them black boys and started losing them games, he left the other two alone, but it was too late. (TH, lines 195-212).

Mrs. Royston also noted that the racism was one of the reasons that Handley discontinued its high school prom. According to Mrs. Royston, they had junior/senior prom the first year that we were there and something happened (this was before I was even old enough to go the prom for that matter). The prom consisted with only juniors and seniors from Handley High School. That meant that many of our African American students didn't have anyone of their own race they could take with them to the prom because of the difference in numbers. So they would either go alone or not go at all. When they did go there ended up being interracial dancing and fights. It was like "No way are you going to dance with this White girl." Fights broke out and the next year there was no senior prom. It was cancelled after the first year. That was the end of the prom for a very long time. (DR, lines 170-177).

Many of the participants noted that often the racial history of the community would spill over into the academic experiences of the students. One example involved an experience with the newly integrated band. According to Mr. Heflin members of the Black community accused Mr. Hyche of being prejudiced because one of the Black females did not make the squad. Mr. Heflin related the following story:

One thing about me. I don't like favoritism. There was an incident that happened before I got here with one of the girls being a majorette. When they got ready to choose the majorettes, the black girl was cut. Everyone started saying that Mr. Hyche was prejudiced. I blew up! They had to understand the standard those white kids had placed on themselves. After school they would get together and practice, and practice, and practice until perfection. I don't know if the black girl practiced and practiced until she got it perfect.

She didn't make the cut. Mr. Hyche was not prejudice. She just did not make the cut. (TH, lines 170-176).

Mrs. Freisson also noted that the racism that still permeated through the Randolph County community had a tremendous effect on the activities she and other Black classmates could participate. For example, during her first years at Handley the students were allowed to leave the school and eat in some of the local restaurants during their lunch period. However, many of the local restaurants remained segregated. Mrs. Freisson stated:

When we were in RCTS we had recess. At Handley we could leave the school and go downtown. When we got downtown to go to the ice cream parlors the White people didn't want to serve us. They soon cut this activity out because they didn't want us fraternizing. A lot of kids in school at that time, their parents owned the pharmacies. They didn't want Niggers coming up in there to get served. I believe they brought the issue to the superintendent and it stopped. That was to keep us from coming into those stores and sitting at those counters. That had never been an issue until the schools got integrated. (CF, lines 426-432)

Mrs. Freisson also noted that during senior year, the senior class opted to have its graduation breakfast at a country club in which Blacks were not allowed. This inhibited her and other Blacks from being able to take place in this activity.

Disappointment. Mr. Heflin noted that many of the Black community identified the final transition as the dawning of a new day. However, he did not share those sentiments. When asked how the

community responded to the news that he no longer had an option to stay at RCTS, Mr. Heflin stated,

I remember my attitude first. I cried. I did not want to go based on the history of race relations in the state of Alabama and the south. It felt like my whole world crashed. It hurt me, but I had to go. I was more focused on how I was feeling than what anyone else was thinking. (TH, lines 78-81)

Mrs. Wright also noted that she also remembered feeling a sense of disappointment when the idea that the school was closing became a possibility. Mrs. Wright stated,

I just remember our class just being heartbroken that we were not going to graduate together. We had come up through school together and then in our final year, we wouldn't be seniors at the Randolph County Training School because of the desegregation. (JW, lines 88-90)

There were those who considered the method of desegregation as unfair. One of the biggest concerns was that the plan only required Black students to fuse into White Schools. White students were not required to come into White schools. Both Dr. Thornton and Mrs. Freisson expressed anger with this aspect of the process. Dr. Thornton emphasized that

The desegregation of the school system was premature, incomplete and not properly implemented. The U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare and State officials should have adequately prepared the community and ensure that "real" integration was taking place. (AT, lines 294-297).

Mrs. Freisson expressed anger with ideas behind the idea of closing the Black school and requiring Black students to move into White schools. According to Mrs. Freisson, the courts did not take into consideration the quality of education being provided by Black educators. It was just assumed that the quality of education in the White school system was better. Mrs. Freisson made the following statement

When they finally just shut down the black school and made everybody go, that was just wrong. You've got a judge sitting on a bench who knows nothing of the community. He knows nothing of the work that had been put in. He knows nothing of how that black school started or operated or stayed in operation. He had no idea of the time, the efforts, and the energies that the parent put into the education of their children. He just shut the doors. What that says to me is that it takes us all the way back to the junction of inferiority. Why would you shut the black school down and send all the children into a hostile environment. A true desegregation would have all personnel intact. There would be no personnel displaced. If the issued was inferior facilities, you could have invested whatever was necessary to upgrade the "inferior" facilities. Instead of making us go into a hostile environment, make some of them come over here. The bottom line is all of that was done from a vantage point of ignorance. Those judges didn't know what was going on in those Black schools. They did not know the quality of teachers, the level of education, and the work that went into everything that was necessary to run a good education program. I just don't feel the quality of the education was anywhere near the quality of education that I would have gotten if I had stayed where I was. (CF, lines 335-357).

All of the participants also noted that the community also felt as if a great part of their history was being eliminated due to the closing of Randolph County Training School. During my research, many participants alluded to a letter that was written by Mrs. Hattie P. Clark, a former teacher, as to the loss the community was suffering due to the closing of Randolph County Training School. I was able to acquire a copy of the letter from one of the class reunion booklets located in the public library. Mrs. Clark wrote the following document to illustrate the legacy of Randolph County Training School....

It has become one of the greatest assets within this community as far as African American people are concerned. It is all we have to call our own. It is the only building in Roanoke or Randolph County where we as a people felt the warmth of welcome. Our parents, fore parents, and other members of the African American community helped raise money to buy the land upon which the building now stands. Many donated hard-earned cash, when a dollar was really a dollar. Many never lived to see the fruit of their labor. Now behind the walls of Old Randolph linger only the memories of the many years which we devoted to – silent memories of pleasure, silent memories not so pleasant. Behind the silent walls linger the memories of beautiful proms, which thrilled the junior and senior classes year after year. Behind the walls of this building remain the silent memories of the sound of the huge drum of the RCTS Marching Band. Behind the walls, linger the memories of the many cold, chilly winter days when the boiler wouldn't work and the hot smoldering spring and fall days. Gone are the walks up and down the aisles on the cement floors, causing calluses and blisters on our feet. Gone are the dreams of little folk who swathe the health nurse coming down the hall. Gone are the dedicated teachers who sat behind the desks and tried to help the slow child and make him or her part of the class. Gone, gone, gone; and

with it go the memories of generations of students who passed through the Randolph County Training School.” RCTS was indeed gone, but its 51 years of educating African American children and serving as a center of social and cultural life for the Black community are etched in the historical landscape of Roanoke, Randolph County and the state of Alabama. The walls of RCTS have gone silent, but they speak through the walls of its graduates. (Clark, 2005)

Many of the participants echoed the same sentiments of loss as presented in Mrs. Clark’s letter. It seems as if the impact of the school continues fifty years. As stated before, many view the experiences associated with RCTS as one of the strongest of their academic career.

CHAPTER VII – FINDINGS OF THE STUDY, PART II: HOLISTIC CONTENT ANALYSIS

Chapter VII relies on a second method known as narrative analysis in order to report the findings of the study. Chapter V relied on categories and subcategories and their chronological relationship to the research questions in order to explain the data. However, this chapter focuses on the guiding research question to present a summation of what was learned in the case study. The guiding research question was: 1) what can African American students share about their academic experiences in the identified small county of Randolph County, Alabama during the years of 1965-1975?

I relied on narrative analysis as the holistic content method to interpret the findings of my data. After analyzing all findings, three central themes were identified throughout the data—marginalization, contact zone, and black pride. When discussing the participants' experiences of racial discrimination, I rely on Mary Louise Pratt's concept of contact zone. In 1991, Pratt devised the term to describe places where African Americans are forced into a power struggle with White Americans. In her article *Arts of the Contact Zone*, Louise Pratt identifies literacy as one of the primary tools used to separate the "elites and those that ruled" from others (Pratt, 1991, p. 38). In this sense literacy operates as a power tool to assert a sense of dominance between cultures. Pratt (1991) uses the term contact zone to identify spaces of intercultural power struggles. In contact zones, a stronger culture seeks to assert dominion over another. According to Pratt, contact zones are "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths" (Pratt,

1991). I extend the definition of contact zones to the participants, illuminating the many ways they experienced the struggles associated with the attainment of an education in a racialized educational system. Further explanation of the three themes is provided below with an inclusion of considerations of the literature in order to permit comparisons to be noted between this study and other documented conditions.

Explanation of Themes

After reviewing the large amount of data incurred, I organized it into “certain patterns, categories, or themes” (Creswell, 1994) order to create a sense of organization. Focusing on the three research questions and the time period identified within the study (Phase one, phase 2, and phase 3). I arrived at several themes which connected the individual stories of the participants. After several months of coding, I was able to reduce the data into ten different themes. After studying the chart that identified each of these themes, I was able to winnow the list down to three all-inclusive themes that seemed to repeat themselves throughout the data. The final list included the concepts of marginalization, contact zone, the notion of Black Pride. Each phase of the research period exhibited each of these ideals in some manner. The ideals were presented when the participants discussed their experiences in segregated schools, during the first phase of the desegregation (Freedom of Choice), and in the final phase of desegregation. The ensuing text elaborates each of these themes in more detail and relates each to the phases identified in the study in order to illuminate how the patterns presented themselves across the data. Similarly, the themes are connected to the categories identified in chapter V. Holistic-content analysis is used to address the overarching research question, categorize themes in order to create a representation of the spirit of the students’ experiences by identifying similarities among the experiences. Even though the identified participants of this study shared information that directed related to Randolph County,

synthesizing the students' narratives in such a manner offers an avenue for subsequent researchers to compare and contrast historical events and situations in other locations.

Theme One: Marginalization

One of the strongest themes noted in this study was that of marginalization. Hermanowicz (2013) defines marginalization as “a social process wherein an individual is relegated to a position of comparative unimportance and powerlessness” (p. 364). I find this definition appropriate when discussing the manner in which the dominant group has historically used its power to oppress members of the Black community. Even after slavery it seemed obvious that former slaveholders were not in compliance to seeing Blacks as being free and had a continuous desire to keep them in subservient positions (Bond, 1994). Quite often Whites would create legislation that made the social and economic advancement of Blacks almost impossible. Southern states began to pass what became infamously known as Jim Crow laws. These were a series of codes that restricted that were directed towards the restriction of the livelihood of Blacks only. Hauser (1996) identified politics as one of the strongest motives of many that compelled Whites towards the maintenance of racial domination. Many politicians were advocates of “racist laws and regulations because they were popular with voters” (31).

One of the first objectives of White Southerners was to restrict the political rights Blacks had acquired during Reconstruction. According to Hauser, Whites understood that if Blacks maintained political strength they could soon become a threat to White dominance. There were also many other Jim Crow restrictions directed towards Blacks. For example, Blacks were not allowed to hold political office or legally own guns. There were restrictions on their freedom to congregate after dark or transfer jobs. Quite often Black employment was severely monitored by labor contracts that made it almost impossible to end employment with an employer. Furthermore,

vagrancy laws were passed which allowed officials to arrest Blacks who did not seem to be employed and force them to work on chain gangs (Boles, 2004, p. 379). Restrictions such as these not only limited the ability of Blacks to prosper, it perpetuated a continuance dependence on Whites for survival. The educational settings of American schools historically disallowed African American and White students from attending the same schools. Although Blacks attended separate schools, their schools were often under the control of those of the White community. Although the Black schools had visible power structures such as principals, teachers, coaches and other members of the Black community, the real control of the school was the invisible White power structure. All of the academic decisions were determined by the local White school board and the supervisors therein. The curriculum design, text book selections, and allocation of funding were all based on the belief system of a White dominated power structure.

The manner in which the assertion of power is implemented to alienate Blacks from privileges reserved for the dominant culture is identified as racism. Berman & Paradies (2010) expressively define racism “as that which maintains or exacerbates inequality of opportunity among ethnoracial groups. Racism can be expressed through stereotypes (racist beliefs), prejudice (racists emotions/affect) or discrimination (racist behaviours and practices)” (p. 217). Hermanowicz continues to state that marginalization can take form in numerous practices such as “intimidation, torment, pressure, humiliation, mocking, provocation, and outright discrimination, as in unfounded disparities in the distribution of resources and rewards” (p. 369). The participants of this study were representations of social marginalization of a subordinate culture by a dominant culture.

