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Recasting the White Stereotype of Southern Appalachia:  
Contribution to Culture and Community by Black Appalachian Women

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A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Appalachian Studies

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Appalachian Studies

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by

Sherry Kaye

December 2016

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Fred Sauceman, Chair

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Dr. Dorothy Drinkard-Hawkshawe

Keywords: Southern Appalachia, Cultural Production, Black Women

## ABSTRACT

Recasting the White Stereotype of Southern Appalachia:

Contribution to Culture and Community by Black Appalachian Women

by

Sherry Kaye

The myth and image of Southern Appalachia spun by local color writers of the early nineteenth century and, later, by local elites in privileged positions of power have long cast the historiography of the region in tones of Caucasian lineage and remediation. The production of culture, contribution to community, and service to church and, family long considered to be the domain of women has predominantly been viewed from the privilege of a white perspective. Prescriptive definitions of a monochromatic culture in the Uplands of Southern Appalachia has written out the cultural contribution of diverse ethnicities who continue to call the region home. The purpose of this study is to illuminate the ways in which women of color and diversity contribute to the production of culture through service to their communities, volunteer outreach, and service in the church and, as models of core Appalachian values for their families.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This study begins with a review of Appalachia in general and Southern Appalachia in particular. The study is important for several reasons first, the region of Appalachia has for many years been regarded as something of an anomaly and second, contrary to scholarly dissertation on the region, there remain lingering myths and misperceptions of the diverse complexity of Appalachia. Of the prevailing myths that surround the Upland South one remains a problem for the region in the stereotype of a white society directly descended from Scotch-Irish forbearers. To be sure, many of the people who live within the Southern Mountains of Appalachia are the proud descendants of Anglo-Saxon ancestors, but the complexity of Appalachia derives as well from the ethnic diversity of the people in the region. Moreover, diversity has long been the grace and strength of the people who live in the Southern Mountains.

The intention of the study is to dispel the lingering myth of a white homogenous society in Southern Appalachia and illuminate the many cultural and civic contributions made to the community by black Appalachians, particularly women. The decision to focus on black women was made for several reasons: first, women in general have been written out of the historical account of Appalachia and second, women of diverse ethnicity are marginalized twice by gender and, by race. There are those who would argue that a third source of prejudice exists in the form of class stratification. In this study, however, I will focus on middle-class black women who are representative of the median in Appalachian society. While many scholarly studies in the past have focused on the cultural accomplishments of white women in Appalachia this study hopes to show the heritage embodied in the work of cultural production by black Appalachian women.

The geographic domain of this study is located within East Tennessee and will encompass the Counties of Carter, Johnson, and Washington. The study concentrates on these areas for practical accessibility and effective deployment of resources. While the area studied represents a very small portion of Southern Appalachia, and smaller still of the South as a whole, the attitudes and general sentiments expressed by black women in interviews are representative of the larger black community in East Tennessee. For many years, beginning with the late nineteenth century proliferation of articles on Southern Appalachia in magazines such as *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, and *Lippincott's* the issue of race and ethnicity in the Southern Uplands has been misrepresented.

While in many sections of the United States, particularly the Northeast, the presence of blacks went unremarked with settled communities of free black citizens such as in Sandy Springs, Maryland, the myth of an all-white population persisted in the Upland South.<sup>1</sup> In the Plantation South free persons of color were few, but for those who were free land ownership became a means by which to amass wealth and status.<sup>2</sup> Historians James Cobb and Melissa Walker note “most free people of color lived in the Upper South, but few of these owned land before 1830.”<sup>3</sup> Cobb and Walker venture further to argue that African American landowners in the Upper South did not consider themselves to be elite and frequently intermarried with slaves. As well, free people of color began to work their way into skilled trades, professions, and began to purchase property.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>House of Representatives, *Report on The Negroes of Sandy Springs, Maryland: A Social Study*, 56<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Department of Labor, no. 32 January 1901. Washington: Government Printing Office. [https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/docs/publications/bls/bls\\_v06\\_0032\\_1901.pdf](https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/docs/publications/bls/bls_v06_0032_1901.pdf) (accessed October 27, 2016).

<sup>2</sup>James C. Cobb and Melissa Walker, “African American Landowners,” in *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Volume 11, Agriculture and Industry*, ed. Charles Regan Wilson (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 31-32.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

Cobb and Walker comment by 1910-1920 roughly 40 per cent of African Americans who lived in the Upper South became landowners, a reality that counters their contested presence.<sup>5</sup> Noted historian W. Todd Groce acknowledges the presence of slaves in East Tennessee as early as 1790 to write “Notwithstanding the fact that the majority of East Tennesseans were nonslaveholders.”<sup>6</sup> Groce comments that by 1850, slaves in East Tennessee comprised as much as one third of the urban population despite the small overall percentage of slaves in the valley population.<sup>7</sup> Lester Lamon confirms the presence of slaves in what was to become Tennessee as early as the 1791 census that listed nearly 3,500 slaves in the newly established territory annexed in the 1789 North Carolina cession to the Federal government.<sup>8</sup> Lamon notes that the black population, free and slave, grew steadily and by the 1800s had risen to over ten thousand and while many did not have all the mobility and privileges of whites, they were allowed to vote and own property.<sup>9</sup> East Tennessee proved to be an exception with regard to how slaves were held, treated, and freed with the 1796 constitution granting suffrage and relative social equality to the free black population.<sup>10</sup> Elihu Embree established the first newspaper in 1819 to advocate for abolition in Jonesborough, Tennessee, and by 1820 East Tennessee had become a staging ground for abolitionist activity.<sup>11</sup> As this evidence indicates slave and free black Appalachians were not only present in the Upland South and East Tennessee, but were active in the formation of the state, in advocacy for manumission, and as providers of skilled labor. Prevailing myths of an all-white society in the Uplands of Southern Appalachia were more a product of fiction than reality.

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<sup>5</sup> Cobb and Walker, “African American Landowners,” 32.

<sup>6</sup> W. Todd Groce, *Mountain Rebels: East Tennessee Confederates and the Civil War, 1860- 1870*. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 6.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Lester Lamon, *Blacks in Tennessee 1791-1970*. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Wayne Moore, *The Tennessee Blue Book, 2007-2008*. <http://www.tn.gov/sos/bluebook/07-08/41-A%20History%20of%20Tennessee.pdf> (accessed October 27, 2016).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.



More recent scholarship deconstructs such fiction by illuminating the ways in which black Appalachians have historically integrated into Southern Appalachian culture and archival records reveal their civic participation in the construction of government as voters.<sup>12</sup> Census records are incomplete for Tennessee, but show definitely the presence of black or mulatto families in the Counties of Franklin, Carter, Johnson and Washington.<sup>13</sup> Federal census records indicate that by 1850 descriptive breakdown of free and slave populations were included in the record with free individuals of color enumerated separately.<sup>14</sup>

Further evidence of the numerical strength and growing population of free black individuals in the Upper South can be found in the comprehensive ethnographical study by Lewis Cecil Grey who writes, “By 1850 there were 228,128 free Negroes in the fifteen Southern States, nearly 85 per cent of them . . . [in] North Carolina and Tennessee.”<sup>15</sup> Grey, however, adds a cautionary note to address prevailing conditions of economic inequity and describes the social condition of free black individuals as “wretched,” in comparison to poor whites.<sup>16</sup> The Bristol News of 1868 takes note as well of general sentiment toward free Negroes in the era of Reconstruction following the end of the Civil War and records public antipathy of the North.<sup>17</sup> The resulting evidence records the presence, participation, and integration of free black persons of color in the Southern Appalachian region and locates them specifically in East Tennessee.

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<sup>12</sup> Rachel Carter Craighead Diaries, 1855-1911, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1864, Women in the civil War Collection, Tennessee Virtual Archive, <http://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15138coll15/id/554/show/550/rec/14> (accessed October 28, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Tennessee Census Records Online, <http://www.census-online.com/links/TN/Washington/> (accessed October 28, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> United States Census Bureau, “Questionnaires,” [https://www.census.gov/history/www/through\\_the\\_decades/index\\_of\\_questions/1850\\_1.html](https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/index_of_questions/1850_1.html) (October 28, 2016).

<sup>15</sup> Lewis Cecil Grey, *History of Agriculture in the United States To 1860*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington Publishing, 1933), 523.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Anthony Trollope, “Reconstruction,” *Bristol News*, vol. IV, no. 1. August 14<sup>th</sup> 1868.

For years historians expressly concerned with documenting the true character of Southern Appalachia have sought to dispel the erroneous notion of a region populated predominately by white Anglo-Saxon natives.<sup>18</sup> Many scholarly narratives explicitly detail the arrival of European immigrants to colonial shores and while many emigres came to the newly established colonies of their own volition and for many different reasons there were those who were brought to the colonies as slaves from the African continent.<sup>19</sup> For many of these people beginning over in a strange new land required courage, fortitude, and hope bolstered by their faith and memories of home. For those individuals who were brought here against their will, the ordeal to hold onto their identity, heritage, and traditions became for them a route of resistance to the invidious institution of slavery; an institution that was integral to the financial success of the Southern economy. The scholarship on Southern Appalachia records a tumultuous history replete with the inequitable distribution of wealth and poverty, exploitation of human resources, and capitalist tactics of usurpation of land and natural resources.<sup>20</sup> Ordinary people of different nationalities and ethnicities were caught up in the fomenting throes of capitalist industry, but were determined to make their home in the Mountains of the Upland South. The region of Southern Appalachia has long been disputed historically with contested borders that over time have coalesced into a coterminous definition proffered and recognized by the Appalachian Regional Commission.

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<sup>18</sup> Regional historians such as Richard Drake, *A History of Appalachia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001); John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); and John C. Inscoe, *Appalachians and Race: The Mountain South from Slavery to Segregation* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001) create an account of Appalachia as one of regional and ethnic diversity.

<sup>19</sup> Don Jordan and Michal Walsh, *White Cargo: The Forgotten History of Britain's White Slaves in America* (Washington Square: New York University Press, 2008); Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> Harry M. Caudill, *Night Comes to the Cumberland's: A Biography of a Depressed Area* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1963); David E. Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine: The Politics of culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); and Henry D. Shapiro, *Appalachia on our Mind: the Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978) These represent only a few examples of the excellent scholarship on the Appalachian region.

The use of the ARC's official recognition of states, and certain counties within those states, allows for a uniform definition of the regional boundaries considered to be Appalachian albeit, a definition based on fiscal revenue. ARC's definition of the region is as follows:

The Appalachian Region, as defined in ARC's authorizing legislation, is a 205,000-square-mile region that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.<sup>21</sup>

The Northern states of the Appalachian region separate from the Southern Appalachian states along an axis of industrial productivity and manufacturing that includes a political affinity for northern sentiment regarding race, class, and gender; a facsimile of the Mason-Dixon line.

The Southern reaches of Appalachia divide further still with distinct division found among the rich alluvial soil of the lowland valley and the steep frequently inaccessible mountain hollows of the Southern Uplands. These divisions of land and agricultural productivity relate to the stratification of class, privilege, and wealth that began centuries earlier when huge tracts of land were purchased and later subdivided by wealthy investors or were awarded, prior to the American Revolution, by the English Crown for services rendered to the king.<sup>22</sup> The division of race, class, and ethnicity lend to the complexity found within the Appalachian region today and much of the earlier stratification of land, wealth, and status that underwrote those divisions continues to contribute to the demarcation among elite and, middle-class residents in the region.

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<sup>21</sup> Appalachian Regional Commission, "The Appalachian Region," [http://www.arc.gov/appalachian\\_region/MapofAppalachia.asp](http://www.arc.gov/appalachian_region/MapofAppalachia.asp) (accessed February 16, 2016).

<sup>22</sup> For a concise account of the tactics used to acquire immense tracts of land see: Stephen Aron, "Pioneers and Profiteers: Land Speculation and the Homestead Ethic in Frontier Kentucky," *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (May, 1992), pp. 179-198, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/970444> (accessed February 16, 2016); for a precise definition of land speculation see Paul W. Gates, *Landlords and Tenants on the Prairie Frontier: Studies in American Land Policies*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), pg. 48-70; and for an excellent discussion on land speculators see, Ray Allen Billington, "The Origin of the Land Speculator as a Frontier type," *Agricultural History*, vol.19 no. 4 (Oct, 1945), 204-212. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3739399> (accessed February 16, 2016).

Appalachia then presents as a replicated microcosm of the nation as a whole despite the historical literary allusions to the contrary that allege the region to be anomalous, homogenous, and at least in the case of the Southern Uplands, wholly Anglo-Saxon.<sup>23</sup> Diversity within Southern Appalachia has long been one of the regions underlying strengths and traces of that ethnic diversity can be observed in the cultural accomplishments of the Southern Mountains such as in the music, arts, crafts, food-ways, and religious practices found within the region. The establishment of culture reflects not just the ethnic or religious composition of a region, but reflects as well the geographical environment in which people live and tends to shape the attitude and, possibilities of those who live there. This is to say that culture is the result not only of heritage and tradition, but of what is possible within a given circumstance of environment, personal history, and the social historiography of an area.

In the Southern Mountains the confluence of those conditions for “Afrilachian’s,” those descended from the African slaves who were brought to labor in the South, resulted in a blend of tradition and adaptation that has come to reflect the style, heritage, and perception of black Appalachian Americans.<sup>24</sup> For the men and women who were brought to the Southern colonies against their will the retention of tradition, religious belief, and skilled craftsmanship became a way to retain their sovereignty and self-respect as free-born human beings. Afrilachian’s, despite the imposition of colonial slavery, continued to cleave to their traditional beliefs and way of life.

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<sup>23</sup> Will Wallace Haney, “A Strange Land and A Peculiar People,” *Lippincott’s Magazine of Popular Literature and Science*, October 1873, vol. XII no. 31, pg. 429. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13964/13964-h/13964-h.htm#strange> (accessed February 16, 2016); George E. Vincent, “A Retarded Frontier,” *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 4 no. 1 (July 1898), pp. 1-20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2761837> (accessed February 16, 2016); William Goodell Frost, “Our Contemporary Ancestors in the Southern Mountains,” *Appalachian heritage*, vol. 4 no. 4 (Fall 1976), pp. 70-80. [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/appalachian\\_heritage/v004/4.4.frost.pdf](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/appalachian_heritage/v004/4.4.frost.pdf) (accessed February 16, 2016).

<sup>24</sup> The term “Afrilachia,” was originally coined by Frank X. Walker in his work, *Afrilachia: Poems by Frank X. Walker* (Lexington: Old Cove Press, 2000).

## Recasting the White Myth

One of the most enduring myths in regard to Southern Appalachia is the lack of racial diversity and the subsequent lack of familiarity or integration of white Appalachians with black Appalachians. One of the earliest scholars to comment on the presence of black slave laborers in the Southern Uplands was historian and scholar Carter Godwin Woodson who in 1916 published an extensive review of the multiple nationalities coexisting on the frontier west of the Piedmont.<sup>25</sup> Woodson, effectively authenticates not only the presence of blacks in Appalachia, albeit as slaves, but reconstructs the earlier effort of abolitionists to eradicate the practice of slavery as early as 1792 when an attempt was made to exclude slavery from the Kentucky constitution.<sup>26</sup>

Noted Appalachian historian John Inscoe refers to Woodson's efforts to document the historical antecedents of slavery in the Mountain South and comments that Woodson contributes to relieving one of the regions "most distinguishing characteristic—its racial innocence."<sup>27</sup> It is precisely that implausible premise that the Mountain South presided as a stronghold of white culture the extent to which that the presence of blacks was unknown or at least, "invisible."<sup>28</sup> The invention of Appalachia and the myths that attach to that fabrication were for the most part spun by visiting journalists and travel writers who in the late 1800s furnished tales about a "strange land and a peculiar people."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Carter G. Woodson, "Freedom and Slavery in Appalachian America," *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. 1 no.2 (April, 1916), pp. 132-150. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3035635> (accessed February 20, 2016).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>27</sup> John C. Inscoe, Introduction, *Appalachians and Race: The Mountain South From Slavery to Segregation* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001) 2.

<sup>28</sup> William H. Turner and Edward J. Cabbell, ed. *Blacks in Appalachia* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985).

<sup>29</sup> Will Wallace Harney, "A Strange Land and a Peculiar People," *Lippencott's Magazine of popular Literature and Science*, (October 1873), vol. XII no. 31. E:\LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE, October, 1873.htm (accessed February 21, 2016).

Local “color writers,” in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century continued to depict Appalachia in the romantic, archaic style of popular demand. The tales written for publication in magazines such as *Lippencott’s*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and *Scribner* pandered to the national appetite for a cultural preserve of white archetypes and allies to draw upon to resist the threat to white conservative standards and ideals seen to stem from immigration. Visiting journalists were not wholly to blame for the images emerging from Southern Appalachia, seizing upon what had already been purveyed to an eager public the President of Berea College, William Goodell Frost, wrote of *Our Contemporary Ancestors* in the hope of arousing northern sentiment and funding for Berea.<sup>30</sup> All of this has been rehashed many times and in many ways by past scholarship on the issue of Appalachian stereotypes, Henry Shapiro (1978), David Whisnant (1983), and Allen Batteau (1990) to name but a few, however, the obduracy of white preeminence remains an issue in the Southern Mountains.

By recasting the white myth of Southern Appalachia the analogy is called upon to change the cast of characters integral to the creation of culture and invoke the diversified heritage that pervades within the Southern Uplands. An Appalachian culture replete with contributions from Anglo-American, African-American, and Native American as well as the influence of Eastern Europeans on art, music, food, and religion throughout the region. In the Mountain South the collective threads of the past interweave to form the fabric of a blended culture authentically Appalachian. Of those authors who wrote the history of the Southern Uplands black Appalachians were integral to the cultural contribution of cuisine and the art of using what was available to survive.

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<sup>30</sup> William Goodell Frost, “Our Contemporary Ancestors In the Southern Mountains,” *Appalachian Heritage*, vol. 4 no.4 (Fall 1976), pp. 70-80, reprinted from *Atlantic Monthly*, March 1899. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/aph/summary/v004/4.4.frost.html> (accessed February 21, 2016).

As cookbook author and historian Jessica Harris writes, “Who used that food to nourish families, grow fortunes, and connect communities.”<sup>31</sup> In the character call for recasting the Appalachian landscape the authority of black Appalachian culinary craft weighs heavily in the formation of Southern culture if for no other reason than that it has enabled generations of families to survive; and with that purpose to ensure the unbroken continuity of black heritage. Many of the traditional food-ways brought over by the slaves from their home on the African continent are reflected in the cuisine of the South and, like the traditions of other dispersed groups of people, enshrine the sacred memories of home, life, and loved ones left behind.

The African continent was once home to the earliest civilization and, according to anthropologist James Newman, a common crucible for humanity. Newman argues that “Humanity shares a common Africa-forged genetic identity,” and concurs in his identification of the African continent as the starting point for humanity with anthropologist George Peter Murdock who in 1959 published his influential volume of work on the cultural antecedents of Africa.<sup>32</sup> Murdock’s cultural and racial assessment of Africa begins with the broad assumption that “Africa was probably the cradle of mankind,” and he supports this argument based on the anthropological and archeological evidence found in the east and south of Africa.<sup>33</sup> Murdock’s recognition that Africa served as a site of human activity in the Neolithic period some 7,000 thousand years ago becomes essential later in history when tracing the trade routes that saw the movement and migration of people, culture, and food such as rice, cereal, and tubers.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Jessica B. Harris, *High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 2.

<sup>32</sup> James L. Newman, *The Peopling of Africa: A Geographic Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), Introduction, 3.

<sup>33</sup> George Peter Murdock, *Africa: Its Peoples and Their Culture History* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959).

<sup>34</sup> Harris, “high on the Hog,” 9.