Phase One. The strongest indicator of marginalization was indicated in phase one of the participants’ segregated school experience. First of all the nature of the segregated school itself indicated the influence of the dominant power structure on the privileges allotted the Black

Community. First of all, the White school board did not allow the Black students to attend the same schools as the White students. Furthermore, many of the Black participants indicated that they had never even seen the schools attended by the White community. Mr. Whitlow gave the strongest indicator of the how separated the Black school structure was from the White school structure. When asked if he knew of any differences between the Black and White schools, Mr. Whitlow responded, "No. I knew they went to school somewhere, but I didn't know where" (HW, line 8). The efforts to maintain separate learning facilities is a strong indicator that the White community did not think that the Black students were worthy of occupying the same space as the White students of the community.

Not only were there separate learning environments for Blacks and Whites, there was also an inequity in the amount of effort attributed to educating the two races. For example, the White community used taxes to fund the building of schools for white students and assuring that there were adequate and modern supplies available for education. However, the Black community had to secure the funding to build their own school. Even after the first Black school burned down, the White school board did not allot funding to rebuild a school for the community. According to Dr. Thornton, the Black Community had to utilize many of the Black church buildings to continue educating students until the Black community could raise the funds to rebuild the school.

Furthermore, remember that the White community also excluded Black schools from the same quality of learning environments and supplies. In the subcategory "materials," participants indicated that they did not receive the same quality of materials that the white schools received. For example, all of the participants noted that they never had new books. They received all of their books from the White schools after books had been discarded when the White students got new ones. Also, many of those who had been athletes also identified that their athletic equipment

had also consisted of cast off materials from the White schools. Mrs. Chapman noted that when she transitioned into the White schools one of the first things she noticed was that “they” had nice books and materials. Mrs. Freisson also noted that they had nicer books and materials than she had experienced in RCTS.

Additionally, the subcategory “facilities” identified that even though the facilities of the school were identified as under the rule of the White school district, there was little to no effort on the part of the White school board to help maintain the facilities. Recall Dr. Thornton’s details of the differences between the schools,

I was aware of the differences in the physical plants of the county schools designated for Black students and those reserved for White students. I was never able to go into the previously all-white elementary, middle and high schools. I could see plainly the differences in the physical structures; the quality of the buildings and the transportation provided. (AT, lines 45-480).

Mrs. Lane noted that when she transitioned into the local White school she was astonished at how big it was in comparison to her former segregated school. Also, there were very little efforts from the White school board to ensure that the facilities were maintained. Mrs. Wright noted that she remembered her school was heated by an old furnace that had to be fueled with coal. According to her, there were many cold days in the winter when the furnace didn’t work. Mr. Johnson shared how his transition into the White school made him aware of the high level of discrepancy between the Black school facilities and the White school facilities.

As far as the facilities and what not. There were no working showers at the school. When they built the gym (they built the gym before I started school there) and there were no

showers. When I got to the other school I found that they had showers, hot and cold water, and all of this type of stuff. (SJ, lines 12-15)

Mr. Johnson also noted that the transportation to the Black schools was not equal to that of the White schools either. Remember his statement, “We had the same school buses from the time I was in the first grade until I got to the tenth grade. We always saw new buses on the routes where the White kids were riding and we always had these old buses.” (SJ, lines 10-11)

Mr. Johnson noted further evidence of the racially motivated misuse of the school funds. For example he identified that the Randolph County school system would allocate funds to furnish school buses to transport White students from the rural areas into Handley High School which was in the city school district. He noted that this was highly “improper” to fund buses for areas that did not pay taxes while failing to provide buses to the taxpaying citizens of the school district. The provision of school buses for White students outside of the school zone was an example of “unfounded disparities in the distribution of resources and rewards” (Hermanowicz, 2013, p. 369). Mr. Johnson strengthened his notion of the high discrepancy of unfairness associated with the school buses in his discussion of how his transportation experience changed when the schools were forced into complete consolidation. Mr. Johnson shared the following

Our buses had such long routes. My dad left work about 6:00 am. We got on the bus about 6:05 a.m. and we would get to the school about 5 minutes to eight-that’s how long we were on the bus. Rock Mills was only about 5 miles from Roanoke. When I started going to Randolph County High School, we would get on the bus at 7:25 and we were at the high school about 7:45. Even though we travelled all of the way from Wedowee, we didn’t have to do all of the stopping we had to do with the all Black bus. When we were in the

segregated schools we had students packed from the front of the bus to the back. Now we had all of this new room on the buses when integration came around. (SJ, lines 130-136)

Finally, Dr. Thornton noted that RCTS did not have a football field for its athletes. The Black school had to play their games on the football of the local White Handley High School.

Phase Two. In 1965, Randolph County began to implement plans to comply with the Brown decision outlawing the legal segregation of public schools. Rather than completely desegregating all schools, Randolph County implemented what was known as the Freedom of Choice plan. Participants identified several situations indicative of marginalization related to the “Freedom of Choice” category. All of the participants noted that they did not have a choice in the transition phase. All stated that their parents decided to have them move into a new school in order to ensure that they received a higher quality of education or because this was a necessary aspect of the Civil Rights Movement. Although this was a monumental decision for the students and the county as a whole, there was no formal preparation methods implemented to ensure that the transition would go smoothly. According to Berman and Paradies (2010), “addressing direct racism (whether interpersonal or systematic) requires a specific policy focus on the broader community and institutional structures that reproduce racism rather than the communities who are the targets of racism” (p. 222). Although the system focused on movement of Black students into White schools, there seemed to be little to no efforts to focus on the broader educational institutional structures of Randolph County. For example, although there were Black instructors and principals in the segregated schools, when the process of desegregation began its implementation, there were no major changes in the overall leadership of Randolph County. For example, the school board leaders and the curriculum remained under the White power structure

and the faculty remained White. Mrs. Freisson best explained the structure of the Randolph County School system:

There was no, not a single leader (education leader) in the school. Not a single principal or assistant principal. Everybody who made decisions, who called the shots, who had any authority, was White. You were just stuck because you were the underdog there and you knew it. There was no equality. It was such a limiting experience. (CF, lines 337-340).

The failure to change the power structure of the White school system limited the ability of the effectiveness of the desegregation procedures. According to Dovi (2009), in order for racist practices to be eradicated, “power and influence must be taken away from privileged groups who are overrepresented within democratic institutions if the representation of historically disadvantaged groups is to be improved” (p. 1172).

During phase two, five students transitioned into desegregated schools. Four transitioned into Handley High School, and one transitioned into Randolph County High School. Although each of the participants shifted from schools that had been a part of a massive effort to marginalize African Americans into a new system theoretically designed to procure equality, they all identified being marginalized even within their new settings.

The strongest examples of marginalization manifested itself in the category “Interactions with Whites.” Randolph County seemed to strategically design the rules associated with the transition movement in a manner that that purposely excluded Blacks from becoming participants of the White schools. Remember that many of the participants identified that when they were in segregated schools, there were many activities for them to participate. These activities were identified as important factors that helped to create a sense of belonging and strengthened

relationships between students. However, during the initial transition movement, there were rules that restricted Black students from participating in extracurricular activities. For example many participants noted that there were rules implemented which stated that students who transitioned into a different school could not participate in extracurricular activities for one year. Implementation of such rules was particularly interesting because they echoed the movement of former slave owners' efforts to limit the voting rights of Blacks after the Emancipation Proclamation. Recall that after slavery, a law was passed that stipulated that in order to vote, individuals who wished to vote must have owned property, have had the ability to read and interpret sections of the constitution, and participate in the process of paying taxes. Even more restrictive was the notion that anyone who had not participated in the voting process prior to the Emancipation of slavery was blocked from the voting process and so were their descendants.

Dr. Thornton, Sydney Johnson, and several others identified the restrictions on extracurricular activities as a strong reason that they refused to participate in the initial transfer movement. They all stated that they held positions of leadership and were actively involved in many of the extracurricular activities associated with the segregated school, and they were not willing to give that up. Remember Mrs. Chapman noted that she didn't feel as if she belonged in the White schools. She noted that felt uncomfortable and really "missed the community of what we had in the Black school" (LC, 98). Mr. Whitlow also noted that he felt as if he wasn't going to fit into the White school environment. He particularly noted how students would leave him out of the activities. For example, he noted that the students would not play with him during recess. Recess can be considered as somewhat a reward within schools because students are allowed a break from the regular learning activities. Although many would identify recess as a happy time, Mr. Whitlow felt miserable because he was not included in any of the activities. One of the

happiest memories he shared was his victory on the baseball field. The homerun ball that he procured allowed him to feel some sense of inclusion within the school environment. Other incidents of feeling isolated from the other participants included memories of White students refusing to sit by them in the cafeteria or the classroom. For example, many participants shared memories of times when they would take a seat in the classroom or cafeteria and the other White students would move in order to avoid sitting near them. Mrs. Lane, the only participant to transition into a school other than RCTS indicated similar feelings of being marginalized in her new school settings. According to Mrs. Lane,

Mingling with the white students was very difficult. They were not used to us. They often referred to us as “those people.” They acted as if they didn’t want to touch you or sit close to you. You were isolated on the playground and somewhat in the classroom. I remember sitting in one section of the room and the white students would sit on the other side. (PL, lines 44-47).

Not only did the participants note situations in which the students marginalized them, they also identified various aspects of mistreatment from the adult faculty of the school. As stated before, the power of the school system remained under the control of Whites. According to Dovi (2009), in order for inclusion to be effective, it is not only important to bring victims of oppression into the mainstream of privilege, it is also important to implement strategies of exclusion. Dovi states that there should be “ethical standards that democratic citizens should use for evaluating how democracies can and should use informal norms to limit the power and influence of certain citizens...” (p. 1174). Randolph County not only failed to implement strategies to include Black leaders in the decision making process of the transition efforts, they also seem to have placed very

little effort to evaluate the attitudes of the White adults who would be in charge of the students who would be placed in their care. For example, Mrs. Lane noted that she was surrounded by adults who had negative attitudes about Blacks:

We had a principal that was very prejudiced. Some of the teachers had prejudiced attitudes. They made sure we sat on different sides of the room and not mix with other students. The principal wanted us to sit separately in the cafeteria because he thought black students were messy. (PL, lines 49-52).

Many of the participants also noted that quite often they did not feel as if the White teachers would include them in the lessons. For example, Mr. Whitlow and several other students noted that the teachers would not call on them when they raised their hands to participate in the class discussions. Several students also recalled the difficulties associated with learning math. They noted that they had experienced relative success in the math curriculum while they were in their segregated school environments. However, when they entered the White schools they did not receive the same assistance as the other students. Mrs. Chapman noted that she and other Black students never received the academic support needed for success from their White math teacher. Mrs. Chapman noted that this particular teacher did however give extra assistance to the other White students. There were also stories that indicated that some White teachers would intentionally create situations that inspired the negative treatment of Black students. Remember Mrs. Lane identified being mistreated on the playground. She shared the following experience:

We had to be very careful on the playground not to be the burnt end of their jokes and not to get hurt. Often on the playground, the teacher would engage you in softball activities. I remember instances when we would purposely get hit with the balls-when being pitched

to. One time I reported to the teacher that the fella had purposely hit me with the softball. She just told me to suck it up and “oh, don’t complain so much.” Like take it in stride. She didn’t try to look into it or investigate. We were sent to the principal’s office during that incident and we were trying to tell the principal that it was not our fault and that the fellows on the court started the fight, but we had to take punishment for it. The teacher sent all 4 of us black students to the principal’s office. It was her way of eliminating us from the classroom. We had to do punishment activities such as work in the lunchroom, wash windows and so forth. (PL, lines 53-65).

Mrs. Lane noted that she often felt that there was a conspiracy between the students and the teachers to make her desegregation experience as painful as possible. According to Hermanowicz (2013) many victims of marginalization suffer psychological effects such as “frustration of circumstances, anger toward individuals who hold power and toward the group in general, and isolation from the group” (p. 374). Remember Mrs. Freisson identified a strong sense of anger towards Whites as a whole. Mrs. Freisson shared the damaging effects of marginalization:

I have had this horrible, horrible hatred. My mother used to tell me all the time, Charlotte, you can’t hate all-white folks. But I hate what they did to me. It wasn’t them, but it was what they did to me. I did make a few connections. I hated the teachers. There were very few who tried to be nice to me, but the majority of them didn’t care. They didn’t care. I was so traumatized by what went on during that time, I couldn’t support my own children when they went to school over there. I couldn’t go over there. I still had all of that hate within me. Every time I would go over there I felt the fuel of hatred just return to me. I remember my children were in the band, and one of the biggest fights was about that band

when I was president of the NAACP. There was a majorette competition, and I basically just went ballistic and got accused of tearing up the band. My own children said that I ruined their band. I am trying so hard not to cry, but it still hurts when I think about it. We were all damaged because the process didn't have to be done the way that it was done. The desegregation process did not have to be done that way. (CF, lines 316-328)

According to Mrs. Freisson, "Here is what I understood and my mama and daddy understood. A court order may get you into an education setting, but a court order can't fix their hearts so you just got to deal with that" (CF, lines 289-291). Many of the participants noted that they were traumatized by the experience. Several noted that they seldom talk about their experiences during the Freedom of Choice plan. Mrs. Chapman noted that this was the first time she had discussed her experiences. The tears she and Mrs. Freisson shed as they discussed their experiences illustrated that fifty years later, the pangs and emotions associated with that time of their lives are still raw and painful.