Over time the voluntary and forced migration of people, customs, and culture from the African continent transplanted onto the new continent of North America and took root in the Plantation South. Despite the harsh conditions of slavery the cultural traditions of Africa flourished to form bonds of connection among kin and extended networks of adopted kin. These networks were seen as a carry-over of African traditions of communal life and caring that enabled the slaves to survive the harsh conditions imposed upon them and, later, to contrive networks of resistance. Author Jessica Harris argues that the transmigration of indigenous foods that comprised African diets are observable today in many of the foods considered quintessentially American such as: black-eye peas, okra, and watermelon.<sup>35</sup>

For black Americans remembering and celebrating the foods that evoke a sense of history and heritage becomes an important task of festivals such as Kwanzaa where families and communities come together. Beginning in the 1960s, Kwanzaa is reminiscent of an African harvest festival and has come to incorporate, according to journalist Elizabeth Pleck, the lighting of candles, gift giving, and feasts prepared using traditional foods that harken back to the common beginning of humanity in Africa.<sup>36</sup> Pleck examines the history of Kwanzaa to explain that the origin of the festival was part of a Black Nationalist movement that sought, among other agenda, to abrogate the authority of black matriarchy; a wholly ironic conclusion since much of the organization, preparation, and cooking for the festival is handled by women.<sup>37</sup> Kwanzaa, writes Pleck, was seen as an “accessible ritual bound to appeal to the black masses . . . (and) was taken up mainly by the black middle-class.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Harris, “High on the hog,” 16-17.

<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth Pleck, “Kwanzaa: The Making of a Black Nationalist Tradition, 1966-1990,” *Journal of American Ethnic History*, (2001): pp.3-28. <http://people.duke.edu/~ldbaker/classes/backtoafrica/documents/pleck1.pdf> (accessed February 23, 2016).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Pleck, “Kawanza,” 3.



Ronald McKinley Everett resides as the Chair of Black Studies at California State University and originated Kwanzaa when he sought to create a sociohistorical consciousness among black Americans. Everett sought to model the Pan-Africanism of indigenous people of the African continent.<sup>39</sup> Festivals such as Kwanza make clear the role that food plays in the historical consciousness and connectivity within the black community and becomes part of broader pattern of repatriation and identification that links people and communities to their heritage. In the casting call for characters in the renovated play of the American South in general and the Upland South in particular, the ethnicity of the actors becomes central as a focal point of attention. Journalist and author on Southern culture John Egerton takes note of this to write, “The American South is generally regarded as the most distinctive and varied regional cuisine in the nation,” varied in regard to the ethnic and racial influences brought to bear on the cuisine.<sup>40</sup> Egerton also takes note of the confining circumstances and circumscribed lives of Southern women that relegated them to the kitchen, the home, and childbearing regardless of race.<sup>41</sup>

In the Old South patterns of patriarchal privilege granted women a limited latitude of authority and for black women that meant a double marginalization of race, and gender. In a southern climate of strict segregation and one that Egerton describes as “white primacy,” little, if any credit was given to the multitude of black women who populated the kitchens of the South and who through memory, innovation, and skill produced some of the region’s most delectable food.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ysamur Flores-Peña and Robin Evanchuk, “Kwanzaa: The Emergence of an African-American Holiday,” *Western Folklore*, Vol. 56, No. 3/4 (Summer - Autumn, 1997), pp. 281-294. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1500280> (accessed February 23, 2016).

<sup>40</sup> John Egerton, Foreword, “A Gallery of Great Cooks,” in *The Jemima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), viiii.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, x.

The primacy of food takes center stage in the discursive racial rhetoric of the South as black women are acknowledged to be among the main contributors to Southern cuisine and the satisfied stomach of southern patrons. Yet, as author and cookbook enthusiast Toni Tipton-Martin argues black cooks, chefs, and culinary artists have seldom been recognized or granted credit for their accomplishments in defiance of what Tipton-Martin calls the Jemima Code.<sup>43</sup> Tipton-Martin's reference regards the racially infused image of a stout, asexual black woman wearing a do-rag that was created to be the counterpart of Uncle Tom; an indentured servant both servile and safe. Tipton-Martin takes that image to task and effectively deconstructs it with historical evidence to the contrary as she traces the evolution of black culinary art and the contribution that artistry has made to the present-day culture of the Upland South. The history of food takes on a heightened meaning within the context of culture as it not only summons up ancestry and heritage, but goes beyond that to establish networks of connectivity within the community. Moreover, the gathering, preparation, and sharing of food serves to ensure feelings of gratitude, obligation, and commitment to common goals within the community. Black women have been instrumental in this way to preserving and promoting fellowship within their churches, communities, and civic organizations through their participation in community festivals.

Festivals are just one of the ways in which black Appalachian Americans contribute back to the community and in so doing reclaim their visibility. While women are primarily responsible for the organization of civic affairs and the preparation of African and Appalachian foods black men, too, contribute to the culture of the Mountain South with musical traditions and instruments that in the past were remembered and replicated in the Plantation South.

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<sup>43</sup> Toni Tipton-Martin, *The Jemima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 25.

All this is not to say that there is some dichotomous division that declares women cook and men create music, Tipton-Martin exposes many truly excellent black chefs who are responsible for the creation of haute cuisine in some of the nation's finest restaurants; by the same logic then black women have as well forged distinct identities as musicians in the Mountain South. The main point of the previous discussion being that the positive contributions of black Appalachian's to the cultural scene have been many and varied with little to none recognition by the convention of historians whose responsibility it is to document and thereby enshrine in the historical memory the noteworthy accomplishments of more than just a few of the regions citizens. To that end a review of the contributions by black musicians to the region follows.

The music, songs and ballads of the Southern Mountains echo with the mournful refrain of slaves who toiled in the region and that serve as counterpoint to the Scots-Irish ballads collected by Francis Child in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>44</sup> Following the lead of Child, many collectors interested in correlating Appalachian ancestry with its English and Scots-Irish roots took to chronicling the songs of the Southern Uplands.<sup>45</sup> While many who came to the Mountain South castigated the region with appalled rhetoric rendering the area, condition, and lives of the population as "retarded," and "primitive," their agitated rhetoric did little to dispel the sense of isolation and white homogeneity that permeated throughout the region.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Francis J. Child, ed. *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (New York: Dover Publication Inc., 1965).

<sup>45</sup> In the Southern Appalachians early ballad collecting was undertaken in the mountains of eastern Kentucky from the centers of education in Lexington and Louisville. Katherine Pettit, founder of the Hindman Settlement School, worked in conjunction with George L. Kitteredge of the American Folklore Society to collect and correlate old-style love ballads she heard among the mountain women.

<sup>46</sup> Ellen Churchill Semple wrote an especially frank review of the "hard conditions," found in Kentucky in "The Anglo-Saxons of the Kentucky Mountains: A Study in Anthropogeography," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 6 (Jun., 1901), pp. 588-623. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1775213> (accessed February 22, 2016); Also see, George E. Vincent, "A Retarded Frontier," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Jul., 1898), pp. 1-2. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27618370>.

Still others who sought relief for a region that was perceived to be in the grip of poverty collected and romanticized the poetry, speech, customs, and songs of the area to substantiate claims of Anglo-Saxon ancestry.<sup>47</sup> Early in the twentieth century, Olive Dame Campbell and Cecil Sharp canvassed the Southern Mountains in search of English folk songs and ballads finding communities where as Sharp writes “The present inhabitants of the Laurel Country are the direct descendants (of those) who were emigrants from England and . . . lowland Scotland.”<sup>48</sup> While most English folk songs and ballads were sung without any instrumental accompaniment Sharp makes note of three instruments he observed in use at the time: The guitar, the fiddle, and the dulcimer.<sup>49</sup> This observation works as an early testament to the types of instruments available at the time. Another inveterate myth within Appalachia precedes the origination of the banjo with some speculating that the banjo was an “emblem of white mountain folk,” and that “a white minstrel invented the five string banjo.”<sup>50</sup>

Cecelia Conway takes issue with that erroneous assumption and seeks to correct it by writing “Behind the myth is a history that reaches far back to Africa. Blacks brought the banjo to this country from their homeland, and they were the only ones who played the instrument for many years.”<sup>51</sup> The indelible traces of the African banjo has etched into the Southern façade of the Appalachians through the songs and ballads of slaves who mourned their loss of freedom and who crafted new instruments with which to celebrate their traditions.

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<sup>47</sup> Olive Dame Campbell and Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk Song from the Southern Appalachians* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1917).

<sup>48</sup> Olive Dame Campbell and Cecil J. Sharp, “Introduction,” iv.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, x.

<sup>50</sup> John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, *Folk Song USA* (New York: Duell, Sloane, and Pearce, 1947), 78.

<sup>51</sup> Cecelia Conway, *African Banjo Echoes in Appalachia: a Study of Folk Traditions* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995), Preface xiii.

Conway documents the tradition of the African banjo in Ashe County, North Carolina and, in so doing, reveals the contested presence of slave and, free black Appalachians in the region.<sup>52</sup> As well, Conway attests to the transmission of the African banjo played by black musicians to white musicians who borrowed freely from their black peers and who adopted their traditional mountain music and ballads to accommodate the new style.<sup>53</sup> Conway writes, “From Ashe County’s earliest days then, blacks were present,” and through patterns of work in the mines, the railroads, and, through festive gatherings in the community such as Christmas, white musicians were presented with opportunities for musical exchange.<sup>54</sup> Conway continues with evidence from the record of a black musician, “All the evidence then, the early presence of slaves in this region . . . the African-American musical traditions . . . argues that mountain whites acquired their banjo traditions directly from blacks.”<sup>55</sup> Conway, a leading authority on the inception of the banjo into Southern history, asserts that the first known record of the African banjo does not appear until 1740 despite the fact that enslaved peoples from Africa were first brought to the colonies as early as the seventeen hundreds.<sup>56</sup> In addition, Conway argues that African artists were playing the fiddle and the banjo long in advance of when, one hundred years later in 1840, the first white minstrels took to using them for their travel shows.<sup>57</sup> Conway traces the often fascinating intersection of history, events, and people when she writes about the lives and adventures of men bold enough to gain their freedom and in the course of their lives come to influence the acquisition of new ideas.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Conway, “African Banjo Echoes,” 144-145.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>56</sup> Cecelia Conway, “Black Banjo Songsters in Appalachia,” *Black Music Research Journal* vol. 23 no. ½ (Spring-Autumn, 2003), pp.149-166. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3593213> (accessed February 26, 2016), 151.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

Untangling the confused skein of past events, Conway, tells of a runaway slave who by dint of personal authority undertook to rewrite his future and brought his talent with him into the uplands of the Mountain South where the musical exchange between free black men and mountain whites “intensified.”<sup>59</sup> Such is the irony of history that a free black family of musicians accomplished in the popular form of musical repertoire common to early nineteenth century are held to be the originators of the tune “*Dixie*,” much to the lament of some in the South.<sup>60</sup> More ironic and of still greater anguish to those in the South who claved to the flag of the Confederacy was that the song and its lyrics are said to have come down from the North to inspire their anthem.<sup>61</sup> That it was black musicians who taught the art of the banjo to white musicians in the Mountain South there can be little doubt despite the obduracy of historical fiction and the proliferate versions of racist minstrelsy that caricatured the black image.

The world of art and artistry take many forms and in Southern Appalachia these forms are expressed through the venue of crafts such as pottery, chair-making, woodcarving, and textiles and, as well, in is the forum of fine art. Black artisans of the Mountain South are no less influenced by the environs of the Appalachian South than artists of other ethnicity and their art reflects the theme and, source of their inspiration. Because black history in the Mountain South and in the lower South has largely been written in terms of slavery and a kidnapped labor force, much of the resulting culture to emerge from these vestiges reflects that heritage. While the whole of art and artistry expand far beyond the capacity of this review to be mentioned there is one other example of black artistry that is wholly indigenous to the South precisely because it

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<sup>59</sup> Conway, “Black Banjo Songsters,” 153.

<sup>60</sup> Howard L. Sacks, Judith Rose Sacks, *Way Up North in Dixie: A Black Family's Claim to the Confederate Anthem* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993); This book presents an excellent composite of history, old slave letters, images of life in the Old South, and the lives, travels, and music of a free black family.

<sup>61</sup> Howard L. Sacks, Judith Rose Sacks, “Way Up North in Dixie,” xi-xii.

stems out of slavery. Gladys-Marie Fry examines the role of slave women in the South and finds that women especially, suffered from “three *isms*: racism, sexism and regionalism.”<sup>62</sup> Lamenting that the contribution by enslaved black women to local economy, plantation upkeep, and family life in the South has largely been “ignored,” Fry asserts “Slave women produced fabric,” and the fact that “they quilted, sewed, and crocheted is irrefutable.”<sup>63</sup> Fry, in what amounts to a validation of purpose for this study, argues that “To date no formal study has been undertaken to determine . . . the influence of African culture on African American quilting styles.

Thus, for too long slave women have been denied “recognition or acknowledgement—or even a history.”<sup>64</sup> Indeed, uncovering those connections and contributions by black women to Southern culture overall and to Mountain culture in particular, defines the purpose of this inquiry and an expose of the talent and skill of black seamstresses in the Plantation South epitomizes that quest and, in the process, revises the historical record. Social historian Steven Hahn describes the conditions under which slave families contended and the small incremental steps taken to procure status and rights within the prevailing system of slavery and human degradation. In an effort to thwart the debilitating effects of enforced servitude slaves sought to continue with the traditions of family and kinship brought with them from the west coast of Africa<sup>65</sup> Hahn writes “As in the West African societies from which they originally came . . . kinship relations composed the social and political foundation of the slave’s world.”<sup>66</sup> Kinship and networks of extended kin through marriage was one of the main institutions that slaves used to resist

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<sup>62</sup> Gladys-Marie Fry, Preface, *Stitched from the Soul: Slave Quilts form the Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 1.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Gladys-Marie Fry, “Stitched from the Soul,” 1.

<sup>65</sup> Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 17.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

fragmentation and achieve stability.<sup>67</sup> The propagation of familial networks of kin became central to the foundation and maintenance of black political resistance to slavery and would lead to the endogenous acquisition of empowerment. Continuing with the rhetoric of resistance, Fry argues that “Quilting also provided an outlet for slaves—a means of developing hidden talents and establishing a kind of emotional stability and independence.”<sup>68</sup> For slave women quilting also offered a means to assert their individuality as human beings and as artisans, as well as, a means with which to establish a heritage of connection within their families.

Quilts embody a lasting legacy of family, memory, and revelation as succeeding generations perceive the encrypted record of resistance and defiance left behind by slave seamstresses. Fry, in her analysis of the “historical omission of written material,” in regard to quilting by slave women, concurs with Egerton when she writes “As women’s work, quilting would also have been considered unimportant,” the *isms* in regard to women in the Antebellum South resurface in response to white patriarchal privilege.<sup>69</sup> For black women in the South quilting was more than an “outlet for emotion,” it was an opportunity for expression, for the style of artistic genius that typified the advanced art of West Africa and the foreign shores of exotic communities where art, as James Newton writes, was both “functional and utilitarian.”<sup>70</sup> Indeed, Fry has pictorial documentation of the beautiful, handmade quilts produced by slave seamstresses to whom little to none credit has been issued owing in part to the suppression of recognition that was inherent within the South. Author Floris Bennett Cash confirms this in her examination of slave women as quilters to write:

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<sup>67</sup> Hahn, “A Nation Under Our Feet,”

<sup>68</sup> Fry, “Stitched from the Soul,” 1.

<sup>69</sup> Fry, “Stitched from the Soul,” 4.

<sup>70</sup> James E. Newton, “Slave Artisans and Craftsmen: The Roots of Afro-American Art,” *The Black Scholar*, Vol. 9, No. 3, Plastic Arts and Crafts (November 1977), pp. 35-42. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41067827> (accessed March 1, 2016).



Quilts can be used as resources in reconstructing the experiences of African American women. They provide a record of their cultural and political past. They are important art forms. Yet, until recently, the historical contributions of African-American women to the craft were virtually dismissed.<sup>71</sup>

Again, Cash reiterates the observations of other scholars in black studies in regard to black culture to argue that culture in the creative sense refers to many forms including the art of quilting and notes, as does Fry, that quilts reveal the “silenced voices of black women.”<sup>72</sup>

Importantly, Cash recognizes other qualities in the sewing of quilts; that of kinship, connection, and the stabilization of family.<sup>73</sup> Within the slave communities of the South kinship functioned to protect and mitigate against the indignities of inhuman servitude and, in addition, to foster the bonds of mutual assistance.<sup>74</sup> Quilts, as an indigenous art forms born out of the plantation economy of the South, survive as testament to the skill and handicraft of black seamstresses who imbued their art with grace and stitched into their work the indelible imprint of their presence and, pride.

### The African Methodist Church

Distinctive within the Lower South and in the Upland Mountains of Southern Appalachia are the religious permutations that accompany the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME). Founded in Pennsylvania in 1794 by Richard Allen who was consecrated as its first Bishop in 1816. The church served as a place of respite for black Americans who could worship together without oppression and with a measure of dignity. Allen, who has been hailed as one of the most influential black leaders in American history and as “One of the most talented people of his

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<sup>71</sup> Floris Bennett Cash, “Kinship and Quilting: An Examination of an African-American Tradition,” *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 80, No. 1 (winter, 1995), pp. 30-41. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2717705> (accessed March 1, 2016).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>73</sup> Floris Bennett Cash, “Kinship and Quilting,” 31.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

generation,” sought to establish a reformed society of free black worship.<sup>75</sup> The official website of the AME church declares that:

The church was unique in that it is the first major religious denomination in the Western World that had its origin over sociological and theological beliefs and differences. It rejected the negative theological interpretations which rendered persons of African descent second class citizens. There was a theological declaration that God is God all the time and for everybody. The church was born in protest against slavery and against dehumanization of African people brought to the American continent as labor.<sup>76</sup>

Author and historian Richard Newman writes that today the AME carries a worldwide membership of over two million people and that the “courage and compassion of her founder, Bishop Richard Allen, (has) set a tone for succeeding generations.”<sup>77</sup> Newman, in his description of Allen, declares that “His was truly a theology of inclusiveness,” and one that sought to bridge the delicate distance between white and black Americans.<sup>78</sup> The theology of Bishop Allen is not what sets the AME apart from other Christian denominations within the South, rather, it is the historical constitution of the church as a common ground of strength and solidarity within the black community. The moral and ethical construction of the AME stands as a cultural artifact caught within the slipstream of American history and posits prominently within Civil Rights.

In 1924 William Henry Heard became the thirty-fifth Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and wrote in his introductory statement to his autobiography that “The AME Church is an instrument in this country that has done, and is doing more for the uplift of the Race than any instrument conditioned as it is.”<sup>79</sup> In 1922, Rector George Bragg wrote of the early motivation and founding principles of the AME indicating that “The initial effort was in the

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<sup>75</sup> Richard S. Newman, *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), Introduction, 1.

<sup>76</sup> *African Methodist Episcopal Church*, Official Website, Administered by the General Secretary/Chief Information Officer, Dr. Jeffery Cooper. <http://ame-church.com/> (accessed March 1, 2016).

<sup>77</sup> Newman, “Freedom’s Prophet,” 2.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>79</sup> William H. Heard, *From Slavery to the Bishopric* (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969).

direction of a benevolent and moral reform association.”<sup>80</sup> From its earliest inception as an egalitarian place of worship the AME church has figured prominently in the African-American struggle for equality charting a course through history that placed the church in the crosshairs of political dissention. The church serves not only as a religious institution, but as a place of public opinion and community cohesion. AME minister and author Albert Miller writes that “African Americans developed a civil society made up of religious, educational, and social institutions,” that serve as “vehicles,” of cultural promotion.<sup>81</sup> As well writes Miller, “Civil society does more: it provides a space for the development of communal moral values.”<sup>82</sup> As a political entity, the AME church fosters the space within which “civil society,” can function to develop strategies that mediate hegemonic forces of oppression and as Miller argues, “For individuals and groups to build unity.”<sup>83</sup> Institutions such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church are used, states Miller, as “buffers from white society and as tools of liberation,” but more than anything else writes Miller the church provides the space for black Americans to develop their own personal and collective identity within white society.<sup>84</sup> Although only the African Methodist Episcopal Church has been mentioned there are actually seven denominations of black churches: The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.; The National Baptist Convention of America, The Progressive National Baptist Convention, and the Church of God in Christ.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> George F. Bragg, D.D., *History of the Afro-American Group of the Episcopal Church* (Baltimore: Church Advocate Press, 1922), 55.