Phase Three. The final phase of school desegregation took place in 1970. The five participants identified within this phase transitioned into different schools of Randolph County. Mrs. Wright transitioned into Wadley High School; Mr. Sydney Johnson transitioned into Randolph County High School; and Mrs. Deborah Royston, Mr. Thomas Heflin, and Mrs. Cynthia Bonner all transitioned into Handley High School. Although many of the participants who transitioned in the final phase noted that students of the Freedom of Choice plan had paved the way for them to have a smoother transition, they still noted instances of being marginalized. Newly desegregated school systems did not reflect on how current practices encouraged the marginalization of the oppressed (Dovi, 209). Mr. Heflin also shared other experiences in which Blacks were excluded from

participating in privileges. For example, remember Mr. Heflin's memories of the racist attitude of the basketball coach and the manner in which the coach isolated Black basketball players from receiving the celebratory accolades associated with winning basketball games. According to Mr. Heflin,

I also tried out for the basketball team. The coach, Cato, was happy because he had a starting lineup come in. When I first came in I was late because I left band practice to get there. The coach asked me why I was late. He pulled me to the side and said "if I can't have you on my team, I don't want you." I said, "We did this at Randolph." He said, "You are not at Randolph anymore. Either quit the band or leave the basketball team." I talked to Mr. Hyche about it. He put a frown on his face and looked down. I knew something was wrong. He said, "Look, Thomas, you decide what you want to do. You are doing good in the band, and I want to keep you in the band. I don't see a problem with you playing basketball and being in the band. You decide what you want to do." I thought about what basketball was going to do for me and what band was going to do for me. I knew band was going to be a part of me for the rest of my life, so I quit basketball. I told the rest of the Black guys, "you better watch Cato, he ain't quite right. Y'all will see what I'm talking about." We had one guy named Owen Shealy who would go in and score 8 or 9 points really quickly. Cato would take Shealy out and put a White boy in so the white boy could get all the glory. (TH, lines 195-207)

Mr. Johnson also noted that he, too, was marginalized from extracurricular activities when he transitioned into Randolph County High School. Recall that Mr. Johnson shared that he had been extremely active in the extracurricular activities at Randolph County Training School. However,

he noted that when he tried to run for class offices at Randolph County High School, the election results would reflect the class racial representation. For example, he stated that “if there were 35 White students and 10 Black students, the votes would always be in favor of the white Student 35 to 10 in favor of the White person” (SJ, lines 110-111).

The strongest aspect of marginalization was identified by participants who attended Randolph County Training School. Collins (2009) argues that true integration between cultures which have foundations of dominant and subservient identities is extremely difficult. According to Collins, intercultural interaction is a process of weakening for those whose values and lifestyles are not seen as acceptable and normal within mainstream society. According to Collins:

Assimilation can force people to shed worthwhile cultural traditions. This has certainly been the case with White immigrant groups who shed their distinctive ethnic cultures to assimilate into a new White Americans identity. In this way, assimilation models counsel that to their rights, individuals must suppress or ignore differences of race, gender, class, sexuality, age—in essence, everything about them that is distinctive. For another, assimilation withdraws protection from all those who refuse to assimilate...For another, assimilation raises the question of which norms and values will become standards to which individuals should assimilate and which should be avoided. If standards are not decided in some sort of democratic fashion, then assimilation can set up permanent winners and losers. Historically in the United States, becoming American meant becoming White. (14)

Dr. Thornton expressed similar sentiments as he discussed the manner in which the desegregation process was executed:

In both communities and among Black and White students, there was insufficient preparation for what was unfolding. Students at Handley, Woodland, Wadley and the Randolph County High School were not prepared to receive the students of RCTS, and RCTS students were not prepared to be received in their new high school environments. That was a major mistake. There should have been a total restructuring of the county educational system in order to create something new (true desegregation and integration) for Black and White students and their communities. The community was hurt because this was not done, and it suffered for many years. (AT, lines 256-262)

Remember Dr. Thornton's notations of how the mascot, school colors, and the band of RCTS were abandoned as the students assimilated into the local White schools which were allowed to maintain all of its previous identifiers. Even Mrs. Freisson alluded to the manner in which Randolph County Training School's importance had been marginalized. Recall how Mrs. Freisson reasoned that if the inequalities could have been fixed if the county had allocated finances to the development of the Black schools and assigned White students to the Black schools.

There were also other expressions of disappointment in the manner in which the desegregation process was executed. For example, even in the final phase of desegregation the school system still failed to reflect on the manner in which marginalization affected the community as suggested by Dovi. Hence, many of the same methods of marginalization were continued. For example, the original Black school for which the community had sacrificed for years was identified as obsolete and useless. Rather than keeping the Randolph County Training School as part of the school system, the school was abandoned. Remember the disappointment many participants expressed with the manner in which there were no formal efforts implemented to preserve any

aspects of RCTS. For example, both Mr. Johnson and Dr. Thornton expressed disgust in the manner in which the doors were just left open and its contents pillaged. The best illustration of the manner in which the sacrifices of the Black community were marginalized was the letter composed by one of the former teachers of Randolph County Training School entitled “Behind These Silent Walls.” Recall several references to the silencing of the drums and the impending empty halls which were to result from the desegregation of the schools.

Other aspects of marginalization were also identified by the participants. For example, many participants discussed the manner in which the former teachers and administrators of Randolph County were treated. According to Hermanowicz (2013), another aspect of marginalization in professional settings is to “hold back the adept, to establish conditions that make their achievements less likely an less notable” (p. 376). According to Dr. Thornton

The State and county did not accord RCTS teachers appropriate respect during the desegregation process. In many instances, the grade level at which they taught was reduced and they were not given appropriate roles as administrators and academic leaders. Black students in the desegregated environment observed this development and it must have impacted their perception of their former RCTS teachers. The students come into an educational environment where the status of administrative and instructional figures to whom they had been accustomed had been lowered significantly. Some of the teachers had difficulty being placed in the first place because of their role in the civil rights movement. This development must have negatively affected the identity of Black students. (AT, lines 284-293)

Mrs. Freisson also identified how the difficulties her mother had in securing a job within the newly desegregated school system. According to Mrs. Freisson, her mother had been lead teacher at Randolph County Training School. She had mentored incoming teachers and had acquired a status equivalent to that of a master teacher. However, when her mother was finally moved into the desegregated school system, she was denied a position reflective of her teaching experience. Mrs. Freisson cried as she recalled the manner in which her mother was treated during the final phase of desegregation: “My mama was so proud to be a teacher. She loved education (and I loathed it). She was assigned as a title I teacher in the basement. They were not going have her, a black teacher, teaching their little angels.” (CF, lines 375-377).

In his final statements on the manner in which the desegregation process was implemented, Dr. Thornton further emphasized his disappointment in which the desegregation process was implemented. According to Dr. Thornton:

The desegregation of the school system was premature, incomplete and not properly implemented. The U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare and State officials should have adequately prepared the community for the change and ensure that “real” integration was taking place. It took years to correct this faulty beginning. (AT, lines 294-297)

When researchers discuss the consolidation of blacks and Whites into the same learning space, the terms “integration” and “desegregation” are often used interchangeably. For example Stillman (2012) uses the term integration to discuss the difficulties associated with placing poverty stricken Black students in affluent White schools. This erroneous interchange is common among

educational researchers (Kahlenberg, 2013; Frankenberg & Jacobsen, 2011; Frankenberg & Orfield, 2007 etc..).

Reid (1956) argues that there is a very distinct and important difference between the terms “integration” and “desegregation.” According to Reid, segregation refers to social barriers that deny access to White dominated spaces based on factors such as race, religion, sexuality etc.. Desegregation refers to “the removal of these barriers” (p. ix). Hence the Brown decision to desegregate schools identifies the removal of legal barriers that prevented Blacks from attending White dominated schools. On the other hand, the term “integration” has a deeper and more significant meaning. According to Reid, integration “is the situation and process which exists when men in society are breaking down such barriers while moving toward the full acceptance of all people without reference to their racial, religious, or ethnic differences” (Reid, 1956, p. ix).

Although the educational systems focused on assimilating the African American and White bodies into the same educational spaces, very little was done to assure that African American culture was embraced. According to Gould (1999), “culture refers to the structures of meaning that constitute identity. Cultural norms regulate (legitimate or not) social values, favoring those consistent with the group’s understanding of itself” (Gould, 1999, p. 185). Hence, when White schools opened its doors to black bodies, it continued to institute practices that were similar to the White student culture which had previously dominated the school settings.

The discrimination against black culture and the submersion into White culture left many black students struggling to identify with the cultural norms of their new environment. Ogbu (2004) argues that the manner in which the dominant society denounced aspects of the Black culture made it even more difficult for African Americans to assimilate. According to Ogbu, minorities “know fully well that they do not have the option of membership in the dominant group;

they also know that they cannot easily escape from their more or less ascribed membership in a subordinate and disparaged group” (Ogbu J. U., 2004, p. 5). Hence, African American students will not only always feel inferior to their White counterparts, they will also feel incapable of performing as well when they are in the in the presence of a White dominated belief system.

Ballantine (2001) argues that the resulting low self-esteem that African Americans develop from trying to assimilate into White culture has a tremendous impact on their performance in the school system. According to Ballantine, “African American students in {integrated} settings have lower self-confidence, self-esteem, and levels of aspirations than African Americans in less integrated schools” (Ballantine, 2001, p. 109).

Theme Two: The Notion of a Contact Zone

In 1991, Louise Pratt wrote an article entitled *Arts of the Contact Zone*. Pratt (1991) uses the term contact zone to identify spaces of intercultural power struggles. In contact zones, a stronger culture seeks to assert dominion over another. According to Pratt, contact zones are “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths” (Pratt, 1991). Pratt proclaims that contact zones are most likely to occur in areas where knowledge is produced. Lawson and Elwood expand the definition of contact zones not only physical domains, but any “virtual or concrete” (Lawson & Elwood, 2013, p. 214) spaces which allow for the interactions of diverse power structures. Such spaces can include, but are not limited to classrooms, communities, political demonstrations, or any other places influenced by discrepancies between privilege and injustice. According to Leonardo (2009) “in order for racial hegemony to saturate everyday life, it has to be secured by a process of domination, or those acts, decisions, and policies that Whites perpetrate on people of color” (p. 75). The power structure of Randolph County had continuously

implementing strategies that limited the progression of its Black population. For example, in the area of education the White school board determined how much funding was allocated for Black schools, but also the texts students were exposed to.

The texts are created by Whites and are often introduced to both the dominant and subservient communities. Leonardo acknowledges that White dominance is perpetuated within America's school system thus reiterating the idea of Whites being superior to Blacks. For example, he discusses the textbook as being a tool used to preserve the ideology of dominance and oppression. Quite often history books present Whites as being heroic conquerors of nations. Textbooks are usually written from the White perspective, thus giving voice to White experiences and marginalizing the historical voices of people of color (Leonardo, 2009).

Pratt introduced the term auto ethnographic text to explain the process "people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them" (Pratt, 1991, p. 35). According to Pratt, the reception of the texts can vary from audience to audience. Pratt relies on Ortiz's term "transculturation" to define the manner in which marginalized cultures implement the information received from the dominant culture. Pratt eloquently expressed her interpretation of transculturation as a process

aimed to replace overly reductive concepts of acculturation and assimilation used to characterize culture under conquest. While subordinate peoples do not usually control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what gets absorbed into their own and what it gets used for. (Pratt, 1991, p. 36)

Quite often the ideas of the inferiority associated with Black students create random responses. For example, in school settings where the teacher populations are overwhelmingly

Black, the emotional responses ranged from determination to discouragement. Black teachers worked tirelessly to help students reach their maximum potential in the face of overwhelmingly negative odds, and often responded with dismal disappointment when test scores indicated the desired gains had not been acquired. For the former African American students who participated in this study, the challenges associated the ideas of White privilege and Black inferiority is clear and the struggles associated with the notion of contact zones is a strong facet of their academic history. It is my argument the evidence of these struggles can be identified in both segregated school experiences and throughout their transitions into desegregated school settings.