<sup>81</sup> Albert G. Miller, Introduction, *Elevating the Race: Theophilus G. Steward, Black Theology, and the making of an African American Civil Society, 1865-1924* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003), xvi.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, xviii.

<sup>85</sup> Anthony B. Pinn, *The Black Church in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), xii-xiii.

While all the churches mentioned are black and Christian, they are far from being homogenous and according to religious studies professor and author Anthony Pinn, these churches represent “a full range of socioeconomic groups.”<sup>86</sup> These same churches, writes Pinn, provide a guiding theological influence to upward of 80 percent of black Americans and “Informs their outlook on socioeconomic, cultural, and political realities.”<sup>87</sup> Moreover, argues Pinn, “They constitute a major impetus for praxis extending beyond the church walls.”<sup>88</sup>

Writer, historian, and theologian Gayraud S. Wilmore remarks that black religion:

Has been equally concerned with the yearning of a despised and subjugated people for freedom—freedom from the religious, economic, social, and political domination that whites have exercised over blacks since the beginning of the African slave trade. It is this radical thrust of blacks for human liberation expressed in theological terms and religious institutions that is the defining characteristic of black Christianity and black religion in the United States.<sup>89</sup>

It becomes exceedingly important for lay people and scholars alike to recognize that the institution of the Black Church and the influence of the black theological message is at one and the same religious and political. In the past as in the present, the centrality of the Black Church revolves around its ability to serve both as a gathering place for worship and as an independent and, indigenous collective of the black community. As such, the church has been integral in the movement of people demanding equality, justice, and Civil Rights. In the few examples outlined briefly above on the cultural contributions made by black Americans to Southern culture I have endeavored to show the ways in which black culture has intermingled with and influenced white culture in the South. That much more remains to be said goes without question, however, it exceeds the reach of this study for a more comprehensive review.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism* (Garden City: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1973),

The previous review had two objectives—one was to remove the lingering misapprehension of a wholly white society in Southern Appalachia overall and the other was to alleviate the notion that diversity, and subsequently the culture that stems from diversity, was unknown in the mountainous regions of the Upland South. The foregoing discussion on the AME church was included to show the importance, authority, and influence welded by the church in the black community. In addition, the AME church played a central role in the establishment of women's social clubs as centers of religious and charitable outreach.

### Goals

In undertaking this study the primary goal has been to document the many positive ways in which black Appalachian women contribute to their communities in Northeast Tennessee through their civic activism, volunteerism, environmental consciousness, conservation efforts, social clubs, church outreach programs, and charitable work. The impetus behind this effort hopes to correct the historical record that has been exclusive to black women and to document their traditions for the benefit of future studies and generations of Appalachians. A second goal looks to correct the fiction of a region so wholly lacking in diversity that all the previous contributions made by black Americans to Southern culture remain unknown. A third goal will be to open the door to future study by other scholar's on the many forms, images, and expressions of cultural diversity found within the region. And, last, but not least, to draw attention to the undocumented, unrecorded, and unheralded accomplishments of women in a region where "women's work," has not been held in high regard nor given the credit such work was due as integral to the family, economic production, and childrearing. In the Upland South women, black and white, have been and continue to be the point of cohesion within the family.

## Methodology

Social theories on black family life in the United States abound to offer conflicting accounts of the structure, complexity, and composition of the black family. Beginning with Edward Franklin Frazier's publication in 1951 of *The Negro Family in the United States* sociologists have debated many of his assertions on the matriarchal structure of black families and instead proffer theories of phenomenology (Willie, 1993), exchange, cost and benefit, (Staples 1985), and disorganization (Daniel Patrick Moynihan).

Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote the now infamous treatise on black families in America to posit that "The Negro family in the urban ghetto is crumbling," and disorganized.<sup>90</sup> Sociologist Charles Willie details numerous criteria in his assessment of black family life that leads him to conclude that black families in the states adhere to an equalitarian model in which both parents share equal authority within the family.<sup>91</sup> In this Willie concurs with Robert Hill, *Director of the National Urban League* who in 1971 wrote "Although the literature is replete with references to a "matriarchal tradition," among black families, most empirical data suggest that an equalitarian pattern is characteristic of most black families."<sup>92</sup>

There are multiple problems that arise from nearly all of the theories posited to date in that they fail to take into account that family structures change over time in response to location, environment, economic conditions, new social arrangements, and ideological conceptions. The organization of the black family in the United States does not pose an exception to prevailing

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<sup>90</sup> Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action (1965)," *African American Male Research* (June 1997). [http://www.utexas.edu/cola/coretexts/\\_files/resources/texts/1965%20Moynihan%20Report.pdf](http://www.utexas.edu/cola/coretexts/_files/resources/texts/1965%20Moynihan%20Report.pdf) (accessed March 3, 2016).

<sup>91</sup> Charles V. Willie, "Social Theory and Social Policy Derived from the Black Family Experience," *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (Jun., 1993), pp. 451-459. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2784379> (accessed March 3, 2016).

<sup>92</sup> Robert B. Hill, *The Strengths of Black Families* (New York: Emerson Hall Publishers, Inc., 1971), 18.

theories of social latitude wherein rigid conformity to traditional understandings of family are transfigured. Where Frazier depends heavily on theories of matriarchal control that stem from an era of slavery when many families were forcibly relocated away from one another and women were left to fend for themselves and their children, more recent scholarship on the parental structure of the black family suggests that women employ a calculated cost verses benefit formula to choose a husband.<sup>93</sup>

A choice by women that implies an expectation of negotiation and concession as well as a sharing of responsibility for decisions. Much as the region of Southern Appalachia has been stereotyped and diminished to confining role models that confirm fictive explanations of “strangeness,” so the conceptual apparatus that has been used in the past to define the “problem,” with black families has to a large extent been skewed. Social analyst Robert Taylor take a hard look at the way in which black families have been characterized and at the categories of social problems to which they have been linked and by which they have been identified i.e. single-parent households, welfare dependency, and disorganization.<sup>94</sup> Taylor argues that the black family is often viewed from within a perspective of “social problems,” however, as Taylor points out such a focus has the undermining effect of drawing attention away from “consideration of the important substantive issues,” that confront them.<sup>95</sup> While much of the blame for the social ill of urban poverty has been attributed to a “lack of appropriate values with respect to the family and work,” the need to shift the perspective to assess underlying structural problems such as “a lack of jobs, viable workplace skills, and the restructuring of the labor market,” have not received as

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<sup>93</sup> Robert Staples, “Changes in Black Family Structure: The Conflict between Family Ideology and Structural Conditions,” *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Nov., 1985), pp. 1005-1013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/352344> (accessed March 3, 2016).

<sup>94</sup> Robert Joseph Taylor, Linda M. Chatters, and James S. Jackson, ed. Introduction *Family Life in Black America* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997), 1.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

much attention.<sup>96</sup> What does all this mean when attempting to define the average black family or locate a social theory from within which to analyze data? It means that similar to the erroneous fiction of white homogeneity in Appalachia so, too, are fictive accounts of homogeneity among black families. One of the many critiques to surface in response to social theories that employ traditional patterns of white familial structure such as the one used by Moynihan are that they attempt to transpose the white paternalistic family model onto the asymmetrical black family.

Willie, in a critique of Moynihan, takes note of an ethnocentric tendency in white sociologists when they attempt to review black families with the use of white models indicating that “It would be disadvantages for Blacks who experience situations and circumstances of life that differ from those of Whites to imitate . . . their adaptive responses.”<sup>97</sup> Taylor concurs with that assessment writing that subsequent to Moynihan’s report many articles were published that “critiqued the reification of a particular ideal of what constitutes a family.”<sup>98</sup> Taylor makes one other very important observation of black family life, “Given important differences in the social location and circumstances of black Americans and their income, education, region, and urbanicity, there exist a multiplicity of ways in which black families define and organize themselves.”<sup>99</sup> By adapting an approach that recognizes the historical experience of black Americans as well as the changing contemporary context within which black families find themselves it then becomes possible to shift to a perspective that views the black family as conforming to the dictates of circumstance and change and removes the burden of being part of a social problem. Significantly, Taylor notes an extensive system of support networks within the

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Willie, “Social Theory,” 453.

<sup>98</sup> Taylor, Chatters, and Jackson, “Changes Over Time in Support Network Involvement Among Black Americans,” in *Family Life in Black America* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997), 295.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.



family, church, and neighborhood that organize daily life and which provide opportunities, advice, childcare, transportation, and companionship among black families.<sup>100</sup> There is an interesting corollary here, in reference to networks of support for black families, many white families too, make use of reciprocal networks of exchange and barter as a hedge against poverty in the Upland South. Social theory on black family life has undergone significant revision since 1950 when black families were perceived as creating the social conditions that engrossed them.

In the early 1950s black families were held responsible for the disorganized and dysfunctional operation of the family unit that was maintained through intergenerational transmission. Sociologist Vonnie McLoyd stipulates to the dualistic framework that simultaneously proclaimed black families to be at once the progenitors and the products of problematic social conditions.<sup>101</sup> During this time an essay by writer- historian Oscar Lewis on the *Culture of Poverty* became inextricably mixed into the prevailing attitudes on the social ills that beset marginalized minorities such as black families. Lewis identified an array of psychological behaviors that became characteristic of self-perpetuating poverty and pathology.<sup>102</sup> Walter Allen, in 1978 published research that built on the cultural perspective to catalog three levels of cultural identification and application: The *Cultural-Deviant* approach that tended to view black families as deviant from the qualities that characterized white families, the *Culture-Variant* perspective that saw black families as the product of their environment, and the *Cultural-Equivalent* view that deemphasized difference and accentuated those qualities held in common among black and white families.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Taylor, Chatters, and Jackson, "Changes Over Time," 293.

<sup>101</sup> Vonnie C. McLoyd, Nancy E. Hill, and Kenneth A. Dodge, ed. Introduction, in *Ecological and Cultural Diversity in African American Life*, (New York: The Guilford Press, 2005), 10.

<sup>102</sup> Oscar Lewis, "The Possessions of the Poor," *Scientific American* (October 1969), vol.221 no.4 114-24.

<sup>103</sup> W.R. Allen, "The Search for Applicable theories of Black Family Life," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol.40 no. 1 (1978), 117-129. <http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/1979-08289-001> (accessed March 4, 2016).

Relief from social theories that touted the constrictive role of culture did not occur until 1986 when Urie Bronfenbrenner published his understanding of the greater role of family and of the extenuating social environment around the family in the formation, structure, and success of the family.<sup>104</sup> The foregoing discussion on social theory was a brief overview of the extant theological perspectives past and present that have been brought to bear on contextualizing black family life. For the purpose of this study I have decided to use an unbiased ethnographic approach and employ a phenomenological perspective. The decision to use phenomenology as an analytical sieve through which to strain results is based on the philosophical tenets of the discipline that employ a holistic integration of social reality. In other words, many factors are taken into account in formulating an opinion of the data such as the entire system of projects, motives, and constructs that surround and defer to the subjective view of the individual. In so doing it is hoped that added emphasis will be given to the worldview of the respondent who chooses to take part in this study.

Originally developed by Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl (1859-1938) as a discipline that sought to build a foundational science based upon phenomenological reduction, that is the reduction of experience down to its most basic constituents, it was later adapted by Alfred Schütz (1899-1959) an Austrian social scientist. Schutz sought to ground the social reality of subjective experience in the everyday, mundane interaction between the individual and her/his environment, reciprocal relationships, and perceived understanding of circumstance that is the subjective interpretation of experience.

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<sup>104</sup> Urie Bronfenbrenner, "Ecology of the Family as a Context for Human Development: Research Perspectives," *Developmental Psychology* vol. 22 no. 6 (1986), 723-742. <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=edd2e17b-b8ae-4d08-bb11-56497e9bb4a7%40sessionmgr4005&hid=4204> (accessed March 4, 2016).

In what may be the most basic prescription to the understanding of analysis and by far the closest one can come to refraining from interjecting one's own subjectivity into experience,

Schutz writes:

Here, we are not referring to differences between the personal standpoints from which different people look at the world, but to the fundamental difference between my interpretation of my own subjective experiences . . . and my interpretation of the subjective experience of someone else.<sup>105</sup>

The objective of this approach is an attempt to distinguish between the subjective and the narrated experience. It is the cognitive apprehension of the social world by an individual and the experience of events and of how these are apprehended to make meaning for an individual. To further clarify the phenomenological approach to analysis the encyclopedia of literature lists it:

The primary objective of phenomenology was to take a fresh approach to concretely experienced phenomena through the direct investigation of the data of consciousness--without theories about their causal explanation and as free as possible from unexamined presuppositions--and to attempt to describe them as faithfully as possible. Adherents argued that, by carefully exploring examples, it was possible to fathom the essential structures and relationships of phenomena.<sup>106</sup>

Sociologist Mark Bevan employs the phenomenological perspective for use in qualitative interviews and writes, "A phenomenological researcher is interested in describing a person's experience in the way he or she experiences it, and not from some theoretical standpoint."<sup>107</sup> Bevan acknowledges the intersubjectivity of experience to recognize that individuals perceive things from their own particular understanding of life and events and apply to that understanding their own subjective interpretation of that experience. It is through their reflection of that experience that meaning is derived and through their verbalization that others gain access to it.

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<sup>105</sup> Alfred Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the social World*, translated by George Walsh and Frederick Lehnert, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967), 8.

<sup>106</sup> Merriam Webster's *Encyclopedia of Literature online* s.v. "Phenomenological Criticism," [http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE|A148922208&v=2.1&u=tel\\_a\\_etsul&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&authCount=1](http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE|A148922208&v=2.1&u=tel_a_etsul&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&authCount=1) (accessed October 28, 2016).

<sup>107</sup> Mark T. Bevan, "A method of Phenomenological Interviewing," *Qualitative Health Research*, vol. 24 no. 1 (2014): 136-144, <http://qhr.sagepub.com/content/24/1/136.full.pdf+html> (accessed October 28, 2016).

## CHAPTER 2

### BLACK APPALACHIAN WOMEN AND SOCIAL ACTION

Social activism among black women has been recorded as earlier as 1830 when in cities such as Philadelphia and New York free black American women established mutual aid societies that distributed food, clothing, and arranged shelter as part of an organized effort to provide services to others in the black community.<sup>1</sup> The earliest of these efforts by black women was seen as an outgrowth of charitable aid through the church and sought to alleviate economic conditions and improve the self-esteem of black Americans where minimal services existed.<sup>2</sup> According to Floris Barnett Cash, by 1830 there was in excess of thirty mutual aid societies founded by women to provide relief to the free black population.<sup>3</sup>

Organizations such as these were formed through the fellowship of the church and attempted to accomplish a number of goals among these was to: reform racist stereotypes of black women as servile or salacious, challenge the idea that black Americans could not acculturate into white society, and to establish a foundation for autonomous black organizations within which black women were prominent.<sup>4</sup> Through the work of these benevolent societies a precedent was set that established and enabled women as agents of change and ensured their recognition as leaders in the community. Cash comments that “They contributed to a developing sisterhood and to a consciousness of the social reforms that became the aim of black women’s clubs.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Floris Barnett Cash, *African American Women and Social Action: The Clubwomen and Volunteerism from Jim Crow to the New Deal, 1896-1936* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

Hence, the benevolent aim of such clubs and church groups focused primarily on the provision of assistance to the poor, gathering school clothes for children, and the extension of small monetary donations to the sick who were unable to work. It is necessary to note here that the formation of mutual aid societies and charitable organizations by middle-class and well-to-do free black women took place north of the Mason-Dixon line prior to the outbreak of hostilities between the states and in the aftermath of the Civil War the task of providing social services to the increased number of arrivals from the South was shared by Congress. By 1865 Congress had established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands in an effort to provide relief to countless men and women who sought escape from the shattered remnants of the South.<sup>6</sup> Even so, Cash argues that “After the Freedmen’s Bureau and northern aid societies closed their facilities in the South, African Americans were left to their own resources.”<sup>7</sup> The institutional and economic Reconstruction of the South, however, did little to address the hoard of homeless and orphaned children left in the wake of the war and it was left to the resurgent efforts of those whom Cash describes as “black evangelical women,” to address the necessities of life for the resettled refugees.<sup>8</sup> Following the breach of hostilities among the states a period of reunification ensued that ushered in an era of progressive goals and values among which were the ethics of social uplift, temperance, and women’s rights issues. Chief among these new notions of progressive morality were ideals of a unified nation founded within a concept of evangelical Christianity. Implicit within that identity of evangelical doctrine the *Cult of True Womanhood* held to the cherished virtues of “piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ira C. Colby, “The Freedmen’s Bureau; From Social Welfare to Segregation,” *Phylon* (1960) Vol. 46 No. 3 pp. 219-230 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/274830> (accessed March 8, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Cash, “social action,” 20.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Part 1 (summer, 1966), pp. 151-174.

According to Cash, it was that “reverence for domesticity,” that inspired women, black and white, to effect the goals of evangelical reform in the “uplift,” of those less fortunate and the establishment of schools, hospitals, and orphanages.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the historical foundation that underlies the establishment of social services for the black community has its roots in the religious convictions and leadership of black evangelical women who through strength of will, well-intentioned purpose, and community activism initiated programs of moral reform, education, and charity that set precedents for future work. In favor of that view Cash argues “The clubwomen promoted themselves as civilizing agents bringing culture to black communities.”<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to Cash, however, historian Lawrence Levine asserts “If emancipation opened up unprecedented opportunities for acculturation and accommodation, the freedmen did not exploit them either uniformly or immediately.”<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Levine argues instead that in the postbellum atmosphere of the South a retreat or retraction of black life away from white institutions of culture and power resulted in “an intensification of black separatism.”<sup>13</sup> Counterintuitively, Levine asserts that “for both economic and social reasons large numbers (of freedmen) moved further South into areas already heavily black.”<sup>14</sup> Emancipation and cultural marginality were as Levine states “parallel events,” and in the aftermath of an attritional war many black Americans withdrew into cultural institutions “filled almost exclusively with members of their own race.”<sup>15</sup>

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<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2711179> (accessed March 8, 2016).

<sup>10</sup> Cash, “social action,” 23.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 140.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 139-140.

Yet, as the barrier of separatism between the institutions of black and white culture became increasingly permeable so, then too, did the values and perceptions of the larger society seep into the cultural mores of the black population. Christian evangelical religion became one of the main channels of communication and redress and acted to reunify the separate spheres of black and white culture within the broader principle of a Christian theology that lent itself in a progressive era to the reification of unity.

#### American Baptist Home Missionary Society

In the nineteenth century, the resurgence of religion, especially evangelism, proved to be the guiding force in almost every aspect of life in a nation that increasingly identified within a Christian collective. The cessation of hostilities between the states opened up new opportunities for the exportation of Christian ideals to populations eager for exposure to the tenets of an evangelical theology. In May of 1863 delegates and officials of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society (ABHMS) convened in Cleveland, Ohio to discuss the decline of their influence and subsequent to that, the decline of revenue and resources for home missions.<sup>16</sup> Author Derek Chang writes “Resources for home missions had diminished considerably since the outbreak of hostilities, and Baptist labors declined precipitously.”<sup>17</sup> The motto of the society was “North America for Christ,” and it gave impetus to the quest for conversion beyond the confines of the North an imperative direction for future work.<sup>18</sup> The goal of conversion, spiritual and social, was seen by the ABHMS as the fundamental objective of their work and as Chang observes the turmoil of war created conditions and opportunities for missionary endeavor in

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<sup>16</sup> Derek Chang, *Citizens of a Christian Nation: Evangelical Missions and the Problem of Race in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 15. Ebook, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fhd9t.4> (accessed March 10, 2016).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

areas previously outside the bounds of the society.<sup>19</sup> The societies recording Secretary E.T. Hiscox espoused optimism that the “evangelical enterprise was encouraging,” despite recent reversals and opined that “opportunities for successful labor were never before as great.”<sup>20</sup> With the end of the Civil War in 1865 those “opportunities,” soon manifested in the form of home missionary activity to black populations in the Plantation South and in the Upper South of the Appalachian Mountains. Moreover, ABHMS proselytized an evangelism that transformed the social and religious ethics of a nation. Tellingly, Chang notes the manifest destiny of a Christian nation to “fulfill the promise of Americas Christian destiny turned specifically on the conversion of racialized populations.”<sup>21</sup> The importance of the religious transformation that swept through the nation in the postbellum period and, equally the conviction carried by many converts that the national position to promote Protestant Christianity was indeed America’s manifest destiny, came to denote public policy. In the fervor of religious zeal that gripped the nation the idea of a manifest destiny seemed to invoke divine right for expansionist objectives beyond the boundaries of colonial confinement and elevated a Calvinist doctrine for a chosen people. The self-conferred ordination of moral and social superiority by the Christian majority of evangelical Protestants expressed itself through the renewed efforts of the ABHMS to instill those values widely regarded as reformed, evangelical, and progressive. Author Jane Sloan indicates that manifest destiny also “incorporated notions of racial, religious, and cultural superiority,” that many white Americans sought to impose upon the newly emancipated slaves through the auspices of the American Baptist Home Missions.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Chang, “Citizens of a Christian Nation,” 16.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>22</sup> Jane Sloan and Carlos E. Cortes, *Multicultural America: A Multimedia Encyclopedia* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2013), 1400. EBook, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com> (accessed March 10, 2016).



Thus, the context of precursors that was brought to bear upon the black minority population reveals the extent of evangelical influence on emancipated men and women who sought relief from the oppression of slavery. Scholar L. Henry Welchel Jr. describes the early black church as a place of inclusion that “served the needs of the people,” and one that “started out as an “invisible institution.”<sup>23</sup> Welchel, makes it clear that the early church stood without official sanction or recognition from white mainstream Protestantism and notes, “The uniqueness of the Black Church is found in the way enslaved Africans took the hybrid Christianity . . . and made it relevant and meaningful to their needs.”<sup>24</sup> In the introduction to his work, Welchel reiterates many of the themes sounded earlier in this study:

Meaning and value are always contingent upon context. Thus, understanding the history and heritage of African American churches requires an appreciation of the historical and cultural context out of which the churches developed. African Americans did not suddenly appear *ex nihilo* in the seventeenth century, and they did not emerge as mere spiritual and cultural destitutes.<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, the evangelical theology emerging in Protestant teachings espoused a new beginning that offered freed slaves the holistic synergy of physical release from bondage and the promise of a spiritual rebirth reminiscent of their deeply rooted African heritage and one in which many emancipated individuals took comfort in.<sup>26</sup> The configuration of the early black church historically links to their use as schools for children and in their provision for many adults to become literate.<sup>27</sup> From the beginning then, the church was seen as a way to gain education, self-esteem, and liberation from the effects of slavery and provided, as Welchel writes, “A world of ideas and possibilities.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> L.H. Welchel, *The History and Heritage of African American Churches* (St. Paul: Paragon House, 2011).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, xix.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

The organization of the black church under the guidance of men such as Bishop Richard Allen resulted in it becoming a refuge for black constituents weary of rejection by white evangelicals. Yet, the role of women within the church was and remains circumscribed by convention and religious dictates that according to author Catherine Prelinger underscore the “patriarchal underpinnings,” that reflect the wider world of women in Western society.<sup>29</sup>

### The Personal is Political: The Rise of Black Feminism

Despite the many political and charitable organizations drafted by black women in the church the attitude of ecclesiastical polity toward women in roles of leadership remains elusive and reserved for men. While many evangelical women find the attitude frustrating they tend to accept the authority of biblical scripture that decrees “women may not lead men,”<sup>30</sup> It is an attitude that leaves many black activist women to wonder why women remain in an institution that curtails their leadership and silences their voices.<sup>31</sup> Author Marla Frederick comments that “Women’s ministerial leadership is often undervalued, and more often than not women are absent from powerful decision making bodies in the church, like the deacon and trustee boards.”<sup>32</sup> Again, black women have been marginalized within a Euro-American patriarchal system of governance that refuses to recognize the equality of women’s work and patronizes them to the sidelines. Frederick notes that the exclusion of women from matters of business and finance within the church adds to the inequitable distribution of power and relegates women, once again, to the margins.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Rima Lunin Schultz, “Women’s Work and Women’s Calling in the Episcopal Church: Chicago 1880-1989,” Catherine M. Prelinger, ed. In *Episcopal Women: Gender, Spirituality, and Commitment in an American Mainline Denomination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 20. EBook, ebscohost.com (Accessed March 14, 2016).

<sup>30</sup> Whelchel, “African American Churches,” 121.

<sup>31</sup> Marla Faye Frederick, *Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 3. EBook, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com> (accessed March 10, 2016).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

In her analysis, Frederick leaves little doubt about the ways in which women participate in the church and goes so far as to allege that without women there would be no ‘church,’ in the sense that it exists today.<sup>34</sup> Historically, the organizational hierarchy of the evangelical church in America adheres to a literal interpretation of biblical scripture that asserts women should remain silent as in this passage from 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 NIV:

As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.<sup>35</sup>

And this from 1 Timothy 2:11-12, “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.”<sup>36</sup> Women, despite the scriptural restriction on their role within the church, tend to persevere and remain active in ways that are profoundly charitable and useful. As Frederick comments “In spite of the problems within the church women . . . remain members, they worship, teach Sunday school (and) give their tithe, form community outreach, and, in a large sense undergird the entire operation of the church.”<sup>37</sup> Author Daphne Wiggins concurs with that assessment to write “Whether in their role as soloists, ushers, nurses, church-mothers, Sunday school teachers, missionaries, pastor’s aids, deaconesses, stewardesses, or prayer warriors, women are at the core of the black church.”<sup>38</sup> Wiggins adds that there is an “ethical dimension,” to the expression of faith by black churchwomen that has been observed in churches where the majority of churchwomen are white that influences their actions in regard to family and community.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Marla Faye Frederick, “Between Sundays,” 3.

<sup>35</sup> 1 Cor. 14:33-35.

<sup>36</sup> 1 Tim. 2:11-12.

<sup>37</sup> Frederick, “Between Sundays,” 4.

<sup>38</sup> Daphne C. Wiggins, *Righteous Content: Black Women's Perspectives of Church and Faith* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 2.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

For black American women in the middle-to-late nineteenth century the church served to reify the rise of the black community as a force for social betterment and provided the foundation upon which social programs of uplift were established in accord with progressive ideals of reform. As an extension of those early efforts black women have been integral in building social networks and communities of solidarity within the matrix of the black community that speak to an inherent consciousness of race, gender, and class.<sup>40</sup> While many of the organizations and clubs middle-class black women attended and supported were charitable in nature there were also those organizations that were distinctly political and through which black women formed a core of resistance to the increased number of lynching's that were occurring in the country.<sup>41</sup>

It may be noted as well that the political action taken by black clubwomen incorporated resistance to racialized images of black female promiscuity popularized by proponents of social Darwinism.<sup>42</sup> In the latter half of the nineteenth century it became evident to black clubwomen that the need to form a national organization in which their best interests would be promoted had become a necessity in order to pursue their personal and political aspirations. Cynthia Nerverdon-Morton recognizes the building momentum behind this objective when she acknowledges that black clubwomen were met with rejection by their white counterparts who held leadership positions in similar organizations with parallel aims to relieve economic, social, and political inequality.<sup>43</sup> In 1892 incorporation of the National Colored Women's League (NCWL) became a reality with proposed objectives that included: racial and social justice, educational and industrial improvement, and promotion of Colored Women and their interests.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Cash, "Social Action," 30.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>43</sup> Cynthia Nerverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925*. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 191.

<sup>44</sup> Cynthia Nerverdon-Morton, "Afro-American Women of the South," 191.

Black clubwomen, faced with personal and political disfranchisement in an increasingly hostile cultural, domestic, and industrial environment, chose to unite in their efforts to obtain a measure of the affirmation that had been accorded to similar groups of white women. The organizational efforts of the League were so successful that in 1894 the National Council of Women (NCW) invited the NCWL to join their ranks. Originally formed in 1888 the NCW was headed by suffragist Frances Elizabeth Caroline Willard who, along with women's rights advocate Susan Brownell Anthony, fought for the political recognition of women and the right to vote. The formidable conjoining of the NCW and the NCWL in 1901 ushered in a new era in the historiography of women and determined the discourse of feminist rhetoric well into the twentieth century that sought the recognition of all women regardless of race. The political activism undertaken by black women in the twentieth century can be located in the precedent setting politics of women such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett who in 1884 defied official sanction of segregation and refused to give up her seat in the ladies coach of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. According to historians Darlene Clark Hines and Kathleen Thompson, Wells-Barnett was forcibly removed and "in response, she sued the railroad and was awarded \$500," making Wells-Barnett the first black woman to initiate a legal challenge to the Supreme Court's nullification of the 1875 Civil Rights Bill.<sup>45</sup> The 1875 legislation was enacted during Reconstruction and was intended to prohibit exclusion of African Americans from public accommodations and facilities; subsequently however, sections of the law were held to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court and were reversed.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Darlene Clark Hines and Kathleen Thompson, *A Shining Thread of Hope: The History of Black Women in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1998), 194.

<sup>46</sup> James M. McPherson, "Abolitionists and the Civil Rights Act of 1875," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Dec., 1965), pp. 493-510. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1890844> (Accessed March 14, 2016).

Rosa Parks in 1955 chose to emulate the historic challenge to the primacy of white segregation and refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama city bus casting her into the national spotlight and, while not the first of civil rights protesters to do so, Parks became a symbol for the black community of civil disobedience and, political resistance. The action taken by Parks and other black women who organized within the church for political action contributed in large part to the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Although lightly traversed in the preceding discourse there is a long and extensive history of political activism by black women who have strove in ways subtle and overt to challenge the status quo of race relations in the United States. Patricia Hill Collins concisely summarizes the problem for many black women, and men, when she comments that “Maintaining the invisibility of Black women and our ideas is critical in structuring patterned relations of race, gender, and class inequality that pervade the entire social structure.”<sup>47</sup> Collins points out that the very discourse on race and inequality or the “dialectical relationship,” as she refers to it, is located within an extent political context that challenges its conceptual origins.<sup>48</sup> It is here that the core of the problem exists and manifests as a parallel schism between white and black feminists precisely because the historical experience for black women of invisibility, oppression, and violence have never been the issues for white women. Until recently, women’s studies focused on the plight and condition of white middle-class women who formed the visible majority of society despite the scholarship of black women equally distressed for reasons white society denied. Historically, black women have faced discrimination from within their rank as male colleagues assign them the front line in a confrontation, but reserve the spotlight for themselves.

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<sup>47</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 5.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

Historian Sara Evans notes the double standard employed against women in her analysis of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1964. Evans relates the internal politics of the organization faltered in securing positions of authority for women and instead reverted to tactics of “condescension and paternalism.” As well, Evans cites “evidence of sexual discrimination.”<sup>49</sup> Yet, here again, Evans reiterates an important truth in the parallel rhetoric of black and white feminist discourse on the politics of sexual discrimination commenting “For a moment black and white women had shared a feminist response . . . but objectively black and white women lacked the trust and (more importantly) solidarity to call each other sister.”<sup>50</sup> Evans offers an astute analysis that lends comparison of the internal politics and tensions of the SNCC to the general context of society in that the effects of “race, class, and culture within the movement,” culminated in a “rising spirit of black nationalism.”<sup>51</sup> Again, Evans argues that many blacks “expressed strong reservations about the impact of large numbers of whites on the movement,” verbalizing fears that whites would try to “take over.”<sup>52</sup> If the SNCC can be cited as an example of the discrimination borne by black women it also offers an instructive lesson; black feminism arose in response to and, as a form of resistance to, the political paternalism of men. When speaking of the schism between black and white feminists it can be helpful to identify those issues that are distinctive in the consciousness of black women and for many black feminists the issues identify as the denial of agency, voice, and language; as well as the exclusion of black women from the social and cultural definition of womanhood. Moreover, the social construction of a “sexed identity,” for black women contributes to the violence against them and

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<sup>49</sup> Sara Evans, “Black Power: Catalyst for Feminism,” in *Half Sisters of History: Southern Women and the American Past* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 224-239.

<sup>50</sup> Evans, “Half Sisters,” 228.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

positions black women into roles that oppose the white definition of womanhood.<sup>53</sup> The editors of a volume of work on black feminism, Donna-Dale Marcano, Kathryn Gines, and Maria del Guadalupe Davidson, argue that black activism goes back to the 1830s to expose and confront the racism of white men and women alongside the sexism of black and white men.<sup>54</sup> The initiative of social welfare early in the nineteenth century proceeded to develop logically into the manifestation of black women's clubs and resurfaced in the 1960s as the voice of black feminism in the conflict that ignited action for Civil Rights. The nearly simultaneous development of the women's movement in the 1960s was closely aligned with the movement for civil liberty and marked renewed efforts by women to campaign for equitable treatment in theory and practice. The forum for black feminist women closely paralleled that of the National League of Women, however, as Marcano, Gines, and Davidson note the "trajectory," or focus for black women was different because of their social location.<sup>55</sup> Feminist Beverly Guy-Sheftall argues that black women who confront dual issues of gender and race mark "the essence of black feminism thought in the nineteenth century."<sup>56</sup> In what may be the clearest explanation for the divergent "trajectories," of black feminist women, Guy-Sheftall writes that the establishment of a separate political, cultural, and intellectual agenda was necessary for black women due to the lack of acceptance by organizations controlled by black men.<sup>57</sup> Feminist author Linda La Rue argues that the difference between groups of black and white women manifest as the facile woes of

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<sup>53</sup> Donna-Dale L. Marcano, Kathryn T. Gines, and Maria del Guadalupe Davidson, ed. Introduction. *Convergences: Black Feminism and Continental Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>56</sup> Beverly Guy-Sheftall, ed. Introduction, *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought* (New York: The New Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.



white discontent amidst privilege and the plight of black mothers on welfare.<sup>58</sup> La Rue's observations tend to make the yawning void between feminist groups of women out to be issues that center on class and wealth and seeks to obviate any commonness of purpose as trivial. Indeed, La Rue writes that it is only the depth and extent of oppression suffered by black women that constitutes sufficient cause for sympathy.<sup>59</sup> Marxist rhetoric aside, while the divergence of issues between groups of black and white feminists do appear to be located within a difference of orientation and origination, still, the economic exploitation and devaluation of women's labor carries global implications for all women regardless of class. Johnnetta Betsch Cole and Beverly Guy-Sheftall express a more progressive view and tend to move away from a class based or "race-only analysis," in their understanding of black women's issues to reassert the emphasis on gender.<sup>60</sup> The enlightened views of Cole and Guy-Sheftall reiterate the refrain of "sexual politics," spawned by the women's movement to identify the diminished status of women and refocus attention on "how patriarchy is manifested within African American communities."<sup>61</sup>

Cole and Guy-Sheftall revisit the definition of black women within white culture to evoke a reminiscence of the *Cult of True Womanhood* and explore the gender dynamic "embedded in the very structure of Black society."<sup>62</sup> The return to the politics of gender illuminates the core of feminist ideology as one that seeks parity within the halls of institutional structures that concentrate power within spheres of male hierarchy. The one constant consensus among women, white and black, is an agreement to disagree on what constitutes areas of specific concern for wo

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<sup>58</sup> Linda La Rue, "The Black Movement and Women's Liberation," in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought* (New York: The New Press, 1995), 164-173.

<sup>59</sup> La Rue, "the Black Movement," 164.

<sup>60</sup> Johnnetta Betsch Cole and Beverly Guy-Sheftall, *Gender Talk: The Struggle for Women's Equality in African American Communities* (New York: One World Ballantine Books, 2003), xxii.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER 3

### CIVIC CLUBS, CHURCH, AND CONVERSATION

In this chapter I hope to show by example the civic pride and contributions to community made by black Appalachian women to communities in East Tennessee. The import of this chapter will provide the primary evidence to support the contentions claimed in the thesis. Many of the women spoken with are active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and most are active politically by staying apprised of candidates, the issues, and by registering to vote. In addition, many of the women have in the past and do still act as volunteers to assist others in the black community to register and vote. In the excerpts of conversations that follow several things are made clear: there is a strong emphasis on education, a commitment to community affairs through political action, and a vibrant sense of community and place that resonates among black Appalachian women.

The study comprises conversations with women who consented to be interviewed and who are extraordinary examples of well-respected leaders, entrepreneurs, and civic-minded women who follow examples of familial involvement in community affairs. All of the women interviewed are active in the church and in charitable programs that benefit the community. Most of the women think of themselves as belonging to the middle-class although, a few used measures of economic status to determine their social standing. As discussed earlier status and social acknowledgement within the black community are accorded on measures other than wealth such as profession, level of education, or in some instances from a history of civic involvement and accomplishment. The conversations themselves range widely and depart frequently from the prescribed script to illuminate briefly issues of race, prejudice, slavery, exclusion, and finally, acceptance and place within the communities of the Tri-Cities.

The issue of middle-class status bears explanation, quantification and clarification. While it is true that within the black community measures other than wealth and financial success are used to delineate those who have standing and respect I would like to clarify my use of the term. For the purpose of this paper the designation of middle-class applies to those women who are independent financially and self-supporting; further, I apply the term to those women who are both above and below the officially mandated level of poverty.<sup>1</sup> In short, I use measures of social standing, inclusive involvement in the community, and profiles of respect that garner attention from other members of the black community. The study conducted for this paper interviewed women from across the financial spectrum working and retired who remain active in church and community affairs and who present as role models and, leaders within the community. The decision to use the term middle-class as applied to black Appalachian women results from examples previously accepted in literary ventures that describe Southern Appalachian society and are grounded in a history of literary precedence that dates back to 1921. I refer to John C. Campbell who wrote a detailed description of Appalachian society with explicit reference to a tiered social construct within which could be found three distinct levels of social organization.<sup>2</sup> Subsequent to that many articles on Appalachian society reference the term “middle-class,” popularized by Charles Wright Mills in his book *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* published in 1951.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The United States Census Bureau for 2015 has set the official level of poverty for one individual under 65 years of age with no children at just over \$12,000, for single individuals over the age of 65 the level lowers to \$11,000. <http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html> (accessed June 13, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> John C. Campbell, *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1969): (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1921), 81-82.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951).

Appalachian historian and sociologist Dwight Billings indicates in an article published in 1974 that many Appalachians “enjoy typical, urban middle-class life styles.”<sup>1</sup> In addition, Appalachian author Mary Beth Pudup distinctly acknowledges the formation of an Appalachian middle class supported by the internal political policies within Kentucky in 1989.<sup>2</sup> By 1990 the emergence of a professional class of black doctors, politicians, and educators can be found documented in the work of Joe William Trotter who traces the formation of what he calls “An elite upper class of black bourgeoisie in West Virginia.”<sup>3</sup> Admittedly, literary reference to middle-class black communities in Southern Appalachia are difficult to find as are any documented sociological studies or ethnographies that focus on the black community in the South. The readings that I have suggested here can be used as a guide to understanding the constituent underpinnings or social economic forces that combine to create a middle-class segment and the conference of social status that adheres to that understanding. Moreover, in documenting the literary trail, conception, and use of the term middle-class as it is applied to certain individuals in society an image or profile results that can be substantiated in social theory and reproduced for analysis with the use of grounded theory. The legitimacy of the term as it is used to apply to black Appalachian women who participated in this study can be satisfied either by determining definitions of respect and status within the black community or by measures that use conventional applications of social economic status. The answers from women varied when asked if they placed themselves within the middle-class as some used measures of financial well-being to ascertain their status and others adopted a more flexible attitude.