Phase one. Historically, it has been common practice to maintain separation between those of the black community and those of the White community. Even centuries after slavery, southern states continued to enforce regulations and laws such as Jim Crow which restricted interactions between Blacks and Whites. Even though Blacks and Whites separated themselves into separate sub communities, the notions of the contact zone continued to manifest itself into the context of the overall community. Those associated with “mainstream” or White American have historically been allocated the privilege of distributing laws and regulations which limited the ability of Black Americans to access the same opportunities Whites took for granted.

The participants’ memories of the sacrifices and struggles of their teachers and communities’ efforts to ensure that they received a proper education is an exemplification of Pratt’s assertion that the manner in which the participants react to auto ethnographic texts is difficult to determine. When participants are in a contact zone “one party is exercising authority and another is submitting to it or questioning it” (Pratt, 1991, p. 38). The Black members of the contact zone created by the communal social structure of Randolph County refused to submit to the notions of inferiority being perpetrated by the White power structure. The participants’ memories of their segregated school

experience illustrated how those of the Black community were constantly struggling and grappling for power and control of their own educational opportunities in the midst of a forum which forced them to operate under extreme limitations. The participants' memories of the sacrifices and struggles of their teachers and communities' efforts to ensure that they received a proper education is an exemplification of Pratt's assertion that the manner in which the participants react to auto ethnographic texts is difficult to determine.

When participants are in a contact zone "one party is exercising authority and another is submitting to it or questioning it" (Pratt, 1991, p. 38). The Black members of the contact zone created by the communal social structure of Randolph County refused to submit to the notions of inferiority being perpetrated by the White power structure. The participants' memories of their segregated school experience illustrated how those of the Black community were constantly struggling and grappling for power and control of their own educational opportunities in the midst of a forum which forced them to operate under extreme limitations. Those who participated in this study witnessed the struggles associated gaining educational empowerment in an environment which operated under a racial disaggregation of power. The segregated school was a social space in which students were either directly or indirectly constant participants in the struggle against racial oppression. Remember that many of the participants dedicated that their school environment was not allotted the comforts of associated with the White schools. There was testimony of inadequate heating systems. As previously stated, many of the students affirmed that the supplies allotted to students were inferior to the supplies allotted to the White schools. One of the strongest examples of the struggles associated with the contact zone would be the hand me down textbooks received from the White schools. It is quite conceivable that many of the ideologies presented in the texts reinforced the notions of Black inferiority. According to King (2014), k-12 textbooks

were an essential part of the efforts of “White historians and educators who used history as a means to explore the ideas of U.S. citizenship” (p. 2). As stated by Pratt, these “autoethnographic” texts which were produced by the White community presented the curriculum from the White perspective. In order to diminish the negative perpetrated through these textbooks, quite often Black educators had to implement knowledge of African American history. Thomas Heflin noted that often teachers would struggle against these philosophies of White superiority by ensuring that the students received information about historical Black leaders which was not located within the text. Recall Heflin’s statement

They taught us who did what as far as Black as Black history was concerned. There was nothing taught in the books as far as Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglas, George Washington Carver, Booker T. Washington and so forth. There was nothing in the books that was taught. A lot of things about slavery mostly came from the instructors themselves. (HF, lines 9-12).

There were also other stories of how the students segregated school experiences were inundated with struggles to ensure that students were provided with every opportunity of academic success to the students. For example, one of the proudest accomplishments identified by the participants was their high school band. Many of the participants identified the band as one of the best in the community. However, Mrs. Freisson noted that the community’s White school board refused to supply financial funding to assist the Black community with the funds needed to purchase the necessary equipment for a successful band. However, the parents and community made tremendous sacrifices to ensure that the students were provided with such a tremendous extracurricular experience. The same philosophy of sacrifice was observed by students in various other circumstances. For example, Randolph County Training School wanted to ensure that their

students also were allotted the same academic experiences as the White schools. This was obvious in the various expressions of pride displayed when the participants of Randolph County Training School discussed their typing program. According to the participants, the school board refused to allocate funds to purchase schools for the Black schools, even though funds had been approved to the White schools for the same endeavor. Rather than consent to a mentality of defeat and passively agree to the White communities' assertion that the Black students of the community were not worth such an investment, the Black members of the community once again reached into their personal funds and procured the funds needed to purchase the necessary typewriters. Mrs. Freisson stated that although the school board members refused to supply the typewriters, they did agree to pay the salary for a typing teacher. The various accounts of the success experienced by the Black students when they transitioned into White schools serves as evidence of the extreme pride and dedication the Black community exerted to ensure that the typing program was successful. Several students attested to the success of the program as they shared instances when they either observed or participated in circumstances that allowed the abilities of Black students to be compared to the abilities of White students. There were several participants who noted that often the typing skills attained in the segregated school were superior to those acquired in the all-White schools.

Dr. Thornton attested RCTS offered opportunities for students to participate in various activities designed to illicit feelings of success and possibilities that had been previously denied to both families and students of Randolph County. For example, Dr. Thornton indicated to the encouragement of mass participation of students in academic and extracurricular activities. I interpreted the explanation of the "mass participation" of students in extracurricular activities as evidence that each individual student was viewed as a representation of the entire Black community.

The participants seemed to be clearly aware of the struggles their teachers made to ensure that they received the best education possible in the direst of circumstances. For example, many noted that often students would not have all of the needed facilities to be successful in school. They often testified of how teachers not only struggled against the power structures associated directly associated with the school. There were often struggles associated with the manner the White economic power structure affected the community. Many of the students noted that often many of the students who entered the school came from extremely poor family structures. Due to the poverty structure of the community, students often entered the school lacking the necessary supplies needed for academic success. Participants testified that their teachers would not allow these community struggles to limit the educational opportunities provided by the teachers. For example, several of them noted that teachers often had to reach into their personal funds to provide for the students' basic needs.

Another example of how the struggle for academic success extended beyond the classroom was exhibited in the participants' accounts of the school and community's efforts to ensure that students were also provided with opportunities to continue their education beyond elementary and high school. Dr. Thornton noted how diligently teachers and faculty worked to develop relationships with local colleges and communities to ensure that students had an opportunity to expand their education to the highest levels possible. He identified various historically Black schools and colleges which collaborated with segregated schools in an effort to expose segregated schools to opportunities available to them. Dr. Thornton also gave a personal testament of how his local church celebrated his academic success by giving him a financial contribution and celebrating him whenever he returned from college for a visit. According to Dr. Thornton students who went off to college were expected to succeed. Those who failed to succeed had not only

disappointing their family; they were also a disappointment to their entire family. According to Dr. Thornton,

The support system included the view that as a college student you represented the community, which had high expectations of how you would perform academically and personally. The community celebrated you not just as a member of a family, but as a member of the larger community. This support system and community expectation motivated us to striving to succeed in college. Students knew that they were representing a people who were trying to gain education and overcome. (AT, lines 157-162)

Phase Two. Participants related several experiences during the Freedom of Choice Era that are indicative of how the notion of contact zone provides explanatory power. The first notion of contact zone was presented in the subcategory of “influences.” The struggle that existed between Blacks and Whites also expressed itself within the homes of African Americans. Several of the older participants noted that they were not forced to enter into desegregated schools in the initial phase of the desegregation movement. For example, Dr. Thornton and Mr. J. Burnett Jackson noted that their parents never forced them to participate in the Freedom of Choice plan. Mr. Thomas Heflin noted that the opportunity to transition was presented to him, but he was able to resist the initial efforts of transition. However, several of the younger students noted that they were not given a choice in regard to their participation in the overall struggle associated with the overarching contact zone previously identified as Randolph County. This in essence created a manifestation of the contact zone within families. Many of the participants who were a part of the Freedom of Choice plan were elementary, middle high or early high school students. Their grade levels ranged from second to ninth grade. Hence, many of them did not have a choice in their participation.

Many participants expressed that they did not feel empowered enough to resist their transition from a segregated school to a desegregated school and were thus thrust into the battle for equality.

As identified above, during the Freedom of Choice era many of the older students were given choices as to whether they desired to participate in the White constructed contact zone or not. Recall that in the earlier section, some of the participants identified factors that influenced the choice of whether or not to transition. Again, according to the contact zone theory, the oppressed either accept or reject the theory of inferiority that those in authority are trying to assign to them. Dr. Thornton noted that his reason for refusing to transition into White schools was because he did not feel the need to compare himself to White students. As Dr. Thornton identified, "At RCTS, I had an identity and a role. I was a high performing student academically; captain of the football and the basketball teams; and student government president during the 10th, 11th and 12th grade years" (AT, lines 229-231). By refusing to see himself through the lenses of the White culture, Dr. Thornton was refusing to acquiesce to the notion of inferiority.

There was a slight discrepancy between the statements of Mr. Thomas Heflin and Mrs. Charlotte Clark Freisson. For example, Mr. Heflin stated that members of the White community actively recruited students whom they wished to participate in the transition. However, Mrs. Freisson stated that the parents actively cherry picked their best and brightest students to participate in the transition. In either scenario, the decisions were made under the assumption that all factors associated with the segregated school were inferior. The notion of having students transition into previously White schools was viewed as progress. The statements given by Mr. Heflin and Mrs. Freisson do not represent a complete explanation of why all students who transitioned into desegregated schools did so. It may be important to note that both Mr. Heflin and Mrs. Freisson were children of parents who were active in the civil rights movement of Randolph

County. Because of their parents' vested interest in school desegregation, they may have witnessed the recruitment process from a different perspective than other participants.

As stated before, within a contact zone, the oppressed would either accept or question the notion of their inferiority. The statements derived from Mrs. Freisson and Dr. Thornton is the best evidence of how those who were marginalized during that time questioned the manner in which their school was being labeled as inferior. For example, Dr. Thornton noted that other than his involvement in activities at the segregated schools, he had another reason for refusing to participate in the Freedom of Choice plan. For example, he stated that the stipulations of the plan were designed with the notion of inferiority of the Black schools. None of the White students were being forced to enroll in the Black schools. The only option the White bureaucracy was considering was the transition of Black students into the White schools. Mrs. Freisson also noted the value discrepancy the White school board was assigning to the two schools. Mrs. Freisson expressed her belief that many of the family members' decision to transition their students into White schools were rooted in the historical belief of Black inferiority. As Mrs. Freisson expressed, "To me it all goes back to our state of mind and how indoctrinated we had been that "we are inferior" and "our children can't learn" and "our children are not teachable." (CF, lines 110-112). The parents' decision to send their students into the White school was a subtle indicator that the members of the Black community were submitting to the notion of Black inferiority. Mrs. Freisson noted that she unwaveringly disapproved of the decision to begin the desegregation movement because

"It was based on the belief that "hey, White folks got it better. If our kids go to the same school that the White kids go to, they will be more competitive because the schools are

better, the books are better, the teachers are better and dadadada-that was the song and dance” (CF, lines 56-59).

For example, Dr. Thornton noted that in early efforts to avoid school desegregation, the White school board had begun to update the segregated schools. He noted that during this time period various structural improvements were being made to the school which included the addition of a new elementary school wing to RCTS. Mrs. Freisson explicitly noted that she questioned the assumption of Black inferiority associated with the initial movements of school desegregation. She adamantly insisted that although the materials and buildings may have left something to be desired, the quality and dedication of the teachers of RCTS were far superior to those of the teachers of her desegregated schools. She insisted that there were other options such as upgrading the facilities of the segregated school and transitioning the students equally into both schools. The statements provided by Dr. Thornton and Mrs. Freisson indicate their questioning of the beliefs associated with the motives behind the transition process.

Participants’ struggle within the contact zone of the political structure of Randolph County is further indicated within the subcategory of “interactions with others.” For many of these students transition into White schools was the first time that they had to view themselves from the White perspective. Fanon (1967) discusses how a sense of “other” functions in the formation of identity in the presence of Whiteness. In his text Black Skin, White Masks Fanon discusses how colonialism created the grounds for inequality between Blacks and Whites. According to Fanon, the interaction between Blacks and Whites evolved into a condition where racial difference was not only visible to the eye, it was also created a sense of inferiority for those who had been subjugated. When discussing his personal experience with racism, Fanon acknowledges how

dehumanizing race was for not only Blacks but also Whites. According to Fanon, when he interacted with a White child that referred to him as a “nigger” on a public train he realized that he was no longer a man but rather he “was an object in the midst of other objects” (109). Fanon discusses awareness of how his race was viewed by Whites resulted in an obstruction of his perception of self and caused him to view himself as inferior. The desegregation of schools created a social space in which Blacks were constantly viewed through the lenses of White standards.