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<sup>1</sup> Dwight Billings, Culture and Poverty in Appalachia: A Theoretical Discussion and Empirical Analysis. *Social Forces*, Vol. 53, No. 2, (Dec., 1974), pp. 315-323. (Accessed June 13, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Mary Beth Pudup, The Boundaries of Class in Preindustrial Appalachia. *Journal of Historical Geography* vol. 15 issue 2 (1989), 139-162. (Accessed June 13, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> Joe William Trotter Jr., *Coal, Class and Color: Blacks in Southern West Virginia 1915-32*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 27-29.

## Organization of Content

In order to organize a coherent construction of the conversations I have decided to group the interview questions into themes that reflect demographic, political, civic, and church activity. To insure the privacy and confidentiality of each participant only first names are used to protect the women interviewed and excerpts of the conversations will be used to illustrate the ways in which women from the black community conform to the practice of building community.<sup>4</sup> To the question of ethnic heritage all of the women responded as identifying as members of the African American community and as residents of communities in East Tennessee. In addition, many of the women spoke of a generational descent from family lines in Appalachia that extend back to before the Civil War to an era of slavery, resistance, and flights to freedom.

One notable departure from public activism occurred with question 11 that asked if concern for the environment, natural parks, and preservation of wildlife habitat was a source of empathy for black women in East Tennessee; none responded affirmatively noting that these issues did not create a conflict for them. I do not mean to suggest that there was a lack of concern on the part of these women simply a lack of relevance to more cogent civic issues that require their attention, time, and focus. Issues such as the not so distant enforced exodus from the city of Irwin, Tennessee that many of the older women remembered and related to me in detail as painful memories mixed with ones that recall the generosity of strangers who stepped in to help. Or, recollections of rejection and racial prejudice that many of the women carry quietly within until the memory surfaces in response to some distracted retraction of truth and confession. Despite the painful memories of racial segregation that many of the women remember and related to me these same women responded with pride to their identification as Appalachians.

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<sup>4</sup> Unabridged recorded conversations can be obtained from the Archives of Sherrod Library at East Tennessee State University. Questions asked in each interview can be found in the addendum of this paper.

## Overview

- Questions 1-3 relate to identity and place of residence
- Questions 4-10 specifically ask about church and civic involvement
- Questions 12-13 inquire into the history of the family
- Questions 14-15 regard social status
- Questions 16-18 are diverse and inquire into race, class, gender, and social roles

As reported earlier all of the women self-identified as African American and indicated residence in communities located within Carter, Washington, and Johnson Counties, Tennessee. As well, the women responded positively in response to questions regarding their civic, cultural and charitable involvement. Many of the women affirmed a history of familiar involvement in politics and civic affairs proudly relating the actions of family members who resisted oppression and fought for an end to the segregation of schools and lunch counters. Most of the women did see themselves as role models for their children and as influential within their communities indicating an internalized concept of empowerment and efficacy acquired through their successful negotiation of the white political franchise. In ways subtle and confrontational black Appalachian women have long appraised the mechanisms and deference of the white dominated political system of disbursement and entitlement within East Tennessee to acquire a strategic competency of inclusion. The issues of race, class, and gender factor significantly into the equation of civic and political involvement with a strong emphasis of commitment to the black community and establishment of an equitable relationship with the white community. For most of the women interviewed gender did not constitute as much of a barrier to inclusion as did race and while most denied racial tension almost all were able to recall some past racial incident.

## Conversations

One of my first interviews, and one that proved to be of strategic importance as a means of introduction to other women in the black community, took place at East Tennessee State University with an older alumna who turned out to be as savvy and intelligent as she was kind. Mary was the first to be interviewed and the conversation began when I asked her about her ethnic heritage and in what way she self-identified. She responded by indicating that she was African American on her mother's side and Cherokee by her father with family and extended family members in East Tennessee.<sup>1</sup> As well, Mary acknowledged that she and her parents before her had lived in East Tennessee for most of her life. As she began to speak she became thoughtful and said that as a child growing up certain expectations of duty were held of her by her parents that related to the community. Mary, *"During the segregation era the women in Johnson City had a fraternal organization that was called The Odd Fellows and we were the sister organization to that called the Household of Ruth if your mother was a member you were expected to be a member, you did not dare embarrass your mother by not being a member."*<sup>2</sup>

Continuing on Mary said that organization was the first civic club she had belonged to that was not related to the church or to missionary work and recalled another memory of her mother who was deeply committed to performing missionary duties for the church. As a child Mary would watch as her mother and other women from the community made visits to the homes of women who had taken ill to clean their homes, cook, and change the bed linens. Mary: *The dirty sheets would be collected and my mother would take these home to wash by hand using a hand powered wringer to draw the water out before hanging them up to dry.*

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Mary A. Sherrod Library, East Tennessee State University, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016. All responses are cited from transcript in author's possession.

<sup>2</sup> The original unabbreviated interviews are on DVD record and can be obtained from the Archives located within Sherrod Library, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee

Speaking of her mother Mary recalled that although her mother was illiterate and could not write she would insist on voting during elections and would learn to write the names of the candidates who appeared on the paper ballot published in the newspaper, Mary: *“I was only five or six, but my mother would take me with her when she went to vote.”* Mary said these were her first memories of civic involvement and missionary duty and recalled that her parents along with other members of the black community would attend political meetings and, while forced to sit in the back, they would be there. Mary: *“I remember that my mother would save up her poll tax, black folk would be charged to pay a poll tax to vote, but she insisted that black folks had died so that I could vote and that was the way it was, no matter if it was only for the dog catcher, you would go in to vote!”* Becoming animated her voice raised with the emotion of that memory, Mary responded to the sentiment her mother had instilled into her, Mary: *“Voting was a way for your voice to be heard it said I matter! I have a voice! I can be heard because when you remember where they came from, I can’t vote, I can’t be heard, for my mother and father voting was their voice.”* More than just a show of civic pride, voting for black families such as Mary’s was a way for them to make their presence, their voice, and their desire to be recognized as equal citizens known. Our conversation moved on to talk of the church and of her connection to it and of what it meant to her, Mary: *“I have been a member of the Pentecostal, Christian, and Baptist churches and I feel fortunate that I feel comfortable in any church I go into including white churches.”* In speaking of the church Mary referenced her work at East Tennessee State University and noted that much of her research had centered on and around the establishment of the black church and it’s function as the center of the black community, Mary: *“The church was the first organization after slavery where blacks had autonomy and it was the first property they owned. A lot of times they owned church property before they owned property of their own.”*



Again, Mary reiterated that she felt comfortable in the churches that she had visited regardless of denominational affiliation and our interview moved on to her involvement in civic affairs as an adult. Now this is where our conversation got really interesting. Mary started to relate her various accomplishments to me and admitted to having served simultaneously on both the Johnson City and the Washington County Planning Boards prior to her history of service as a Coordinator for the Housing Authority and Development Board. As she spoke Mary told me of her trip to Nashville, Tennessee while she served in the role of Coordinator for the Housing Board to attend a state wide meeting of Planning Commissioners there. Laughing now at the memory of her encounter with one of the committee members Mary, recalled that the fellow was deeply impressed by her arrival and told her, *“I can’t believe you came! We were surprised that you came because you are the only black and female coordinator in Northeast Tennessee! We just couldn’t believe that there were that many black people in Northeast Tennessee and a black woman who was the coordinator! We just could not get with that.”*

I asked her then to tell me about what she did to participate in building community and Mary replied: *“Johnson City is in a phase where they have community organizations all over town, the government finally decided that you can’t rule from the tower you have to get down into the trenches, and I participate in quite a few of those.”* My next question to Mary really gets to the heart of what this paper is all about I asked her to tell me why it was important for her to be part of the effort, to participate in the community? This is what Mary told me: *“you can’t get it done any other way.”* This last statement exposes the spirit of a committed activist who remains undaunted in the face of opposition and underlies the motivational initiative for much of what she has accomplished. Activism and resistance runs in the blood of Mary’s family and true to her heritage, albeit a heritage born in the crucible of slavery, Mary strives still to *“get it done.”*

The next interview takes place in Jonesboro, Tennessee with a woman very highly regarded in the black community and with a personal history of participation in the community. Marion has lived a lifetime of involvement in civic affairs and within the political organization of Washington County. As one of the oldest women interviewed Marion has a wealth of memories that date back over eighty years to when segregation was in place and enforced in schools, lunchrooms, and within professional services such as nursing. I was invited into her home where this interview took place and discovered that she still lived in the same home that she had shared with her late husband and where she had raised her two boys. Spacious and sunny with the late afternoon sun streaming in from the many windows in her home we sat down to talk at her coffee table in the quiet of a summer day.

Marion can only be described as quietly dignified and she bears her years with the grace and humor of a woman long aware of life's inequities and the skew of the color line that divides. As we sat down to talk I could not help but notice that Marion was wearing a cotton shirt that bore the message, *If You Want to Color Me, Color me Human*, I wish I knew where she found such a shirt, I would wear it too as it erases the false divide of color between people. Our conversation began with my asking her to identify her ethnic heritage to which Marion replied: "*African American.*"<sup>1</sup> To questions of place of birth and time spent within Appalachia, Marion responded that she had lived in Jonesboro all her life and her parents were born in Washington County. I then asked whether she belonged to any civic groups or clubs, Marion responded by telling me that by the age of eleven she had become a member of Bethel Christian Church, she also belongs to a social club located in Johnson City, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Marion M. in her home, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

As a former school social worker Marion stated that she belongs to the Washington County Education Association and the National Education Association. Prior to her position with the Washington County Educational System Marion informed me that she had served for thirteen years as a licensed practical nurse for the Johnson City Medical Center working nights while she attended classes at East Tennessee State University during the day. When I commented on her perseverance to work nights and take classes during the day Marion reiterated what by now has become a common theme in the lives of these women, Marion remarked: *“You find time to do things and you get it done.”* Marion was married for almost sixty years before her husband passed away and when I asked her about him she replied that he had been the principal at the Booker T. Washington School in Jonesborough, Tennessee prior to being elected Alderman on the day that Martin Luther King was shot. Noting the irony and synchronicity of the two events Marion remarked: *“Jonesborough is one of the oldest and smaller towns in Tennessee and Memphis one of the largest while we were electing the first black alderman in East Tennessee, West Tennessee was killing the symbol of black America.”*

Having established that Marion and her husband were well integrated in public and civic affairs I asked her what had prompted her, other than the fact of her husband’s political career to engage herself in the community, Marion replied: *“It’s always been one of my favorite things to do to work with people, I like people and I like working with them.”* Marion then brought to my attention that she had been elected to serve on the Washington County Election Commission and was the first black person to do so despite the *“few wrinkles,”* that surfaced due to her race. Encouraged by her straightforward demeanor I asked her what it was that she had hoped to accomplish by entering into events such as coaching the little league team? Without missing a beat Marion responded: *“I had two sons!”*

Practicality after all had been the driving force behind much of her civic activism that, and the fact that both she and her husband sought to instill into their children a sense of equality that they were, *“not inferior to anyone else.”* Persisting along the same line I asked Marion why was it important to her to be involved in these civic organizations? Here is what Marion told me: *“One of the big things was because of the children they needed to see that I and their daddy was out in the community doing things. They needed to see that we were a family and our brother’s keeper, that we didn’t just live here and didn’t go out and do things for other people.”* Again, when I asked about environmental issues Marion responded that while she believed in protecting and preserving the environment and had made a conscientious decision to recycle, she did not participate as an activist in those issues.

Marion, too, had come from a family that was well integrated into community life and as we spoke together in her comfortable living room I asked her to tell me about her parents, Marion: *“My mother and father both belonged to the church and my mother belonged to a women’s outreach group called the Christian Women’s Fellowship that would meet in the home of parishioners to help out when needed. My mother also belonged to the NAACP, she believed in that, my daddy did too.”* As I listened to Marion a pattern seemed to be emerging that closely paralleled what I had learned from Mary and it spoke to the close knit community of black Appalachian women and men who participated in church and civic life. I asked Marion directly if she saw community involvement as part of her family legacy and she responded: *“Yes! Oh Yes I do,”* I then asked her to identify her status in society and Marion said without any hesitation: *“I’m a middle-class black woman,”* persisting I asked if she based her opinion of her status on her economic well-being or if she took into account other factors such as her social status or the respect she received?

Marion: *“No! I base my opinion because I have been able to work and not be on the public dole and I educated myself.”* Again, Marion reiterated: *“Education was key, the key to everything.”* Marion was emphatic that her parents had instilled into her two key points of reference: one, you are as good as anyone else and two, you must get a good education. The next interview takes place at a restaurant in Johnson City, Tennessee with a woman who by all accounts has bested the odds against her to become a successful black entrepreneur and owner of her own business. Lorraine and her husband own and operate a corner catering service that features a patio style eatery and takeout and is well known in the downtown business district. Our interview takes place after hours on the patio and as we become acquainted Lorraine begins to tell me about herself, her family and the civic clubs she belongs to, Lorraine: *“I am an African American woman and I moved here with my family from Florida. I have been in the area for over fifty years. I’m affiliated with Bethel Christian Church, I am also a member of the NAACP, and I belong to Umoja a non-profit civic organization that does community work we put on a festival every year in downtown Johnson City. I was once a member of the Washington County Development Association, and I am a member of the Downtown Merchants Association.”*<sup>2</sup>

Lorraine indicated to me that civic life and community were her *“passion,”* I asked her then how and why she had become involved in these organizations? Lorraine told me that after retirement she had become bored, but then as she continued on her mind moved back in time to an incident in Florida that had left a lasting impression on a young girl. Lorraine dredged up a memory of racial segregation that had forced her to retreat to the back of a store for service and of her family’s flight north to Tennessee. As Lorraine continued on she told me that even as a young girl of fifteen she had determined that she would not let such a thing happen to her again.

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Lorraine W. at her place of business in Johnson City, Tennessee, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Lorraine: “*when I got married and came here it was a different world to me,*” she went on to say that it was then that she decided to join the NAACP because she wanted to “*change things.*” As an example of the continued division between the black and white communities Lorraine brought up the two festivals of Blue Plum and Umoja. In her comparison of the twin celebrations Lorraine observed that while Umoja was inclusive of diversity the same was not true of the Blue Plum. Lorraine used the word “*invisible,*” to describe how she felt about the exclusion of the black community from the practiced merchandizing of art, craft, and food found at the Blue Plum festival and, to a large extent, still felt by the black community in Northeast Tennessee. Sensitized to racial insult, Lorraine recounted instances where people had walked away from her diner when they saw her, but quickly reminded me that 95% per cent of her business was with the white community. I asked Lorraine to tell me how she saw the role of black women in the community and about their role in keeping the family together; here is what she had to say: “*I see women playing a significant part, I see that we try to educate our younger generations to what is proper. I think to educate our community to family values is the most important thing to me.*”

Remember that shirt worn by Marion? The one that said *Color Me Human* Lorraine reiterated that sentiment when I asked her what she would change if she could. Lorraine: “*I would like to see things change to where you could look at me and not see an African American. I’m just a person and that’s the way I would like to be treated.*” I asked if her family had been involved in the community and Lorraine answered that her grandparents had been active in the church and her grandfather a well-known and respected deacon. Lorraine, as with other women I spoke with, identified her social status as middle-class and employed an economic basis to classify herself, but when I asked her if being part of the middle-class influenced her activism

within the community Lorraine stated emphatically: *“It does not influence me at all, I would gladly go and work like a dog with people that live in poverty. I feel better if I can give back to the community. I try to give back something to the community every day. That’s my way.”* In speaking of her children, Lorraine was proud of the moral and civic values that she had instilled within them and mentioned her hopes for a grandchild to become involved in civic affairs. I asked Lorraine if the issues of race, class and gender had played a part in her decision to become socially active in the community and she responded: *“No. I have not been discriminated against because of my color here in Tennessee. You know that there is a lot of hidden racism, you don’t see it, but you can feel it. I have felt it since I have been here the political part of it.”* Lorraine acknowledged that the black community was small in Northeast Tennessee and in order for a black candidate to have a chance to succeed the entire black community would have to turn out to support him or her. Lorraine provided yet another reason why women like her tend to become motivated to become active within the community to form social clubs and political organizations that solicit and support issues of concern to the black community. Interestingly, Lorraine admitted that due to the small size of the black population in Northeast Tennessee it was necessary for communities, black and white, to work together to bring about change and said she took her political duties *“very seriously.”*

Toward the end of our interview, Lorraine touched upon a subject I had not thought to bring up, but pursued once she opened the door to it. We were talking about racial discrimination when suddenly Lorraine admitted to me that such discrimination existed not only from the white community, but indeed from within the black community toward other black members. Lorraine: *“We don’t talk about those things.”* I asked her if she was referring to an elite class of black people within the community and if color was an underlying basis for that discrimination?

Lorraine: “*Yes. If you were lighter than the average African American than you were treated differently.*” The interview concluded when I asked what that meant to her to be discriminated against from both without and from within the black community? Lorraine said simply: “*I am Woman. Whether I am black as coal or light as milk chocolate, I am woman, I am beautiful. I am educated. I am.*”

Lorraine is a tough act to follow, but the next interview takes place with a well-educated woman and was recorded at the public library in Johnson City, Tennessee. Starlet is an older woman in her seventies and as we sat down to begin our interview I found her to be extraordinarily articulate in response to the questions. As a longtime member of the NAACP Starlet began the conversation by declaring her civic commitment to voting and to seeing to it that other members of the black community were registered to vote as well. In addition, Starlet sees herself as a role model for her children and she has instructed them that participation in the community is necessary and expected. As Starlet stated: “*You have a responsibility to the community,*” and in regard to her children “*They need to aware of what is happening in the community and be a part of it.*”<sup>3</sup> Most of the women I spoke to affirmed race as a factor in their lives and Starlet confirmed this as well by telling me that “*race was an issue,*” especially during the time when she worked in a private home and her employer attempted to influence her choice of a candidate. Starlet’s memory strained back to a time years ago when she had been in the employ of a private home and the expectation of the home owner had been that his employees would vote in accord with their employer. Years later, Starlet found herself working as an instructor at a college while finishing her degree in a position that she informed me proudly had been awarded by dint of merit and not due to the politically correct course of affirmative action.

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Starlet W. Public Library, Johnson City, Tennessee May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016.



I asked Starlet to tell me what she considered to be her civic contributions to the community and here is what she said: *“Beside the NAACP I worked with Veterans Upward Bound at East Tennessee State University, and the Langston Heritage Group, and of course I worked as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for a while.”* Starlet’s emphasis on her own lifelong political participation and her effort to get others registered to vote piqued my curiosity and I asked her to tell me why she had focused on this particular area of concern?

To no great surprise, starlet responded by saying: *“It gives you a voice, I think that if you don’t vote, you don’t participate and you don’t know what the issues are, then you have no right to complain.”* As well, Starlet stated that it was necessary to: *“hold your elected officials responsible for their actions and votes.”* Continuing on I returned to the original format of the questions that were slightly out of order by now and I asked Starlet to tell me a little about her family’s historical background in Appalachia. Starlet related to me the story of her grandmother who as a young girl moved with her husband from North Carolina to Erwin, Tennessee. Starlet recalled that when the trouble started, *“They moved everyone out from there,”* her grandmother had relied on the kindness of a white neighbor to help her while her husband was away. In addition to the shameful memory of her grandmother’s exodus from the city of Erwin, Starlet remembers the day when school lunch counters were desegregated and the women who were responsible for serving the food would instead, *“Slide the food down to us.”*

Still interested in the civic work of her family I asked Starlet to tell me a little about her mother. Starlet replied that her mother had performed missionary service work for the church by visiting the sick and spread the word of the bible to black and white neighbors alike while teaching her daughter not to discriminate against people because of their color. As we talked further the issue of black visibility came up and in response to my question about why it

mattered Starlet said: “*Because if you are not there, if you don’t show up, people will think you don’t care.*” I asked Starlet then if that was what motivated her participation and she responded: “*Yes. Visibility depends on being there, on being vocal and if not comfortable with being vocal than on volunteer activities.*” As Starlet continued to speak it came out that she had once been a member of the Christian Women’s Temperance Union as well as a member of the Household of Ruth, organizations that by the very character of their origination held to the moral and ethical values so highly placed in Southern Appalachian culture.