The constant exposure to attitudes which identified their culture as “less than” hugely impacted the manner in which Blacks perceived themselves. According to Bhabha (2002), when individuals outside of the dominant culture interact with those within the dominant culture, the interaction creates a space of inequality. One culture automatically becomes identified as inferior to the other. Rather than being perceived as normal members of society, those who do not possess the standards of Whiteness are identified as being the “other.” When isolated in segregated school systems, Black teachers and students rarely had an opportunity to have social contact with White Americans. Many would argue that being separated from Whites not only allowed Blacks to be independent, it also gave them a sense of strength that was often diminished when their Blackness was in the presence of Whiteness. Recall how Mrs. Pate described her initial reaction when she first entered Handley High School as being “scared as HELL” (KP, line 99). She continued to note how the fear she experienced was not just the anxiety of being in a new school, but also the population she found herself in the midst of. She noted, “Everybody was looking at you. There were all of these White people. I was not used to that. We saw White people, but not all together like that” (KP, lines 99-101). Mrs. Freisson also noted the feelings of trepidation that encapsulated her when she arrived and found herself “standing out here in a damn sea of White and I can’t see nothing else but” (CF, line 254). Similar to Fanon, Mrs. Freisson noted several situations in which

she found herself being called nigger. Situations such as these exemplified the manner in which students had to negotiate their auto ethnographic texts.

Mrs. Lane was the only student who transitioned from a school other than Randolph County Training School. Mrs. Lane began her education in Wedowee High School, the offspring segregated school of Randolph County Training School. Mrs. Lane noted that when she transitioned into Randolph County High School she was instantly placed into a situation where she had to negotiate her sense of value. She stated that she and the other Black girls who transitioned with were separated from the other students. She also noted that the principal and several of the teachers were very prejudiced in their attitudes towards her and the other Black students. This indicates the students were in the midst of mindsets that saw them as inferior. However, Mrs. Lane noted that her rejection of the White culture's assumption of her inferiority was displayed through her academic achievement. She emphasized that she did not allow their perception of her to influence her belief in her abilities. She proved to herself and to the White culture that she was not inferior by maintaining the same high standards of academic performance that she had set for herself in the segregated schools.

Many of the other participants also indicated similar experiences of being perceived as inferior when they interacted with their new White instructors and White peers. For example several students noted that they would be ignored by teachers when they would raise their hands to answer questions in the classroom. It is often that quite often Black students enter educational settings in which their academic inferiority is immediately assumed. Yosso (2005) argues that many mainstream educators assume that Black students derive from poor home environments and communities that do not value education and students are not being encouraged to reach their full academic potential. Mrs. Chapman indicated that many of the White teachers of the era also

assumed that the students of the Black school were assumed to be inferior and incapable of learning as well as the White students. According to Mrs. Chapman, many of the teachers just tolerated those who transitioned from the Black schools. Also, recall the conversation that Mrs. Chapman had with one of the White teachers whom she had identified as kind. The teacher suggested that she was a good student and that she should entertain the idea of going to college. It had never occurred to him that she already had intentions of going to college. Mrs. Chapman noted that he seemed even more shocked when he realized that she came from a family that valued education. Mrs. Chapman's this and other situations are indicators that she was well aware that she was struggling against preconceived notions of inferiority in order to be successful in her new environment. Even though it was difficult, Mrs. Chapman highlighted that she continued to maintain her academic success even through such difficulties.

Mrs. Freisson also identified how she struggled with the educators of the White school setting. She indicated several instances of academic struggle and being ignored by White teachers. The strongest indicator illustrated by Mrs. Freisson was the situation involving the timeframe in history class when the subject matter would relate to slavery. Because she was the only Black student in the class, she noted that she would often become ill when the subject of slavery was covered. I found it particularly interesting that the only space in the curriculum which included Blacks involved their identities as slaves. Recall that Mr. Heflin had noted previously that teachers from the segregated schools had placed particular efforts into ensuring that the students were made aware of the positive contributions and efforts of Black Americans in history. He stated that teachers had to supply this information on their own because it was not included in the school texts handed down from the White schools. This is an indicator of Pratt's theory of autoethnographic texts or the manner in which the oppressed "engage with representations others have made of

them” (Pratt, 1991, p. 35). Mrs. Freisson’s uneasiness associated being forced to listen to those who identified Blacks as inferior interact with a text that only presented texts in roles of inferiority.

Other participants indicated that there were many interactions with their peer white students. Many participants noted how White students would intentionally avoid them. For example several noted that when they would take their seats in the classroom other students would get up and move. Again, Mrs. Freisson clearly expressed the struggle associated with the struggles associated with the beliefs of inferiority many of her peer white students had been indoctrinated with. For example, recall how she emphasized how much pride she took in grooming herself before she attended school. According to Mrs. Freisson, when she got into the classroom or when she took a seat at the lunch table, many of the students would move “like you was something nasty” (CF, line 283). Mrs. Freisson noted that she mentally retaliated against these notions of inferiority by through her affirmations, “I know that I came to school clean and I am not dirty. I don’t stink and the Black is not gon’ rub off on you” (CF, lines 281-282).

Mr. Whitlow also noted his struggles with the ideals of inferiority carried by his peer White students. For example he noted how many of the students would not drink after him at the water fountain. Mr. Whitlow’s face seemed extremely sad as he remembered how he would stand in line at the water fountain to get water, and the White students would push him to the back of the line each time he would find himself in front of the water fountain. He stated that this happened continuously until all of the White students had drunk from the fountain. Mr. Whitlow noted that he finally decided to wait until after the bell rang to ask the teacher if he could get water thus saving himself the embarrassment of being treated as he was contagious or subhuman.

For many of the students who transitioned into White schools during the Freedom of Choice plan, the transition into White schools was their first encounter with those who viewed

them as inferior. In their previous segregated school setting, these participants indicated that they had been nurtured and valued by their environment. There was never a sense of inferiority associated with their identity. However, when they entered the white school setting, they became directly absorbed into the heart of a contact zone that had been infused with the belief systems of colonialism.

Phase Three. Phase three which discusses the final stage of transition also exemplifies the notion of the contact zone. For example, in the subcategory “Fears,” participants noted that they were afraid of being forced to go into schools that had exhibited negativity in previous interactions with Black students. Mrs. Juanita Wright explained that she had heard of many of the struggles of the previously transitioned students and was afraid that she would possibly have similar experiences. Similar to other participants who transitioned during the final phase of desegregation, Mrs. Wright was well aware that she would be entering an environment that viewed her as inferior. The notion of inferiority is further expressed when Mrs. Royston noted how inadequate she felt not only when she first entered the school, but especially when she found herself struggling academically. As stated before, the texts that were previously used in Black schools were the hand me down texts designed for the learning needs of White students. In addition to the books being designed for White student needs, the texts assigned to Black schools were out of date, thus continually placing Black students one step behind students in White schools. When students were transitioned into White schools, there were not any efforts to academically prepare students for the new academic challenges.

Mrs. Royston also presented further evidence of the manner that the final phase of school desegregation as a contact zone where opposite cultures meet and grapple for power. For example she noted how she observed the Black teachers’ struggle to maintain power their new learning

environment. For example both Mrs. Royston and Mrs. Pate noted how they observed one of their teachers who had transitioned during the final phase of transition struggle in her new environment. The teacher not only struggled with the updated subject matter, she also struggled in her interactions with White parents and students who more than likely felt her struggles with the academics were further evidence of Black inferiority. According to Mrs. Royston, the White teachers were also concerned with their ability of meeting the diverse needs of their current and new student populations. The observations associated with their teachers' interaction with the diversity of the two cultures must have further ingrained Black and White students with notions of Black inferiority. It is reasonable to assume that the undercurrent of these beliefs of Black inferiority contributed to the internal feelings of inadequacy referred to by Mrs. Royston. As Pratt notes in her definition of auto ethnographic texts, the manner in which people describe themselves from other people's perception varies from audience to audience. Whereas in the segregated environment the negative images associated with Black inferiority were fought against, in the desegregated school environment the feelings of inadequacy had a greater opportunity to manifest. Also, because the transition of Randolph County Training School involved the movement of Black students and teachers into all-white environments, there was increased exposure to the value system of the dominant culture and an increased struggle to determine how these beliefs were absorbed by Black students.

In describing the struggles of Black students in White schools, Morrell (2008) argues that the educational system is not designed to meet the needs of all, but is set up as a caste system that continually keeps the dominant culture in power. Students who are not a part of the "upper crust" of society are continually lacking the advantages of their social counterparts. The separation that exists between the privileges associated between Black and White students is not a recent

phenomenon. It is an occurrence that is linked to a racial heritage that is contaminated with prejudgments and rights associated with skin color that have been inscribed in America's belief system through a series of laws and practices. According to Barker (1980) the experience of Black students in the American education has always been that of "subject orientation." According to Barker the goal of education was never to support Blacks in an effort to become active and progressive American citizens. On the contrary, Barker believes that as far as Blacks were concerned "the citizen was a passive figure, inactive in political and social affairs and for whom such affairs had little if any importance" (p. 97). Barker's theory implies that very little effort was put forth to create an atmosphere of learning equality and potential for Black students. On the contrary, accommodations for Blacks and Whites were continuously designed to maintain the separation of social status that existed between the two races. I read the theories of Morrell and Barker as indicators of Billings' assertion of how race and power interact. Although Blacks were transitioned into White dominated schools, there were still active efforts to maintain the White power structure. This was evident as many of the students discussed their academic struggles. When asked about the preparation the Randolph County Schools implemented to prepare them for success, many of the students stated that they were not aware of any special accommodations. Although some of the students identified areas of success in their new academic environment, there were many who admitted that they struggled academically. Remember Mrs. Royston noted that her grades experience a definite drop when she transitioned into Handley High School. According to her statement, "By the time I got to the seventh grade at Handley and saw a "C" or even a "D" it was frightening. It was like somebody slapped me in the face. I was thinking "what is this?" I have never seen this kind of grade," (DR, lines 147-149).

Evidence of student struggles was also present in the subcategory “interaction with others.” Similar to phase two which discussed former students who transitioned during the initial phases of desegregation, former students of the final phase of desegregation found themselves in constant struggles with White teachers and students who felt that the Black students were inferior. Several of the participants also noted that there were many racial fights that occurred within the newly desegregated schools. Mrs. Royston stated, “I kept thinking “why? Why?” Nobody had done anything to provoke these people. Why do they not care for each other?” (DR, lines 168-169). Mrs. Royston’s observation was a strong indicator of two cultures physically struggling with each other. The struggle emanated from the White belief that the black students were inferior and had no right to be there while the Black students were struggling against this label of inferiority.

Interestingly, although each of the participants noted that the transition into newly desegregated schools was extremely difficult, the attitudes toward the transition were different. For example, several of the participants stated that the transition was necessary in order for Black students to have the same opportunities as the White student population of Randolph County. Remember Kathy Pate expressed that although she wished she could have stayed within the comfort of Randolph County, she realized that it would have been impossible for them (African American schools) to have remained separate and equal. Several other participants agreed with her and noted that they had no regrets about their decision. As stated by Mr. Heflin, it was seen as a move forward. However, Mrs. Freisson expressed extreme regret of having been required to leave the familiar nexus of the segregated schools and move into the desegregated school system. She stated that although subsequent generations may have benefitted from the desegregation movement, she suffered tremendously and it wasn’t worth it.

Theme Three: Black Pride

A final theme that reverberated throughout this study was that of “Black Pride.” Even though racism has had detrimental effect on their lives, African Americans have continued to overcome. Although Rowles & Duan (2012) do not give a direct definition of Black Pride, they do state that African Americans’ “coping and resilience in the face of racism” should be a focus of research (Rowles & Duan, 2012). Rowles and Duan (2012) define ethnic pride as “how a person feels about the ethnic group to which he or she belongs” (p. 13). Since the era of colonialism, there has been historical efforts to dehumanize African Americans in order to create and maintain a perception of White superiority. Bond (1969) attributes the early relationship status that existed between Blacks and Whites as a strong contributor to the mindsets that separate the social privileges that separate the two. According to Bond “slavery produced social and psychological attitudes—forces—of immense vitality in the minds of those surrounded by it” (10). Barker (1976) also argues that although Blacks have always been an essential part of America’s political system, their station in the system has been confined to one that differs from those of their White counterparts. Barker argues that the status of life in America for Blacks was clearly defined in the United States constitution by the founding fathers.

Bhabha (2002) also discusses how colonialism created a discourse that identified aspects of dominant culture as normal and all representations unlike that of the dominant as “other” as in other than or outside of the realm of normality.

The decision of Brown vs. the Board of education not only challenged the notion of separate classrooms for Blacks and Whites, it also challenged the social foundation which had ingrained itself within the soul of America’s identity. The idea that Blacks were inferior to Whites and unworthy of receiving the same privileges as Whites was a strong part of America’s belief system. Teachers and students who accepted the challenge of migrating into the forbidden social

spaces would not only face the ramifications of a society that wanted to keep Blacks separate a subservient, they would also have to confront a social system that was infused with the belief that Blacks were an inferior race incapable of being productive in a society dictated by White standards. *Phase I.* Much of the information discussed under the theme of “Contact Zone” overlaps in the theme of Black Pride. I feel that it is important to discuss the same ideals under each theme when appropriate because they illustrate the many layers of the participants’ experience. Many of the students reflected on the level of dedication that their teachers and community members invested in ensuring that they received the best education possible. According to Fairclough (2000) providing an “education brought the added duty of dispelling the ignorance, immorality, and superstition that, many believed, slavery had bequeathed to the race—of leading and elevating a benighted people” (65). According to John Hope Franklin, during reconstruction, education was seen as one of the strongest tools to dispel the myth of Black inferiority. Franklin states,

Education came to be one of the great preoccupations; enlightenment was viewed as the greatest single opportunity to escape the indignities that Whites were heaping upon Blacks. Children were sent to school even when it was a great inconvenience to their parents. Parents made untold sacrifices to secure the learning for their children that they had been denied (John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 1947 as cited in Riley, 1995).

Randolph County exemplified the same belief in educational possibilities for racial progression. The determination of the Black community to dispel the myths associated with White dominance began with the construction of the Randolph County School system. Although there was a small donation from the Rosenwald education fund to the establishment of Randolph County Training School, a majority of the funds were procured by the Black citizens of the community. Recall that Randolph County Training School was the only high school dedicated to the education

of Black students from 1919-1957. The participants constantly noted that the school was the pride of the community. Mr. Sydney Johnson emphasized the pride the community felt when he stated, “Everything we did was centered around that school” (SJ, line 7). Several of the students noted the great sacrifices the community made to ensure that the Black school received as many benefits and experiences as possible. The churches, parents and Teachers of the community made personal sacrifices to ensure that students received quality social and academic experiences. As Mrs. Freisson stated, the community took great pride in the students. Remember Mrs. Freisson’s strong description of the communities pride and determination:

It was almost like we were an army. There weren’t no bullets, or guns, or rifles or anything like that. The parents and all of the adults in the community were an army walking in locked step with one common goal which was “We’re gonna educate our children and we gonna have the best school we can have if we have to get out here and raise the money ourselves. (CF, lines 44-48).

This statement is a strong illustration of the segregated schools’ influence on the community. It provided a place where all of the Blacks in the community could fight against the social stigma of inferiority. Mr. Heflin noted that the teachers also went to great lengths to provide historical images of Black Americans which could create a sense of pride. He noted that teachers would often venture outside of the curriculum of the handed down textbooks and included knowledge about people such as Frederick Douglas, Sojourner Truth and other prominent Black figures in American history. I feel comfortable assuming that there were no positive Black images in the text book because of Mrs. Freisson’s discussion of her discomfort when she transitioned into White schools and the only time teachers discussed African Americans was through their roles of slavery.

The community seemed to identify the school not only as a place that ensured that they received a quality education, it was also a place where the African American community could hold their heads high and create an identity for themselves away from the belittling eyes of the White community. Examples of this sense of pride were exemplified through many of the participants' description of their teachers and instructors. During the course of this study, I attended the fifty year reunion of the Randolph County Training School. In a session in which the former students shared memories of their school experience, one of the speakers reminisced about the manner in which their principal would walk boldly down the hall with a sense of "swagger" and pride. As I listened to this story, I was reminded of Maya Angelou's description of Mrs. Flowers in her novel "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings." Mrs. Angelou noted how proud she was of Mrs. Flowers' representation of the aristocracy in Stamps, Arkansas. Mrs. Angelou expresses gratitude that she never had to see Mrs. Flowers in the presence of White folks. This notion exemplifies the importance of having Black role models in the midst of a racially segregated era. The presence of Black role models gave the students an opportunity to develop images of themselves which they could be proud of. Mrs. Freisson made sure that I thoroughly understood that despite the belief that everything associated with the Black school was inferior. Although she acknowledged that the white schools were allotted better books and facilities, they did not have better teachers. Remember how she proudly emphasized,

Our teachers were NOT inferior. We were steep in that mental brainwashing and indoctrination that had been done on our people for so long we just assumed that "hey, they've got it so much better. They've got better teachers; better books (maybe); better facilities (maybe). But as far as the quality and the substance of what we got and what was delivered in the Black or segregated schools, education in the desegregated system was

nothing compared to what we got. Those teachers were prepared. They were professional. They were competent. The one thing that we got in the Black school that was priceless was that we didn't lose our dignity. We never lost our dignity and we never lost our sense of who we really were. (CF, lines 12-19)

Another example of Black pride is illustrated in Dr. Thornton's explanation of how the community would celebrate those students who went off to college. Not only did the church provide the students with a \$25 token, they would also expect the student to share the college experience in order to motivate other students. Remember Dr. Thornton's statement:

"You represented the community, which had high expectations of how you would perform academically and personally. The community celebrated you not just as a member of a family, but as a member of the larger community. This support system and community expectation motivated us to striving to succeed in college. Students knew that they were representing a people who were trying to gain education and move on". (AT, lines 158-162).

This statement illustrates how the responsibility to dissipate the historical perception of Black inferiority was distributed to the students of the Civil Rights Movement. Not only was the sense of the importance of Black pride a strong influence on the community, parents, and teachers, it was also a strong aspect of the mentality of the students. There was a strong sense of responsibility on behalf of the students to ensure that the Black race was not perceived as subservient to its White counterpart.

Phase 2. Participants made several statements related to the theory of Black Pride in the “Influences” category. Several of the participants noted that they were chosen to transition into the desegregated school because they were identified as smart enough to disprove the notion of racial inferiority. Recall that most of the participants emphasized that they had no desire to transition into White schools. Mrs. Chapman shared her memory of how the community leaders would travel through the community choosing students who they felt people from the community “cherry-picked” choice students to send into the new school. The participants also indicated that they were aware of the expectations that were placed on them and felt the responsibility maintain the torch of Black Pride which had been passed to them. In the category identified as interaction with others several of the participants noted that they were aware that they had the responsibility of representing their race. Remember Mrs. Lane expression of this awareness even though she was in early elementary school. Although her parents had not spoken specifically of these obligations to her, Mrs. Lane stated, “I kind of felt like I always had to prove myself when I was among them. Even at a young age. I was not going to let them label me as inferior. I know that was heavy for a young person, but that’s how I felt” (PL, lines 89-91). Even Mrs. Chapman noted that she was not going to allow them to label her as inferior. She wanted them to know that Black people were smart. Also, several of the students expressed pride when they realized that at times the skills they had received in the segregated schools were better than the same skills taught at the integrated school. One particular skill that was spoken of was the typing skill. It was noted that there were some students who could out type the White students who had been accustomed to better typing equipment than they had. Mr. Whitlow also noted a great sense of Pride when his baseball skills were noticed by the white students who had made it their mission to torture and bully him.

Phase Three. I strongly rely on the data collected from Mr. Thomas Heflin to illustrate how the notion of Black Pride manifests itself in phase three. One sample of pride was illustrated in Mr. Heflin's notation of how proud he was when he discovered that the education he received from RCTS had prepared him for success in his desegregated school. Mr. Heflin stated that when the administration reviewed his records, one of his foremost concerns was whether an 'A' from Randolph County Training School was equivalent to an 'A' at Handley High School. According to Mr. Heflin, in many areas the academic preparation received from Randolph County Training School was sufficient enough to ensure him success at Handley High School. The best example of the preparation identified was the experience in typing. Recall how Mr. Heflin noted that he and other Black students outperformed the White students on a typing ability test. Mr. Heflin also noted that the typing teacher made it clear that she was not going to lower her standards to accommodate her assumed lack of ability of Black students. Rist (1973) maintains that not only were students expected to assimilate into the culture of mainstream schools, Black children were also preconceived as entering mainstream schools with cultural disadvantages. In what he identifies as "culture of poverty," Black students who entered mainstream schools during the Civil Rights movement were expected to fail in schools due to factors associated with their home life, social environments, and even racially genetic deficiencies. Remember how Mr. Heflin noted that he felt that the curriculum from his desegregated school experience was more difficult than that which he had experienced in his segregated school experience. I view this as further evidence of the determination of Black teachers to ensure that students were equipped to handle the challenges associated with surviving in a world that was riddled with perceptions of racial inferiority.

Mr. Heflin also illustrates the ideals associated with Black Pride in the subcategory "*Interactions with Whites.*" The first example of pride presented itself when Mr. Heflin discussed

the situation in which the band director identified Heflin's marching skills as the perfect example for all of the other band members to follow. Mr. Heflin expressed great sense of satisfaction in knowing that the marching skills that he had acquired at RCTS were identified as exemplary among his now Black and White peers. Although he noted some positive experiences in the band, he also identified one particular experience which illustrated the band director's failure to evaluate the manner in which the musical selections celebrated the marginalization of African Americans. For example, although the band at the newly desegregated schools now contained Black and White students, the musical selections of the Mr. Heflin shared the following experience:

One day we were getting ready to go to Jackson Alabama, and I looked at the sheet music. I told the guys, "this look like 'Dixie'". They were like, "No, man. That looks more like the "star spangled banner." We started to thumb through it and it was "Dixie." They said "What you going to do"? I said, "I don't know what y'all going to do, but I am not going to play it." We got ready to start. Everyone took their music out to start. Everyone started playing their music and Mr. Hyche started looking around and he noticed that there wasn't a full sound coming from the trumpet section. "Trumpets! I want the trumpets to play!" He was not hearing that full brass sound. There were 26 trumpets. Four of us were not playing. We got ready to play, and we held the horns up against our mouths and didn't let out a sound. (TH, lines 159-167)

Another example of Black Pride which was identified in the same category was associated with the basketball players. Mr. Heflin noted how the basketball coach would use the skills of the Black athletes to propel the team into a winning position and subsequently replace them with White athletes when victory was near. I feel that Mr. Heflin's explanation of how the Black athletes

eventually ended up quitting the team. Each of these instances of protest illustrates the manner in which the students refused to comply to the efforts of White to reproduce ideals of White superiority.

CHAPTER VIII - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although many Blacks viewed the implementation of a desegregated school system as progressive and positive, there were also those who felt quite the opposite. Many were concerned that combining the two schools would have an adverse effect on African (Hay, 2011) Americans. For example, Derrick Bell considered it to be demeaning to insinuate that the only way a Black child could only learn was if he or she was in the presence of White children (Patterson J. , 2001). Bell seemed to believe that depending on the interaction of Black and White students to improve the performance of Black students reiterated the notion of White superiority.

The purpose of this study was to give voice to the African American students of Randolph County through the use of thick description (Janesick, 2000) of their descriptions during the time span of 1965-1975. In order to accomplish this effort, the researcher provided the reader with the precise testimonies of participants provided in Chapters V and VI. Furthermore, the findings identified in those chapters denote my analyses of the participants' words based on critical reflections of the shared narratives.

This closing chapter provides a conclusion to the study by considering the combined stories of the participants who are former African American students of Randolph County. To begin with, I explain the manner in which participants memories were gathered; subsequently, I offer a model to help make sense of the participants' experiences. I propose that the conditions which they lived through can be compared the survivor mode in which the former students underwent experiences that challenged their mental and emotional fortitudes. Afterwards I share personal academic

experiences which connect the participants' stories to the Black experience in education as a whole. Finally, the chapter is concluded with suggestions for future research. Although this study focuses on a specific case, there is immense potential to connect it to other research endeavors or expanding this study.