Although I usually try to adhere to a script during an interview to insure the uniformity of the questions asked there are times when tangential departures result from a sudden turn in the conversation that take it down a different path. The next question and response are an example of this phenomena and lead to some interesting implications for the black community. I had asked Starlet to tell me in what way she observed other women in the black community acting as role models and in what way they participated in contributing to the welfare of the community? Starlet responded that women were strong leaders in the home and held the family together, in addition, Starlet identified women as agents of change. I asked if there was a problem with how black men perceived black women? Again, Starlet responded positively adding, “*I think so.*” Starlet referenced a line of scripture that securely secretes women inside the separate sphere of the home and subordinate to the husband. Starlet: “*So many men are intimidated by a woman, by her strength, her vision, and her wisdom.*” I asked Starlet if she thought black women formed a matrilineal center of control that drew resentment from men. As before, Starlet indicated that in her opinion men were both intimidated and resentful of the black woman’s empowerment; a fact that lead to more interracial marriages according to Starlet.

Again, our conversation turned to defining criteria of what constituted middle-class status and Starlet concurred that accord of social recognition and respect occurred based as much on an individual's accomplishments as on factors of wealth. In addition, Starlet noted that the black community was influenced by those who comprised an elite upper class. Oddly, when I asked Starlet how she identified her status, she replied: "*Servant*," possibly harking back to those days spent in the private employ of white paternalism or perhaps to her time spent as a university instructor instilling knowledge and understanding into students. A few days later I once again found myself preparing to meet another participant at the library in Johnson City, and as usual I waited in the lobby near the door watching for someone I presumed to be a middle aged black woman. Carefully screening the entries into the library I did not see anyone who matched that profile and disappointed, I turned to leave, but first called the number I had been given to see if I had somehow confused the time. There was no answer, but a short time later I received a call from Lottie whose crisp, clear voice assured me that she would be there and what she would be wearing. Good thing Lottie told me how to spot her because she is not your average black woman, in fact Lottie is not black, at least not to look at her. Meeting Lottie for the first time can throw all your preset profiles askew and leave you wondering if ethnicity can be a choice rather than an ascribed asset. Our conversation began with the usual format of ethnicity and Lottie answered without the slightest hesitation that she identified as a black woman. In the same breath Lottie returned the inquiry and asked me to identify myself. Caught off guard I stammered something like: I think I come from a mixed heritage. To be sure most of us do carry the influence of mixed ethnic strains to a greater or lesser degree depending on far back one goes into the genealogical tree, but I could see from the start that this woman was different and would confront any question fearlessly.

Lottie told me that she had lived in East Tennessee all her life and her parents had moved here from Southwest Virginia to find better educational opportunities for their daughters. Following the pattern established by her parents and other black families in the community, Lottie told me that her own daughter had just finished her master's degree and would likely go on to college in North Carolina. I asked Lottie if she belonged to a women's organization, civic or political group or church and she answered: "*All of the above,*" so I asked her to tell me about those affiliations and she began by telling me that she was a deacon in the Calvary Church.

She is currently serving a third term as an elected member of the Board of Education as well as a sustaining member of the Junior League of Johnson City that she described to me as a women's organization. I asked specifically if she was a member of the NAACP and Lottie responded that she was not, however, she indicated to me that she did serve on various civic boards "*All over town.*" In addition, Lottie indicated that she had been active in multiple voter registration drives and had gotten young people involved in these drives as well. I asked her to tell me what had gotten her involved and what did she hoped to accomplish with her involvement? Lottie replied that she had always, "*Seen herself as doing something political,*" and she said that she saw her participation, "*As an opportunity to make a difference.*" I asked her to tell me why it was important to participate in community groups and with an unusual degree of articulate insight Lottie replied: "*People get frustrated about things when they feel that [they] can't make a difference, but you really can and on a local level you can make more of a difference than on a state or a national level. People are more passionate and invested and, there is less red tape. You can see the opportunities and it's more fertile ground to make a difference.*"

I asked Lottie to tell me what she saw as the cultural contributions of black women to the community and the ways in which women acted to make a difference? Lottie: *“I think there is such a sense of purpose and family in the black culture in terms of taking care of the family and extended family in the community. I also see people taking ownership and responsibility for issues and events by getting involved.”* As we continued to talk the conversation took a sudden turn down an unexpected avenue when Lottie brought up the issue of abortion in the black community and indicated to me several reasons why abortion was not as prevalent or as censured as in the white community. Lottie: *“You don’t see abortion in the black community much because that is a life and people are going to care for it whether it’s their child, grandchild, or neighbor I think you see more of people taking an ownership of community.”* I wanted to pursue the issue so I asked Lottie if she thought that black women felt empowered to raise a child regardless of their marital status and, along with that, a lack of censure from the community. Lottie: *“I don’t see black churches as being as morally condescending as traditional white churches so I think there is more acceptance from the church and some of that goes back to faith.”* On the subject of the church as an important source of strength within the black community Lottie responded that the church still played a role in the leadership of the community, but was not as strong as it once was. Lottie: *“I absolutely believe the church still serves as a central point to bring people together.”* Switching gears, I asked Lottie if she perceived a social structure within the black community that reflected an upper echelon of talent and merit. Lottie: *“Historically, that has been your teachers, professional people, and pastors who have had more status and wealth.”* I asked if education was a denominator of respect and Lottie agreed, but not exclusively and went on to tell me about her father who sued the school system in Washington County to insure more rapid integration.

Lottie also commented on the commitment by both her parents to participate politically by voting. Naturally, my next question (the script lay forgotten now) asked why voting was so important? Lottie: *“My vote matters. It’s the opportunity to express what your opinion is and to push forward in a very positive way.”* Lottie identified her status as middle-class and used financial indicators of well-being that she admitted allowed her time for her activism. Interestingly, when I asked how the issues of race, class, and gender affected her ability to prosper Lottie was one of few women to identify gender as an issue in her field of employment over that of race.

In the interest of expediency and practical review the next five conversations will be abbreviated to illustrate only those ways in which they depart from the usual or are unique examples of volunteer work, charity, or civic commitment to avoid a redundancy of verbiage and to conserve duplication. The next conversation took place in the home of Pat who lives in Carter County, Tennessee and similar to the women before her she identifies as a black woman. Pat did not regale me with a long list of organizations or service to elected boards, instead, she rattled off a litany of volunteerism to groups such as the Carter County Adult Education Program, The First Tennessee Center on Aging and Disability, and service as Secretary-Treasurer to the local chapter of the Appalachian Regional Commission. In addition, Pat enrolled in a leadership program while also contributing time and expertise to the United Way of Tennessee. Again, as did many of the women before her Pat was able to recall instances of racial segregation that still stir in her memory and serve to strengthen her resolve to help others while reiterating the common refrain of humanism.

Pat's commitment to her community takes shape in her statement that she: "*Loves her community and she will do what she can to make it a better place to live in.*"<sup>4</sup> Pat's attitude and her generous donation of time and effort to the community are exemplary. The next interview also takes place in Carter County at the home of Diana who volunteers through her work as a registered nurse to take part in community service projects such as the gardens at the local library and the Pine Ridge Senior Community; in addition, Diana donates her time and money to the Samaritans Purse Charity for Children. Diana remains committed to voting, political awareness, and to giving back to the community in ways that are available to her. Moreover, the issue of political participation as a way to be heard and seen are important to her. Diana typifies the quite, unheralded heroine found in the trenches of community work where she remains committed despite her memories of exclusion due to color.<sup>5</sup>

For the eighth interview I traveled to Johnson County, Tennessee to talk with a woman who quite possibly may represent the epitome of public service to the community. Flora, she prefers to be called Flo, has dedicated her life to the service of the public good and to the benefit of the entire community in which she lives. Born one of the eldest of thirteen children, Flo was taught at an early age to help out and assume responsibility for herself and for her younger siblings. At a time when a college education was an unusual asset to possess even for white folk Flo's parents came to Mountain City, Tennessee well-educated and well prepared to raise their children to become self-sufficient and responsive to the community in which they lived. Following the example set for her by her parents, Flo has become integral in the distribution of goods and services to the community and has instigated critical services such as transportation to Johnson City for cancer patients who are unable to access these services themselves.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Pat B. in her home on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Diana W. in her home on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Raised by conscientious parents to believe that she was obligated to leave the world a better place, Flo has focused her attention and energy on raising funding for the local community center as well as devoting her time to directing programs for young and old to participate in. Despite troubling memories of racially motivated incidents that mar the serenity of her spirit, Flo continues to believe in herself as an empowered agent of change and to instill confidence in the children she counsels. In concert with her conception of confidence Flo responds to the theme of political activism and voting with the same emphasis used by other women in the black community; that it was a privilege earned by the sacrifice of others who had died to achieve that right and it should be exercised. Other similarities arose in response to Flo's emphasis on education as the key to obtaining respect, though she denied that she was part of an upper echelon of black elite. Instead, Flo insisted that she was a strong black woman capable of getting it done especially when she was told, "*No, you won't be funded.*"<sup>6</sup>

The ninth interview takes place in the Elizabethton home of Elizabeth who, it turns out, was one of the first black college students to integrate the undergraduate program at East Tennessee State University in 1958. I arrived early and the smell of banana bread baking in the oven greeted me as Elizabeth opened the door and invited me into her kitchen. Inside, Elizabeth offered me one of her muffins she had just baked to take on her rounds to neighbors and friends who were not well. In speaking with Elizabeth I learned that she and her family were originally from South Carolina, but she moved to Carter County as a young child with her parents whom she described as hard-working and diligent. While not overly political, Elizabeth spoke of her membership in the Christian Women's Temperance League and other charitable organizations with a focus on providing scholarships to young adults regardless of race.

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Flora B. Mountain City Community Center, Mountain City, Tennessee on June 30, 2016.



In many ways the interview with Elizabeth reiterated key facets of focus by other women in the black community such as her determination to vote “*because others had died to give her that right,*” an emphasis on education, and her charitable outreach to those who were unable to get out of their homes. Again, the emphasis on charity and taking care of your own resurfaced as we talked and Elizabeth recalled that her own family had taken in several children whose parents were not able to care for them. While it would serve no purpose to reiterate a disgraceful racial incident that Elizabeth remembered as having happened to a young black woman what is remarkable, is that despite her personal awareness of incidents of racial exclusion, to herself as well as to others, Elizabeth works hard to enhance her community. As with other women I spoke with, Elizabeth identifies as part of the middle-class because she is able to support herself without incurring the intercession of the state and she hopes to be seen as a role model by her own children. When I asked her what advice she would give to other young black women Elizabeth replied simply, “*Follow your heart.*”<sup>7</sup>

The last of ten interviews takes place within the city library of Elizabethton with the new Director of Library Services. When I met Renita I realized immediately that I would be speaking with a highly intelligent and articulate individual what I did not know, but would soon find out, was that I would be talking with a woman who has devoted most of her young life to political intervention and activism. Renita is a card carrying member and a past leader of the NAACP as well, she has been or is currently involved in a number of civic and charitable organizations that comprise the majority of community programs in Elizabethton, Tennessee. In addition, Renita devotes an extensive effort of time and resource to programs that deal with social ills such as drug addiction and recovery.

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Elizabeth C. in her home in Elizabethton, Tennessee on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Originally hailing from South Carolina, Renita brings with her an impressive resume of community service, civic involvement, and political activism that stems from a familial legacy of ethnic pride and activism within the community. As a young woman, Renita brings a different focus to the issues of racial division and like so many of her generation her willingness to participate in civic affairs through voting, organization of resources, and participatory activism mark the standard by which many young people contribute to their communities. Renita spoke of the inclusiveness within the black community in the care of children whose parents were deceased and of the charitable outreach of the church. As well, Renita spoke of her own commitment to the church instilled into her at an early age by her grandmother. When I asked her about her participation in community affairs, Renita reiterated the common sentiment of other black women I had talked with and spoke of her resolve to participate in voting as a means by which to make herself heard and by which to effect change within the community. Naturally, as a strong, independent young woman Renita identifies her status in society as soundly within the middle-class, the location of which adds to her sense of empowerment, efficacy, and confidence. As the new Director of Services, Renita has many ideas on ways to enhance the library as a place of inclusiveness for all the citizens of Elizabethton and from what I observed she had already effected many positive changes. Despite her busy schedule, Renita does not hesitate to make herself available to the library staff or to citizens who wish to meet with her.<sup>8</sup>

The previous interviews comprise the primary evidence sought by this study in support of the premise that black women in Appalachia contribute their time, effort, and goodwill to serve the communities in which they live; and by so doing, these women have become integral in the production of culture that promotes the core values of Appalachian society.

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Renita B. at the Elizabethton Library, Elizabethton, Tennessee on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

## CHAPTER 4

### LITERATURE REVIEW

As the preceding chapters have demonstrated black history, culture, and activism within the South overall and within the Mountain South particularly have long been engaged in political and benevolent work to promote the acculturation, education, and inclusion of black Americans. Unfortunately, historical accounts usually written by white historians have tended to overlook, ignore, or denigrate the cultural contributions of black Americans to a point that many unique perspectives in art, music, textiles, food, and religion have all, but been written out of history. Black invisibility, has long been trenchant and ingrained in the politics of the white communities of the Old South and certainly Southern Appalachia has never departed in thought or practice from the official stance of the South in its treatment of black Americans. If anything, in the past white antipathy toward black Americans in Appalachia paralleled the attitude held by whites in the Deep South. As well, it should be remembered that many benevolent organizations sponsored and initiated by black church women north of the Mason Dixon line sought to provide a protective shelter for black refugees to counteract the prevalent racism found in the North.

Beginning then with the myth of an exclusively white society composed of those whom Frost described as *Our Contemporary Ancestors*, and of whom Weller wrote of as being *Yesterday's People*, there arose a body of fictive work that pandered to Northern sentiment and the purulent imagination of popular demand.<sup>1</sup> Fiction, heralded as “local color,” that added to the growing misperception of Southern Appalachia as a location of racial innocence and purity.

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<sup>1</sup> William Goodell Frost, “Our Contemporary Ancestors in the Southern Mountains,” *Appalachian Heritage*, vol. 4 no. 4 (Fall 1976), pp. 70-80. [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/appalachian\\_heritage/v004/4.4.frost.pdf](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/appalachian_heritage/v004/4.4.frost.pdf) (accessed March 29, 2016); Jack E. Weller, *Yesterday's People: Life in Contemporary Appalachia* (Lexington: Kentucky, 1993) Ebook online, Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hjzqk> (accessed March 29, 2016).

Many scholars past and present have disputed the monolithic image presented by popular fiction writers of the nineteenth century to offer historical revisions that testify to the presence of black Appalachian's in the Mountain South. Carter G. Woodson for one wrote about *Freedom and Slavery in Appalachian America* in 1916 and sought through his prolific volumes of work to establish what author Jacqueline Groggin cites as a "highly political act," in the reconstruction of the black experience in America.<sup>2</sup> William Hobart Turner and Edward J. Cabbell broke ground with an anthology of stories by noted scholars on *Blacks in Appalachia* and as John Inscoe notes, the book takes to task the issue of black invisibility and the "refusal by outsiders to see beyond the "whiteness," of Appalachia."<sup>3</sup> Following in similar tradition the work of Connie Park Rice meticulously documents the presence and history of black Americans in West Virginia as early as 1766 when a family of slaves accompanied John Evans and his family into the region.<sup>4</sup>

Rice is careful to note that "Not all African Americans who settled in Monongalia County were slaves. Free African Americans also settled in the region, most of whom were farmers."<sup>5</sup> Rice observes that for those fortunate enough to escape the yoke of slavery and censure imposed by white residents of Monongalia County there existed a latitude of equity established in law and in practice that was applied to free blacks who won respect for their work.<sup>6</sup> What stands out from these works on black Americans in Appalachia are that they offer a contravening discourse that works to dispel the myth of "whiteness," that attends to the pulp of popular fiction writers.

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<sup>2</sup> Carter G. Woodson, "Freedom and Slavery in Appalachian America," *The Journal of Negro History* Vol. 1, No. 2 (Apr., 1916), pp. 132-150. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3035635> (accessed March 29, 2016): Jacqueline Anne Groggin, *Carter G. Woodson: A Life in Black History* EBook online <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/> (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), xiii. (Accessed March 29, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> William Hobart Turner and Edward J. Cabbell, ed. *Blacks in Appalachia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985): John C. Inscoe, Review, *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Aug., 1986), Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2209610> (Accessed March 29, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Connie Park Rice, *Our Monongalia: A History of African Americans in Monongalia County, West Virginia* (Terra Alta: Headline Books, Inc., 1999), 16.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

Issues of exclusion and invisibility within white society provided the catalyst for the establishment of the black church in 1787 when disillusioned parishioners Richard Allen and Absalom Jones found discrimination instead of absolution by white officials of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.<sup>7</sup> Allen, A Methodist minister, organized the Free African Society (FAS) a nondenominational mutual aid society that assisted fugitive slaves and new migrants to Philadelphia as part of their mission to acculturate free black men and women into white society and teach them the values and ethics they would need to prosper. Authors Tanya Brice and Kimberly Hardy explicate the intent of organizational reform provided by FAS:

One objective of the Free African Society was to teach thrift and savings to build wealth in the Black community. Members were encouraged to deposit a certain amount of money per month to be used just in case "they, or their wives, widows, or children fell into poverty, provided that this necessity is not brought on by their own imprudence." Members were expected to live a "sober and orderly life." In addition, there was an appointed committee of monitors to oversee the needs of Blacks in Philadelphia. These monitors conducted surveys of the needs of the community, and then provided those needs. The Free African Society provided access to funds, clothes, education, jobs, and religious services to those escaping slavery and to free blacks who were migrating to Philadelphia. As an outgrowth of this work, Allen founded the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1787, also known as Mother Bethel. This marked the birth of the AME denomination, the oldest Black denomination in the country.<sup>8</sup>

What followed Allen's initiative was a gathering of interest and fellowship among black congregants in the North as well as in the South and led directly to the establishment of the AME Church as a focal point in black communal, political, and religious life. Allen's early efforts also served to energize other societies of reform and mutual aid organized by black churchwomen whose organizational efforts were integral precedents of political reform in the black community.

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<sup>7</sup> Jeffery Cooper, General Secretary/Chief Information Officer, Official African Methodist Episcopal Website. <http://ame-church.com/our-church/our-history/> (Accessed March 30, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> Tanya Brice and Kimberly Hardy, "Introduction: Special Issue on the Black Church and Social Reform," *Journal of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work: Social Work and Christianity* 42, 3 (2015), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1759299997/fulltextPDF/78FD63D75B1346E3PQ/1?accountid=10771> (Accessed March 30, 2016).