Gathering the Participants' Stories

When deciding to conduct interviews to collect data, it is important to remember that people may agree to share their stories for various reasons. For example, the participants may have a personal relationship with the researcher or they may view sharing their experiences with a stranger as process emotional healing. According to Bruce & Lune (2012), sometimes interviewees “may desire to share some personal experiences they have not felt comfortable sharing with other before” (140). This seemed to be the case in this study. When I contacted participants, many of them noted that they had never spoken of their desegregation experiences. This information alerted me to be aware of how I conducted the interviews. I wanted to be careful to allow the person being interviewed to share as much information as needed to make them feel comfortable while simultaneously ensuring that I gathered the data that I needed. One of the best ways to ensure that I acquired the necessary data was to ensure that I was a good listener. Yin (2014) states that “a good listener hears the exact words used by the interviewee, captures the mood and affective components, understands the context from which the interviewee is perceiving the world, and infers the meaning intended by the interviewee (not the researcher)” (p. 74). For example, when I first started the interview process, I had preconceived notions of the type of data that would be shared based on texts that I had previously read. However, I soon realized that these participants had their own stories that were unique to their experiences and location. For example, there was variation

in the perspective as to whether or not the desegregation process was a positive or negative step for African Americans. For example, Charlotte Clark Freisson stated

They thought that what they were doing was right at that time. They thought they were doing it for the right reason. Now I am wrestling with an emotional indictment against my Mama and Daddy. I can't deny my love for them. They were the most wonderful people in the world. I don't know if they ever really understood the pain I endured. Maybe at the end my Mama understood, but my Daddy didn't. My daddy was just an idealist. He didn't have to go the White school. He never really experienced a matriculation through the White school either. I can't really fault him. He was something like Martin Luther King. He was just a dreamer. (lines 357-363)

This statement can be contrasted with Kathy Pate's statement

I wish it could have just stayed there, but I know that there was no way for us to be separate and equal. Especially as far as academics and books. We used "used" books. It was so different when I got to Handley. They had all of the up-to-date books and materials for us to learn from. (lines 17-19)

Many of the participants entered the desegregation phase from different perspectives. For example, Mrs. Freisson was the only daughter of a very prominent Civil Rights Activist of the town. Because she was the only child she was given a lot of attention from both of her parents. Also because of her father's notoriety, she was well-known throughout the community. Hence going into an environment where she was isolated and felt like a nobody had a strong effect on her perspective. Also remember Mrs. Freisson stated that she felt that one of the strongest reasons her

father sent her to the school was because he knew it would make him look hypocritical not to send her to the desegregated school after fighting so hard for desegregation. Mrs. Freisson in one part of the interview identified herself as a sacrificial lamb of the Desegregation Process. There were several participants whose parents or other family members were active Civil Rights leaders. However, Mrs. Pate spoke from another perspective. Mrs. Pate's family was not as actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement, and she had multiple siblings. She noted that her parents sent her to the school in order to increase her opportunities at a better life. Each participant of the study had varying life experiences that may have influenced their experiences in their desegregated environment.

Research Question One

The first specific research question asked: What were the experiences of African students in segregated schools? When considering and comparing each phase of my study it was obvious that although each of my participants had a variety of experiences, they all had similar memories of their segregated experiences. The responses associated with the segregated schools seemed to be stronger and filled with a strong sense of respect. Many seemed to view this as an opportunity to pay homage to those who they felt had sacrificed to invest in the most formidable years of their lives. Although many of the participants of the study had varying home background lives as children and had experienced a variety of life experiences, they all presented data that indicated that their segregated experiences were extremely positive. All of the participants felt as if their teachers, parents, and community had sacrificed greatly to ensure that they had the best education possibility. For example, they all told stories of all parties coming together to ensure that the students not only received the best academic experiences, but also the best extracurricular experiences. For example, there were stories of the community constantly raising money to supply

items that the local school board refused to purchase for the Black school such as band instruments and uniforms, typewriters, and anything else that was necessary.

Research Question Two

The second specific research question asked: What were the experiences of African American students in the initial phase of the desegregation Movement? Although many of the participants of the initial desegregation movement were extremely young during their transition, their memories regarding the movement were extremely clear. Participants of this segment seemed to relive their experiences throughout phases of the interview. It was almost as if the participants were children again. For example several of them cried when they discussed the treatment they received from White teachers and White students of their new schools. When Mrs. Freisson spoke of the White students constantly referring to her in the terms “Nigra,” she not only shed tears, we actually had to halt the interview so that she could get a glass of water to compose herself. The same were true of the recollections of Herbert Whitlow when he discussed the manner in which the students pushed him to the back of the line because “They didn’t want to drink behind me” (HW, line 34). The clear memories of the participants serves as evidence of the impact desegregation had on their childhood.

There may have been community conversations about the transfer of Black students into White schools, but very few of the participants of this phase seemed to be aware of any types of discussions or planning associated with the decisions of how to deal with any disruptions or problems which may result from the transfer. Although each of the participants noted that they had no desire to transition into desegregated schools, there seemed to be some discrepancy as to how students were chosen to be a part of the initial transition. Each of the responses seemed to reflect the positioning of the parents of the community. For example, Mr. Whitlow’s and Mrs.

Pate's parents were not actively involved in the political arena of the community. Each of these participants stated that they believed that their parents chose to send them to the desegregated school in order to ensure that they received a better education. However, Mrs. Freisson, Mrs. Lane, and Mrs. Chapman all had parents that were educators and/or actively involved in the political arena of the community. They all seemed to share the belief that they were chosen by the community in order to represent the abilities of the Black community and to suppress the ideas of racial inferiority. It is highly likely that as children the latter participants were often surrounded by their parents' discussions of politics and had a broader understanding of the political tensions of the community during that time. I believe that it is the differences in family background and community involvement which may have affected the participants' perceptions of why they were forced to transition during the first phase of the integration movement.

Research Question Three

The third specific research question asked: What were the experiences of African American students during the final phase of desegregation? I noticed that the participants associated with this question often discussed their experiences in relation to their segregated school experiences. This should have been a reasonable expectation considering the students that the purpose of the study was to illuminate their experiences in both environments. Dissimilar to the responses gathered from those participants who transitioned during the Freedom of Choice plan, the responses gathered from those who participated in the final phase of transition had less emotion attached to their responses. Those who were a part of the final transition did not have as many negative experiences to scar them. Mrs. Wright best expressed the reasoning behind this by noting that those who participated in the Freedom of Choice plan had paved the way for them.

One of the major differences that may attribute to the change in attitude was the removal of the restrictions on extracurricular activities. Two of those associated with the final phase of transition noted that their participation in extracurricular activities which led to a feeling of acceptance in their new school. Mr. Heflin noted how participating in the band helped him to establish an identity for himself. The skills that he acquired at RCTS helped to create a bond between him and the White students he encountered. Even Mrs. Royston noted that becoming a cheerleader helped eradicate the racial tension between her and the other cheerleaders. Mr. Johnson admitted that had he not been bitter about the manner in which the transition had taken place, he would probably have gotten more involved in the activities available and would have enjoyed his high school experience more. The students' participation in extracurricular activities also eased some of the racial tensions in the community. Participants who transitioned into each of the schools noted that African Americans began to come out to support the Black athletes.

Another factor which may have helped ease the tensions associated with the transitions may have also been attributed to the fact that those in the final transition had other African American students. None of the participants of the final transition communicated a sense of loneliness during this phase. Although they rarely discussed other African American students or seldom discussed interacting with other African American students, it is assumable that there were other Black students in their classes. Even those who transitioned during the Freedom of Choice plan noted more African American students in their classes. Mrs. Freisson stated that she and another student began to walk home together and also indicated that that there were other students sitting in the front of the class with her.

Although there were stories of acceptance, there were some racial tensions associated with the final transition. For example, Mr. Heflin noted that often the basketball skills of the Black

athletes were used to position the team for victory, and they were replaced with White players who received the credit. Also, Mrs. Freisson noted that many of the activities for senior class were held in places that African Americans were not allowed to enter. She noted that she never felt as if she were a part of the school. Even though the newspaper reported that the transition seemed to occur without incidence, the participants noted that there were fights during this era also.

I believe that some of the contradictions associated with the various notations can be explained by the level of political associations of the participants' family members. For example the fact that Mr. Heflin's and Mrs. Freisson's fathers were political leaders in the Black community could have placed them in a position to hear more discussions on race where as the other students may not have had this background knowledge to apply to their experiences. Although the other students were aware that they were being educated in separate environments, they seemed to have little knowledge of the political facets of the community. I make this conclusion based on how the other members failed to mention any of the other factors associated with the racial climate of the era.

Sense of Loss

Although each phase of the desegregation captured different responses from the participants, there was one theme that resounded with all of the participants. Randolph County Training School was not only a tremendous part of the Black community, but it also served as a strong influence on the lives of the children of the community. As stated by Sydney Johnson, "Everything we did was centered around that school" (SJ. Lines 5-7). Other's also attested to the strong sense of purpose associated with Randolph County Training School. Although there was discretion among the participants as to whether or not desegregation was a positive change, there was one common opinion. The closing of Randolph County Training School was a hard loss for

the Black community. The dismantling of Randolph County Training school not only represented the loss of the school itself, there was a loss of strong support systems and strong role models associated with the school. Each of the participants wanted to ensure that it was understood that despite the impoverished state of their school, great achievements were accomplished behind the silent walls of the desegregated schools. Hopefully, this work will illuminate the great strength and resilience associated with desegregated schools and will nurture a sense of respect for the diligence and pride associated with desegregated schools. Although it is true that students who entered into desegregated schools were exposed to facilities, textbooks, and other opportunities that were not a part of the desegregated school experience, these “privileges” came at a great cost.

Recommendations for Future Research

The experiences of African American students who were enrolled as students in the Randolph County School System during the years of 1965-1975. Specifically, the study identified the perceptions of former African American students related to learning in segregated schools, their memories of their experiences during the Freedom of Choice plan, and the progression of their perception of their experiences as the Randolph County implemented its final phase of desegregating its school system. Within the interviews themselves, there were presented a variety of options available by which scholars could continue the research began in this study.

- 1) After I had completed gathering all of my data, I attended a church service with the former students of my study. After service, a lady who had failed to contact me after I had sent her an invitation to be part of the study approached me. She expressed an appreciation for my work and continued to explain why she had not participated. She stated that her experience had been different than any of the other participants because she and her siblings

were biracial and were not treated well at RCTS or the desegregated school. One interesting study would be the focus on the experiences of biracial (Black and White students) of this era.

- 2) Also the body of participants in this study could be isolated even more. For example I had a wide sampling of students from various backgrounds. It would be interesting to focus on a complete group of students from similar backgrounds. For example, a study could attempt to focus on the desegregation experiences of students whose parents were educators in this time period. Mrs. Wright shared with me the experiences of one student whose father was a principal and her mother was a teacher. During her transition she was treated incredibly cruel. Mrs. Wright and Mrs. Freisson speculated that it was these early experiences which turned this former student to drugs and criminal behavior. It was speculated that this young lady was still in prison. Also, a similar study could focus on the experiences of those students whose parents were actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement.
- 3) The participants of this study represented students who transitioned into various schools of the county. Dr. Thornton explained to me that the trauma was different in various parts of the county. For example, Roanoke (the area where most of my participants transitioned) was identified as having more Black leaders. It would be interesting to conduct a study that specifically analyzed the voices of students from the outskirts or more rural areas of the county of Roanoke.
- 4) Initially, it was my desire to analyze the voices of teachers and students from this era. There are still a few former teachers who are alive and well in this area. It would be wonderful if the voices of these former educators could be captured before it is too late so

that they can share their experiences. I am sure that many of them could shed light on many factors of the desegregation movement which their former students probably know nothing about.

- 5) Another interesting study would focus on the parents who chose to send their children to desegregated schools during this time period. Many of my participants speculated on the reasons they were chosen to participate. A study could attempt to analyze the voices of these parents. If possible, it would be interesting to hear a representative of voices from different backgrounds. For example it would be beneficial to hear from the parents of civil rights leaders, educators, and others on their experiences and observations of this era.
- 6) A similar vein of study could be conducted to focus on the voices and experiences of the other side of the coin. For example, it would be interesting to conduct a study on the voices of White teachers who were responsible for accepting and educating these students at such a pivotal time in history. It would also be interesting to hear the voices of the White students of this era. A study such as this would have to be done delicately because I assume that any who exhibited negative behavior during this time would be reluctant to share their experiences.
- 7) Mrs. Wright identified that during the early phase of desegregation, there were some White teachers who transitioned into the Black schools. It would be a good idea to conduct a study to illustrate the experiences of White teachers who taught in Black schools during this era.
- 8) In an effort to add to the literature, research could also be conducted on the counties surrounding Randolph. Randolph County is on the edge of the Alabama line and

approximately thirty minutes from the Georgia line. It would be quite interesting to see how other students perceived their experiences during this time frame.