The establishment of the early black church provided the foundation for the benevolent aid societies that would follow and excised a channel of authority, action, and autonomy for black churchwomen through which many found empowerment and gratification. Christian women, black and white, were frequently denied official recognition within a church hierarchy of male prerogative and privilege and were forbidden by scripture to aspire to the pulpit. The black church, while founded upon principles of benevolence and reform, nonetheless restricted the role of women to emissaries of outreach and proselytization within the black community even while providing a platform from which social action was initiated. Author Charles Lincoln confirms the restricted role of women within the church to write “None of the black women prior to the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries were ever officially recognized or ordained as preachers and pastors by any black denomination.”<sup>9</sup> Instead, writes Lincoln, they were required to take “sublimated paths,” that confined their roles to that of missionaries, evangelists, and as wives of clergymen, a position that afforded them a measure of respect in the community.<sup>10</sup>

Breaking with that paradigm Vashti Murphy McKenzi is the first woman Bishop elected to serve as a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the denominations history. Chief Communications Officer Kevin Eckstrom writing for the Washington National Cathedral notes that Bishop McKenzi “represents the first time in the over 200 year history of the A.M.E. Church in which a woman (has) obtained that level of Episcopal office.”<sup>11</sup> As well, Eckstrom notes that in 2004 Bishop McKenzi again made history when she was elected to serve as the Titular Head of the denomination.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Charles Eric Lincoln, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: duke University Press, 1990), 279.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Kevin Eckstrom, Chief Communications Officer, Washington National Cathedral, Washington, D.C. <http://www.cathedral.org/staff/PE-46ER5-V0000I.shtml> webpage (accessed April 10, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

No stranger to controversy, Bishop McKenzi is honored to serve as the presiding prelate of the 13th Episcopal District which includes the State of Tennessee and Commonwealth of Kentucky.<sup>13</sup> Prior to her election as Bishop in 2000, Mckenzis' leadership of the church initiated many benevolent programs of relief for parishioners in the Baltimore, Maryland District and accomplished initiation of innovative ministries that served many more church constituents. In her work as the author of two books on the spiritual and scriptural prohibitions against women in the pulpit McKenzi writes "Paradigm changes in major institutions such as the church move slowly because the values of those institutions are deeply embedded into their personalities and those of their participants."<sup>14</sup> McKenzi is quick to note the colliding intersection of women, religion, and history and observes that throughout the course of ancient history women were excluded from religious leadership and consigned as heretics in league with the devil.<sup>15</sup>

In a deeply interesting discussion, McKenzi elucidates the Tertullian distrust with which women were viewed leading to their dismissal as religious exegetes and to their banishment from positions of religious authority.<sup>16</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruther takes the discussion further still in her groundbreaking work on religious women in the thirteenth century who clung to their faith under extreme duress and persecution as heretics. Ruther writes in excruciating detail of the Patristic Christianity that consigned women as weak, vulnerable, and susceptible to the influence of nature, evil, and temptation.<sup>17</sup> Ruther's historiographic depiction of religious women who chose lives of celibate reclusion stands in stark contrast to devout women of faith today.

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<sup>13</sup> Eckstrom, "Bishop Mckenzi," webpage for the Washington National Cathedral, <http://www.cathedral.org/staff/PE-46ER5-V0000I.shtml> (accessed April 10, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Vashti Murphy McKenzi, *Not Without A Struggle: Leadership Development for African American Women in Ministry* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1996), 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruther, *Women and Redemption: A Theological History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 79.

Although Ruther's historiography of women in the religious world of the Patristic Fathers is helpful in illuminating the antecedents of a theological philosophy that directed vitriolic verbiage toward women, it is McKenzi's insightful commentary that inform of antiqueous attitudes in the church that yet remain against women. McKenzi, in her elucidation of exemplary religious women throughout history touches upon the exegesis of creation in Genesis and the subsequent move to indict women for the fall of man.<sup>18</sup> Many religious women in the ministry and spiritual women of faith take exception to this proscribed account of creation and instead refer to Genesis 1 that holds women and men to have been created equally in the image of God.<sup>19</sup>

Speaking out on the divergent history of women from the African continent, McKenzi observes that "African women served as partners with men, shaping kingdoms and community life. Women were more included in the leadership of ancient African cultures."<sup>20</sup> Again, McKenzi notes that "The theory and practice of female inferiority and subservience were far more prevalent in Asia and Europe."<sup>21</sup> McKenzi's argues that ancient cultural perspectives in Africa held women and men socially equal to one another with less proscribed prohibitions than found elsewhere and sets a precedent for positions of authority for African American women.<sup>22</sup> In similar tradition the spiritual voices of black churchwomen and clergywomen within the ministry support their right to participate in the structure and organization of church polity and in the outreach ministry of charitable benevolence to aid those in the community who are in need. Frequently for many churchwomen measures of empowerment can be found in these avenues.

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<sup>18</sup> McKenzie, "African American Women in Ministry," 10.

<sup>19</sup> Mieke Bal, *Sexuality, "Sin and Sorrow: The Emergence of the Female Character: A Reading of Genesis 1-3," Poetics Today, Vol. 6, No. 1/2, The Female Body in Western Culture: Semiotic Perspectives (1985), 21-42.* Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1772119> (accessed April 10, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> McKenzi, "African American Women in Ministry," 14.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.



Importantly, it has mainly been through the church that black churchwomen gained momentum as a source of resistance to the wider social inequities of economic parity, racial recognition, and class distinction. Historian Bettye Collier-Thomas observes that “Churchwomen are the spiritual sisters of preaching women. It is the power of their voices and those of their spiritual sisters “within the public discourse of racial and gender self-determination”” that helped fuel the efforts of black women’s secular organizations, such as The National Association of Colored Women (NACW) and to empower many of its leaders.<sup>23</sup> In her work, Collier-Thomas recognizes the link forged between the social activism of the black church and the efforts of reformation, recognition, and relief sought by secular women’s organizations such as NACW to achieve a parity of status with similar organizations attended by white women. While the intent of Collier-Thomas’ writing extends to the province of women preachers and their spiritual assignment to speak and spread the word of the scriptures, still, it illuminates an important linkage of development within the historical beginning of black women’s clubs, social organizations, and the incipient politicization of feminist reform.

Author John Williams undertakes a study of the sociocultural link between social action and religiosity to argue that “Christian beliefs are a fundamental factor in African American sociopolitical struggles.”<sup>24</sup> Williams, who considers the example of local and national women’s organizations that are designed to foster political and charitable activism, observes that black churchwomen did not allow their efforts to secure political and economic equality to be challenged by the constraints of segregation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Bettye Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and their Sermons 1850-1979* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 12.

<sup>24</sup> Johnny E. Williams, *African American Religion and the Civil Rights Movement in Arkansas* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), xiii.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, xxi.

Instead argues Williams, activist women sought to “create social bonds,” that fostered community support, commitment, and “activist identities that sustained their movement.”<sup>26</sup> In concurrence with scholars such as Cash, Williams writes “Women’s individual acts of resistance to sexism, racism, and classism were fueled in part by deeply held religious sentiments and understandings that increased their protest activities.”<sup>27</sup> The work of Floris Barnett Cash illustrates the importance of organized clubs and leagues within which black women sponsor the civic and social work of the community to build upon an institutional history of action, mutual aid, and civic involvement. Cash notes that “The dearth of social service institutions and the frequent exclusion of Africans from those that were in existence raised the consciousness of black women to community needs and influenced their decision to establish their own institutions.”<sup>28</sup> Cash acknowledges the link between the church and the development of charitable and philanthropic organizations sponsored by black women. Yet, just as it would be a mistake to assign a homogenous identity to black women, so too, would it be misguided to socialize them to one class or social strata of wealth, education, or sophistication.

Cash, references the affluence of certain women of wealth and means who worked within the abolitionist movement and who conformed to standards of propriety that were set for women writes, “Women from prosperous families met the expectations of middle-class womanhood and could devote time to community work.”<sup>29</sup> Interlaced in Cash’s commentary are subtle clues that allude to an ideology of class, position and autonomy that attend to women of means and ideals that invoke the constraining conformity of comportment demanded by “true womanhood.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Williams, “African American Religion,” xxi.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>28</sup> Floris Barnett Cash, *African American Women and Social Action: The Clubwomen and Volunteerism from Jim Crow to the New Deal, 1896-1936* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 15.

<sup>29</sup> Cash, “African American Women,” 18.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

Despite that white society set a standard of womanly virtue based on Victorian precepts inherently exclusive of black women, even so, black women aspired to attain a measure of that respect for themselves by emulating white conduct and moral expectations in their daily lives.<sup>31</sup> Cash touches upon yet another thread in the tapestry of the black community that of class, specifically, an elite class of upper echelon women who formed the initiative behind many of the programs directed toward charitable outreach. In her documentation of benevolent ministries Cash offers the example of the First Congregational Church of Atlanta, Georgia where “Women . . . influenced the upper-class congregation to become the first black institution to enter social service . . . and mission work in Atlanta’s poverty areas.”<sup>32</sup> Again, Cash comments “The anxiety of an emerging middle-class of black women was a vital motivational force for organizing local clubs and self-help organizations.”<sup>33</sup> In reference to class and wealth, Cash argues that “most had the education and resources to do it,” and that “more than half . . . were married to men who were prominent in their own professions, therefore, they had the time and economic security to do philanthropic work.”<sup>34</sup>

Harking back to the issue of black invisibility author Keri Day recounts watching a televised program on poverty in Appalachia only to become aware that all of the people interviewed were “white,” and were granted “wider structural explanations,” for their poverty than are customarily granted to black Appalachians in similar circumstances.<sup>35</sup> An observation that once again attributes the onus of poverty to social explanations of inherent disorganization and dependency among black families.

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<sup>31</sup> Cash, “African American Women,” 97.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>35</sup> Keri Day, *Unfinished Business: Black Women, The Black Church, and the Struggle to Thrive in America* (New York: Orbis Books, 2012), 1.

Day uses the forum of her book as a political stump from which to expound upon her theory of “advanced capitalism,” as the downfall of “poor blacks.”<sup>36</sup> Moreover, Day contrives to convolute a form of socialist rhetoric to complain of a “black underclass,” who are vulnerable to the machinations of a new “black elite,” even while they are susceptible to white racism.<sup>37</sup> Day who cites evidence of elite class divisions in black communities argues that these divisions separate black Americans along socioeconomic lines and gives four examples of those whom she sees as profiting from advanced capitalism: politicians, clergymen, educators, and entrepreneurs.<sup>38</sup> In addition, Day asserts that black men in these categories are positioned to profit and do so at the expense of others in the community even while operating within a white structural system of exploitation since Reconstruction.<sup>39</sup> While the pseudo-socialist complaint of class exploitation voiced by Day may indeed be true, still, it is worthwhile to note that the same socio-economic circumstances that dictated a usurious system of exploitive manipulation by men of privilege and wealth was used to control measures of wage and profit for non-elite white populations as well.

Class distinctions among black Americans parallel those found within white society and contain many of the same concerns, prejudices, and philosophical theories that guide more radical lines of rationality in heterogeneous groups. In a research survey of black college graduates scholar Daniel Thompson remarks “It may be argued that college educated blacks on the whole constitute what amounts to a separate, distinct, self-conscious social class—even an elitist subgroup in the black community.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Day, “Unfinished Business,” 54.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Daniel C. Thompson, *A Black Elite: A Profile of Graduates of UNCF Colleges* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986,), 1.

Thompson bases many of his assumptions on work drawn from W.E.B. Du Bois who wrote, now somewhat infamously, of a *Talented Tenth*, a small subset of extraordinarily gifted individuals who become leaders in their communities. The article referred to by Thompson and written by Du Bois, contains explicit reference to “natural selection, and “survival of the fittest,” in a thinly disguised resort to the theory of eugenics as discussed in a paper written by Fredrick Osborn.<sup>41</sup> Thompson willingly declares that “the concept of the “elite” as applied in (his) study refers to the same distinct social category or social segment as did Du Bois (in his) concept of the *Talented Tenth*.”<sup>42</sup> Again, Thompson echoes Cash when he describes those in his study as belonging to families of wealth and means with the superior advantages that come from economic privilege and higher education. In an attempt to assuage any lingering doubts regarding affiliation with theories of eugenic origin, Thompson resorts to the use of thaumaturgy in recollecting and resurrecting the words of Thomas Jefferson; to wit, Jefferson’s concept of a “natural aristocracy,” a selection of individuals born with innate abilities and talent. Thompson’s evocation of Jeffersonian rhetoric appears as an attempt to absolve himself of complicity with such theories of disrepute and lend a patina of respectability to his designation of an elite class.

Following in the theoretical footsteps of both Day and Thompson, James Blackwell gains insight into the stratification of class from Marxian and Weberian theories to discuss socioeconomic and ethnic divisions within groups. In reference to socialist theories of classification based upon wealth, power, and productive ownership Blackwell applies a well-rehearsed regimen of rhetoric that rehashes well-worn theories of unequal distribution.

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<sup>41</sup> William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, *The Negro Problem: A series of Articles by Representative American Negroes of to-day* (New York: James Pott & Company, 1908), or access website at [http://darrow.law.umn.edu/documents/Talented\\_Tenth.pdf](http://darrow.law.umn.edu/documents/Talented_Tenth.pdf) (accessed April 12, 2016); Fredrick Osborn, “Development of a Eugenic Philosophy,” *American Sociological Review* 2, no. 3 (1937), 389-397. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2084871> (accessed April 12, 2016).

<sup>42</sup> Thompson, “A Black Elite,” 3.

Blackwell resurrects a system of class stratification based upon a measure of worth that uses color as a code for social status with approximation and distance from *whiteness* as key to placement within the social hierarchy.<sup>43</sup> Blackwell notes that “Whenever the color variable enters into the classification schema, it is almost axiomatic that the more closely a person or a group approximates whiteness, the higher his or its rank in the social system.”<sup>44</sup> In a move that echoes the concerns of Day, Blackwell writes “The same principle often obtains within some ethnic groups . . . color, therefore, has both a divisive and unifying effect.”<sup>45</sup> Blackwell’s theories stipulate to an ideology of class divisiveness from within the group that has the effect of creating an artificial standard by which other members are judged and stratified.

As indicated earlier in the discussion, Blackwell reiterates that “stratification within the black population would somewhat parallel that of the larger American structure.”<sup>46</sup> Blackwell argues that a system of stratification based upon color or more precisely the lack of it, family background, and education are the three variables responsible for “levels of social acceptability, status recognition, and special privilege within the black community.”<sup>47</sup> As well, Blackwell underscores the complexity of social stratification by noting the shifting variances of public apprehension and incremental changes in what constitutes social acceptability of black members of the community by those Blackwell terms “The Black upper-class and The New Black upper-class.”<sup>48</sup> In what reads much as a strange case of *déjà vu*, Blackwell delineates the “old upper-class or “bourgeoisie,” from the *nouveau riche* or “new upper-class,” of black elite to reiterate

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<sup>43</sup> James E. Blackwell, *The Black Community: Division and Unity* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1975), 68.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

once again the parallels in black society to those in white society.<sup>49</sup> The issue of social status and of an emerging upper middle-class of black professional as seen from the viewpoint of Karyn Lacy suggests some surprisingly new information. Lacy observes that “In terms of occupational status, educational attainment, income and housing, the top segment of the black middle-class is equal to the white middle-class.”<sup>50</sup> Defining the variables, measures, and social ideology of what society acknowledges to be superior social ranking can be difficult due to the constantly changing conception of what constitutes social status. As well, such definitions are heavily dependent upon measures of worth as determined by current standards of value. Lacy examines the social identity of middle class blacks along with the earmarks of their success and the ways in which black Americans work to carefully preserve and, maintain their status. While many sociological reports utilize economic data as the leading indicator of social status, Lacy looks at other measures as well to determine social location noting that “perceptions vary widely.”<sup>51</sup>

In her study, Lacy found three measures that received wide attention from study participants as indicators of social status and hierarchal location: income, socialization and integration of children “across the color line,” and attitudes about the collective interests of their communities.<sup>52</sup> To explicate how difficult it is to define the amalgamate of a black middle class, Lacy notes that distinctions occur within residential and geographic locations and within such populations according to self-determining perceptions of social identity and, belonging. Astutely, Lacy recognizes the importance of context in the ascription and achievement of social identity to write, “Context matters greatly because it affects the situations that middle-class blacks are likely

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<sup>49</sup> Blackwell, “The Black Community,” 79.

<sup>50</sup> Karyn R. Lacy, *Blue-chip Black: Race, Class, and Status in the New Black Middle Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 3.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

to confront and the strategies they use to deal with such situations.”<sup>53</sup> According to Lacy the socially prescriptive roles that are ascribed to individuals tend to change depending on context, but this is true regardless of ethnicity; what Lacy is attempting to show is the complexity of circumstances that confound the issues of social identity and status.<sup>54</sup> In her summation, Lacy articulates concisely that there are *two* groups of the black middle class; the elite and the core.<sup>55</sup> The difference among the groups, according to Lacy, are that those described as “elite,” live within an exclusive residential location and have the means to “lavish luxuries,” on their children, while those described as “core,” tend to spend more “conservatively.”<sup>56</sup> Lacy’s sociological study simply reiterates fundamental financial principles that adhere regardless of color and fails to generate surprise for the reader, however, her study does illuminate critical change within the black community to reflect establishment of an upper echelon of black elite.

The idea of a rising black middle-class of entrepreneurs, artisans, professionals, and artists comprises a volatile area of discussion in communities where for many years the black community has existed quietly and in most cases invisibly. In the interviews and discussions conducted for this study one recurrent theme noted was the issue of ‘invisibility,’ as it is perceived today by members of the black community in Northeast Tennessee. As well, the standards and values used to determine middle-class status varies widely within geographic locals as well as from one demographic center to another. Moreover, descriptions of middle-class status when used within the black community are not always linked to financial achievement and frequently are attached to individuals who have attained recognition as community leaders. The idea of status as linked to leadership bears extraordinary importance for the purpose of this study.

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<sup>53</sup> Lacy, “Blue Chip Black,” 15.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.



Echoing the sentiment expressed above author /historian Jacqueline Jones Royster expresses much the same distinction in regard to her study of African American women writers of the nineteenth century whom Royster describes as “elite.”<sup>57</sup> Royster notes that “class privilege was indeed one marker of eliteness,” however, it was the respect and regard with which these women were viewed within the community that reserved them an elite status.<sup>58</sup> As Royster explains “I chose to look at women who laid claim through their families and through their own actions to the label *well respected*.”<sup>59</sup> In general, says Royster “in the African American community, well respected is not a term to which high economic status is always the first measure. Community status derives also from other measures”<sup>60</sup> Education, writes Royster was one such measure by which women were judged and in addition that women stood in good repute and /or were married to men of good repute.<sup>61</sup>

Royster acknowledges that black women took seriously the responsibility of maintaining a respectable presence within the black community and for conducting themselves with “a sense of propriety,” that spoke to the Victorian expectation of the era in which they lived to be *ladies*.<sup>62</sup> Royster reiterates sentiments expressed previously by other scholars that women of means and privilege “had access to power and influence,” and the luxury to use these assets in the best interest of themselves and others less fortunate within their communities.<sup>63</sup> While definition of what constitutes a white middle-class are firmly predicated within socioeconomic boundaries the definition of a black middle-class becomes amorphous with allusion to measures of respect.

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<sup>57</sup> Jacqueline Jones Royster, *Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change among African American Women* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 6.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

In reference to educated black women, historian Deborah Grey White makes note of an illuminati of women historians who have undertaken revision of the historical omission that attends to women, and women of color.<sup>64</sup> White inquires why “practitioners of history eschewed black women’s history despite their intimate understanding of how their history had been misrepresented and used against them.”<sup>65</sup> Again, in reference to “class,” White emphasizes that quite possibly one of the reasons that black women students did not attend to historical revision may have been because of parental expectations that they would contribute to the community. White, in reference to those whom she describes as “prominent educated black women,” writes that they “were expected to make a difference in the lives of the many people in their communities who did not enjoy the advantages that they did.”<sup>66</sup>

Yet again, White references the overwhelming perception by black women to “project the proper image,” in obeisance to the moral patriarchy within which they worked and to appear as under the “authority and protection of a man.”<sup>67</sup> White’s analysis of the dilemma faced by black women historians lends itself to a cyclical dialectic in which black women were held to be “ignorant and uneducable,” but to escape from that status required them to become educated.<sup>68</sup> For educated black women in the nineteenth century there was more at stake than cultural conformity to Victorian standards of propriety, for black women in general there was a socially constructed expectation of sloth, promiscuity, and in concurrence with Ruther, a susceptibility on the part of all women to surrender to temptation.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Deborah Gray White, Introduction, *Telling Histories: Black Women Historians in the Ivory Tower* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 1-27.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruther, “Women and Redemption,” 26.

Kevin Gains offers his perspective on the rise of a black middle-class in what he terms an “assimilist aesthetic of cultural uplift and vindication in response to pejorative minstrel-based constructions of blackness.”<sup>70</sup> Gains, articulate and discursive, notes that the black community as a whole sought to distance away from the derogative racial images emerging from the Jim Crow South and in doing so imbibed the proscriptive morality of what Gains refers to as “formulaic racialized conceptions of bourgeois morality.”<sup>71</sup> While acknowledging that patriarchal family ideals “created tensions between black men and women,” even so states Gains, “many black reformers focused . . . on the domestic realm,” thought to be within their control to concentrate on racial uplift.<sup>72</sup> But, just as such tightly-laced visions of prescriptive behavior rankled many white suffragist so then too, did the “paeans to patriarchy,” complicate the position of black women.<sup>73</sup>

In his reference to black activist women, Gains notes that “black women elites of the era, contested black bourgeois patriarchy from within its confines.”<sup>74</sup> Gains comments acerbically on the end of the nineteenth century as one in which “eugenics, genetics, and heredity served as secular rearticulations of Calvinist notions of original sin and predestination,” in his emphasis on domestic and moral reform.<sup>75</sup> In what serves as a vitriolic ramble, Gains manages to contort Victorian morality, Darwinian Theory, and eugenic agenda into a diatribe aimed at the suppression of black (women’s) sexuality in a remarkable simile of white racist rhetoric. What emerges, however, from the commentary of Gains ‘scholarship is the formation of a black middle-class juxtaposed against a black elite who seek to preserve their moral authority and position of privilege by adopting expression of a bourgeois morality.

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<sup>70</sup> Kevin K. Gains, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 76.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

Heretofore much of the discussion has centered on the peripheral edge of and about black American women, class, race, and sexism. There is much more to learn and many issues yet to be discussed specifically concerning black American women and black Appalachian women. In the opening foray of their edited collection of essays Micheline Malson, Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi, Jean O’Barr, and Mary Wyer ask “How can we describe and name an existence that consists of multiple realities and many different situations of oppression? What are the ways in which black women’s experience converge and diverge from those of other women?”<sup>76</sup> The point is well taken, indeed, black women are far from being a homogenous group moving and turning like a school of fish in one direction or another despite having many of the same sentiments in regard to race and sexism. Moreover, many of the sentiments expressed by women of color change and ameliorate over time in accord with society as a whole. So, what then are the experiences and expressions of black women about themselves and in what ways do they perceive and view the social world in which they live?

One such voice survives in the writing of Anna Julia Cooper who in 1892 took note of those “multiple oppressions,” that black women labored under to write “One muffled strain in the South, a jarring chord and a vague and uncomprehending cadenza has been and still is the Negro. And of that muffled chord, the one mute and voiceless note has been the sadly expectant Black Women.”<sup>77</sup> Cooper was one of the first black American women to make her voice heard through her skill as a scholar and her eloquent prose remains relevant to black feminist women who adhere to her advice on personal authority and autonomy. Cooper wrote her essays in the much the same spirit that directed the work of social uplift by other nineteenth century women.

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<sup>76</sup> Micheline R. Malson, Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi, Jean F. O’Barr, and Mary Wyer, ed. Introduction. *Black Women in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 5.

<sup>77</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South* ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), vii.

Racial uplift, acculturation, and parity has been and still is in many instances the solitary province of black women who, through their church and other social groups and clubs, pursue an agenda to enlighten and elevate their communities and, their race as a whole. In her introduction to the essayist work of Cooper, Mary Helen Washington notes in concurrence with Deborah White that “Because the black women . . . is the most likely to be responsible for the nurturing of families, it is she . . . who represents the entire race.”<sup>78</sup> Cooper echoes that sentiment when she writes “Only the Black Women can say when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole Negro race enters with me.”<sup>79</sup>

Speaking out against other forms of oppression Tracy Fitzgerald focuses on the relationship of race and gender to power noting that womanhood (as described by Cooper) is an important aspect of identity for black women and sexism an important source of oppression.<sup>80</sup> Fitzgerald’s rhetorical largess equals that of Gains as she ties racism, sexism, feminism, and Marxist theories of repression and alienation to systems that support the rule of the white male capitalist class.<sup>81</sup> Fitzgerald takes the position that black women in the 1960s suffered from several sources of subjugation both from within their own platforms for racial equality and from without by white feminist organizations that chose to exclude them; black male chauvinism was the cause of the former and white feminist exclusionist policies was to blame for the latter. Fitzgerald notes that the efforts of black woman have been essential to the progress of race and womanhood and that neither can proceed without her.

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<sup>78</sup> Mary Helen Washington, Introduction. *A Voice from the South by a Black Women of the South* ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), xxix.

<sup>79</sup> Cooper, “a voice From the South,” 31.

<sup>80</sup> Tracy A. Fitzgerald, *The National Council of Negro Women and the Feminist Movement* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1985),5.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

As reformers both within and outside of the home black women have been deemed essential, even “paramount to African American progress.”<sup>82</sup> In the work discussed previously many of the studies dealt with divisions of class within the black community in ways that closely parallel those in white society with the formation of an elite class who have been described by Du Bois as a “Talented Tenth.”<sup>83</sup> Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham cites a female counterpart to that concept whom she credits as a “conduit of race pride and white middle-class culture,” to the black community.<sup>84</sup> Etiology of the term “talented tenth,” actually derives from a speech given by Henry Morehouse, Executive Secretary of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society (ABHMS) who coined the term in a plea for funding black educational facilities.

The talented tenth therefore represented the hopes and aspirations of white northern philanthropists who sought to “transform the illiterate and impoverished black masses into American citizens,” in accord with progressive notions of manifest destiny and Protestant mores.<sup>85</sup> Higginbotham’s emphasis on education reflects reliance on women and ministers to act as leaders within the black community to promulgate white middle-class values and contribute to racial uplift.<sup>86</sup> Interestingly, Higginbotham explores the less obvious agenda of the ABHMS in their push to educate those in the black community whom Higginbotham describes as a “buffer between white society and the black masses.”<sup>87</sup> In what appears to be a thinly disguised imitation of Jim Crow racism, Higginbotham writes that Morehouse concurred in the effort to create a “colored American Yankee,” to mediate against the potential for black retaliation.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 21.

<sup>83</sup> Du Bois, “The Negro Problem,” 33

<sup>84</sup> Higginbotham, “Righteous Discontent,” 21.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

Higginbotham's representation of the sentiments expressed by Morehouse on behalf of the ABHMS appear to be part of the legacy of white society's fear of the black community's resentment and potential retaliation. Higginbotham quotes Morehouse as saying "We must finish this work, or the problem will be, not, what we shall do with the Negro? But what will the Negro do with us."<sup>89</sup> Again, Higginbotham reports that much of the prevailing sentiment in regard to education and provision of facilities for black Americans predicated on justifiable fear of reproach and to secure a force of containment for "racial disturbance or public excitement."<sup>90</sup>

In summation, black women have been integral within the black community to the processes of acculturation, assimilation and uplift into the larger arena of American society; in particular, an elite class of black women who have the means in terms of wealth and the respect of their community in terms of authority to accomplish their goals. The literature suggests that the historiography of the black church and the subsequent outgrowth of mutual aid societies in the North actively participated in the repatriation of black citizens into society and extended charity to those in need while instituting high standards of moral conduct. In addition, social organizations, groups, and clubs, funded and run by black women, are primarily responsible for social events, festivals, group gatherings, church outreach, and community wide cohesion. Many of the organizations directed by black women such as the National Association of Colored Women came to prominence and national attention as organizational entities that merited respect and recognition. Scholarship on black churchwomen's groups suggests that many women find empowerment and personal autonomy through their civic activism in community programs and participation in the political process such as voting and service on elected boards. Moreover, black women retain a sense of womanhood that reflects their sense of self and sovereign identity.

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<sup>89</sup> Higginbotham, "Righteous Discontent," 27.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER 5

### ANALYSIS

As previously mentioned analysis for the interviews will be conducted using a phenomenological approach that seeks to validate personal, subjective experience over the imposition of interpretation by the interviewer. Originally developed by the German philosopher Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl in 1920 it employs a method of reflective attentiveness that discloses the individual's lived experience by illuminating the meaning of experiential events. Because it is a philosophy that honors the individual emphasis of meaning, memory, and perception I have chosen to use it as a means by which to better understand the thoughts and reflections of the women who spoke with me and confided their memories and reserved emotion.

Many of the women were able to recall memories of events before the desegregation of schools, cafeterias, and public facilities that linger etched into their consciousness such as the effigy of a black child that was hung-up in the school yard in Johnson County and remembered by Flo who spoke of it fleetingly, but without rancor. Or, the memory of Lorraine who was told that she could not sit down at an all-white lunch counter in Daytona, Florida, but would have to go to the back of the store and again, the memory of Marion who recalls that she was not allowed to eat with the rest of her nursing class due to restrictions against integration. The women who were interviewed voiced many memories such as these, but with a distinct lack of bitterness or resentment, instead many of the women evinced regret and tread around these episodes with the utmost care as if unwilling to awaken the painful memories these would stir deep in their soul. The use of phenomenology allows for the reflective content and conscious apprehension of such events and imbues the individual's perception of those events with meaning that reifies them.



By subjecting the interviews to a phenomenological analysis the intention is to hopefully remove my own subjective bias from consideration and focus instead on the meaning attributed to them by the women who were interviewed. In the interest of expediency I feel that the purpose of analytic application would be far better served to review the narrative expressions of the interviewees as a whole rather than on a case by case basis. To apply a cogent analysis to each of the ten conversations conducted with the participants individually would be needlessly long and complicated and beyond the ability of this study. Hence, the decision to review the sentiments expressed by the women as a whole relieves of that burden and facilitates an expeditious review.

I should start by stating the obvious that the collective experience of black women in Appalachia, at least those that I spoke with, present as a profound and intensely personal recollection of current and past events that comprise significant associations of social reality. Without getting too deeply into the Cartesian dynamics of perception i.e. what constitutes reality such as the color and perception of a table, an individual's perception and subsequent understanding of an event is highly dependent on the previous meaning assigned to it-like a pattern of perception. For an individual there is a context of cognition from which to draw upon such as a schema that informs of how to interpret future events of similar appearance. All of this is to say that meaning predicates on previous perception and experience to provide a means of interpretation for an individual. In the instance of the women who were interviewed incidents of past exclusion from groups, racial segregation, and consciousness of difference of being "other," left indelible traces in their apprehension of self by others, but not in their own self-esteem. The women that I interviewed had a strong sense of personal worth drawn from familial and community-wide networks of supportive kinship that reinforced positive images of themselves and worked to enhance their sense of empowerment and, efficacy.

Taking the assigned weight and value of an experience appointed to it by the narrator of the story lends validity, a measure of what a thing really is, to the instance of recollected memory and turns the whole of the memoir credible. In the discussions held with the women many forms of expression evinced other than regret for racial injustice such as ethnic pride and the strength of character and will that precede accomplishment as well as investment in the community. The women I interviewed showed a remarkable resilience in their recollection of self as distinct from categories of difference imposed upon them in situ within the white community. The social reality of de facto conditions from within which they operate are made bearable by the close knit adhesiveness of the black community and work to enhance their cultural contributions to the common community shared by all. The personal subjective experiences of the women I spoke with seemed to indicate an increased sensitivity to the needs of others despite instances of exclusion and in almost all of the conversations a determination was expressed by these women to act as agents of change in their community. The women who were interviewed for this study evinced a profound capacity of care for their communities and a deep reserve of emotion in their reflection on past events that in some cases were spoken of in the hushed tone of the victimized, but by no means vanquished.

The premise behind phenomenology is that our conscious experience or knowledge of something is directed toward it through the structure of a particular concept that in turn gives meaning to that experience; the product of that process is then separate and distinct from the actuality of the thing that was beheld. In effect, the premise draws upon Cartesian philosophy to question the nature of reality as no two people can behold the same object in exactly the same way. Yet, it is the combined conscious reality of the social world experienced by the women in this study that has been accorded the validity of substantive apprehension and truthful testimony.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY

The goals and objectives of this study have been met in accord with the announced intention of the research-to substantiate the presence of diversity within Appalachia and in concert to show the cultural contribution made to community by women of ethnic diversity. Historical venues of literary production have rendered Southern Appalachia the preserve of white Anglican heritage replete with the skirl of bagpipes, Irish lore, and English ballads. So complete has been the historical omission of ethnic diversity within the Mountain South that to great extent traces of cultural accomplishment by black Appalachians has all but been obliterated. Within the confine of Southern Appalachia women, and most especially women of color, have largely been ignored and marginalized to the sideline of historical record with only brief allusion to their service as wives, cooks, mothers, and servants. The cultural enhancement of Appalachia by black men and women has been located within a reference of denial that serves to obscure their contribution to traditions of culinary craft, banjo tunes, and quilted textiles in Appalachia. The charter and organization of social clubs, women's groups, civic and political boards, as well as charitable outreach ministries can be directly attributed to the action of black American women who seek to serve their communities through their personal efficacy and empowerment. The myth of racial "innocence," within Southern Appalachia has been debunked with literary scholarship that dates the presence of free and slave African American families in West Virginia, Western North Carolina, Southeast Virginia, and Northeast Tennessee as early as the seventeenth century. In addition, many of the foodstuffs, traditions, and interfamilial networks of kinship brought over by Afrikaners on the transatlantic voyage from the West Coast of Africa are used and employed within the region of Southern Appalachia.

In the course of this research and in conversation with women several contentions have been established first, vibrant communities of ethnic diversity are thriving in the counties that comprise Northeast Tennessee and second, the women who consented to be interviewed are representative of many other black women who work within their communities to make them a better place to live and work in. Many of the women who were interviewed for this study are strong women of faith and courage, but possess no special knowledge or ability other than their commitment to moral values and standards of behavior that are common in Southern Appalachia. The cultural contributions of black American women and men to the Appalachian region have been many and varied and continue to be a source of cultural production through which the region flourishes.

Several key points of interest arose in the course of conversation with the women one point being that four stated that they were not aware of any special difference directed toward them as they grew up in Carter and Washington Counties belying the notion of racial discord. While almost all of the women were able to recall racial incidents and the circumstances of segregation none appeared to harbor any bitter resentment other than regret and the discomfort such memories bring. Another key point to emerge was the close knit bond within the black community possibly an extension of previous tradition that employed networks of kinship to offset the loss of family. Several women informed that the services of nursing homes for the aged and orphanages were simply not available to black Americans and gave rise to the practice of caring for one another within the community. A third notable point is the keen emphasis on education and subsequent to that to stay informed on the issues related to the community and, extending from that the determination to exercise the right to vote “a right that others died for.” In all respects the women interviewed were average American women save for their ethnicity.

The social clubs, women's groups, civic and political organizations black American women choose to belong to stems from a long tradition of involvement within the community and speaks to the larger issues that confront black Americans nationally. The African Methodist Episcopal Church continues to provide leadership on religious and political issues and continues to be a focal point of consensus and cohesion within the black community and, as well to provide outreach ministries that serve the poor, the ill, and the old. As an institution the church has historically been a center of learning and place of accommodation within which black Americans could worship freely and without censure; as well, the church constitutes property a privilege that for many years was denied to black Americans.

In the final analysis what emerges from all the rhetoric, review, and verbiage can be reduced to the realization that no real difference exists among black and white Americans. I make the statement for several reasons, first many of the women I interviewed admitted to having white relatives and over time many black families were integrated by interracial marriage to the point that color becomes a matter of tone; some lighter and some a shade darker. Second, and just as important, we all belong to the human species and as the legend on Marion's T Shirt proclaims *if you want to color me, color me human*. In the region of Southern Appalachia most people adhere to the indigenous values and ethics of hard work, family, and church that stem from a history of hard times, poverty, and exploitation of natural and, human resources. In order to prevail against adversity the people of this region-English, Scots-Irish, Native American, Afrikaner, and European needed to work together to build the communities that are here today and which reflect the rich cultural diversity that imbues the region with resilience and, strength. In the course of time to come the color line that heretofore has divided people into opposing camps will give way to the declaration that we are one people, we are Appalachian Americans.

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# APPENDIX

## IRB Approval



EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

Office for the Protection of Human Research Subjects • Box 70565 • Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-1707  
Phone: (423) 439-6053 Fax: (423) 439-6060

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### IRB APPROVAL – Initial Expedited Review

March 17, 2016

Sherry Kaye  
250 Nave hollow loop Rd.  
Elizabethton, TN 37643

**Re:** Recasting the White Stereotype of Southern Appalachia:  
Contribution to Culture and Community by Black American Women.  
**IRB#:** c0216.28s  
**ORSPA #:**

The following items were reviewed and approved by an expedited process:

- new protocol submission xForm, References, PI CV, Informed consent document (ver 2-18-16), Telephone script, interview questions

The following revisions were received and approved as part of the requested changes:

- Requested changes xForm, Revised informed consent document, Revised telephone script

On **March 17, 2016**, a final approval was granted for a period not to exceed 12 months and will expire on **March 16, 2017**. The expedited approval of the study *and* requested changes will be reported to the convened board on the next agenda.

The following **enclosed stamped, approved Informed Consent Documents** have been stamped with the approval and expiration date and these documents must be copied and provided to each participant prior to participant enrollment:

- Informed Consent Document (version 3-7-16, stamped approved 3-17-16), Telephone Script (stamped approved 3-17-16)

Federal regulations require that the original copy of the participant's consent be maintained in the principal investigator's files and that a copy is given to the subject at the time of consent.

**Projects involving Mountain States Health Alliance must also be approved by MSHA following IRB approval prior to initiating the study.**



*Accredited Since December 2005*

Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks to Subjects or Others must be reported to the IRB (and VA R&D if applicable) within 10 working days.

Proposed changes in approved research cannot be initiated without IRB review and approval. The only exception to this rule is that a change can be made prior to IRB approval when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the research subjects [21 CFR 56.108 (a)(4)]. In such a case, the IRB must be promptly informed of the change following its implementation (within 10 working days) on Form 109 ([www.etsu.edu/irb](http://www.etsu.edu/irb)). The IRB will review the change to determine that it is consistent with ensuring the subject's continued welfare.

Sincerely,  
Stacey Williams, Chair  
ETSU Campus IRB

cc: Lee Bidgood, PhD

## VITA

### SHERRY KAYE

- Personal Data:                   Date of Birth: January 28, 1951  
  Place of Birth: San Diego, California  
  Marital Status: Single
- Education:                        Northeast State Community College-Division of Nursing 2002-2004  
  Walter State Community College-Department of Nursing 2004-2006  
  B.S. Psychology, Sociology, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2006-2009  
  M.A. Liberal Arts, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2009-2013  
  M.A. Appalachian Studies, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2016
- Professional:                    Registered Nurse-Holston Valley Medical Center, Kingsport, Tennessee, 2006-2007  
  Registered Nurse-Excell Staffing Agency, Greensboro, North Carolina, 2007-2010
- Publications:                    Hirsch, J.K., Kaye, S., & Lyness, J.M. (2009, August). Functional impairment and depressive symptoms: Mitigating effects of trait hope. Presentation at the 117th annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- Hirsch, J.K., Visser, P.L., Hatfield, J., Kaye, S., Peake, A., & Mason, H. (2008, September). Screening for mood disorders in rural primary care: A review of the literature. Presentation at the 5th annual Primary Care and Prevention Research Day, Department of Family Medicine, East Tennessee State University, J.C., TN.
- Hatfield, J., Hirsch, J.K., Visser, P.L., Kaye, S., Peake, A., & Mason, H. (2008, November). Screening for depression in primary care: A critical review of the literature. Presentation at the



55th annual conference of the Tennessee Psychological Association, Nashville, TN.

Hatfield, J., Hirsch, J.K., Kaye, S., & Lyness, J.M. (2008, November). The association of social support and family criticism to depression in a sample of older adult, primary care patients. Presentation at the 55th annual conference of the Tennessee Psychological Association, Nashville, TN.

Kaye, S., Hirsch, J.K., & Lyness, J.M. (2009, April). *Functional impairment and depressive symptom in older adults: Examining the components of trait hope*. Presentation at the 24<sup>th</sup> annual Appalachian Student Research Forum, ETSU, Quillen College of Medicine, Johnson City, TN.

Honors and Awards:

Dean's List Walter State Community College, Morristown, Tennessee, 2005

Community Activity: Volunteer Community Food Bank, Fund Raising, Supervisor

Volunteer Second Harvest Food Bank, Johnson City, Tennessee, Hunger Outreach Program 2009

Volunteer Second Harvest Food Bank, Children's Charity Event. 2012

Extra-Curricular Programs: Ronald McNair Post Baccalaureate Research Program, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2010