This study is only a small representation of African American students' experiences regarding being educated in segregated and desegregated schools. The material provided results from participants who had been African American students in a site specific geographical region. Subsequent in-depth studies will help shed more light on the events that occurred during this time period. The African American population has a wealth of information associated with school desegregation from which much knowledge can be acquired. However, as stated before, the number of participants from which to pull from is steadily dwindling. Anyone interested in exploring the opportunity to add to the literature should act expeditiously to acquire as many stories as possible. As I conducted my research and reminisced on the smaller research opportunities that were afforded me on this journey, I regret that I did not take the opportunity to explore more of these voices. Dr. Thornton and others have expressed an interest in transforming this study into a book. Hopefully this is an endeavor that we will pursue. It would be nice to compose a book which captures the voice of at least the Black parents, teachers, and students of this era and present it to the school in two years as it celebrates the 100th year of the founding of Randolph County Training School.

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APPENDIX A - INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR THE RESEARCHER

PART I. PERSONAL BACKGROUND/STUDENTS

Name:

Sex:

Race:

Years in Randolph County School System:

School: _____: Year(s) _____ Grades: _____

School: _____: Year(s) _____ Grades: _____

School: _____: Year(s) _____ Grades: _____

FAMILY BACKGROUND

- 1) How long have you lived in Randolph County?
- 2) Were your parents raised in Randolph County?
- 3) Were your parents educated in Randolph County School System?

If so, what schools did they attend? What years? Did they graduate? Did they acquire any education above that in Randolph County (College, training school, etc...)? What type of work did they do in Randolph County?

- 4) Were your parents or any members of your family active in the Civil Rights movement?
If so, in what role did they participate?
- 5) Do you have siblings that were educated in Randolph County school system? If so, how many? Which schools did they attend and when? Did they graduate? Did they acquire any other education? What career(s) did they acquire after school?

PERSONAL

6) During what years did you attend school in the Randolph County School System?

Which Randolph County School(s) did you attend during the period of 1965 to 1975? Identify school, grade level...

7) Were you active in any extra-curricular activities? If so, identify the activities, grade levels, and school(s) where you participated?

8) What were your grades like in the school(s) you attended? Discuss the grade levels associated with those grades? (Were you an honor student or a struggling student etc...?)

9) Did you graduate? If so, what did you do after graduation? Discuss academics, career etc...

APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 2

Possible Interview Protocol

- 1) During what year and grades did you attend a segregated school in Randolph County?
Which school did you attend?
- 2) Would you consider your segregated school experience to have been positive or negative?
Explain.
- 3) Were you aware of any differences between your school and the local White schools?
Explain.
- 4) Discuss your relationship with your teachers while in segregated schools.
- 5) What was the relationship like between the Black school and the Black Community?
- 6) What do you remember about the attitudes of the community when the notion of school desegregation became a possibility?
- 7) Did you transfer schools during the Freedom of Choice plan? Why or Why not?
- 8) What were your school experiences during the Freedom of Choice plan? If you stayed in segregated schools? If you transferred into White schools? Discuss the attitudes of teachers, peers, etc... What were your feelings about transferring or staying?
- 9) What was the attitude of the community when every Black school had to consolidate into the White schools? How did your parents react? Teachers? Other members of the community?
- 10) Were there any actions or discussions to prepare you for the transfer?
- 11) What were your initial reactions when you entered the White schools? How did you feel? Did you notice any differences from your previous environment? How were you received by teachers and other students?

- 12) After you transferred what were your experiences with teachers and faculty? Former?
New??
- 13) How did your academic performance in desegregated schools compare to your academic performance in segregated schools?
- 14) What changes, if any, did you notice between the relationship between your new school and your community?

APPENDIX C – AAHRPP AGREEMENT

12/04/2014 14:11

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SOUTHERN UNION

AAHRPP DOCUMENT # 109
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION PROGRAM

FORM: SIGNATURE ASSURANCE SHEET

I understand the University of Alabama's policies concerning research involving human subjects and I agree:

1. To comply with all IRB policies, decisions, conditions, and requirements;
2. To accept responsibility for the scientific and ethical conduct of this research study;
3. To obtain prior approval from the Institutional Review Board before amending or altering the research protocol or implementing changes in the approved consent/assent form;
4. To report to the IRB in accord with federal, sponsor, university, and IRB policies, any adverse event(s) and/or unanticipated problem(s) involving risks to subjects;
5. To complete continuation, modification, and closure forms on time and to collaborate with IRB monitoring of studies for quality improvement or cause;
6. To notify the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and/or the IRB (when applicable) of the development of any financial interest not already disclosed;
7. To ensure that individuals listed as study personnel have received the mandatory human research protections education;
8. To ensure that individuals listed as study personnel possess the necessary experience for conducting research activities in the role described for this research study.

My signature below also states that I have appropriate facilities and resources for conducting the study.

PI SIGNATURE

014

NAME TYPED Effie Fields

STUDY TITLE: *Race, Law, and Literacy: The Lived Experiences of African Americans Who Were Students in the Randolph County School System Between 1965-1975 During Desegregation*

I certify that I have reviewed this research protocol. I attest to the scientific merit of this study; to the competency of the investigator(s) to conduct the project; that facilities, equipment, and personnel are adequate to conduct the research; that continued and the study will be closed before student graduation.

SIGNATURE

NAME

I certify that I have reviewed this research protocol. I attest to the scientific validity and importance of this study; to the competency of the investigator(s) to conduct the project and their time availability; that facilities, equipment, and personnel are adequate to conduct the research; and that conditions are appropriate. When the principal investigator assumes a sponsor function, the additional regulatory requirements of the sponsor and can comply with them.

SIGNATURE

DATE

NAME TYPED

TITLE

APPENDIX E – IRB APPROVAL

February 16, 2015

Office for Research

Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects

Effie Fields
ELPTS
College of Education
Box 870302

THE UNIVERSITY OF

Re: IRB # 15-OR-043, "Race, Law, and Literacy: A Case Study Revealing the Voices of African American Students of the Randolph County Desegregation Process from 1965 to 1975"

Dear Ms. Fields:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research.

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your application will expire on February 15, 2016. If your research will continue beyond this date, please complete the relevant portions of the IRB Renewal Application. If you wish to modify the application, please complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. Changes in this study cannot

apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, please complete the Request for Study Closure Form.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved stamped consent forms to obtain consent from your participants.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

M , CIM
Comp

358 Rose Administration Building
Box 870127
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0127
(205) 348-8461
FAX (205) 348-7189
TOLL FREE (877) 820-3066

The University of Alabama

**UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS
REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

I. Identifying information

	Principal Investigator	Second Investigator	Third Investigator
Names:	Effie Fields	John Petrovic	
Department:	ELPTS	ELPTS	
College:	Education	Education	
University:	UA	UA	
Address:	870302	870302	
Telephone:		205-348-0465	
FAX:		205-348-2161	
E-mail:	fieldeh@yahoo.com	jpetrovi@bamaed.ua.edu	

Title of Research Project: Race, Law, & Literacy: A Case Study Revealing the Voices of African American Students of the Randolph County Desegregation Process from 1965 TO 1975

Date Submitted:
Funding Source:

Type of Proposal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Revision	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal Please attach a renewal application	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Exempt
Please attach a continuing review of studies form					
Please enter the original IRB # at the top of the page					

UA faculty or staff member signature: _____

II. NOTIFICATION OF IRB ACTION (to be completed by IRB):

Type of Review: _____ Full board Expedited

IRB Action:

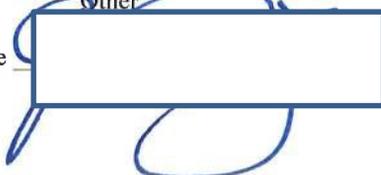
___ Rejected Date: _____
 ___ Tabled Pending Revisions Date: _____
 ___ Approved Pending Revisions Date: _____

Approved-this proposal complies with University and federal regulations for the protection of human subjects.

Approval is effective until the following date: 2-15-16

Items approved: Research protocol (dated 2/16/15)
 Informed consent (dated 2/16/15)
 Recruitment materials (dated 2/16/15)
 Other (dated _____)

Approval signature



Date

2/16/2015

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
Informed Consent for Participants

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This study is entitled *Race, Law, & Literacy: A Case Study Revealing the Voices of African American Students of the Randolph County Desegregation Process from 1965 TO 1975*. This study is being done by Ms. Effie Fields who is a doctoral candidate at The University of Alabama.

What is this study about?

This is a study of the experiences of those who were students in the Randolph County System when the process of school desegregation in Randolph County. The study is a comparison of students' experiences in segregated and desegregated schools during this time (1965-1975).

Why is this study important? What good will the results do?

This study is important because it gives African Americans who were students during school desegregation a chance to contribute the knowledge of how school desegregation affected African American students.

Why have you been asked to take part in this study?

You have been asked to take part in this study because you identify yourself as being an African American student during the desegregation process of Randolph County during the years of 1965-1975.

How many people besides you will be in this study?

There number of participants will range from 10-20.

What will you be asked to do in this study?

If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked to:

1. Complete a questionnaire. This will take from 15-20 minutes
2. Complete a face to face interview with Ms. Fields at a site of your convenience. This will take range from 1-4 hours
3. Possibly complete follow-up interviews with Ms. Fields in person, on the phone, or through email to clarify your responses.
4. Be audiotaped during interviews if you agree (optional)
5. Share and/or allow photocopying of any memorabilia (textbooks, pictures, yearbooks, report cards, letters, newspaper clippings etc...) from your academic experience from 1965-1975.

How much time will you spend in this study?

The time you will spend in this study will range from 1-4 hours.

Will you be paid for being in this study?

No. Participants are not paid for being in this study.

Will being in this study cost you anything?

No, being in this study will not cost anything.

Can you withdraw from the study?

Yes, you may withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

Are there any risks for participating in this study?

As with any research, there are minor risks to participants. These are reasons you may not want to participate:

- 1.) You may not wish discuss memories of this period of your life.
- 2.) You may not agree with the perceptions of the experiences of other participants.
- 3.) You may feel uncomfortable revealing experiences with me.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. However, you will help contribute information on the educational experiences of African American students during the desegregation era of the United States.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

You may use a false name if you desire to keep your identity private.

All data and photocopies of artifacts will be stored in a locked cabinet in my office until no longer needed. I have the only key. When the material is no longer needed (at the end of the study), it will be destroyed. Interviews will be shredded and erased from computer. Digital data will be deleted from both digital recorder and the computer when it is no longer needed.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Effie Fields at 205-826-7923 (ejfields1@crimson.ua.edu) or fieldeh@yahoo.com.

If you have questions or complaints about your rights as a research participant, call Ms. Tanta Myles, the Research Compliance Officer of The University of Alabama at 204-348-8461 or 877-820-3066.

You may also contact my faculty advisor:

Dr. John Petrovic,
Office Phone: 348-0465
jpetrovic@ua.edu

You may also ask questions, make a suggestion, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach Website at http://osp.ua.edu/site/PRCO_Welcome.html. After you participate, you are encouraged to complete the survey for research participants that is online there, or you may ask the research for a copy of it. You may also e-mail us at participantoutreach@bama.ua.edu.

Audio Taping Consent

As mentioned above, the individual qualitative interview may be audio recorded for research purposes only to Effie J. Fields. Should the participant allow himself/herself to be audiotaped, digital recordings will be stored on a flash drive specifically allocated to hold this data. The flash drive will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked room and only available to the Principal Investigator, Effie Fields. A set of audio data will also be stored in a file on the principal researchers laptop which is password protected.

Please check whether you give permission to the Principal Investigator, Effie Fields, to record the interview. Should you not wish to be audiotaped, detailed handwritten notes will be taken of your responses:

Signature of Participant

Date

Yes, my participation in the study, "Race, Law, and Literacy: A Case study of the experiences of African American teachers and students before, during, and after the school desegregation process of Randolph County, Alabama" **can** be audiotaped.

No, I do not want my participation in the study, " Race, Law, and Literacy: A Case study of the experiences of African American teachers and students before, during, and after the school desegregation process of Randolph County, Alabama " to be audiotape.